THE MARIE ANTOINETTE ROMANCES.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

Memoirs of a Physician.

LOUIS XV. . . . . Vol. I.
CAGLIOSTRO (BALSAMO) . . . . . II.
MME. DUBARRY . . . . . III.

The Queen's Necklace.

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THE NECKLACE . . . . . II.

Ange Pitou.

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PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE . . . . . IV.

Le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.

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MEMOIRS OF A PHYSICIAN.

INTRODUCTORY.

NEAR the source of the Selz, on the left bank of the Rhine, some leagues from the imperial city of Worms, there begins a range of mountains, the scattered and rugged summits of which disappear northward like a herd of wild buffaloes vanishing in a mist.

These mountains, which from their lofty summits overlook an almost desert region, and seem but to form an attendant train to one which is their chief, have each a peculiar figure, and each bears a name indicating some tradition connected with it. One is the King's Chair, another the Wild-rose Stone; this the Falcon's Rock, that the Serpent's Crest.

The highest of all, which raises to the clouds its granite top, girt with a crown of ruins, is Mont Tonnerre.

When evening deepens the shadows of the lofty oaks, when the last rays of the sun die away on the peaks of this family of giants, we might imagine that silence descended from these sublime heights to the plain, — that an invisible hand unfolded from their declivities the dark blue veil through which we see the stars, to wrap it over the world, wearied with the toil and the noise of day.

Then waking gives place to sleep, and all the tenants of earth and air repose.

Alone in that silence the little river already mentioned, called by the inhabitants of the country the Selzbach, pursues its mysterious course by the fir-trees on its banks, stopping not by day or night; for it must hurry on to the Rhine, which to it is eternity. The sands of its current are so smooth, its reeds so flexible, its rocks so richly clothed with moss, that not one of its waves murmurs, from Morsheim, where it rises, to Freiwenheim, where it finishes its course.

A little above its source, between Albisheim and Kirchheim-Poland, a road, winding deep between two rugged walls of rock, leads to Danenfels. Beyond Danenfels the road becomes a path, — it narrows, is lost; and the eye seeks in vain anything on which to rest, except the slopes of Mont Tonnerre, whose lightning-blasted summit is hidden by a belt of trees impenetrable to the eye.

In fact, once under those trees, leafy as the oaks of Dodona of old, the traveller may in open day continue his way unseen by any one on the plain below. Were his horse hung with more bells than any mule in Spain, not a sound would be heard; were his trappings of gold and jewels like those of an emperor, not a ray from them would pierce through the foliage, — so powerful is the density of the forest in extinguishing sound, and its darkness in dimming the brightest colors.

Even at the present time, when our highest mountains have become mere observatories for every-day tourists, on whose lips the most fearful of the legends of poetry call up a smile of doubt, — even now this solitude has its terrors; so that only a few miserable-looking houses, outposts of neighboring villages, appear here and there, at a

distance from the magic belt, to show that man is to be found in that region. Their inhabitants are millers who carry their flour to Rockenhausen or Alzey, or shepherds who herd their flocks around the mountain, they and their dogs trembling often to hear some enormous fir-tree fall with age, crashing in the unknown depths of the forest.

All the fireside tales of the country are gloomy, and that path which is lost beyond Danenfels, among the heath and furze of the mountains, has not always, they say, led good Christians to a safe shelter. Perhaps there yet may live one of those country people who has heard his father or his grandfather tell what we are now about to relate.

On the 6th of May, 1770, at that hour when the waters of the great river are tinged with a pale rose-color, — that is to say, when the inhabitants of the Rhinegau see the setting sun sink behind the spire of Strasburg Cathedral, which divides it into two hemispheres of fire, — a man who came from Mayence, having passed through Alzey and Kirchheim-Poland, appeared beyond the village of Danenfels. He followed the path so long as the path was visible ; then, when all trace of it vanished, dismounting from his horse, he fastened its bridle to the first fir-tree of the pathless forest. The animal neighed uneasily, and the woods seemed to start at a sound so unusual.

"Gently, gently, my good Djerid ! We have made twelve leagues, and thou at least hast reached thy journey's end."

The traveller tried to peer into the recesses of the forest, but in vain ; he could see only masses of dark shadows relieved upon shadows yet darker. Turning then to his horse, whose Arab name declared his race and swiftness, he took his head between his hands,

approached his lips to the smoking nostrils of the animal, and said, "Farewell, my good horse! If I do not find thee here again, farewell!"

As he said these words he looked quickly around, as if he feared they might have been overheard, or as if he desired it. The horse shook his silky mane, pawed, and neighed as he would in the desert on the approach of the lion. The traveller nodded his head with a smile which seemed to say, "Thou art not wrong, Djerid; there is danger here."

Then, having decided beforehand, no doubt, not to oppose force against this danger, the unknown adventurer drew from his saddlebow two richly mounted pistols, took out their balls, and sprinkled the powder on the ground. This done, he put them back in their holsters. Then he unbuckled a sword with a steel handle, wrapped the belt of it round it, and put all together under the saddle, so that the pommel of the sword was toward the horse's shoulder. After these formalities the traveller shook the dust from his boots, took off his gloves, felt in his pockets, and having found a pair of small scissors and a penknife with a tortoise-shell handle, he threw first the one and then the other over his shoulder, without looking to see where they fell. That done, he again stroked Djerid, breathed deeply, as if to expand his chest, feeling that his strength was about to be taxed, and sought a pathway among the trees. He found none, and at last entered the forest at a venture.

It is time that we should give our readers some idea of the traveller's appearance, as he is destined to play an important part in our history.

He was a man apparently of thirty to thirty-two years of age, of middle height, but admirably made, and his every movement exhibited a fine combination of strength

and flexibility of limb. He was dressed in a travelling coat of black velvet, with gold buttons, under which appeared an embroidered waistcoat; tight-fitting breeches of leather, and polished boots, on limbs which might have served as a model for a sculptor, completed his costume. His face, which had all the mobility of the Southern types, exhibited a singular combination of shrewdness and force. His eye, which could express every feeling, seemed to read the soul of any one on whom it rested. His complexion, naturally dark, had been rendered darker by exposure to a warmer sun than ours. His mouth, large, but well formed, showed a fine set of teeth, the whiteness of which was heightened by contrast with the darkness of his skin. His foot was long, but finely formed, and his hand small, but sinewy.

Scarcely had he advanced ten steps among the dark fir-trees, when he heard the quick tramp of hoofs in the direction of the place where he had left his horse. His first movement was to turn back, but he stopped himself; however, unable to resist the wish to know the fate of Djerid, he raised himself on tiptoe and glanced through an opening. Djerid had disappeared, guided by an invisible hand which had untied his bridle. A slight frown contracted the brow of the unknown, yet something like a smile curled his chiselled lips. Then he went on his way toward the centre of the forest. For a few steps farther the twilight aided him, then it left him, and in darkness so thick that, seeing no longer where to place his foot, he stopped.

"I got on very well to Danenfels, for from Mayence to Danenfels there is a road," said he aloud; "and from Danenfels to the Dark Heath, because there is a path; and from the Dark Heath hither, though there is neither

road nor path, because I could see where I was going: but now I must stop, — I see nothing."

Scarcely had he pronounced these words, in a dialect half-French, half-Sicilian, when a light appeared about fifty paces from the traveller.

"Thanks," said he; "now as the light moves I shall follow."

The light moved steadily on, with a gliding motion, as we sometimes see a light move over the stage of a theatre. The traveller might have gone about a hundred steps farther, when he thought he felt a breathing at his ear. He started.

"Turn not," said a voice on the right, "or thou art dead!"

"Good!" replied the immovable traveller.

"Speak not," said a voice on the left, "or thou art dead!"

The traveller bowed without speaking.

"But if thou art afraid," said a third voice, which, like that of Hamlet's father, seemed to come from the bowels of the earth, "turn back, — that will declare that thou abandonest thy scheme; and thou shalt be permitted to go."

The traveller made a gesture of dissent with his hand, and went on. The night was so dark and the forest so thick that he could not advance without occasionally stumbling. For about an hour the flame moved on, and he followed without a murmur, and without showing a sign of fear. All at once the light disappeared. The traveller was out of the forest. He raised his eyes, and in the dark sky saw some twinkling stars. He continued to advance in the direction of the place where the light had disappeared, and soon saw arise before him a ruin, the spectre, as it were, of some ancient castle. Next his foot

struck against some of its fragments. Then something cold passed over his temples and sealed up his eyes, and he no longer saw even the shadows. A bandage of wet linen bound his head. This was only what he had expected, no doubt, as he made no effort to remove it. He only silently stretched out his hand, like a blind man imploring a guide. His gesture was understood. A cold, dry, bony hand grasped the fingers of the traveller. He knew that it was the hand of a skeleton; but if that hand had been endowed with sensation, it would have felt that his did not tremble.

Then the traveller felt himself rapidly drawn on for about a hundred paces. Suddenly the hand released its grasp, the bandage fell from his eyes, he stopped: he was on the summit of Mont Tonnerre.

II. — HE WHO IS.

In the midst of a glade formed by larches, bare with age, rose one of those feudal castles which the Crusaders, on their return from the Holy Land, scattered over Europe. The gateways and arches had been finely sculptured, and in their niches formerly were statues; but these lay broken at the foot of the walls, and creeping-plants and wild-flowers now filled their places.

The traveller on opening his eyes found himself before the damp and mossy steps of the principal entrance; on the first of these steps stood the phantom by whose bony hand he had been led thither. A long shroud wrapped it from head to foot, and the eyeless sockets darted flames. Its fleshless hand pointed to the interior of the ruins as the termination of the traveller's journey. This interior was a hall, whose elevation above the ground concealed its

lower part, but on whose broken ceiling flickered a dim and mysterious light.

The traveller bowed in assent. The phantom mounted slowly step by step to the hall and plunged into the ruins. The unknown followed calmly and slowly up the steps which the spectre had trodden, and entered also. With the noise of a clashing wall of brass, the great gate of the portal closed behind him.

At the entrance of a circular hall hung in black and lighted by three lamps, which cast a greenish light, the phantom stopped. The traveller, ten steps farther back, stopped in his turn.

"Open thine eyes!" said the phantom.

"I see!" replied the unknown.

The phantom then drew, with a quick and haughty movement, a two-edged sword from beneath his shroud, and struck it against a column of bronze. A hollow metallic groan responded to its blow.

Then all around the hall arose stone seats, and numerous phantoms, like the first, appeared. Each was armed with a two-edged sword, and each took his place on a seat; and seen by the pale green light of the three lamps, they might have been taken, so cold and motionless were they, for statues on their pedestals. And these human statues came out in strange relief on the black tapestry of the walls.

Some seats were placed in advance of the others, on which sat six spectres who seemed like chiefs; one seat was vacant. He who sat on the middle seat arose.

"Brethren, how many are present?" he asked, turning to the assembly.

"Three hundred," replied the phantoms, with one voice. It thundered through the hall, and died away among the funeral hangings on the walls.

"Three hundred," replied the president, "and each speaks for ten thousand companions! Three hundred swords, which are equal to three millions of poniards!"

Then he turned to the traveller. "What dost thou wish?" he asked.

"To see the light," replied the other.

"The paths which lead to the mountain of fire are rugged and difficult. Fearest thou not?"

"I fear nothing."

"One step forward, and you cannot return. Reflect!"

"I stop not till I reach the goal."

"Wilt thou swear?"

"Dictate the oath!"

The president raised his hand, and with a slow and solemn voice pronounced these words: "In the name of the Crucified Son, swear to break all bonds of nature which unite thee to father, mother, brother, sister, wife, relation, friend, mistress, king, benefactor, and to any being whatever to whom thou hast promised faith, obedience, gratitude, or service!"

The traveller with a firm voice repeated these words, and then the president dictated the second part of the oath.

"From this moment thou art free from the pretended oath thou hast taken to thy country and its laws: swear thou to reveal to the new head whom thou acknowledgest all that thou hast seen or done, read or heard, learned or divined, and henceforward to search out and penetrate into that which may not openly present itself to thine eyes."

The president stopped; the unknown repeated the words.

"Honor and respect the *aqua tofana* as a prompt, sure, and necessary means of ridding the world, by death

or idiocy, of those who would degrade truth or tear it from us."

An echo could not have been more exact than the voice of the unknown as he repeated the words of the president.

"Flee from Spain, flee from Naples, flee from every accursed land; flee from the temptation of revealing aught that thou shalt now see and hear! Lightning is not more quick to strike than will be the invisible and inevitable knife, wherever thou mayest be, shouldst thou fail in thy secrecy."

Spite of the threat conveyed in these last words, no trace of emotion was seen on the face of the unknown; he pronounced the end of the oath with a voice as calm as at the beginning.

"And now," continued the president, "put on his forehead the sacred band!"

Two phantoms approached the unknown. He bowed his head. One of them bound round it a crimson ribbon covered with silver characters, placed alternately with the figure of our Lady of Lorette; the other tied it behind, just at the nape of the neck. Then they left his side.

"What wouldst thou ask?" inquired the president.

"Three things."

"Name them!"

"The hand of iron, the sword of fire, the scales of adamant."

"Why the hand of iron?"

"To stifle tyranny."

"Why the sword of fire?"

"To banish the impure from the earth."

"Why the scales of adamant?"

"To weigh the destinies of humanity."

"Art thou ready for the tests?"

"The brave man is ready for everything."

"The tests, the tests!" cried many voices.

"Turn!" said the president.

The unknown obeyed, and found himself face to face with a man pale as death, bound and gagged.

"What seest thou?" asked the president.

"A malefactor or a victim."

"A traitor! One who took the oath as thou hast done, and then revealed the secrets of our order."

"A criminal, then."

"Yes; what penalty has he incurred?"

"Death."

The three hundred phantoms repeated "Death!" and in spite of all his efforts, the condemned was dragged into a darker part of the hall. The traveller saw him struggle with his executioners; he heard his choking voice; a dagger glimmered for an instant; a blow was struck; and a dead and heavy sound announced a body falling on the earthy floor.

"Justice is done!" said the unknown, turning to the ghastly assembly, who from beneath their shrouds had devoured the sight with greedy looks.

"Then," said the president, "thou dost approve what has been done?"

"Yes, if he who has fallen was really guilty."

"Thou wilt drink to the death of every man who, like him, would betray the secrets of the holy society?"

"I will!"

"Whatever be the draught?"

"Whatever be the draught."

"Bring the cup," said the president.

One of the two executioners brought the unknown a red, tepid liquor in a human skull, mounted on a bronze

support. He took this frightful cup, raised it above his head, saying, "I drink to the death of every man who shall betray the secrets of the holy society." Then, bringing it to his lips, he drained it to the last drop, and returned it calmly to him who had presented it.

A murmur of surprise ran through the assembly, and the phantoms seemed to look at each other through their half-opened shrouds.

"Good!" said the president. "The pistol!"

A phantom drew near the president, holding in one hand a pistol, and in the other a ball and a charge of powder. The candidate hardly deigned to turn his eyes in that direction.

"Thou promisest passive obedience to the holy society?"

"Yes."

"Even if this obedience be put to the proof against thyself?"

"He who enters here is no longer his own; he belongs to all."

"Then thou wilt obey whatever order be given thee?"

"I will obey."

"On the instant?"

"On the instant."

"Without hesitation?"

"Without hesitation."

"Take this pistol and load it!"

The unknown took the pistol, put the powder in the barrel, forced it down with a wad, then dropped into the barrel the bullet, which he secured with a second wad, and then primed the weapon. All the dread assembly looked on the operation in a silence broken only by the sighs of the wind among the arches of the ruin.

"The pistol is loaded," said the unknown, coolly.

"Art thou sure?" asked the president.

A smile passed over the lips of the candidate as he drew the ramrod and let it slip down into the barrel of the pistol, from which it projected by about two inches. The president bowed in token of being satisfied. "Yes," said he, "it is loaded, and well loaded."

"What am I to do with it?"

"Cock it."

The unknown cocked the pistol, and its click was distinctly heard in the profound silence which attended the intervals in the dialogue.

"Now put it to thy forehead," said the president.

He obeyed unhesitatingly. The silence seemed to deepen over the assembly, and the lamps to turn pale. These were real phantoms, for not a breath was then heard.

"Fire!" said the president.

The cock was heard to snap, the flint flashed; but the powder in the pan alone took fire, and no report accompanied its quick flame. A shout of admiration burst from every breast, and the president involuntarily extended his hand to the unknown.

But two proofs were not sufficient to satisfy all, and some voices shouted, "The dagger! the dagger!"

"You demand it?" said the president.

"Yes, the dagger; the dagger!" replied the voices.

"Bring the dagger," said the president.

"It is useless," said the unknown, making a disdainful movement with his head.

"Useless!" cried the assembly.

"Yes, useless!" he replied, with a voice which drowned every other; "useless! You only lose time, and it is precious."

"What meanest thou?" asked the president.

"I tell you I know all your secrets, — that these tests

of yours are but child's play, unworthy of men. I tell you that I know the body which lies there is not dead; that I have not drunk blood; that, by a spring, the charge fell into the butt at the moment I cocked the pistol. Such things may frighten cowards. Rise, pretended corpse; thou hast no terrors for the brave."

A terrible shout made the arches ring.

"Thou knowest our mysteries?" said the president. "Thou art, then, one of the illuminated or a traitor!"

"Who art thou?" demanded the three hundred voices; and on the instant twenty swords, in the hands of the nearest phantoms, were pointed, with a motion as precise as if directed by a military signal, at the bosom of the unknown.

He smiled, shook the thick curls of his hair, which, unpowdered, were retained only by the ribbon which had been bound round his head, and said, calmly, "*Ego sum qui sum, — I am he who is.*"

Then he turned his eyes slowly around the living wall which hemmed him in, and gradually sword after sword sank before him.

"Thou hast spoken rashly," said the president. "Doubtless thou knowest not the import of thy words."

The stranger shook his head and smiled. "I have spoken the truth," he said.

"Whence comest thou?"

"I come whence comes the light."

"But we have learned that thou comest from Sweden."

"I might come from Sweden, and yet from the East."

"Then we know thee not. Who art thou?"

"Who am I? Well, I will soon tell you, since you pretend not to understand me; but first I will tell you who you are!"

The phantoms started, and the clang of their swords

was heard as they grasped them in their right hands and raised them to the level of the stranger's breast.

"First," said the stranger, extending his hand toward the president, "thou who believest thyself a god, and who art but the forerunner of one, thou who representest Sweden, I shall name thee, that the rest may know I can also name them. Swedenborg, have not the angels who converse with thee familiarly told thee that he whom thou waitedst for was on the road?"

"They did declare it to me," replied the president, putting aside a fold of his shroud in order to see him better who spoke. In doing this, contrary to all the habits of the association, he showed a white beard and the venerable face of a man of eighty.

"Good!" replied the stranger. "On thy left is the representative of England or of old Caledonia. I greet you, my lord. If the blood of your grandfather flows in your veins, England's extinguished light may be rekindled."

The swords sank; anger gave place to astonishment.

"Ah, captain!" said the unknown, addressing one on the left of the president, "in what port waits thy good ship? A noble frigate, the 'Providence.' Its name augurs well for America."

Then turning toward him on the right, he said: "Look, Prophet of Zurich; thou hast carried physiognomy almost to divination: read the lines on my face, and acknowledge my mission."

He to whom he spoke recoiled.

"Come," said he, turning to another, "descendant of Pelago, we must drive the Moors a second time from Spain, —an easy task if the Castilians yet retain the sword of the Cid!"

The fifth chief remained so still, so motionless, that the

voice of the unknown seemed to have turned him to stone.

"And to me," said the sixth: "hast thou nought to say to me?"

"Aye," replied the traveller, turning on him a look which read his heart, "aye, what Jesus said to Judas, — but not yet."

The chief turned paler than his shroud, and a murmur running through the assembly seemed to demand the cause of this singular accusation.

"Thou forgettest the representative of France," said the president.

"He is not here," replied the stranger, haughtily; "and that thou knowest well, since his seat is vacant. Learn, then, that snares make him smile who sees in darkness, who acts in spite of the elements, and who lives in spite of death."

"Thou art young," replied the president, "and thou speakest as if with divine authority. Reflect! boldness imposes on only the weak or the ignorant."

A disdainful smile played over the lips of the stranger. "You are all weak," he said, "since you have no power over me; you are all ignorant, since you know not who I am: while I, on the contrary, know who you are! Boldness, then, alone might overcome you; but why should one all-powerful so overcome?"

"Give us the proof of your boasted power?" said the president.

"Who convoked you?" asked the unknown, becoming the interrogator.

"The grand assembly."

"And not without a cause hast thou," pointing to the president, "come from Sweden, thou" — and he turned toward each of the five chiefs as he spoke — "from Lon-

don, thou from New York, thou from Zurich, thou from Madrid, thou from Warsaw; and you all," looking round the assembly, "from the four quarters of the earth, to meet in the sanctuary of the dreaded faith."

"No," replied the president, "not without cause; for we came to meet him who has founded in the East a mysterious empire, joining the two hemispheres in a community of faith, and uniting mankind in the bonds of brotherhood."

"Is there any sign by which you shall know him?"

"Yes," said the president; "God has deigned to reveal it to me by the mediation of his angels."

"You alone know that sign?"

"I alone."

"You have revealed it to none?"

"To none."

"Name it."

The president hesitated.

"Name it! the hour is come."

"He will bear on his breast a diamond star, and on it three letters, the signification of which is known only to himself."

"What are those three letters?"

"L. P. D."

The stranger rapidly threw open his coat and vest, and on his shirt of fine linen shone like a flaming star the diamond and the three letters formed of rubies.

"HE!" cried the president, in consternation; "can it be HE?"

"He whom the world expects?" said the chiefs, with anxiety.

"The Great Copt?" murmured the three hundred voices.

"Now," cried the stranger, triumphantly, "do you believe me when I say, I am he who is?"

"Yes," said the phantoms, prostrating themselves before him.

"Speak, master," said the president and the five chiefs, "speak; we shall obey."

III. — L. P. D.

There was silence for some moments, during which the unknown seemed to collect his thoughts. Then he began.

"Seigneurs," he said, "you but weary your arms with your swords; lay them aside, and lend an attentive ear, for you have much to learn in the few words which I am about to utter."

All were profoundly attentive.

"The sources of great rivers are sacred, therefore unknown. Like the Nile, the Ganges, the Amazon, I know to what I tend, not whence I come. All that I can reveal is that when the eyes of my spirit first opened to comprehend external things I was in Medina, the holy city, playing in the gardens of the Mufti Salaaym. He was a venerable man, whom I loved as my father, yet he was not my father; for though he looked on me with love, he spoke to me only with respect. Thrice a day he left me, and gave place to another old man, whose name I pronounce with gratitude, yet with fear. He was called Althotas, and him the seven great spirits had taught all that the angels know in order to comprehend God. He was my tutor, my master; he is my friend, — a friend to be venerated indeed, for his age is double that of the most aged among you."

His solemn tone, his majestic deportment, deeply impressed the assembly; they seemed trembling with anxiety to hear more. He continued: —

"When I reached my fifteenth year I was initiated into the mysteries of Nature. I knew botany, not as one of your learned men, who has acquired only the knowledge of the plants of his own corner of the world, — to me were known the sixty thousand families of plants of the whole earth. My master, pressing his hands on my forehead, made a ray of celestial light descend on my soul; then could I perceive beneath the seas the wondrous vegetations which are tossed by the waves, in the giant branches of which are cradled monsters unknown to the eye of man.

"All tongues, living and dead, I knew. I could speak every language spoken from the Dardanelles to the Straits of Magellan. I could read the dark hieroglyphics on those granite books, the Pyramids. From Sanchoniathon to Socrates, from Moses to Jerome, from Zoroaster to Agrippa, all human knowledge was mine.

"Medicine I studied, not only in Hippocrates, in Galen, and in Averrhoes, but in that great teacher Nature. I penetrated the secrets of the Copts and the Druses. I gathered up the seeds of destruction and of happiness. When the Simoom or the hurricane swept over my head, I threw to it one of those seeds, which its breath bore on, carrying death or life to whomsoever I had condemned or blessed.

"In the midst of these studies I reached my twentieth year. Then my master sought me one day in a marble grotto, to which I had retired from the heat of the day. His face was at the same moment grave and smiling. He held a little vial in his hand. 'Acharat,' said he, 'I have told thee that nothing is born, nothing dies in the world; that the cradle and the coffin are twins; that man wants only to see into past existences to be equal to the gods, and that when that power shall be acquired by him,

he will be as immortal as they. Behold! I have found the beverage which dispels the darkness, while yet I search for that which will banish death. Acharat, I drank of it yesterday, — see, the vial is not full; drink thou the rest to-day.'

"I had entire confidence in my venerable master, yet my hand trembled as it touched the vial which he offered me, as Adam's might have trembled in touching the apple offered him by Eve.

"'Drink!' said he, smiling.

"I drank.

"Then he placed his hands on my head, as he always did when he would make light penetrate to my soul.

"'Sleep!' said he.

"Immediately I slept, and I dreamed that I was lying on a pile of sandal-wood and aloes. An angel, passing by on the behests of the Highest from the East to the West, touched the pile with the tip of his wing, and it kindled into flame. Yet I, far from being afraid, far from dreading the fire, lay voluptuously in the midst of it, like the phœnix, drawing in new life from the source of all life.

"Then my material frame vanished away; my soul only remained. It preserved the form of my body, but transparent, impalpable; it was lighter than the atmosphere in which we live, and it rose above it. Then, like Pythagoras, who remembered that in a former state he had been at the siege of Troy, I remembered the thirty-two existences through which I had already lived. I saw the centuries pass before me like a train of aged men. I beheld myself under the different names which I had borne from the day of my first birth to that of my last death. You know, brethren — and it is an essential article of our faith — that souls, those countless emanations of the Deity, fill the air, and are formed into numerous hierarchies,

descending from the sublime to the base; and the man who at the moment of his birth inhales one of those pre-existing souls, gives it up at his death, that it may enter on a new course of transformations."

He said this in a tone so expressive of conviction, and his look had something so sublime, that the assembly interrupted him by a murmur of admiration.

"When I awoke," continued the illuminated, "I felt that I was more than man, — that I was almost divine. Then I resolved to dedicate not only my present existence, but all my future ones, to the happiness of man.

"The next day, as if he had guessed my thoughts, Althotas said to me, 'My son, twenty years ago thy mother expired in giving birth to thee. Since that time invincible obstacles have prevented thy illustrious father from revealing himself to thee. We shall travel, we shall meet thy father; he will embrace thee, but thou wilt not know him.'

"Thus in me, as in one of the elect, all was mysterious, — past, present, future.

"I bade adieu to the Mufti Salaaym, who blessed me and loaded me with presents, and we joined a caravan going to Suez.

"Pardon me, Seigneurs, if I give way for a moment to emotion, as I recall that one day a venerable man embraced me: a strange thrill ran through me as I felt his heart beat against mine. He was the Cheriffe of Mecca, a great and illustrious prince who had seen a hundred battles, and at the raising of his hand three millions of men bent their heads before him. Althotas turned away to hide his feelings, — perhaps not to betray a secret, — and we continued our road.

"We went into the heart of Asia; we ascended the Tigris; we visited Palmyra, Damascus, Smyrna, Constan-

tinople, Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, Moscow, Stockholm, Petersburg, New York, Buenos Ayres, the Cape of Good Hope, and Aden; then, being near the point at which we had set out, we proceeded into Abyssinia, descended the Nile, sailed to Rhodes, and, lastly, to Malta. Before landing, a vessel came out to meet us, bringing two knights of the order; they saluted me and embraced Althotas, and conducted us in a sort of triumph to the palace of the Grand Master, Pinto.

"Now, you will ask me, Seigneurs, how it happened that the Mussulman Acharat was received with honor by those who have vowed the extermination of the infidels. Althotas, a Catholic, and himself a knight of Malta, had always spoken to me of one only God, omnipotent, universal, who by the aid of angels, his ministers, made the world a harmonious whole, and to this whole gave the great name of Cosmos. I was, in fact, a theosophist.

"My journeyings ended; but, in truth, all that I had seen had awakened in me no astonishment, because for me there was nothing new under the sun, and in my preceding thirty-two existences I had already visited the cities through which I had lately passed. All that struck me was the changes which had taken place among their inhabitants. I was able to hover over events and watch the progress of man. I saw that all minds tend onward, and that this tendency leads to liberty. I saw that prophets had been raised up from time to time to aid the wavering advances of the human race, and that men, half-blind from their cradle, make but one step toward the light in a century. Centuries are the days of nations.

"'Then, said I to myself, 'so much has not been revealed to me that it should remain buried in my soul. In vain does the mountain conceal its veins of gold, in vain does the ocean hide its pearls; for the persevering miner

penetrates to the bowels of the mountain, the diver descends to the depths of the ocean. But, better than the mountain or the ocean, let me be like the sun, shedding blessings on the whole earth.'

"You understand, then, that it is not to go through some masonic ceremonies I have come from the East. I have come to say to you: Brethren, take the wings and the eyes of the eagle; rise above the world, and cast your eyes over its kingdoms!

"Nations form but one vast body. Men, though born at different periods, in different ranks, arrive all in turn at that goal to reach which they were created. They are continually advancing, though seemingly stationary; and if they appear to retreat a step from time to time, it is but to collect strength for a bound which shall carry them over some obstacle in their way.

"France is the advance-guard of nations. Put a torch in her hand, and though it kindle a wide-spreading flame, that flame will be salutary, for it will enlighten the world.

"The representative of France is not here; it may be that he shrinks from the task imposed on him. Well, then, we must have a man who will shrink from nothing. I will go to France."

"You will go to France?" said the president.

"Yes; the most important post I take myself, — the most perilous work shall be mine."

"You know what is taking place in France, then?" inquired the president.

The stranger smiled. "I know," he said, "for I myself have prepared all. An old king, weak, vicious, yet not so old, not so weak, not so vicious as the monarchy which he represents, sits on the throne of France. He has but few years to live. Events must be prepared to succeed his

death. France is the keystone of the arch; let the six million hands that will be uplifted on a sign from the supreme circle pluck out that stone, and the monarchial edifice will fall! Ay, the day that Europe's most arrogant sovereigns shall hear that there is no longer a king in France, bewildered, they will of themselves rush into the abyss left by the destruction of the throne of Saint Louis!"

Here, he on the right of the president spoke, and his accent announced that he was a Swiss. "Most venerated master, hast thou then calculated all?" he asked.

"All!" replied the Great Copt.

"Your pardon if I say more, — but on our mountains, in our valleys, by our lakes, our words are free as the winds and the waters. Let me say, then, that a great event is now about to occur, and that to it the French monarchy may owe its regeneration. I have seen, great master, a daughter of Maria Theresa travelling in state toward France to unite the blood of seventeen emperors with that of the successor of sixty-one kings; and the people rejoiced blindly, as they do when their chains are slackened or when they bow beneath a gilded yoke. I say, then, for myself and in the name of my brothers that the time is not ripe for action."

All turned to him who so calmly and boldly had spoken to their master.

"Speak on, brother," said the Great Copt; "if thy advice be good, it shall be followed. We are chosen of Heaven, and we may not sacrifice the interests of a world to wounded pride."

The deputy from Switzerland continued, amid deep silence: "My studies have convinced me of one truth, that the physiognomy of men reveals, to the eye which knows how to read it, their virtues and their vices. We may see a composed look or a smile, for these are caused

by muscular movements and are under control; but the great type of character is still imprinted legibly on the countenance, declaring what is going on in the heart. The tiger can caress, can give a kindly look; but his low forehead, his projecting face, his great occiput, declare him tiger still. The dog growls, shows his teeth; but his honest eye, his intelligent face, declare him still the friend of man. God has imprinted on each creature's face its name and nature. I have seen the young girl who is to reign in France: on her forehead I read the pride, the courage, the tenderness of the German maiden. I have seen the young man who is to be her husband: calmness, Christian meekness, and a high regard for the rights of others, characterize him. Now, France, remembering no wrongs and forgetting no benefits, whose Charlemagne, Saint Louis, and Henri IV. have sufficed to redeem the reigns of twenty base and cruel kings; France, who hopes on, despairs never, — will she not adore a young, lovely, kindly queen, a patient, gentle, economical king, after the disastrous reign of Louis XV., — after his public orgies, his mean revenges, his Pompadours and Dubarrys? Will not France bless her youthful sovereigns, who will bring to her as their dowry peace with Europe? Marie Antoinette now crosses the frontier; the altar and the nuptial bed are prepared at Versailles. Is this the time to begin in France your work of regeneration? Pardon me; I have felt compelled to say, most venerated Seigneur, what in the depths of my soul I believe, and what I think it my duty to submit to your infallible wisdom."

At these words he whom the unknown had addressed as the apostle of Zurich bowed as he received the applause of the assembly, and awaited a reply from the Great Copt. He did not wait long, for the latter immediately responded, —

"If you read physiognomy, illustrious brother, I read the future. Marie Antoinette is proud, she will interfere in the coming struggle, and will perish in it; Louis Auguste is mild, he will yield to it, and will perish with her. But each will fall through opposite defects of character. Now they esteem each other; but short will be their love, in a year they will feel mutual contempt. Why, then, deliberate, brethren, to discover whence comes the light? It is revealed to me. I come from the East, led, like the shepherds, by a star which foretells a second regeneration of mankind. To-morrow I begin my work. Give me twenty years for it; that will be enough, if we are united and firm."

"Twenty years?" murmured several voices; "the time is long."

The Great Copt turned to those who thus betrayed impatience. "Yes," said he, "it is long to those who think that a principle is destroyed, as a man is killed, with the dagger of Jacques Clement or the knife of Damiens. Fools! The knife kills the man, but like the pruning-hook it lops a branch that other branches may take its place. In the stead of the murdered king rises up a Louis XIII., a stupid tyrant; a Louis XIV., a cunning despot; a Louis XV., an idol whose path is wet with tears of blood, like the monstrous deities of India, crushing with changeless smile women and children who cast garlands before their chariot-wheels. Ah! you think twenty years too long to efface the name of king from the hearts of thirty millions of men who but lately offered to God their children's lives to purchase that of Louis XV.! Ah! you think it an easy task to make France hate her lilies, which, bright as the stars of heaven, grateful as the odors of flowers, for a thousand years have borne light, charity, victory, to the ends of the world! Try, try, brethren!

I give you, not twenty years, — I give you a century. You are scattered, trembling, unknown each to the others; I alone know all your names; I alone can sum up your divided worth; I alone can unite you in one fraternal chain. I tell you, philosophers, political economists, theorists, that in twenty years those thoughts which you whisper in your families, which you write with uneasy eye in the solitude of your old towers, which you tell one another with the dagger in your hands, that you may strike the traitor who would repeat them in tones louder than your own, — I tell you that these thoughts shall be proclaimed aloud in the streets, printed in the open face of day, spread through Europe by peaceful emissaries or by the bayonets of five hundred thousand soldiers battling for liberty, with your principles inscribed on their standards. You who tremble at the name of the Tower of London, you who shrink at that of the prisons of the Inquisition, hear me, — me, who am about to dare the Bastille! I tell you that we shall see those dreaded prisons in ruins, and your wives and children shall dance on their ashes. But that cannot be until, not the monarch, but the monarchy, is dead; until religious domination is despised; until social inferiority is extinguished; until aristocratic castes and unjust division of lands are no more. I ask twenty years to destroy an old world and make a new one, — twenty years! — twenty seconds of eternity! — and you say it is too long!"

The silence of admiration and of assent followed the words of this dark prophet. It was evident that he had completely won the sympathies of those mysterious depositaries of the European hope. The Great Copt enjoyed for some minutes his triumph; then, feeling that it was complete, he continued: —

"Now, brethren, now that I am going to devote myself

to our cause, to beard the lion in his den, to risk my life for the freedom of mankind, — now, what will you do for that to which you say you are ready to give up life, liberty, and fortune? This is what I am here to demand."

A deeper silence fell on the assembly than when he last ceased to speak; it seemed as if the motionless phantoms around him were absorbed by a fateful thought, which when expressed would shake twenty thrones. The six chiefs conversed for a moment apart, and then returned to the president. The president spoke, —

"In the name of Sweden, I offer for the overthrow of the throne of Vasa the miners who established it, and one hundred thousand crowns."

The Great Copt made an entry in his tablets. Another on the left spoke, —

"I, sent by Scotland and Ireland, can promise nothing from England, our firm opponent; but from poor Scotland, from poor Ireland, I shall bring three thousand men, and three thousand crowns yearly."

The supreme chief wrote that pledge with the others. "And you?" said he, turning to one whose vigorous frame and restless spirit seemed wearied by his phantom robe, and who replied, —

"I represent America, whose stones, whose trees, whose waters, whose every drop of blood are vowed to rebellion. While we have gold we will give it; while we have blood we will shed it: let us but be free first. Though now divided and set apart from one another in diverse communities, we are the links of a gigantic chain, and could some mighty hand join two of those links, the rest would unite of themselves. Begin then, O great master, with us! If thou wouldst rid France of royalty, free us first from the foreign yoke."

"It shall be so," replied the master; "you shall first

be free, and France shall help you. Wait, brother! but I promise thou shalt not wait long."

Then he turned to the Swiss deputy.

"I can promise nothing," he said, "but my own personal contribution. Our republic has been long the ally of the French monarchy, to which it sold its blood at Marignan and Pavia; its sons are faithful, — they will give that for which they have been paid; for the first time, I am ashamed of their fidelity."

"So! But we shall conquer without them and in spite of them. And you, representative of Spain?"

"I am poor; I can offer only three thousand of my brothers, with a contribution of a thousand reals yearly. Our Spaniards are indolent; they sleep on a bed of pain: provided they sleep, they care not."

"Good! And you?" said the Copt to another.

"I represent Russia and Poland. My people are either discontented nobles or wretched serfs doomed to labor without rest and to a premature death. The serf, who owns not even his life, can offer nothing; but three thousand nobles have promised twenty louis d'or each annually."

Then all the representatives in turn declared what those from whom they came would give for the great cause. Some were deputies from small kingdoms, some from large principalities, some from impoverished States; but all declared that they would add something to what had been offered. Their promises were written on the tablets of the Great Copt, and they were bound by an oath to keep them.

"Now," said he, "you have seen and recognized the initials of our watchword. Let it be placed *on* your hearts, and *in* them; for we, the sovereign lord of the circles in the East and in the West, have decreed the

downfall of the lily. Hear it, then, brethren: LILIA PEDIBUS DESTRUE."

Loud was their shout at this explanation of the mysterious letters, — so loud that the gorges of the mountains re-echoed it.

"And now retire," said the master, when silence had succeeded, — "retire by those subterranean passages which lead to the quarries of Mont Tonnerre. Disperse, before the rising of the sun. You shall see me once more, and it will be on the day of our triumph! Go!"

His words were followed by a masonic sign understood only by the six heads of the assembly, so that they remained around him when the rest had disappeared.

"Swedenborg," said he, "thou art truly inspired. God thanks thee by me for thy efforts in his cause. I shall give thee an address to which thou shalt send the promised money to France."

The president bowed, and departed, full of astonishment at that intelligence which had discovered his name.

"I greet thee, Fairfax," continued the master; "thou art worthy of thy great ancestor. Remember me to Washington when next thou writest to him."

Fairfax bowed, and followed Swedenborg.

"Come, Paul Jones," said the Copt, "thou hast well spoken; thou shalt be one of the heroes of America. Let her be ready at the first signal!"

The American, thrilled in every nerve, as if the breath of some divine being had passed over him, retired also.

"And now, as to thee, Lavater," continued the chief, "abjure thy theories; it is the time for action. Study no longer what man is, but what he may be. Go! Woe to thy countrymen if they rise against us; for our people will devour in its wrath as the wrath of God devours."

The trembling Swiss bowed and departed.

"Hear, Ximenes," the Copt continued, addressing the Spaniard, "thou art zealous, but distrustful. Thy country sleeps, but it is because none awakes her. Go! Castile is still the country of the Cid!"

The last of the six was advancing, but the Copt stopped him by a gesture and said: "Scieffort of Russia, before a month thou wilt betray our cause; but in a month thou shalt be no more."

The Russian envoy fell on his knees; but a threatening movement of the master made him rise, and with tottering steps he also departed.

And now this singular man, whom we have introduced as the hero of our drama, left alone, looked around the empty, silent hall, buttoned up his black velvet coat, fixed his hat firmly on his head, touched the spring of the great bronze gate which had closed behind him, and sallied out into the defiles of the mountain, as if he had been long familiar with them. Though he had neither guide nor light, he went on rapidly, as if led by an invisible hand.

Having passed the thick belt of trees, he looked for his horse; and not seeing him, he listened, and soon thought he heard a distant neighing. He whistled with a peculiar modulation, and in a moment Djerid could be seen coming forward like a faithful and obedient dog. The traveller sprang to the saddle, and quickly disappeared in the darkness which spread over the heath extending from Mont Tonnerre to Danenfels.

CHAPTER I.

THE STORM.

EIGHT days after the scene just related, about five in the evening, a carriage with four horses and two postilions left Pont-à-Mousson, a small town between Nancy and Metz. It had taken fresh horses at an inn, in spite of the recommendation of an attentive hostess who was on the look-out for belated travellers, and continued on its road to Paris. Its four horses had scarcely turned the corner of the street when a score of children and half a score of gossips, who had watched their harnessing, returned to their respective dwellings with gestures and exclamations expressive in some of great mirth, in others of great astonishment. This was because nothing like that carriage had for fifty years passed the bridge which good King Stanislaus threw across the Moselle to facilitate the intercourse of his little kingdom with France. We do not except even those curious vehicles of Alsace which bring from Phalsbourg to our fairs two-headed wonders, dancing bears, and the wandering tribes of harlequins and gypsies.

In fact, without being either a child or a curious old gossip, surprise might have arrested one's steps on seeing this primitive machine on four massive wheels roll by with such velocity that every one exclaimed, "What a strange way of travelling post!" As our readers, fortunately for them, did not see it pass, we shall describe it.

First, then, the principal compartment — we say "principal," because in front of it was a smaller compartment — was painted light blue, and bore on its panels a baronial scroll surmounting a J and a B artistically combined. Two windows — large windows, with white muslin curtains — gave it light; only these windows, almost invisible to the profane vulgar, were placed in the forward part of the carriage. A grating covered them, through which one might speak to the occupants of the other compartment.

This rear compartment, which seemed to be the important part of that strange vehicle, and which was about eight feet in length by six in breadth, had no light but from the windows, and no air but from a ventilator on the top; and then, to complete its oddity, a chimney, rising about a foot above the roof, offered to the passers-by the pleasant sight of a light cloud of smoke, lengthening into a bluish trail behind it. At the present day we should only have thought it a new invention, combining the power of steam with that of horses. This would have seemed the more probable since the carriage, preceded, as we have said, by four horses and two postilions, was followed by one horse fastened to it by his bridle. His small head, slender legs, narrow chest, and silky mane and tail showed that he was of Arab race. He was saddled, which indicated that one of the travellers shut up in this Noah's ark sometimes enjoyed the pleasure of riding beside the carriage.

At Pont-à-Mousson the postilion who left had received, besides the pay for the horses, a double gratuity, presented by a white and muscular hand, slipped through the leather curtains of the forward compartment, which shaded it as imperviously as the muslin ones did the rear compartment.

"Many thanks, Monseigneur," said the astonished postilion, quickly taking off his cap and bowing low.

A sonorous voice replied in German (for at Nancy German is still understood, though no longer spoken), "*Schnell ! schneller !*" which means "Fast ! faster !"

Postilions understand nearly all languages, — above all, when accompanied by the sound of certain metals, of which it is said they are rather fond. So the two new postilions did their utmost to keep to a gallop; but after efforts which did more honor to their arms than to the powers of their horses, wearied out, they fell into a trot, getting on at the rate of two and a half or three leagues an hour. Toward seven o'clock they changed at Saint-Mihiel; the same hand passed through the curtains payment for the last stage, and the same voice uttered a similar injunction. Of course the strange vehicle excited there the same curiosity as at Pont-à-Mousson; and as night was fast approaching, its appearance was still more fantastic.

Beyond Saint-Mihiel there is a steep hill, and travellers must be satisfied to let the horses walk. It took half an hour to proceed a quarter of a league. Reaching the summit, the postilions stopped a moment to breathe their horses, and the travellers in the carriage, by withdrawing the curtains, might have gazed on a wide prospect, which the mists of evening were beginning to obscure.

The weather had been clear and warm until three in the afternoon; toward evening, however, it became oppressive. A great white cloud from the south seemed as if intentionally to follow the carriage, threatening to overtake it before it reached Bar-le-Duc, where the postilions resolved at all risks to pass the night.

The road, shut in between the hill and a rugged declivity, descended to a valley in which was seen the winding Meuse, and was so steep that it was dangerous to allow the horses to do anything but walk, — which prudent plan

the postilions adopted. The cloud advanced; and as it brooded over and almost touched the ground, continually extending its limits by drawing the vapors arising from the soil, so was it observed in ill-boding whiteness to overwhelm the bluish clouds, which seemed to take up their station to windward, like ships preparing for an engagement. Soon, with the rapidity of the flood-tide, it spread, until it hid the last rays of the sun. A dim gray light struggled through upon the scene; and although no breeze swept along, the leaves shivered, and put on the dark tinge which they assume in the deepening twilight succeeding sunset.

Suddenly a flash illumined the cloud, the heavens burst into sheets of flame, and the startled eye might penetrate the immeasurable depths of the firmament. At the same moment the thunder rolled from tree to tree, shaking the earth, and hurrying on the vast cloud like a maddened steed. On went the carriage, sending forth its smoke, now no longer black, as at first, but of a delicate opal-color.

In the mean time the heavens grew darker and darker; but a purple light appeared from the carriage, as if the person within, careless of the storm, had lighted a lamp, and was continuing some work which he had to accomplish. The vehicle was now on a level part of the mountain; and when it was about to begin the descent, a peal of thunder more violent than the first rent the clouds, and the rain fell, at first in large drops, then thick and smarting, like arrows darted from the heavens. The postilions seemed to consult together, and then stopped.

"Well!" cried the voice which had before spoken, but now in excellent French, "what the devil are you doing?"

"We were consulting whether we should go on," replied the postilions.

"I think you ought to ask me, not one another. On with you!"

The postilions obeyed, for there was that in the voice which forbade all thought of disobedience, and the carriage began to descend.

"Good!" said the voice; and the leather curtains, which had been half opened, fell between the traveller and the postilions. But the road had become so slippery from the torrents of rain that the horses stopped of themselves.

"Monsieur," said the leading postilion, "it is impossible to go any farther."

"Why?" asked the voice within.

"Because the horses only slip, — they cannot get on; they will fall."

"How far are we from the next place where we change?"

"A long way, Monsieur, — four leagues."

"Well, postilion, put silver shoes on your horses, and they will get on;" and as he said this the stranger opened the curtain and held out four crowns.

"Many thanks!" said the postilion, receiving them in his broad hand, and slipping them into his great boot.

"The gentleman spoke, I think," said the other postilion, who had heard the sound of money, and did not wish to be excluded from so interesting a conversation.

"Yes, the gentleman says we must push on."

"Have you anything to say against that, my friend?" asked the traveller, in a kind voice, but with a firmness that showed he would brook no contradiction.

"Why, as to myself I have nothing to say; but the horses won't stir."

"What is the use of your spurs, then?"

"I have buried them in the sides of the poor jades; and if it has made them move a step, may Heaven —"

He had not time to finish his oath, for a frightful peal of thunder interrupted him.

"This is no weather for Christians to be out in," said the honest fellow. "See, Monsieur, see! the carriage is going of itself; in five minutes it will go fast enough. *Jésus Dieu!* there we go, in spite of ourselves!"

And, in fact, the heavy machine pressing on the horses, they lost their footing. It then made a progressive movement, and by increase of momentum its velocity was augmented till, with the rapidity of an arrow, it was visibly nearing the edge of a precipice. Now not only the voice of the traveller came forth from the cabriolet, his head was seen thrust out.

"Stupid fellow!" cried he, "will you kill us? To the left! the leaders to the left!"

"Ah, Monsieur, I wish from my heart I saw you on the left," replied the frightened postilion, vainly trying to gather up the reins and recover his control of the horses.

"Joseph!" cried a female voice, now first heard, "Joseph! help! help! O Holy Virgin!"

Indeed, the danger was urgent, terrible, supreme, and well might inspire that invocation to the Mother of God. The carriage, impelled by its own weight, neared the precipice, — already one of the leaders appeared suspended over it; three revolutions of the wheel, and horses, carriage, and postilions would all have been precipitated, crushed and mangled, to its base, when the traveller, springing from the forward compartment to the pole, seized the postilion by the collar, lifted him like a child, flung him two paces from him, leaped into the saddle, and gathering up the reins, called to the second postilion, "To the left, rascal, or I will blow out thy brains!"

The command acted like magic. By an extraordinary effort the postilion gave an impulse to the carriage, brought it to the middle of the road, where it began to roll on rapidly, with a noise that contended with that of the thunder. "Gallop!" cried the traveller, "gallop! If you slacken your speed I will run you through the body, and your horses too!"

The postilion felt that this was no vain menace; he redoubled his efforts, and the carriage descended with frightful speed. As it thus passed in the night, with its fearful noise, its flaming chimney, and its stifled cries from within, it might have been taken for some infernal chariot drawn by phantom horses and pursued by a hurricane.

But if the travellers had escaped from one danger, they met another. The cloud which had hung over the valley was as rapid as the horses. From time to time, as a flash rent the darkness, the traveller raised his head; and then, by its gleam, anxiety, perhaps fear, might have been seen on his face, — which he took no care to conceal, for no one but God could see him. Just as the carriage had reached level ground, and was carried on only by its own impetus, the cloud burst with an awful explosion. A violet flame, changing to green and then to white, wrapped the horses; the hind ones reared, snuffing the sulphurous air; the leaders, as if the ground had given way beneath their feet, fell flat; but almost instantly the horse upon which the postilion was mounted regained his feet, and finding his traces snapped by the shock, he carried off his rider, who disappeared in the darkness, while the carriage, after proceeding ten feet farther, was stopped by encountering the dead body of the lightning-stricken horse. All this was accompanied by piercing shrieks from the woman in the vehicle.

There was a moment of strange confusion, in which no one knew whether he was dead or living. The traveller felt himself all over to assure himself of his own identity. He was safe and sound, but the woman had fainted. Although he suspected this, from the silence which had succeeded to her shrieks, it was not to her that his first cares were directed. Scarcely had he lighted on the ground when he hastened to the back of the vehicle.

There was the beautiful Arabian horse of which we have spoken, — terrified, rigid, with every hair rising as if life were in it. He tugged violently at his fastening, shaking the door to the handle of which he was secured. His eye was fixed, the foam was on his nostrils; but after vain efforts to break away, he had remained, horror-stricken by the tempest; and when his master whistled to him in his usual manner, and put out his hand to caress him, he bounded aside, neighing, as if he did not know him.

"Aye, always that devil of a horse!" muttered a broken voice from the carriage. "Curse him, he has broken my wall!" Then, with double emphasis, this voice cried in Arabic, "Be still, demon!"

"Do not be angry with Djerid, master," said the traveller, loosing the horse, which he now tied to one of the hind wheels, —"he has been frightened, that is all; and indeed one might well have been frightened at less."

Saying this, he opened the carriage-door, let down the step, entered, and closed the door after him.

CHAPTER II.

ALTHOTAS.

THE traveller found himself face to face with an old man with gray eyes, a hooked nose, and trembling but busy hands. He was half-buried in a great chair, and turned, with his right hand, the leaves of a manuscript on parchment called "La Chivre del Gabinetto;" in his left he held a silver skimming-dish. His attitude, his occupation, his face, motionless and deeply wrinkled, alive only, as it were, in the eyes and mouth, may seem strange to the reader, but they were certainly very familiar to the traveller, for he scarcely cast a look on the old man, nor on all that surrounded him, and yet it was worth the trouble.

Three walls — so the old man called the sides of the compartment — were covered by shelves filled with books. These walls shut in his chair, his usual and principal seat, while above the books had been planned for his convenience several articles for holding vials, decanters, and boxes, the whole set in wooden cases as earthen and glass ware are secured at sea. He could thus reach anything without assistance; for his chair was on wheels, and with the aid of a spring he could raise or lower it to any height necessary to attain what he wanted.

The room — for so we must call it — was eight feet long, six wide, and six high. Opposite the door was a little furnace, with its shade, bellows, and tongs. At that moment there boiled in a crucible a mixture which sent out

by the chimney the mysterious smoke of which we have spoken, and which excited so much surprise in old and young who saw the carriage pass.

Besides the vials, boxes, books, and papers strewed around, copper pincers were seen, and pieces of charcoal which had been dipped in various liquids; there was also a large vase half full of water, and from the roof, hung by threads, were bundles of herbs, some apparently gathered the night before, others a hundred years ago. A keen odor pervaded this interior, which in a laboratory less grotesque would have been called a perfume.

As the traveller entered, the old man, wheeling his chair with remarkable ease to the furnace, began skimming the mixture in the crucible with a careful attention that seemed to contain an element of reverence; then, disturbed by the appearance of the other, he drew over his ears his cap of velvet, once black, from under which a few locks of silver hair peeped out. Then he sharply pulled from beneath one of the wheels of his chair the skirt of his long silk robe, — a robe now nothing but a shapeless, colorless, ragged covering. The old man appeared to be in a very bad humor, and grumbled as he continued skimming his mixture.

"Afraid, — the accursed animal! Afraid of what? He has shaken the wall, moved the furnace, and spilled a quart of my elixir in the fire. Acharat, in Heaven's name, get rid of that brute in the first desert we come to!"

"In the first place," said the other, smiling, "we shall come to no deserts, — we are in France. Secondly, I should not like to leave to his fate a horse worth a thousand louis d'or, or rather a horse above all price; for he is of the race of Al-Borach."

"A thousand louis d'or! I will give you them, or

what is equal to them. That horse has cost me more than a million, to say nothing of the days of my life of which he has robbed me."

"What has he done, poor Djerid?"

"What has he done? The elixir was boiling, not a drop escaping, — true, neither Zoroaster nor Paracelsus says that none must escape; but Borri recommends it."

"Well, dear master, in a few moments more the elixir will boil again."

"Boil? See! there is a curse on it, — the fire is going out. Something, I know not what, is falling down the chimney."

"I know what is falling," said the disciple, laughing; "it is water!"

"Water? — water? Then the elixir is ruined; the operation must be begun again, — as if I had time to lose! Heaven and earth," cried the old man, raising his hands in despair, "water! What kind of water, Acharat?"

"Pure water, master, — rain from the sky. Have you not seen that it rained?"

"How should I see anything when I am at my work? Water! You see, Acharat, how this troubles my poor brain! For six months — nay, for a year — I have been asking you for a funnel for my chimney! You never think of anything; yet what have you to do, you who are young? Thanks to your neglect, it is now the rain, now the wind, which ruins all my operations; and yet, by Jupiter, I have no time to lose! You know it, — the day decreed is near; and if I am not ready for that day, — if I have not found the elixir of life, — farewell to the philosopher; farewell to the wise Althotas! My hundredth year begins on the 15th of July at eleven at night, and before that time my elixir must attain perfection."

"But it is going on famously, it seems to me, dear master!"

"Yes, I have made some trials by absorption. My left arm, nearly paralyzed, has regained its power; then, eating, as I do, only once in two or three days, sustaining myself meanwhile by a spoonful of my elixir, imperfect as it is, I have more time. Oh, when I think that I want but one plant, but one leaf of a plant, to perfect my elixir, and that we have perhaps passed by that plant a hundred, five hundred, a thousand times! Perhaps our horses have trodden it, our wheels crushed it, Acharat, — that very plant of which Pliny speaks, and which no sage has yet found again or recognized, for nothing is lost. But stay, Acharat; you must ask its name from Lorenza in one of her trances."

"Fear not, master, I will ask her."

"Meantime," said the philosopher, with a deep sigh, "my elixir remains imperfect, and three times fifteen days will be necessary to reach the point at which I was to-day. Have a care, Acharat; your loss will be as great as mine the day I lose my life! But what noise is that? Does the carriage move?"

"No, master; it is thunder."

"Thunder?"

"Yes, we have all nearly been killed by a thunderbolt; but my silk coat protected me."

"Now see to what your childish freaks expose me, Acharat! To die by a thunderbolt, to be stupidly killed by an electric fire that I would myself bring down from heaven, if I had time to boil my pot, — this is not only exposing me to accidents which the malice or awkwardness of men bring on us, but to those which come from heaven, and which may be easily prevented."

"Your pardon, master; I do not understand."

"What! did I not explain to you my system of points, — my paper-kite conductor? When I have found my elixir, I shall tell it you again; but now, you see, I have not time."

"And you believe one may master the thunderbolt of heaven?"

"Certainly, — not only master it, but conduct it where he will; and when I have passed my second half-century, when I shall have but calmly to await a third, I shall put a steel bridle on a thunderbolt, and guide it as easily as you do Djerid. Meantime, put a funnel on my chimney, I beg you!"

"I will do so; be calm."

"'I will do so!' — always the future; as if we could both look forward to the future! Oh, I shall never be understood!" cried the philosopher, writhing in his chair, and tossing his arms in despair. "'Be calm!' — he tells me to be calm; and in three months, if I have not completed my elixir, all will be over! But only let me pass my second half-century; only let me recover my youth, the elasticity of my frame, my powers of motion, — I shall then no longer have need of any one; no longer will any one say to me, 'I will do:' I shall then myself say, 'I have done!'"

"Do you hope to say that with regard to our great work?"

"Yes! were I but as sure of — oh, heavens! — discovering the elixir as I am of making the diamond!"

"Then you are sure of that?"

"Certainly, since I have already made some."

"Made some?"

"Yes, look!"

"Where?"

"On your right, in the little glass vase."

The traveller anxiously seized the little crystal cup, to the bottom and sides of which adhered an almost impalpable powder.

"Diamond dust?" cried the young man.

"Yes, diamond dust; but in the middle, — look carefully!"

"Yes, yes! a brilliant of the size of a millet-seed."

"The size is nothing; we shall attain to the union of the dust, and make the grain of millet-seed a grain of hemp-seed, and the grain of hemp-seed a pea. But for God's sake, my dear Acharat, put a funnel on my chimney, and a conductor on the carriage, that the rain may not descend through my chimney, and that the lightning may go and sport itself elsewhere."

"Yes, yes; doubt it not! Be calm!"

"Again, again this eternal 'Be calm!' You make me swear. Youth, mad youth, presumptuous youth!" cried the old man, with a gloomy laugh which showed his toothless gums and seemed to deepen the hollow sockets of his eyes.

"Master," said Acharat, "your fire is going out, your crucible cooling. But what is in the crucible?"

"Look into it."

The young man obeyed, uncovered the crucible, and found in it a bit of vitrified carbon of about the size of a small nut.

"A diamond!" cried he. Then, after a slight examination of it, "Yes, but stained, incomplete, valueless!"

"Because the fire was put out; because there is no funnel on the chimney."

"Let me look at it again, master," said the young man, turning in his hand the diamond, which sometimes shot forth brilliant rays, and sometimes was dull. "Good! Pardon me, and take some food to sustain yourself."

"It is unnecessary; I took my spoonful of elixir two hours ago."

"You are mistaken, master; it was at six in the morning that you took it."

"Well, and what o'clock is it now?"

"Half-past eight in the evening."

"*Jésus!*" cried the philosopher, clasping his hands, "another day gone, fled, lost! The days are shorter, then? They no longer contain twenty-four hours?"

"If you will not eat, sleep at least for some minutes."

"Well, yes, I will sleep two hours, — yes, just two hours. Look at your watch, and in two hours awake me."

"I promise to do so."

"Dost thou know, dear Acharat," said the old man, in a caressing tone, "when I sleep, I always fear it will be for eternity? In two hours, then, you will wake me, will you not? Do not promise it, swear it!"

"I swear it, master."

"In two hours?"

"In two hours!"

Just then something like the trampling of a horse was heard, and a shout which indicated alarm and surprise.

"What does that mean?" cried the traveller; and hurriedly opening the carriage door, he leaped out.

CHAPTER III.

LORENZA FELICIANI.

We shall now inform the reader what had occurred outside while the philosopher and the traveller were conversing inside the carriage.

At the noise of the thunderbolt, which struck down two of the horses and caused the other two to rear so frightfully, the lady in the cabriolet, as we have said, had fainted. She remained for some minutes motionless; then, as fear alone had caused her to swoon, by slow degrees her consciousness returned.

"Ah, heaven!" she exclaimed, "abandoned here, helpless, with no human creature to take pity on me!"

"Madame," replied a timid voice, "I am here if I can be of any service to you."

At the sound of this voice, which seemed close to her ear, the young lady rose, put her head out between the leather curtains, and found herself face to face with a young man who was standing on the step of the cabriolet.

"It was you who spoke, Monsieur?" said she.

"Yes, Madame," answered the young man.

"And you offered me your services?"

"Yes."

"But first tell me what has happened."

"The thunderbolt, which fell almost on your carriage, broke the traces of the leading horses, and one of them ran off with the postilion."

The lady looked uneasily around. "And he who rode the hinder horses?" she asked.

"He has just got into the carriage, Madame."

"Has he not been injured?"

"Not in the least."

"Are you sure?"

"He leaped from his horse, at least, like a man all safe and sound."

"Heaven be praised!" and the young lady breathed more freely. "But who are you, Monsieur, who are here so opportunely to offer me assistance?"

"Madame, overtaken by the storm, I was down in that hollow which is merely the entrance to a quarry, when all at once I heard a carriage coming with alarming speed. I at first supposed the horses had run off, but soon saw that they were managed by a powerful hand. Then the thunderbolt fell with a tremendous explosion, and I thought for an instant that all was over with me. Indeed, on recovering, all that I have related seemed but a dream."

"Then you are not sure that the gentleman entered the carriage?"

"Oh, yes, Madame! I had quite recovered, and distinctly saw him enter."

"Make yourself certain, I entreat you, that he is in the carriage."

"But how?"

"Listen; if he be there, you will hear two voices."

The young man jumped down from the step, approached the door of the principal compartment, and listened.

"Yes, Madame," said he, returning to her, "he is there."

The young lady by a movement of her head seemed to say, "It is well;" but she remained for some time as if plunged in a deep revery.

During this time the young man had leisure to examine her appearance. She was about twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, — a brunette in complexion, but of that rich brown which is more beautiful than the most delicate tint of the rose; her fine blue eyes raised to heaven, from which she seemed to ask counsel, shone like two stars, and her black hair, which she wore without powder, notwithstanding the fashion of the day, fell in jetty curls on her neck. All at once she roused herself, as if she had decided on her course.

"Monsieur," said she, "where are we now?"

"On the road from Strasburg to Paris, Madame."

"On what part of the road?"

"Two leagues from Pierrefitte."

"What is Pierrefitte?"

"A village."

"And after Pierrefitte, what is the next stage?"

"Bar-le-Duc."

"Is it a town?"

"Yes, Madame."

"A large one?"

"About four or five thousand inhabitants."

"Is there any cross-road by which one could get more directly to Bar-le-Duc?"

"No, Madame, — at least I know of none."

"*Peccato!*" murmured the lady, falling back in the cabriolet.

The young man waited, expecting to be questioned further; but as she kept silence, he moved a step or two away. This roused her, and leaning out again, she called hurriedly, "Monsieur!"

The young man returned. "I am here, Madame," said he, approaching her.

"One question, if you please."

"Speak, Madame."

"There was a horse behind the carriage?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Is he there still?"

"No, Madame; the person who got into the carriage untied him and fastened him to the wheel."

"Nothing, then, has injured the horse?"

"I think not."

"He is a valuable animal, and I should like to be sure that he is safe; but how can I reach him through this mud?"

"I can bring the horse here," said the young man.

"Oh, yes! do so, I pray; I shall be forever grateful to you."

The young man approached the horse, who tossed his head and neighed.

"Do not be afraid," said the female; "he is as gentle as a lamb;" then in a low voice she murmured, "Djerid, Djerid!"

The animal evidently knew the voice to be that of his mistress, for he snorted, and stretched out his intelligent head toward the cabriolet. During this time the young man was untying him; but the horse no sooner felt his bridle in unpractised hands than with one bound he was free, and twenty paces from the carriage.

"Djerid," repeated the young woman in her most caressing tones, "Djerid, here, here!"

The Arabian tossed his head, snuffed the air, and came toward the cabriolet, pawing as if in time to some musical air.

The lady leaned out. "Come, Djerid, come!" said she.

And the obedient animal advanced toward the hand which she held out to caress him. Then with her slender hand she seized him by the mane, and sprang as

lightly into the saddle as the goblin in the German ballads who leaps behind unwary travellers and holds on by their belts.

The young man hurried toward her, but she waved him off imperiously.

"Hearken!" said she; "though young, or rather because you are young, you ought to be humane. Do not oppose my flight. I leave a man whom I love; but my religion is still dearer to me. That man will destroy my soul if I stay with him longer; he is an atheist and a necromancer. God has warned him by his thunders; may he profit by the warning! Tell him what I have said, and receive my blessing for what you have done for me. Farewell!"

At that word, light as a vapor, she disappeared, borne away by the aerial Djerid. The young man, seeing her flee, could not prevent a cry of astonishment escaping his lips. It was this cry which startled the traveller in the carriage.

CHAPTER IV.

GILBERT.

THE cry had, as we have said, roused the traveller. He leaped out, shut the door carefully after him, and looked uneasily around.

The first object which he beheld was the young man standing there in alarm. The lightning, which flashed incessantly, enabled him to examine him from head to foot, — a practice which seemed habitual with the traveller when any unknown person or thing met his eye. He was a youth sixteen or seventeen years old, of small size, thin and muscular. His black eyes, which he fixed boldly on any object which attracted his attention, wanted mildness, but had a certain kind of beauty; his nose, small and turned up, his thin lip and projecting cheek-bones, betokened cunning and circumspection; and the strong curve of his chin announced firmness.

"Is it you who shouted just now?" asked the traveller.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"And why did you shout?"

"Because —" He stopped short, hesitating.

"Because?" repeated the traveller.

"Monsieur, there was a lady in the cabriolet."

"Yes!"

And the eyes of Balsamo were turned toward the carriage as if they could have penetrated its sides.

"There was a horse tied to the wheel."

"Yes; where the devil is he?"

"Monsieur, the lady has fled on the horse."

The traveller, without uttering a word, sprang to the cabriolet and drew the curtains; a flash of lightning showed him it was empty.

"Blood of Christ!" shouted he, with a roar like the rolling of thunder, which served as its accompaniment. Then he looked round, as if for some means of pursuit, but saw immediately that there were none.

"To try to overtake Djerid," he muttered, "with a common horse would be to hunt the gazelle with the tortoise; but I shall know where she is, unless —"

He felt hurriedly in the pocket of his vest, drew from it a little case, opened it, and took out of a folded paper a curl of black hair. At the sight of it the traveller's face lost its anxious expression, and his manner became calm, — at least in appearance.

"Well," said he, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, "well, and did she say anything to you on leaving?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"What did she say?"

"That she left you, not through hatred, but fear; that she is a good Christian, while you, on the contrary —" He hesitated.

"While I, on the contrary —" repeated the traveller.

"I know not if I ought to tell you."

"*Pardieu!* tell me."

"While you, on the contrary, are an atheist and an infidel; that God has given you a last warning by the storm; that she understood that warning, and conjures you not to be deaf to it."

A smile of contempt curled the lip of the traveller. "And this was all she said?"

"Yes, this was all."

"Well, let us speak of something else;" and all trace of disquietude passed away from the traveller's countenance. The young man remarked all these emotions reflected on his face with a curiosity indicating no deficiency on his side of powers of observation.

"And now," said the traveller, "what is your name, my young friend?"

"Gilbert, Monsieur."

"Gilbert! — that is merely a baptismal name."

"It is the name of my family."

"Well, my dear Gilbert, Providence has sent you to my aid."

"I shall be happy if I can oblige you, Monsieur."

"Thank you. At your age one is obliging for the mere pleasure of the thing; but what I am going to ask is only a trifle, — merely if you can direct me to a shelter for the night."

"Why, in the first place, there is that rock under which I took refuge from the storm."

"Yes," said the traveller; "but I should like something more like a house, where I could have a good supper and a good bed."

"That would be very difficult to find."

"Are we then so far from the next village?"

"From Pierrefitte?"

"It is called Pierrefitte, then?"

"Yes, Monsieur; it is about a league and a half distant."

"A league and a half in this darkness, in this weather, with only these two horses, would be a two hours' journey. Think again, my friend; is there not some habitation in this neighborhood?"

"There is the château of Taverney, about three hundred paces from here."

"Well, then —"

"What, Monsieur!" and the young man opened his eyes in astonishment.

"Why did you not say so at once?"

"The château of Taverney is not a hotel."

"Is it inhabited?"

"Certainly."

"By whom?"

"Why, by the Baron de Taverney."

"What is this Baron de Taverney?"

"He is the father of Mademoiselle Andrée, Monsieur."

"I am very glad to know it," said the traveller, smiling; "but I mean what sort of a man is he?"

"An old nobleman, Monsieur, of sixty or sixty-five years of age; he once was rich, they say."

"Ay, and poor now! — that is the history of all those old barons. Well, show me the way to this baron's abode."

"To the Baron de Taverney's?" he asked, in alarm.

"Then you refuse?"

"No, Monsieur; but —"

"Well?"

"He will not receive you."

"He will not receive a gentleman in need of shelter? Is he a bear, then, your baron?"

"Indeed!" said the young man, in a tone which said plainly, "Not much unlike one."

"No matter," said the traveller; "I 'll run the risk."

"I do not advise it," replied Gilbert.

"Bah!" said the traveller, "bear as he is, he won't eat me!"

"No, but he may shut the door in your face."

"Then I 'll break it open; so, if you refuse to be my guide —"

"I don't refuse, Monsieur."

"Show me the way, then."

"Willingly, Monsieur."

The traveller entered the cabriolet and brought from it a little lantern. The young man hoped, as it was not lighted, that he would be obliged to open the carriage, and that then its interior would be disclosed. But the traveller did nothing of the kind; he put the lantern into Gilbert's hand.

"What shall I do with it, Monsieur?"

"You will light the way with it while I lead the horses."

"But it is not lighted."

"I am going to light it."

"Oh! you have a fire in the carriage?"

"And in my pocket," replied the traveller.

"But in this rain the tinder won't kindle."

"Open the lantern," said the traveller, smiling.

Gilbert obeyed.

"Hold your hat over my hands."

Gilbert obeyed, regarding with curiosity what followed; for he knew no other means of procuring a light than with a flint and tinder.

The traveller took from his pocket a very small silver case, and drew from it a match, which he rubbed in some sort of inflammable paste; it kindled instantly, with a slight crackling.

Gilbert started; the traveller smiled at his surprise, which was natural enough at that time, when phosphorus was known only to a few chemists, who kept the secret for their own advantage. The candle in the lantern being lighted by the match, he put up the little case. The young man followed his movements with greedy eyes; it was evident that he would have given a great deal for such a treasure.

"Now that we have light, will you guide me?" asked the traveller.

"Come, Monsieur;" and Gilbert advanced, while his companion, taking the horse by the bit, dragged him after. The weather was now not so bad, the rain had ceased, and the thunder was heard muttering at a distance. The traveller seemed to wish for more conversation.

"You know this baron, then, my good fellow?"

"Certainly, Monsieur, since I have lived in his house from my infancy."

"A relative?"

"No, Monsieur."

"Your guardian?"

"No."

"Your master?"

The young man started and colored with anger at the word "master." "I am not a servant, Monsieur," said he.

"Well, but you are surely something or other?"

"I am the son of an old tenant of the baron's; my mother nursed Mademoiselle Andrée."

"I understand; you live in the house as the young lady's foster-brother, — for I presume she is young."

"She is sixteen years old, Monsieur."

It will be noticed that of the traveller's two questions, Gilbert avoided any reply to the one which concerned himself. The traveller seemed to observe this, and gave his interrogations another turn.

"How did you happen to be travelling during such weather?"

"I was not travelling, Monsieur; I was under a rock near the road."

"What were you doing there?"

"I was reading."

"You were reading?"

"Yes."

"What were you reading?"

"'Le Contrat Social,' by Rousseau."

The traveller looked at the young man with surprise.

"Did you get that book in the baron's library?"

"No, Monsieur; I bought it."

"Where? — at Bar-le-Duc?"

"No, Monsieur, — here, from a pedler. They roam this way now and then, and bring us some tolerably good books."

"Who told you 'Le Contrat Social' was a good book?"

"I found that out by reading it, Monsieur."

"Have you read bad books, then, that you know the difference so well?"

"Yes."

"What do you call bad books?"

"Why, 'Le Sofa,' 'Tanzaï,' and 'Néadarme,' and books of that description."

"But where the deuce did you get such books?"

"In the baron's library."

"And how does the baron get new novels in this den of his?"

"They are sent him from Paris."

"So this poor baron spends his money on that sort of trash?"

"No; they are given him."

"Given him? By whom?"

"By one of his friends, a great nobleman."

"A great nobleman! Do you know his name?"

"The Duc de Richelieu."

"What, the old marshal?"

"Yes, the marshal."

"I take it for granted he does not leave such books in Mademoiselle Andrée's way?"

"Indeed, Monsieur, he leaves them in everybody's way."

"Is Mademoiselle Andrée of your opinion," asked the traveller, with a sly smile, "that they are bad?"

"She does not read them, Monsieur," replied Gilbert, dryly.

The traveller was silent for a minute; this character, a singular mixture of shame and boldness, of good and evil, interested him in spite of himself.

"And why did you read those books when you knew they were bad?"

"Because I did not know their character when I began them."

"But you soon found it out?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"And nevertheless you continued reading?"

"I continued."

"But why?"

"They taught me things I did not know before."

"And 'Le Contrat Social'?"

"It teaches me things that I have myself discovered."

"What are they?"

"That men are brothers; that societies in which there are serfs or slaves are ill constituted; that one day we shall all be equal."

"Oh, ho!" said the traveller. There was a short silence.

"So, my good fellow," continued the traveller, in a low voice, "you wish to learn?"

"Yes, Monsieur; that is my most ardent wish."

"And what do you wish to learn?"

"Everything."

"For what purpose?"

"To raise myself in the world."

"And how high would you rise?"

Gilbert hesitated. No doubt he had his mind made up on that point; but it was evidently a secret, and he would not reveal it.

"As high as man can rise," he replied.

"Well, have you studied anything?"

"Nothing. How can I study, not being rich, and living at Taverney?"

"Then you know nothing of mathematics?"

"No."

"Nor of natural philosophy?"

"No."

"Nor of chemistry?"

"No; I know only how to read and write. But I shall know all those things."

"When?"

"Some day or other."

"But how?"

"I don't know yet, but I shall know them."

"Strange creature!" muttered the traveller.

"And then—!" murmured Gilbert, speaking to himself.

"Well! then—?"

"Nothing."

They had now proceeded for about a quarter of an hour; the rain had ceased, and the earth sent up those odoriferous exhalations which in spring follow a great storm. Gilbert seemed reflecting; all at once he said, "Monsieur, do you know the cause of storms?"

"Certainly."

"You really do!"

"Yes."

"You know what a tempest is; you know the cause of thunder?"

The traveller smiled. "It is the meeting of two streams of the electric fluid, — one from the clouds, the other from the earth."

Gilbert sighed. "I do not understand that," said he.

Perhaps the traveller would have explained the matter more clearly; but just then a light appeared through the trees.

"Ah! what is that?" asked the stranger.

"It is Taverney."

"We have reached it, then?"

"Yes; this is the gate of the back entrance."

"Open it."

"Oh, Monsieur, the gate of Taverney is not to be opened in that manner!"

"Is it a fortified place, then? Knock."

Gilbert approached the gate and timidly gave one knock.

"*Pardieu!* they will never hear that. Knock loudly!"

Nothing, indeed, indicated that Gilbert's knock had been heard; all was silent.

"You must take the responsibility upon yourself, then, Monsieur," said Gilbert.

"Don't be troubled about that."

Gilbert hesitated no longer; he left the knocker, and pulled a string which made a bell sound so loud one might have heard it a mile off.

"Faith! if your baron does not hear that," said the traveller, "he must be deaf."

"Hark! I hear Mahon barking."

"Mahon? That is no doubt a compliment from your baron to his friend the Duc de Richelieu!"

"I don't know what you mean, Monsieur."

"Mahon was the last place taken by the marshal."

"Alas, Monsieur! I have already told you that I know nothing;" and Gilbert sighed again.

These sighs revealed to the stranger some hidden ambition, some secret cause of pain. A step was heard. "Here is some one at last," said the stranger.

"It is Master la Brie," said Gilbert.

The gate opened; but La Brie, taken by surprise at seeing the stranger and the carriage when he expected no one but Gilbert, would have shut it again.

"Excuse me, my friend," said the traveller, "but I have come here purposely, and you must not shut the door in my face."

"But, Monsieur, I must tell the baron that an unexpected visitor —"

"Believe me, there is no need to tell him. I will run the risk of his looking a little cross at me; but he shall not turn me out, I can tell you, until I am warmed, dried, and fed. They say you have good wine in this part of the country; do you happen to know?"

La Brie, instead of replying, was going to make further resistance; but it was in vain, the traveller pushed in, and Gilbert closed the gate after him, the two horses and carriage being in the avenue. La Brie, seeing himself vanquished, proceeded as quickly as his old limbs would permit toward the house to announce his own defeat, shouting with all his strength, "Nicole Legay, Nicole Legay!"

"Who is this Nicole Legay!" asked the stranger, calmly making his way to the house.

"Nicole Legay, Monsieur?" replied Gilbert, with symptoms of some inward emotion.

"Yes, — she whom Master la Brie is calling!"

"Mademoiselle Andrée's waiting-maid, Monsieur."

In the mean time, in answer to the calls of La Brie, a light appeared under the trees, borne by a beautiful young girl. "What do you want, La Brie? What is all this fuss?" she asked.

"Quick, Nicole," cried the quivering voice of the old man; "run and tell the baron a strange gentleman, overtaken by the storm, is asking hospitality for the night."

Nicole did not wait to be told twice, but flew off toward the château so quickly that in a moment she was out of sight. As to La Brie, having thus satisfied himself that the baron should not be taken by surprise, he stopped and took breath.

The message soon produced an effect. A sharp, commanding voice was heard from the house repeating, with an accent by no means hospitable, "A strange gentleman? Who is he? Gentlemen don't come in that way, without sending up their names!"

"Is it the baron himself?" asked he who was the cause of all the disturbance.

"Oh, yes, Monsieur!" replied the poor, frightened old man; "you hear what he says?"

"He asks my name, I think?"

"Yes. I forgot to ask it, Monsieur."

"Announce the Baron Joseph Balsamo. Our titles being the same, he will perhaps not be so angry."

La Brie, a little emboldened by the rank of the stranger, announced him as he requested.

"Well," grumbled the voice from the house, "since he is there, he must come in. Here, monsieur — this way — this way."

The stranger advanced quickly; but just as he reached the foot of the stone steps leading up to the door, he turned to see whether Gilbert were there or not. Gilbert had disappeared.

CHAPTER V.

THE BARON DE TAVERNEY.

ALTHOUGH forewarned by Gilbert of the poverty of the Baron de Taverney, the person who had caused himself to be announced as the Baron Joseph Balsamo could not help being surprised at the miserable appearance of the abode called by Gilbert, with emphasis, a château.

The house was built in the form of an oblong square of one story in height, with a square tower at each corner. Its irregular appearance had, however, something pleasing and picturesque, seen by the pale light of the moon, shining out between the huge masses of cloud left by the storm. There were six windows in the low building, and two in each tower, — that is, one window in each of its stories. A broad flight of steps led up to the hall-door, but they were so broken and rugged that they seemed rather a sort of precipice than a staircase.

Such was the dwelling, on the threshold of which the stranger was received by the Baron de Taverney, in his dressing-gown, and holding a candlestick in his hand. The baron was a little old man of from sixty to sixty-five years of age, with a keen eye and a high, retreating forehead. He wore an old wig, which from frequent accidents with the candles on the mantelpiece had lost all the curls which had been spared by the rats. He held in his hand a napkin of very dubious whiteness, which indicated that he had been disturbed when about sitting down to supper. In his malicious countenance, which

slightly resembled that of Voltaire, two expressions struggled for mastery, — politeness required a smile for his guest; vexation changed it to an atrabilious sneer. Thus lighted by the candle in his hand, the flickering of which distorted his features, the Baron de Taverney could not well be called anything but a very ugly nobleman.

"Monsieur," said he, "may I know to what fortunate circumstance I owe the pleasure of seeing you?"

"Simply, Monsieur, to the storm, which frightened my horses and caused them very nearly to destroy my carriage. One of my postilions was thrown from his horse, the other galloped off with his; and I know not what I should have done had I not met a young man who conducted me to your château, assuring me that your hospitality was well known."

The baron raised his light that he might see the unlucky wight who was responsible for that "fortunate circumstance" of which he had just spoken. Balsamo also looked around to ascertain more certainly whether his young guide had disappeared.

"And do you know the name of the young man who pointed out my château?" asked the Baron de Taverney, as if he wanted to return him thanks.

"Gilbert, I think, is his name."

"Ha! Gilbert; I scarcely thought him capable even of that. Ah! he is an idle dog, — a philosopher, you must know, Monsieur!"

The threatening tone in which these epithets were uttered showed that there was little sympathy between the lord and his vassal.

"However, Monsieur," said the baron, after a moment's silence, as expressive as his words, "will you be good enough to enter?"

"Allow me first, sir, to see after my carriage, which contains some very valuable articles."

"La Brie!" cried the baron, "La Brie! get some assistance, and put the gentleman's carriage under the shed in the yard; there are still some laths of a roof there. I can't answer for your horses, however, getting a good feed; but as they are not yours, but the postmaster's, you need not care very much."

"In truth, Monsieur," said the traveller, beginning to get impatient, "I fear that I am giving you quite too much trouble."

"Not at all, Monsieur, not at all, — no trouble to me; but you will be rather poorly lodged, I warn you."

"Monsieur, I assure you I shall be forever grateful —"

"Oh! I allow myself no illusions, Monsieur," said the baron, raising his candle so as to throw its rays in the direction where Balsamo was assisting La Brie to wheel his carriage under the shed, and elevating his voice in proportion as his guest retreated, — "I am under no illusion; Taverney is a dull abode, and especially a poor abode!"

The traveller was too busy to reply; he chose the best-covered part of the shed to shelter the carriage, and having pointed it out to La Brie, slipped a lois-d'or into his hand and returned to the baron. La Brie put the louis in his pocket, supposing it only a crown, and thanking Heaven for his good fortune.

"God forbid I should think so ill of your château as you speak of it!" said Balsamo, bowing to the baron, who, as the only proof of the truth of his assertion, shook his head, and led the guest through a wide, damp antechamber, grumbling as he proceeded, "Oh! all very good; but I know what I am saying, — I know, unfortunately, my own means; and I assure you they are very limited. If you are a Frenchman, Monsieur, — but your German accent

shows you are not; and yet your name is Italian: but that is no matter,—if you are a Frenchman, I repeat, the name of Taverney may recall some recollections of splendor; it was once Taverney the rich!"

Balsamo expected a sigh at this conclusion, but there was none. "Philosophy!" thought he.

"This way, this way!" continued the baron, opening the dining-room door. "Holloa, Maître la Brie! wait at supper now as if you were yourself a hundred servants in one!"

La Brie bustled about in obedience to this command.

"I have no servant but this, Monsieur," said Taverney; "he is a very bad one, but I have not the means of getting a better. The fool has been with me twenty years without getting a penny of wages. I feed him about as well as he waits on me. He is an ass, you see!"

Balsamo continued to study this character. "No heart," thought he; "yet perhaps all this is merely affectation."

The baron shut the door of the dining-room; and then as he held his light high above his head, the traveller saw distinctly its size and its furniture. It was a large, low hall, which had formerly been the principal apartment of a small farm-house, raised by its owner to the rank of a château. It was so scantily furnished that at the first glance it appeared empty. Straw chairs with carved backs, some engravings from the battle-pieces of Lebrun, framed in black-varnished wood, and a large oak cupboard dark with age and smoke, were all its ornaments. In the middle stood a little round table on which was a dish of partridges and cabbage. The wine was in a stone jar, and the plate, unpolished, worn, and battered, consisted of three covers, one tankard, and one salt-cellar; but this last article was very massive, exquisitely chased, and looked like a diamond among worthless pebbles.

"There, Monsieur, there!" said the baron, offering a seat to his guest, whose scrutinizing look on all around did not escape him. "Oh! you are looking at my salt-cellar. You admire it. Good taste, — and very polite too; for you fix on the only thing here worth looking at. I assure you, Monsieur, I am particularly obliged. But no, I forgot; I have one other valuable commodity, — my daughter!"

"Mademoiselle Andrée?" said Balsamo.

"Faith, yes! Mademoiselle Andrée!" said the host, surprised that his guest was so well informed. "I shall present you to her. Andrée! Andrée! Come hither, child; don't be afraid."

"I am not afraid, father," answered a sweet and clear voice; and a tall and beautiful girl entered the room, in a manner perfectly unembarrassed, and yet quite free from forwardness.

Joseph Balsamo, though, as we have seen, perfectly master of himself, could not prevent an involuntary bow at sight of that sovereign beauty. Andrée de Taverney seemed indeed sent to adorn and brighten all around her. She had dark auburn hair, of a rather lighter shade at her temples and neck, black eyes, — clear, with dilated pupils, — and a steady and majestic look, like that of an eagle; yet the mildness of that look was inexpressible. Her small mouth, formed like Apollo's bow, was brilliant as coral; her tapering hands were antique in form, as were her arms, and dazzlingly fair. Her figure, flexible and firm, was like that of the statue of some pagan goddess to which a miracle had given life. Her foot might bear a comparison with that of the huntress Diana, and it seemed only by a miracle that it could support the weight of her body. Her dress was of the simplest fashion, yet suited her so well that it seemed as if one from the

wardrobe of a queen would not have been so elegant or so rich.

All these details were perceived by Balsamo in the first glance as the young lady passed from the door to the table. On his side, the baron had not lost a single impression produced on the mind of his guest by the rare union of perfections in his daughter.

"You were right," whispered Balsamo, turning to his host; "Mademoiselle Andrée is perfection."

"Do not flatter poor Andrée, Monsieur," said the baron, carelessly; "she has just returned home from her convent, and she will believe all you say. Not that I am afraid of her coquetry, — on the contrary, the dear child is not enough of a coquette; but, like a good father, I am cultivating in her that quality which is a woman's best weapon."

Andrée looked down and blushed; although she tried to avoid listening, she could not but overhear her father's strange theory.

"Did they tell Mademoiselle that at the convent?" asked Joseph Balsamo, laughing; "and was that precept part of the instructions of the nuns?"

"Monsieur," replied the baron, "I have my own way of thinking, as you perhaps have already seen."

Balsamo bowed, in token that he assented entirely to the baron's claim.

"No," continued he, "I do not imitate those fathers who say to their daughters, 'Be prudes, be rigid, be blind; think of nothing but honor, delicacy, devotion.' Fools! It is as if the fathers of the knights of old had sent those champions into the lists, after having taken off all their armor, to fight an adversary armed cap-à-pie. *Pardieu!* that is not the way I shall bring up my daughter Andrée, though she be brought up in this miserable den."

Although Balsamo perfectly agreed with the baron as to the propriety of this last epithet, yet he deemed it proper to intimate a polite contradiction.

"Oh! all very well," resumed the old man, replying to the movement of Balsamo's features; "but I know the place, I tell you. Yet, though now so far from the sun of Versailles, my daughter shall know the world which I formerly knew so well myself; and if she enter it, it shall be with an arsenal of weapons forged by my experience and my recollections. But I must confess, Monsieur, the convent has ruined all my plans. My daughter — such things happen only to me — was the first pupil who really practised the precepts there taught, and followed the letter of the Gospel. *Corbleu!* was not that being prettily served?"

"Mademoiselle is an angel," replied Balsamo; "and in truth, Monsieur, what you say does not surprise me."

Andrée bowed her thanks for this compliment, and sat down in obedience to a look from her father.

"Be seated, baron," said the host, "and if you are hungry, eat. What a horrible ragout that fool La Brie has given us!"

"Partridges! Do you call that horrible?" said the guest, smiling. "You slander your supper. Partridges in May! They are, then, from your own estates?"

"My estates! it is long since I had one. My respectable father left me some land, indeed, but it was eaten and digested long enough ago. Oh, Heaven be praised! I have not an inch of ground. That good-for-nothing Gilbert, who can only read and dream, must have stolen a gun, powder, and shot from some one or other; and he kills birds, poaching on the estates of my neighbors. He will be caught and sent to the galleys some day, and certainly I shall not interfere, — it will be a good riddance;

but Andrée likes game, so I am obliged to overlook Monsieur Gilbert's freaks."

Balsamo watched Andrée's lovely face as this was said, but not a change, not the slightest blush, disturbed it. He was seated at table between her and the baron; and she helped him, without appearing in the least annoyed at the scantiness of the repast, to a portion of the dish procured by Gilbert and cooked by La Brie, and so heartily abused by the baron. During this time poor La Brie, who heard all the eulogiums passed on himself and Gilbert, handed the plates with a deprecating air, which became quite triumphant at each word of praise the guest bestowed on his cookery.

"He has not even salted his abominable ragout!" cried the baron, after he had devoured two wings of a partridge, which his daughter had placed before him on a tempting layer of cabbage. "Andrée, pass the salt-cellar to the Baron Balsamo."

Andrée obeyed, extending her arm with exquisite grace.

"Ah, you are admiring the salt-cellar again!" said the host.

"No, Monsieur, you are wrong this time," replied Balsamo; "I was admiring Mademoiselle's hand."

"Ah! very good indeed, — a perfect Richelieu! But since you have the salt-cellar in your own hand, examine it; it was made for the regent by the goldsmith Lucas. It represents the loves of the satyrs and bacchantes, — a little free, but pretty."

Balsamo saw that the little figures so admirably executed were something worse than free, and he could not but admire the unconsciousness with which Andrée had offered him the salt-cellar. But as if the baron had determined to put to the proof that innocence which carries

with it such a charm, he began to point out in detail the beauties of his favorite piece of plate, in spite of all Balsamo's efforts to change the conversation.

"Come, eat, baron," said Taverney; "for I warn you there is no other dish. Perhaps you are expecting the roast and other removes; if so, great will be your disappointment."

"Pardon me, Monsieur," said Andrée, in her usual calm manner; "but if Nicole has rightly understood me, we shall have another dish. I have given her the receipt for one."

"The receipt! you have given a receipt to your maid! the femme-de-chambre turned cook! There is only one step more, — turn cook yourself, I beg you! Did the Duchesse de Châteauroux or the Marquise de Pompadour ever cook for the king? On the contrary, it was he who dressed omelets for them. *Jour de Dieu!* have I lived to see women cooking in my house? Baron, excuse my daughter, I beseech you."

"But, father, we must eat," said Andrée, quietly. "Well, Legay," added she in a louder tone, "is it done?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle," replied the maid, bringing in a dish of a very tempting odor.

"I know one at least who will not eat of that dish!" said the baron, furious, and breaking his plate as he spoke.

"Perhaps *you* will eat some, Monsieur?" said Andrée, coldly. Then, turning to her father, "You know, Monsieur, we have now only seven plates of that set which my mother left me;" and, so saying, she proceeded to carve the smoking viands which Mademoiselle Legay, the pretty waiting-maid, had just placed on the table.

CHAPTER VI.

ANDRÉE DE TAVERNEY.

THE searching intellect of Balsamo found ample food for study in each detail of the strange and isolated life led by this family in a corner of Lorraine. The salt-cellar alone revealed to him one phase of the baron's character, or rather his character in all its bearings. He called up all his penetration, therefore, as he scrutinized the features of Andrée while she handed him that salt-cellar.

Whether moved by curiosity or by some deeper feeling, Balsamo gazed on Andrée so fixedly that two or three times, in less than ten minutes, the eyes of the young girl met his. At first she bore his look without confusion; but its intensity became by degrees so great that a feverish impatience, which made the blood mount to her cheeks, took possession of her; then feeling that this look had something supernatural in its power, she tried to brave it, and in her turn she gazed at the baron with her large, limpid, dilated eyes. But this time again she was obliged to yield; and filled with the magnetic fluid which flowed in streams from his flaming orbs, her eyelids, weighed down, sank timidly, no longer to be raised but with hesitation.

While this silent struggle went on between the young girl and the mysterious traveller, the baron grumbled, laughed, found fault, and swore like a true country gentleman, and pinched La Brie whenever he was within his reach, feeling that he must vent his spleen on some one.

He was going to do the same to Nicole, when his eyes, for the first time, no doubt, rested on the hands of the young waiting-maid. The baron was an adorer of fine hands; all his youthful follies might be attributed to the power of a fine hand over him.

"Only see," cried he, "what pretty fingers this little rogue has! How the nail tapers! it would bend over the tip, — a great beauty, if washing bottles and cutting wood did not wear down the horn; for it is horn you have at the ends of your fingers, Mademoiselle Nicole."

Not accustomed to compliments from her master, Nicole looked at him with a half-smile, in which there was more astonishment than gratification.

"Yes, yes," said the baron, who read the mind of the young flirt, "turn away, — play the coquette, I beg of you; but I must inform you, my dear guest, that Mademoiselle Nicole Legay, this young lady here present, is not a prude like her mistress, and is not at all afraid of a compliment."

Balsamo turned quickly toward the baron's daughter, and saw an expression of supreme disdain on her handsome features; then thinking it right to adapt his expression to hers, he looked haughtily away, — at which Andrée seemed pleased, and regarded him with less sternness, or rather with less uneasiness, than before.

"Would you think, Monsieur," continued the baron, chucking Nicole under the chin, "would you think that this damsel had been in a convent with my daughter, and is really what one might call 'educated'? Oh! Mademoiselle Nicole would not quit her mistress for a moment. There is a devotedness in her which would greatly delight the philosophers who maintain that these creatures have souls."

"Monsieur," said Andrée, displeased, "it is not de-

votedness which prevents Nicole from leaving me, it is because I order her to remain."

Balsamo raised his eyes to Nicole to see the effect of these contemptuous words; and he observed, from her compressed lips, that she was not insensible to the humiliations to which her position of domestic exposed her. But the emotion was transitory; for in turning away to hide it, her eyes rested with interest on a window of the room which looked into the courtyard. Everything roused the curiosity of Balsamo, and as he followed her eyes he thought he saw what interested her, — the face of a man at the window. "In truth," thought he, "every one has a mystery in this house; and I hope soon to know Mademoiselle Andrée's. I have found out the baron's, and I guess what Nicole's is." While he was thus communing with himself, the baron observed his absence of mind.

"You are in a revery, my dear guest," said he. "Well, it is infectious here, — it attacks every one. Let me reckon: first, Mademoiselle de Taverney falls into reveries; then Mademoiselle Nicole does the same; then the good-for-nothing fellow who shot the partridges is in a perpetual revery; and very likely the partridges were in a revery when he shot them."

"Gilbert?" asked Balsamo.

"Yes, — a philosopher, like Monsieur la Brie here! But speaking of philosophers, perhaps you are a friend of theirs? If so, I warn you you will be none of mine."

"No, Monsieur; I am neither for them nor against them," replied Balsamo. "I know nothing of them."

"*Ventre-bleu!* so much the better. They are wretches as mischievous as they are ugly; the monarchy will be ruined by their opinions. No one laughs now; they read, they read! And what, I pray you? Sentiments like

this: 'Under a monarchical government it is difficult for a people to be virtuous;' or this: 'Monarchy is an institution invented for the corruption of the morals of men, and with the purpose of enslaving them;' or this: 'If the power of kings comes from God, it comes as diseases and other scourges of the human race come from him.' How refreshing is all that! A virtuous people! Now, I ask you, of what use would they be? Everything has gone wrong since the king spoke to Voltaire and read Diderot!"

At this moment Balsamo thought he saw the pale face which he had seen before again appear at the window; but it vanished when he looked in that direction.

"Is Mademoiselle a philosopher?" asked Balsamo, turning to Andrée, with a smile.

"I don't know what philosophy is," replied Andrée. "I know only that I like what is serious."

"Ha! Mademoiselle!" cried the baron, "in my opinion nothing is more serious than good living; like that, then."

"But Mademoiselle does not hate life, I presume?" said Balsamo.

"That depends on circumstances," replied Andrée.

"What a stupid phrase!" exclaimed the baron; "would you believe it, Monsieur, my son once made me, word for word, a similar reply?"

"You have a son, then, Monsieur?"

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* Monsieur, yes! I have that misfortune. A Vicomte de Taverney, lieutenant in the body-guard of the dauphin, — a most excellent young man!" And the baron ground his teeth in uttering these four words as if he would have crushed each letter in them.

"I congratulate you, Monsieur," said Balsamo, with a bow.

"Oh yes! another philosopher, Monsieur! Upon the

honor of a gentleman, it is sickening! Did he not speak to me the other day about giving the negroes their freedom? 'And what about sugar?' I asked. 'For I like my coffee very sweet, and so does Louis XV.' 'Monsieur,' he replied, 'is it not better to go without sugar than to make a whole race suffer?' 'A race of monkeys!' said I; and I think it was saying a great deal in their praise. Well! What do you think he said next? Faith! there must be something in the air to turn people's heads! He replied to me that all men were brothers! I the brother of a Hottentot!"

"Oh, that was going rather far!"

"Hey! what do you think of that? I am in great luck with my two children, am I not? No one will say of me that I live again in my descendants. The sister is an angel, the brother an apostle! Drink, Monsieur, drink! The wine is detestable!"

"I think it exquisite," said Balsamo, still looking at Andrée.

"Then you too are a philosopher! Take care, or I shall order my daughter to preach you a sermon. But no, philosophers have no religion. Still, religion was a very convenient thing, — one believed in God and the king, and all was settled. Now people believe in neither one nor the other; they must know so much, read so much; I prefer never doubting. In my time our only study was to amuse ourselves, — to play at faro and dice, and to fence; we ruined duchesses, and were ruined by opera-dancers. That was my history to a tittle! The whole of Taverney went to the opera. It is the only thing I regret, for a ruined man is not a man. You think me old, don't you? Well, it is because I am ruined and live in this den; because my wig is shabby, and my coat a relic of antiquity. But look at my friend

the marshal, with his coats of the newest cut and his well-curled wig and his ten thousand a year. He looks young, fresh, and gay; and yet he is ten years older than I, Monsieur, — ten years, I assure you!"

"You speak of Monsieur de Richelieu?"

"Yes."

"The duke?"

"Why, faith, not the cardinal, I think; I do not go quite so far back. Besides, the cardinal never did what his nephew did, — he did not last so long."

"I am surprised that with such powerful friends at court, you should have left it."

"Oh, a temporary retreat! I shall return to it some day or other;" and the old baron cast a singular glance at his daughter. That glance was noticed by Balsamo.

"But," said he, "the marshal might at least advance your son."

"My son! He hates him."

"Hates the son of his friend?"

"He is quite right."

"And do *you* say so, Monsieur?"

"*Pardieu!* I tell you my son is a philosopher; the marshal abhors him!"

"And Philippe returns him the compliment," said Andrée, with perfect calmness. "Remove these things, Legay!"

The young girl, roused from her fixed contemplation of the window, hastened to obey.

"Ah!" said the baron, sighing, "one used to sit after supper till two in the morning; we had what was fit to eat then, and when the eating was over, we drank. But how drink this stuff when we are not occupied in eating? Legay, bring a flask of Maraschino, if there be one."

"Do so," said Andrée; for the maid seemed to wait for

her orders before obeying those of the baron. The baron threw himself back in his chair, shut his eyes, and sighed with a grotesque sort of melancholy.

"You were speaking of the Maréchal de Richelieu," said Balsamo, who appeared not inclined to let the conversation drop.

"Yes," said Taverney, "I was speaking of him;" and he hummed an air as melancholy as his sighs.

"If he hate your son, and if he be right to hate him because he is a philosopher, he must retain all his friendship for you, since you are not one."

"Philosopher! no, thank God!"

"You must surely have claims on the administration? You have served the king?"

"Fifteen years. I was the marshal's aide-de-camp; we served together in the campaign of Mahon. Our friendship is of long standing. Let me see, — it began at the siege of Philipsbourg; that was in the year 1742 or 1743."

"So," said Balsamo, "you were at the siege of Philipsbourg? I was there myself."

The old man sat upright in his chair and stared at the stranger. "Excuse me," he said; "but what is your age, my dear guest?"

"Oh, I am not old!" said Balsamo, holding out his glass to be filled with Maraschino by the fair hand of Andrée.

The baron interpreted the stranger's answer in his own way, and concluded that Balsamo had some reason for concealing his age.

"Monsieur," said he, "allow me to say that you do not appear to be old enough to have served at Philipsbourg; that siege took place twenty-eight years ago, and you seem to be about thirty."

"Oh! anybody might be taken for thirty."

"*Pardieu!* then I wish that *I* could; it is just thirty years since I was of that age."

Mademoiselle Andrée gazed with increasing and irresistible curiosity on the stranger, for every word revealed him in a new light.

"Indeed, Monsieur," continued the baron, "you astonish me. Perhaps you are all this time mistaken in the name, and are thinking of some other town than Philipsbourg. I should say you were not more than thirty. Would not you, Andrée, say the same?"

"Yes, indeed," replied she, trying to sustain the steady gaze of their guest, but this time again in vain.

"No, no," said the latter, "I mean what I say, — I mean the famous siege of Philipsbourg, at which the Duc de Richelieu killed his cousin, the Prince de Lixen, in a duel. The affair took place as they were returning from the trenches, on the high road; he ran his sword right through his body! I passed just as he expired in the arms of the Prince de Deux-Ponts; he was seated against the side of a ditch, while Richelieu was coolly wiping his sword."

"On my honor, you amaze me, Monsieur," cried the baron; "it occurred precisely as you say."

"You have heard the affair described?" asked Balsamo, coolly.

"I was there. I had the honor of being second to the marshal; he was not marshal then, but that is no matter."

"Wait a moment," said Balsamo, turning and gazing firmly on him. "Did you not wear at that time the uniform of a captain?"

"Precisely."

"You were in the queen's regiment of light horse, which was cut to pieces at Fontenoi?"

"Perhaps you were at Fontenoi too?" asked the baron, trying to jest.

"No," replied Balsamo; "at that time I was dead."

The baron stared, Andrée started, Nicole crossed herself.

"But to return to what we were saying. You wore the uniform of the light horse, I remember perfectly, at that time; I saw you as I passed: you were holding your own and the marshal's horse while they fought. I went up to you and asked you about the duel; you gave me the details."

"I?"

"Yes, you, *pardieu!*—I recognize you now. You bore the title of chevalier; they called you 'the little chevalier.'"

"*Mordieu!*" cried the baron, beside himself.

"Excuse me that I did not sooner recognize you; but thirty years change a man. Let us drink the marshal's health, my dear baron." He raised his glass, and drained it to the last drop.

"You saw me there?" cried the baron; "impossible!"

"I saw you," said Balsamo.

"On the high road?"

"On the high road."

"Holding the horses?"

"Holding the horses."

"While the duel was going on?"

"As the prince was expiring, I said."

"Then you are fifty years old!"

"I am old enough to have seen what I tell you."

The baron threw himself back in his chair, but in so ridiculous a pet that Nicole could not help laughing. Andrée, instead of laughing, seemed to be in a revery, her eyes open, and fixed on those of Balsamo. He appeared now to have attained his object. Suddenly rising,

he sent from his flaming eyeball two or three lightning flashes full on her. She started, as if from an electric shock. Her arms stiffened, her neck bent, she smiled, yet as if involuntarily, on the stranger, then closed her eyes. He, still standing, touched her arms; again she started.

"Do you also, Mademoiselle," said he, "believe I speak falsely when I say that I was present at the siege of Philipsbourg?"

"No, Monsieur, I believe you," she articulated, making a violent effort.

"Then it is I who am a dotard," said the baron; "the gentleman no doubt has come back from the other world!"

Nicole gazed on him with horror.

"Who knows?" replied Balsamo, in so solemn a tone that she was yet more horrified.

"Well, then, baron," resumed the old man, "to have done with jesting, are you really more than thirty years old? You do not seem older."

"Monsieur," said Balsamo, "would you believe me if I told you a very incredible thing?"

"I do not promise that," said the baron, shaking his head with a knowing air, while Andrée listened with eager attention. "I am very incredulous, I must candidly warn you."

"What use is there, then, in putting a question, when you will not listen to my reply?"

"Well, then, I will believe you. There!—are you satisfied?"

"Then, Monsieur, I have only to repeat what I have told you, and to add that I knew you personally at the siege of Philipsbourg."

"Then you must have been a child?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Four or five years old at most?"

"No, I was forty-one."

The baron burst into a loud fit of laughter, which Nicole re-echoed.

"I told you you would not believe me," said Balsamo, gravely.

"But how is it possible to believe that? At least, give me some proofs."

"It is very clear, nevertheless," replied Balsamo, without showing any embarrassment. "I was forty-one then, but I do not say that I was the man I am."

"Oh," cried the baron, "this is going back to paganism. Was there not a philosopher — for those wretches flourished in every century — was there not a Greek philosopher who would not eat beans because he pretended that they had souls, as my son says negroes have? Who invented that idea? It was — what the devil was his name?"

"Pythagoras," said Andrée.

"Yes, Pythagoras; the Jesuits taught me that. Father Porée made me compose Latin verses on it, with little Arouet. I remember they thought mine much the best. Pythagoras? — yes."

"Well, how do you know that I am not Pythagoras?" replied Balsamo, quietly.

"I do not deny that you may be Pythagoras, but Pythagoras was not at the siege of Philipsbourg; at least, I did not see him there."

"No; but you saw the Viscount Jean des Barreaux, who was in the black musketeers."

"Yes, I knew him well; but he was no philosopher, although he did hate beans, and never ate them when he could help it."

"Well! Do you recollect, the day after the duel, Des Barreaux was in the trenches with you?"

"Yes, perfectly well."

"For you know the black musketeers and the light horse always mounted guard together, every seven days."

"True enough. What next?"

"That very evening the grape-shot fell like hail, and Des Barreaux was sad; he asked you for a pinch of snuff, and you offered him your gold box."

"On which was the likeness of a female?"

"Exactly. I see her now. She was fair, was she not?"

"*Mordieu!*" cried the baron, terrified, "you are right. Well, then?"

"Well, then," continued Balsamo, "as he was taking that pinch of snuff, a ball carried off his head, just in the same way that Marshal Berwick's was carried away formerly."

"Alas! yes, I remember," said the baron; "poor Des Barreaux!"

"And now, Monsieur, you will admit that I must have seen and known you at the siege of Philipsbourg, since I was that very Des Barreaux."

The baron fell back once more in his chair, almost stupefied at these words; but, recovering, he cried, "Why, this is sorcery, magic! A hundred years ago you would have been burned, my dear guest. Upon my honor, I think I can smell a sort of corpse-like odor!"

"Monsieur," said Balsamo, "no true sorcerer or magician has ever yet been burned; it is fools who have anything to do with the fagot. But a truce to this conversation. Mademoiselle de Taverney is asleep; it seems that metaphysics and the occult sciences have few attractions for her."

In fact, Andrée, overcome by an unknown, irresistible power, felt her head sink on her breast, like a flower whose cup bends under its weight of dew. At the last words of Balsamo she made an effort to shake off the influence that like a subtle fluid stole upon her. She shook her head, arose, seemed about to fall, and then, supported by Nicole, left the dining-room. At the same moment the face which had been looking in at the window, and which Balsamo had long ago recognized as Gilbert's, also disappeared. An instant after he heard Andrée begin to play with vigor on her harpsichord. He had followed her with his eye as she left the room, and could not help exclaiming triumphantly, as she disappeared, "I may say, like Archimedes, 'Eureka!'"

"Archimedes! Who was he?" asked the baron.

"A good sort of a fellow, — a savant whom I knew two thousand one hundred and fifty years ago," said Balsamo.

CHAPTER VII.

EUREKA.

WHETHER this piece of extravagance was too much for the baron, whether he had not heard it, or whether, having heard it, he thought it best to get rid of his strange guest, we know not; but when the sound of Andrée's harpsichord proved that she was engaged in the next apartment, he offered to procure Balsamo the means of proceeding to the nearest town. "I have an old horse," he said, "who, though on his last legs, will carry you so far; and you would at least procure good lodgings. There is, indeed, a room and a bed at Taverney; but my ideas of hospitality are rather peculiar. 'Good or none' is my motto."

"Then you send me away?" said Balsamo, hiding his vexation under a smile. "That is treating me like an intruder."

"No, indeed; it is treating you like a friend, my dear guest. Lodging you here would be really treating you as an enemy. I say this in all conscience, but with great regret, for I am delighted with your society."

"Then pray do not force me to rise when I am tired, to get on horseback when I would rather stretch my limbs in bed. Do not represent your hospitable resources as worse than they are, if you would not have me believe that I have been so unfortunate as to incur your dislike."

"Oh!" said the baron, "since you view the matter in that light, you shall stay."

Then, looking round for La Brie, who was in a corner, he cried, "Come hither, you old rascal!" La Brie advanced a few steps timidly. "*Ventre-bleu*, come hither, I say! Is the red room fit to accommodate a gentleman, think you?"

"Oh, certainly, Monsieur!" replied the old servant; "you know it is occupied by M. Philippe when he comes to Taverney."

"It may do very well for a poor devil of a lieutenant who comes to pass a month with a ruined father, and at the same time be very unfit for a rich nobleman who travels post with four horses."

"I assure you," said Balsamo, "I shall be perfectly content with it."

The baron grinned, as if he would have said, "I know better;" then he added aloud, "La Brie, show the stranger to the red room, since he is determined to be cured of all wish to return to Taverney. Really, you have decided to stay?"

"Of course."

"Stay! there are still other means."

"Means for what?"

"To avoid having to make the journey on horseback."

"What journey?"

"To Bar-le-Duc."

Balsamo waited quietly to hear this new plan developed.

"You were brought here by post-horses, were you not?"

"Yes, unless Satan brought me."

"I at first almost suspected he did, for you do not seem to be on bad terms with him."

"You do me infinitely more honor than I deserve."

"Well, the horses that brought your carriage could now take it away."

"No; there are only two horses left of the four, and the carriage is heavy. Besides, post-horses must rest."

"Ha! another reason. You are determined, I see, to remain."

"Because I wish to see you again to-morrow and express my gratitude to you for your hospitality."

"That you could easily repay."

"How?"

"Since you are on such good terms with his Satanic Majesty, beg him to permit me to discover the philosopher's stone."

"Why, M. le Baron, if you really wish for it —"

"The philosopher's stone! *Parbleu!* if I really wish for it!"

"In that case you must apply to another individual than the devil."

"To whom, then?"

"To ME! as I heard Corneille say about a hundred years ago, when he was reciting to me a part of one of his comedies. We were on the Pont-Neuf in Paris."

"Ha! La Brie, you old rascal!" cried the baron, who began to find the conversation rather dangerous at such an hour and with such a man, "try and find a wax candle, and light the gentleman to his room."

La Brie hastened to obey; and during this search, almost as dubious in its result as that for the philosopher's stone, he desired Nicole to precede him upstairs and air the red room. Nicole being gone, Andrée was delighted to find herself alone. She felt as if she required to reflect. The baron bid Balsamo good-night, and retired to bed.

Balsamo looked at his watch, for he remembered the

promise he had made to Althotas, — a promise now impossible to fulfil, since two hours and a half had already elapsed. There were thirty minutes lost. He asked La Brie if the carriage was still in the place he had pointed out. La Brie replied that unless it would move away of itself, it must be there. He then asked what had become of Gilbert. La Brie assured him that Gilbert was a lazy fellow, and had probably been in bed an hour at least. Then, after having studied the topography of the passage which led to the red room, Balsamo went out to waken Althotas.

The Baron de Taverney had not spoken falsely respecting the discomfort of this apartment; it was as poorly furnished as all the other rooms of the château. An oaken bed with a faded green damask coverlet, and hangings of the same material looped up above it; an oaken table with twisted legs; a huge stone chimney-piece of the time of Louis XIII., to which in winter a fire might impart some appearance of comfort, but which now, wanting that, wanting all ornaments and utensils, wanting wood, and stuffed with old newspapers, only made the place look still more dreary, — such was the furniture of which Balsamo was for one night to be the fortunate possessor. We must add that there were two chairs and a wardrobe painted of a gray color.

While La Brie was endeavoring to give a habitable appearance to the room, which Nicole had aired before retiring to her own apartment, Balsamo had wakened Althotas and returned to the house. When he reached Andrée's door, he stopped to listen. From the moment Andrée left the dining-room, she felt that she had escaped from the mysterious influence which the stranger exercised over her, and to rouse herself completely from its power she continued to play on her harpsichord. Its

sound reached Balsamo through the closed door, and, as we have said, he stopped to listen.

After a minute or two he made several gestures with a sweeping circular motion which might have been mistaken for a species of conjuration, since Andrée, struck again by the same sensation she had previously experienced, ceased to play, let her arms fall immovable by her side, and turned toward the door with a slow, stiff motion, as if she were obeying a command against her own free will. Balsamo smiled in the dark as if he saw through the door. No doubt this was all he wanted, for he stretched out his left hand, and, having found the balustrade of the staircase, which was steep and broad, he ascended to the red room. In proportion as he increased his distance, Andrée, with the same slow, rigid motion, returned to her harpsichord, and when Balsamo reached the highest stair, he heard her resume the first notes of the air which he had interrupted. Having entered his chamber, he dismissed La Brie. La Brie was evidently a good servant, accustomed to obey on the instant; but now, after moving a few steps toward the door, he stopped.

"Well?" said Balsamo.

La Brie slipped his hand into his waistcoat pocket, and seemed feeling for something in its silent depths; but he did not reply.

"Have you anything to say to me, my friend?" inquired Balsamo, approaching him.

La Brie made a great effort over himself, and pulled his hand out of his pocket. "I merely wished to say, Monsieur, that you made a mistake this evening," he replied.

"Did I?" said Balsamo. "How so?"

"You meant to give me a crown, and you gave me a louis-d'or;" and he opened his hand and disclosed to view the new, shining piece.

Balsamo looked at the old servant with an expression of admiration which indicated he had not the highest opinion of men as far as probity was concerned. "*And honest?*" said he, "as Hamlet says;" and, feeling in his own pocket, he drew out a second louis-d'or, which he laid beside the first in La Brie's hand.

La Brie's joy at this munificence could not be described. For twenty years he had not once seen gold; and in order to convince him that he was really the happy possessor of such a treasure, Balsamo had to put the money with his own hand into La Brie's pocket. He bowed to the ground, and was retiring without turning his back on the stranger, when the latter stopped him.

"At what hour does the family usually rise in the morning?" asked he.

"Monsieur de Taverney rises late; but Mademoiselle de Taverney is always up at a very early hour."

"At what hour?"

"About six o'clock."

"Who sleeps above this room?"

"I do, Monsieur."

"And below?"

"No one; the vestibule is under this."

"Thank you, my friend; now you may go."

"Good-night, Monsieur."

"Good-night; but, by the by, see that my carriage is safe."

"You may depend on me, Monsieur."

"If you hear any noise in it, or see any light, do not be alarmed; I have in the carriage an old, lame servant who travels with me everywhere. Tell M. Gilbert not to interfere with him; and tell him also, if you please, not to go out to-morrow morning until I have spoken to him. Can you remember all this?"

"Oh, certainly! But will Monsieur leave us so soon?"

"I am not quite sure," said Balsamo, with a smile; "yet, strictly speaking, I ought to be at Bar-le-Duc to-morrow evening."

La Brie sighed resignedly, gave a last glance at the bed, and taking up the candle, went toward the fireplace to give a little warmth to the great damp room by setting fire to the papers, as he had no wood.

"No, never mind," said Balsamo, preventing him; "leave the old papers. If I do not sleep, I can amuse myself by reading them."

La Brie bowed and retired.

Balsamo listened until the steps of the old servant had died away on the stairs, and then until he heard them overhead. Then he went to the window. In the opposite tower there was a light in the window of a garret, the curtains of which were but half-closed. It was Legay's room. She was thoughtfully unfastening her gown and handkerchief, and from time to time opened her window and leaned out to look into the courtyard. Balsamo watched her with more attention than he had chosen to bestow on her during supper. "What a singular resemblance!" he murmured to himself. At this moment the light in the garret was extinguished, although its occupant was not yet in bed.

Balsamo remained leaning against the wall. The notes of the harpsichord still sounded in his ears. He assured himself that its harmony alone broke the midnight silence; then, opening the door, which La Brie had shut, he cautiously descended the stairs, and gently pushed open the door of the salon.

Andrée heard nothing; her white hands continued to wander over the old yellow keys of the instrument. Opposite her was a mirror set in an old carved frame, the

gilding of which had changed to a dull gray. The air she played was melancholy, or rather, she played merely harmonies instead of an air. No doubt it was all extemporary; and she was thus reproducing in music her early recollections, or indulging in the dreams of her imagination. Perhaps her spirit, saddened by her residence at Taverney, had left the château to wander in the large, shady gardens of the convent of the Annonciades at Nancy, ringing with the merry voices of troops of happy boarders. Whether such were her dreams or not, her vague gaze seemed to lose itself in the sombre mirror before her, which reflected only indistinctly the different objects in the vast apartment, dimly lighted by the single candle placed on the harpsichord.

Sometimes she suddenly ceased; it was when she recalled the strange vision of the evening, and her unaccountable impressions. Before her thoughts had time to take any precise form, her heart beat, she felt a thrill run through her limbs, and she started as though a living being had come into contact with her. All at once, as she tried to account for these feelings, they returned. She felt a thrill as if from an electric shock. Her eyes became fixed, her floating thoughts became embodied, as it were, and in the mirror she saw something moving. It was the door of the salon, opening without noise; and in the doorway a shadow appeared. She shuddered, her fingers wandered involuntarily over the keys; yet nothing could be more natural than that apparition. Might it not be her father, or Nicole, or La Brie, who, before retiring, had returned to the apartment upon some household errand? La Brie's visits of that kind were frequent; and on these occasions the faithful creature never made a sound. But no; the eyes of her soul discerned that the visitor was not one of those three persons.

The shadow drew nearer with a noiseless step, becoming more distinct in the mirror; and when within the circle of the light afforded by the candle, the stranger was seen, his coat of black velvet increasing the ghastly pallor of his face. He had, for some mysterious reason, laid aside the silk coat which he wore at supper.[1]

Andrée would have turned and screamed; but Balsamo extended his arms, and she remained motionless. She made another effort. "Monsieur," said she, "in the name of Heaven, what do you want?"

He smiled, the glass reflected his smile, and she watched it with eager gaze; but he did not reply. She tried once more to rise, but could not; an irresistible power, a paralyzing feeling, accompanied by a sensation not altogether unpleasant, fixed her to her chair, while her eyes remained fixed upon the magic mirror. This new sensation alarmed her, for she felt that she was altogether in the power of the unknown. She made another almost supernatural effort to call for aid; but Balsamo extended both his hands above her head, and no sound escaped her lips. She continued dumb, her bosom loaded with a stupefying heat which ascended slowly in invading billows to her brain. She had no longer strength or will; her head sank on her shoulder.

At this moment Balsamo thought he heard a slight noise; he turned quickly, — the face of the man he had seen before was at the window. He frowned, and, strange to say, the frown was reflected on the young girl's face. Then, turning again to Andrée, he drew down his hands, which he had hitherto held above her head; then he raised them again gently, again drew them down, and

[1] It is well known that silk is a bad conductor, and repels the electric fluid. It is almost impossible to magnetize a person who wears a dress of silk.

continued thus to overwhelm her with column upon column of the electric fluid. "Sleep!" said he.

She still struggled against his power.

"Sleep!" he repeated, in a voice of command. "Sleep! it is my will!"

Then all her faculties yielded to that all-powerful will; she leaned her elbow on the harpsichord, drooped her head on her hand, and slept.

Balsamo now, without turning his face from her, left the room, closed the door, and went up to his own chamber. Scarcely had he retired when the face once more appeared at the window. It was Gilbert's.

CHAPTER VIII.

ATTRACTION.

GILBERT, whose menial position in the château of Taverney caused him to be excluded from the salon, watched all the evening those whose rank permitted them to enter there. During supper he saw Balsamo's looks and gestures; he remarked Andrée's attention to him, the baron's unusual affability, and the respectful eagerness of La Brie. When the party rose from table he hid in a clump of shrubs, lest Nicole, in closing the shutters or in going to her own room, should see him, and put an end to his espionage. Nicole had, indeed, made her round to secure all for the night; but one of the shutters of the salon she had been forced to leave open, the loosened hinge of which would not permit it to close. Gilbert was aware of this fact; so he remained out, certain that he could continue his watchings when Legay was gone. His watchings, have we said? What reason had Gilbert to watch? Having been brought up in the château of Taverney, did he not know it perfectly, as well as the habits of the family? The reason was that on that evening he had other motives than those which usually actuated him; he not only watched, but waited.

When Nicole went away from the salon, leaving Andrée there, after having slowly closed the doors and shutters she walked for a few minutes up and down in front of the house, as if she expected some one. Then she looked fur-

tively on all sides, peeped into the salon, waited a little longer, and at length made up her mind to go to bed.

Gilbert, motionless, bending down close to the trunk of a tree, and scarcely venturing to breathe, saw every movement and gesture of Nicole; and when she had disappeared, and when he saw a light in the windows of her apartment, he stole again on tiptoe to the window, leaned forward, and continued, although scarcely knowing why, with eager eyes to devour Andrée, who was sitting at her harpsichord in a listless attitude.

Just then Joseph Balsamo entered the salon. Gilbert shuddered on seeing him, and all his faculties were strained to enable him to comprehend the scene which we have just described. He thought that Balsamo complimented Andreé on her musical talent; that she replied with her usual coldness; that, with a smile, he repeated his praise; and that then she came out from her revery to reply, and to dismiss him for the night. He admired the grace with which the stranger retired backward; but he had in reality understood nothing of the scene, as it had all passed in silence. He had heard no words; he had seen the lips and hands of the pair before him move, and close observer as he was, he discovered no mystery in what appeared to be done so naturally.

Balsamo gone, Gilbert remained no longer in an attitude of observation, but apparently was lost in contemplation of Andrée, — so beautiful in her careless attitude; but soon, to his amazement, he discovered that she was asleep. He remained for some moments longer in the same position, to be certain that such was the case; then, when he was quite convinced, he clasped his forehead with both hands, like one who fears that his brain will give way under the flood of thoughts by which it is oppressed.

"Oh!" said he wildly, "her hand! — that my lips might only touch her hand! Gilbert, Gilbert, rouse thee! I will do it!"

As he spoke he rushed into the ante-room and reached the door of the salon, which, as when Balsamo entered, opened without noise. But scarcely was it open, scarcely did he find the young girl before him without anything separating them, when he felt all the importance of the step he had taken. He the son of a farmer and a peasant woman; he, the timid young man, who in his lowness dared hardly raise his eyes to his haughty mistress, — he was going to press to his lips the hem of the robe or the tip of the finger of this sleeping majesty, who, if she awoke,would with a look crush him to the dust. At this idea all that had intoxicated him and made him bold vanished; he stopped and clung to the door-post, for he trembled and felt as if he should fall.

But Andrée's meditation or sleep (for Gilbert could not yet decide whether she slept or was only buried in thought) was so deep that she made no movement, although she might have heard the beating of his heart, which he tried in vain to still. He remained a minute gazing on her; but she did not stir. She was so beautiful, with her head gently bent forward on her hand, her long, unpowdered hair falling on her shoulders, that the flame, which fear for a moment had extinguished, was rekindled. His madness returned; he must at least touch something touched by her. He made a step toward her. The floor creaked under his unsteady footstep. At that noise a cold moisture stood on his forehead; but she seemed to have heard nothing.

"She sleeps!" he murmured; "oh, joy, she sleeps!"

But before he advanced three steps farther he stopped again. It was the unusual brightness of the candle which

alarmed him now, for it had burned down in the socket, and gave, as is usual, a larger flame just before it expired. But not a sound, not a breath in the house. La Brie had retired to bed, and no doubt to sleep, and the light in Nicole's chamber was extinguished.

"Courage!" said he, and he advanced anew. Strange, the floor creaked again; but Andrée stirred not, and Gilbert could scarcely avoid being frightened by this mysterious repose.

"She sleeps!" repeated he again, with that varying resolution peculiar to the lover and the coward; and he who is not master of his heart is always a coward. "She sleeps! Oh, my God, my God!"

In the midst of all these feverish alternations of fear and hope Gilbert still advanced until he was within two paces of Andrée. Then he felt as if fascinated. He would have fled, were flight possible; but once within the circle of attraction of which she was the centre, he felt himself rooted to the spot, and, conquered, subdued, he fell on his knees. Andrée remained motionless as a statue. Gilbert took the hem of her dress in both hands, and kissed it; then he looked up slowly, breathlessly. His eyes met hers, which were wide open, yet she did not see him.

Gilbert no longer knew what to think; he was overwhelmed with astonishment. For a moment the horrible idea that she was dead flashed across his mind. He seized her hand: it was warm, and the pulse beat softly; but this hand remained unresistingly in his. Then, bewildered by having touched it, he imagined that she saw, that she felt, that she had discovered his maddening passion, — poor, blinded heart! — that she expected his visit, that her silence indicated consent, her immovability favor. He raised her hand to his lips, and imprinted on it a long and burning kiss. Immediately a shudder ran through

her frame, and Gilbert felt that she repelled him. "I am lost!" he murmured, relinquishing her hand and throwing himself upon the floor.

Andrée rose as if moved by a spring; and not once casting her eyes to the floor on which Gilbert lay overcome by shame and fear, without even strength to ask a pardon which he knew would not be granted, her head erect, her neck rigid, and with a painful and constrained step, she moved toward the door. She passed on like one drawn by a secret spell to an unseen goal, and in passing she touched Gilbert's shoulder. He raised himself on one hand, turned slowly, and followed her with eyes full of amazement. She opened the door, passed into the anteroom, and reached the foot of the stairs. Pale and trembling, Gilbert dragged himself after her on his knees.

"Oh," thought he, "she is so indignant that she would not deign to show me her anger! She is going to the baron to relate my shameful infatuation, and I shall be turned out like a disgraced lackey!"

The thought that he should be dismissed, that he should no longer see her who was his light, his life, his soul, gave him courage; he arose and hurried after her. "Oh, pardon, Mademoiselle! In the name of Heaven, pardon!" he murmured.

Andrée appeared not to have heard him, passed on, but did not enter her father's apartment. Gilbert breathed more freely. She advanced toward the staircase, and began to ascend.

"Great Heaven!" murmured he, "where can she be going? That is the way to the red room, which the stranger occupies, and to La Brie's loft. It may be to call him, — yet she would ring; she must be going — oh, impossible, impossible!" and he wrung his hands with rage at the thought that she was going into Balsamo's apartment.

She stopped before the door. A cold perspiration trickled down Gilbert's forehead; he grasped the iron of the balustrade that he might not fall, for he had continued to follow her. All that he saw and all that he fancied filled him with horror.

Balsamo's door was half open. Andrée did not knock, but pushed against it and entered the room. The light within fell on her noble features, and was reflected with a golden lustre from her large, open eyes. Gilbert could see the stranger standing in the middle of the chamber, with his eyes fixed, his brow contracted, and one hand extended with a commanding gesture. Then the door was shut.

Gilbert felt his strength abandon him. He put his hand to his head and fell heavily on the cold stone of the upper step of the stairs, but with his eyes turned on the accursed door which entombed his past dreams, his present happiness, his future hopes.

CHAPTER IX.

CLAIRVOYANCE.

Balsamo advanced to meet the young lady, who moved toward him in a direct line, rigid in her movement as the bronze statue in Don Juan. However strange her coming might seem to any other than Balsamo, he appeared in no degree surprised at it.

"I commanded you to sleep," said he; "do you sleep?"

She sighed, but did not answer. Balsamo drew nearer her, imparting to her still more of the electric fluid.

"It is my will that you speak," he said.

She started.

"Have you heard my command?"

Andrée assented by a gesture.

"Then why do you not speak?"

She put her hand to her throat, as if to indicate that she could not articulate.

"Well, sit down!" said Balsamo.

He took her by the hand which Gilbert had so lately kissed without her perceiving it, and his touch gave her that shudder which she had then exhibited, but which had been caused by the electric fluid descending on her at that moment from the room above. Led by him, she made three steps backward and sat down in an arm-chair.

"Do you see?" he asked.

Her eyes dilated as if she tried to take in all the rays of light in the apartment.

"I do not mean to ask if you see with your eyes. Do you see inwardly?" and drawing from under his embroidered coat a little rod of steel, he touched her heaving breast. She bounded as if a dart of flame had pierced her and entered her heart, and then her eyes closed.

"And now you begin to see?" he said.

She bowed in assent.

"And you will soon speak?"

"Yes," replied Andrée; but at the same moment she put her hand to her head in a manner indicating great suffering.

"What is the matter?" asked Balsamo.

"I am in pain."

"Wherefore?"

"Because you force me to see and speak."

He made several movements over her head, as if to lessen the influence of the electricity. "Do you suffer now?" he asked.

"Not so much."

"Well, then, look, and see where you are."

Her eyes remained closed, but her face expressed great surprise. "I am in the red chamber!" she murmured.

"With whom?"

"With you!" she continued, shuddering.

"What is the matter?"

"I am afraid; I am ashamed!"

"Of what? Are we not united by sympathy?"

"Yes, certainly!"

"And you know that I have caused you to come here with a pure intention?"

"True, true," said she.

"That I respect you as a sister?"

"I know it, indeed!" and her face grew calm, then again was troubled.

"You do not tell me all," said Balsamo. "You do not pardon me entirely."

"Because I see that though you would not wrong me, you would wrong others perhaps."

"Possibly," he muttered; "but look not at that!" he added, in an authoritative tone.

Her face resumed its usual expression.

"Are all asleep in the house?"

"I do not know."

"Then look and see."

"Where shall I look?"

"Let me see, — first, in your father's room; what is he doing?"

"He is in bed."

"Asleep?"

"No; he is reading."

"What is he reading?"

"One of those bad books which he wishes me to read."

"And you will not read them?"

"No!" said she, with an expression of the greatest scorn on her features.

"Well, we are safe then in that quarter. Look in Nicole's room."

"There is no light in her room."

"But you do not want light to see."

"Not if you command me."

"See! It is my will."

"Ah, I see her!"

"Well?"

"She is half-undressed; she is opening her door softly; she is going downstairs!"

"So! Where is she going?"

"She stops at the courtyard gate; she waits behind it; she watches!"

Balsamo smiled. "Is she watching to see whether you are out?"

"No."

"Well, that is the principal matter; for when a young lady is free from her father's and her waiting-maid's eye, she has nothing to fear unless —"

"No."

"Ah! ah! you reply to my thought."

"I see it."

"Then you have no lover?"

"I?" asked she disdainfully.

"Yes; you might be in love, I think. Young people do not leave their convents to be shut up. They give liberty to their hearts when their persons are set free!"

Andrée shook her head. "My heart is free," she said, sadly; and such an expression of candor and virgin modesty lighted her features that Balsamo exclaimed with rapture, "A lily! a true pupil! a clairvoyante!" and he clasped his hands with joy and gratitude.

Then turning again to Andrée, "But if you do not love, you may be loved," said he.

"I do not know," replied she, softly.

"What, you do not know!" he cried, imperiously. "When I question, I expect a proper answer;" and he touched her bosom again with the steel rod. She started, but without evincing so much pain as before.

"Yes, I see," said she; "but be gentle, or you will kill me."

"What do you see?"

"Oh — but no! It cannot be," said she.

"What, then, do you see?"

"A young man who, ever since my leaving the convent, has followed me, watched me, brooded over me, yet always secretly."

"Who is the young man?"

"I do not see his face. I see his coat, — it is like that of a workman."

"Where is he?"

"At the foot of the stairs. He seems in sorrow, he weeps."

"Why can you not see his face?"

"It is hidden in his hands."

"Look through his hands."

Andrée seemed to make an effort; then she exclaimed, "Gilbert! I said truly that it was impossible."

"Why impossible?"

"He? — he dares not love me!" she cried, with a lofty expression of disdain.

Balsamo smiled, like one who knows mankind, and who is aware that there is no distance the heart will not overleap, were there an abyss between it and its object.

"And what is he doing at the foot of the staircase?"

"Stay. He removes his hands from his face; he seizes the balustrade; he ascends."

"Ascends whither?"

"To us here; but no matter, — he dares not come in."

"Why not?"

"Because he is afraid," said Andrée, with a smile of contempt.

"But he will listen?"

"Yes; for he is now putting his ear to the door."

"That annoys you?"

"Yes, he may hear what I say."

"And would he use it against her whom he loves?"

"Yes, in a moment of passion or jealousy; in such a moment he would be capable of anything."

"Then let us get rid of him," said Balsamo; and he walked noisily to the door.

Gilbert's hour to be courageous had not yet come; for hearing Balsamo's step, and fearing to be caught, he jumped astride on the balustrade, and slid down noiselessly to the bottom of the staircase. Andrée uttered a stifled cry.

"Look no more in that direction," said Balsamo, returning toward her; "the loves of the vulgar are of no importance. Speak to me of the Baron de Taverney, will you?"

"I will answer what you choose," said she, sighing.

"The baron is very poor, is he not?"

"Very poor."

"Too poor to allow you any amusement?"

"Oh, yes!"

"You are heartily tired of Taverney?"

"Heartily!"

"You are ambitious, perhaps?"

"No."

"You love your father?"

"Yes," said the young girl, with hesitation.

"Yet I thought this evening your filial love was not very apparent," said Balsamo, smiling.

"I am vexed at him for having wasted my mother's fortune, so that poor Maison Rouge has to pass his time in garrison, and cannot worthily support the dignity of our family."

"Who is this Maison Rouge?"

"My brother Philippe."

"Why do you call him Maison Rouge?"

"It is — or rather it was — the name of one of our castles; and the eldest of the family bears it until the death of the chief: then he is called Taverney."

"You love your brother, then?"

"Oh, dearly, dearly!"

"More than any one in the world?"

"More than any one in the world."

"Why do you love him so warmly, and your father so coldly?"

"Because he has a noble heart; he would die for me."

"And your father?"

She was silent.

"You do not answer."

"I do not wish to answer."

Doubtless Balsamo thought it better not to urge her on this point; and perhaps also he already knew as much of the baron as he wished.

"And where is the Chevalier Maison Rouge at this moment?"

"You ask me where Philippe is?"

"Yes."

"In the garrison at Strasburg."

"Do you see him there?"

"Where?"

"At Strasburg."

"I do not see him."

"Do you know that town?"

"No."

"I know it. Let us visit it together, will you?"

"Yes, with pleasure."

"Is he at the theatre?"

"No."

"Is he at the coffee-house in the square, with the other officers?"

"No."

"Has he gone back to his apartment? I wish you to look for him there."

"I see nothing. I think he is not in Strasburg."

"Do you know the road?"

"No."

"I know it; follow me. Is he at Saverne?"

"No."

"Is he at Saarbrück?"

"No."

"Is he at Nancy?"

"Stay, stay!" The young girl seemed collecting all her powers; her heart beat, her bosom heaved. "I see him! I see him! Dear Philippe, — what happiness!"

"What is he doing?"

"Dear Philippe!" continued Andrée, her eyes sparkling with joy.

"Where is he?"

"On horseback, riding through a town I know well."

"What town?"

"Nancy, Nancy! where I was at the convent."

"Are you sure that it is he?"

"Oh, yes! the torches around show his face."

"Torches!" said Balsamo, with surprise; "why, are there torches?"

"He is on horseback, at the door of a magnificent carriage, richly gilt."

"Ah!" cried Balsamo, who appeared to comprehend this, "who is in the carriage?"

"A young lady, — oh, how majestic she is! how graceful! how beautiful! Strange! I almost fancy I have seen her before. No; it is Nicole's features which resemble hers."

"Nicole resembles the young lady who is so beautiful and so majestic?"

"Yes, yes; but as a jasmine resembles a lily."

"Let us see what is happening at Nancy at this moment."

"The young lady bends forward and makes a sign to

Phillippe to approach; he obeys, and takes off his hat respectfully."

"Can you hear what they say?"

"I will listen," said Andrée, imposing silence on Balsamo by a gesture. "I hear, I hear!" she murmured.

"What does the young lady say?"

"She orders him, with a sweet smile, to hasten the pace of the horses. She says she will require her escort to be ready at six in the morning, as she wishes to stop on the road."

"To stop? Where?"

"My brother is just asking her. Heavens! she wishes to stop at Taverney to see my father! Oh, such a great princess at our poor house! What shall we do? — without plate, almost without linen!"

"Do not be uneasy; that will be provided for."

"Oh, thanks, thanks!" And the young girl, who had half risen from her seat, sank back, with a heavy sigh, completely exhausted.

Balsamo immediately approached her; and changing by magnetic passes the direction of the electric currents, he restored the tranquillity of sleep to that lovely frame which had bent down exhausted, to that head sinking on her palpitating bosom. Andrée appeared to fall into a complete and refreshing repose.

"Recover thy strength," said Balsamo, gazing at her with a stern delight; "I shall soon require thy light again. O Science!" continued he, with the rapture of exalted faith, "thou alone never deceivest us; to thee, then, man ought to sacrifice every feeling. This young girl is beautiful, pure as an angel; and He who made beauty and innocence knows how dear they ought to be to us. But let the creature perish — how pure, how perfect, how beautiful soever she be — if I can but make her

speak the words of truth! Let all the delights of the world — love, passion, rapture — exist no longer for me if I can only with a firm step advance on the path of light and science. And now, young girl, now that my will has given thee strength, awake! — or rather, sink again in the sleep which reveals all things! Speak again; but now it is for me that thou must speak."

He spread his hands over her head, and forced her to sit up by breathing upon her. Seeing her ready and submissive, he took from his pocket-book a curl of jet-black hair, which he put into Andrée's hand.

"See!" he commanded.

"Again!" said she, with anguish. "Oh, no! let me rest; it is too painful, — and just now I felt so happy!"

"See!" replied Balsamo, pitilessly, touching her again with the steel rod.

She wrung her hands, struggling to evade the tyranny of the experimenter. The foam was on her lips, as formerly it gathered on those of the pythoness on her sacred tripod.

"I see, I see!" cried she, with the despair of a subdued will.

"What do you see?"

"A woman."

"Ah!" murmured Balsamo, with wild joy, "science is not, then, a useless word, like virtue! Mesmer is greater than Brutus! Describe the woman, that I may know you really see her whom I would have you see."

"She is a brunette, tall, with blue eyes, jet-black hair, and sinewy arms."

"What is she doing?"

"She gallops, she flies forward, carried by a splendid horse reeking with sweat and foam."

"In what direction?"

"There, there!" said the young girl, pointing to the west.

"On the highway?"

"Yes."

"Toward Chalons?"

"Yes."

"Good!" said Balsamo; "she takes the road which I shall take. She goes to Paris, as I do; I shall find her there. Now rest," said he; and he took from Andrée's hand the curl of hair.

Her arms fell powerless by her side.

"Now return to your harpsichord."

Andrée arose and made a step toward the door; but, overcome by inexpressible fatigue, her limbs refused to support her. She staggered.

"Renew your strength and walk!" said Balsamo, enveloping her anew with magnetic passes; and she, like the generous steed that braces every nerve to fulfil his master's will, unjust though it be, walked erect. Balsamo opened the door, and, still sleeping, she descended the stairs.

CHAPTER X.

NICOLE LEGAY.

WHILE the inquisition by Balsamo was going on, Gilbert remained under the railings at the foot of the staircase in a state of indescribable torture. Not daring to ascend again to listen at the door of the red chamber, he fell into despair; and this despair was increased tenfold by the feeling of his weakness and his inferiority.

Balsamo was only a man (for Gilbert, being a profound thinker, a philosopher in embryo, had small faith in sorcerers). But then this man was strong, and he was weak; this man was courageous, and Gilbert was not so yet. Twenty times he arose, determined to beard the stranger, and twenty times his trembling limbs bent under him, and he sank on his knees. Then the thought struck him that he would get a ladder used by La Brie (who was at the same time cook, butler, and gardener) for nailing the jasmine and honeysuckle against the walls, and by propping it against the balcony of the apartment he would be enabled to mount to the window and witness what he so ardently desired to discover.

He passed stealthily into the courtyard, and ran to the spot where the ladder lay; but as he was stooping to take it up he thought he heard a noise in the direction of the house, and he turned. He was almost certain that in the obscurity he saw a human form enter the dark frame of the open door, but moving so quickly and so noiselessly that it appeared rather a spectre than a living being.

He let the ladder fall, and, his heart beating audibly, hastened back toward the château.

Some minds are constitutionally superstitious, and these are generally the most exalted and the richest in fancy. They admit the fabulous more readily than the rational, because what is natural is too common for them, impelled as they are toward the impossible, or at least toward the ideal. Such spirits delight in the darkness of the forest, the depths of which they people with phantoms or genii. The ancients, who were poets in all things, saw these fantastic beings in open day; but as their sun, warmer and brighter than ours, forbade the fancy to bring forth spectres and demons, they filled the forest with smiling dryads and wood-nymphs. Gilbert, born in a gloomier clime, imagined he saw a spirit. This time, in spite of his incredulity, he recalled the words of the woman who had fled from Balsamo, and the idea flashed across his mind that the sorcerer might have summoned up some evil spirit to do his bad behests. But Gilbert had always after a first impression a second not more encouraging, for it was the result of reflection. He recalled all the arguments of powerful minds against the belief in the return of spirits to this world, and a remembrance of the article "Spectre" in the "Philosophical Dictionary" restored his courage; but it was only to give him another apprehension better founded and more alarming. If he had indeed seen any one it must have been a real person, deeply interested in watching him. Fear suggested M. de Taverney; his conscience whispered another name. He looked up to Nicole's apartment; her candle was out, not a ray of light was visible, — not a whisper, not a movement, not a light in all the house except in the stranger's room. He looked, he listened; then, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, he took up the ladder again, convinced that he had been

deceived, and that this vision had been the result of a suspension of his observing faculties rather than of their exercise.

Just as he was about to place his ladder, Balsamo's door opened and then shut. At this sound he hurried in, and saw Andrée glide out and descend the stairs without noise and without a light, as if guided and supported by a supernatural power. Having reached the landing-place, she passed by where he had now concealed himself in the shade, her dress touching him as she passed, and continued her way. The baron was asleep, La Brie in bed, Nicole in the other turret, Balsamo's door closed, — he could not be surprised by any one. He made a violent effort and followed Andrée, adapting his step to hers, and keeping at a distance from her. She passed through the ante-room into the salon; but although she left the door open, he stopped just before he reached it. Should he enter? He hesitated, then resolved; but just as his foot was on the threshold, an arm was stretched out in the darkness, and he was firmly grasped. Gilbert turned, his heart panting as if it would burst his bosom.

"So I have caught you at last!" whispered an angry voice close at his ear. "Deny now, if you can, that you have meetings, — that you are in love with her!"

Gilbert had not strength to shake himself loose from the grasp which detained him, yet it was only that of a young girl, — it was simply the hand of Nicole Legay that held him.

"What do you mean?" whispered he, impatiently.

"Oh! I am to speak it out, then?" and Nicole raised her voice nearly to the loudest pitch.

"No; for God's sake be quiet!" replied Gilbert between his closed teeth, and dragging her away from the door.

"Well, come with me, then!"

This was what Gilbert wanted, for by going away with her, he took her away from Andrée. He followed Nicole, who led the way into the courtyard, shutting the door behind her when he had passed.

"But," said Gilbert, "Mademoiselle will be retiring to her apartment; she will call you to help her to undress, and you will not be in the house."

"Do you think I care for that now? Let her call or not, I must speak to you."

"You might put off until to-morrow what you have to say, Nicole. You know Mademoiselle Andrée is strict."

"Yes, I would advise her to be strict, — particularly with me."

"To-morrow, Nicole, I promise — "

"You promise! I know what your fine promises are. This very day you promised to meet me near Maison Rouge. Where were you? Why, in the very opposite direction, since you brought the traveller hither! Your promises indeed! I believe them just as I did those of our confessor at the Annonciades, who swore to keep secret what we confessed, and then told all our sins to the abbess!"

"But, Nicole, you will be dismissed if you are seen."

"And you, — will you not be dismissed for being in love with my young lady? Do you think the baron too generous for that?"

"He could surely have no motive for dismissing me," said Gilbert, endeavoring to defend himself.

"Oh, none in the world! The baron, perhaps, allows you to pay your addresses to his daughter. I really did not know he was quite so much a philosopher!"

Gilbert might easily have proved to Nicole, by relating what he had just witnessed, that if he was to blame, at

least Andrée was not privy to his misconduct; and incredible as her visit to the stranger's apartment would have appeared, Nicole, thanks to the good opinion women have of one another, would have believed him. But deeper reflection arrested the words on his lips. Andrée's secret was one that might serve him, as it placed her completely in his power; and as he loved Andrée infinitely more than he feared Nicole, he was silent on the singular events he had just witnessed. "Well," said he, "since you insist on having an explanation, let us understand each other."

"Oh! that is easily done. But you are right, — this is a bad place for it; let us go to my room."

"To your room? Impossible!"

"Why so?"

"We might be surprised."

"Indeed! and who would surprise us? Mademoiselle? True; she might be jealous about her sweet youth. Unfortunately for her, since her secret is discovered, I am not afraid of her. Mademoiselle Andrée jealous of Nicole! What an honor!" And the forced laugh of the young girl frightened Gilbert more than any invective or menace could possibly have done.

"It is not Mademoiselle of whom I am afraid," said he; "I am anxious only on your own account, Nicole."

"Oh, most anxious, no doubt! But you are going to my room for no bad purpose; and you have often told me that where there is no bad intention there should be no shame. Philosophers are Jesuits sometimes; and our confessor at the Annonciades told me all that before you. Come, come, no more false reasons! Come to my room; I am resolved you shall!"

"Nicole!" said he, grinding his teeth.

"Well! what more?"

"Take care!" and he raised his hand.

"Oh, I am not afraid! You struck me once; but you were jealous then. At that time you loved me, and I allowed you to strike me. But I shall not now, — no, no, no! for you no longer love me, and it is I who am jealous now."

"But what will you do?" cried Gilbert, grasping her wrist.

"I shall scream, and Mademoiselle will hear me. I advise you to let go your hold of me."

Gilbert dropped her hand; then seizing the ladder, and dragging it cautiously after him, he placed it against the wall of the turret, so that it reached to Nicole's window.

"See how things turn in this world," said she, maliciously. "The ladder which was to assist you to climb to Mademoiselle's apartment must merely serve you to descend from my humble attic. Very flattering for me, is it not?"

Nicole, perceiving the advantage she had gained, declared her triumph with that precipitate eagerness which women, unless, indeed, of very superior minds, often exhibit, — a victory which is often too dearly purchased.

Gilbert, who felt himself in a false position, was silent, and followed the young girl, reserving all his powers for the approaching contest. In the first place, however, like a prudent general, he satisfied himself on two points. The first was, in passing before the window, that Mademoiselle de Taverney was still in the salon; and the second, on reaching Nicole's chamber, that in case of necessity, he could reach the ladder without much risk of breaking his neck, and thus allow himself to slide to the ground.

Nicole's room was as simple in its furniture as the rest of the house. It was a loft, the walls of which were

covered with a drab and green paper. A corded bedstead and a large geranium placed near the window furnished the room. There was also a large bonnet-box, given her by Andrée, which served both for table and wardrobe. Nicole sat down on the edge of the bed, Gilbert on a corner of the box. She had had time to calm down while ascending the stairs; and now, completely mistress of herself, she felt strong in having justice on her side. Gilbert, on the contrary, was agitated, and could not recover his coolness; his anger had increased as hers decreased.

"So," said she, "you are in love with Mademoiselle, and you have attempted to deceive me?"

"Who told you I was in love with Mademoiselle?"

"What! were you not going to a rendezvous with her?"

"Who told you that I had a rendezvous with her?"

"With whom, then, had you to do in the pavilion, — with the sorcerer?"

"Possibly; you know that I am ambitious."

"Say envious."

"It is the same word taken in a bad sense."

"Don't let us dispute about words. You love me no longer, do you?"

"Yes, I do; I love you still."

"Then why do you avoid me?"

"Because you quarrel with me whenever I meet you."

"That is because you always avoid me."

"You know I am shy, — that I love solitude."

"Yes; and you seek solitude ladder in hand!"

Gilbert was beaten on his first move.

"Come, come! be frank if you can, Gilbert, and confess that you no longer love me, or that you love two women at once."

"Well, and if I did, what would you say?"

"I should say it is monstrous!"

"No, no! — that there was an error somewhere."

"In your heart?"

"No, in our social state. You know there are nations where every man is allowed seven or eight wives."

"They are not Christians," said Nicole, pettishly.

"They are philosophers," said Gilbert, with dignity.

"So, Master Philosopher, you would wish me to take a second lover, as you have done!"

"I would not be unjust and tyrannical; I would not wish to repress the impulses of your heart. Freedom, blessed freedom, respects free-will. If you change your love, Nicole, I shall not force you to a fidelity which in my opinion is unnatural."

"Ah, I see plainly you no longer love me!"

Gilbert was strong in argument, — not that he was skilful in logic, but he was an adept in paradox, and however little he knew, he still knew more than Nicole. She had read only what amused her, — he what taught him a little also; and as they talked, he regained his presence of mind, while Nicole began to lose hers.

"Has the great philosopher any memory?" asked Nicole, with an ironical smile.

"Sometimes," replied Gilbert.

"Then you have not forgotten, perhaps, what you said to me five months ago, when I came with Mademoiselle from the Annonciades?"

"I have forgotten; tell me."

"You said, 'I am poor.' It was the day we were reading 'Tanzaï' among the old ruins."

"Well, go on."

"You trembled very much that day."

"Very likely, — I am naturally timid; but I do all I can to correct that fault, and some others also."

"So that when you have corrected all your faults," said Nicole, laughing, "you will be perfect."

"I shall be strong, at least; for wisdom gives strength."

"Where did you read that, pray?"

"Never mind; return to what you were saying."

Nicole felt that she was losing ground every minute.

"Well, you said to me, 'I am poor, — no one loves me; yet there is something here,' and you pressed your hand on your heart."

"No, Nicole; if I pressed my hand anywhere when I said that, it must have been on my forehead. The heart is merely a forcing-pump, which drives the blood to the extremities of the body. Read the article 'Heart' in the 'Philosophical Dictionary;'" and Gilbert drew himself up proudly. Humble before Balsamo, he gave himself the airs of a prince before Nicole.

"You are right, Gilbert; it must have been your head which you struck. Well, striking your forehead, you said, 'I am treated here worse than a dog, — indeed, Mahon is in a happier condition than I.' I replied that they were wrong not to love you; that if you had been my brother I should have loved you. I think, however, I said that from my heart, not from my head; but perhaps I am wrong, for I never read the 'Philosophical Dictionary.'"

"You ought to read it, Nicole."

"Then you threw your arms round me. You said, 'You are an orphan, I am one too; let us love one another as if we were brother and sister, — no! better than if we were; for if we were, we should be forbidden to love as I wish we should;' then you kissed me."

"Very possibly!"

"Did you think then as you spoke?"

"Oh, yes! one generally thinks what he says at the time he says it."

"So that now —?"

"Now I am five months older than I was. I have learned things of which I knew nothing then, and I look forward to things which I do not yet know; I think differently now."

"You are a deceiver, a hypocrite, a liar!" Nicole exclaimed, furiously.

"No more than a traveller, should he make two different answers to the same question, — if you asked him in a valley what he thought of the prospect, and again when he had got to the top of a mountain which before had closed his view. I have a wider outlook, that is all."

"So then you will not marry me?"

"I never said that I would marry you," said Gilbert, contemptuously.

"And yet," cried the exasperated girl, "I think Nicole Legay fully the equal of Sebastian Gilbert."

"All human beings are equal; but nature or education makes certain faculties greater in one man than another, and according as these faculties are more or less developed men differ from one another."

"So that your faculties being more developed than mine, you are raised above me?"

"Quite correct; you do not reason yet, Nicole, but you understand."

"Yes, yes; I understand!" cried Nicole, with redoubled passion.

"What do you understand?"

"That you are a bad man."

"It is possible. Many are born with bad inclinations. Rousseau himself had evil impulses, but he corrected them; I shall do the same."

"Oh, heavens!" cried Nicole, "how could I ever love such a man?"

"You did not love me, Nicole," replied Gilbert, coldly; "I pleased you, — that was all. You had just come from Nancy, where you had seen only students whom you laughed at, or soldiers who frightened you; so you took a fancy to me, and for a month or two we enjoyed our dream of love. But should we therefore be tied together to be eternally miserable? You see, Nicole, if we bound ourselves for our lives in a moment of happiness, we should give up our free-will, and that would be absurd!"

"Is that philosophy?" asked Nicole.

"I think so," replied Gilbert.

"Then there is nothing sacred in the eyes of you philosophers?"

"Oh, yes! — reason is."

"Yet I think you once said something about being faithful to the choice of the heart. You recollect your theory on marriages — ?"

"On unions, Nicole, for I shall never marry."

"You will never marry?"

"No! I shall be a learned man, — a philosopher. Science requires perfect freedom of the mind, and philosophy that of the body."

"Monsieur Gilbert," said she, "you are a wretch; and whatever I am, I am at least better than you."

"Now," said Gilbert, rising, "we are only losing time, — you in abusing me, I in listening to you; let us end! You loved me because you took pleasure in loving."

"Well?"

"Well, there is no reason in the world that I should make myself unhappy because you did a thing which gave you gratification."

"Fool!" she exclaimed, "you think you can confound my common-sense; and you pretend not to fear me!"

"Fear you! Why, Nicole, jealousy is turning your brain!"

"Jealousy!" she cried, stamping her foot, "and why should I be jealous? Is there a prettier girl in the province than I?—if I had but as white hands as Mademoiselle; and I shall have some day, when I do no more hard work. You are my first lover, it is true, but you are not the first man who has paid court to me. Gilbert, Gilbert! do not force me to seek revenge on you; do not make me leave the narrow path in which a last remembrance of my mother and the regular repetition of my prayers have kept me. Gilbert, if you do, you may have to reproach yourself with bringing many evils on yourself and others."

"All in good time," said Gilbert. "So now that you have got to the summit of your dignity, Nicole, I am perfectly satisfied on one point."

"And what may that be?" inquired the girl.

"Simply that if I consented now to marry you —"

"What then?"

"Why, that you would refuse me."

Nicole paused, her clenched hands and gnashing teeth showing the workings of her mind. "You are right," she exclaimed at length. "Yes; I also begin to ascend that mountain of which you spoke. I see a wider prospect before me. The wife of a learned man, a philosopher! No, I am destined for something greater than that! Mount your ladder! and don't break your neck,—though I begin to think it would be a blessing for many persons if you would, perhaps even for yourself."

She turned her back on him. Gilbert stood a moment wavering and irresolute; for Nicole, excited by anger and jealousy, was truly beautiful. But he had resolved to break with her; Nicole could blast at once his love and his ambition. His decision was made.

In a few seconds Nicole, hearing no sound, looked behind her; she was alone.

"Gone!" she murmured. "And Mademoiselle? Oh, I shall know to-morrow whether she loves him or not!"

She went to the window and looked out; all was dark, every light extinguished. She stole on tiptoe to her young lady's door and listened. "She is in bed, — she sleeps soundly," said she; "but to-morrow I shall know all!"

CHAPTER XI.

MISTRESS AND MAID.

THE calmness with which Nicole returned to her room was not affected. Young, strong, full of an uncultivated self-confidence, she was blest with that faculty so important for those who would govern where they love, — the faculty of forgetting; and she could sleep after she had arranged her plan of vengeance with the little malicious sprites that dwelt in her heart.

Mademoiselle de Taverney appeared to her even more guilty than Gilbert. This aristocratic girl, rigid in her prejudices, elevated in her pride, who at their convent would descend to familiarity with none below the daughters of marquises, — this statue, outwardly so cold, but yet with feeling in its marble bosom; this statue, warming to life for a rural Pygmalion like Gilbert, became contemptible in her estimation. For Nicole felt that Gilbert was her inferior in everything but a little reading, and thought that she had condescended very much when she, the waiting-maid of the daughter of a ruined baron, put herself on a level with the son of a poor peasant. What, then, could she think of her mistress, if she really returned Gilbert's love?

Nicole reflected that in relating what she had seen to the baron, she would fall into a great error, — first, because he would only laugh at the affair, box Gilbert's ears, and turn him out of doors; next, because it would deprive her of her power over Gilbert and Andrée. What

pleasure she should have — she, the waiting-maid — in seeing them turn pale or red as her eye fell on them! This idea flattered her pride and soothed her vindictive spirit; and at this idea her reflections ceased, she slept.

It was day when she awoke, fresh, light-hearted, and her mind prepared for everything. She took her usual time to dress, — that is, an hour. She looked at herself in the piece of broken glass which served as her mirror. Her eyes appeared to her more brilliant than ever; her lips had not lost their brightness nor their roundness; her teeth were perfect; her neck, which she took particular care to hide from the sun, was white as a lily. Seeing herself so handsome, she began to think she could easily make her young lady jealous. Thus armed personally and mentally, she opened Andrée's door, as she was authorized to do whenever, at seven o'clock, her mistress had not rung for her.

When Nicole entered the room she stopped in amazement. Pale, her beautiful hair damp with perspiration, Andrée lay on her bed in a heavy sleep, in which she sometimes writhed as if in pain. She was still in the dress which she had worn the day before. Her breathing was hurried, and now and then a low groan escaped her lips. Nicole looked at her for a minute, then shook her head; for she acknowledged to herself that there could be no beauty which could contest the palm with Andrée's.

She went to the window and opened the shutters. A stream of light poured in, and made Mademoiselle de Taverney's violet-veined eyelids quiver. She awoke and tried to rise, but felt such weakness and pain that she fell back on her pillow with a cry of suffering.

"Oh, Mademoiselle! what is the matter?" asked Nicole.

"Is it late?" said Andrée, rubbing her eyes.

"Very late; Mademoiselle has remained in bed an hour longer than usual."

"I do not know what is the matter with me, Nicole," said Andrée, looking around her; "I feel so oppressed, so ill!"

Nicole fixed her eyes on her mistress before replying: "It is the commencement of a cold that Mademoiselle caught last night."

"Last night!" replied Andrée, surprised; then, looking at her disordered dress, "Have I really lain down without undressing? How could that be?"

"If Mademoiselle would recollect —"

"I recollect nothing," replied Andrée, leaning her head on her hand. "What has happened? Am I going mad?" She sat up on the bed, and looked round for the second time, all bewildered. Then, after reflecting: "Oh! yes, I remember I was very tired, very much exhausted yesterday, — it was the storm, no doubt; then I fell asleep on the music-stool at my harpsichord. But after that I remember nothing. I must have come up to my room half-asleep, and thrown myself on my bed without strength to undress."

"You should have called me," said Nicole; "Mademoiselle knows that I am always ready to wait on her."

"I either did not think of it or had not strength to do it."

"Hypocrite!" muttered Nicole to herself. Then she added: "But Mademoiselle must have stayed very late at her harpsichord, then, for before she came up to her room, hearing a noise, I went down —" She stopped, hoping to discover in Andrée something like agitation, — a blush, perhaps. No. Andrée was calm, and her countenance, that clear mirror of her soul, was undisturbed. "I went down —" repeated Nicole.

"Well?"

"Well, Mademoiselle, you were not at your harpsichord."

Andrée looked up, but there was only surprise to be read in her lovely eyes. "Very strange!" said she.

"It is quite true, however."

"You say I was not in the salon? But I never left it for a moment till I came to bed."

"Mademoiselle will pardon me for contradicting her."

"But where was I, then?"

"Mademoiselle must know that better than I," said Nicole, shrugging her shoulders.

"You must be wrong, Nicole," said Andrée, mildly; "I only remember feeling cold and stiff, and having great difficulty in walking."

"Oh! but when I saw Mademoiselle, she walked very well," said Nicole, almost with a sneer.

"You saw me walk?"

"Yes, indeed."

"But just now you said I was not in the salon?"

"It was not in the salon I saw Mademoiselle."

"Where, then?"

"In the vestibule, near the staircase."

"You saw me?"

"Yes; I think I ought to know Mademoiselle when I see her," said Nicole, with an affected laugh.

"I am certain, however," said Andrée, with great simplicity, after she had again tried to recall the events of the night, "that I did not stir out of the salon."

"I am, however, quite as certain that I saw Mademoiselle in the vestibule. I thought, indeed, she had just come in from a walk in the garden. It was a beautiful night after the storm, and it is very pleasant to walk out when the air is so cool, and when the flowers smell so sweet, is it not, Mademoiselle?"

"Oh, but you know I dare not walk out at night! I am too timid."

"Mademoiselle might have some one with her, and then she would not be afraid."

"And whom could I have with me?" asked Andrée, without the least suspicion that she was undergoing a cross-examination.

Nicole was afraid to proceed further in her investigation. Andrée's coolness she thought the height of dissimulation; but she judged it best to give the conversation another turn.

"Mademoiselle was saying that she felt in pain?"

"Yes, indeed, I feel in great pain, and so weak, so low. I did nothing yesterday but what I do every day, yet I am so tired; perhaps I am going to be ill."

"It may be some sorrow which causes that feeling of weariness; I have felt it myself."

"Oh! you have sorrows, have you, Nicole?"

This was said with a disdainful carelessness which gave Nicole courage to speak more plainly.

"Oh, yes, Mademoiselle!" she replied; "yes, I have."

Andrée got out of bed slowly; and while proceeding to undress, that she might dress again, she said, "Well, let me hear them."

"Indeed, I have just come to tell Mademoiselle—" She stopped.

"To tell what? You look frightened, Nicole."

"I look frightened, and Mademoiselle looks tired; so doubtless we are both suffering."

This piece of familiarity displeased Andrée. She frowned slightly, exclaiming, "Oh!"

The intonation of her voice might have made Nicole reflect; but she was not to be daunted. "Since Mademoiselle wishes me to speak, I shall do so," she said.

"Well, go on."

"I wish to get married, Mademoiselle."

"Oh! is that what you are thinking of? Why, you are not seventeen yet."

"Mademoiselle is only sixteen, and yet does she not sometimes think of marrying?"

"What reason have you to suppose so?" asked Andrée, severely.

Nicole was just opening her mouth to say something impertinent; but she knew that that would cut short the conversation, which she had no desire should end yet.

"I beg Mademoiselle's pardon, — I cannot certainly know her thoughts. I am but a country girl, — I follow nature."

"That is a strange expression!"

"Is it not natural for a woman to love, and to wish to be loved?"

"Perhaps so. Well?"

"Well; I am in love."

"And the person you love loves you?"

"I think so, Mademoiselle." Then, reflecting that this reply was not decided enough under the circumstances, she added, "Indeed, I am sure of it."

"You are not wasting your time at Taverney, from your own account, Mademoiselle Nicole!"

"One must think of the future, Mademoiselle. You are a lady, and doubtless some rich relation will leave you a fortune; I must do the best I can for myself."

All this appeared natural enough; and forgetting Nicole's little piece of impertinence, Andrée's goodness of heart began to resume the ascendency.

"Very true," said she; "but I should like to know who is your choice."

"Ah, you do know him, Mademoiselle!" said Nicole, fixing her eyes on Andrée.

"I know him?"

"Yes, very well."

"Who is it, then? Do not keep me in suspense."

"I am afraid Mademoiselle will be displeased."

"I displeased?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

"Then it is some improper person whom you have chosen?"

"I do not say that."

"Then tell it without fear. It is the duty of masters to take an interest in the welfare of their dependents who perform their duties satisfactorily; and you know I am satisfied with you."

"You are very kind, Mademoiselle."

"Well, tell me quickly, and finish lacing me."

Nicole collected all her firmness and all her powers of penetration as she said, "Well, Mademoiselle, it is Gilbert whom I have chosen."

To her great surprise Andrée betrayed no emotion of any kind; she only said, "What! little Gilbert, my nurse's son?"

"It is he, Mademoiselle."

"And he loves you?"

Nicole believed that the decisive moment had arrived. "He has told me so twenty times," she said.

"Well, marry him," said Andrée, calmly. "I see nothing to prevent it. You have no relations, — he is an orphan; you are each of you free from control."

"Certainly," stammered Nicole, quite amazed at the matter ending so differently from what she had expected. "Mademoiselle gives her permission, then?"

"My full permission, — only you are both very young yet."

"We shall live longer together."

"And you have neither of you any money."

"We shall work."

"What can he work at, — he who is such a good-for-nothing?"

This dissimulation was too much for Nicole. She could not contain herself. "Mademoiselle must allow me to say that in speaking so of poor Gilbert she is treating him very ill," she said.

"It is treating him as he deserves; he is a lazy fellow."

"Oh, Mademoiselle, he reads a great deal; he wishes so to be well-informed!"

"He will not work."

"For Mademoiselle he does all that he can."

"For me?"

"Mademoiselle must know that, since she orders him to procure game for her every day, and he does so."

"I order him?"

"Yes; and he often goes twenty miles for it."

"Indeed! I confess I never thought about it."

"About the game?" asked Nicole, sarcastically.

"What does that witticism mean?" asked Andrée, getting a little impatient, for she felt irritable and unwell.

"I have no wit, Mademoiselle; wit is for great ladies. I am a poor girl, and tell things plainly as they are," replied Nicole; "and Mademoiselle is unjust to Gilbert, who is so very attentive to all her wishes."

"He only does his duty as a servant, if he be so."

"But Gilbert is not a servant, Mademoiselle; he receives no wages."

"He is the son of an old tenant; he is kept, he is fed, and he does nothing in return. But why defend so warmly this lad when he was not attacked?"

"Oh! I knew very well that Mademoiselle would not attack him."

"More words that I do not understand!"

"Mademoiselle will not understand."

"Enough! Explain this moment what you mean."

"Mademoiselle certainly knows better than I what I mean."

"I know nothing, and I shall not take the trouble of finding out; you ask my consent to your marriage?"

"Yes, and I would beg of you, Mademoiselle, not to be angry with Gilbert for loving me."

"What can it matter to me whether he loves you or does not love you? You are really very tiresome."

"Perhaps Mademoiselle has said the same to Gilbert?" said the waiting-maid.

"I!—do I ever speak to your Gilbert? You are crazy, I think."

"If Mademoiselle does not speak to him now, it is not very long since she did speak to him."

Andrée turned on her a look of ineffable scorn. "You have been trying for an hour to let me hear some specimen of your impertinence; say it at once, I command you."

"But—" began Nicole, a little alarmed.

"You say that I have spoken to Gilbert?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, I say so!"

A thought flashed across Andrée's mind, but it was so absurd that she burst into a fit of laughter. "Heaven forgive me!" she exclaimed; "I do believe the poor girl is jealous. Be not uneasy, Legay; I know so little of your Gilbert that I do not even know the color of his eyes!" And Andrée felt quite prepared to pardon what she now thought not impertinence, but mere folly. But Nicole did not want to be pardoned, because she looked on herself as the injured person.

"It is not the way to know their color to look at them by night," said she.

"Did you speak?" asked Andrée, now beginning to understand, but scarcely willing to allow herself to entertain the thought.

"I said that if Mademoiselle only speaks to Gilbert at night, she will not see very well what his features are."

"Take care!" said Andrée, turning pale, "and explain instantly what you mean."

"That is easily done. Last night I saw —"

"Be silent; some one calls me!"

In fact, a voice just then called, from the court in front of the house, "Andrée! Andrée!"

"It is the baron, Mademoiselle," said Nicole, "with the strange gentleman."

"Go down, and say that I cannot appear, — that I am indisposed; and then return and let me know the end of this extraordinary story of yours."

"Andrée!" cried her father again, "it is only the Baron Balsamo, who wishes to bid you good-morning and inquire after your health."

"Go, I tell you," said she to Nicole; and she pointed to the door with the gesture of a queen.

But when Nicole was gone, Andrée felt a strange sensation; she had resolved not to appear, yet she was impelled by an irresistible power to the window left open by her waiting-maid. She saw Balsamo below; he bowed, at the same time fixing his eyes steadily on her. She trembled, and held by the window to keep herself from falling.

"Good-morning, Monsieur," said she, in reply to his salutation; and just as she pronounced the words, Nicole, whom she had sent to say she should not appear, advanced

toward the gentlemen, looking with open mouth at this instance of caprice in her mistress.

Andrée had scarcely spoken when she sank, deprived of strength, on a chair; Balsamo still continued to gaze on her.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MORNING.

THE traveller had risen early, in order to look after his carriage and ascertain how Althotas had got on. No one was up at that hour in the castle but Gilbert, who followed with his eyes every movement of the stranger. But he could discover little, as Balsamo closed the carriage-door too carefully for his inquisitive looks to penetrate its mystery.

Seeing the baron's abode by the clear light of a sunny morning, Balsamo was struck by the change which the light of day had made in a picture which the night before had seemed to him very gloomy. The little white and red château — for it was built of stone and brick — was surrounded by a grove of sycamores and laburnums of a large size, the flowers of which hung on the roof of the low building and girt the towers with a crown of gold. In front of the court there was a small piece of water, surrounded by a broad border of turf and a hedge of acacias, on which the eye rested with pleasure, confined as the view was on this side by the tall chestnut and ash trees of the avenue.

Balsamo turned along a broad walk on the left, and had scarcely advanced twenty paces when he found himself in the midst of a thick shrubbery of maples, palms, and lindens, among which the roses and syringas, steeped by the rain of the preceding night, sent forth a delicious perfume. Through the hedge of privet which bordered

the walk peeped jasmine and honeysuckle, and in the distance could be seen a long alley, lined with pink hawthorn and wild roses, leading to a wood.

Balsamo at last arrived at the extremity of the demesne. Here, on a slight elevation, stood the massive ruins of an ancient castle, one of the towers of which was still standing almost uninjured, and clothed from its base to its summit with luxuriant shoots of the ivy and wild vine. Viewed from this point, the demesne of Taverney, though but seven or eight acres in extent, wanted neither dignity nor elegance.

After having spent about an hour in examining the ruins, Balsamo was returning toward the house, when he saw the baron leave it by a side-door, his slight frame buried in an Indian flowered dressing-gown, and proceed to prune and arrange his little parterre. He hastened to meet him; and now having still further sounded the poverty of his host, his politeness was more decided in its expression than it had been the night before.

"Allow me, Monsieur," said he, "to offer you my excuses for the trouble I have given you, and at the same time my respectful thanks for your hospitality. I should not have ventured to come down before knowing that you were up; but the view of Taverney from my window was so charming that I could not resist my desire to revisit those imposing ruins, and to see your beautiful garden."

"The ruins," said the baron, after having politely wished the stranger good-morning, "the ruins, Monsieur, are fine, — indeed, the only thing that is fine at Taverney."

"It was a large castle!"

"Yes; it was mine, or rather my ancestors'. They called it Maison Rouge, which name has long been joined

to Taverney, — indeed, our barony is that of Maison Rouge. But, my dear guest, let us not talk of things no longer in being."

Balsamo bowed in acquiescence.

"Allow me rather to make my excuses to you for your poor accommodation here. I told you beforehand what my house was."

"I have been delighted with it."

"A dog-kennel, a dog-kennel, Monsieur! A very favorite place with the rats, since the foxes, lizards, and adders drove them from the other castle. Ah, *pardieu!* Monsieur, you, who are a sorcerer or something very near it, you certainly ought to raise up with a stroke of your wand the old castle in its glory again, — not forgetting the two thousand acres which formerly surrounded it. I 'll wager, however, that instead of thinking of doing me such a service, you have been so polite as to go to sleep in an execrable bed!"

"Oh, Monsieur!"

"No, no; don't attempt to say anything in its favor! It is an execrable bed, — it is my son's."

"You must permit me to say that, such as the bed is, it appeared to me excellent. I cannot but feel ashamed of having intruded on you, and I am deeply indebted for the kindness with which you have received me. It would give me sincere pleasure to make a return, if it were in my power."

"Well, there is an opportunity," replied the old man, with a mocking smile; and pointing to La Brie, who was coming with a glass of water on a splendid plate of Dresden china, "just turn this into Burgundy, Chambertin, or any other good wine, and you will do me a most important service."

Balsamo smiled; the old man took the smile for a

refusal, and at one draught swallowed the water presented to him.

"An excellent specific!" said Balsamo. "Water is highest among the elements, for the Holy Spirit was borne on it before the creation of the world. Nothing can resist its action, — it penetrates stone; and we may yet discover that the diamond can be dissolved by it."

"I shall be dissolved by it, I fear," replied the baron. "Will you pledge me? The water has some advantages over my wine, — it is in capital order, and it is not yet exhausted. It is not like my Maraschino."

"If you had ordered a glass for me as well as for yourself, I might have been able to use it for your advantage."

"Good; explain that for me. Is there not still time?"

"Oh, yes! Tell your servant to bring me a glass of very pure water."

"La Brie, do you hear, you old rascal?"

La Brie hastened to obey.

"How," said the baron, turning to his guest, "can the glass of water which I drink every morning contain any properties or secrets which are unknown to me? Have I for ten years been making chemical experiments, as Monsieur Jourdain made prose, without being aware of it?"

"I do not know what you have been doing, but you shall see what I can do. Thank you, my good fellow," said Balsamo, taking the glass from La Brie, who had brought it with marvellous rapidity. He held the glass on a level with his eyes, and seemed to interrogate the water which it contained; in the sunlight the little beads on its surface were bright as diamonds, and streaked with violet color.

"Oh, the deuce!" cried the baron, laughing; "can anything beautiful be seen in a glass of water?"

"Yes, Baron, to-day, at least, something very beautiful." And Balsamo appeared doubly attentive in his occupation, — the baron, in spite of himself, looking a little serious, and La Brie gazing with open mouth at what was going on.

"What do you see? I am bursting with impatience to know. A good estate for me? A new Maison Rouge to set me on foot again?"

"I see something which induces me to beg you to be on the alert."

"Really! Am I going to be attacked?"

"No; but this morning you will receive a visit."

"Then you have yourself ordered some one to meet you here. That was wrong, Monsieur, very wrong. There may be no partridges this morning, — remember that!"

"I speak seriously, my dear Baron, and what I say is most important. Some one is at this moment on the way to Taverney."

"By what unhappy chance, *mon Dieu!* and what sort of visitor? Tell me, I beseech you, my dear guest; for I confess (you must have perceived it from the rather sour reception I gave you) that every one annoys me who comes here. Be precise, my dear sorcerer; if possible, be precise in your description."

"I can very easily tell all you wish;" and Balsamo again raised the glass to his searching eye.

"Well, do you see anything?"

"I see everything distinctly."

"Speak, oh speak, Sister Anne!"

"I see a lady of great consequence coming."

"Bah! indeed! — coming without being invited?"

"She has invited herself; she is attended by your son."

"By Philippe?"

"Yes."

The baron was seized with a fit of laughter very uncomplimentary to the sorcerer. "Ah! ah!" he said, "attended by my son? You say that the visitor is attended by my son?"

"Yes, Baron."

"You know my son, then?"

"I never saw him in my life."

"And my son at this moment is —"

"Is about a mile off."

"My dear Monsieur, he is in garrison at Strasburg; and unless he has deserted, — which he has not, I can swear, — he is bringing nobody hither."

"He is bringing some one, nevertheless," said Balsamo, still consulting his glass of water.

"And that some one," asked the baron, — "is it a man, or a woman?"

"It is a lady, Baron, and one of very high rank. Ah! there is one thing I ought to tell you, — you had better keep out of sight that little rogue with the horn at her finger-ends."

"Why so?"

"Because her features resemble those of the lady who is coming."

"A great lady resembles Nicole? That is absurd!"

"Why not? I bought a slave once who resembled Cleopatra so much that there was some idea of sending her to Rome to pass for that queen in Octavius's triumph."

"Ah, another attack of your old malady!"

"Well, do as you please about what I have told you. You must surely see, my dear Baron, that this matter cannot concern me; I speak only for your own good."

"But why should Nicole's resemblance to the great lady offend her?"

"Suppose you were the king of France (which I am far from wishing), or the dauphin (which I wish still less), should you be flattered on entering a house to find among the servants one whose face was a counterpart of your august visage?"

"Oh, the devil! that would be a sad dilemma! So, then, you think —"

"I think that the most high and mighty lady who is coming would not be pleased to see her living image in a short petticoat and cotton handkerchief."

"Oh, well," said the baron, still laughing, "we must see about it! But after all, my dear Baron, what delights me most in this affair is that my son is coming, — that dear Philippe, — without giving us a note of warning!" and he laughed louder than before.

"So you are pleased with my prediction?" said Balsamo, gravely. "I am glad of it; but in your place I should set about giving some orders."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"I shall think of it, my dear guest; I shall think of it."

"You have very little time."

"And you are serious, then?"

"No one could be more serious. If you wish to receive properly the great personage who does you the honor of visiting you, you have not a minute to lose."

The baron shook his head.

"You still doubt?" asked Balsamo.

"Faith! I confess, dear guest, that you have to do with a most confirmed sceptic." And just then he turned to call his daughter, in order to communicate his guest's prediction to her, as we have before related. We have seen how the young girl replied to her father's invitation,

and how Balsamo's gaze had drawn her, as if by fascination, to the window.

Nicole stood looking with amazement at La Brie, who was making signs to her, and trying to understand what had been said.

"It is devilishly hard to believe!" repeated the baron, "and without seeing —"

"Then, since you must see, look there!" said Balsamo, pointing to the avenue, where a horseman appeared galloping toward them.

"Ha!" cried the baron, "there indeed is —"

"Monsieur Philippe!" said Nicole, standing on tiptoe.

"My young master!" exclaimed La Brie, joyfully.

"My brother, my brother!" cried Andrée, stretching out her arms at the window.

"Is it your son, my dear Baron?" asked Balsamo, in a careless tone.

"Yes, *pardieu*, it is!" he exclaimed, stupefied with astonishment.

"This is but the beginning," said Balsamo.

"You are positively a sorcerer, then?" said the baron.

A triumphant smile hovered on the stranger's lips.

The horse came on at full speed, reeking with moisture, passed the last rows of trees, and was still in motion when the rider leaped to the ground and hastened to embrace his father, who only muttered, "What the devil! what the devil!"

"It is really I," said Philippe, who saw his father's perplexity; "it is indeed."

"Doubtless, — I see that plainly enough; but what brought you hither at this time?"

"Father, a great honor awaits our house!"

The old man looked up inquiringly.

Philippe went on: "In an hour Marie Antoinette

Josephe, Archduchess of Austria and Dauphiness of France, will be here."

The baron looked as deeply humbled as he had before looked sarcastic; and turning to Balsamo, said only, "Pardon me!"

"Monsieur," returned Balsamo, "I leave you with your son; it is long since you have met, and you must have much to say to each other."

Bowing to Andrée, who, full of joy at the arrival of her brother, had hastened down to meet him, he retired, making a sign to Nicole and La Brie, which they doubtless understood, for they disappeared with him among the trees of the avenue.

CHAPTER XIII.

PHILIPPE DE TAVERNEY.

PHILIPPE DE TAVERNEY, Chevalier de Maison Rouge, did not resemble his sister, yet was as fine a specimen of manly beauty as she was of feminine loveliness. His features were noble and regular, his figure and carriage graceful in the extreme, and the expression of his eyes was at the same time mild and haughty.

Like all distinguished minds, burdened by the conditions of life imposed on them, he was disposed to sadness, without being gloomy. To this perhaps he owed his mildness of temper; for he was naturally proud, imperious, and reserved. The necessity of associating with the poor, his real equals, as with the rich, his equals in rank, had softened a character inclined to be overbearing and scornful.

Philippe had scarcely embraced his father when Andrée, roused from her magnetic torpor by his arrival, hastened down to throw herself on his bosom. The sobs which accompanied this action showed how dear he was to the heart of the tender girl. Philippe took her hand and his father's and drew them into the salon, where they could be alone. "You are incredulous, my dear father, — you are surprised, my dear sister," said he, after seating them near him; "yet nothing is more true than that in a few minutes the dauphiness will be in our poor abode."

"*Ventrebleu!*" cried the baron, "she must be prevented, whatever it may cost! The dauphiness here, — we should

be dishonored forever! This would be a specimen of the nobility of France to present her! No, no; it must not be. But tell me, what the deuce put my house into her head?"

"Oh, it is a complete romance!"

"A romance!" said Andrée. "Relate it, brother, my dear, good brother!"

"'My dear, good brother!'" repeated the baron, — "she seems quite pleased!"

"Yes; for is not Philippe pleased, my dear father?"

"Because master Philippe is an enthusiast. But for me, who look at things in a more serious manner, I see nothing very agreeable in it."

"You will be of a different opinion," said the young man, "when I relate what has occurred."

"Well, relate it quickly!" grumbled the baron.

"Yes, yes; relate it, Philippe!" exclaimed Andrée.

"Well, I was in garrison at Strasburg, as you know. Now, you are aware that it was by Strasburg that the dauphiness was to enter France."

"Know it! how should we know anything in this den?" asked the baron.

"Well, at Strasburg, brother?" said Andrée.

"Well, we were waiting on the glacis from six in the morning, for we did not know positively at what hour Madame la Dauphine would arrive. It rained in torrents, and our clothes were dripping. The major sent me forward to endeavor to discover the cortège. I had galloped about a league, when all at once, at a turn in the road, I found myself close to the advanced guard of the escort. I exchanged a few words with them, and just then her Royal Highness put her head out of the carriage-window and asked who I was. It seemed that some one called to me to stop; but being eager to carry the news to the

officer who had sent me, I had already set off at full gallop. All my fatigue was forgotten in an instant."

"And the dauphiness?" asked Andrée.

"She is not older than you, and beautiful as an angel."

"But, Philippe —" said the baron, rather hesitatingly.

"Well, father?"

"Does she not resemble some one you have seen?"

"Some one that I have seen?"

"Yes; endeavor to recollect."

"No, I know no one like Madame la Dauphine!" he exclaimed, enthusiastically.

"What! not Nicole, for instance?"

"Ha, that is strange!" cried Philippe, in surprise. "Now you say so, I do think she is like her; but oh, so much inferior in beauty and grace! But how could you know that she was like her?"

"Faith! a sorcerer told me."

"A sorcerer?" said Philippe, astonished.

"Yes; and he predicted her coming and yours this morning."

"The stranger?" asked Andrée, timidly.

"Is it he who was beside you, Monsieur, when I arrived, and who retired so discreetly?"

"Yes; but go on, Philippe, go on."

"Perhaps it would be better to make some preparations," said Andrée.

"No, —the more you prepare, the more ridiculous we shall appear. Go on, Philippe, I tell you!"

"I returned to Strasburg and made my report. Word was sent to the governor, the Comte de Stainville, who immediately joined us. We set out to meet her Royal Highness, and we were at the Kehl gate when the procession came in sight. I was close to the governor."

"Stay!" said the baron; "I once knew a Comte de Stainville."

"Brother-in-law to the prime minister, the Duc de Choiseul."

"It is the same. Go on, then, go on."

"The dauphiness, who is young, perhaps likes young faces; for she listened very inattentively to the governor, and fixed her eyes on me, although I kept respectfully in the background. Then, pointing to me, she said, 'Is not that the gentleman who was the first to meet me?' 'Yes, Madame,' replied the governor. 'Approach, Monsieur,' said she. I approached her. 'What is your name?' asked the dauphiness, in the sweetest voice I ever heard. 'The Chevalier de Taverney Maison Rouge,' I replied, stammering. 'Pray take a note of that name on your tablets, my dear friend,' said the dauphiness, turning to an old lady, who, I have since learned, is the Comtesse de Langershausen, her governess. My name was written. Then, turning again to me, she said, 'Ah, Monsieur, you have suffered very much from your exposure to this frightful weather! I am extremely sorry for having been the cause of it.'"

"Oh, how good the dauphiness must be! What kindness and consideration!" said Andrée, with delight.

"Very well, very well indeed," muttered the baron, with a smile indicating a father's partiality, and at the same time his bad opinion of women, even of queens. "But go on, Philippe."

"What did you reply?" asked Andrée.

"I replied not a word; I bowed to the very ground. She passed on."

"What, you made no reply?" exclaimed the baron.

"I had no voice, I assure you, Monsieur; my heart beat so rapidly, — I was so much agitated."

"What the devil! do you think I had nothing to say when, at about your age, I was presented to the Princess Leczinska?"

"But, Monsieur, you had always a great deal of wit," Philippe replied, bowing.

Andrée pressed his hand.

"I profited by her Royal Highness's departure," continued Philippe, "to hasten to my apartment and change my clothes; for I was wet to the skin, and covered with mud from head to foot."

"Poor brother!" whispered Andrée.

"When the dauphiness," Philippe continued, "reached the town-hall, she had to receive the congratulations of the principal inhabitants; that being over, it was announced that dinner was ready. A friend of mine, the major of my regiment, has since told me that while at table she looked several times round on the officers who were present, and at last she said, 'I do not see the young officer who was sent to meet me this morning; has he not been told that I wished to thank him?' The major stepped forward. 'Madame,' said he, 'Lieutenant de Taverney was obliged to retire and change his dress, that he might present himself in a more suitable manner before you.' A moment after, I entered the room, and I had not been there five minutes when the dauphiness perceived me. She made a sign to me to approach; I obeyed. 'Monsieur,' said she, 'would you object to follow me to Paris?' 'Oh, Madame,' I cried, 'it would only make me too happy; but I am in garrison at Strasburg, and am not my own master.' 'Well, I shall arrange that matter with the governor;' and she made a gesture for me to retire. In the evening she said to the governor, 'Monsieur, I have a vow to fulfil, and you must assist me in it.' 'I shall consider it a sacred duty,

Madame,' he replied. 'You must know,' she continued, 'that I made a vow to take into my own service the first Frenchman, whoever he should be, whom I should meet on touching the soil of France, and that I would make him and his family happy, — if, indeed, princes can make any one happy.' 'Madame,' said the governor, 'princes are God's representatives on earth. But may I ask,' continued he, 'who was the person who had the good fortune to be first met by your Royal Highness?' 'The Chevalier de Taverney Maison Rouge, a young lieutenant.' 'We shall all be jealous of the Chevalier de Taverney, Madame,' replied the governor, 'but we shall not place any obstacle in the way of his high fortune; the ties which engage him here shall be broken, and he shall depart at the same time as your Highness.' So the day on which the dauphiness left Strasburg I was ordered to accompany her on horseback, and since then have never left the door of her carriage."

"Oh!" said the baron, with his former singular smile, "strange enough, but not impossible!"

"What, father?" said the young man, naïvely.

"Oh, I know!" said the baron; "I know, eh! eh!"

"But, brother," said Andrée, "I don't see what all this has to do with the visit of the dauphiness."

"Wait till you hear. Last night we arrived at Nancy at about eleven o'clock, and were passing through the town by torch-light. The dauphiness called me to her. 'Monsieur de Taverney,' she said, 'urge on the escort.' I made a sign that the dauphiness wished to travel faster. 'I wish,' she added, 'to depart early to-morrow morning.' 'Your Highness is going to make a long march, then?' 'No, but I wish to stop on the road; and can you guess where?' she asked, smiling. 'No, Madame.' 'I mean to stop at Taverney, to see your

father and sister.' 'My father and my sister! What, your Royal Highness knows —' 'I have made inquiries, and know that they live only two hundred paces from the road which we are travelling. You will give the order to make a halt at Taverney.' The perspiration broke on my forehead, and, trembling, as you may suppose, I hastened to reply, 'My father's house, Madame, is not worthy to receive so great a princess; we are poor.' 'So much the better,' she replied; 'I shall therefore, I am certain, be received more cordially and more simply, — however poor you may be, there will be always a cup of milk for a friend who wishes to forget for a moment that she is Archduchess of Austria and Dauphiness of France.' 'O Madame!' said I. That was all I could say; respect forbade me to go farther."

"Stupid fellow!" cried the baron.

"One might have thought that her Royal Highness understood what was in my mind; for she added: 'Do not be afraid, I shall not stay long. But if, as you think, I should suffer some inconvenience by this visit, that would be only fair; for I caused you to suffer on my arrival at Strasburg.' Who could resist such charming words, father?"

"Oh, it would have been impossible," cried Andrée; "she is so sweet, so good! She will be satisfied with my flowers and a cup of my milk, as she says."

"Yes," said the baron; "but she will not be very well satisfied with my chairs, which will dislocate her bones, and my hangings, which will disgust her. Devil take all whims! So! France will be well governed by a woman who takes such caprices. *Peste!* This is ominous of a strange reign."

"Oh, father, how can you say such things of a princess who is honoring us so highly?"

"Who is dishonoring us, rather!" cried the old man. "Taverney was forgotten, buried under the ruins of Maison Rouge. I intended that if it came to light again, it should be in a suitable manner; and now the whims of a girl are going to drag us into day, — dusty, shabby, wretched! Now the gazettes, on the watch for everything absurd, will amuse their readers with the visit of a great princess to this den of Taverney. *Cordieu* I have an idea!"

The young people started at the manner in which he pronounced these words. "What do you mean, Monsieur?" asked Philippe.

The baron muttered to himself: "If the Count of Medina burned his palace that he might embrace a queen I may well burn my kennel to get rid of the visit of a princess. Let her come! let her come!"

Philippe and Andrée heard only the last words, and they looked at each other uneasily.

"It cannot be long before she will be here, Monsieur," said Philippe. "I took the way through the wood, in order to get some minutes in advance of the cortège; but it will soon be here."

"Then I must not lose time," said the baron; and, with the agility of youth, he left the salon, ran to the kitchen, snatched a flaming piece of wood from the hearth, and hurried to his barns. But just as he was about to throw the burning brand into a heap of straw, his arm was seized by Balsamo.

"What are you about, Monsieur?" cried he. "The Archduchess of Austria is not a Constable de Bourbon, whose presence contaminates so that we should rather burn our house than permit her to enter it!"

The old man stopped, pale, trembling, and his habitual smile banished from his lips. He had gathered all his

strength into his resolution to make his poverty yet greater by the destruction of his dwelling, rather than be disgraced — according to his ideas — by allowing its mediocrity to be seen.

"Come, Monsieur, come," continued Balsamo; "you have only time to throw off your dressing-gown and put yourself in better trim. The Baron of Taverney whom I knew at the siege of Philipsbourg, wore the grand cross of the order of Saint Louis. Any coat will be rich and elegant when decorated with that."

"But, Monsieur, shall I show to our dauphiness that poverty which I wished to hide even from you?"

"Be not uneasy, Baron; we shall manage to occupy her attention so that she shall not know whether your house be new or old, poor or rich. Be hospitable, Monsieur; it is your duty as a gentleman! What will the enemies of the dauphiness do — and she has many — if her friends burn their castles rather than receive her under their roof? Let us not thus anticipate that vengeance which is to come! Everything in its predestined time."

The baron again showed an involuntary submission to Balsamo, and hurried to his children, who, uneasy at his absence, were seeking him on every side. As to Balsamo, he retired in silence, like a man intent on some work which he had undertaken, and which he must complete.

CHAPTER XIV.

MARIE ANTOINETTE JOSEPHE, ARCHDUCHESS OF AUSTRIA.

As Balsamo had said, there was no time to be lost; for now on the road, generally so peaceful, which led to the Baron of Taverney's dwelling, a great sound of carriages, horses, and voices was heard. Three carriages, one of which was covered with gilding and mythological bas-reliefs, and, notwithstanding its magnificence, was not less soiled and bespattered than the others, stopped at the great gate of the avenue. Gilbert held open the gate, his eyes distended, his whole frame trembling with feverish agitation at the sight of so much magnificence. Twenty gentlemen on horseback, all young and splendidly dressed, drew up near the principal carriage, from which a young girl of sixteen, dressed with great simplicity, but with her hair elaborately piled on her forehead, got out, assisted by a gentleman in black, who wore, saltier-wise, under his mantle, the ribbon of Saint Louis.

Marie Antoinette — for it was she — brought with her a reputation for beauty which the princesses destined to share the thrones of the kings of France have not always possessed. It was difficult to say whether her eyes were beautiful or not; yet they were capable of every expression, more particularly of the opposite expressions of mildness and scorn. Her nose was finely formed, her upper lip beautiful; but the lower lip — her aristocratic inheritance from seventeen emperors — was too thick and promi-

nent. Her complexion was lovely; her neck, shoulders, and bust were of marble whiteness and beautifully formed; her hands truly regal. At times, when she was roused to energy, her carriage was majestic, firm, and decided; at other times soft, undulating, — one might almost say caressing. No woman ever made a reverence more gracefully; no queen ever gave greeting with more tact and discrimination. This day the most expressive sweetness shone in her countenance. She had resolved to be only the woman, and to forget the dauphiness. She wore a dress of white silk, and her beautiful bare arms supported a mantle of rich lace. Scarcely had she touched the ground when she turned to assist one of her ladies of honor, whom age had weakened a little; and refusing the arm of the gentleman in black, she advanced, inhaling the fresh air, and looking around as if determined to enjoy to the utmost the few moments of freedom with which she was indulging herself. "Oh! what a beautiful situation," she exclaimed; "what magnificent trees! And such a pretty little house! How happy one might be in this healthful air, under those trees, which make so sweet a retirement!"

At this moment Philippe appeared, followed by Andrée, on whose arm the baron leaned. She was dressed in a simple gown of gray silk, and the baron in a coat of blue velvet, the remains of some of his old magnificence; he had not forgotten Balsamo's recommendation, and wore his ribbon of Saint Louis. On seeing the three approach, the dauphiness stopped. Her escort then grouped itself around her, — the officers holding their horses by the bridles, and the courtiers, hat in hand, whispering to one another.

Philippe drew near, pale with agitation, yet with a noble bearing. "With your Royal Highness's permis-

sion," said he, "I have the honor of presenting to you the Baron de Taverney Maison Rouge, my father, and Claire Andrée de Taverney, my sister."

The baron bowed profoundly, like a man who knew how to bow to queens. Andrée showed in her graceful timidity the flattering politeness of sincere respect. Marie Antoinette looked at the two young persons; and recalling what Philippe had said of their poverty, she understood what they suffered at that moment.

"Madame," said the baron, with dignity, "your Royal Highness does too much honor to the château of Taverney; such an obscure abode is not worthy to receive so much rank and beauty."

"I know that it is the abode of an old soldier of France," replied the dauphiness; "and my mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, who has often made war, has told me that in your country those richest in glory are sometimes the poorest in meaner treasures;" and with ineffable grace she extended her lovely hand to Andrée, who, kneeling, kissed it.

The baron was, however, still haunted by the idea which had so much tormented him, that the attendants of the dauphiness were about to crowd into his little house, in which there could not be found chairs for a fourth of their number. The dauphiness hastened to relieve him from his embarrassment. "Gentlemen," said she, turning to those who formed her escort, "I must not impose on you the trouble of following me in all my caprices. You will wait here, if you please; in half an hour I shall return. Come with me, my good Langershausen," she added in German to the lady whom she had assisted out of the carriage; "and you, Monsieur," said she to the gentleman in black, "have the goodness to follow us!"

This personage, who, though dressed simply, was re-

markable for the elegance of his manners, was about thirty years of age and very handsome. He drew to one side to allow the princess to pass. Marie Antoinette took Andrée for her guide, and made a sign to Philippe to come near his sister. As to the baron, he was left to the personage, of high rank doubtless, to whom the dauphiness had granted the honor of accompanying her.

"So you are a Taverney Maison Rouge?" said the stranger, playing with his splendid ruffles of the most expensive lace, and turning to the baron with aristocratic impertinence.

"Must I reply 'Monsieur,' or 'Monseigneur?'" asked the baron, with equal impertinence.

"You may say simply 'Prince,' or 'your Eminence,' which you choose," the other replied.

"Well, then, your Eminence, I am a Taverney Maison Rouge, — a real one!" said the baron, in that tone of raillery which he so seldom abandoned.

His Eminence, who had the usual tact of great nobles, felt that he had to do with no country clown, and continued, "This is your summer residence?"

"Summer and winter," answered the baron, who wished to put an end to disagreeable queries, but accompanying each reply with a low bow.

Philippe could not help turning from time to time uneasily toward his father, for the house as they drew nearer it, wore an aspect threatening and ironical, as if pitilessly determined to show all their poverty. The baron had already resignedly extended his hand to point the way to the door of his house, when the dauphiness, turning to him, said, "Excuse me, Monsieur, if I do not enter; these shades are so delightful that I could pass my life in them. I am tired of rooms. For fifteen days I have been received in rooms, — I, who love the open air, the shade of trees,

and the perfume of flowers." Then, turning to Andrée, "You will bring me a cup of milk here, under these beautiful trees, will you not?"

"Your Highness," said the baron, turning pale, "how should we dare to offer you such poor refreshment?"

"I prefer it, Monsieur, to anything else. New-laid eggs and milk formed my banquets at Schönbrunn."

All at once La Brie, swelling with pride, in a splendid livery and with a napkin on his arm, appeared under an archway of jasmine, the shade of which had attracted the eye of the dauphiness. In a tone in which importance and respect were strangely mixed, he announced, "Her Royal Highness is served!"

"Am I in the dwelling of an enchanter?" cried the princess, as she ran rather than walked to the perfumed alley.

The baron, in his uneasiness, forgot all etiquette, left the gentleman in black, and hurried after the dauphiness. Andrée and Philippe looked at one another with mingled astonishment and anxiety, and followed their father.

Under the clematis, jasmine, and woodbine was placed an oval table, covered with a damask cloth of dazzling whiteness, on which was arranged, in a brilliant service of plate, a collation the most elegant and rare. There were exotic fruits made into the most delicious confections, biscuits from Aleppo, oranges from Malta, and lemons of extraordinary size, all arranged in beautiful vases. Wines, the richest and most esteemed, sparkled like the ruby and the topaz in decanters ornamented and cut in Persia; and in the centre, in a silver vase, was placed the milk for which the dauphiness had asked.

Marie Antoinette looked around and saw surprise and alarm imprinted on the face of her host and on the countenances of his son and daughter. The gentlemen of her

escort were delighted with what they saw, without understanding it, and without endeavoring to understand it.

"You expected me, then, Monsieur?" said she to the baron.

"I, Madame!" stammered he.

"Yes; you could not in ten minutes have all this prepared, and I have been only ten minutes here;" and she looked at La Brie with an expression which said, "especially when you have only one servant!"

"Madame," answered the baron, "your Royal Highness was expected, or rather your coming was foretold to me."

"Your son wrote to you?"

"No, Madame."

"No one knew that I was coming here, as I did not wish to give you the trouble which I see I have occasioned. It was only late last night that I expressed my intention to your son, and he reached this place only a few minutes before me."

"Scarcely a quarter of an hour, Madame."

"Then some fairy must have revealed to you what was to occur, — Mademoiselle's godmother, perhaps?"

"Madame," said the baron, offering a chair to the princess, "it is not a fairy who announced my good fortune to me; it is —"

"It is —?" repeated the princess, observing that he hesitated.

"An enchanter, Madame!"

"An enchanter! How can that be?"

"I know nothing of the matter, for I do not meddle with magic myself; yet it is to him, Madame, I am indebted for being able to entertain your Highness in a tolerable fashion."

"Then we must not touch anything, since the collation

is the work of sorcery. His Eminence," she added, pointing to the gentleman in black, whose attention was fixed on a Strasburg pie, "seems in a hurry to begin; but we shall assuredly not eat of this enchanted collation. And you, dear friend," turning to her governess, "distrust the Cyprus wine, and do as I do!" and she poured some water from a globe-formed carafe with a narrow neck into a golden goblet.

"In truth," said Andrée, with alarm, "her Royal Highness is perhaps right!"

Philippe trembled with surprise, and ignorant of what had taken place the evening before, looked alternately at his father and his sister for explanation.

"But I see," continued the dauphiness, "his Eminence is determined to sin, in spite of all the canons of the Church."

"Madame," replied the prelate, "we princes of the Church are too worldly to believe that celestial wrath can be aroused by the food we eat, and certainly too humane to burn an honest sorcerer for providing us with good things like these!"

"Do not jest, Monseigneur," said the baron. "I swear to you that the contriver of all this is a sorcerer, — a real sorcerer, — who foretold to me, about an hour ago, the arrival of her Royal Highness and my son!"

"And has an hour been sufficient for you to prepare this banquet?" demanded the dauphiness. "In that case you are a greater sorcerer than your sorcerer!"

"No, Madame, it is he who did all this; he brought the table up through the ground, laden as you see."

"On your word, Monsieur?"

"On the honor of a gentleman!" replied the baron.

"Ha!" said the cardinal, in a serious tone, putting back the plate which he had taken, "I thought you

were jesting. Then you have in your house a real magician?"

"A real magician! And I should not wonder if he has made all the gold on that table himself."

"Oh, he must have found out the philosopher's stone!" cried the cardinal, his eyes sparkling with covetousness.

"See how the eyes of his Eminence sparkle! He has been seeking all his life for the philosopher's stone!" said the dauphiness.

"I confess to your Royal Highness," replied his very worldly Eminence, "that nothing interests me more than the supernatural; nothing is so curious, in my estimation, as the impossible."

"Ah! I have touched the vulnerable part, it seems," said the dauphiness. "Every great man has his mysteries, particularly when he is a diplomatist; and I — I warn your Eminence — know a great deal of sorcery. I sometimes find out things, if not impossible, if not supernatural, at least incredible;" and the eye of the dauphiness, before so mild, flashed as from an internal storm, but no thunder followed. His Eminence doubtless understood what this meant, for he was evidently embarrassed. The dauphiness continued: "To make the thing complete, M. de Taverney, you must show us your magician. Where is he? In what box have you hidden him?"

"Madame," answered the baron, "he is much more able to put me and my house in a box than I to put him!"

"In truth, you excite my curiosity," said Marie Antoinette. "Positively, Monsieur, I must see him!"

The tone in which this was uttered, although still retaining the charm which Marie Antoinette knew how to give to her words, forbade all idea of refusal to comply

with her wish. The baron understood this perfectly, and made a sign to La Brie, who was contemplating with eager eyes the illustrious guests, the sight of whom seemed to make up to him for his twenty years of unpaid wages.

"Tell Baron Joseph Balsamo," said his master, "that her Royal Highness the dauphiness desires to see him." La Brie departed.

"Joseph Balsamo!" said the dauphiness. "What a singular name!"

"Joseph Balsamo!" repeated his Eminence, as if reflecting; "I think I know that name."

Five minutes passed in silence. Suddenly Andrée shuddered; she heard, before it was perceptible to other ears, a step advancing under the shade of the trees. The branches were put aside, and Joseph Balsamo stood face to face with Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER XV.

MAGIC.

Balsamo bowed humbly; but no sooner had he raised his head than he fixed his bright, expressive eyes firmly but respectfully on the face of the dauphiness, and waited calmly until she should interrogate him.

"If it is you of whom the Baron de Taverney has been speaking to us," said Marie Antoinette, "draw near, Monsieur, that we may better see what a magician is."

Balsamo advanced another step and bowed.

"Your profession is to foretell events, Monsieur?" said the dauphiness, regarding him with more curiosity than she would herself have been willing to acknowledge, and sipping some milk which had been handed her.

"It is not my profession, Madame," said Balsamo, "but I do foretell events."

"We have been brought up in an enlightened creed," said the dauphiness, "and the only mysteries in which we believe are those of the Catholic faith."

"They are to be venerated," replied Balsamo, reverently; "but here is Monseigneur the Cardinal de Rohan, who will tell your Royal Highness, though he be a prince of the Church, that they are not the only mysteries which deserve to be regarded with respect."

The cardinal started; he had not told his name, it had not been pronounced, yet this stranger knew it. Marie Antoinette did not appear to remark this circumstance, but continued: "You will confess, Monsieur, that at

least they are the only mysteries which cannot be controverted?"

"Madame," answered Balsamo, with the same respect, "besides faith, there is certainty."

"You speak rather obscurely, Monsieur. Although thoroughly French in heart, I am but indifferently acquainted with the niceties of the language, and must beg you to be less enigmatic if I am to comprehend you."

"And I, Madame," said Balsamo, shaking his head, with a melancholy smile, "would entreat that all may remain unexplained. I should deeply regret to unveil to so illustrious a princess a future which might not correspond to her hopes."

"This becomes serious," said Marie Antoinette; "the gentleman wishes to excite my curiosity, that I may command him to tell my fortune."

"God forbid that your Royal Highness should force me to do it!" said Balsamo, coldly.

"Yes," replied the dauphiness; "for you would be rather puzzled to do it!" and she laughed.

But the dauphiness's laugh died away without meeting an echo from any of the attendants. They all seemed to submit tacitly to the influence of the singular man who was for the moment the centre of general attraction.

"Come, confess it frankly," said the dauphiness.

Balsamo bowed without answering.

"Yet it is you who predicted my arrival to the Baron de Taverney," resumed Marie Antoinette, with a slight movement of impatience.

"Yes, Madame, it is I."

"And how did he do it?" she added, turning to the baron, as if she felt the necessity that a third party should intervene in this strange dialogue.

"Very simply, Madame, — merely by looking in a glass of water."

"Is that true?" she asked, turning to Balsamo.

"Yes, Madame," he replied.

"Then, having read the future for the Baron de Taverney in a glass of water, surely you can read it for me in a decanter."

"Perfectly well, Madame."

"And why refuse to do so?"

"Because the future is uncertain; and if I saw a cloud on it —" He stopped.

"Well?"

"It would give me pain, as I have had the honor to say already, to sadden your Royal Highness."

"Have you known me before, or do you now see me for the first time?"

"I have had the honor of seeing your Royal Highness when a child, in your native country, with your august mother."

"You have seen my mother, then?"

"I have had that honor. She is a great and powerful queen."

"Empress, Monsieur."

"I used the word 'queen' in reference to the heart and mind; and yet —"

"Reservations concerning my mother?" said the dauphiness, haughtily.

"The greatest hearts have weaknesses, Madame, particularly where they think the happiness of their children is concerned."

"History, I trust, Monsieur, will not discover a single weakness in Maria Theresa."

"Because history will not know what is known only to the Empress Maria Theresa, to your Royal Highness, and to myself."

"We have a secret, Monsieur, — we three?" said the dauphiness, smiling disdainfully.

"We three, Madame," replied Balsamo, solemnly.

"Come, then, tell this secret, Monsieur."

"It will then be one no longer."

"No matter; tell it!"

"Is it your Royal Highness's will?"

"It is."

Balsamo bowed. "There is in the Palace of Schönbrunn," said he, "a cabinet, called the Dresden cabinet, on account of the splendid vases of porcelain which it contains."

"Yes," said the dauphiness; "go on."

"This cabinet forms a part of the private suite of rooms of the Empress Maria Theresa; in it she writes her letters."

"Yes."

"On a certain day, about seven in the morning, when the empress had not yet risen, your Royal Highness entered this cabinet by a door through which you alone were permitted to pass; for your Highness is the favorite daughter of her Imperial Majesty."

"Well, Monsieur?"

"Your Highness approached a writing-desk, on which lay open a letter which her Imperial Majesty had written the night before. Your Royal Highness read that letter; and doubtless some expressions in it were displeasing to you, for you took a pen, and with your own hand erased three words."

The dauphiness blushed slightly. "What were the words erased?" she asked anxiously.

"They were the first words of the letter."

"I do not ask you where they were to be found, but what was their meaning."

"A too strong expression of affection, doubtless, for the person to whom they were addressed. This was a weakness, and to this it was I alluded in speaking of your august mother."

"Then you remember the words?"

"Assuredly."

"Repeat them to me."

"They were: '*My dear friend.*'"

Marie Antoinette bit her lip and turned pale.

"Shall I tell your Royal Highness to whom the letter was addressed?"

"No; but you may write the name."

Balsamo drew out a pocket-book with gold clasps; and having written some words on one of the leaves, he tore it out, and, bowing, presented it to the dauphiness. Marie Antoinette unfolded the leaf and read, "The letter was addressed to the mistress of Louis XV.: 'To the Marquise de Pompadour.'" The dauphiness raised her eyes and looked with astonishment at the man who, though he bowed low before her, seemed to have it in his power to direct her fate. "All this is true, Monsieur," she said, after a pause; "and although I am ignorant by what means you have become acquainted with these circumstances, I cannot speak falsely, and I must declare that what you have said is true."

"Then," said Balsamo, "will your Royal Highness permit me to retire, satisfied with this harmless proof of my art?"

"No, Monsieur," replied the dauphiness; "the more I know of your powers, the more desirous I become to have my fate foretold. You have spoken only of the past; let me learn what the future will be."

The princess spoke these words with a feverish impatience which she in vain endeavored to conceal from her auditors.

"I am ready, if your Royal Highness commands me, to declare it; yet let me supplicate you not to do so."

"I have never expressed a command twice; and you will recollect, Monsieur, that I have already commanded once."

"Let me at least ask the oracle if the revelation may be made to your Royal Highness," he said, entreatingly.

"Good or bad, Monsieur," replied Marie Antoinette, with increasing irritation, "I will know it. If good, I shall take it for flattery; if bad, I shall hold it as a warning, and shall be obliged to you for it. Begin!"

Balsamo took the round carafe with the narrow neck and placed it on a golden saucer; the rays of the sun, striking on this, shone dimly yellow in the water, and seemed to offer something worthy of deep consideration to the attentive soothsayer. Every one was silent. At length he placed the carafe again on the table, and shook his head.

"Well, Monsieur?" said the dauphiness.

"I cannot speak it," replied Balsamo.

"You cannot, because you have nothing to tell me," replied Marie Antoinette, a little contemptuously.

"There are things which must never be said to princes, Madame," replied Balsamo, in a tone which seemed to express his determination to oppose her wishes.

"Yes, when those things, I repeat, may be expressed by the word *nothing*."

"It is not that which prevents me, Madame; on the contrary, it is the very reverse."

The dauphiness smiled disdainfully, Balsamo appeared embarrassed, the cardinal began to laugh outright, and the baron drew near, grumbling: "So my magician has exhausted himself! His powers have not lasted very long! It only remains for us to see all these fine things

turned into vine-leaves, as we have read in Eastern tales."

"I should rather have had the simple vine-leaves," said Marie Antoinette, "than these fine things displayed by the gentleman for the purpose of getting himself presented to me."

"Deign to remember, Madame," replied Balsamo, who was deadly pale, "that I did not solicit this honor."

"It was not difficult for you to anticipate, Monsieur, that I should ask to see you."

"Pardon him, Madame," said Andrée, in a low voice; "he thought he was doing right."

"And I tell you he was doing wrong," replied the princess, so as to be heard only by Andrée and Balsamo. "No one can elevate himself by humiliating an old man; and when we can have the pewter goblet of a gentleman to drink in, we need not the golden one of a mountebank!"

Balsamo started as if a viper had bitten him. "Madame," said he, greatly agitated, "I am ready to let you know your destiny, since your blindness impels you to desire such knowledge."

He pronounced these words in a tone so firm and so threatening that all who heard him felt the blood chilled in their veins.

"Gib ihm kein Gehör, meine Tochter,"[1] said the old lady to Marie Antoinette.

"Lass sie hören; sie hat wissen wollen, und so soll sie wissen,"[2] replied Balsamo.

These words, spoken in German, — a language which was understood by only a few present, — seemed to render more mysterious what was going on.

[1] Do not listen to him, my daughter.

[2] Let her; she wishes to know, and she shall know.

"No," said the dauphiness, resisting the entreaties of her venerable governess; "let him say what he desires to say. Were I now to permit him to be silent, he would believe me afraid."

Balsamo heard these words, and a dark, furtive smile played for a second on his lips. "It is as I said," he muttered to himself; "the courage of bravado merely."

"Speak!" said the dauphiness; "speak, Monsieur!"

"Then your Royal Highness is decided?"

"I never go back from a decision once made."

"In that case, Madame, I would entreat that we may be alone."

She made a sign which those around understood; all retired.

"This is a good way to obtain a private audience," said the dauphiness, turning to Balsamo; "is it not, Monsieur?"

"I would beg your Royal Highness not to irritate me!" replied Balsamo; "I am but an instrument of Providence to enlighten you on those sorrows which await you. Insult Fortune, if you will, — she can revenge herself; but for me, I am but the gloomy herald of the misfortunes she has in store for you."

"Then it appears that misfortunes await me?" said the dauphiness, mildly, touched by Balsamo's respectful manner.

"Yes, Madame, very great misfortunes!"

"First, will my family be happy?"

"That which you have left, or that to which you are going?"

"Oh, my own family, — my mother, my brother Joseph, my sister Caroline!"

"Your misfortunes will not reach them."

"They are mine alone, then?"

"They are yours, and those of your new family."

"The royal family of France includes three princes, — the Duc de Berry, the Comte de Provence, and the Comte d'Artois: what will be their fate?"

"They will all reign."

"Then I shall have no children?"

"You will have children."

"Not sons?"

"Some of them sons."

"My sorrows, then, will be caused by their death?"

"You will grieve because one of them dies, but most will you grieve because the other survives."

"Will my husband love me?"

"Yes, too well."

"Shall I not, then, be able to bear my grief, supported by my husband and my family?"

"Neither will support you."

"The love of my people will still be mine?"

"The people! — the ocean in a calm! — have you seen the ocean in a storm, Madame?"

"By doing good I shall prevent the storm; or, if it rise, I shall rise with it!"

"The higher the wave, the deeper the abyss."

"God will defend me."

"Alas! there are heads which he himself foredooms!"

"What mean you, Monsieur? Shall I not, then, be queen?"

"Yes, Madame; but would to Heaven that you were not to be!"

She smiled disdainfully.

"Did you remark," he continued, "the tapestry of the first room in which you slept after having entered France?"

"Yes, Monsieur," replied the dauphiness, shuddering.

"What did it represent?"

"The slaughter of the Innocents."

"Have not the grim faces of the murderers haunted your memory?"

"I confess that they have."

"Had you not a storm on the way hither?"

"Yes; a thunderbolt fell, and nearly on my carriage."

"Were not those omens?"

"Omens of sinister import?"

"It would be difficult, it seems to me, to interpret them otherwise."

The dauphiness let her head fall on her bosom, and raising it after a minute's silence, "Speak!" said she; "in what manner shall I die?"

He shook his head.

"Speak!"

"I dare not."

"It is my will that you should," she said, imperiously.

"Have mercy, have mercy on yourself!"

"Speak, Monsieur, or I shall say that all this is but an absurd fable. Take care! the daughter of Maria Theresa is not to be jested with, — the woman who holds in her hand the destiny of thirty millions of men."

He continued silent.

"You know no more," she said, contemptuously; "or rather, your imagination is exhausted."

"My knowledge of the future is not exhausted, Madame; and if you will force me — "

"Yes, I will hear all."

He seized the carafe on the golden saucer, placed it in a dark hollow, where some rocks formed a sort of grotto; then he took the hand of the archduchess, and drew her under the vault. "Are you ready?" he asked the princess, who was alarmed by his rapid movements.

"Yes."

"On your knees, then! on your knees! and pray to God to spare you the dreadful end of all your greatness, which you are now to witness!"

She obeyed mechanically, and fell on her knees. He pointed with a wand to the glass globe, in the centre of which must have appeared some dark and terrible form, for the dauphiness, in trying to rise, trembled, and sank again to the ground with a shriek of horror; she had fainted.

The baron hastened to her assistance, and in a few minutes she came to herself. She put her hand to her forehead, as if to recall her thoughts; then suddenly exclaimed, with indescribable terror, "The carafe! the carafe!"

The baron presented it to her. The water was perfectly limpid, not a stain mingled with it. Balsamo had disappeared.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BARON DE TAVERNEY THINKS HE SEES AT LAST A SMALL OPENING INTO THE FUTURE.

THE baron was the first to perceive that the dauphiness had fainted; he had kept on the watch, more uneasy than any one else at what might take place between her and the sorcerer. Hearing her cry of terror, and seeing Balsamo spring out of the grotto, he ran to the spot.

The dauphiness's first request was to see the carafe; her second that no injury should be done the magician. It was well that she made this request, for no sooner had Philippe heard her cry than he bounded after him like an angry lion. Her lady of honor came near, and questioned her in German; but to all questions she replied only that Balsamo had in no way been wanting in respect to her, — that she thought the storm of the preceding night, and her long journey, had fatigued her and brought on a nervous attack. Her replies were translated to the Cardinal de Rohan, who stood by, but dared not himself ask for information. In courts, people are obliged to be satisfied with half answers; what the dauphiness said satisfied no one, though every one appeared to be satisfied. Philippe then drew near and said: "I am obliged to obey your Royal Highness's orders, yet it is with regret that I do so; the half-hour during which you intended to stay is past, and the horses are ready."

"Thanks, Monsieur," said she, with a smile full of fascinating languor; "but I must alter my determination. I

do not feel able to set out just now. If I could rest for a few hours, I should be quite restored."

The baron turned pale; Andrée looked at him anxiously. "Your Royal Highness knows what a poor abode ours is," the baron stammered out.

"Oh, Monsieur, any place will do; a little rest is all I want!" She said this as if again fainting, and her head sank again on her bosom.

Andrée went to prepare her room for her; and having in a few minutes returned, she stood beside the dauphiness, not daring to speak until some indication was given that she might do so. At length Marie Antoinette raised her head, smiled to Andrée, and with her hand made a sign to her to draw nearer.

"The room is ready for your Royal Highness; we entreat only —"

But she was not permitted to finish her apology; the dauphiness interrupted her. "Many thanks, Mademoiselle," she said. "May I ask you to summon the Countess of Langershausen, and to lead us to the apartment?"

Andrée obeyed; the old lady-of-honor hurriedly approached. "Give me your arm, my dear friend," said the dauphiness to her in German, "for indeed I have scarcely strength enough to walk without support."

The baroness obeyed; Andrée started to assist.

"Do you understand German, then, Mademoiselle?" asked Marie Antoinette.

"Yes, Madame; I even speak it a little," replied Andrée, in German.

"That is delightful!" exclaimed the dauphiness; "that agrees well with my plans."

Andrée dared not ask her august guest what her plans were, although she longed to know them. The dauphiness leaned on the arm of the Comtesse de Langershausen,

and advanced slowly, her limbs trembling under her. As she issued from the trees in front of the grotto, she heard the cardinal's voice.

"What!" said he, "Comte de Stainville, do you insist on speaking to her Royal Highness, notwithstanding her orders to the contrary?"

"I must insist on doing so," replied the governor of Strasburg, in a firm voice; "her Royal Highness will pardon me, I am certain."

"Really, Monsieur, I do not know that I ought —"

"Let the governor come forward," said the dauphiness, appearing at the opening of the trees, which formed a verdant arch above her head. "Approach, Monsieur de Stainville."

Every one bowed at her command, and drew back to allow free passage to the brother-in-law of the then all-powerful minister who governed France. The count looked around as if to request a private audience. Marie Antoinette understood that he had something important to say to her, but before she could express a wish to be left alone, all had withdrawn.

"A despatch from Versailles, Madame," said the count in a low voice, and presenting a letter which he had kept concealed under his plumed hat.

The dauphiness took it, and read the address. "It is for you, Monsieur, not for me," she said; "open it and read it to me, if, indeed, it contains anything of interest to me."

"The letter is addressed to me," he replied, "but in the corner is a mark agreed on between my brother, M. de Choiseul, and myself, indicating that the letter is for your Royal Highness."

"Ah! that is true, — a cross; I did not observe it. Give me the letter."

She opened the letter, and read the following lines: "The presentation of Madame Dubarry is decided on, if she can only procure some noble lady to present her. We still hope she may not find one; but the only sure means to prevent the presentation will be for her Royal Highness the dauphiness to make all speed. Her Royal Highness once at Versailles, no one will dare to offer such an insult to the court."

"Very well," said the dauphiness, folding up the letter, without showing any sign of emotion, or even of interest.

"Will your Royal Highness now retire to repose a little?" asked Andrée, timidly.

"No, I thank you, Mademoiselle; the air has revived me, I have quite recovered." Abandoning the arm of her lady-of-honor, she walked forward firmly and rapidly. "My horses immediately!" said she.

The cardinal looked with inquisitive surprise at the count.

"The dauphin is becoming impatient," whispered the latter; and this falsehood appearing a secret confided to him alone, his Eminence was satisfied. As to Andrée, her father had taught her to respect the whims of crowned heads, and she was not at all surprised at the change in Marie Antoinette's intentions. The latter, therefore, turning, and seeing no alteration in the sweet expression of her countenance, said: "Thanks, Mademoiselle; your hospitable reception has made a deep impression on me." Then, turning to the baron, she continued: "Monsieur, you must know that on leaving Vienna I made a vow to advance the fortune of the first Frenchman whom I should meet on the frontiers of France. That Frenchman was your son. But I do not intend to stop there; your daughter shall not be forgotten either."

"Oh, your Highness!" murmured Andrée.

"Yes, I mean to make you one of my maids-of-honor. You are noble, are you not?" she added, again addressing the baron.

"Oh, your Highness!" cried the baron, with delight, for all his dreams seemed realized by what he heard, "although poor, our descent is unblemished; yet so high an honor—"

"It is only due to you. Your son will defend the king in the army; your daughter will serve the dauphiness at home: the one you will inspire with every loyal sentiment, the other with every virtuous one. Shall I not be faithfully served, Monsieur?" she said, turning to Philippe, who knelt in gratitude at her feet, without words to express his emotion.

"But—" murmured the baron; for his feelings did not prevent him from reflecting.

"Yes, I understand," said the dauphiness; "you have preparations to make; yet they cannot require much time."

A sad smile passed over the lips of Andrée and Philippe, a bitter one over those of the baron; and Marie Antoinette stopped, for she felt that she might unintentionally have wounded their pride.

"At least," she resumed, "if I may judge by your desire to please me. Besides, I shall leave you one of my carriages; it will bring you after us. I must call the Comte de Stainville to my aid."

The count approached.

"I shall leave one of my carriages for the Baron de Taverney, whom I wish to accompany me to Paris with his daughter. Appoint some one to accompany their carriage and to cause it to be recognized as belonging to my suite."

"Immediately, Madame," replied the governor. "Come forward, Monsieur de Beausire!"

A young man, of about five and twenty years of age, with an easy and graceful carriage, and a lively and intelligent eye, advanced, hat in hand, from the ranks of the escort of the dauphiness.

"Let one of the carriages remain behind," said the count, "for the Baron de Taverney; you will accompany the carriage yourself."

"And, Monsieur," said the dauphiness, "join us again as soon as possible. I authorize you to have double relays of horses, if necessary."

The baron and his children were profuse in their acknowledgments.

"This sudden departure will not put you to much inconvenience, I hope, Monsieur," said the dauphiness.

"We are too happy to obey your Royal Highness's orders," replied the baron.

"Adieu! adieu!" said she, with a smile. "Gentlemen, conduct me to my carriage. Monsieur Philippe, to horse!"

Philippe kissed his father's hand, embraced his sister, and leaped lightly into his saddle.

The glittering train swept on, and in a quarter of an hour had disappeared like an evening vapor; there remained no human being in the avenue of Taverney but a young man, who, sitting on one of the low pillars of the gate, pale and sorrowful, followed with a longing eye the last cloud of dust which was raised by the horses' feet, and which served to show the road they had taken. The young man was Gilbert.

Meantime the salon of Taverney presented a singular scene. Andrée, with clasped hands, reflected on the unexpected and extraordinary event which had so suddenly interrupted the course of her calm life, and she believed herself in a dream. The baron was pulling some hairs,

which were rather too long, out of his gray eyebrows, and adjusting the bosom of his shirt. Nicole, leaning against the door, looked at her master and mistress, and La Brie, with his arms hanging down and his mouth open, looked at Nicole.

The baron was the first to rouse himself from his revery. "Scoundrel!" cried he to La Brie, "are you standing there like a statue, and that gentleman, an officer of the king's household, waiting without?"

La Brie made a bound toward the door, knocked one leg against the other, and disappeared, staggering. In a short time he returned. "Monsieur," he said, "the gentleman is below."

"What is he doing?"

"Making his horse eat the pimpernels."

"Leave him alone, then. And the carriage?"

"It is in the avenue."

"The horses harnessed?"

"Yes, Monsieur, — four horses; such beautiful animals! They are eating the pomegranates."

"The king's horses have a right to eat whatever they like. By the by, the sorcerer?"

"The sorcerer, Monsieur, has disappeared."

"And has left all the plate on the table? It is not possible. He will return, or will send some one for it."

"I don't think he will, Monsieur. Gilbert saw him set out with his wagon."

"Gilbert saw him set out with his wagon?" the baron repeated, in a thoughtful tone.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"That wretch Gilbert sees everything! Go and pack my trunk."

"It is packed, Monsieur."

"What! — it is packed?"

"Yes; as soon as I heard what her Royal Highness the dauphiness said, I went into your room and packed your clothes and linen."

"Who told you to do so, you officious rascal?"

"Indeed, Monsieur, I thought I was only anticipating your orders."

"Fool! Go, then, and help my daughter."

"Thank you, father; but I have Nicole."

The baron began to reflect again.

"But, triple blockhead," he said to La Brie, "it is impossible."

"What is impossible, Monsieur?"

"What you have not thought of, for you think of nothing."

"But what is it, Monsieur?"

"That her Royal Highness would go without leaving something with Monsieur de Beausire, or the sorcerer without leaving a message with Gilbert."

At this moment a low whistle was heard from the courtyard.

"What is that?"

"It is a call for me, Monsieur," replied La Brie.

"And who calls?"

"The gentleman, Monsieur."

"The gentleman left by the dauphiness?"

"Yes, Monsieur. And here is Gilbert coming as if he had something to say to you."

"Go, then, stupid animal!"

La Brie obeyed with his usual alacrity.

"Father," said Andrée, approaching him, "I know what troubles you. Recollect, I have thirty louis-d'or, and that beautiful watch set with diamonds which Queen Marie Leczinska gave my mother."

"Yes, my dear, yes!" replied the baron; "but keep

them, keep them. You must have a handsome dress for your presentation. Meantime it is for me to provide resources. Hush! here is La Brie."

"Monsieur," cried La Brie as he came in, holding in one hand a letter, and in the other some money, "see what the dauphiness left for me, — ten louis-d'or, Monsieur! ten louis-d'or!"

"And that letter, rascal?"

"Oh! the letter is for you, Monsieur, — from the sorcerer."

"From the sorcerer? Who gave it you?"

"Gilbert, Monsieur."

"I could have told you so, stupid animal! Give it me, give it me!"

He snatched the letter, tore it open, and read these words: —

MONSIEUR LE BARON, — Since a hand so august has touched the plate I left with you, it belongs to you; keep it as a relic, and remember sometimes your grateful guest,

JOSEPH BALSAMO.

"La Brie!" cried the baron, after a moment's reflection, "is there not a good goldsmith at Bar-le-Duc?"

"Oh, yes, Monsieur! the one who soldered Mademoiselle Andrée's silver brooch."

"Very well! Andrée, lay aside the goblet out of which her Royal Highness drank, and let the rest of the service be put up in the carriage with us. And you, beast that you are, help the gentleman outside to a glass of what remains of our good wine."

"One bottle, Monsieur," said La Brie, with deep melancholy.

"That is enough."

"Now, Andrée," said the baron, taking both his

daughter's hands, "courage, my child! We are going to court; there are plenty of titles there without possessors; there are rich abbeys to give, — regiments without colonels; there are pensions waiting. It is a fine country, the court; the sun shines brightly there. Put yourself always in its rays, my child; for you are worthy to be seen. Go, my love, go!"

Andrée went out, followed by Nicole.

"Holloa! La Brie, you monster!" cried the baron, "attend to the gentleman, I tell you!"

"Yes, Monsieur," answered La Brie, from a distant part of the cellar.

"I," continued the baron, going toward his room, "must go and arrange my papers. We must be out of this hole in an hour. Do you hear, Andrée? And we are leaving it in good style too! What a capital fellow that sorcerer is! I am becoming as superstitious as the devil! But make haste, La Brie, you wretch!"

"I was obliged to go feeling about, Monsieur, in the cellar; there is not a candle in the house."

"It was time to leave it, it appears," said the baron.

CHAPTER XVII.

NICOLE'S TWENTY-FIVE LOUIS-D'OR.

In the mean time Andrée made active preparations for her departure, and Nicole assisted her with an ardor which quickly dissipated the little cloud that had arisen between them in the morning.

"She is a good girl," said Andrée to herself, "devoted and grateful; she has faults, but what human creature has not? Let me forget them."

Nicole was not slow to observe the expression of her mistress's face. "Fool that I was!" said she to herself, "I was nearly quarrelling with my young lady, and all about that good-for-nothing Gilbert! And she is going to Paris, and will take me with her! One is sure of making one's fortune in Paris."

Andrée was the first to speak. "Put my lace in a bandbox," said she.

"What bandbox, Mademoiselle?"

"How should I know? We have one, have we not?"

"Oh, yes! the one you gave me; it is in my room;" and Nicole ran to bring it, with an obliging air which disposed Andrée still more in her favor.

"But this bandbox is your own," said Andrée, when Nicole reappeared with the article in her hand, "and you may want it yourself, poor child."

"Oh! you have more need of it, Mademoiselle; and besides, it is yours."

"When people get married and set up housekeeping, they require many little things; so just now you have most need of the box. Keep it to put your bridal finery in."

"Oh, Mademoiselle," said Nicole, gayly, shaking her head, "my finery will not take up much room!"

"But if you marry, Nicole, I should wish you to be happy, — even rich."

"Rich?"

"Yes, rich according to your rank."

"Then you have found some farmer-general for me, Mademoiselle?"

"No; but I have found a dowry."

"Indeed, Mademoiselle?"

"You know what is in my purse?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, — twenty-five shining louis-d'or."

"They are yours, Nicole."

"Twenty-five louis-d'or!" cried Nicole, with rapture; "it is indeed a fortune!"

"My poor girl, I am glad you think so!"

"And you really give them to me, Mademoiselle?"

"I wish I could give you more."

Nicole felt surprised, moved; the tears came to her eyes. She seized her young lady's hand and kissed it.

"Do you think your husband will be pleased?"

"Oh, much pleased!" said Nicole, — "at least, I hope so."

She reflected that Gilbert had doubtless refused her hand through fear of poverty; and that since she had now become rich, she perhaps would appear more desirable to the ambitious young man. Then she determined immediately to offer him a share of her young lady's generous gift, and to attach him to herself by gratitude. Such was Nicole's generous plan. Andrée looked at her

as she reflected. "Poor girl," sighed she, "may she be happy in her simple life!"

Nicole heard the words and started from her revery. They opened to her fancy a whole Eldorado of silks, diamonds, lace, and love, — things of which Andrée had not thought. But she turned away her eyes from the gold and purple cloud brightening her horizon, and resisted the temptation. "After all, Mademoiselle," said she, "I shall be happy here, in a quiet way."

"Reflect seriously, my child."

"Yes, Mademoiselle, I shall reflect."

"That is right. Make yourself happy in the way you propose if you can; but do not be foolish."

"You are very kind, Mademoiselle. And let me say now that I was very foolish this morning; but I hope Mademoiselle will forgive me. When one is in love —"

"Then you are really in love with Gilbert?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle; I — I loved him," said Nicole.

"Is it possible?" said Andrée, smiling. "What can you see to admire in the young man? The first time I meet him I must take a look at this M. Gilbert who steals young girls' hearts."

"Is he not going with us to Paris, Mademoiselle?" inquired Nicole, who wished to be fully informed on every point before taking the step she meditated.

"Of what use would he be there? He is not a domestic, and could not take charge of a house in Paris. Idle people at Taverney live like the birds; however poor the soil, it feeds them. But in Paris an idle person would cost too much; we could not support him."

"But if I marry him?" stammered Nicole.

"Well, if you marry him, you shall live here with him at Taverney. You shall take care of this house which my mother loved so much."

It was impossible for Nicole to suspect any mystery or reservation in these words. She heard Andrée renounce Gilbert without hesitation or a shadow of regret. Yet she paused before speaking again. Andrée, noticing her silence, thought that her mind was in doubt between the pleasures of a Parisian life and those of the quiet country. She continued, in a gentle but firm tone: "Nicole, the decision which you are now to make will affect all your future life. Reflect, my child. You have an hour for your deliberation. It is but a short time; you, however, are prompt in your decisions, and I think it will be sufficient to enable you to choose between my service and marriage, — between me and Gilbert."

"An hour? Oh, yes, Mademoiselle, I can decide in an hour!"

"Collect all my clothes and my mother's, — I would not leave behind those relics so dear to me, — then go, and return in an hour fully decided. But whatever your determination be, here are your twenty-five louis-d'or. If you marry, they shall be your dowry; if you continue in my service, your wages for two years."

Nicole took the purse from Andrée's hands and kissed it. Doubtless she was unwilling to lose a second of the hour which her mistress had granted her, for she darted out of the chamber, went rapidly downstairs, crossed the court-yard, and entered the avenue.

Andrée saw her as she went, and murmured, "Poor fool, to be so happy! Is love, then, so sweet?"

Five minutes later, still that she might lose no time, doubtless, Nicole knocked on the window of a room on the ground-floor occupied by Gilbert, — the idler, according to Andrée, the good-for-nothing, according to the baron. Gilbert was bustling about with his back to the window; but at the sound of the knocking he turned, and

like a thief caught in the fact, he quickly abandoned his occupation.

"Oh! is it you, Nicole?" said he.

"Yes, it is," she replied, smiling, but with an air of decision.

"You are welcome," said he, coming forward and opening the window.

Nicole felt that there was kindness in his reception of her, and held out her hand. Gilbert grasped it. "This is a good beginning," thought she; "farewell my journey to Paris!" and to Nicole's praise, it must be said, she did not sigh at this thought.

"You know," said the young girl, leaning her elbows on the window, "you know, Gilbert, that the family are leaving Taverney?"

"Yes, I know."

"Do you know where they are going?"

"They are going to Paris."

"And do you know that I am going too?"

"No, I did not know it."

"Well?"

"Well! I congratulate you if you are pleased at going."

"How you say that!"

"I say it plainly, I think, — if you are pleased at going."

"My being pleased depends —"

"Why do you stop? depends —?"

"My being pleased or not depends on you."

"I don't understand you," said Gilbert, seating himself on the window so that his knees touched Nicole's arm, and they could thus converse unseen and unheard.

Nicole looked at him tenderly; he shook his head, insinuating that he understood her look no more than her words.

"Well," said she, "since I must tell you everything, listen to what I am going to say."

"I hear you," replied Gilbert, coldly.

"Mademoiselle offers to take me to Paris with her — "

"Very well; go on!"

"Unless — "

"Unless what?"

"Unless I get married here."

"Then you still think of getting married?" he answered, quite unmoved.

"Yes, more particularly since I have become rich."

"Oh! you have become rich?' he asked, so phlegmatically that Nicole knew not what to think.

"Very rich, Gilbert!"

"Indeed?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"And how did that miracle come about?"

"Mademoiselle has given me a marriage portion."

"You are very fortunate. I congratulate you, Nicole."

"Look!" said she, pouring out of the purse into her hand the twenty-five louis-d'or, and watching Gilbert's eyes to discover some ray of pleasure or at least of covetousness in them.

Gilbert moved not a muscle. "On my word, it is a nice little sum!" said he.

"And that is not all," continued Nicole. "The baron will be rich once more; the old castle will be rebuilt, and the care of it given — "

"To the fortunate husband of Nicole," said Gilbert, with an irony not so well concealed but that it grated on Nicole's fine ear; yet she restrained her anger.

"And Nicole's husband — is he not some one whom you know, Gilbert?"

"Of whom are you speaking, Nicole?"

"Have you, then, grown stupid, or do I no longer speak French?" cried the young girl, who began to be impatient.

"I understand you perfectly," replied Gilbert: "you offer to make me your husband, do you not, Mademoiselle Legay?"

"Yes, Monsieur Gilbert."

"And it is since you have become rich that you have thought of this," returned Gilbert, hastily. "I am truly grateful to you, — I am indeed!"

"Really?"

"Certainly."

"Very well," said Nicole, frankly, and holding out her hand, "take it!"

"I?"

"You accept, do you not?"

"No; I refuse!"

Nicole sprang up from her leaning position. "Gilbert," said she, "you have a bad heart; and, trust me, what you now do will not bring you happiness. If I loved you still, if I felt any warmer sentiment in making the offer I have just made than a sense of duty and honor, trust me, I should now be miserable indeed; but having become rich, I did not wish it to be said that Nicole would look down on her old friend Gilbert. However, all is now over between us."

Gilbert made a gesture of indifference.

"What I think of your conduct in the matter," Nicole continued, "you must be well aware. I, whose character you know to be as free and independent as your own, had decided to bury myself here for your sake, when I had it in my power to go to Paris, which may be for me a scene of triumph. I would have borne to see before me, every day of the year, for a whole lifetime, that cold and impen-

etrable face, the mask of so many wicked thoughts. You have not perceived that there was any sacrifice in this; so much the worse for you, Gilbert! I do not say that you will regret me; but remember, you may yet feel remorse for the contempt and scorn you have shown me. Guided by you, I should have been a virtuous, happy, and contented woman; now I am abandoned on the ocean of life, without a keeping or a guiding hand. Gilbert, if I fall, God will not hold you innocent of my fall! Farewell!"

And the proud young girl turned away, without anger or impatience, but having shown, as all impassioned natures do in the time of trial, true generosity of soul. Gilbert shut his window quietly, and returned to the mysterious occupation in which she had interrupted him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FAREWELL TO TAVERNEY.

NICOLE, before entering her mistress's apartment, stopped on the staircase to subdue some gathering emotions of resentment rising in her bosom. The baron encountered her as she stood motionless, thoughtful, her chin resting on her hand, and her brows contracted; and seeing her so pretty, he kissed her, as the Duc de Richelieu would have done at thirty years of age. Roused from her revery by this piece of gallantry, Nicole hurried up to Andrée's room, and found her just closing her trunk.

"Well," said Mademoiselle de Taverney, "have you come to a conclusion?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle," replied Nicole, with an air of deliberation.

"You will marry?"

"No, Mademoiselle."

"Ah, bah! And that great love?"

"My love will never do for me what the kindness of Mademoiselle has done for me. I belong to you, Mademoiselle, and wish always to belong to you. I know the mistress I have; I do not know the master I might have."

Andrée was touched by this unlooked-for exhibition of affectionate feeling in the giddy Nicole, and was far from suspecting that this choice had been a forced one. She smiled, pleased to find one human being better than she had expected.

"You do well, Nicole," she replied, "to attach yourself to me. I shall not forget it. Confide yourself to me, my child; and if any good fortune comes to me, you shall share it."

"Oh, Mademoiselle, it is decided; I will go with you!"

"Without regret?"

"Blindly."

"I do not like that answer, Nicole. I should not wish you at some future day to reproach yourself with having blindly trusted me and followed me."

"I shall never have to reproach any one but myself, Mademoiselle."

"Then you have had an explanation with your lover?"

Nicole blushed. "I?" she said.

"Yes, you; I saw you talking with him."

Nicole bit her lips. She had forgotten that Andrée's window was opposite that at which she had spoken to Gilbert. "It is true, Mademoiselle," she replied.

"And you told him all?"

Nicole thought Andrée had some particular reason for this question; and all her former suspicions returning, she answered, "I told him I would have nothing more to do with him."

It was plain that these two women — the one pure as the diamond, the other with a natural tendency to vice — would never understand each other.

In the mean time the baron had completed all his arrangements. An old sword which he had worn at Fontenoi, some parchments establishing his right to travel in his Majesty's carriages, and a litter of old papers, formed the most bulky part of his baggage. La Brie followed, tottering under the weight of an almost empty trunk. In the avenue they found the officer of the king's household, who, while waiting, had drained to the last drop his bottle of wine. The gallant had remarked the

fine waist and pretty ankle of Nicole, who was going back and forth with messages, and he had hovered about in the hope of exchanging a word with her. He was roused, however, to more active occupation by the baron's request that he would order the carriage to the door; he started, bowed, and in a sonorous voice summoned the coachman.

The carriage drew up. La Brie put the trunk on behind with an indescribable mixture of joy and pride in his looks. "I am really," murmured he, carried away by his enthusiasm, and thinking he was alone, "going to get into the king's carriage!"

"Behind it, behind it, my worthy friend!" replied Beausire, with a patronizing smile.

"What, Monsieur, are you going to take La Brie with you?" said Andrée to her father. "Who will take care of Taverney?"

"Why, *pardieu!* that good-for-nothing philosopher."

"Gilbert?"

"Yes; has he not a gun?"

"But how will he live?"

"By his gun, to be sure! Don't be uneasy; he will have excellent fare. Blackbirds and thrushes are not scarce at Taverney."

Andrée looked at Nicole; the latter began to laugh.

"And is that all the compassion you show for him, ungrateful girl?" said Andrée.

"Oh, Mademoiselle," replied Nicole, "he is very clever with his gun; he will not die of hunger!"

"But, Monsieur," said Andrée to the baron, "we must at least leave him two or three louis-d'or."

"To spoil him? Very fine indeed! He is vicious enough as he is!"

"He must have something to live on," persisted Andrée.

"The neighbors will help him, if he is in want."

"Don't be uneasy, Mademoiselle," said Nicole; "he will have no cause to ask their assistance."

"At all events," replied Andrée, "leave him two or three crowns."

"He would not accept them."

"He would not accept them? Then he is proud, this Monsieur Gilbert of yours?"

"Oh, Mademoiselle, he is no longer mine, thank God!"

"Come, come!" said the baron; "let Gilbert go to the devil! The carriage is waiting; get in, my love."

Andrée did not reply. She cast a farewell look on the old château, and then got into the heavy and ponderous carriage. The baron seated himself beside her. La Brie, still wearing his splendid livery, and Nicole, who seemed never to have known such a person as Gilbert, mounted on the box. The coachman rode one of the horses as postilion.

"But where will the officer ride?" exclaimed the baron.

"On my horse, Monsieur, on my horse," replied Beausire, still eying Nicole, who colored with delight at having so soon replaced a rude peasant admirer by an elegant gentleman.

The carriage, drawn by four strong horses, started into rapid motion. The trees of the avenue glided away on each side, and disappeared one by one, sadly bending before the east wind, as if to bid farewell to their owners who abandoned them. The carriage reached the gate. Gilbert stood there, upright, immovable, his hat in his hand. He did not seem to see Andrée, yet he watched her least movement; her eyes were fixed on the dear home she was leaving, so as to keep it in view as long as possible.

"Stop a moment!" cried the baron to the postilion.

The carriage stopped.

"So, Monsieur Good-for-nothing, you are going to be happy; you will be quite alone, like a real philosopher, with nothing to do, and nobody to scold you. Don't let the house take fire; and, hark ye, take care of Mahon!"

Gilbert bowed, but did not reply. He felt as if Nicole's looks were a weight too great to be borne; he feared to meet her triumphant, ironical smile, as he would the touch of red-hot iron.

"Go on, postilion!" cried the baron.

Nicole did not smile, as Gilbert had feared she would; it even required more than her habitual power over herself to prevent her expressing aloud her pity for the poor young man thus heartlessly abandoned. She was obliged to keep her eye on Monsieur de Beausire, who looked so well on his prancing horse.

Now, as Nicole kept her eyes fixed on M. de Beausire, she did not see that Gilbert was gazing, his soul in his eyes, on Andrée. Andrée saw nothing but the house in which she was born, — in which her mother died. The carriage disappeared. Gilbert, a moment before of so little importance in the eyes of the travellers, was now nothing to them.

The baron, Andrée, Nicole, and La Brie, having passed through the gates of the avenue, entered a new world. Each had a special subject for reflection. The baron thought that at Bar-le-Duc he could easily raise five or six thousand livres on Balsamo's plate. Andrée repeated a prayer her mother had taught her, to keep away the demon of pride and ambition. Nicole covered her neck more closely with her handkerchief, to the great chagrin of M. de Beausire. La Brie, with his hand in his pocket, counted over the ten louis-d'or of the dauphiness, and the

two of Balsamo. M. de Beausire galloped at the side of the carriage.

Gilbert closed the gates of Taverney, whose hinges, as usual, creaked for lack of oil. Then he ran to his little room, pulled out his oaken chest of drawers, behind which he found a bundle tied up in a napkin, and slung it on his stick. After this, pushing his hands into his hay-stuffed mattress, he drew out something wrapped in a bit of paper. It was a shining crown-piece, — his savings for three or four years. He opened the paper, looked at his crown to assure himself that it had not been changed, and then put it in his pocket, still protected by its covering.

Mahon, on seeing Gilbert, began to howl loudly, making furious leaps the whole length of his chain. Having seen his other friends leave him, his fine instinct told him that Gilbert was also about to abandon him, and he howled louder and louder.

"Hush!" cried Gilbert, "hush Mahon!"

Then smiling bitterly at the parallel which occurred to his mind, he muttered, "Have they not abandoned me like a dog? Why should not I abandon thee like a man?" But after a minute's reflection he added, "They abandoned me free, at least, — free to seek for food. Well, then, Mahon, I will do for thee what they did for me, neither more nor less;" and he detached the dog's chain from the hook to which it was fastened. "You are free!" said he; "provide for yourself as you like!"

The dog bounded toward the house; but finding the doors all closed, he sprang toward the ruins and disappeared.

"And now," said Gilbert, "we shall see which has most instinct, — the dog, or the man!" So saying, he went out by the small gate, closed it, double-locked it, and threw the key over the wall.

But Nature speaks with the same voice in all hearts. Gilbert felt something like what Andrée had experienced in leaving Taverney. But with Andrée it was regret for the past; with Gilbert it was hope of a better future. "Farewell!" said he, turning to look for the last time at the château, whose pointed roof appeared above the sycamores and laburnums; "farewell, abode in which I have suffered so much, where every one hated me and threw me food grudgingly, and accused me of stealing. Be cursed! My heart bounds with joy, and I feel that I am free, for thy walls enclose me no more! Farewell, prison! hell! den of tyrants!—farewell forever!"

After this imprecation, Gilbert sprang forward on the road which the carriage had taken, fancying that he yet heard the roll of its distant wheels.

CHAPTER XIX.

GILBERT'S CROWN-PIECE.

After half-an-hour's headlong race, Gilbert uttered a cry of joy; he saw the carriage, about a quarter of a league before him, slowly ascending a hill. He felt his heart dilate with pride as he thought that he, with only youth, strength, spirit, was about to do all that wealth, power, and rank could accomplish. Then, indeed, might the baron have called Gilbert a philosopher, had he seen him, his stick on his shoulder, his small bundle slung on it, walking on with rapid strides, leaping down every slope which could shorten his path, and stopping at every ascent, chafing with impatience, as if saying to the horses, "You do not go fast enough for me; see, I am obliged to wait for you."

Philosopher? Yes! and he deserved the name, if it be philosophy to despise all that contributes to ease and to enjoyment. It was an interesting spectacle, worthy of being seen by the Creator of energetic and intelligent creatures, — this young man bounding forward on his way, all dusty and panting, for an hour or more, until he had almost overtaken the carriage, and then resting with delight when the horses were compelled to pause for breath. Gilbert that day would have inspired every one with admiration who could have followed him in spirit as we do; and who knows but that even the proud Andrée might have been moved, could she have seen him, and

that her contempt for his indolence would have changed to admiration of his energy?

The day passed on in this manner. The baron stopped an hour at Bar-le-Duc, which gave Gilbert time to get in advance of him. He had heard the order to stop at the goldsmith's; so, having passed the town by a détour, without entering it, he hid in a thicket until he saw the carriage coming; and when it had gone by, followed it as before. Toward evening it came up with the train of the dauphiness at the little village of Brillon, the inhabitants of which, crowded on a hill, made the air resound with their shouts of welcome. Gilbert had not eaten a morsel during the entire day, except a bit of bread which he had brought with him from Taverney; but he had drunk plentifully from a rivulet which crossed the road, the water of which was so fresh and limpid that Andrée had requested that the carriage might stop, and had alighted to fill the chased cup, the only article of Balsamo's service which the baron could be persuaded to retain. Gilbert saw all this, hidden by some trees on the roadside. Then, when the carriage had passed on, he emerged from his hiding-place, and advancing to the bank, placed his foot on the same spot where Mademoiselle Taverney had stood, and dipping up the water in his hand, like Diogenes, he drank from the same stream which had brought refreshment to Andrée.

Evening came on, shrouding the landscape in her dusty mantle, until at last he saw nothing but the light from the large lantern placed on the left-hand side of the carriage; this pale gleam, ever hurrying onward in the distance, looked like a phantom impelled forward by some strange destiny. Then night came on. They had travelled twelve leagues; they were at Combles. The equipages stopped; Gilbert was sure that it was for the night,

that he should have time to stop for a couple of hours in a barn, and after that how vigorously would he pursue his way! He approached to listen for Andrée's voice; the carriage still continued stationary. He glided into a deep doorway: he saw Andrée by the glare of the torch-light, and heard her asking what hour it was. A voice replied, "Eleven o'clock." At that moment Gilbert no longer felt fatigue, and would have rejected with scorn an offer of a seat in a vehicle. Versailles already appeared in view, — Versailles, all gilded, shining, the city of nobles and kings; and beyond appeared Paris, grim, immense, — the city of the people!

Two things roused him from his ecstasy, — the noise of the carriages setting out again, and the complaints of his stomach, which began to be distressed for want of food. "Fortunately," he said to himself, "I have money; I am rich." On went the carriages, Gilbert following, his hunger unappeased. At midnight they stopped at St.-Dizier. For the night? No! only to change horses; while, in the mean time, the illustrious travellers took a little refreshment by torch-light.

Gilbert had need of all his courage; and as he heard them depart, he sprang to his feet from the bank, where he had seated himself, with an energy of determination which made him forget that, ten minutes before, his wearied legs had bent under him in spite of all his efforts. "Well," cried he, "go, go! I shall stop also for refreshment at St.-Dizier; I shall buy some bread and a slice of bacon; I shall drink a glass of wine, and for five sous I shall be refreshed as well as *the masters*."

Gilbert entered the town. The train having passed, the good folks were closing their doors and shutters; but our philosopher saw a good-looking inn not yet shut up, where the large dishes of fowls and other things showed

that the attendants of the dauphiness had had time to levy only a very slight contribution. He entered the kitchen resolutely; the hostess was there, counting her gains.

"Excuse me, Madame, but can I have some bread and ham?" said Gilbert.

"We have no ham, but you can have fowl."

"No, thank you; I ask for ham because I wish for ham, — I don't like fowl."

"That is a pity, my little fellow, for we have only fowl; but it shall not be dearer," she added, smiling, "than ham. Take half of one, or, indeed, take a whole one, for tenpence; and that will be provision for you for to-morrow. We thought her Royal Highness would have stayed all night, and that we should have sold all these things to the attendants; but as she merely passed through, they will be wasted."

It might be thought that Gilbert would have gladly embraced the generous offer of the kind hostess; but that would be to misunderstand his character completely. "No, thank you," he replied, "I shall satisfy myself in a more humble manner; I am neither a prince nor a footman."

"Well, then," said the good woman, "I will give you the fowl, my little Artaban."

"I am not a beggar either," he replied, in a mortified tone; "I buy what I wish, and pay for it;" and he majestically plunged his hand in his breeches-pocket: it went down to the elbow. But in vain he fumbled in that capacious receptacle; he brought forth from it only the paper wrapper. The crown, tossed about by his rapid movements, had worn the paper, then the thin lining of his pocket, and had slipped out at his knee; for he had unfastened his garters to give freer play to his limbs.

His paleness and trembling touched the good woman. Many in her place would have rejoiced on seeing his pride brought low; but she felt sympathy for him, seeing suffering so strongly expressed in the changes of his countenance. "Come, my poor boy!" said she, "you shall sup and sleep here; and to-morrow, if you must go on, you shall do so."

"Oh, yes, yes!" exclaimed Gilbert, "I must go on, — not to-morrow, but at once!" And snatching up his bundle, without waiting to hear more, he darted out of the house, to hide his shame and grief in the darkness. He rushed on, alone, truly alone in the world; for no man is more alone than he who has just parted with his last crown, — especially if it be the only one he ever possessed. The night was dark around him; what should he do? He hesitated. To turn back to look for his crown would be to begin a hopeless task; besides, it would make it impossible for him ever to come up with the carriages. He resolved to continue his way. After he had gone about a league, hunger, which his mental suffering had made him forget for a time, awoke more keen than ever. Weariness also began to encroach upon his strength; yet by incredible efforts he had once more come in sight of the carriages. But Fate, it would seem, had decided against him. They stopped only to change horses, and made the exchange so quickly that he had not five minutes to rest himself.

Again Gilbert set out. The day began to dawn; the sun appeared above a broad circle of dark clouds, foretelling one of those burning days of May which sometimes precede the heats of summer. How could Gilbert bear the heat at noon of that day? He had for a moment the idea, flattering to his vanity, that horses, men, the destinies, had united against him. Like Ajax, he shook his

clenched fist at the heavens; and if he did not say, like him, "I shall escape, in spite of the gods!" it was because he knew "Le Contrat Social" better than the Odyssey.

At last, however, as Gilbert had dreaded, the moment arrived when he found it quite impossible to go much farther. By a last and almost despairing effort, he once more overtook the carriages, of which he had previously lost sight, and which, under the influence of his heated and feverish imagination, he fancied were surrounded with a strange, fantastic halo. The noise of the wheels sounded like thunder in his ears, and almost maddened his brain. He staggered on, his blackened lips wide apart, his eyes fixed and staring, his long hair clinging to his forehead bathed in perspiration, and his movements seeming rather the effect of some clever piece of mechanism than those of a thinking being. Since the evening before he had travelled upward of twenty leagues, and his weary and fainting limbs now refused to carry him farther. A mist overspread his eyes, strange noises sounded in his ears, the earth seemed to reel under him; he endeavored to cry out, but could utter no sound, and staggered forward, beating the air wildly with his arms. At last his voice returned to his throat in cries of rage; and turning toward Paris, or rather toward where he thought Paris was, he uttered against the conquerors of his courage and his strength a series of terrible imprecations. Then, tearing his hair with both hands, he reeled forward, and fell heavily to the ground, — with the consolation of having, like a hero of antiquity, fought the battle to the last.

"Out of the way, there! Out of the way, madman!" cried a hoarse voice just as he fell, accompanied by the loud cracking of a whip.

Gilbert did not hear; he had fainted.

"Out of the way! or I shall crush you, *morbleu!*"

And this time the words were accompanied by a vigorous stroke of a whip, which reached Gilbert's waist and cut into the flesh. But he felt nothing; he remained immovable under the feet of the horses of a carriage, which was issuing into the high road from a by-way between Thiéblemont and Vauclère.

A shrill cry was heard from the carriage, which was going at a high rate of speed. The postilion made an almost superhuman effort, but could not prevent one of the horses, which was placed as a leader, from leaping over Gilbert. The other two, however, he succeeded in pulling up. A lady leaned out of the carriage. "Heavens!" she cried, "you have killed the poor boy!"

"Why, faith, Madame," replied the postilion, endeavoring to discover the body amid the cloud of dust which the horses' feet had raised, "it looks that way to me."

"Poor creature! poor boy! Do not move a step farther!" and opening the door of the carriage herself, she sprang out.

The postilion had already alighted, and was dragging out Gilbert's body, which he expected to find bruised and bloody; the lady assisted him with all her strength.

"What an escape!" he cried. "Not a scratch, not a kick!"

"But he has fainted," said the lady.

"Only from fear. Let us place him against the bank; and since Madame is in haste, let us go on."

"Impossible! I cannot leave that child in such a state."

"Pooh! it 's nothing, Madame; he will soon recover."

"No, no! Poor fellow, he is some runaway lad from college, and has undertaken a journey beyond his strength. See how pale he is! he might die. No; I will not leave him. Lift him into the carriage, and place him on the front seat."

The postilion obeyed. The lady had already resumed her place in the carriage. Gilbert was laid lengthwise on a good cushion, his head supported by the well-stuffed side of the carriage.

"And now," cried the lady, "we have lost ten minutes; a crown for you if you make up for them."

The postilion cracked his whip above his head; the horses knew what this threatened, and set off at a gallop.

CHAPTER XX.

GILBERT FINDS CONSOLATION FOR THE LOSS OF HIS CROWN.

WHEN Gilbert returned to consciousness, he was in no small degree surprised to find himself placed at the feet of a young lady who was watching him attentively.

This young lady was about twenty-five years old, with large gray eyes, a nose slightly turned up, cheeks embrowned by a Southern sun, and a delicate little mouth, the peculiar shape of which added to the naturally cheerful and laughing expression of her face a touch of shrewdness and circumspection. Her neck and arms, which were beautifully formed, were displayed to advantage by a closely-fitting bodice of violet-colored velvet with golden buttons, while the skirt of her dress, of gray silk, was so enormously wide as to fill almost the entire carriage. Gilbert continued for some time to gaze on this face, which looked on his smilingly and with much interest, and he could scarcely persuade himself that he was not in a dream.

"Well, my child," said the lady, "are you not better now?"

"Where am I?" asked he, languidly.

"You are in safety now, my little man," replied the lady, who spoke with a strong Southern accent; "but just now you were in great danger of being crushed under the wheels of my carriage. What could have happened to you to make you fall in that manner just in the middle of the highway?"

"I was overcome by weakness, Madame, from having travelled too far."

"Then you have been some time on the road?"

"Since yesterday, at four in the afternoon."

"And how far have you journeyed?"

"I think about eighteen leagues."

"What! in fourteen hours?"

"Oh, I ran all the way!"

"Where are you going, then?"

"To Versailles, Madame."

"And you came from —"

"From Taverney."

"Taverney! where is that?"

"It is a château situated between Pierrefitte and Bar-le-Duc."

"But you have scarcely had time to eat on the way?"

"I not only had not time, Madame, but I had not the means."

"How so?"

"I lost my money on the way."

"So that since yesterday you have eaten nothing?"

"Only a few mouthfuls of bread, which I brought with me."

"Poor child! But why did you not beg something?"

"Because I am proud, Madame," said he, smiling scornfully.

"Proud! It is all very fine to be proud; but when one is dying of hunger —"

"Better death than dishonor."

The lady looked at the sententious speaker with something like admiration. "But who are you, my friend," said she, "who speak in this style?"

"I am an orphan."

"What is your name?"

"Gilbert."

"Gilbert what?"

"Gilbert nothing."

"Ah!" said the lady, still more surprised.

Gilbert perceived that he had produced an effect, and felt as if he were another Rousseau.

"You are very young to wander about in this way," continued the lady.

"I was left, deserted and alone, in an old château which the family had abandoned. I did as they had done, — I abandoned it too."

"Without any object in view?"

"The world is wide; there is room for all."

"And you lost your purse. Was it well filled?"

"There was only one crown in it," Gilbert replied, divided between the shame of confessing his poverty and the fear of naming a large sum, which might have excited the suspicion that it had not been fairly obtained; "but it would have been enough."

"One crown for such a journey! Why, it would scarcely have been sufficient to purchase bread for two days; and the distance! — good heavens! from Bar-le-Duc to Paris is nearly sixty-five leagues!"

"I never counted the leagues, Madame; I only said, I must get to Paris."

"And thereupon you set out, poor simpleton?"

"Oh, I have good legs!"

"Good as they are, they failed, you see."

"Oh! it was not my legs, it was hope which failed me."

"Why, indeed, you looked as if you were desperate."

Gilbert smiled bitterly.

"What was passing in your mind? You struck your forehead with your clenched hand, and tore out your hair by handfuls."

"Indeed, Madame?" asked Gilbert, who was rather embarrassed.

"Oh! I am certain of it; it was your despair, probably, which prevented your hearing or seeing the carriage."

Gilbert's instinct told him that he might increase his consequence, and still more awaken the interest of the lady, by telling the whole truth. "I was, indeed, in despair," said he.

"And about what?" said the lady.

"Because I could not keep up with a carriage which I was following."

"Indeed," said the young lady, smiling, "this is quite a romance. Is there love in the case?"

Gilbert was not yet sufficiently master of himself not to blush.

"And what carriage was it, my little Cato?"

"A carriage in the train of the dauphiness."

"What do you tell me?" exclaimed the young woman; "is the dauphiness before us?"

"Certainly."

"I thought her scarcely yet at Nancy. Are no honors paid her on the way, that she advances so rapidly?"

"Oh, yes, Madame! but her Highness seems to be in haste."

"In haste? Who told you so?"

"I guessed it."

"On what grounds?"

"Why, she said at first she would stay two or three hours at Taverney, and she stayed only three quarters of an hour."

"Do you know whether she received any letters from Paris?"

"I saw a gentleman, in a dress covered with embroidery, who had a letter in his hand as he entered."

"Did you hear his name mentioned?"

"No, Madame; I know only that he is the governor of Strasburg."

"What! the Comte de Stainville, brother-in-law to the Duc de Choiseul! Horrible! Faster, postilion, faster!"

A vigorous stroke of the whip was the reply, and Gilbert felt the speed of the carriage increase.

"But she must stop to breakfast," said the lady, as if speaking to herself, "and then we shall pass her, — unless last night — Did she stop last night?"

"Yes, at St.-Dizier."

"At what hour?"

"At about eleven o'clock."

"That was for supper. Good! she will have to take breakfast. Postilion, what is the next town?"

"Vitry, Madame."

"How far are we from it?"

"Three leagues."

"Where shall we change horses?"

"At Vauclère."

"Well, drive on; and if you see a train of carriages on the road before us, let me know."

While the lady was exchanging these words with the postilion, Gilbert had again nearly fainted. When she once more turned toward him, he was pale, and his eyes were closed.

"Poor child!" said she, "he is fainting again. It is my fault; I made him talk when he was dying of hunger, instead of giving him something to eat and drink." She took from the pocket of the carriage a richly-carved flask, with a little silver goblet hanging round its neck by a chain, and poured out some of the contents for Gilbert. On this occasion he did not require to be asked twice, — either because the goblet was offered

by a pretty hand, or because his necessity was more pressing than at St.-Dizier.

"Now," said the lady, "eat a biscuit; in an hour or so you shall breakfast more substantially."

"Thank you, Madame," said Gilbert, gladly taking the biscuit, as he had taken the wine.

"Good! Now that you have recovered a little strength," said the lady, "tell me, if you are disposed to have confidence in me, what induced you to follow a carriage in the train of the dauphiness?"

"Well, Madame, you shall hear the truth. I was living with the Baron de Taverney when her Highness came. She commanded him to follow her to Paris; he obeyed. I was an orphan, and consequently nobody thought of me; they left me there, without food and without money. So I resolved, since everybody was going to Versailles, with the assistance of good horses and fine coaches, I, with the assistance of only my legs, would go to Versailles, and as soon as the horses. But Fate was against me. If I had not lost my money, I should have had something to eat last night; and if I had eaten last night, I should have overtaken the horses this morning."

"Very well. You showed courage, and I like that; but you forgot that at Versailles people cannot live on courage alone."

"I shall go to Paris."

"But in that respect Paris much resembles Versailles."

"If courage will not support me, labor will."

"A good answer, my child. But what sort of labor? Your hands do not seem those of a workman or porter."

"I shall study, Madame."

"I think you seem to know a great deal already."

"Yes, for I know that I know nothing!" replied Gilbert, remembering the aphorism of Socrates.

"And may I ask, my young friend, what branch of study you would choose?"

"I think, Madame, that the best is that which teaches man to be most useful to his fellows. Besides, man is so frail a being that he should learn the secret of his weakness, in order that he may know that of his strength. I should like to know, some day, why my stomach prevented my legs from carrying me any farther this morning, and if it was not that weakness of my stomach which brought to my brain that wrath, that fever, that black vapor, which overcame me."

"Really, you will make an excellent physician; it seems to me that you talk medicine admirably already. In ten years you shall have me for a patient."

"I shall try to deserve that honor, Madame."

They had now reached the place where they were to change horses. The young lady asked for information respecting the dauphiness, and found that she had passed through that place a quarter of an hour before; she intended to stop at Vitry to change horses and to breakfast.

Another postilion took his place in the saddle. The lady allowed him to leave the village at the usual speed; but when they had got a little beyond the last house, — "Postilion," said she, "will you engage to overtake the carriages of the dauphiness?"

"Certainly, Madame."

"Before they reach Vitry?"

"The devil! they were going at full trot."

"Yes; but if you were to go at a gallop?"

The postilion looked at her.

"Treble pay," said she.

"If you had said so at first," he replied, "we should have been a quarter of a league farther by this time."

"Well, here is a crown on account; make up for lost time."

The postilion's arm was stretched back, the lady's forward, their hands met, and the crown passed from the lady's hand to that of the postilion. The horses received a sharp stroke of the whip, and the carriage started off with the speed of the wind.

During the change of horses Gilbert had alighted and washed his face and hands at a fountain, had smoothed down his hair, which was very thick, and had altogether improved his appearance very much.

"In truth," said the lady to herself, "he is not too ugly for a physician;" and she smiled as she looked at him. Gilbert blushed, as if he knew what was in her mind.

Having finished her dialogue with the postilion, she turned once more to Gilbert, whose paradoxes and sententious humor amused her exceedingly. From time to time she interrupted herself in a burst of laughter, occasioned by his sententious replies, to lean out of the carriage and look anxiously before her. They had gone about a league in this way, when she uttered a cry of joy; she had seen the last wagons of the dauphiness's train as they were slowly ascending a steep hill, and now there appeared in advance of them about twenty carriages, from which many of the travellers had got out to walk beside them. Gilbert put out his head also, searching with burning eyes for Mademoiselle de Taverney in the midst of the crowd of pygmies, and thought he recognized Nicole by her high cap.

"And now, Madame," said the postilion, "what must we do?"

"We must get before them."

"Get before them? Impossible, Madame! We cannot pass the carriage of the dauphiness."

"Why not?"

"Because it is expressly forbidden. *Peste!* pass the king's horses! I should be sent to the galleys."

"Now listen, my good fellow: manage it as you please, but I must positively get before those carriages."

"But do you not belong to the train of her Royal Highness?" asked Gilbert.

"It is very proper to wish for information," replied she, "but we should not ask indiscreet questions."

"I beg your pardon, Madame," said he, reddening.

"Well, postilion, what are we to do?"

"Why, faith! keep behind till we reach Vitry; and then, if her Highness stops, ask permission to go on before her."

"Ay; but then they would want to know who I am. They would learn — No, no, that will not do; we must find out some other way."

"Madame," said Gilbert, "if I might give advice —"

"Yes, yes, my young friend; if you have any good advice, give it."

"Could we not take some by-road which would bring us round to Vitry, and so get before the dauphiness without having been wanting in respect to her?"

"Excellent! The boy is right," cried the young lady. "Postilion, is there a by-road?"

"To go whither?"

"Whither you like, provided you leave the dauphiness behind."

"There is, in fact, a by-road leading round Vitry, and joining the high road again at Lachaussée."

"That is it; that is the very thing!" cried the lady.

"But, Madame, if I take that road, you must double the pay."

"Two louis-d'or for you if we get to Lachaussée before the dauphiness."

"Madame is not afraid, then, of her carriage being broken?"

"I care for nothing! If it breaks, I shall proceed on horseback."

And turning to the right, they entered a cross-road full of deep ruts, bordered by a little river, which falls into the Marne between Lachaussée and Martigny.

The postilion kept his word. He did all that human power could do to break the carriage, but at the same time to arrive before the dauphiness. A dozen times Gilbert was thrown into the lady's arms, and a dozen times she into his. Intimacy springs up quickly from jolting on in the loneliness of a carriage; and after two hours' travelling on this by-road it seemed to Gilbert as if he had known his companion ten years, and she on her part would have sworn she had known him since his birth. About eleven o'clock they came again on the high road between Vitry and Châlons. A courier whom they questioned told them that the dauphiness was not only staying to breakfast at Vitry, but that she meant to take two hours' repose. He added that he had been sent forward to desire those who attended to the horses to have them in readiness between three and four o'clock. This news filled the lady with joy. She gave the postilion the two louis-d'or which she had promised him; and turning to Gilbert, "So now," said she, "we shall be able to dine at the next stopping-place." But fate had decided that Gilbert should not dine there.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH A NEW PERSONAGE MAKES HIS APPEARANCE.

From the top of the hill which the lady's carriage was ascending, the village of Lachaussée might be seen; it was there she was to change horses and stop to dine. It was a lovely little village, with its thatched cottages scattered here and there at the caprice of the owners, — some in the very middle of the road, some half-hidden under the shade of a grove which bordered the highway, and some following the course of the little river which we have mentioned, over which the inhabitants had placed temporary rustic bridges to reach their dwellings.

At that moment, however, the most remarkable object in the village was a man, who, looking down the brook, was standing right in the middle of the road, as if he had been ordered to keep watch there. Sometimes he looked up, sometimes down the road; then he turned a longing eye toward a beautiful gray horse with long mane and tail, which was fastened to the window-shutter of a cabin, which he shook in his impatient tossing of his head, — an impatience which might be explained by the saddle on his back, indicating that he was waiting for his master.

From time to time the stranger ventured to approach the horse to pat his side, or pass his hand down his slender legs; and then, when he luckily escaped the kick which was offered him at each attempt, he returned to

his occupation of watching the road. Wearied at last by this fruitless watching, he knocked on the window-shutter. "Holloa! In there!" he shouted.

"Who is there?" replied a man's voice; and the shutter was opened.

"Monsieur," said the stranger, "if your horse is to be sold, the buyer is here at hand."

"You can see he has no wisp at his tail," answered the other, who appeared to be a countryman; and he shut the window.

This answer did not appear to satisfy the stranger, for he knocked again. He was a tall, stout man, about forty years of age, with a ruddy complexion, a black beard, and large, sinewy hands, peeping out from fine lace ruffles. He wore a hat edged with gold lace and set on crosswise, resembling those officers of the provinces who try to look fierce in the eyes of the Parisians. He knocked a third time. Then he became impatient. "Do you know, my honest fellow," he cried, "you are not very polite? If you don't open your shutter, I 'll break it in!"

At this threat the shutter opened, and the same face appeared again.

"But when you were told the horse is not for sale," replied the peasant for the second time, "what the devil — is not that enough?"

"But when I tell you that I want a fast animal!"

"Well, if you want one, can you not go to the post-house? There are sixty of the king's there; you surely can choose from among them. But leave a man who has only one that one!"

"I tell you this is the very one I want!"

"A nice proposal, indeed! An Arabian —"

"That is the reason I want it."

"Very possibly; but it is not for sale."

"Whose is it?"

"You are very curious!"

"And you are very discreet!"

"Well, it belongs to a person asleep in the house."

"A man, or a woman?"

"A woman."

"Tell the woman, then, that I will give her five hundred pistoles for her horse."

"Oh, ho!" said the peasant, staring; "five hundred pistoles! That is a sum!"

"Tell her it is the king who wants her horse."

"The king?"

"Yes, in person!"

"Oh, come! you are not the king, are you?"

"No, but I represent him."

"You represent the king?" said the peasant, taking off his hat.

"Come, come! make haste! The king is in a hurry!" and the burly stranger cast another impatient glance toward the highway.

"Well, when the lady awakes I will tell her."

"Yes, but I can't wait till she wakes."

"What is to be done, then?"

"*Parbleu!* awaken her!"

"Awaken her? Certainly not."

"Well, I shall do it myself!"

But just as the stranger, who pretended to be the representative of his Majesty, advanced to knock at the window of the upper story with the handle of his long whip, he caught a glimpse of a carriage coming along at the utmost speed of the worn-out horses. His quick eye recognized it instantly, and he sprang forward to meet it: it was that in which were Gilbert and his guardian angel. On seeing this man, who made signs to him to stop, the postilion

gladly obeyed; for he scarcely knew whether the horses could take him to the post-house.

"Chon! my dear Chon!" cried the stranger, "is it you at last?"

"It is, Jean," replied the lady addressed by this singular name. "And what are you doing here?"

"*Pardieu!* a pretty question! I am waiting for you." And he leaped on the step of the carriage, and putting in his long arms, seized her and covered her with kisses. "Ha!" said he, all at once observing Gilbert, who looked on with surprise at these strange proceedings, "what the deuce have you here?"

"Oh! a little philosopher, and very amusing," replied Mademoiselle Chon, little caring whether she hurt or flattered the pride of her new acquaintance.

"And where did you pick him up?"

"On the road; but that is not the question."

"True," said the person who was called Jean. "What about our old Comtesse de Béarn?"

"All settled!"

"What, settled?"

"Yes, she will come."

"But what did you say to her?"

"That I was the daughter of her lawyer, Maître Flageot; that I was passing through Verdun; and that my father desired me to tell her her lawsuit was coming on. I merely added that her presence in Paris had now become indispensable for its success."

"What did she say to that?"

"She opened her little gray eyes, took a long pinch of snuff, said that Monsieur Flageot was the cleverest man in the world, and gave orders for her departure!"

"Admirable, Chon! I shall make you my ambassador extraordinary. And now, shall we breakfast?"

"With all my heart; for this poor child is dying of hunger. But we must be quick, for she will soon overtake us."

"Who, — the old countess? Nonsense."

"No, the dauphiness."

"Bah! The dauphiness is scarcely at Nancy yet."

"She is at Vitry, — three leagues off!"

"*Peste!* That alters the case! Drive on, drive on, postilion!"

"To what place, Monsieur?"

"To the post-house."

The carriage drove off, with the stranger still standing on the step, and soon drew up before the inn-door.

"Quick, quick!" said Chon. "Let us have some cutlets, a fowl, some eggs, and a bottle of Burgundy. We must set out again instantly."

"Excuse me, Madame," said the innkeeper, stepping forward, "but in that case it must be with your own horses."

"What!" said Jean, leaping heavily down from the step of the carriage. "With our own horses?"

"Certainly, with those that brought you."

"Impossible!" said the postilion; "they have already done a double stage. See what a state they are in!"

"Oh! that is true," said Chon; "it would be utterly impossible to proceed farther with them."

"But what prevents your giving us fresh horses?" asked Jean.

"Merely that I have none."

"What the devil! You know the regulations; it is your duty to have horses."

"The regulations, Monsieur, oblige me to have fifteen horses in my stables."

"Very well?"

"Well, I have eighteen."

"That is more than I ask for, since I need only three."

"Yes, but they are all out."

"What! all the eighteen?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Damnation!" thundered the traveller.

"Oh, viscount, viscount!" cried Chon.

"Yes, yes, Chon, don't be afraid; I will keep calm. And when will your miserable hacks be in?" continued the viscount, turning to the host.

"Faith, Monsieur, I don't know; it all depends on the postilions. Perhaps in an hour, — perhaps in two hours."

"Now, my good fellow," said Vicomte Jean, placing his hat on one side, and putting out his right leg, "I wish you to understand this: I never jest."

"I am sorry for it, Monsieur. I should like you much better if you did."

"Now, take my advice! Let the horses be harnessed before I get angry."

"Go into the stable yourself, Monsieur; and if you find a horse there, you shall have it for nothing."

"Indeed! — and what if I should find sixty?"

"It would be just the same as if there were none; for these sixty horses are the king's."

"Well, what then?"

"What then? — they are not to be hired out!"

"What the devil are they here for, then?"

"For the use of Madame the dauphiness!"

"What! sixty horses in the stalls, and not one for me?"

"But you know, Monsieur —"

"I know only one thing, and that is, that I am in a hurry."

"It is a pity."

"And," continued the viscount, without heeding the

postmaster's interruption, "as the dauphiness will not be here before the evening — "

"What do you say?" exclaimed the host, all alarmed.

"I say that the horses will be back before she arrives!"

"Can it be possible you would propose — "

"*Parbleu!*" said the viscount, going into the stable, "I will have three horses; I don't want eight, like royal personages, although I have a right to them, — by alliance, at least."

"But I say you shall not have one!" said the host, throwing himself between the stranger and his horses.

"Scoundrel!" cried the viscount, turning pale with anger, "do you know who I am?"

"Viscount, viscount, in Heaven's name, no broils!" cried Chon.

"You are right, my good little Chon;" then, after a moment's thought, he turned with his most charming smile to the host. "My dear friend," he said, "I am going to take the responsibility off your shoulders."

"How so?" asked the host, by no means reassured, notwithstanding the friendly manner of his interlocutor.

"I shall help myself; here are three horses that suit me exactly."

"And you call that freeing me from responsibility?"

"Certainly; you have not given them to me, — it is I who take them."

"I tell you the thing is impossible!"

"We shall see about that. Where is the harness?"

"Let no one stir, at his peril!" cried the host to two or three grooms loitering about.

"Scoundrels!" cried the viscount.

"Jean, my dear Jean!" exclaimed Chon, "you will only bring us into some disagreeable situation. When on a mission like this we must endure — "

"Everything except delay," said Jean, with the utmost coolness; "and since these rogues won't help me, I shall do the business myself." And Jean coolly took from the wall, one after another, three sets of harness, and fitted them on three of the horses.

"Jean, Jean, I entreat you, do not be rash!" cried Chon, clasping her hands.

"Do you wish to arrive in Paris, or not?" said the viscount, grinding his teeth.

"Of course I do. All is lost if we do not hasten on!"

"Well, then, leave me alone." And separating three horses — not the worst — from the others, he led them to the carriage.

"Take care, Monsieur, take care!" cried the host; "it is high treason to steal those horses!"

"I am not going to steal them, you fool; I'm only going to borrow them. Come on, my little pets!"

The host sprang forward to catch the reins; but before he could touch them, he was rudely repulsed by the stranger.

"Brother, brother!" cried Mademoiselle Chon.

"Ah, he is her brother!" muttered Gilbert to himself, breathing more freely.

At this moment a window was opened on the opposite side of the way, and a lovely female face was seen. She appeared quite alarmed at the noise.

"Oh! it is you, Madame?" cried Jean, who immediately perceived her.

"I, Monsieur? What do you mean?" she replied, in bad French.

"You have awaked; so much the better. Will you sell your horse?"

"My horse?"

"Yes, the gray Arabian, tied to the window-shutter there. You know I offered you five hundred pistoles!"

"My horse is not for sale, Monsieur," said she, shutting the window.

"Well, I am not in luck to-day; people will neither sell nor hire. But, *corbleu!* I'll take the Arabian, if she won't sell it; and I'll drive these hacks to the devil, if they won't let me have them. Come, Patrice!"

The footman on his sister's carriage jumped down.

"Put them to the carriage!" said Jean.

"Help! help!" shouted the host.

Two grooms ran forward.

"Jean! viscount!" cried poor Chon, writhing in the carriage, and endeavoring in vain to open the door. "You are mad; we shall all be slaughtered!"

"Slaughtered! It is we who shall slaughter them, I hope. We are three against three! Come out, my young philosopher!" thundered Jean, addressing Gilbert, who never stirred, so great was his astonishment; "come out, and do something, — sticks, stones, or fists; anything will do! *Morbleu!* you look like a saint carved on stone!"

Gilbert gave an inquiring and supplicating glance at his protectress, but she held him by the arm. The host in the mean time bawled incessantly, dragging the horses in one direction, while Jean pulled them in the other. But the struggle could not last forever. Jean, wearied and heated, dealt the defender of the horses such a blow with his clenched fist that the latter fell back into the horse-pond, among his frightened ducks and geese, shouting, as he plunged in, "Help! murder! murder!"

The viscount, thus rid of his adversary, lost no time in attaching the horses.

"Help, in the name of the king! Help!" cried the host, rising, and endeavoring to rally his frightened grooms.

"Who calls for help in the name of the king?" cried a

cavalier, riding at full speed into the yard of the post-house, and reining up his horse, bathed in sweat and foam, in the very midst of the actors in this tumultuous scene.

"M. Philippe de Taverney!" muttered Gilbert to himself, sinking down in the carriage to escape observation. Chon, who lost no opportunity of acquiring information, heard the young man's name.

CHAPTER XXII.

VICOMTE JEAN.

THE young lieutenant of the body-guard of the dauphin — for it was he — leaped from his horse at the aspect of this strange scene, which began to collect about the post-house all the women and children of the village. On seeing Philippe, the postmaster was ready to throw himself on his knees before his protector, whom Providence had sent him so opportunely.

"Monsieur," he cried, "do you know what is happening?"

"No," replied Philippe, coldly, "but you are going to tell me, my friend."

"Well! they are attempting to take by force some of the horses of her Royal Highness the dauphiness?"

Philippe drew back, as if he heard what was absolutely incredible. "And who has made this attempt?" he inquired.

"I, Monsieur! — *mordieu!* — I myself!" said Jean.

"You are mistaken," said Taverney, shaking his head, — "it cannot be; otherwise Monsieur is either mad, or no gentleman!"

"It is you who are mistaken, — on both points, my dear Lieutenant," said the viscount. "My head is all right, and I ride in his Majesty's carriages."

"What! You are in your perfect senses, and are received at court, and yet you dare to take the horses of the dauphiness?"

"In the first place, there are sixty horses. Her Royal Highness can employ only eight; and it would be strange indeed if I should unluckily pitch upon the very ones she wanted."

"True, Monsieur, — there are sixty horses," replied the young man; "and her Royal Highness will employ only eight; but that does not hinder every horse, from the first to the sixtieth, being for her service; and between these horses no distinction can be made."

"You are mistaken, Monsieur; it is made," said the viscount, contemptuously, "since I have taken these three for myself. Shall I go on foot, when rascally lackeys are drawn by four horses? *Mordieu!* let them be satisfied, as I am, with three, and there will be enough for us all."

"If the lackeys have four horses, Monsieur, it is by the king's order; and now have the goodness to order your footman to take those horses back to the stable." These words Philippe pronounced firmly, but with so much politeness that none but a ruffian would have answered otherwise than respectfully.

"You may be right, my dear Lieutenant," answered Jean, "to speak in this manner, if it be a part of your duty to attend to the cattle; but I did not know that the gentlemen of the dauphin's body-guard had been raised to the rank of grooms. Shut your eyes; tell your people to do the same; and good-by."

"Monsieur, whether I have been raised or lowered to the rank of groom is not the question; what I do is my duty, for I am commanded by the dauphiness herself to attend to the relays."

"Oh! that alters the case; but allow me to tell you that you are filling a sorry office, Mr. Lieutenant, and if this is the way the young lady begins to treat the army —"

"Of whom do you speak, Monsieur?" interrupted Philippe.

"Why, *parbleu!* of the Austrian."

The chevalier turned pale. "Do you dare," he exclaimed, "to speak —"

"I not only dare to speak," interrupted Jean, "but I dare to act. Come, Patrice; hasten, we are pressed for time."

Philippe seized the first horse by the bridle. "Monsieur," said he, in a perfectly calm voice, "do me the favor to give your name."

"Do you wish particularly to know it?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, I am the Vicomte Jean Dubarry."

"What! you are the brother of that —"

"Who will send you to rot in the Bastille if you say one word more;" and Jean jumped into the carriage.

Philippe approached the door. "Vicomte Jean Dubarry," said he, "you will do me the honor to come out."

"Ah, indeed! I have plenty of leisure for that!" said the viscount, endeavoring to shut the door.

"If you hesitate one instant, Monsieur," replied Philippe, preventing him with his left hand from closing the carriage-door, "I give you my word of honor I will run you through the body!" and, as he spoke, he drew his sword.

"Oh!" cried Chon, "we shall be murdered. Give up the horses, Jean; give them up!"

"Ah, you threaten me!" shouted Jean, grinding his teeth and snatching up his sword, which he had laid on the seat of the carriage before him.

"And the threat shall be followed up if you delay a single moment, — do you hear? — a single moment;" and the young man's sword glanced before Jean's eyes.

"We shall never get away," whispered Chon, "if you do not manage this officer by gentle means."

"Neither gentleness nor violence shall stop me in the discharge of my duty," said Philippe, who had overheard the advice, bowing; "I recommend you, Madame, to advise Monsieur le Vicomte to submit in time, or in the name of the king, whom I represent, I shall be forced to kill him if he consents to fight, or to arrest him if he does not."

"And I tell you I shall have the horses in spite of you!" shouted Jean, leaping out of the carriage and drawing his sword.

"That remains to be proved, Monsieur," said Philippe, putting himself on guard; "are you ready?"

"Lieutenant," said the brigadier commanding under Philippe, "there are six of our men near; shall I —"

"Do not stir, Monsieur," said the lieutenant; "this is a personal quarrel. Come, Monsieur le Vicomte, I am at your service."

Mademoiselle Chon shrieked, and Gilbert wished the carriage had been as deep as a well, to hide him.

Jean began the attack; he was a good swordsman, but anger prevented him from turning his skill to advantage. Philippe, on the contrary, was as cool as if he had been playing with a foil in the fencing-school. The viscount advanced, retired, leaped to the right, to the left, shouting in making his passes like the fencing-master of a regiment; while the chevalier, with closed teeth and steady eye, immovable as a statue, watched all his adversary's movements and divined his intentions. Every one in the yard was silent, attentively looking on; even Chon ceased to scream. For some minutes the combat continued without Jean's feints, shouts, and movements producing any effect, but also without his having permitted Philippe, who

doubtless was studying his opponent's play, to touch him once. All at once, however, the viscount sprang back, uttering a cry of pain, and at the same moment his ruffles were stained with blood, which ran down his fingers in large drops. Philippe's sword had pierced the forearm of his adversary. "You are wounded, Monsieur," said he.

"*Sacrebleu*, I am aware of it!" cried Jean, turning pale and letting his sword fall.

The chevalier took it up and restored it to him. "Take it, Monsieur," said he, "and commit no more such follies."

"*Peste!* if I commit them I pay for them," growled the viscount. "Come here quick, my poor Chonchon; come," added he to his sister, who sprang from the carriage and hastened to his assistance.

"You will do me the justice, Madame," said Philippe, "to acknowledge that all this has not been caused by my fault. I deeply regret having been driven to such extremities before a lady;" and bowing, he retired. "Let those horses be unharnessed and taken back to the stable," said he to the postmaster.

Jean shook his fist at Philippe, who shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah!" cried the postmaster, "here are three horses coming in! Courtin, Courtin, quick! put them to the gentleman's carriage."

"But, Master —" said the postilion.

"Come, come! no reply; the gentleman is in a hurry. Don't be uneasy, Monsieur, you shall have the horses."

"All very fine; but your horses should have been here half an hour ago," growled Dubarry, stamping with his foot, as he looked at his arm, pierced through and through, which Chon was binding up with her handkerchief. Meantime Philippe had mounted his horse again, and was giving his orders as if nothing had occurred.

"Now, brother, now! let us go," said Chon, leading Dubarry toward the carriage.

"And my Arabian?" said he. "Ah! let him go to the devil; I am in for a day of ill-luck," and he got into the carriage.

"Oh!" said he, perceiving Gilbert, "I cannot stretch my legs with this fellow here."

"Let me out," said Gilbert, "and I will walk."

"In the devil's name go, then!" replied Jean.

"No, no," said Chon, "I must keep my little philosopher. Sit opposite me, and you will not annoy him;" and she held Gilbert by the arm. Then, bending forward, she whispered to her brother, "He knows the man who wounded you."

A gleam of joy flashed from the viscount's eyes. "Oh, very well! — let him stay. What is the fellow's name?"

"Philippe de Taverney."

Just then the young officer passed the carriage.

"Oh! you are there, my little gendarme," shouted the viscount. "You are very proud just now, but my turn will come some day."

"We will see about that, Monsieur, whenever you please," answered Philippe, calmly.

"Yes, yes, we shall see about that, Monsieur Philippe de Taverney," said the viscount, leaning forward to see what effect the unexpected mention of his name would have on the young man.

Philippe looked up with surprise, and indeed with a slight feeling of uneasiness; but immediately recovering his self-possession, and taking off his hat with the utmost grace, "A pleasant journey, Monsieur Jean Dubarry," said he.

The carriage rolled on rapidly. "Thousand devils!"

said the viscount, making a horrible grimace; "do you know, my little Chon, I am suffering dreadful pain?"

"At the first place where we change I shall summon a doctor for you, while this poor fellow breakfasts," replied Chon.

"Ah! true, true, — we have not breakfasted; but the pain I suffer takes away my appetite. I am only thirsty."

"Will you drink a glass of wine from my flask?"

"Faith, yes! give it me."

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, "will you allow me to remark that wine is very bad for you in your present condition?"

"Ah, indeed!" said the viscount; then turning to Chon, he asked, "Is your little philosopher a physician, then?"

"No, Monsieur," said Gilbert, "I am not a physician; if it please God I shall be one some time. I have read, however, in a treatise written for people in the army, that the first things forbidden the wounded are spirits, wine, and coffee."

"Ah, you read that! Well, we will say no more about it."

"But if M. le Vicomte would permit me to take his handkerchief and dip it in that brook, and then wrap it round his arm, I am sure it would ease his pain."

"Do, do!" said Chon. "Stop, postilion!"

Gilbert got out to dip the viscount's handkerchief in the brook.

"This boy will be a horrid plague to us," said the viscount; "I have a great mind to tell the postilion to drive on and leave him there with my handkerchief."

"You would be wrong; that boy can be useful to us."

"How so?"

"He has already given me some important information

about the dauphiness; and did he not just now tell you the name of your adversary?"

"True! Well, let him stay."

Gilbert returned; and, as he had predicted, the application of the wet bandage to the viscount's arm relieved him greatly.

"Faith, he was right! I feel much better," said Jean; "let us have a little chat."

Gilbert closed his eyes and opened his ears. But his attentiveness did him no good. Chon replied to her brother's invitation in the lively and brilliant patois of Provence, unintelligible to Parisian ears. Gilbert, master of himself as he was, could not avoid a slight movement of impatience, which was noticed by Mademoiselle Chon, who, to console him, gave him a gentle smile. This smile reminded the poor boy of the kindness with which he was treated. Circumstances had brought him in contact with a nobleman honored with the royal favor. "Ah," thought he, "if Andrée saw me in this magnificent carriage!" — and his heart swelled with pride. As to Nicole, he no longer thought of her.

In the mean time the brother and sister resumed their conversation in the Provençal dialect. Suddenly the viscount leaned out and looked back. "Good!" he exclaimed.

"What is it?"

"The Arabian horse is following us."

"What Arabian horse?"

"The one I tried to buy."

"Hold!" said Chon; "it is ridden by a woman. Oh, the magnificent creature!"

"Of whom are you speaking, — the woman, or the horse?"

"Of the woman."

"Call her, Chon; she will not perhaps be so much afraid of you. I would give a thousand crowns for the horse."

"And how much for the woman?" said Chon, laughing.

"I would give all I have for her. But call her."

"Madame!" cried Chon, "Madame!"

But the stranger appeared not to hear, or not to understand. Wrapped in a long white mantle, and her face shaded by a large beaver hat with drooping feathers, she flew past them like an arrow, crying: "Avanti, Djerid, avanti!"

"She is an Italian," said the viscount. "*Mordieu*, what a splendid woman! If it were not for the pain of my arm, I would jump out and run after her."

"I know her," said Gilbert.

"Why, the little fellow is a directory for the whole province," said the viscount; "he knows every one."

"Who is she?" asked Chon.

"Her name is Lorenza, and she is the sorcerer's wife."

"What sorcerer?"

"The Baron Joseph Balsamo."

The brother and sister looked at each other with an expression which said, "We did well to keep him!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE COMTESSE DUBARRY'S MORNING LEVEE.

WHILE Mademoiselle Chon and Vicomte Jean are travelling post on the Châlons road, let us introduce the reader to another member of the same family.

In the suite of rooms at Versailles which the Princess Adélaïde, daughter of Louis XV., had once occupied, his Majesty had installed his mistress, the Comtesse Dubarry, — not without studying beforehand the effect which this proceeding would produce on his court. The favorite, with her merry whims and her careless, joyous humor, had transformed that wing of the palace, formerly so quiet, into a scene of perpetual merriment and tumult; and every hour she issued thence her commands for a banquet or a party of pleasure.

But what appeared still more unusual on these magnificent staircases was the never-ceasing stream of visitors ascending them to wait humbly in an antechamber filled with curiosities, but containing nothing so curious as the idol whom they had come to adore.

On the morning following the day on which occurred in the little village of Lachaussée the incident which we have just described, at about nine o'clock (that is, at the customary hour), Jeanne de Vaubernier, in a robe of embroidered muslin which disclosed beneath fleecy lace-work her rounded limbs and her alabaster arms, — Jeanne de Vaubernier, who was afterward Mademoiselle Lange, and finally Comtesse Dubarry, by grace of M. Jean Dubarry,

her former protector, arose from her bed, we will not say like Venus, but certainly more beautiful than Venus for every man who prefers what is real to what is imaginary.

Locks of a light auburn hue, beautifully curled, a skin of white satin veined with blue, eyes by turns languishing and animated, a small mouth of vermilion color pencilled with the purest carmine, which on opening disclosed a double row of pearls, dimples everywhere, in cheeks, chin, and fingers, a throat modelled after that of the Vénus de Milo, the suppleness of a serpent together with a plumpness exactly proportioned, — this is what Madame Dubarry was preparing to exhibit to the elect at her little levee; this is what his Majesty, the elect by night, did not fail to seek in the morning, as did the others, in obedience to the maxim which counsels old people not to permit the crumbs which fall from the table of life to go to waste.

The favorite had been awake for some time. At eight o'clock she had rung for some one to allow the daylight, her earliest courtier, to enter gradually her chamber, first through thick curtains, and then through those of lighter texture. The sun, radiant this morning, had been introduced, and in memory of its pleasing mythological fortunes had come to caress this beautiful nymph, who, instead of fleeing, like Daphne, the love of the gods, was human enough to meet half-way sometimes the love of mortals. There were, then, no signs of recent slumber in the eyes, brilliant as carbuncles, which smilingly questioned a little hand-mirror circled with gold and set with pearls. The lithe form of which we have tried to present some idea glided from the bed whereon it had reposed, lulled by sweetest dreams, to the carpet of ermine, where feet that would have done honor to Cinderella met hands

holding two slippers, either one of which would have made rich a woodcutter in Jeanne's native forest if he perchance could have found it. While the seductive form was rising, and becoming more and more alive, over its shoulders was thrown a magnificent mantle of Malines lace; then upon the plump feet, withdrawn for a moment from the slippers, were drawn silk stockings of a tissue so fine that they could hardly be distinguished from the skin they covered.

"No news of Chon?" the countess asked, addressing her maid.

"No, Madame."

"Nor of the viscount?"

"No, Madame."

"Do you know whether Bischi has received any news?"

"A messenger was sent to your sister's, Madame, this morning, but there were no letters."

"It is very tiresome waiting in this way," said the countess, pouting her lovely mouth. "Will a way never be found to communicate in a moment over a hundred leagues' distance? Ah! I pity all who may come near me to-day. Is my antechamber passably filled this morning?"

"Can Madame think it necessary to ask?"

"Perhaps not; but listen, Dorée: the dauphiness is coming, and it would not be surprising if I should be abandoned for that sun, — I, who am only a little twinkling star. But tell me, who is there this morning?"

"The Duc d'Aiguillon, Madame, the Prince de Soubise, Monsieur de Sartines, the President Maupeou —"

"And the Duc de Richelieu?"

"Not yet, Madame."

"Neither to-day nor yesterday? I told you so, Dorée; he is afraid of compromising himself. You must send

one of my servants to the Hôtel de Hanovre to inquire if the duke be ill."

"Yes, Madame; will you receive all who are waiting at once, or do you wish to give any one a private audience?"

"Monsieur de Sartines first; I must speak to him alone."

The order was transmitted by the countess's woman to a tall footman who waited in the corridor leading from her bed-chamber to the anterooms, and the lieutenant of police immediately appeared, dressed in black, and endeavoring by an insinuating smile to moderate the severe expression of his gray eyes and thin lips.

"Good morning, my dear enemy!" said the countess, without looking round, but seeing him in the mirror before her.

"Your enemy, Madame!"

"Yes; my world is divided into two classes, — friends and enemies. I admit no neutrals, or class them as enemies."

"And you are right, Madame; but tell me how I, notwithstanding my well-known devotion to your interests, deserve to be classed as neutral or hostile."

"By allowing to be printed, distributed, sold, and sent to the king an ocean of pamphlets, libels, verses, — all against me. It is ill-natured, it is odious, it is stupid!"

"But, Madame, I am not responsible — "

"Yes, Monsieur, you are; for you know the wretch who wrote them."

"Madame, if they were all written by one author, we should not have the trouble of sending him to the Bastille; Hercules himself would sink under such a labor!"

"Upon my word, you are highly complimentary to me!"

"If I were your enemy, Madame, I should not speak the truth thus."

"Well, I believe you! — we understand each other now. But one thing still gives me some uneasiness."

"What is that, Madame?"

"You are on good terms with the Choiseuls."

"Madame, M. de Choiseul is prime minister; he issues his orders, and I must obey them."

"So if Monsieur de Choiseul orders that I am to be vexed, tortured, worried to death, you will allow me to be vexed, tortured, worried! Thank you!"

"Let us discuss matters a little," said Sartines, sitting down, without being asked to do so, but without eliciting any sign of displeasure on the part of the favorite, — for much must be pardoned to the man who knew better than any other all that was doing in France. "Let us discuss this a little. What have I done for you in these last three days?"

"You informed me that a courier had been sent from Chanteloup to hasten the arrival of the dauphiness."

"Was that done like an enemy?"

"But about the presentation, on which you know my heart is set, — what have you been doing for me?"

"All that I possibly could."

"Monsieur de Sartines, you are not candid!"

"Ah, Madame, I assure you, you are unjust! Did I not find and bring you Vicomte Jean from the back room of a tavern in less than two hours, when you wanted him in order to send him I don't know where, — or rather, I do know where."

"I had much rather you had allowed my brother-in-law to stay there," said Madame Dubarry, laughing, — "a man allied to the royal family of France!"

"Well, but was that not a service to be added to my many other services?"

"Oh, very well! So much for three days ago, and so much for day before yesterday; now tell me what you did for me yesterday."

"Yesterday, Madame!"

"Oh! you may well endeavor to recollect; that was your day for obliging others."

"I don't understand you, Madame."

"Well, I understand myself. Answer, Monsieur, what were you doing yesterday?"

"Yesterday morning I was occupied as usual, writing with my secretary."

"Till what hour?"

"Till ten."

"What did you do then?"

"I sent to invite a friend of mine from Lyons, who had made a wager that he would come to Paris without my knowledge, and for whom one of my lackeys was waiting at the barrier."

"Well, after dinner?"

"I sent to the Austrian lieutenant of police information of the haunt of a famous robber whom he could not discover."

"And who was —"

"At Vienna."

"So you do police duty, not for Paris only, but for foreign courts?"

"Yes, Madame, in my leisure moments."

"Well, I shall take a note of that. Then, after having despatched the courier to Vienna?"

"I went to the opera."

"To see the little Guimard? Poor Soubise!"

"No, — to arrest a famous pickpocket, whom I did not

disturb so long as he kept to the farmers-general, but who had the audacity to rob two or three noblemen."

"You should say 'the indiscretion.' Well, after the opera?"

"After the opera?"

"Yes. That is a rather puzzling question, is it not?"

"No. After the opera? Let me think —"

"Ah! it seems that now your memory fails."

"Oh! after the opera — Yes, I remember."

"Well?"

"I went to the house of a certain lady who keeps a gaming-table, and I myself conducted her to Fort-l'Evêque."

"In her carriage?"

"No in a fiacre."

"Well?"

"Well, that is all."

"No, it is not all!"

"I got into my fiacre again."

"And whom did you find in it?"

M. de Sartines changed color.

"Oh!" cried the countess, clapping her little hands, "I have really had the honor of making a minister of police blush!"

"Madame —" stammered Sartines.

"Well, I will tell you who was in the fiacre; it was the Duchesse de Grammont!"

"The Duchesse de Grammont?"

"Yes, the Duchesse de Grammont, — who came to ask you to contrive to get her admitted to the king's private apartments."

"Faith, Madame!" said the minister, moving uneasily in his chair, "I may give up my portfolio to you. It is you who manage the police of Paris, not I."

"To tell the truth, Monsieur, I have a police of my own. So beware! Oh, the Duchesse de Grammont in a fiacre with the minister of police at midnight! It was capital! Do you know what I did?"

"No; but I am afraid it was something dreadful! Fortunately, the hour was very late."

"Yes; but that does n't help you. Night is the time for vengeance!"

"And what, then, did you do?"

"As I keep a police of my own, I keep a body of writers also, — shocking, ragged, hungry scribblers!"

"Hungry? You must feed them badly."

"I don't feed them at all. If they became fat, they would be as stupid as the Prince de Soubise. Fat, we are told, absorbs the gall."

"Go on; you make me shudder!"

"I recollected all the disagreeable things you have allowed the Choiseuls to do against me, and determined to be revenged. I gave my legion of famishing Apollos the following programme: First, Monsieur de Sartines, disguised as a lawyer, visiting an innocent young girl who lives in a garret, and giving her on the thirtieth of every month a wretched pittance of a hundred crowns."

"Madame, that is a benevolent action which you are endeavoring to misconstrue."

"It is only such actions which can be misconstrued. Second, Monsieur de Sartines, disguised as a reverend missionary, introducing himself into the convent of the Carmelites of the Rue St.-Antoine."

"I was taking those good nuns some news from the Indies."

"East, or West? Third, Monsieur de Sartines, disguised as lieutenant of the police, driving through the

streets at midnight in a fiacre with the Duchesse de Grammont."

"No, Madame!" exclaimed he. "No, — you would not bring such ridicule on my administration!"

"Why, do you not bring ridicule on mine?" said the countess, laughing; "but wait! I set my rogues to work, and they began, like boys at college, with exordium, narration, and amplification; and I have received this morning an epigram, a song, and a ballad, of which you are the subject."

"Ah, my God!"

"Frightful, all three of them! I amused the king with them this morning, and also with the new *Pater noster* which you have allowed to circulate. You know what it is: 'Our Father who art at Versailles, dishonored be thy name, as it deserves to be. Thy kingdom is in disorder; thy will is not done on the earth any more than it is in heaven. Give us our daily bread, which thy favorites have taken from us. Forgive thy parliaments, which uphold thine interests, as we forgive thy ministers who have sold them. Yield not to the seductions of the Dubarry, and deliver us from thy devil of a chancellor. Amen.'"

"Where in the world did you find that?" asked M. de Sartines, clasping his hands.

"Oh! I had no need to find it; some one has the politeness to send me every day the best things in that line as they come out. I have even supposed that it is you who have done me that honor."

"Oh, Madame!"

"And so, by way of reciprocity, to-morrow you will receive the epigram, the song, and the ballad I have mentioned."

"Why not to-day?"

"I must have some time first to distribute them. Is

not that the way? Besides, the police ought always to hear last about any new affair. I assure you, you will be very much amused! I laughed three quarters of an hour at them this morning, and the king was made ill with laughing; it is that which makes him so late."

"I am ruined!" cried Sartines, beating his head with his hands.

"Ruined? Nonsense! You are only celebrated in song. Am I ruined by all the verses made on me? No; I only get in a passion at them, and then for revenge I determine to put somebody else in a passion too. Ah, what delightful verses! I was so pleased with them that I ordered some white wine for my literary scorpions, and I suppose that by this time they are dead drunk."

"Ah, Countess, Countess!"

"But, *pardieu*, you must hear the epigram, —

"'O France! how wretched is thy fate,
When women hold the helm of state!'

No, no, — I am wrong; that is what you have allowed to be circulated against me. But there are so many, I confound them. Listen, listen! here it is: —

"'A perfumer once sought of a painter a sign.
His skill than his genius was duller;
For in a huge bottle, with knavish design,
He makes Boynes, Maupeou, and Terray to shine,
Displayed in their own proper color.
But for Sartines still room in the vessel he leaves,
And he labels the mixture "The Essence of Thieves."'"

"Cruel woman, you will drive me mad!" cried Sartines.

"Now we must look at the song. You must know it is Madame de Grammont who speaks: —

"'Dear minister, you know my skin
Is to the purest snow akin;
Then grant to me this single thing, —
Oh, say so, say so, to the king!'"

"Madame, Madame!" cried Sartines, more furious than ever.

"Oh! don't be disturbed," said the countess; "I have had only ten thousand copies printed. But you ought to hear the ballad."

"You have a press, then?"

"Certainly. Has not the Duc de Choiseul one?"

"Let your printer take care!"

"Oh, it is kept in my own name! I am the printer."

"Shocking, shocking! And the king laughs at these infamies!"

"Laughs? He sometimes gives me rhymes himself, when my spiders give out."

"You know how I serve you, and you treat me thus!"

"I know that you are betraying me. The Duchesse de Grammont is a Choiseul; she wishes to ruin me."

"Madame, I declare to you she took me by surprise!"

"You confess, then, that I was informed correctly?"

"I am forced to confess it."

"Why did you not tell me?"

"I came now for that purpose."

"I don't believe you."

"Upon my honor!"

"I bet two to one against it."

"Behold me at your feet!" and he fell on his knees. "I beg forgiveness!"

"You do well."

"Let us make peace, Countess, in Heaven's name!"

"So you are afraid of a few bad verses, — you, a man, a minister!"

"Ah! if I had only that to fear!"

"And you never reflect how many wretched hours such things make me spend, — me, a woman!"

"You are a queen."

"A queen, not presented at court!"

"I swear to you I have never done anything hurtful to your interests!"

"No; but you have allowed others to do so. The matter, however, is now not the doing nothing against them, but the doing all in your power to forward them. Are you on my side, — yes, or no?"

"Certainly, on your side."

"Will your devotion go so far as to help on my presentation?" asked the countess.

"You yourself shall fix its limits."

"Remember, my press is in order; it works night and day. In twenty-four hours my scribblers will be hungry; and when they are hungry they bite."

"I will be good. What do you wish?"

"That nothing which I undertake shalt be opposed."

"For myself, I promise everything."

"No," said the countess, stamping with her foot. "Punic faith! I will not accept that; there is a loop-hole in it for you to crawl out. You will be supposed to do nothing against me yourself, but the Duc de Choiseul will do all. All or nothing. Give me up the Choiseuls, bound hand and foot, or I will destroy you, annihilate you! Take care! Verses are not my only weapons!"

"Do not threaten me, Madame," said Sartines, thoughtfully; "there are difficulties about this presentation which you cannot understand."

"Obstacles have purposely been thrown in the way of it. You can remove them."

"I am only one person; we need a hundred."

"You shall have a million!"

"The king will not give his consent."

"He will give it!"

"And when you have got it, you will need a lady to present you."

"I am seeking for one now."

"It is useless; there is a league against you."

"At Versailles?"

"Yes. All the ladies have refused, in order to pay their court to the Duc de Choiseul, the Duchesse de Grammont, the dauphiness, — the party of prudes, in short."

"Do not fear; I have nearly obtained what I want."

"Ha! it was for that you sent your sister to Verdun!"

"So you know that, do you?" said she, angrily.

"Oh, I have also my police, you know!" said Sartines, laughing.

"And your spies?"

"And my spies."

"In my apartments?"

"In your apartments."

"In my stable, or in my kitchen?"

"In your antechamber, in your salon, in your bedroom, under your pillow."

"Now, as the first pledge of our peace," said the countess, "give me the names of those spies."

"No, Countess; I should not wish to embroil you with your friends."

"But name only the last who told you a secret."

"What would you do?"

"I would turn him out."

"If you begin in that way, you will soon have to live in an empty house."

"This is frightful!"

"Yet perfectly true. Oh, you know we could not govern without spies! So excellent a politician as you must have discovered that long ago."

Madame Dubarry leaned her elbow on a table, and seemed to reflect for some minutes; then she said, "You are right. Let us say no more on the subject. What are to be the conditions of our treaty?"

"Make them yourself. You are the conqueror."

"I am as magnanimous as Semiramis. Let me hear what you wish."

"Well, then, you are never to speak to the king about petitions on the subject of wheat; for, traitress! you have promised your support to those petitions."

"Very well. Take away all the petitions with you; they are in a box there."

"Take in exchange this document, drawn up by the peers of the kingdom, respecting presentations and the right of sitting in the royal presence."

"A document which you were charged to give his Majesty?"

"Yes."

"But what will you say to them?"

"That I have given it. You will thus gain time; and you are too clever in your tactics not to take advantage of it."

At this moment the folding-doors were thrown open, and an usher announced, "The king!"

The two allies hastened to hide their mutual pledges of peace and good understanding, and turned to salute his Majesty, Louis XV.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KING LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH.

THE king entered with head erect, with a firm step, his eye full of life, and a smile on his lips. As the doors were opened, a double file of bowing heads was seen, belonging to the courtiers, who had been long waiting in the antechamber, and who were now more desirous of admittance than ever, since they could thus pay their court to two powers at once; but the doors closed on them, for the king made a sign that no one should follow him. He found himself alone, therefore, with the countess and the minister of police; for we need make no account of the waiting-maid or a little negro who was in attendance.

"Good-morning, Countess!" said the king, kissing Madame Dubarry's hand. "Ha! fresh as any rose, I see! Good-morning, Sartines! Is this your cabinet, where you write your despatches? Heavens, what heaps of papers! Hide them, hide them! Ha! what a beautiful fountain, Countess!" And with the versatile curiosity of one always in search of something to amuse him, he fixed his eyes on a large china ornament, which had been brought in since the evening before, and placed in a corner of the countess's bedroom.

"Sire," replied the countess, "it is a Chinese fountain. On turning this cock, the water comes out and makes these birds sing and these fishes swim; then the doors of the pagoda open, and there comes out a procession of mandarins."

"Very pretty, very pretty indeed!"

At this moment the little negro walked across the room, dressed in the fantastic fashion in which, at this period, they dressed their Osmans and Othellos. He wore a little turban, ornamented with a lofty plume of feathers, on one side of his head, a vest embroidered with gold, which permitted his ebony arms to be seen, and slashed breeches of white brocaded satin; round his waist was a scarf of various bright colors, which connected the breeches with a richly embroidered jacket; and a dagger, ornamented with precious stones, was stuck in the scarf bound around his waist.

"*Peste!*" cried the king, "how splendid Zamore is to-day!"

The negro stopped to admire himself before a mirror.

"Sire, he has a favor to ask of your Majesty."

"Madame," replied the king, with a courtly smile, "I am afraid Zamore is very ambitious."

"How so, Sire?"

"Because he has already been granted the greatest favor he can desire."

"What is that?"

"The same that has been granted me."

"I do not understand you, Sire."

"You have made him your slave."

The minister of police bowed, smiling, and bit his lip at the same time.

"Oh, how charming you are, Sire!" cried the countess. Then, leaning toward the king, she said, in a low tone, "France, I adore thee!"

The king smiled in his turn. "Well," he asked, "what do you want for Zamore?"

"The reward of his long and numerous services."

"Yes; he is twelve years old."

"His long and numerous future services."

"Oh, very well!"

"Yes, indeed, Sire. Past services have been rewarded long enough; it is now time to begin rewarding those of the future. There would not then be so much ingratitude."

"Ha! not a bad idea," said the king. "What do you think of it, Sartines?"

"That it would benefit all devoted servants of your majesty, Sire; therefore I support it."

"Well, Countess, come, what do you ask for Zamore?"

"Sire, you know my little country seat of Luciennes?"

"I have heard it spoken of only."

"It is your own fault; I have invited you to it a hundred times."

"You know the etiquette, dear Countess: unless on a journey, the king can sleep only in a royal château."

"Exactly; this is the favor which I have to ask. We will make Luciennes a royal château, and we will appoint Zamore to be its governor."

"But, Countess, that would be a burlesque."

"I love burlesques, Sire."

"The governors of the other castles would all cry out, — and this time with reason."

"So much the better; they have so often cried out without reason. Kneel down, Zamore, and thank his Majesty."

"And what for?" asked Louis XV.

The negro knelt.

"For the reward you are going to give him for bearing my train, and putting all the prudes of the court in a rage."

"He is really a hideous creature," said the king, bursting into a fit of laughter.

"Rise, Zamore," said the countess; "you are appointed governor of Luciennes."

"But indeed, Madame — "

"I shall send Zamore all the writings necessary for his governorship. And now, Sire, you may come to Luciennes; you have one more royal château from this day."

"Is there any way of refusing her anything, Sartines?"

"There may be a way, Sire," replied Sartines; "but it has not yet been discovered."

"And if it should be found out, Sire, there is one thing certain: it is M. de Sartines who will be the discoverer."

"How can you think so, Madame?" asked Sartines, trembling.

"Sire, only imagine that I have requested a favor of M. de Sartines for three months past, and it is not yet granted."

"And what is it?" asked the king.

"Oh, he knows very well!"

"I! I swear to you, Madame — "

"Does it fall within the duties of his office?"

"Yes; within either his or those of his successor."

"Madame," cried Sartines, "you really make me uneasy."

"What is the request?" again inquired the king.

"To find me a sorcerer."

Sartines breathed more freely.

"To burn him?" asked the king. "It is rather too hot, Countess; wait till the winter."

"No, Sire; I wish to present him with a golden wand."

"Then the sorcerer foretold you some misfortune which has not befallen you."

"On the contrary, Sire, he predicted a piece of good-fortune which has come to pass."

"Let us hear it then, Countess," said the king, throwing himself back in an arm-chair, like one who is not

quite sure whether he is to be amused or bored, but takes the chance.

"With all my heart; but if I tell the tale, you must contribute the half of the sorcerer's reward."

"The whole, if you like!"

"Royally said. Now listen."

"I am all attention."

"There was once —"

"It begins like a fairy tale."

"It is one, Sire."

"Delightful; I adore enchanters!"

"There was once a poor young girl who at the time my story begins had neither page, nor carriage, nor negro, nor parrot, nor monkey —"

"Nor king," added Louis.

"Oh, Sire!"

"And what did the poor young girl do?"

"She trotted about through the streets of Paris like any other common mortal, only she always went very quick; for it is said she was very pretty, and she was afraid of meeting some rude man."

"The young girl was a Lucretia, eh?"

"Oh! your Majesty knows there have been no Lucretias since the year — I don't know what — of the foundation of Rome."

"Oh, heavens! Countess, are you going to become learned?"

"No; if I were learned, I should have given you a wrong date, but I have given you none."

"True," said the king; "go on."

"The young girl one day was trotting along, as usual, when all at once, while crossing the Tuileries, she discovered that a man was following her."

"Oh, the deuce! Then she stopped, I presume."

"Ah, Sire, what a bad opinion you have of women! It is easily seen that you have associated with only marchionesses and duchesses."

"And princesses?"

"I am too polite to contradict your Majesty. But what frightened the young girl was that a fog came on, which became every moment denser."

"Sartines, do you know what causes fogs?"

The minister, thus taken unawares, started.

"Faith! no, Sire."

"Nor I. Well, go on, dear Countess."

"She ran as fast as she could, passed through the gate, and found herself in the square which bears your Majesty's name, when she met the unknown, from whom she thought she had escaped, face to face. She uttered a cry —"

"Was he so very ugly, then?"

"No, Sire; he was a handsome young man, of twenty-six to twenty-eight years of age, of a dark complexion, with large, speaking eyes, and a pleasing voice."

"And the heroine was afraid? *Peste!* how easily she was frightened!"

"She was not quite so much so when she looked at him; still, it was not a pleasant situation in that dense fog. So, clasping her hands, she said: 'I implore you, Monsieur, not to do me any harm.' The unknown shook his head, smiled, and replied, 'Heaven is my witness, I have no such intention.' 'What, then, do you want?' I asked. 'To obtain a promise from you.' 'What can I promise you, Monsieur?' 'Promise to grant me the first favor I shall ask when —' 'When?' repeated the young girl, with curiosity. 'When you are queen.'"

"And what did the young girl do?" said the king.

"Sire, she thought it would be engaging herself to nothing; she promised."

"And what became of the sorcerer?"

"He disappeared."

"And Sartines refuses to find him? He is wrong."

"Sire, I do not refuse; but I cannot find him."

"Oh, Monsieur," said the countess, "that word *cannot* should never be in the dictionary of the police."

"Madame, we are on his track."

"Yes, — what you always say when you are baffled."

"It is the truth; but consider what trivial directions you have given."

"What! — trivial? — young, handsome, dark complexion, black hair, splendid eyes, a sonorous voice."

"Oh, the devil! how you speak of him, Countess! Sartines, I forbid you to find that young man," said the king.

"You are wrong, Sire; for I only wish to ask one simple question."

"Is it about yourself?"

"Yes."

"Well, what is it? His prediction is accomplished."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; you are queen."

"Very nearly."

"What has the sorcerer, then, to tell you more?"

"He has to tell me when the queen will be presented. It is not enough to reign at night, Sire; it is necessary to reign a little also by day."

"That does not concern the sorcerer," said the king, with a grimace which showed that he thought they were getting on dangerous ground.

"And whose concern is it?"

"Your own."

"Mine?"

"Yes; you must find a lady to present you."

"Oh! very likely, among the prudes of the court! Your Majesty knows that it is impossible; they are all sold to Choiseul and Praslin."

"What! was there not an agreement made between us that the ministers should never be named here?"

"I did not promise, Sire."

"Well, I beg you to leave them where they are, and remain where you are. Believe me, the best place is yours."

"Alas, then, for the administration of foreign affairs and the navy!"

"Countess," interrupted the king, "in Heaven's name, no politics!"

At this moment Dorée entered, and whispered a word or two in her mistress's ear.

"Oh, certainly, certainly!" she cried.

"What is it?" asked the king.

"Chon, Sire, who has just returned from a journey, and wishes to pay her respects to your Majesty."

"Let her come in, let her come in! Indeed, for some days past I felt that I wanted something, without knowing exactly what it was."

"Thanks, Sire!" said Chon as she entered; then, going up to her sister, she whispered, "It is all settled!"

The countess uttered an exclamation of joy.

"Well, what now?" asked the king.

"Nothing, Sire, — only that I am glad to see her again."

"I am glad too. How do you do, little Chon?"

"May I say a word or two, Sire, to my sister?"

"Yes, yes, child; and while you are talking together, I will ask Sartines where you have been."

"Sire," said the minister, wishing to avoid being questioned on that point, "may I beg your Majesty to

allow me a few moments on business of the utmost importance?"

"Oh! I have very little time now, M. de Sartines," said the king, beginning to yawn.

"Only two words, your Majesty."

"About what?"

"About those people with the second sight, — those illuminati, those workers of miracles."

"Pooh! jugglers! Give them permission to exercise their trade, and there will be nothing to fear from them."

"The matter is more serious than your Majesty supposes. Every day we have new masonic lodges formed. They are now a powerful sect, attracting to them all the enemies of monarchy, — the philosophers, the encyclopedists. Voltaire is to be received by them in great state."

"He? He is dying."

"He, Sire! Oh, no, Sire; he is not such a fool!"

"He has confessed."

"Merely a trick."

"In the habit of a Capuchin."

"That was an impiety, Sire. But with regard to these freemasons, they are always active; they write, they talk, they form associations, correspond with foreign countries; they intrigue, they threaten. Just now they are expecting the arrival of a great chief or head of the whole body, as I have learned from some words which escaped from one of their number."

"Well, Sartines, when this chief comes, catch him and put him in the Bastille, and the whole affair is settled."

"Sire, these persons have great resources."

"Have they greater than you, Monsieur, who have the whole police of a kingdom?"

"Your Majesty was induced to expel the Jesuits; it was the philosophers whom you should have expelled."

"Come, come! — no more about those poor quill-drivers!"

"Sire, those quills are dangerous which are cut by the penknife of Damiens."

Louis XV. turned pale.

"These philosophers, Sire, whom you despise — "

"Well, Monsieur?"

"Will destroy the monarchy, Sire."

"How much time do they need for that, Monsieur?"

Sartines stared at this coolness. "How can I tell, Sire? Perhaps fifteen, twenty, or thirty years."

"Well, my dear friend, in fifteen or twenty years I shall be no more; so talk of all these things to my successor." And the king turned to Madame Dubarry, who, seeming to have waited for this movement, said, with a heavy sigh, "Oh, heavens! what is it you tell me, Chon?"

"Yes, what is it?" asked the king; "for you both look very miserable."

"Oh, Sire, there is good cause for it!"

"Speak; let me hear what has happened."

"My poor brother!"

"Poor Jean!"

"Do you think it must be cut off?"

"They hope not."

"Cut off! What?" asked the king.

"His arm, Sire!"

"Cut off the viscount's arm! What for?"

"Because he has been seriously wounded."

"Wounded in the arm?"

"Oh, yes, Sire."

"Aye, in some drunken squabble in a filthy tavern."

"No, Sire; on the highway."

"But how did that happen?"

"It happened that some one wished to assassinate him, that is all."

"Ah, the poor viscount!" exclaimed the king, who had very little feeling for the sufferings of others, although he could look wonderfully compassionate. "To assassinate him! This is a serious matter, is it not, Sartines?"

The minister looked much less moved than the king, but was in reality a great deal more uneasy on the subject. He drew near the sisters. "Can it be possible?" asked he, anxiously, "that such a misfortune has occurred?"

"Oh, yes, Monsieur, it is but too possible," said Chon, very mournfully.

"Assassinated! But how?"

"He was waylaid."

"Waylaid? Ha! Sartines, this is an affair for you," said the king.

"Relate all the circumstances, Madame," said the minister, "and do not, I entreat you, allow your just resentment to exaggerate them. In being strictly just we shall be the more severe; and where things are looked at closely and coolly, they are often not so very serious as we at first apprehended."

"Oh!" cried Chon, "this is not an affair which has been related to me; I saw the whole with my own eyes."

"Well, but what did you see, Chon?" inquired the king.

"I saw a man fall on my brother, and, having forced him to draw in self-defence, wound him shockingly."

"Was the man alone?" asked Sartines.

"No, indeed, he had six others with him."

"The poor viscount!" said the king, looking at the countess, that he might know exactly what degree of grief to exhibit, — "forced to fight, poor fellow!"

But seeing that she did not relish this pleasantry, "And he was wounded?" he added, in a compassionate voice.

"But what was the quarrel about?" asked the minister of police, trying, if possible, to betray her into telling the truth.

"Oh, the merest trifle! It was about post-horses, which I wanted in order to hasten back to my sister, as I had promised to be with her this morning."

"Ha! Sartines, this merits punishment, does it not?" said the king.

"I think it does, Sire, and I shall get together all the facts. What was the name of the aggressor, Madame, his condition, his rank?"

"His rank? He is a military man, — an officer in the bodyguard of the dauphin, I think. As to his name, he is called Baverney, Faverney, Taverney, — yes, Taverney, that is it."

"Madame, to-morrow he shall lie in the Bastille."

"Oh, no!" said the countess, who until now had very diplomatically kept silence; "oh, no!"

"Why, oh no?" asked the king; "why should not the fellow be imprisoned? You know I detest the military."

"And I repeat, Sire," said the countess, doggedly, "that I am quite sure nothing will be done to the man who assassinated the viscount."

"Ha, Countess, this is very curious. Explain it, if you please."

"That is easily done; he will be protected."

"And who will protect him?"

"The person at whose instance he acted."

"And that person will protect him against us? Oh, that is rather too much, Countess!"

"Madame —" stammered the Comte de Sartines, for he

felt that a blow was coming, and he was not prepared to ward it off.

"Yes!" exclaimed the countess, "he will be protected against you, and there will be nothing said. Do you suppose you are the master, Sire?"

The king felt the blow which the minister had foreseen, and braced himself.

"I see that you are going to plunge into politics," said he, "and find out some reasons of state for a paltry duel!"

"There, now! you abandon me already; the assassination has become nothing but a duel, now that you suspect the quarter whence it comes!"

"So! I am in for it!" said the king, going to the great Chinese fountain, turning the cock, and making the birds sing, the fishes swim, and the mandarins come out.

"And you don't know who aimed this blow?" asked the countess, pulling the ears of Zamore, who was lying at her feet.

"No, on my word!" said the king.

"Or suspect?"

"I swear I don't. Do you, Countess?"

"No, I don't suspect, I know positively. I am going to tell you, and it will be no news to you, I am certain!"

"Countess, Countess, do you know that you are giving the lie to your king?" and Louis tried to look dignified.

"Sire, I know I am a little warm, but if you think I shall quietly allow my brother to be killed by the Duc de Choiseul —"

"Yes, there it is, — Choiseul again!" exclaimed the king, in a loud voice, as if he had not expected this name, which for the last ten minutes he had been dreading.

"Well, it is because your Majesty is determined not to

see that he is my worst enemy; but I see it plainly, for he does not even take the trouble to hide his hatred from me."

"He is far from hating any one so much that he would cause him to be assassinated, dear Countess."

"To the Choiseuls all things are possible."

"Now, my dear Countess, politics again!"

"Oh, Monsieur de Sartines!" cried she, "is it not dreadful to be treated thus?"

"Why, no, if what you think —"

"I think you are not supporting me; I will say more, — I am sure that you abandon me," cried the countess, with violence.

"Now, do not get angry, Countess," said the king. "Not only will you not be abandoned, you will even be supported; and so well —"

"So well —?"

"So well that he who attacked poor Jean shall pay dearly for it."

"Yes, the instrument will be broken; but the hand that directed it will be kindly pressed!"

"Is it not right to punish this Monsieur Taverney, who actually committed the assault?"

"Oh, certainly! but it is not right that what you do for me is no more than would be done to a soldier who should give a blow to a shopkeeper at the theatre. I warn you, I will not be treated like every one else. If you do no more for those whom you love than for those who are indifferent to you, I prefer the obscurity and isolation of the latter; they at least are not assassinated!"

"Oh, Countess!" said the king, imploringly, "I got up in good spirits, disposed to be gay, happy, and pleased with every one; how you are spoiling my beautiful morning!"

"Very fine indeed! It is a delightful morning for me, of course, — for me, whose family are massacred!"

The king, in spite of his internal fears of the terrible storm that was gathering, could not help smiling at the word "massacred." The countess started up in a towering passion. "Ah! is that the way you pity me?" said she.

"Now, now, — do not get angry."

"But I will get angry!"

"You are very wrong; you look lovely when you smile, but anger makes you ugly."

"What matters it to me how I look, when my beauty does not prevent my being sacrificed to state intrigues?"

"Now, my dear Countess —"

"No, no. Choose between me and your Choiseul!"

"Dear creature, it is impossible to choose; you are both necessary to me."

"Well, then, I shall retire, and leave the field to my enemies. I shall die of grief; but the Duc de Choiseul will be satisfied, and that will console you."

"I swear to you, Countess, that he has n't the slightest dislike to you; on the contrary, he admires you. He is an excellent man, after all," added the king, in a louder tone, that the minister of police might hear him.

"An excellent man! Sire, you drive me to desperation. An excellent man, who causes people to be assassinated!"

"Oh!" said the king, "we don't yet know."

"And besides," Sartines ventured to say, "a quarrel, a duel between military men is so common, — so natural!"

"Ha, Monsieur de Sartines! and are you also against me?" cried the countess.

The minister of police understood the weight of this *tu quoque*, and retreated before her anger. There was a moment of deep and ominous silence.

"Ah, Chon!" said the king, in the midst of the general consternation, "you see your handiwork!"

"Your Majesty will pardon me," said she, "if the grief of the sister has made me forget for a moment my duty as a subject."

"Kind creature!" murmured the king. "Come, Countess, forget and forgive!"

"Yes, Sire, I shall forgive; only I shall set out for Luciennes, and thence for Boulogne."

"Boulogne-sur-mer?" asked the king.

"Yes, Sire; I shall quit a kingdom where the king is afraid of his minister."

"Madame!" exclaimed Louis, with an offended air.

"Sire, that I may not any longer be wanting in respect to you, permit me to retire;" and the countess rose, observing with the corner of her eye what effect her movement might produce.

The king gave his usual heavy sigh of weariness, which said plainly, "I am getting rather tired of this." Chon understood what the sigh meant, and saw that it would be dangerous to push matters to extremity. She caught her sister by the gown, and approaching the king, "Sire," said she, "my sister's affection for the poor viscount has carried her too far. It is I who have committed the fault; it is I who must repair it. As the humblest of your Majesty's subjects, I beg from your Majesty justice for my brother. I accuse nobody; your wisdom will discover the guilty."

"Why, that is precisely what I wish myself," said the king, "that justice should be done. If a man has not committed a crime, let him not be reproached with it; but if he has committed it, let him be punished." And Louis looked toward the countess as he spoke, with the hope of renewing the expectation he had entertained of an

amusing morning, — a morning which seemed turning out so dismally. The good-natured countess could not help pitying the king, whose want of occupation and emptiness of mind made him feel tired and dispirited except when with her. She turned half round, for she had already made a step toward the door, and said, with the sweetest submission, "Do I wish for anything but justice? Only let not my suspicions be repulsed when I express them."

"Your suspicions are sacred to me, Countess," cried the king; "and if they be changed into certainty, you shall see. But now I think of it, how easy to know the truth! Let the Duc de Choiseul be sent for."

"Oh! your Majesty knows that he never comes into these apartments; he would scorn to do so. His sister, however, is not of his mind, — she wishes for nothing better."

The king laughed. The countess, encouraged by this, added: "The Duc de Choiseul apes the dauphin; he will not compromise his dignity."

"The dauphin is religious, Countess."

"And the duke a hypocrite, Sire."

"I promise you, my dear countess, you shall see him here, for I shall summon him. He must come, as it is on state business, and we shall have all explained in Chon's presence, who saw all. We shall confront them, as the lawyers say, — eh, Sartines? Let some one go for the Duc de Choiseul."

"And let some one bring me my monkey. Dorée, my monkey!" cried the countess.

These words, which were addressed to the waiting-maid, could be heard in the ante-room when the door was opened to despatch the usher for the prime minister; and a broken, lisping voice responded: "The countess's monkey? That means me; I hasten to present myself."

And with these words entered a little hunchback, dressed with great magnificence.

"The Duc de Tresmes!" said the countess, annoyed by his appearance; "I did not summon you, Duke."

"You asked for your monkey, Madame," said the duke, bowing to the king, the countess, and the minister; "and seeing among the courtiers no ape half so ugly as myself, I hastened to obey your call;" and the duke laughed, showing such long teeth that the countess could not help laughing also.

"Shall I stay?" asked the duke, as if that were the favor he had aspired to all his life.

"Ask his Majesty, Duke; he is master here."

The duke turned to the king, with the air of a suppliant.

"Yes, stay, Duke, stay!" said the king, glad to find any additional means of amusement. At this moment the usher threw open the doors.

"Oh!" said the king, with a slight expression of dissatisfaction on his face, "is it the Duc de Choiseul already?"

"No, Sire," replied the usher; "it is Monseigneur the Dauphin, who desires to speak to you."

The countess almost started from her chair with joy, for she imagined the dauphin was about to enter; but Chon, who thought of everything, frowned.

"Well, where is the dauphin, then?" asked the king, impatiently.

"In your Majesty's apartments; his Royal Highness awaits your return."

"It is fated I shall never have a minute's repose," grumbled the king. Then, remembering that the audience demanded by the dauphin might spare him the scene with M. de Choiseul, he thought better of it. "I am

coming," said he, "I am coming. Good-by, Countess. See how I am dragged in all directions!"

"But will your Majesty go just when the Duc de Choiseul is coming?"

"What can I do? The principal slave is the king. Oh, if those rogues of philosophers knew what it is to be a king, — especially a king of France!"

"But, Sire, you can stay."

"Oh! I must not keep the dauphin waiting. People say already that I have no affection except for my daughters."

"But what shall I say to M. de Choiseul?"

"Oh! tell him to come to my apartments, Countess." And to put an end to any further remonstrance, he kissed her hand, and disappeared running, as was his habit whenever he feared to lose a victory gained by his temporizing policy and his petty cunning. The countess trembled with passion, and clasping her hands she exclaimed, "So, he has escaped once more!"

But the king did not hear those words; the door was already closed behind him, and he passed through the ante-rooms, saying to the courtiers, "Go in, gentlemen, go in, the countess will see you; but you will find her very dull, on account of the accident which has befallen poor Vicomte Jean."

The courtiers looked at one another in amazement, for they had not heard of the accident. Many hoped that the viscount was dead, but all assumed the expression of countenance suitable to the occasion. Those who were best pleased looked the most sympathetic, and they entered.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE HALL OF CLOCKS.

In that large hall of the palace of Versailles which was called the Hall of Clocks, a young man of rosy complexion, with mild eyes and a somewhat vulgar bearing, walked slowly up and down, with his arms hanging and his head bent forward. He appeared to be about seventeen years of age. On his breast sparkled a diamond star, rendered more brilliant by the dark, violet-colored velvet of his coat; and his white satin waistcoat, embroidered with silver, was crossed by the blue ribbon supporting the cross of St. Louis.

None could fail to recognize that profile, so expressive of dignity and kindliness, which formed the characteristic type of the elder branch of the House of Bourbon, of which this young man was at once the most obvious and the most striking image. In fact, Louis Auguste, Duc de Berry, Dauphin of France, who was afterward Louis XVI., had the Bourbon nose even longer and more aquiline than those of his predecessors. His forehead was lower and more retreating than Louis XV.'s, and the double chin of his grandfather was so remarkable in him that although he was at the time we speak of young and thin, his chin formed nearly one third of the length of his face.

Although well made, he yet seemed constrained in the movement of his legs and shoulders, and his walk was slow and awkward. His arms alone, and especially his fingers, had activity, suppleness, force, and, so to speak,

that physiognomy which in other persons is written on the forehead, the mouth, and the eyes. The dauphin continued to pace in silence the Hall of Clocks, — the same in which, eight years before, Louis XV. had given to Madame de Pompadour the decree of the parliament exiling the Jesuits from the kingdom, — and as he walked he seemed plunged in revery.

At last, however, he seemed to become impatient of waiting there alone, and to amuse himself he began to look at the timepieces, remarking, as Charles V. had done, the differences which are found among the most regular clocks. These differences are a singular but decided manifestation of the inequality existing in all material things, whether regulated or not regulated by the hand of man. He stopped before the large clock at the lower end of the hall — the same place it occupies at present — which by a clever arrangement of machinery marks the days, the months, the years, the phases of the moon, the course of the planets, — in short, all which interests the still more curious machine called man, in the progressive movement of life toward death.

The prince examined this clock with the eye of an amateur, and leaned now to the right, now to the left, to inspect this or that wheel. Then he returned to his place in front, and observed the second-hand moving lightly from second to second, like those flies which, with their long slender legs, skim over the surface of a pond without disturbing the liquid crystal of its waters. This contemplation naturally led him to think that a very great number of seconds had passed while he had been waiting there. It is true also that many had already elapsed before he had ventured to send word to the king that he was waiting for him.

Suddenly the hand on which the young prince's eyes

were fixed stopped as if by enchantment, the wheels ceased their measured rotation, the springs became still, and deep silence took possession of the machine but a moment before so full of noise and motion. No more ticking, no more oscillations, no more movement of the wheels or of the hands. The time-piece had died.

Had some grain of sand, small as an atom, lodged on a tooth of one of the wheels and stopped its movements; or was the genius of the machine resting, wearied by its monotonous activity? Surprised by this sudden death, this stroke of apoplexy occurring before his eyes, the dauphin forgot why he had come thither, and how long he had waited. He forgot, too, that hours are not counted in eternity by the movements of a pendulum, nor arrested even for a moment in their course by the stopping of a wheel, but are recorded on the dial of eternity, established even before the birth of worlds by the unchangeable hand of the Almighty. He opened the glass door of the crystal pagoda, the genius of which had ceased to act, and put his head inside to examine the time-piece more closely. But the large pendulum was in his way; he slipped in his supple fingers and took it off. This was not enough; the cause of the lethargy of the machine was still hidden from him. He then supposed that the person who had the care of the clocks of the palace had forgotten to wind up this time-piece, and he took down the key from a hook and began to wind it up like a man quite accustomed to the business. But he could turn it only three times, — a proof that some accident had happened to the mechanism. He drew from his pocket a little file, and with the end of it pushed one of the wheels; they moved for half a second, then stopped again.

The malady of the clock appeared to be serious; the dauphin therefore began carefully to unscrew several parts of it, laying them all in order on a console beside

him. Then, drawn on by his ardor, he began to take to pieces still more and more of the complicated machine, and to search minutely into its most hidden and mysterious recesses. Suddenly he uttered a cry of joy; he had discovered that a screw which acted on one of the springs had become loose, and had thus impeded the movement of the motive wheel. He immediately began to tighten it; and then, with a wheel in his left hand and his little file in his right, he plunged his head again into the interior of the clock. He was busy at his work, absorbed in contemplation of the mechanism of the time-piece, when a door opened, and a voice announced, "The king!" But the dauphin heard only the melodious sound of that ticking which his hand had reawakened, like the beating of a heart which a clever physician has restored to life.

The king looked around on all sides, but did not see the dauphin immediately, whose head and the upper parts of his body were hidden in the opening, so that his legs alone were visible. He approached, smiling, and tapped his grandson on the shoulder. "What the devil are you doing there?" said he.

The dauphin drew out his head quickly, but at the same time with all the care necessary to avoid doing any harm to the beautiful object which he had undertaken to mend. "Sire, your Majesty sees," he replied, blushing with shame at being surprised in the midst of such occupations, "I was amusing myself while waiting till you should come."

"Yes, in destroying my clock, — a very pretty amusement indeed!"

"Oh no, Sire! I was mending it. The principal wheel would not move, it was prevented by this screw; I have tightened the screw, and now it goes."

"But you will blind yourself with looking into that thing. I would not put my head into such a trap for all the gold in the world."

"Oh! it will do me no harm, Sire; I understand all about it. I always take to pieces, clean, and put together again that beautiful watch which your Majesty gave me on my fourteenth birthday."

"Very well; but stop now, if you please, and leave your mechanics. You wish to speak to me?"

"I, Sire?" said the young man, coloring again.

"Of course, since you sent to say you were waiting for me."

"It is true, Sire," replied the dauphin, with downcast eyes.

"Well, what is it? Answer. If it is of no importance, I must go; for I am just setting off for Marly." Louis XV., as was his custom, already sought to escape.

The dauphin placed his wheel and his file on a chair, which indicated that he had really something important to say, since he interrupted his interesting work for it.

"Do you want money?" asked the king, sharply. "If so, I will send you some;" and he made a step toward the door.

"Oh, no, Sire! I have still a thousand crowns remaining of the sum I received last month."

"What economy!" said the king; "and how well Monsieur de Lavauguyon has educated him! I think he has precisely all the virtues I have not."

The young prince made a violent effort over himself. "Sire," said he, "is the dauphiness yet very far distant?"

"Do you not know as well as I how far off she is?" replied the king.

"I?" the dauphin asked, with embarrassment.

"Of course; you heard the account of her journey read yesterday. Last Monday she was at Nancy, and she ought to be now about forty-five leagues from Paris."

"Sire, does not your Majesty think her Royal Highness travels very slowly?"

"By no means," replied the king; "I think she travels very fast, for a woman. And then, you know, there are the receptions and the rejoicings on the road. She travels at least ten leagues every two days."

"I think it very little, Sire," said the dauphin, timidly.

Louis XV. was more and more astonished at the appearance of impatience, which he had been far from suspecting. "Come, come," said he, smiling slyly, "don't be impatient; your dauphiness will arrive soon."

"Sire, might not these ceremonies on the road be shortened?" continued the dauphin.

"Impossible; she has already passed, without stopping, through two or three towns where she should have made a stay."

"But these delays will be eternal; and then, Sire, I think —" said the dauphin, still more timidly.

"Well, what do you think? Let me hear it; speak!"

"I think that the service is badly performed."

"What do you mean? what service?"

"The service for the journey."

"Nonsense! I sent thirty thousand horses to be ready on the road, thirty carriages, sixty wagons, — I don't know how many carts. If carts, carriages, and horses were put in file, they would reach from here to Strasburg. How then can you think that with all this provision the service is badly performed?"

"Well, Sire, in spite of all your Majesty's goodness, I am almost certain that what I say is true; but perhaps

I have used an improper term, and instead of 'badly performed' I should have said 'badly arranged.'"

The king raised his head and fixed his eyes on the dauphin; he began to comprehend that more was meant than met the ear in the few words which his Royal Highness had spoken.

"Thirty thousand horses," he repeated, "thirty carriages, sixty wagons, two regiments. I ask you, Monsieur le Savant, have you ever before heard of a dauphiness entering France with such an attendance as that?"

"I acknowledge, Sire, that things have been royally done, and as your Majesty alone knows how to do them. But has your Majesty specially ordered that these horses and carriages should be employed solely for her Royal Highness and her train?"

The king looked at his grandson for the third time. A vague suspicion had stung him, a vague recollection began to illumine his mind, at the same time that a confused analogy between what the dauphin was saying and a disagreeable circumstance of late occurrence entered his thought. "A fine question!" said he. "Certainly, everything has been ordered for her Royal Highness, and for her alone; and therefore, I repeat, she cannot fail to arrive very soon. But why do you look at me in that manner?" added he, in a decided tone, which to the dauphin seemed even threatening. "Are you amusing yourself in studying my features as you study the springs of your mechanical works?"

The dauphin had opened his mouth to speak, but became silent at this address.

"Very well," said the king, sharply; "it appears you have no more to say, eh? Are you satisfied now? Your dauphiness will arrive soon; all is arranged delightfully for her on the road; you are as rich as Crœsus with

your own private purse. And now, since your mind is at ease, be good enough to put my clock in order again."

The dauphin did not stir.

"Do you know," said the king, laughing, "I have a great mind to make you the chief clockmaker for the palace, with a good salary?"

The dauphin looked down, and, intimidated by the king's look, took up the wheel and the file which he had laid on the chair. The king in the mean time had quietly gained the door. "What the devil," said he, looking at him, "did he mean with his badly arranged service? Well, well! I have escaped another scene, for he is certainly dissatisfied about something."

In fact the dauphin, generally so patient, had stamped with his foot as the king turned away from him.

"He is beginning again," murmured the king, laughing; "decidedly, I have nothing for it but to fly." But as he opened the door he saw on the threshold the Duc de Choiseul, who bowed profoundly.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE COURT OF KING PÉTAUD.

THE king made a step backward at the sight of this new actor in the scene, who had come just in time to prevent his escape. "Ha!" thought he, "I had forgotten him; but he is welcome, and I will make him pay for what the others have made me suffer. Ha! you are there!" he cried. "I sent for you; did you know that?"

"Yes, Sire," replied the minister, coldly; "I was dressing to wait on your Majesty when the summons arrived."

"I wished to speak to you on serious matters," said the king, frowning, in order, if possible, to intimidate his minister. Unfortunately for the king, Monsieur de Choiseul was one of the men least likely to be daunted among all those in his dominions.

"And I also, if it please your Majesty," said he, bowing, "have serious matters to speak of." At the same time he exchanged a look with the dauphin, who was still half hidden by the clock.

The king stopped short. "Ha!" thought he, "now I am caught between two fires; there is no escape."

"You know, I presume," said the king, hastily, in order to have the first word, "that poor Vicomte Jean has had a narrow escape from assassination."

"That is to say, he has received a wound in his arm. I came to speak of that affair to your Majesty."

"I understand; you wished to prevent unpleasant reports?"

"I wished, Sire, to anticipate all remarks."

"Then you know the particulars, Monsieur?" inquired the king, in a significant manner.

"Perfectly."

"Ha!" said the king, "I was told so by one who was likely to be well informed."

The Duc de Choiseul seemed quite unmoved. The dauphin continued turning the screw in the clock, his head bent down; but he lost not a syllable of the conversation.

"I shall now tell you how the affair happened," said the king.

"Does your Majesty think that you have been well informed?" asked M. de Choiseul.

"Oh! as to that —"

"We are all attention, Sire."

"We?" repeated the king.

"Certainly, — Monseigneur the Dauphin and I."

"Monseigneur the Dauphin?" repeated the king, turning his eyes from the respectful Choiseul to the attentive Louis Auguste, "and how does this squabble concern his Royal Highness?"

"It concerns Monseigneur," said the duke, bowing to the young prince, "because Madame the Dauphiness was the cause of it."

"The dauphiness the cause?" said the king, starting.

"Certainly; if you are ignorant of that, Sire, your Majesty has been very badly informed."

"The dauphiness and Jean Dubarry!" said the king; "this is likely to be a curious tale! Come, explain this, Monsieur de Choiseul; conceal nothing, even though it were the dauphiness herself who pierced Dubarry's arm!"

"Sire, it was not the dauphiness," replied Choiseul,

still calm and unmoved, "it was one of the gentlemen of her escort."

"Ah!" said the king, again becoming grave, "an officer whom you know, is it not, Monsieur?"

"No, Sire, but an officer whom your Majesty ought to know, if you remember all who have served you well; an officer whose father's name was honored at Philipsbourg, at Fontenoi, at Mahon, — a Taverney Maison Rouge."

The dauphin seemed to draw a deeper breath, as if to inhale this name with the air of the hall, and preserve it in his memory.

"A Maison Rouge," said the king, — "certainly I know the name; and why did he attack Jean, whom I like so much? Perhaps because I like him! Such absurd jealousies, such discontents, are almost seditious!"

"Sire, will your Majesty deign to listen to me?" said M. de Choiseul.

The king saw there was no other way for him to escape from this troublesome business but by going into a passion, and he exclaimed, "I tell you, Monsieur, that I see in this the beginning of a conspiracy against my peace, an organized persecution of my family!"

"Ah, Sire," said Monsieur de Choiseul, "is it for defending the dauphiness, your Majesty's daughter-in-law, that these reproaches are cast on a brave young man?"

The dauphin raised his head and folded his arms. 'For my part," said he, "I cannot but feel grateful to the man who exposed his life for a princess who in a fortnight will be my wife."

"Exposed his life! Exposed his life!" stammered the king. "What about? Let me know that, — what about?"

"About the horses of Madame the Dauphiness," replied

the duke. "Vicomte Jean Dubarry, who was travelling very fast, took it upon himself to insist on having some of those horses which were appropriated to the use of her Royal Highness, — no doubt that he might get on still faster."

The king bit his lip and changed color; he saw now, as a threatening apparition, the analogy which had previously disquieted him. "It is not possible," he murmured, to gain time. "I know the whole affair; you have been misinformed, Duke."

"No, Sire, I have not been misinformed; what I have the honor to tell your Majesty is the simple truth. Vicomte Jean Dubarry offered an insult to the dauphiness by insisting on taking for his use horses appointed for her service. After having ill-treated the master of the post-house, he was going to take them by force, when the Chevalier Philippe de Taverney arrived, sent forward by her Royal Highness; and after he had several times summoned him in a friendly and conciliating manner — "

"Oh, oh!" growled the king.

"After he had several times summoned him in a friendly and conciliating manner. I repeat it, Sire — "

"Yes, and I guarantee it," said the dauphin.

"You also know that — you?" said the king with astonishment.

"Perfectly, Sire."

The minister bowed, delighted. "Will your Royal Highness deign to proceed?" said he. "His Majesty will doubtless have more confidence in the assertions of his august grandson than in mine."

"Yes, Sire," continued the dauphin, without testifying for the Duc de Choiseul's zeal in his cause all that gratitude which might have been expected, "yes, Sire, I know the circumstances, and I had come to tell your

Majesty that Vicomte Dubarry has not only insulted the dauphiness in interfering with the arrangements made for her journey, but he has also insulted me in opposing a gentleman of my regiment who was doing his duty."

The king shook his head. "We must inquire," said he; "we must inquire."

"I have already inquired, Sire," said the dauphin, gently, "and have no doubt in the matter; the viscount drew his sword on my officer."

"Did he draw first?" asked the king, happy to seize any chance of putting his adversary in fault.

The dauphin colored, and looked to the minister for assistance. "Sire," said the latter, "swords were crossed by two men, one of whom was insulting, the other defending, the dauphiness, — that is all."

"Yes, but which was the aggressor?" asked the king. "I know poor Jean; he is as gentle as a lamb."

"The aggressor, in my opinion, Sire," said the dauphin, with his usual mildness, "is he who is in the wrong."

"It is a delicate matter to decide," replied the king; "the aggressor he who is in the wrong? — in the wrong? But if the officer was insolent?"

"Insolent!" cried the Duc de Choiseul, "insolent toward a man who wanted to take by force horses placed for the use of the dauphiness? Is it possible, Sire?"

The dauphin turned pale, but said nothing. The king noticed the hostile attitude of both.

"I should say warm, perhaps, not insolent," said he.

"But your Majesty knows," said the minister, taking advantage of the king's having yielded a step, to make a step forward, "your Majesty knows that a zealous servant can never be in the wrong."

"Oh, perhaps! But how did you become acquainted

with this event, Monsieur?" said he, turning sharply to the dauphin, without ceasing, however, to observe the duke, who endeavored vainly to hide the embarrassment which this sudden question caused him.

"By a letter, Sire," replied the dauphin.

"A letter from whom?"

"A letter from a person concerned for Madame the Dauphiness, and who thinks it singular that any one should dare to affront her."

"Ha!" cried the king, "more mysteries, secret correspondences, plots! Every one is beginning again to plan annoyances for me, as in the time of the Marquise de Pompadour!"

"No, Sire," said the minister; "this affair is no plot, and can be settled very simply. It is the crime of treason in the second degree; let the guilty person be punished, and all will be settled."

At this word "punished," Louis XV. saw in fancy the countess furious, and Chon in a rage; he saw Peace flying from his dwelling, — Peace, which he had been seeking all his life, but had never been able to find, — and Intestine War, with crooked nails and eyes red and swollen with tears, entering in her stead.

"Punished!" he cried, "without my giving the parties a hearing; without knowing which side is in the right? You make a very extraordinary proposal to me, Duke. You wish to draw odium on me!"

"But, Sire, who will henceforward respect Madame the Dauphiness if a severe example is not made of the person who was the first to insult her?"

"Certainly, Sire," added the dauphin; "it would be a scandal."

"An example? a scandal?" cried the king. "*Mordieu!* if I make an example for every scandal that springs

up around me, I may pass my life in signing arrests for the Bastille! I have signed enough of them as it is, Heaven knows!"

"In this case it is necessary, Sire," said the duke.

"Sire, I entreat your Majesty," said the dauphin.

"What! do you not think him punished already, by the wound he has received?"

"No, Sire," said the duke; "for he might have wounded the Chevalier de Taverney."

"And in that case what would you have done?"

"I should have demanded his head."

"But no more than that was done in the case of M. de Montgomery for killing King Henry II.," said the king.

"He killed the king by accident, Sire; Vicomte Dubarry insulted the dauphiness intentionally."

"And you, Monsieur," said the king, turning to the dauphin, "do you wish to have Jean's head?"

"No, Sire; I am not in favor of the punishment of death, as your Majesty knows. I shall merely demand from you the viscount's banishment."

The king started up. "Banishment for a tavern quarrel?" he exclaimed. "Louis, you are severe, notwithstanding your philanthropical notions. It is true that before becoming philanthropist you were a mathematician, and —"

"Will your Majesty deign to proceed?"

"A mathematician would sacrifice the universe to his problem."

"Sire," said the dauphin, "I have no ill-will toward the Vicomte Dubarry personally."

"With whom, then, are you angry?"

"With the insulter of Madame the Dauphiness."

"What a model for husbands!" cried the king, ironically; "but I am not so easy of belief. I see very well

who is attacked under all this; I see to what people would lead me with their exaggerations!"

"Sire," said M. de Choiseul, "do not be misled. Nothing has been exaggerated; the public are indignant at the insolence which has been shown in this affair."

"The public? Ah! there is another monster with which you frighten yourself, or rather with which you would frighten me. Shall I listen to this public, which by the thousand mouths of libellists, pamphleteers, and ballad-mongers, tells me that I am robbed, ridiculed, betrayed on all hands? No, no; I let the public talk, and I laugh. Do as I do, *pardieu!* Close your ears, and when your great public is tired of bawling, it will stop. There you are again, making your discontented bow; and Louis is putting on a sulky face! Heavens! is it not singular that what is done for the lowest individual cannot be done for me? I cannot be allowed to live quietly in my own fashion! Everybody hates what I love, and loves what I hate! Am I in my senses, or am I mad? Am I the master, or am I not?"

The dauphin took up his file and returned to his work in the clock. The Duc de Choiseul bowed exactly as before.

"There now, — no answer! Answer something, will you? *Mordieu!* you will harass me to death with your hints and your reservations, your petty hatreds and your petty fears!"

"I do not hate M. Dubarry, Sire," said the dauphin, smiling.

"And I do not fear him, Sire," said the minister, haughtily.

"You are both very ill-natured," cried the king, pretending to be in a great passion, when he was in reality only out of temper. "You wish to make me the laughing-

stock of all Europe, — to give my cousin of Prussia something to make jests on; to make me realize the court of King Pétaud, which that rascal Voltaire has described. But I will not be what you wish; no, you shall not have that satisfaction. I know what concerns my own honor, and I shall attend to it in my own way."

"Sire," said the dauphin, with his immovable mildness, but at the same time with his unyielding perseverance, "this is not a matter which concerns your honor, it is the dignity of the dauphiness which has been attacked."

"Monseigneur is right, Sire," said the duke; "let but your Majesty speak the word, and no one will again dare to insult her."

"And who would insult her? No one intended to insult her. Jean is a stupid fellow, but he is not malignant."

"Well, then, Sire," continued the minister, "let it be placed to the account of stupidity, and let him ask pardon of the Chevalier de Taverney on that ground."

"I said before," cried the king, "that I have nothing to do in the affair. Let Jean ask pardon: he is at liberty to do so; or let him decline: he is at liberty to do that."

"The affair abandoned to itself will make a noise, Sire," said M. de Choiseul. "I have the honor to warn your Majesty."

"So much the better!" cried the king. "Let it make more and more noise, till I am deafened by it, so that I may no longer hear your foolish utterances."

"Then," replied the minister, with his imperturbable coolness, "I am authorized by your Majesty to say that Vicomte Dubarry did right?"

"Authorized by me? authorized by me? and in an affair of which I understand nothing! You mean, I see,

to drive me to extremities. Take care, Duke! and you, Louis, must be more considerate toward me! I shall leave you to think of what I have said, for I am tired out; I cannot bear this any longer. Good-by, gentlemen! I am going to see my daughters, and then I shall take refuge at Marly, where I may hope for some tranquillity, if you do not follow me."

At this moment, and as the king was going toward the door, it was opened, and an usher appeared.

"Sire," said he, "her Royal Highness the Princess Louise is awaiting your Majesty in the gallery to bid you farewell."

"To bid me farewell?" exclaimed the king, in alarm; "where is she going?"

"Her Highness says that she has had your Majesty's permission to leave the palace."

"Ha! another scene! This is my bigot daughter going to show off some of her follies. In truth, I am the most wretched of men!" And he left the apartment hurriedly.

"His Majesty has given us no answer," said the Duc de Choiseul. "What has your Royal Highness decided on?"

"Ah, there it strikes!" said the young prince, listening with either a real or a pretended joy to the clock which he had restored to action.

The minister frowned, and retired backward from the Hall of Clocks, leaving the dauphin alone.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MADAME LOUISE OF FRANCE.

THE king's eldest daughter awaited him in the great gallery of Lebrun, the same in which Louis XIV., in 1683, had received the Doge Imperiali and the four Genoese senators sent to implore pardon for the republic.

At the farther end of the gallery, opposite the door by which the king must enter, were three or four ladies-of-honor, who appeared to be in the greatest consternation. Louis arrived just at the moment when groups began to form in the vestibule; for the resolution which the princess had taken only that morning was now whispered on all sides through the palace.

The Princess Louise possessed a majestic figure and a truly regal style of beauty, yet a secret sadness had left its lines on her fair forehead. Her austere practice of every virtue had won from all the court respect for the great powers of the State, which for fifty years had retained homage in France only through fear and ambition. We must add that she was loved even by the people, at a time when the disaffection of the people toward their masters was becoming general.

She was loved because her virtue was not stern. She was not loudly talked of, but all knew that she had a gentle disposition. She manifested this every day by works of charity, while others were exhibiting their characters in scandalous behavior. Louis XV. feared this daughter, for the simple reason that he esteemed her.

There were even times when he was proud of her; and she was the only one of his children whom he spared in his sharp raillery or his silly familiarities. He called her Madame, while the Princesses Adélaïde, Victoire, and Sophie he named Loque, Chiffe, and Graille. Since the period when Marshal Saxe carried with him to the tomb the soul of the Turennes and the Condés, and with the Queen Maria Leczinska passed away the governing mind of a Maria Theresa, all had become mean and worthless around the throne of France. The Princess Louise, whose character was truly regal, and compared with those around her seemed even heroic, alone remained to adorn the crown, like a pearl of price amid false stones and tinsel. We should be wrong in concluding from this that Louis XV. loved his daughter. Louis, it is well known, loved no one but himself; we affirm only that he preferred her to his other children.

When he entered, he found the princess in the centre of the gallery, leaning on a table inlaid with crimson jasper and lapis lazuli. She was dressed entirely in black, and her beautiful hair, which was without powder, was covered by a double roll of lace. A deeper shade of sadness than usual rested on her brow. She looked at no one in the apartment, but from time to time her melancholy gaze wandered over the portraits of the kings of Europe which ornamented the gallery, at the head of whom were those of her ancestors, the kings of France.

The black dress which she wore was the usual travelling costume of princesses. It concealed large pockets, still worn as in the times of the housewife-queens; and the Princess Louise, imitating them in that also, had the numerous keys of her chests and wardrobes suspended at her waist by a gold chain.

The king's face assumed a very serious expression when

he saw how silent all in the gallery were, and how attentively they awaited the result of the interview between him and his daughter. The gallery was so long that the spectators at either end might see, but they could not hear what took place. They had a right to see; it was their duty not to hear.

The princess advanced a few steps to meet the king, and taking his hand, she kissed it respectfully.

"They tell me you are setting out on a journey, Madame," said he; "are you going into Picardy?"

"No, Sire," she replied.

"Then I presume," said he, in a louder voice, "that you are about to make a pilgrimage to Noirmontiers?"

"No, Sire, I am going to retire to the convent of the Carmelites at St. Denis, of which you know I have the right to be abbess."

The king started; but he preserved his countenance unmoved, although in reality his heart was troubled. "Oh, no, my daughter!" he said, "you will not leave me; it is impossible for you to leave me!"

"My dear father, it is long since I decided on abandoning the world. Your Majesty permitted me to make that decision; do not now, I entreat you, my dear father, oppose my wishes."

"Yes, certainly, you wrung from me the permission of which you speak. I gave it, but still hoped that when the moment of departure came, your heart would fail you. You ought not to bury yourself in a cloister, — that is an antiquated custom. It is only grief or want of fortune which forces one to enter a convent. The daughter of the King of France is certainly not poor; and if she be unhappy, the world ought not to know it."

The king's thoughts and even his language seemed to become more elevated as he entered more and more into

the part he was called on to play, — that of a king and a father. This is, indeed, a part never played ill when pride and regret inspire the actor.

"Sire," replied the princess, perceiving her father's emotion, and fearful that it might affect her more deeply than she desired at that moment, "Sire, do not by your tenderness for me weaken my resolution. My grief is no vulgar grief, and therefore it has no relation to the customs of the present time."

"Your grief?" exclaimed the king, with a burst of feeling. "Have you then sorrows, my poor child?"

"Heavy, heavy sorrows, Sire!"

"Why did you not confide them to me, my child?"

"Because they are sorrows not to be assuaged by any mortal hand."

"Not by that of a king?"

"Ah, no, Sire!"

"Not by a father's hand?"

"No, Sire, no!"

"But you are religious, Louise; does not religion give you strength?"

"Not sufficient strength yet, Sire; therefore I retire to a cloister in order to obtain more. In silence God speaks to the heart of man; in solitude man communes with God."

"But you are making a sacrifice for which nothing can compensate. The throne of France casts a majestic shadow over the children of its kings; does not this grandeur satisfy you?"

"The shadow of the cell is better, Sire. It refreshes the weary spirit; it soothes the strong as well as the weak, the humble as well as the proud, the high as well as the low."

"Is it then some danger that you fear? In that case, Louise, the king is here to defend you."

"Sire, may God, in the first place, defend the king!"

"I repeat, Louise, that mistaken zeal leads you astray. It is good to pray, but not to pray always; and you, — so good, so pious, — how can you need to pray so much?"

"Oh, my father, never can I offer up prayers enough to avert the woes which threaten you! If God has given me a portion of goodness; if for twenty years my only effort has been to purify my soul, — I fear, alas! that I am yet far from having attained the goodness and the purity necessary to an expiatory victim."

The king started back and gazed at the princess with surprise. "Never have I heard you speak thus before, my dear child!" said he. "Your ascetic life is making your reason wander."

"Oh, Sire, do not speak thus of a devotion the truest that ever subject offered to a king, or daughter to a father. in a time of need! Sire, that throne, of which you but now so proudly spoke as lending a protecting shade to your children, — that throne is tottering! You perceive not the blows which are dealt at its foundations, but I know them. Silently a deep abyss is preparing which will engulf the monarchy! Sire, has any one ever told you the truth?"

The princess looked around to discover whether the attendants were far enough to be out of hearing of her words; then she resumed: "Well, Sire, I know the truth! Too often have I heard the groans which the wretched send forth when, as a Sister of Mercy, I visited the dark, narrow streets, the filthy lanes, the dismal garrets of the poor. In those streets, those lanes, those garrets, I have seen human beings dying of cold and hunger in winter, of heat and thirst in summer. You see not, Sire, what the country is, — you, who go only from Versailles to Marly, and from Marly to Versailles. But in the country

there is no grain, — I do not say to feed the people, but even to sow for a new harvest; for the land, cursed by some adverse power, has received, but has given nothing back. The people, wanting bread, are filled with discontent. The air is filled in the twilight and at night with voices telling them of weapons, of chains, of prisons, of tyranny; and at these voices they awake, cease to complain, and begin to threaten. The parliaments demand the right of remonstrance, — that is, the right to say to you openly what they whisper in private, 'King, you are ruining the kingdom; save it, or we will save it ourselves.' The soldiers with their idle swords furrow the land in which the philosophers have scattered the seeds of liberty. Men now see things which they formerly saw not. The writers know the evil that we do as soon as it is done, and they inform the people, who now bend their brows whenever they see their masters going by. Your Majesty's successor is soon to be married. When Anne of Austria's son was married, the city of Paris made presents to the new queen; now it is not only silent and offers nothing, but you have been obliged to use force to collect the taxes to pay the expense of bringing the daughter of Cæsar to the palace of the son of Saint Louis. The clergy had long ceased to pray to God; but seeing the lands given away, privileges exhausted, coffers empty, they have begun again to pray for what they call the happiness of the people. And then, Sire, must I tell you what you know so well, what you have seen with so much bitterness, although you have spoken of it to none? The kings your brothers, who formerly envied us, now turn away from us. Your four daughters, Sire, princesses of France, have not found husbands; and there are twenty princes in Germany, three in England, sixteen in the States of the North, without naming our relatives the Bourbons of

Spain and Naples, who forget us, or turn away from us like the others. Perhaps the Turk would have taken us had we not been daughters of his most Christian Majesty. Not for myself, my father, do I care for this, or complain of it. Mine is a happy state, since it leaves me free, since I am not necessary to any one of my family, and may retire from the world, in meditation and in poverty to pray to God to avert from your head and from my nephew's the awful storm I see gathering on the horizon of the future."

"My child, my daughter, it is your fears which make the future appear so dreadful!"

"Sire, Sire, remember that princess of antiquity, that royal prophetess! She foretold to her father and to her brothers war, destruction, conflagration; and her predictions were laughed at, they called her mad! Do not treat me as she was treated! Take care, O my father! Reflect, O my king!"

Louis XV. folded his arms, and his head sank on his bosom. "My daughter," said he, "you speak very severely. Are those woes which you denounce caused by me?"

"God forbid that I should think so! They are the fruit of the times in which we live. You are whirled on in the career of events as are we all. Only listen, Sire, to the applause in the theatre which follows any adverse allusion to royalty. See, in the evenings, what joyous crowds descend the narrow stairs of the galleries, while the grand marble staircase is deserted. Sire, both the people and the courtiers have made for themselves pleasures quite apart from our pleasures. They amuse themselves without us; or rather, when we appear in the midst of their pleasures, they become dull. Alas!" continued the princess, her eyes swimming with tears, "alas! poor

young men, affectionate young women, love, sing, forget, be happy! Here, when I went among you, I only disturbed your happiness. Yonder, in my cloister, I shall serve you. Here, you hid your glad smiles in my presence for fear of displeasing me. There, I shall pray, oh! I shall pray with all my soul, for my king, for my sisters, for my nephews, for the people of France, — for you all, whom I love with the energy of a heart which no earthly passion has exhausted."

"My daughter," said the king, after a melancholy silence, "I entreat you not to leave me, — not at this moment, at least; you will break my heart!"

The princess seized his hand, and, fixing her eyes full of love on his noble features, "No!" said she, "no, my father, — not another hour in this palace! No, it is time for me to pray. I feel in myself strength to redeem, by my tears, those pleasures for which you sigh, — you, who are yet young. You are the kindest of fathers, you are ever ready to pardon!"

"Stay with us, Louise! stay with us!" said the king, pressing her to his heart.

The princess shook her head. "My kingdom is not of this world!" said she, disengaging herself from her father's embrace. "Farewell, my father! I have told you to-day what for ten years has lain heavy on my heart. The burden became too great. Farewell! I am satisfied. See, I can smile, — I am now, at length, happy; I regret nothing!"

"Not even me, my daughter?"

"Ah, I should regret you were I never to see you again; but you will sometimes come to St. Denis? You will not quite forget your child?"

"Oh, never, never!"

"Do not, my dear father, allow yourself to be afflicted.

Let it not appear that this separation is to be a lasting one. My sisters, I believe, know nothing of it yet; my women alone have been my confidants. For eight days I have been making all my preparations; and I wish that the report of my departure should be spread only when the great doors of St. Denis shall have closed on me. That last sound will prevent my hearing any other."

The king read in his daughter's eyes that her resolution was irrevocable, and he wished that she should go without disturbance. If she feared that sobs might shake her resolution, he feared them still more for his nerves. Besides, he wished to go to Marly that day, and too much grief at Versailles might have obliged him to put off his journey. He reflected also that when issuing from orgies discreditable both to a king and to a father, he should no more meet that grave, sad face, which seemed to reproach him for the careless, worthless life he led. "Be it then as you wish, my child," said he; "but at least receive before you go the blessing of a father whom you have always made perfectly happy."

"Give me your hand only, Sire, and let me kiss it. Bestow your precious blessing on me in thought."

To those who knew the decision of the princess it was a solemn spectacle to see her at every step she made advancing, yet in life, to the the tombs of her ancestors, — those ancestors who from their golden frames seemed to thank her that she hastened to rejoin them.

At the door of the gallery the king bowed, and returned without uttering a word. The court, according to etiquette, followed him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LOQUE, CHIFFE, AND GRAILLE.

THE king passed on to what was called the Cabinet of the Equipages. It was there that he was accustomed, before going to hunt or to drive, to pass a few minutes in giving particular orders concerning the vehicles and attendants he should require during the rest of the day.

At the door of the gallery he bowed to the courtiers, and by a wave of his hand indicated that he wished to be alone. When they had left him he passed through the cabinet to a corridor which led to the apartments of the princesses. Having reached the door, before which hung a curtain, he stopped for a moment, shook his head, and muttered between his teeth, "There was but one of them good, and she is gone!"

This very flattering speech for those who remained was answered by a shrill chorus of voices; the curtain was raised, and the furious trio saluted their father with cries of "Thank you, father, thank you!"

"Ha, Loque!" said he, addressing the eldest of them, Madame Adélaïde, "you heard what I said, — so much the worse for you. Be angry or not, just as you like; I spoke only the truth."

"Yes," said Madame Victoire, "you tell us nothing new, Sire. We always knew that you preferred Louise to us."

"In faith, quite true, Chiffe."

"And why do you prefer Louise?" asked Madame Sophie, sharply.

"Because Louise never gave me any trouble," replied the king, with that good-humored frankness of which, when he was pleased, Louis XV. was so excellent an example.

"Oh, but she will give you trouble yet, rest assured!" replied Madame Sophie, with such a peculiar emphasis that it drew the attention of the king more particularly to her.

"And pray, what do you know about her, Graille?" said he. "Did Louise, before going away, make you her confidant? I should be rather surprised if she did, for she is not very fond of you."

"I can say most truly," answered the princess, "that I return her affection with interest."

"Oh, very well! Hate one another, detest one another as much as you choose; I am perfectly content. Only do not summon me to restore order in the kingdom of the Amazons. But I should like to know how poor Louise is to give me trouble."

"Poor Louise!" repeated Madame Victoire and Madame Adélaïde, each with her own grimace.

"You wish to know how she will give you trouble? Well, I will tell you," said Madame Sophie.

The king stretched himself in a large easy-chair, placed near the door, so that he could at any moment make his escape.

"Louise is retiring to a convent because she is slightly tormented by the demon which troubled the Abbess of Chelles, and she wishes to make some experiments."

"Come, come!" said the king, "no insinuations against the virtue of your sister. No one from without has said a word of that kind, though so many things are said; do not you begin — you."

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"Oh! I was not going to attack Louise's virtue," said Madame Sophie, very much hurt by the peculiar accent her father had given to the word "you," and by his marked repetition of it; "I only said she was going to make experiments."

"Well, and if she does make experiments in chemistry; if she does make firearms, and wheels for chairs; if she does play on the flute, the drum, or the harpsichord, or the violin, — what harm would there be in it?"

"The experiments to which I alluded were experiments in politics."

The king started.

"She is going to study philosophy and theology; she will continue the commentaries on the Bull *Unigenitus;* so that, what with her governmental theories, her metaphysical systems, and her theology, we must appear useless members of the family."

"And if these pursuits lead your sister to heaven, what harm can you see in them?" said the king, struck, however, with the agreement between what Madame Sophie was saying, and the political diatribe which Madame Louise had pronounced on her departure. "If you envy her happiness, you are very bad Christians."

"Ah! indeed, no!" said Madame Victoire; "she has my full permission to go, but I shall take care not to follow her."

"Nor I!" responded Madame Adélaïde.

"Nor I!" said Madame Sophie.

"Besides, she always detested us," said Madame Victoire.

"You?" the king asked.

"Yes, us, us," replied the two other sisters.

"Oh, then, you see," he said, "poor Louise has chosen to go to heaven that she may not meet any of her family again!"

This sally made the three sisters laugh, but rather constrainedly. Madame Adélaïde, the eldest, brought all her wit into play in order to deal her father a more weighty blow than he had given them.

"Ladies," said she, with the sneering tone which was peculiar to her when roused from that habitual indolence which had procured for her the name of Loque, "you have either not found out or you do not dare tell the king the real cause of Louise's departure!"

"Come, Loque, come! you have some wicked tale to tell, I see. Let us hear it!"

"Sire, I fear it may vex you."

"No, no; say you hope it will vex me, — that would be nearer the truth."

Madame Adélaïde bit her lips. "Then I shall tell you the truth, Sire."

"Good! that promises well. The truth! Cure yourself of that way of talking. Do I ever tell the truth? Well, you see I do very well without it, thank God!" and he shrugged his shoulders.

"Speak, sister, speak," said the other two sisters, impatient to hear anything that might wound their father.

"Sweet little creatures!" growled the king, "see how they love their father!" But he consoled himself by thinking that he returned their love in kind.

"Well," continued Madame Adélaïde, "what Louise dreaded most, for she was very precise on the score of etiquette, was —"

"Was what?" exclaimed the king. "Come, finish, since you have gone so far!"

"It was, then, Sire, the intrusion of new faces at court."

"Do you say intrusion?" asked he, by no means pleased with this beginning, for he saw to what it tended. "Intrusion? Are there intruders, then, in my palace? Am I forced to receive persons against my will?"

By this adroit turn he hoped to change the course of the conversation. But Madame Adélaïde believed herself on the right scent, and she was too cunning and too malicious to lose it, when she had so good an end in view as the annoyance of her father.

"Perhaps I was not quite correct; perhaps I used the wrong word. Instead of 'intrusion' I should have said 'introduction.'"

"Oh, ah!" said the king, "that is an improvement, — the other word was a disagreeable one, I confess; I like 'introduction' better."

"And yet," continued the princess, "that is not the right word either."

"What is it then?"

"It is 'presentation.'"

"Yes," cried the other sisters, "yes, you have found the right word now."

The king bit his lip. "Oh! do you think so?" said he.

"Yes," replied Madame Adélaïde, "my sister was very much afraid of new presentations."

"Well?" said the king, feeling what must come, and thinking it best to have done with it as speedily as possible; "well? go on!"

"Well, Sire, she was consequently afraid of seeing the Comtesse Dubarry presented at court."

"Ha!" cried the king, with a burst of passion which he could not repress, "so you have been all this time getting this out! *Mordieu!* Madame Truth-teller, how you beat about the bush!"

"Sire," replied the princess, "if I have so long delayed in telling your Majesty this, it is because respect closed my lips, and I should not have opened them but by your own command."

"Yes, yes; you would never have opened them, I suppose, to yawn or to speak or to bite!"

"I am quite certain, however, Sire, that I have discovered the real motive which has made my sister retire into a convent."

"Well, you are wrong!"

"Oh, Sire!" said Madame Victoire and Madame Sophie together, nodding their heads, "oh, Sire! we are sure of it."

"Pshaw! You are all of a tale, I see. There is a conspiracy in my family. This is the reason the presentation cannot take place; this is the reason the princesses can never be seen when persons wish to visit them, — that they give no answers to petitions, or requests for an audience."

"What petitions? What requests for an audience?" asked Madame Adélaïde.

"Oh! you know," replied Madame Sophie, — "the petitions of Mademoiselle Jeanne Vaubernier."

"No," added the Princess Victoire, "the requests for an audience of Mademoiselle Lange."

The king started up, furious with passion. His eye, generally calm and mild, now flashed in a manner rather alarming for the three sisters; and as none of this royal trio of heroines was courageous enough to bear the paternal wrath, they bent their heads before the storm.

"And now," cried he, "was I wrong when I said the best had left me?"

"Sire," said the Princess Adélaïde, "you treat us very ill, — worse than you treat your dogs!"

"And justly too. My dogs, when I go near them, receive me kindly, caress me, — they are real friends. So adieu, ladies! I shall go to Charlotte, Bellefille, and Gredinet. Poor animals! Yes, I love them! And I love them more particularly because they do not bark out the truth."

The king left the apartment in a rage; but he had not taken three steps in the ante-room, when he heard his daughters singing in chorus the first verse of a ballad ridiculing the Comtesse Dubarry, which was then sung through the streets of Paris.

He was about to return, — and perhaps the princesses would not have fared well had he done so, — but he restrained himself, and went on, calling loudly, that he might not hear them, "Halloa! the captain of the greyhounds! the captain of the greyhounds!"

The officer who bore this singular title hurried forward.

"Let the dogs be loosed!"

"Oh, Sire!" cried the officer, placing himself in the king's way, "do not advance another step!"

"What now? what now?" said the king, stopping before a door, from under which was heard the snuffing of dogs, aware that their master was near.

"Sire," said the officer, "pardon me, but I cannot permit your Majesty to enter here."

"Oh! I understand; the kennel is out of order. Well, then, let Gredinet be brought out."

"Sire," continued the officer, with alarm depicted on his face, "Gredinet has neither eaten nor drunk for two days, and it is feared he is mad."

"Oh," cried the king, "I am really the most wretched of men! Gredinet mad! This alone was wanting to complete my misery!"

The officer of the greyhounds thought it his duty to

shed a tear, to complete the scene. The king turned on his heel, and retired to his private cabinet, where his valet was waiting. He, seeing the king's face so disturbed, hid himself in the recess of a window; and the king, looking upon him rather as a piece of furniture than as a man, strode up and down his room talking to himself.

"Yes, I see it, I see it plainly," said he. "The Duc de Choiseul laughs at me; the dauphin looks upon himself as already half master, and thinks he will be wholly so when he has his little Austrian beside him on the throne. Louise loves me, but so sternly that she preaches me a sermon and leaves me. My three other daughters sing songs in which I am ridiculed under the name of Blaise. My grandson, the Comte de Provence, translates Lucretius; and his brother, the Comte d'Artois, is a dissipated scapegrace. My dogs go mad, and would bite me. Decidedly, there is only the poor countess who loves me. To the devil, then, with those who would annoy her!"

Then the king seated himself, in a desperate mood, at that table on which Louis XIV. wrote his proudest letters and signed his last treaties. "I know now," continued he, "why every one wishes to hasten the arrival of the dauphiness. They think that when she shows herself I shall become her slave and be governed by her family. Faith! I shall see her soon enough, that dear daughter-in-law of mine, particularly if her arrival is to be the signal for new troubles. Let me be quiet as long as I can, and to that end the longer she is delayed on the road the better. She was to have passed through Rheims and Noyon without stopping, and to come immediately to Compiègne. I shall insist on the first arrangement. Three days at Rheims and one — no, faith, two! — bah! *three* days at Noyon! That would be six days I should gain, — yes, six good days!"

He took a pen, and wrote an order to the Comte de Stainville to stop three days at Rheims and three days at Noyon. Then summoning a courier, "Don't draw bridle," said he, "until you have delivered this according to its address." Then with the same pen he wrote:

DEAR COUNTESS, — To-day we install Zamore in his government. I am just setting out for Marly. This evening, at Luciennes, I shall tell you all I now think.

FRANCE.

"Here, Lebel," said he to the valet, "take this letter to the countess, and keep on good terms with her, I advise you."

The valet bowed and left the room.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE COMTESSE DE BÉARN.

THE principal object of all the fury of the court, and their stumbling-block on this dreaded occasion, the Comtesse de Béarn, was, as Chon said, travelling rapidly to Paris. Her journey thither was the result of one of those bright ideas which sometimes came to Vicomte Jean's assistance in his times of trouble. Not being able to find among the ladies of the court one who would present the Comtesse Dubarry, and since she could not be presented without a lady to introduce her, he cast his eye on the provinces. He examined country-seats, searched carefully in the towns, and at last found what he wanted on the banks of the Meuse, in a house of antique appearance, but well preserved. Now, what he wanted was an old lady fond of law, and having a lawsuit on hand. The old lady with the lawsuit was the Comtesse de Béarn.

The lawsuit was an affair which involved the entire fortune of the Comtesse de Béarn, and was to be heard before Monsieur de Maupeou, who had lately taken up the cause of the Comtesse Dubarry, having discovered — what had remained hidden until then — that he was related to her, and who now called her his cousin. Looking forward to the appointment of chancellor through her interest, he showed the king's favorite all the warmth of a friendship arising on such a substantial basis. This friend-

ship and this interest had procured for him from the king the office of vice-chancellor, and from the world in general the title of "the vice."

The Comtesse de Béarn was a thin, angular, agile little woman, always on the alert, always rolling her eyes under her gray eyebrows like those of a frightened cat. She still wore the dress which had been fashionable in her youth; and as the capricious goddess of fashion has sensible fits now and then, it so happened that the costume of the young girl of 1740 was precisely that of the old woman of 1770.

An abundance of lace, a pointed mantle, an enormous head-dress, an immense bag, and a neck-kerchief of flowered silk, — such was the costume in which Chon, the well-beloved sister and confidant of the Comtesse Dubarry, found the Comtesse de Béarn arrayed when she presented herself before her as Mademoiselle Flageot, the daughter of the lawyer in Paris who had the management of her suit. The old countess wore the costume of her early days as much from taste as from economy. She was not one of those persons who blush for their poverty, because her poverty had not been caused by her own fault. She regretted, indeed, not being rich, for her son's sake, to whom she would have wished to leave a fortune worthy of his name. The young man was thoroughly country bred, timid to a fault, caring much more for what belonged to the substantial things of life than for the honors of renown.

The countess's sole consolation consisted in calling the lands which were contested with the Saluce family "my estate;" but as she was a woman of sense, she was well aware that if she wanted to borrow money on that estate, not a usurer in France — and there were some bold enough in running risks at that period — would lend it

her; not an attorney — and there were some not very scrupulous then, as there have been at all times — would procure her the smallest sum on such a security.

Forced then to live on the annual rents of those lands that were not disputed, the Comtesse de Béarn, having an income of only one thousand crowns a year, kept very far from court; for there she must have spent twelve livres a day in the hire of a carriage to take her to her lawyer's and to the judge's. She was still more determined in keeping aloof, since she had despaired of her cause being heard for four or five years at least. Lawsuits, even in the present day, are in truth tedious affairs; but in these days a person who begins a lawsuit has some hope of seeing it to an end, though he may not live to the age of Methuselah, whereas formerly a suit extended through two or three generations, and was like those fabulous plants of the Arabian tales which blossomed only at the end of two or three centuries.

The Comtesse de Béarn, therefore, did not wish to lose the remains of her patrimony in seeking to recover the ten twelfths of it which were disputed. She was what is called "a woman of the old school," — that is to say, sagacious, prudent, firm, avaricious. She could certainly have managed her suit much better herself than any advocate, lawyer, or attorney; but she was called Béarn, and that name prevented her doing many things which economy might have prompted. Like the divine Achilles in his tent, suffering a thousand deaths when he heard the trumpet, although feigning to be deaf to it, she in her retirement was devoured by regret and anguish. She passed her days in deciphering old parchments, her spectacles on her nose; and at night, on her pillow, she pleaded with such eloquence the cause of the estate claimed by the Saluces that she was always successful, —

a termination of the affair which she could but wish might be reached by her advocate.

It may readily be imagined that in such a temper of mind, the arrival of Chon, in the character of Mademoiselle Flageot, was very agreeable to Madame de Béarn.

The young count was with his regiment.

We always believe what we wish to believe; so Madame de Béarn was very easily caught by the young lady's tale.

There was, however, a shadow of suspicion in the countess's mind. She had known Master Flageot twenty years, and had visited him two hundred times in his narrow, dark street; but she had never seen a child playing on the square bit of carpet which looked so small on the floor of his large office; and had there been children there, they would surely have found their way into it to get a toy or a cake from the clients.

But what was the use of thinking about the lawyer and his office and his carpet? What was the use of trying to remember anything about it? Flageot's daughter was Flageot's daughter, and there she was! Moreover, she was married, and — what banished the last shadow of suspicion — she had not come on purpose to Verdun; she was going to join her husband at Strasburg.

Perhaps the countess ought to have asked Mademoiselle Flageot for a letter from her father to assure herself of her identity; but if a father could not send his own child without a letter, to whom could he intrust a confidential mission? Then, once again, why entertain these fears? To what end these suspicions? Why should any one travel sixty leagues to tell her a deceitful story?

If she had been rich, — a banker's or a financier's wife, — taking with her carriages, plate, and diamonds, she might have thought it was a plot contrived by robbers.

But she laughed to herself when she thought what a disappointment any robbers would experience who should be so ill advised as to attack her.

So Chon having disappeared with her plain dress and her shabby little one-horse chaise, which she had taken at the last post, leaving her carriage behind her, the countess, convinced that the time had come for her to make a sacrifice, got into her old coach, and urged on the postilions so well that she passed through Lachaussée an hour before the dauphiness, and reached the gate of St. Denis five or six hours after Chon herself.

As she had little luggage, and as she was eager to receive information from her lawyer, she ordered her coach to drive to the Rue du Petit-Lion, and stop before Maître Flageot's door. The vehicle, we may be assured, did not stop there without attracting a great number of curious spectators, — and the Parisians are all curious, — who stared at the venerable machine which seemed to have issued from the coach-house of Henry IV., so antique was it in its solidity, its monumental form, and its scalloped leather curtains, which ran with a disagreeable creaking on a copper rod covered with verdigris.

The Rue du Petit-Lion was not wide, and the countess's equipage filled it up very majestically. Having alighted and paid the postilions, she ordered them to take it to the inn where she usually stopped, — Le Coq Chantant, in the Rue Saint-Germain des Près. She ascended Monsieur Flageot's dark stairs, holding by the greasy cord which served instead of a hand-rail. The air of the interior was cool, and it refreshed the old lady, who was tired by her long and rapid journey. When Marguerite, his servant, announced the Comtesse de Béarn, Maître Flageot pulled up his stockings, which he had allowed to fall nearly to his ankles, on account of the heat, with one hand, fixed

on his wig with the other, then hastily threw on a dimity dressing-gown, and so adorned advanced, smiling, to the door. In this smile, however, there was such an expression of surprise that the countess could not help saying, "Well, well, my dear Monsieur, it is I!"

"Yes, indeed," replied he; "I see plainly enough, Madame, that it is you!"

Then modestly wrapping his dressing-gown round him, he led the countess to a large leathern arm-chair in the lightest corner of the apartment, carefully putting aside the papers which covered his desk, for he knew the old lady to be curious in the extreme. "And now, Madame," he said, gallantly, "permit me to express my pleasure at this agreeable surprise!"

The countess had leaned back in her chair and raised her feet from the floor to allow Marguerite to slip between it and her brocaded satin shoes a leather cushion; but at this phrase she started up hastily. "What!" she exclaimed, drawing her spectacles from their case and putting them on, so that she might see his face the better, — "surprise?"

"Most assuredly! I thought you at your estates, Madame," replied the lawyer, adroitly flattering the old lady by bestowing this title on her three acres of kitchen-garden.

"Well, I was there; but on the first intimation from you I came away."

"Intimation from me?" said the astonished advocate.

"Yes, at your first word, or counsel, or advice, or whatever you please to call it."

Flageot's eyes looked as large as the countess's glasses.

"I have been very expeditious," continued she, "and I hope you are satisfied."

"I am delighted to see you, Madame, as I always am;

but allow me to say that I do not see how I have been the cause of your visit."

"Not the cause? Most certainly you have been the only cause of it!"

"I?"

"Yes, you, undoubtedly. Well, have you no news to tell me?"

"Oh, yes, Madame. It is said the king is meditating some great stroke of policy with regard to the parliament. But may I offer you some refreshment?"

"But what have I to do with the king and his strokes of policy?"

"About what, then, did you inquire, Madame?"

"About my suit, of course. It is in reference to my suit that I ask you whether there is anything new."

"Oh! as to that," said Flageot, shaking his head sorrowfully, "nothing, absolutely nothing!"

"That is to say, nothing —"

"No — nothing, Madame."

"Nothing since your daughter spoke to me about it; but as that was only the day before yesterday, I can readily understand that there may not be much new since then."

"My daughter, Madame?"

"Yes."

"Did you say my daughter?"

"Yes, your daughter, whom you sent to me."

"Pardon me, Madame, but it is quite impossible that I could send my daughter to you."

"Impossible?"

"Yes, for a very simple reason, — I have no daughter."

"Are you sure?" asked the countess.

"Madame," replied Flageot, "I have the honor to be a bachelor."

"Come, come!" said the countess, as if she supposed him jesting.

M. Flageot became uneasy; he called Marguerite to bring in some refreshment, but, more particularly, that she might watch the countess. "Poor woman!" said he to himself, "her head is turned."

"What!" said she, returning to the charge, "you have not a daughter?"

"No, Madame."

"A daughter married at Strasburg?"

"No, Madame, no; a thousand times no!"

"And you did not send that daughter," pursued the countess, "on her way thither, to tell me that my suit was placed on the docket?"

"Nothing of the kind, Madame."

The countess started from her chair and clasped her hands.

"Drink a little of something, Madame; it will do you good," said M. Flageot; and at the same time he made a sign to Marguerite to bring a tray, on which were two glasses of beer. But the old lady was not thinking of her thirst, and she pushed away the tray so rudely that Dame Marguerite, who appeared to be a privileged sort of person, was affronted.

"But let us understand each other," said the countess, eying Maître Flageot over her spectacles; "explain all this, if you please."

"Certainly, Madame. Marguerite, you need not go; the countess will perhaps drink something presently. Let us explain."

"Yes, let us explain; for, upon my honor, my dear Monsieur, you are quite incomprehensible to-day. I begin to think the hot weather has turned your brain."

"Do not be angry, Madame," said Flageot, manœuvring

with the hind-feet of his chair, so that he got by degrees farther from the countess; "do not get angry, and let us talk over the matter quietly."

"Yes, yes, certainly. You say you have not a daughter?"

"No, Madame; and I regret it deeply, since, as it appears, that would be agreeable to you, although —"

"Although what?" repeated the countess.

"Although, for my own part, I should prefer a son. Boys succeed better in the world, or rather, don't turn out so ill, as girls in the present day."

The countess looked more and more alarmed. "What!" said she, "have you not summoned me to Paris by a sister, a niece, a cousin, — by some person, in short?"

"I never thought of such a thing, Madame, knowing how expensive it is staying in Paris."

"But my suit?"

"I should always have taken care to let you know in time, before the pleading came on."

"Before it came on?"

"Yes."

"Has it not come on, then?"

"Not that I am aware, Madame."

"It has not been called?"

"No."

"And it is not likely to come on soon?"

"Oh no, Madame, certainly not!"

"Then," cried the old lady, rising, "I have been tricked! I have been most basely deceived!"

Flageot pushed back his wig, muttering, "I fear it, indeed, Madame."

"Maître Flageot!" cried the countess.

The lawyer started on his seat, and made a sign to Marguerite to keep near, in order to defend him.

"Maître Flageot," continued the countess, "I will not submit to such an indignity as this; I will address the minister of police, to discover the impudent creature who has thus insulted me!"

"Oh!" said Flageot, "it is a very doubtful affair."

"And when she is found," continued the countess, almost speechless with anger, "I shall bring an action against her."

"Another lawsuit!" said the lawyer, sorrowfully.

These words made the poor lady fall from the height of her passion, and a heavy fall it was. "Alas!" said she, "I came here so happy."

"But what did that woman say to you, Madame?"

"First, that she was sent by you."

"Shocking intriguer!"

"That you desired her to say that the trial was coming on, — was very near, — that I could scarcely be in time with all the speed I could make."

"Alas! Madame," repeated Flageot, in his turn, "the trial is very far from coming on."

"We are forgotten, are we not?"

"Forgotten! — sunk, buried, Madame; and unless a miracle were to happen, — and you know miracles are very rare nowadays —"

"Oh, yes!" murmured the countess, with a sigh.

M. Flageot replied by another sigh, a faithful echo of the countess's.

"Well, Monsieur, one thing is certain," added she.

"What is it, Madame?"

"I shall not survive this."

"Oh, don't say so! you would be quite wrong."

"Oh, Heaven! oh, Heaven!" exclaimed the poor countess, "my strength is completely exhausted."

"Courage, Madame, courage!" said Flageot.

"But have you no advice to give me?"

"Oh, yes! My advice is to return to your estates, and after this never believe anybody who does not bring you a letter from me."

"I must return indeed."

"It will be the wisest plan."

"Well, Monsieur," said the countess, with a groan, "believe me, we shall never meet again, — at least, not in this world."

"What an infamous affair!"

"I must have some very cruel enemies."

"It has been a trick of the Saluces, I would swear!"

"It is a very mean trick in any case."

"A mean, sorry trick indeed!"

"Justice! justice!" cried the countess; "my dear Monsieur, it is the cave of Cacus!"

"And why is it?" he replied. "Because justice is no longer itself; because the parliament is opposed; because Monsieur de Maupeou must be chancellor, forsooth! instead of remaining what he ought to be, president."

"M. Flageot, I think I could drink something now."

"Marguerite!" cried the lawyer, for she had left the room, seeing the peaceable turn affairs were taking. She now entered with the tray and the two glasses which she had carried away. The countess drank her glass of beer very slowly, after having touched the lawyer's glass with hers; then, sadly uttering farewell phrases, she went into the ante-room, on her way to the street. The lawyer followed her, his wig in his hand. She was in the lobby, and was reaching out her hand for the cord to aid her in her descent, when a hand was laid on hers, and a head gave her a thump on the chest. The head and the hand were those of a clerk, who was mounting the stairs four steps at a time.

The old lady, muttering and grumbling, readjusted her skirts and continued on her way, while the clerk, having reached the lobby, pushed open the lawyer's door, and with the open and joyous voice for which the clerks of the parliament were noted, cried out, "Here, Maître Flageot! here! it is about the Béarn business;" and he held out a paper.

To rush up the stairs on hearing that name, push by the clerk, throw herself on Flageot, snatch the paper from him, shut herself up with him in his office, — all this was effected by the countess before the clerk had recovered from two boxes on the ear which Marguerite bestowed, or seemed to bestow, on him, in return for two kisses.

"Well!" cried the old lady, "what is it? Maître Flageot, what is it?"

"Faith, I can't tell, Madame; but if you will give me back the paper, I will let you know."

"True, true, my good Maître Flageot! Read it; read it!"

He looked at the signature. "It is from Guildou, our attorney," said he.

"Ah! *mon Dieu!*"

"He desires me," continued Flageot, with increasing stupefaction, "he desires me to be ready to plead on Tuesday, for your affair is to come on!"

"To come on?" cried the countess. "Take care, Maître Flageot, take care! No more tricks! I should never recover from another."

"Madame," replied Flageot, overwhelmed by the intelligence, "if there be any trick, any jest in this, Guildou is the author of it; and it is certainly the first time in his life that he has jested."

"But are you certain the letter is from him?"

"It is signed 'Guildou,' — see!"

"I see it is. To be called this morning and pleaded on

Tuesday. Well, then, you see, my dear Monsieur, the lady who came to me was not a cheat."

"It appears not."

"Then since she was not sent by you — But are you sure she was not?"

"*Pardieu!* am I sure of it?"

"By whom was she sent, then?"

"Yes, by whom?"

"For she must have been sent by some one."

"It is a complete riddle to me."

"And to me also. Let me read the paper again. Yes, my dear Maître Flageot, the pleading is to come on; it is written so, — and before President Maupeou."

"The devil! Is that there?"

"Yes, certainly."

"That is vexatious."

"How so?"

"Because M. Maupeou is a great friend of your opponents."

"You know that?"

"He is always with them."

"Ha! I am truly unfortunate! Now we are more embarrassed than ever!"

"But, for all that," said the lawyer, "you must wait on him."

"He will receive me very badly!"

"That is probable."

"Oh, Maître Flageot, what do you tell me?"

"The truth, Madame."

"What! you not only lose courage yourself, but you try to deprive me of mine."

"With the Chancellor Maupeou you must not hope for anything favorable."

"You so timid! you a Cicero!"

"Cicero would have lost the cause of Ligarius had he pleaded before Verres instead of Cæsar," replied Maître Flageot, finding nothing more humble to say in return for the high compliment of his client.

"Then you advise me not to wait on him?"

"Heaven forbid, Madame, I should advise anything so irregular. But I pity you sincerely for having to undergo such an interview."

"You really speak like a soldier who means to desert his post. One would think you feared to undertake the business."

"Madame," replied the lawyer, "I have lost causes which seemed much more likely to be gained by me than this of yours does."

The countess sighed; but summoning all her energy, she said, with a kind of dignity which contrasted with the comical character of the interview, "I shall carry the matter through; it shall not be said that, having right on my side, I gave way before a cabal. I shall lose my cause, but I shall at least act as a woman of rank and character, — of whom there are few at court in the present day. You will accompany me, will you not, M. Flageot, in my visit to the vice-chancellor?"

"Madame," replied the lawyer, also calling to his aid all his dignity, "we opposition members of the parliament of Paris have sworn to have no intercourse beyond necessary audiences with those who failed to support the parliament in the affair of Monsieur d'Aiguillon. Union is strength; and as the vice-chancellor tacked about perpetually in that business, we have determined to keep aloof until he shows his real colors."

"My suit is doomed, I see," sighed the countess; "the lawyers quarrel with the judges, the judges with the clients. No matter; I shall persevere."

"God help you, Madame!" said Flageot, flinging his dressing-gown over his left arm as a Roman senator might have flung his toga.

"This is but a poor sort of an advocate," murmured the countess to herself; "I am afraid I shall have less chance with him before the parliament than I had at home on my pillow." Then aloud, with a smile, under which she strove to hide her uneasiness, "Adieu, Maître Flageot, adieu; study the case thoroughly, I entreat you, — we know not how things may turn out."

"Oh, Madame!" said Maître Flageot, "do not fear as to the pleading; I shall do you justice, — I shall make some terrible allusions."

"Allusions to what, Monsieur?"

"To the corruption of Jerusalem, Madame, which I shall compare to the accursed cities, and on which I shall invoke fire from heaven; you understand, Madame; and no one will fail to see that by Jerusalem I mean Versailles."

"M. Flageot," exclaimed the old lady, "do not compromise yourself, — or rather, do not compromise my cause."

"Oh, Madame, with Monsieur de Maupeou for judge, your cause is lost. But then, let the world hear of us; since we cannot obtain justice, let us at least strike terror to the wicked."

"Monsieur Flageot — "

"Madame, let us be philosophic; let us thunder — "

"The devil take you, with your thunder!" muttered the countess. "Fool of a lawyer, you are thinking only of making a figure with your fag-ends of philosophy. Come, I will go to the vice-chancellor; he at least is no philosopher. I may do better with him than with you, after all."

And the old countess left M. Flageot and the Rue du Petit-Lion, having passed in two days through all the stages of hope and of disappointment.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE VICE.

THE old countess trembled in every limb as she proceeded toward Monsieur de Maupeou's residence. However, one thought had quieted her a little on the road, — it was so late that in all probability she would not be admitted, and she would merely have to tell the porter when she should come again.

In fact, it was about seven in the evening; and although it was still light, the habit of dining at four, which the nobility had adopted, had caused all business to be suspended from that hour until the next day. Although Madame de Béarn anxiously longed to see the vice-chancellor, she was nevertheless consoled by the thought that she should not see him. This is one of the many paradoxes in the human mind which we can always understand, but never explain.

The countess presented herself, therefore, quite certain that the porter would refuse her admittance, and had even prepared a crown to offer the Cerberus to induce him to put her name on the list of those who requested an audience. On reaching the house she found an usher talking to the porter, as if giving him an order. She waited discreetly, that she might not interrupt them; but on perceiving her in her hackney-coach, the usher withdrew. The porter approached and asked her name.

"Oh! I know," said she, "that it is not probable I shall have the honor of seeing his Excellency."

"No matter, Madame," replied the porter; "have the goodness to tell me your name."

"The Comtesse de Béarn."

"Monseigneur is at home," he replied.

"What did you say?" asked the countess, with the greatest astonishment.

"I say that Monseigneur is at home," he repeated.

"But of course he will not receive visitors?"

"He will receive Madame la Comtesse."

Madame de Béarn got out of the coach, hardly knowing whether she was asleep or awake. The porter pulled a cord; a bell rang twice. The usher appeared at the top of the steps, and the porter made a sign to the countess to enter.

"You wish to speak to Monseigneur, Madame?" asked the usher.

"I wished for that honor, but I scarcely hoped to obtain it."

"Have the goodness to follow me, Madame la Comtesse."

"And people speak so ill of this chancellor," said the countess to herself, as she followed the usher; "yet he has certainly one good quality, — that of accessibility at all hours. Strange, in a vice-chancellor!" Still, she shuddered at the idea that she might find the chancellor severer and more ungracious for the very reason that he was assiduous in the performance of his duties.

M. de Maupeou, buried under a great wig, and dressed in a suit of black velvet, was at work in his cabinet, with the doors open. The countess on entering cast a rapid glance around. She saw with surprise that he was alone, that the mirrors reflected no other face than her own and that of the meagre, yellow, busy vice-chancellor.

The usher announced, "Madame the Comtesse de

Béarn." The vice-chancellor rose up stiffly, as if he had no joints, and, by the same movement, leaned his back against the mantelpiece.

The countess made the three reverences required by etiquette. The brief complimentary speech which followed the reverences was rather embarrassed. She did not expect the honor; she did not think that a minister who had so much to do would deprive himself of the hours necessary for recreation, etc.

The vice-chancellor replied that time was as precious to his Majesty's subjects as to his Majesty's ministers; that, nevertheless, he admitted there were distinctions to be made as to the importance of the affairs brought before him; consequently, he always gave the greater part of his time to those whose business was most urgent.

More reverences on the part of the countess, then an embarrassed silence; for compliments were ended, and her request must now be made. The vice-chancellor waited, stroking his chin.

"Monseigneur," said the countess, "I have presented myself before you, to explain to you an affair on which my whole fortune depends."

M. de Maupeou bowed, as if to intimate that she should go on.

"Monseigneur," she continued, "you must know that all my property, or rather my son's, is at stake in a suit now pending between us and the family of the Saluces."

The vice-chancellor continued to stroke his chin.

"But your equity is so well known to me, Monseigneur, that although I am aware of your interest in — indeed I may say your friendship for — the adverse party, I have not hesitated an instant in coming to entreat your Excellency to hear me."

M. de Maupeou could not help smiling on hearing him-

self praised for his equity, — a quality for which he was about as famous as Dubois was for the apostolical virtues on which he had been complimented fifty years before. "You are right, Madame," said he, "in saying that I am a friend of your opponents; but you are also right in thinking that, when I accepted the seals, I laid aside all friendship. I shall reply to you, then, without any bias, as becomes the supreme head of justice."

"Heaven bless you, Monseigneur!" cried the old countess.

"I shall examine your affair as a jurist only," continued the chancellor.

"I thank your Excellency; your skill in these matters is well known."

"Your cause comes on soon, I think?"

"Next week, Monseigneur!"

"In the mean time, what are your wishes respecting it?"

"That your Excellency would kindly look into the documents."

"I have already done so."

"Well," asked the old countess, trembling, "and what do you think of it, Monseigneur?"

"Of your suit?"

"Yes."

"I think that there is not a doubt on the subject."

"Not a doubt of my gaining?"

"No, — of your losing."

"Then you think, Monseigneur, I shall lose?"

"Undoubtedly. I shall therefore give you a piece of advice."

"What is it?" asked the countess, with a lingering hope.

"If you have any payments to make, the cause being tried, and sentence pronounced, have your funds ready."

"Oh, Monseigneur, we are ruined, then!"

"Surely you know, Madame, that justice never takes into account considerations of that kind."

"But, Monseigneur, by the side of justice there is mercy."

"It is precisely for that reason, Madame la Comtesse, that justice is blind."

"But your Excellency will not refuse me your advice?"

"Certainly not; ask it, Madame. On what point do you wish for it?"

"Is there no means of entering into an arrangement by which the judgment might not be so severe?"

"Do you know any of your judges?"

"Not one of them, Monseigneur."

"That is unfortunate. Messieurs de Saluces, your opponents, are connected with three fourths of the parliament."

The countess shuddered.

"But observe," continued the vice-chancellor, "that that counts for nothing; for a judge does not permit himself to be influenced by private feelings." This was about as true as that he possessed the virtue of equity, or Dubois the apostolic virtues. The countess nearly fainted.

"But, after all," continued the vice-chancellor, "the judge having done all that integrity demands, of course leans more to a friend than to a person concerning whom he is indifferent. That is only just, when it is just; and as it is just that you should lose your cause, they may make the consequences very unpleasant to you."

"But what your Excellency does me the honor to tell me is frightful!"

"As far as I am concerned, I shall refrain from saying anything that might have an influence on the minds of

others; but as I am not a judge myself, I may speak to you of the state of affairs."

"Alas! Monseigneur, there is one thing quite clear to me."

The vice-chancellor fixed on her his little gray eyes.

"It is that the adverse party, living in Paris, have become connected with the judges, and thus are all-powerful."

"Because, in the first place, they have justice on their side."

"How painful it is, Monseigneur, to hear such words from the lips of a man infallible as you are!"

"I say this to you because it is the truth; and yet," continued M. de Maupeou, with an affected frankness, "I should like, upon my word, to serve you."

The countess started; she thought that she saw some obscure meaning, if not in the vice-chancellor's words, at least in his thoughts, which, if she could but understand it, was favorable to her.

"Besides," he proceeded, "the name you bear is one of the noblest in France, and that is in itself a powerful recommendation to me."

"Ah, Monseigneur, it will not prevent me from losing my suit."

"As to that, I have no power either one way or the other."

"Oh, Monseigneur, Monseigneur!" cried the countess, shaking her head, "how things go in this world now!"

"You seem to imply, Madame, that in old times they went better."

"Alas, Monseigneur, I cannot but think so! I recall with pleasure the time when you were merely a king's advocate in the parliament, and when you made those beautiful speeches which I, then a young woman, went to

listen to, and which I applauded with enthusiasm. What fire! what eloquence! what virtue! Ah, Monseigneur, in those times there were no plots, no cabals, no favorites; in those times I should have gained my suit!"

"Yet we had Madame de Phalaris then, who tried to reign occasionally, when the regent shut his eyes; and we had, too, La Souris, who went about picking up what crumbs she could find."

"Oh, Monseigneur, Madame de Phalaris was really a lady of rank, and La Souris was such a good-natured girl!"

"Yes; so nothing was refused them."

"Or, rather, they could refuse no one."

"Come, Madame," said the vice-chancellor, laughing in a manner that astonished the old lady more and more, it was so open and natural, "come, do not make me speak ill of my own administration, through affection for my youth."

"But your Excellency will not forbid me to lament my lost fortune, my ruined family?"

"You see, Countess, what it is not to go with the times, not to sacrifice to the idols of the day."

"Alas, Monseigneur, those idols care not for worshippers who come with empty hands!"

"What can you know about them?"

"I?"

"Yes; you have never tried them, I think."

"Oh, Monseigneur, you are so good! You speak to me really like a friend."

"Well, are we not of about the same age, Countess?"

"Oh! why, am I not twenty years old, — and you, Monseigneur, a simple advocate again? You would plead for me, and I should gain my suit."

"Unhappily, we are no longer twenty years of age, Countess," said the vice-chancellor, with a gallant sigh; "we must therefore beg those who are of that age to

assist us, since you confess that that is the age of influence. What! do you know no one at court?"

"Some old noblemen, who have left it now, I once knew; but they would blush for their old friend in her poverty. Stay, Monseigneur, I have still the privilege of being received at court! I might go to Versailles; yet of what use would it be? Oh, had I again only my two hundred thousand livrés, people would come to visit me! Perform that miracle for me, Monseigneur!"

The vice-chancellor pretended not to hear this last phrase. "In your place," said he, "I should forget the old, as they have forgotten you. I should apply to the young, and beat up for recruits among them. Do you happen to know the princesses at all?"

"They must have forgotten me."

"And besides, they have no influence. Do you know the dauphin?"

"No."

"And after all he is so busy about his archduchess, who is about to arrive, that he can think of nothing else. Let us look among the favorites."

"I don't even know their names."

"M. d'Aguillon?"

"A coxcomb, of whom such shameful things are said, — that he hid in a mill while others were fighting! Fie! fie!"

"Pooh! we must not believe the half of what we hear. Let us look farther."

"Do, Monseigneur; think of some one!"

"Yes; why not? Yes; ha! yes!"

"Speak, Monseigneur, speak!"

"Why not apply to the Countess herself?"

"To Madame Dubarry?" said the old lady, spreading out her fan.

"Yes; she is really a kind creature."

"Indeed!"

"And anxious to be useful."

"I fear I am of too ancient a family to please her, Monseigneur."

"You are mistaken, Countess; she tries to attach high families to her."

"Do you think so?" asked the old countess, already beginning to waver in her opposition.

"Do you know her?" said the chancellor.

"No, indeed!"

"Ah, there is the mischief! She is the person who has real influence."

"Yes, yes, she has influence; but I never saw her."

"Nor her sister Chon?"

"No."

"Nor her sister Bischi?"

"No."

"Nor her brother Jean?"

"No."

"Nor her negro Zamore?"

"What! her negro?"

"Yes; her negro is one of the governing powers."

"What! that little fright, whose picture is sold in the streets, who looks like a dressed-up pug-dog?"

"That is he."

"You ask if I know that blackamoor, Monseigneur?" cried the countess, with offended dignity. "How should I know him?"

"Well, well! I see you do not wish to keep your estates, Countess."

"How is that?"

"Because you speak contemptuously of Zamore."

"But what has Zamore to do in the matter?"

"He might gain your suit for you, that is all."

"He, — that Hottentot? How could he gain it for me?"

"By saying to his mistress that it would please him that you should gain it. You know what influence is; he makes his mistress do what he chooses, and she makes the king do what she chooses."

"Then Zamore governs France?"

"Hum!" replied the vice-chancellor, nodding his head. "He has a great deal of influence; and I would rather quarrel with — with the dauphiness, for instance, than with Zamore."

"Great Heaven!" exclaimed the countess, "if it were not a grave person like your Excellency who tells me such things — "

"Oh, I am not the only one who will tell them to you! Everybody can tell them. Ask any of the dukes and peers if they ever forget, when going to Marly or Luciennes, to take comfits for Zamore to put in his mouth, or pearls for him to hang in his ears. I, who speak to you, am I not the chancellor of France, or something very near it? Well, what was I doing when you came in? I was drawing up a governor's commission for Zamore."

"A governor's commission?"

"Yes; Monsieur Zamore is appointed governor of the castle of Luciennes."

"The very same title with which they rewarded the Comte de Béarn after twenty years' service."

"Yes; he was made governor of the castle of Blois. I remember that."

"But what a degradation! Good heavens! the monarchy is ruined then!"

"It is very low, at least; and you know, Countess, when an invalid draws near his end, people try to get all they can from him."

"No doubt, no doubt; but the question is how to get near this invalid."

"Do you know what you must do to be well received by Madame Dubarry?"

"What?"

"You must get admitted to her as the bearer of this commission for her negro. It will be an excellent beginning."

"Do you think so, Monseigneur?" said the poor countess, alarmed.

"I am sure of it; but —"

"But what?"

"Do you know any one acquainted with her?"

"No one but yourself, Monseigneur."

"Oh! as for me, it would be difficult for me to introduce you."

"Assuredly," said the poor old lady, tossed to and fro by alternate hopes and fears, "assuredly, fortune is hostile to me! Your Excellency has received me in a manner quite unexpected, — for indeed I did not expect to be admitted to an audience; then you inclined me to pay my court to Madame Dubarry, — I, a Béarn! — and persuaded me to act as go-between for that frightful negro; and now, behold, I cannot even get at that little monster —"

The vice-chancellor began again to stroke his chin, and appeared very thoughtful, when suddenly the usher announced, "M. le Vicomte Jean Dubarry!"

At this name M. de Maupeou made a gesture of amazement, and the countess sank back breathless in her chair.

"Now say that fortune has abandoned you!" cried the vice-chancellor. "Ah, countess, countess, Heaven is working in your favor!" Then turning to the usher, without

giving the old lady time to recover, he desired that the viscount should be admitted instantly. The usher withdrew, and a moment later our old acquaintance Jean Dubarry entered, with his arm in a sling.

After the usual number of bows were made on both sides, and as the countess, trembling and undecided, was trying to rise in order to take leave, — for the vice-chancellor by a slight movement of the head had indicated to her that her audience was ended, — "Pardon me, Monseigneur," said the viscount; "pardon me, Madame, — I interrupt you, I fear. But I beg of you not to go away; I have only two words to say to his Excellency."

The countess sat down again without needing to be urged, her heart full of joy and expectation. "But perhaps, Monsieur, I shall be in your way," she stammered.

"Oh, Madame, not at all, not at all! I merely wish to lodge a short complaint with his Excellency."

"A complaint! — against whom?" exclaimed the vice-chancellor.

"An attack upon me, Monseigneur! an assassination! One cannot pass over such things as that. Let them abuse us, make ballads about us, blacken us, — we can survive all that; but when it comes to cutting our throats, — *mordieu!* that is dangerous!"

"Explain the affair, I beg," said the vice-chancellor, pretending to be very much horrified.

"It is easily done. But I fear I am interrupting this lady's audience."

"The Comtesse de Béarn," said the vice-chancellor, introducing the old lady to the Vicomte Jean Dubarry.

Dubarry drew back gracefully to make his bow, the countess to make her own; and both saluted as ceremoniously as if they had been at court.

"After you, Monsieur le Vicomte," said she.

"Madame la Comtesse, I would not be guilty of such treason against gallantry."

"Oh, Monsieur! my business concerns only money, — in yours honor is concerned; yours is therefore more urgent."

"Then, Madame," said the viscount, "since it is your wish, I shall take advantage of your obliging permission." And he related his tale to the chancellor, who listened gravely.

"You will require witnesses," said Monsieur de Maupeou, after a moment's reflection.

"Ah!" cried Dubarry, "how easily one discovers even in those words, the upright judge, who can be influenced only by irrefutable truth! Well, I can procure witnesses."

"Monseigneur," said the countess, "one is found already."

"Who is that witness?" they asked together.

"I myself," the countess replied.

"You!" exclaimed M. de Maupeou.

"Monsieur," said she, addressing the viscount, "did not this affair happen at the village of Lachaussée?"

"Yes, Madame."

"At the post-house?"

"Yes."

"Well, I will be your witness. I passed through the place where the attack was made on you, two hours after it happened."

"Really, Madame?" said the chancellor.

"Yes," continued the countess, "and everybody was talking of what had just taken place."

"Take care!" said the viscount, "take care, Madame! If you consent to aid me in this matter, very likely the Choiseuls will find some way to make you repent of it."

"Ah!" said the vice-chancellor, "and the more easily that the Comtesse de Béarn is engaged in a lawsuit, her chance of gaining which is very doubtful, I am afraid."

"Oh, Monseigneur," cried the old lady, putting her hand to her head, "I roll from abyss to abyss!"

"Lean upon the viscount," said the chancellor, in a whisper; "he has an arm powerful to assist you."

"Only one at present," said Dubarry, with a simper. "But I know a certain person who has two good arms; they can reach far, and I offer you their aid."

"Oh, Monsieur le Vicomte, are you serious in making me such an offer?"

"It is only service for service, Madame. I accept your aid; you accept mine. Is it agreed?"

"Do I accept yours? Oh, Monsieur, you do me too much honor!"

"Then, Madame, will you take a seat in my carriage? I am just going to pay a visit to my sister."

"Without any reason; without any preparations? Oh, Monsieur, I dare not —"

"You have a reason, Madame," said the vice-chancellor, slipping into her hand Zamore's commission.

"Monseigneur, you are my protecting genius!" cried the old lady. "Monsieur le Vicomte, you are the flower of the French nobility."

"At your service," said the viscount, showing the way to the countess, who started off with the lightness of a bird.

"Thanks for my sister," whispered Jean in the vice-chancellor's ear; "thank you, cousin! But did I play my part well, eh?"

"Admirably," said Maupeou. "Report to the countess how I played mine. But take care! the old lady is sharp."

At that moment the countess turned. The two gentlemen bowed formally to one another, as if taking a ceremonious adieu.

A splendid carriage, with attendants in the royal livery, waited at the door. The old lady took her place in it, quite elated; Jean seated himself beside her, and they departed.

After the king left Madame Dubarry, as we have formerly related, after a very cold and constrained reception, the countess was left alone with Chon and her brother, who had not appeared at first, for fear that his wound might be examined, it being in reality very trifling. The result of this family council was that the countess, instead of going to Luciennes, as she had told the king she was about to do, set off for Paris. She had there, in the Rue de Valois, a snug little house which served as a place of rendezvous for all her family, every member of which was constantly running backward and forward, hither and thither, as business or pleasure led them. The countess, being installed in this domicile, took a book and waited. Meantime the viscount arranged his batteries.

It might be about half-past seven by the large dial of the Church of St. Eustache, when the Comtesse de Béarn and Vicomte Dubarry passed by on their way to his sister's. The conversation on her side expressed great reluctance to avail herself of the good fortune which had fallen in her way. On his, there was the assumption of a sort of dignity in being her patron, with repeated exclamations at the happy chance which enabled him to introduce her to the Comtesse Dubarry. In return, the old lady praised unceasingly the politeness and affability of the vice-chancellor. This exchange of falsehoods did not affect the speed of the horses, and they reached their destination a few minutes before eight o'clock.

"Permit me, Madame," said the viscount, leaving the old lady in an ante-room, "to inform the Comtesse Dubarry of the honor awaiting her."

"Oh, Monsieur!" said the countess, "do not, I entreat you, allow my unseasonable visit to disturb her."

Jean approached Zamore, who was watching at one of the windows for his return, and whispered something in his ear.

"What a dear little negro!" cried the countess; "is he your sister's, Monsieur?"

"Yes, he is one of her favorites, Madame."

"I congratulate her."

At this moment a footman opened the folding doors of the salon where Madame Dubarry usually granted audiences, and requested the countess to enter. While the old lady was sighing over the luxurious furniture of the apartment, Jean had gone to find his sister,

"Is it really she?" asked Madame Dubarry.

"In flesh and blood!"

"Does she suspect anything?"

"Nothing in the world."

"And how did the Vice behave?"

"Admirably! Everything conspired to favor us."

"Do not let us leave her too long alone, lest she should suspect something."

"You are right; for I assure you she seems to me cunning enough. Where is Chon?"

"At Versailles, you know."

"Well, she must not by any means let herself be seen."

"Oh, I warned her!"

"Now, Princess, enter."

Madame Dubarry gently pushed open the door of her boudoir and entered the salon.

All the ceremonial enjoined by the etiquette of those days was scrupulously performed by the two actresses, mutually desirous of pleasing. Madame Dubarry was the first to speak. "I have already thanked my brother, Madame," she said, "for having procured me the honor of this visit; allow me now to thank you also for having consented to his wish."

"I know not, Madame," replied the old lady, "in what terms to thank you for this gracious reception of me."

"Madame," said the countess in her turn, with a motion of profound respect, "it is only due to a lady of your rank to place myself at your disposal, if I can be of service to you in any way."

And the three reverences having been made on each side, the countess invited Madame de Béarn to be seated.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ZAMORE'S COMMISSION.

"MADAME," said the favorite, "pray let me hear your wishes; I am all attention."

"Permit me, sister," said Jean, who continued standing, "to disabuse your mind of the idea that the Comtesse de Béarn comes with a petition; not at all, — the chancellor has simply asked her to perform a little office for him."

The old lady turned a grateful look on the viscount, and held out to the countess the patent signed by the vice-chancellor, declaring Luciennes a royal castle, and Zamore its governor.

"Then it is I who am the person obliged," said the countess, glancing at the document; "if I could only be so fortunate, Madame, as to be of any service to you in return."

"Oh, that you can readily be!" exclaimed the old lady, with a frankness which enchanted the brother and sister.

"Tell me how, Madame; speak, I entreat you."

"You were kind enough to say that my name is not quite unknown to you, Madame."

"Unknown? — a Béarn!"

"Then you have perhaps heard of a lawsuit which threatens my whole property."

"Oh, yes! A suit between you and the family of the Saluces?"

"Alas, Madame, yes!"

"I know all about it, Madame; I heard his Majesty the other evening speak of it to my cousin the vice-chancellor."

"His Majesty has spoken of my lawsuit?"

"Yes, Madame."

"And in what terms?"

"Alas! my dear Madame!" and Madame Dubarry shook her head.

"As lost, as lost, — was it not?" exclaimed the old lady, in agony.

"If I must speak the truth, Madame, it was."

"His Majesty said so?"

"His Majesty had too much prudence and delicacy to give a pronounced opinion, but he seemed to regard the Saluces as already in possession of the estate."

"Oh, Heavens! Madame, if his Majesty were but rightly informed on the subject, — if he knew that all this was about a debt that has been paid! Yes, Madame, the two hundred thousand francs have been paid. I have not a receipt for the money, it is true; but I have moral proofs that it was paid. I could, if I were allowed to plead in person before the parliament, demonstrate by inference —"

"By inference?" exclaimed Madame Dubarry, who did not understand one word of what she said, but who appeared to pay the most serious attention.

"Yes, Madame, by inference."

"The proof by inference is admissible," said Jean.

"Do you think so, Monsieur?" asked the old lady.

"Yes, I think it is," replied the viscount, with profound gravity.

"Well, then, by inference I could prove that the bond for two hundred thousand francs, with the interest accumulated, amounting to a total of about one million, —

I could prove that this bond, bearing date 1406, was discharged by Guy Gaston, the fourth Comte de Béarn, on his deathbed in 1417; for there it is written by his own hand in his will, — 'Being on my deathbed, and *owing nothing to any man*, and ready to appear before God —'"

"Well?" said Madame Dubarry.

"Well, Madame, if he owed nothing to any man, he owed nothing to the family of the Saluces; otherwise he would have said, 'owing two hundred thousand francs,' instead of saying, 'owing nothing to any man.'"

"Undoubtedly he would have said so!" exclaimed Jean.

"But have you no other proof?" asked the favorite.

"Than his word? None, Madame; but he was called 'Gaston the Irreproachable.'"

"And your opponents have the bond?"

"Yes, they have; and that is just what makes the affair more intricate."

She might have said, "That is just what clears up the matter;" but she looked at things from her own point of view.

"So your conviction is, Madame, that the bond was discharged?" said Jean.

"Yes, Monsieur, that is my decided conviction," exclaimed Madame de Béarn, warmly.

"Do you know," said the countess, turning to her brother, as if deeply penetrated by that conviction, "the proof by inference, as the Comtesse de Béarn calls it, changes the face of things wonderfully?"

"Oh, wonderfully!" returned Jean.

"And very unpleasantly for my opponents," continued the countess. "The terms of Gaston IV.'s will are most positive, — 'owing nothing to any man —'"

"It is not only clear, it is logical," said Jean. "He owed nothing to any man; therefore, of course, he had paid what he had owed."

"Therefore he had paid what he had owed," repeated the Comtesse Dubarry.

"Oh, Madame, why are you not my judge?" exclaimed the old lady.

"Formerly," said the viscount, "we should not have had recourse to the tribunals to settle an affair of that kind; the judgment of Heaven would have determined it. For my part, I am so convinced of the goodness of your cause that, did the old custom still exist, I would willingly offer myself as your champion."

"Oh, Monsieur!"

"Yes, I should act as did my grandfather, Dubarry-Moore, who had the honor of being connected with the royal family of the Stuarts, when he fought in the lists for the beautiful Edith of Scarborough, and made his adversary confess that he lied in his throat. But unhappily," continued the viscount, with a sigh of disdain for the degeneracy of the age, "we live not in those glorious times, and gentlemen, when they claim their rights, must submit their cause to the judgment of a set of pettifoggers who have not the sense to understand a phrase so clear as — 'owing nothing to any man.'"

"But, brother," said Madame Dubarry, "it is three hundred years since those words were written; and it is necessary to consider what, I think, in courts of justice is called 'prescription.'"

"Oh! no matter, no matter. I am certain that if his Majesty heard the Comtesse de Béarn state her case herself as she has done to us —"

"I should convince his Majesty, — should I not, Monsieur?"

"I am sure you would."

"Yes, but how am I to obtain an audience of his Majesty?"

"You must come and visit me at Luciennes; and as his Majesty does me the honor of coming sometimes to see me there —"

"My dear," interrupted the viscount, "that is all very well; but it depends on chance."

"Viscount," replied the favorite, with a sweet smile, "you know that I depend a good deal on chance, and I have no reason to complain."

"Yes, but the Comtesse de Béarn might go to Luciennes for a week or a fortnight, and yet not meet his Majesty."

"That is true."

"In the mean time, her cause is to come on next Monday or Tuesday."

"On Tuesday, Monsieur."

"And this is Friday evening."

"Ah, then," said Madame Dubarry, with an air of disappointment, "we must not reckon upon that."

"What shall we do?" said the viscount, as if in deep thought. "What a devil of a business!"

"I might have an audience at Versailles," suggested the old lady, timidly.

"Oh! you will not obtain it."

"But through your influence, Madame?"

"Oh! my influence would be of no avail. His Majesty detests business matters; and besides, his mind is now full of one thing only."

"The parliaments?" asked Madame de Béarn.

"No, — my presentation."

"Ah!" said the old lady.

"For you know, Madame, in spite of the opposition of

Monsieur de Choiseul and Madame de Grammont, the king has decided that I shall be presented."

"I was not aware, Madame."

"It is a settled affair," said Jean.

"And when will the presentation take place, Madame?"

"Oh! very soon."

"You see," said Jean, "the king wishes it to be before the arrival of the dauphiness, that he may invite my sister to share the festivities at Compiègne."

"Ah! I understand. Then you have all the arrangements made for your presentation?" said the old countess, sighing.

"Oh, yes!" replied the viscount; "the Baronne d'Alogny — Do you know the Baronne d'Alogny?"

"No, Monsieur. Alas! I scarcely know any one now; it is twenty years since I was at court."

"Well, it is the Baronne d'Alogny who is to present my sister. The king loads her with favors; her husband is chamberlain, — he is to be raised from a baron to a count; the son is to go into the guards; her orders on the king's privy purse are to be made payable by the city of Paris; and the day of the presentation she is to receive twenty thousand crowns paid down. So she is eager for it, you may be sure!"

"Yes, I can readily understand that," said the old lady, smiling.

"Oh! but now I think of it —" cried Jean.

"Of what?" asked the Comtesse Dubarry.

"What a misfortune, what a misfortune!" he continued, "that I did not meet Madame a week sooner at our cousin the vice-chancellor's!"

"Why?"

"Why, we had no positive engagement then with the Baronne d'Alogny."

"Dear brother, you speak like a sphinx; I do not understand you."

"You do not understand?"

"No."

"I will wager something that Madame understands!"

"Pardon, Monsieur, but I seek in vain —"

"Last week you had not decided who should present you?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Very well! Madame — But perhaps I am going too far; I am taking too great a liberty."

"No, Monsieur; speak."

"Madame could have presented you, and the king would have done for her what he is going to do for the Baronne d'Alogny."

"Alas!" said the old lady, opening her eyes.

"Oh! if you knew," continued Jean, "all the favors his Majesty heaped on the family of the baronne as soon as he knew she had offered to introduce Jeanne! There was only one thing in the affair that vexed him —"

"Ah! one thing vexed him?"

"Yes, — only one. 'One thing vexes me,' said he; 'the lady who presents the Comtesse Dubarry I should have wished to bear an historical name;' and as he said that, he looked at the picture of Charles I. by Vandyck."

"Yes, I understand," said the old lady; "his Majesty turned to that picture on account of the alliance between the Dubarry-Moores and the Stuarts, of which you spoke just now."

"Precisely."

"The fact is," said the old lady, with a manner impossible to describe, "I never heard of the family of D'Alogny."

"A good family, however," said the countess; "they

have brought forward all the necessary proofs, or nearly all."

"*Pardieu!*" cried Jean, suddenly starting in his chair.

"Well, what is the matter?" said Madame Dubarry, scarcely able to refrain from laughing outright at the contortions of her brother-in-law.

"Monsieur has pricked himself, perhaps?" asked the old lady, anxiously.

"No," said Jean, sinking slowly back again into his chair; "it was an idea which just then occurred to me."

"What idea?" said the countess, laughing; "it almost upset you."

"It must have been a good one," said Madame de Béarn.

"Excellent!"

"Give it to us then."

"It has only one fault."

"Well?"

"It is impracticable."

"No matter; let us hear it."

"Suppose you were to tell the Baronne d'Alogny the king's remark when he looked at Charles I.'s portrait?"

"Oh, brother, that would not be polite!"

The old lady sighed.

"It is vexatious too," continued the viscount, as if speaking to himself; "the affair could have been so easily arranged. The Comtesse de Béarn, who not only bears such an ancient name, but is besides a woman of distinguished talent, might have offered herself in the place of the Baronne d'Alogny. She would have gained her lawsuit; her son would have got a commission as lieutenant in the guards; and as Madame must, of course, have been put to considerable expense in her frequent visits to Paris, there would have been adequate compen-

sation allowed. Such an opportunity does not occur twice in a lifetime!"

"Alas, no!" exclaimed the old lady, quite overcome by this unforeseen blow.

The fact is that any one in the position of the old litigant would have felt inclined to echo her exclamation, and, like her, would have sunk back, overwhelmed, in the easy chair.

"Now, brother," said the countess, in a tone of great compassion, "you see you are giving pain to Madame de Béarn. Was it not enough that I was forced to tell her I could do nothing for her with the king before my presentation?"

"Oh! if I could delay my suit," sighed the countess.

"For only eight days," said Dubarry.

"Yes, in eight days," resumed Madame de Béarn; "in eight days Madame will be presented."

"Yes; but the king will be at Compiègne in eight days; he will be in the midst of festivities; the dauphiness will have arrived."

"Stop! I have another idea. No — yes — no — yes, yes! — I have hit it!"

"What is it, Monsieur?" said Madame de Béarn, whose whole soul seemed to hang upon the viscount's lips, and who repeated mechanically the monosyllables he uttered.

"Your presentation is still a secret; no one knows that you have found a lady to present you?"

"No, for the king wishes it to fall like a thunderbolt on the court."

"Well, the Comtesse de Béarn will demand an audience of the king, as she is not supposed to know any more about your presentation than others, for the purpose of offering to present you. The king, at such an offer

from a lady of her rank, will be delighted; he will receive her, thank her, will ask her what he can do for her. She will introduce the subject of her lawsuit, and explain her views respecting it; his Majesty will give them a favorable consideration, and the suit which she thought lost will be won!"

The favorite fixed her eager gaze on the old lady, who probably began to suspect that there was some snare laid for her. "I am a poor unknown creature," said she; "how do you suppose that his Majesty —"

"It is enough, I think, in such circumstances to have shown good-will," said Jean.

"If it is only a question of good-will —" said Madame de Béarn, hesitating.

"It is not a bad idea," replied Madame Dubarry, smiling; "but perhaps Madame would not like to descend to anything like a trick, even to gain her lawsuit."

"Quite true, Madame," said the old lady, hoping to get off by this means. "I would much rather do you some real service to obtain your friendship."

"Indeed, nothing could be more gracious!" said the favorite, with a slight shade of irony, which did not escape the penetration of Madame de Béarn.

"Well, I have still another means," said Jean. The old lady listened anxiously.

"Really, brother, your imagination is as fertile in resources as that of M. de Beaumarchais. Let us hear this last idea."

"It is that the Comtesse de Béarn shall render you the real service which she wishes to. Can you not persuade the Baronne d'Alogny to yield her rights to the countess? You need not repeat to her too frankly the king's remark; but you could, with your tact, make her understand that he preferred the countess's ancient name."

This time the attack was direct; he thought there could be no evasive answer. But the countess found one. "I should not like to interfere with that lady's arrangements," said she; "among persons of quality a certain attention to these engagements must be observed."

Madame Dubarry made a gesture of anger and disappointment, but the viscount by a look restrained her. "Observe, Madame," said he, "I urge nothing upon you. Like many other persons, you have a lawsuit, which very naturally you wish to gain. It appears that you are likely to lose it; you are in despair. Just at that moment I arrive; I am moved with sympathy for you; I take an interest in an affair which does not in the remotest degree concern me; I endeavor to make it turn out favorably for you. I am wrong; let us say no more about it!" and Jean rose from his seat.

"Oh, Monsieur!" exclaimed the old lady, in despair, for she now saw that the Dubarrys, who had been till then indifferent, were going to use their influence against her; "oh, Monsieur! believe me, I acknowledge and am grateful for your good-will."

"As for myself," replied Jean, with well-assumed indifference, "it matters not whether my sister be presented by the Baronne d'Alogny, the Comtesse de Polastron, or the Comtesse de Béarn."

"Of course, Monsieur."

"Only I confess I felt annoyed that the royal favor should be bestowed on some mean spirit, actuated by sordid interest, — a spirit yielding to our power because it is impossible to undermine it."

"Oh, that is what will most probably happen!" said the favorite.

"While," continued Jean, "the Comtesse de Béarn, almost an entire stranger to us, and coming forward with-

out any solicitation on our part, and prompted solely by her kindness and good nature to offer her services, appears to me worthy of all the advantages which would thereby accrue to her."

The old lady was probably about to disclaim that good will which the viscount did her the honor to attribute to her, but Madame Dubarry did not give her time.

"The fact is," said she, "the king would not refuse anything to a lady who would act as you suggest."

"What! the king would not refuse anything, do you say?"

"He would hasten to meet that person's wishes; so that with your own ears you might hear him say to the vice-chancellor: 'M. de Maupeou, I wish every one to be agreeable to Madame de Béarn, — do you understand?' But it appears that Madame la Comtesse sees difficulties in the way. Very good! You will at least do me the justice, I hope, to believe that I have a sincere wish to serve you, Madame;" and the viscount bowed.

"Indeed, Monsieur, my heart is filled with gratitude to you!"

"Oh, do not speak of it!" said the gallant viscount.

"But the Baronne d'Alogny would not yield up her right," resumed the old lady, after a short pause.

"Still, his Majesty would not be the less grateful to you for your offer."

"But supposing," persisted the old lady, who was determined to view the matter in the worst light, in order to see to the bottom of the affair, — "supposing the baronne would yield her privilege to me, one would not wish to take from that lady the advantages — "

"The king's kindness is inexhaustible, Madame," said the favorite.

"If I offered my services, Madame," replied the old

lady, yielding more and more, allured as she was both by her interest and by the comedy they were playing with her, "I should leave out of view the gaining of my cause; for, to say the truth, a suit which every one thinks lost to-day will not be easily gained to-morrow."

"Oh, but if the king were favorable!" exclaimed Jean, eager to combat her new doubts.

"Well," said the favorite, "I confess I am of the countess's opinion, Viscount."

"You are?" said he, staring at her with open eyes.

"Yes; I think it would be more honorable for a lady of her ancient name to allow her suit to go as it may. Then there would be nothing binding on the king, — nothing to check his munificence to her; and if he were unwilling — especially in his present relation to his parliaments — to interfere with the course of justice, he might offer her compensation for the loss of the suit."

"That would be more honorable," the viscount hastened to say. "Oh, yes, little sister, I am of your opinion!"

"Ah!" sighed the old lady, "how could he offer anything to compensate for the loss of two hundred thousand francs?"

"Why, in the first place," replied Madame Dubarry, "there might, for instance, be a royal gift of one hundred thousand francs."

The partners in this scheme looked at their victim with eager eyes.

"I have a son —" said she.

"So much the better! — one more loyal servant of the State."

"But do you think, Madame, there would be anything done for my son?"

"I can answer for it," said Jean, "that the least he might expect would be a lieutenancy in the guards."

"Have you any other relations?" inquired the Comtesse Dubarry."

"I have a nephew."

"Well, we should find out something for your nephew," said the viscount.

"I think we may leave that in your hands, Viscount," said the favorite, laughing, "after the proofs of your resources which you have given us."

"Well, if his Majesty did all this for you, Madame," said the viscount, who, obeying Horace's maxim, pushed on toward the end in view, "would you think the king reasonable?"

"I should think him generous beyond all expression, and should offer you, Madame, all my thanks, — convinced that to you alone I should be indebted for his generosity."

"Then," asked the favorite, "you really take our proposal seriously into consideration?"

"Yes, Madame, most seriously," replied the old lady, turning pale at the very thought of the obligation to which she pledged herself.

"And you permit me to mention you to his Majesty?"

"Pray do me that honor," she replied, with a deep sigh.

"Madame, I shall do so with the least possible delay, — indeed, this very evening," said the favorite, rising to terminate the interview. "And in the mean time, I trust that I have secured your friendship."

"I feel so highly honored by yours, Madame," said the old lady, beginning her reverences again, "that I almost feel as if all this were a dream."

"Let us see, once more," said Jean, wishing to fix the matter firmly in the old countess's mind. "One hundred thousand francs first, to make up for the loss of the suit;

a lieutenancy for the young count; and something for a nephew."

"Something?"

"I shall find out something good; that is my affair."

"And when shall I have the honor of seeing you again, Madame?" asked the old lady.

"To-morrow morning my carriage will be at your door to take you to Luciennes; the king will be there. To-morrow, at ten o'clock, I shall have fulfilled my promise; his Majesty will be informed, and will expect you."

"Allow me to accompany you, Madame," said Jean, offering his arm.

"By no means, Monsieur; remain here, I entreat you."

Jean insisted. "To the top of the stairs, at least."

"Since you insist on it —" and Madame de Béarn took the viscount's arm.

"Zamore!" cried the countess.

Zamore appeared.

"Light this lady downstairs, and order my brother's carriage forward to the door."

The two ladies exchanged a last reverence. At the top of the staircase Jean bade the old countess adieu, and returned to his sister, while Madame de Béarn majestically descended the grand staircase. Zamore marched first; then came two footmen with lights; and then the old lady, her train (rather a short one) borne by a third footman.

The brother and sister watched at the window, following with their eyes to the very carriage the precious chaperon, sought with so much care, and found with so much difficulty. Just as she reached the door, a chaise entered the courtyard, and a young lady sprang out.

"Ah, Maîtresse Chon!" cried Zamore, opening his

enormous mouth to its widest extent. "How do you do this evening, Maîtresse Chon?"

The Comtesse de Béarn stood petrified. In the new arrival she recognized her visitor,— the false daughter of Maître Flageot. Dubarry hurriedly opened a window, and made frantic signs to his sister; but she did not see them.

"Has that little fool Gilbert been here?" inquired Chon of a lackey, without perceiving the countess.

"No, Madame," replied one of the footmen; "we have not seen him."

It was just then that, looking up, she saw her brother, and following the direction of his hand, discovered Madame de Béarn. Chon recognized her, uttered a little cry, hastily pulled down her hood, and rushed into the vestibule. The old lady, without appearing to have remarked anything, got into the carriage and gave her address to the coachman.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE KING GETS TIRED.

THE king, who had gone to Marly, as he had said he would, ordered his carriage at three o'clock in the afternoon, and drove to Luciennes. He supposed that Madame Dubarry, on receiving his note, would immediately leave Versailles, and hasten thither to wait for him.

He was rather surprised, therefore, on entering the château, to find Zamore — looking very little like a governor — occupied in plucking out the feathers of a parrot, which, in return, was trying to bite him. The two favorites were rivals, like the Duc de Choiseul and the Comtesse Dubarry.

The king installed himself in the small salon, and dismissed his attendants. Although the most inquisitive gentleman in his kingdom, he was not in the habit of questioning servants or lackeys. But Zamore was neither a servant nor a lackey; he occupied a middle place between the monkey and the parrot. The king therefore questioned Zamore. "Is the countess in the garden?"

"No, Master." This word the favorite, in one of her whims, had ordered to take the place of "Majesty," at Luciennes.

"Is she at the lake then?"

At very great expense the bed of a lake had been excavated on the summit of the hill. It was fed with water from the aqueduct, and inhabited by great numbers of the finest carp, brought from Versailles.

"No, Master," again answered Zamore.

"Where is she, then?"

"In Paris, Master."

"What! Did the countess not come to Luciennes?"

"No, Master; but she sent Zamore."

"What to do?"

"To wait for the king."

"Ah, ha! so you are delegated to receive me? Very agreeable indeed! Thank you, Countess, thank you! The society of Zamore is charming!" And he rose from his chair rather piqued.

"Oh, no! the king is not to have the society of Zamore," said the negro.

"Why not?"

"Because Zamore is going away."

"Where are you going?"

"To Paris."

"Then I am to be left alone? Better and better. But why do you go to Paris?"

"To find Maîtresse Dubarry and tell her the king is at Luciennes."

"Oh! the countess desired you to tell me that, then?"

"Yes, Master."

"And did she tell you what I was to do till she came?"

"She said you were to sleep."

"Ah!" said the king to himself, "she will not be long delayed, and she has some surprise for me;" then he added aloud, "Go, then, and bring back the countess. But how will you travel?"

"On the great white horse with the scarlet housings."

"And how long does it take for the great white horse to go to Paris?"

"I do not know," said the negro boy; "but he goes fast, fast, fast! Zamore likes to go fast."

"Indeed! It is at least very fortunate that Zamore likes to go fast." And he stationed himself at the window to see Zamore depart. A tall footman lifted the negro on the horse, and with the happy ignorance of childhood, he set off at a gallop on his gigantic steed.

The king, being left alone, asked a footman at last if there were anything new at Luciennes. The servant replied that there was only Monsieur Boucher, who was painting the countess's boudoir.

"Oh, Boucher, poor Boucher! is he here?" said the king, with a slight satisfaction; "and where is he?"

"In the summer-house; shall I show your Majesty the way to it?"

"No, no; I will go and see the carp. Give me a knife."

"A knife, Sire?"

"Yes, and a large loaf."

The valet returned, bringing a large loaf, with a long knife stuck in it, on a china plate. The king made a sign to the valet to accompany him, and with a pleased air proceeded toward the lake. The feeding of carp was a traditional occupation in the Bourbon family, the Grand Monarque never missing it for a single day. Louis XV. seated himself on a mossy bank where there was a charming view. There lay the little lake, with its velvet slopes of turf; beyond it a village nestled between two hills; farther off, the towers of St.-Germain, with their wooded terraces, and farther still, the blue declivities of Sannois and Cormeilles; while above all this the sky, gray and rose-colored, hung like a magnificent cupola. The weather had been stormy, and the foliage of the trees looked dark and heavy against the pale green of the meadows; the waters of the lake, glassy and immovable as a vast surface of oil, were disturbed from time to time

by a fish darting with a flash like that of silver to seize the unwary fly; then was the surface covered with wide-spreading circles of alternate black and white. At the margin might be perceived the enormous snouts of a number of fish, which, fearless of hook or net, sucked the leaves of pendant plants, and with their huge, fixed eyes, apparently without sight, stared at the gray lizards and green frogs sporting among the bulrushes.

When the king, like a man skilled in the art of killing time, had looked at the landscape on all sides; when he had counted the houses in the village, and the villages in the distance, — he took the plate with the loaf, placed it beside him, and began to cut off large pieces of the bread.

The carp heard the sound of the knife in the crust; and accustomed to that noise, which announced their dinner-hour, they immediately flocked as close as possible to the bank, to show themselves to his Majesty and solicit their daily meal. They would have done the same for any footman in his service; but the king naturally thought that all this trouble was for him alone. He threw in, one after another, the pieces of bread, which, first disappearing for an instant, and then returning to the surface, were contended for for some time; then, crumbled by the action of the water, were seized, and seen no more. It was indeed curious and amusing to see all these crusts pushed hither and thither by the invisible snouts, and tossed on the surface of the water, until the moment when they were swallowed.

At the end of about half an hour his Majesty, having in that time patiently cut one hundred bits of crust, had the satisfaction of seeing that not one remained floating. He began now, however, to feel rather tired of the sport, and it occurred to him that Monsieur Boucher might amuse

him a little; he would not be as good a resource as the carp, but in the country we must take what we can get.

Louis therefore turned toward the summer-house. Boucher had heard that he was at Luciennes; and though he went on painting, or seeming to paint, he followed the king with his eyes, saw him turn in the direction of the summer-house, and, radiant with joy, he adjusted his ruffles and mounted on his ladder, for he had been warned not to appear to know that the king was there. He heard a step on the floor of the room, and applied himself to his representation of a fat Cupid stealing a rose from a shepherdess in a blue satin gown and straw hat. His hand trembled, his heart beat. The king stopped on the threshold. "Ah, Boucher," cried he, "how you smell of turpentine!" and he walked on.

Poor Boucher, although he knew the king had no taste for the fine arts, did expect some other kind of compliment, and was near falling from his ladder. He came down and went away with the tears in his eyes, without scraping his palette or washing his brushes, which in general he was so careful to do.

His Majesty pulled out his watch; it was seven o'clock. He returned to the house, teased the monkey, made the parrot speak, pulled out all the drawers of the cabinets one after another, and ransacked their contents. Evening drew on. The king was not fond of darkness, and the apartments were lighted up. But he did not like solitude either. "My horses in a quarter of an hour!" said he. "Faith!" he added, "I will just give her one quarter of an hour, — not a minute longer." As he said this, he stretched himself on a sofa opposite the fireplace, to watch the course of the fifteen minutes, — that is, of nine hundred seconds. At the four hundredth beat of the time-

piece, which represented a blue elephant carrying a pink sultana, he was asleep.

As may be supposed, the footman, who came to announce his Majesty's carriage, took care not to awake him. The result of this attention to his august slumber was that when he awoke of his own accord, he found himself face to face with the Comtesse Dubarry, who was looking at him with her eyes wide open. Zamore stood in a corner waiting for orders.

"Ah! you are here at last, Countess," said the king, sitting up on the sofa.

"Yes, Sire, here I am," said the countess; "and here I have been a pretty long time."

"Oh! a pretty long time?"

"An hour at least. But how your Majesty does sleep!"

"Faith, Countess, you were not here, and I was getting shockingly tired; and then I sleep so badly at night. Do you know that I was on the point of going away?"

"Yes, I saw your Majesty's carriage at the door."

The king looked at his watch. "What, half-past ten?" he exclaimed; "then I have slept nearly three hours!"

"After that, Sire, say that you cannot sleep well at Luciennes!"

"Oh, faith, very well! But what the devil do I see there?" said he, looking at Zamore.

"You see the governor of Luciennes, Sire."

"Not yet, not yet," said the king, laughing; "the little wretch has put on his uniform before he is appointed. He reckons on my word, then?"

"Sire, your word is sacred, and he is right in reckoning on it. But Zamore has something more than your word, or rather something less, — he has his commission; the

vice-chancellor sent it to me. The oath is now the only formality which is wanting; make him swear quickly, and then betake himself to his post."

"Approach, Governor," said the king.

Zamore came forward. He was dressed in a uniform with an embroidered collar and a captain's epaulettes, with short breeches, silk stockings, and a sword like a spit. He walked with a stiff, measured step, an enormous three-corned hat under his arm.

"Will he know what to swear?" asked the king.

"Oh, yes, Sire! try him."

"Advance," said the king, looking curiously at the black puppet.

"On your knees!" said the countess.

"Swear!" said the king.

The child placed one hand on his heart, the other in the king's hand, and said, "I swear fealty and homage to my master and mistress; I swear to defend to the death the castle in my keeping, and to eat the last pot of preserves before surrendering, should I be attacked."

The king laughed as much at the form of the oath as at the gravity with which Zamore pronounced it. "In return for this oath," he replied, with suitable gravity, "I confer on you the sovereign rights of justice, high and low, on all inhabiting the air, earth, fire, and water of this castle."

"Thank you, Master," said Zamore, rising.

"And now," said the king, "go and show off your fine clothes in the kitchen, and leave us alone; go!"

As Zamore went out at one door, Chon entered by another.

"Ah! you here, little Chon?" said the king. And he took her on his knees and kissed her. "Come, my little Chon," he continued, "from you I shall get the truth."

"Take care, Sire, that you are not disappointed in your expectations!" said Chon. "The truth! I think that if I were to tell the truth, it would be for the first time in my life. If you wish to learn the truth, apply to my sister; she is incapable of speaking falsely."

"Is that true, Countess?"

"Sire, Chon has too good an opinion of me. Bad example has ruined me; and from this evening forth I am determined to lie like a real countess, if the truth will not serve me."

"Oh, ho!" said the king; "I suspect Chon has something to conceal from me. I must get from the police a report of what has occurred to-day."

"From which police, Sire, — Sartines's, or mine?"

"Oh, from Sartines's!"

"What will you pay him for it?"

"If he tell me anything worth hearing, I shall not be niggardly."

"Well, then, give my police the preference, and take my report. I will serve you — royally."

"You will even sell your own secrets?"

"Why not, if I am well paid?"

"Come, then, let me hear the report, — but no fibs, remember!"

"Sire, you insult me."

"I mean, no equivocations."

"Well, Sire, get your funds ready; I am about to begin my report."

"They are ready," said the king, jingling some money in his pocket.

"In the first place, the Comtesse Dubarry was seen in Paris, in the Rue de Valois, about two o'clock in the afternoon."

"Well, I know that; go on!"

"About six o'clock Zamore proceeded to join her there."

"Very possibly; but what was Madame Dubarry doing in the Rue de Valois?"

"She went to her house there."

"I understand; but why did she go to her house?"

"To await her godmother."

"Her godmother!" said the king, with a grimace he could not wholly conceal; "then she is going to be baptized?"

"Yes, Sire, at the great fonts of Versailles."

"Faith, she is wrong; paganism agrees so well with her!"

"Well, Sire, you know the proverb, 'Every one wishes what he does not possess.'"

"So that we still wish for a godmother?"

"And we have one, Sire."

The king started, and shrugged his shoulders.

"I like that movement, Sire; it shows that your Majesty would be annoyed at the defeat of the Grammonts, the Guémenées, and all the hypocrites of the court," said the countess.

"I beg your pardon!"

"Yes, I am sure you are in league with those persons."

"In league? Countess, learn one thing, that the king leagues only with kings."

"True; but all your kings are friends of the Duc de Choiseul."

"Let us return to your godmother, Countess."

"With all my heart, Sire."

"You have succeeded in manufacturing one, then?"

"I found one ready made, and very well made, — a Comtesse de Béarn, of a family some of whose members

have been princes. She will not dishonor the relative of the relatives of the Stuarts, I hope!"

"The Comtesse de Béarn!" exclaimed the king, with surprise. "I know of but one, who lives somewhere near Verdun."

"It is the very same; she has come to Paris on purpose to present me."

"Ha! and when is the affair to take place?"

"To-morrow, at eleven o'clock in the morning, I am to give her a private audience, and at the same time, if it be not too presumptuous, she will request the king to name a day; and you will name the earliest possible, will you not, dear France?"

The king burst into a forced laugh.

"Certainly, certainly," said he, kissing the countess's hand. Then suddenly, "To-morrow, at eleven?" he asked.

"Yes, at breakfast."

"Impossible, my dear Countess."

"Impossible! Why?"

"I shall not breakfast here; I must return this evening."

"What!" said the countess, who felt an icy pang shoot through her heart at these words, "you are going to leave us, Sire?"

"I am forced to do so, dear Countess; I have to meet Sartines on very important business."

"As you please, Sire; but you will at least take supper here, I hope?"

"Oh, yes, I will have supper, I think! Yes, I am rather hungry, — I will stay to supper."

"Order supper, Chon," said the countess, making at the same time a private signal to her, which no doubt referred to some previous arrangements. Chon left the

room. The king had seen the signal in a mirror, and although he could not comprehend its meaning, he suspected some snare. "Ah!" said he, "on second thoughts I think it will be impossible to stay even for supper. I must not lose a moment; I have some papers to sign, — to-day is Saturday."

"As you please, Sire. Shall I order the horses?"

"Yes, my dear."

"Chon!"

Chon re-appeared.

"His Majesty's horses!" said the countess.

"Very well," said Chon, with a smile; and she left the room again. A moment later her voice was heard in the ante-room, ordering the king's carriage.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE KING AMUSES HIMSELF.

THE king, delighted at this exercise of his authority, which punished the countess for leaving him alone so long, at the same time that it freed him from the trouble of settling the affair of her presentation, walked toward the door of the salon. Chon entered.

"Well, are my attendants there?"

"No, Sire, there is not one of them in the ante-room."

The king advanced into the ante-room himself. "My attendants!" he cried. No one answered; there was not even an echo in the silent château.

"Who the devil would believe," said the king, returning to the salon, "that I am the grandson of the man who once said, 'I was very near having to wait!'" and he went to a window, opened it, and looked out.

The space in front of the château was as deserted as the ante-rooms, — no horses, no attendants, no guards. Night alone presented itself to the eyes and to the soul in all its calmness and all its majesty. The lovely moon shone brightly on the woods of Chatou, whose lofty summits rustled gently like the waves of the sea rippled by a breeze. The Seine, on whose bosom glittered a long line of light, looked like a gigantic serpent trailing its slow length along, its windings being visible from Bougival to Maisons, that is, for four or five leagues; and then, in the midst of this heavenly scene, a nightingale burst forth with such a sweet and varied song as she gives only in

the month of May, as if those joyous notes found Nature worthy of them in the early days of spring alone, — days which are scarcely come ere they are gone.

All this beauty and harmony were lost on Louis XV., who was not much of a dreamer, poet, or artist, but, on the contrary, a good deal of a sensualist. "Come, Countess!" said he, considerably annoyed, "give the necessary orders, I entreat. What the devil! this jest must have an end."

"Sire," replied the countess, with that charming, pouting air which became her so well, "I do not command here."

"Nor do I," replied the king; "for you see how little I am obeyed."

"It is neither you nor I who command."

"Who is it, then? Is it you, Chon?"

"I?" said the young lady, who was seated on a couch on the other side of the apartment exactly opposite the countess, who occupied a similar one on the near side, — "I find the task of obeying so difficult that I have no inclination for that of commanding."

"But who is the master, then?"

"The governor, Sire, of course."

"M. Zamore?"

"Yes."

"Ah, very true! Well, let some one ring for him."

The countess stretched out her arm with a most graceful air of nonchalance to a silken cord ending in a tassel of beads. A footman, who had no doubt received his lesson beforehand, was ready in the ante-room and appeared.

"The governor," said the king.

"The governor," replied the valet, respectfully, "is on guard, watching over his Majesty's precious life."

"Where is he?"

"Going his rounds, Sire."

"Going his rounds?" repeated the king.

"Yes, with four officers, Sire."

The king could not help smiling. "That is droll enough," said he, "but it need not prevent my horses from being harnessed immediately."

"Sire, the governor ordered the stables to be closed, lest some marauder might enter them."

"And where are my grooms?"

"Gone to bed, Sire."

"Gone to bed! By whose orders?"

"The governor's, Sire."

"And the gates of the castle?"

"Are locked, Sire."

"Very well; then you must get the keys."

"The governor has them at his belt, Sire."

"A well-guarded castle indeed! *Peste!* what order is kept!"

The footman, seeing that the king ceased to question him, retired. The countess, reclining gracefully on a couch, continued to bite off the leaves of a beautiful rose, beside which her lips seemed like coral. "Come, Sire," said she at length, with a fascinating smile, "I must take compassion on your Majesty; give me your arm, and let us set out in search of some one to help you. Chon, light the way."

Chon went before, ready to apprise them of any dangers which they might encounter. At the very first turn in the corridor the king's nose was saluted by an odor quite sufficient to awaken the appetite of the most fastidious epicure. "Ah, ha! what is that, Countess?" said he, stopping.

"Oh, only supper, Sire! I thought your Majesty

intended doing me the honor of supping at Luciennes, and I made arrangements accordingly."

The king inhaled the gastronomic perfume two or three times, while he reflected that his stomach had been inviting his attention for some time; that it would take half an hour and a great deal of noise to awake his grooms, a quarter more to harness the horses, ten minutes to reach Marly; and when at Marly, where he was not expected, he should find only a cold supper. He still inhaled the seductive perfumes, and, conducted by the countess, he paused before the door of the dining-room. Two covers were placed on the table, which was splendidly lighted and sumptuously laid out.

"*Peste!*" said Louis, "you have a good cook, Countess."

"Oh, Sire, this is only his first effort; the poor devil has been doing wonders to deserve your Majesty's approbation. Indeed, he is so sensitive that he might perhaps, in his disappointment, cut his throat, as poor Vatel did."

"Really? Do you think so?"

"There was to be an omelet of pheasants' eggs, on which he especially prided himself."

"An omelet of pheasants' eggs? I adore omelets of pheasants' eggs."

"What a pity you must go!"

"Well, Countess, we must not vex your cook," said the king, laughing; "and perhaps while we are at supper, Maître Zamore may return from his rounds."

"Ah! Sire, a capital idea," said the countess, unable to conceal her delight at having gained this first step. "Come, Sire, come!"

"But who will wait on us?" said the king, looking round in vain for an attendant.

"Ah, Sire!" said Madame Dubarry, "will your coffee be less agreeable when presented to you by me?"

"No, Countess; and I will even say, when you make it for me."

"Well, come then, Sire."

"Two covers only! Has Chon then had her supper?"

"Sire, I did not venture without your Majesty's express command —"

"Come, come," said the king, taking a plate and cover from a sideboard himself, "come, my little Chon; sit there opposite us."

"Oh, Sire!" said Chon.

"Yes, yes! play the very humble and very obedient subject, you little hypocrite. Sit here, Countess, near me, — beside me. What a beautiful profile you have!"

"Is this the first time you have observed it, dear France?"

"How should I observe it when I am so happy in looking at your full countenance? Decidedly, Countess, your cook is of the first grade. What soup!"

"Then I was right in sending away the other?"

"Quite right."

"Sire, follow my example; you see it will be to your advantage."

"I do not understand you."

"I have dismissed my Choiseul; dismiss yours."

"Countess, no politics. Give me some Madeira."

The king held out his glass; the countess took up a decanter to help him, and as she raised it up, her white fingers and rosy nails were seen to advantage.

"Pour gently and slowly," said the king.

"Not to shake the wine, Sire?"

"No, to give me more time to admire your hand."

"Assuredly, Sire," said the countess, laughing, "your Majesty is in the vein of making discoveries!"

"Faith, yes!" said the king, now in perfect good humor again, "and think I am in the fair way of discovering —"

"A new world?"

"No, I am not so ambitious; besides, I find a kingdom as much as I can manage. No, only an isle, a little nook, an enchanted mountain, a palace of which a certain fair lady will be the Armida, and the entrance to which will be defended by all kinds of monsters."

"Sire," said the countess, presenting the king with a glass of iced champagne, a luxury quite new at that period, "here is some water just drawn from the river Lethe."

"The river Lethe, Countess? are you sure?"

"Yes, Sire; it was poor Jean who brought it from the lower regions, from which he returned with so much difficulty."

"Countess, I drink to his happy resurrection. But no politics, I beg."

"Then I don't know what to talk about, Sire. If you would relate something, — you, who have such a happy gift of telling a story."

"No, but I will repeat to you some verses."

"Verses?"

"Yes, verses. Is there anything surprising in that?"

"I thought your Majesty detested them."

"*Parbleu!* out of each hundred thousand manufactured, ninety thousand are against myself!"

"And those which your Majesty is going to give me, belong to the ten thousand which cannot even make you look favorably on the ninety thousand."

"No, Countess, these are addressed to you."

"To me? By whom?"

"By Monsieur de Voltaire."

"He charged your Majesty to deliver them?"

"Not at all; he sent them directly to your Highness."

"How? without a cover?"

"No; enclosed in a charming letter."

"Ah! I understand; your Majesty has been at work this morning with the postmaster. But read the verses, Sire; read Monsieur de Voltaire's verses."

Louis XV. opened the paper and read: —

"Goddess of pleasure, soft Queen of the Graces,
Why blend with the fêtes which make Paphos to ring,
Foul, threatening suspicions and hideous disgraces?
The fate of a hero, oh! why shouldst thou bring?
Still dear our Ulysses his country shall hold,
The State's mighty bulwark, the monarch's delight;
None wiser in council, in battle more bold, —
And Ilion can tell how resistless his might!

"Fair Venus, thy throne all the gods shall surround,
Thy beauty celestial all tongues shall declare,
The roses of joy in thy path shall abound;
Then calm the rough waters and smile on our prayer.
Ah! why should thy anger burn fiercely and high
'Gainst the hero whom foemen still tremble to meet;
For how can he draw from such beauty a sigh,
Save in breathing his vows as he kneels at her feet?"

"Decidedly, Sire," said the countess, more piqued than gratified by this poetical offering, "Monsieur de Voltaire wishes to recommend himself to your favor."

"He loses his pains, then," said the king. "He is a firebrand who would burn Paris if he returned to it. Let him stay with his friend my cousin Frederick II.; we have enough with M. Rousseau on our hands. But take the verses, Countess, and study them."

She took the paper, made a lighter of it, and laid it beside her plate, the king watching her.

"Some tokay, Sire?" said Chon.

"From the vaults which supply his Majesty the Emperor of Austria," said the countess.

"From the emperor's vaults?" said the king. "*Pardieu!* no one is supplied from them but myself."

"Very true, Sire," said the countess; "I had it from your butler."

"Ah!" said the king, "and you have seduced —"

"No, Sire, I have ordered."

"Well answered, Countess! The king is a fool."

"Will the king take coffee?" asked Chon.

"Oh, certainly!"

"And will his Majesty burn it, as usual?" asked the countess.

"If the lady of the castle permit." The countess rose. "But what are you doing?"

"I am going to wait on you myself, Monseigneur."

"Well," said the king, leaning back in his chair like a man who has made an excellent supper, and whose humors are, therefore, in a happy state of equilibrium, "Well, I see that my best plan is to let you do as you like, Countess."

The countess brought a silver stand, with a little coffee-pot containing the boiling mocha; she then placed before the king a plate on which was a silver cup and a carafe of Bohemian glass, and beside the plate she laid the lighter which she had just folded.

The king, with the profound attention which he always bestowed on this operation, proportioned his sugar, measured his coffee, and having gently poured on it the brandy, so that it swam on the surface, he took the little roll of paper, lighted it at a candle, and communicated the flame to the liquor. Five minutes afterwards he enjoyed his coffee with all the delight of a finished epicure.

The countess looked on till he had finished to the last drop; then she exclaimed, "Oh, Sire, you have burned your coffee with M. de Voltaire's verses! That is a bad omen for the Choiseuls."

"I was wrong," said he, laughing. "You are not a fairy, you are a demon!"

The countess rose. "Does your Majesty wish to know whether the governor has returned?" she said.

"Zamore? Bah! for what purpose?"

"So that you can go to Marly, Sire."

"True," said the king, making a great effort to rouse himself from his comfortable condition. "Well, Countess, let us see! let us see!"

The countess made a sign to Chon, who vanished. The king resumed his deliberations; but, it must be confessed, with very different feelings from those which had before influenced him. Philosophers say that we see things in bright or dark colors according to the state of our stomachs; and as kings have stomachs like other men, — in general, indeed, not so good as other men, but still communicating the sensation of comfort or discomfort to the rest of the body in the same manner, — our king appeared to be in the most charming humor possible.

At the end of about ten steps in the corridor the king noticed a new perfume. A door was opened into a charming room draped with blue satin embroidered with natural flowers, and revealed to view, illumined by a mysterious light, the retreat toward which, for the last two hours, the steps of the enchantress had been directed. "Well, Sire," she said, "it appears that Zamore has not returned, and we are still imprisoned, — unless we leave the château by the windows."

"By means of the bed-clothes?" asked the king.

"Sire," said the countess, with an admirable smile, "let us use, not abuse."

The king opened his arms, laughing, and the countess dropped the pretty rose, which shed its leaves on the carpet.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU.

At ten o'clock the next morning the king left the blue chamber. His carriage had awaited him in the court-yard since nine o'clock. Zamore, with folded arms, was giving, or pretending to give, orders.

The king, approaching a window, saw all these preparations for departure. "What does this mean, Countess?" said he; "are we not to breakfast? One would think you were going to send me away fasting!"

"Heaven forbid, Sire! but I thought your Majesty had to meet Monsieur de Sartines at Marly."

"*Pardieu!*" said the king, "could not Sartines be told to come here, — it is so near?"

"Your Majesty will do me the honor to believe that that idea had already occurred to me."

"And, besides, the morning is too fine for work; let us breakfast."

"Your Majesty must first give me a few signatures for myself."

"For the Comtesse de Béarn?"

"Yes; and then name the day and the hour."

"What day and hour?"

"The day and hour for my presentation."

"Faith!" said the king, "you have won your presention, Countess; fix the day yourself."

"Sire, the sooner the better."

"Is all ready?"

"Yes."

"You have learned to make your three reverences?"

"I have practised them for more than a year."

"You have your dress?"

"In twenty-four hours it will be ready."

"And you have your godmother?"

"In an hour she will be here."

"Very well, Countess; come, a compact."

"What is it?"

"That you will never again speak of that affair of the Vicomte Jean with the Baron de Taverney."

"Must I sacrifice the poor viscount?"

"Yes, faith!"

"Well, Sire, I will speak of it no more. The day?"

"The day after to-morrow."

"The hour?"

"Half-past ten at night, as usual."

"It is settled, Sire?"

"It is settled."

"On your royal word?"

"On the word of a gentleman."

"Give me your hand on it, France!" and Madame Dubarry held out her pretty little hand, in which the king placed his own.

This morning all Luciennes felt the gayety of its master. He had yielded on one point on which he had long before determined to yield; but he had gained another, which was all profit. He would give one hundred thousand livres to Jean, on condition that he should go to lose them at the waters of the Pyrenees or of Auvergne, — that would pass for banishment in the eyes of the Choiseul party. There were louis-d'or that morning for the poor, cakes for the carp, and praises for Boucher's paintings.

Eleven o'clock struck. The countess, although attend-

ing assiduously to the king at his breakfast, could not help looking, from time to time, at the clock, which moved too slowly for her wishes. His Majesty had taken the trouble to say that when the Comtesse de Béarn arrived, she was to be shown into the breakfast-room. The coffee was served, tasted, drunk, — still she did not come. Suddenly the tramping of a horse's feet was heard. The countess ran to a window. It was a messenger from the viscount, who leaped from his horse reeking with foam. At sight of him she felt a chill run through her veins; but it was necessary to hide her uneasiness, in order to keep the king in good humor. She returned to his side and sat down. A moment afterward, Chon entered with a note in her hand. There was no means of escape; it must be read before the king.

"What is that, sweet Chon?" said the king; "a love-letter?"

"Oh, certainly, Sire!"

"From whom?"

"From the poor viscount."

"Are you quite certain?"

"Look at it, Sire."

The king recognized the writing; and thinking the note might contain something about the Lachaussée affair, "Very well," said he, pushing it aside, "very well; that is enough."

The countess was on thorns. "Is the note for me?" she asked.

"Yes, Countess."

"Will your Majesty permit me — "

"Oh, yes! read it, read it; and in the mean time Chon will repeat 'Maître Corbeau' to me." So saying, he pulled her on his knee, and began to sing, — with the falsest voice in the kingdom, according to Rousseau.

The countess retired into the recess of a window, and read the following epistle: —

Do not expect the old wretch; she pretends that she scalded her foot yesterday, and is obliged to keep her room. You may thank Chon's most opportune arrival yesterday for this. The old witch recognized her immediately, and so ends our little comedy.

It was fortunate that that little fool of a Gilbert, who is the cause of this misfortune, cannot be found. I could wring his neck. However, he may be assured it is in store for him if ever he crosses my path.

But to the point; come to Paris at once, or all is lost.

JEAN.

"What is the matter?" inquired the king, surprised at the sudden paleness which overspread the countess's face.

"Nothing, Sire; it is only a bulletin of Jean's health."

"Does not the dear viscount get better, then?"

"Oh, yes, thank you, Sire, much better!" said the countess. "But I hear a carriage enter the courtyard."

"Oh, our old countess, no doubt!"

"No, Sire, it is M. de Sartines."

"Well, what then?" exclaimed the king, seeing that Madame Dubarry was moving toward the door.

"Well, Sire, I shall leave you with him and go to dress."

"And what about the Comtesse de Béarn?"

"When she comes, Sire, I will let your Majesty know," replied the countess, crumbling the viscount's note in the pocket of her dressing-gown.

"Then you abandon me?" said the king, with a melancholy air.

"Sire, remember this is Sunday; you have papers to sign." So saying, she presented her fresh and rosy cheeks to the king, who kissed them, and she left the room.

"Devil take all signatures," said the king, "and those who bring them! Who was it that invented ministers and portfolios?"

He had scarcely finished this malediction, when the minister and the portfolio entered by a door opposite that by which the countess had departed. The king sighed again, more deeply than before.

"Ah! are you there, Sartines?" said he. "How very punctual you are."

This was said in a tone which left it very doubtful whether the words were intended as a eulogium or a reproach. The minister opened his portfolio, and busied himself in taking out and arranging his papers. Just then the sound of the wheels of a carriage was heard, grating on the sand of the avenue.

"Wait a little, Sartines," said the king; and he ran to the window.

"What!" said he, "the countess is driving off?"

"It is she indeed, Sire," said the minister.

"But is she not going to wait for the Comtesse de Béarn?"

"Sire, I am inclined to think she is tired of waiting, and is going to find her."

"Yet the old lady had decided on coming this morning."

"Sire, I am almost certain that she will not come."

"Then you know something about the matter, Sartines?"

"Sire, I am obliged to know a little about everything, otherwise your Majesty would be dissatisfied with me."

"Well, what has happened? Tell me, Sartines."

"To the old countess, Sire?"

"Yes."

"What are always happening, Sire, — difficulties."

"Then the Comtesse de Béarn really will not come?"

"Hum! there was rather more certainty of it last evening than there is this morning."

"Poor countess!" said the king, unable, in spite of himself, to conceal a gleam of satisfaction which sparkled in his eyes.

"Ah, Sire, the quadruple alliance and the family compact were trifles in comparison with this presentation!"

"Poor countess!" repeated the king, shaking his head, "she will never accomplish her purpose."

"I fear it, Sire, unless your Majesty concerns yourself about it."

"She was so certain that now all was in the right train."

"And what makes the matter worse for the countess," said M. de Sartines, "is, that if she is not presented before the arrival of the dauphiness, it is probable she never will be presented at all."

"More than probable! Sartines, you are right. They say that my daughter-in-law is very strict, very devout, very prudish. Poor countess!"

"It will certainly annoy Madame Dubarry very much, Sire, if she is not presented; but it will relieve your Majesty of many annoyances."

"Do you think so, Sartines?"

"Oh yes, Sire! The envious, the libellers, the balladmongers, the flatterers, the journalists, will not have so much to say. If she were to be presented, Sire, it would cost us at least one hundred thousand francs for additional police."

"Indeed! Poor countess! and yet she wishes so much to be presented."

"Your Majesty knows you have only to command, and her wishes will be gratified."

"What do you mean, Sartines? Do you imagine that I

could meddle in such an affair? Can I, by signing an order, make people polite to Madame Dubarry? Is it you, Sartines, a man of sense, who advise such an innovation to satisfy the whims of the countess?"

"Oh, by no means, Sire! I merely say, as your Majesty says. 'Poor countess!'"

"Besides," said the king, "her position is not so desperate, after all. You always look at things on the dark side, Sartines. Who can tell whether the Comtesse de Béarn may not change her mind? Who can be certain that the dauphiness will arrive so soon? It will take four days yet before she can reach Compiègne, and in four days much may be done. Let me see. Have you anything for me to do this morning, Sartines?"

"Oh, your Majesty, only three papers to sign!" and the minister of police drew out the first from his portfolio.

"Oh!" said the king, "a *lettre-de-cachet*."

"Yes, Sire."

"And against whom?"

"Your Majesty may see."

"Oh! against the Sieur Rousseau. What Rousseau is that, Sartines, and what has he done?"

"Done, Sire! — written 'Le Contrat Social.'"

"Oh, then! it is Jean-Jacques whom you wish to shut up in the Bastille?"

"Sire, he disturbs the public peace."

"And what the devil would you have him do?"

"Besides, I don't propose to shut him up."

"Of what use is this letter, then?"

"Sire, merely to have a weapon ready."

"It is not that I am at all fond of your philosophers."

"Your Majesty has good cause not to love them."

"But people will exclaim against us. Besides, I think we authorized him to come to Paris."

"No, Sire; we said we should tolerate him on condition that he did not appear in public."

"And does he appear in public?"

"He is always to be seen."

"In his Armenian dress?"

"Oh no, Sire! We ordered him to lay it aside."

"And he obeyed?"

"Yes, but complaining loudly all the time of our persecution."

"And how does he dress now?"

"Oh, like other people, Sire!"

"Then he cannot be so much remarked?"

"What, Sire, a man who has been forbidden to appear in public not remarked! And then do you know where he goes every day?"

"To the Maréchal de Luxembourg's, to Monsieur d'Alembert's, to Madame d'Epinay's?"

"To the Café de la Régence, Sire! He plays chess there every evening. He must be mad upon that point, for he always loses; and it requires every evening a company of soldiers to keep order among the crowds around the house."

"Well," said the king, "the Parisians are even greater fools than I thought them. Let them go on amusing themselves in that way, Sartines; while they do so they will not complain!"

"But, Sire, if some fine day he should take it into his head to make a speech, as he did in London?"

"Oh! in that case, as there would be criminality and public infringement of the laws, you would not require a *lettre-de-cachet*, Sartines."

The minister saw that the king did not wish the arrest of Rousseau to rest on the royal responsibility, so he did not press the matter farther.

"But, Sire," said he, "there is another philosopher."

"Another!" replied the king, languidly, "shall we never have done with them?"

"Ah, Sire, it is they who have never done with us!"

"And who is this one?"

"M. de Voltaire."

"Has he also returned to France?"

"No, Sire; it would be much better, perhaps, if he had, for then we could watch him."

"What has he been doing?"

"It is not he who has been doing anything, it is his partisans; they are actually going to have a statue erected in his honor!"

"Equestrian?"

"No, Sire; and yet I assure you he is a famous captor of towns!"

The king shrugged his shoulders.

"Sire, there has been no such man since Poliorcetes," continued Sartines. "He obtains information from all quarters; the highest persons in your kingdom turn smugglers for the sake of his books. I seized, the other day, eight boxes full of them; two were addressed to the Duc de Choiseul."

"It is very amusing!"

"Sire, reflect that they are now doing for him what is done for kings, — they are decreeing him a statue."

"Sartines, statues are not decreed by others to kings, they decree them to themselves. And who is to make this fine work of art?"

"The sculptor Pigale. He has set out for Ferney to make the model. In the mean time subscriptions are pouring in; and observe, Sire, it is only authors who are permitted to subscribe. All come with their offerings; they

make quite a procession every day. Even Rousseau brought his two louis-d'or."

"Well," said the king, "what can I do in the matter? I am not an author; it does not concern me."

"Sire, I thought of proposing to your Majesty to put an end, by royal command, to this demonstration."

"I shall take good care not to do any such thing, Sartines. Instead of decreeing him a bronze statue, they would then decree him one of gold. Let them alone. Faith, he will look even uglier in bronze than in flesh and blood!"

"Then your Majesty desires that the matter should take its own course?"

"Let us understand one another, Sartines. 'Desire' is not the word. I should be very glad to put an end to these things, certainly; but how can I? It is impossible. The time is past when royalty could say to the spirit of philosophy, as God says to the ocean, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther!' To blame loudly but uselessly; to aim a blow, but strike short of our aim, — that would serve only to show our weakness. Let us turn away our eyes, Sartines, and pretend not to see."

The minister sighed. "At least, Sire," said he, "if we do not punish the men, let us suppress their works. Here is a list of books which, in my opinion, should instantly be proscribed. Some attack the throne, some the altar; some teach rebellion, others sacrilege."

The king took the list, and read in a languid voice: "'The Sacred Contagion; or, the Natural History of Superstition.' 'The System of Nature; or, Laws of the Physical and Moral World.' 'Instructions of the Capuchin at Ragusa to Brother Pediculoso on his setting out for the Holy Land.'" He had not read one fourth of the list, when he let it fall, while an expression of sadness and

dejection overspread his usually unmoved countenance. He remained thoughtful, and for some minutes seemed quite overcome. "Sartines," said he at last, "one might as well undertake to move the world. Let others try it."

The minister looked at him with that perfect understanding of his wishes which the king liked in those who approached him, as it saved him the trouble of thinking and acting. "A tranquil life, Sire," said he, "a tranquil life, — is not that what your Majesty wishes?"

The king nodded. "Oh, yes!" said he; "I ask for nothing else from your philosophers, encyclopedists, thaumaturgi, illuminati, poets, economists, journalists, — tribes that come one knows not whence, — that are always bustling, writing, croaking, calumniating, calculating, preaching, complaining. Let them be crowned; let statues be raised to them; let temples be built to them, — but let them leave me in peace."

Sartines arose, bowed, and left the apartment muttering, as he went, "It is fortunate we have on our money, 'Domine salvum fac regem.'"

Then the king, now left to himself, took a pen and wrote to the dauphin the following lines: —

"You have requested me to hasten the arrival of her Royal Highness the Dauphiness, and I wish to gratify you.

"I have ordered that there shall be no stay made at Noyon; consequently, on Tuesday morning she will be at Compiègne.

"I shall be there myself precisely at ten o'clock, — that is to say, a quarter of an hour before her."

"Thus," said he to himself, "I shall get rid of that foolish affair of the presentation, which annoys me more than Voltaire and Rousseau and all the philosophers past, present, and to come. The affair will then be between the poor countess, the dauphin, and dauphiness. Faith! it is only fair that young minds, with strength for it, should

contend with these vexations, hatreds, and revenges! Children should early learn to suffer; it is an excellent part of education."

Delighted at having thus got rid of the difficulty, and certain that he would not be reproached with either favoring or hindering this presentation, which was occupying the attention of all Paris, the king entered his carriage and drove off to Marly, where the court was waiting for him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CHAPERON AND DÉBUTANTE.

THE poor countess — let us continue to apply the epithet which the king had given her, for at this moment she truly deserved it — hastened toward Paris like a soul in torment. Chon, terrified by Jean's paragraph concerning Gilbert, shut herself up in the boudoir at Luciennes to hide her grief and anxiety, lamenting the fatal whim which had induced her to pick up Gilbert on the high-road.

Having reached the outskirts of Paris, the countess found a coach awaiting her. In the coach were Vicomte Jean and a lawyer, with whom he seemed to be arguing in the most energetic manner. The moment he perceived the countess he leaped out, and made a sign to his sister's coachman to stop. "Quick, Countess!" said he. "Quick, get into my carriage and drive to the Rue Saint-Germain des Près!"

"Is the old lady going to give us the slip?" said Madame Dubarry, changing carriages, while the lawyer, on a sign from the viscount, followed her example.

"I fear it, Countess," replied Jean; "I fear she is giving us a Roland for our Oliver."

"But what has happened?"

"You shall hear. I stayed in Paris because I am always suspicious; and in this case I was not wrong, as you will see. At nine last night I went prowling about the inn of the Coq Chantant. All quiet, — no movement, no visitors; all looked well. Consequently I thought I might

go home to bed, — and to bed I went. This morning I awoke at break of day. I roused Patrice, and ordered him to go and keep watch at the corner of the street. Well, at nine — observe, that was an hour sooner than I had appointed — I drove up to the hotel. Patrice had seen nothing to cause the least anxiety, so I boldly walked upstairs. At the door of the countess's room a maid-servant stopped me, and told me that the countess could not leave the house to-day, and perhaps not for a week. I confess that although prepared for some rebuff, I was not for that. 'What!' I exclaimed, 'she cannot go out? What is the matter?' 'She is ill.' 'Ill? Impossible! Yesterday she was perfectly well.' 'Yes, Monsieur, but Madame makes her own chocolate; and this morning, when it was boiling, she spilled it over her foot, and she is scalded. On hearing the countess's cries I hastened in, and I found her nearly fainting. I carried her to her bed, and I think she is now asleep.' I was as white as your lace, Countess, and could not help crying out, 'It is a lie!' 'No, my dear Vicomte Dubarry,' replied a sharp voice, which seemed to pierce the very wall, 'it is not a lie; I am in horrible pain.' I rushed forward in the direction whence the voice came, and burst through a glass door which I could not open; the old countess was really in bed. 'Ah, Madame!' I exclaimed, — but it was all I could utter; I was in such a rage. I could have strangled her with pleasure. 'Look there,' said she, pointing to an old kettle which was lying on the floor; 'there is the chocolate-kettle that did all the mischief.' I flew to it, and stamped on it with both feet; it will make no more chocolate, I can answer for it. 'What a misfortune!' cried the old lady, piteously; 'it must be the Baronne d'Alogny who will present your sister. But what can we do? It was so written, as they say in the East.'"

"Heavens, Jean, you drive me to despair!" exclaimed the countess.

"Oh! I do not despair yet, if you go to her; it was for that that I sent for you."

"But why do you not despair?"

"Why? Because you are a woman, and can do what I cannot; you can have the bandage taken off; and if you discover that it is an imposture, you can tell her that her son shall never be anything but a clown, — that she shall never touch a farthing from the estate of the Saluces; in short, you can play off the imprecations of Camilla on her, much better than I the fury of Orestes."

"Is this all a jest?" cried the countess.

"No, I assure you."

"And where does our sybil lodge?"

"At the Coq Chantant, Rue Saint-Germain des Près, in a great black house, with a monstrous cock painted on an iron plate; when the iron creaks, the cock crows."

"I shall have a dreadful scene with her."

"No doubt of it; but you must take your chance. Shall I go with you?"

"No; you would spoil all."

"Just what our lawyer said; I was consulting him on that point when you drove up. For your information, I may tell you that he says to beat a person in his own house renders you liable to fine and imprisonment, while to beat him out of it — "

"Is nothing!" said the countess. "You know that better than any one else."

Jean made a grimace, and smiled significantly.

"Debts," said he, "that are long due gain interest; and if ever I meet my man again — "

"I would much rather, at present, speak of my woman!"

"I have nothing more to tell you; so be off!"

"But where will you wait for me?"

"In the inn itself. I shall ask for a bottle of wine, and if you need help I shall be on hand."

"Drive on, coachman," cried the countess.

"Rue Saint-Germain des Près, at the sign of the Coq Chantant," added the viscount.

In a quarter of an hour the carriage stopped near the Rue Abbatiale. Then Madame Dubarry descended and proceeded on foot. She feared that the noise of the wheels might put the old lady on the alert, — that she might suspect what visitor was coming, and have time to avoid her. Alone, then, she entered the gaping porch of the inn. No one saw her until she was at the foot of the staircase; there she encountered the hostess. "The Comtesse de Béarn?" said she.

"She is very ill, Madame, and cannot see any one."

"Yes, I know; I have come to inquire about her." And, light as a bird, she was at the top of the stairs in a moment.

"Madame, Madame!" cried the hostess, "a lady is forcing her way into your chamber."

"Who is she?" asked the old lady, from a distant part of the room.

"I," said the favorite, appearing on the threshold with a face perfectly suited to the occasion, for she smiled out of compliment, and looked sad by way of condolence.

"You here, Madame?" exclaimed the old lady, turning pale.

"Yes, dear Madame, I have come to express my sympathy for your misfortune, of which I have just heard. I beg you to tell me how this accident happened."

"But, Madame, I dare not ask you to sit down in such a miserable place as this."

"I know, Madame, that you have a castle in Touraine; I can excuse your being obliged to receive your friends here in an inn." And she sat down so determinedly that the old lady saw she must allow her to have her way.

"You seem in great pain, Madame," said the favorite.

"Oh, in dreadful pain!"

"The right leg? But, good heavens, how did you manage to scald it?"

"Nothing more simple; I held the chocolate-kettle in my hand, the handle gave way, and I received the boiling water on my ankle."

"How shocking!"

The old lady sighed. "Yes, shocking indeed," said she; "but it is always so, — misfortunes never come singly."

"You are aware that the king expected you this morning?"

"You increase my despair, Madame."

"His Majesty is not pleased, Madame, that he has failed to see you."

"But the pain I am in will be a sufficient apology; and I trust yet to be able to offer to his Majesty my very humble excuses."

"I do not tell you that to cause you any vexation," said the countess, seeing that the old lady was assuming a little formality, "but merely to let you know that his Majesty felt grateful for the offer you made me."

"You see my condition, Madame."

"Certainly; but may I ask you a question?"

"I shall be honored if you will do so."

"Was not your accident a consequence of your having experienced some sudden agitation?"

"Very possibly," said the old lady, bowing slightly;

"I must acknowledge that I was deeply moved by your gracious reception of me."

"Yes; but there was another thing."

"Another thing? Nothing that I know of, Madame."

"Oh, yes! an unexpected meeting with a person on leaving my house."

"I did not meet any one; I was in your brother's carriage."

"Before getting into the carriage?"

The old lady seemed to be tasking her memory.

"Just as you were going down the stairs to the vestibule."

The old lady seemed to search her memory still more anxiously.

"Yes," said the favorite, smiling, but with some impatience, "some one entered the court as you left my house."

"I am so unfortunate, Madame, as not to be able to remember."

"A lady; now you remember?"

"I am so short-sighted that at a distance of two paces, Madame, I cannot distinguish any one."

"Oh, ho!" said the favorite to herself; "she is too cunning for me, — I shall never succeed in this way. Then, since you did not see the lady," she continued aloud, "I must tell you that she is my sister-in-law, Mademoiselle Dubarry."

"Oh! very well, Madame; but as I have never had the pleasure of seeing her —"

"Yes," interrupted the other, "you have seen her; only when you saw her she called herself Mademoiselle Flageot."

"So," cried the old lady, with a bitterness which she could not suppress, "that pretended Mademoiselle Flageot,

who caused me to undertake the journey to Paris, is your sister-in-law?"

"She is, Madame."

"And who sent her to me?"

"I did."

"To play a trick on me?"

"No, to serve you, while at the same time you should serve me."

The old lady bent her thick gray eyebrows. "I do not think," said she, "her visit will turn out very profitable to me."

"Did the vice-chancellor receive you ill, then, Madame?"

"Empty promises."

"But it seems to me that I offered you something more tangible than empty promises."

"Madame, God disposes, though man proposes."

"Come, Madame, let us view the matter seriously. You have scalded your foot?"

"Scalded it very badly."

"Could you not, in spite of this accident, — painful, no doubt, but, after all, nothing dangerous, — make an effort to bear the journey to Luciennes in my carriage, and stand before his Majesty for one minute?"

"It is quite impossible, Madame! I turn faint at the very thought of getting up."

"Is the injury so very serious?"

"Serious indeed!"

"And who dresses it for you and nurses you?"

"Like all housekeepers, I have excellent receipts for burns, and I dress it myself."

"Might I take the liberty of requesting to see your specific?"

"Oh, yes! it is in that vial on the table."

"Hypocrite!" thought the countess, "to carry her dis-

simulation to such a point! She is as cunning as a fox, but I shall match her. Madame," added she, aloud, "I also have an excellent oil for accidents of this kind; but, before applying it, it is necessary to know what kind of scald it is, — whether it is inflamed, or blistered, or the skin is broken."

"Madame, the skin is broken," said the old lady.

"Oh, heavens! how you must suffer. Shall I apply my oil to it?"

"With all my heart, Madame. Have you brought it?"

"No; but I will send for it."

"A thousand thanks!"

"But I ought to ascertain the degree of seriousness."

The old lady cried out. "Oh, no, Madame!" she said; "I could not think of permitting you to see such a sight."

"Delightful! she is caught," thought Madame Dubarry. "Don't be afraid, Madame!" she said aloud; "I am accustomed to the sight of wounds!"

"Oh, Madame, I have too much regard for propriety —"

"When it is a question of serving our fellow-beings, Madame, we must not stand upon etiquette," said Madame Dubarry; and she stretched out her hand toward the old lady's leg, which was extended on the sofa.

Madame de Béarn uttered a scream of pain.

"Very well acted," said Madame Dubarry to herself, watching her every feature distorted with anguish.

"How you frightened me, Madame!" said the old lady. "It is almost death to me to touch it;" and with pale cheeks and half-closed eyes she leaned back, as if nearly fainting.

"Do you allow me to look at it?"

"If you choose, Madame," said the old lady, in a weak and suffering voice.

Madame Dubarry did not lose an instant; she took out

the pins in the bandages, and rapidly unrolled them. To her great surprise she was permitted to go on. "When it comes to the last covering," she thought, "she will scream, and try to prevent me from seeing it; but though she kill herself calling on me to stop, I will see the leg!" and she proceeded in her task.

Madame de Béarn groaned, but offered no resistance.

At last the bandages were untied, the last covering was removed, and a real wound, caused by a scald, lay before Madame Dubarry's eyes. Here ended the old lady's diplomacy; livid and inflamed, the wound spoke for itself. The Comtesse de Béarn might have seen and recognized Chon; but if so, her courage and determination raised her far above Portia and Mutius Scævola. Madame Dubarry gazed at her in silent admiration. The old lady, now somewhat recovered, enjoyed her victory to the utmost; her inflamed eye brooded with satisfaction on the countess kneeling at her feet. Madame Dubarry replaced the bandages with that delicate care which women exercise toward the suffering, placed the limb once more on its cushion, and took her seat beside the couch.

"Come, Madame," said she, "I see of what you are capable, and I beg your pardon for not having begun this subject in the way in which I ought with such a woman as you. Make your own conditions."

The eyes of the old lady sparkled, but it was only for a moment. "In the first place," said she, "state what your wishes are, and then I will see if I can be of any service to you."

"Madame, I wish to be presented at Versailles by you, though it should cost you another hour of the horrible suffering which you have endured this morning."

The Comtesse de Béarn listened impassively. "Anything else, Madame?" said she.

"That is all. Now it is your turn."

"I must have," replied Madame de Béarn, with a decision which showed clearly that she treated with the countess as one power with another, "I must have the two hundred thousand francs of my lawsuit secured to me."

"But if you gain your cause, you will then have been paid four hundred thousand."

"No; for I look on the disputed two hundred thousand as mine already, — the other two hundred thousand I shall reckon as merely an additional piece of good fortune to that of possessing the honor of your acquaintance."

"You shall have them, Madame. What next?"

"I have a son, whom I love tenderly, Madame. Our house has already been distinguished by military genius; but, born to command, we make but indifferent subalterns. My son must have a company immediately, and next year a colonel's commission."

"Who will pay all the necessary expenses, Madame?"

"The king. You perceive that if I expended on my son the sum which I am to receive from you, I should be as poor to-morrow as I am to-day."

"That will make six hundred thousand francs."

"Four hundred thousand, supposing the commission cost two hundred thousand, which is a high estimate."

"Agreed. You shall be satisfied on this point."

"I have now to request from the king restitution of my vineyard in Touraine, containing four acres, which the engineers took from me eleven years ago in making a canal."

"But they paid you for them?"

"Yes, they paid me according to the assessor's valuation; but I value it at just double the sum."

"Well, you shall be paid a second time. Is that all?"

"Excuse me. I am out of cash, as you may suppose, Madame, and I owe Maître Flageot about nine thousand francs."

"Nine thousand francs!"

"Yes; it is absolutely necessary to pay him. Maître Flageot is an excellent lawyer."

"I have not the least doubt of it, Madame. Well, I will pay these nine thousand francs out of my own private purse. I hope you will acknowledge that I am accommodating."

"Oh, you are perfect, Madame! But I think I have also proved that I wish to serve you."

"If you knew how much I regret that you scalded yourself!" replied the favorite, with a smile.

"I do not regret it, Madame, since, in spite of the accident, my devotion to your interests will, I trust, give me strength to be useful to you."

"Let us sum up," said Madame Dubarry.

"Pardon me one moment, — I had forgotten one thing. Alas! it is so long since I have been at court that I have no dress fit for the occasion."

"I foresaw that, Madame, and yesterday, after your departure, I ordered a dress for you. To-morrow, at noon, it will be ready."

"I have no diamonds."

"Bömer and Bossange will give you to-morrow, on my order, a set of ornaments worth two hundred and ten thousand livres, which, the following day, they will take back at two hundred thousand. Thus your indemnity will be paid."

"Very well, Madame; I have nothing more to wish."

"I am delighted to hear it."

"However, about my son's commission?"

"His Majesty will give it to you himself."

"And for the attendant expenses?"

"The order will be given with the commission."

"Very good. We have now only to arrange about the vineyard; there were four acres —"

"How much were they worth?"

"Six thousand francs an acre; it was excellent land."

"I will now subscribe an obligation to pay you twelve thousand francs, which, with the twelve thousand you have already received for the land, will make just twenty-four thousand."

"There is the writing-desk, Madame."

"I shall do myself the honor to hand the desk to you," said Madame Dubarry.

"To me?"

"Yes, that you may write a little letter to his Majesty which I shall dictate, — a fair return, you know."

"Very true," replied the old lady; and arranging her paper and taking a pen, she waited. Madame Dubarry dictated: —

SIRE, — The happiness which I feel on learning that your Majesty has accepted my offer to present my dear friend the Comtesse Dubarry —

The old lady made a grimace, and her pen began to spit.

"You have a bad pen," said the favorite; "you must change it."

"It is unnecessary, Madame; I shall get accustomed to it."

Madame Dubarry continued, —

emboldens me to solicit your Majesty to look on me with a favorable eye when I shall appear at Versailles to-morrow, as you have deigned to permit me to do. I venture to hope, Sire, that I merit your Majesty's favor, inasmuch as I am

allied to a house, every chief of which has shed his blood for the princes of your august race.

"Now sign, if you please," said the favorite.

And the countess signed, —

ANASTASIE EUPHÉMIE RODOLPHE,
COMTESSE DE BÉARN.

The old lady wrote with a firm hand, in great letters half an inch long, and sprinkled her letter with a sufficient number of aristocratic mistakes in orthography. When she had signed, still holding the letter fast with one hand, she passed with the other the paper, pen, and ink to Madame Dubarry, who in a little straight, sharp hand signed an obligation to pay the sums agreed upon.

Madame Dubarry then wrote a letter to Bömer and Bossange, the Crown jewellers, requesting them to give the bearer the set of diamond and emerald ornaments called "Louise," — because they had belonged to the Princess Louise, aunt to the dauphin, who had sold them to obtain funds for her charities. That done, the ladies exchanged their papers.

"Now," said Madame Dubarry, "give me a proof of your friendship, my dear Countess."

"With all my heart, Madame."

"I am sure that if you come to me, Tronchin will cure you in less than three days. Come, then; and you can at the same time try my oil, which is really excellent."

"Well, but do not let me detain you, Madame," said the prudent old lady. "I have some matters to settle here before I can set out."

"Then you refuse me?"

"On the contrary, Madame, I accept, but not for this moment. It is just now striking one by the abbey clock; give me until three, and at five precisely I will be at Luciennes."

"Will you permit my brother to come for you with his carriage at three o'clock?"

"Certainly."

"In the mean time take care of yourself."

"Fear nothing, you have my word; and though my death should be the consequence, I will present you to-morrow at Versailles."

"Good-by, then, my dear godmother."

"Good-by, my charming godchild."

And so saying, they parted, the old lady still reclining, with her foot on the cushion and her hand on her papers, Madame Dubarry in better spirits than on her arrival, but certainly rather vexed that she had not been able to make better terms with an old woman from the country, — she who could outwit the king of France when she chose. Passing by the door of the principal salon, she saw Jean, who, doubtless to prevent any one harboring suspicions as to the cause of his long stay, was taking a second bottle of wine. Perceiving his sister, he jumped up from his chair and ran to her.

"Well?" he cried.

"Well, I may say, as Marshal Saxe once said to his Majesty on the battlefield of Fontenoi, 'Sire, learn from this spectacle how dearly a victory may be purchased.'"

"We are victorious, then?"

"There is another saying; but this comes down to us from antiquity: 'One more victory like that, and we are lost.'"

"We have the godmother?"

"Yes; only it costs us about a million."

"Oh, oh!" said Jean, with a frightful grimace.

"Why, I had no chance; I must either take her at that, or give her up."

"But it is abominable!"

"It is as I tell you; and perhaps if you make her angry, she will make us pay double."

"*Pardieu*, what a woman!"

"She is a Roman!"

"She is a Greek!"

"Never mind! Greek or Roman, be ready to bring her to Luciennes at three o'clock. I shall never be easy until I have her under lock and key."

"I will not stir from here," said Jean.

"And I, on my side, will hasten to prepare everything," said the countess. She sprang into her carriage. "To Luciennes!" said she. "To-morrow I shall say, 'To Marly!'"

Jean followed the carriage with his eyes. "We cost France a pretty little sum," said he. "It is very flattering for the Dubarrys!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MARÉCHAL DE RICHELIEU'S FIFTH CONSPIRACY.

THE king returned to hold his court at Marly as usual. Less the slave of etiquette than Louis XIV., who sought, even in the assemblies of his courtiers, occasions for exhibiting his power, Louis XV. sought in them only news, for which he was eager, and, above all, a variety of faces around him, — a gratification which he preferred to all others, particularly if they were smiling faces.

In the evening of the day on which the interview just related took place, and two hours after the Comtesse de Béarn (who this time kept her promise faithfully) was comfortably installed in Madame Dubarry's cabinet, the king was playing cards at Marly in the blue drawing-room. On his left sat the Duchesse d'Ayen; on his right, Madame de Guéménée. His Majesty appeared very much preoccupied, losing, in consequence of inattention to his game, eight hundred louis-d'or. Rather sobered by his loss, — for, like a true descendant of Henri IV., Louis liked to win, — the king left his cards and retired into the recess of a window to talk with Monsieur de Malesherbes, son of the ex-chancellor, while Monsieur de Maupeou, who was conversing with the Duc de Choiseul in an opposite window, watched the interview with an anxious eye. In the mean time, after the king left the card-table, a circle was formed near the fireplace. The Princesses Adélaïde, Sophie, and Victoire, attended by their

ladies of honor and their gentlemen, had placed themselves there on their return from a walk in the gardens.

Around the king — who must certainly have been discussing some matter of importance, as the gravity of Monsieur de Malesherbes was well known — were grouped, but at a respectful distance, generals, admirals, great dignitaries of the State, noblemen, and judges. The little court at the fireplace, therefore, was left a good deal to itself, and seemed disposed toward a more lively conversation, if one might judge by the skirmishing with which they began.

The principal ladies of the group, besides the three princesses, were Madame de Grammont, Madame de Guéménée, Madame de Choiseul, Madame de Mirepoix, and Madame de Polastron.

At the moment when we approach this group, Madame Adélaïde has just narrated an anecdote of a bishop banished from his diocese by the grand penitentiary. The story, which we refrain from repeating, was tolerably scandalous, especially for a princess royal.

"Well," said Madame Victoire, "it is only a month since that bishop was sitting here among us!"

"Oh! we shall have worse than he sitting among us," said Madame de Grammont, "if his Majesty receives those who, not having been yet received, are now determined to be received."

Every one understood from the tone in which these words were uttered who was meant, and at once perceived what turn the conversation was taking.

"Fortunately, wishing to be received and being received are two different things, Duchess," said a little elderly man, joining in the conversation. He was seventy-four years of age, but looked only fifty, so elegant was his figure, his voice so unbroken, his leg so well shaped, his eye so lively, his skin so fair, and his hand so beautiful.

"Ah! here is M. de Richelieu," said the duchess, "advancing his scaling-ladders, and preparing to take our conversation by assault, as he took Mahon. Still something of the soldier, my dear Marshal!"

"Still *something* of the soldier! Ah, Duchess, you are very severe!"

"Well, but did I not speak the truth?"

"The truth! When?"

"Just now."

"And what did you say?"

"That the king's doors are not to be forced —"

"Like the curtains of an alcove. I am of your opinion, Duchess, — always of your opinion."

At this witticism some of the ladies put fans before their faces; but it was successful, though some persons had affirmed that the marshal's wit was on the wane. The Duchesse de Grammont blushed under her rouge; for it was to her especially that the epigram had been addressed. "Ladies," said she, "if Monsieur le Duc says such things, I shall not finish my story; and you will lose very much, I assure you, unless you ask the marshal to tell you another."

"I?" said the duke; "do you imagine that I would interrupt you when you probably are about to speak evil of one of my friends? God forbid! I am listening with eager anticipation."

The circle closed around the duchess. She cast a glance toward the window, to be certain that the king was still there. He was still in the same position; but although he continued to converse with Monsieur de Malesherbes, he did not lose sight of the group at the fireplace, and his eye met that of Madame de Grammont. The duchess felt somewhat intimidated by its expression, but she had made a beginning, and would not be stopped.

"You must know," she continued, addressing herself particularly to the three princesses, "that a certain lady — her name is of no consequence, is it? — has lately taken it into her head that she will see us, the privileged of the land, sitting in our glory, the brightness of which fills her with jealousy."

"See us, — where?" asked the marshal.

"Oh! at Versailles, at Marly, at Fontainebleau."

"Well, well, well!"

"The poor creature knows nothing of our meetings except from having seen, with the rest of the mob, the king at dinner with his guests. How disagreeable, with a barrier between them and the great, and an usher with his rod driving them before him!"

The marshal took snuff noisily out of his box of Sèvres porcelain. "But," said he, "in order to join our circle at Versailles, at Marly, at Fontainebleau, one must be presented."

"Precisely; the lady in question has requested to be presented."

"Then I'll wager the king has consented; he is so kind."

"Unfortunately, something more is necessary than the king's permission, — there must be some one to present her."

"Yes," said Madame de Guéménée, "like a godmother, for example."

"Yes; but godmothers are rather scarce," said Madame de Mirepoix, — "witness the fair Bourbonnaise, who has sought but has not found one."

"Pardon me," replied the duchess; "she has sought so well that she has found what she wants. But what a godmother, — a frank, sincere country dame! She was brought away from her dovecot, petted, caressed, and dressed — "

"It is shocking," said Madame de Guéménée. "But just when the dear dame had been sufficiently petted, caressed, and dressed, she fell downstairs from the top to the bottom, and broke her leg."

"So there can be no presentation?" exclaimed Madame de Guéménée.

"Not a shadow, my dear."

"See how gracious Providence is!" said the marshal, raising his hands.

"Your pardon," said Madame Victoire; "for my own part, I am very sorry for the poor lady from the country."

"On the contrary, Madame," said the duchess, "congratulate her. Of two evils she has chosen the least." She stopped short, for again her eye met the king's.

"If the ladies who have been presented," said Madame de Guéménée, "were courageous and faithful to the sentiments of honor of the ancient nobility of France, they would go in a body to return thanks to the lady from the country who conceived the sublime idea of breaking her leg."

"Yes, faith," said the marshal, "that is a great idea! But what is the name of the excellent lady who has saved us in this great danger? We have nothing now to fear, have we, dear Duchess?"

"Oh, nothing! She is in her bed, her leg bound up, and unable to move a step."

"But if the lady should find another godmother?" said the princess; "she is so indefatigable."

"Oh, do not be afraid; it is not very easy to find godmothers!"

At this moment the throng of courtiers separated, and the king approached; the group became silent. A moment afterward his clear and well-known voice was heard: "Adieu, ladies! Good-night, gentlemen!"

Every one rose. The king advanced toward the door; then, turning before leaving the room, he said, "By the by, there will be a presentation to-morrow at Versailles."

These words fell like a thunderbolt on the assembly. The king glanced around upon the group of ladies, who looked at each other and turned pale; then he left the apartment, without adding another word. Scarcely had he crossed the threshold with the long train of gentlemen attending him, when there was a general explosion among the princesses and the ladies around them.

"A presentation!" stammered the Duchesse de Grammont, her lips quite livid. "What does his Majesty mean?"

"Eh! Duchess," said the marshal, with one of those smiles which even his best friends could not pardon; "can this be the presentation you have just been speaking of?"

The ladies bit their lips with vexation.

"Oh, it is impossible!" murmured the duchess.

"Ah, Duchess," said the marshal, "they do set legs so well nowadays!"

The Duc de Choiseul approached his sister, the Duchesse de Grammont, and pressed her arm as a warning not to go too far; but she was too deeply wounded to attend to him. "It would be an insult to us all," she exclaimed.

"Yes, an insult indeed!" repeated Madame de Guéménée.

Monsieur de Choiseul saw he could do nothing more, and went away.

"Oh, your Royal Highnesses," cried the duchess, addressing the king's three daughters, "there is no resource for us now but in you! You, the first ladies in the kingdom, will you endure it? Must we be exposed, in the only asylum remaining for ladies of rank, to meet a person

with whom we should not allow our chambermaids to associate?"

The princesses, instead of replying, hung their heads sadly.

"Oh, your Royal Highnesses, in Heaven's name!" she exclaimed, "save us."

"The king is master," said Madame Adélaïde, sighing.

"That is as it should be," said the Maréchal de Richelieu.

"But the entire court of France will be compromised in the affair," cried the duchess. "Gentlemen, have you then no regard for the honor of your families?"

"Ladies," said the Duc de Choiseul, trying to laugh, "as this borders on conspiracy, you must allow me to retire, and to take with me M. de Sartines. Will you come, Marshal?"

"I?—faith, I adore conspiracies! I shall remain," replied the Maréchal de Richelieu.

The two ministers departed. The few gentlemen who had remained followed their example. There now remained around the princesses eight or ten of the ladies who had espoused most warmly the league against the presentation. Richelieu was the only gentleman. The ladies looked at him suspiciously, as if he had been a Trojan in the Grecian camp.

"I represent my daughter, the Comtesse d'Egmont," said he; "go on, ladies, go on."

"Your Royal Highnesses," the Duchesse de Grammont began, "there is a means by which we can protest against the infamy which they intend to impose on us, and for my part I shall make use of the means."

"What is it?" all the ladies exclaimed.

"We have been told that the king is master," she continued.

"And I have replied, 'That is as it should be,'" said the marshal.

"He is master in his own palace, but we are mistresses in our own houses. Now, what is to prevent me from giving my coachman directions to drive to Chanteloup to-night, instead of to Versailles?"

"Or what is to prevent others from imitating you?" said Madame de Guéménée.

"Why should we not all imitate the duchess?" asked the Maréchale de Mirepoix.

"Oh, your Royal Highnesses," exclaimed the duchess, again addressing the princesses, "what a noble example it would be for you to give the court!"

"The king would be angry with us," said Madame Sophie.

"Your Royal Highness may be sure that he would not," exclaimed the spiteful duchess. "No; he has such exquisite sense, such perfect tact, that he will afterward acknowledge you to be in the right, and he will be grateful to you. The king, believe me, uses force with no one."

"On the contrary," said the Duc de Richelieu, alluding for the third or fourth time to an invasion which Madame de Grammont had made into the king's chamber, "he is the one with whom force is used."

At these words there was in the group of ladies a commotion equal to that in a company of grenadiers at the bursting of a shell. In a moment, however, they recovered their composure.

"It is true," said Madame Victoire, encouraged by the general spirit of rebellion, "that the king said nothing when we refused to admit the visits of the countess, but on a public occasion like this he might not be disposed to forgive us."

"No, certainly," replied the duchess, "if you were

the only ladies who absented yourselves; but when he sees that we have all left the court?"

"All!" exclaimed the party.

"Yes, all," repeated the old marshal.

"Then you are of the plot?" said Madame Adélaïde.

"Certainly I am, and therefore I wish to speak."

"Speak, marshal, speak!" said Madame de Grammont.

"We must proceed methodically," said he. "It is not enough to shout 'All! all!' I have known people say, 'This is what I shall do,' but at the moment of action they have done the very contrary. Now, as I have the honor to make one in this conspiracy, I do not wish to be left by myself, as I always was when I took part in the conspiracies under the late king and under the regency."

"Upon my word, Marshal," said the Duchesse de Grammont, ironically; "one would say that you forget where you are. Among Amazons you assume the manners of a chief."

"Madame, I beg you to consider that I may have some right to that position. You hate Madame Dubarry, — there, I have let the name slip out, but nobody heard it! You hate her more than I; but I am more compromised than you."

"How is that?"

"I have not called at Luciennes for eight days, nor at her apartments at Versailles for four. The affair has gone so far that a footman was sent to ask if I was ill; so I am already looked on with suspicion. However, I am not ambitious, — I yield the leadership to you; you have set the affair on foot; you are the fire-brand; you revolutionize our consciences, — yours must be the bâton of command."

"No, I must follow their Royal Highnesses," said the duchess, respectfully.

"Oh, pray let us remain passive!" said Madame Adélaïde; "we are going to St.-Denis to see our sister Louise; she will keep us there, and of course there can be nothing said."

"Nothing, nothing at all, unless by some very ill-disposed person," said the marshal.

"As for me," said the Duchesse de Grammont, "I have to go to Chanteloup because it is hay-making season."

"Bravo!" cried the duke; "an excellent reason."

"I must stay at home; one of my children is ill, and I have to nurse him," said Madame de Guéménée.

"I," said Madame de Polastron, "have felt a giddiness all this evening; I am sure I shall be dangerously ill if Tronchin does not bleed me to-morrow."

"And I," said the Maréchale de Mirepoix, majestically, "I will not go to Versailles because I will not, — that is my reason."

"Excellent! excellent!" said the marshal; "all this is quite logical; but we must swear."

"What! we must swear?"

"Yes; conspirators always swear, from the conspiracy of Catiline down to that of Cellamare, in which I had the honor of participating. We always swore; it is true, the thing did not succeed at all the better for it, — still, let us respect old customs. Let us swear, then; you shall see how solemn it is!"

The marshal extended his hand in the midst of the group of ladies, and said, with proper dignity, "I swear it." All the ladies repeated the oath, with the exception of the princesses, who had slipped away.

"Now that all is over," said the marshal, "when once people have sworn in conspiracies, they do nothing more."

"Oh, what a fury she will be in," said the Duchesse

de Grammont, "when she finds herself alone in the grand salon!"

"Hum!" said the marshal; "the king will most probably banish us for a while."

"Ah!" cried Madame de Guéménée, "what kind of a court would it be if we were banished? The King of Denmark is expected: who will be presented to him? The dauphiness is expected: to whom will she be presented? Besides, a whole court is never exiled; a selection is made."

"I know that very well," said Richelieu, "and I am so lucky as to have been selected for banishment four times already; this is my fifth conspiracy, ladies."

"Do not be afraid, Marshal," said the Duchesse de Grammont; "it is I who will be sacrificed."

"Or your brother, the Duc de Choiseul; take care, Duchess," replied the marshal.

"My brother is of my mind; he could submit to misfortune, not to an insult."

"It will be neither you, Marshal, nor you, Duchess, who will be banished," said the Maréchale de Mirepoix; "I shall be the victim. The king will never pardon me for being less gracious to the countess than I was to the marchioness."

"That is true," said the marshal; "you were always called the favorite of the favorite. Poor Maréchale! we shall be banished together."

"Let him banish us all," said Madame de Guéménée, rising; "for I trust none of us will draw back from the resolution which we have taken."

"We cannot draw back after our oath," said the marshal.

"Besides," said the Duchesse de Grammont, "I have still other resources."

"You?"

"Yes; she cannot be presented to-morrow evening without three things."

"What three?"

"A hairdresser, a dress, and a carriage."

"Certainly."

"Well, she will not be at Versailles at ten o'clock; the king will become impatient; he will dismiss the court, and the presentation will be postponed till the Greek calends, on account of the arrival of the dauphiness."

A burst of delight followed this new episode in the conspiracy; but while applauding even more loudly than the others, the Duc de Richelieu and Madame de Mirepoix exchanged glances, — the same idea had occurred simultaneously to the two old courtiers.

At eleven o'clock all the conspirators, by the light of a lovely moon, were speeding along the roads to Versailles and St.-Germain. Maréchal Richelieu, however, mounted his groom's horse, and while his carriage, with the blinds drawn closely down, apparently bore him to Versailles, he rode rapidly to Paris by a cross-road.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NO HAIRDRESSER, NO DRESS, NO CARRIAGE.

It would have been in bad taste for the Comtesse Dubarry to go directly from her apartments in the palace of Versailles to the grand salon where presentations took place. Besides, Versailles was very poor in resources for so important a day. In short, — highest consideration of all, — it was not the custom. The person to be presented always arrived with the noise and state of a foreign ambassador, whether it were from her house in the town of Versailles, or from her house in Paris. Madame Dubarry chose to arrive from the latter place. At eleven o'clock in the morning, therefore, she was at her house in the Rue de Valois with the Comtesse de Béarn, whom she kept under lock and key when she did not keep her under her smiles, and whose burn was attended to most carefully, — every secret of medicine and chemistry being exhausted on it.

Since the preceding evening Jean, Chon, and Dorée had been at work ; and any one who could have seen them at their work would have formed an exalted idea of the power of gold or of the greatness of the human intellect. One made sure of the hairdresser, another harassed the costumers. Jean took it upon himself to look after the carriage, but also cast an eye occasionally on the hairdresser and the dressmakers. The countess, occupied with flowers, diamonds, and lace, was buried in boxes, cases, and caskets, and gave audiences every hour to couriers from Versailles, who informed her how matters were going

on. Orders had been given for lighting the queen's drawing-room, and no change had taken place in the king's intentions.

About four the viscount came in, pale, agitated, but joyful.

"Well?" asked the countess.

"Well, all will be ready!"

"The hairdresser?"

"I went to him myself, — Dorée was with him; but to make sure of him, I slipped fifty louis-d'or into his hand. He will dine here at six o'clock precisely, so you may be quite easy on that score."

"My dress?"

"It will be wonderful! Chon is superintending it; there are six and twenty workwomen at it, sewing on the pearls, the ribbons, and the trimmings. They go on breadth by breadth at the stupendous work; it would certainly require eight days for any other persons than ourselves to have it finished."

"But do you say they are doing it breadth by breadth?"

"Yes, my dear; there are thirteen breadths of the stuff, — two workwomen at each breadth; one works to the right, the other to the left, putting on the jewels and trimmings; then at the last all the breadths will be joined together. It will take them two hours yet; at six you will have it."

"Are you quite sure, Jean?"

"Yesterday I made a calculation with my engineer about it. There are ten thousand stitches in each breadth, — that is, five thousand for each workwoman. In such thick stuff a woman can make only one stitch in five seconds, — that is, twelve in one minute, seven hundred and twenty in one hour, and seven thousand two hundred in ten hours. I reckon the two thousand two hundred as

lost by interruptions and false stitches. We still have a margin of four hours."

"And what about the carriage?"

"Oh! I'll answer for it. The varnish is now drying in a large store heated to fifty degrees. It is an elegant *vis-à-vis*, compared with which the carriages sent for the dauphiness are small affairs. Besides the coats-of-arms on the four panels, there is the war-cry of the Dubarrys: '*Boutés en avant!*' on each side. Besides that, I made them paint on one place two doves billing and cooing, and in another a heart pierced with a dart, — the whole surrounded by bows and arrows, quivers and torches. There is such a crowd of people at Francian's to see it! It will be here exactly at eight."

At this moment Chon and Dorée came in and confirmed all that Jean had said.

"Thank you, my brave aides-de-camp!" said the countess.

"My sweet sister," said the viscount, "your eyes look tired; had you not better sleep for an hour? It will refresh you."

"Sleep? No! I shall sleep to-night; and that is more than some will do."

While these preparations were going on, the report of the intended presentation had spread through all Paris. Idle and careless as they appear, no people love news more than the Parisians. None knew better all the courtiers and all the intrigues of Versailles than the Parisian cockney of the eighteenth century, though debarred from the festivities of the palace, and seeing only the hieroglyphics on the carriages and the curious liveries of the footmen. At that period this or that nobleman was known to the whole city. The reason is obvious. The court at that period formed the principal attraction in the theatres and

in the gardens. M. de Richelieu in his place at the Italian opera, Madame Dubarry in a coach rivalling that of royalty itself, were constantly before the public, like some favorite comedian or admired actress of the present day.

People are especially interested in faces that are well known to them. Every one in Paris knew Madame Dubarry's face, constantly shown where a rich and pretty woman likes to be seen, — in the theatres, in the public walks, in the shops. Besides, she was easily recognized by means of portraits, caricatures, and by her negro page Zamore. The affair of the presentation therefore interested the city nearly as much as it occupied the court. This day there was a crowd near the Palais Royal; but we must beg pardon of Philosophy, — it was not to see Rousseau playing chess at the Café de la Régence, it was to see the favorite in her fine coach and her handsome dress, of which they had heard so much. There was meaning in Jean Dubarry's expression, "We cost a pretty little sum to France!" And it was natural that France, represented by Paris, should wish to enjoy the sight for which they had paid so dearly. Madame Dubarry knew her people well, — for they were much more her people than they had been Maria Leczinska's. She knew that they loved to be dazzled by magnificence; and as she was good-natured, she labored to make the spectacle correspond with the expense.

Instead of sleeping, as her brother advised her, Madame Dubarry at about five o'clock took a bath. Then at about six o'clock she began to expect her hairdresser; and while she waits, we will explain, if we can, what hairdressing then was. It was building a complete edifice; it was the inauguration of those castles, with towers and bastions, which the ladies of the court of the young

king Louis XVI. erected on their heads. May we not, even in this frivolity of fashion, discover an omen of the mine dug beneath the feet of all who were, or pretended to be, great? By some mysterious divination had the women of the aristocracy learned they should have but a short time to enjoy their titles? and did they, therefore, attempt to make the most of them, by bearing them aloft on their heads, — as if, not having long to keep their heads, they must decorate them to the utmost point which extravagance could attain, and raise them as high as possible above those of the common herd?

To plait the hair; to elevate it on a silken cushion; to roll it about a hoop of whalebone; to adorn it with diamonds, pearls, and flowers; to sprinkle it with powder, which made the eyes brilliant and the complexion fresh; to blend into harmony with the complexion pearl, ruby, opal, diamond, flowers of all hues and of all forms, — to do all this, a man must be not only a great artist, but the most patient of his race. As a proof that such a man was esteemed great, the hairdresser was the only tradesman allowed to wear a sword.

This explanation may account for the fifty louis-d'or given by Jean Dubarry to the hairdresser of the court. It may account also for some fears lest the great Lubin (the court hairdresser of that day was called Lubin) might not be so punctual or so skilful as was desirable. The fears about his punctuality were, alas! too well founded. Six o'clock struck, and the hairdresser did not appear; then half past six came, then a quarter to seven. One thought inspired some hope in the anxious hearts of all, — it was that a man of M. Lubin's importance would naturally make people wait a little. But seven o'clock struck. The viscount feared that the dinner prepared for the hairdresser might be cold when he came, and the great artist

might be dissatisfied. He sent a servant to his house to say that dinner waited.

The servant returned in a quarter of an hour. Those only who have waited under similar circumstances know how many seconds there are in such a quarter of an hour. The servant had spoken to Madame Lubin herself, who assured him that Monsieur Lubin had set out for the countess's; that if he were not then there, he must be on the way.

"Perhaps," said Jean, "he has been delayed in consequence of not getting a carriage. We will wait a little."

"Besides," said the countess, "there will be no time lost, — my hair can be attended to when I am partly dressed; the presentation does not take place until ten; we have still three hours, and it will take only one to go to Versailles. In the mean time, Chon, show me my dress; that will divert me. Where is Chon? Chon! Chon! my dress, my dress!"

"Your dress has not come yet, Madame," said Dorée, "and your sister went ten minutes ago to see about it herself."

"Oh," exclaimed the viscount, "I hear a noise of wheels! They are bringing the carriage, no doubt."

The viscount was mistaken; it was Chon, who had come back in great haste.

"My dress!" said the countess, while Chon was still in the vestibule; "my dress!"

"Has it not come?" asked Chon, terror-stricken.

"No."

"Oh, well, it can't be long delayed! When I got to the dressmaker's she had just set out in a fiacre with two of her women, bringing the dress to fit it on."

"It is a good way from her house to this, and as you drove very fast, no doubt you have passed her," said Jean.

"Yes, yes, certainly!" replied Chon; yet she could not suppress a vague feeling of apprehension.

"Viscount," said the countess, "you had better send to see about the carriage, that there may be no disappointment there at least."

"You are right, Jeanne;" and Dubarry opened the door. "Let some of you," cried he, "take the new horses to Francian's for the carriage, so that when it arrives it may be ready to start."

The coachman and the horses set out. As the sound of their trampling died away Zamore entered with a letter. "A letter for Madame," said he.

"Who brought it?"

"A man."

"A man! What sort of man?"

"A man on horseback."

"And why did he give it to you?"

"Because Zamore was at the door."

"But read it! Read it rather than question him!" cried Jean.

"You are right, Viscount."

"Aye, provided there be nothing annoying in the letter," he muttered.

"Oh, no! it is some petition for his Majesty."

"It is not folded like a petition."

"Réally, Viscount, you are full of fears!" said the countess, smiling; and she broke the seal. At the first line she shrieked, and fell back in her chair half-dead.

"No hairdresser, no dress, no carriage!" she cried. Chon sprang toward her. Jean seized the letter. It was evidently the writing of a woman, and ran thus:—

MADAME, — Be not too confident! This evening you will have no hairdresser, no dress, no carriage. I hope this information will reach you in time to be useful to you. As I do

not desire your gratitude, I do not give you my name. Guess who I am, and you will have discovered

A SINCERE FRIEND.

"Oh!" shouted Dubarry, in despair, "all is over! *Sang bleu!* I must kill somebody! By all the devils! I 'll run Lubin through the body! It is half-past seven, and he not here! Confound him! Damn him!"

And as Dubarry was not to be presented that evening, and was not concerned about his hair, he plunged his hands into it without restraint.

"But the dress! Good heavens, the dress!" cried Chon. "A hairdresser could easily be found!"

"Oh, I defy you to find one! What sort of hairdresser would he be? Oh, thunder! Oh, death and damnation!"

The countess said nothing, but sighs burst from her bosom which might have softened the Choiseuls themselves, could they but have heard them.

"Let us think! let us think calmly!" said Chon. "Let us find out another hairdresser, and send to the dressmaker to know what has become of the dress!"

"No hairdresser!" murmured the almost fainting countess. "No dress! no carriage!"

"Yes, no carriage!" cried Jean; "it does not come, although it is time for it to be here. It is a plot, Countess, it is a plot! Cannot Sartines find out the authors of it? Cannot Maupeou hang them? Can they not with their accomplices be burned in the market-place? I will have the hairdresser broken on the wheel; the dressmaker torn to pieces with pincers; the coach-maker flayed alive!"

At length the countess recovered a little from her state of stupefaction; but it was only to feel more poignantly all the horror of her situation. "All is lost!" she exclaimed. "Those who have bought over Lubin are rich enough to remove all the good hairdressers from Paris.

None are left but wretches who would destroy my hair! And my dress, my poor dress! And my new carriage, the sight of which would have made them all burst with envy!"

Dubarry did not answer, but rolling his eyes fearfully, strode up and down the room, striking himself against all the corners; and as often as he encountered any ornament, or small article of furniture, he broke it in pieces, and if the pieces seemed too large he broke them into smaller ones.

In the midst of this scene of horror, which, spreading from the boudoir to the ante-rooms, and from the ante-rooms to the court, caused all the domestics to run hither and thither with twenty different and contradictory orders, a young man in a light-green coat, a satin waistcoat, lilac breeches, and white silk stockings, got out of a cabriolet, crossed the court, stepping from stone to stone on the tips of his toes, entered the open door abandoned by all the servants, mounted the stairs, and tapped at the countess's dressing-room door.

Jean was just stamping on a tray containing a set of Sèvres porcelain, which he had pulled down with the tail of his coat while he was dealing a blow with his fist to a great Chinese mandarin. When the noise of these feats had subsided a little, three gentle, discreet, modest taps were heard. Then followed profound silence; all were in such a state of expectation that no one could ask who was there.

"Excuse me!" said an unknown voice, "but I wish to speak to the Comtesse Dubarry."

"Monsieur, people do not enter here in that way!" cried a servant, who had discovered the stranger, and had run after him, to prevent his further advance.

"Never mind! never mind!" cried Jean, flinging open

the door with a hand which might have driven in the gates of Gaza. "Worse cannot happen to us now! What do you want with the countess?"

The stranger avoided the shock of this sudden meeting by springing backward and falling into the third position.

"Monsieur," said he, "I came to offer my services to the Comtesse Dubarry."

"What services, Monsieur?"

"My professional services, Monsieur."

"What is your profession?"

"I am a hairdresser!" and the stranger bowed.

"Oh," cried Jean, falling on his neck, "a hair-dresser! Come in! come in!"

"Come in! Come in, Monsieur!" cried Chon, almost taking the astonished young man in her arms.

"A hairdresser?" cried Madame Dubarry, raising her hands. "A hairdresser? An angel! Were you sent by Monsieur Lubin, Monsieur?"

"I was not sent by any one. I read in the Gazette that the Comtesse Dubarry was to be presented this evening; then said I to myself, 'Suppose that the Comtesse Dubarry has no hairdresser? It is not probable, but it is possible;' and I have come."

"What is your name, Monsieur?" asked the countess, a little cooled by this account.

"Léonard, Madame."

"Léonard? You are not known to any one?"

"If you accept my services, Madame, to-morrow every one will know me."

"Hum!" said Jean, "there are different kinds of hair-dressing."

"If Madame distrusts my skill, I will retire."

"We have no time to try you," said Chon.

"Why make any trial?" cried the young man, walking

round the countess in a fit of enthusiasm. "I know, Madame, that all eyes must be attracted to your head-dress, and already in contemplating you I have invented a style which will have a most powerful effect." And the young man made a gesture so significant of confidence in himself that the countess's resolution was a little shaken, and hope sprang up in the hearts of Chon and Jean.

"Have you really?" said Madame Dubarry, quite astonished at the young man's ease; for he was now leaning back, hand on hip, as the great Lubin himself would have done.

"Yes, but, Madame, I must see your dress, that I may make the ornaments harmonize with it."

"Oh, my dress! my dress!" cried the countess, recalled by his words to the terrible reality.

Jean struck his forehead fiercely. "Oh, imagine, Monsieur," he cried, "imagine what a horrid trick! They have carried off dress, dressmaker, — all! Chon, Chon, dear Chon!" and Dubarry, tired of tearing at his hair, gave way to a fit of sobbing.

"Suppose you go back to the dressmaker's, Chon," said the countess.

"For what purpose? You know she had set out to come hither."

"Alas! alas!" murmured the countess, falling back in her chair, "of what use is a hairdresser when I have no dress?"

At this moment the door-bell rang; all the doors had been carefully shut, and even bolted, by the porter, lest any other should slip in as the hairdresser had done.

"Some one rings," said the countess.

Chon sprang to a window.

"A bandbox!" she cried.

"A bandbox!" cried the countess.

"Coming in?" cried Jean.

"Yes — no — yes. It is given to the porter; run, Jean, run!"

He dashed down the stairs, got ahead of all the footmen, and snatched the bandbox from the porter.

Chon watched him through the window.

He pulled off the lid, plunged his hand into the depths of the bandbox, and uttered a yell of joy. It contained a beautiful dress of Chinese satin, decorated with flowers, and a complete trimming of lace of immense value.

"A dress! A dress!" shouted Chon, clapping her hands.

"A dress!" repeated the countess, almost sinking under her joy, as she had before sunk under her grief.

"Who gave it you, rogue?" asked the viscount of the porter.

"A woman, Monsieur, whom I don't know."

"Where is she?"

"Monsieur, she laid it on the step of the door, cried 'For the countess,' and disappeared."

"Well, we have secured a dress, — that is the main thing!"

"Come up, Jean, come up!" called Chon; "my sister is dying with impatience."

"Look!" said Jean, returning to the room, "look! — admire! See what Heaven sends you!"

"But it will not go on; it will not fit; it was not made for me. *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* what a misfortune, for it is beautiful!"

Chon quickly measured it. "The same length, the same width in the waist!" she exclaimed.

"What admirable stuff!" said Jean.

"It is miraculous!" said Chon.

"It is terrible!" said the countess.

"Not at all," replied the viscount; "for it proves that

although you have great enemies, you have also devoted friends."

"It cannot be sent by a friend," said Chon, "for how should a friend know of the plot formed against us? It must be sent by a fairy."

"Let it be sent by his Satanic Majesty!" exclaimed the countess, "I care not, provided it assists me to oppose the Choiseuls! Whoever sent it, he cannot be so much of a demon as they."

"And now," said Jean, "I am sure that you may confidently submit your head to this gentleman."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because he has been sent by the same person who sent the dress."

"I?" said Léonard, with innocent surprise.

"Come, come, Monsieur, acknowledge that it was all a tale about the gazette!"

"The simple truth, Monsieur. Here is the paper; I kept it for curl-papers;" and he drew out the gazette in which the presentation was announced.

"Now," said Chon, "let him set to work, — it is eight o'clock."

"Oh, we have time enough!" said the hairdresser; "it will take only an hour to go to Versailles."

"Yes, if we had a carriage," said the countess.

"Oh, *mordieu!* that is true!" exclaimed Jean. "That wretch Francian does not come."

"You know we have been warned: 'No hairdresser, no dress, no carriage!'" repeated the countess.

"Now, if the coachmaker should not keep his word!" said Chon.

"No; here he is, here he is!" cried Jean.

"And the carriage, the carriage?" exclaimed the countess.

"It is at the door, no doubt. But what is the matter with the coachmaker?"

At that moment Francian rushed in, all in alarm. "Oh, Viscount!" he cried, "the carriage was on its way hither, when at the corner of a street it was seized by four men; they knocked down my young man who was bringing it, seized the reins, and set off with it at a gallop."

"I told you so! I told you so!" said Dubarry, sitting down resignedly in his chair.

"But, brother," exclaimed Chon, "exert yourself! Do something!"

"What for?"

"To get a carriage! the horses here are tired out, and the carriages dirty. Jeanne cannot go in any of them."

"Bah!" said Dubarry, "he who calms the fury of the waves, who gives food to the little birds, who sends a hairdresser like Monsieur and a dress like that, will not forget to send a carriage."

"Hush!" cried Chon; "surely I hear carriage-wheels."

"Yes, it is stopping," he replied. Then, springing to a window which he opened, he shouted to the servants, "Run, rascals, run! Quick, quick! Find out our benefactor!"

A carriage, lined with white satin, and drawn by two splendid bay horses, stood before the door. But neither coachman nor footman was to be seen; a common street-porter held the horses by the head. A crown had been given to him by a person unknown to him at the end of the street, with orders to lead the carriage to the countess's door.

They looked at the panels; the arms were replaced by a simple rose.

The whole of this counterplay against the miseries with which the evening had begun lasted about an hour.

Jean had the carriage taken into the yard, locked the gate, and took the key with him. On returning to the dressing-room he found the hairdresser about to give the countess the first proof of his profound knowledge of his art.

"Monsieur," cried the viscount, seizing him by the arm, "if you do not declare who is our protecting genius, that we may make known our eternal gratitude to him, I swear —"

"Allow me," said the young man, interrupting him very coolly, "allow me to say, Monsieur, that you are doing me the honor of squeezing my arm so tight that I fear my hand will be quite stiff when I shall have to dress the countess's hair; and it is now eight o'clock."

"Leave him alone, Jean, leave him alone!" cried the countess.

Jean sank down in his chair.

"A miracle!" exclaimed Chon; "it is a perfect fit, — only an inch too long in front; but that fault can be remedied in ten minutes."

"And what is the carriage like?" asked the countess.

"It is in the best style," replied Jean; "I got into it. It is lined with white satin, and perfumed with essence of rose."

"All is right, all is right!" cried the countess, clapping her little hands with delight. "Now, Monsieur Léonard, if you succeed, your fortune is made!"

Léonard took possession of her head, and the very first touch of the comb revealed a skilful hand. Rapidity, taste, precision, a marvellous knowledge of the relation between the moral and the physical, — all these he displayed in the accomplishment of his important duty. At the end of three quarters of an hour Madame Dubarry left his hands more charming than the goddess Aphrodite; for

she was much less naked and not less beautiful. When he had given the finishing touch to the splendid edifice which he had reared on the countess's head, he would have modestly retired, after having washed his hands in a basin which Chon presented to him as if he had been a king.

"Now, Monsieur," said Dubarry, "you must know that I am as ardent in my loves as in my hatreds. I hope now that you will tell me who you are."

"You know already, Monsieur; my name is Léonard, — I am only a beginner."

"A beginner? *Sang bleu!* you are a thorough master of your profession!"

"You shall be my hairdresser, Monsieur Léonard," said the countess, looking at herself in a little glass which she had in her hand, "and I will pay you on each occasion like this fifty louis-d'or. Chon, count out one hundred for this time; he shall have fifty of earnest money."

"I told you, Madame, that you would make my reputation."

"But you must dress no one's hair but mine."

"Keep your hundred louis-d'or, then, Madame, — I prefer my liberty; to it I owe the honor of having this evening dressed your hair. Liberty is man's greatest boon."

"A philosophical hairdresser!" exclaimed Dubarry, raising his hands; "to what shall we come at last? Well, my dear M. Léonard, I shall not quarrel with you; take your hundred louis-d'or, and keep your secret and your liberty. Now, Countess, to your carriage!"

The last words were addressed to the Comtesse de Béarn, who entered stiff and stately, and adorned like a shrine. She was brought out of her room just when she was to be made use of.

"Now," cried Jean to the servants, "let four of you take her and carry her downstairs; and if you hurt her so as to make her heave one sigh, I 'll flay you alive!"

While he was superintending this delicate and important operation, assisted by Chon, the countess turned to look for Monsieur Léonard; he had disappeared.

"But how did he go?" murmured Madame Dubarry, who had not yet quite recovered from the effect of the many surprises of the evening.

"How did he go? Why, through the floor, or up through the ceiling, of course, as all genii do. Take care, Countess, that your headdress does not turn into a heap of mud, your dress into a spider's web, and your coach into a pumpkin drawn by two rats!"

Having given utterance to this last apprehension, Jean took his place beside the Comtesse de Béarn and her fortunate goddaughter.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE PRESENTATION.

VERSAILLES, like everything really great, is and will long be beautiful. Though moss should cover its mouldering walls, though its gods of marble, bronze, and lead should lie shattered around their broken fountains, though its broad alleys of clipped trees should remain in all the wild luxuriance of nature, though it should become but a heap of ruins, — it will always present to the thinker or the poet a great and touching spectacle, as from the grand balcony he looks from its circle of ephemeral splendor to the eternal horizons.

But it was especially in its days of pomp and splendor that Versailles was fair to look upon, — when its gay and thoughtless population, restrained by a crowd of soldiers still more gay than themselves, thronged its gilded gates; when carriages lined with velvet and satin, blazoned with armorial bearings, thundered over its pavements at the full speed of their prancing steeds; when all the windows, blazing with light like those of an enchanted palace, illumined the moving throng, radiant with diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and bending to the gesture of one man as bends before the wind a field of golden corn, with its bright flowers of crimson, white, and blue. Yes, Versailles was brilliant indeed when its gates sent forth couriers to all the powers of the earth, — when kings, princes, nobles, generals, learned men from all parts of the civilized world, trod its rich carpets and its inlaid floors!

But when, for some great ceremony, all the sumptuous furniture was displayed, and its sumptuousness doubled by the magic of a thousand lights, even the coldest imagination must have glowed on beholding what human invention and human power could do. Such was the ceremony observed on the reception of an ambassador or on the occasion of a presentation.

Louis XIV., the creator of etiquette, a system which shut up each individual within bounds beyond which he could not pass, desired that the favored few initiated into the magnificence of his regal life should be struck with such veneration that ever afterward they would regard the palace as a temple, and the king as its presiding deity, to whose presence some had the right of approaching nearer than others.

Versailles, then still magnificent, although already showing symptoms of degeneration, had opened all its doors, lighted all its chandeliers, and exhibited all its splendor for the presentation of Madame Dubarry. The people, inquisitive, though hungry and wretched, forgetting — strange anomaly! — both their hunger and wretchedness that they might gaze on so much grandeur, filled the Place d'Armes and the avenue leading from Paris. From every window of the château issued floods of light, and the lustres from a distance looked like stars gleaming in an atmosphere of golden dust.

The king left his private apartments exactly at ten. He was dressed rather more richly than usual; that is, his lace was finer, and the buckles alone of his garters and his shoes were worth a million francs. The Comte de Sartines had informed him of the conspiracy entered into by the ladies the evening before, so that there was a shade of anxiety on his brow, and he trembled lest he should see only gentlemen in the grand salon. But he

was soon reassured when, on entering the queen's drawing-room, — the place designated for presentations, — he saw, amid a cloud of lace and powder, mingled with the blaze of diamonds, first, his three daughters, then the Maréchale de Mirepoix, who had talked so loudly among the plotters, — in short, all the turbulent spirits who had sworn not to come were there.

The Duc de Richelieu, like a general on the eve of an engagement, hurried from one to another, saying to this one, "Ah, I have caught you, traitor!" to another, "I was certain you would not keep your oath!" to another, "Remember what I told you about conspiracies!"

"But, Marshal," replied the ladies, "you are here yourself!"

"Oh, I represent my daughter! I represent the Comtesse d'Egmont. Look around, you will not find Septimanie! She alone has kept faith with Madame de Grammont and Madame de Guéménée; so I am pretty certain what my fate will be. To-morrow I shall enter on my fifth banishment, or my fourth confinement in the Bastille. Most certainly I shall never again conspire."

The king entered. There was a profound silence, during which ten o'clock struck, — the hour fixed for the ceremony. His Majesty was surrounded by a numerous court, and was attended by about fifty gentlemen, who, not having sworn to come to the presentation, were probably for that reason present.

The king observed at the first glance that Madame de Grammont, Madame de Guéménée, and Madame d'Egmont were wanting in this splendid assembly. He approached the Duc de Choiseul, who affected great calmness, but in spite of all his efforts was somewhat disturbed.

"I do not see the Duchesse de Grammont here," said the king.

"Sire, my sister is ill," replied the Duc de Choiseul, "and desired me to present her very humble respects to your Majesty."

"So much the worse!" said the king; and he turned his back on the duke. In doing so, he found himself face to face with the Prince de Guéménée.

"And the Princesse de Guéménée," said he, "where is she? Have you not brought her, Prince?"

"It was impossible, Sire! The princess is ill; when I went for her I found her in bed."

"Oh, so much the worse! so much the worse!" said the king. "Ah, here is the marshal! Good evening, Duke."

The old courtier bowed with all the suppleness of a youth.

"*You* are not ill, at least!" said the king, loud enough for De Choiseul and De Guéménée to hear him.

"Whenever, Sire, I have in prospect the happiness of seeing your Majesty, I am perfectly well," replied Richelieu.

"But," said the king, looking round, "I do not see your daughter, the Comtesse d'Egmont; how comes it that she is not here?"

The duke's features assumed an expression of deep regret. "Alas! Sire," he said, "my poor daughter is really not able to lay her humble homage at your Majesty's feet, — this evening, above all others; she is ill, Sire, ill!"

"So much the worse!" said the king. "Ill, — the Comtesse d'Egmont, the healthiest person in France! So much the worse, so much the worse!" and the king left the marshal as he had left M. de Choiseul and M. de Guéménée. Then he completed the circuit of the salon, and particularly complimented the Maréchale de Mirepoix, who did not feel altogether at her ease.

"You see what the price of treachery is," whispered the

marshal in her ear. "To-morrow you will be loaded with honors, while we — I shudder to think of it!" and he sighed.

"But I think you have rather betrayed the Choiseuls yourself, since you are here; and yet you swore — "

"For my daughter! for my poor Septimanie, Marchioness! She is disgraced for being too faithful!"

"To her father!" replied the marchioness.

The marshal pretended not to hear this remark, which might have passed for an epigram. "Do you not think," said he, "that the king is uneasy?"

"I think he has reason to be so; it is a quarter past ten."

"True; and the countess not here! Shall I tell you what I think?"

"Yes."

"I have fears!"

"Fears about what?"

"Fears that something disagreeable may have happened to that poor countess! You ought to know something about that."

"I! how should I know?"

"Yes; you were up to the neck in the conspiracy."

"Well, I may tell you in confidence, Marshal, that I cannot help sharing your fears!"

"Oh, our friend the duchess is a fierce antagonist! She has fled, and, like the Parthians, she wounds in fleeing. See how restless M. de Choiseul is, although he wishes to appear calm; he cannot stay a moment in one position, and he keeps his eye always on the king. Come, confess it! they have contrived something."

"I know nothing of it, Duke; but, like you, I have suspicions!"

"But what can they gain by their plot?"

"Time, my dear Marshal; and you know the proverb,

'He who gains time, gains all.' To-morrow something may occur to put off the presentation *sine die*. The dauphiness may reach Compiègne to-morrow instead of four days hence; perhaps they wished only to gain to-morrow."

"Do you know, Marchioness, this little tale of yours has all the appearance of truth? There is no sign of her coming."

"And see, the king is becoming impatient!"

"That is the third time he has approached the window; he is really suffering."

"Things will be much worse presently."

"How so?"

"It is twenty minutes past ten, is it not?"

"Yes."

"Then I may now tell you —"

"What?"

The marchioness looked around, then whispered, "She will not come."

"Oh, heavens! but, Marchioness, it will be a scandalous affair."

"Matter for a criminal process, — capital; for there is in this affair — I have it from good authority — robbery, abduction, treason even, if they choose to call it so. The Choiseuls have staked all to gain everything."

"Very imprudent in them."

"Of course; their passion has blinded them."

"You see what an advantage we have over them in not being governed by our passions; we are cool, and can look at things calmly."

"Observe, the king is going again to the window."

Gloomy, anxious, and irritated, Louis had indeed drawn near a window, leaned his head on a carved frame, and pressed his forehead to the cool glass. Meanwhile the conversation of the courtiers sounded like the rustling of the leaves of a forest before a tempest. All eyes wandered

from the king to the clock, and from the clock to the king. The half-hour struck; the clear, vibrating sound died away in the vast salon.

Monsieur de Maupeou approached the king. "Delightful weather, Sire," said he, timidly.

"Very fine, very fine! Do you understand anything of this matter, Monsieur de Maupeou?"

"Of what, Sire?"

"About this delay, — the poor countess!"

"She must be ill, Sire," replied the chancellor.

"I can comprehend that Madame de Grammont may be ill, that Madame de Guéménée may be ill, that Madame d'Egmont may be ill; but the countess ill, — it is inconceivable!"

"Sire, very great emotion often causes illness, and the countess's joy was so great —"

"Ah! there is no longer any hope," said Louis, shaking his head; "she will not come."

Although the king had uttered these words in a low voice, there was so profound a silence in the salon that every one heard them. No one, however, had time to reply, even in thought; for just then the noise of a carriage was heard in the court of the palace. All heads moved; eyes questioned eyes. The king went forward to the middle of the salon, that through the open doors he might see the whole length of the gallery.

"I am afraid," whispered the marchioness to the marshal, with a meaning smile, "that some bad news is coming."

But suddenly the king's face brightened, and his eyes flashed with pleasure.

"The Comtesse Dubarry! the Comtesse de Béarn!" cried the usher to the grand master of the ceremonies.

These two names made all hearts beat, but with diverse

emotions. A crowd of courtiers, impelled by ungovernable curiosity, drew near the king. Madame de Mirepoix was nearest him ; clasping her hands, she exclaimed, as if ready to fall down and worship, "Oh, how beautiful she is ! how beautiful she is !"

The king turned toward her with a gracious smile.

"She is not a woman," said Richelieu, "she is a fairy."

The king sent the remainder of the smile in the direction of the old courtier.

In fact, the countess never had appeared more lovely. Never had such a perfect representation of gentle agitation and modesty, never had a more charming figure or more noble carriage, graced the queen's salon at Versailles, which, nevertheless, as we have said, was the salon of presentations. Lovely in the extreme, dressed richly but without display, her hair especially splendidly arranged and adorned, the countess advanced, conducted by Madame de Béarn, who, notwithstanding the frightful pain she suffered, did not limp or give the slightest sign of discomfort; yet every movement caused the fibres of her frame to quiver, while from her dry and fevered cheeks the rouge dropped off atom by atom.

Every eye was fixed upon the pair who presented such a strange contrast. The old lady, her neck uncovered as in the time of her youth, her headdress standing up a foot above her head, and her large eyes glittering in their deep sockets like those of an osprey, seemed, in her splendid dress and with her skeleton appearance, the type of the past leading forward the present. So striking was the contrast that it seemed to the king as if his favorite had never looked so beautiful as now, when receiving her from the hand of the old Comtesse de Béarn.

Just as the countess, according to the etiquette, sank on her knee to kiss the king's hand, Louis seized her arm,

raised her up, and in a few words rewarded her for all she had suffered during the last fortnight. "You at my feet, Countess!" said he. "It is I who should be, and who always wish to be, at yours." Then he extended his arms to her, following the usual ceremonial; but on this occasion the embrace was not a pretended but a real one.

"You have a lovely goddaughter, Madame," said the king to the Comtesse de Béarn; "but she has as noble a chaperon, and one whom I rejoice to see again in my court."

The old lady bowed.

"Go and pay your respects to my daughters," whispered the king to Madame Dubarry, "and show them that you know how to make a reverence. I hope you will have cause to be satisfied with their reception of you."

The two ladies advanced in the space which was formed around them, while the eager looks of all followed every movement which they made. The king's three daughters, seeing them approach, rose as if moved by springs, and remained standing. Their father fixed a look on them which commanded them to be polite. The princesses, a little agitated, returned Madame Dubarry's reverence, which she made much lower than etiquette demanded; and this they thought such good taste that they embraced her as the king had done, and delighted him by their cordiality.

From that moment the countess's success became a triumph, and the slower and less adroit courtiers had to wait an hour before they could make their bows to the queen of the occasion.

She, without bitterness, anger, or a desire to retaliate, received all advances favorably, and seemed to forget the treachery practised against her. Nor was this mere pretence; for her heart was too full of joy to be anything

but magnanimous, or to have room for a single unamiable feeling.

Marshal Richelieu showed a knowledge of tactics worthy of the victor of Mahon. While the common courtiers waited in their places the result of the presentation, in order to decide whether they should offer incense to the idol or turn their backs on her, he took up a position behind the countess's chair, like a flugelman who serves as a guide by which to deploy a troop of cavalry on a given point. The result was that at last he found himself close to Madame Dubarry, without being troubled by the crowd. Madame de Mirepoix knew that her old friend had been successful in war; she therefore imitated his tactics, and gradually drew her seat near that of the favorite.

Conversations were now established among the different groups, and the countess was criticised from head to foot. She, sustained by the love of the king, by the gracious reception of the princesses, and by the support of the Comtesse de Béarn, looked less timidly on the men surrounding the king, and, sure of her position, sought out her enemies among the women. An opaque body interrupted her view.

"Ah! M. le Duc," said she, "I was obliged to come here in order to meet you."

"How so, Madame?"

"Yes, it is something like eight days since I have seen you either at Versailles or in Paris or at Luciennes."

"I was preparing myself for the pleasure of seeing you here this evening," replied the old courtier.

"You foresaw that I should be here?"

"I was certain of it."

"Oh, Marshal, you knew it, and you did not tell me, your friend, who knew nothing about it?"

"What, Madame! you did not know that you were to be here?"

"No; I was like Æsop when a magistrate arrested him in the street. 'Where are you going?' said the magistrate. 'I don't know,' replied the fabulist. 'Then you shall go to prison,' the other replied. 'You see plainly,' said Æsop, 'that I did not know where I was going.' In like manner, Duke, I had some idea that I should go to Versailles, but I was not sure. That is why you would have done me a great service had you come and told me that I should be here. But you will come to see me now, will you not?"

"Madame," replied Richelieu, without appearing to be moved by her raillery, "I really do not understand how it was that you were not sure of being here."

"I will tell you, — it was because snares were laid on all sides for me," and she looked steadily at him; but he bore her look without wincing.

"Snares! Good heavens! How could that be?"

"First, they stole my hairdresser."

"Stole your hairdresser?"

"Yes."

"But why did you not inform me? I could have sent you, — but let us speak low, if you please, — I could have sent you a treasure; my daughter, Madame d'Egmont, found him out. He is an artist quite superior to all others, even to the royal hairdressers, — my little Léonard."

"Léonard?" cried Madame Dubarry.

"Yes, a young man whom she hides from every one. But you have no reason to complain, Countess, — your hair is charmingly dressed; and singularly enough, the design is exactly like the sketch which the Comtesse d'Egmont ordered from Boucher for her own headdress,

and which she intended to use this evening, had she not been ill. Poor Septimanie!"

The countess started, and again fixed a searching look upon the marshal; but he remained smiling and impenetrable. "But pardon me, Countess, for interrupting you," said he; "you were speaking of snares."

"Yes, after having carried off my hairdresser, they stole my dress, — a most beautiful dress."

"How shocking! However, it was not of much consequence, as you had another dress so wonderfully beautiful as that you wear. It is Chinese silk, is it not, with flowers embroidered on it? Well, if you had applied to me in your trouble, as you must always do in the future, I could have sent you a dress which my daughter had ordered, so like that that I could swear it was the same."

Madame Dubarry seized both the duke's hands, for she now began to suspect who was the enchanter who had befriended her in her difficulties. "Do you know in whose carriage I came, Marshal?" said she.

"In your own, no doubt."

"No; they stole my carriage as well as my hairdresser."

"Why, it was a regular ambuscade! In whose carriage, then, did you come?"

"Will you tell me first what the Comtesse d'Egmont's carriage is like?"

"I think that for this evening she had ordered one lined with white satin; but there was not time to paint the coat-of-arms."

"Yes," exclaimed the countess, "and they substituted a rose instead! Marshal, Marshal, you are an adorable man!" and she held out to him both her hands, which he covered with kisses. All at once he perceived that her hands trembled.

"What is the matter, Countess?" inquired he, looking round.

"Marshal," said the countess, with an alarmed air, "who is that man near the Prince de Guéménée?"

"In a Prussian uniform?"

"Yes, — the dark man with black eyes, and such an expressive countenance."

"He is some officer of rank, Countess, whom his Prussian Majesty has sent, no doubt, to do honor to your presentation."

"Do not jest, Marshal; I know that man. He was in France three or four years ago; I have sought him everywhere, but could never discover him."

"I think you must be mistaken, Countess. He is the Comte de Fenix, a foreigner, and arrived in France only yesterday or the day before."

"Observe how he looks at me."

"Every one looks at you; you are so beautiful."

"He bows to me; he bows to me! — do you see him?"

"Every one bows to you, — at least all who have not already done so."

But the countess, who seemed greatly agitated, paid no attention to the duke's gallant speeches, but kept her eyes riveted on the stranger who had attracted her attention, and as if involuntarily, she abandoned her interlocutor, and advanced a few steps toward the unknown. The king, who had kept her in view, observed this movement, and thought that she desired to be near him; and as etiquette had been sufficiently observed by his keeping so long from her side, he approached to congratulate her on her success. Her thoughts were, however, too much engaged to be turned from their object. "Sire," said she, "who is that Prussian officer with his back to the Prince de Guéménée?"

"And who is looking at us at this moment?" asked the king.

"Yes."

"That strongly marked face, that square head, framed as it were in the gold collar?"

"Yes, yes, precisely."

"He is an accredited agent of my cousin of Prussia, — some philosopher like himself, I think. I desired him to be here this evening, as I wished Prussian philosophy to enhance, by its ambassador, the triumph of Cotillon III."

"But what is his name, Sire?"

"Let me think, — ah, yes! — the Comte de Fenix."

"It is he," she murmured, — "yes, I am sure it is he."

The king waited a few moments, in order to give Madame Dubarry time to ask further questions if she wished to do so; but finding that she did not speak, he said in a loud voice, "Ladies, her Royal Highness the Dauphiness will arrive to-morrow at Compiègne; we shall meet her precisely at noon. All the ladies who have been *presented* will go, except, however, those who are ill; for the journey will be fatiguing, and her Royal Highness would be sorry to aggravate their indisposition." As the king pronounced these words, he looked sternly at the Duc de Choiseul, the Prince de Guéménée, and the Maréchal de Richelieu. There was a profound silence; every one understood the meaning of the royal words, — they meant disgrace.

"Sire," said Madame Dubarry, who had remained near the king, "may I request your gracious pardon for the Comtesse d'Egmont?"

"Why so, may I ask?"

"Because she is the daughter of the Duc de Richelieu, who is my most faithful friend."

"Richelieu?"

"I am certain, Sire."

"I will do what you wish, Countess," said the king.

The king then approached the marshal, who had watched every movement of the countess's lips, and if he had not heard her words, had at least divined their meaning.

"I hope, my dear Marshal," said the king, "that the Comtesse d'Egmont will be better to-morrow?"

"Certainly, Sire; if your Majesty wishes, she will even come out this evening." And Richelieu made a bow which expressed at once respect and gratitude.

The king then whispered a word in the countess's ear. "Sire," she replied, with a reverence accompanied by a charming smile, "I am your Majesty's obedient servant."

The king, by a wave of his hand, saluted all the assembly and retired. Scarcely had he crossed the threshold when the countess's eyes turned again with increasing anxiety on the singular man who had before attracted her so strongly. This man bowed like the rest as the king passed along, but even as he bowed there was something haughty, almost threatening, in the expression of his countenance. When Louis XV. had disappeared, he made way for himself through the different groups, and stopped within two paces of Madame Dubarry. The countess, attracted by an inexpressible curiosity, made one step forward, so that, as the unknown bowed to her, he could say in a low voice and so as not to be overheard, "Do you know me again, Madame?"

"Yes, Monsieur; you are the prophet of the Place Louis XV."

The stranger fixed his clear and penetrating glance on her. "Well, did I speak falsely, Madame, when I predicted that you would be queen of France?"

"No, Monsieur; your prediction is accomplished, or at least nearly so, and I am ready to fulfil my part of the engagement. Speak, Monsieur, what do you desire?"

"This place is inconvenient, Madame; besides, the moment for me to make my request has not arrived."

"At whatever moment that request shall be presented, you will find me ready to grant it."

"May I, at any time, in any place, at any hour, be admitted to your presence?"

"I promise it."

"Thanks."

"But under what name shall I expect you, — under that of the Comte de Fenix?"

"No, under that of Joseph Balsamo."

"Joseph Balsamo," repeated the countess to herself, while the mysterious stranger disappeared among the groups of courtiers, — "Joseph Balsamo; I shall not forget it!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

COMPIÈGNE.

THE following morning Compiègne awoke transported, intoxicated with joy; or rather, to be more exact, Compiègne had not slept. The evening before, the first detachment of the king's guards had entered the town, and while the officers found their proper quarters, the magistrates, assisted by the manager of the festivities, prepared the town for the distinguished honor which was to be conferred on it. Triumphal arches composed of evergreens, roses, and lilacs, inscriptions in Latin, French, and German, compositions in verse and prose, occupied the sub-magistracy of Picardy until morning. Young girls dressed in white according to immemorial usage; municipal officers clad in black; monks attired in gray; the clergy in their richest vestures; officers and soldiers in their new uniforms, — all were at their posts, ready to advance on the first signal of the arrival of the dauphiness.

The dauphin had arrived incognito, with his two brothers, about eleven o'clock the night before. Very early in the morning he mounted his horse, as if he had been a private gentleman, and followed by his brothers, the Comte de Provence and the Comte d'Artois, the one fifteen and the other thirteen years of age, he galloped off in the direction of Ribecourt, following the road by which the dauphiness was to approach. It was not to the young prince, we must confess, that this gallant idea had first occurred; it was suggested by his tutor, Monsieur de La-

vauguyon, who had been desired by the king to instruct his august pupil in all the duties which the next twenty-four hours would impose upon him. The tutor, therefore, had thought it right, in order to maintain the honor of the monarchy, to cause him to follow the traditional example of the kings of his race — Henry IV., Louis XIII., Louis XIV., and Louis XV., — who had desired to see their future wives on the high road, without any of the illusions of dress and ornament, and unprepared for that examination.

Mounted on swift horses, the three brothers made three or four leagues in half an hour; the dauphin had set out serious, the two others laughing. At half-past eight they returned, — the dauphin still serious, the Comte de Provence almost ill-tempered, the Comte d'Artois more gay than before. The dauphin was uneasy, the Comte de Provence envious, and the Comte d'Artois enchanted, about one and the same thing, — the beauty of the dauphiness. The grave, the jealous, and the careless dispositions of the three princes were exhibited in the different expressions of their faces.

At ten o'clock the look-out employed to watch for the expected train announced that a white flag was displayed on the steeple of the church of Cleves, which was to be the signal that the dauphiness was approaching. The bells of the church began to ring, and were answered by the firing of cannon.

At that instant, as if he had waited only for this signal, the king entered Compiègne in a carriage drawn by eight horses, between a double file of his body-guards, and followed by the immense train of the carriages of the court. The guards and dragoons, at a gallop, opened a passage through the crowd, which was divided between two feelings, — desire to see the king, and curiosity with regard to the dauphiness. One hundred carriages drawn by four

horses, extending nearly a league in length, contained four hundred ladies, and as many lords, of the noblest families of France. These hundred carriages were escorted by outriders, footmen, and pages. The gentlemen of the king's household were on horseback, and formed a brilliant army, glittering like a sea of velvet and gold, waving plumes, and silk, in the midst of the dust raised by the horses' feet. They halted an instant at Compiègne, then slowly proceeded to the spot agreed on for the meeting, and marked by a cross near the village of Magny. All the young nobility thronged around the dauphin, and all the old around the king. On the other side, the dauphiness was also slowly approaching the appointed place.

At length the two parties met. On both sides the courtiers left their carriages; two only remained occupied, — that of the king and that of the dauphiness. The door of the dauphiness's carriage was open, and the young archduchess sprang lightly to the ground and advanced to the royal carriage. The king, on perceiving his daughter-in-law, ordered the door to be opened, and hurriedly got out.

The dauphiness had calculated her time so well that just as the king put his foot to the ground she was close to him, and she sank on her knee. He raised the young princess and embraced her tenderly, yet casting a look upon her which made her blush.

"His Royal Highness the dauphin," said the king, introducing his grandson, who had kept behind the dauphiness, without being perceived by her, at least formally. The dauphiness made a gracious reverence; he bowed, in his turn, blushing. After the dauphin came his two brothers, then the three princesses; the dauphiness had something pleasing to say to each.

While these introductions were going on, Madame Dubarry stood anxiously behind the princesses. Would she be thought of, would she be forgotten?

After the introduction of Madame Sophie, the last of the king's daughters, there was a pause; every breath was suspended. The king seemed to hesitate; the dauphiness seemed to expect some incident concerning which she had been previously warned. The king looked round, and seeing the countess within reach, took her hand; all near him stepped back, and he found himself in the centre of a circle with the dauphiness. "The Comtesse Dubarry," said he, "my very dear friend."

The dauphiness turned pale, yet a gracious smile appeared on her white lips. "Your Majesty is happy," said she, "in having a friend who is so charming; and I am not surprised at the attachment which she inspires."

Every one heard these words with astonishment amounting to stupefaction. It was evident that the dauphiness followed the instructions of the court of Austria; perhaps the very words she repeated were dictated by Maria Theresa.

The Duc de Choiseul then thought that his presence was necessary. He advanced, to be presented in his turn; but the king made a sign with his head, the trumpets sounded, the drums beat, the cannon were fired. His Majesty took the young princess's hand to conduct her to her carriage. She passed close to the Duc de Choiseul. Did she see him, or did she not? It was impossible to say; but it is certain that she made no sign of recognition. At the moment when she entered her carriage the bells of the town pealed out, and their clear tones were heard above all the other festive sounds. Madame Dubarry returned radiant to her carriage. There was a halt for about ten minutes while the king was re-entering his

carriage and giving his orders to return to Compiègne. In the mean time conversation, which had been suspended from respect or by the interest of the scene, again became general. Dubarry drew near his sister's carriage; she received him with smiles, expecting his congratulations.

"Jeanne," said he, pointing to a gentleman on horseback, who was talking at the door of a carriage in the train of the dauphiness, "do you know that young man?"

"No," replied the countess; "but do you know what the dauphiness said when the king presented me to her?"

"I am not thinking of that. That young man is the Chevalier Philippe de Taverney."

"He who wounded you?"

"Yes; and do you know who that beautiful creature is with whom he is talking?"

"The young girl so pale and so majestic?"

"Yes, she at whom the king is looking at this moment, — I think he is asking the dauphiness her name."

"Well, what then?"

"That young girl is Taverney's sister."

"Ah!" exclaimed the countess.

"Jeanne, I don't know why, but I think you have as much reason to fear the sister as I the brother."

"You are a fool!"

"No, I am tolerably wise; and I shall at all events look after the youth."

"Well, then, I shall keep an eye on the girl."

"Hush! here is your friend, the Duc de Richelieu."

The marshal drew near, shaking his head.

"What is the matter, my dear Marshal?" inquired the countess, with her most fascinating smile. "You seem dissatisfied with something."

"Don't you think, Countess," said the duke, "that we

all seem very grave, not to say sorrowful, for such a joyous occasion? Formerly, I know, we were much more gay when we went to meet a princess who was as amiable and as beautiful as this, — the mother of his Royal Highness the Dauphin. Was it because we were younger then?"

"No," answered a voice behind the marshal, "no, my dear Marshal, but because the monarchy was not so old."

"God damn me!" exclaimed the marshal, "it is the Baron de Taverney! Countess, one of my oldest friends, for whom I solicit your kindness, — the Baron de Taverney Maison Rouge."

"The father," whispered Jean and the countess to each other, as they bowed in saluting the baron.

"To your carriages, gentlemen, to your carriages!" cried the major of the guards commanding the escort.

The two old gentlemen bowed to the countess and to the viscount, and both entered the same carriage, delighted to meet once more after so long a separation.

"And now," said the viscount, "shall I tell you another thing, my dear? I have as little love for the father as for the children."

"What a pity," replied the countess, "that that cub, Gilbert, ran away! He was brought up in their house, and could have told us so much about them."

"Pshaw! we shall find him again, now that we have nothing else to think about."

Their conversation was interrupted by the starting of the carriages.

After having passed the night in Compiègne, the two courts (representing the evening of one era and the dawn of another) set out on the following day for Paris, — the yawning gulf which was to swallow them both!

CHAPTER XL.

THE PATRONESS AND THE PATRONIZED.

It is now time that we should return to Gilbert, of whose flight the reader has been made aware by an imprudent exclamation of his protectress, Mademoiselle Chon, but of whom we have since heard nothing.

Our philosopher had cooled very much in his admiration of his patroness from the moment that he had, during the preliminaries of the duel between Philippe de Taverney and Vicomte Jean, become aware that her name was Dubarry. Often at Taverney, when hidden by some hedge, he had followed Andrée and her father in their walks, he had heard the baron speak of Madame Dubarry. The old baron's hatred toward her — in him altogether selfish, and not inconsistent with his vices and principles already described — had found a certain degree of sympathy in Gilbert's heart. This arose partly from the fact that Mademoiselle Andrée never protested in any way against the evil that the baron spoke against Madame Dubarry; for we ought to say that the name of Madame Dubarry was a name much hated in France. But what had completed Gilbert's conviction, and placed him entirely on the baron's side, was that more than once he had heard Nicole exclaim, "Ah! if I were Madame Dubarry!"

During the journey Chon was too much occupied with matters of a more serious import to pay any attention to the change of feeling which the knowledge of who his

travelling companions were had produced in Gilbert. She reached Versailles, therefore, thinking only how the viscount's wound, since it would not redound to his honor, might be turned to his greatest profit.

As to Gilbert, scarcely had he entered the capital, — if not of France, at least of the French monarchy, — when he forgot every unpleasant thought, and gave free scope to his enthusiastic admiration. Versailles, so majestic and stately, with its lofty trees already beginning to show symptoms of decay, touched his heart with that religious sadness which poetic minds always experience in contemplating the mighty works of Nature, or those erected by the perseverance of man.

In consequence of this impression, — a very novel one to Gilbert, and one against which his innate pride struggled in vain, — he became silent and submissive, overcome by wonder and admiration. He was crushed by his consciousness of inferiority and poverty. He found himself very meanly clad in comparison with those noblemen bedizened with gold and ribbons, very small in comparison with the Swiss footmen, very timid when in his hob-nailed shoes he had to walk over the shining marble or polished inlaid floors. Then he perceived that the protection of his patroness was indispensable to him, unless he wished to sink into absolute nothingness. He drew near her that it might be seen he belonged to her; yet it was for the very reason that he needed her that he disliked her.

We are already aware that Madame Dubarry occupied at Versailles the magnificent suite of rooms formerly inhabited by the Princesse Adélaïde. The gold, the marble, the perfumes, the carpets, the hangings, at first intoxicated Gilbert, sensuous by instinct, philosopher by force of will; and it was only after these had become somewhat familiar

to him that his understanding, dazzled by the reflected light which so many marvels cast on it, roused itself to a clear perception of surrounding objects, and he became aware that he was in a little attic-room hung with serge; that some one had placed before him a basin of soup, some cold mutton, and a custard; and that the servant who brought these eatables had said, with the tone of a master, "Remain here!" and then had left him.

But Gilbert soon found that the situation had its advantages. From the window of his garret he could see the park of Versailles, studded with marble statues, and ornamented with fountains. Beyond were the dense and lofty summits of the trees, rolling like a sea of verdure; and farther still, the checkered plains and the blue horizon of the neighboring mountains. The only subject which occupied Gilbert's mind while eating his dinner was that, like the greatest lords of France, without being either a courtier or a lackey, without having been introduced there either by birth or baseness, he was living in Versailles in the palace of the king.

His dinner, too, was an excellent one, when compared with those to which he had been accustomed. When it was over, he returned to his contemplation at the window. Meantime Chon had, as the reader may remember, joined her sister; had whispered that her business with Madame de Béarn was happily concluded; and then had related aloud the accident which their brother had met with at Lachaussée. This accident, although it made a great noise at first, was lost, as the reader has seen, in that great gulf which swallowed up so many things much more important, — the king's indifference.

Gilbert had fallen into one of those reveries to which he often gave way while meditating on what was beyond his comprehension, or on what was impracticable for him to

accomplish, when he was told that his patroness requested his presence. He took his hat, brushed it, compared by a glance his old worn coat with the new one of the footman, and saying to himself that that of the latter was a livery coat, he followed him. Yet, notwithstanding this philosophic reflection, he could not help blushing with shame to observe how little he resembled the men who elbowed him, and how much out of keeping he was with everything around him.

Chon was descending to the court at the same time as himself, — with this difference, that she took the grand staircase, while he descended by a staircase narrow and steep, resembling a ladder. A carriage was waiting for them. It was a kind of low phaeton, containing seats for four persons, and resembled that historical vehicle in which the Great King took to ride, at the same time, Madame de Montespan and Madame de Fontanges, and sometimes even the queen.

Chon got in and took the front seat, with a large box and a little dog beside her; the other seat was for Gilbert and an intendant called M. Grange. Gilbert hastened to take the place behind Chon, in order to keep up his dignity; the intendant, without thinking there was any degradation in the matter, placed himself behind the box and the dog.

As Mademoiselle Chon, like all who inhabited Versailles, felt joyous on leaving the great palace to inhale the air of the woods and the meadows, she became communicative, and was scarcely out of the town when she turned half-round and said, "Well, what do you think of Versailles, Monsieur le Philosophe?"

"It is very beautiful, Madame; but are we leaving it already?"

"Yes; now we are going to our own home."

"That is to say, to *your* home, Madame," said Gilbert, with the tone of a half-tamed bear.

"That is what I meant. I shall introduce you to my sister; try to please her. All the greatest noblemen in France are only too happy if they can succeed in doing so. By the by, Grange, you must order a complete suit for this boy."

Gilbert blushed up to the eyes.

"What kind of suit, Madame?" asked the intendant; "the usual livery?"

Gilbert half started from his seat. "Livery?" he cried, with a fierce look at the intendant.

Chon burst into a laugh. "No," said she; "you will order — But no matter, I will tell you another time. I have an idea, on which I wish for my sister's opinion. But take care to have the suit ready at the same time as Zamore's."

"Very well, Madame."

"Do you know Zamore?" asked Chon, turning to Gilbert, who began to be very much alarmed by the conversation.

"No, Madame, I have not that honor," he replied.

"He will be a young companion of yours; he is going to be governor of the château of Luciennes. Endeavor to gain his friendship; for Zamore is a good creature, in spite of his color."

Gilbert was about to ask of what color he was; but recollecting the reproof he had already received on the subject of curiosity, he refrained, for fear of another reprimand.

"I shall try," he answered, with a dignified smile.

They reached Luciennes. The philosopher observed everything, — the road, lately planted, the shady slopes, the great aqueduct, which resembled a work of the Romans, the dense wood of chestnut-trees, the varied and

magnificent prospect of plains and woods stretching away on both sides of the Seine to Maisons.

"This, then," said he to himself, "is the country-seat which cost France so much, according to the Baron de Taverney."

Bounding dogs and eager domestics ran out to welcome Chon, and interrupted Gilbert in the midst of his aristocratico-philosophical reflections.

"Has my sister arrived?" asked Chon.

"No, Madame, but there are visitors waiting for her."

"Who are they?"

"The chancellor, the minister of police, and the Duc d'Aiguillon."

"Well, run quickly and open my sister's private cabinet, and tell her when she arrives that I am there; do you understand? Oh, Sylvie," she added, addressing a maid who had taken from her the box and the little dog, "give the box and Misapouf to Grange, and take my little philosopher to Zamore."

Sylvie looked all round, doubtless to find out what sort of animal Chon was speaking of; but her eyes and those of her mistress happening to rest on Gilbert at the same moment, Chon made a sign that the young man was the person in question.

"Come!" said Sylvie.

Gilbert, more and more surprised at all that he saw, followed the maid, while Chon, light as a bird, disappeared by a side door of the pavilion.

Had it not been for the commanding tone in which Chon had addressed her, Gilbert would have taken Mademoiselle Sylvie to be a great lady rather than a lady's-maid. In fact, her dress resembled Andrée's much more than it did Nicole's. She took him by the hand with a gracious smile; for her mistress's words showed that, if

not an object of affection, he was the object at least of some new caprice.

"What is your name, Monsieur?" said she.

"Gilbert, Mademoiselle," replied the young man, in a gentle voice.

"Well, Monsieur, I am going to introduce you to Seigneur Zamore."

"To the governor of the château of Luciennes?"

"Yes, to the governor."

Gilbert pulled down his sleeves, dusted his coat a little, and wiped his hands with his handkerchief. He was in reality rather intimidated at the idea of appearing before so important a personage; but he recalled Chon's remark, "Zamore is a good creature," and recovered his courage. He was already the friend of a countess and a viscount; he was going to be the friend of a governor. "Well," thought he, "surely people calumniate the court; it is certainly easy enough to find friends in it, — I, at least, have found every one kind and hospitable."

Sylvie threw open the door of an ante-room, which, from its splendor, might rather have been supposed a boudoir. The panels of the walls were of tortoise-shell, inlaid with copper gilt; and one might have imagined himself in the atrium of Lucullus, but that that ancient Roman used pure gold to decorate his walls.

There, in an immense arm-chair, half-buried in cushions, sitting cross-legged and gnawing chocolate cakes, reposed Seigneur Zamore, whom we already know, but whom Gilbert till now had never seen. The effect which the governor of Luciennes produced on the mind of the philosopher was rather curiously depicted in his face. He stared with all his might at the strange being, for it was the first time he had ever seen a negro. "Oh, oh!" he exclaimed, "what is that?"

As for Zamore, he did not raise his head, but continued to munch his cakes, rolling his eyes in an ecstasy of pleasure.

"That," said Sylvie, "is Seigneur Zamore."

"That person?" said Gilbert, almost dumb with amazement.

"Yes, to be sure," answered Sylvie, laughing in spite of herself at the turn the scene was taking.

"He the governor?" continued Gilbert. "That ape the governor of the château of Luciennes? Oh, Mademoiselle, you are certainly jesting with me!"

At these words Zamore raised his head and showed his white teeth. "Me governor," said he; "me not ape."

Gilbert looked from Zamore to Sylvie, and his glance, at first uneasy, became wrathful when the young woman, in spite of all her efforts, burst into a fit of laughter. As for Zamore, grave and solemn as an Indian fetish, he plunged his black claw into a satin bag, and took out a handful of his cakes. At this moment the door opened, and the intendant entered, followed by a tailor. "Here," said he, pointing to Gilbert, "is the person for whom you are to make the suit; take the measure according to the directions I gave you."

Gilbert mechanically submitted his arms and shoulders to be measured, while Sylvie and Grange were talking in another part of the room, and at every word of the intendant Mademoiselle Sylvie laughed louder and louder.

"Oh, it will be delightful!" she said. "And will he wear a pointed cap, like Sganarello?"

Gilbert heard no more; he rudely pushed the tailor aside, and absolutely refused to submit to the rest of the ceremony. He knew nothing about Sganarello; but the name, and particularly Sylvie's mirth, plainly declared that he was some eminently ridiculous personage.

"It is of no consequence," said the intendant to the tailor; "don't compel him! I suppose you can do very well with the measure you have taken."

"Certainly," replied the tailor, "for width does no harm in such suits. I shall make it very wide."

Whereupon Sylvie, the intendant, and the tailor walked off, leaving Gilbert with the little negro, who continued to gnaw his cakes and roll his great eyes. What an enigma was all this to the poor country lad! What fears, what anguish, did the philosopher experience, in seeing his dignity as a man evidently more compromised at Luciennes than ever it had been at Taverney!

However, he tried to talk to Zamore. It occurred to him that he might be some Indian prince, such as he had read of in the romances of M. Crebillon the younger. But the Indian prince, instead of replying, made the circuit of the apartment from mirror to mirror, admiring his splendid clothes like a bride in her wedding-dress. After that he got astride on a chair with wheels, and impelling it with his feet, he whirled round the ante-chamber a dozen times with a velocity which showed that he had made a profound study of that ingenious exercise.

Suddenly a bell rang. Zamore jumped up from his chair, and hurried through one of the doors in the direction of the sound. This promptness in obeying the silvery tinkling convinced Gilbert that Zamore was not a prince. For a moment he entertained the idea of following him; but on reaching the end of the passage which led into a salon he saw so many blue ribbons and red ribbons, guarded by lackeys so bold, impudent, and noisy, that he felt a chill run through his veins, and, with the cold perspiration on his forehead, he returned to his ante-room.

An hour passed. Zamore did not return; Sylvie was seen no more. Any human face would have seemed then to Gilbert better than none, were it even that of the dreaded tailor who was to be the instrument of the unknown humiliation with which he was threatened. Just at that moment the door by which he had entered the room opened, and a footman appeared and said, "Come!"

CHAPTER XLI.

THE PHYSICIAN AGAINST HIS WILL.

GILBERT was reluctant to obey a footman; nevertheless, he lost no time in following him, for he thought that now there was some prospect of a change in his condition, and it seemed to him that any change must be for the better.

Chon, now completely her own mistress, after having acquainted her sister with the whole affair of the Comtesse de Béarn, was breakfasting very much at her ease, in a charming morning-dress, beside a window shaded by acacias and chestnut-trees. She was eating with an excellent appetite, justified, as Gilbert observed, by the attractiveness of the pheasant and truffles placed before her.

The philosopher having entered the apartment, looked around to discover his place at the table; but there was no plate for him, and he was not even asked to sit down. Chon merely cast a glance on him; then, after swallowing a little glass of wine, as clear and yellow as a topaz, — "Well, my dear doctor," said she, "how have you got on with Zamore?"

"How have I got on with him?"

"Yes; I hope you have become acquainted with him."

"How could one make acquaintance with an animal like that, who never speaks, and who, when one speaks to him, only rolls his eyes and shows his teeth?"

"Really you frighten me!" said Chon, without stopping one moment in her repast, and without showing in

her countenance any emotion corresponding with her words. "Your friendship is difficult to gain, then?"

"Friendship presupposes equality, Mademoiselle."

"A noble maxim," said Chon. "Then you don't think yourself the equal of Zamore?"

"That is to say, I do not think him my equal," replied Gilbert.

"In truth," said Chon, as if talking to herself, "he is charming!" Then turning to Gilbert, she remarked his stately air. "So, my dear doctor," said she, "you do not easily bestow your affections?"

"No, Madame, not easily."

"Then I was mistaken when I thought you held me as your friend, and as a good friend too?"

"Madame," said Gilbert, very stiffly, "I naturally feel for you a liking, but —"

"Oh! a thousand thanks for your condescension! you really overwhelm me! And how long do you think, my scornful young gentleman, it would require to gain your affection?"

"A long time, Madame; and there are even persons who, whatever they did, could never gain it."

"Oh! then that explains the reason why after having been eighteen years in the Baron de Taverney's house, you left it all at once. The Taverneys were not so fortunate as to gain your affection, — that was it, was it not?"

Gilbert blushed.

"Well, you don't answer," continued Chon.

"I have nothing to reply, Madame, but that friendship and confidence must be merited."

"Oh! it appears, then, that your friends at Taverney did not merit your friendship and confidence?"

"Not all of them, Madame."

"Ah! and what had those done who were so unfortunate as not to please you?"

"I do not complain of them, Madame," he answered, proudly.

"Well, well. I perceive, Monsieur Gilbert, that I also am one of the unfortunates excluded from your confidence; yet, believe me, it is not for any want of a desire to obtain it, but through my not knowing the right means of doing so!"

Gilbert bit his lip.

"Well," she added, with an inquisitiveness which he felt must be for some object, "the Taverneys did not behave quite satisfactorily to you. Tell me, if you please, what was your position in their establishment?"

This was a rather embarrassing question, since Gilbert himself did not know what his position was at Taverney.

"Madame," said he, "I was — I was their confidential adviser."

At these words, which he pronounced with characteristic coolness and deliberation, Chon was seized with such a fit of laughter that she threw herself back in her chair.

"Do you doubt my words?" asked Gilbert, frowning.

"God forbid! Really, my dear friend, you are so fierce that one can scarcely venture to speak to you. I merely asked what sort of people the Taverneys were. Believe me, it was with no other intention than that of serving you, by assisting you to be revenged on them."

"If I am revenged, Madame, it must be by myself."

"All very well, — but we have a cause of complaint against the Taverneys ourselves; and as you have one, or perhaps indeed several, we are naturally allies."

"You are quite mistaken, Madame. Should I think of vengeance, mine could have no connection with yours. You speak of all the Taverneys, while I have differ-

ent shades of feeling toward different members of the family."

"The Chevalier Philippe de Taverney, for instance, — is he in the dark shades or the light shades?"

"I have nothing to say against M. Philippe. He never did me either good or ill. I neither love him nor hate him; I am quite indifferent to him."

"Then you would not give evidence before the king, or before the Duc de Choiseul, against M. Philippe de Taverney?"

"Give evidence about what?"

"About the duel with my brother."

"I should say all that I know about it, if I were called upon to give evidence."

"And what do you know about it?"

"The truth."

"But what do you call 'truth'? That is a very plastic word."

"No, not to the man who can distinguish between good and evil, between justice and injustice."

"I understand you, — justice is on the side of the Chevalier de Taverney, injustice on that of Vicomte Dubarry?"

"Yes, Madame," said Gilbert, "so I think, if I must speak conscientiously."

"So this is the creature I picked up on the highway!" said Chon, sharply; "this is my recompense from one who owes me his life!"

"That is to say, Madame, who does not owe you his death."

"It is all the same."

"On the contrary, Madame, it is very different."

"How different?"

"I do not owe my life to you, you merely prevented

your horses from depriving me of it, — besides, it was not you, but the postilion."

Chon fixed a penetrating look on the young logician who showed so little scruple in the choice of his terms. "I should have expected," said she, in a milder tone, and allowing a smile to steal over her features, "a little more gallantry from my travelling-companion who, on the journey, had my arm for a pillow, and my foot on his knee."

Chon was so seductive with that gentleness and familiarity that Gilbert forgot Zamore, the tailor, and the breakfast to which he had not been invited.

"Come, come, now we are more gracious," said Chon, caressing Gilbert's chin; "you will give evidence against Philippe de Taverney, will you not?"

"Oh! as to that, no," said Gilbert; "never!"

"And why not, you foolish fellow?"

"Because the viscount was in the wrong."

"And how was he in the wrong, if you please?"

"In insulting the dauphiness; while, on the contrary, the chevalier —"

"Well?"

"Was right in defending her."

"Oh, ho! then it appears you belong to the dauphiness's party?"

"No, I am only for justice."

"Hold your tongue, Gilbert; you are a fool! Do not let any one hear you talk in that way here."

"Then pray permit me to remain silent when I am questioned."

"In that case, let us change the subject."

Gilbert bowed, in token of assent.

"And now, my little friend," said the young lady, in a rather harsh tone of voice, "what do you intend to do here, if you refuse to make yourself agreeable?"

Must I perjure myself in order to make myself agreeable?"

"Perjure! where do you find all those grand words?"

"In the right of every man to be faithful to his conscience."

"Pshaw!" said Chon; "when we serve a master, the master takes all the responsibility."

"But I have no master," growled Gilbert.

"And in the way you are now acting, you little fool," said Chon, lazily rising, "you will never have a mistress. Well, answer my question. What do you mean to do here?"

"I did not think that I must study to be agreeable when I could be useful."

"You are mistaken; we can get useful people anywhere, — we are tired of them."

"Then I shall go away."

"You will go away?"

"Yes, of course. I did not ask to come here; I am therefore free."

"Free?" exclaimed Chon, who began to get angry at this resistance to her will, — a thing to which she was by no means accustomed. "Free! indeed you are not!"

Gilbert's brow contracted.

"Come, come!" said she, seeing by his frown that he would not easily renounce his freedom; "let us be friends. You are a handsome lad, and very virtuous, — which makes you very amusing, were it only for the contrast which you will present to everybody else about us. Only keep your love for the truth."

"I shall take care to keep it," said Gilbert.

"Yes; but we understand the word in two different senses. I mean, keep it to yourself, and don't exemplify

your worship in the corridors of Trianon or the antechambers of Versailles."

"Hum!" said Gilbert.

"There is no occasion for 'hum!' You are not so learned, my little philosopher, but that you may learn something from a woman; and let this be your first maxim: 'To hold your tongue is not to lie.' Remember that."

"But if any one questions me?"

"Who would question you, — are you mad, my friend? Who in the world would ever think about you but myself? You have not yet founded a school, I suppose, Monsieur le Philosophe? The species to which you belong is quite rare. You would have to search the highways and the hedges for disciples. You shall live with me; and within four times twenty-four hours I shall have transformed you into a perfect courtier."

"I doubt that," replied Gilbert, majestically.

Chon shrugged her shoulders.

Gilbert smiled.

"Now," said Chon, "to settle the matter at once, you have only to endeavor to please three persons."

"What three?"

"The king, my sister, and myself."

"What must I do to please?"

"Have you not seen Zamore?" asked the young lady, avoiding a direct reply.

"That negro?" said Gilbert, with the utmost contempt.

"Yes, that negro."

"What can I have in common with him?"

"Try to make a similarity of fortune, my little friend. That negro has already two thousand francs a year from the king's privy purse. He is to be appointed governor of Luciennes; and even those who laugh at his thick

lips and his black face call him 'Monsieur,' and even 'Monseigneur.'"

"I shall not be one of those," said Gilbert.

"Oh! I thought that the first principle of you philosophers was that all men are equal."

"That is the very reason that I shall not call Zamore 'Monseigneur.'"

Chon was beaten with her own weapons; it was her turn to bite her lips. "So you are not ambitious?" said she.

"Oh, yes, I am!" replied Gilbert, with sparkling eyes.

"And if I remember rightly, your ambition was to be a physician."

"I look upon the mission of soothing the pain and suffering of our fellow-creatures as the noblest in the world."

"Well, your dream shall be realized."

"How so?"

"You shall be a physician, — and the king's physician, even."

"I?" cried Gilbert, "I, who know not even the first principles of medical science? You jest, Madame."

"Well, and what does Zamore know about portcullises and drawbridges and counterscarps? He does not trouble his head about such things; yet that does not prevent his being governor of Luciennes, with all a governor's privileges."

"Ah, yes, yes, I understand!" said Gilbert, bitterly. "You have only one buffoon, and that is not sufficient. The king is getting tired, and wishes for another."

"There," said Chon, "you are putting on your long face again. You make yourself so ugly, my little man, it is really quite delightful to see you. Keep all those ridiculous faces till the wig is on your head and the sugar-loaf

hat over the wig; then, instead of being ugly, they will be comical."

Gilbert frowned again.

"I should think you might be glad of the post of the king's physician, when the Duc de Tresmes solicits that of my sister's monkey."

Gilbert made no answer. Chon applied to him the proverb, "Silence gives consent." "As a proof that you are in favor," said she, "you shall not eat with servants."

"Ah! thank you, Madame," replied Gilbert.

"I have already given orders to that effect."

"And where shall I eat?"

"With Zamore."

"I?"

"Yes, the king's governor and his physician may surely eat at the same table. You may go now and dine with him, if you wish."

"I am not hungry," answered Gilbert, rudely.

"Very well," said Chon, quietly; "you are not hungry now, but you will be in the evening."

Gilbert shook his head.

"To-morrow, then, or the day after to-morrow you may be. Oh! we know how to tame rebels here; and if you continue obstinate, we have Monsieur the Corrector of the Pages, who is devoted to us."

Gilbert shuddered and turned pale.

"Go now to Seigneur Zamore," said Chon, harshly. "You will be very well treated with him; his table is excellent. But no ingratitude, remember, or we shall teach you to be grateful!"

Gilbert let his head fall on his breast, — an invariable sign that instead of replying he had determined to act. The footman who had showed him to Chon's apartment waited at the door, and on Gilbert's dismissal conducted

him to a little dining-room adjoining the ante-room. Zamore was at table. Gilbert took his place at the table, but he could not be made to eat.

Three o'clock struck, Madame Dubarry set off for Paris. Chon, who was to join her there a short time after, gave instructions for the taming of her bear. An abundance of sugared delicacies were to be his reward if he became docile; threats, and at last the dungeon, if he continued rebellious.

At four o'clock a complete suit, such as that worn by the "physician against his will," was brought into Gilbert's chamber. There was the pointed cap, the wig, the black jacket, and the long black robe; in addition to these, they sent him a collar, a wand, and a large book. The footman who carried them in exhibited the various articles one by one. Gilbert betrayed no inclination to resist. Grange entered after the footman, and showed Gilbert how all the different parts of the dress should be worn.

Gilbert patiently listened, remarking only, "I thought that doctors formerly carried a little writing-case and a roll of paper."

"Yes, faith, he is right!" replied M. Grange. "Go and bring him a long writing-case, which he can hang at his girdle."

"With pen and paper," added Gilbert. "I must have my costume complete."

The footman hastened to execute the order, and at the same time to tell Chon how obliging Gilbert had become. Chon was so much delighted that she gave the messenger a little purse, with eight crowns in it, to hang with the writing-case at the girdle of this model physician.

"Thank you!" said Gilbert to the person who brought it. "Now may I be left alone to dress?"

"Well, make haste!" replied Grange, "so that Mademoiselle may see you before she goes to Paris."

"Half an hour!" said Gilbert; "I ask only half an hour!"

"You may take three quarters, if you like, my dear doctor!" said the intendant, shutting the door carefully, as if it had been that of his money-box.

Gilbert stole on tip-toe to the door, to be certain that the footsteps were dying away in the distance; then he glided to the window and looked down. There was a terrace about eighteen feet below him, covered with fine gravel, and bordered by lofty trees, which shaded the balconies of the windows.

Gilbert tore his long robe into three pieces, which he tied lengthwise together, placed the hat on the table, and near it the purse and the following note: —

MADAME, — Liberty is the first of blessings. Man's most sacred duty is to preserve it. You endeavor to enslave me; I emancipate myself.

GILBERT.

This letter he folded and addressed to Mademoiselle Chon; then he tied his twelve feet of serge to the bars of the window, slipped between them with the suppleness of an eel, and when at the end of his cord dropped down to the terrace, at the risk of breaking his neck. Though a little stunned by the fall, he lost not a moment in gaining the trees, among which he glided stealthily, and running as fast as his limbs would carry him, he disappeared in the direction of the forest of Ville d'Avray. When, at the end of half an hour, they came to seek for him, he was already far beyond their reach.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE OLD MAN.

GILBERT had avoided the highway through fear of pursuit; he glided from one plantation to another until he reached a sort of forest, and there he stopped. He had travelled a league and a half in about three quarters of an hour.

The fugitive looked around him, and finding himself quite alone, he felt so much courage that he thought he might venture nearer the highroad. He therefore turned in the direction which, according to his calculation of his position, he supposed would lead to Paris. But some horses, which he saw near the village of Roquencourt, led by grooms in orange liveries, frightened him so much that he was cured of all desire to be on the public road, and he returned to the woods.

"Let me keep in the shade of the trees," said he to himself. "If I am pursued, it will certainly be on the highroad. In the evening, from tree to tree, from one opening to another, I will steal on to Paris. They say Paris is very large, and as I am little, I can easily hide there."

This idea was rendered still more agreeable to him by the fine weather, the shade of the forest, and the softness of the mossy sward. The sun was now disappearing behind the hills of Marly, and the vegetation, dried by the scorching heat of the day, exhaled the sweet perfume of the spring, — a mingled odor of plant and flower.

Evening came on. It was the hour when beneath the darkening skies silence falls more softly and more deeply

on all things; when the closing flower shuts in the insect sleeping on its bosom, the gilded flies return with ceaseless hum to the hollow oak which serves them as an asylum, the birds hurry silently to their nests, their wings rustling through the foliage, and the only song which is heard is the clear whistle of the blackbird and the timid warble of the redbreast.

Gilbert was familiar with the woods; he was well acquainted both with their sounds and with their silence. Without giving way, therefore, to hesitation or to idle fear, he threw himself at full length on the heath, on which there yet remained here and there a red leaf of the preceding winter. Far from feeling anxious or disturbed, he was filled with joy. He inhaled with rapture the pure and free air, feeling, with the pride of a Stoic, that he had once more triumphed over the snares laid for human weakness. What though he had neither bread nor money nor shelter, — had he not his beloved liberty? Was he not the free and uncontrolled master of his destiny? He stretched himself therefore at the foot of a gigantic chestnut-tree, where between two of its moss-covered roots he found a luxurious couch; then, gazing up at the calm and smiling heavens, he gradually sank to sleep.

The warbling of the birds awoke him; it was scarcely day. Raising himself on his elbow, bruised by contact with the hard wood, he saw, in the dawning light, an opening from which three paths branched off through the wood. Here and there a rabbit scudded by him with its ears drooping, and brushing away the dew in its course, or a stag coming on with its sharp, quick leaps, stopped to gaze at the unknown object under the tree, and then, alarmed, darted off with a more rapid flight.

Gilbert jumped to his feet; but no sooner had he done so than he became aware that he was hungry. The reader

may remember that he had refused to dine with Zamore, so that since his breakfast in the attic at Versailles he had eaten nothing. On finding himself once more under the leafy arches of a forest, — he who had so boldly traversed the great woods of Lorraine and Champagne, — he almost thought himself beneath the trees of Taverney or among the brakes of Pierrefitte, surprised by the morning beams after a nocturnal expedition to procure game for Andrée. But at Taverney he had always found by his side a partridge or a pheasant which he had shot, while here he found only his hat, rather the worse for his journey, and now nearly unfit to wear, after the damps of the night.

It was not, then, all a dream, as he had on first awakening supposed. Versailles and Luciennes were realities, from his triumphal entry into the first down to his forcible escape from the last. But what more than all else served to recall him to his real position was his hunger, — now becoming sharper every moment. Then he mechanically looked around for mulberries, wild cherries, or those pungent roots which, though acrid like the radish, the woodman is pleased to find as he plods in the morning to his labor with his tools on his shoulder. But this was not the season for such things; and besides, he saw around him only the ash, the beech, and other trees which bear no fruit.

"Well," said Gilbert to himself, "I will go directly to Paris. I cannot be more than three or four leagues from it, — five at the most; I can be there in two hours. What matter is it to suffer for a couple of hours, when I am sure after that of not having to suffer any longer? In Paris every one has bread, and the first artisan whom I meet will not refuse me bread for my work, when he sees that I am honest and industrious. In Paris I shall be able in one day to procure food for the next. What do I want

more? Nothing, except that every succeeding day may see me increasing in strength, in elevation of character, in greatness of mind, and approaching the goal toward which I strive."

Gilbert redoubled his speed. He now wished to find the highroad, but he had lost all means of knowing his course. At Taverney and in the woods around it he knew the east and the west; every ray of light was to him an index of the hour; at night every star, although unknown to him by its name of Venus, Lucifer, or Saturn, served him as a guide. But here he was in a new world; he knew neither places nor objects, and was forced to seek his way, groping by chance. "Fortunately," said he, "I saw guide-posts, on which the roads were indicated."

He proceeded toward an opening where he had seen these guide-posts. There were, in fact, three of them. One directed to Marais-Jaune, another to Champ-de-l'Alouette, a third to Trou-Salé. Gilbert was not much assisted by this; he ran for three hours from one place to another, very often finding himself in the same spot from which he had set out. The perspiration poured down his face. A dozen times he threw off his coat and vest to climb some colossal chestnut-tree; but when he had reached its summit, he saw nothing but Versailles, now on his right, now on his left, — Versailles, toward which, by some fatality, he seemed constantly impelled. Half-frantic with rage, afraid to travel by the highway because convinced that all Luciennes was out searching for him, keeping always within the forest, he succeeded at last in passing Viroflay, then Chaville, then Sèvres.

Half-past five sounded from the clock-tower of Meudon when he reached the Capuchin convent between Sèvres and Bellevue; there, climbing on a cross at the risk of breaking it, and of being himself broken on the wheel by

order of the parliament, as Sirven had been, he saw from that height the Seine, the village, and the smoke of the nearest houses. Beyond this he saw a great mass of buildings on the horizon, dimly distinguished in the morning vapors. That must be Paris, he thought; so, feeling no longer either fatigue or hunger, he directed his course thither, and stopped only when out of breath.

Gilbert was now in the woods of Meudon, between Fleury and Plessis-Piquet. "Come," said he, looking around, "no false shame! I shall no doubt soon meet some early workman going to his day's labor with a loaf under his arm. I shall say to him, 'All men are brethren, and ought to help one another. You have more bread there than you will want this day, while I am dying of hunger.' Then he will give me the half of his loaf."

Hunger rendering Gilbert more and more philosophical, he continued his reflections. "In truth," said he, "should not everything be in common among men on this earth? Has the Eternal Source of all things given to this man or to that the air which fertilizes the soil, or the soil which produces the fruits? No. Some, it is true, have usurped a power over these things; but in the eyes of their Maker, as in the eyes of the philosopher, no one possesses them. He who holds them is only he to whom the Creator has lent them."

Gilbert in all this was but condensing, with his native intelligence, the vague and indefinite ideas of the period, which men felt, as it were, floating in the air and hovering above their heads, like clouds impelled in one direction, and forming a threatening mass, from which at length the tempest bursts. "Some," he continued, "retain by force what belongs to all. Well, then, from such we should tear by force what by right they should share with us. If my brother, who has too much bread, refuses me a portion

of that bread, why, then, I shall take it from him by force, — I shall follow the law of Nature, the source of all sound sense and of all justice, since it arises from our natural wants; unless my brother says to me 'The portion you ask for is that of my wife and of my children;' or, 'I am stronger than you, and I shall eat that bread in spite of you.'"

He was in this temper of mind, like that of a hungry wolf, when he reached an open space among the trees. In its centre was a pond of muddy water, bordered by reeds and water-lilies, on the surface of which sported myriads of winged insects. The grassy slope which descended to the water's edge was closely studded with bunches of myosotis, and resembled a bed of turquoises and emeralds. The background of the picture — that is, the circle around the pool and the bank — was formed of a hedge of tall aspens, the interstices between whose golden trunks was filled up with the thick and leafy branches of the alder. Six paths led down to this spot; two of which, radiant with golden light, might have seemed to the imagination avenues to the palace of the glorious luminary of day; the four others, diverging like rays of a star, were lost in the blue depths of the forest.

This hall of verdure, so to speak, seemed fresher and more flowery than any other part of the wood. Gilbert entered it by one of the dark alleys. The first object which he perceived, when, after having at a glance taken in its extent and circumference, his eye rested on nearer objects, was a man seated on the fallen trunk of a tree, near a deep ditch. The expression of his face was mild, yet refined and penetrating, and he was dressed in a coat of coarse brown cloth, breeches of the same, and a waistcoat of gray jean. His well-made, sinewy legs were encased in gray cotton stockings, and his buckled shoes

were dusty here and there, yet showed at the ends traces of the morning dew. Near him on the grass was placed a box, painted green, wide open, and filled with plants recently gathered. He had between his legs a stout stick, with a smooth, round handle, and terminating at the other end in a little spade about two inches broad and three long.

Gilbert embraced all these details in one rapid glance; but what fixed his attention was a piece of bread, from which the old man from time to time broke off small pieces to eat, sharing them benevolently with the linnets and the wrens, who, a little way off, eyed the coveted food, swooped down upon it the moment it was thrown to them, and then flew with joyful twittering to the thick foliage above. The old man watched them with an expression at once gentle and animated; then, extending his hand to a checked handkerchief beside him, he drew from it a cherry from time to time, and ate it as a relish with his mouthful of bread.

"Ha, this is the man for me!" said Gilbert, brushing aside the branches of the trees and advancing four steps toward the solitary man, who looked up as he approached; but he had not made a third of the distance which separated them, when, perceiving the calmness and gentleness of the old man's countenance, he stopped and took off his hat. The old man, finding himself no longer alone, cast a hurried glance on his box and then on his coat. He shut the former and buttoned up the latter.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE BOTANIST.

GILBERT took courage and drew near; but he opened his mouth and shut it again without uttering a word. His philosophy gave way, and it seemed to him that he was about to entreat alms, and not to demand a right. The old man observed this timidity, and it seemed to banish on his side all feelings of apprehension. "Do you wish to speak to me, my friend?" said he, smiling, and laying down his bread on the trunk of the tree on which he sat.

"Yes, Monsieur," replied Gilbert.

"What do you wish to say?"

"Monsieur, I see that you throw your bread to the birds, as if we were not told that God feeds them."

"Doubtless he does feed them, young man; but the hand of man is one of the means which he employs for that purpose. If you mean your words as a reproach, you are wrong; for neither in the silent wood nor in the crowded street is the bread ever lost which we cast from our hand. In the one place the birds pick it up, in the other the poor."

"Well, Monsieur," said Gilbert, singularly moved by the soft, penetrating voice of the old man, "although we are in the woods, I know a man who would dispute your bread with the birds."

"Can it be you, my friend?" cried the old man; "are you then hungry?"

"Very hungry, Monsieur, and if you will permit me —"

The old man seized his bread at once with eager com-

passion. Then reflecting for a moment, he looked at Gilbert with a keen and searching glance.

In fact, Gilbert so little resembled a starving man that some hesitation might be permitted. His coat was clean, except where it was in some places stained by its contact with the ground; his shirt was white, for at Versailles the evening before he had taken a clean one from his bundle, but it had been wet by the dews; it was quite evident that he had passed the night in the wood. Besides all this, his hands were white and slender, like those of a man of thought rather than of labor.

Gilbert did not want tact; he read the stranger's distrust and hesitation in his countenance, and hastened to anticipate further conjectures, which he readily saw would not be favorable to him. "We are always hungry, Monsieur," he said, "when we have not eaten for twelve hours, and it is now twenty-four since I have had any food."

The truth of the young man's words was confirmed by the emotion visible in his face, by the trembling of his voice, and by his pallor. The old man hesitated, or rather feared no longer; he held out to Gilbert his bread and the handkerchief containing his cherries.

"Thank you, Monsieur, thank you," said Gilbert, gently pushing aside the handkerchief containing the cherries; "nothing but the bread, — it is quite sufficient." And he broke it in two pieces, keeping one half for himself, and returning the other to the old man; then he sat down on the grass about three paces from his companion, who looked at him with increasing wonder.

The repast did not last very long. There was but little bread, and Gilbert was very hungry. The old man did not disturb his occupation by a word; he continued to observe him furtively but silently, bestowing apparently

great attention on the plants and flowers in his box, which, when he opened it again, raised their odoriferous heads to the level of the edge, as if to inhale the air. But seeing Gilbert approach the pond, he cried hastily, "Do not drink that water, young man; it is rendered unwholesome by the remains of last year's plants and by the spawn of frogs now on its surface. Take instead a few of these cherries; they will refresh you as much as the water. Take them, I beg of you, for you are not a forward guest, I see."

"It is true, Monsieur; forwardness is contrary to my disposition, and I fear nothing so much as being intrusive. I have just proved that at Versailles."

"Oh! you come from Versailles?" said the stranger, eying Gilbert with a strong expression of curiosity.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"It is a rich town; one must be either very poor or very proud to be starving there."

"I am both, Monsieur."

"You have had a quarrel with your master, perhaps?" said the stranger, while he apparently arranged the plants in his box, yet giving Gilbert a rapid, interrogating glance.

"I have no master, Monsieur."

"My friend," replied the old man, putting on his hat, "that is too ambitious a reply."

"It is the truth, however."

"No, young man. Every one has his master here below; and it is not a true pride which says, 'I have no master.'"

"How is that?"

"Yes. Whether old or young, it is so ordered that we must submit to some ruling power. Some are ruled by men, others by principles; and the severest masters are

not always those who order with the voice or strike with the hand."

"Be it so," said Gilbert. "Then I am governed by principles, I confess. Principles are the only masters which a reflecting mind can recognize without shame."

"And what are your principles? Let me hear them. You seem to be very young, my friend, to have any decided principles."

"Monsieur, I know that all men are brethren, and that every man from his birth is bound to fulfil certain duties toward his fellow-men. I know that God has bestowed on me a certain value, however small it may be; and as I acknowledge the worth of other men, I have a right to exact from them that they shall acknowledge mine, if I do not exaggerate its importance. So long as I do nothing unjust and dishonorable, I merit some regard, even were it only as a human being."

"Oh, oh!" said the stranger, "you have studied, I perceive."

"Alas, Monsieur, I have not! But I have read the 'Discours sur l'Inégalité des Conditions,' and 'Le Contrat Social.' From those two books come all the things that I know, and perhaps all my dreams."

At these words the eyes of the stranger flashed, and by an involuntary movement he was nearly destroying a beautiful xeranthemum, which he was trying to place securely in his box.

"And such are the principles which you profess?" said he.

"They may not be yours, Monsieur," replied the young man, "but they are those of Jean-Jacques Rousseau."

"But," said the stranger, with a distrust so apparent that it was rather humbling to Gilbert's vanity, "are you sure you have rightly understood those principles?"

"I understand French, I think, Monsieur, particularly when it is pure and poetical."

"You see that you do not," said the old man, smiling; "for what I ask you, if not poetical, is at least quite plain. I mean, have your philosophical studies enabled you to understand the groundwork of the system of—" He stopped, almost blushing.

"Of Rousseau?" continued Gilbert. "Oh, Monsieur! I have not studied my philosophy in a college; but there is an instinct within me which reveals the excellence and utility of 'Le Contrat Social,' above all other books that I have read."

"A dry book for a young man, Monsieur; a barren subject for revery at twenty years of age; a bitter and unfragrant flower for fancy in its springtime!" said the old man, with gentle sadness.

"Misfortune ripens man before his time, Monsieur," answered Gilbert; "and as to revery, if we give it a free and unrestrained course, it very often leads to ill."

The stranger opened his eyes, which he usually kept half closed in his moments of calmness and reflection, — a peculiarity which gave an indefinable charm to his countenance.

"To whom do you allude?" asked he, reddening.

"Not to any one, Monsieur," said Gilbert.

"Oh, yes, you do!"

"No, I assure you, I do not."

"You appear to have studied the philosopher of Geneva. Did you not allude to his life?"

"I know nothing of his life," replied Gilbert, frankly.

"Do you not?" and the stranger sighed. "Young man, he is a wretched creature."

"Impossible! Jean-Jacques Rousseau wretched? Then

there is no justice on earth. Wretched? The man who has devoted his life to the happiness of mankind?"

"Well, well! I see that you know nothing about him. Let us speak of yourself, my friend, if you please."

"I should prefer going on with our present subject. What can I tell you of myself worth hearing, Monsieur, I, who am a mere nobody?"

"And besides, you do not know me, and are afraid of trusting a stranger."

"Oh, Monsieur! what have I to fear from any one? Who can make me more wretched than I am? Recollect in what guise I came before you, — alone, poor, hungry."

"Where were you going?"

"I was going to Paris. Are you a Parisian, Monsieur?"

"Yes, — that is to say, no."

"Which of the two am I to believe?" asked Gilbert, smiling.

"I abhor falsehood, and every moment I perceive how necessary it is to reflect before speaking. I am a Parisian, if by that is meant a man who has lived in Paris for a long time, and has mixed in its society; but I was not born in that city. Why do you ask?"

"It was from an association of ideas arising out of our conversation. I thought if you lived in Paris you might have seen Rousseau, of whom we were speaking just now."

"I have indeed seen him sometimes."

"People look at him as he passes by, do they not? He is admired, and pointed out as the benefactor of the human race?"

"No; children, incited by their parents, follow him and throw stones at him!"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Gilbert, with the most painful astonishment; "but at least he is rich?"

"He has sometimes to ask himself, as you asked yourself this morning, 'Where shall I procure a breakfast?'"

"But poor as he is, he is esteemed, powerful, respected?"

"He knows not at night, when he lies down, whether he may not in the morning awake in the Bastille."

"Oh, how he must hate mankind!"

"He neither loves them nor hates them; he is disgusted with them, — that is all."

"How can we avoid hating people who treat us ill?" cried Gilbert; "I cannot comprehend that."

"Rousseau has always been free, Monsieur; Rousseau has always been strong enough to rely on himself alone. It is strength and freedom which make men mild and kind; slavery and weakness alone make them malevolent."

"Those are my reasons for wishing to be free," said Gilbert, proudly. "I have long thought what you have so well explained to me."

"But one may be free even in prison, my friend," replied the stranger. "Suppose Rousseau were in the Bastille to-morrow, — and he certainly will be in it some day, — he would think and write as freely as among the mountains of Switzerland. I have always thought, for my part, that man's freedom consists, not in his being able to do whatever he wills, but in his not being compelled, by any human power, to do what is against his will."

"Has Rousseau written what you have just said, Monsieur?"

"I think he has."

"It is not in 'Le Contrat Social?'"

"No, it is in a new work of his, called 'Rêveries d'un Promeneur solitaire.'"

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, warmly, "I think we shall agree on one point."

"What is that?"

"That we both love and admire Rousseau."

"Speak for yourself, young man; you are still in the age of illusions."

"We may be deceived about things, but not about men."

"Alas! you will learn at a later period that it is in the characters of men more than in aught else that we are deceived. Rousseau may be a little more just than other men, but believe me, he has faults, and very great ones."

Gilbert shook his head, in a way which showed that he was far from being convinced; but notwithstanding this rather uncivil demonstration, the stranger continued to treat him with the same kindness.

"Let us return to the point at which we set out," said the stranger. "I was saying that you had come away from your master at Versailles."

"And I," replied Gilbert, but more mildly than before, "I answered that I had no master. I should have added that it depended entirely on myself to have one, and a very illustrious one too, and that I had refused a situation which many would have sought eagerly."

"A situation?"

"Yes, one in which I should have been called on only to amuse idle noblemen of very high rank; but I thought that, being young, and able to study and push my way in life, I ought not to lose my most precious years, and compromise in my person the dignity of man."

"And you decided well. But have you any fixed plan of pursuing your career?"

"Monsieur, I am ambitious to be a physician."

"A noble profession, in which you may choose between real science, ever modest and self-sacrificing, and quackery,

ever noisy and empty. If you would become a physician, young man, study; if a quack, nothing but impudence and effrontery are necessary."

"But it requires a great deal of money to study, does it it not, Monsieur?"

"It certainly requires some money; I should say not a great deal."

"In fact, I believe that Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who knows everything, studied at no expense."

"At no expense? Oh, young man!" said the stranger, with a sad smile, "do you call it no expense when we expend the most precious of God's gifts, — innocence, health, sleep? These are what it has cost the philosopher of Geneva to acquire the little that he knows."

"The little?" repeated Gilbert, almost angrily.

"Yes; ask any one about him, and you will hear him spoken of as I speak of him."

"In the first place, he is a great musician."

"Oh, King Louis XV. sang a song out of an opera of Rousseau's composing, but that does not make it a good opera."

"He is a great botanist. I have seen only a few odd sheets of his letters on botany; but you, who gather plants in the woods, have read them, I daresay."

"Oh! sometimes a person thinks himself a botanist, and is only —"

"Only what?"

"Only an herborist; and even —"

"And which are you, — herborist, or botanist?"

"A very humble and very ignorant herborist, beholding those marvels of God's creation which are called plants and flowers!"

"He is a Latin scholar."

"A very bad one."

"But I read in a newspaper that he had translated an ancient author called Tacitus."

"Because in his pride — alas! every man has his moments of pride, — he thought he could undertake anything. In the preface, however, to the first book — the only one which he translated — he himself says that he does not understand Latin well; and Tacitus, who is a rude antagonist, soon wearied him. No, no, my good young man, in spite of your admiration, there is no such thing as a man of universal knowledge; and believe me, one loses in depth what he gains in extent. A little river, when swollen by the rains, may overflow its banks till it looks like a lake; but try to sail on it, and your boat will soon touch the ground."

"Then you think Rousseau a superficial man?"

"Yes; perhaps he presents a more extended surface than other men, but that is all."

"There are some, I think, who would be very glad to be superficial in his way."

"Do you intend that for me?" asked the stranger, with a good-natured frankness which quite disarmed Gilbert.

"Oh, no, Monsieur! I am too happy in my conversation with you to say anything disagreeable."

"In what way does my conversation please you? Let me hear; for I do not think you would flatter me for a morsel of bread and a few cherries."

"You do me justice; I would not flatter to obtain the empire of the world. But listen; you are the first person who has ever spoken to me without haughtiness, who has reasoned with me in a tone of kindness, — as if speaking to a young man, and not to a child. Although we do not agree about Rousseau, there has been in all that you have said something so calm and elevated that it

attracted me. I seem, when talking to you, to be in a richly-furnished salon, the window-shutters of which are closed, but of which, notwithstanding the darkness, I divine the magnificence. I know that you could, if you wished, permit a ray of light to penetrate into your conversation which would dazzle me."

"But you yourself speak with a certain degree of refinement, which might lead me to think that you have received a better education than you have confessed."

"It is the first time, Monsieur, that I have spoken so, and I am surprised myself at the terms which I have employed; there are even some of them of which I do not quite understand the signification, and which I have heard but once. I have met with them in books, but I did not comprehend them."

"Have you read much?"

"Too much; but I shall re-read."

The old man looked at Gilbert in astonishment.

"Yes, I read all that fell in my way, whether good or bad; I devoured all. Ah, if I had only had some one to direct me in my reading, and tell me what I ought to forget and what I ought to remember! But I beg pardon, Monsieur; I was forgetting that although your conversation is delightful to me, it does not therefore follow that mine must be so to you! You were herborizing, and I perhaps interfere with your occupation."

Gilbert made a movement as if to withdraw, but with the greatest desire to be detained. The little gray eyes of the stranger were fixed on him, and they seemed to read his heart. "No," said he, "my box is almost full; I want only a few mosses. I have been told there are some very beautiful hair-mosses in this quarter."

"Stay, stay!" said Gilbert; "I think I saw what you want on a rock just now."

"Far from this?"

"No, not more than fifty paces."

"But how do you know that description of moss?"

"I have lived almost all my life in the woods, Monsieur; and then the daughter of the gentleman at whose house I was brought up was fond of botany. She had an herbarium, and under each plant the name was written in her own hand. I have often looked at the plants and the writing, and then I knew them when I saw them again in the woods."

"Then you had a taste for botany?"

"Oh, sir, whenever I heard Nicole say — Nicole was Mademoiselle Andrée's maid — that her mistress had been trying in vain to find some particular plant, I asked her to get me the form of that plant. Then, without knowing that I had asked for it, Mademoiselle Andrée would sketch it in four strokes of the pencil, and Nicole would bring the drawing to me. I would then scour the fields, meadows, and woods until I had found the plant in question. When I had found it I dug it up and planted it in the lawn, where Mademoiselle Andrée could see it; and, full of joy, she would exclaim on discovering it, 'How strange! here is the very plant which I have been searching for everywhere.'"

The old man looked at Gilbert with even more attention than he had yet bestowed on him; and if Gilbert, on reflecting on the purport of what he had said, had not cast down his eyes and blushed, he would have seen that this attention was mingled with an expression of tender interest.

"Well, young man," said he, "continue to study botany; it will lead by a short route to a knowledge of medicine. God has made nothing in vain, and sometime the

utility of each plant will be distinctly marked in the book of science. Learn first to know simples; afterwards you can study their properties."

"Are there not schools in Paris?"

"Yes, and even some gratuitous ones. The school of surgery, for instance, is one of the benefits which we owe to the present reign."

"I shall follow the course prescribed in it."

"Nothing can be more easy; for your parents, seeing your inclinations, will no doubt provide you an adequate maintenance."

"I have no parents; but I am not afraid. I can provide for myself by my labor."

"Certainly; and as you have read Rousseau's works, you know that he says that every man, even a prince, ought to be taught some manual trade."

"I have not read 'Emile.' I think it is in 'Emile' that he has given that recommendation?"

"It is."

"I have heard the Baron de Taverney turn that advice into ridicule, and regret that he had not made his son a carpenter."

"And what did he make him?"

"An officer."

The old man smiled.

"Yes, our nobles are all so. Instead of teaching their children a trade, by which life might be preserved, they teach them the trade of killing. When a revolution comes, and exile after revolution, they will be forced to beg their bread from foreigners, or to sell them their swords, which is still worse. You, however, are not the son of a noble; you know a trade, I presume?"

"Monsieur, I have already told you I know nothing. Besides, I must confess that I have always had an invin-

cible repugnance for all labors requiring strong, rough movements of the body."

"Ah," said the old man, "you are lazy!"

"Oh, no! I am not lazy. Instead of putting me to the labor of a mechanic, place me in a room half-dark, and give me books, and you shall see whether I will not work day and night at the labor of my own choosing."

The stranger looked at the young man's white and slender hands. "It is a sort of predisposition, or instinct," said he. "Sometimes instincts of that kind lead to good results; but they must be well directed. Well," he continued, "if you have not been at college, you have at least been at school?"

Gilbert shook his head.

"You can read and write?"

"My mother had time before she died to teach me to read, — poor mother! for seeing that I was not strong, she always said, 'He will never make a good workman; he must be a priest or a scholar.' When I showed any distaste for my lessons she would say, 'Learn to read, Gilbert, and you will not have to cut wood, drive a team, or break stones.' So I began to learn; but unfortunately I could scarcely read when my mother died."

"And who taught you to write?"

"I taught myself."

"You taught yourself?"

"Yes, with a stick which I pointed, and with some sand which I made fine by putting it through a sieve. For two years I wrote the letters which are used in printing, copying them from a book. I did not know that there were any others than these, and I could soon imitate them very well. But one day, about three years ago, when Mademoiselle Andrée had gone to a convent, the steward handed me a letter from her for her father, and

then I saw that there existed other characters. M. de Taverney, having broken the seal, threw the cover away; I picked it up very carefully, and when the steward came again, I made him read me what was on it. It was, 'To the Baron de Taverney Maison Rouge, at his château, near Pierrefitte.' Under each of these letters I put its corresponding printed letter, and found that I had nearly all the alphabet. Then I imitated the writing; and in a week had copied the address ten thousand times perhaps, and had taught myself to write. You see, Monsieur, that I am not extravagant in my expectations; since I can read and write, have read all that I could, have reflected on all that I read, why may I not perhaps find a man who requires my pen, a blind man who wants eyes, or a dumb man who wants a tongue?"

"But you forget that then you will have a master, and that is what you do not want. A secretary or a reader is only a sort of upper servant, after all."

"That is true," replied Gilbert, a little downcast; "but no matter, I must accomplish my object. I will stir the paving-stones of Paris, I will turn water-carrier, if necessary, but I will attain my object, or I will die in attempting it; and even then my object will be attained."

"Well," replied the stranger, "you seem indeed full of ardor and courage, — excellent qualities."

"But have you not a profession yourself, Monsieur? You are dressed like a man employed in the finances."

The old man smiled sadly. "I have a profession," said he, — "every man ought to have one; but mine is a complete stranger to everything connected with finance. A financier would not come out herborizing."

"Are you an herborist by profession, then?"

"Almost."

"Then you are poor?"

"Yes."

"It is the poor who give; for poverty makes them wise, and good advice is better than gold. Give me, then, your advice."

"I will do more than that."

Gilbert smiled. "I thought so," said he.

"On how little do you think you could live?"

"Oh, very little!"

"But perhaps you do not know how expensive living is in Paris?"

"Yesterday I saw Paris for the first time, from the hills near Luciennes."

"Then you are not aware that living in great towns is dear?"

"How much does it cost? Give me an idea."

"Willingly. For instance, what costs a sou in the country, costs three sous in Paris."

"Well," said Gilbert, "if I got any kind of shelter to rest in after my work, I should need for my food only six sous a day."

"Ah!" cried the stranger, "that is what I like, young man! Come with me to Paris, and I will find you an independent profession by which you may live."

"Oh, Monsieur!" cried Gilbert, with rapture. Then, after a moment's reflection, "But it must really be an occupation; I must not live on alms."

"Do not be afraid of that, my child. I am not rich enough to bestow much in charity, and not foolish enough to do it without knowing the object better."

This little sally of misanthropy pleased Gilbert instead of giving him offence. "That is right!" said he; "I like such language. I accept your offer, and thank you for it."

"So you decide upon coming to Paris with me?"

"Yes, Monsieur, if you have no objection."

"Of course I have no objection, since I make you the offer."

"What shall I have to do with you?"

"Nothing but to work. But you shall regulate the quantity of your work yourself. You are young, you ought to be happy and free, — even idle, if you like, after you have earned leisure," said the stranger, smiling in spite of himself; then, raising his eyes, he exclaimed with a deep sigh, "O youth! O vigor! O freedom!" As he said these words, an expression of deep and poetic melancholy overspread his fine features. Then he rose, leaning on his cane. "And now," he continued, in a more cheerful voice, "now that you have got an employment, will you object to help me fill another box with plants? I have some sheets of paper here in which we can classify the others. But, by the by, are you hungry? I have still some bread."

"Keep it for the afternoon, if you please, Monsieur."

"Well, but at least eat the cherries; they will be troublesome to carry with us."

"On that account I will eat them. But allow me to carry your box; you will then be more at your ease, and I think, thanks to habit, my legs will tire yours."

"Ah, see! you bring me good fortune. There is the *Vicris hieracioïdes*, which I sought in vain until now; and just under your foot — take care! — the *Cerastium aquaticum*. Stop, stop! Do not gather them! Oh! you are not an herborist yet. The one is too moist to be gathered now, the other not advanced enough. We can get the *Vicris hieracioïdes* in the afternoon when we pass this way, and the *Cerastium* a week hence. Besides, I wish to show

it, growing, to a friend whose patronage I mean to solicit for you. And now show me the place where you saw the beautiful hair-mosses."

Gilbert walked on, the old man followed him, and both disappeared in the shades of the forest.

CHAPTER XLIV.

MONSIEUR JACQUES.

GILBERT, delighted at that good fortune which had hitherto befriended him in his utmost need, walked on, turning from time to time toward the stranger, who had by a few words made him at once so submissive and docile. In this manner he led him to the spot where the mosses grew; they were really splendid specimens. When the old man had made a collection of them, they went in search of other plants.

Gilbert was a much better botanist than he thought himself. Accustomed to the woods from his infancy, he was familiar with all the plants that grew in them; but he knew them only by their vulgar names. When he named them in that manner, his companion told him the corresponding scientific name, which Gilbert, on finding another plant of the same family, would endeavor to repeat. If he miscalled the Greek or Latin name, the stranger repeated it in syllables, and gave him its derivation. Then he explained how it was adapted to the nature of the plant; and thus Gilbert learned not only its botanical name, but the meaning of the Greek or Latin word with which Pliny, Linnæus, or Jussieu had baptized it.

From time to time he said, "What a pity, Monsieur, that I cannot gain my six sous by botanizing every day with you! Oh, I should never rest a moment, — and indeed I should not want even the six sous; a piece of bread such as you gave me this morning would be sufficient for

the whole day. I have just drunk from a spring of excellent water, as good as that at Taverney; and last night I slept under a tree here, and better, I am sure, than I should have slept under the roof of a château."

"My friend," replied the stranger, with a smile, "winter will come; the plants will be withered, and the spring frozen; the north wind will whistle through the naked trees, instead of this gentle breeze which agitates their leaves. You will then require a shelter, clothes, and fire, and you must be economical with your six sous, that you may obtain them."

Gilbert sighed, gathered more plants, and asked more questions. They spent thus the greater part of the day in the woods of Alnay, Plessis-Piquet, and Clamart-sous-Meudon. Gilbert, according to his usual custom, soon became familiar with his companion, who questioned him with admirable address; but the young man, distrustful and circumspect, revealed as little as possible of his past life.

At Châtillon the stranger bought some bread and milk; but it was with difficulty he prevailed upon Gilbert to take half of his purchase. Then, refreshed, they set out for Paris, so that Gilbert might enter the city by daylight. The young man's heart beat high at the mere thought of being in Paris, and he could not conceal his emotion when, from the hill of Vanves, he perceived St. Geneviève, the Invalides, Notre Dame, and that vast sea of houses whose rolling billows seemed to lave the declivities of Montmartres, Belleville, and Ménilmontant. "Oh, Paris! Paris!" he murmured.

"Yes, Paris, a mass of houses, an abyss of ills!" said the old man. "If the griefs and crimes which those houses enclose were to appear on their exteriors, from every stone would ooze a tear or a drop of blood!"

Gilbert heard, and repressed his enthusiasm; and besides,

his enthusiasm soon died away of itself. The suburb by which they entered the city was filthy and squalid; sick persons on litters passed him on their way to the hospitals; children, half-naked, were playing in the dirt among dogs, cows, and pigs. His brow grew dark.

"You think all this hideous," said the stranger; "well, in a short time you will not even see these things! People are rich who have a pig or a cow: they will soon have neither the one nor the other. Their children give them pleasure: soon they will bring them only sorrow. As to filth, you will always find that everywhere."

Gilbert had been inclined to look on Paris with a gloomy eye; the picture of it which his companion drew did not, therefore, displease him. The old man, at first prolix in his declamation, gradually sank into abstraction and silence as they approached the centre of the city. He seemed so full of anxious thoughts that Gilbert had not courage to ask him the name of a large garden which he saw through a railing, nor of a bridge by which the Seine was crossed. The garden was the Luxembourg, the bridge the Pont-Neuf. At last, however, as they still proceeded onward, and as the stranger's meditation appeared to have changed into uneasiness, Gilbert ventured to say, "Do you live far from here, Monsieur?"

"Not very far," answered the stranger, whom this question seemed to make more morose.

They proceeded along the Rue du Four, passing the magnificent Hôtel de Soissons, the windows and the principal entrance of which looked on that street, but whose splendid gardens extended along the streets of Grenelle and Deux-Écus. They passed by a church which Gilbert thought very beautiful; he stopped a moment to gaze at it. "That is a beautiful building," said he.

"It is Saint-Eustache," replied the old man; then,

looking up, "Eight o'clock! Good heavens! make haste, young man, make haste!"

The stranger strode on faster; Gilbert followed him.

"By the by," said the old man, after some minutes of a silence so ungenial that Gilbert began to feel uneasy, "I forgot to tell you that I am married."

"Oh!" said Gilbert.

"Yes; and my wife, like a true Parisian housekeeper, will scold us, I daresay, for coming in so late. Besides, I must tell you, she is very suspicious of strangers."

"Do you wish me to leave you, Monsieur?" said Gilbert, whose heart was chilled by these words.

"Not at all, not at all! I invited you to come home with me, and you shall come."

"I follow you then," answered the young man.

"Now, here we are; down this street, — to the right!"

Gilbert raised his eyes, and by the last gleams of expiring day he read at the corner of the street, above a grocer's shop, the words "Rue Plastrière."

The old man continued to hurry on, and as he approached his house, his feverish agitation seemed to increase. Gilbert feared to lose sight of him, and in his haste knocked against the passers-by, the burdens of the porters, and the poles of carriages and litters. His companion seemed to have completely forgotten him in his hurried progress, lost in the contemplation of some disagreeable idea. At last he stopped before a door, in the upper part of which was a grating. A little string hung out through a hole; the stranger pulled it, and the door opened. He then turned, and seeing Gilbert standing undecided whether to enter or not, he said, "Come on!" Gilbert obeyed, and the old man shut the door.

After a few steps forward in the dark, Gilbert's foot struck against a narrow, steep staircase; but the old man,

accustomed to the place, had already mounted half the flight. Gilbert overtook him, ascended with him, and stopped when he stopped. This was on a worn-out mat, in a lobby with two doors.

The stranger pulled a cord near one of these doors, and a sharp tinkling bell rang; then from the interior of one of the rooms was heard the shuffling of slipshod feet dragging along the floor. The door opened, and a woman of from fifty to fifty-five years of age appeared. Two voices immediately arose together, — one, that of the stranger, the other, that of the woman who had opened the door.

One of these voices said, timidly, 'Is it very late, dear Thérèse?"

The other voice muttered, "A pretty time for you to come to supper, Jacques!"

"Come, come, we will soon make all that right!" replied the stranger, affectionately, shutting the door, and then turning to receive the tin box from Gilbert's hands.

"Oh, a porter to carry your box!" cried the old woman; "that only was wanting! So, then, you can no longer carry your rubbish of grass! Indeed, a porter for M. Jacques! I beg pardon, M. Jacques has become a grand seigneur."

"Well, well, be calm, Thérèse!" quietly replied he whom she addressed so insolently by the name of Jacques, arranging his plants on the mantelpiece.

"Pay him, then, and send him away; we don't want a spy here."

Gilbert turned pale and sprang toward the door. Jacques stopped him.

"This gentleman," said he, with a degree of firmness, "is not a porter, still less a spy. He is a guest whom I have brought."

The old woman's arms fell powerless by her side. "A guest?" said she. "Certainly, we are in great need of guests."

"Come, Thérèse," said the stranger, in a tone still affectionate, but in which determination became more and more manifest, "light a candle. I am heated, and we are thirsty."

The old woman still grumbled, in tones quite loud at first, but gradually subsiding. Then she proceeded to strike a light. While the dialogue lasted, and the murmurs succeeding it, Gilbert remained silent and immovable, nailed to the floor within a step or two of the door, which he deeply regretted having entered.

Jacques perceived what the young man was suffering. "Come forward, Monsieur Gilbert," said he; "come forward, I beg of you."

The old woman turned to see the person to whom her husband spoke with this marked politeness, and Gilbert had thus an opportunity of seeing her yellow, morose face, by the first rays of the miserable candle, which she had placed in a copper candlestick. That face awoke in him at the first glance a violent antipathy. It was wrinkled, pimpled, and filled, as it were, with gall; the eyes were sharp, but meaningless; there was also a pretended softness spread over those vulgar features at that moment, which the old woman's voice and manner so completely contradicted that Gilbert's dislike was if possible increased.

The old woman, on her side, found the thin, pale face, circumspect silence, and stiff demeanor of the young man little to her taste. "I see, gentlemen," said she, "that you are hot, and I am sure you must be thirsty. Indeed, passing a day in the shade of the woods is so fatiguing, and stooping from time to time to gather a plant so laborious an occupation! For this gentleman is a botanist

also, no doubt; it is the occupation of those who have none!"

"The gentleman," replied Jacques, in a voice becoming every moment firmer, "is a kind, good young man, who did me the honor to bear me company all the day, and whom my Thérèse will, I am sure, receive like a friend."

"There is enough of supper for two, but not for three," she grumbled.

"He is easily satisfied, and so am I."

"Oh, yes, — all very fine; I know what that means! I tell you plainly there is not bread enough for your double moderation, and I am not going down three flights of stairs to get any more, I assure you. Besides, at this hour the baker's would be shut."

"Then I will go down myself," replied Jacques, frowning; "open the door, Thérèse."

"Oh! but —"

"I will go down, I tell you!"

"Well, well," said the old woman, in a discontented voice, but at the same time yielding to the absolute tone which her opposition had called forth from Jacques; "am I not always ready to satisfy your whims? I think we can do with what we have. Come to supper."

"Sit by me," said Jacques, leading Gilbert into the next room, where a little table was prepared for the master and mistress of the house. On it were laid two plates, beside which two napkins, folded and tied, one with a red and the other with a white ribbon, indicated their respective seats to the two proprietors.

The walls of the room, which was small and of a square shape, were covered with a pale-blue paper, with a white pattern, and its only ornaments were two large maps. The rest of the furniture consisted of six straw-seated

chairs, the table mentioned, and a box filled with stockings to be mended.

Gilbert sat down. The old woman placed a plate before him; then she brought a spoon, worn thin by use, a knife and fork, and a brightly polished pewter goblet.

"Are you not going down?" asked Jacques.

"It is not necessary," she replied, in a sharp tone, showing the spite which filled her heart at his having gained a victory over her. "It is not necessary. I found half a loaf in the pantry. That makes a pound and a half of bread for us all; we must make it do." So saying, she put the soup on the table.

Jacques was helped first, then Gilbert, and the old woman ate out of the tureen. All three were very hungry. Gilbert, intimidated by the discussion on domestic economy to which he had given rise, kept his appetite as much within bounds as possible; but, notwithstanding, he finished his soup first. The old woman cast a wrathful look on his plate, so prematurely empty.

"Who called to-day?" inquired Jacques, in order to change the current of her thoughts.

"Oh, everybody, as usual!" she replied. "You promised Madame de Boufflers her four pieces, Madame d'Escars two airs, Madame de Penthièvre a quartette with an accompaniment. Some persons came themselves, others sent for what they wanted. But what of that? Monsieur was botanizing; and as people cannot amuse themselves and do their work at the same time, the ladies had to go without their music!"

Jacques did not say a word, — to the great astonishment of Gilbert, who expected to see him get angry; but as, this time, it was a matter that concerned only himself, the old man was undisturbed.

To the soup succeeded a morsel of boiled beef, served

on a common earthenware dish, marked all over by the edge of the knife. Jacques helped Gilbert moderately enough, for Thérèse had her eye upon him; then he took a piece of about the same size for himself, and handed the dish to her. The old woman seized on the loaf and cut a slice for Gilbert, — so small a slice that Jacques blushed. He waited until she had helped him and herself; then he took the loaf into his own hands. "You shall cut your own bread, my young friend," said he; "and cut it according to your appetite, I beg of you. Bread ought to be doled out only to those who waste it."

A moment afterward appeared a dish of kidney-beans stewed in butter.

"Observe how green they are," said Jacques; "they are of our own drying. We have an excellent method for that;" and he passed the dish to Gilbert.

"Thank you, Monsieur!" said the latter; "but I have eaten quite enough. I am not hungry."

"The young gentleman is not of your opinion about my kidney-beans," said Thérèse, angrily; "he prefers fresh beans, no doubt. But at this early season they are luxuries beyond our means."

"No, Madame," said Gilbert. "On the contrary, these appear very nice indeed, and I am sure I should like them; but I never eat of more than one dish."

"And you drink water?" said Jacques, handing him the bottle.

"Always, Monsieur."

Jacques poured out a small glass of wine for himself. "And now, wife," said he, replacing the bottle on the table, "I beg you to set about getting this young man's bed ready; he must be tired."

Thérèse let her knife and fork fall from her hands, and fixed on her husband an angry gaze. "Bed? Are you

mad? If you bring any one to sleep here, he must sleep in your own bed, I can tell you. You are really losing your head! Or perhaps you are going to keep a boarding-house? If you are, you may get a cook and waiting-maid; it is quite enough for me to be your servant, without being servant to others!"

"Thérèse," replied Jacques, in his serious and firm tone, "Thérèse, I beg you will listen to me, my dear! It is for one night only. This young man has never set foot in Paris before; he has come here under my protection. I will not permit him to sleep in an inn; I will not, though I should, as you say, have to resign to him my own bed."

After this second exhibition of firmness and resolution, the old man paused. Thérèse, who had watched him while he spoke, appearing to study every muscle of his face, seemed now to understand that she must give up the contest; and she suddenly changed her tactics. She was certain of being beaten if she continued Gilbert's enemy; she therefore began to fight for him, but certainly like an ally who intended treachery. "Well, well," said she, "since the young gentleman has come home with you, it must be that you know him well; and it is better, as you say, that he should remain under our roof. I shall make him a bed as well as I can in your study, near the bundles of papers."

"No, no!" said Jacques, quickly. "A study is not a fit place to sleep in; he might set fire to the papers."

"A great misfortune, truly!" muttered Thérèse to herself. Then she added aloud, "In that case, I can put him in front of the cupboard in the ante-room."

"No, no!"

"Well, you see, however much I wish to do so, I can't manage it unless he takes your bed or mine."

"I do not think, Thérèse, you are looking in the right quarter."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, we have the garret, you know."

"The garret? The loft, you mean."

"No, it is not a loft. It is a room, — a little garret-like, I confess, but wholesome; and with a splendid view of neighboring gardens, — a thing very unusual in Paris."

"Oh! what matters it, Monsieur," exclaimed Gilbert, "whether it be a loft or not? Even if it were, I should be but too glad of it, I assure you."

"But stay, — that cannot be!" cried Thérèse; "it is there that I dry our linen."

"The young man will not disturb it, Thérèse. You will take care, will you not, my young friend, that no accident happens to my good housekeeper's linen? We are poor, and any loss is serious to us."

"Oh, do not be afraid, Monsieur!"

Jacques rose and approached Thérèse. "I do not wish, my dear," said he, "that this young man should be ruined. Paris is a dangerous place for a stranger; while he is here we can watch over him."

"Then you have taken him to educate? He will pay for his board, this pupil of yours?"

"No; but I answer for it he shall cost you nothing. From to-morrow he will provide for himself. As for lodging, since the garret is almost useless to us, let us do him this slight service."

"How well idle people understand each other!" muttered Thérèse, shrugging her shoulders.

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, more wearied even than his host of this struggle for a hospitality which was so humbling to him, and which was gained only by fighting for every inch of ground, "I have never yet given trouble to

any one, and I shall certainly not begin with you, who have been so good to me. Permit me, therefore, to leave you, if you please! I saw near the bridge, which we crossed, some trees with benches under them. I should sleep very well, I assure you, on one of those benches."

"Yes," said Jacques, "to be taken up by the watch as a vagabond!"

"Which he is!" muttered Thérèse to herself, as she removed the dishes from the table.

"Come, come, young man!" said Jacques, "there is, I believe, a very good straw mattress upstairs; and that is surely better than a bench."

"Oh, Monsieur, I have never slept on anything but a straw mattress!" said Gilbert; then correcting this statement by a slight fib, "the woollen mattress overheated me," he added.

Jacques smiled. "Straw is certainly cool and refreshing!" said he. "Take that bit of candle, which is on the table, and follow me."

Thérèse did not even look at them. She sighed, — she was defeated.

Gilbert rose gravely and followed his protector. Passing through the ante-room he saw a cistern of water. "Monsieur," he asked, "is water dear in Paris?"

"No, my friend; but were it dear, water and bread are two things which no man has a right to refuse his fellow-man who asks for them."

"Oh! at Taverney water costs nothing, and cleanliness is the poor man's luxury."

"Take some, my friend," said Jacques, pointing to a large earthenware pitcher; and he preceded the young man to his sleeping-apartment, surprised to find united in a youth of his age all the strength of mind of the lower classes with all the refined tastes of the higher.

CHAPTER XLV.

MONSIEUR JACQUES'S GARRET.

THE staircase, narrow and steep in the hall below, where Gilbert had stumbled against its lower step, became still more narrow and steep from the third story, on which Jacques lived, to the rooms above. It was therefore with considerable difficulty that they reached what was, in fact, a loft. Thérèse was right for once, — it was neither more nor less than a loft, divided into four compartments, three of which were uninhabited. To say the truth, they were all, except the one destined for Gilbert, uninhabitable.

The roof sloped precipitately down, and formed an acute angle with the floor. In the middle of the slope, a skylight in a broken frame, without glass, admitted both light and air, — the former rather scantily; the latter superabundantly, particularly during high winds in winter.

Fortunately, summer was near; and yet, in spite of the near approach of the mild season, the candle which Jacques held was nearly blown out as they entered the loft.

The mattress of which Jacques had spoken so boastingly lay on the floor, and at the first glance seemed to be the principal article of furniture in the chamber. Here and there were piles of old printed papers, which had turned yellow at the edges from age, and in the midst of them were some books gnawed by rats.

From two cords which were stretched from one side of the loft to the other, and the first of which was near

strangling Gilbert, hung, dancing in the night breeze, several paper bags containing kidney-beans dried in their pods, a few bundles of aromatic herbs, some household linen, and several articles of female attire almost in rags.

"It is not a very handsome place," said Jacques, "but sleep and darkness make the poorest hovel equal to a sumptuous palace. Sleep, my young friend, as you ought to sleep at your age, and to-morrow morning you may believe that you have slept in the Louvre. But, above all things, take care of fire."

"Yes, Monsieur," said Gilbert, a little bewildered at all that he had heard and seen.

Jacques left the room smiling, then returned. "To-morrow we will have some conversation," said he; "you will have no objection to work, will you?"

"You know, Monsieur, that, on the contrary, all I wish for is to work."

"That is right," said Jacques, and he turned toward the door.

"To work in an honorable way, you understand, Monsieur," added the punctilious Gilbert.

"I know of no other, my young friend; so then, good-night."

"Good-night, and thank you, Monsieur."

Jacques retired, closed the door, and Gilbert was left alone in his garret.

At first amazed, then stupefied at the thought that he was in Paris, he asked himself if this really could be Paris, — this city in which were found rooms like his? He then reflected that, in reality, Monsieur Jacques was bestowing charity on him; and as he had seen alms bestowed at Taverney, not only did his surprise subside, but gradually gave way to gratitude.

Candle in hand, and taking every precaution against fire, as recommended by Jacques, Gilbert went over all parts of his garret, thinking so little of Thérèse's clothes that he would not take even an old gown to serve him for a quilt. He stopped at the piles of printed papers. They roused his curiosity to the utmost; but they were tied up, and he did not touch them. With outstretched neck and eager eye he passed from these parcels to the bags of kidney-beans. The bags were made of very white paper, also printed, and were fastened together by pins. In making rather a hurried movement, he touched the rope with his head, and one of the bags fell.

Paler and more frightened than if he had been discovered breaking open a strong box, Gilbert hastened to gather up the beans scattered on the floor and to return them to the bag. During this process he naturally looked at the paper, and mechanically read a few words. These words excited his interest. He pushed aside the beans, and sitting down on his mattress, he read with eagerness; for the words were so completely in unison with his own character and feelings that he could almost imagine them to have been written, not only for, but by himself. They were as follows: —

"Besides, grisettes, tradesmen's daughters, and housemaids never presented any temptation to me; I was influenced by ladies alone. Every one has his whim, and this was mine. I do not agree with Horace on this point. It is not, however, mere admiration of rank or wealth which induces this preference; it is the superior delicacy of complexion, the soft white hands, the becoming attire, the air of delicacy and order exhibited in the whole person, the taste which appears in every gesture and every expression, the dress so much finer and better fashioned, the shoes of more delicate workmanship, the more judicious blending of ribbons and laces, the hair arranged with superior care. I should prefer the plainest features, with

such adornments, to beauty without them. I think myself that this preference is very ridiculous, but my heart has made it in spite of me."

Gilbert started, and the perspiration burst from his forehead; his thoughts could not be better expressed, his desires more clearly defined, nor his tastes more perfectly analyzed. But Andrée, though thus adorned, did not require these auxiliaries to set off "the plainest features." All these were subservient to her peerless beauty.

Gilbert, therefore, eagerly continued to read. Following the lines which we have given above, came a delightful adventure of a young man with two young girls, — a description of a horseback ride which was attended by those charming little cries of fear which render women more fascinating in betraying their weakness; of a ride *en croupe* behind one of them; and of the return by night, still more charming and delightful.

Gilbert's interest increased; he had unfolded the bag and had read all that was in it; then he looked at the numbering of the pages, and sought for those that should follow. The succession of pages was interrupted, but he found seven or eight bags which seemed to contain the pages that were missing. He took out the pins, emptied the beans on the floor, put the sheets together, and proceeded to read. This time it was still another matter. These new pages described the amours of a poor, unknown young man with a lady of rank. The lady had condescended to him, or rather, he had ascended to her; and she had treated him as if he had been her equal, taking him for her lover, and initiating him into all the mysteries of the heart, — those dreams of youth which are of so brief duration that when we are on the other side of life they seem to us like the meteors, brilliant but fugitive, which flash across the starlit sky of spring. The young

man was nowhere named. The lady was Madame de Warens, — a name pleasant to pronounce.

Gilbert was thinking of the happiness he should have in spending the whole night in reading, and the pleasure he should find in unpinning the long file of bags yet untouched, when suddenly a slight crackling was heard. The candle, being low, had heated the copper around it, and the wick had sunk into the melted grease; a disagreeable odor filled the loft, and in a moment all was darkness. This took place so quickly that Gilbert had no time to prevent it, and he could have wept with vexation at being interrupted in the middle of his reading. He allowed the papers to slip from his hands on the heap of beans near his bed, threw himself on his mattress, and in spite of his disappointment soon slept profoundly.

He did not awake until roused by the noise of taking off the padlock with which Jacques had closed the door the night before. It was broad daylight, and as Gilbert opened his eyes, he saw his host enter softly. Then he noticed the kidney-beans scattered on the floor, and the bags turned into their original form. Jacques's glance had taken the same direction.

Gilbert felt the blush of shame covering his cheeks, and scarcely knowing what he said, he murmured, "Good morning, Monsieur."

"Good morning, my friend," said Jacques; "have you slept well?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Are you a somnambulist?"

Gilbert did not know what a somnambulist was, but he understood that the question referred to the beans no longer in their bags, and to the bags despoiled of their contents. "Ah, Monsieur!" said he, "I understand why you ask me that question. Yes, I have been guilty of

this misconduct; I humbly confess it, but I think I can repair it."

"Yes. But why is your candle burned out?"

"I sat up too late."

"But why sit up?" asked Jacques, distrustfully.

"To read."

The old man's eyes wandered around the garret with increasing suspicion.

"This first leaf," said Gilbert, taking up the first page which he had unpinned and read, "which I looked at by chance, interested me deeply; but, Monsieur, you, who know so much, do you know from what book this is taken?"

Jacques glanced carelessly at it and said, "I don't know."

"It is a romance, I am sure," said Gilbert; "and a charming romance too."

"A romance? Do you think so?"

"Yes; for love is spoken of here, as in romances, only much better."

"Well, as I see at the foot of this page the word 'confessions,' I think that it may be a true history."

"Oh, no! The man who speaks thus does not speak of himself. There is too much frankness in his avowals, too much impartiality in his judgments."

"You are wrong," answered the old man, quickly; "the author wished to give an example to the world of a man appearing to his fellow-men such as God had made him."

"Do you know who is the author?"

"The author is Jean-Jacques Rousseau."

"Rousseau?" cried the young man, impetuously.

"Yes; these are some leaves from his last work."

"So this young man, poor, unknown, almost begging

on the highway, was Rousseau, — that is to say, the man who was one day to write 'Le Contrat Social' and 'Emile?'"

"The same — or rather not the same," said the old man, with an expression of deep melancholy; "no, not the same: the author of 'Le Contrat' and 'Emile' is the man disenchanted with the world, life, glory, almost with God; the other Rousseau is the child, entering a world rosy as the dawn, — a child with all the joys and all the hopes of that happy age! Between the two Rousseaus lies an abyss which will forever prevent them from being one, — thirty years of misery!" The old man shook his head, let his arms sink by his side, and appeared lost in revery.

Gilbert was delighted. "Then," said he, "this adventure with Mademoiselle Galley and Mademoiselle de Graffenried is, then, true? He really felt, then, that ardent love for Madame de Warens? That possession of the woman he loved — a possession which saddened him instead of transporting him to the skies, as he had anticipated — is not, then, a charming fiction?"

"Young man, Rousseau has never lied; remember his motto, 'Vitam impendere vero.'"

"I have seen it; but as I do not know Latin, I did not understand it."

"It means to give one's life for the truth."

"And so," said Gilbert, "it is possible that a man of such an origin as Rousseau's may be loved by a lady of rank? Oh, heavens! Do you know what it is to madden with hope those who, like him, have dared to raise their eyes above them?"

"You love," said Jacques, "and you find an analogy between your situation and that of Rousseau?"

Gilbert blushed, but did not answer this question.

"But all women," said he, "are not like Madame de Warens; how many are proud, haughty, disdainful, whom it would be only folly to love!"

"And yet, young man," replied the other, "such opportunities have more than once presented themselves to Rousseau."

"Yes," cried Gilbert; "but he was Rousseau. Certainly, if I felt within me one spark of the fire which consumed his heart while illumining his brain —"

"Well?"

"Well, I would say that there is no woman, however noble by birth, who would count for anything with me; but being nothing myself, and without assurance of a future, when I look above me I am dazzled. Oh, I wish I might speak with Rousseau!"

"What for?"

"To ask him whether, if Madame de Warens had not condescended to him, he would not have ascended to her; to say to him, 'If that possession which saddened you had been refused to you, would you not have attained to it even —" The young man paused.

"Even —?" repeated the old man.

"Even by a crime!"

Jacques started. "My wife must have risen by this time," said he, cutting short the conversation; "let us go down. Besides, a man who is going to work can never begin the day too early. Come, young man, come."

"That is true, Monsieur; pardon me for having detained you! But there are conversations which intoxicate me, books which exalt me, and thoughts which make me almost mad."

"Come, come! I fear you are in love," said the old man.

Instead of replying, Gilbert began to make up the bags

again with the help of the pins, and fill them with the kidney-beans. Jacques looked on. "You have not been very splendidly lodged," said he, "but, after all, you have had what was necessary; and if you had been up earlier, you might have inhaled through your window the perfume of the garden trees, which in the midst of the disagreeable odors that infest a great town is certainly very agreeable. The gardens of the Rue Jussienne are just below; and to breathe in the morning the fragrance of their flowers and shrubs is to a poor captive a store of happiness for all the day."

"It certainly conveys an agreeable sensation to me," said Gilbert; "but I am too much accustomed to those things to pay any particular attention to them."

"Say rather that you have not yet been long enough the inhabitant of a city to know how much the country is to be regretted. But you have done; let us go down." And motioning Gilbert to precede him, he shut the door and put on the padlock.

This time Jacques led his companion directly to the room which Thérèse the evening before had named the study. Its furniture was composed of glass cases containing butterflies, plants, and minerals, a bookcase of walnut-tree wood, a long, narrow table, with a green and black baize cover worn out by constant use, on which were a number of manuscripts arranged in good order, and four armchairs stuffed and covered with hair-cloth. Every article was waxed and shining, irreproachable as to neatness and cleanliness, but chilling to the eye and the heart, so dim and gray was the light admitted through the drab curtains, and so far removed from comfort were the cold ashes on the black hearth.

A little harpsichord of rosewood on four straight legs, the strings of which vibrated as the carriages passed in the

street, and the slight ticking of a clock over the fireplace, were all that seemed to give life to this species of tomb. But Gilbert entered it with profound respect. The furniture seemed to him almost sumptuous, since it was somewhat like that of the château of Taverney; and the polished floor, above all, struck him with awe.

"Sit down," said Jacques, pointing to a second little table, placed in the recess of a window, "and I will explain what occupation I intend for you."

Gilbert eagerly obeyed.

"Do you know what this is?" asked the old man, showing him some paper which was ruled with lines at equal distances.

"Certainly," said he; "it is music-paper."

"Well, when one of these leaves has been filled up properly by me, — that is, when I have copied on it as much music as it will contain, — I have earned ten sous; that is the price which I fixed myself. Do you think you can learn to copy music?"

"Oh, yes, Monsieur! I think so.

"But does not all this little black dotting of spots, joined together by single, double, and triple strokes, swim before your eyes?"

"Yes, Monsieur. At the first glance I cannot distinguish them well; but on looking more closely, I shall be able to separate one note from another, — for instance, here is an F."

"And the note above that, crossing the second line?"

"That is G."

"Then you can read music?"

"I know only the names of the notes; I do not understand their value."

"Do you know when they are minims, crotchets, quavers, and semiquavers?"

"Oh, yes, I know that."

"And that mark?"

"It is a rest."

"And that?"

"A sharp."

"And that?"

"A flat."

"Very well! And so, with this ignorance of yours," said Jacques, his eye beginning to darken with the distrust which seemed natural to him, "with this ignorance of yours, you speak of music as you spoke of botany, and as you would have spoken of love, had I not cut you short."

"Oh, Monsieur," replied Gilbert, blushing, "do not ridicule me!"

"No, my child; I am only surprised at you. Music is an art which is seldom learned until after other studies, and you told me you had received no education, — in fact, that you had been taught nothing."

"That is the truth, Monsieur."

"But you could not have found out of yourself that this black point was an F."

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, looking down with an embarrassed air, "in the house where I lived there was a — a young lady who played on the harpsichord."

"Oh! the same who studied botany?"

"Yes, Monsieur; and she played very well."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, and I adore music."

"All that does not account for your knowing the notes?"

"Monsieur, Rousseau says that the man who enjoys the effect without seeking to know the cause, allows half his powers to lie dormant."

"Yes; but he also says that man in acquiring that knowledge loses his joyousness, his innocence, and his natural instincts."

"What matters it, if he find in the search itself an enjoyment equal to all the pleasures which he loses?"

Jacques turned toward him, still more surprised. "Ha!" said he, "you are not only a botanist and a musician, but also a logician."

"Ah, Monsieur, I am unfortunately neither a musician, a botanist, nor a logician! I can distinguish one note from another, one sign from another; that is all."

"You can sol-fa, then?"

"No, not in the least."

"Well, no matter. Will you try to copy this? Here is some ruled paper, — but take care not to waste it, it is very dear; and now I think of it, it would be better for you to take some common paper, rule it yourself, and make a trial on it."

"Oh, Monsieur, I will do whatever you recommend! But allow me to say that this is not an occupation for my whole lifetime. It would be much better for me to become a public writer than copy music which I do not understand."

"Young man, young man, you speak without reflection. Is it by night that a public writer exercises his profession and gains his bread?"

"No, certainly."

"Well, listen to me: with practice a man can copy in two or three hours at night five, or even six, of these pages; for that he will get three francs. A man can live on that sum; you will not contradict that, — you who would be content with six sous? Thus, you see, with two hours' work at night you could earn sufficient to enable you

to attend the schools of surgery, of medicine, and of botany."

"Oh!" cried Gilbert, "now I understand, and I thank you from my very heart." And so saying, he seized eagerly the paper which the old man offered him.

END OF VOL. I.

MEMOIRS OF A PHYSICIAN.

CHAPTER I.

WHO MONSIEUR JACQUES WAS.

GILBERT set to work with the greatest ardor, and his paper was soon covered with careful copies of what was placed before him. The old man looked at him for some time, and then sat down at the other table to correct printed sheets like those of which the bags containing the kidney-beans had been made.

They had passed three hours in this way, and the clock had just struck nine, when Thérèse entered hurriedly. Jacques raised his head.

"Quick, quick!" said she, "come into the other room! Here is another prince come to visit you. When will this procession of grandees be over? I only hope he will not take it into his head to breakfast with us, as the Duc de Chartres did the other day."

"Who is this prince?" asked Jacques, in a low voice.

"Monseigneur the Prince de Conté."

At this name Gilbert let fall on his paper a G which looked much more like a dinner-plate than a note.

"A prince! A grandee!" he muttered to himself.

Jacques left the study smiling; Thérèse followed, and closed the door behind her. Then Gilbert looked around, and finding that he was alone, sat bolt upright with astonishment.

"But where am I then?" exclaimed he. "Princes, highnesses, calling on Monsieur Jacques! The Duc de Chartres, the Prince de Conté calling on a copier of music!" He approached the door to listen; his heart beat strangely.

The first greetings were over between Jacques and the prince, and the latter was speaking. "I should have liked," he said, "to take you with me."

"Why so, Monseigneur?" asked Jacques.

"To introduce you to the dauphiness. A new era is opening for philosophy, my dear philosopher."

"A thousand thanks for your kindness, Monseigneur, but it impossible for me to accompany you."

"Yet, six years ago, you accompanied Madame de Pompadour to Fontainebleau?"

"I was six years younger then. Now I am fastened to my armchair by infirmities."

"And by misanthropy."

"And if it were so, Monseigneur, you must allow that the world is not worth the trouble of putting one's self out of the way for it."

"Well, I will let you off for St. Denis, and the grand ceremonial; but I must take you to Muette, where her Royal Highness will sleep the night after to-morrow."

"Then her Royal Highness arrives at St. Denis the day after to-morrow?"

"Yes, with all her retinue. Come, two leagues are easily travelled. Report represents her Highness to be an excellent musician, — a pupil of Gluck."

Gilbert heard no more. On the day after the morrow

the dauphiness and all her retinue would be at St. Denis; these words suggested but one idea to him, — that the next day but one, Andrée would be only two leagues distant from him. Of the two feelings which he experienced, the stronger overcame the weaker. Love put an end to curiosity. For a moment it seemed to him as if he had not room to breathe. He ran to a window to open it, but it was fastened inside with a padlock, — no doubt to prevent those on the opposite side of the street from seeing what took place in the study.

Gilbert sank on his chair. "Oh! I will never listen at doors again," said he; "I must not try to penetrate the secrets of this man, apparently so humble, whom a prince calls his friend and wishes to present to the future queen of France, — to the daughter of emperors, — whom Mademoiselle Andrée addressed almost kneeling at her feet. And yet perhaps I might hear something of Mademoiselle Andrée. No, no! I should seem like a lackey; La Brie used to listen at doors."

And he courageously retired from the door. But his hands trembled so much that he could not write, and indeed he required some more exciting pursuit to divert his thoughts; he therefore took a book from the table of Monsieur Jacques.

"'The Confessions!'" he read, with joyful surprise, "'embellished with a likeness of the author, Jean Jacques Rousseau;' and I have never yet seen a likeness of Rousseau!" and he hastily turned the silk paper which covered the engraving. No sooner did it meet his eye than he uttered a cry of amazement. At that moment Jacques opened the door. Gilbert compared his face with the likeness in the book, which he held in his hand, then, pale and trembling, he let the volume fall, exclaiming, "I am in the house of Jean Jacques Rousseau!"

"Let me see, my child, how you have copied your music," said Rousseau, smiling, and inwardly better pleased with this involuntary homage than with the thousand triumphs of his glorious life. And passing by the trembling Gilbert, he approached the table and began to examine his work.

"Your notes are not badly formed," said he, "but they are carelessly joined together. Here, there should be a rest, to make the time complete. Then see, the bars which divide it are not quite straight. Make the semibreves by two semicircles; it is not important that they should join. The note made perfectly round is ungraceful, and the stem does not join with it so well. Yes, my friend, you are indeed in the house of Jean Jacques Rousseau."

"Oh, pardon me, Monsieur, for all the foolish words which I have uttered!" exclaimed Gilbert, clasping his hands and ready to fall on his knees.

"Was it necessary that a prince should come to visit me," said Rousseau, shrugging his shoulders, "to enable you to discover in me the unhappy, persecuted philosopher of Geneva? Poor child, — happy in your ignorance of persecution!"

"Oh, yes, I am happy, very happy! But it is in seeing you, in knowing you, in being near you!"

"Thanks, my child, thanks. But it is not enough to be happy, you must work. Now that you have made a trial, take this rondeau and copy it on some proper music-paper. It is short and easy; above all things, observe neatness. But how did you discover —?"

Gilbert, with a swelling heart, took up the volume and pointed to the portrait.

"Oh, yes, I understand, — my likeness burned in effigy on the first page of the 'Emile'! But no matter, flame is

illuminating, whether it proceeds from the sun or from an *auto-da-fé.*"

"Ah! Monsieur, my wildest dreams never exceeded this! To live with you! My highest ambition never hoped for more!"

"You cannot live with me, my friend," said Jean Jacques, "for I do not take pupils; as for guests, you perceive that I am not rich enough to entertain them, — certainly not to receive them as regular inmates."

Gilbert trembled. Rousseau took his hand.

"However," said he, "do not despair. From the moment I first saw you, I have been studying your character. In it there is much which requires to be corrected, but there is also much to esteem. Learn to subdue your inclinations. Distrust your pride, — that gnawing worm which is the bane of philosophy. Copy music, and wait patiently for better times."

"Oh, heavens!" said Gilbert, "I feel bewildered when I think of what has happened to me."

"What has happened to you is very simple and very natural, my child. You were flying, I know not whence, for I did not seek to know your secret, and in your flight you met a man gathering plants in a wood. He had bread, you had none; he shared his with you. You did not know where to seek an asylum for the night; he offered you the shelter of his roof. The man happened to be called Rousseau, — that is the whole affair. This man said to you, 'The first precept of philosophy is, "Man, suffice for thyself."' Now, my friend, when you have copied your rondeau you will have gained your bread for to-day. Copy your rondeau, therefore."

"Oh, Monsieur, what kindness!"

"As for your lodging, that is yours into the bargain, — only, no reading at night; or, if you must have a candle,

let it be your own, otherwise Thérèse will scold. In the mean time, are you hungry?"

"Oh, no, Monsieur!" replied Gilbert, in a choking voice.

"There is enough left from our supper of last night to serve for this morning's breakfast. Do not stand on ceremony; this repast is the last you will get at my table unless by invitation, if we remain friends."

Gilbert made a movement as if to speak, but Rousseau interrupted him. "There is in the Rue Plastrière," he continued, "a modest eating-house for mechanics; you can dine there on moderate terms, for I shall recommend you to the proprietor. In the mean time, come to breakfast."

Gilbert followed Rousseau without daring to reply. He was completely subdued; but at least it was by a man superior to most other men.

After a few mouthfuls he left the table and returned to his task. He spoke truly; his emotion was so great that it had taken away his appetite. During the whole day he never raised his eyes from the paper; and at eight in the evening, after having torn up three sheets, he had succeeded in copying legibly and neatly a rondeau of four pages.

"I will not flatter you," said Rousseau; "it is not yet well done, but it is legible. What you have done is worth ten sous; here is the money."

Gilbert took it with a low bow.

"There is some bread in the cupboard, M. Gilbert," said Thérèse, on whom the young man's modest demeanor, mildness, and industry had produced a favorable impression.

"Thank you, Madame!" replied Gilbert; "believe me, I shall never forget your kindness."

"Here!" said she, holding the bread out to him.

He was about to refuse, but looking at Rousseau, he saw, by the slight frown which contracted his piercing eye, and the curl which hovered on his delicately formed lips, that the refusal would wound him. "I accept your kind offer," said he.

He then withdrew to his little chamber, holding in his hand the six silver sous and the four copper ones which he had just received. "At last," said he, on entering his garret, "I am my own master! But stay, — not yet, since I hold in my hand the bread of charity!" And although he felt hungry, he laid down the piece of bread on the sill of the skylight, and did not eat it. Then, fancying that sleep would enable him to forget his hunger, he blew out his candle and stretched himself on his straw pallet.

Gilbert was awake before daybreak on the following morning, for in truth he had slept very little during the night. Recollecting what Rousseau had said about the gardens, he leaned out of the sky-light and saw below him the trees and shrubs of a very beautiful garden, and beyond the trees the hôtel to which the garden belonged, the entrance to which was from the Rue Jussienne.

In one corner of the garden, quite surrounded by shrubs and flowers, there stood a little summer-house, the windows of which were closed. Gilbert at first thought that the windows were closed on account of the earliness of the hour; but observing that the foliage of the trees had grown up against the shutters, he was convinced that the summer-house must have been unoccupied since the preceding winter at least. He returned, therefore, to his admiring contemplation of the noble lime-trees, which partially concealed from view the main body of the hôtel.

Two or three times during his survey Gilbert's eyes had

turned toward the piece of bread which Thérèse had cut for him the evening before; but although hunger pleaded loudly, he was so much the master of himself that he refrained from touching it.

Five o'clock struck. Gilbert was persuaded that the door of the passage must now be open; and washed, brushed, and combed, — for Rousseau had furnished his garret with all that was necessary for his modest toilet, — he descended the stairs with his piece of bread under his arm.

Rousseau, who this time was not the first to be up, and who from a lingering suspicion perhaps, and the better to watch his guest, had left his door open, heard him descend, and narrowly observed his movements. He saw Gilbert leave the house with the bread under his arm; a poor man came up to him, and he saw Gilbert give him the bread, and then enter a baker's shop, which was just opened, and buy another piece.

"Now," said Rousseau, "he will go to a tavern, and his poor ten sous will soon vanish."

But he was mistaken. Gilbert ate a part of his bread as he walked along; then stopping at a fountain at the corner of the street he took a long draught, ate the rest of his bread, drank again, rinsed his mouth, washed his hands, and returned toward the house.

"Ha!" said Rousseau, "I believe that I am more fortunate than Diogenes, and have found a man!" And hearing Gilbert's footsteps on the stairs, he hastened to open the door.

The entire day was spent in uninterrupted labor. Gilbert brought to his monotonous task activity, intelligence, and unshrinking assiduity. What he did not perfectly comprehend he divined; and his hand, the slave of his iron will, traced the notes without hesitation and without

mistake. By evening he had copied seven pages, if not elegantly, at least with scrupulous correctness.

Rousseau examined his work with the eye both of a judge and a philosopher. As a judge he criticised the forms of the notes, the fineness of the joinings, the spaces for the rests and dots; but he acknowledged that there was a decided improvement since the day before, and he gave Gilbert twenty-five sous.

As a philosopher Rousseau admired the strength of resolution which could bend the ardent temperament and active and athletic frame of a young man of eighteen to such constant and unceasing labor. For he had discovered that in that young heart there burned an ardent passion; but whether ambition or love, he had not yet ascertained.

Gilbert gazed thoughtfully at the money which he had received; it was a piece of twenty-four sous and a single sou. He put the sou in his waistcoat pocket, probably with the other sous which were remaining from the little sum of the day before, and grasping the silver with evident satisfaction in his right hand, he said: "Monsieur, you are my master, since you give me work, and also lodge me in your house gratis. I think it only right, therefore, that I should communicate to you all my intentions, otherwise I might lose your regard."

Rousseau looked at him with a lowering eye. "What are you going to do?" said he. "Have you any other intention than that of working to-morrow?"

"Monsieur, for to-morrow, yes. With your permission, I should like to be at liberty to-morrow."

"What to do," said Rousseau, — "to idle?"

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, "I wish to go to St. Denis."

"To St. Denis?"

"Yes; Madame the Dauphiness is to arrive there to-morrow."

"Ah! true; there are to be festivities in honor of her arrival."

"That is it, Monsieur."

"I thought you less of a sight-seer, my young friend," said Rousseau. "I gave you credit, at first, on the contrary, for despising the pomps of absolute power."

"Monsieur — "

"Look at me, — me whom you pretend to take for a model. Yesterday one of the royal princes came to invite me to court. Well, observe: I, a humble citizen, refused his invitation, — not to go as you would go, my poor lad, on foot, and standing on tiptoe to catch a glimpse, over the shoulder of a guardsman, of the king's carriage as it passes, but to appear before princes, — to be honored by a smile from princesses."

Gilbert nodded his approbation.

"And why did I refuse?" continued Rousseau, with vehemence. "Because a man ought not to have two faces; because the man who has written that royalty is an abuse ought not to be seen bending before a king. Because I — who know that every festivity of the great robs the people of some portion of that comfort which is now scarcely sufficient to keep them from revolt — I protest by my absence against all such festivities."

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, "believe me, I comprehend all the sublimity of your philosophy."

"Doubtless; and yet, since you do not practise it, permit me to tell you — "

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, "I am not a philosopher."

"Tell me, at least, what you are going to do at St. Denis."

"Monsieur, I am discreet."

Rousseau was struck by these words; he saw that there was some mystery concealed under this obstinate desire, and he looked at this young man with a sort of admiration which his character inspired.

"Oh, very well!" said he; "I see you have a motive. I like that better."

"Yes, Monsieur, I have a motive, — one, I assure you, in no way connected with an idle love for pomp or show."

"So much the better; or perhaps I should say so much the worse. There is something unfathomable in your look, young man, and I seek in vain in its expression for the frankness and calm of youth."

"I told you, Monsieur, that I have been unhappy," replied Gilbert, sorrowfully, "and for the unhappy there is no youth. Then you consent to give me to-morrow to myself?"

"Yes."

"Thank you, Monsieur."

"Remember, however," said Rousseau, "that while you are gazing at the vain pomps of the world defiling in procession before you, I shall, in one of my herbals, be passing in review the splendor and variety of Nature."

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, "would you not have left all the herbals in the world the day when you went to visit Mademoiselle Galley after having thrown the bunch of cherries into her lap?"

"Good!" said Rousseau. "True, you are young. Go to St. Denis, my child." Then, when Gilbert, with a joyful countenance, had left the room, "It is not ambition," said he, "it is love."

CHAPTER II.

THE SORCERER'S WIFE.

At the moment when Gilbert, after his hard day's labor, was munching in his loft his bread dipped in cold water, and inhaling with delight the pure air of the gardens below him, a woman mounted on a magnificent Arabian horse was advancing at full gallop toward St. Denis, along that road which was now deserted, but which on the morrow was to be crowded with so much rank and fashion. She was dressed with elegance, but in a strange and peculiar style, and her face was hidden by a thick veil. On entering the town she proceeded straight to the Carmelite convent, and dismounting, knocked with her delicately formed finger at the wicket, while her horse, which she held by the bridle, snorted and pawed the ground with impatience.

Several inhabitants of the town, struck with curiosity, gathered around her. They were attracted in the first place by her foreign attire, then by her persistent knocking.

"What is it you want, Madame?" said one of them at length.

"You see, Monsieur," she replied, with a strongly marked Italian accent, "I wish to obtain admittance."

"In that case, you are taking the wrong way. This gate is opened only once a day to the poor, and the hour is now past."

"What must I do, then, to gain an audience of the Superior?"

"You must knock at that little door at the extremity of the wall, or ring at the grand entrance."

Another person now approached. "Do you know, Madame," said he, "that the present abbess is her Royal Highness, Madame Louise of France?"

"I know it, thank you," she replied.

"*Vertudieu!* What a splendid animal!" exclaimed a dragoon, gazing in admiration at the foreigner's steed. "Now, that horse, if not too old, is worth five hundred louis-d'or, as sure as mine is worth a hundred pistoles!"

These words produced a great effect on the crowd. At that moment a canon, who, unlike the dragoon, looked only at the rider, to the exclusion of her steed, made his way toward her, and by some secret known to himself alone, opened the wicket of the tower. "Enter, Madame," said he, "and lead in your horse, if you please."

The woman, eager to escape from the gaze of the crowd, which seemed to terrify her, hurried in, and the gate was closed behind her. The moment she found herself alone in the large courtyard she shook the bridle loose on the horse's neck, and the noble animal, rejoiced to feel himself at liberty, made his trappings clash, and pawed the ground so loudly that the portress, who happened for the moment to be off her post, hastened out from the interior of the convent. "What do you want, Madame?" she cried; "and how did you gain admittance here?"

"A charitable canon opened the gate for me," said the stranger. "As for my business, I wish, if possible, to speak to the Superior."

"Madame will not receive any one this evening."

"Yet I have been told that it is the duty of Superiors of convents to admit, at any hour of the day or night,

their sisters of the world who come to implore their succor."

"Possibly so, in ordinary circumstances; but her Royal Highness, who arrived only the day before yesterday, is scarcely installed in her office yet, and holds this evening a chapter of our Order."

"Oh, Madame!" replied the stranger, "I come from a great distance, — I come from Rome. I have travelled sixty leagues on horseback, and am almost exhausted."

"What can I do? The orders of the Superior are positive."

"My sister, I have to reveal to your abbess matters of the highest importance."

"Return to-morrow."

"It is impossible. I have stayed one day in Paris, and already during that day — Besides, I cannot sleep at an inn."

"Why so?"

"Because I have no money."

The nun gazed in amazement at this woman, covered with jewels, and mistress of a fine horse, who pretended that she had no money to pay for a night's lodging.

"Oh, do not heed my words, do not examine my dress!" said the young woman; "perhaps I did not speak the precise truth when I said I had no money, for no doubt I could obtain credit in any inn. But what I want is not a lodging, but a refuge."

"Madame, this is not the only convent in St. Denis, and each convent has an abbess."

"Yes, yes! I know that well; but it is not a common abbess who can protect me."

"I think you are wrong in persisting thus. The Princess Louise no longer takes any interest in affairs of this world."

"What matters it to you? Only tell her that I wish to speak to her."

"She is holding a chapter, I tell you."

"After it is over, then."

"It has scarcely begun."

"I can go into the church and wait there in prayer."

"I am sorry, Madame, that I cannot permit you to wait there."

"Oh, then I am mistaken, — I am not in the house of God!" cried the stranger, with such vehemence of voice and look that the nun, alarmed, dared no longer oppose her wishes.

"If you are really in great distress," said she, "I will see what I can do."

"Oh! tell her Royal Highness," added the foreigner, "that I come from Rome; that I have made only two halts on the road, — one at Mayence, the other at Strasburg; that during the last four days I have rested only for the time absolutely necessary for myself and my horse to regain strength to continue our journey."

"I will tell her, sister;" and the nun hastened away.

A moment after, a lay sister appeared, followed by the portress.

"Well?" exclaimed the stranger, impatient to know what reply had been sent.

"Her Royal Highness says, Madame," replied the lay sister, "that it is quite impossible to give you an audience this evening; but that nevertheless the hospitality of the convent shall be extended to you, since you are in such urgent want of an asylum. You may follow me, therefore, sister, and if you have made so long a journey as you say, and are fatigued, you can retire to rest at once."

"But my horse?"

"Rest assured he shall be taken care of, my sister."

"He is as gentle as a lamb. He is called Djerid, and comes when called by that name. I entreat you to take care of him, for he is a most valuable animal."

"He shall be treated as if he were one of the king's horses."

"Thanks."

"In the mean time, conduct Madame to her apartment," said the lay sister to the portress.

"Not to my apartment, — to the church! I do not require sleep, but prayer."

"The chapel is open, my sister," said the nun, pointing to a little side door opening into the church.

"And I shall see the Superior in the morning?" asked the stranger.

"To-morrow morning? That is also impossible."

"Why so?"

"Because to-morrow morning there will be a grand reception."

"And for whom can a reception be more necessary than for an unfortunate like me?"

"Madame the Dauphiness will do us the honor to spend two hours here on her way through town to-morrow. It is a great honor for our convent, and a high solemnity for us poor nuns; so that, you understand, the abbess is most anxious that everything should be worthy of the royal guests we expect."

"But in the mean time," said the stranger, looking around with a shudder, "while I wait the leisure of your august Superior, shall I be in safety here?"

"Undoubtedly, my sister. Our house is a refuge even for the guilty; much more for —"

"For fugitives," said the stranger. "It is well; then no one can enter here?"

"No one, — that is, not without an order."

"Oh, but if he procures an order! Good heavens! — he who is so powerful that his power at times terrifies me!"

"He, — who?" asked the nun.

"Oh, no one, no one!"

"The poor creature is deranged," murmured the nun to herself.

"The church, the church!" repeated the stranger, so wildly as in some degree to justify this suspicion.

"Come, my sister, let me lead you to it."

"Yes, yes, I am pursued; look you — quick! The church!"

"Oh, the walls of St. Denis are strong!" said the nun, with a compassionate smile. "Believe me, after such a journey as you have described, you had much better go and rest in a good bed than bruise your knees on the stones of our chapel."

"No, no! I wish to pray; I wish to pray that God will rescue me from my pursuers!" cried the young woman, hurriedly entering the church by the door which the nun pointed out, and shutting the door behind her. The nun, curious, as all nuns are, hastened round to the principal entrance, and, advancing softly, saw the unknown praying and sobbing before the altar, her face bowed to the ground.

CHAPTER III.

PARISIANS.

THE nuns had informed the stranger correctly when they told her that the chapter of the convent was assembled in conclave. Madame Louise of France presided at the meeting, her first exercise of supreme authority, and assisted in their deliberation as to the best means of giving the daughter of the Cæsars a reception worthy of her august character and station.

The funds of the convent were rather low. The late abbess, on resigning her functions, had carried away with her a large portion of the lace, which was her private property, as well as the reliquaries and monstrances, which it was the practice of Superiors, who were all taken from the highest families, to lend to their convents, on devoting themselves to the service of God from the most worldly motives.

Madame Louise, on being informed of the intended visit of the dauphiness, had sent an express to Versailles, and the same night a wagon had arrived loaded with hangings, lace, and ornaments, to the value of six hundred thousand francs.

Consequently, when the tidings were spread of the royal splendor which was to be exhibited at the reception of the dauphiness, all the ardent curiosity of the Parisians was redoubled, — those Parisians whom Mercier describes as provoking only a smile when seen in private life, but

assembled in masses, inciting rather to reflection and sorrow.

From earliest dawn the citizens of the capital, having learned from public report the route which the dauphiness was to take, began to issue from their dens, and at first in parties of ten or twenty, then in hundreds, and finally in thousands, they arrived at St. Denis.

The French and Swiss guards and the regiments stationed at St. Denis were under arms, and formed a line on each side of the road to keep back the waves of the living tide which rolled on toward the gates of the cathedral, and mounted even to the sculptured projections of the building. A sea of heads appeared everywhere, children's peeping from above the porches of doors, men's and women's thronging the windows. Besides these, thousands of curious spectators, who had arrived too late to secure places, or who, like Gilbert, preferred their liberty to the constraint and inconvenience of being shut up during the whole day in one spot, swarmed like ants on every side, climbing the trees which bordered the road from St. Denis to Muette, or dispersed here and there waiting for the procession.

The cortège, although still possessing a numerous train of sumptuous equipages, and troops of domestics in splendid liveries, had considerably diminished after leaving Compiègne; for, except for the great lords, it was found impossible to keep pace with the king, who doubled and tripled the usual stages, by means of relays posted on the road.

Those of lesser note had remained at Compiègne, or had taken post to return to Paris, and give their horses a breathing-spell. But after a day's repose at their own houses, masters and domestics now thronged toward St. Denis both to see the crowd and to get another glimpse

of the dauphiness, whom they had already seen once. And then, besides the court carriages, were there not at that period the carriages of the parliament, the financiers, the rich merchants, the ladies of fashion and of the opera? Were there not, also, hired horses and carriages, as well as public conveyances, which, crowded with good citizens of Paris, rolled toward St. Denis, moving slowly, and arriving later than if the journey had been made on foot? It may easily be imagined, therefore, what a formidable army directed its march toward St. Denis on the morning of the day when the gazettes and placards had announced that the dauphiness was to arrive, forming into a dense mass before the convent of the Carmelites, and when no more room could be obtained within the privileged enclosure, stretching away in long lines on the road by which the dauphiness and her suite were to arrive and depart.

Now, let any one picture to himself in this crowd, terrible even to the Parisian, Gilbert, insignificant in stature, alone, undecided, ignorant of localities, and too proud even to ask a question; for since he was in Paris, he had determined to pass for a Parisian, — he who had never before seen a hundred people assembled together.

At first he saw pedestrians thinly scattered along the road; at La Chapelle they began to increase, and at St. Denis they seemed to rise out of the ground, and presented much the appearance of an immense field bristling with ears of corn. For a long time Gilbert had seen nothing, lost as he was in the crowd; he could not look over the heads of those around him, and, swept along in the throng, he blindly followed where the concourse of spectators led him.

At last he saw some children perched on a tree, and longed to imitate their example; but he dared not take off his coat. He made his way, however, to the foot of

the tree just as one of those unfortunates — who like himself were deprived of all view, and who staggered onward, stepping on the feet of others, and having their own feet trodden upon — conceived the bright idea of questioning their lucky neighbors perched on the branches, and learned from one of them that there was a large space vacant between the convent and the guards. Gilbert, encouraged by this first question, ventured in his turn to ask whether the carriages were in sight.

They had not yet appeared; but on the road, about a quarter of a league beyond St. Denis, a great cloud of dust was plainly visible. This was what Gilbert wished to know; the carriages not being in sight, it was needful only to ascertain precisely by what route they would approach.

In Paris, when one goes through a crowd without entering into conversation with any one, he is set down as either an Englishman or deaf and dumb.

Scarcely had Gilbert extricated himself from the multitude, when he perceived, seated behind a ditch, the family of a humble tradesman at breakfast. There was a blue-eyed daughter, tall and fair, modest and timid. There was the mother, a fat, laughing little woman, with white teeth and rosy cheeks. There was an aunt, tall, bony, dry, and harsh. There was the father, half-buried in an immense camlet coat, which was usually brought out of his chest only on Sundays, but which he ventured to put on on so grand an occasion as the present, and of which he took more care than he did of his wife and daughter, being certain that they could take care of themselves. There was the servant-maid, who did nothing but laugh. She carried an enormous basket containing everything necessary for breakfast, and even under its weight the stout lass had never ceased laughing and singing, encouraged as she

was by her master, who took the burden when she was fatigued. In those days a domestic was one of the family, and occupied a position in it very analogous to that of the house-dog, beaten sometimes, excluded never.

Gilbert contemplated by stealth this group which was so new to him. Shut up at Taverney from his birth, he had hitherto seen only the lord and the lackey; the citizen was altogether a novelty to him. He saw these honest people employ in their domestic economy a system of philosophy which, although not drawn from the teachings of Plato and Socrates, was modelled much after that of Bias, *in extenso.*

They had brought with them as much food as they possibly could, and were determined to make the most of it. The father was carving one of those appetizing pieces of roast veal so much liked by the Parisian tradesmen. Nicely browned, dainty, and tempting, it reposed amid a bed of carrots, onions, and bacon, in the dish in which the day before it had been baked, carefully placed there by the good housekeeper. The maid had then carried it to the baker, who while baking his loaves, had given it an asylum in his oven along with a score of such dishes, destined to enhance the enjoyments of the following day.

Gilbert chose out a place for himself at the foot of a neighboring elm, and dusted it carefully with his checked pocket-handkerchief. He then took off his hat, spread his handkerchief on the ground, and seated himself. He paid no attention to his neighbors, and they, seeing this, naturally took notice of him.

"That is a careful young man," said the mother.

The daughter blushed. She always did so when a young man was mentioned before her, — a trait in her character which gave the highest gratification to her parents.

The father turned. "And a handsome lad too," said he.

The daughter blushed still more deeply than before.

"He looks tired," said the servant-maid, "and yet he has not been carrying anything."

"Rather say lazy," said the aunt.

"Monsieur," said the mother, addressing Gilbert with that familiarity which is found nowhere but among the Parisians, "are the carriages still far off?"

Gilbert turned, and seeing that these words were addressed to him, rose and bowed.

"A most polite young man," said the mother.

This remark added a still deeper dye to the daughter's cheeks.

"I do not know, Madame," answered Gilbert; "I only heard that a cloud of dust was seen about a quarter of a league off."

"Draw nearer, Monsieur," said the honest tradesman, "and if you have not breakfasted —" and he pointed to the excellent repast which was spread on the grass.

Gilbert approached the group. He had not breakfasted, and the seducing odor of the viands tempted him strongly; but he jingled his twenty-five sous in his pocket, and reflecting that for the third of this sum he could purchase a breakfast almost as good as that which was offered to him, he would not accept any favor from people whom he saw for the first time.

"Thank you, Monsieur," said he, "a thousand thanks; but I have already breakfasted."

"Ah!" said the good woman, "I see that you are a prudent young man. But from where you are seated you will see nothing."

"Why," replied Gilbert, smiling, "in that case you will not see anything yourselves, as you are in the same position as I am."

"Oh, it is a very different matter with us! We have a nephew a sergeant in the French guards."

The young girl looked like a peony.

"His post this morning will be before Le Paon Bleu."

"If I am not taking too great a liberty," said Gilbert, "may I ask where Le Paon Bleu is?"

"Just opposite the Carmelite convent," replied the mother. "He has promised to keep places for us behind his detachment. He will then give us his bench, and we shall see at our ease all the company get out of their carriages."

It was now Gilbert's turn to redden; he had refused to eat with the good people, but he longed to be of their party. Nevertheless, his philosophy, or rather his pride, whispered: "It is very well for women to require some one to assist them, but I, a man, have arms and shoulders of my own."

"All those who do not reach that place," continued the mother, as if guessing his thoughts, "will see only empty carriages, — no great sight in truth, for empty carriages can be seen everywhere; it is not worth while to come to St. Denis for that."

"But, Madame," said Gilbert, "it seems to me that many besides yourself will endeavor to secure the place you speak of."

"Yes; but every one has not a nephew in the guards to assist them."

"Ah, true!" murmured Gilbert. As he said this, his face wore an expression of disappointment which did not escape Parisian penetration.

"But," said the husband, well skilled in divining the wishes of his wife, "this gentleman may accompany us if he pleases."

"Oh, Monsieur, I fear I should be troublesome," replied Gilbert.

"Bah! not at all," said the good woman; "on the contrary, you will assist us in reaching our places. We have only one man now to depend on, and then we should have two."

No other argument could have had so much weight in determining Gilbert. The idea that he could be useful, and thus pay for the favor which was offered him, put him quite at his ease and relieved him of every scruple. He accepted the offer.

"We shall see to whom he will offer his arm," said the aunt.

This assistance was indeed a real God-send to Gilbert. How, without it, could he have passed through a barrier of thirty thousand persons, each more favored than himself by rank, wealth, or strength, and especially by the practice they had acquired in obtaining places at fêtes, where every one seizes the best he can procure?

Had our philosopher been less theoretical and more practical, the present occasion would have furnished him an admirable opportunity for studying the dynamics of society.

The carriage with four horses burst like a cannon-ball through the mass; all fell back before its running footman, with his plumed hat, his gayly striped jacket, and his thick stick, who rushed on in advance, sometimes preceded by two formidable coach-dogs.

From the carriage with two horses was whispered a sort of pass-word in the ear of a guardsman, after which it proceeded to take its place in the cortège before the convent.

Single horsemen, although overlooking the crowd from their elevated position, were forced to advance at a foot-

pace, and gained a good position only after a thousand jostlings, interruptions, and oaths.

Lastly, the poor pedestrian, trodden, trampled on, and tossed about, was driven forward like a wave urged on by thousands of waves behind. Sometimes raising himself on tiptoe to see over the heads of his neighbors; sometimes wrestling like Antæus, to fall like him to his mother Earth; seeking his way through the multitude, and when he had found it, dragging after him his family, — almost always a troop of women, — whom the Parisian alone ventures to attempt conducting through such scenes.

Lowest of all was the man of the dregs of the people. With unshaven beard and ragged cap, his arms naked to the elbow, and his garments held together by a string, indefatigably working with elbows, with shoulders, and with feet, and ever and anon uttering a savage and sardonic laugh, he made his way among the crowd as easily as Gulliver amid the Liliputians.

Gilbert, who was neither a great lord with four horses, nor a member of parliament with two, nor a soldier on horseback, nor a Parisian, nor a man of the people, certainly would have been trampled under foot by the throng had he not been under the protection of the tradesman. Backed by him he felt powerful, and boldly offered his arm to the mother of the family.

"Impertinent fellow!" said the aunt.

They set out; the father gave his sister and his daughter each an arm, and the maid servant followed behind with the basket.

"Gentlemen, may I trouble you?" said the good woman, with her ready laugh. "Gentlemen, if you please, a little room. Gentlemen, be good enough —"

And every one fell back and yielded a passage to her and Gilbert, while in their wake glided the rest of the

party. Foot by foot, step by step, they managed to advance five hundred paces, and then found themselves close to that formidable line of French guards on which the tradesman and his family rested all their hopes. The daughter had by this time regained her natural color. Once there, the citizen mounted on Gilbert's shoulders, and perceived at twenty yards' distance from him his wife's nephew twisting his moustache. The good man made such violent gestures with his hat that at last his nephew's attention was attracted to him; he came forward, asked his comrades to make way a little, and obtained a slight opening in their ranks.

Through this chink slipped Gilbert and the good woman, then the citizen himself, the sister and daughter, and after them the stout lass with the basket. Their troublesome journey was over, and mutual thanks were exchanged between Gilbert and the head of the family. The mother endeavored to detain him by their side; the aunt said he had better go; and they separated, not to meet again.

In the open space in which Gilbert now found himself, none but privileged persons were admitted, and he therefore easily reached the trunk of a large linden-tree, mounted upon a stone near it, and, supporting himself by a low branch, waited patiently. About half an hour after he had thus installed himself, the cannon roared, the rattling of the drums was heard, and the great bell of the cathedral sent forth its first majestic peal.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KING'S CARRIAGES.

A DULL heavy sound was heard in the distance, which became stronger and deeper as it advanced. As Gilbert listened, he felt every nerve in his body vibrate painfully.

The people were shouting "God save the king!" It was still the fashion then. Onward came a cloud of prancing horses covered with housings of gold and purple; these were the musketeers, the gendarmes, and Swiss horse-guards. Then followed a massive carriage magnificently decorated.

Gilbert perceived in the carriage a blue ribbon and a majestic head not uncovered. He saw the cold, penetrating light of the royal look, before which every form bent and every head was uncovered. Fascinated, motionless, breathless, he forgot to take off his hat. A violent blow roused him from his trance; his hat rolled on the ground. He sprang forward, lifted it up, and looking round, saw the tradesman's nephew looking at him with that truculent smile which is peculiar to the soldier. "Well," said he, "so you don't take off your hat to the king?"

Gilbert turned pale, and looked at his hat, covered with dust. "It is the first time I ever saw the king," said he, "and I forgot to salute him, it is true. But I did not know—"

"You did not know?" said the soldier, frowning.

Gilbert feared that he should be driven from the spot where he was so well placed for seeing Andrée, and love

conquered pride. "Pardon me," said he, "I am from the country."

"And you have come to Paris to be educated, my little man?"

"Yes, Monsieur," replied Gilbert, swallowing his rage.

"Well, since you are seeking instruction," said the sergeant, arresting Gilbert's hand as he was putting his hat on his head, "learn this: you must take off your hat to the dauphiness as well as to the king, and to their Royal Highnesses the princes as well as to the dauphiness, — in short, you must take it off to all the carriages on which you see the *fleur-de-lis*. Do you know the *fleur-de-lis*, my little fellow, or must I show you what it is?"

"Quite unnecessary, Monsieur; I know it."

"It is well you know even that much," grumbled the sergeant.

The royal carriages continued to file past. As each reached the door of the convent, it stopped to permit its occupants to alight. This operation caused every five minutes a general halt along the whole line.

At one of these halts Gilbert felt as if a fiery sword had pierced his heart. He became giddy, everything swam before his eyes, and he trembled so violently that he was forced to grasp his branch more firmly to prevent himself from falling. About ten paces from him, in one of the carriages with the *fleur-de-lis* to which the sergeant had desired him to take off his hat, he had just perceived Andrée. Dressed in white, and dazzling with beauty, she seemed to his excited eyes some angelic being from a higher sphere. He uttered a stifled cry; but immediately afterward, conquering his agitation, he commanded his heart to be still and his gaze steady; and so great was his self-control that he succeeded.

Andrée, on her side, wishing to know why the proces-

sion had stopped, leaned forward out of the carriage, and directing her clear and limpid gaze around, she perceived Gilbert and at once recognized him. Gilbert feared that on seeing him she would be surprised, and would point him out to her father. He was not mistaken. With an air of astonishment she turned toward the Baron de Taverney, who, decorated with his red ribbon, sat with great dignity beside her, and directed his attention to Gilbert.

"Gilbert?" cried the baron, starting, "Gilbert here? And who, then, will take care of Mahon down yonder?"

The young man heard these words distinctly, and with the most studied respect he bowed to Andrée and the baron. It required all his strength to accomplish this feat.

"It is really he!" continued the baron, on perceiving our philosopher. "It is the little rascal himself!" The idea that Gilbert was in Paris was so far removed from his thoughts that at first he would not believe his daughter's assertions, and could hardly credit even his own eyes. As for Andrée, whom Gilbert examined closely, after the first slight shade of surprise had passed away, her countenance resumed an expression of perfect calm.

The baron leaned out of the carriage window and signed to Gilbert to approach; but as he attempted to obey, the sergeant stopped him.

"You see that I am called," said he.

"By whom?" demanded the sergeant.

"The gentleman in that carriage."

The sergeant's eye followed the direction of Gilbert's finger, and rested on the Baron de Taverney's carriage.

"Pray allow him to come this way, Sergeant," said the baron. "I wish to speak to the lad, — two words only."

"Four, Monsieur, four, if you like," replied the soldier.

"You have plenty of time; they are now reading an address at the gate, and I daresay it will occupy half an hour. Pass through, young man."

"Come hither, you rascal!" said the baron to Gilbert, who affected to walk at his usual pace, "and tell me by what accident it happens you are here, when you ought to be at Taverney!"

Gilbert saluted Andrée and the baron a second time, and replied; "It was no accident which brought me to Paris, Monsieur; I came hither of my own free will."

"Your free will, you scoundrel! Do you talk of your will to me?"

"Why not? Every free man has a right to his will."

"Oh, ho! Free man! You imagine yourself free, do you, you little wretch?"

"Certainly I am; I have never sold my freedom to any one."

"Upon my word, this is an amusing sort of a scoundrel!" exclaimed the baron, confounded at the coolness with which Gilbert spoke. "Your free will led you to Paris! And how did you travel; what assistance had you, if you please?"

"I came on foot."

"On foot!" said Andrée, with a slight expression of pity in her tone.

"And what do you intend to do in Paris?" inquired the baron.

"To get educated first, — then make my fortune."

"Educated?"

"Yes, I am certain of being educated."

"Make your fortune?"

"I hope to make it."

"And in the mean time what do you do, — beg?"

"Beg!" exclaimed Gilbert, with lofty scorn.

"You steal, then?"

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, with a look so proud and fierce that it fixed Andrée's attention on him for a moment, "did I ever steal from you?"

"What can your idle hands do but steal?"

"What those of a man of genius do, — a man whom I wish to imitate, were it only in his perseverance," replied Gilbert. "They copy music."

Andrée turned towards him. "Copy music?" said she.

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

"You know music, then?" she inquired, with the same contemptuous tone in which she would have said, "It is false."

"I know my notes, and that is enough for a copyist."

"And how the devil did you learn your notes, you rascal?" cried the baron.

"Yes, how?" added Andrée, smiling.

"I love music, Monsieur, passionately; and when Mademoiselle Andrée played on the harpsichord every day, I hid myself that I might listen."

"Good-for-nothing fellow!"

"At first I remembered the airs; then, as they were written in a music-book, by degrees I learned to read the notes from the book."

"From my music-book?" exclaimed Andrée, with the utmost indignation. "Did you dare to touch my music-book?"

"No, Mademoiselle, I did not permit myself to do so; but as it remained open on the harpsichord, sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, I endeavored to read in it, but without touching it. My eyes would not soil the pages."

"You will see," cried the baron, "that the fellow will assert next that he plays on the piano like Haydn!"

"I should probably have been able by this time to

play," said Gilbert, "had I dared to place my fingers on the keys."

Andrée in spite of herself again glanced at that face which was animated by a sentiment only to be compared to the fanaticism of a martyr; but the baron, who did not possess his daughter's clear and comprehensive intellect, felt his choler rise on reflecting that the young man was in the right, and that he had been treated inhumanly in being left with Mahon at Taverney. It is not easy to pardon in an inferior the wrong which he proves you have done him; and the baron therefore became more furious in proportion as his daughter became calm. "Wretch!" cried he, "you steal away; you go running about like a vagabond; and when questioned about your mode of life you utter such a tissue of absurdities as those which we have just heard! But it shall not be my fault if rogues and pickpockets infest the king's highways."

Andrée by a gesture entreated her father to be calm; she knew that ungoverned anger annuls superiority. But the baron thrust aside her hand, which she had placed on his arm, and continued: "I shall recommend you to the notice of the Comte de Sartines, and you shall speedily take a turn in the Bicêtre, scarecrow of a philosopher!"

Gilbert stepped back, crushed his hat under his arm, and pale with anger exclaimed: "Learn, Monsieur le Baron, that since I arrived in Paris I have found protectors in whose ante-chambers your Comte de Sartines would be glad to wait!"

"Indeed!" said the baron. "In that case, if you escape a prison you shall not escape a good caning. Andrée, call your brother!"

Andrée leaned forward out of the carriage and said imperiously to Gilbert, "Come, Monsieur Gilbert, you must withdraw."

"Philippe! Philippe!" shouted the old man.

"Leave us!" said Andrée again to the young man, who remained silent and motionless in his place, as if in ecstatic contemplation.

An officer, summoned by the baron's cries, hurried forward to the carriage door; it was Philippe, dressed in his captain's uniform. The young man was splendidly attired, and seemed in high spirits. "What! Gilbert?" he exclaimed, with a good-humored smile on recognizing the young man. "Gilbert here! How do you do, Gilbert? Well, what do you want with me, my dear father?"

"How do you do, M. Philippe?" replied Gilbert.

"What do I want?" said the baron, furiously. "I want you to take the sheath of your sword and chastise this scoundrel!"

"But what has he done?" asked Philippe, gazing by turns with increasing astonishment at the angry face of his father and the rigid and motionless features of Gilbert.

"Done? He has done — he has — Beat him, Philippe; beat him as you would a dog!" cried the baron. Taverney turned to his sister.

"What has he done, Andrée? Has he insulted you?"

"Insulted her!" repeated Gilbert.

"No, Philippe, no!" replied Andrée. "He has done nothing wrong; my father is in error. Gilbert is no longer in our service, and has a perfect right to go where he pleases; but my father will not understand this, and is angry at finding him here."

"Is that all?" said Philippe.

"Nothing more, brother; and I cannot imagine why my father should be so angry, particularly on such a subject, and about things and persons that do not deserve even a thought. Philippe, look and see whether the train is moving on."

The baron was silent, overcome by the lofty serenity of his daughter. Gilbert bowed his head, crushed by her contempt. For a moment a feeling akin to hatred darted through his heart. He would have preferred the mortal thrust of Philippe's sword — aye, even a lash of his whip — to her insulting scorn. He was almost fainting. Fortunately, the address had now ended, and the cortège once more moved on. The baron's carriage advanced with the rest, and Andrée disappeared from before his eyes like a vision. Gilbert remained alone. He could have wept; he could have groaned aloud. He thought that he could no longer bear the weight of his sufferings. Just then a hand rested on his shoulder. He turned and saw Philippe, who, having given his horse to a soldier of his regiment to hold, returned smiling toward him.

"Come, let me hear what has happened, my poor Gilbert," said he, "and why you have come to Paris."

His frank and cordial tone touched the young man's heart. "Oh, Monsieur!" he replied, with a sigh, his stern stoicism melting at once, "what should I have done at Taverney, I ask you? I must have died of despair, ignorance, and hunger!"

Philippe started. His generous heart was struck, as Andrée's had been, by the misery and destitution in which Gilbert had been left. "And you think, my poor fellow, to succeed in Paris without money, protection, or resources?"

"I trust so, Monsieur. A man who is willing to work rarely dies of hunger, where there are other men who wish to do nothing."

Philippe was struck by this reply; until then he had always looked on Gilbert as a commonplace domestic. "But have you any means of buying food?" said he.

"I can earn my daily bread, M. Philippe. That is suf-

ficient for one who has never had any cause for self-reproach but that of having eaten bread he has not earned."

"I hope you do not say so with reference to that which you received at Taverney, my poor lad! Your father and mother were faithful servants, and you were always willing to make yourself useful."

"I only did my duty, Monsieur."

"Listen to me, Gilbert. You know that I always liked you. I have always taken a more favorable view of your character than others have, — whether justly or the reverse, the future will show. What others called savage pride, I regarded as sensitiveness; where others saw rudeness and ill-breeding, I perceived only honest bluntness."

"Ah, chevalier!" said Gilbert, breathing more freely.

"I really wish you well, Gilbert."

"Thank you, Monsieur!"

"Young like you, and like you also in an unhappy position, I was perhaps on that account more disposed to feel for and pity you. Fortune has blessed me with abundance; let me assist you until fortune smiles on you in your turn."

"Thanks, Monsieur, many thanks."

"What do you think of doing? You are too proud to accept of a situation as servant."

Gilbert shook his head with a scornful smile. "I wish to study," said he.

"But in order to study, you must have masters, and to pay them you must have money."

"I can earn money, Monsieur."

"Earn money? How much can you earn?"

"Twenty-five sous a day, and in a short time perhaps thirty and even forty sous."

"But that is barely enough for food."

Gilbert smiled.

"Perhaps," continued Philippe, "I am not taking the right way of offering you my services."

"Your services to me, M. Philippe?"

"Yes, my services. Are you ashamed to accept them?"

Gilbert made no answer.

"Men are sent on earth to aid one another," continued Maison-Rouge. "Are we not all brethren?"

Gilbert raised his head and fixed his intelligent gaze on the chevalier's noble countenance.

"Does this language surprise you?" said he.

"No, Monsieur," said Gilbert, "it is the language of philosophy; but it is not usual to hear such from persons of your rank."

"Yet it is the language of the times. The dauphin himself shares in these sentiments. Come, do not be proud with me," continued Philippe. "What I lend you, you can repay me one day or other. Who knows but you may yet be a Colbert or a Vauban?"

"Or a Tronchin," said Gilbert.

"Yes, or a Tronchin. Here is my purse, let me share its contents with you."

"Thank you, Monsieur," said the indomitable Gilbert, moved in spite of himself by Philippe's genial kindness; "but I do not want anything; only — only, believe me, I am as grateful to you as if I had accepted your offer." And, bowing, he disappeared in the crowd, leaving the young captain lost in astonishment. The latter waited a few minutes, as if he could not believe his eyes or ears; but finding that Gilbert did not return, he mounted his horse and returned to his post.

CHAPTER V.

THE FUGITIVE.

THE noise of the carriages, the prolonged and merry peal of the bells, the joyful beating of the drums, all the pomp and ceremony of the day — a faint reflection of that world now lost to her forever — slipped away from the Princess Louise's mind like an idle wave which had rolled up to the walls of her cell and then retreated.

When the king had departed, after having once more endeavored, but in vain, to win his daughter back to the world by a mingling of paternal entreaty and royal command, and when the dauphiness, who had been at the first glance struck by the real greatness of soul displayed by her august aunt, had also disappeared with her gay throng of courtiers, the Superior of the Carmelites gave orders that the hangings should be taken down, the flowers removed, and the lace put away. Of all the sisterhood of the Carmelites she alone was unmoved when the massive gates of the convent, which had for a moment opened to the world, closed heavily again on their solitude. Then she summoned the sister who acted as treasurer of the convent. "During these two days of disorder," asked she, "have the poor received their usual alms?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Have the sick been visited?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Did the soldiers receive some refreshment before they departed?"

"They received the wine and the bread which you ordered, Madame."

"Then no one is ill or sick in the convent?"

"No one, Madame."

The princess approached a window and softly inhaled the cool and perfumed breeze which was wafted toward her on the humid wings of evening. The treasurer waited respectfully until her august Superior should give her an order or dismiss her. Madame Louise began to pluck off the leaves of the roses and jasmine which twined around the windows and climbed up the walls of the building. Heaven alone knows what were the thoughts of the poor royal recluse at that moment.

Suddenly the door of a detached building in the court-yard, close at hand, was shaken by the violent kick of a horse. Madame Louise started. "What nobleman of the court has remained at St. Denis?" asked she.

"His Eminence the Cardinal de Rohan, Madame."

"Are his horses here too?"

"No, Madame; they are at the chapter-house of the abbey, where he is to pass the night."

"What noise was that, then?"

"Madame, it was caused by the foreign woman's horse."

"What woman?" asked Madame Louise, endeavoring to recollect.

"The Italian who came yesterday to request the protection of your Royal Highness."

"Ah! true, I remember now. Where is she?"

"In her chamber, or in the church."

"How has she conducted herself since she came?"

"Since yesterday she has refused all nourishment

except dry bread, and has spent the entire night praying in the chapel."

"Some great criminal, doubtless?" said the Superior, frowning.

"I do not know, Madame; she has spoken to no one."

"What sort of a woman is she?"

"Extremely handsome, and with an expression at once gentle and haughty."

"This morning, during the ceremony, where was she?"

"In her chamber, close to the window, where I saw her, half hidden by the curtain, watching with anxious eyes every person who entered, as if in each she feared an enemy."

"She is some poor erring creature of the world in which I once lived and reigned. Admit her."

The nun made a movement to retire.

"Ah! what is her name?" asked the princess.

"Lorenza Feliciani."

"I know no one of that name," said Madame Louise, reflecting; "no matter, introduce her."

The Superior seated herself in her chair of state, which was of carved oak, made in the reign of Henry II., and had been used by the last nine abbesses of the Carmelites. It was a formidable judgment-seat, before which had trembled many a poor novice caught on the slippery path between spiritual and temporal things. A moment afterward the nun entered, leading in the strange lady, who was covered from head to foot with the long veil we have before mentioned.

The Princess Louise possessed the piercing eye characteristic of her family; and as Lorenza Feliciani appeared before her, she fastened a stern and searching glance on her. But she saw in the young woman so much humility, grace, and beauty, and in the large eyes, filled with tears,

so much innocence, that her feeling of harshness gave place immediately to one of compassion and kindness.

"Draw near, Madame," said the princess.

The stranger advanced hesitatingly, and was about to kneel, when the princess prevented her.

"Is not your name, Madame," said she, "Lorenza Feliciani?"

"Yes, Madame."

"And you wish to confide a secret to me?"

"Oh! I am longing to do so."

"But why had you not recourse to the tribunal of penance? I have power only to console; a priest can not only console, but pardon."

"I require only consolation, Madame," replied Lorenza; "and, besides, it is to a woman alone that I dare relate what I have to tell you."

"Then it is a strange story which you are about to narrate?"

"Yes, strange indeed. But hear me patiently, Madame; it is to you alone, I repeat, that I dare confide it, both because you are all-powerful, and because the hand of God is almost necessary to protect me."

"Protect you? Are you pursued then? Are you in danger?"

"Oh, yes, Madame, yes!" cried the stranger, in wild alarm.

"But reflect, Madame," said the princess, "that this is a convent, and not a fortress; that those worldly thoughts which agitate the breasts of men penetrate here but to be extinguished; that this is not a house of justice, of force, or repression, but simply the house of God."

"Oh, that is what I seek!" said Lorenza. "Yes, I seek the house of God, for there alone can I find shelter and repose."

"But God admits not of revenge. How then do you ask his servant to avenge you? Address yourself to the magistrates."

"They can do nothing against him whom I dread."

"Who is he, then?" asked the abbess, with a mysterious and involuntary dread.

Lorenza approached close to the princess in a nervous and excited manner. "Who is he, Madame?" said she. "He is, I firmly believe, one of those demons who war against man, and whom Satan, their prince, has gifted with superhuman power."

"What do you say?" exclaimed the princess, recoiling as if to satisfy herself that she was not addressing a lunatic.

"And I — oh, how unhappy I am!" continued Lorenza, writhing her beautiful arms, which seemed modelled from those of some antique statue, "I crossed the path of that man, and now I am — "

"Go on."

Lorenza again approached the princess, and, as if terrified herself at what she was about to utter, she whispered hoarsely, "I am possessed!"

"Possessed?" cried the princess. "Take care, Madame! Are you sure you are in your senses? Are you not — "

"Mad, you would say. No, I am not mad; but I may become so if you abandon me."

"But permit me to observe that you seem to me in all respects one of the favored of Heaven. You are rich and beautiful, you express yourself rationally, and I see in your countenance nothing betokening that terrible and mysterious disease called possession."

"Madame, it is in my life, it is in the adventures which have befallen me, that the baleful secret lies which I would willingly conceal even from myself."

"Explain yourself calmly. Am I the first to whom you you have disclosed your sufferings? Your parents, your friends —"

"My parents!" exclaimed the young woman, clasping her hands with agony, "my poor parents! Shall I never see you again? Friends!" added she, bitterly; "alas, Madame, have I any friends?"

"Come, let us proceed regularly, my poor child," said Madame Louise, endeavoring to restore order to the stranger's incoherent words; "tell me all. Who are your parents? How came you to abandon them?"

"Madame, I am a native of Rome, and I lived in Rome with them. My father belongs to the ancient nobility, but, like all our patricians, he is poor. I have also a mother, and a brother older than myself. In France, I believe, when a family such as mine has a son and daughter, the portion of the daughter is sacrificed to purchase the son's sword; with us the daughter is sacrificed to put the son forward in the church. Now, I have received no education, because an education was a necessity for my brother, who is studying, as my mother naïvely said, to become a cardinal; and to aid my brother my parents submitted to every privation, and decided on making me take the veil in the Carmelite convent at Subiaco."

"And you, what did you say?"

"Nothing, Madame. From childhood I had been taught to look forward to such an event as inevitable. Besides, I was not consulted; my parents commanded, — I had only to obey."

"But yet —"

"Oh, Madame, we Roman girls are helpless instruments in the hands of others. Almost all my young friends who had brothers had paid this debt for the advancement of

their families. I had therefore no reason to complain; nothing unusual was asked of me. My mother merely caressed me a little more than usual as the time for my leaving her approached. At last the day for the commencement of my novitiate arrived; my father prepared his five hundred crowns, my dowry for the convent, and we set out for Subiaco. It is only about nine leagues from Rome to Subiaco, but the roads are bad, and our journey was slow and fatiguing. Nevertheless, it pleased me. I welcomed it as a last enjoyment, and whispered adieu to the trees, the shrubs, the rocks, and even to the withered grass which lined the road. How could I tell if at the convent I should see trees, rocks, or shrubs? Suddenly, in the midst of my fancies, as we wound along between a wood and a mass of overhanging rock, the carriage stopped. My mother shrieked; my father seized his pistols. My thoughts descended suddenly to earth, for those who had stopped us were bandits."

"My poor child!" said the princess, becoming more and more interested in the narrative.

"Well, — shall I confess it, Madame? — I was not much terrified, for these men had stopped us to take our money, and this money was the sum destined for my dowry to the convent. Consequently, if there was no dowry, my entrance into the convent would be delayed until my father could collect five hundred crowns more, and I knew well the time and trouble it had taken to amass these. But when the robbers, after having shared the booty, instead of permitting us to continue our journey, turned and seized me, regardless of the tears of my mother and the efforts of my father to defend me, I was struck with a sort of nameless terror, and shrieked aloud. They bound my hands in spite of my struggles, and held me while they threw the dice to ascertain to whom I

should belong. I had abandoned all hope; my mother had fainted away, and my father lay writhing on the earth. At this moment a man mounted on horseback appeared among the robbers. He had spoken in a low voice to one of the sentinels, who had allowed him to proceed, exchanging a sign with him as he did so. This man was of the middle height, of commanding features, and had a resolute glance; he continued to advance calmly at the usual pace of his steed, and when he had arrived opposite me he stopped. The bandit who had already taken me in his arms and was carrying me away, turned suddenly at the first blast which the stranger gave on a little whistle fixed to the end of his whip, and allowed me to slip to the ground. 'Come hither,' said the unknown; and as the man appeared to hesitate, he leaned forward and whispered in his ear the single word, '*Mac.*' '*Benac,*' replied the bandit; and then, like a lion subdued and crouching under the lash, he proceeded to untie my hands as well as those of my father and mother. Then, as the money had been already divided, each man of the troop came forward in his turn to lay his share on a stone. Not a crown of the entire sum was wanting. 'Now, go!' said the unknown to the banditti, and instantly every man disappeared in the surrounding woods.

"'Lorenza Feliciani,' said the stranger then, addressing me and fixing on me a look which had more than human power in it, 'proceed on your way; you are free!'

"My father and mother thanked this stranger, who knew me, but whom we did not know, and entered the carriage again. I accompanied them with a sort of regret; for some strange, irresistible power seemed to attract me to the man who had saved me. He remained immovable in the same spot, as if to protect our retreat. As long as I could distinguish his form my eyes were fixed on him,

and it was only when he was lost to view that the oppressive feeling which weighed upon my bosom was removed."

"But who was this extraordinary man?" asked the princess, interested by the simplicity of the narrative.

"Deign to hear me farther, Madame," asked Lorenza. "Alas! all is not yet told."

"I listen," said Madame Louise.

The young woman proceeded: "Two hours afterward we reached Subiaco. During the rest of our journey we never ceased conversing about this singular protector, mysterious and powerful, who had come so suddenly to our assistance like a messenger from heaven. My father, less credulous than I, thought that he must be the captain of one of the numerous troops of robbers which infest the neighborhood of Rome; but in this I could not agree, although I dared not openly oppose my opinion to my father's, which was the result of years and experience. My instinctive feeling of gratitude toward this man who had so wonderfully saved me revolted against the idea that he was a bandit; and every evening, in my devotions, I offered up a prayer to the Virgin for my unknown protector.

"The same day I entered the convent. I felt sadder, but also more resigned. An Italian, and consequently superstitious, I believed that God, by delivering me from the bandits, had wished to preserve me pure and unsullied for his service. I therefore gave myself up with ardor to the fulfilment of every duty of religion; and my father, learning this, drew up a petition to the Sovereign Pontiff to entreat him to shorten the period of my novitiate. I signed this document, which was expressed in terms so warm and earnest that his Holiness, seeing in it only the aspirations of a soul disgusted with the world, granted me

a dispensation which fixed the term of my novitiate at a month instead of a year.

"This news, when announced to me, inspired me with neither joy nor grief. I was like one already dead to the world. For fifteen days I was kept closely confined, lest any worldly desires might arise in my breast. At the end of that time I was allowed to descend with the other sisters to the chapel. I entered and took my place behind the curtain which separated, or affected to separate, the nuns from the congregation. Looking through one of the openings, which seemed to me a loophole through which I could obtain a last glance at the world I was leaving, I saw a man standing up alone in the middle of the kneeling crowd. He seemed to devour me with his eyes, and I felt again that strange sensation of uneasiness which I had before experienced, — that superhuman power which seemed to draw me away from myself, as I had seen my brother draw a needle to the loadstone, even through a leaf of paper or a piece of wood.

"Overcome, subdued, unable to resist this attraction, I leaned forward, and with clasped hands I murmured, 'Thanks, thanks!' The nuns looked at me with surprise. They could not comprehend my words or gestures, and, following my glance, they rose on their seats and gazed down into the body of the church. I also gazed, trembling. The stranger had disappeared. They questioned me, but I only turned pale and red by turns, and stammered out some incoherent words. From that moment, Madame," cried Lorenza, in a despairing voice, "from that moment I have been in the demon's power."

"Nevertheless," replied the princess, smiling, "I see nothing supernatural in all that you have related. Calm yourself, my sister, and proceed."

"Ah, Madame! it is because you cannot understand

what I felt. Heart, soul, mind, — the demon possessed all."

"My sister, I fear greatly that this demon was only love," said Madame Louise.

"Oh, love could not have made me suffer thus! Love would not so have oppressed my heart; it would not have shaken my frame as the storm shakes a slender reed! Love would not have whispered in my ear the sinful thought which haunted me at that moment."

"What thought, my child?"

"Ought not I to have disclosed all to my confessor, Madame?"

"Doubtless."

"Well, the demon that possessed me whispered me, on the contrary, to keep it secret. I imagined, Madame, that there would be attributed to me with this man one of those intrigues which each one of us sisters before taking the veil has had with a regretted lover."

"An evil thought, indeed; but it is often a very innocent demon which puts such thoughts in the heart of a woman. Proceed."

"On the following day I was summoned to the parlor. I found there one of my neighbors of the Via Frattina at Rome, a young married lady, who regretted very much the loss of my society, because every evening we used to meet to talk and sing together. Behind her, close to the door, stood a man wrapped in a cloak, who seemed to be her servant. He did not turn toward me, but I turned toward him; he did not speak, yet I knew him. He was my unknown protector. The same thrilling sensation I had already experienced shot through my frame. I felt my whole being subdued by the power of this man. Had it not been for the bars which held me captive, I should certainly have followed him. Although enveloped closely

in his mantle, rays of light seemed to shoot from him which dazzled me; profound as was his silence, it had sounds which spoke to me a harmonious language. I made a violent effort to subdue my feelings, and asked my friend who the man was who accompanied her. She did not know him. Her husband, who had intended to come with her, had been prevented by some engagement, and had brought this friend of his, a stranger to her, to be her companion.

"My friend was religious, and seeing in a corner of the parlor a Madonna who had the reputation of possessing miraculous powers, she would not depart without offering up a prayer before her. While she was engaged in her devotions, the man entered the room, approached close to me, uncovered his face, and fixed his glowing eyes on mine. I waited for him to speak; my bosom heaved as if in expectation of his words; but he contented himself with putting his arms through the bars which separated us, and extended them above my head. Immediately an inexpressible feeling of delight seized on my whole frame. He smiled; I returned his smile, closing my eyes, which seemed weighed down by an overpowering languor. Then, as if he had merely wished to assure himself of his power over me, he immediately retired. As he disappeared I recovered by degrees the use of my senses; but I was still under the control of this strange hallucination when my friend, having finished her prayer, rose, and embracing me, took her leave. When I was undressing at night I found in my bosom a note containing these words: 'In Rome, the man who loves a nun is punished by death. Will you give death to him to whom you owe your life?' From that moment the demon possessed me entirely, for I lied before Heaven, Madame, in not confessing that I thought of this man much more than of my salvation."

Lorenza, terrified at what she had disclosed, paused to discover what impression it had produced on the mild and intelligent countenance of the princess.

"Still," replied the princess, firmly, "all this is not possession by the Evil One; it is merely the result of an unhappy passion, and I must again repeat that such thoughts cannot be spoken of here, except to express regret for them."

"Regret, Madame?" cried Lorenza. "What, you behold me in tears at your feet beseeching you to rescue me from the power of this fearful man, and yet you doubt my regret! Oh, I feel more than regret, — I feel remorse!"

"And yet," said Madame Louise, "up to this point —"

"Ah, Madame, you have not yet heard all! Wait till I have finished, and then, I beseech you, judge me mercifully! Three days in the week we attended divine service in the chapel. The unknown was always present. I wished to resist him; I pretended that I was ill; I resolved not to go down. Alas! for human weakness. When the hour arrived, I descended with the nuns, as it were, in despite of my own will. If he were not in the church when I entered, I had some moments of calm; but as he drew near I felt him coming. I could have said, 'Now he is a hundred paces off; now he is at the door; now he is in the church,' and that without even looking in the direction from which he came. Then, when he had reached his accustomed place, although my eyes had been fastened on my prayer-book while I murmured the words before me, they turned involuntarily and rested on him. I could neither read nor pray; all my thought, all my will, all my soul were in my eyes, and my eyes were fixed on that man, who I believed was disputing possession of

me with God. At first I could not look at him without fear; then I longed to see him; then my thoughts seemed to meet his. And often I saw him in the night as in a dream, and felt him pass beneath my window.

"The state of my mind did not escape the notice of my companions. The abbess was informed of it, and she in turn informed my parents. Three days before I was to pronounce my vows my father, my mother, and my brother — the only relations I had in the world — entered my cell. They came ostensibly to bid me farewell, but I saw plainly that they had some other motive; and when my mother was left alone with me she questioned me closely. And here the power of the Evil One may clearly be seen; for instead of telling all, as I ought to have done, I denied everything obstinately.

. "On the day when I was to take the veil a strange struggle took place within me. I both dreaded and wished for the moment which was to give me up entirely to the service of God; and I felt that if the demon meditated a last effort to subdue me to his will, it would be at this solemn moment that he would make it."

"And had that strange man never written to you since the first letter which you found in your bosom?" asked the princess.

"Never, Madame."

"And at that time you had never spoken to him?"

"Never, except in thought."

"Nor written to him?"

"Oh, never!"

"Proceed; you were at the day when you were to take the veil."

"That day, as I have told your Highness, I hoped was to end my tortures, and I was impatient for the ceremony. 'When I belong to God entirely,' I thought, 'he will

defend me as he defended me from the attack of the bandits.' I forgot that God had defended me only through the intervention of this man. In the mean time the hour arrived. I descended to the church pale, restless, but yet less agitated than usual. My father, my mother, my brother, my friend from the Via Frattina who had come before to see me, and many other of our friends, were there. The inhabitants of the neighboring villages also thronged the church, for the report had been spread that I was lovely; and a lovely victim, they say, is most acceptable to the Lord.

"The service began. I would have hastened it by my prayers; for he was not present, and in his absence I felt that I was mistress of myself. Already the priest had raised the crucifix before me, and I was just about to extend my arm toward it, when the trembling which invariably announced the approach of my persecutor seized me. Forced by an irresistible attraction, I turned round and saw him standing near the pulpit, gazing at me more fixedly than he had ever yet done. In vain I endeavored to keep my eyes on the priest; service, ceremony, prayers, faded from my sight. I believe I was questioned concerning the rite; I remember I was pulled by the arm to arouse me, but I tottered like some inanimate object trembling on its base. I was shown the scissors, from which a ray of sunlight was reflected back with dazzling brightness, but I did not even wink. Then I felt the cold steel on my neck, and heard its sharp points in my hair.

"At that moment it seemed to me as if all strength left me; my soul rushed from my body to meet his, and I fell motionless on the pavement, — yet, strange to say, not like one who has fainted, but like one overcome by sleep. I heard a loud murmur, and almost immediately

after became insensible. The ceremony was interrupted with frightful tumult."

The princess clasped her hands with a gesture of compassion.

"Ah, Madame, was not that terrible?" said Lorenza; "and is it not easy to see in such an event the intervention of the Enemy of man?"

"Take care, my poor girl," said the princess, in a tone of tenderness and pity; "I think you are too much disposed to attribute to miraculous power that which is simply the result of a natural weakness. On seeing that man you fainted, that is all. Proceed."

"Oh, Madame, do not say so, or at least wait till you have heard all before you judge. Had I fainted, should I not have come to myself in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, or an hour at most? Should I not have been surrounded by my sister nuns, and have resumed courage and faith on seeing them?"

"Doubtless," said Madame Louise. "Well, was it not so?"

"Madame," said Lorenza, in a low, hurried whisper, "when I was restored to consciousness it was night. I felt a rapid, jolting motion, which fatigued me, and I raised my head, thinking that I was under the vaulted roof of the chapel, or within the curtains of my cell. I saw rocks, trees, clouds; then I felt a warm breath fanning my cheeks. I thought that it was the sick nurse who was endeavoring to restore me, and I made an effort to thank her. Madame, my head was resting on the bosom of a man, — that man my persecutor! I looked at myself and felt of myself to become certain that I was alive, and that I was not dreaming. I could not restrain a cry of terror. I was dressed in white, and wore on my head a crown of white roses like a bride, or like a maiden dressed for the tomb."

The princess uttered an exclamation of astonishment. Lorenza hid her face in her hands.

"The next day," continued Lorenza, sobbing, "I made inquiries, and ascertained that it was Wednesday. For three days, therefore, I had remained insensible. I am ignorant of all that happened during that time."

CHAPTER VI.

LE COMTE DE FENIX.

A LONG and painful silence succeeded to this narrative, during which each of the two ladies seemed absorbed in her reflections. The princess was the first to break it.

"And you lent no assistance to this man to carry you off?" said she.

"None, Madame."

"You are ignorant how you left the convent?"

"I am quite ignorant."

"Yet a convent is kept carefully guarded; there are bars to the windows; the walls are very high; there is a portress who keeps the keys of the gates always at her side. That is especially the case in Italy, where the rules are even more severe than in France."

"Madame, I can only reply, that from the moment of my awaking from my trance until now, I have searched my memory in vain."

"But did you not reproach him for what he had done?"

"Oh, yes, Madame!"

"What was his excuse?"

"That he loved me."

"And what did you reply to that?"

"That I had a horror of him."

"Then you did not love him?"

"Oh no, no!"

"Are you quite certain?"

"Alas, Madame, what I felt for that man was singular indeed! When he was present I was no longer myself; what he willed, I willed; what he commanded, I did; my soul had no power, my mind no will; a look from him subdued and fascinated me. Sometimes he seemed to inspire me with thoughts which were not mine; sometimes he seemed to draw from me ideas so deeply hidden that I had never even guessed that I possessed them. Oh! do you not see, Madame, that there was magic in all this?"

"It is certainly strange, if not supernatural," said the princess. "But after you had been carried off, how did you live with that man?"

"He displayed the warmest affection for me, the sincerest attachment."

"He was a vicious man, no doubt?"

"I do not think so; there was, on the contrary, something lofty and inspired in his manner of speaking."

"Come, come! you loved him; confess it!"

"No, no, Madame," said the young woman, with mournful bitterness; "no, I did not love him."

"Then you ought to have left him; you ought to have appealed to the public authorities, and demanded to be restored to your parents."

"Madame, he watched me so closely that I could not fly."

"But why not write, then?"

"Wherever we stopped on the road, the house seemed to belong to him alone, and every one obeyed him. Several times I asked for pen, ink, and paper; but those to whom I applied were doubtless directed by him, for they never even answered me."

"And how did you travel?"

"At first in a post-chaise; but at Milan, instead of a

carriage we entered a kind of moving house, in which we continued our journey."

"But he must have sometimes left you alone?"

"Yes; but at these times, before leaving me, he approached me and said, 'Sleep!' I slept, and did not awake until his return."

The princess shook her head incredulously. "You would have been able to escape," said she, "had you seriously endeavored to do so."

"Alas, Madame! and yet it seemed to me that I did; but perhaps I was fascinated."

"By his words of love, by his caresses?"

"He seldom spoke of love, Madame; and except a kiss imprinted on my forehead in the morning, and one in the evening, he bestowed no caresses on me."

"Strange, strange indeed!" murmured the princess; then, as if some suspicion had crossed her mind, she said aloud: "And you are ready to assert again that you do not love him?"

"I do assert it again, Madame."

"And no earthly bond unites you to him?"

"None, Madame."

"Then should he claim you, he would have no right over you?"

"None, Madame, none."

"But," added the princess, after a moment's reflection, "how did you escape at last? I do not understand that."

"Madame, I took advantage of a violent storm which occurred while we were near a town called Nancy, I think. He left his place near me to go into another compartment of the carriage to talk to an old man who was with us. Then I leaped on his horse and fled."

"And why did you prefer remaining in France to returning to Italy?"

"I reflected that I could not return to Rome, since my parents and friends there would certainly imagine I had been the accomplice of that man, and perhaps refuse to receive me. I resolved therefore to come to Paris, and to endeavor to remain concealed; or to try to reach some other great city, where no eye — and, above all, his — could discover me. When I reached Paris, Madame, every one was speaking of your retirement into the convent of the Carmelites. They lauded your piety, your charity toward the wretched, your pity for the afflicted. A ray of hope darted through my soul, and I was struck with the conviction that you would be generous enough to receive me and powerful enough to protect me."

"You appeal always to my power, my poor child. Is he, then, so powerful?"

"Oh, yes, Madame!"

"But who is he, then? Through delicacy I have until now refrained from asking his name; but if I am to defend you, I must know against whom."

"Oh, Madame, even on that point I cannot enlighten you. I know neither who he is nor what he is. All that I know is that a king could not inspire more respect, a deity could not receive greater adoration, than he, from those to whom he deigns to reveal himself."

"But how do they address him? What is his name?"

"I have heard him addressed by different names; at present, however, I remember only two of them. One is given him by the old man, who, as I told you, travelled with us from Milan; the other he gives himself."

"What does the old man call him?"

"Acharat; is not that a heathenish name, Madame?"

"And what is his other name?"

"Joseph Balsamo."

"And what can you tell me of him?"

"That he seems to know all persons, to penetrate into all things; he is contemporary with all times, has lived in all ages. He speaks — may Heaven pardon such blasphemies! — he speaks of Alexander, Cæsar, and Charlemagne as if he had known them; yet I am sure they have been dead a very long time. But what is worse, he will talk of Caiaphas, Pilate, and our blessed Saviour as if he had been present at the crucifixion."

"He is some charlatan, I perceive," said the princess.

"I do not know exactly what that means, Madame; but what I do know is that he is a dangerous, terrible man. All yield to him, all bend before him, all fall prostrate at his word. You think him defenceless, he is armed; you think him alone, and he causes men to rise out of the earth; and that without an effort, — by a gesture, a word, a smile."

"It is well," said the princess. "Whoever he be, take courage, my child; you shall be protected from him."

"By you, Madame, by you?"

"Yes, by me; so long as you yourself do not abandon my protection. But cease from this time to believe, and above all do not seek to make me believe, in the superstitious visions which are the offspring of your diseased imagination. The walls of St. Denis will guard you securely against infernal powers, and against powers even more to be feared, — those of wicked men. And now, Madame, what are your intentions?"

"With these jewels, which belong to me, Madame, I wish to pay my dowry to some convent, — to this convent, if possible."

And Lorenza laid on a table precious bracelets, valuable rings, a magnificent diamond, and other jewels, the whole worth about twenty thousand crowns.

"Are those ornaments your own?" asked the princess.

"Yes, Madame. He gave them to me, and I devote them to the church. I have only one wish with regard to his property."

"What is that?"

"That his Arabian horse, Djerid, the instrument of my deliverance, be restored to him if he demands it."

"But with regard to yourself, you will on no account return to him?"

"On no account."

"Then what will you do? Am I to assume that it is your wish to enter this convent and continue in the practice of those duties which were interrupted at Subiaco by the extraordinary circumstances you have related to me?"

"It is my dearest wish, Madame; at your feet I supplicate its fulfilment."

"Be tranquil, my child. From this day you shall live with us; and when, by the exemplary conduct which I expect from you, you have shown that you deserve that favor, you shall take the vows, — and I answer for it, no one shall carry you away from St. Denis while your abbess watches over you."

Lorenza threw herself at the feet of her benefactress, and poured forth expressions of gratitude the most tender and the most sincere; but all at once, rising on one knee, she listened, turned pale, and trembled.

"Oh, heavens! Oh, heavens!" she exclaimed.

"What is the matter?" asked Madame Louise.

"My whole frame trembles. He is coming! He is coming!"

"Who is coming?"

"He who has sworn to destroy my soul."

"That man?"

"Yes, that man; do you not see how my hand trembles?

Oh!" continued she, in a tone of anguish, "he approaches! — he is near!"

"You are mistaken."

"No, Madame, no! Hold me! He draws me to him against my will. Hold me! Hold me!"

Madame Louise seized her by the arm. "Courage, courage, my poor child!" said she; "were it even he, you are in safety here."

"He approaches! He approaches!" cried Lorenza, with despair and horror in her voice, her eyes fixed, and her arms extended toward the door of the room.

"This is madness! Dare any one, think you, enter unannounced the apartment of Madame Louise of France? To obtain admittance, he must be the bearer of an order from the king."

"Oh, Madame, I know not how he procured an entrance," cried Lorenza, recoiling with terror; "but I do know that he is ascending the stairs, that he is scarcely ten paces distant, that he is here!"

At that moment the door opened. Alarmed at the strange coincidence, the princess could not prevent herself from starting back. A nun appeared.

"Who is there?" asked the abbess, hurriedly, "and what do you want?"

"Madame, a gentleman has just arrived who wishes to speak to your Royal Highness."

"His name?"

"Monsieur le Comte de Fenix."

"Is that he?" asked the princess, turning to Lorenza; "and do you know that name?"

"I do not know that name; but it is he, Madame, — it is he!"

"What does this gentleman want?" inquired the princess, addressing the nun.

"Having been sent on a mission to the king of France by his Majesty the king of Prussia, he wishes, he says, to have the honor of a moment's conversation with your Royal Highness."

The princess reflected for a moment; then, turning to Lorenza, "Retire into that cabinet," said she. Lorenza obeyed. "And you, sister," continued the princess, "admit this gentleman." The nun bowed, and left the room.

Having ascertained that the door of the cabinet was securely fastened, the princess seated herself in her arm-chair, and awaited the termination of the strange scene in which she found herself involved. Yet she could not subdue a certain degree of agitation.

Almost immediately the nun re-appeared, followed by the person who, as we have already seen, on the day of the presentation had caused himself to be announced as the Comte de Fenix. He was dressed in the same costume, — a Prussian uniform, with the military wig and black stock. His large, expressive eyes were cast down at first in the presence of the royal abbess, but only in a manner to indicate the respect which any gentleman, however high his rank, ought to show to a princess of France. But immediately raising them again, with a look which almost implied that he had already shown too great humility, "Madame," said he, "I thank your Royal Highness for the favor you have shown me. I confidently expected it, however, knowing that your Royal Highness is the generous patron of all the unhappy."

"Monsieur, I endeavor to be so," replied the princess, with dignity; for she felt certain that she should, before the lapse of many minutes, put to shame this man, who so impudently dared to claim her protection, after having deceived and ill-treated one confided to his care.

The count bowed, without betraying any consciousness of understanding the double meaning of her words.

She then continued, with something of irony in her tone: "In what way can I render you any assistance, Monsieur?"

"You can aid me in a matter of the greatest moment, Madame."

"Speak, Monsieur!"

"None but weighty considerations could have induced me, Madame, to intrude on your Royal Highness in this retreat which you have chosen; but you have, I believe, given shelter here to a person in whom I am deeply interested."

"The name of that person, Monsieur?"

"Lorenza Feliciani."

"And what is she to you? Is she your relation, your sister?"

"She is my wife."

"Your wife?" said the princess, raising her voice so that she might be heard in the cabinet. "Lorenza Feliciani is the Comtesse de Fenix?"

"Yes, Madame, Lorenza Feliciani is the Comtesse de Fenix," replied the count, with the utmost coolness.

"I have no Comtesse de Fenix in this convent, Monsieur," replied the princess.

But the count was not to be so repulsed. "Perhaps, Madame," said he, "your Royal Highness is not convinced that Lorenza Feliciani and the Comtesse de Fenix are one and the same person?"

"I admit it, Monsieur, — and your conjecture is correct; I am not well convinced on that point."

"If your Royal Highness will but command Lorenza Feliciani to be brought hither, you will soon have all doubts on that head cleared away. I entreat your Highness's pardon for urging the matter thus, but I am tenderly

attached to the young lady, and she herself, I think, regrets being separated from me."

"Do you think so, Monsieur?"

"Yes, Madame, unworthy as I am, I think so."

"Ah!" thought the princess, "Lorenza was right; this is indeed a most dangerous man."

The count preserved unruffled calmness of demeanor, and maintained the most courtly politeness.

"I must temporize," thought the princess to herself. "Monsieur," said she, "I cannot give up to you a woman who is not here. If you love, as you say you do, the person whom you seek, I can easily understand why you thus persist in endeavoring to find her; but, believe me, to be successful you must seek elsewhere."

The count on entering the room had cast a rapid glance on every article in it, and his eyes had rested for a single instant only, but that had been sufficient, on a table in a dark corner, on which Lorenza had placed those jewels which she had offered to pay as her dowry to the convent. He recognized them instantly.

"If your Royal Highness will have the goodness to recollect, — and I venture to entreat you to do so, — you will remember that Lorenza Feliciani was very lately in this room, that she placed on that table those jewels, and that, after having had the honor of conversing with your Royal Highness, she withdrew." Just then he caught the eye of the princess turning unconsciously toward the cabinet. "She withdrew," he continued, "into that cabinet; so that now I only wait for the permission of your Royal Highness to order her to return hither, which she will do immediately, I feel certain."

The princess colored with shame at the thought that she had lowered herself so far as to attempt to deceive this man, from whom, as it seemed, nothing could be

hidden; and she could not conceal her vexation at the uselessness of all her efforts. She recollected, however, that Lorenza had fastened the door from within, and that, consequently, nothing but the impulse of her own free will could induce her to leave the cabinet.

"But even suppose she comes," said she, "what will she do?"

"Nothing, Madame; she will merely tell your Highness that she wishes to go with me, being my wife."

This last word reassured the princess, for she recollected the protestations of Lorenza. "Your wife!" she exclaimed, with indignation. "Are you sure of that?"

"Your Highness does not seem to believe me," said the count, politely. "Nevertheless, it is not quite incredible that the Comte de Fenix should have married Lorenza Feliciani, and that, having married her, he seeks to recover his wife."

"His wife!" she repeated, impatiently; "you dare to say Lorenza Feliciani is your wife?"

"Yes, Madame, I dare to say so," answered the count, with the most natural air in the world, "because it is true."

"You are married to her?"

"I am."

"Legitimately?"

"Certainly; and if your Royal Highness thus persists in doubting my word, I will place before your eyes the register of my marriage, signed by the priest who united us."

The princess started; so much coolness and self-possession shook all her convictions.

The count opened his pocket-book and unfolded a paper. "This is the register of my marriage, Madame, and the proof that I have a right to claim that woman as my wife; if your Royal Highness will read it and note the signature —"

"The signature!" repeated the princess, in a tone of doubt more insulting to the stranger than her indignation had been; "but if this signature — "

"This signature is that of the vicar of St. Jean de Strasburg, who is well known to Prince Louis, Cardinal de Rohan; and if his Eminence were here — "

"His Eminence is here!" cried the princess, fixing her flashing eyes on the count. "He has not yet left St. Denis, and is now with the canons of the cathedral; so that nothing is easier for us than the verification which you propose."

"That is indeed a fortunate circumstance for me!" replied the count, coolly putting up the paper again in his pocket-book. "When your Royal Highness has heard the cardinal's testimony, I trust that your Highness's unjust suspicions will be dispelled."

"Monsieur, this impudent perseverance is most revolting to me!" said the princess, ringing her bell violently.

The nun who had introduced the count appeared.

"Let my groom mount his horse instantly and carry this note to the Cardinal de Rohan; he will be found at the chapter of the cathedral. Let him come hither without a moment's delay, — I wait for him."

While giving these directions the princess wrote hastily a few words on a slip of paper, and handing it to the nun she added in a whisper: "Let a couple of archers of the guard be placed in the corridor, and take care that no one leaves the convent without my permission."

The count had followed all the movements of the princess, whom he now saw determined to contest the point with him to the very last; but, evidently decided not to yield the victory to her, he drew nearer to the door of the cabinet while she was writing, fixed his eyes on it, pronounced some words in a low voice, and extending his

hands toward it, moved them to and fro with a regular and steady motion.

The princess, turning, saw him in this attitude, and exclaimed, "What are you doing there, Monsieur?"

"Madame," said the count, "I am adjuring Lorenza Feliciani to appear and declare to you of her own free will that I am not an impostor nor a forger. But this is not to prevent your Royal Highness from requiring the other proofs you have mentioned."

"Monsieur!"

"Lorenza Feliciani," cried the count, overpowering all opposition, even that of the princess, "leave that cabinet and come hither, — come!"

But the door remained closed.

"Come forth! It is my will!" repeated the count.

Then the key was heard turning in the lock, and the princess, with inexpressible alarm, saw the young girl enter, her eyes fixed on the count without any expression either of anger or hatred.

"What are you doing, my child?" cried the princess. "Why do you return to the man from whom you fled? You were in safety here; I told you so."

"She is also in safety in my house, Madame," answered the count. "Are you not, Lorenza? Are you not safe with me?"

"Yes!" replied the young woman.

The princess, overcome with astonishment, clasped her hands and sank back in her chair.

"And now, Lorenza," added the count, in a gentle tone, but yet with an accent of command, "I am accused of having made you act contrary to your wishes. Say, have I ever done so?"

"Never!" answered the young woman, clearly and

distinctly, yet without accompanying the denial by any movement.

"In that case," cried the princess, "what do you mean by all that story of an abduction which you told me?"

Lorenza remained silent, and looked at the count as if life and speech hung on his lips.

"Her Highness wishes doubtless to know how you left the convent, Lorenza. Relate to her all that happened from the moment of your fainting until you awoke in the post-chaise."

Lorenza was still silent.

"Relate all that occurred, from first to last; do not omit anything," continued the count. "It is my will."

"I do not remember," she replied.

"Search your memory, and you will recollect all."

"Ah, yes, yes!" said Lorenza, in the same monotonous tone, "I remember."

"Speak, then."

"When I fainted, at the very moment that the scissors touched my hair, I was carried back to my cell and laid on my bed. My mother remained with me until night, when, seeing that I continued in the same state of insensibility, they sent for the village surgeon. He felt my pulse, passed a looking-glass before my lips, and discovering no sign of life in me, pronounced me dead."

"But how do you know all that?" asked the princess.

"Her Highness wishes to know how you know that," repeated the count.

"Strange!" replied Lorenza; "I was able to see and hear, but I could not open my eyes, nor speak, nor move; I was in a sort of lethargy."

"In fact," said the princess, "Tronchin has sometimes spoken to me of persons who had fallen into a lethargy, and who, being to all appearance dead, were interred alive."

"Proceed, Lorenza."

"My mother was in despair, and would not believe that I was dead; she said that she would pass that night and the following day by my side. She did so; but the thirty-six hours during which she watched over me passed away without my making the slightest movement, or without a sigh having escaped my lips. Thrice a priest came to visit my mother; and each time he told her that it was rebelling against the will of God thus to persist in keeping my body on earth when He possessed my soul; for, as I had died at the moment when I was pronouncing my vows, he did not doubt, he said, but that my soul had winged its flight to heaven. My mother, by her entreaties, prevailed on him to allow her to watch by me another night, — that of Monday. On Tuesday morning they found me still insensible.

"My mother withdrew, vanquished, leaving me to the nuns, who by this time were loud in their exclamations against her impiety. The tapers were lighted in the chapel, in which, according to custom, I was to be laid out during one day and night. As I had not pronounced my vows, the sisters dressed me in a white robe, put a crown of white roses on my head, crossed my arms on my bosom, and placed my coffin on a bier. During this last operation a thrill of horror ran through my veins; for I repeat, although my eyelids were closed, I saw everything as if they had been wide open.

"The bier was carried into the church, and there — my face still uncovered, as is the custom in Italy — I was placed in the middle aisle, with lighted tapers around me, and a vase of holy water at my feet. During the day the peasants of Subiaco entered the church, prayed for me, and sprinkled my body with the holy water. Night came on; and as the visitors had ceased, the doors of the church

were closed, except a little side door, and the nun who took care of the sick remained alone beside me.

"One terrible thought never left me during my trance, and now it became more dreadful. On the morrow I was to be buried, — buried alive, if some unknown power did not come to my aid! I heard the hours strike, one after another; first nine, then ten, then eleven. Each stroke found an echo in my trembling heart; for, oh, horror! I listened to my own death-knell.

"What efforts I made to break my icy sleep, to burst the iron bonds which held me down in my coffin, God alone knows; but he saw, and had pity on me. Midnight struck. At the very first stroke my frame was shaken by a convulsive shudder, like that which I always experienced when Acharat approached me; then my heart was stirred, and I saw him appear at the door of the church."

"Were your feelings at that moment those of fear?" asked the Comte de Fenix.

"No; they were feelings of happiness, joy, ecstasy! For I knew that he came to snatch me from the dreadful death which before had seemed inevitable. He advanced slowly toward my coffin, looked on me for a moment with a melancholy smile; then he said, 'Arise and walk!' The bonds which fastened me were broken at that powerful voice; I rose, and put one foot out of the coffin. 'Are you glad to live?' he asked. 'Oh, yes!' I replied. 'Follow me, then,' said he.

"The sister who was appointed to watch the dead had fulfilled this duty toward so many of the nuns that she had become careless and indifferent, and slept soundly in her chair. I passed close by her without awaking her, as I followed him who, for the second time, had saved me from death. We reached the outer court, and once more saw the cloudless firmament, studded with stars, and felt

the cool night-breeze, which the dead feel not, but which is so grateful to the living.

"'And now,' said he, before leaving the convent, 'choose between God and me. Do you wish to be a nun, or to follow me?' 'I will follow you,' I replied. 'Come, then,' he said again. We reached the entrance-gate; it was locked. 'Where are the keys?' he asked. 'In the pocket of the portress, on a chair near her bed,' I replied. 'Enter the lodge without noise,' said he, 'take the keys, select the one that unlocks the gate, and bring it to me.' I obeyed, entered the lodge, found the key, and brought it to him.

"Five minutes afterward the gate was opened, and we were in the street. I took his arm, and we hurried toward the outskirts of the village of Subiaco. About a hundred paces from its last house a post-chaise was in waiting; we entered it, and drove off at a rapid pace."

"And no force was used; no threat was uttered; you followed that man voluntarily?"

Lorenza remained silent.

"Her Royal Highness asks you, Lorenza, if by any threat or any violence you were forced to accompany me?"

"No."

"And why did you go with him?"

"Speak, why did you accompany me?"

"Because I loved you," said Lorenza.

The Comte de Fenix turned toward the princess with a triumphant smile.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CARDINAL DE ROHAN.

STRONG as was the mind of the Princess Louise, all that she had just heard seemed so extraordinary to her that she could not help asking herself whether the man who stood before her were not a real magician, disposing of hearts and understandings at his will.

But the Comte de Fenix was not yet satisfied. "That is not all, Madame," said he; "and your Royal Highness has heard only a part of our history. Some doubts might remain on your mind did you not hear the rest from her own lips." Then, turning toward the young woman, "Do you remember, dear Lorenza," said he, "the rest of our journey, — how we visited Milan, the Lake Maggiore, the Oberland, the Righi, and the magnificent Rhine, the Tiber of the North?"

"Yes," she answered, still in the same monotonous voice, "yes; Lorenza saw all that."

"Dragged onward by that man, were you not, my child, — yielding to an irresistible power which you did not yourself comprehend?" asked the princess.

"Why should you think so, Madame, after what your Highness has heard? But if you wish for yet more palpable and material proofs, here is a letter written by Lorenza to me. I was obliged to leave her alone for a short time at Mayence. Well! she regretted me, and longed for my return; for in my absence she wrote me these lines, which your Highness may read."

The count took out of his pocket-book a note, which he handed to the princess. She read as follows :—

RETURN, Acharat! When you leave me, all hope and joy depart. Ah! when shall I be yours through all eternity?

LORENZA.

The princess rose, anger flashing in her eyes, and approached Lorenza with the note in her hand. The young woman appeared neither to see nor hear her. Her whole soul seemed to hang on the count's lips.

"I understand," said the count, quickly, before the princess could utter a word, "your Highness doubts whether this note be really written by her or not. That point can easily be settled. Lorenza, speak! Who wrote this note?"

He took the note, placed it in her hand, and she immediately pressed it to her heart. "Lorenza wrote it," said she.

"Does Lorenza know what it contains?"

"Yes."

"Then tell the princess what is in the letter, that she may believe me when I say you love me. Tell her; it is my will."

Lorenza appeared to make an effort; then, without opening the note, or turning her eyes on it, she repeated its contents.

"This is incredible!" said the princess. "I cannot trust the evidence of my own senses; there is something inexplicable and supernatural in all this."

"It was this letter," continued the Comte de Fenix, as if he had not heard what the princess said, "which determined me to hasten our marriage. I loved Lorenza as much as she loved me. We were in a position which might have given rise to unfounded suspicions. Besides,

in the adventurous life which I lead, some accident might happen to me. I might be killed; I might die. And I wished, in case of such an event, that all my fortune should belong to Lorenza. On arriving at Strasburg, therefore, we were married."

"You were married?"

"Yes, Madame."

"It is impossible!"

"Why so, Madame?" said the count, smiling. "What is there impossible in the fact that the Comte de Fenix should marry Lorenza Feliciani?"

"But she told me that she is not your wife."

The count, without replying, turned to Lorenza. "Do you remember on what day we were married?" asked he.

"Yes," she replied; "it was the third of May."

"Where?"

"At Strasburg."

"In what church?"

"In the cathedral, — in the chapel of St. John."

"Did you offer any opposition to our union?"

"No; I was too happy."

"Because, Lorenza," continued the count, "the princess thinks that the marriage was forced on you, — that you hate me." As he said these words he took Lorenza's hand.

A thrill of rapture seemed to run through the young woman's frame. "I hate you!" she exclaimed. "Oh, no! I love you; you are good, you are generous, you are powerful!"

The count turned toward the princess as if he had said, "You hear?"

Seized with a kind of horror, the princess had recoiled from the pair before her, and sank at the foot of an ivory crucifix which was fastened against the black velvet hangings of the room.

"Does your Royal Highness wish for any further information?" asked the count, as he released Lorenza's hand.

"Monsieur," cried the princess, "do not approach me! — nor let her approach me!"

At this moment the noise of wheels was heard in the courtyard, and a carriage stopped at the entrance door.

"Ah!" exclaimed the princess, "here comes the cardinal, and we shall now know the truth."

The Comte de Fenix bowed, said a few words to Lorenza in a low voice, and waited with the calmness of a man able to control events. A moment afterward the door opened, and his Eminence the Cardinal de Rohan was announced.

The princess, reassured by the presence of a third person, resumed her seat, and desired him to be admitted. The cardinal entered; but scarcely had he made his salutation to the princess, when, perceiving the count, he exclaimed with surprise, "You here, Monsieur?"

"Do you know this person?" asked the princess, more and more astonished.

"Yes, Madame," said the cardinal.

"Then," she cried, "you will tell me who he is?"

"Nothing is more easy," replied the cardinal; "the gentleman is a sorcerer."

"A sorcerer!" murmured the princess.

"Pardon me, Madame," said the count; "but I trust that his Eminence will explain his words to your satisfaction."

"Has the gentleman been making any predictions to your Royal Highness, that I see you so much alarmed?" asked Monsieur de Rohan.

"The register of the marriage! The register, immediately!" exclaimed the princess.

The cardinal stared with the utmost surprise, not comprehending what this exclamation meant.

"Here it is," said the count, presenting it to the cardinal.

"Monsieur, what is this?" said he.

"I wish to know," said the princess, "whether the signature to that document is genuine or not."

The cardinal took the paper and read it. "Yes," said he, "it is a perfectly legal register of a marriage, and the signature is that of Monsieur Remy, vicar of St. John's, in Strasburg. But in what way does that concern your Royal Highness?"

"Oh, it concerns me deeply, Monsieur! So the signature is correct?"

"Certainly; but I will not guarantee that it may not have been extorted."

"Extorted!" cried the princess. "Yes, that is quite possible."

"And the consent of Lorenza also?" said the count, with a tone of irony which was aimed directly at the princess.

"But by what means, Cardinal, — by what means could this signature have been extorted? Do you know?"

"By means which this gentleman has at his disposal, — by means of magic!"

"Magic? Is it you, Cardinal, who speak to me of magic?"

"Yes, I have said that this gentleman is a sorcerer; and I shall not unsay it."

"Your Eminence must be jesting!"

"By no means; and the proof is that I am going, in the presence of your Highness, to have a very serious explanation with him."

"I was myself going to request it from your Eminence," said the count.

"Excellent! But do not forget," said the cardinal, haughtily, "that it is I who am the questioner."

"And do not forget also," said the count, "that I will answer all your questions before her Highness, if you insist upon it; but I feel certain that you will not insist."

The cardinal smiled. "Monsieur," said he, "to play the magician well is, in our times, a rather difficult task. I have seen you at work, and you were very successful; but every one will not show the patience, and, above all, the generosity, of Madame the Dauphiness."

"The dauphiness!" exclaimed the princess.

"Yes, Madame," said the count; "I have had the honor of being presented to her Royal Highness."

"And how did you repay that honor, Monsieur? Come, speak!"

"Alas! much worse than I could have wished; for I have no personal hatred against men, and especially none against women."

"But what did Monsieur do to my august niece?" asked the princess.

"I had the misfortune, Madame, to tell her the truth, which she demanded of me."

"Yes," said the cardinal, "a truth which made her swoon!"

"Was it my fault," cried the count, in that commanding tone which he could at times assume, "was it my fault that the truth was so terrible as to produce such effects? Was it I who sought the princess? Did I request to be presented to her? On the contrary, I avoided her; I was brought before her almost by force, and she positively commanded me to reply to her questions."

"But what, then, Monsieur, was that truth which you declare to have been so terrible?" asked the princess.

"That truth, Madame? I drew aside the veil that hides the future."

"The future?"

"Yes, Madame, that future which appeared to your Royal Highness so threatening that you fled for shelter from it to a cloister to offer up tears and prayers before the altar."

"Monsieur!"

"Is it my fault, Madame, if the future, which was revealed to you as one of the sainted, was shadowed forth to me as a prophet, and if the dauphiness, whom it threatens personally, terrified at the sight, fainted when I declared it to her?"

"You hear him?" said the cardinal.

"Alas!" sighed the princess.

"For her reign is doomed," continued the count, "as the most fatal and disastrous in the history of the monarchy."

"Monsieur!" exclaimed the princess.

"For yourself, Madame," continued the count, "your prayers have perhaps obtained favor; for you will not see those events which I foretell. You will be in the bosom of the Lord when they come to pass. But pray! pray always!"

The princess, overcome by his prophetic tone, which agreed too well with the terrors of her own soul, sank again on her knees at the foot of the crucifix, and began to pray fervently.

The count turned to the cardinal, and, preceding him toward the embrasure of a window, "Let us be alone," said he; "what does your Eminence desire of me?"

The cardinal hastened to join him. The princess seemed

wholly absorbed in her prayers, and Lorenza remained silent and motionless in the middle of the room. Her eyes were wide open, but she seemed to see nothing. The two men stood apart in the embrasure of the window, half concealed by the curtains.

"What do you desire of me?" repeated the count. "Speak."

"I wish to know who you are," replied the cardinal.

"Yet you seem to know. Did you not say that I was a sorcerer?"

"Yes; but down yonder you were called Joseph Balsamo, and here you are called the Comte de Fenix."

"Well, that only proves that I have changed my name, nothing more."

"Very true; but are you aware that such changes may make M. de Sartines, the minister of police, rather inquisitive about you?"

The count smiled. "Oh, Monsieur," said he, "this is a petty warfare for a Rohan! What! your Eminence quibbles about names? *Verba et voces*, as the Latin has it. Is there nothing worse with which I can be reproached!"

"You seem to have become satirical," said the cardinal.

"I have not become so; it is my character."

"In that case I shall do myself the pleasure of lowering your tone a little."

"Do so, Monsieur."

"I am certain I shall please the dauphiness by so doing."

"Which may be not altogether useless to you, considering the terms on which you stand at present with her," answered Balsamo, with the greatest coolness.

"And suppose, most learned dealer in horoscopes, that I should cause you to be arrested?" said the cardinal.

"I should say that your Eminence would commit a very grave mistake in doing so."

"Indeed!" said the prince-cardinal, with withering contempt. "And who then, pray, will suffer from my mistake?"

"Yourself, Monsieur le Cardinal."

"Then I will give the order for your arrest this moment, Monsieur; and we shall soon know who this Baron Balsamo, Comte de Fenix, is, — this illustrious branch of a genealogical tree not to be discovered in any field of heraldry in Europe!"

"But why has your Highness not asked for information respecting me from your friend the Comte de Breteuil?"

"Monsieur de Breteuil is no friend of mine."

"That is to say, he is no longer so. Yet he must have been one of your best friends when you wrote him a certain letter — "

"What letter?" asked the cardinal, drawing nearer to the count.

"A little closer, Monsieur le Cardinal; I do not wish to speak loud, for fear of compromising you. That letter which you wrote from Vienna to Paris, to endeavor to prevent the marriage of the dauphin."

The prelate could not repress a gesture of alarm.

"I know that letter by heart," continued the count, coldly.

"Then Breteuil has turned traitor?"

"How so?"

"Because when the marriage was decided on, I demanded back my letter, and he told me he had burned it!"

"Ah, he dared not tell you he had lost it!"

"Lost it?"

"Yes, and you know that a lost letter may be found by some one."

"And so my letter —"

"Was found by me. Oh! by the merest chance, I assure you, one day when crossing the marble court at Versailles."

"And did you not return it to the Comte de Breteuil?"

"I took good care not to do so."

"Why so?"

"Because, being a sorcerer, I knew that although I wished to be of all the service I could to your Eminence, you wished to do me all the harm you could. So, you understand. A disarmed man who journeys through a wood, where he knows he will be attacked, would be a fool not to pick up a loaded pistol which he found at his feet."

The cardinal's head swam, and he was obliged to lean against the window-frame for a few minutes; but after an instant's hesitation, during which the count eagerly watched every variation of his countenance, — "So be it," said he. "It shall never be said that a prince of my house gave way before the threats of a charlatan. Though that letter should be shown to the dauphiness herself; though, in a political point of view, it should ruin me, — I shall maintain my character as a loyal subject and faithful ambassador. I shall say, what is the truth, that I thought the alliance hurtful to the interests of my country, and my country will defend me, or will lament me."

"But if some one should happen to relate that the young, handsome, gallant ambassador, confiding in the name of Rohan and the title of prince, and being most graciously received by the Archduchess Marie Antoinette, did not say that because he saw anything in the marriage hurtful to France, but because in his vanity he imagined

he saw something more than affability in her manner toward him? What would the loyal subject and faithful ambassador reply then?"

"He would deny, Monsieur, that there ever had existed the sentiment that your words imply; there is no proof that it did exist."

"Ah, Monsieur, you mistake! There is the strongest proof, in the coldness of the dauphiness toward you."

The cardinal hesitated.

"Monseigneur," said the count, "trust me, it is better for us to remain good friends than to quarrel, — which we should have done before this, had I not been more prudent than you."

"Good friends?"

"Why not? Our friends are those who render us good offices."

"Have I ever asked you for any?"

"No, and that is where you have been wrong; for during the two days you were in Paris —"

"I in Paris?"

"Yes, you. Why attempt to hide that from me, who am a sorcerer? You left the dauphiness at Soissons, you came post to Paris by Villers-Cotterets and Dammartin, — that is to say, by the shortest road, — and you hastened to request your kind friends there for assistance, which they all refused. After their refusals you once more set out post for Compiègne in despair."

The cardinal seemed overwhelmed. "And what sort of assistance might I have expected from you," he asked, "had I addressed myself to you?"

"That assistance of a man who makes gold."

"And what matters it to me that you can make gold?"

"*Peste!* when one has to pay five hundred thousand francs within forty-eight hours! Am I not right? Is not that the sum?"

"Yes, that is indeed the sum."

"And yet you ask what matters it to have a friend who can make gold? It matters just this, that the five hundred thousand francs which you cannot procure elsewhere, you may procure from him."

"And where?" asked the cardinal.

"In the Rue St. Claude."

"How shall I know your house?"

"By a griffin's head in bronze, which serves as knocker to the gate."

"When may I present myself?"

"The day after to-morrow, Monseigneur, toward six o'clock in the evening; and afterward you may come whenever you please. But stay; we have finished our conversation just in time, for the princess, I see, has ended her prayers."

The cardinal was conquered, and, no longer attempting to resist, he approached the princess: "Madame," said he, "I am obliged to confess that the Comte de Fenix is entirely right; his register of marriage is authentic and valid, and he has explained all the circumstances to my complete satisfaction."

The count bowed. "Has your Royal Highness any further commands for me?" he asked.

"I wish to speak once more to the young woman," she replied. Then, turning to Lorenza, "Is it of your own free and unrestrained will that you leave this convent, in which you sought refuge?"

"Her Highness asks you," said Balsamo, quickly, "whether it is of your own free and unfettered choice that you leave this convent. Answer, Lorenza."

"Yes," said the young woman, "it is of my own free and unfettered will."

"And to accompany your husband, the Comte de Fenix?"

"And to accompany me?" repeated the count.

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Lorenza.

"In that case," said the princess, "I wish to retain neither one nor the other; for it would be doing violence to your feelings. But if there is in all this anything out of the natural order of events, may the vengeance of Heaven fall on him who, for his own advantage or profit, has interrupted the proper course of nature! Go, Monsieur le Comte de Fenix! Go, Lorenza Feliciani! — only, take with you your jewels."

"They are for the use of the poor, Madame," said the count; "and distributed by your hands, the alms will be doubly acceptable to God. I seek to recover only my horse Djerid."

"You can claim him as you pass, Monsieur. Go."

The count bowed low, and gave his arm to Lorenza, who took it and left the room with him without uttering a word.

"Ah, Monsieur le Cardinal," said the princess, shaking her head sorrowfully, "there are incomprehensible and fatal omens in the very air we breathe!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RETURN FROM ST. DENIS.

After leaving Philippe, Gilbert, as we have said, had re-entered the crowd. But not now with a heart bounding with joyful anticipation did he throw himself into the noisy billow of human beings; his soul was wounded to the quick, and Philippe's kind reception of him and all his friendly offers of assistance had no power to soothe him.

Andrée never suspected that she had been cruel to Gilbert. The lovely and serene young girl was entirely ignorant that there could be between her and the son of her nurse any point of contact either for pain or for pleasure. She revolved above all the lower spheres of life, casting light or shadow on them according as she herself was gay or sad. But now the shadow of her disdain had fallen on Gilbert and frozen him to the soul; while she, following only the impulse of her nature, knew not even that she had been scornful. But Gilbert, like a gladiator disarmed, had offered his naked breast to the full brunt of her haughty looks and disdainful words; and now his philosophy could suggest to him, bleeding at every pore, no relief but the consolation of despair. From the moment that he once more plunged into the crowd, he cared neither for horses nor men. Collecting all his strength, he dashed forward like a wild boar with the spear in its side; and at the risk of being crushed or trodden under foot, he opened a passage for himself through the multi-

tude. When the very dense mass of people had been passed, he began to breathe more freely, and looking about him, he saw green grass, the cool water, and that he was alone.

Without knowing whither he was going, he had advanced toward the Seine; and he now found himself opposite the isle of St. Denis. Exhausted, not from fatigue of body, but from anguish of mind, he sank on the turf; and grasping his head with both hands, he began to roar hoarsely, as if by these inarticulate sounds alone he could express his rage and grief.

All those vague and senseless hopes which until then had shed a glimmering light on the darkness of his soul, and whose existence he scarcely ventured to confess even to himself, were now at one blow utterly annihilated. To whatsoever height genius, science, or study might raise him in the social scale, he must to Andrée always remain the Gilbert that he had been, — a thing or a man, to use her own words, not worth the slightest regard, not worth even the trouble of a glance. For a moment he had thought that, seeing him in Paris, knowing his resolution to struggle out of obscurity into light, — he had thought that Andrée would commend his endeavor; but instead of applause, what had he met with as the reward of so much fatigue and of such firm determination? The same scornful indifference with which he had been treated at Taverney. Even more, — was she not almost angry when she heard that his eyes had had the audacity to look on her music-book? Had he only touched that music-book with the tip of his finger, he would doubtless have been considered only worthy to be burned at the stake.

In weak characters any deception is but a blow under which love bends only to rise again stronger and more persevering than before. They vent their sufferings in

complaints and tears, but their resistance is only passive, — nay, their love often increases by that which should destroy it; and they say to themselves that their submissiveness will at last have its reward. Toward that reward they steadfastly advance, whether the road be smooth or rough, — if the way be hard, they arrive later, that is all; but they do arrive. It is not thus with strong minds, obstinate natures, and powerful wills. They are indignant when they see their own blood flowing; at the sight their energy augments so furiously that they seem to hate rather than to love. Indeed, with them love and hate are so closely allied that they often are not aware of the transition from one to the other.

So it was with Gilbert. When he flung himself on the ground, overcome by his grief, did he love or hate Andrée? He knew not; he suffered, that was all. But not having the virtue of submission, he shook off his dejection of soul, and determined to carry into practice some energetic resolution. "She does not love me," thought he, "it is true; but had I any right to hope that she would? The only feeling that I had a right to hope for was that kindly interest which attaches to the unfortunate who strive with energy to rise above their wretchedness. Her brother felt this; she did not feel it. He said, 'Who knows? Perhaps you may become a Colbert, a Vauban!' If I should become either one or the other, he would do me justice; he would give me his sister as a reward for the glory I had won for myself, as he would now give her in exchange for my personal nobility, had I been born his equal. But as for her, — oh, yes! I feel it, — yes, although Colbert or Vauban, I should never be to her other than Gilbert! What she despises in me is what nothing can efface, nothing gild, nothing cover, — it is my humble birth. As if, supposing I attain my object, I should not then be greater, having

risen to her level, than if I had been born beside her! Ah, senseless, unthinking creature! Woman! woman! — that is, imperfection! Do you trust in her open look, her expansive forehead, her beaming smile, her queenly carriage, her beauty which makes her worthy to be an empress? Fool! she is an affected, starched country-girl, bound up, swathed in aristocratic prejudices. The gay and showy young noblemen with empty heads — mere weathercocks — who have all the means and appliances for learning, but who know nothing, — they are her equals; they are men on whom she may bestow attention! But Gilbert? Gilbert is a dog, — nay, lower than a dog! She asked, I think, for news of Mahon; she did not ask how it had fared with Gilbert. Oh! she knows not, then, that I am as strong as they; that if clothed like them, I should be as handsome; that I have what they have not, — an inflexible will; and that if I wished — "

A threatening smile curled his lip, and he left the sentence unfinished; then slowly, and with a deep frown, he bowed his head on his breast. What thoughts at that moment entered his dark and gloomy soul? Under what terrible idea did that pale forehead, already furrowed with painful thoughts, droop? Who shall tell? Is it the boatman who slowly glides down the river in his skiff, humming the song of Henri-Quatre? Is it the laughing washerwoman who is returning from the splendid scene at St. Denis, and who, turning aside from her path to avoid him, probably takes the young loiterer for a thief, lying as he is at full length on the grass amid the lines hung with linen?

After half an hour's reflection, Gilbert arose, calm and resolved. He approached the bank of the Seine, and refreshed himself with a deep draught of water; then, looking around, he saw on his left the distant waves of people

pouring out of St. Denis. Amid the throng he could distinguish the principal carriages, forced to go slowly from the crowd of spectators that pressed on them, and taking the road to St. Ouen.

The dauphiness had expressed a desire that her entrance into the kingdom should be a family festival, and the good Parisians had taken advantage of this kind wish to place their families so near the royal train that many of them had mounted on the seats of the footmen, and some held on by the heavy springs which projected from the carriages, without manifesting the least fear.

Gilbert soon recognized Andrée's carriage; Philippe was galloping, or rather, we should say, reining in his prancing horse, close beside it.

"It is well," said he. "I must know whither she is going; and for that purpose I must follow her."

The dauphiness was to take supper at Muette in private with the king, the dauphin, the Comte de Provence, and the Comte d'Artois. At St. Denis the king had invited the dauphiness, and had given her a list of the guests and a pencil, desiring her to erase the name of any one whom she did not wish to be present. Now, it must be confessed that Louis carried his forgetfulness of the respect due to her so far as to include in it the name of Madame Dubarry. It was the last on the list; and when the dauphiness reached it, her cheek turned pale and her lip quivered. But, following the instructions of the empress her mother, she recovered her self-possession, and with a sweet smile returning the list and the pencil to the king, she expressed herself most happy to be admitted thus from the first to the intimacy of his family circle.

Gilbert knew nothing of all this, and it was only at Muette that he discovered the equipage of the countess, followed by Zamore on his tall white charger. Fortu-

nately it was dark; and concealing himself behind a clump of trees, he lay down and waited.

The king took supper with his daughter-in-law and his mistress, and was in charming spirits; more especially when he saw the dauphiness receive the countess even more graciously than she had done at Compiègne. But the dauphin seemed grave and anxious, and pretending that he suffered from a violent headache, retired before they sat down to supper. The entertainment was prolonged until eleven o'clock.

In the mean time the retinue of the dauphiness — and the haughty Andrée was forced to acknowledge that she belonged to it — ate in tents to the music of the king's private band, who had been ordered to attend for that purpose. Besides these, — as the tents could not accommodate all, — fifty gentlemen were seated at tables spread in the open air, waited on by fifty lackeys in the royal livery. Gilbert, still hidden in the clump of trees, lost nothing of this spectacle; and while the others were at supper he also ate his, — a piece of bread which he had bought at Clichy-la-Garenne.

After supper the dauphiness and the king appeared on a balcony to take leave of their guests. Madame Dubarry, with a tact which even her enemies admired, remained out of sight in the remotest part of the room. As each person departed, he passed below the balcony to salute his Majesty and her Royal Highness. The dauphiness already knew many who had accompanied her from Compiègne, and those whom she did not know the king named to her. From time to time a gracious word or a well-turned compliment fell from her lips, diffusing joy in the breasts of those to whom it was addressed. Gilbert, from his distant post, saw the meanness of their homage, and murmured, "I am greater than those people, since for

all the gold in the world I would not do what they are doing."

At last the turn of the Baron de Taverney and his family came. Gilbert rose on one knee.

"M. Philippe," said the dauphiness, "I give you leave of absence, in order that you may accompany your father and your sister to Paris."

Gilbert heard these words distinctly, which in the silence of the night and amid the respectful attention of all around, vibrated in his ears.

Then she added: "Monsieur de Taverney, I cannot promise you apartments until I install my household at Versailles. You can, therefore, in the mean time, accompany your daughter to Paris. Do not forget me, Mademoiselle."

The baron passed on with his son and daughter. They were succeeded by many others, to whom the dauphiness made similar speeches; but Gilbert cared no longer for her words. He glided out from the clump of trees and followed the baron amid the confused cries of two hundred footmen running after their masters and calling to a hundred coachmen, while their shouts were accompanied by the thundering of numerous carriages rolling along the paved road.

The baron had one of the carriages of the court at his command, and it waited for them apart from the general crowd. When, accompanied by Andrée and Philippe, he had entered it, the latter said to the footman who was closing the door, "Mount on the seat beside the coachman, my friend."

"Why so? why so?" asked the baron, hastily.

"Because the poor devil has been on his legs since morning, and must be tired by this time."

The baron grumbled something which Gilbert did not

hear, while the footman mounted beside the coachman. Gilbert drew nearer. At the moment when they were about to start, it was perceived that the trace had become unbuckled. The coachman jumped down, and the coach remained for a few moments stationary.

"It is very late," said the baron.

"I am dreadfully fatigued," said Andrée. "Are you sure we shall get beds?"

"I hope so," said Philippe; "I sent on La Brie and Nicole from Soissons with a letter to a friend of mine, desiring him to engage a small garden pavilion for us, which his mother and sister occupied last year. It is not a very splendid abode, but it is suitable enough; you do not wish to receive company, — you want only a stopping-place for the present."

"Faith!" exclaimed the baron, "whatever it is, it will be better than Taverney."

"Unfortunately, father, that is true," replied Philippe, in a melancholy tone.

"Are there any trees?" asked Andrée.

"Oh, yes! and very fine ones too. But in all probability you will not have long to enjoy them, for as soon as the marriage is over, you will be presented at court."

"Well, this is all a dream, I fear," said the baron; "do not awake us too soon, Philippe. Have you given the proper direction to the coachman?"

Gilbert listened anxiously.

"Yes, father."

Gilbert, who had heard all this conversation, had for a moment hoped to discover the address.

"No matter," said he, "I will follow them; it is only a league to Paris."

The trace was fastened, the coachman mounted his seat,

and the carriage was again in motion. But the king's horses go fast when they are not in a procession which obliges them to go slowly, and now they darted forward so rapidly that they recalled to poor Gilbert's recollection the road to Lachaussée, his weakness, and his fainting. He made an effort and reached the footboard behind, which was vacant, as the weary footman was seated beside the coachman. Gilbert grasped it, sprang up, and seated himself. But scarcely had he done so when the thought struck him that he was behind Andrée's carriage and in the footman's place.

"No, no!" muttered the inflexible young man; "it shall never be said that I did not struggle to the last. My legs are tired, but my arms are strong."

Then, seizing the footboard with his hands, he followed at full speed, supported by the strength of his arms, and keeping his hold in spite of jolts and shocks, rather than capitulate with his conscience.

"At least I shall know her address," he murmured. "True, I shall have to pass one more bad night; but to-morrow I shall rest while I copy my music. Besides, I have still some money, and I may take two hours for sleep if I like." Then he reflected that as Paris was such a large place, and as he was quite unacquainted with it, he might lose his way after the baron and his daughter should have entered the house chosen for them by Philippe. Fortunately, it was then near midnight, and day would break at half-past three.

As all these reflections passed through Gilbert's mind, he remarked that they were passing through a spacious square, in the centre of which was a large equestrian statue. "Ha! this looks like the Place des Victoires," cried he, with a mingled sensation of surprise and joy.

The carriage turned. Andrée put her head out of the

window and looked back. "It is the statue of the late king," said Philippe; "we are now near the house."

They descended a steep street so rapidly that Gilbert was nearly thrown under the wheels.

"Here we are at last!" cried Philippe.

Gilbert sprang aside, and hid himself behind the corner of the neighboring street. Philippe leaped out, rang the bell, and turning, received Andrée in his arms. The baron got out last. "Well," cried he, "are those scoundrels going to keep us here all night?"

At that moment the voices of La Brie and Nicole were heard, and a gate was opened. The three travellers disappeared in a dark court, and the gate closed behind them.

The carriage drove off on its way to the king's stable. The house which had received the strangers was in no way remarkable in its appearance; but the lamps of the carriage in passing had flashed on that next to it, and Gilbert read over the gateway the words, "Hôtel d'Armenonville." It only remained for him to discover the name of the street. He proceeded to the nearest end of the street, — that by which the carriage had disappeared, — and to his great surprise he found himself close to the fountain at which he was in the habit of drinking. He advanced a few steps in a street parallel to that which he had left, and discovered the baker's shop where he usually bought his loaf. Doubting still, he went back to the corner of the street; and there, by the light of a neighboring lamp, he read the words which he had noticed when returning with Rousseau from their botanical excursion in the forest of Meudon three days before, — Rue Plastrière! Andrée, consequently, was not one hundred paces distant from him, — not so far off as she had been at Taverney when he slept in his little room at the castle gate! Then

he regained his domicile, scarcely daring to hope to find the end of the cord left out by which the latch of the door was lifted. But Gilbert's star was in the ascendant; a few ravelled threads were hanging out, by which he pulled the whole, and the door opened gently at his touch. He felt his way to the stairs, mounted step by step without making the least noise, and at last put his hand on the padlock of the garret door, in which Rousseau had kindly left the key. Ten minutes afterward fatigue asserted its power over his disquieted thoughts, and he slept soundly, although longing for the morrow.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GARDEN PAVILION.

HAVING come in late and thrown himself hastily on his bed, Gilbert had forgotten to place over his window the blind which intercepted the light of the rising sun. At five o'clock, therefore, the rays of light beaming through the window awoke him. He sprang up, fearing that he had slept too long.

Accustomed as he had been to a country life, Gilbert could guess the hour at all times with the utmost precision by the direction of the shadows and by the paler or warmer tints of light. He ran, therefore, to consult his clock. The faintness of the morning beams, barely tinging with their light the topmost boughs of the trees, reassured him; and he found that instead of having risen too late, he had risen too early. He finished his toilet at the garret window, thinking over the events of the preceding day, and exposing with delight his burning and oppressed forehead to the refreshing morning breeze. Then he remembered that Andrée lodged in the next street, near the Hôtel d'Armenonville, and he tried to guess in which of all the houses that he saw she might be. The sight of the lofty trees on which he looked down recalled her question to Philippe, "Are there any trees there?"

"Might they not have chosen that uninhabited house in the garden?" said Gilbert to himself. This idea naturally led him to fix his attention on the garden pavilion, where, by a singular coincidence, a sort of noise and stir began to be apparent.

One of the window-shutters of the little abode, which apparently had not been opened for a considerable time, was shaken by an awkward or feeble hand. The wood yielded above; but held fast — by the damp, no doubt — to the frame at the bottom, it resisted the effort made to open it. A second shake more violent than the first had a better effect; the two shutters creaked, gave way, and falling back quickly, exposed to view a young girl all in a glow with her exertions, and beating off the dust from her hands.

Gilbert uttered a cry of surprise, and stepped back. The young girl, whose face was still flushed with sleep, and who was stretching herself in the fresh air, was Mademoiselle Nicole. There was no longer any room for doubt. The lodging which Philippe had said La Brie and Nicole were preparing was the house before him, and the mansion through whose gateway he had seen the travellers disappear must have its gardens adjoining the rear of the Rue Plastrière. Gilbert's movement was so abrupt that if Nicole had not been completely absorbed in the lazy meditation so delightful at the moment of waking, she must have discovered our philosopher at his skylight.

But Gilbert had retired all the more speedily, as he had no intention of being discovered by Nicole at a garret window. Had he been on a first floor, and had his open window showed a background of rich hangings or sumptuous furniture, he would not have been so anxious to avoid her eye; but a garret on the fifth story declared him to be still so low in the social scale that he took the greatest care to hide himself. Moreover, there is always a great advantage in seeing without being seen. And then, if Andrée should discover that he was there, would it not be sufficient either to induce her to change her abode, or prevent her walking in the garden?

Alas! Gilbert's pride still made him of too great importance in his own eyes. What was Gilbert to Andrée? Would she have moved her foot, either to approach or to avoid him? Was she not one of that class of women who leave the bath in presence of a lackey or a peasant because neither a lackey nor a peasant is a man? But these were far from being Nicole's sentiments, and her, consequently, he must shun.

He hid himself carefully, therefore; but as he did not wish to withdraw from the window entirely, he ventured to peep out cautiously at one corner.

A second window on the ground-floor of the pavilion, exactly below the first, just then opened, and a white form appeared there. It was Andrée, seemingly just awakened. She was enveloped in a dressing-gown, and was occupied in searching for the slipper which had escaped from her tiny foot and was lying beneath a chair. It was in vain that Gilbert, every time that he saw Andrée, vowed to build up between them a barrier of hatred instead of giving way to love; the same effect was produced by the same cause. He was obliged to lean against the wall for support; his heart palpitated as if it would have burst, and sent the blood in boiling currents through his whole frame. However, by degrees his throbbing arteries beat with a calmer motion, and reflection resumed her sway. The problem was, as we have said, to see without being seen. He took one of Thérèse's gowns and fastened it with a pin to one of the cords which crossed his window; and, sheltered by this impromptu curtain, he could watch Andrée without running any risk of being discovered by her. Andrée, following Nicole's example, stretched out her snowy arms, and then, folding them on the window-sill, she looked out on the garden. Her countenance expressed the liveliest satisfac-

tion at all she saw. Lofty trees shaded the walks with their drooping branches, and everywhere verdure cheered her eye. She, who smiled so seldom on men, smiled freely on the inanimate objects around her.

The house in which Gilbert lived attracted her eye for a moment, like all the others which surrounded the garden; but as from her apartment only the garrets of the houses were visible, and, consequently, from them alone could she be seen, she gave those houses no farther attention. Of what interest to the proud young girl were persons living in garret chambers? Andrée was satisfied that no one saw her by whom it was of the least importance that she should not be seen, and that within the bounds of her tranquil retreat there would appear none of those prying or satirical Parisian faces so much dreaded by ladies from the provinces. The effect was immediate. Leaving her window wide open, so that the fresh and perfumed air might penetrate to the farthest extremity of her apartment, she proceeded toward the mantelpiece, rang a bell, and began to dress, or undress rather, in the shaded part of the chamber.

Nicole appeared, undid the straps of a shagreen dressing-case of the reign of Queen Anne, took from it a tortoise-shell comb, and began to comb out Andrée's hair. In a moment the long tresses and shining curls spread like a glossy veil over the shoulders of the young girl.

Gilbert gave a stifled sigh. At that distance he scarcely saw the beauty of her locks, but he saw Andrée herself, a thousand times more lovely in this dishabille than she would have been in the most splendid attire. He gazed with his whole soul in his eyes.

By chance, as Nicole continued to dress her hair, Andrée raised her eyes and fixed them on Gilbert's garret.

"Yes, yes!" said he, "look, gaze, as much as you

please; it is all in vain, — you can see nothing, and I see all."

But Gilbert was mistaken; Andrée did see something. It was the gown which he had hung up, and which, being blown about, had got wrapped round his head like a turban. She pointed out this strange object to her companion. Nicole, stopping in her complicated task, pointed with the comb which she held in her hand toward the skylight, and seemed to ask her mistress if that were the object which she meant.

All these gestures, which Gilbert devoured with the greatest eagerness, had, without his suspecting it, a third spectator. Suddenly a rude hand snatched Thérèse's gown from his head, and he was ready to sink with shame on seeing Rousseau beside him.

"What the devil are you doing there, Monsieur?" cried the philosopher, with a terrible frown, and a scrutinizing glance at the gown borrowed, without leave asked, from his wife.

"Nothing, Monsieur, nothing at all," replied Gilbert, endeavoring to turn Rousseau's attention from the window.

"Nothing? Then why did you hide yourself with the gown?"

"The sun hurts my eyes."

"This window looks towards the west, and the sun dazzles you when rising? You have very delicate eyes, young man!"

Gilbert stammered out some unconnected words; but feeling that he was only getting deeper in the mire, he at last hid his head in his hands.

"You are speaking falsely, and you are afraid," said Rousseau; "therefore you have been doing wrong."

After this terrible syllogism, which seemed to complete

Gilbert's confusion, Rousseau planted himself exactly opposite the window. From a feeling too natural to require explanation, Gilbert, who so lately trembled to be discovered at the window, rushed forward when he saw Rousseau standing before it.

"Ah, ah!" said the latter, in a tone which froze the blood in Gilbert's veins, "the garden-house is inhabited now."

Gilbert was dumb.

"And by persons," continued the philosopher, "who seem to know my house, for they are pointing to it."

Gilbert, trembling lest he had advanced too far, stepped back quickly; but neither his movement, nor the cause which produced it, escaped the jealous eye of Rousseau; he saw that Gilbert feared to be seen.

"No," cried he, seizing the young man by the arm, "you shall not escape, my young friend; there is some plot under this, — I know by their pointing to your garret. Place yourself here, if you please;" and he dragged him opposite the skylight, in the full view of those beneath.

"Oh, no, Monsieur, no! have mercy!" cried Gilbert, struggling to escape.

But to escape, which for a young and active man like Gilbert would have been an easy task, he must have engaged in a contest with Rousseau, — Rousseau, whom he venerated like some superior being; and respect restrained him.

"You know those women," said Rousseau, "and they know you."

"No, no, no, Monsieur."

"Then if you do not know them, and if they do not know you, why not show yourself?"

"Monsieur Rousseau, you have sometimes had secrets yourself. Show some pity for mine."

"Ah! traitor," cried Rousseau. "Yes, I know what sort of a secret yours is. You are a creature of Grimm or D'Holbach; you have been tutored to act a part in order to impose upon my benevolence; you have gained admittance into my house, and now you betray me to them. Oh, stupid fool that I am! Silly lover of Nature! I thought I was aiding a fellow-creature, and I was bringing a spy into my house!"

"A spy!" exclaimed Gilbert, indignantly.

"Come, Judas! on what day am I to be sold?" continued Rousseau, folding Thérèse's gown tragically about him, and thinking himself sublime in his grief, when unfortunately he was only ridiculous.

"Monsieur, you calumniate me," said Gilbert.

"Calumniate you, you little serpent!" exclaimed Rousseau. "Did I not find you corresponding with my enemies by signs, — making them understand, perhaps, what is the subject of my new work?"

"Monsieur, had I gained admittance to your house in order to betray the secret of your work, it would have been easier for me to copy some of the manuscripts in your desk than to inform others of the subject by signs."

This was true; and Rousseau felt so plainly that he had given utterance to one of those absurdities which escaped him when his monomania of suspicion was at its height that he got angry.

"Monsieur," said he, "I am sorry for you, but experience has made me severe. My life has been one long series of deceptions. I have been betrayed, sold, made a martyr, by every one that surrounded me. I am, you must be aware, one of those illustrious unfortunates on whom government has put its ban. In such a situation it is pardonable to be suspicious. Now, I suspect you, therefore you must leave my house."

Gilbert was far from expecting this peroration. He to be turned out! He clenched his hands tightly, and a flash of anger, which almost made Rousseau tremble, lighted up his eyes. The flash was only momentary, however, for the thought occurred to him that in leaving Rousseau's house he should lose the happiness of seeing Andrée every hour of the day, as well as forfeit the friendship of Rousseau; this would be to add misery to shame. His fierce pride gave way, and, clasping his hands: "Monsieur," said he, "listen to me! One word, only one word!"

"I am pitiless," said Rousseau; "men have made me by their injustice more cruel than the tiger. You are in correspondence with my enemies. Go to them, I do not prevent you. League with them, I do not oppose your doing so. Only leave my house!"

"Monsieur, those two young girls are not your enemies; they are Mademoiselle Andrée and Nicole."

"And who is Mademoiselle Andrée?" said Rousseau, to whom this name, spoken already two or three times by Gilbert, was quite familiar. "Who is Mademoiselle Andrée? Speak!"

"Mademoiselle Andrée, Monsieur, is the daughter of the Baron de Taverney. Oh, pardon me, Monsieur, for daring to say so to you, but I love her more than you ever loved Mademoiselle Galley or Madame de Warens! It is she whom I have followed on foot to Paris, without money and without bread, until I fell down on the road exhausted with hunger and fatigue. It is she whom I went to see yesterday at St. Denis, whom I followed, unseen by her, to Muette, and thence to a street near this. It is she whom by chance I discovered this morning to be the occupant of this garden-house; and it is she for whose sake I burn to be a Turenne, a Richelieu, or a Rousseau!"

Rousseau knew the human heart and the varying tones in which it speaks; and he felt assured that no one acting a part could speak with the trembling and impassioned accents of Gilbert, or accompany his words with gestures so true to nature. "So," said he, "this young lady is Mademoiselle Andrée?"

"Yes, Monsieur Rousseau."

"Then you know her?"

"I am the son of her nurse."

"Then you lied just now when you said you did not know her; and if you are not a traitor, you are a liar."

"Monsieur, you tear my very heart! Indeed, you would hurt me less were you to kill me on the spot."

"Pshaw! Mere phrases! — in the style of Diderot and Marmontel! You are a liar, Monsieur."

"Well, yes, yes!" said Gilbert; "I am a liar, Monsieur, — and so much the worse for you if you do not feel for one so forced to lie. A liar! a liar! I leave you, Monsieur; but I leave you in despair, and my misery will weigh heavy on your conscience."

Rousseau stroked his chin as he looked at this young man, in whom he found so many points of character resembling his own. "He has either a great soul or he is a great rogue," said he to himself; "but if they are plotting against me, why not hold in my hand a clew to the plot?"

Gilbert had advanced toward the door; and now, with his hand on the lock, stood waiting for the fiat which was to banish or recall him.

"Enough on this subject, my son," said Rousseau. "If you are as deeply in love as you say, so much the worse for you. But it is now late; you lost the whole of yesterday, and we have to-day thirty pages to copy. Quick, Gilbert; bestir yourself!"

Gilbert seized the philosopher's hand and pressed it to his lips; he certainly would not have done so much to a king's. But before leaving the room, and while Gilbert, still deeply moved, stood leaning against the door, Rousseau again placed himself at the window to take a last look at the young girls. Andrée had just thrown off her dressing-gown and taken her gown from Nicole's hands. She saw his pallid countenance and searching eye, and starting back, she ordered Nicole to close the window. Nicole obeyed.

"So," said Rousseau, "my old face frightens her; his young one would not have had the same effect. O lovely youth!" added he, sighing, —

"'O gioventu primavera dell' eta!
O primavera gioventu dell' anno!'"

and once more hanging up Thérèse's gown on its nail, he went downstairs in a melancholy mood, followed by Gilbert, for whose youth he would perhaps at that moment have exchanged his renown, which then rivalled that of Voltaire, sharing with it the admiration of the world.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOUSE IN THE RUE ST. CLAUDE.

THE Rue St. Claude, in which the Comte de Fenix had appointed to meet the Cardinal de Rohan, was not so different at that period from what it is at the present day but that some vestiges of the localities we are about to describe may yet be discovered. It abutted then, as it does now, on the Rue St. Louis and the boulevard, and descended toward the latter with rather a steep inclination. It boasted of fifteen houses and seven lanterns, and was remarkable besides for two lanes, which branched off from it, — the one on the left, the other on the right; the former passing by the Hôtel de Voysins, while the latter bounded the large garden of the convent of St. Sacrament. This last-mentioned lane, shaded on one side by the trees of the convent garden, was bordered on the other by the high, dark wall of a house, which stood in the Rue St. Claude. This wall, resembling the face of a cyclops, had only one eye, or, if the reader like it better, only one window; and even that, covered with bars and grating, was horribly gloomy. Just below this window, which was never opened, as one might perceive from the spider's webs that covered it on the outside, was a door studded with large nails, which indicated, not that the house was entered, but that it might be entered, on this side.

There were no dwellings in this lane, and only two occupants. These were a cobbler in a wooden box, and a stocking-mender in a cask, both taking shelter from the

heat under the acacias of the convent garden, which after nine o'clock in the morning threw their broad shadow on the dusty ground. In the evening the stocking-mender returned to her domicile, the cobbler put a padlock on his castle, and no guardian watched over the lonely street, save the stern and sombre eye of the window we have spoken of.

Besides the door just mentioned, the house which we have undertaken to describe so accurately had another, and the principal, entrance in the Rue St. Claude. This entrance was a large gateway surmounted with carved figures in relief, which recalled the architecture of the time of Louis XIII., and was adorned with the griffin's head for a knocker which the Comte de Fenix had indicated to the Cardinal de Rohan as distinguishing his abode.

As for the windows, they looked on the boulevard, and were opened early in the morning to admit the fresh air. But as Paris at that period, and above all in that quarter, was far from safe, it occasioned no astonishment to see them grated, and the walls near them bristling with iron spikes. Indeed, the first story of the house was not unlike a fortress. Against enemies, thieves, or lovers it presented iron balconies with sharp points; a deep moat separated the building from the boulevard; and to obtain entrance on this side would have required ladders at least thirty feet long, — for the wall which enclosed, or rather buried, the courtyard was of fully that height.

This house, before which in the present day a spectator would be arrested by curiosity on beholding its singular aspect, was not very remarkable in 1770. On the contrary, it seemed to harmonize with the quarter of the city in which it stood; and if the worthy inhabitants of the Rue St. Louis, and the not less worthy denizens of the Rue St. Claude, shunned its neighborhood, it was not on

account of its reputation, which was then unimpaired, but on account of the lonely boulevard of the Porte St. Louis and the Pont aux Choux, both of which were in very bad odor with the Parisians. In fact, the boulevard on this side led only to the Bastille; and as there were not more than a dozen houses in the space of a quarter of a league, the city authorities had not thought it worth their while to light such a desert region. The consequence was that after eight o'clock in summer, and four in winter, the place became a sort of chaos, with the addition of robbers.

It was, however, on this very boulevard, toward nine o'clock in the evening, and about three quarters of an hour after the visit to St. Denis, that a carriage drove rapidly along. It bore the coat of arms of the Comte de Fenix on its panels. The count himself, mounted on Djerid, who whisked his long and silky tail as he snuffed the stifling atmosphere, rode about twenty paces in advance. Within it, resting on cushions, and concealed by the closed blinds, lay Lorenza fast asleep. The gate opened as if by enchantment, at the noise of the wheels, and the carriage, after turning into the dark gulf of the Rue St. Claude, disappeared in the courtyard of the house we have just described, and the gate closed behind it. There was most assuredly no occasion for so much mystery, since no one was there to see the Comte de Fenix return, or to interfere with him had he carried off in his carriage the treasures of the Abbey of St. Denis.

And now we shall say a few words respecting the interior of this house, of which it is important that our readers should know something, since it is our intention to introduce them to it more than once.

In the courtyard of which we have spoken, and in which the springing grass labored by a never-ceasing effort to displace the pavement, were seen on the right the stables,

on the left the coach-houses, while at the back a double flight of twelve steps led to the entrance door. On the ground floor the house, or at least as much of it as was accessible, consisted of a large antechamber, a dining-room, remarkable for the quantity of massive plate heaped on its sideboards, and a salon, which seemed quite recently furnished, — probably for the reception of its new inmates. From the antechamber a broad staircase led to the first-floor, which contained three principal apartments. A skilful geometrician, however, on measuring with his eye the extent of the house outside, and observing the space within it, would have been surprised that it contained so little accommodation. In fact, in the outside apparent house there was a second hidden house, known only to him who inhabited it.

In the antechamber, close beside a statue of the god Harpocrates, — who, with his finger on his lips, seemed to enjoin the silence of which he is the symbol, — was concealed a secret door opening with a spring, and masked by the ornaments of the architecture. This door gave access to a staircase, which, ascending to about the same height as the first-floor on the other staircase, led to a little apartment lighted by two grated windows looking on an inner court. This inner court was the box, as it were, which enclosed the second house and concealed it from all eyes.

The apartment to which this staircase led was evidently intended for a man. Beside the bed, and before the sofas and couches, were spread, instead of carpets, the most magnificent furs which Africa and India could produce. There were skins of lions, tigers, and panthers, with their glaring eyes and threatening teeth. The walls, hung with Cordova leather stamped in large and flowing arabesques, were decorated with weapons of every kind, from the

tomahawk of the Huron to the kris of the Malay; from the sword of the Crusader to the kandjiar of the Arab; from the arquebuse, incrusted with ivory, of the sixteenth century, to the gun, damaskeened with gold, of the eighteenth. The eye in vain sought in this room for any other outlet than that from the staircase; perhaps there were several, but if so, they were concealed and invisible.

A German domestic, about twenty-five or thirty years of age, the only human being who had been seen moving about in that vast mansion for several days, bolted the gate of the courtyard; and, opening the carriage-door while the stolid coachman unharnessed his horses, he took Lorenza in his arms and carried her into the antechamber. There he laid her on a table covered with red cloth, and drew down her long white veil over her person. Then he left the room to light at the lamps of the carriage a large chandelier with seven branches, and returned with all its lights burning; but in that interval, short as it was, Lorenza had disappeared.

The Comte de Fenix had followed close behind the German, and had no sooner been left alone with Lorenza than he took her in his arms and carried her by the secret staircase we have described to the hall of arms, after having carefully closed both the doors behind him. Once there, he pressed his foot on a spring in the corner of the lofty mantelpiece, and immediately a door, which formed the back of the fireplace, rolled back on its noiseless hinges, and the count with his burden again disappeared, carefully closing behind him with his foot the mysterious door.

At the back of the mantelpiece was a second staircase, consisting of a flight of fifteen steps covered with Utrecht velvet; after mounting which, he reached a chamber elegantly hung with satin, embroidered with flowers of such

brilliant colors, and so naturally designed, that they might have been taken for real flowers. The furniture was richly gilt. Two cabinets of tortoise-shell inlaid with brass, a harpsichord, and a toilet-table of rose-wood, a beautiful bed with transparent curtains, and several vases of Sèvres porcelain, formed the principal articles, while chairs and couches, arranged symmetrically in a space of thirty feet square, served to complete the decoration of the apartment, to which was attached a dressing-room and a boudoir. The latter had no windows, but lamps filled with perfumed oil burned in them day and night, and, let down from the ceiling, were trimmed by invisible hands. The sleeping-chamber, however, had two windows, hung with rich and heavy curtains; but as it was now night, the curtains had nothing to conceal.

Not a sound, not a breath, was heard in this chamber; and an occupant of it might have thought himself a hundred miles from the world. But gold shone on every side; beautiful paintings smiled from the walls, and lustres of colored Bohemian glass glittered and sparkled like glowing eyes, when, after having placed Lorenza on a sofa, the count, not satisfied with the trembling radiance of the boudoir, proceeded to light the rose-colored wax-candles of two candelabra on the mantelpiece.

Then, returning to Lorenza and placing himself before her, he knelt with one knee on a pile of cushions, and called softly, "Lorenza!"

The young woman at this appeal raised herself on her elbow, although her eyes remained closed; but she did not reply.

"Lorenza," he repeated, "do you sleep in your ordinary sleep, or in the magnetic sleep?"

"In the magnetic sleep," she answered.

"Then if I question you, you can reply?"

"I think so."

The Comte de Fenix was silent for a moment; then he continued: "Look in the apartment of Madame Louise, whom we left three quarters of an hour ago."

"I am looking."

"What do you see?"

"The princess is praying before retiring to bed."

"Do you see the Cardinal de Rohan in the convent."

"No."

"In any of the corridors or courts?"

"No."

"See whether his carriage is at the gate?"

"I do not see it."

"Follow the road by which we came. Do you see carriages on it?"

"Yes, several."

"Do you see the cardinal's among them?"

"No."

"Come nearer Paris, — now?"

"Now I see it."

"Where?"

"At the gate of the city."

"Has it stopped?"

"Yes; the footman has just got down."

"Does the cardinal speak to him?"

"Yes; he is going to speak."

"Lorenza, attend! It is important that I should know what the cardinal says."

"You should have told me to listen in time. But stop! — the footman is speaking to the coachman."

"What does he say?"

"The Rue St. Claude, in the Marais, by the boulevard."

"Thanks, Lorenza."

The count wrote some words on a piece of paper, which

he folded round a plate of copper, — doubtless to give it weight; then he pulled a bell, pressed a spring, and a small opening appearing in the wall, he dropped the note down. The opening closed again instantly. It was in this way that the count, in the inner apartments of his house, gave his orders to Fritz, his German servant.

Then, returning to Lorenza, "I thank you," he repeated.

"You are, then, satisfied with me?" asked the young woman.

"Yes, dear Lorenza."

"Well, reward me, then."

Balsamo smiled, and approached his lips to Lorenza's, whose whole body trembled at the touch. "Oh, Joseph, Joseph!" she murmured, with a sigh almost painful, "Joseph, how I love you!" And the young woman reached out her arms to press Balsamo to her heart.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DOUBLE EXISTENCE — SLEEP.

Balsamo recoiled quickly, and Lorenza's arms, passing through the empty air, fell crossed upon her breast.

"Lorenza," said Balsamo, "are you willing to talk with your friend?"

"Oh, yes!" she replied. "But speak yourself the most, — I love so to hear your voice."

"Lorenza, you have often said that you would be happy if you could live with me, shut out from all the world."

"Yes; that would be happiness indeed!"

"Well, your wish is realized. No one can follow us to this chamber, — no one can enter here; we are alone, quite alone."

"Ah! so much the better."

"Tell me, is this apartment to your taste?"

"Order me to see it, then."

"I order you."

"Oh, what a charming room!"

"You are pleased with it, then?" asked the count, tenderly.

"Oh, yes! There are my favorite flowers, — my vanilla heliotropes, my crimson roses, my Chinese jasmines. Thanks, my sweet Joseph! How good you are!"

"I do all I can to please you, Lorenza."

"Oh, you do a hundred times more than I deserve!"

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"Then you confess that you have been very ill natured?"

"Very ill natured? Oh, yes! But you forgive me, do you not?"

"I will forgive you when you explain to me the strange mystery which I have sought to fathom ever since I knew you."

"It is this, Balsamo. There are in me two Lorenzas, quite distinct from each other, — one that loves, and one that hates you. So there are in me two lives; in one I taste all the joys of paradise, in the other experience all the torments of hell."

"And one of those is the life of sleep, the other is the life of waking?"

"Yes."

"You love me when you sleep, and you hate me when you are awake?"

"Yes."

"But why so?"

"I do not know."

"You must know."

"No."

"Search carefully; look within yourself; sound your own heart."

"Yes, I see the cause now."

"What is it?"

"When Lorenza awakes, she is the Roman girl, the superstitious daughter of Italy; she thinks science a crime, and love a sin. Her confessor told her that they were so. She is then afraid of you, and would flee from you to the confines of the earth."

"And when Lorenza sleeps?"

"Ah! then she is no longer the Roman, no longer superstitious; she is a woman. Then she reads Balsamo's

heart and mind; she sees that his genius contemplates sublime things. Then she feels her littleness compared with him. Then she would live and die beside him, that the future might whisper softly the name of Lorenza, when it trumpets forth that of — Cagliostro!"

"It is by that name, then, that I shall become celebrated?"

"Yes, by that name."

"Dear Lorenza! Then you will love this new abode, will you not?"

"It is much more splendid than any of those you have already given me; but it is not on that account that I shall love it."

"For what, then?"

"I shall love it because you have promised to live in it with me."

"Then, when you sleep, you see clearly that I love you, — ardently love you?"

The young woman smiled faintly. "Yes," said she, "I do see that you love me; and yet," added she, with a sigh, "there is something which you love better than Lorenza."

"What is it?" asked Balsamo, starting.

"Your dream."

"Say, my task."

"Your ambition."

"Say, my glory."

"Ah, *mon Dieu! mon Dieu!*" and the young woman's breast heaved, while the tears forced their way through her closed eyelids.

"What do you see?" asked Balsamo, with alarm; for there were moments when her clairvoyant powers startled even him.

"Oh, I see darkness, and phantoms gliding through it! Some of them hold in their hands their crowned heads,

and you, — you are among them, like a general in the thick of the battle. You command, and they obey."

"Well," said Balsamo, joyfully, "and does that not make you proud of me?"

"Oh, you are so good that you have no need to be great! And besides, I seek my own figure amid the throng which surrounds you, and I cannot see myself. I shall not be there!" murmured she, sadly. "I shall not be there!"

"Where will you be then?"

"I shall be dead."

Balsamo shuddered. "Dead, my Lorenza?" cried he, — "dead? No, no; we shall live long together to love one another!"

"You do not love me."

"Oh, yes!"

"Not enough, at any rate, — not enough!" she cried, putting her arms around his head. "Not enough," she added, bestowing on his forehead many kisses with her glowing lips.

"With what do you reproach me?"

"Your coldness. See, you draw back! Do my lips burn you, that you avoid my kisses? Oh, restore to me my maiden tranquillity, my convent at Subiaco, the nights in my solitary cell! Give to me again the kisses which you sent me on mysterious wings of air, and which in my sleep I saw coming to me, like sylphs on wings of gold, and which filled my soul with delight."

"Lorenza! Lorenza!"

"Oh! do not avoid me, Balsamo; do not avoid me, I beseech you! Give me your hand, that I may press it, — your eyes, that I may kiss them; I am your wife."

"Yes, yes, my dear Lorenza, you are my well-beloved wife."

"And you suffer me to live near you, useless, abandoned! You have a chaste and solitary flower, whose perfume invites you, and you repulse its perfume. Ah! I see clearly that I am nothing to you."

"You, my Lorenza, nothing? You are my all, my strength, my power, my genius! Without you I should be nothing. Cease, then, to love me with that mad fever which disturbs the nights of the women of your country. Love me as I love you."

"Oh! it is not love, it is not love, — the feeling you have toward me."

"It is at any rate all I ask from you; for you give me all that I desire. That possession of the soul suffices me for happiness."

"Happiness!" said Lorenza, with an air of contempt; "do you call that happiness?"

"Yes; for, in my mind, to be happy is to be great."

She sighed deeply.

"Oh, could you but know, my sweet Lorenza, what it is to read the uncovered hearts of men, and govern them with their own passions!"

"Yes, I serve you in that, I know."

"That is not all. Your eyes read for me the hidden book of the future. What I could not learn with twenty years of toil and suffering, you, my gentle dove, innocent and pure, you teach me when you wish. Foes dog my steps and lay snares for me; you inform me of every danger. On my understanding depend my life, my fortune, my freedom; you give that understanding the eye of the lynx, which dilates and sees clearly in the darkness. Your lovely eyes, closing to the light of this outward world, open to me a superhuman clearness of sight. They watch for me. It is you who make me free, rich, powerful."

"And you in return make me wretched," she exclaimed, abandoned to her emotions. And more eagerly than before she threw her arms around Balsamo, who, himself charged with the electric flame, could oppose but a feeble resistance. He made an effort, however, and unwound the loving chain that was about him. "Lorenza! Lorenza!" he said, "for pity's sake!"

"I am your wife, and not your daughter. Love me as a husband loves his wife, and not as my father loved me."

"Lorenza," said Balsamo, trembling, "do not ask me, I beg of you, a love other than that which I can give you."

"But," said the young woman, raising her arms in despair, "that is not love; that is not love!"

"Oh, yes! it is love, — love holy and pure; it is that with which one ought to love a virgin."

The young woman made a sharp movement, and extended toward the count her white and vigorous arms in a manner almost threatening. "Oh! what does that signify?" she said, in a desolate tone. "And why have you made me abandon my country, my name, my family, everything, even my God? — for your God is not like mine. Why have you assumed that absolute empire over me which makes me your slave, which makes my life and my blood yours, — do you hear me? — why have you done all this, to call me the virgin Lorenza?"

Balsamo sighed in his turn, overwhelmed by the grief of that broken-hearted woman. "Alas!" he said, "it is your fault; or rather, it is the fault of God. Why has God made you that angel with infallible sight by whose aid I shall subdue the universe? Why do you read all hearts through their material covering, as one reads a book behind a pane of glass? It is because you are an angel

of purity, Lorenza. It is because you are a diamond without blemish. It is because nothing casts a shadow on your mind. It is because God, seeing that immaculate form, pure and radiant, like that of the Holy Mother, sends to it, when I invoke him in the name of the elements which he has made, his Holy Spirit, which does not enter sordid and vulgar souls because it can find in them no place without spot in which to rest. As a virgin you are a seer, my Lorenza; as wife you would be only matter."

"And you do not prefer my love," cried Lorenza, striking her beautiful hands together angrily, — "you do not prefer my love to all the dreams which you pursue, to all the chimeras you create? And you condemn me to maintain, in your presence, the coldness of a recluse. Ah, Joseph, Joseph! you commit a crime; it is I who tell you so."

"Do not blaspheme, my Lorenza," cried Balsamo; "for, like you, I suffer. Stay, read in my heart, and then say that I do not love you!"

"But, then, why do you resist yourself?"

"Because I wish to raise you with myself to the throne of the world."

"Oh! your ambition, Balsamo," murmured the young woman. "Will your ambition ever give you what my love gives you?"

In his turn abandoned to his emotions, Balsamo allowed his head to lie on Lorenza's breast. "Oh! yes, yes!" she cried; "I see now that you love me more than your ambition, more than your power, more than your hope! Oh! at last you love me as I love you!"

Balsamo tried to shake off the intoxicating cloud which began to drown his reason; but his effort was useless. "Oh! since you love me so much," said he, "spare me!"

Lorenza no longer listened. She had made with her

arms one of those invincible chains that are more binding than clamps of steel, and more solid than diamond. "I will love you as you choose," she said, — "as sister or wife, as virgin or spouse; but give me one kiss."

Balsamo was conquered. Overcome by so much love, he had no strength for further resistance. His lips approached those of the young woman. Suddenly reason returned to him. His hands beat the air charged with intoxicating vapors. "Lorenza!" he cried, "awake; it is my will."

At once her arms released their hold, the smile which had played on her lips died away, and she sighed heavily. At length her closed eyes opened; the dilated pupils assumed their natural size; she stretched out her arms, appeared overcome with weariness, and fell back at full length, but awake, on the sofa.

Balsamo, seated at a little distance from her, heaved a deep sigh. "Adieu, my dream!" murmured he to himself. "Farewell, happiness!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE DOUBLE EXISTENCE — WAKING.

As soon as Lorenza had recovered her natural powers of sight, she cast a hurried glance around her. Her eyes roamed over all the splendid trifles which surrounded her on every side, without exhibiting any appearance of the pleasure which such things usually give to women. At length they rested with a shudder on Balsamo, who was seated at a short distance, and was watching her attentively.

"You again!" said she, recoiling; and all the symptoms of horror appeared in her countenance. Her lips turned deadly pale, and the perspiration stood in large drops on her forehead. Balsamo did not reply.

"Where am I?" she asked.

"You know whence you come, Madame," said Balsamo; "and that should naturally enable you to divine where you are."

"Yes, you do well to revive my recollection! I remember now; I know that I have been persecuted by you, pursued by you, torn by you from the arms of the royal lady whom I had chosen to protect me."

"Then you must know also that this princess, all-powerful though she be, could not defend you?"

"Yes; you have conquered her by some work of magic!" cried Lorenza, clasping her hands. "O Heaven, deliver me from this demon!"

"In what way do I resemble a demon, Madame?" said Balsamo, shrugging his shoulders. "Once for all, abandon, I beg of you, this farrago of childish prejudices which you brought with you from Rome; have done with all those absurd superstitions which you have retained in your mind ever since you left the convent."

"Oh, my convent! Who will restore me my convent?" cried Lorenza, bursting into tears.

"In fact," said Balsamo, ironically, "a convent is a place very much to be regretted!"

Lorenza darted toward one of the windows, drew aside the curtains, and, opening it, stretched out her hand. It struck against a thick bar supporting an iron grating, which, although hidden by flowers, was not the less efficacious in retaining a prisoner.

"Prison for prison," said she, "I like that better which conducts toward heaven than that which sends to hell." And she dashed her delicate hands against the iron bars.

"If you were more reasonable, Lorenza, you would find only the flowers, without the bars, at your windows."

"Was I not reasonable when you shut me up in that moving prison, with the vampire whom you call Althotas? And yet you kept me a prisoner, you watched me like a lynx, and whenever you left me you breathed into me that spirit which takes possession of me, and which I cannot overcome. Where is he, that horrible old man, whose sight freezes me with terror? In some corner here, is he not? Let us keep silent, and we shall hear his unearthly voice issue from the depths of the earth."

"You really give way to your imagination like a child, Madame. Althotas, my teacher, my friend, my second father, is an inoffensive old man who has never seen or approached you; or, if he has seen you, has never paid the least attention to you, immersed as he is in his task."

"His task?" murmured Lorenza. "And what is his task?"

"He is trying to discover the elixir of life, — what all the greatest minds have been in search of for the last six thousand years."

"And you, — what are you trying to discover?"

"The means of human perfectibility."

"Oh, demons! demons!" said Lorenza, raising her hands.

"Ah!" said Balsamo, rising, "now your fit is coming on again."

"My fit?"

"Yes, your fit. There is one thing, Lorenza, which you are not aware of, — it is that your life is divided into two equal periods. During one you are gentle, good, and reasonable; during the other you are mad."

"And it is under this false pretext of madness that you shut me up?"

"Alas! I am obliged to do so."

"Oh, be cruel, barbarous, pitiless, if you will; shut me up, kill me, — but do not play the hypocrite; do not pretend to compassionate while you destroy me!"

"But only reflect a moment," said Balsamo, without anger, and even with a caressing smile; "is it torture to live in an elegant, commodious apartment like this?"

"Grated windows, iron bars on all sides, — no air, no air!"

"The bars are for the safety of your life, you must know, Lorenza."

"Oh!" she cried, "he destroys me piecemeal, and tells me he cares for my life!"

Balsamo approached the young woman, and, with a friendly gesture, endeavored to take her hand; but recoiling as if from the touch of a serpent, "Oh, do not touch me!" said she.

"Do you hate me, then, Lorenza?"

"Ask the sufferer if he hates his executioner?"

"Lorenza, Lorenza! it is because I do not wish to be your executioner that I deprive you of a little of your liberty. If you could go and come as you liked, who knows what you might do in the moments of your madness?"

"What I might do? Oh, let me once be free, and you shall see what I would do!"

"Lorenza, you are treating unkindly the husband whom you have chosen in the sight of God."

"I chose you? Never! never!"

"You are my wife, notwithstanding."

"Yes; that indeed must have been the work of the demon."

"Poor insensate!" said Balsamo, with a tender look.

"But I am a Roman," murmured Lorenza; "and some day I shall take my revenge."

Balsamo shook his head gently. "You say that only to frighten me, Lorenza, do you not?" said he, smiling.

"No, no; I shall do what I say."

"Christian woman, what are you saying?" cried Balsamo, with authority. "Your religion, which enjoins the return of good for evil, is, then, an hypocrisy? — since you pretend to obey that religion and you return evil for good."

Lorenza appeared for an instant struck by these words. "Oh!" said she, "it is not vengeance to denounce to society its enemies, it is a duty."

"If you denounce me as a necromancer, as a sorcerer, it is not society whom I offend, but God; but if I offend God, who by a sign can destroy me, why does he not do

so? Does he leave my punishment to weak men, subject to error like myself?"

"He bears with you," murmured the young woman; "he waits for you to reform."

Balsamo smiled. "And in the mean time," said he, "he counsels you to betray your friend, your benefactor, your husband?"

"My husband? Ah! thank Heaven, your hand has never touched mine that I have not blushed or shuddered at its contact."

"And you know that I have always endeavored to spare you that contact."

"It is true, — you are chaste, and that is the only amelioration of my misfortunes. Oh! if I had been obliged to submit to your love!"

"Oh, mystery! impenetrable mystery!" murmured Balsamo to himself, replying rather to his own thoughts than to Lorenza's words.

"Once for all," said Lorenza, "why do you deprive me of my liberty?"

"Why, after having given yourself voluntarily to me, do you now wish for liberty? Why do you flee from him who protects you? Why do you ask a stranger for protection against him who loves you? Why do you threaten him who has never yet threatened you, and say you will reveal secrets which are not yours, and of which you do not comprehend the import?"

"Oh!" said Lorenza, without replying to his questions, "the prisoner who has firmly determined to be free, will be so, sooner or later, and your bars of iron shall not keep me, any more than your moving cage kept me!"

"Fortunately for you, Lorenza, the bars are strong," answered Balsamo, with a threatening calmness.

"God will send me some storm like that of Lorraine, — some thunderbolt which will break them."

"Trust me, you had better pray God to do nothing of the kind. Do not give way, I advise you, to your romantic fancies, Lorenza. I speak to you as a friend."

There was such an expression of concentrated anger in Balsamo's voice, such a gloomy and threatening fire in his eyes, such a strange and nervous movement in his white and muscular hand, as he pronounced each word slowly and solemnly, that Lorenza, subdued in the very height of her rebellion, listened to him in spite of herself.

"You see, my child," he continued, in the same calm and threatening tone, "I have endeavored to make this prison a habitation fit for a queen. Were you a queen, you could here want for nothing. Calm, then, this wild excitement. Live here as you would have lived in your convent. Accustom yourself to my presence; love me as a friend, as a brother. I have heavy sorrows, — I will confide them to you; I am often and deeply deceived, — a smile from you will console me. The more I see you kind, attentive, patient, the more I shall lighten the rigor of your imprisonment. Who knows but that in a year, nay, in six months perhaps, you may be as free as I am, — always supposing that you no longer entertain the wish to steal your freedom."

"No, no!" cried Lorenza, who could not comprehend that so terrible a resolve should be expressed in a voice so gentle; "no! More promises! More falsehoods! You have carried me off, and by violent means. I belong to myself, and to myself alone; restore me therefore to the house of God at least, if you will not grant me my full liberty. I have until now submitted to your tyranny, because I remembered that you once saved me from robbers; but my gratitude is already weakened. A few

days more of this insulting imprisonment, and it will expire; and then — take care! I may begin to suspect that you had some secret connection with those robbers!"

"You do me the honor, then, to take me for a captain of banditti?" said Balsamo, ironically.

"I know not what you are, but I caught certain signs and words."

"You caught signs and words?" exclaimed Balsamo, turning pale.

"Yes, yes, I intercepted them; I know them, — I remember them."

"But you will never tell them to any living soul? You will shut them up in the depths of your heart?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Lorenza, full of delight, in her anger, that she had found the vulnerable part of her antagonist, "I shall treasure them up religiously in my memory; I shall murmur them over to myself, and on the first opportunity shall say them aloud to others. I have already told them."

"To whom?"

"To the princess."

"Well, Lorenza, listen!" said Balsamo, clenching his hands till the nails entered the flesh. "If you have told them once, you shall never tell them again. Never shall the words you have spoken again cross your lips, for I will keep every door closely shut. I will sharpen the points on those bars, and raise the walls around this house, if need be, as high as those of Babel."

"I have already told you, Balsamo," exclaimed Lorenza, "that no prison can hold a captive forever, especially when the love of liberty is aided by hatred of the tyrant."

"Very well, leave your prison, then; but mark me, you have only twice to do so. The first time, I will beat you

so cruelly that your eyes will have no more tears to shed; the second time, so pitilessly that your veins will have no more blood to shed."

"Great heavens! He will murder me!" screamed the young woman, in the highest paroxysm of fury, tearing her hair and writhing on the carpet.

Balsamo looked at her for an instant with a mixture of anger and compassion. At length compassion seemed to prevail. "Come, Lorenza," said he, "be calm; some future day you will be well rewarded for all you suffer now, or think you suffer."

"Imprisoned! imprisoned!" cried Lorenza, without listening to him.

"Be patient."

"Beaten!"

"It is a period of probation."

"Mad! mad!"

"You will be cured."

"Oh, put me in a madhouse at once! Shut me up at once in a real prison!"

"No; you have too well prepared me for what you would do in such a case."

"Death, then!" screamed Lorenza, "instant death!" and bounding up with the suppleness and rapidity of some wild animal, she rushed forward to dash her head against the wall.

Balsamo had only to extend his hand toward her and to pronounce, by his will rather than his lips, one single word to arrest her progress. Lorenza, checked in her wild career, staggered and fell into Balsamo's arms. She was asleep.

The strange enchanter, who seemed to have subdued in this woman all that belonged to her physical existence, without having been able to triumph over the moral life,

raised her and carried her to her couch; then, having laid her on it, he imprinted a long kiss on her lips, drew the curtains, and left the chamber.

A soft and soothing sleep wrapped Lorenza in its embrace, as the mantle of a kind mother wraps the froward child after it has long suffered and wept.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VISIT.

LORENZA was not mistaken. A carriage, after having entered Paris by the Barrière St. Denis and traversing the faubourg of that name throughout its entire length, had turned the angle formed by the last house and the Porte St. Denis, and was rapidly advancing along the boulevard. This carriage contained Monsieur Louis de Rohan, Bishop of Strasburg, whose impatience led him to anticipate the time fixed upon for seeking the sorcerer in his den.

The coachman, a man of mettle, and well accustomed to aid the handsome prelate in his gallant adventures amid the darkness and perils of certain mysterious streets, was by no means discouraged when, after having passed the boulevards of St. Denis and St. Martin, still thronged with people and well lighted, he received the order to proceed along the lonely and dismal boulevard of the Bastille. The carriage stopped at the corner of the Rue St. Claude, on the boulevard itself, and after a whispered order from its master took up a concealed position under the trees about twenty paces off.

Then M. de Rohan, who was dressed in the ordinary costume of a civilian, glided down the street, and knocked at the door of the house, which he easily recognized by the description of it given to him by the Comte de Fenix. Fritz's footsteps were heard approaching, and the door was opened.

"Is it not here that the Comte de Fenix resides?" asked the prince.

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Is he at home?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Well, say that a gentleman wishes to see him."

"His Eminence the Cardinal de Rohan, is it not?" asked Fritz.

The prince stood confounded. He looked all around him and at his dress, to see whether anything in his costume or in the attendant circumstances had revealed his rank; but he was alone, and in the dress of a layman.

"How do you know my name?" said he.

"My master has just told me, this very instant even, that he expected your Eminence."

"Yes, but to-morrow, or the day after?"

"No, Monseigneur, this evening."

"Your master told you that he expected me this evening?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Very well; announce me, then," said the cardinal, putting a double louis-d'or into Fritz's hand.

"Will your Eminence have the goodness to follow me, then?"

The cardinal made a gesture in the affirmative. Fritz then advanced with a rapid step toward the antechamber, which was lighted by a massive bronze candelabrum containing twelve wax tapers. The cardinal followed, surprised and thoughtful.

"My friend," said he, stopping at the door of the salon, "there must be a mistake, I think; and in that case I do not wish to intrude on the count. It is impossible that he can expect me, for he was not aware that I intended to come to-night."

"Monseigneur is the Prince-Cardinal de Rohan, Bishop of Strasburg, is he not?" inquired Fritz.

"Yes, my friend."

"Well, then, it is Monseigneur whom my master the count expects." And lighting successively the candles of two other candelabra in the salon, Fritz bowed and retired.

Five minutes elapsed, during which the cardinal, agitated by a strange emotion, gazed at the elegant furniture of this salon and at the eight pictures by the first masters which hung from the walls. The door opened, and the Comte de Fenix appeared on the threshold.

"Good evening, Monseigneur!" said he, simply.

"I am told that you expected me," exclaimed the cardinal, without replying to this salutation, — "that you expected me this evening. It is impossible!"

"I beg your pardon, Monseigneur, but I did expect you," replied the count. "Perhaps you doubt the truth of my words on seeing the poor reception I give you? But I have only very lately arrived in Paris, and can scarcely call myself installed here yet; your Eminence must therefore be good enough to excuse me."

"You expected me! But who could have told you that I was coming?"

"Yourself, Monseigneur."

"How so?"

"Did you not stop your carriage at the Barrière St. Denis?"

"Yes."

"Did you not summon your footman to the carriage-door, and give him the order, 'Rue St. Claude, in the Marais, by the Faubourg St. Denis and the boulevard,' — words which he repeated to the coachman?"

"Yes, certainly; did you see me, then, and hear me?"

"I saw and heard you, Monseigneur."

"Then you were there?"

"No, Monseigneur, I was not there."

"And where were you?"

"I was here."

"You saw me and heard me from here?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Come, come!"

"Monseigneur forgets that I am a sorcerer."

"Ah, true; I did forget that! But, Monsieur, what am I to call you, — the Baron Balsamo, or the Comte de Fenix?"

"In my own house, my lord, I have no name: I am called the MASTER."

"Yes, that is the hermetical title. So then, Master, you expected me?"

"I did expect you."

"And your laboratory is heated?"

"My laboratory is always heated, Monseigneur."

"And you will permit me to enter it?"

"I shall have the honor of conducting your Eminence thither."

"And I will follow you, but only on one condition."

"What is that?"

"That you promise not to place me personally in contact with the devil. I am terribly afraid of his Majesty Lucifer."

"Oh, Monseigneur!"

"Yes, for in general you employ for such a purpose the greatest rogues, — discarded soldiers of the guards, or fencing-masters without pupils, who in order to play the part of Satan naturally, treat their dupes to sundry fillips and tweaks of the nose, after first putting out the lights."

"Monseigneur," said Balsamo, smiling, "my devils

never forget that they have the honor of dealing with princes, and ever bear in mind the Prince de Condé's speech to one of them who would not keep still, namely, that if he did not conduct himself more decently, he would so rub him down with an oaken towel that he would never need washing again."

"I am delighted to hear that you manage your imps so well. Let us proceed to the laboratory, then."

"Will your Eminence have the goodness to follow me?"

"Proceed!"

CHAPTER XIV.

GOLD.

THE Cardinal de Rohan and Balsamo went up a narrow staircase which ran parallel with the great staircase, and, like it, led to the apartments on the first floor. There, under an arch, appeared a door which Balsamo opened, and a very gloomy corridor was disclosed to the cardinal's view, who entered it resolutely. Balsamo closed the door behind them. At the noise which this door made in closing, the cardinal looked back with a slight feeling of trepidation.

"Monseigneur," said Balsamo, "we have now arrived. We have but one more door to open and close; but let me warn you not to be alarmed at the sound it will make, for it is of iron."

The cardinal, who had started at the sound of the first door, was glad to be thus warned in time, for the grating noise of the hinges and lock might have given a shock to nerves even less susceptible than his. They descended three steps and entered the laboratory. It was a large room, with the beams and joists of the ceiling left uncovered, and containing a huge lamp with a shade, several books, and a great number of appliances for use in chemistry and physics.

After a few seconds the cardinal noticed that he found difficulty in breathing. "What is the meaning of this?" said he. "The air is stifling here, Master; the perspiration pours from my forehead? What noise is that?"

"Here is the explanation of it, Monseigneur," said Balsamo, drawing back a large curtain of asbestos cloth, and disclosing to view an immense brick furnace, in the centre of which two holes glared in the darkness like the gleaming eyes of a panther. This furnace was situated in the middle of another room, twice as large as the first, which the prince had not perceived, hidden as it was by the asbestos curtain.

"Ah, ha!" cried the prince, retreating two or three steps, "that looks a little alarming."

"It is a furnace, Monseigneur."

"Yes, but this furnace of yours has a very diabolical appearance. What are you cooking in it?"

"What your Eminence asked from me."

"What I asked from you?"

"Yes. I think your Eminence said you wished for a specimen of my handiwork. I had not intended beginning the operation till to-morrow evening, as you were not to visit me till the day following; but your Eminence having changed your intention, as soon as I saw you coming to the Rue St. Claude I kindled the furnace fires and made the combination; so that now the charge is boiling, and in ten minutes you will have your gold. Permit me to open the ventilator to start a current of air."

"What! those crucibles on the furnace —"

"Will in ten minutes give us gold as pure as that of the sequins of Venice, or the florins of Tuscany."

"I should like to see it, — that is, if it may be seen."

"Certainly, your Eminence. But you must use some necessary precautions."

"What precautions?"

"Cover your face with this mask of asbestos with glass eyes; otherwise your sight might be injured by the glowing heat."

"*Peste!* I must take care of that. I attach a good deal of value to my eyes, and would not give them for the hundred thousand crowns which you have promised me."

"I should think so, Monseigneur; your Eminence has handsome eyes."

This compliment was by no means displeasing to the cardinal, who was not a little vain of his person. "Ha!" said he, putting on his mask, "so it seems we are to see gold?"

"I trust so, Monseigneur."

"Gold to the value of one hundred thousand crowns?"

"Yes, Monseigneur, perhaps even a little more; for I made a very abundant mixture."

"You are indeed a most generous sorcerer," said the prince, with a joyous palpitation of the heart.

"Less generous than your Eminence, who so kindly compliments me. In the mean time, Monseigneur, may I beg you to keep back a little while I take off the lid of the crucible?" And Balsamo, having put on a short shirt of asbestos, seized with a vigorous arm a pair of iron pincers, and raised the cover, now red hot, which revealed to view four crucibles of the same shape, some containing a mixture of a vermilion color, others a substance already whitening, though still somewhat purple and transparent.

"And that is gold!" said the prelate in a half-whisper, as if he feared to disturb the mysterious operation.

"Yes, Monseigneur. These four crucibles contain the substance in different stages, some of them having been subject to the process twelve, others only eleven hours. The mixture — and this is a secret which I reveal only to a friend of the hermetic science — is thrown into the matter at the moment of ebullition. But, as your Eminence may see, the first crucible is now at a white heat; it has

reached the proper stage, and it is time to pour it out. Be good enough to keep back, Monseigneur."

The prince obeyed with the promptitude of a soldier at the command of his officer, and Balsamo, laying aside the pincers already heated by contact with the crucibles, rolled forward to the furnace a sort of movable anvil in which were hollowed eight cylindrical moulds of equal capacity.

"What is this, my dear sorcerer?" asked the prince.

"This, Monseigneur, contains the equal and uniform moulds in which your ingots are to be cast."

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed the cardinal, and he redoubled his attention.

Balsamo spread over the floor a thick layer of white tow as a protection against accidents; then, placing himself between the furnace and the anvil, he opened a huge book, and, wand in hand, repeated a solemn incantation. This ended, he seized an enormous pair of tongs intended for grasping the weighty crucibles.

"The gold will be excellent, Monseigneur," said he, — "of the finest quality."

"What! Are you going to lift off that flaming pot?"

"Which weighs fifty pounds? Yes, Monseigneur; few founders, I may say it without boasting, possess my muscles or my dexterity. Fear nothing, therefore."

"But if the crucible were to break?"

"Yes, that happened with me once, Monseigneur, — in the year 1399. I was making an experiment with Nicolas Flamel, in his house in the Rue des Ecrivains, near the church of St. Jacques-la-Boucherie. Poor Flamel was near losing his life, and I lost eighteen pounds of a substance more precious than gold."

"What the devil is that you are saying, Master?"

"The truth."

"Do you mean to say that you pursued the great work in 1399 with Nicolas Flamel?"

"Precisely so, Monseigneur. We found out the secret together, about fifty or sixty years before, when experimenting with Pierre le Bon in the town of Pola. He did not shut up the crucible quickly enough, and I lost the use of my right eye for nearly twelve years in consequence of the evaporation."

"Pierre le Bon?"

"He who composed the famous work, 'Margarita Pretiosa,' — a work with which, probably, you are acquainted."

"Yes, and which bears the date of 1330."

"Precisely so, Monseigneur."

"And you knew Pierre le Bon and Flamel?"

"I was the pupil of the one and the teacher of the other."

And while the terrified prelate asked himself whether the personage at his side was not the devil in person, instead of one of his satellites, Balsamo plunged his long tongs into the furnace. His grasp was quick and sure. He seized the crucible about four inches from the top, satisfied himself, by raising it up a little, that his hold was firm; then, by a vigorous effort which strained every muscle in his frame, he heaved up the terrible pot from the glowing furnace. The handle of the tongs turned glowing red immediately; then, rippling over the fused matter within, were seen white furrows, like lightning streaking a black sulphureous cloud; then the edges of the crucible turned a brownish red, while the conical base appeared still rose-colored and silvery in the shadow of the furnace; then the metal, on the surface of which had formed a violet-colored scum, crusted here and there with gold, hissed over the mouth of the crucible, and fell

flashing into the dark mould, around the top of which the golden wave, angry and foaming, seemed by its shudderings to insult the vile metal with which it was forced into contact.

"Now for the second," said Balsamo, seizing another crucible; and another mould was filled by the same exercise of strength and dexterity as the first. The perspiration poured from the operator's forehead; and the cardinal, standing back in the shade, crossed himself.

In fact, the scene was one of wild and majestic horror. Balsamo, his features lighted by the reddish glare of the glowing metal, resembled one of the damned of Michael Angelo or Dante, writhing in the depths of their flaming caldrons; while over all brooded the feeling of the mysterious and unknown.

Balsamo took no breathing time between the two operations; time pressed. "There will be a slight loss," said he, after having filled the second mould. "I have allowed the mixture to boil the hundredth part of a minute too long."

"The hundredth part of a minute!" exclaimed the cardinal, no longer seeking to conceal his stupefaction.

"It is enormous in alchemy," replied Balsamo, quietly; "but in the mean time, your Eminence, here are two crucibles emptied, and two moulds filled with one hundred pounds' weight of pure gold;" and seizing the first mould with his powerful tongs, he plunged it into water, which hissed and bubbled around it for some time. Then he opened it, and took out a lump of solid gold in the form of a sugar-loaf flattened at each end.

"We shall have to wait some time for the other crucibles," said Balsamo. "Will your Eminence in the mean time be seated, or would you prefer to breathe for a few moments a cooler atmosphere than this?"

"And that is really gold?" asked the cardinal, without replying to the operator's question.

Balsamo smiled. The cardinal was his. "Do you doubt it, Monseigneur?"

"Why you know, science is so often mistaken "

"Prince, your words do not express your whole meaning," said Balsamo. "You think that I am deceiving you — intentionally. Monseigneur, I should sink very low in my own opinion could I act such a part; for my ambition in that case would not extend beyond the walls of my cabinet, which you would leave filled with wonder, only to be undeceived on taking your ingot to the nearest goldsmith. Come, come, Monseigneur, do not think so meanly of me; and be assured that if I wished to deceive you, I should do it more adroitly, and with a higher aim. However, your Eminence knows how to test gold?"

"Certainly, — by the touchstone."

"You have doubtless had occasion, Monseigneur, to make the experiment yourself, were it only on Spanish doubloons, which are much esteemed in play, because they are of the purest gold, but which, for that very reason, are frequently counterfeited."

"In fact, I have done so before now."

"Well, Monseigneur, here are the stone and the acid."

"No, I am satisfied."

"Monseigneur, do me the favor to assure yourself that these ingots are not only gold, but gold without alloy."

The cardinal appeared unwilling to give this evidence of his incredulity, and yet it was evident that he was not convinced. Balsamo himself tested the ingots, and showed the result of the experiment to his guest.

"Twenty-eight carats," said he; "and now I may pour out the two others."

Ten minutes afterward the two hundred pounds of gold,

in four ingots, were lying side by side on the tow, heated by their contact.

"Your Eminence came here in a carriage, did you not? At least, you were in a carriage when I saw you."

"Yes."

"If your Eminence will order it to the door, my servant will put the ingots into it."

"One hundred thousand crowns!" murmured the cardinal, as he took off his mask to feast his eyes on the gold lying at his feet.

"And as for this gold, your Eminence can tell whence it comes, having seen it made?"

"Oh, yes; I shall testify —"

"Oh, no!" said Balsamo, hastily; "alchemists are not much in favor in France! Testify nothing, Monseigneur. If instead of making gold I made theories, then indeed I should have no objection."

"Then what can I do for you?" said the prince, lifting an ingot of fifty pounds with difficulty in his delicate hands.

Balsamo looked at him steadily, and began to laugh irreverently.

"What is there so very ludicrous in what I have said?" asked the cardinal.

"Your Eminence offers me your services, I think!"

"Certainly."

"Would it not be much more to the purpose were I to offer mine to you?"

The cardinal's brow darkened. "You have obliged me, Monsieur," said he, "and I am ready to acknowledge it; but if my gratitude is to be a heavier burden than I imagined, I shall not accept the obligation. There are still, thank God, usurers enough in Paris from whom I can procure, half on some pledge and half on my bond, one hundred thousand crowns by day after to-morrow. My

episcopal ring alone is worth forty thousand francs." And the prelate held out his hand, as white as a woman's, on which shone a diamond as large as a nut.

"Prince," said Balsamo, bowing, "it is impossible that you can for a moment imagine that I meant to offend you." Then, as if speaking to himself, he proceeded: "It is singular that the truth should always produce this effect on those who bear the title of prince."

"What is the meaning of that?"

"Your Eminence proposes to serve me; now I ask you, Monseigneur, of what nature are those services which your Eminence proposes to render me?"

"Why, in the first place, my credit at court."

"Monseigneur, you know too well that that credit is much shaken. In fact, I should almost prefer that of the Duc de Choiseul; and yet he has not perhaps a fortnight to hold his place. Take my word for it, Prince, as far as credit goes, mine is the best. There is good and sterling gold. Every time that your Eminence is in want of any, let me know the night before, and you shall have as much as you like. And with gold, Monseigneur, cannot all things be procured?"

"Not all," murmured the cardinal, sinking into the grade of a protégé, and no longer even making an effort to regain that of patron.

"Ah! true. I forgot that your Eminence desires something more than gold, — something more precious than all the riches of the earth. But in this, science cannot assist you; it is the province of magic. Monseigneur, say the word, and the alchemist is ready to become the magician."

"Thank you, Monsieur, but I want for nothing more; I desire nothing farther," said the cardinal, in a desponding voice.

Balsamo approached him.

"Monseigneur," said he, "a prince, young, handsome, ardent, rich, and bearing the name of Rohan, ought not to make such a reply to a magician."

"Why not, Monsieur?"

"Because the magician reads his heart, and knows the contrary."

"I wish for nothing; I desire nothing," repeated the cardinal, almost terrified.

"I should have thought, on the contrary, that your Eminence's wishes were such as you dared not avow, even to yourself, since they are those of a — king!"

"Monsieur," said the cardinal, with a start, "you allude, I presume, to a subject which you introduced before, when I saw you at St. Denis?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Monsieur, you were mistaken then, and you are equally mistaken now."

"Do you forget, Monseigneur, that I can read the thoughts at this moment in your heart as clearly as, a short time ago, I saw your carriage enter the city, drive along the boulevard, and stop beneath the trees about fifty paces from my house?"

"Then explain yourself; tell me what you mean."

"Monseigneur, the princes of your family have always cherished a high and daring passion; you have not degenerated from your race in that respect."

"I do not know what you mean, Count," stammered the prince.

"On the contrary, you understand me perfectly. I could have touched many chords which vibrate in your heart, but why do so uselessly? I have touched the one which it was necessary to touch, and it vibrates deeply, I am certain."

The cardinal raised his head, and with a last effort at

defiance met the clear and penetrating glance of Balsamo. Balsamo smiled with such an expression of superiority that the cardinal cast down his eyes.

"Oh! you are right, Monseigneur, you are right; do not look at me, for then I read too plainly what passes in your heart, — that heart which, like a mirror, gives back the form of the objects reflected in it."

"Silence, Comte de Fenix, silence!" said the cardinal, completely subdued.

"Yes, you are right; it is better to be silent, for the moment has not yet come to let such a passion be seen."

"Not yet, did you say?"

"Not yet."

"That love, then, has a future?"

"Why not?"

"And can you tell me, then, if this love be not the love of a madman, as it often seems to myself, and as it ever will seem, until I have a proof to the contrary?"

"You ask much, Monseigneur. I can tell you nothing without being placed in contact with the person who inspires your love, — or at least with something belonging to her person."

"What would be necessary?"

"A ringlet, however small, of her beautiful golden hair, for example."

"Yes, you are a man profoundly skilled in the human heart; you read it as I should read an open book."

"Alas! that is just what your great-grand-uncle, the Chevalier Louis de Rohan, said to me when I bade him farewell on the platform of the Bastille, at the foot of the scaffold which he ascended so courageously."

"He said that to you, — that you were profoundly skilled in the human heart?"

"Yes, and that I could read it; for I had forewarned

him that the Chevalier de Preault would betray him. He would not believe me, and the Chevalier de Preault did betray him."

"But what a singular analogy you draw between my ancestor and myself!" said the cardinal, turning pale in spite of himself.

"I did so merely to remind you of the necessity of being prudent, Monseigneur, in obtaining a tress of hair whose curling locks are surmounted by a crown."

"No matter how obtained, you shall have the tress, Monsieur."

"It is well. In the mean time, here is your gold, Monseigneur; I hope you no longer doubt that it is really gold?"

"Give me a pen and paper."

"What for, Monseigneur?"

"To give you a receipt for the hundred thousand crowns which you are so good as to lend me."

"A receipt to me, Monseigneur? For what purpose?"

"I borrow often, my dear Count; but I tell you beforehand, I never take gifts."

"As you please, Prince."

The cardinal took a pen from the table, and wrote a receipt for the money in an enormous, illegible hand, and in a style of orthography which would shock a poor curate's housekeeper of the present day.

"Is that right?" he asked, as he handed it to Balsamo.

"Perfectly right," replied the count, putting it in his pocket without even looking at it.

"You have not read it, Monsieur."

"I have the word of your Eminence; and the word of a Rohan is better than any pledge."

"Comte de Fenix," said the cardinal, with a slight inclination very significant from a man of his rank, "you

are an honest man; and if I cannot make you my debtor, I am at least fortunate in being yours."

Balsamo bowed in his turn, and rang a bell, in answer to which Fritz appeared. The count spoke a few words to him in German. He stooped, and like a child carrying a handful of oranges, — a little embarrassed, to be sure, but by no means oppressed with the burden, — he carried off the eight ingots wrapped up in tow.

"Why, that fellow is a Hercules!" said the cardinal.

"He is tolerably strong indeed, Monseigneur; but since he has been in my service I give him every day three drops of an elixir compounded by my learned friend, the doctor Althotas. So, you see, the rogue profits by it; in a year he will be able to carry a hundredweight with one hand."

"Wonderful, incomprehensible!" murmured the cardinal; "I shall never be able to resist speaking of all this."

"Oh, speak of it by all means!" replied Balsamo, laughing; "but remember that by so doing you bind yourself to come in person and extinguish the flame of the fagots, if by chance the parliament should take it into their heads to burn me alive in the Place de Grève." And having escorted his illustrious visitor to the outer gate, Balsamo took leave of him with a respectful bow.

"But I do not see your servant," said the cardinal.

"He has gone to carry the gold to your carriage, Monseigneur."

"He knows, then, where it is?"

"Under the fourth tree to the right, on the boulevard; that was what I said to him in German, Monseigneur."

The cardinal raised his hands in astonishment, and disappeared in the darkness.

Balsamo waited for Fritz's return, and then entered the house, closing all the doors carefully behind him.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

Balsamo, being now alone, proceeded to listen at Lorenza's door. She was still sunk in a soft and gentle sleep. He half opened a wicket in the door, and contemplated her for some time in a sweet and tender revery. Then, shutting the wicket, he crossed the apartment which we have described, and which separated Lorenza's apartment from the laboratory, and hastened to extinguish the fire in the furnace by throwing open an immense conduit, which allowed the heat to escape into the chimney, and at the same time gave passage to the water of a reservoir on the roof.

Then, carefully placing the cardinal's receipt in a black morocco case, — "The word of a Rohan is good," he murmured, "but for myself alone; and it is well that the brethren yonder should know how I employ their gold."

As these words died away on his lips, three short, quick taps on the ceiling made him raise his head. "Oh, oh!" said he, "there is Althotas calling me."

Then, while he continued ventilating the laboratory, and arranging everything in order, the taps were repeated louder than before. "So, he is getting impatient; it is a good sign."

Balsamo took a long iron rod and knocked on the ceiling in answer. He then proceeded to move an iron ring fixed in the wall; and by means of a spring which was disclosed to view, a trap-door was detached from the

ceiling and descended to the floor of the laboratory. Balsamo placed himself in the centre of this machine, which by means of another spring gently rose with its burden, with as much ease as in the opera the gods and goddesses are carried up to Elysium, and the pupil found himself in the presence of the master.

The new dwelling of the old alchemist was about eight or nine feet high and sixteen in diameter; it was lighted from the top like a well, and hermetically closed on the four sides. This apartment, as the reader may observe, was a palace when compared with his habitation in the vehicle.

The old man was seated in his armchair on wheels, within the curvature of a marble table formed like a horse-shoe, and heaped up with a whole world, or rather a whole chaos, of plants, phials, tools, books, instruments, and papers covered with cabalistic characters. He was so absorbed that he did not raise his head when Balsamo appeared. The light of an astral lamp, suspended from the culminating point of the window in the roof, fell on his bald, shining head. He was turning to and fro in his fingers a small white bottle, the transparency of which he was examining, as a good housekeeper tries the eggs which she buys at market. Balsamo gazed on him at first in silence; then after a moment's pause, "Well," said he, "have you anything new?"

"Yes, yes; come hither, Acharat. You see me enchanted, — transported with joy! I have found, I have found — "

"What?"

"*Pardieu!* what I sought."

"Gold?"

"Gold indeed! I am surprised at you!"

"The diamond?"

"Gold, diamonds? The man raves! A fine discovery, forsooth, — a thing to rejoice over, on my soul, if I had found that!"

"Then what you have found is your elixir?"

"Yes, my son, it is my elixir; that is to say, life, — what do I say? The eternity of life!"

"Oh!" said Balsamo, in a dejected voice (for he looked on this pursuit as mere insanity), "so it is that dream which occupies you still?"

But Althotas, without listening, continued to gaze delightedly at his phial. "At last," said he, "the combination is complete: the elixir of Aristæus, twenty grams; balm of Mercury, fifteen grams; precipitate of gold, fifteen grams; essence of the cedar of Lebanon, twenty-five grams."

"But it seems to me that, with the exception of the elixir of Aristæus, this is precisely your last combination, Master?"

"Yes; but I had not then discovered one more ingredient which binds all the others, and without which all the rest are as nothing."

"And have you discovered it now?"

"Yes."

"Can you procure it?"

"I should think so!"

"What is it?"

"We must add to the several ingredients already combined in this phial, the three last drops of the arterial blood of an infant."

"Well, but where will you procure this infant?" said Balsamo, horror-struck.

"I trust to you for that."

"To me? You are mad, Master!"

"Mad! And why?" asked the old man, unmoved at

this charge, and licking with delight a drop of the fluid which had escaped from the cork of the phial and was trickling down the side.

"Why, for that purpose you must kill the child."

"Of course we must kill him; and the handsomer he is, the better."

"Impossible," said Balsamo, shrugging his shoulders; "in this country children are not taken in that way to be killed."

"Bah!" cried the old man, with hideous naïveté, "and what do they do with them, then?"

"They rear them, of course."

"Oh! then the world is changed. It is only three years ago since we were offered as many infants as we chose for four charges of powder and half a bottle of eau-de-vie."

"Was that in Congo, Master?"

"Well, yes, that was in Congo! It is quite the same to me whether the child be black or white. Those who were offered to us, I remember, were sweet, playful, curly-headed little things."

"Ah! yes," said Balsamo; "but unfortunately, my dear Master, we are not in Congo."

"Oh! we are not in Congo?" said Althotas. "And where are we, then?"

"In Paris."

"In Paris? Well, if we were to embark from Marseilles, we could be in Congo in six weeks."

"Yes, no doubt; but I am obliged to remain in France."

"You are obliged to remain in France? And why so?"

"Because I have business here."

"You have business in France?"

"Yes; important business."

The old man burst into a prolonged and ghastly laugh. "Business!" said he, "business in France! True, I forgot; you have your clubs to organize!"

"Yes, Master."

"Conspiracies to set on foot?"

"Yes, Master."

"And you call that business?" and the aged man again began to laugh, with an air of mockery and sarcasm. Balsamo remained silent, collecting his forces for the storm which was brewing, and which he saw was approaching.

"Well, and how is this business of yours getting on?" said the old man, turning with difficulty in his chair, and fixing his large gray eyes on his pupil.

Balsamo felt his glance pierce him like a ray of light. "How far have I advanced?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I have thrown the first stone, and the waters are troubled."

"Troubled? And what slime have you stirred up? — eh?"

"The best, — the slime of philosophy."

"Oh! so you are setting to work with your Utopias, your baseless visions, your fogs and mists! Fools! You discuss the existence or non-existence of God, instead of trying, like me, to make gods of yourselves. And who are these famous philosophers with whom you are connected? Let me hear."

"I have already gained over the greatest poet and the greatest atheist of the age. He is soon expected in France, whence he has been in a manner exiled, and he is to be made a freemason at the lodge which I have established in the old monastery of the Jesuits, in the Rue Pot-de-Fer."

"What is his name?"

"Voltaire."

"I never heard of him. Well, who else is with you?"

"I am very soon to have a conference with the man who has done more to overturn established ideas than any other in this age, — the man who wrote 'Le Contrat Social.'"

"What is his name?"

"Rousseau."

"I never heard of him."

"Very probably, since you read only Alphonso the Tenth, Raymond Sully, Peter of Toledo, and Albertus Magnus."

"They are the only men who really lived, because all their lives they were occupied by that great question, to be, or not to be."

"There are two ways of living, Master."

"I know only one, for my part, — it is that of existence. But let us return to your philosophers. You called them, I think —"

"Voltaire and Rousseau."

"Good. I shall remember those names. And you propose by means of these men —"

"To make myself master of the present, and to undermine the future."

"The people in this country, then, are very stupid, since they can be led by ideas!"

"On the contrary, it is because they have too much mind that ideas have more power over them than facts. Besides, I have an auxiliary more powerful than all the philosophers on earth."

"What is that?"

"Love of change. It is now some sixteen hundred

years since monarchy was established in France, and the people are tired of it."

"So that you think they will overthrow it?"

"I am sure of it."

"And you would help them to begin the work?"

"Aye, with all my strength!"

"Fool!"

"How so?"

"What will you gain by the overthrow of this monarchy?"

"I? Nothing. But the people will gain happiness."

"Come, as I am satisfied with what I have done to-day, I am willing to lose my time in trying to follow you. Explain first how you are to attain to this happiness, and afterwards what happiness is."

"How I am to attain to it?"

"Yes, to this universal happiness of yours, or to the overthrow of the monarchy, which in your eyes seems to be the same thing."

"Well, there exists at this moment a ministry which is the last rampart of the monarchy, — intelligent, industrious, courageous, and which might perhaps maintain this tottering and worn-out monarchy for twenty years longer; but they will assist me to overturn it."

"Who? Your philosophers?"

"No. The philosophers support it, on the contrary."

"What! Your philosophers support a ministry which supports a monarchy to which they themselves are hostile? What fools these philosophers of yours are!"

"It is because the prime minister is himself a philosopher."

"So! I understand; they mean to govern in the person of this minister. They are not fools, then, they are egotists."

"I do not wish to discuss what they are," exclaimed

Balsamo, who began to get impatient. "All I know is that, this ministry overturned, every one will cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war on their successors. First, there will be against them the philosophers, then the parliament. The philosophers will blame, the parliament will blame; the ministry will persecute the philosophers, and will dissolve the parliament. Then mind and matter will combine, and organize a silent league, — an opposition obstinate, tenacious, incessant, which will attack, undermine, destroy. Instead of parliaments, judges will be appointed; these judges, nominated by the king, will move heaven and earth in defence of royalty. They will be accused, and with truth, of venality, of connivance, of injustice. The nation will arise, and then the monarchy will have against it the philosophers, — that is, mind; the parliaments, — that is, the middle class; the people, — that is, the lever which Archimedes sought, and with which he could have raised the world."

"Well, when you have raised the world, you can only let it fall back again into its old place."

"Yes; but in falling back it will crush the monarchy to atoms."

"And when the monarchy is crushed to atoms — to adopt your false metaphors and inflated language — what will arise on its ruins?"

"Liberty!"

"Ah! the French will then be free?"

"They cannot fail to be so."

"All free?"

"All.

"There will then be in France thirty millions of free men?"

"Yes."

"And among those thirty millions of free men, has it

never occurred to you that there might be one, with a little more brains than the rest, who some fine morning will seize on the liberty of the twenty-nine millions nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine, in order that he might have a little more liberty himself? You remember that dog we had at Medina, who ate up what was intended for all the other dogs?"

"Yes; but you may remember also, that one day the others combined together and strangled him."

"Because they were dogs; in such a case men would have done nothing."

"Then you place man's intelligence below that of a dog, Master?"

"Certainly. All the examples sustain me."

"What examples?"

"I think you may recall among the ancients a certain Cæsar Augustus, and among the moderns a certain Oliver Cromwell, who bit rather deeply into the Roman cake and the English cake, without any great resistance having been offered by those from whom they snatched it."

"Well, and supposing that the man of whom you speak should arise, — he will be mortal, he will die; and before dying he will have done good even to those whom he may have oppressed; for he will have changed the nature of the aristocracy. Being obliged to lean for support on something, he will choose what is strongest, — the people. Instead of an equality which degrades, he will establish an equality which elevates. For equality has no fixed range; it adapts itself to the level of him who makes it. Now, in elevating the people in the social scale, he will have introduced a principle unknown until his time. A revolution will make the French free; a protectorate under another Cæsar Augustus or another Oliver Cromwell will make them equal."

Althotas wheeled round in his armchair. "Oh, the stupidity of man!" he cried. "Busy yourself for twenty years in educating a child; teach him all that you know, — that at thirty he may come and tell you, 'Men will be equal!'"

"Certainly, men will be equal, — equal before the law."

"And before death, fool? — before death, that law of laws, will they be equal, when one shall die at three days old, and another at a hundred years? Equal? Men equal so long as they have not conquered death? Oh, the fool, the double fool!" And Althotas threw himself back in his chair to laugh at his ease, while Balsamo, grave and sad, sat with his head leaning on his hand.

The old man at length turned a look of pity on him. "Am I," said he, "the equal of the workman who munches his coarse bread; of the sucking babe; of the drivelling old man sunk in second childhood? Wretched sophist that you are! Men can be equal only when they are immortal; for when immortal they will be gods, and gods alone are on an equality with one another."

"Immortal!" murmured Balsamo. "Immortal! — 't is a chimera."

"A chimera? Yes, a chimera like steam; a chimera like the electric fluid; a chimera like everything which is sought, — not yet discovered, but to be discovered. Rake up the dust of bygone worlds; lay bare one after another the superincumbent strata, each of which represents a social state now passed away; and in these human strata, in this detritus of kingdoms, in these slimy deposits of time, into which modern investigation has pierced like an iron ploughshare, — what do you read? Is it not that men have, in all ages, sought what I seek, under the various names of the highest good, human hap-

piness, perfection? When did they not seek it? They sought it in the days of Homer, when men lived two hundred years; they sought it in the days of the patriarchs, when they lived eight centuries. They did not find that highest good, that well-being, that perfection; for if they had, this decrepit world would now be fresh, youthful, roseate as the morning dawn. Instead of that we have suffering, death, decay. Is suffering good? Is death lovely? Is decay fair to look upon?"

Here the old man was interrupted by his short, dry cough, and Balsamo had a moment to reply. "You acknowledge," said he, "that no one has yet discovered that elixir of life which you seek. I tell you that no one will ever discover it. Submit to God."

"Fool! No one has discovered it, therefore no one will discover it! By that mode of reasoning we should never have made any discoveries. But do you think that all discoveries are new things, inventions? No, they are forgotten things found again. Why should things, once discovered, be forgotten? Because life is too short for the discoverer to draw from his discovery all the deductions which belong to it. Twenty times has man been on the point of grasping the elixir of life. Do you think that the Styx was merely a dream of Homer's? Do you think that Achilles, almost immortal, because vulnerable in his heel alone, was a fable? No; Achilles was the pupil of Chiron, as you are my pupil. That word Chiron means either best or worst. Chiron was a sage whom they have depicted as a Centaur, because by his learning he had endowed man with the strength and swiftness of the horse. Well, like me, he had almost found the elixir of immortality. Perhaps, like me, he wanted only those three drops of blood which you refuse me. The want of those three drops of blood rendered Achilles vulnerable in his

heel; death found a passage, — it entered. Yes, I repeat it, Chiron, the universal man, is only another Althotas, prevented by another Acharat from completing the work which would have saved humanity by arresting the operation of the Divine curse. Well, what have you to say to that?"

"I say," replied Balsamo, visibly shaken, "that I have my task, and you have yours; let each fulfil his own at his own personal risk and danger. I will not second yours by a crime."

"By a crime?"

"Yes; and by such a crime as would raise a whole people with cries of indignation in pursuit of you, — a crime which would cause you to hang on one of those infamous gibbets from which your science has not secured the best men, any more than the worst."

Althotas struck the marble table with his dry and fleshless hands. "Come!" said he, "be not a humanitarian idiot, — the worst race of idiots which exists in the world! Let us converse a little on these laws of yours, — these brutal and absurd laws, written by animals of your species who shudder at a drop of blood shed for a wise purpose, but gloat over torrents of the vital fluid shed on scaffolds, before the ramparts of cities, or on those plains which they call fields of battle! Your laws, ignorant and selfish, sacrificing the man of the future to the man of the present, and which have taken for their motto, 'Live to-day; for to-morrow we die!' — let us speak of them, I say."

"Say what you have to say; I am listening," said Balsamo, becoming more and more gloomy.

"Have you a pencil? I wish you to make a little calculation."

"I can calculate without pen or pencil. Proceed with what you have to say."

"What was this project of yours? Oh! I remember. You are to overturn a ministry, dissolve the parliament, establish venal judges, cause a national bankruptcy, stir up rebellion, kindle a revolution, overturn the monarchy, raise up a protectorate, and hurl down the protector. The revolution is to bring freedom, the protectorship equality. Then, the French being free and equal, your task will be accomplished? Is not that it?"

"Yes; do you look on the thing as impossible?"

"I do not believe in impossibility. You see I play fairly with you."

"Well, what then?"

"In the first place, France is not England, where what you wish to do has already been done, — plagiarist that you are! France is not an isolated land, where ministers may be dismissed, parliaments dissolved, iniquitous judges established, bankruptcy brought about, revolt fomented, revolution kindled, the monarchy overturned, a protectorship established, and the protector then overthrown, without other nations interfering a little in these movements. France is incorporated in Europe as the liver in the frame of man. It has roots in all nations; its fibres extend through every people. Try to tear up the liver of this great machine, which is called the European continent, and for twenty, thirty, forty years perhaps, the whole body will quiver. But I will take the lowest number, — I will say twenty years. Is that too much, O sage philosopher?"

"No, it is not too much," said Balsamo; "it is not even enough."

"However, I am satisfied with it, — twenty years of war, of a bloody, mortal, incessant strife. Let me see, — I put down that at two hundred thousand dead each year. That is not too high a calculation, considering that there

will be fighting at the same time in Germany, Italy, Spain, and Heaven knows where else! Two hundred thousand men a year in twenty years make four millions. Allowing each man seventeen pounds of blood, which is nearly the natural quantity, that will make — seventeen multiplied by four — let me see — that will make sixty-eight millions of pounds of blood shed for the attainment of your object. I, for my part, ask but three drops! Say, now, which of us is mad? which of us is the savage? which of us the cannibal? Well, you do not answer!"

"Yes, Master, I do answer, that three drops of blood would be nothing, were you sure of success."

"And you, who would shed sixty-eight millions of pounds, are you sure of success? Speak! If you be sure, lay your hand on your heart and say, 'Master, for these four millions of dead I guarantee the happiness of the human race!'"

"Master," said Balsamo, evading a direct reply, "in the name of Heaven seek for some other means than this!"

"Ah, you dare not answer me! You dare not answer me!" exclaimed Althotas, triumphantly.

"You are deceived, Master, about the efficacy of the means; it is impossible!"

"Aye? So you give advice, so you contradict me, so you give me the lie, do you?" said Althotas, rolling his gray eyes beneath his white and shaggy eyebrows with an expression of concentrated anger.

"No, Master; but I cannot help reflecting on the difficulties in your way, — I, who am brought every day into contact with the world in opposition to men, who have to struggle against princes, and who do not live, like you, secluded in a corner, indifferent to all that takes place around you, and careless whether your actions are forbidden or authorized by the laws, — a pure abstraction,

in short, of the savant and the scholar. I, in short, who see the difficulties, warn you of them, that is all."

"You could easily set aside all those difficulties if you chose."

"Say rather if I believed that you were in the right."

"You do not believe it, then?"

"No," said Balsamo.

"You are only tempting me?" cried Althotas.

"No, I merely express my doubts."

"Well, come, do you believe in death?"

"I believe in what is. Now, death *is*."

Althotas shrugged his shoulders. "Death, then, *is*," he said; "that is one point which you will not contest?"

"No, it is incontestable."

"Death is omnipresent, invincible too, is it not?" added the old man, with a smile which made his disciple shudder.

"Oh, yes, Master, omnipresent, and, above all, invincible!"

"And when you see a corpse, the cold sweat bedews your forehead, regret pierces your heart?"

"No, the cold sweat does not bedew my forehead, because I am familiar with every form of human misery; grief does not pierce my heart, because I attach little value to life. I only say, in the presence of a corpse, 'Death, death! thou art as powerful as God! Thou reignest as a sovereign, O death, and none can prevail against thee!'"

Althotas listened to Balsamo in silence, giving no other sign of impatience than that of turning a scalpel eagerly in his fingers; but when the pupil had ended his painful and solemn invocation, the Master looked around him with a smile, and his piercing eyes, which seemed to penetrate Nature's most hidden secrets, rested on a poor black

dog which lay trembling in a corner of the room on a little heap of straw. It was the last of three animals of the same species which Althotas had demanded for his experiments, and which Balsamo had procured for him.

"Take that dog," said Althotas, "and place it on the table."

Balsamo obeyed. The creature, which seemed to have a presentiment of its fate, and which had no doubt already been in the hands of the experimenter, began to tremble, struggle, and howl, as soon as it felt the contact of the marble table.

"And so," said Althotas, "you believe in life, do you not, since you believe in death?"

"Certainly."

"There is a dog which appears to me quite alive. What do you think?"

"He is alive, assuredly, because he howls, struggles, is terrified."

"How ugly black dogs are! By the by, remember on the first opportunity to get me some white ones."

"I will endeavor to do so."

"Well, you say this one is alive? Bark, my little fellow, bark!" said the old man, with his frightful laugh; "we must convince my Lord Acharat that you are alive." And he touched the dog on a certain muscle, which made him bark, or rather howl, immediately.

"Very well; now bring forward the air-pump, and put the dog under the receiver. But I forgot to ask you in which death you have the firmest belief."

"I do not know what you mean, Master; death is death."

"Very just; that is my opinion also. Then, since death is death, make a vacuum, Acharat."

Balsamo turned a handle, and the air which was

enclosed with the dog in the receiver rushed out by means of a tube with a sharp, whistling sound. The little dog seemed at first restless, then looked around, snuffed uneasily, raised its head, breathed noisily and hurriedly, and at last sank down, — suffocated, swollen, senseless.

"Now, the dog is dead of apoplexy, is he not?" said Althotas, — "a very good kind of death, as it does not cause much suffering."

"Yes."

"Is he really dead?"

"Certainly he is."

"You do not seem quite convinced, Acharat."

"Yes, I assure you I am."

"Oh, you know my resources, do you not? You suppose that I have discovered the art of insufflation, do you not? — that other achievement, which consists in restoring life by making the vital air circulate in a body which has not been wounded, as in a bladder which has not been pierced?"

"No, I suppose nothing. I simply believe that the dog is dead."

"However, for greater security we will kill him twice. Lift up the receiver, Acharat."

Acharat raised the glass apparatus. The dog did not stir; his eyelids were closed, and his heart had ceased to beat.

"Take this scalpel, and without wounding the larynx, divide the vertebral column."

"I do so only to satisfy you."

"And also to put an end to the poor animal in case it should not be quite dead," replied Althotas, smiling with that kind of obstinate pertinacity peculiar to the aged.

Balsamo made an incision with the keen blade, which divided the vertebral column about two inches below

the brain, and opened a large, bloody wound. The animal, or rather the dead body of the animal, remained motionless.

"Ha! by my faith, he was quite dead," said Althotas. "See! not a fibre moves, not a muscle stirs, not one atom of his flesh recoils at this second attack."

"I will acknowledge all that as often as you like," said Balsamo, impatiently.

"Then you are certain that you behold an animal inert, cold, forever incapable of motion? Nothing can prevail against death, you say? No power can restore life, or even the semblance of life, to this poor creature?"

"No power, except that of God."

"Yes, but God turns not aside from his established laws. When God kills, he has a reason for doing so, since he is supreme wisdom; some benefit is to result from it. An assassin — I forget his name — said that, and it was well said. Nature has an interest in death. So you see before you a dog as dead as it is possible to be; Nature has reclaimed her rights over him."

Althotas fixed his piercing eye on Balsamo, who, wearied by the old man's rambling talk, only bowed in reply.

"Well," continued Althotas, "what would you say if this dog opened his eye and looked at you!"

"I should be very much surprised, Master," replied Balsamo, smiling.

"You would be surprised? Ha! I am delighted to hear it." On uttering these words, with his dreary, hollow laugh, the old man drew near the dog a machine composed of plates of metal separated by dampers of cloths; this apparatus was standing in an acidulated liquid; the two extremities, or poles, as they are called, projected from the trough.

"Which eye do you wish him to open, Acharat?" asked the old man.

"The right."

He placed the two poles of the machine nearly together, separated from each other by a small piece of silk, and fixed them on a muscle in the neck. Instantly the right eye of the dog opened and looked steadily at Balsamo, who recoiled with horror.

"Shall we now pass to the jaws?" said Althotas.

Balsamo made no reply; he was overpowered with astonishment.

Another muscle was touched; and the eye having closed, the jaws opened, showing the sharp white teeth, and at their roots the gums red, and quivering apparently with life.

"This is, in truth, strange!" murmured Balsamo, unable to conceal his agitation.

"You see that death is not so powerful after all," said Althotas, triumphing at the discomfiture of his pupil, "since a poor old man like me, who must soon be its prey, can turn it — the inexorable — from its path." Then, with a sharp, ringing laugh, he suddenly added: "Take care, Acharat! here is a dead dog which just now tried to bite you, and is now about to run at you. Take care!"

And in fact the dog, with its neck laid open, its mouth gaping, and eye quivering, rose suddenly on its four legs, and staggered for a moment, its head hanging down hideously. Balsamo felt his hair stand on end, and he recoiled to the wall of the apartment, uncertain whether to fly or remain.

"Come, come, I do not wish to kill you with fright in trying to instruct you," said Althotas, pushing aside the dead body and the machine. "Enough of experiments like that."

Immediately the body, ceasing to be in contact with the battery, fell down, stiff and motionless as before.

"Could you have believed that of death, Acharat? Did you think it so kindly disposed?"

"It is strange, in truth, — very strange!" replied Balsamo, drawing nearer.

"You see, my child, that we may arrive at what I seek, for the first step toward it is made. What is it to prolong life, when we have already succeeded in annulling death?"

"But we must not assume that yet," objected Balsamo; "for the life which you have just restored is only factitious."

"With time we shall discover the real life. Have you not read in the Roman poets that Cassidæus restored life to dead bodies?"

"In the poets, — yes."

"Do not forget, my friend, that the Romans called poets *vates*."

"But I have still an objection to offer."

"Let me hear it! Let me hear it!"

"If your elixir of life were made, and if you caused this dog to swallow some of it, he would live eternally?"

"Without doubt."

"But suppose he fell into the hands of an experimenter like you, who cut his throat, — what then?"

"Good! good!" cried the old man, joyfully, and rubbing his hands together; "this is what I expected from you."

"Well, if you expected it, reply to it."

"I ask nothing better."

"Will your elixir prevent a chimney from falling on a man's head, a pistol-ball from going through his heart, a horse from giving him a kick that shall destroy him?"

Althotas looked at Balsamo with the eye of a bravo who perceives that his adversary has exposed himself to his blow.

"No, no, no!" said he; "you are a real logician, my dear Acharat. No, I cannot prevent the effects of the chimney, or of the ball, or of the horse, while there are houses, firearms, and horses."

"However, you can bring the dead to life!"

"Why, yes, for a moment, — not for an indefinite period. In order to do that, I must first discover the spot where the soul is lodged, and that may be rather tedious; but I can prevent the soul from leaving the body by a wound."

"How so?"

"By causing the wound to close up."

"Even if an artery be divided?"

"Certainly."

"Ah! I should like to see that done."

"Very well, look!" and before Balsamo could prevent him, the old man opened a vein in his left arm with a lancet. There was so little blood in his body, and it circulated so slowly, that it was some time before it issued from the wound; but at last it did flow abundantly.

"Great God!" exclaimed Balsamo.

"Well, what is the matter?" said Althotas.

"You have wounded yourself seriously."

"That is because you are like Saint Thomas, and must see and touch before you will believe." He then took a little phial which he had placed near him, and poured a few drops of its contents on the wound. "Look!" said he.

At the touch of this magic fluid the blood ceased to flow, the flesh contracted, closing up the vein, and the wound became merely like the prick of a pin, — an opening too small for the blood to pass through.

This time Balsamo gazed at the old man in amazement.

"That is another of my discoveries, Acharat. What do you think of it?"

"Oh, Master, you are the most learned of men!"

"Yes, acknowledge that if I have not conquered death, I have at least dealt it a blow from which it will not readily recover. The bones of the human body are easily broken: I will render them, my son, as hard as steel. It has blood, which when it is shed carries life along with it: I will prevent the blood from leaving the body. The flesh is soft, and can be pierced without difficulty: I will make it invulnerable as that of the paladins of the Middle Ages, which blunted the edge of swords and axes. To do all that requires only an Althotas who shall live three hundred years. Well, give me what I ask, and I will live one thousand! Oh, my dear Acharat, all depends on you! Give me back my youth, give me back the vigor of my body, give me back the freshness of my ideas, and you shall see whether I fear the sword, the ball, the tottering wall, or the stupid beast which bites or kicks. In my fourth youth, Acharat, — that is, before I have lived to the age of four men, — I tell you I shall have renewed the face of the world; I shall have made for myself and for a regenerated race of men a new world, without falling chimneys, without swords, without musket-balls, without kicking horses; for men will then understand that it is better to live to help and love one another than to tear each other to pieces and to destroy each other."

"It is true, Master; or at least it is possible."

"Well, bring me the child, then."

"Give me time to reflect on the matter, and reflect on it yourself."

Althotas darted on his disciple a glance of sovereign scorn. "Go," said he, "go! I will yet convince you that I

am right. And in truth the blood of man is not so precious an ingredient that a substitute for it may not be found. Go! I will seek, — I shall find. Go! I need you not."

Balsamo struck the trap-door with his foot, and descended into the lower apartment, mute, melancholy, and wholly subdued by the genius of this man, who compelled him to believe in impossibilities by accomplishing them before his eyes.

CHAPTER XVI.

INQUIRIES.

This night, so long and so fertile in events, during which we have been borne about, as in the cloud of the mythological deities, from St. Denis to Muette, from Muette to the Rue Coq-Heron, from the Rue Coq-Heron to the Rue Plastrière, and from thence to the Rue St. Claude, had been employed by Madame Dubarry in efforts to bend the king's mind to her new political views. She insisted in particular on the danger there would be in allowing the Choiseuls to gain ground with the dauphiness.

The king replied to this, with a shrug, that the dauphiness was a child and the Duc de Choiseul was an elderly minister, and that consequently there was no danger, seeing that he could not amuse her, and she would not understand him. Then, enchanted with this *bon mot*, the king had cut short the discussion.

But if the king was enchanted, the countess was far from being so, as she thought she perceived symptoms of his Majesty's throwing off her yoke.

Louis XV. was unstable in his affections. His greatest happiness consisted in his making his mistresses jealous, providing always that their jealousy did not assume the form of obstinate quarrels or prolonged sulkiness. Madame Dubarry was jealous, — at first through vanity, and then through fear. It had cost her too much pains to attain her present elevated position, and it was too far removed from her point of departure, for her to dare, like

Madame de Pompadour, to tolerate other favorites near the king. Madame Dubarry, then, being jealous, was determined to probe to the bottom this sudden change in the king's manner.

The king replied to her in these memorable words, in which there was not one particle of truth: "I am thinking very seriously about the happiness of my daughter-in-law; I really do not know whether the dauphin will make her happy or not."

"Why not, Sire?"

"Because Louis at Compiègne, St. Denis, and Muette, seemed to me much more occupied with other women than with his wife."

"In truth, Sire, if your Majesty had not told me this yourself, I should not have believed it; for the dauphiness is lovely."

"She is rather thin."

"She is so young."

"Oh! as for that, look at Mademoiselle de Taverney; she is of the same age as the archduchess."

"Well, Sire?"

"Well, she is a faultless beauty."

A flash from the countess's eye warned the king of his mistake. "And you yourself, dear Countess," he added, quickly, "you yourself, at sixteen, were as round as one of our friend Boucher's shepherdesses, I am sure."

This little bit of adulation smoothed matters in some degree, but the blow had taken effect. Madame Dubarry therefore assumed the offensive. "Ah!" said she, bridling, "so she is very handsome, this Mademoiselle de Taverney?"

"Handsome! How should I know?" replied the king.

"What? You praise her, and yet you do not know, you say, whether she is handsome or not?"

"I know that she is not thin, that is all."

"Then you have seen her, and looked rather narrowly at her?"

"Ah! my dear Countess, you push me rather closely. You know that I am short-sighted; a mass strikes me, but devil take details! In looking at the dauphiness, I saw bones, and nothing more."

"And in looking at Mademoiselle de Taverney you saw masses, to use your own expression; for the dauphiness is an aristocratic beauty, Mademoiselle de Taverney a vulgar one."

"Oh, ho!" said the king, "by this mode of reckoning, Jeanne, you will never be an aristocratic beauty! Come, you must be jesting, I think."

"Very good; a compliment!" thought the countess to herself. "Unfortunately, this compliment serves only to cover another compliment which is not intended for me." Then aloud, "On my honor," said she, "I shall be very glad if her Royal Highness the dauphiness chooses for her ladies of honor those that are a little attractive; a court of old women is frightful."

"My dear creature, you need not tell that to me. I said the same thing to the dauphin yesterday; but our newly fledged husband seems quite indifferent about the matter."

"And suppose, for a beginning, she were to take this Mademoiselle de Taverney?"

"I think she has already chosen her," replied Louis.

"Ah! you know that, Sire?"

"At least, I fancy I heard some one say so."

"She has no fortune, I hear."

"No, but she is of an old family. The Taverneys Maison Rouge are of ancient descent, and have served the State honorably."

"Who patronizes them?"

"I have no idea. But I think they are beggars, as you say."

"In that case it cannot be the Duc de Choiseul; otherwise they would actually burst with pensions."

"Countess, Countess, I beseech you, no politics!"

"Do you call it politics to say that the Choiseuls are robbing you?"

"Certainly," said the king, rising.

An hour afterward, the king arrived at the great Trianon, delighted at having awakened the countess's jealousy, but repeating to himself, in a half-whisper, as the Duc de Richelieu might have done at thirty, "Really, jealous women are very tiresome!"

No sooner had his Majesty left Madame Dubarry than she also rose and passed into her boudoir, where Chon awaited her, impatient to hear the news.

"Well!" said she, "your star has been in the ascendant these last few days, — presented to the dauphiness the day before yesterday, invited to her table yesterday!"

"A great triumph, truly!"

"What, do you speak in that tone? Are you aware that at this moment a hundred carriages are hastening to Luciennes, that their occupants may obtain a smile from you?"

"I am sorry to hear it."

"Why so?"

"Because they are losing their time. Neither the carriages nor their owners shall have a smile from me this morning."

"Ah! this is a cloudy morning, then, Countess?"

"Yes, very cloudy! My chocolate, quick, — my chocolate!"

Chon rang the bell, and Zamore appeared.

"My chocolate!" said the countess.

Zamore retired, walking very slowly and with a majestic strut.

"The wretch intends that I should die of hunger!" cried the countess. "A hundred blows of the whip if you do not run."

"Me not run, — me governor," said Zamore, majestically.

"Ah! you governor?" exclaimed the countess, seizing a little riding-whip with a silver handle, which she used for keeping peace among the spaniels and monkeys. "Governor, indeed! Wait, Governor, and you shall see!"

At this spectacle Zamore took to flight, slamming the doors behind him and uttering loud cries.

"Really, Jeanne, you are perfectly ferocious to-day," said Chon.

"I am at liberty to be so if I please, am I not?"

"Oh, very well; but in that case you must permit me to leave you, my dear!"

"Why so?"

"I am afraid of being devoured."

Three taps were heard at the door.

"Well, who is knocking now?" said the countess, impatiently.

"Whoever he is, he will get a warm reception," muttered Chon.

"Oh! I should advise you to give me a bad reception," said Jean, throwing open the door with an air of dignity.

"Well, and what would happen if you were ill received? For, after all, the thing is possible."

"It would happen," said Jean, "that I should never come back."

"Well?"

"And that you would lose a great deal more than I should by receiving me badly."

"Impertinent fellow!"

"Ah! I am impertinent, because I do not flatter. What is the matter with her this morning, Chon, my beauty?"

"Don't speak to me about her, Jean. She is perfectly insufferable. Oh! here is the chocolate."

"Oh, well, never mind her, then! How do you do, chocolate? I am very glad to see you, my dear chocolate!" continued Jean, taking the tray from the servant, placing it on a little table in the corner, and seating himself before it. "Come, Chon, come!" said he; "those who are too proud to speak shall not have any."

"You are quite delightful, you two!" said the countess, seeing that Chon by a sign gave Jean to understand that he might breakfast alone. "You pretend to be sensitive, and yet you do not see that I am suffering."

"What is the matter, then?" said Chon, approaching her.

"No!" exclaimed the countess, pettishly. "Neither of them bestows a thought on what torments me."

"And what does torment you?" asked Jean, coolly buttering his bread.

"Do you want money?" asked Chon.

"Oh! as for money, the king will want before I shall."

"I wish you would lend me a thousand louis-d'or, then," said Jean; "I need them very much."

"A thousand fillips on your great red nose!"

"The king has positively decided on keeping that abominable Choiseul, then?" asked Chon.

"Great news that! You know very well that the Choiseuls are immovable."

"Then his Majesty the king has fallen in love with the dauphiness."

"Now you are coming nearer it. But look at that beast stuffing himself with chocolate! He would not

move his little finger to save me from destruction. Oh, those two creatures will be the death of me!"

Jean, without paying the least attention to the storm which was raging behind him, cut a second slice, buttered it carefully, and poured out another cup of chocolate.

"What! The king is really in love?" cried Chon, clasping her hands and turning pale.

Madame Dubarry nodded, as much as to say, "You have hit it."

"Oh, if it be so, we are lost!" continued Chon; "and will you suffer that, Jeanne? But to whom has he taken a fancy?"

"Ask your brother there, who is purple with chocolate, and who looks as if he were just going to burst. He will tell you, for he knows, or at least he suspects."

Jean raised his head.

"Did you speak to me?" said he.

"Yes, most obliging brother, most useful ally!" said Jeanne, "I was asking you the name of the person who has attracted the king."

The Viscount's mouth was so full that it was with great difficulty that he sputtered out, "Mademoiselle de Taverney."

"Mademoiselle de Taverney! Oh, mercy on us!" cried Chon.

"He knows it, the wretch!" shrieked the countess, throwing herself back in her chair, and clasping her hands, — "he knows it, and he eats!"

"Oh!" said Chon, visibly deserting from her brother's camp for that of her sister.

"I wonder," cried the countess, "what prevents me from tearing out his two great ugly eyes! Look at them, all swollen with sleep, the lazy idler! He has just got up, my dear — just got up!"

"You are mistaken," said Jean; "I have not been in bed at all."

"And what were you doing, then, glutton?"

"Why, faith, I have been running up and down all night and all the morning too."

"I told you so. Oh! who will render me the greatest service? Who will tell me what that girl has become, and where she is?"

"Where she is?" asked Jean.

"Yes."

"Where should she be but in Paris?"

"In Paris? But where in Paris?"

"Rue Coq-Héron."

"Who told you so?"

"The coachman who drove her; I waited for him at the stables and questioned him."

"He told you—"

"That he had just driven the Taverney family to a little hôtel in the Rue Coq-Héron, situated in a garden adjoining the Hôtel d'Armenonville."

"Oh, Jean, Jean!" cried the countess, "this reconciles me to you, my dear. But now we want the particulars,—how she lives; whom she sees; what she does; whether she receives letters. These are things we must find out."

"Well, you shall know all that."

"But how?"

"Ah! how? Try to find out for yourself. I have found out a great deal for my share."

"Oh!" said Chon, "there might be lodgings to let in the Rue Coq-Héron."

"An excellent idea!" exclaimed the countess. "You must hasten to the Rue Coq-Héron, Jean, and hire a house. We will conceal some one there who can see

every one that goes in or comes out. Quick! Order the carriage."

"It is useless; there is neither house nor lodging to be let in that street."

"How do you know?"

"I have inquired, *parbleu;* but there are apartments to let —"

"Where?"

"In the Rue Plastrière."

"And where is the Rue Plastrière?"

"It is a street where there are houses overlooking the gardens of the Rue Coq-Héron."

"Well! quick, quick!" said the countess; "let us hire an apartment in the Rue Plastrière."

"It is already hired," said Jean.

"Admirable man!" cried the countess; "kiss me, Jean."

Jean wiped his mouth, kissed Madame Dubarry on both cheeks, and then made a ceremonious bow of thanks for the honor that had been done him.

"Was it not luck?" said he.

"But I hope no one recognized you?"

"Who the devil should recognize me in a street like that?"

"And what have you engaged?"

"A little apartment in an obscure, out-of-the-way house."

"But they must have asked for whom you wanted it?"

"Certainly they did."

"And what did you say?"

"That it was for a young widow; are you a widow, Chon?"

"Of course I am!" said Chon.

"Excellent!" said the countess. "Then it is Chon

who will be installed in the apartment; she will watch, she will spy. But not a moment must be lost."

"Therefore I will set off at once," said Chon. "The carriage, the carriage!"

"The carriage!" repeated Madame Dubarry, ringing loud enough to have awakened the whole household of the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood.

Jean and the countess well knew what they had to dread from Andrée's presence. She had, even on her first appearance, attracted the king's attention; therefore she was dangerous.

"This girl," said the countess, "is not a true provincial if she has not brought some rustic lover with her from her dovecot at Taverney; let us but discover the swain, and patch up a marriage at once. Nothing would cool the king like a marriage between country lovers."

"Oh, the devil! I am not quite so sure of that," said Jean. "You know better than any one, Countess, that a young married woman is a very dainty morsel for his most Christian Majesty; while a girl with a lover would be less attractive to him. But the carriage is ready."

Chon sprang into the carriage after having embraced her sister and pressed Jean's hand.

"But why not take Jean with you?" asked the countess.

"No, no; I will go my own way," replied Jean. "Wait for me in the Rue Plastrière; I shall be your first visitor in your new domicile."

Chon drove off. Jean seated himself at his table again, and poured out a third cup of chocolate.

Chon called first at the family residence, and changed her dress, studying as much as possible to assume the costume and appearance of a tradesman's wife. Then, when she was satisfied with her labors, she threw over

her aristocratic shoulders a light black-silk mantle, ordered a sedan-chair to the door, and about half an hour afterward she and Sylvie were mounting the steep, narrow staircase leading up to the fourth story of a house in the Rue Plastrière; for in a fourth story was situated that lodging so fortunately procured by the viscount.

When she reached the landing of the second story, Chon turned, for she heard some one following her. It was the old proprietress of the house, who lived on the first-floor, and who, hearing a noise, had come out to see what caused it, and was rather puzzled at seeing two women, so young and pretty, enter her abode. She looked up with a scowling face, to meet the gaze of two smiling countenances. "Stop, ladies, stop!" she cried; "what do you want here?"

"The lodging which my brother was to engage for us, Madame," said Chon, assuming the serious air of a widow. "Have you not seen him, or can we have made a mistake in the house?"

"Oh, no!" replied the old proprietress, "you are quite right; it is on the fourth story. Poor young creature, —a widow at your age!"

"Alas, alas!" sighed Chon, raising her eyes to heaven.

"But do not grieve; you will be very pleasantly situated in the Rue Plastrière. It is a charming street; you will hear no noise, and your apartment looks into the gardens."

"That is just what I wished, Madame."

"And besides, by going into the corridor, you can see into the street when any procession is passing, or when the learned dogs are exhibited."

"Thank you; that will be a great relief to me," sighed Chon, and she continued to ascend.

The old proprietress followed her with her eyes until

she reached the fourth story. Then Chon, after shutting the door, hurried to the window which looked on the garden. Jean had made no mistake; almost immediately below the window of the apartment which he had engaged was the garden pavilion which the coachman had described to him. Soon all doubts were removed, — a young girl came forward to the window of the pavilion and seated herself before a little embroidery frame. It was Andrée.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE APARTMENT IN THE RUE PLASTRIÈRE.

CHON had not scrutinized the young girl many moments before Vicomte Jean, ascending the stairs four at a time, like a lawyer's clerk, appeared on the threshold of the pretended widow's apartment. "Well?" said he, inquiringly.

"Is it you, Jean? In truth, you frighten me."

"Well, what do you say to it?"

"Why, that I shall be admirably situated here for seeing all that happens; unluckily, I shall not be able to hear everything."

"Ah, faith! you want too much. By the by, I have another piece of news for you."

"What is it?"

"Wonderful!"

"Pooh!"

"Incomparable!"

"What a bore the man is with his exclamations!"

"The philosopher—"

"Well, what of the philosopher?"

"It is said, 'The wise man is for all events prepared.' Now, I am a wise man, but I was not prepared for this."

"I should like to know when you will finish. Perhaps this girl is in the way. In that case, Mademoiselle Sylvie, step into the next room."

"Oh! there is no occasion whatever. That charming girl is not in the way; quite the contrary. Remain,

Sylvie, remain;" and the viscount chucked the handsome waiting-maid's chin, whose brow began already to darken at the idea that something was about to be said which she was not to hear.

"Let her stay, then; but speak."

"Why, I have done nothing else since I have been here."

"And said nothing. So hold your tongue, and let me watch, — that will be more to the purpose."

"Don't be out of temper! As I was saying, then, I was passing the fountain — "

"Positively, you never said a word about it."

"Why, there you interrupt me again."

"No."

"I was passing the fountain, then, and bargaining for some old furniture for this frightful lodging, when all at once I felt a stream of water splashing my stockings."

"How very interesting all this is!"

"Only wait; you are in too great a hurry, my dear. Well, I looked, and I saw — guess what? I will give you a hundred guesses."

"Do go on."

"I saw a young gentleman obstructing the jet of the fountain with a piece of bread, and by means of this obstacle causing the water to diverge and to spirt upon me."

"I can't tell you how much your story interests me," said Chon, shrugging her shoulders.

"Only wait. I swore lustily on feeling myself splashed; the bread-soaker turned round, and I saw — "

"You saw?"

"My philosopher, — or rather, our philosopher."

"Who, then, — Gilbert?"

"Himself, — bareheaded, his waistcoat open, stockings

dangling about his heels, shoes unbuckled, — in complete undress, in short."

"Gilbert! And what did he say?"

"I recognized him at once, and he recognized me. I advanced; he retreated. I stretched out my arm; he stretched his legs, and off he scampered like a greyhound among the carriages and the water-porters."

"You lost sight of him, then?"

"*Parbleu!* I should say so. You surely don't suppose that I would start off and run too?"

"True; it was impossible, I admit. And so we have lost him."

"Ah, what a pity!" ejaculated Mademoiselle Sylvie.

"Oh, most certainly!" said Jean. "I owe him a sound thrashing, and if I had once laid hands upon him he should have lost nothing for waiting, I promise you; but he guessed my kind intentions toward him, and made good use of his legs. No matter, he is in Paris, — that is the essential point; and in Paris, if you are not on very bad terms with the lieutenant of police, you may find whatever you seek."

"We must find him."

"And when we have got him we will keep him fasting."

"He must be shut up," said Mademoiselle Sylvie; "only this time a safer place must be chosen for the purpose."

"And Sylvie will carry his bread and water to that safe place, will you not, Sylvie?" said the viscount.

"It is no subject for jesting, brother," said Chon. "That lad saw the affair of the post-horses; and if he had motives for bearing us a grudge, we might have reason to fear him."

"And therefore," replied Jean, "I made up my mind,

while ascending your stairs, to call on Monsieur de Sartines and inform him of my discovery. Monsieur de Sartines will reply that a man bare-headed, his stockings about his heels, his shoes unbuckled, soaking his bread at a fountain, must live near the spot where he has been seen in such a plight; and he will then engage to find him for us."

"What can he do here without money?"

"Do errands."

"He? A philosopher of that wild breed? Oh, no!"

"He has perhaps discovered a relative," said Sylvie, — "some old devotee, who gives him the crusts that are too stale for her lapdog."

"Enough, enough, Sylvie! Put the house-linen into that old chest, and come you, brother, to our observatory."

Accordingly, the pair approached the window with the greatest caution. Andrée had abandoned her embroidery, but still sat in the armchair, with her limbs carelessly thrust out; stretching out her hand to a book lying on another chair within her reach, she opened it, and was soon absorbed in what the spectators supposed must be a most interesting subject, for she remained motionless from the moment that she began to read.

"Oh, the studious creature!" said Mademoiselle Chon; "what can she be reading there?"

"First indispensable article of furniture," replied the viscount, taking from his pocket an opera-glass, which he drew out and pointed at Andrée, resting it upon the angle of the window to steady it. Chon watched his movements with impatience. "Well, let us see; is the creature really handsome?" she asked.

"Admirable! She is an exquisite girl! What arms, what hands, what eyes! Lips too tempting for Saint Anthony! Feet, oh, divine feet! and the ankle, — what an ankle under that silk stocking!"

"Oh! I should advise you to fall in love with her, — that would complete the affair," said Chon, peevishly.

"Well, after all, that would be no bad idea either, especially if she would grant me a little love in return; that would somewhat cheer our poor countess."

"Come, hand me that glass, and a truce to your gabble, if that is possible! Yes, in truth the girl is handsome, and it is impossible that she should not have a lover. She is not reading — look! the book is slipping out of her hand. There! it drops. Stay — I told you, Jean, she was not reading; she is lost in thought."

"Or sleep."

"With her eyes open? Lovely eyes, upon my word!"

"At any rate," said Jean, "if she has a lover we shall have a good view of him here."

"Yes, if he comes in the day-time; but if he should come at night?"

"The deuce! I did not think of that, and yet it is the first thing that I ought to have thought of, — which proves how very simple I am."

"Yes; simple as a lawyer."

"However, now that I am forewarned, I will devise something."

"What an excellent glass this is!" said Chon. "I can almost read the characters in the book."

Chon had leaned forward out of the window, urged by curiosity; but she drew back her head more quickly than she had advanced it.

"Well, what is the matter?" asked the viscount.

Chon grasped his arm. "Look cautiously, brother," said she; "look! Who is that person leaning out of yonder garret-window on the left? Take care not to be seen!"

"Oh, ho!" cried Dubarry, in a low tone, "it is my crust-soaker, God forgive me!"

"He is going to throw himself out!"

"No; he has fast hold of the parapet."

"But what is he looking at with those piercing eyes, with that wild eagerness?"

"He is watching somebody." The viscount struck his forehead. "I have it!" he exclaimed.

"What?"

"*Pardieu!* he is watching the girl!"

"Mademoiselle de Taverney?"

"Yes, yes; that's the swain of the dovecot. She comes to Paris, — he hastens hither too; she takes lodgings in the Rue Coq-Héron, — he sneaks away from us to go and live in the Rue Plastrière. He is looking at her, and she is musing."

"Upon my word, it is true," said Chon. "Observe that look, how intently fixed, — that lurid fire of his eyes; he is distractedly in love."

"Sister," said Jean, "let us not give ourselves any further trouble to watch the lady; he will do our business."

"Yes, — to his own advantage."

"No; to ours. Now let me go and see that dear Sartines. *Pardieu!* we have a chance. But take care, Chon, not to let the philosopher see you; you know how quickly he decamps!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

PLAN OF CAMPAIGN.

Monsieur de Sartines had returned home at three in the morning, extremely fatigued, but at the same time highly pleased with the entertainment which he had provided, on the spur of the moment, for the king and Madame Dubarry. Rekindled by the arrival of the dauphiness, the popular enthusiasm had greeted his Majesty with shouts of *Vive le Roi!* greatly diminished in volume, however, since that famous illness at Metz, during which all France had been seen in the churches or on pilgrimage, to obtain the restoration to health of the young Louis XV., — called at that time the "well-beloved." On the other hand, Madame Dubarry, who scarcely ever failed to be insulted in public by certain exclamations, had, contrary to her expectation, been graciously received by several rows of spectators judiciously placed in front; so that the pleased monarch had smiled graciously on Monsieur de Sartines, and the lieutenant of police reckoned upon a handsome acknowledgment. In consequence, he thought that he might lie till noon, which he had not done for a very long time; and on rising he had taken advantage of this holiday, which he gave himself, to try on some dozen or two of new wigs, while listening to the reports of the night. At the sixth wig, and when he was about a third through the reports, the Vicomte Jean Dubarry was announced.

"Good!" thought Monsieur de Sartines, "here come my thanks. But who knows? Women are so capricious. Show Monsieur le Vicomte into the drawing-room."

Jean, already fatigued with his forenoon's work, seated himself in an armchair; and the lieutenant of police, who speedily joined him, felt convinced that there would be nothing unpleasant in this interview. Jean appeared in fact in the highest spirits. The two gentlemen shook hands.

"Well, Viscount," said Monsieur de Sartines, "what brings you here so early?"

"In the first place," replied Jean, who was accustomed above all things to flatter the self-love of those whose good offices he needed, "in the first place I was anxious to congratulate you on the capital arrangements of your fête yesterday."

"Ah! many thanks. Is it officially?"

"Officially as regards Luciennes."

"That is all I want. Is it not there that the sun rises?"

"And retires to rest occasionally;" and Dubarry burst into a loud and rather vulgar laugh, which imparted to his appearance a semblance of good-nature which was sometimes lacking. "But," said he, "besides the compliments which I have to pay you, I have come to solicit a service also."

"Two, if they are possible."

"Not so fast; I hope to hear you say so by and by. When a thing is lost in Paris, is there any hope of finding it again?"

"If it is either worth nothing, or worth a great deal, there is."

"What I am seeking is of no great value," said Jean, shaking his head.

"And what are you in search of?"

"I am in search of a lad about eighteen years old."

Monsieur de Sartines extended his hand to a paper, took

a pencil, and wrote. "Eighteen years old; what is your lad's name?"

"Gilbert."

"What does he do?"

"As little as he can, I suppose."

"Where does he come from?"

"From Lorraine."

"With whom was he?"

"In the service of the Taverneys."

"They brought him with them?"

"No, my sister Chon picked him up on the highroad, perishing with hunger; she took him into her carriage and brought him to Luciennes, and there —"

"Well, and there?"

"I am afraid the rogue has abused the hospitality he met with."

"Has he stolen anything?"

"I do not say that. But, in short, he absconded in a strange way."

"And you would now like to get him back?"

"Yes."

"Have you any idea where he can be?"

"I met him yesterday at the fountain which forms the corner of the Rue Plastrière, and have every reason to think that he lives in the street. In fact, I believe, if necessary, that I can point out the house."

"Well, but if you know the house, nothing is easier than to have him seized there. What do you wish to do with him when you have caught him? Have him shut up at Charenton? — at Bicêtre?"

"Not precisely that."

"Oh! whatever you please, my dear fellow. Don't stand on ceremony."

"No, on the contrary, this lad pleased my sister, and

she would have liked to keep him about her, as he is intelligent. If one could get him back for her by fair means, it would be more desirable."

"We must try. You have not made any inquiry in the Rue Plastrière to learn with whom he is?"

"Oh, no! You must understand that I did not wish to attract attention, for fear of losing the advantage I had gained. He had already perceived me, and scampered off as if the devil were at his heels; and if he had known that I was aware of his retreat, he would perhaps have decamped."

"Very likely. Rue Plastrière, you say? At the end, the middle, or the beginning of the street?"

"About one third down."

"Rest satisfied; I will send a clever fellow thither for you."

"Ah! my dear lieutenant, a man, let him be ever so clever, will always talk a little."

"No, our people never talk."

"The young one is cunning as a fox."

"Ah! I comprehend. Pardon me for not having seen your drift sooner. You wish me to go myself? In fact, you are right; it will be better, for there are perhaps difficulties in the way which you are not aware of."

Jean, though persuaded that the magistrate was desirous to assume a little consequence, was not disposed to diminish in the slightest degree the importance of his part. He even added, "It is precisely on account of these difficulties which you anticipate that I am desirous to have your personal assistance."

Monsieur de Sartines rang for his valet-de-chambre. "Let the horses be harnessed," said he.

"I have a carriage," said Jean.

"Thank you, but I prefer my own. Mine is without

arms, and holds a middle place between a hackney-coach and a chariot. It is freshly painted every month, and for that reason is scarcely to be recognized. In the mean time, while they are harnessing, permit me to try on my new wigs."

"Oh! by all means," said Jean.

Monsieur de Sartines summoned his wig-maker. He was an artist, and brought his client a veritable collection of wigs; they were of all forms, of all colors, of all dimensions, and of all denominations. Monsieur de Sartines occasionally changed his dress three or four times a day for his tours of inspection, and he was most particular with regard to the regularity of his costume. While the magistrate was trying on his twenty-fourth wig, a servant came to tell him that the carriage was ready.

"You will know the house again?" said Monsieur de Sartines to Jean, when they were in the carriage.

"Certainly; I see it from here."

"Have you examined the entrance?"

"That was the first thing I looked to."

"And what is the approach to it?"

"An alley."

"Ah! an alley, — one third down the street, you say?"

"Yes, with a private door."

"With a private door? The devil! Do you know on what floor your runaway lives?"

"In the attics. But you will see it directly; I perceive the fountain."

"At a foot-pace, coachman," said Monsieur de Sartines.

The coachman moderated his speed; Monsieur de Sartines drew up the glasses.

"Stop," said Jean; "it is that dingy-looking house."

"Ah, precisely!" exclaimed Monsieur de Sartines, clasping his hands; "that is just what I feared.

"What! Are you afraid of something?"

"Alas! yes."

"And what are you afraid of?"

"You are unlucky."

"Explain yourself."

"Why, that dingy house where your runaway lives is the house of Monsieur Rousseau, of Geneva."

"Rousseau, the author?"

"Yes."

"Well, and how does that concern you?"

"How does that concern me? Ah! it is plain enough that you are not lieutenant of police, and that you have nothing to do with philosophers."

"Pooh, pooh! Gilbert at Monsieur Rousseau's? What an improbable story!"

"Have you not said that your youth is a philosopher?"

"Yes."

"Well, 'birds of a feather, you know."

"And supposing that he is at Monsieur Rousseau's?"

"Yes, let us suppose that."

"What will be the consequence?"

"That you will not have him, *pardieu!*"

"Why not?"

"Because Monsieur Rousseau is a man who is much to be dreaded."

"Why not shut him up in the Bastille, then?"

"I proposed it the other day to the king, but he dared not."

"What! dared not?"

"No, no, — he wanted to leave the responsibility of his arrest to me; and by my faith, I was not bolder than the king."

"Indeed!"

"It is as I tell you. We have to look twice, I assure

you, before we bring all those philosophers about our ears. *Peste!* Take a person away from Monsieur Rousseau's? No, my dear friend, it will not do."

"In truth, my dear magistrate, you appear to be strangely timorous. Is not the king the king? Are you not his lieutenant of police?"

"And in truth, you citizens are charming fellows. When you have said, 'Is not the king the king?' you fancy that you have said all that is necessary. Well, listen to me, my dear viscount. I would rather arrest you at Madame Dubarry's than remove your Monsieur Gilbert from Monsieur Rousseau's."

"Really! Many thanks for the preference."

"Yes, upon my honor; there would be less outcry. You have no idea what delicate skins those literary men have; they cry out at the slightest scratch, as if you were breaking them upon the wheel."

"But let us not conjure up phantoms; look you, is it quite certain that Monsieur Rousseau has harbored our fugitive? This house has four floors. Does it belong to him, and does he live alone in it?"

"Monsieur Rousseau is not worth a farthing, and, consequently, has no house in Paris; there are probably from fifteen to twenty other inmates besides himself in yonder barrack. But take this for a rule of conduct: whenever ill-luck appears at all probable, reckon upon it; whenever good-luck, never reckon upon that. There are always ninety-nine chances for the ill, and one for the good. But wait a moment. As I suspected what would happen, I have brought my notes with me."

"What notes?"

"My notes respecting Monsieur Rousseau. Do you suppose that he can take a step without our knowing whither he goes?"

"Ha, indeed! Then he is really dangerous?"

"No; but he makes us uneasy. Such a madman may at any time break an arm or a leg, and people would say it was we who had broken it."

"A good thing if he would break his neck some day."

"God forbid!"

"Permit me to tell you that this is quite incomprehensible to me."

"The people stone this honest Genevese from time to time, but they allow no one else to do so; and if the smallest pebble were flung at him by us, they would stone us in return."

"Excuse me, but in truth I know not what to make of all these doings."

"And so we must use the most minute precautions. Now, let us test the only chance which is left us, — namely, that he does not lodge with Monsieur Rousseau. Keep yourself out of sight, at the back of the carriage."

Jean obeyed, and Monsieur de Sartines ordered the coachman to walk the horses a few paces to and fro in the street. He then opened his portfolio and took some papers out of it. "Let me see," said he, "if your youth is with Monsieur Rousseau. Since what day do you suppose him to have been there?"

"Since the sixteenth."

"'17*th*. — Monsieur Rousseau was seen herborizing at six o'clock in the morning in the wood of Meudon; he was alone.'"

"He was alone!"

"Let us proceed. 'At two o'clock in the afternoon he was herborizing again, but with a young man.'"

"Ah, ha!" cried Jean.

"'With a young man,'" repeated Monsieur de Sartines: "do you understand?"

"That 's he, *mordieu !* that 's he ! "

" 'The young man is mean-looking —' "

"That 's he ! "

" 'He is eating.' "

"That 's he ! "

" 'The two individuals pick up plants, and dry them in a tin box.' "

"The devil ! the devil ! " exclaimed Dubarry.

"That is not all ; listen further. 'In the evening he took the young man home ; at midnight the young man had not left the house.' "

"Well ? "

" '18*th*. — The young man has not left the house, and appears to be installed at Monsieur Rousseau's.' "

"I have still a gleam of hope."

"You are decidedly an optimist ! No matter, tell me your hope."

"It is that he has some relative in the house."

"Come ! we must satisfy you, or utterly destroy your hopes. Halt, coachman ! "

Monsieur de Sartines alighted. He had not taken ten steps before he met a man in gray clothes and of very equivocal aspect. This man, on perceiving the illustrious magistrate, took off his hat and replaced it, without appearing to attach further importance to his salutation, although respect and attachment had been expressed in his look. Monsieur de Sartines made a sign ; the man approached, received some whispered instructions, and disappeared in Rousseau's alley. The lieutenant of police returned to his carriage. Five minutes after, the man in gray made his appearance again, and approached the door.

"I will turn my head to the right," said Dubarry, "that I may not be seen."

Monsieur de Sartines smiled, received the communication of his agent, and dismissed him.

"Well?" inquired Dubarry.

"Well, the chance was against you, as I apprehended; it is with Rousseau that your Gilbert lodges. You must give him up, depend upon it."

"Give him up?"

"Yes. You would not, for a whim, raise all the philosophers in Paris against us, would you?"

"Oh, heavens! and what will my sister Jeanne say?"

"Is she so much attached to Gilbert?" asked Monsieur de Sartines.

"Indeed she is."

"Well, in that case you must resort to gentle means, — coax Monsieur Rousseau; and instead of suffering Gilbert to be taken from him only by force, he will give him up voluntarily."

"As well set us to tame a bear."

"It is perhaps not so difficult a task as you imagine; do not despair. He is fond of pretty faces; that of the countess is very handsome, and Mademoiselle Chon's is not unpleasing. Let me see, — the countess will make a sacrifice for her whim?"

"She will make a hundred."

"Would she consent to fall in love with Rousseau?"

"If it were absolutely necessary."

"It will perhaps be useful; but to bring the parties together, we shall need a third person. Are you acquainted with any one who knows Rousseau?"

"Monsieur de Conti."

"Won't do; he distrusts princes. We want a nobody, — a scholar, a poet."

"We never see people of that sort."

"Have I not met Monsieur de Jussieu at the countess's?"

"The botanist?"

"Yes."

"Faith! I believe so; he comes to Trianon, and the countess lets him ravage her flower-beds."

"That is your man; Jussieu is a friend of mine too."

"Then the thing is done."

"Almost."

"I shall get back my Gilbert, then?"

Monsieur de Sartines mused for a moment. "I begin to think you will," said he, "and without violence, without noise. Rousseau will deliver him up to you bound hand and foot."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"And what must be done to bring this about?"

"The merest trifle. You have, no doubt, a piece of vacant ground toward Meudon or Marly?"

"Oh! no want of that. I know ten such between Luciennes and Bougival."

"Well, get built upon it — what shall I call the thing? — a trap for philosophers."

"Excuse me, what do you say?"

"I said, a trap for philosophers."

"*Pardieu!* and how is that built?"

"I will give you a plan of it, rest satisfied. And now, let us be off; we begin to be noticed. To the hotel, coachman."

CHAPTER XIX.

MONSIEUR DE LA VAUGUYON.

THE important events of history are to the novelist what gigantic mountains are to the traveller. He surveys them, he skirts their base, he salutes them as he passes; but he does not climb them. In like manner we shall survey, skirt, and salute that august ceremony, the marriage of the dauphiness at Versailles. The ceremonial of France is the only chronicle that ought to be consulted in such a case. It is not, in fact, in the splendor of the Versailles of Louis XV., in the description of the court-dresses, the liveries, the pontifical ornaments, that our particular history — that modest follower who takes a by-path leading along the highroad of the history of France — would find anything to pick up. Let us leave the ceremony to be performed amid the brilliant sunshine of a fine day in May; let us leave the illustrious spectators to retire in silence, or rehearsing and commenting on the marvels of the exhibition which they have just witnessed; and let us return to our own events and personages, which also have, historically speaking, a certain value.

The king, weary of the ceremonies, and especially of the dinner, — which had been of tedious duration, in imitation of that given on the marriage of the great dauphin, son of Louis XIV., — retired to his apartments at nine o'clock, and dismissed everybody, except Monsieur de la Vauguyon, tutor of his children.

This duke, a great friend of the Jesuits, whom he hoped to restore to favor through the influence of Madame Dubarry, saw a part of his task as tutor brought to a conclusion by the marriage of Monsieur le Duc de Berry. It was not the most difficult part, for he had yet to finish the education of Monsieur le Comte de Provence and of Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, — the former at this time fifteen years old, and the latter thirteen. Monsieur le Comte de Provence was sly and undisciplined; Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, thoughtless and ungovernable; and since the dauphin, besides possessing good qualities which made him a desirable pupil, was dauphin, — that is, the person in France next in importance to the king, — Monsieur de la Vauguyon would lose much in losing over such a spirit the influence which a woman was perhaps about to obtain.

Since the king had invited him to remain, Monsieur de la Vauguyon thought that the king comprehended this loss, and wished to recompense him. Ordinarily on the completion of an education the tutor receives a gratuity. This led Monsieur le Duc de la Vauguyon to make a great show of his emotion. During the whole dinner he had held his handkerchief to his eyes to show how much he felt the loss of his pupil. At the end of the dessert he had sobbed; but on finding himself alone, he became more calm. At the call of the king he again wiped the tears from his eyes.

"Come, my poor La Vauguyon," said the king, establishing himself comfortably on a lounge, "come, let us talk."

"I am at your Majesty's orders," replied the duke.

"Sit down there, my dear friend; you must be tired."

"I sit down, Sire?"

"Yes, without ceremony; take that seat." And Louis XV. pointed to a low seat placed in such a way that the

light fell directly upon the face of the tutor, and left that of the king in shadow.

"Well, my dear Duke," said the king, "here is an education finished."

"Yes, Sire;" and Vauguyon sighed.

"A fine education, on my word," continued Louis XV.

"Your Majesty is too good."

"And which does you great credit, Duke."

"Your Majesty overwhelms me."

"Monsieur le Dauphin is, I suppose, one of the most learned princes in Europe?"

"I think so, Sire."

"Good historian?"

"Very good."

"Perfect geographer?"

"Sire, Monsieur le Dauphin draws better maps than any engineer."

"What skill has he in horology?"

"It is prodigious, Sire."

"For six months all my clocks have been running one behind another, like the four wheels of a carriage, without coming together. Well, he alone regulates them."

"That enters into mechanics, Sire; and I must confess that I am good for nothing there."

"Yes, but mathematics, — navigation?"

"Oh, Sire, those are the sciences to the study of which I have always urged Monsieur le Dauphin."

"And he is very strong in them. The other evening I heard him talking with Monsieur de Laperouse about stream-cables, shrouds, and brigantine sails."

"All marine terms, — yes, Sire."

"He talks navigation like Jean Bart."

"He does, indeed, know a great deal about it."

"It is you to whom he owes all this."

"Your Majesty rewards me beyond my deserts in attributing to me in the slightest degree the advantages which Monsieur le Dauphin has derived from study."

"The truth is, Duke, I think that Monsieur le Dauphin will be really a good king, a good administrator, a good family man — By the way, Monsieur le Duc," repeated the king, dwelling on these words, "will he be a good family man?"

"Indeed, Sire," replied Monsieur de la Vauguyon, innocently, "I presume that this virtue, like all the others, must be implanted in his heart."

"You do not understand me, Duke," said Louis XV.; "I ask if he will make a good family man?"

"Sire, I confess I do not understand your Majesty. In what sense do you use that term?"

"Why, in the sense, in the sense — You must have read your Bible, Monsieur le Duc?"

"Certainly, Sire. I have read it."

"Well, you know about the patriarchs, don't you?"

"Of course?"

"Will he be a good patriarch?"

Monsieur de la Vauguyon looked at the king as if he had spoken Hebrew; and twirling his hat in his hands, he replied, "Sire, a great king is all that he wishes to be."

"Pardon, Monsieur le Duc," insisted the king, "I see that we do not understand each other very well."

"Sire, I am nevertheless doing my best."

"Well," said the king, "I am going to speak more clearly. Come, you know the dauphin as if he were your own child, do you not?"

"Oh, certainly, Sire!"

"His tastes?"

"Yes."

"His passions?"

"Oh! as to passions, Sire, that is another thing; if Monseigneur had had any, I should have extirpated them radically. But I have not had that trouble, fortunately; Monseigneur has no passions."

"You said 'fortunately'?"

"Sire, is it not a good thing?"

"Then he has none?"

"Passions? No, Sire."

"Not one?"

"Not one, I assure you."

"Well, that is just what I feared. The dauphin will be a very good king, a very good administrator, but he will never be a good patriarch."

"Alas! Sire, you never told me to educate Monsieur le Dauphin for a patriarch."

"It was my mistake. I ought to have considered that he would some time marry. But although he has no passions, you do not entirely give him up?"

"I do not understand your Majesty."

"I mean that you do not consider him forever incapable of them?"

"Sire, I am afraid."

"Of what are you afraid?"

"In truth," said the poor duke, mournfully, "your Majesty tortures me."

"Monsieur de la Vauguyon," cried the king, who was becoming impatient, "I ask you plainly if, passion or no passion, Monsieur le Duc de Berry will be a good husband. I set aside the qualification of father of a family, and I abandon the patriarch."

"Well, Sire, that is something that I cannot tell your Majesty."

"What! it is something that you cannot tell me?"

"Certainly, for I do not know."

"You do not know," cried Louis XV., with an expression of astonishment which made Monsieur de la Vauguyon's wig tremble.

"Sire, Monsieur le Duc de Berry lived under your Majesty's roof in the innocence of a studious child."

"But, Monsieur, that child studies no longer; he is married."

"Sire, I was the tutor of Monseigneur — "

"Exactly, Monsieur! You should have taught him, then, all that he ought to know;" and Louis XV. threw himself back in his chair, shrugging his shoulders. "I suspected it," he added, with a sigh.

"*Mon Dieu*, Sire — "

"You know the history of France, do you not, Monsieur de la Vauguyon?"

"Sire, I have always thought so, and shall continue to think so, — at least until your Majesty has told me to the contrary."

"Well, then, you ought to know what happened to me the night of my marriage."

"No, Sire, I do not know it."

"Ah! do you know nothing?"

"If your Majesty would tell me this thing which is unknown to me?"

"Listen! and may this be a lesson to you as regards my two other grandsons."

"I listen, Sire."

"I also had been brought up as you have brought up the dauphin, under the roof of my grandfather. I had for tutor Monsieur de Villeroy, a noble man, — indeed, a *very* noble man, like you, Duke. Oh, if he had only left me oftener in the society of my uncle the regent! But no; in the innocence of study, as you call it, Duke, I neglected the study of innocence. However, I married; and when

a king marries, Monsieur le Duc, it is a serious thing for the world."

"Oh, yes, Sire; I begin to understand!"

"Indeed, that is fortunate! I will go on, then. Monsieur le Cardinal examined me upon my inclinations toward the patriarchate. I had none; and was, besides, of such purity that there was danger of the kingdom of France falling into the female line. Fortunately, Monsieur le Cardinal consulted Monsieur de Richelieu; it was a delicate matter, but Monsieur de Richelieu was a master-spirit in such a case. He had a luminous idea. There was a Miss Lemaure, or Lemoure, who made admirable pictures; they ordered of her a series of scenes, — you understand?"

"No, Sire."

"How shall I say it? — rural scenes."

"Like the pictures of Teniers, then?"

"Better than that, — primitive."

"Primitive?"

"Natural. I think I have found the word at last; do you understand now?"

"What!" cried Monsieur de la Vauguyon, turning red, "they dared to present to your Majesty —"

"And who talks of presenting anything to me, Duke?"

"But in order that your Majesty should see —"

"It was necessary that my Majesty should look, that is all."

"Well?"

"Well, I looked."

"And —?"

"And as man is essentially an imitator, I imitated."

"Certainly, Sire, the device was ingenious, excellent; although dangerous for a young man."

The king looked at the Duc de la Vauguyon with a smile almost cynical.

"Let us leave the danger for to-day," said he, "and consider what remains for us to do."

"Ah!"

"Do you know what it is?"

"No, Sire; and I shall be happy to be informed by your Majesty."

"Well, this is it: you will go and find Monsieur le Dauphin, who is receiving the last congratulations of the men, while Madame la Dauphine receives those of the women."

"Yes, Sire."

"Provide yourself with a candle, and take Monsieur le Dauphin aside."

"Yes, Sire."

"Show *your pupil*" — the king emphasized these words — "that his chamber is situated at the end of the new corridor."

"Of which no one has the key, Sire."

"Because I have kept it, Monsieur; I foresaw what would happen to-day. Here is the key."

Monsieur de la Vauguyon took it, trembling.

"I wish to say to you, Monsieur le Duc," continued the king, "that this gallery contains a score of pictures which I have had placed there."

"Ah, Sire, yes, yes!"

"Yes, Monsieur le Duc. Embrace your pupil, open for him the door of the corridor, put the candle in his hand, wish him good-night, and say to him that he is to spend twenty minutes in going to the door of his chamber, — one minute for each picture."

"Ah, Sire, I understand!"

"That is well. I wish you good-night, Monsieur de la Vauguyon."

"Your Majesty has the goodness to pardon me?"

"Why, not too readily; for without my intervention you would have done fine things in my family."

The door closed upon the tutor. The king pulled the cord to his private bell, and Lebel appeared.

"My coffee," said the king. "By the way, Lebel."

"Sire?"

"When you have given me my coffee, follow Monsieur de la Vauguyon, who is going to pay his respects to Monsieur le Dauphin."

"I will go, Sire."

"But wait until I tell you what you are going for."

"True, Sire; but my eagerness to obey your Majesty is such —"

"Very well. Follow Monsieur de la Vauguyon."

"Yes, Sire."

"He is so troubled, so sad, that I fear the effect of his emotion on Monsieur le Dauphin."

"And what must I do, Sire, if he is affected?"

"Nothing; come and tell me, that is all."

Lebel put down the coffee before the king, who drank it slowly. Then the historical valet-de-chambre went out. A quarter of an hour after, he reappeared.

"Well, Lebel?" demanded the king.

"Sire, Monsieur de la Vauguyon was at the entrance to the new corridor, holding Monseigneur by the arm."

"Well, what then?"

"He did not seem very much affected; on the contrary, he rolled his little eyes quite briskly."

"Good! Well?"

"He took a key from his pocket, gave it to Monsieur le Dauphin, who opened the door and stepped into the corridor."

"Then?"

"Then Monsieur le Duc put his candle in the hand of

Monseigneur, and said to him in a low tone, but not too low for me to hear: 'Monseigneur, the nuptial chamber is at the end of this gallery, the key of which I have just given you. The king wishes you to spend twenty minutes in getting to the chamber.' 'What!' said the prince, 'twenty minutes? But it will take barely twenty seconds!' 'Monseigneur,' replied Monsieur le la Vauguyon, 'my authority ends here. I have no more lessons to give you, but a final piece of advice: examine carefully the opposite walls of this gallery, and I promise your Highness that you will find your twenty minutes fully employed.'"

"Not bad."

"Then, Sire, Monsieur de la Vauguyon made a low bow, and it seemed as if his piercing glances would penetrate into the corridor; then he left Monseigneur at the door."

"And Monseigneur entered, I suppose?"

"There, Sire, see the light in the gallery! It has been moving about there for at least a quarter of an hour."

"Well, it ought to disappear," said the king, after watching the window for some moments. "I had twenty minutes given me, but I remember that at the end of five I was with my wife. Alas! if only it could be said of Monsieur le Dauphin as they said of the second Racine, 'He is the grandson of his grandfather!'"

CHAPTER XX.

THE WEDDING-NIGHT.

THE dauphin opened the door of the nuptial chamber, — or rather of the antechamber adjoining it.

The archduchess, in a long white robe, lay on the gilded bed, which was hardly depressed by the light weight of her frail and delicate body. Madame de Noailles was sitting by the bed. The ladies were standing in another part of the room, waiting attentively for the lady of honor to give them the order to retire. The latter, faithful to the law of etiquette, awaited quietly the coming of the dauphin.

But as if all the laws of etiquette and of ceremonial had been forced to yield to malicious circumstance, it happened that those who were to introduce Monsieur le Dauphin into the nuptial chamber, not knowing that the king Louis XV. had arranged that his Highness should arrive by the new corridor, were awaiting him in another antechamber. The chamber which Monsieur le Dauphin had entered was empty, and the door which opened into the bed-chamber being ajar, the dauphin could see and hear what was going on there. He stood looking and listening stealthily.

The voice of Madame la Dauphine rose pure and sweet, but trembling. "Where will Monsieur le Dauphin enter?" she asked.

"By this door, Madame," said the Duchesse de Noailles; and she pointed to a door opposite the one at which Monsieur le Dauphin was standing.

"And what do we hear through that window?" added the dauphiness; "it sounds like the noise of the sea."

"It comes from the crowd of spectators who are enjoying the illumination and waiting to see the fireworks."

"The illumination?" said the dauphiness, with a sad smile. "It has been of use to-night, for the sky is very dark; have you noticed it, Madame?"

Just then the dauphin, tired of waiting, opened the door softly, and asked if he might come in. Madame de Noailles uttered a cry, for she did not recognize the prince at first. The dauphiness, made very nervous by so much excitement, seized the arm of Madame de Noailles.

"It is I, Madame," said the dauphin; "have no fear."

"Why did you come by that door?" asked Madame de Noailles.

"Because," said King Louis XV., thrusting his cynical face through the half-open door, "Monsieur de la Vauguyon, true Jesuit that he is, knows Latin, mathematics, and geography too well, and other things not well enough."

At this unexpected appearance of the king, the dauphiness slipped from her bed and stood up, her long dressing-gown covering her from head to foot as closely as the *stola* worn by Roman women.

"She is certainly thin," muttered Louis XV. "Devil take Monsieur de Choiseul, who among all the archduchesses selects for me just this one."

"Your Majesty," said Madame de Noailles, "sees that, as far as I am concerned, etiquette has been strictly observed; it is Monseigneur le Dauphin who has disregarded it."

"I take the blame upon myself, since I caused the offence, — which I hope you will pardon, my dear Madame de Noailles."

"I do not understand your Majesty."

"We will go away together, Duchess, and I will explain. Come, now, let these children go to bed."

Madame la Dauphine moved away from the bed and seized the arm of Madame de Noailles with more terror even than before. "Oh! for mercy's sake, Madame," said she, "I shall die of shame."

"Sire," said Madame de Noailles, "Madame la Dauphine begs you to let her go to bed like a woman of the people."

"The devil! Is it you who ask that, Madame Etiquette?"

"Sire, I know that it is against the law of the ceremonial of France; but look at the archduchess."

Indeed Marie Antoinette, erect, pale, clinging to the back of a chair for support, looked like a statue of Fright, except for the chattering of her teeth and the cold perspiration on her brow.

"Oh! I do not wish to annoy the dauphiness," said Louis XV., a prince as much an enemy to ceremony as Louis XIV. was its ardent supporter. "Let us retire, Duchess. Besides, there are key-holes in the doors, and that will be much more comical."

The dauphin heard these last words of his grandfather and blushed. The dauphiness heard also, but she did not understand.

The king embraced his daughter-in-law and went out, taking with him the Duchesse de Noailles, and with that mocking smile on his face, so sad for those who are not in sympathy with him who laughs. The others who were present went out by another door.

The two young people were alone. For a moment there was silence. At last the young prince approached Marie Antoinette. His heart beat violently; he felt rush-

ing to his breast, to his temples, to the arteries of his hands, the rebellious blood of youth and love. But he felt that his grandfather was behind the door, and the thought of that cynical gaze penetrating even into the nuptial room, increased his natural timidity and awkwardness. "Madame," said he, looking at the archduchess, "are you suffering? You are pale, and you seem to tremble."

"Monsieur," said she, "I will not conceal from you that I am strangely agitated; there must be a violent storm coming. A thunder-storm has a terrible influence over me."

"Ah! you think that we are threatened with a hurricane?" said the dauphin.

"Oh, I am sure of it; see, I am trembling all over!" and it seemed as if the body of the poor princess were trembling under electric shocks.

At this moment, as if to justify her premonitions, a gust of furious wind, one of those powerful blasts which raise the waves of the sea and lay bare the mountain sides, the first onset of the approaching tempest, filled the chateau with tumult, moans, and violent creakings. Leaves torn from the branches, branches torn from the trees, statues thrown from their foundation, a long and loud clamor of the hundred thousand spectators in the gardens, a dismal and continuous roar, penetrating the galleries and corridors of the chateau, — composed at this moment the wildest and most mournful harmony ever heard by human ears.

Then a sinister rattling succeeded the roaring; it was the panes of glass, which, broken in a thousand pieces, fell upon the marble of the stairs and cornices. The wind had torn from its fastening one of the window-blinds which beat against the wall like the gigantic wing of a bird of night. Wherever in the chateau the windows

were open, the lights were extinguished by this gust of wind.

The dauphin approached the window, — probably to refasten the window-blind; but the dauphiness stopped him. "Oh, Monsieur! for mercy's sake," said she, "do not open that window; our candles will go out, and I shall perish with fear."

The dauphin stopped. Through the curtain which he had drawn aside, the tops of the trees could be seen, tossed and twisted as if the arm of some invisible giant were shaking their trunks in the darkness. All the illuminations were extinguished. Then in the heavens were seen great black clouds, whirling and rolling on like a charge of cavalry.

The dauphin turned pale and remained standing, one hand resting on the casement of the window. The dauphiness fell into a chair with a sigh.

"You are afraid, Madame?" asked the dauphin.

"Oh, yes! but your presence reassures me. Oh, what a tempest! what a tempest! All the illuminations are extinguished."

"Yes," said Louis; "the wind blows south-southeast, and that is the wind which gives warning of the fiercest hurricanes. If it continues, I don't see how they can have the fireworks."

"Oh, Monsieur, there will be no one in the gardens to see them in such weather as this."

"Ah, Madame, you do not know the French people; they must have fireworks, and these will be superb, — the engineer showed me the plan of them. See, I am not mistaken; there are the first rockets."

Like long, fiery serpents, the rockets shot up toward the sky, but at the same time, as if the storm had taken these burning jets as a challenge, one single flash of

lightning, which seemed to rend the heavens, wound in and out among the fireworks, mingling its bluish flame with the red fire of the rockets.

"Truly," said the archduchess, "it is wicked for man to struggle thus with God."

These preliminary rockets had preceded the firing of the other pieces but a few seconds; the engineer saw that he must make haste, and he lighted the first pieces, which were greeted with shouts of joy.

Then, as if there were really a struggle between earth and heaven; as if, as the archduchess had said, man had committed a sin against his God, — the noise of the angry storm rose above that of the people, all the windows of heaven opening at once; torrents of rain poured down from the highest clouds. The wind had extinguished the illuminations, the rain put out the fireworks.

"Ah, what a misfortune!" said the dauphin; "the fireworks are a failure."

"Yes, Monsieur," replied Marie Antoinette, sadly; "is not everything a failure since my arrival in France?"

"How is that, Madame?"

"Did you observe Versailles?"

"Certainly, Madame. Do you not like Versailles?"

"Oh, yes! I should like Versailles if it had remained as your illustrious ancestor Louis XIV. left it. But in what a condition we find Versailles! Everywhere ruin and mourning. Oh, yes! the tempest agrees well with the festival they have given me. Does not a hurricane fittingly conceal from our people the wretchedness of our palace? Is not darkness welcome to hide these paths overgrown with grass, these dirty Tritons, these empty fountains, these mutilated statues? Oh, yes, yes! blow, south wind; moan, tempest; pile up, ye clouds; hide from every eye the strange reception which France has

given to a daughter of the Cæsars on the day when she places her hand in that of its future king!"

The dauphin, visibly embarrassed, for he did not know what to reply to these reproaches, could not sympathize with this exalted melancholy, so foreign to his character, and in his turn heaved a deep sigh.

"I distress you," said Marie Antoinette. "Do not think, however, that it is my pride which speaks; oh, no, no, it is not! If they had shown me only the Trianon, so smiling, so umbrageous, so flowery, — where, alas! the storm has stripped the groves and muddied the waters, — I should have been contented with that charming nest. But ruins frighten me; they are repugnant to my youth. And yet what ruins this frightful tempest still will make!"

Another blast, yet more terrible than the first, shook the palace. The princess rose, terrified. "Oh, my God!" she cried, "tell me that there is no danger, that nothing can happen! I am dying of fright!"

"There is no danger, Madame. Versailles, built in terraces, cannot draw the lightning. If it should strike anywhere, it would strike the chapel, which has a sharp roof, or the little chateau, which rises into points. You know that points attract the electric fluid, while flat masses, on the contrary, repel it."

"No," cried Marie Antoinette, "I do not know, I do not know!"

Louis took the hand of the archduchess, which was trembling and cold. At that moment a flash of lightning inundated the chamber with its livid and purple light. Marie Antoinette uttered a cry and repulsed the dauphin.

"Why Madame," he asked, "what, then, is the matter?"

"Oh!" she said, "in the light of that flash you appeared to me pale, fainting, and bloody. I seemed to see a ghost."

"That is a reflection from the burning of sulphur," said the prince; "I could explain to you —"

A tremendous clap of thunder, whose echoes rolled with a prolonged roaring till they reached their culmination, and then gradually died away in the distance, cut short the scientific explanation which the young man so coolly offered to his royal spouse. "Come, Madame," he said, after a moment of silence, "take courage, I entreat you. Let us leave these fears to the vulgar. Physical agitation is one of the conditions of nature; there is nothing in it more surprising than in a calm. Only, the calm and the commotion succeed each other; the calm is troubled by the commotion, and the commotion is stilled by the calm. After all, Madame, it is only a storm, and a storm is among the most natural and most frequent phenomena of the creation. I don't know, then, why any one should be afraid of it."

"Oh! the tempest alone perhaps would not frighten me so; but this tempest, on the very day of our marriage, — does it not seem to you a fearful omen, when taken with those that have attended me since my arrival in France?"

"What are you saying, Madame?" cried the dauphin, moved in spite of himself by a superstitious terror, — "omens, do you say?"

"Yes, yes, — fearful, bloody omens."

"And what are these omens, Madame? I am generally believed to have a steady and cool mind; perhaps I shall have the good fortune to combat and defeat these omens which terrify you."

"Monsieur, I passed my first night in France at Stras-

burg. I was lodged in a large chamber lighted by torches. Now, by the light of those torches I saw a wall dripping with blood. Yet I had the courage to approach the panels and examine those red stains with more attention. Those walls were hung with a tapestry representing the Massacre of the Innocents. Despair, with its hopeless look, Murder with flaming eyes, the gleam of the axe and the sword, tears, cries of 'Mother!' sighs of agony, — seemed to break forth from that prophetic wall, which by force of gazing upon it I came to regard as living. Oh! frozen with terror, I could not sleep. Tell me, was not that a gloomy omen?"

"For a woman of antiquity, perhaps, Madame; but not for a princess of our age."

"Monsieur, this age is freighted with calamities, my mother has told me, as the sky which blazes above our heads is charged with sulphur, flame, and desolation. Oh! this is why I am so afraid; this is why every omen seems to me a warning."

"Madame, no danger menaces the throne to which we ascend; we live, we kings, in a region above the clouds. The thunder is at our feet, and when it falls upon the earth it is we who launch it."

"Alas! alas! that is not what has been predicted to me, Monsieur."

"And what has been predicted to you?"

"Something frightful, unspeakable."

"Some one has predicted to you?"

"Or rather, has made me see."

"See?"

"Yes, I have seen, — seen, I tell you; and that vision has so remained with me that there is not a day on which I do not tremble with thinking of it, not a night during which I do not see it again in my dreams."

"And cannot you tell what you have seen? Are you pledged to silence?"

"No, I am pledged to nothing."

"Speak, then, Madame."

"Listen! It was a thing impossible to describe. It was a machine raised above the ground like a scaffold; but to that scaffold were fitted the two uprights of a ladder, and between those two uprights glided a knife, a chopper, an axe. I saw that, and — strange thing! — I saw also my head beneath the knife. The knife fell between the two uprights, and separated my head from my body; the head fell and rolled on the ground. That is what I saw, Monsieur, that is what I saw."

"Pure hallucination, Madame," said the dauphin. "I am somewhat acquainted with all the instruments of punishment by whose aid death is inflicted, and that instrument is not in existence. You may, then, reassure yourself."

"Alas!" said Marie Antoinette, "I cannot banish that hateful thought; I do what I can, however."

"You will succeed, Madame," said the dauphin, approaching his wife. "From this moment you have near you an affectionate friend, a devoted protector."

"Alas!" repeated Marie Antoinette, closing her eyes and falling back in her chair.

The dauphin drew still nearer to the princess, and she could feel his breath upon her cheek. At that moment the door by which the dauphin had entered was gently opened, and the curious, eager gaze of Louis XV. pierced the shades of that vast chamber, hardly lighted by the two remaining candles.

The old king opened his mouth, no doubt to utter in a suppressed tone a word of encouragement to his grandson, when a crash that cannot be described resounded through the palace, this time accompanied by the lightning flash

which had preceded the previous bursts of thunder. At the same time a column of white flame, crossed with green, darted before the window, breaking all the remaining panes of glass, and crushing a statue under the balcony; then, after a fearful noise, it returned to the sky and vanished like a meteor.

The two candles were extinguished by the wind that entered the chamber. The dauphin, frightened, tottering, dazzled, recoiled till he reached the wall, and remained leaning against it. The dauphiness, almost unconscious, fell upon the steps of her *prie-Dieu* and remained shrouded in mortal terror. Louis XV., trembling, thought that the earth was about to open under his feet, and followed by Lebel, hastened back to his deserted apartments.

Meanwhile the people of Versailles and Paris fled like a flock of frightened birds, scattered over the gardens, in the roads, in the woods, pursued in all directions by thick hail, which, beating down the flowers in the gardens, the foliage in the forest, the wheat and the barley in the fields, and slates and ornaments from the buildings, added ruin to desolation.

The dauphiness, resting her forehead on her hands, sobbed and prayed. The dauphin dully contemplated the water that entered the chamber through the broken windows and reflected on the floor the lightning-flashes that continued for several hours.

By morning, however, all the tumult was calmed, and the first rays of light, darting from between copper-colored clouds, displayed to view the ravages of the nocturnal hurricane. Versailles was no longer to be recognized. The ground had imbibed that deluge of water, the trees had absorbed that deluge of fire; everywhere were seas of muddy water, and trees broken, twisted, calcined, by that serpent with flaming coils called lightning.

As soon as it was light, Louis XV., whose terror was so great that he could not sleep, ordered Lebel, who had not left him during the night, to dress him. He then proceeded to the bridal-chamber, and pushing open the door, shuddered on perceiving the future queen of France reclining on a *prie-Dieu*, pale, and with eyes swollen and violet-colored, like those of the sublime Magdalen of Rubens. Her terror, caused by the hurricane, had at length been suspended by sleep, and the first dawn of morning which stole into the apartment tinged, with religious respect, her long white robe with an azure hue. At the farther end of the chamber, in an armchair pushed back to the wall, and surrounded by a pool of water, reposed the dauphin of France, pale as his young bride, and, like her, having the perspiration of nightmare on his brow. The nuptial bed was as the king had seen it on the preceding evening.

Louis XV. knit his brow; a grief such as he had not before experienced pierced like a hot iron that heart chilled by egotism, — still cold when he sought to warm it by debauchery, He shook his head, heaved a deep sigh, and returned to his apartments, more gloomy and more affrighted, perhaps, at that moment than he had been during the night.

CHAPTER XXI.

ANDRÉE DE TAVERNEY.

On the 30th of May, — that is, on the second day after that frightful night, that night fraught, as Marie Antoinette had said, with presages and warnings, — Paris celebrated in its turn the marriage festival of its future sovereign. The whole population poured, in consequence, toward the Place Louis XV., where were to be exhibited the fireworks, — that necessary accompaniment to every great public solemnity, which the Parisian accepts scoffingly, but which he cannot dispense with. The spot was judiciously chosen. Six hundred thousand spectators could move about there at their ease. Around the equestrian statue of Louis XV. had been erected a circular scaffolding, which by raising the fireworks ten or twelve feet above the ground, enabled all the spectators in the Place to see them distinctly. The Parisians arrived, according to custom, in groups, and spent some time in choosing the best places, — an inalienable privilege of the first-comers. Boys found trees, grave men posts, women the railings of fences and temporary stands, erected in the open air, as usual at all Parisian festivities, by adventurous speculators, whose fertile imagination allows them to change their mode of speculation every day. About seven o'clock, with the earliest of the spectators, arrived several parties of police.

The duty of watching over the safety of Paris was not performed by the French Guards, to whom the city authorities would not grant the gratuity of a thousand

crowns demanded by their colonel, the Maréchal Duc de Biron. That regiment was both feared and liked by the people, by whom each member of the corps was regarded at once as a Cæsar and a Maudrin.

The French Guards, terrible on the field of battle, inexorable in the fulfilment of their functions, had in time of peace and out of service a frightful reputation for brutality and misconduct. On duty they were handsome, brave, intractable, and their evolutions delighted women and awed husbands; but when dispersed among the crowd as individuals, they became the terror of those whose admiration they had won the day before, and severely persecuted the people whom they would have to protect on the morrow.

Now, the city, finding in its old grudge against these night-brawlers and sharpers a reason for not giving a thousand crowns to the French Guards, sent only its civil force, upon the specious pretext that in a family festivity, like that in preparation, the usual guardians of the family ought to be sufficient. The French Guards, on leave therefore, mingled among the groups mentioned above, and, as licentious as they would under other circumstances have been severe, they produced among the crowd, in their quality of soldier-citizens, all those little irregularities which they would have repressed with the butts of their muskets, with kicks and cuffs, nay, even with taking the offenders into custody, if their commander, their Cæsar Biron, had had a right to call them on that evening soldiers.

The shrieks of the women, the grumbling of the citizens, the complaints of the hucksters, whose cakes and gingerbread were eaten without being paid for, raised a sham tumult preparatory to the real commotion which could not fail to take place when six hundred thousand sight-loving persons should be assembled on that spot, and

constituted so animated a scene that the Place Louis XV., about eight o'clock in the evening, presented much the appearance of one of Teniers' pictures on a large scale, and with French instead of Dutch merry-makers.

After the *gamins*, or street-boys, of Paris (at once the most impatient and the idlest in the known world) had taken or clambered up to their places; after the citizens and the populace had settled themselves in theirs, — the carriages of the nobility and the financiers arrived. No route had been marked out for them, and they therefore entered the Place at random by the Rue de la Madeleine and the Rue St. Honoré, setting down at the new buildings those who had received invitations for the windows and balconies of the governor's house, from which an excellent view could be obtained of the fireworks.

Those of the persons in carriages who had not invitations, left their equipages at the corner of the Place, and, preceded by their footmen, mingled in the crowd, already very dense, but in which there was still room for any one who knew how to conquer it. It was curious to observe with what sagacity those lovers of sights availed themselves, in their ambitious progress, of every inequality of ground. The very wide, but as yet unfinished, street which was to be called the Rue Royale, was intersected here and there by deep ditches, on the margins of which had been heaped the mould thrown out of them and other rubbish. Each of these little eminences had its group, looking like a loftier billow rising above the level of that human ocean.

From time to time this wave, propelled by other waves behind it, toppled over, amid the laughter of the multitude, not yet so crowded as to cause such falls to be attended with danger, or to prevent those who fell from scrambling to their feet again.

About half-past eight all eyes, hitherto wandering in different directions, began to converge toward the same point, and to fix themselves on the scaffolding which contained the fireworks. It was then that elbows, plied without ceasing, began seriously to maintain positions that had been gained, against the assaults of invaders incessantly reinforced.

These fireworks, designed by Ruggieri, were intended to rival (a rivalry, by the way, which the storm two evenings before had rendered easy) those executed at Versailles by Torre, the engineer. It was known in Paris that Versailles had derived little pleasure from the royal liberality, which had granted fifty thousand francs for their exhibition, since the very first discharges had been extinguished by the rain; and as the weather was fine on the evening of May 30, the Parisians reckoned upon a certain triumph over their neighbors of Versailles. Besides, Paris expected much more from the established popularity of Ruggieri than from the recent reputation of Torre.

Moreover, the plan of Ruggieri, less capricious and less vague than that of his colleague, outlined pyrotechnical intentions of a highly distinguished order. Allegory, which reigned supreme at that period, was aided by the most graceful architectural conceptions; the scaffolding represented the ancient temple of Hymen, which, with the French, rivals in ever-springing youth the temple of Glory. It was supported by a gigantic colonnade and surrounded by a parapet, at the angles of which dolphins, open-mouthed, awaited the signal to spout forth torrents of flames. Facing the dolphins rose majestically upon their urns the Loire, the Rhone, the Seine, and the Rhine, — that river which we persist in naturalizing and accounting French, in spite of all the world, and, if we may believe the modern lays of our friends the Germans, in spite

even of itself, — all four — we mean the rivers — ready to pour forth, instead of water, blue, white, green, and rose-colored flames at the moment when the colonnade should be fired. Other parts of the works, which were to be discharged at the same time, were to form gigantic vases of flowers on the terrace of the temple of Hymen. Lastly, still upon this same palace destined to support so many different things, rose a luminous pyramid, terminated by a globe representing the earth. This globe, after emitting a rumbling noise like distant thunder, was to burst with a crash and to discharge a mass of colored girandoles.

As for the bouquet, — so important and indeed indispensable an accompaniment that no Parisian ever judges of fireworks but by the bouquet, — Ruggieri had separated it from the main body of the structure. It was placed toward the river, close to the statue, in a bastion crammed with spare pieces, so that the effect would be greatly improved by this additional elevation of six or eight yards, which would place the foot of the sheaf, as it were, upon a pedestal.

Such were the details which had engrossed the attention of all Paris for the last fortnight. The Parisians now watched with great admiration Ruggieri and his assistants passing like shades amid the lurid lights of their scaffolding, and pausing, with strange gestures, to fix their matches and to secure their priming.

The moment, therefore, that the lanterns were brought upon the terrace of the building — an appearance which indicated that the discharge was about to take place — there was a strong sensation in the crowd, and some rows of the least courageous recoiled, producing a long oscillation, which extended to the very extremities of the assembled multitude.

Carriages now continued to arrive in quick succession,

and began to encroach more and more upon the Place, — the horses resting their heads upon the shoulders of the outside spectators, who began to feel uneasy at the close vicinity of these dangerous neighbors. Presently a crowd, every moment increasing, collected behind the carriages, so that it was not possible to withdraw them from their position, even had their occupants desired to do so, imbedded as they were in this compact and tumultuous throng. Then might be seen — inspired by that audacity peculiar to the Parisians when in an encroaching mood, and which has no parallel except the long-suffering of the same people when encroached upon — French Guards, artisans, and lackeys climbing upon the roofs of these carriages, like shipwrecked mariners upon a rocky shore.

The illumination of the boulevards threw from a distance its ruddy glare upon the heads of the thousands of spectators, among whom the bayonet of a city official, flashing like lightning, appeared as rare as the ears of corn left standing in a field levelled by the reaper.

On either side of the new buildings, now the Hôtel Crillon and the Garde-Meuble of the Crown, the carriages of the invited guests — in the midst of which no precaution had been taken to leave a passage — had formed a triple rank which extended on one side from the boulevard to the Tuileries, and on the other from the boulevard to the Rue des Champs Elysées, turning like a serpent thrice doubled upon itself.

Along this triple row of carriages were seen wandering, like spectres on the banks of the Styx, such of the invited as were prevented by the carriages of those earlier on the ground from reaching the principal entrance. Stunned by the noise, and unwilling, especially the ladies, who were dressed in satin from head to foot, to step upon the dusty pavement, they were hustled to and fro by the

waves of the populace, who jeered at them for their delicacy, and, seeking a passage between the wheels of the carriages and the feet of the horses, crept onward as well as they could to the place of their destination, — a goal as fervently desired as a haven of refuge by mariners in a storm.

One of these carriages arrived at about nine o'clock, — that is to say, a very few minutes before the time fixed for the discharge of the fireworks, — and attempted, in its turn, to find a passage to the governor's door; but the attempt, so warmly disputed for some time back, had at this moment become extremely hazardous, if not impracticable. A fourth row of carriages had begun to form, reinforcing the first three; and the mettled horses, tormented by the crowd, had become furious, lashing out right and left upon the slightest provocation, and already causing several accidents unnoticed amid the noise and bustle of the crowd.

Clinging to the springs of this carriage, which was attempting to force its way through the concourse, walked a youth, pushing aside all comers who endeavored to avail themselves of this means of locomotion, which he appeared desirous to monopolize. When the carriage stopped, the youth stepped aside, but without loosing his hold of the protecting spring, which he continued to grasp with one hand. He could thus overhear, through the open door, the animated conversation of the party in the vehicle.

A female head, attired in white and adorned with a few natural flowers, leaned forward out of the carriage-door. Immediately a voice exclaimed: "Come, Andrée, provincial that you are, you must not lean out in that manner, or, *mordieu!* you run a great risk of being kissed by the first bumpkin that passes. Don't you see that our carriage is swimming as it were in the middle of this mob, just as if it were in the middle of the river? We are in the water,

my dear, and dirty water it is; let us not soil ourselves more than is necessary."

The young lady's head was drawn back into the carriage. "We cannot see anything from here, Monsieur," said she. "If our horses were to make a half-turn, we could see from the door of the carriage, and be almost as well off as if we were at the governor's window."

"Turn about a little, coachman," cried the baron.

"It is impossible, Monsieur le Baron; I should be obliged to crush ten persons."

"Well, *pardieu!* crush away."

"Oh, Monsieur!" exclaimed Andrée.

"Oh, father!" cried Philippe.

"Who is that baron that talks of crushing poor folk?" cried several threatening voices.

"*Parbleu!* it is I," said Taverney, leaning out, and exhibiting as he did so a broad red ribbon crossed over his breast.

At that time people still paid some respect to broad ribbons, — even to red ones. There was some grumbling, but on a descending scale.

"Wait, father, I will alight," said Philippe, "and see if there is any possibility of advancing."

"Take care, brother, or you will be killed. Hark to the neighing of the horses, which are fighting with one another!"

"Say rather the roaring," resumed the baron. "Stay! we will alight. Tell them to make way, Philippe, and let us pass."

"Ah, father!" said Philippe, "you are quite a stranger to the Paris of the present day. Such lordly airs might have passed current formerly, but nowadays they are but little heeded; and you have no wish to compromise your dignity, I am sure."

"Still, when these fellows know who I am —"

"My dear father," said Philippe, smiling, "were you the dauphin himself they would not stir an inch for you. At this moment, particularly, I should fear the consequences of such a step, for I see the fireworks are about to be lighted."

"Then we shall see nothing!" said Andrée, with vexation.

"It is your own fault, *pardieu!*" replied the baron; "you were upwards of two hours at your toilet."

"Brother," said Andrée, "could I not take your arm and place myself with you among the crowd?"

"Yes, yes, my sweet lady," exclaimed several voices, touched by her beauty; "yes, come along, — you are not very large, and we 'll make room for you."

"Should you like to come, Andrée?" asked Philippe.

"Oh, yes!" said Andrée; and she sprang lightly from the carriage, without touching the steps.

"Very well," said the baron; "but I, who care not a straw about fireworks, will stay where I am."

"Yes, remain here," said Philippe; "we will not go far, my dear father."

In fact the mob, ever respectful when not irritated by any passion, ever paying homage to that sovereign goddess called Beauty, opened to make way for Andrée and her brother; and a good-natured citizen, who with his family occupied a stone bench, desired his wife and daughter to make room for Andrée between them. Philippe placed himself at his sister's feet, who leaned with one hand on his shoulder. Gilbert had followed them, and was stationed about four paces off, with his eyes riveted upon Andrée.

"Are you comfortably placed, Andrée?" asked Philippe.

"Excellently," replied the young girl.

"See what it is to be beautiful!" said the viscount, smiling.

"Yes, yes, beautiful! beautiful!" murmured Gilbert.

Andrée heard those words; but as they proceeded doubtless from the lips of one of the populace, she cared no more about them than an Indian god cares for the offering which a poor pariah lays at his feet.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FIREWORKS.

ANDRÉE and her brother had scarcely settled themselves in their new position when the first rockets pierced the clouds, and a prodigious shout arose from the crowd, thenceforward alive only to the spectacle which was exhibiting in the centre of the Place.

The opening of the exhibition was magnificent, and in every respect worthy of the high reputation of Ruggieri. The decorations of the temple were lighted up one after another, and soon presented a sheet of flame. The air rang with plaudits; but these plaudits were soon succeeded by frantic cheers when the gaping mouths of the dolphins and the urns of the rivers began to spout forth streams of fire of different colors, which crossed and intermingled with each other.

Andrée, transported with astonishment at this sight, which has not its equal in the world, — that of a population of seven hundred thousand souls frantic with delight in front of a palace in flames — did not even attempt to conceal her feelings.

Three paces distant from her, hidden by the herculean shoulders of a porter who held his child aloft over his head, stood Gilbert, gazing at Andrée for her own sake, and at the fireworks because she was looking at them. Gilbert's view of Andrée was in profile; every rocket lighted up that lovely face and made him tremble with delight. It seemed to him that the whole crowd shared

in his admiration of the heavenly creature whom he adored. Andrée had never before seen Paris, or a crowd, or the splendors of a public rejoicing; and her mind was stunned by the multiplicity of novel sensations which beset it at once.

Suddenly a bright light burst forth and darted in a diagonal line toward the river. It was a bomb, which exploded with a crash, scattering the many-colored fires which Andrée admired.

"Look, Philippe; how beautiful that is!" said she.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed her brother, anxiously, without replying; "that last rocket took a wrong direction! It must have deviated from its course; instead of describing a parabola, it went almost horizontally."

Philippe had scarcely finished this expression of an uneasiness which began to be manifested in the agitation of the crowd, when a hurricane of flame burst from the bastion upon which were placed the bouquet and the spare fireworks. A crash equal to that of a hundred peals of thunder, crossing in all directions, bellowed through the Place; and as if the fire had included a discharge of grapeshot, it put to rout the nearest spectators, who for a moment felt the unexpected flame scorch their faces.

"The bouquet already? the bouquet already?" cried the more distant of the crowd. "Not yet, — it is too early!"

"Already?" repeated Andrée. "Ah, yes; it is too early!"

"No," said Philippe, "no, it is not the bouquet; it is an accident, which in a moment will agitate this prodigious crowd, now so calm, like the ocean in a storm. Come, Andrée, let us return to our carriage, — come."

"Oh! let me stay a little longer, Philippe, — it is so beautiful!"

"Andrée, we have not a moment to lose; follow me! It is the misfortune which I feared, — a stray rocket has set fire to the bastion. Hark! they are already crushing one another yonder. Don't you hear their cries? Those are not cries of joy, but shrieks of distress. Quick! quick! to the carriage. Gentlemen, gentlemen, allow us to pass!" And Philippe, throwing his arm round his sister's waist, drew her toward the place where he had left his father, who, uneasy, and dreading, from the noise which he heard, a danger, of the nature of which he could form no conception, but whose presence was obvious to him, put his head out of the carriage-door and looked about for his children.

It was already too late, and the prediction of Philippe was verified. The bouquet, composed of fifteen thousand pieces, exploded, flying in all directions, and pursuing the spectators like those fiery darts which are flung at the bulls in the arena to provoke them to fight.

The spectators, at first astonished, then terrified, recoiled by mere force of instinct with resistless impetus, communicating the same movement to myriads of spectators in the rear, who, breathless and suffocated, pressed backward in their turn on those behind them. The scaffolding took fire; children shrieked; screaming women, almost stifled, raised them in their arms; and the police, thinking to silence the screamers and to restore order by violence, struck right and left at random. All these terrors combined made the storm-tossed ocean of which Philippe had spoken fall like a water-spout on that corner of the Place where he was; and instead of rejoining the baron's carriage, as he had designed, the youth was hurried away by the mighty and irresistible current of which no description could convey any idea, — for individual strength, increased tenfold by terror and anxiety, was again augmented a hundredfold by the added force of combination.

At the moment when Philippe drew Andrée away, Gilbert had resigned himself to the movement which bore them along; but he had not gone above twenty paces before a band of fugitives, turning to the left into the Rue de la Madeleine, surrounded Gilbert and swept him away, foaming with rage on finding himself separated from Andrée.

Andrée, clinging fast to Philippe's arm, was inclosed in a group which was striving to get out of the way of a carriage dragged along by a pair of furious horses. Philippe saw it approaching swiftly and threateningly; the horses' eyes seemed to emit flame, and they snorted foam from their nostrils. He made superhuman efforts to escape them, but in vain. He saw the crowd open behind him; he perceived the foaming heads of the two ungovernable animals; he saw them rear, like the two marble horses which guard the entrance of the Tuileries; and, like the slave who is striving to subdue them, — letting go Andrée's arm, and pushing her as far as he could out of the way of danger, — he sprang up to seize the rein of the horse that was next to him. The animal reared a second time; Andrée saw her brother sink back, fall, and disappear from her sight. She shrieked, extended her arms, was hustled to and fro in the crowd, and in a moment found herself helpless, tottering, borne along like a feather by the wind, and just as incapable of resisting the force that was hurrying her away.

The stunning cries, — far more terrible than those of the battlefield, — the neighing of horses, the frightful noise of wheels, grinding now the pavement, now the bodies of the slain; the lurid flames of the scaffolds which were on fire, the sinister gleaming of swords drawn by some of the infuriated soldiers; and over all this ensanguined chaos, the bronze statue, tinged by the ruddy reflections, and

seeming to preside over the carnage, — were more than was needed to disturb Andrée's reason and paralyze her strength. Besides, the power of a Titan would have been impotent in such a struggle, — a struggle for life and limb, of one against all. Andrée uttered a piercing shriek; a soldier, opening himself a passage through the crowd, was striking the people with his sword, and the weapon flashed over her head. She clasped her hands, like a shipwrecked mariner when the last wave is passing over him, and exclaiming, "Oh, my God!" sank to the ground. Whoever fell in that scene might give himself up for lost!

But that terrible, that despairing shriek was heard and answered. Gilbert, carried to a distance from Andrée, had by dint of struggling once more approached her. Bending beneath the same wave which had engulfed Andrée, he raised himself again, made a frantic leap at the sword which had unwittingly threatened her, grasped the throat of the soldier who was going to strike, and hurled him to the ground. Beside the soldier lay a female form dressed in white; he raised her up and bore her off as though he had been a giant.

When he felt that lovely form, that corpse, perhaps, pressed to his heart, a gleam of pride lighted up his countenance; his force and courage rose with the circumstances, — he felt himself a hero! He flung himself and his burden into a stream of people, whose resistless flow would certainly have levelled a wall encountered in its course. Supported by this group, which lifted him up and bore him along with his lovely burden, he walked, or rather rolled onward, for some minutes. All at once the torrent stopped, as if broken by some opposing obstacle. Gilbert's feet touched the ground, and not till then was he sensible of the weight of Andrée. He looked up, to

ascertain what the obstacle might be, and perceived that he was within a few steps of the Garde-Meuble. That mass of stone had broken the mass of flesh.

During that momentary and anxious halt he had time to look at Andrée, overcome by a sleep heavy as that of death. Her heart had ceased to beat, her eyes were closed, and her face was of a violet tinge, like a white rose that is fading. Gilbert thought that she was dead. He cried out in his turn, and pressed his lips to her dress, to her hand; then, emboldened by her insensibility, he covered with kisses that cold face, those eyes swollen beneath their sealed lids. He blushed, wept, raved, strove to transfuse his soul into the bosom of Andrée, feeling astonished that his kisses, which might have warmed a marble statue, had no effect upon that inanimate form. All at once Gilbert felt her heart beat under his hand. "She is saved!" he exclaimed, at the same time perceiving the swart and blood-stained mob dispersing, and hearing the imprecations, the shrieks, the sighs, the agony of the victims. "She is saved; and it is I who have saved her!"

The poor fellow, who stood leaning with his back against the wall and his eyes turned toward the bridge, had not looked to his right. In front of the carriages, which, long detained by the crowd, but now hemmed in less closely, began once more to move, and soon came on galloping as if coachman and horses had been seized with a general frenzy, fled twenty thousand unfortunate creatures, mutilated, wounded, bruised one against the other. Instinctively they fled close to the walls, against which the nearest of them were crushed. This mass swept away, or suffocated, all those who, having taken up their position near the Garde-Meuble, imagined that they had escaped the wreck. Another shower of blows, of living and dead

bodies, rained on Gilbert. He found one of the recesses formed by the iron gates, and stationed himself there. The weight of the fugitives made the wall crack.

Gilbert, nearly stifled, perceived that he was near losing his hold; but with a last desperate effort, mustering all his strength, he encompassed Andrée's body with his arms, resting his head on the bosom of the young girl. One would have supposed that he meant to suffocate her whom he was protecting.

"Farewell," murmured he, biting, rather than kissing, her dress, "farewell!" And he raised his eyes to heaven, as if directing a last supplicating glance to it for assistance. Then a strange sight met his eyes.

Mounted on a post, holding with his right hand by a ring let into the wall, while with his left hand he seemed to be rallying an army of fugitives, was a man who, looking at the furious sea raging at his feet, sometimes dropped a word, sometimes made a gesture. At that word, at that gesture, some individual among the crowd might be seen to pause, struggle, and by a violent effort strive to reach the man. Others who had already reached him seemed to recognize the new-comers as brothers, and assisted to drag them out of the crowd, raising, supporting, and drawing them toward themselves. In this manner, by acting together, this knot had, like the pier of a bridge which divides and resists the water, succeeded in dividing the crowd and holding in check the flying masses.

Every moment fresh stragglers, seeming to rise out of the ground at those strange words and singular gestures, swelled the retinue of this man. Gilbert raised himself by a last effort; he felt that *there* was safety, for *there* was calmness and power. A last dying gleam from the burning scaffold, leaping up only to expire, fell upon his face. Gilbert uttered a cry of amazement. "Oh, let me die!"

he murmured; "let me die, but she must live! That man can save her." Then, with a sublime forgetfulness of self, raising the young girl in both his arms, he exclaimed, "Baron de Balsamo, save Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney!"

Balsamo heard that voice which cried to him, like that in the Bible, from the depths; he beheld a white figure raised above the devouring waves. He leaped from his post to the ground, crying, "This way!" His party overturned all that obstructed their course, and seizing Andrée, still supported in Gilbert's sinking arms, he lifted her up, and, impelled by a movement of that crowd which he had ceased to repress, he bore her off without once turning to look behind.

Gilbert endeavored to utter a last word. Perhaps, after imploring the protection of this strange man for Andrée, he might have solicited it for himself; but he had only strength to press his lips to the drooping arm of the young girl, and to snatch, with a wild and despairing grasp, a portion of her dress. After that last kiss, after that final farewell, the young man had nothing left to live for; he made no further struggle, but closing his eyes, sank dying upon a heap of dead.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FIELD OF THE DEAD.

GREAT storms are always succeeded by calms, fearful in their very stillness, but healing in their effects.

It was about two o'clock in the morning. The moon, shining through large white clouds which hovered over Paris, showed in strong relief by her wan and sickly light the inequalities of this sad spot, and the pits and holes in which so many of the fleeing crowd had found an untimely grave.

Here and there in the moonlight, which was obscured from time to time by the large white floating clouds we have mentioned, might be seen on the margin of the slopes and in the ditches heaps of corpses with disordered attire, stiffened limbs, livid and discolored faces, and hands stretched out in an attitude of terror or of prayer.

In the centre of the Place a heavy, tainted smoke, emitted from the burning embers of the timber, contributed to give to the Place Louis XV. the appearance of a battlefield.

Over this bloody and desolate plain flitted, with rapid and mysterious steps, shadowy figures, who stopped, looked stealthily round, bent down, and then fled. They were the robbers of the slain, attracted to their prey like vultures to the decaying carrion. They had not been able to rob the living, and they came to despoil the dead. Surprised at seeing themselves anticipated by their fellow-

robbers, they might be seen escaping sullenly and fearfully at the sight of the tardy bayonets which menaced them.

But the robber and the lazy watchman were not the only persons moving among the long ranks of the dead. There were some there who, furnished with lanterns, might have been taken for curious lookers-on. Sad lookers-on, alas! for they were parents and anxious friends, whose children, brothers, friends, or lovers had not returned home. They had come from great distances, for the dreadful news had already spread over Paris like a hurricane, scattering dismay and horror, and their anxiety had quickly led them into active search. It was a sight perhaps more dreadful to behold than the catastrophe itself. Every expression was portrayed on these pale faces, from the despair of those who discovered the corpse of the beloved one, to the gloomy uncertainty of those who had found nothing, and who cast an anxious and longing glance toward the river which flowed onward with a monotonous murmur. It was reported that many corpses had already been thrown into the river by the provostry of Paris, who wished to conceal the fearful number of deaths their guilty imprudence had occasioned.

Then, when they had satiated their eyes with this fruitless spectacle, and, standing ankle deep in the Seine, had watched with anguished hearts its dark waters flow past unburdened with the loved bodies of those whom they sought, they proceeded, lantern in hand, to explore the neighboring streets, where it was said many of the wounded had dragged themselves, to seek for help, or at least to flee from the scene of their sufferings.

When unfortunately they found among the dead the object of their search — the lost and wept-for friend — then cries succeeded to their heart-rending surprise, and

their sobs, rising from some new point of the bloody scene, were responded to by other sobs.

At times the Place resounded with sudden noises. A lantern would fall and be broken; the living had fallen senseless on the dead, to embrace him for the last time.

There are yet other noises in this vast cemetery. Sometimes one of the wounded, whose limbs have been broken by the fall, whose breast has been pierced by the sword, or crushed by the weight of the crowd, utters a hoarse cry, or groans forth a prayer; and then those who hope to find in the sufferer a friend hastily approach, but retire when they do not recognize him.

In the mean time, at the extremity of the Place, near the garden, a field-hospital is formed by the kindness and charity of the people. A young surgeon, known as such by the profusion of instruments which surround him, has the wounded men and women brought to him; he bandages their wounds, and while he tends them, he speaks to them in words which express hatred for the cause rather than pity for the effect. To his two robust assistants, who pass the sufferers in bloody review before him, he cries repeatedly: "The women of the people, the men of the people, first! They can be easily recognized; they are almost always more severely wounded, certainly always less richly dressed."

At these words, repeated after each dressing with a shrill monotony, a young man who, torch in hand, is seeking among the dead, has twice already raised his head. From a large wound which furrows his forehead a few drops of crimson blood are falling. One of his arms is supported by his coat, which he has buttoned over it; and his countenance, covered with perspiration, betrays deep and absorbing emotion. At these words of the surgeon, which he has heard, as we have said, for the

second time, he raises his head, and looking sadly on the mutilated limbs which the operator seems almost to gloat over: "Oh, Monsieur," said he, "why do you make a choice among the victims?"

"Because," replied the surgeon, raising his head at this interruption, "because no one will care for the poor if I do not think of them, and the rich are always well looked after. Lower your lantern, and search upon the ground: you will find a hundred poor people for one rich or noble. In this catastrophe, with a good fortune which will in the end weary even Providence, the noble and the rich have paid only the tribute they generally pay,—one in a thousand."

The young man raised his torch to a level with his bleeding forehead. "Then I am that one," said he, without anger, — "I, a gentleman, lost among so many others in the crowd, wounded in the forehead by a horse's hoof, and my left arm broken by falling into a pit. You say that the noble and the rich are sought after and cared for; you see plainly, however, that my wounds are not yet dressed."

"You have your hôtel, your physician. Return home, since you can walk."

"I do not ask for your care, Monsieur; I seek my sister, a beautiful young girl of sixteen, — killed probably, alas! though she is not of the people. She wore a white dress, and a chain with a cross round her neck. Though she has her hôtel and her physician, answer me, for pity's sake, Monsieur, have you seen her whom I seek?"

"Monsieur," said the young surgeon, with a feverish vehemence which showed that the ideas he expressed had long boiled within his breast, "Monsieur, humanity is my guide. It is to her service I devote myself; and

when I leave the noble on their bed of death to assist the suffering people, I obey the true laws of humanity, who is my goddess. All this day's misfortunes have been caused by you. They arose from your abuses, from your usurpations. Therefore, bear the consequences. No, Monsieur, I have not seen your sister."

And after this harsh apostrophe, the operator returned to his task. A poor woman had just been brought to him, whose two legs had been fractured by a carriage.

"See!" he exclaimed, calling after Philippe, who was rushing away, "see, do the poor bring their carriages to the public festivals to break the legs of the rich?"

Philippe, who belonged to that class of the young nobility from which sprang the Lafayettes and Lameths, had often professed the same maxims which terrified him in the mouth of this young man, and their application recoiled upon him like a judgment. His heart bursting with grief, he left the neighborhood of the hospital and continued his sad search. He had not proceeded many steps when, carried away by his grief, he could not repress a heart-rending cry of, "Andrée! Andrée!"

At that moment there passed by him, walking with hasty steps, a man already advanced in years, wearing a gray cloth coat and milled stockings, his right hand resting on a stick, while with the left he held one of those lanterns made of a candle enclosed in oiled paper. Hearing Philippe's cry of grief, he understood his suffering, and murmured: "Poor young man!" But as the young man seemed to have come for the same purpose as himself, he passed on. Then suddenly, as if he reproached himself for having passed unheeding by so much suffering without attempting to console it, "Monsieur," said he, "pardon me for mingling my grief with yours; but those who are struck by the same blow should lean on one

another for support. Besides, you may be useful to me. You have already sought for a considerable time, I see, as your light is nearly extinguished, and you must therefore be acquainted with the most fatal localities of the Place."

"Oh, yes, Monsieur, I know them!"

"Well, I also seek some one."

"Then look first in the great ditch; you will find more than fifty corpses there."

"Fifty! Just Heaven! So many victims killed at a fête!"

"So many! Monsieur, I have already looked at a thousand faces, and have not yet found my sister."

"Your sister?"

"It was yonder, in that direction, that she was. I lost her near a bench. I have found the place since, but no trace of her was visible. I am about to resume the search, beginning with the bastion."

"In what direction did the crowd move, Monsieur?"

"Toward the new buildings; toward the Rue de la Madeleine."

"Then it must have been in this direction?"

"Yes, and I therefore searched on this side first; but there were terrible eddies. Besides, although the tide flowed as I have said, a poor bewildered woman soon loses her senses in such a scene; she knows not whither she goes, and endeavors to escape in any direction."

"Monsieur, it is not probable that she would struggle against the current. I am about to search the streets on this side; come with me, and both working together, perhaps we shall succeed."

"And whom do you seek? Your son?" asked Philippe, timidly.

"No, Monsieur, but a child whom I had almost adopted."

"And you allowed him to come alone?"

"Oh! he is a young man eighteen or nineteen years old. He is master of his own actions; and as he wished to come, I could not hinder him. Besides, we were far from expecting this horrible catastrophe! But your light is going out."

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Come with me; I will light you."

"Thank you, you are very good; but I fear I shall incommode you."

"Oh! do not fear, since I must search at any rate. The poor child generally came home very punctually," continued the old man, proceeding in the direction of the streets; "but this evening I felt a sort of foreboding. I waited for him; it was already eleven o'clock when my wife heard of the misfortunes of this fête from a neighbor. I waited two hours longer, still hoping that he would return. Then, as he did not appear, I thought it would be base and cowardly in me to sleep without having news of him."

"Then we are going toward the houses?" asked the young man.

"Yes; you said the crowd must have rushed in this direction, and it certainly has done so. The unfortunate boy had doubtless been carried this way also! He is from the provinces, and is alike ignorant of the usages and of the localities of this great town. Probably this was the first time he had ever been in the Place Louis XV."

"Alas! my sister also is from the provinces, Monsieur."

"What a fearful sight!" said the old man, turning away from a group of corpses heaped together.

"Yet it is there we must look," replied the young man, resolutely holding his light over the mound of dead bodies.

"Oh! I shudder to look at it, for, simple man that I

am, the sight of destruction causes in me an unconquerable horror."

"I had the same horror; but this evening I have served my apprenticeship! Hold, here is a young man of about eighteen years; he has been suffocated, for I see no wounds. Is it he whom you seek?"

The old man made an effort, and held his lantern close to the body. "No, Monsieur," said he, "no; my child is younger, has black hair and a pale complexion."

"Alas! all are pale to-night," replied Philippe.

"Oh! see," said the old man, "here we are, at the foot of the Garde-Meuble. Look at these tokens of the struggle. This blood upon the walls, these shreds of garments upon the iron bars, these torn dresses on the points of the railing!"

"It was here; it was certainly here," murmured Philippe.

"What sufferings!"

"Ah! my God!"

"What?"

"Something white under these corpses! My sister wore a white dress. Lend me your lamp, Monsieur, I beseech you."

In fact, Philippe had seen and snatched a shred of white cloth. He let go his hold, having but one hand, to take the lamp.

"It is a fragment of a woman's dress, held firmly in a young man's hand," he cried, — "of a white dress like my sister's. Oh! Andrée! Andrée!" And the young man uttered heart-rending sobs.

The old man now approached. "It is he!" he exclaimed, opening his arms.

This exclamation attracted the young man's attention. "Gilbert!" exclaimed Philippe in his turn.

"You know Gilbert, Monsieur?"

"Is it Gilbert whom you seek?"

These two questions were uttered simultaneously. The old man seized Gilbert's hand, — it was as cold as death. Philippe opened the young man's dress, pushed aside the shirt, and placed his hand upon his heart. "Poor Gilbert!" said he.

"My dear child!" sobbed the old man.

"He breathes, he lives! He lives, I tell you!" exclaimed Philippe.

"Oh! do you think so?"

"I am certain of it; his heart beats."

"It is true," replied the old man. "Help! help! There is a surgeon yonder."

"Oh! let us succor him ourselves, Monsieur; just now I asked that man for help, and he refused me."

"He must help my child!" cried the old man, indignantly. "Assist me, Monsieur, to carry Gilbert to him."

"I have only one arm, but it is at your service, Monsieur," replied Philippe.

"And I, old as I am, feel strong again! Come!"

The old man seized Gilbert by the shoulders; the young man took his two feet under his right arm, and in this manner they advanced toward the group in the midst of which the surgeon was operating.

"Help, help!" cried the old man.

"The men of the people first!" replied the surgeon, faithful to his maxim, and sure, each time he replied thus, of exciting a murmur of applause among the group which surrounded him.

"It is a man of the people whom I am bringing," replied the old man with vehemence, but beginning to share in the general admiration which the firm and resolute tone of the young operator excited.

"After the women, then," said the surgeon; "men have more strength to support pain than women."

"A simple bleeding will suffice, Monsieur," replied the old man.

"Oh! is it you again, my young nobleman?" said the surgeon, perceiving Philippe before noticing the old man.

Philippe did not reply. The old man thought that these words were addressed to him. "I am not a nobleman," said he, "I am a man of the people; my name is Jean-Jacques Rousseau."

The doctor gave a cry of astonishment, and making an imperative gesture, "Give place," said he, "to the man of nature! Make room for the emancipator of the human race! Place for the citizen of Geneva!"

"Thanks, Monsieur," said Rousseau, "thanks!"

"Has any accident happened to you?" asked the young doctor.

"Not to me, but to this poor child. See!"

"Ah! you too," cried the physician, "you too, like myself, represent the cause of humanity."

Rousseau, deeply moved by this unexpected triumph, could only stammer forth some almost unintelligible words. Philippe, dumb with astonishment at finding himself in the presence of the philosopher whom he admired so highly, remained standing apart. Those who stood around assisted Rousseau to lay the unconscious Gilbert upon the table.

It was at this moment that the old man glanced at the person whose assistance he was imploring. He was a young man of about Gilbert's age, but his features presented no appearance of youth. His sallow complexion was withered, like that of an old man; his heavy and drooping eyelids covered an eye like a serpent's, and his mouth was distorted like that of an epileptic in a fit.

His sleeves turned back to the elbow, his arms covered with blood, surrounded by lifeless and bleeding limbs, he seemed more like an executioner at work, and glorying in his task, than a physician accomplishing his sad and holy mission.

Nevertheless, Rousseau's name had so much influence over him as to cause him to lay aside for an instant his customary rudeness; he gently opened Gilbert's sleeve, tied a band of linen round his arm, and opened the vein. The blood flowed at first drop by drop; but after some moments the pure and generous current of youth spouted forth freely.

"Ha! we shall save him," said the operator. "But he will require great care; his chest has been rudely pressed."

"I have now to thank you, Monsieur," said Rousseau, "and praise you, not for the exclusive preference you show for the poor, but for your care and kindness toward them. All men are brothers."

"Even the noble, even the aristocrats, even the rich?" asked the surgeon, his piercing eyes flashing beneath his heavy eyelids.

"Even the noble, the aristocrats, the rich, when they suffer," said Rousseau.

"Monsieur," said the operator, "excuse me. I am from Baudry, near Neufchâtel; I am a Switzer like yourself, and therefore somewhat democratic."

"A countryman," cried Rousseau, "a native of Switzerland? Your name, Monsieur, if you please?"

"An obscure name, Monsieur, — the name of a retiring man who devotes his life to study, waiting till he may, like yourself, devote it to the good of humanity. My name is Jean-Paul Marat."

"Thanks, Monsieur Marat," said Rousseau. "But while enlightening the people as to their rights, do not excite

them to vengeance; for if they should ever revenge themselves, you will perhaps yourself be terrified at their reprisals."

Marat smiled a fearful smile. "Oh! if that day should happen during my life!" said he; "if I could only have the happiness to see that day!"

Rousseau heard these words, and alarmed at the tone in which they were uttered, as a traveller trembles at the first mutterings of the far-distant thunder, he took Gilbert in his arms and attempted to carry him away.

"Two volunteers to help Monsieur Rousseau! Two men of the people!" cried the surgeon.

"Here! here! here!" cried twenty voices at once.

Rousseau had only to choose; he selected two vigorous porters, who took the youth up in their arms. As he was leaving the Place, he passed Philippe. "Here, Monsieur," said he, "I have no more use for the lantern; take it."

"Thank you, Monsieur," said Philippe; "thank you." He seized the lantern; and while Rousseau once more took the way to the Rue Plastrière, he continued his search.

"Poor young man!" murmured Rousseau, turning back, and seeing Philippe disappear in the blocked-up and encumbered streets. He proceeded on his way shuddering, for he still heard the shrill voice of the surgeon echoing over the field of blood, and crying: "The men of the people! None but the men of the people! Woe to the noble, to the rich, to the aristocrats!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE RETURN.

WHILE the countless catastrophes we have mentioned were rapidly succeeding each other, Monsieur de Taverney escaped all these dangers as if by a miracle. Unable to oppose any physical resistance to the devouring force which swept away everything in its passage, but at the same time calm and collected, he had succeeded in maintaining his position in the centre of a group which was rolling onward toward the Rue de la Madeleine. This group, crushed against the parapet walls of the Place, ground against the angles of the Garde-Meuble, had left on either side a long trail of wounded and dead; but, decimated as it was, it had yet succeeded in reaching a place of safety. When this was accomplished, the handful of men and women remaining, dispersed themselves over the boulevards with cries of joy. Monsieur de Taverney found himself, like his companions, completely out of danger.

What we are about to say would be difficult to believe, had we not already so frankly sketched the character of the baron. During the whole of this fearful passage, Monsieur de Taverney — may God forgive him! — had absolutely thought only of himself. Besides that he was not of a very affectionate disposition, he was a man of action; and in the great crises of life such characters always put into practice Cæsar's maxim, "Age quod agis." We shall not say, therefore, that Monsieur de Taverney was utterly

selfish; we shall merely admit that he was absent-minded. But once upon the pavement of the boulevards, once more master of his actions, sensible of having escaped from death to life, satisfied, in short, of his safety, the baron uttered a loud cry of satisfaction, which was followed by another cry. That other cry was not so loud as the first, but it was a cry of grief. "My daughter!" said he, "my daughter!" and he remained motionless, his hands fell by his side, his eyes were fixed and glassy, while he searched his memory for all the particulars of that separation.

"Poor dear man!" murmured some compassionate women.

A group had collected around the baron, ready to pity, but above all to question. But Monsieur de Taverney had no popular instincts; he felt ill at ease in the centre of this compassionate group, and making a successful effort, he broke through them, and, we say it to his praise, made a few steps toward the Place Louis XV. But these few steps were the unreflecting movement of paternal love, which is never entirely extinguished in the heart of man. Reason immediately came to the baron's aid and arrested his steps.

We will follow, with the reader's permission, the course of the baron's reasoning. First, the impossibility of returning to the Place Louis XV. occurred to him. In it there was only confusion and death, and the crowds which were still rushing from it would render any attempt to pass through them as futile as for the swimmer to seek to ascend the Fall of the Rhine at Schaffhausen. Besides, even if the divine arm should enable him to reach the Place, how could he hope to find one woman among a hundred thousand women? And why should he expose himself again, and fruitlessly, to a death from which he had so miraculously escaped?

Then came hope, — that light which ever gilds the clouds of the darkest night. Was not Andrée near Philippe, resting on his arm, protected by his manly strength and his brotherly heart? That he, the baron, a feeble and tottering old man, should have been carried away, was very natural; but that Philippe, with his ardent, vigorous, hopeful nature, — Philippe, with his arm of iron, — Philippe, responsible for his sister's safety, should be so, was impossible. Philippe had struggled, and must have conquered.

The baron, like all selfish men, endowed Philippe with those qualities which his selfishness denied to himself, but which nevertheless he sought in others, — strength, generosity, and valor. For one selfish man regards all other selfish men as rivals and enemies, who rob him of those advantages which he believes he has the right to reap from society.

Monsieur de Taverney, being thus reassured by the force of his own arguments, concluded that Philippe, naturally, must have saved his sister; that he had perhaps lost some time in seeking his father to save him also, but that probably, nay certainly, he had taken the way to the Rue Coq-Héron, to bring back Andrée, who must be somewhat dazed by all that tumult. He therefore wheeled round, and descending the Rue des Capucines, he gained the Place des Conquêtes, or Louis le Grand, now called the Place des Victoires.

But scarcely had the baron arrived within twenty paces of the hôtel, when Nicole, placed as sentinel on the threshold, where she was chattering with some companions, exclaimed: "And Monsieur Philippe? and Mademoiselle Andrée? What has become of them?" For all Paris was already informed by the earliest fugitives of the catastrophe, which their terror had even exaggerated.

"Oh, heavens!" cried the baron, a little agitated, "have they not returned, Nicole?"

"No, no, Monsieur, they have not been seen."

"They most probably have been obliged to make a détour," replied the baron, trembling more and more in proportion as the calculations of his logic were demolished; and he remained standing in the street, waiting in his turn, with Nicole, who was sobbing, and La Brie, who raised his clasped hands to heaven.

"Ah, here is Monsieur Philippe!" exclaimed Nicole, in a tone of indescribable terror, for Philippe was alone.

And in the darkness of the night Philippe was seen running toward them, breathless and despairing. "Is my sister here?" he cried, while yet at a distance, as soon as he could see the group assembled at the door of the hôtel.

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed the baron, pale and trembling.

"Andrée! Andrée!" cried the young man, approaching nearer and nearer, "where is Andrée?"

"We have not seen her; she is not here, Monsieur Philippe. Oh, heavens! my dear young lady!" cried Nicole, bursting into tears.

"And yet you have returned?" said the baron, in a tone of anger, which must seem to the reader the more unjust that we have already made him acquainted with the secrets of his logic.

Philippe, instead of replying, approached and showed his bleeding face and his arm, broken and hanging at his side like a withered branch.

"Alas! alas!" sighed the old man, "Andrée! my poor Andrée!" and he sank back upon the stone bench beside the door.

"I will find her, living or dead!" exclaimed Philippe,

gloomily. And he again started off with feverish activity. Without slackening his pace, he secured his left arm in the opening of his vest, for this useless limb would have fettered his movements in the crowd, and if he had had a hatchet at that moment, he would have struck it off. It was then that he met on that fatal field of the dead, Rousseau, Gilbert, and the fierce and gloomy operator, who, covered with blood, seemed rather an infernal demon presiding over the massacre than a beneficent genius appearing to succor and to help. During a great portion of the night Philippe wandered over the Place Louis XV., unable to tear himself away from the walls of the Garde-Meuble, near which Gilbert had been found, and incessantly gazing at the piece of white muslin which the young man had held firmly grasped in his hand.

But when the first light of day appeared, worn-out, ready to sink among the heaps of corpses scarcely paler than himself, seized with a strange giddiness, and hoping, as his father had hoped, that Andrée might have returned or been carried back to the house, Philippe bent his steps once more toward the Rue Coq-Héron. While still at a distance he saw the same group he had left there; and understanding at once that Andrée had not returned, he stopped. The baron, on his side, had recognized his son.

"Well?" he cried.

"What! has my sister not returned?" asked the young man.

"Alas!" cried, with one voice, the baron, Nicole, and La Brie.

"Nothing, — no news; no information; no hope?"

"Nothing?"

Philippe fell upon the stone bench of the hôtel; the baron uttered a savage exclamation.

At this very moment a carriage appeared at the end of

the street; it approached slowly, and stopped in front of the hôtel. A woman's head was seen through the door, leaning over, as if she had fainted. Philippe, roused by this sight, hastened toward the vehicle. The door of the coach opened, and a man alighted, bearing the senseless form of Andrée in his arms.

"Dead, dead! They bring us her corpse!" cried Philippe, falling on his knees.

"Dead!" stammered the baron, "oh, Monsieur, is she indeed dead?"

"I think not, gentlemen," calmly replied the man who carried Andrée. "Mademoiselle de Taverney, I hope, is only in a swoon."

"Oh, the sorcerer, the sorcerer!" cried the baron.

"The Comte de Balsamo!" murmured Philippe.

"Myself, Monsieur, and truly happy in having recognized Mademoiselle de Taverney in the frightful mêlée."

"Where were you, Monsieur?" asked Philippe.

"Near the Garde-Meuble."

"Yes," said Philippe. Then his expression of joy changing suddenly to one of gloomy distrust, "You bring her back very late, Count," said he.

"Monsieur," replied Balsamo, without embarrassment, "you may easily comprehend the difficulties of my situation. I did not know your sister's address, and I had no resource but to take her to the Marquise de Savigny's, a friend of mine who lives near the royal stables. Then this honest fellow whom you see, and who assisted me to rescue the young lady — Come hither, Comtois." Balsamo accompanied these last words by a sign, and a man in the royal livery alighted from the coach. "Then," continued Balsamo, "this worthy fellow, who belongs to the royal stables, recognized the young lady, having one evening

driven her from Muette to your hôtel. Mademoiselle owes this lucky recognition to her marvellous beauty. I made him accompany me in the coach, and I have the honor to restore Mademoiselle de Taverney to you with all the respect due to her, and less injured than you think;" and as he concluded, he gave the young girl into the care of her father and Nicole.

For the first time the baron felt a tear trembling on his eyelids; and though no doubt inwardly surprised at this mark of feeling, he permitted it to roll unheeded down his wrinkled cheeks. Philippe held out to Balsamo his only free hand. "Monsieur," he said, "you know my name and my address. Give me an opportunity of showing my gratitude for the service you have rendered us."

"I have only fulfilled a duty," replied Balsamo. "Do I not owe you hospitality?" And bowing low, he made a few steps to retire, without replying to the baron's invitation to enter. But returning, — "Pardon me," said he, "but I omitted to give you the exact address of the Marquise de Savigny. She lives in the Rue St. Honoré, near the Feuillants. I thought it necessary to give you this information, in case Mademoiselle de Taverney should think proper to call on her."

There was in this precision of details, in this accumulation of proofs, a delicacy which touched Philippe deeply, and affected even the baron.

"Monsieur," said the baron, "my daughter owes her life to you."

"I know it, Monsieur, and I feel proud and happy at the thought," replied Balsamo; and this time, followed by Comtois, who refused Philippe's proffered purse, he entered the carriage, which drove off rapidly.

Almost at the same moment, and as if Balsamo's departure had put an end to her swoon, Andrée opened her

eyes; but she remained for some moments mute, bewildered, and with a wild and staring look.

"Oh, heavens!" murmured Philippe, "has Providence only half restored her to us? Has her reason fled?"

Andrée seemed to comprehend these words, and shook her head; but she remained silent, and as if under the influence of a sort of ecstasy. She was still standing, and one of her arms was extended in the direction of the street by which Balsamo had disappeared.

"Come, come!" said the baron, "it is time to put an end to all this. Assist Andrée into the house, Philippe."

The young man supported Andrée with his uninjured arm, Nicole sustained her on the other side; and walking on, but after the manner of a sleeping person, she entered the hôtel and gained her apartments. There, for the first time, the power of speech returned.

"Philippe! My father!" said she.

"She recognizes us! she knows us again!" exclaimed Philippe.

"Of course I know you again; but, O heavens! what has happened?" And Andrée closed her eyes, not now in a swoon, but in a calm and peaceful slumber. Nicole, left alone with her young mistress, undressed her and put her in bed.

When Philippe returned to his apartments he found there a physician, whom the thoughtful La Brie had run to summon as soon as the anxiety on Andrée's account had subsided. The doctor examined Philippe's arm. It was not broken, but only dislocated; and a skilful compression replaced the shoulder in the socket from which it had been moved. After the operation Philippe, who was still uneasy on his sister's account, conducted the doctor to her bedside. The doctor felt her pulse, listened to her breath-

ing, and smiled. "Your sister sleeps as calmly as an infant," said he. "Let her sleep, Chevalier; there is nothing to do."

As for the baron, sufficiently reassured on his children's account, he had long been sound asleep.

CHAPTER XXV.

MONSIEUR DE JUSSIEU.

We must again transport the reader to the house in the Rue Plastrière to which Monsieur de Sartines had sent his agent; and there on the morning of the 31st of May we shall once more find Gilbert, stretched upon a mattress in Thérèse's room, and standing around him Thérèse and Rousseau, with several of their neighbors, contemplating this single result of the terrible event, at the horror of which all Paris still shuddered.

Gilbert, pale and bleeding, opened his eyes; and as soon as he regained his consciousness, he endeavored to raise himself, and looked round as if he were still in the Place Louis XV. A profound anxiety, then a great joy were pictured in his features; then came a second cloud, effacing the joy.

"Are you suffering, my dear child?" inquired Rousseau, taking his hand affectionately.

"Oh! who, then, has saved me?" asked Gilbert. "Who thought of me, lonely and friendless that I am?"

"What saved you, my child, was the happy chance that you were not yet dead. He who thought of you is He who thinks of all."

"No matter; it was very imprudent," grumbled Thérèse, "to go into such a crowd."

"Yes, yes, it was very imprudent," repeated all the neighbors, with one voice.

"Why, ladies," interrupted Rousseau, "there is no imprudence when there is no manifest danger; and there is no manifest danger in going to see fireworks. When danger arrives under such circumstances, you do not call the sufferer imprudent, but unfortunate. Any of us present would have done the same."

Gilbert looked round, and seeing himself in Rousseau's apartment, endeavored to speak; but the effort was too much for him, the blood gushed from his mouth and nostrils, and he sank back insensible. Rousseau had been warned by the surgeon of the Place Louis XV., and was therefore not alarmed. He had expected that result, and had placed the invalid on a temporary mattress without sheets. "Now," said he to Thérèse, "you will be able to put the poor lad to bed."

"Where?"

"Why, here, in my bed."

Gilbert heard these words. Extreme weakness alone prevented his replying immediately; but he made a violent effort, and opening his eyes he said, slowly and painfully, "No, no; upstairs."

"You wish to return to your own room?"

"Yes, yes, if you please;" and he expressed with his eyes, rather than with his tongue, this wish, dictated by a recollection still more powerful than pain, and which with him seemed to survive even his consciousness.

Rousseau, whose own sensibility was so extreme, doubtless understood him, for he added: "It is well, my child; we will carry you up. He does not wish to inconvenience us," said he to Thérèse, who had warmly applauded the resolution. It was therefore decided that Gilbert should be instantly installed in the attic he preferred.

Toward the middle of the day Rousseau came to pass by the bedside of his disciple the hours he usually spent in

collecting his favorite plants; and the young man, feeling a little better, related to him, in a low and almost inaudible voice, the details of the catastrophe. But he did not mention the real reason why he went to see the fireworks. Curiosity alone, he said, led him to the Place Louis XV. Rousseau could not suspect anything further, unless he had been a sorcerer, and he therefore expressed no surprise at Gilbert's story, but contented himself with the questions he had already put, and only recommended patience. He did not speak of the fragment of muslin which had been found in Gilbert's hand, and of which Philippe had taken possession. This conversation, which on both sides bordered so narrowly on the real feelings of each, was no less attractive on that account; and they were still deeply absorbed in it, when suddenly Thérèse's step was heard upon the landing.

"Jacques!" said she; "Jacques!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Some prince coming to visit me in my turn," said Gilbert, with a feeble smile.

"Jacques!" cried Thérèse, advancing and still calling.

"Well! What do you want with me?"

Thérèse entered. "Monsieur de Jussieu is below," said she; "he heard that you were in the crowd during that night, and he has come to see if you have been hurt."

"The good Jussieu!" said Rousseau. "Excellent man, like all those who, from taste or from necessity, commune with Nature, the source of all good. Be calm; do not move, Gilbert; I will return."

"Yes, thank you," said the young man.

Rousseau left the room; but scarcely had he gone, when Gilbert, raising himself as well as he could, dragged himself toward the skylight from which Andrée's window could be seen. It was a most painful effort for a young man

without strength, almost without the power of thought, to raise himself upon the stool, lift the sash of the skylight, and prop himself upon the edge of the roof. Gilbert nevertheless succeeded in effecting this; but once there, his eyes swam, his hand shook, the blood rushed to his lips, and he fell heavily upon the floor. At that moment the door of the garret was opened, and Rousseau entered, followed by Jussieu, to whom he was paying great civility.

"Take care, my dear philosopher; stoop a little here," said Rousseau. "There is a step there, — we are not entering a palace."

"Thank you; I have good eyes and stout limbs," replied the learned botanist.

"Here is some one come to visit you, my little Gilbert," said Rousseau, looking toward the bed. "Oh, good heavens! where is he? He has got up, the unfortunate lad!" and Rousseau, seeing the window open, began to vent his displeasure in affectionate grumblings.

Gilbert raised himself with difficulty, and said, in an almost inaudible voice, "I wanted air."

It was impossible to scold him, for suffering was plainly depicted in his pale and altered features.

"In fact," interrupted Monsieur de Jussieu, "it is very warm here. Come, young man, let me feel your pulse; I am also a doctor."

"And better than many regular physicians," said Rousseau; "for you are a healer of the mind as well as of the body."

"It is too much honor," murmured Gilbert, feebly, endeavoring to shroud himself from view on his humble pallet.

"Monsieur de Jussieu insisted on visiting you," said Rousseau, "and I accepted his offer. Well, dear Doctor, what do you think of his chest?"

The skilful anatomist felt the bones, and sounded the cavity by an attentive auscultation. "The vital parts are uninjured," said he. "But who has pressed you in his arms with so much force?"

"Alas! Monsieur, it was Death!" said Gilbert.

Rousseau looked at the young man with astonishment.

"Oh! you are bruised, my child, greatly bruised," said Monsieur de Jussieu; "but tonics, air, leisure, will make all that disappear."

"No leisure; I cannot afford it," said the young man, looking at Rousseau.

"What does he mean?" asked Jussieu.

"Gilbert is a determined worker, my dear Monsieur," replied Rousseau.

"That may be; but he cannot possibly work for a day or two yet."

"To obtain a livelihood," said Gilbert, "one must work every day; for every day one eats."

"Oh! you will not consume much food, and your medicine will not cost much."

"However little they cost, Monsieur," said Gilbert, "I never receive alms."

"You are mad," said Rousseau, "and you exaggerate. I tell you that you must be governed by Monsieur de Jussieu's orders, who will be your doctor in spite of you. Would you believe it?" continued he, addressing Monsieur de Jussieu, "he had begged me not to send for a physician."

"Why?"

"Because it would have cost me money, and he is proud."

"But," replied Monsieur de Jussieu, gazing at Gilbert's fine, expressive features with growing interest, "no matter how proud he is, he cannot accomplish impossibilities.

Do you think yourself capable of working, when you fell down with the mere exertion of going to the window?"

"It is true," sighed Gilbert, "I am weak; I know it."

"Well, then, take repose, and, above all, mentally. You are the guest of a man whom all men obey, except his guest."

Rousseau, delighted at this delicate compliment from so great a man, took his hand and pressed it.

"And then," continued Monsieur de Jussieu, "you will become an object of particular care to the king and the princes."

"I!" exclaimed Gilbert.

"You, a poor victim of that unfortunate evening. The dauphin, when he heard the news, uttered cries of grief; and the dauphiness, who was going to Marly, remained at Trianon to be nearer the unfortunate sufferers."

"Ah, really?" said Rousseau.

"Yes, my dear philosopher; and nothing is spoken of but the letter written by the dauphin to Monsieur de Sartines."

"I have not heard of it."

"It is at once simple and touching. The dauphin receives a monthly pension of two thousand crowns. This morning his month's income had not been paid. The prince walked to and fro quite alarmed, asked for the treasurer several times, and as soon as the latter brought him the money, sent it instantly to Paris with two charming lines to Monsieur de Sartines, who has just shown them to me."

"Ah! then you have seen Monsieur de Sartines to-day?" said Rousseau, with a kind of uneasiness, or rather distrust.

"Yes; I have just left him," replied Monsieur de Jussieu, rather embarrassed. "I had to ask him for some

seeds. So that," added he, quickly, "the dauphiness remained at Versailles to tend her sick and wounded."

"Her sick and wounded?" asked Rousseau.

"Yes; Monsieur Gilbert is not the only one who has suffered. This time the people have contributed only a portion of the victims of the catastrophe; it is said that there are among the wounded many belonging to noble families."

Gilbert listened with inexpressible eagerness and anxiety. It seemed to him that every moment the name of Andrée would be pronounced by the illustrious naturalist. Monsieur de Jussieu rose.

"So our consultation is over?" said Rousseau.

"And henceforward our science will be useless with regard to this young invalid; air, moderate exercise, the woods — Ah! by the by, I was forgetting —"

"What?"

"Next Sunday I am to make a botanical excursion to the forest of Marly; will you accompany me, my illustrious colleague?"

"Oh!" replied Rousseau, "say rather your unworthy admirer."

"*Parbleu!* that will be a fine opportunity for giving our invalid an airing. Bring him."

"So far?"

"The distance is nothing; besides, I shall go in my carriage as far as Bougival, and I can take you with me. We will go by the Princess's Road to Luciennes, and from there proceed to Marly. Botanists stop every moment; our invalid will carry our camp-stools. You and I will gather samples; he will gather health."

"What an amiable man you are, my dear Jussieu!" said Rousseau.

"Never mind; it is for my own interest. You have

in hand, I know, a great work upon mosses, and I am feeling my way a little on the same subject; you will guide me."

"Oh!" exclaimed Rousseau, whose satisfaction was apparent in spite of himself.

"And when there," added the botanist, "we will have a little breakfast in the open air, and will enjoy the shade and the beautiful flowers. It is settled?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"For Sunday, then?"

"Delightful! It seems to me as if I were fifteen again. I revel beforehand in all the pleasure I have in prospect," replied Rousseau, with almost childish satisfaction.

"And you, my young friend, must get stronger on your legs in the mean time."

Gilbert stammered out some words of thanks, which Monsieur de Jussieu did not hear, and the two botanists left Gilbert alone with his thoughts, and especially with his fears.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LIFE RETURNS.

In the mean time, while Rousseau believed his invalid to be on the highroad to health, and while Thérèse informed all her neighbors that, thanks to the prescriptions of the learned doctor, Monsieur de Jussieu, Gilbert was entirely out of danger, — during this period of general confidence the young man ran into a worse danger than he had yet encountered through his obstinacy and his perpetual reveries.

Rousseau could not be so confident but that he entertained in his inmost thoughts a distrust solidly founded on philosophical reasonings. Knowing Gilbert to be in love, and having caught him in open rebellion to medical authority, he judged that he would again commit the same faults if he gave him too much liberty. Therefore, like a good father, he had locked the door of Gilbert's attic more carefully than ever, tacitly permitting him meanwhile to go to the window, but carefully preventing his crossing the threshold.

It may easily be imagined what rage this solicitude, which changed his garret into a prison, aroused in Gilbert's breast, and what hosts of projects crowded his teeming brain. To many minds constraint is fruitful in inventions. Gilbert now thought only of Andrée, of the happiness of seeing and watching over the progress of her convalescence, even from afar. But Andrée did not appear at the windows of the pavilion, and Gilbert, when

he fixed his ardent and searching looks on the opposite apartments, or surveyed every nook and corner of the building, could see only Nicole carrying the invalid's draught on a porcelain plate, or Monsieur de Taverney walking in the garden and vigorously taking snuff, as if to clear and refresh his intellect. Still these details tranquillized him, for they betokened illness, but not death.

"There," thought he, "beyond that door, behind that blind, breathes, sighs, and suffers, she whom I adore, whom I idolize, — she, the very sight of whom would cause the perspiration to stand upon my forehead and make my limbs tremble; she to whose existence mine is forever riveted; she for whom alone I breathe and live!"

And then, leaning forward out of his window, — so that the inquisitive Chon thought, twenty times in an hour, that he would throw himself out, — Gilbert, with his practised eye, took the measure of the partitions, of the floors, of the depth of the pavilion, and constructed an exact plan of them in his brain. There Monsieur de Taverney slept; there must be the kitchen; there Philippe's apartments; there the cabinet occupied by Nicole; and, last of all, there must be Andrée's chamber, — the sanctuary at the door of which he would have given his life to remain for one day kneeling.

This sanctuary, according to Gilbert's plan, was a large apartment on the ground-floor, guarded by an antechamber, from which opened a small cabinet with a glass door, which should be Nicole's sleeping-chamber.

"Oh!" exclaimed the excited youth, in his fits of jealous fury, "how happy are the beings who are privileged to walk in the garden on which my window and that of the stairway look! How happy those thoughtless mortals who tread the gravel of the parterre! For there,

during the silence of night, may be heard Mademoiselle Andrée's plaints and sighs."

Between the formation of a wish and its accomplishment there is a wide gulf; but fertile imaginations can throw a bridge across. They can find the real in the impossible; they know how to cross the broadest rivers and scale the highest mountains.

For the first few days Gilbert contented himself with wishing. Then he reflected that these much-envied, happy beings were simple mortals, endowed, as he was, with limbs to tread the soil of the garden, and with arms to open the doors. Then by degrees he pictured to himself the happiness there would be in secretly gliding into this forbidden house, — in pressing his ears against the Venetian blinds, through which the sounds from the interior were, as it were, filtered. With Gilbert, wishing did not long suffice; the fulfilment must be immediate.

Besides, his strength returned rapidly: youth is fruitful and rich. At the end of three days, his veins still throbbing with feverish excitement, Gilbert felt himself as strong as he had ever been in his life. He calculated that as Rousseau had locked him in, one of the greatest difficulties — that of obtaining an entrance into the hôtel of the Taverneys by the street-door — was placed out of the question; for as the entrance door opened upon the Rue Coq-Héron, and as Gilbert was locked up in the Rue Plastrière, he could not of course reach any street, and had therefore no need to open any doors. There remained the windows. That of his garret looked down upon a perpendicular wall of forty-eight feet in height. No one, unless he were drunk or mad, would attempt to descend it. "Oh! those doors are happy inventions after all," thought he, clenching his hands; "and yet Monsieur Rousseau, a philosopher, locks them!"

To break the padlock! That would be easily done; but when done, adieu to the hospitable roof which had sheltered him.

To escape from Luciennes, from the Rue Plastrière, from Taverney, — always to escape, — would be to render himself unable to look any one in the face without fearing to meet the reproach of ingratitude.

"No!" thought Gilbert, "Monsieur Rousseau shall know nothing of it." Leaning out of his window, he continued: "With my hands and my legs, those instruments granted to free men by Nature, I will creep along the tiles, and, keeping in the gutter — which is narrow indeed, but straight, and therefore the direct road from one end to the other — I shall arrive, if I get on so far, at the skylight parallel to this. Now, that skylight belongs to the stairs. If I do not arrive, I shall fall into the garden; that will make a noise, — people will hasten from the pavilion, will raise me up, will recognize me, and I shall die nobly, poetically, pitied! That will be glorious!

"If I arrive, as everything leads me to believe I shall, I will creep in through the skylight over the stairs, and descend bare-footed to the first story, the window of which also opens in the garden, at fifteen feet from the ground. I jump. Alas, my strength, my activity are gone! It is true that there is a trellis to assist me. Yes, but this trellis, with its rotten framework, will break; I shall tumble down, not killed nobly and poetically, but whitened with plaster, my clothes torn, ashamed, and looking as if I had come to rob the orchard! Odious thought! Monsieur de Taverney will order the porter to flog me, or La Brie to pull my ears.

"No! I have here twenty strings, which, twisted together, will make a rope, according to Monsieur Rousseau's saying, that many straws make a sheaf. I will borrow

all these strings from Madame Thérèse for one night; I will make knots in them; and when I have reached the window on the first-floor, I will tie the rope to the little balcony, or even to the lead, and slip down into the garden."

When Gilbert had inspected the spout, separated and measured the cords, and calculated the height by his eye, he felt himself strong and determined. He twisted the pieces of twine together and made a tolerably strong rope of them, then tried its strength by hanging to a beam in his garret, and, happy to find that he had spat blood only once during his efforts, he decided upon undertaking the nocturnal expedition.

The better to hoodwink Monsieur Jacques and Thérèse, he counterfeited illness, and kept his bed until two o'clock, at which time Rousseau went out for his after-dinner walk, from which he usually did not return till the evening. When Rousseau paid a visit to his attic before setting out, Gilbert announced to him his wish to sleep until the next morning; to which Rousseau replied that as he had made an engagement to take supper away from home that evening, he was happy to find Gilbert inclined to rest. With these mutual explanations they separated.

When Rousseau had gone, Gilbert brought out his cords again, and this time he twisted them permanently. He again examined the spout and the tiles; then placed himself at the window to keep watch on the garden until evening.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE AERIAL JOURNEY.

GILBERT was now prepared for his entrance into the enemy's camp, — for thus he mentally termed Monsieur de Taverney's grounds, — and from his window was exploring the garden with the care and attention of a skilful strategist who is about to give battle, when in that calm and silent mansion an incident occurred which attracted the philosopher's attention.

A stone flew over the garden wall and struck at an angle at the side of the house. Gilbert, who had already learned that there can be no effect without a cause, determined, having seen the effect, to discover the cause. But although he leaned out as far as possible, he could not discover the person in the street who had thrown the stone. However, he immediately comprehended that this manœuvre had reference to an event which just then took place, — one of the outside shutters of the ground-floor opened cautiously, and through the opening appeared Nicole's head.

On seeing Nicole, Gilbert made a plunge back into his garret, but without losing sight of the alert young girl. The latter, after throwing a stealthy glance at all the windows, particularly at those of the pavilion, emerged from her hiding-place and ran toward the garden, as if going to the trellis where some lace was drying in the sun. It was on the path which led toward the trellis that the stone had fallen, and neither Nicole nor Gilbert lost sight of it.

Gilbert saw her kick this stone — which for the moment became of such great importance — before her several times; and she continued this manœuvre until she reached the flower-border in which the trellis stood. Once there, Nicole raised her hands to take down the lace, let fall some of it, and in picking it up again seized the stone.

As yet Gilbert could understand nothing of this movement; but seeing Nicole pick up the stone as a greedy school-boy picks up a nut, and unroll a slip of paper which was tied round it, he at once guessed the degree of importance which was attached to this aerolite. It was, in fact, neither more nor less than a note which Nicole had found rolled round the stone. The cunning girl quickly unfolded it, read it, and put it into her pocket, and then immediately discovered that there was no more occasion for looking at the lace; it was dry.

Meanwhile Gilbert shook his head, saying to himself, with the blind selfishness of men who entertain a bad opinion of women, that Nicole was in reality a viciously inclined person, and that he (Gilbert) had performed an act of sound and moral policy in breaking off so suddenly and so boldly with a girl who had letters thrown to her over the wall. In reasoning thus, Gilbert, who had just before pondered so wisely on causes and effects, condemned an effect of which perhaps he was the cause.

Nicole ran back to the house, and soon reappeared, this time with her hand in her pocket. She drew from it a key, which Gilbert saw glitter in her hand for a moment; and then the young girl slipped this key under a little door which served to admit the gardener, and which was situated at the end of the wall opposite the street, and parallel to the great door which was generally used.

"Good!" said Gilbert; "I understand, — a love-letter

and a rendezvous. Nicole loses no time; she has already a new lover." And he frowned with the disappointment of a man who thinks that his loss should cause an irreparable void in the heart of the woman he abandons, and who to his great astonishment finds this void completely filled. "This may spoil all my projects," he continued, seeking a factitious cause for his ill-humor. "No matter," he resumed, after a moment's silence, "I shall not be sorry to know the happy mortal who succeeds me in Mademoiselle Nicole's good graces."

But Gilbert on certain subjects had a very discerning judgment. He calculated that the discovery which he had made, and which Nicole was far from suspecting, would give him an advantage over her which might be of use to him, since he knew her secret, with such details as she could not deny, while she scarcely suspected his; and even if she did, there existed no facts which could give a color to her suspicions. He promised himself, therefore, to take advantage of the discovery whenever he should find occasion.

During all these goings and comings, the anxiously expected night had come on. The only thing which Gilbert now feared was the return of Rousseau, who might surprise him on the roof or on the staircase, or might come up and find his room empty. In the latter case the anger of the philosopher of Geneva would be terrible; but Gilbert hoped to avert the blow by means of the following note, which he left upon his little table, addressed to the philosopher: —

My Dear and Illustrious Protector, — Do not think ill of me if, notwithstanding your recommendations, and even against your order, I have dared to leave my apartment. I shall soon return, unless some accident, similar to that which has already happened to me, should again take place; but at

the risk of a similar, or even a worse, accident, I must leave my room for two hours.

"I do not know what I shall say when I return," thought Gilbert; "but at least Monsieur Rousseau will not be uneasy or angry."

The evening was dark. A suffocating heat prevailed, as it often does during the first warm days of spring. The sky was cloudy, and at half-past eight the most practised eye could have distinguished nothing at the bottom of the dark gulf into which Gilbert peered.

It was then, for the first time, that the young man perceived that he breathed with difficulty, and that sudden perspirations bedewed his forehead and breast, — unmistakable signs of a weak and unhinged system. Prudence counselled him not to undertake, in his present condition, an expedition for which strength and steadiness in all his members were peculiarly necessary, not only to ensure success, but even for the preservation of his life; but Gilbert did not listen to what his physical instincts counselled. His moral will spoke more loudly; and to it, as ever, the young man vowed obedience.

The moment had come. Gilbert rolled his rope several times round his neck, and began, with beating heart, to scale the skylight; then, firmly grasping the casement, he made the first step in the gutter toward the skylight on the right, which was, as we have said, that of the stairway, and about four yards distant from his own.

His feet in a groove of lead, at the utmost only eight inches wide, which, though it was supported here and there by holdfasts of iron, yet, owing to the pliability of the lead, yielded to his steps; his hands resting against the tiles, which could be only a point of support for his equilibrium, but no help in case of falling, since the fingers could take no hold of them, — such was Gilbert's

position during this aerial passage, which lasted two minutes; that is to say, two eternities.

But Gilbert determined not to be afraid; and such was the power of will in this young man that he was not afraid. He recollected to have heard a rope-dancer say, that to walk safely on narrow ways one ought never to look downward, but about ten feet in advance, and never think of the abyss beneath but as an eagle might, — that is, with the conviction of being able to float over it at pleasure. Besides, Gilbert had already put these precepts in practice in several visits he had paid to Nicole, — that Nicole who was now so bold that she could find her profit in keys and doors instead of in roofs and chimneys.

In this manner he had often traversed the sluices of the mill at Taverney, and the naked beams of the roof of an old barn. He arrived, therefore, at the goal without a shudder; and once arrived there, he glided through the skylight, and with a thrill of joy alighted on the staircase. But on reaching the landing-place he stopped short. Voices were heard on the lower stories: they were those of Thérèse and certain neighbors of hers, who were speaking of Rousseau's genius, of the merit of his books, and of the harmony of his music.

The neighbors had read "La Nouvelle Héloïse," and confessed frankly that they found the book improper. In reply to this criticism Madame Thérèse observed that they did not understand the philosophical part of that excellent book. To this the neighbors had nothing to reply, except to confess their incompetence to give an opinion on such a subject.

This edifying conversation was held from one landing-place to another; and the fire of discussion, ardent as it was, was less so than that of the stoves on which the savory suppers of these ladies were cooking. Gilbert was

listening to the arguments, therefore, and snuffing the smell of the viands, when his name, pronounced in the midst of the tumult, caused him to start rather unpleasantly.

"After my supper," said Thérèse, "I must go and see if that dear child does not want something in his attic."

This "dear child" gave Gilbert less pleasure than the promise of the visit gave him alarm. Luckily, he remembered that Thérèse, when she supped alone, chatted a long time with her bottle, that the meat seemed savory, and that "after supper" meant — ten o'clock. It was now only quarter of nine. Besides, it was probable that after supper the course of ideas in Thérèse's brain would take a change, and that she would then think of anything else rather than of the "dear child."

But time was slipping by, to the great vexation of Gilbert, when suddenly one of the joints of meat pertaining to the coterie began to burn. The cry of the alarmed cook was heard, which put an end to all conversation, for every one hurried to the theatre of the catastrophe.

Gilbert profited by this culinary panic among the ladies to glide down the stairs like a shadow. Arrived at the first story, he found that the window frame was sufficiently strong to hold his rope, and attaching it by a slip-knot, he mounted the window-sill and began to descend. He was still suspended between the window and the ground, when a rapid step sounded in the garden beneath him. He had sufficient time, before the step reached him, to turn himself round, and holding fast by the knots, he watched to see who this untimely visitor was.

The intruder was a man, and as he proceeded from the direction of the little door, Gilbert did not doubt for a moment that it was the happy mortal whom Nicole was expecting. He fixed all his attention therefore upon this

other invader, who had thus arrested him in the midst of his perilous descent. By his walk, by a glance at his profile, seen beneath his three-cornered hat, and by the particular mode in which this hat was placed over the corner of his attentive ear, Gilbert thought he recognized the famous Beausire, that officer whose acquaintance Nicole had made in Taverney.

Almost immediately Gilbert saw Nicole open the door of the pavilion, hasten into the garden, leaving the door open, and light and active as a bird, direct her steps toward the greenhouse, — that is to say, the place toward which Monsieur Beausire was already advancing. This was most certainly not their first rendezvous, since neither one nor the other betrayed the least hesitation as to the place of meeting.

"Now I can finish my descent," thought Gilbert; "for if Nicole has appointed this hour for meeting her lover, it must be because she is certain of being undisturbed. Andrée must be alone, then, — alone!"

In fact, no noise was heard in the house, and only a faint light gleamed from the windows of the ground-floor. Gilbert alighted upon the ground without any accident, and, unwilling to cross the garden, he glided gently along the wall till he came to a clump of trees, crossed it in a stooping posture, and without being seen, arrived at the door which Nicole had left open. There, sheltered by an immense aristolochia, which was trained over the door and hung down in large festoons, he observed that the outer apartment, which was a spacious antechamber, was, as he had supposed, entirely empty. This antechamber communicated with the interior of the house by means of two doors, one open, the other closed. Gilbert conjectured that the open door was that belonging to Nicole's chamber. He softly entered this room, stretching

out his hands before him for fear of accident, for the room was entirely without light; but at the end of a sort of corridor was seen a glass door whose framework was clearly designed against the light of the adjoining apartment. On the inner side of this glass door was drawn a muslin curtain.

As Gilbert advanced along the corridor he heard a feeble voice speaking in the lighted apartment; it was Andrée's, and every drop of Gilbert's blood rushed to his heart. Another voice replied to hers; it was Philippe's. The young man was anxiously inquiring after his sister's health.

Gilbert, now on his guard, proceeded a few steps farther, and placed himself behind one of those truncated columns, surmounted by a bust, which at that period formed the usual ornament of double doors. Thus concealed, he strained his eyes and ears to the utmost stretch, — so happy that his heart melted with joy, so fearful that the same heart shrank together till it seemed to become only a minute point in his breast. He listened and gazed.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

GILBERT, as we have said, gazed and listened. He saw Andrée stretched on a reclining-chair, her face turned toward the glass door, that is to say, directly toward him. This door was slightly ajar.

A small lamp with a deep shade was placed upon an adjoining table covered with books, indicating the only species of recreation permitted to the invalid, and lighted only the lower part of Mademoiselle de Taverney's face. Sometimes, however, when she leaned back, so as to rest against the pillow of the lounge, the light overspread her marble forehead, which was veiled in a lace cap. Philippe was sitting on the end of the lounge with his back toward Gilbert; his arm was still in a sling, and all exercise of it was forbidden.

It was the first time that Andrée had been up, and the first time also that Philippe had left his room. Therefore they had not seen each other since that terrible night; but each knew that the other was recovering, and hastening toward convalescence. They had been together only for a few moments, and were conversing without restraint; for they supposed that even if any one should interrupt them, they would be warned by the noise of the bell attached to the door which Nicole had left open. Gilbert saw and heard all, therefore; for through this open door he could seize every word of their conversation.

"So now," Philippe was saying, just as Gilbert took his place behind a curtain hung loosely before the door of a dressing-room, — "so now you breathe more easily, my poor sister?"

"Yes, more easily, but still with a slight pain."

"And your strength?"

"Returns but slowly; nevertheless, I have been able to walk to the window two or three times to-day. How sweet the fresh air is, how lovely the flowers! It seems to me that, surrounded with air and flowers, it is impossible to die."

"But still you are very weak, are you not, Andrée?"

"Oh yes, the shock was terrible! I walk with difficulty, and am obliged to lean on the tables and the projecting points of the wainscoting. Without this support my limbs bend under me, and I feel as if I should every moment fall."

"Courage, Andrée! The fresh air and the beautiful flowers you spoke of just now will cure you, and in a week you will be able to pay a visit to the dauphiness, who, I am informed, so kindly sends to inquire about you."

"Yes, I hope so, Philippe; for the dauphiness in truth seems very good to me." And Andrée, leaning back, put her hand upon her chest and closed her lovely eyes. Gilbert made a step forward with outstretched arms.

"You are in pain, my sister?" asked Philippe, taking her hand.

"Yes, at times I have slight spasms, and sometimes the blood mounts to my head, and my temples throb; sometimes again I feel quite giddy, and my heart sinks within me."

"Oh!" said Philippe, thoughtfully, "that is not surprising; you have met with a dreadful trial, and your escape was almost miraculous."

"Miraculous is in truth the proper term, brother."

"But speaking of your miraculous escape, Andrée," said Philippe, approaching closer to his sister, to give more emphasis to the question, "do you know I have never yet had an opportunity of speaking to you of this catastrophe?"

Andrée blushed and seemed uneasy; but Philippe did not remark this change of color, or at least did not appear to remark it.

"I thought, however," said the young girl, "that the person who restored me to you gave all the explanations you could wish; my father, at least, told me he was quite satisfied."

"Of course, my dear Andrée; and this man, so far as I could judge, behaved with extreme delicacy in the whole affair; but still some parts of his tale seemed to me, not suspicious, indeed, but — obscure; that is the proper term."

"How so, and what do you mean, brother?" asked Andrée, with the frankness of innocence.

"For instance," said Philippe, "there is one point which did not at first strike me, but which has since seemed to me to bear a very strange aspect."

"What is that?" asked Andrée.

"Why, the very manner in which you were saved. Can you describe it to me?"

The young girl seemed to make an effort over herself. "Oh! Philippe," said she, "I have almost forgotten, I was in such terror."

"No matter, my dear Andrée; tell me all you remember."

"Well, you know, brother, we were separated at about twenty paces from the Garde-Meuble. I saw you dragged away toward the garden of the Tuileries, while I was drawn toward the Rue Royale. For an instant I could still see

you making fruitless attempts to rejoin me. I stretched out my arms toward you, crying, Philippe! Philippe! when all at once I was, as it were, seized by a whirlwind, which raised me aloft and bore me in the direction of the railings. I felt the living tide carrying me toward the wall against which it would break; I heard the cries of those who were crushed against the railings; I understood that my turn would come to be crushed and killed; I could almost calculate the number of seconds I had yet to live, when, half-dead and almost frantic, raising my hands and eyes to heaven in a last prayer, I met the burning glance of a man who seemed to govern the crowd, and whom the crowd seemed to obey."

"And this man was the Comte Joseph Balsamo?"

"Yes; he whom I had already seen at Taverney; he who, even there, had inspired me with such a strange terror; he, in short, who seems to be endowed with some supernatural power, who has fascinated my sight with his eyes, my ears with his voice, who has made my whole being tremble by the mere touch of his finger on my shoulder."

"Proceed, proceed, Andrée," said Philippe, his features and voice becoming gloomier as she spoke.

"Well, this man seemed to tower aloft above the catastrophe, as if human suffering could not reach him. I read in his eyes that he wished to save me,—that he had the power to do so. Then something extraordinary took place within me. Bruised, powerless, half-dead as I was, I felt myself raised toward this man as if some unknown, mysterious, invincible power lifted me up to him. I felt as if some strong arm, by a mighty effort, was drawing me out of the gulf of mangled flesh in which so many unhappy victims were suffocating, and was restoring me to air, to life. Oh, Philippe!" continued Andrée, with a sort of

exaltation, "I feel certain it was that man's look which attracted me to him. I reached his hand; I was saved!"

"Alas!" murmured Gilbert, "she had eyes only for him; and I — I — who was dying at her feet — she did not see me." He wiped his brow, bathed in perspiration.

"That is how the affair happened, then?" asked Philippe.

"Yes; up to the moment when I felt myself out of danger. Then, whether all my force had been exhausted in the last effort I had made, or whether the terror I had experienced had exceeded the measure of my strength, I do not know, but I fainted."

"And at what time do you think you fainted?"

"About ten minutes after we were separated, brother."

"Yes," pursued Philippe, "that was about midnight. How then did it happen that you did not return till three o'clock? Forgive me this catechizing, which may seem ridiculous to you, dear Andrée, but I have a good reason for it."

"Thanks, Philippe!" said Andrée, pressing her brother's hand. "Three days ago I could not have replied to you as I have now done; but to-day — what I am saying may seem strange to you — my mental vision is stronger; it seems to me as if some will stronger than my own ordered me to remember, and I do remember."

"Speak, then, speak, dear Andrée; I am waiting impatiently. Did this man carry you away in his arms?"

"In his arms?" said Andrée, blushing; "I do not well recollect. All I know is, that he drew me out of the crowd. But the touch of his hand caused me the same feeling as at Taverney, and scarcely had he touched me when I fainted again, or rather, I sank to sleep; for fainting is generally preceded by a painful feeling, and on this

occasion I felt only the pleasing sensation attendant on sleep."

"In truth, Andrée, what you tell me seems so strange that if any other related these things I should not believe them. But proceed," continued he, in a voice which betrayed more emotion than he was willing to show. As for Gilbert, he devoured Andrée's every word, for he knew that, so far at least, every word was true.

"When I regained my consciousness," continued the young girl, "I was in a splendidly furnished saloon. A waiting-maid and a lady were standing beside me; but they did not seem at all uneasy, for when I awoke they were smiling kindly."

"Do you know at what time this was, Andrée?"

"The half-hour after midnight was just striking."

"Oh!" said the young man, breathing freely, "that is well. Go on, Andrée; go on."

"I thanked the ladies for the attentions they lavished on me; but knowing how uneasy you would be, I begged them to send me home immediately. Then they told me that the count had returned to the scene of the catastrophe to assist the wounded, but that he would return with a carriage and convey me himself to our hôtel. In fact, at about two o'clock I heard a carriage roll along the street; then the same sensation which I had formerly felt on the approach of that man overpowered me; I fell back trembling and almost senseless upon a sofa. The door opened. In the midst of my confusion I could still recognize the man who had saved me; then for a second time I lost all consciousness. They must then have carried me down, placed me in the carriage, and brought me here. That is all I can remember, brother."

Philippe calculated the time, and saw that his sister must have been brought directly from the Rue des

Écuries-du-Louvre to the Rue Coq-Héron, as she had been from the Place Louis XV. to the Rue des Écuries-du-Louvre; and, joyfully pressing her hand, he said in a frank, cheerful voice: "Thanks, my dear sister, thanks; all the calculations correspond exactly. I will call upon the Marquise de Savigny and thank her in person. In the mean time one word more upon a subject of secondary importance."

"Speak."

"Do you remember seeing among the crowd any face which you knew?"

"No, none."

"The little Gilbert's, for example?"

"In fact," said Andrée, endeavoring to recall her thoughts, "I do remember to have seen him. At the moment when we were separated, he was about ten paces from me."

"She saw me!" murmured Gilbert.

"Because, while searching for you, Andrée, I found the poor lad."

"Among the dead?" asked Andrée, with that peculiar shade of interest which the great testify for their dependents.

"No, he was only wounded; he was rescued, and I hope he will recover."

"Oh! I am glad to hear it," said Andrée; "and what injury had he received?"

"His chest was greatly bruised."

"Yes, yes, against thine, Andrée!" murmured Gilbert.

"But," continued Philippe, "the strangest circumstance of all, and the one which induced me to speak of the lad, was that I found in his hand, clenched and stiffened by pain, a fragment of your dress."

"That is strange indeed."

"Did you not see him at the last moment?"

"At the last moment, Philippe, I saw so many faces frightful through terror, pain, selfishness, love, pity, avarice, and indifference that I seem to have spent a year in hell. Among all these faces, which had the effect upon me of a procession of the damned passing in review before me, it may be that I saw the good little fellow, but I cannot recall him."

"And yet the piece of stuff torn from your dress? — and it was your dress, Andrée, for Nicole has identified it."

"Did you tell the girl for what purpose you questioned her?" asked Andrée; for she remembered the singular explanation she had had at Taverney with her waiting-maid in relation to this same Gilbert.

"Oh, no! But the fragment was in his hand. How can you explain that?"

"Oh! very easily," said Andrée, with a calmness which contrasted strangely with the fearful beating of Gilbert's heart; "if he was near me when I felt myself raised aloft, as it were, by this man's look, he probably clung to me to profit by the help I was receiving, in the same manner as a drowning man clings to the belt of the swimmer."

"Oh!" said Gilbert, with a feeling of angry contempt at this idea of the young girl, "oh, what an ignoble interpretation of my devotion! How these nobles judge us sons of the people! Monsieur Rousseau is right, — we are worth more than they; our hearts are purer, and our arms stronger."

As he once more settled himself to listen to the conversation of the brother and sister, which he had for a moment lost during this soliloquy, he heard a noise behind him. "My God!" he murmured, "some one in the ante-room!" And hearing the step approach the corridor,

he drew back into the dressing-room, letting the curtain fall before him.

"Well! Is that madcap Nicole not here?" said the Baron de Taverney's voice as he entered his daughter's apartment, touching Gilbert with the flaps of his coat as he passed.

"I daresay she is in the garden," said Andrée, with a tranquillity which showed that she had no suspicion of the presence of a third person; "good evening, father."

Philippe rose respectfully; the baron motioned him to remain where he was, and taking an armchair, sat down near his children.

"Ah! my children," said the baron, "it is a long journey from the Rue Coq-Héron to Versailles when, instead of going in a good court carriage, you have only a fiacre drawn by one horse. However, I saw the dauphiness."

"Ah!" said Andrée, "then you have just arrived from Versailles, father?"

"Yes; the princess did me the honor to send for me, having heard of the accident which had happened to my daughter."

"Andrée is much better, father," said Philippe.

"I am aware of it, and I told her Royal Highness so, who was kind enough to promise that as soon as your sister is completely restored, she will summon her to the little Trianon, which she has fixed upon for her residence, and which she is now having decorated according to her taste."

"I — I at court!" said Andrée, timidly.

"It is not the court, my child. The dauphiness has quiet and unobtrusive habits, and the dauphin hates show and noise. They will live in complete retirement at Trianon. However, from what I know of her Highness

the dauphiness's disposition, her little family parties will turn out in the end much better than Beds of Justice and meetings of States-General. The princess has a decided character, and the dauphin, I am told, is learned."

"Oh, it will always be the court! Do not deceive yourself, sister," said Philippe, mournfully.

"The court!" said Gilbert to himself, with an emotion of concentrated rage and despair. "The court! that is a summit which I cannot reach, — a gulf into which I cannot dash myself. In that case, farewell, Andrée! Lost, — lost to me forever!"

"But, father," replied Andrée, "we have neither the fortune which would warrant our choosing such a residence, nor the education necessary for those who move in its lofty circle. What shall I, a poor girl, do among those brilliant ladies whose dazzling splendor I on one occasion witnessed, whose minds I thought so empty, but at the same time so sparkling? Alas! my brother, we are too obscure to mingle among so many dazzling lights."

The baron knit his brow. "Still the same absurd ideas!" said he. "In truth, I cannot understand the pains which my family take to depreciate everything which they inherit from me or which relates to me. Obscure! Really, Mademoiselle, you are mad. Obscure, — a Taverney Maison Rouge obscure! And who will shine, pray, if you do not! Fortune? — *pardieu!* we know what the fortunes of the court are; the sun of royalty fills them, the same sun makes them blow, — it is the great vivifier of nature. I have ruined myself at court, and now I shall grow rich again at court, that 's all. Has the king no more money to bestow upon his faithful servants? And do you really think I should blush at the offer of a regiment to the heir of my family; at the grant

of a dowry to you, Andrée; at a nice little appanage conferred on myself, or at finding a handsome pension under my napkin some day at dinner? No, no; fools alone have prejudices. I have none. Besides, it is only my own property which is given back to me. Do not, therefore, entertain these foolish scruples. There remains only one of your objections, — your education, of which you spoke just now. But, Mademoiselle, remember that no young lady of the court has been educated as you have been. Nay, more; you have, besides the education usually given to the daughters of the nobility, the solid acquirements more generally confined to the families of lawyers or financiers. You are a musician, and you draw landscapes, with sheep and cows, which Berghem would not disown. Now, the dauphiness dotes on cows, on sheep, and on Berghem. You are beautiful; the king cannot fail to notice it. You can converse; that will charm the Comte d'Artois and the Comte de Provence. You will not only be well received, therefore, but adored. Yes, yes," continued the baron, rubbing his hands, and chuckling in so strange a manner that Philippe gazed at his father, doubting if such a laugh could proceed from human lips, "adored! I have said the word."

Andrée cast down her eyes, and Philippe, taking her hand, said: "Our father is right, Andrée; you are all that he has said. None can be more worthy to enter Versailles than you."

"But I shall be separated from you," replied Andrée.

"By no means, by no means," interrupted the baron; "Versailles is large, my dear."

"Yes, but Trianon is little," replied Andrée, haughty and rather unmanageable when she was opposed.

"Trianon will always be large enough to provide a chamber for Monsieur de Taverney. A man such as I am

always finds room," added he, with a modesty which meant, — "always knows how to make room for himself."

Andrée, not much comforted by this promised proximity of her father, turned to Philippe.

"My sister," said the latter, "you will certainly not belong to what is called the court. Instead of placing you in a convent and paying your dowry, the dauphiness, who wishes to distinguish you, will keep you near herself in some employment. Etiquette is not so rigid now as in the time of Louis XIV. Offices are more easily fused together and separated. You may occupy the post of reader or companion to the dauphiness; she will draw with you, she will always keep you near her; probably you will never appear in public, but you will enjoy her immediate protection, and consequently will inspire envy. That is what you fear, is it not?"

"Yes, brother."

"However," said the baron, "we shall not grieve for such a trifle as one or two envious persons. Get better quickly, therefore, Andrée, and I shall have the pleasure of taking you to Trianon myself; it is the dauphiness's command."

"Very well, father, I will go."

"By the way, Philippe, have you any money?" asked the baron.

"If you want any, Monsieur," replied the young man, "I have not enough to offer you; if, on the contrary, you are offering any to me, I shall answer you that I have enough for myself."

"True, you are a philosopher," said the baron, laughing sarcastically. "Are you a philosopher also, Andrée, who have nothing to ask from me? or is there something you wish for?"

"I am afraid of embarrassing you, father."

"Oh! we are not at Taverney now. The king has sent me five hundred louis-d'or, — on account, his Majesty said. Think of your wardrobe, Andrée."

"Thank you, my dear father," said the young girl, joyously.

"There, there," said the baron; "see the extremes! Only a minute ago she wanted nothing; now she would ruin the Emperor of China. But no matter, ask; fine dresses will become you well, Andrée." Then, giving her a very affectionate kiss, the baron opened the door of an apartment which separated his own from his daughter's chamber, and left the room, saying, "That cursed Nicole is not here to light my way."

"Shall I ring for her, father?"

"No, I have La Brie, who is sleeping in some armchair or other; good-night, my children."

Philippe now rose in his turn.

"Good-night, brother," said Andrée. "I am dreadfully tired. It is the first time I have spoken so much since my accident. Good-night, dear Philippe." And she gave her hand to the young man, who kissed it with brotherly affection, but at the same time with a sort of respect with which his sister always inspired him, and retired, touching, as he passed, the door behind which Gilbert was concealed.

"Shall I call Nicole?" asked he, as he left the room.

"No, no," said Andrée "I can undress alone; adieu, Philippe!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHAT GILBERT HAD FORESEEN.

When Andrée was alone she rose from the chair, and a shudder passed through Gilbert's frame. The young girl stood upright, and with her hands, white as alabaster, she took the hairpins one by one from her headdress, while the light robe which covered her slipped from her shoulders and showed her snowy, graceful neck and her arms, which, raised carelessly above her head, displayed to advantage her exquisite throat and her bosom palpitating under the cambric.

Gilbert, on his knees, breathless, intoxicated, felt the blood rush furiously to his heart and forehead. Fiery waves circulated in his veins, a cloud of flame descended over his sight, and there was a strange, feverish buzzing in his ears. His state of mind bordered on madness. He was on the point of crossing the threshold of Andrée's door and crying: "Yes, thou art beautiful, thou art indeed beautiful! But be not so proud of thy beauty, for thou owest it to me; I saved thy life!"

All at once a knot in her waistband embarrassed the young girl; she became impatient, stamped with her foot, and sat down weak and trembling on her bed, as if this slight obstacle had overcome her strength. Then, bending toward the cord of the bell, she pulled it impatiently.

This noise recalled Gilbert to his senses. Nicole had left the door open to hear, therefore she would come. "Farewell, my dream!" he murmured. "Farewell,

happiness! henceforth only a baseless vision, — henceforth only a remembrance, ever burning in my imagination, ever present to my heart!"

Gilbert endeavored to rush from the pavilion; but the baron on entering had closed the doors of the corridor after him. Gilbert had not anticipated this obstacle, and was delayed some seconds opening the doors. Just as he entered Nicole's apartment, Nicole reached the pavilion. The young man heard the gravel of the garden walk grinding under her steps. He had only time to conceal himself in the shade, in order to let the young girl pass him; for after crossing the antechamber, the door of which she locked, she flew along the corridor as light as a bird.

Gilbert gained the antechamber, and attempted to escape into the garden; but Nicole, while running on and crying, "I am coming, Mademoiselle, I am coming! I am just closing the door!" had closed it indeed, and not only closed it and double-locked it, but in her confusion had put the key into her pocket.

Gilbert tried in vain to open the door. Then he had recourse to the windows; but they were barred, and after five minutes' investigation he saw that it was impossible to escape. He crouched in a corner, fortifying himself with the firm resolve to make Nicole open the door for him.

As for the latter, when she had given the plausible excuse for her absence that she had gone to close the windows of the greenhouse, lest the night air should injure her young lady's flowers, she finished undressing Andrée and assisted her to bed.

There was a tremulousness in Nicole's voice, an unsteadiness in her hands, and an eagerness in all her attentions, which were very unusual, and indicated some

extraordinary emotion. But from the calm and lofty sphere in which Andrée's thoughts revolved, she rarely looked down upon the lower earth, and when she did so, the inferior beings whom she saw seemed like atoms in her eyes. She therefore perceived nothing. Meanwhile Gilbert was boiling with impatience, since he found his retreat cut off. He now longed only for liberty.

Andrée dismissed Nicole after a short chat, in which the latter exhibited all the wheedling manner of a remorseful waiting-maid. Before withdrawing, she turned back her mistress's coverlet, lowered the light, and sweetened the warm drink which was standing in a silver goblet upon an alabaster night-lamp; she then wished her mistress good-night in her sweetest voice, and left the room on tip-toe. As she came out, she closed the glass door. Then, humming gayly, as if her mind was entirely tranquil, she crossed the antechamber, and advanced toward the door leading into the garden.

Gilbert understood Nicole's intention; and for a moment he asked himself if he should not, instead of making himself known, slip out suddenly, taking advantage of the opportunity to escape when the door should be opened. But in that case he would be seen without being recognized, and would be taken for a robber. Nicole would cry for help, he would not have time to reach the cord; and even if he should reach it, he would be seen in his aerial flight, his retreat discovered, and himself made the object of the Taverneys' displeasure, which could not fail to be deep and lasting, considering the feeling evinced toward him by the head of the family. True, he might expose Nicole, and procure her dismissal; but of what use would that be to him? He would in that case have done evil without reaping any corresponding advantage, — in short, from pure revenge; and Gilbert was not so

feeble-minded as to feel satisfied when he was revenged. Useless revenge was to him worse than a bad action, — it was folly.

As Nicole approached the door where Gilbert was in waiting, he suddenly emerged from the shadow in which he was concealed, and appeared to the young girl in the full rays of the moonlight, which was streaming through the window. Nicole was on the point of crying out; but she took Gilbert for another, and after the first emotion of terror was past, "You here!" she said. "What imprudence!"

"Yes, it is I," replied Gilbert, in a whisper; "but do not cry out for me more than you would for another."

This time Nicole recognized her interlocutor. "Gilbert!" she exclaimed; "my God!"

"I requested you not to cry out," said the young man, coldly.

"But what are you doing here, Monsieur?" exclaimed Nicole, angrily.

"Come," said Gilbert, as coolly as before, "a moment ago you called me imprudent; and now you are more imprudent than I."

"I think I am only too kind to you in asking what you are doing here," said Nicole; "for I know very well."

"What am I doing, then?"

"You came to see Mademoiselle Andrée."

"Mademoiselle Andrée?" said Gilbert, as calmly as before.

"Yes, you are in love with her; but, fortunately, she does not love you."

"Really?"

"But you had better take care, Monsieur Gilbert," said Nicole, threateningly.

"Oh, I must take care!"

"Yes."

"Of what?"

"Take care that I do not inform on you."

"You, Nicole?"

"Yes, I; take care that I don't get you dismissed from the house."

"Try," said Gilbert, smiling.

"You defy me?"

"Yes, absolutely defy you."

"What will happen, then, if I tell Mademoiselle, Monsieur Philippe, and the baron that I have found you here?"

"It will happen as you have said, — not that I shall be dismissed; I am, thank God, dismissed already, — but that I shall be tracked and hunted like a wild beast. She who will be dismissed will be Nicole."

"How Nicole?"

"Certainly, — Nicole, who has stones thrown to her over the walls."

"Take care, Monsieur Gilbert!" said Nicole, in a threatening tone, "a piece of Mademoiselle's dress was found in your hand upon the Place Louis XV."

"You think so?"

"Monsieur Philippe told his father so. He suspects nothing as yet; but if he gets a hint or two, perhaps he will suspect in the end."

"And who will give him the hint?"

"I will."

"Take care, Nicole! One might suspect also that when you seem to be drying lace, you are picking up the stones that are thrown over the wall!"

"It is false!" cried Nicole. Then, retracting her denial, she continued: "At all events, it is not a crime to

receive a letter, — not like stealing in here while Mademoiselle is undressing. Ah! what will you say to that, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"I shall say, Mademoiselle Nicole, that it is also a crime for such a well-conducted young lady as you are to slip keys under the doors of gardens."

Nicole trembled.

"I shall say," continued Gilbert, "that if I, who am known to Monsieur de Taverney, to Monsieur Philippe, to Mademoiselle Andrée, have committed a crime in entering here, in my anxiety concerning the health of my former masters, and particularly of Mademoiselle Andrée, whom I endeavored so strenuously to save on the evening of the fireworks that a piece of her dress remained in my hand, — I shall say that if I have committed this pardonable crime, you have committed the unpardonable one of introducing a stranger into your master's house, and are now going to meet him a second time, in the greenhouse, where you have already spent an hour in his company —"

"Gilbert! Gilbert!"

"Oh! how virtuous we are, all of a sudden, Mademoiselle Nicole! You deem it very wicked that I should be found here, while —"

"Gilbert!"

"Yes, go and tell Mademoiselle that I love her. I shall say that it is you whom I love; and she will believe me, for you were foolish enough to tell her so at Taverney."

"Gilbert, my friend!"

"And you will be dismissed, Nicole; and instead of going to Trianon, and entering the household of the dauphiness with Mademoiselle; instead of coquetting with the fine lords and rich gentlemen, as you will not fail to do if you remain with the family, — instead of all this, you will be sent to enjoy the society of your admirer,

Monsieur Beausire, a soldier! Oh, what a direful fall! What a noble ambition Mademoiselle Nicole's is, — to be the mistress of a guardsman!" And Gilbert began to hum, in a low voice, with a most malicious accent, —

"In the Garde Française
I had a faithful lover — "

"In mercy, Monsieur Gilbert," said Nicole, "do not look at me in that ill-natured manner. Your eyes pierce me, even in the darkness. Do not laugh either, — your laugh terrifies me."

"Then open the door," said Gilbert, imperatively; "open the door for me, Nicole, and not another word of all this."

Nicole opened the door with so violent a nervous trembling that her shoulders and head shook like those of an old woman. Gilbert tranquilly went out first, and seeing that the young girl was leading him toward the door of the garden, he said: "No, no; you have your own way of admitting visitors, I have my own way of departure. Go to the greenhouse, to Monsieur Beausire, who must be waiting impatiently for you, and remain with him ten minutes longer than you ought to. I will grant you this recompense for your discretion."

"Ten minutes, and why ten minutes?" asked Nicole, trembling.

"Because I need ten minutes for my disappearance. Go, Nicole, go; and like Lot's wife, whose story I told you at Taverney when you gave me a rendezvous among the haystacks, do not turn round, else something worse will happen to you than to be changed into a pillar of salt. Go, beautiful siren, go; I have nothing else to say to you."

Nicole, subdued, alarmed, conquered, by the coolness

and presence of mind shown by Gilbert, who held her future in his hands, turned with drooping head toward the greenhouse, where Beausire was already uneasy at her prolonged absence.

Gilbert, observing the same precautions as before to avoid discovery, once more reached the wall, seized his rope, and assisted by the vine and trellis-work, gained the first story in safety, and quickly ascended the stairs. As luck would have it, he met no one on his way up; the neighbors were already gone to bed, and Thérèse was still at supper.

Gilbert was too much excited by his victory over Nicole to entertain the least fear of missing his foot in the leaden gutter. He felt as if he could have walked on the edge of a sharpened razor, had the razor been a league long. He regained his attic in safety, therefore, closed the window, seized the note, which no one had touched, and tore it in pieces. Then he stretched himself with a delicious feeling of languor upon his bed.

Half an hour afterward Thérèse kept her word, and came to the door to inquire how he was. Gilbert thanked her, in a voice interrupted by terrific yawns, as if he were dying of sleep. He was eager to be alone, quite alone, in darkness and silence, to collect his thoughts and analyze the varied emotions of this ever-memorable day. Soon, indeed, everything faded from his mind; the baron, Philippe, Nicole, Beausire, disappeared from view, to give place to the vision of Andrée at her toilet, her arms raised above her head, and detaching the pins from her long and flowing hair.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BOTANISTS.

THE events which we have just related happened on Friday evening; the excursion to which Rousseau looked forward with so much pleasure was to take place, therefore, two days later.

Gilbert, indifferent to everything since he had heard that Andrée was so soon to depart for Trianon, had spent the entire day leaning on his window-sill. During this day the window of Andrée's room remained open, and once or twice the young girl had approached it, as if to breathe the fresh air. She was pale and weak; but it seemed to Gilbert as if he would wish for nothing more than that Andrée should always inhabit that pavilion, that he should always have his attic, and that once or twice every day Andrée should come to the window as he had seen her that day.

The long-looked-for Sunday at last arrived. Rousseau had made his preparations the day before; his shoes were carefully blacked, and his gray coat, at once light and warm, was taken from the chest, — to the great annoyance of Thérèse, who thought a blouse or a linen frock quite good enough for such an expedition. But Rousseau had completed his toilet without replying to her complaint. Not only his own clothes, but Gilbert's also, had been examined with the greatest care, and the latter's had even been supplemented by a pair of irreproachable stockings

and by new shoes, which Rousseau had presented him with as an agreeable surprise.

The herbal also was put in good condition. Rousseau had not forgotten his collection of mosses, which was to play a part in the proceedings of the day. Impatient as a child, he went more than twenty times to the window to see if the carriage that was passing was not Monsieur de Jussieu's. At last he perceived a highly varnished chariot, a pair of splendid horses with rich harness, and an immense, powdered footman standing at his door. He ran instantly to Thérèse, exclaiming: "Here he is! here he is!" and he called to Gilbert: "Quick, quick; the carriage is waiting."

"Well," said Thérèse, sharply, "if you are so fond of riding in a coach, why do you not work, in order to have one of your own, like Monsieur de Voltaire?"

"Be quiet!" grumbled Rousseau.

"*Dame!* you always say you have as much talent as he."

"I do not say so, hark you!" cried Rousseau, in a rage; "I say — I say nothing!" and all his joy fled, as it invariably did at the mention of that hated name.

Happily, Monsieur de Jussieu entered. He was pomatumed, powdered, fresh as the spring. His dress consisted of a splendid coat of ribbed Indian satin of a light gray color, a vest of pale lilac silk, white silk stockings of extraordinary fineness, and bright gold buckles. On entering Rousseau's apartment he filled the room with a delightful perfume, which Thérèse inhaled without concealing her admiration.

"How fine you are!" said Rousseau, looking askance at Thérèse, and comparing his modest dress and clumsy equipment with the elegant toilet of Monsieur de Jussieu.

"Oh! I am afraid of the heat," said the elegant botanist.

"But the wood is damp. If we botanize in the marshes your silk stockings —"

"Oh! we can choose the driest places."

"And the aquatic mosses, — must we give them up for to-day?"

"Do not be uneasy about that, my dear colleague."

"One would think you were going to a ball, or to pay your respects to ladies."

"Why should we not honor Dame Nature with a pair of silk stockings?" replied Monsieur de Jussieu, rather embarrassed; "does she not deserve that we should dress ourselves for her?"

Rousseau said no more; from the moment that Monsieur de Jussieu invoked Nature, he agreed with him that it was impossible to honor her too highly. As for Gilbert, notwithstanding his stoicism he gazed at Monsieur de Jussieu with envious eyes. Since he had observed so many young exquisites improving their natural advantages with dress, he had seen the utility, from a frivolous point of view, of elegance, and he had whispered to himself that this silk, this lace, this linen, would add a charm to his youth; and that if Andrée saw him dressed like Monsieur de Jussieu instead of as he was, she would then deign to look at him.

The carriage rolled off at the utmost speed of two fine Danish horses; and an hour after their departure the botanists alighted at Bougival, and turned to the left by the Chestnut Walk.

This walk, which at present is so surpassingly beautiful, was then at least quite as much so; for the portion of the rising ground which our explorers had to traverse, already planted by Louis XIV., had been the object of constant care since the king had taken a fancy to Marly.

The chestnut-trees, with their ruddy bark, their gigantic

branches, and their fantastic forms, sometimes presenting in their knotty circumvolutions the appearance of a huge boa twining itself round the trunk, sometimes that of a bull prostrate upon the butcher's block and vomiting a stream of black and clotted blood; the moss-covered apple-trees and the colossal walnuts, whose foliage was already assuming the dark-blue shade of summer; the solitude, the picturesque simplicity and grandeur of the landscape, which with its old, shadowy trees, stood out in bold relief against the clear blue sky, — all this, clothed with that simple and touching charm which Nature ever lends to her productions, plunged Rousseau into a state of ecstasy impossible to be described.

Gilbert was calm, but moody; his whole being was absorbed in this one thought: "Andrée leaves the garden pavilion and goes to Trianon."

Upon the summit of the little hill, which the three botanists were climbing on foot, was seen the square tower of Luciennes. The sight of this building, from which he had fled, changed the current of Gilbert's thoughts, and recalled rather unpleasant recollections, unmingled, however, with fear. From his position in the rear of the party he saw two protectors before him; and thinking himself in safety, he gazed at Luciennes as a shipwrecked sailor from the shore looks upon the sand-bank upon which his vessel has struck.

Rousseau, spade in hand, began to fix his looks on the ground; Monsieur de Jussieu did the same, but with this difference, — that the former was searching for plants, while the latter was only endeavoring to keep his stockings from the damp.

"What a splendid *lepopodium!*" exclaimed Rousseau.

"Charming," replied Monsieur de Jussieu; "but let us pass on, if you have no objection."

"Ah! the *Lysimachia fenella*, — it is ready to pluck; look!"

"Pluck it, then, if it gives you pleasure."

"Ah! we are not botanizing, then?"

"Yes, yes; but I think we shall do better upon that height yonder."

"As you please; let us go, then."

"What time is it?" asked Monsieur de Jussieu; "in my hurry I forgot my watch."

Rousseau pulled a very large silver watch from his pocket. "Nine o'clock," said he.

"Have you any objection to our resting a little while?" continued Monsieur de Jussieu.

"Oh! what a wretched walker you are," said Rousseau. "You see what it is to botanize in fine shoes and silk stockings."

"Perhaps I am hungry."

"Well, then, let us breakfast; the village is about a quarter of a league from here."

"Oh, no! we need not go so far."

"How so? Have you our breakfast in your carriage?"

"Look yonder, — into that thicket!" said Monsieur de Jussieu, pointing with his hand toward the place he wished to indicate.

Rousseau stood upon tiptoe, and shaded his eyes with his hand. "I can see nothing," said he.

"What! Do you not see that little rustic roof?"

"No."

"Surmounted by a weather-cock, and the walls thatched with red and white straw, — a sort of rustic cottage, in short?"

"Yes, I see it now, — a little house recently built."

"A kiosk, that is it."

"Well?"

"Well, we shall find there the little luncheon I promised you."

"Very good," said Rousseau. "Are you hungry, Gilbert?"

Gilbert, who had not paid any attention to this debate, and was employed in mechanically knocking off the heads of the wild-flowers, replied: "Whatever is agreeable to you, Monsieur."

"Come, then, if you please," said Monsieur de Jussieu; "besides, nothing need prevent our gathering flowers on the way."

"Oh!" said Rousseau, "your nephew is a more ardent botanist than you. I spent a day with him botanizing in the woods of Montmorency, with a select party. He finds well, he gathers well, he explains well."

"Oh! he is young; he has his name to make yet."

"Has he not yours already made? Oh! comrade, comrade, you botanize like an amateur."

"Come, do not be angry, my dear philosopher. Hold! here is the beautiful *Plantago monanthos*. Did you find anything like that at your Montmorency?"

"No, indeed," said Rousseau, quite delighted; "I have often searched for it in vain. Upon the faith of a naturalist, it is magnificent."

"Oh, the beautiful pavilion!" said Gilbert, who had passed from the rear-guard of the party into the van.

"Gilbert is hungry," replied Monsieur de Jussieu.

"Oh, Monsieur, I beg your pardon! I can wait patiently until you are ready."

"Let us continue our task a little longer," said Rousseau, "inasmuch as botanizing after a meal is bad for digestion; and besides, the eye is then heavy, and the back stiff. But what is this pavilion called?"

"The Trap," answered Monsieur de Jussieu, remembering the name invented by Monsieur de Sartines.

"What a singular name!"

"Oh! the country, you know, is the place for indulging all sorts of caprices."

"To whom do those beautiful grounds belong?"

"I do not exactly know."

"You must know the proprietor, however, since you are going to breakfast there," said Rousseau, pricking up his ears with a slight shade of suspicion.

"Not at all — or rather, I know every one here, including the gamekeepers, who have often seen me in their enclosures, and who always touch their hats, and sometimes offer me a hare or a string of woodcocks as a present from their masters. The people on this and the neighboring estates let me do here just as if I were on my own grounds. I do not know exactly whether this summer-house belongs to Madame de Mirepoix or to Madame d'Egmont, or — in short, I do not know to whom it belongs. But the most important point, my dear philosopher, I am sure you will agree with me, is that we shall find there bread, fruit, and pastry."

The good-natured tone in which Monsieur de Jussieu spoke, dispelled the cloud of suspicion which had already begun to darken Rousseau's brow. The philosopher wiped his feet on the grass, rubbed the mould off his hands, and preceded by Monsieur de Jussieu, entered the mossy walk which wound gracefully beneath the chestnut-trees leading up to the hermitage. Gilbert, who had again taken up his position in the rear, closed the march, dreaming of Andrée and of the means of seeing her when she should be at Trianon.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE TRAP FOR PHILOSOPHERS.

On the summit of the hill, which the three botanists were ascending with some difficulty, stood one of those little rustic retreats, with gnarled and knotty pillars, pointed gables, and windows festooned with ivy and clematis, which are the genuine offspring of English architecture, or to speak more correctly, of English gardening, which imitates nature, or rather invents a species of nature for itself, thus giving a certain air of originality to its creations. The English have invented blue roses, and their greatest ambition has always been toward the antithesis of all received ideas. Some day they will invent black lilies.

This summer-house, which was large enough to contain a table and six chairs, was floored with tiles and carpeted with handsome matting. The walls were covered with little mosaics of flint picked up on the river's bank, mingled with foreign shells of the most delicate tints, gathered from the shores of the Indian Ocean.

The ceiling was in relief, and was composed of fir-cones and knotty excrescences of bark, arranged so as to imitate hideous profiles of fauns or savage animals, who seemed suspended over the heads of the visitors. The windows were each stained with some different shade, so that, according as the spectator looked out of the violet, the red, or the blue glass, the woods of Vesinet seemed tinted by a stormy sky, bathed in the burning rays of an August

sun, or sleeping beneath the cold and frosty atmosphere of December. The visitor had only to consult his taste, that is to say, choose his window, and look out.

This sight pleased Gilbert greatly, and he amused himself with looking through the differently tinted windows at the rich valley which lies stretched beneath the feet of a spectator situated on the hill of Luciennes, and at the noble Seine winding in the midst.

A sight nearly as interesting, however, at least in Monsieur de Jussieu's opinion, was the tempting breakfast spread in the centre of the summer-house, upon a table formed of gnarled and fantastic woodwork, on which the bark had been allowed to remain.

The exquisite cream for which Marly is celebrated, the luscious apricots and plums of Luciennes, the crisp sausages of Nanterre smoking upon a porcelain dish, — without any appearance of a servant bringing them, — strawberries peeping from a graceful little basket lined with vine-leaves, and beside the fresh and glistening pats of butter rolls of homely peasant bread, with its rich brown crust, so dear to the pampered appetite of the inhabitant of towns, — all this drew an exclamation of admiration from Rousseau, who, philosopher as he was, was not the less an unaffected gourmand; for his appetite was as keen as his taste was simple.

"What folly!" said he to Monsieur de Jussieu, "bread and fruit would have been sufficient; and even then, as true botanists and industrious explorers, we ought to have eaten the bread and munched the plums without ceasing our search among the grass or along the hedgerows. Do you remember, Gilbert, our luncheon at Plessis-Piquet?"

"Yes, Monsieur, — the bread and cherries which appeared to me so delicious."

"Yes, that is how true lovers of Nature should breakfast."

"But, my dear master," interrupted Monsieur de Jussieu, "if you reproach me with extravagance, you are wrong; a more modest meal was never—"

"Oh!" cried the philosopher, "you do your table injustice, Seigneur Lucullus."

"My table?—by no means," said Jussieu.

"Who are our hosts, then?" resumed Rousseau, with a smile which evinced at once good humor and constraint, —"sprites?"

"Or fairies!" said Monsieur de Jussieu, rising, and glancing stealthily toward the door.

"Fairies?" exclaimed Rousseau, gayly,—"a thousand blessings on them for their hospitality! I am hungry. Come, Gilbert, fall to;" and he cut a very respectable slice from the brown loaf, passing the bread and the knife to his disciple. Then, while taking a huge bite, he picked out some plums from the dish.

Gilbert hesitated.

"Come, come!" said Rousseau. "The fairies will be offended by your stiffness, and will imagine you are dissatisfied with their banquet."

"Or that it is unworthy of you, gentlemen," uttered a silvery voice from the door of the pavilion, where two young and lovely women appeared arm in arm, smiling, and making signs to Monsieur de Jussieu to moderate his obeisances.

Rousseau turned, holding the half-tasted bread in his right hand, and the remains of a plum in his left; and beholding these two goddesses,—at least such they seemed to him by their youth and beauty,—he remained stupefied with astonishment, bowing mechanically, and retreating toward the wall of the summer-house.

"Oh, Countess!" said Monsieur de Jussieu, "you here? What a delightful surprise!"

"Good-day, my dear botanist," said one of the ladies, with a grace and condescension quite regal.

"Allow me to present Monsieur Rousseau to you," said Jussieu, taking the philosopher by the hand which held the brown bread.

Gilbert also had seen and recognized the ladies. He opened his eyes to their utmost width, and, pale as death, looked out of the window of the summer-house, with the idea of throwing himself from it.

"Good-day, my little philosopher," said the other lady to the almost lifeless Gilbert, patting his cheek with her rosy fingers.

Rousseau saw and heard; he was almost choking with rage. His disciple knew these goddesses, and was known to them. Gilbert was almost fainting.

"Do you not know Madame la Comtesse, Monsieur Rousseau?" asked Jussieu.

"No," he replied, thunderstruck; "it is the first time, I think —"

"Madame Dubarry," continued Monsieur de Jussieu.

Rousseau started up as if he stood on a red-hot ploughshare. "Madame Dubarry!" he exclaimed.

"Myself, Monsieur," said the young lady, with surpassing grace, "who is most happy to have received in her house and to have been favored with a near view of one of the most illustrious thinkers of the age."

"Madame Dubarry!" continued Rousseau, without remarking that his astonishment was becoming a grave offence against good-breeding. "She! and doubtless this pavilion is hers, and doubtless it is she who has provided this breakfast."

"You have conjectured rightly, my dear philosopher,

— she and her sister," continued Jussieu, ill at ease in presence of this threatening storm.

"Her sister, who knows Gilbert!"

"Intimately, Monsieur," replied Chon, with that saucy boldness which respected neither royal whims nor philosophers' fancies.

Gilbert looked as if he wished the earth would open and swallow him, so fiercely did Rousseau's eye rest upon him.

"Intimately?" repeated Rousseau; "Gilbert knew Madame intimately, and I was not told of it? But in that case I was betrayed, I was sported with!"

Mademoiselle Chon and her sister looked at each other with a malicious smile. Monsieur de Jussieu in his agitation tore a Malines ruffle which was worth at least forty louis-d'or.

Gilbert clasped his hands as if to entreat Chon to be silent, or Monsieur Rousseau to speak more graciously to him. But, on the contrary, it was Rousseau who was silent, and Chon who spoke.

"Yes," said she, "Gilbert and I are old friends; he was a guest of mine. Were you not, little one? What! are you already ungrateful for the dainties of Luciennes and Versailles?"

This was the final blow; Rousseau's arms fell stiff and motionless. "Oh!" said he, looking askance at the young man, "that was the way, was it, you little scoundrel?"

"Monsieur Rousseau!" murmured Gilbert.

"Why, one would think you were weeping for the little tap I gave your cheek," continued Chon. "Well, I always feared you were ungrateful."

"Mademoiselle!" entreated Gilbert.

"Little one," said Madame Dubarry, "return to

Luciennes; your bonbons and Zamore await you, and though you left it in rather a strange manner, you will be well received."

"Thank you, Madame!" said Gilbert dryly; "when I leave a place it is because I do not like it."

"And why refuse the favor that is offered to you?" interrupted Rousseau, bitterly. "You have tasted of wealth, my dear Gilbert, and you had better return to it."

"But, Monsieur, when I swear to you —"

"Go, go! I do not like those who blow hot and cold with the same breath."

"But you will not listen to me, Monsieur Rousseau!"

"Well?"

"I ran away from Luciennes, where I was kept locked up."

"A trap, — I know the malice of men!"

"But since I preferred you to them, since I accepted you as my host, my protector, my master —"

"Hypocrisy!"

"But, Monsieur Rousseau, if I wished for riches, I should accept the offer these ladies have made me."

"Monsieur Gilbert, I have been often deceived, but never twice by the same person. You are free; go where you please."

"But where in the world shall I go?" cried Gilbert, plunged in an abyss of despair; for he saw his window, and the neighborhood of Andrée, and his love, lost to him forever. His pride was hurt at being suspected of treachery; and the idea that his self-denial, his long and arduous struggle against the indolence and the passions natural to his age, was misconstrued and despised, stung him to the quick.

"Where?" said Rousseau. "Why, in the first place,

to this lady, of course. Where could you find a lovelier or more worthy protector?"

"Oh, my God, my God!" cried Gilbert, burying his head in his hands.

"Do not be afraid," said Monsieur de Jussieu, deeply wounded, as a man of the world, by Rousseau's strange sally against the ladies; "you will be taken care of, and whatever you may lose in one way, will be amply made good to you."

"You see," said Rousseau, bitterly, "there is Monsieur de Jussieu, a learned man, a lover of Nature, — one of your accomplices," added he, with a grin which was meant for a smile, "who promises you assistance and fortune; and you may be sure that what Monsieur de Jussieu promises he can perform."

As he spoke, Rousseau, no longer master of himself, bowed to the ladies with a most majestic air, did the same to Monsieur de Jussieu, to the latter's consternation, and then, with a tragic air and without even looking at Gilbert, he left the pavilion.

"Oh! what an ugly animal a philosopher is!" said Chon, coolly, looking after the Genevese, who walked, or rather stumbled, down the path.

"Ask what you wish," said Monsieur de Jussieu to Gilbert, who still kept his face buried in his hands.

"Yes, ask, Monsieur Gilbert," added the countess, smiling on the abandoned disciple.

The latter raised his pale face, pushed back the hair which perspiration and tears had matted over his forehead, and said with a firm voice: "Since you are kind enough to offer me an employment, I would wish to be an assistant-gardener at Trianon."

Chon and the countess looked at each other, and the former, with her tiny little foot, touched her sister's with a

triumphant glance. The countess made a sign with her head that she understood.

"Is that practicable, Monsieur de Jussieu?" asked the countess; "I should wish it very much."

"If you wish it, Madame," replied he, "it is done."

Gilbert bowed, and put his hand upon his heart, which now bounded with joy as a few moments before it had been overwhelmed with grief.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE APOLOGUE.

In that little cabinet at Luciennes where we have seen the Vicomte Jean Dubarry imbibe so much chocolate, to the great annoyance of the countess, the Maréchal de Richelieu was lunching with Madame Dubarry, who, while amusing herself with pulling Zamore's ears, carelessly reclined upon a couch of brocaded satin, while the old courier uttered sighs of admiration at each new position the charming creature assumed. "Oh, Countess!" said he, smirking like an old woman, "your hair is falling down; look, there is a ringlet drooping on your neck. Ah! your slipper is falling off, Countess."

"Bah! my dear Duke, never mind," said she, absently, and pulling a handful of hair from Zamore's head while she lay back at full length on the couch, more lovely and fascinating than Venus on her shell.

Zamore, entirely insensible to these graceful attitudes, bellowed with anger. The countess endeavored to quiet him by taking a handful of sugar-plums from the table and filling his pockets with them. But Zamore was sulky, turned his pocket inside out, and emptied his sugar-plums upon the carpet.

"Oh, the little scoundrel!" continued the countess, stretching out her tiny foot till it came in contact with the fantastic hose of the little negro.

"Oh, have mercy!" cried the old marshal; "upon my faith, you will kill him!"

"Why cannot I kill everything which displeases me to-day?" said the countess. "I feel merciless!"

"Oh!" said the duke, "then perhaps I displease you."

"Oh, no! quite the contrary; you are an old friend, and I adore you. But the fact is, I believe I am going mad."

"Can it be that those whom you have made mad have smitten you with their complaint?"

"Take care! you provoke me horribly with your gallant speeches, of which you do not believe one word."

"Countess, Countess! I begin to think you are not mad, but ungrateful."

"No, I am neither mad nor ungrateful; I am —"

"Well, confess! What are you?"

"I am angry, Duke."

"Really?"

"Are you surprised at that?"

"Not in the least, Countess; upon my honor, you have reason to be so."

"Ah! that is what annoys me in you, Marshal."

"Then there is something in my conduct which annoys you, Countess?"

"Yes."

"And what is this something, if you please? I am rather old to begin to correct my faults, and yet there is no effort I would not make for you."

"Well, it is that you do not even know what is the cause of my anger, Marshal."

"Oh! but I do."

"You know what vexes me?"

"Of course I do! Zamore has broken the Chinese fountain."

An imperceptible smile played around the young

countess's mouth; but Zamore, who felt himself guilty, drooped his head humbly, as if the skies were pregnant with clouds of blows and kicks.

"Oh, yes!" said the Countess, with a sigh, "yes, Duke, you are right, — that is it; and in truth you are a very deep politician."

"I have always been told so, Madame," replied Monsieur de Richelieu, with an air of profound modesty.

"Oh! I can see that without being told, Duke. Have you not guessed the cause of my annoyance immediately, without looking to the right or left? It is superb."

"Superb indeed; but still that is not all."

"Indeed!"

"No, I divine something else."

"And what do you divine?"

"That you expected his Majesty last evening."

"Where?"

"Here."

"Well, what then?"

"And that his Majesty did not come."

The countess reddened, and raised herself slightly upon her elbow.

"Oh!" said she.

"And meantime," said the duke, "I have come from Paris."

"Well, what does that prove?"

"*Pardieu!* that I could not, of course, know what took place at Versailles; and yet —"

"My dear Duke, you are full of mystery to-day. When a person begins, he should finish, or else he should not have commenced."

"You speak quite at your ease, Countess. Allow me, at least, to take breath. Where was I?"

"You were at — 'and yet.'"

"Oh, yes! true; and yet I not only know that his Majesty did not come, but also why he did not come."

"Duke, I have always thought you a sorcerer; but the proof was lacking."

"Well, that proof I will now give you."

The countess, who attached much more interest to this conversation than she wished to let appear, relinquished her hold of Zamore's head, in whose hair her long taper fingers had been carelessly playing.

"Give it, Duke, give it!" said she.

"Before the governor?" asked the duke.

"Vanish, Zamore!" said the countess to the negro boy, who, mad with delight, made only one bound from the boudoir to the antechamber.

"An excellent step," murmured Richelieu; "then I must tell you all, Countess?"

"What! did that monkey Zamore embarrass you, Duke?"

"To tell the truth, Countess, any one can embarrass me."

"Yes, I can understand that; but is Zamore any one?"

"Zamore is neither blind, deaf, nor dumb; therefore he is some one. I distinguish by the title of some one every person who is my equal in the hearing, seeing, and speaking faculties, every person who can see what I do, hear and repeat what I say,—every person, in short, who might betray me. This theory established, I proceed."

"Yes, yes, Duke, pray proceed; you will gratify me exceedingly."

"Gratify! I think not, Countess; but no matter, I must go on. Well, the king was at Trianon yesterday."

"The little or the great Trianon."

"The little. The dauphiness was leaning on his arm."

"Ah!"

"And the dauphiness, who is charming, as you know — "

"Alas ! "

"Coaxed him so much, with dear papa here, and dear papa there, that his Majesty, who has a heart of gold, could not resist her. So, after the walk came supper, and after supper amusing games ; so that, in short — "

"In short," said Madame Dubarry, pale with impatience, "in short, the king did not come to Luciennes, — that is what you would say ? "

"Exactly."

"Oh ! it is easily explained ; his Majesty found there all that he loves."

"Ah ! by no means, and you are far from believing one word of what you say ; all that pleases him he found, no doubt."

"Take care, Duke, that is much worse ; to sup, chat, and play is all that he wants. And with whom did he play ? "

"With Monsieur de Choiseul."

The countess made an angry gesture.

"Shall I not pursue the subject further, Countess ? " asked Richelieu.

"On the contrary, Monsieur, speak on."

"You are as courageous, Madame, as you are witty ; let me therefore take the bull by the horns, as the Spaniards say."

"Madame de Choiseul would not forgive you for that proverb, Duke."

"It is, however, not applied to her husband. I must tell you, then, Madame, that Monsieur de Choiseul, since I must name him, held the cards ; and with so much good fortune, so much address — "

"That he won."

"By no means, — that he lost, and that his Majesty

won a thousand louis-d'or at piquet, — a game on which his Majesty prides himself very much, seeing that he plays it very badly."

"Oh, that Choiseul, that Choiseul!" murmured Madame Dubarry. "But Madame de Grammont was of the party also, was she not?"

"That is to say, Countess, she was paying her respects before her departure."

"The duchess!"

"Yes; she is very foolish, I think."

"Why so?"

"Finding that no one persecutes her, she pouts; finding that no one exiles her, she exiles herself."

"Where to?"

"To the provinces."

"She is going to plot."

"*Parbleu!* what else would you expect her to do? Well, as she was about to set out, she very naturally wished to take leave of the dauphiness, who besides is very fond of her. That is why she was at Trianon."

"The great?"

"Of course. The little Trianon is not yet furnished."

"Ah! her Highness the Dauphiness, by surrounding herself with all these Choiseuls, shows plainly which party she intends to embrace."

"No, Countess, do not let us exaggerate; to-morrow the duchess will have departed."

"And the king was amused where I was absent!" cried the countess, with indignation not unmixed with terror.

"Yes; it is incredible, Countess, but still it is so. Well, what do you conclude from it?"

"That you are well informed, Duke."

"Is that all?"

"No."

"Finish, then."

"I gather from it that we shall all be lost if we do not rescue the king from the clutches of these Choiseuls, either with his consent or without it."

"Alas!"

"I say we," resumed the countess, — "but do not fear, Duke; I speak only of our own family."

"And your friends, Countess; permit me to claim that title. So then —"

"Then you are one of my friends?"

"I think I have said so, Madame."

"That is not enough."

"I think I have proved it."

"That is better. And you will assist me?"

"With all my power, Countess; but —"

"But what?"

"I cannot conceal from you that the task is difficult."

"Are these Choiseuls positively not to be rooted out, then?"

"They are firmly planted, at least."

"Then, whatever our friend La Fontaine may say, neither wind nor storm can prevail against this oak?"

"The minister is a lofty genius."

"Bah! you speak like an encyclopedist!"

"Am I not a member of the Académie?"

"Oh! you are slightly so."

"True, you are right; my secretary is the member, not I. But, nevertheless, I maintain my opinion."

"That Monsieur de Choiseul is a genius?"

"Eh! yes."

"But may I ask in what does this mighty genius shine?"

"In this, Madame, that he has made such a piece of work with the parliament and the English that the king cannot do without him."

"The parliament? Why, he excites it against his Majesty."

"Of course; therein lies his cleverness."

"He provokes the English to war."

"Of course. Peace would ruin him."

"That is not genius, Duke."

"What is it then, Countess?"

"It is high treason."

"When high treason is successful, Countess, it is genius, and genius of a lofty description."

"But by that mode of reasoning I know some one who is as great a genius as Monsieur de Choiseul."

"Bah!"

"As regards the parliament, at least."

"You puzzle me, Countess."

"Do you not know him, Duke? He belongs to your own family."

"Can I have a man of genius in my family? Do you speak of my uncle, the cardinal duke, Madame?"

"No; I mean the Duc d'Aiguillon, your nephew."

"Ah! Monsieur d'Aiguillon. Yes, true, it was he who set that affair of La Chalotais moving. 'Pon honor, he is a brave youth. Yes, true; that was a tough piece of work. Countess, there is a man whom a woman of spirit should attach to her interests."

"Are you aware, Duke," said the countess, "that I do not know your nephew?"

"Indeed, Madame, you don't know him?"

"No; I have never seen him."

"Poor fellow! In fact, I now remember that since you came to court he has always been at Brittany. Let him

look to himself when he first sees you; he has not latterly been accustomed to the sun."

"What does he do among all those black gowns, — a nobleman of spirit like him?"

"He revolutionizes them, not being able to do better. You understand, Countess, every one takes his pleasure where he can find it, and there is not much pleasure to be had in Brittany. Ah! he is an active man. *Peste!* what a servant the king might have in him, if he wished. Parliament would not be insolent to him. Oh! he is a true Richelieu. Permit me, therefore, Countess —"

"What?"

"To present him to you on his first appearance."

"Does he intend to visit Paris soon?"

"Oh! Madame, who knows? Perhaps he will have to remain in Brittany another lustre, as that scoundrel Voltaire says; perhaps he is on his way hither; perhaps two hundred leagues off; perhaps at the barrier."

And while he spoke, the marshal studied the lady's features, to see what effect his last words produced. But after having reflected for a moment, she said: "Let us return to the point where we left off."

"Wherever you please, Countess."

"Where were we?"

"At the moment when his Majesty was enjoying himself so much at Trianon in the company of Monsieur de Choiseul."

"And when we were speaking of getting rid of this Choiseul, Duke."

"That is to say, when you were speaking of getting rid of him, Countess."

"Oh! I am so anxious that he should go," said the favorite, "that I think I shall die if he remains. Will you not assist me a little, my dear Duke?"

"Oh!" said Richelieu, bridling; "in politics that is called an overture."

"Take it as you will, call it what you please, but answer categorically."

"Oh, what a long, ugly adverb in such a pretty little mouth!"

"Do you call that answering, Duke?"

"No, not exactly; I call that preparing my answer."

"Is it prepared?"

"Wait a little."

"You hesitate, Duke?"

"Oh, no!"

"Well, I am listening."

"What do you think of apologues, Countess?"

"Why, that they are very antiquated."

"Bah! the sun is antiquated also, and yet we have not invented any better means of seeing."

"Well, let me hear your apologue, then; but let it be clear."

"As crystal. Let us suppose, then, Countess — You know one always supposes something in an apologue."

"How tiresome you are, Duke."

"You do not believe one word of what you say, Countess, for you never listened to me more attentively."

"I was wrong, then; go on."

"Suppose, then, that you were walking in your beautiful garden at Luciennes, and that you saw a magnificent plum, — one of those Queen Claudes which you are so fond of, because their vermilion and purple tints resemble your own."

"Go on, flatterer."

"Well, I was saying, suppose you saw one of these plums at the extremity of one of the loftiest branches of the tree, what would you do, Countess?"

"I would shake the tree, to be sure!"

"Yes, but in vain, for the tree is large and massive, and not to be rooted out, as you said just now; and you would soon perceive that, without even succeeding in shaking it, you would tear your charming little hands against its rough bark. And then you would say, reclining your head to one side in that adorable manner which belongs only to you and the flowers, 'Oh, how I wish I had that plum upon the ground!' and then you would get angry."

"That is all very natural, Duke."

"I shall certainly not be the person to contradict you."

"Go on, my dear Duke; your apologue is exceedingly interesting."

"All at once, when turning your little head from side to side, you perceive your friend the Duc de Richelieu, who is walking behind you, thinking."

"Of what?"

"What a question! *Pardieu!* of you. You say to him with your heavenly voice, 'Oh, Duke, Duke!'"

"Well?"

"'You are a man; you are strong; you took Mahon. Shake this devil of a plum-tree for me, that I may have that provoking plum!' Is not that it, Countess?"

"Exactly, Duke; I repeated that to myself while you were saying it aloud. But what did you reply?"

"Reply? Oh, I replied, 'How you run on, Countess! Certainly nothing could give me greater pleasure; but only see how firm the tree is, how knotty the branches! I have a sort of affection for my hands as well as you have for yours, though mine are fifty years older than yours.'"

"Ah!" said the countess, suddenly, "yes, yes; I comprehend."

"Then finish the apologue. What did you say to me?"

"I said, 'My little Marshal, do not look with indifferent eyes upon this plum, which you look at indifferently only because it is not for you. Wish for it along with me, my dear Marshal; covet it along with me. And if you shake the tree properly, if the plum falls, then we will eat it together.'"

"Bravo!" exclaimed the duke, clapping his hands.

"Is that it?"

"Faith, Countess, there is no one like you for finishing an apologue. By mine honor, as my deceased father used to say, it is right well tricked out!"

"You will shake the tree, Duke?"

"With two hands and three hearts, Countess."

"And the plum was really a Queen Claude?"

"I am not quite sure of that, Countess."

"What was it, then?"

"Do you know, it seemed much more like a portfolio dangling from the tree."

"Then we will divide the portfolio."

"Oh, no! for me alone. Do not envy me the morocco, Countess. There will fall so many beautiful things from the tree along with the portfolio, when I shake it, that you will not know how to choose."

"Then, Marshal, it is a settled affair?"

"I am to have Monsieur de Choiseul's place?"

"If the king consents."

"Does not the king do all you wish?"

"You see plainly he does not, since he will not send this Choiseul away."

"Oh! I trust that the king will gladly recall his old companion."

"And you ask nothing for the Duc d'Aiguillon?"

"No, faith; the rascal can ask for himself."

"Besides, you will be there. And now it is my turn to ask."

"That is but just."

"What will you give me?"

"Whatever you wish."

"I want everything."

"That is reasonable."

"And shall I have it?"

"What a question! But will you be satisfied at least, and ask me for nothing further?"

"Only that, and something more."

"Speak."

"You know Monsieur de Taverney?"

"He is a friend of forty years' standing."

"He has a son?"

"And a daughter. Well?"

"That is all."

"How! all?"

"Yes; the other demand I have to make shall be made in proper time and place. In the mean time, we understand each other, Duke?"

"Yes, Countess."

"Our compact is signed."

"Nay, more, it is sworn."

"Then shake the tree for me."

"Oh, rest satisfied! I have the means."

"What are they?"

"My nephew."

"What else?"

"The Jesuits."

"Oh! ho!"

"I have a very nice little plan already formed."

"May I know it?"

"Alas! Countess —"

"Well, you are right."

"You know, secrecy —"

"Is half the battle. I complete your thought for you."

"You are charming."

"But I wish to shake the tree also."

"Oh! very well, shake away, Countess; it can do no harm."

"But when will you begin to undermine, Duke?" asked the countess.

"To-morrow. And when do you begin to shake?"

A loud noise of carriages was heard in the courtyard, and almost immediately cries of "Long live the king!" rose on the air.

"I?" said the countess, glancing at the window, "I will begin immediately."

"Bravo!"

"Retire by the little staircase, Duke, and wait in the courtyard. You shall have my answer in an hour."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE EXPEDIENT OF HIS MAJESTY LOUIS XV.

Louis XV. was not so easy tempered that one could talk politics with him every day; for in truth, politics were his aversion, and when he was in a bad temper he always avoided that subject with this argument, which admitted of no reply: "Bah! the machine will last as long as I shall."

When circumstances were favorable, it was necessary to take advantage of them; but it rarely happened that the king did not regain the advantage which a moment of good-humor had caused him to lose. Madame Dubarry knew her king well, and like fishermen well skilled in the dangers of the sea, she never attempted to start in bad weather. Now, the present visit of his Majesty to Luciennes was one of the best opportunities possible. The king had done wrong the previous day, and knew beforehand that he should receive a scolding; he would therefore be an easy prey.

But however confiding the game for which the hunter lies in wait, it has always a certain instinct which must be taken into account. But this instinct is set at nought if the sportsman knows how to thwart it. The countess managed the royal game she had in view and which she wished to capture, in the following manner.

We have said that she was in a most becoming morning-dress, like those in which Boucher represents his

shepherdesses. Only she had no rouge on, for Louis XV. had an antipathy to rouge. The moment his Majesty was announced she seized her pot of rouge and began to rub her cheeks vigorously. The king saw what the countess was doing from the anteroom. "Fie!" said he, as he entered, "how she daubs herself!"

"Ah! good-day, Sire," said the countess, without interrupting her occupation even when the king kissed her on the neck.

"You did not expect me, it seems, Countess?" asked the king.

"Why do you think so, Sire?"

"Because you soil your face in that manner."

"On the contrary, Sire, I was certain that I should have the honor of receiving your Majesty in the course of the day."

"Ah! how you say that, Countess!"

"Indeed?"

"Yes, you are as serious as Monsieur Rousseau when he is listening to his own music."

"That is because I have serious things to say to your Majesty."

"Ah, good! I see what is coming, Countess."

"Really?"

"Yes, — reproaches."

"I reproach you, Sire? — and why, if you please?"

"Because I did not come yesterday."

"Oh, Sire, do me the justice not to imagine that I pretend to monopolize your Majesty."

"My little Jeanne, you are getting angry."

"Oh! no, Sire, I am angry already."

"But hear me, Countess; I assure you I have not ceased thinking of you."

"Pshaw!"

"And the evening seemed interminable to me."

"But once more, Sire, I am not speaking of that at all. Your Majesty may spend your evenings where you please, without consulting any one."

"Quite a family party, Madame; only my own family."

"Sire, I have not even inquired."

"Why not?"

"What! you know it would be very unbecoming for me to do so."

"Well," said the king, "if you are not displeased with me about that, what is it, then? We must be just in this world."

"I have no complaint to make against you, Sire."

"But since you are angry —"

"Yes, I am angry, Sire, that is true; but it is at being made a make-shift."

"You a make-shift? Good heavens!"

"Yes, I! The Comtesse Dubarry, the beautiful Jeanne, the charming Jeannette, the fascinating Jeanneton, as your Majesty calls me, — I am a make-shift!"

"But how?"

"Because I have my king, my lover, only when Madame de Choiseul and Madame de Grammont do not want him."

"Oh! oh! Countess —"

"My faith! I speak right out what is in my heart. Hold, Sire. They tell me that Madame de Grammont has often watched for your entrance to your bedchamber. Well, I will take a course just contrary to that of the noble duchess, — I will watch for the coming out; and the first Choiseul or Grammont that falls into my hands — so much the worse, by my faith!"

"Countess, Countess!"

"Oh! what can you expect? I am an uneducated

woman. I am the mistress of Blaise, — the beautiful Bourbonnaise, you know."

"Countess, the Choiseuls will avenge themselves."

"What matter, if they avenge themselves for my vengeance?"

"They will despise you."

"You are right. Well, I have an excellent plan, which I shall carry into execution at once."

"And that is?" asked the king, uneasily.

"Simply to go away."

The king shrugged his shoulders.

"Ah! you do not believe me, Sire?"

"No, indeed!"

"That is because you do not take the trouble to reason; you confound me with others."

"How so?"

"Madame de Châteauroux wanted to be a goddess; Madame de Pompadour aimed at being a queen; others wished to be rich, powerful, or to humiliate the ladies of the court by the weight of their favors. I have none of these defects."

"That is true."

"But yet I have many good qualities."

"That is also true."

"You do not think a word of what you say."

"Oh, Countess! no one knows your worth better than I do."

"Well, but listen. What I am going to say will not alter your conviction."

"Speak."

"In the first place, I am rich, and independent of every one."

"Do you wish to make me regret that, Countess?"

"Then I have not the least ambition for all that flatters

these ladies, the least desire for what they aim at; my only wish is to love sincerely him whom I have chosen, whether he be a soldier or a king. When I love him no longer, I care for nothing else."

"Let me trust you care a little for me yet, Countess."

"I have not finished, Sire."

"Proceed, Madame."

"I am pretty, I am young, and may reasonably hope for ten years more of beauty; and the moment I cease to be your Majesty's favorite, I shall be the happiest and most honored woman in the world. You smile, Sire. I am sorry to tell you it is because you do not reflect. When you had had enough, and your people too much, of your other favorites, you sent them away, and your people blessed you and execrated the disgraced favorite more than ever; but I will not wait until I am sent away. I will leave the place, and make it known publicly that I have left it. I will give a hundred thousand francs to the poor; I will retire to a convent for a week; and in less than a month my portrait will be hung up in all the churches as that of a repentant Magdalen."

"Oh, Countess! you do not speak seriously?" said the king.

"Look at me, Sire, and see whether I am serious or not. I swear to you that I never was more serious in my life."

"Then you will commit this folly, Jeanne? But do you not see that by so doing you place yourself at the mercy of my whim, Madame la Comtesse?"

"No, Sire; to do so would be to say, 'Choose between this and that;' whereas I say, 'Adieu, Sire!' — nothing more."

The king turned pale, but this time with anger. "If you forget yourself so far, Madame, take care."

"Of what, Sire?"

"I will send you to the Bastille, and you will find the Bastille rather more tiresome than a convent."

"Oh, Sire!" said the countess, clasping her hands, "if you would but do me that favor, it would delight me!"

"Delight you? How so?"

"Yes, indeed. My secret ambition has always been to be popular, like Monsieur de la Chalotais, or Monsieur de Voltaire. I only want the Bastille for that. A little of the Bastille, and I shall be the happiest of women. I can then write memoirs of myself, of your ministers, of your daughters, of yourself, and transmit the virtues of Louis the Well-Beloved to the remotest posterity. Give me the *lettre-de-cachet*, Sire. Here, I will provide the pen and ink." And she pushed a pen and an inkstand which were upon the work-table toward the king.

The king, thus braved, reflected a moment, then, rising, "Very well, Madame," said he: "adieu."

"My horses!" cried the countess. "Adieu, Sire."

The king made a step toward the door.

"Chon!" said the countess.

Chon entered.

"My trunks, my travelling equipage, and post-horses," said she. "Quick! lose no time!"

"Post-horses!" said Chon, startled. "Good heavens! what is the matter?"

"We must leave this as quickly as possible, my dear, else the king will send us to the Bastille. There is no time to be lost. Make haste, Chon, make haste!"

This reproach stung Louis to the heart. He approached the countess and took her hand. "Forgive my warmth, Countess," said he.

"In truth, Sire, I am surprised you did not threaten me with the gibbet."

"Oh, Countess!"

"Of course. Thieves are always hanged."

"Thieves?"

"Yes; do I not steal the Comtesse de Grammont's place?"

"Countess!"

"Certainly! that is my crime, Sire."

"Be just, Countess; you irritated me."

"And how?"

The king took her hands. "We were both wrong. Let us forgive each other."

"Are you serious in your wish for a reconciliation, Sire?"

"On my honor."

"Go, Chon."

"Without ordering anything?" asked Chon.

"No, order what I told you."

"Countess!"

"But let them wait for fresh orders."

"Ah!"

Chon left the room.

"Then you wish me to remain?" said the countess.

"Above all things."

"Reflect on what you say, Sire."

The king reflected, but he could not retract; besides, he wanted to see how far the requirements of the victor would go.

"Speak," said he.

"Immediately. Mark, Sire! I was going away without asking anything."

"I observed it."

"But if I remain, I shall ask for something."

"Well, what is it? It is only necessary to know what it is."

"Ah! you know very well."

"No."

"Yes, for you make a grimace."

"Monsieur de Choiseul's dismissal, is it?"

"Exactly."

"It is impossible, Countess."

"My horses, then."

"But, ill-natured creature that you are —"

"Sign my *lettre-de-cachet* for the Bastille, or the letter which dismisses the minister."

"There is a middle course," said the king.

"Thanks for your clemency, Sire; it seems I shall be permitted to go without being arrested."

"Countess, you are a woman."

"Fortunately I am."

"And you talk politics like an angry, rebellious woman. I have no grounds for dismissing Monsieur de Choiseul."

"I understand he is the idol of the parliament; he encourages them in their revolt."

"But there must be some pretext."

"A pretext is the reason of the weak."

"Countess, Monsieur de Choiseul is an honest man, and honest men are rare."

"Honest! he sells you to the gentlemen of the black robe, who swallow up all the gold in the kingdom."

"No exaggeration, Countess."

"Half, then."

"Good heavens!" cried Louis XV., with vexation.

"Yes, I know," cried the countess, "I am very foolish. What are parliaments, Choiseuls, governments, to me? What is the king to me, when I am only his make-shift?"

"Again!"

"Always, Sire."

"Give me two hours to consider, Countess."

"Ten minutes, Sire. I will retire into my apartment;

slip your answer under the door. There are pen, ink, and paper. If in ten minutes you have not replied, and replied as I wish, adieu; think no more of me, — I shall have gone. Otherwise — "

"Otherwise?"

"Pull at the bobbin, and the latch will fly up."

Louis XV. kissed the hands of the countess, who, like the Parthian, threw back her most fascinating smile on him as she left the room. The king made no opposition to her withdrawal, and the countess entered the adjoining chamber and shut the door. Five minutes afterward a folded paper grazed the silken mat and the rich carpet beneath the door. The countess eagerly devoured the contents of the letter, hastily wrote some words with a pencil on a scrap of paper, and opening the window, threw the paper to Monsieur de Richelieu, who was walking in the little courtyard under an awning, in great trepidation lest he should be seen, and keeping himself out of view as much as possible.

The marshal unfolded the paper, read it, and in spite of his sixty-five years hastily ran to the large courtyard and jumped into his carriage. "Coachman," said he, "to Versailles, as quick as possible!"

The paper which was thrown to Monsieur de Richelieu from the window contained only these words: "I have shaken the tree; the portfolio has fallen!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HOW KING LOUIS XV. TRANSACTED BUSINESS.

THE next day there was a great commotion at Versailles. Whenever two courtiers met, there was nothing but mysterious signs and significant shakes of the hand, or else folded arms and upward looks expressive of grief and surprise.

Monsieur de Richelieu, with a number of his partisans, was in the king's antechamber at Trianon at about ten o'clock. The Count Jean, all bedizened with lace and quite dazzling, conversed with the old marshal, and conversed gayly, if his joyous face could be trusted as evidence.

At about eleven o'clock the king passed quickly through the gallery and entered the council-chamber, without speaking to any one.

At about five minutes past eleven Monsieur de Choiseul alighted from his carriage and crossed the gallery with his portfolio under his arm. As he passed through the throng, there was a hurried movement among the courtiers, who all turned round as if talking among themselves, in order to avoid bowing to the minister. The duke paid no attention to this manœuvre; he entered the closet where the king was turning over some papers while sipping his chocolate.

"Good morning, Duke," said the king, familiarly; "are we feeling well this morning?"

"Sire, Monsieur de Choiseul is quite well, but the minister is very ill, and comes to request that your Majesty, since you have not yet spoken, will accept his resignation. I thank the king for permitting me to take the initiative in this matter; it is a last favor, for which I am deeply grateful."

"What, Duke! — your resignation? What does that mean?"

"Sire, your Majesty yesterday signed for Madame Dubarry an order which deposes me. This news is already spread all over Paris and Versailles. The evil is done; nevertheless, I was unwilling to leave your Majesty's service without receiving a formal order with the permission. For, nominated officially, I can consider myself dismissed only by an official act."

"What, Duke!" exclaimed the king, laughing, — for the severe and lofty attitude of Monsieur de Choiseul made him almost tremble, — "did you, a man of genius, and skilled in official forms, did you believe that?"

"But, Sire," said the surprised minister, "you have signed —"

"What?"

"A letter, in the possession of Madame Dubarry."

"Ah, Duke! have you never felt the want of peace? You are most fortunate! Madame de Choiseul must indeed be a model."

The duke, offended by the comparison, frowned. "Your Majesty," said he, "has too much firmness of character, and above all, too much tact and discretion, to mix up affairs of state with what you deign to call household matters."

"Choiseul, I must tell you how that affair happened; it is very amusing. You are aware that you are very much feared in that quarter."

"Rather say hated, Sire."

"Hated, if you will. Well, this madcap countess left me no alternative but to send her to the Bastille or to thank you for your services."

"Well, Sire?"

"Well, Duke, you must confess that it would have been a pity to lose the sight which Versailles presents this morning. I have been amused since yesterday with seeing the couriers depart in all directions, and watching the faces brighten up or lengthen. Since yesterday Cotillon III. is queen of France. It is exceedingly amusing."

"But the end of all this, Sire?"

"The end, my dear Duke," said the king, seriously, "the end will always be the same. You know me; I always seem to yield, but I never yield. Let the women swallow the honored morsel I throw them now and then, as to another Cerberus; but let us live quietly, uninterruptedly, always together. And since we are on the chapter of explanations, keep this one for yourself. Whatever report you may hear, whatever letter you may receive from me, do not absent yourself from Versailles. As long as I continue to say to you what I now do, Duke, we shall be good friends."

The king extended his hand to his minister, who bowed over it, without gratitude and without anger.

"And now, my dear Duke, let us to business."

"At your Majesty's pleasure," replied the minister, opening his portfolio.

"Well, tell me something of these fireworks, to begin with."

"Ah! that was a great disaster, Sire."

"Whose fault was it?"

"Monsieur Bignon's, the provost of the merchants."

"Did the people cry out very much?"

"Oh, very much!"

"Then perhaps we had better dismiss this Monsieur Bignon."

"One of the members of parliament was nearly killed in the mêlée, and his colleagues took up the matter warmly. But the advocate-general, Séguier, made a very eloquent speech to prove that this misfortune was the work of fate alone. His speech was applauded, and so the affair is over for the present."

"So much the better! Let us pass to the parliament, Duke. Ah! we are reproached in that quarter."

"I am blamed, Sire, for not supporting Monsieur d'Aiguillon against Monsieur de la Chalotais. But who blames me? The very people who carried your Majesty's letter about with all the demonstrations of joy. Remember, Sire, that Monsieur d'Aiguillon overstepped the bounds of his authority in Brittany, that the Jesuits were really exiled, and that Monsieur de la Chalotais was right. Your Majesty has publicly acknowledged the innocence of the attorney-general. The king cannot thus be made to stultify himself. To his minister that is nothing, but to his people —!"

"In the mean time the parliament feels itself strong?"

"And it is strong. How can it be otherwise? The members are reprimanded, imprisoned, persecuted, and then declared innocent! I do not accuse Monsieur d'Aiguillon of having initiated this affair of Chalotais, but I can never forgive him for having been on the wrong side of it."

"Oh, come, Duke! the evil is done; think of the remedy. How can we bridle those insolent fellows?"

"Let the intrigues of the chancellor cease, let Monsieur d'Aiguillon have no more support, and the anger of the parliament will at once subside."

"But that would be to yield, Duke."

"Then your Majesty is represented by Monsieur d'Aiguillon, and not by me?"

This was a home-thrust, and the king felt it. "You know," said he, "I do not like to affront my servants, even when they have been in the wrong. But no more of this unfortunate business; time will decide who is right. Let us speak of foreign affairs. I am told we shall have a war?"

"Sire, if there be war, it will be a just and necessary war."

"With the English — the devil!"

"Does your Majesty fear the English?"

"Oh! upon the sea—"

"Your Majesty may rest tranquil. My cousin the Duc de Praslin, your minister of marine, will tell you that he has sixty-four men-of-war, not including those which are on the stocks. Besides, there are materials sufficient to construct twelve more in a year. Then there are fifty first-rate frigates, — a respectable force with which to meet a naval war. For a Continental war we have more than all that, — we have the remembrance of Fontenoi."

"Very well; but why must I fight the English, my dear Duke? A much less skilful minister than you, the Abbé Dubois, always avoided a war with England."

"I daresay, Sire. The Abbé Dubois received from the English six hundred thousand francs a month."

"Oh, Duke!"

"I have the proof, Sire."

"Well, be it so. But where are the grounds for war?"

"England covets all the Indies; I have been obliged to give the most stringent and hostile orders to your officers there. The first collision will call forth demands for redress from England; my official advice is that we do not

listen to them. Your Majesty's Government must make itself respected by force, as it formerly was through corruption."

"Oh, let us be patient! Who will know what happens in India? It is so far from here!"

The duke bit his lips. "There is a *casus belli* nearer home, Sire," said he.

"Another! What is that?"

"The Spaniards claim the Malouine and Falkland Islands. The port of Egmont was arbitrarily occupied by the English; the Spaniards drove them from it by main force. The English are enraged; they threaten the Spaniards with instant war if they do not give them satisfaction."

"Well! but if the Spaniards are in the wrong, let them unravel the knot themselves."

"And the family compact, Sire? Why did you insist on the signing of this compact, which allies so closely all the Bourbons in Europe against English encroachment?"

The king hung his head.

"Do not be uneasy, Sire," continued Choiseul; "you have a formidable army, an imposing fleet, and sufficient money. I can raise enough without making the people cry out. If we have a war, it will be an additional glory to your Majesty's reign, and it will furnish the pretext and excuse for several aggrandizements which I have in view."

"But in that case, Duke, we must have peace in the interior; let there not be war everywhere."

"But the interior is quiet, Sire," replied the duke, affecting not to understand.

"No, no! you see plainly it is not. You love me, and serve me well. Others say they love me, and their conduct does not at all resemble yours. Let there be con-

cord between all shades of opinion; let me live happily, my dear Duke."

"It is not my fault, Sire, if your happiness is not complete."

"That is the way to speak. Well, come, then, and dine with me to-day."

"At Versailles, Sire?"

"No; at Luciennes."

"I regret exceedingly, Sire, that I cannot; but my family is in great alarm on account of the reports which were spread yesterday. They think I am in disgrace with your Majesty, and I cannot let so many loving hearts suffer."

"And do those of whom I speak not suffer, Duke? Remember how happily we three used to live together in the time of the poor Marchioness."

The duke drooped his head, his eyes dimmed, and he uttered a half-suppressed sigh. "Madame de Pompadour was extremely jealous of your Majesty's glory," he said, "and had lofty political ideas. I confess that her character sympathized strongly with my own. Often, Sire, I was joined with her in the great enterprises she undertook. Yes, we understood each other."

"But she meddled with politics, Duke, and every one blamed her for it."

"True!"

"This other, on the contrary, is mild as a lamb; she has never yet asked me for a single *lettre-de-cachet*, even against the pamphleteers and sonnet-writers. Well, they reproach her as if she followed in the other's footsteps. Oh, Duke, it is enough to disgust one with progress! Come, will you make your peace at Luciennes?"

"Sire, deign to assure the Comtesse Dubarry that I esteem her as a charming woman, and well worthy of the king's love; but —"

"Ah! a but, Duke —"

"But," continued Monsieur de Choiseul, "my conviction is that if your Majesty is necessary for the welfare of France, a good minister is of more importance to your Majesty in the present juncture than a charming mistress."

"Let us speak no more of it, Duke, and let us remain good friends. But calm Madame de Grammont, and let her not lay any more plots against the Countess; the women will embroil us."

"Madame de Grammont, Sire, is too anxious to please your Majesty; that is her failing."

"But she displeases me by annoying the Countess, Duke."

"Well, Madame de Grammont is going, Sire; we shall see her no more. That will be an enemy the less."

"I did not mean that; you go too far. But my head burns, Duke; we have worked this morning like Louis XIV. and Colbert, — quite in the style of the *grand siècle*, as the philosophers say. By the way, Duke, are you a philosopher?"

"I am your Majesty's humble servant," replied Monsieur de Choiseul.

"You charm me; you are an invaluable man. Give me your arm, — I am quite giddy."

The duke hastened to offer his arm to his Majesty. He understood that the folding-doors would be thrown open, that the whole court was in the gallery, and that he would be seen in this triumphant position. After having suffered so much, he was not sorry to make his enemies suffer in their turn. The usher, in fact, now opened the doors and announced the king in the gallery.

Louis XV. crossed the gallery leaning heavily on Monsieur de Choiseul's arm, talking and smiling, without remarking, or seeming to remark, how pale Jean Dubarry was, and how red Monsieur de Richelieu. But Monsieur

de Choiseul saw these shades of expression very well. With elastic step, lofty head, and sparkling eyes, he passed before the courtiers, who now approached as eagerly as they had before kept away.

"There," said the king, at the end of the gallery, "wait for me; I will take you with me to Trianon. Remember what I have told you."

"I have treasured it up in my heart," replied the minister, well knowing what a sting this cutting sentence would inflict on his enemies.

The king once more entered his apartments.

Monsieur de Richelieu broke the file, and hastened to press the minister's hand between his meagre fingers, exclaiming, "I have known for a long time that a Choiseul bears a charmed life."

"Thank you!" said the duke, who knew how the land lay.

"But this absurd report?" continued the marshal.

"The report made his Majesty laugh," said Choiseul.

"I heard something of a letter —"

"A little joke of the king's," replied the minister, glancing, while he spoke, at Jean, who lost countenance.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" repeated the marshal, turning to the viscount as soon as the Duke de Choiseul was out of sight.

The king ascended the staircase, calling the duke, who eagerly followed him.

"We have been tricked," said the marshal to Jean.

"Where are they going?"

"To the little Trianon, to amuse themselves at our expense."

"Hell and furies!" exclaimed Jean. "Ah, pardon me, Marshal!"

"It is now my turn," said the latter. "We shall see if my plans are more successful than that of the Countess."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE LITTLE TRIANON.

When Louis XIV. had built Versailles, and had felt the inconvenience of grandeur, when he saw the immense salons full of guards, the ante-rooms thronged with courtiers, the corridors and entresols crowded with footmen, pages, and officers, he said to himself that Versailles was indeed what Louis XIV. had planned, and what Mansard, Le Brun, and Le Nôtre had executed, — a sojourn for a god, but not a habitation for a man. Then the Grand Monarque, who deigned to be a man in his leisure moments, built Trianon, that he might breathe more freely and enjoy a little retirement. But the sword of Achilles, which had fatigued even Achilles himself, was an insupportable burden to his puny successor.

Trianon, the miniature replica of Versailles, seemed yet too pompous to Louis XV., who caused the little Trianon, a pavilion of sixty feet square, to be built by the architect Gabriel.

To the left of this building was erected an oblong square structure without character and without ornament; this was the dwelling of the servants and officers of the household. It contained about ten lodgings for masters, and had accommodation for fifty servants. This building still remains entire, and is composed of a ground-floor, a first story, and attics. This ground-floor is protected by a paved moat, which separates it from the plantation; and

all the windows in it, as well as those of the first-floor, are grated. On the side next Trianon the windows admit light to a long corridor, like that of a convent.

Eight or nine doors opening from the corridor give entrance to the different suites of apartments, each consisting of an ante-room and two closets, one to the left, the other to the right, and of one, and sometimes two, rooms in the basement, looking upon the inner court of the building. Over the basement are the kitchens, and in the attics the chambers of the domestics. Such is the little Trianon.

Add to this a chapel about forty yards from the chateau, which we shall not describe, because there is no necessity for our doing so, and because it is too small to deserve our notice.

The topography of the establishment is therefore as follows: a chateau looking with its large eyes upon the park and wood in front, and on the left looking toward the offices, which present only barred windows, — the windows of the corridors or of the kitchens, masked by a thick trellis.

The path leading from the great Trianon, the established residence of Louis XIV., to the little, was through a kitchen-garden which connected the two residences by means of a wooden bridge. It was through this kitchen and fruit garden, which La Quintinie had designed and planted, that Louis XV. conducted Monsieur de Choiseul to the little Trianon after the laborious council we have just mentioned. He wished to show him the improvements he had made in the new abode of the dauphin and dauphiness.

Monsieur de Choiseul admired everything and commented upon everything with the sagacity of a courtier. He listened while the king told him that the little Trianon

became every day more beautiful, more charming to live in; and the minister added that it would serve as his Majesty's private residence.

"The dauphiness," said the king, "is rather timid yet, like all young Germans; she speaks French well, but she is afraid of a slight accent, which to French ears betrays the Austrian. At Trianon she will see only friends, and will speak only when she wishes."

"The result will be that she will speak well. I have already had the honor to remark," said Monsieur de Choiseul, "that her Royal Highness is accomplished, and needs nothing to make her perfect."

On the way the two travellers found the dauphin standing motionless upon a lawn, measuring the sun's altitude. Monsieur de Choiseul bent low; but as the dauphin did not speak to him, he did not speak to the dauphin.

The king said, loud enough to be heard by his grandson, "Louis is a finished scholar, but he is wrong thus to run his head against the sciences; his wife will suffer for it."

"By no means, Sire," replied a low, soft voice issuing from a thicket; and the king saw the dauphiness running toward him. She had been talking to a man provided with papers, compasses, and chalks.

"Sire," said the princess, "Monsieur Mique, my architect."

"Ah!" exclaimed the king, "then you, too, are bitten by that mania, Madame?"

"Sire, it runs in the family."

"You are going to build?"

"I am going to improve this great park, in which every one gets wearied."

"Oh, oh! my dear daughter, you speak too loud; the dauphin might hear you."

"It is a matter agreed upon between us, my father," replied the princess.

"To be wearied?"

"No; but to try to amuse ourselves."

"And so your Highness is going to build?" asked Monsieur de Choiseul.

"I intend making a garden of this park, Monsieur le Duc."

"Ah! poor Le Nôtre!" said the king.

"Le Nôtre was a great man, Sire, for what was in vogue then; but for what I love —"

"What do you love, Madame?"

"Nature."

"Ah! like the philosophers."

"Or like the English."

"Good! Say that before Choiseul, and you will have a declaration of war immediately. He will let loose upon you the sixty-four ships and forty frigates of his cousin, Monsieur de Praslin."

"Sire," said the dauphiness, "I am going to have a natural garden laid out here by Monsieur Robert, who is the cleverest man in the world in that particular branch of horticulture."

"And what do you call a natural garden?" asked the king. "I thought that trees and flowers and even fruit such as I gathered as I came along, were natural objects."

"Sire, you may walk a hundred years in your grounds, and you will see nothing but straight alleys, or thickets cut off at an angle of forty-five degrees, as the dauphin says, or pieces of water wedded to lawns, which in their turn are wedded to perspectives, parterres, or terraces."

"Well, that is ugly, is it?"

"It is not natural."

"There is a little girl who loves Nature!" said the

king, with a jovial rather than a joyous air. "Well, come; what will you make of my Trianon?"

"Rivers, cascades, bridges, grottos, rocks, woods, ravines, houses, mountains, fields."

"For dolls?" said the king.

"Alas! Sire, for kings such as we shall be," replied the princess, without remarking the blush which overspread her grandfather's face, and without perceiving that she foretold a sad truth for herself.

"Then you will destroy; but what will you build?"

"I shall preserve the present buildings."

"Ah! your people may consider themselves fortunate that you do not intend to lodge them in these woods and rivers you speak of, like Hurons, Esquimaux, and Greenlanders. They would live a natural life there, and Monsieur Rousseau would call them children of Nature. Do that, my child, and the encyclopedists will adore you."

"Sire, my servants would be too cold in such lodgings."

"Where will you lodge them, then, if you destroy all? Not in the palace; there is scarcely room for you two there."

"Sire, I will keep the offices as they are;" and the dauphiness pointed to the windows of the corridor which we have described.

"What do I see there?" said the king, shading his eyes with his hand.

"A woman, Sire," said Monsieur de Choiseul.

"A young lady whom I have taken into my household," replied the dauphiness.

"Mademoiselle de Taverney," said Choiseul, with his piercing glance.

"Ah!" said the king; "so you have the Taverneys here?"

"Only Mademoiselle de Taverney, Sire."

"A charming girl! What do you make of her."

"My reader."

"Very good," said the king, without taking his eye from the window through which Mademoiselle de Taverney, still pale from her illness, was looking very innocently, and without in the least suspecting that she was observed.

"How pale she is," said Monsieur de Choiseul.

"She was nearly killed on the 30th of May. Monsieur le Duc."

"Indeed? Poor girl!" said the king. "That Monsieur Bignon deserves to be disgraced."

"She is quite well again?" said Monsieur de Choiseul, hastily.

"Thank God, yes, Monsieur le Duc!"

"Ah!" said the king, "she has fled."

"She has perhaps recognized your Majesty; she is very timid."

"Has she been with you long?"

"Since yesterday, Sire; I sent for her when I installed myself here."

"What a melancholy abode for a young girl!" said Louis. "That devil of a Gabriel was very clumsy. He did not remember that the trees, as they grew, would conceal and darken that building."

"But I assure you, Sire, that the apartments are very tolerable."

"That is impossible," said Louis XV.

"Will your Majesty deign to convince yourself?" said the dauphiness, anxious to do the honors of her palace.

"Very well. Will you come, Choiseul?"

"Sire, it is two o'clock. I have a parliamentary meeting at half-past two. I have only time to return to Versailles."

"Well, Duke, go; and give those black-gowns a shake for me. Dauphiness, show me these little apartments, if you please; I have a great liking for interiors."

"Come, Monsieur Mique," said the dauphiness to her architect, "you will have an opportunity of profiting by the opinion of his Majesty, who understands everything so well."

The king walked first, the dauphiness followed. They mounted the little flight of steps which led to the chapel, avoiding the entrance of the courtyard, which was at one side. The door of the chapel is on the left; the staircase, narrow and unpretending, which leads to the corridor, on the right.

"Who lives here?" asked Louis XV.

"No one yet, Sire."

"There is a key in the door of the first suite of apartments."

"Ah, yes, true! Mademoiselle de Taverney enters it to-day."

"Here?" said the king, pointing to the door.

"Yes, Sire."

"And is she there at present? If so, let us not enter."

"Sire, she has just gone down; I saw her walking under the veranda of the court."

"Then show me her apartments as an example."

"As you please," replied the dauphiness; and she introduced the king into the principal apartment, which was preceded by an ante-room and two closets.

Some articles of furniture which were already arranged, several books, a pianoforte, and, above all, an enormous bouquet of the most beautiful flowers, which Mademoiselle de Taverney had placed in a Chinese vase, attracted the king's attention. "Ah!" said he, "what beautiful flowers! And yet you wish to change the garden! Who

the devil supplies your people with flowers like these? Do they keep some for you?"

"It is in truth a beautiful bouquet."

"The gardener takes good care of Mademoiselle de Taverney. Who is your gardener here?"

"I do not know, Sire. Monsieur de Jussieu undertook to procure them for me."

The king gave a curious glance around the apartments, looked again at the exterior, peeped into the courtyard, and went away. His Majesty crossed the park and returned to the great Trianon, where his equipages were already in waiting for a hunt which was to take place after dinner, in carriages, from three till six o'clock.

The dauphin was still measuring the sun's altitude.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CONSPIRACY IS RENEWED.

WHILE the king, in order to reassure Monsieur de Choiseul and not to lose any time himself, was walking thus in the Trianon till the chase should begin, Luciennes was the centre of a reunion of frightened conspirators, who had flown swiftly to Madame Dubarry, like birds who have smelt the sportsman's powder.

Jean and the Maréchal de Richelieu, after having looked at each other ill-humoredly for some time, were the first to take flight. The others were the usual herd of favorites, whom the certain disgrace of the Choiseuls had allured, whom the duke's return to favor had alarmed, and who, no longer finding the minister there to fawn upon, had returned mechanically to Luciennes, to see if the tree was yet strong enough for them to cling to as before.

Madame Dubarry was taking a siesta after the fatigues of her diplomacy and the deceptive triumph which had crowned it, when Richelieu's carriage rolled into the court with the noise and swiftness of a whirlwind.

"Mistress Dubarry is asleep," said Zamore, without moving.

Jean sent Zamore rolling on the carpet with a scientific kick, inflicted upon the most highly ornamented portion of his governor's uniform. Zamore screamed, and Chon hastened to inquire the cause. "You are beating that little fellow again, you brute!" said she.

"And I will exterminate you," continued Jean, with kindling eyes, "if you do not immediately awaken the Countess."

But there was no need to awaken the countess; at Zamore's cries, at the growling tones of Jean's voice, she had suspected some misfortune, and hastened into the room, wrapped in a dressing-gown.

"What is the matter?" she exclaimed, alarmed at seeing Jean stretched at full length upon the sofa to calm the agitation of his bile, and at finding that the marshal did not even kiss her hand.

"The matter, the matter?" said Jean. "*Parbleu!* what is always the matter, — the Choiseuls!"

"What do you mean?"

"Yes, thousand thunders! — firmer than ever."

"What are you saying?"

"The Comte Dubarry is right," continued Richelieu; "Monsieur the Duc de Choiseul is firmer than ever."

The countess drew the king's letter from her bosom. "And this?" said she, smiling.

"Have you read it aright, Countess?" asked the marshal.

"Why, I fancy I can read, Duke," replied Madame Dubarry.

"I do not doubt it, Madame. Will you allow me to read it also?"

"Oh, certainly! Read."

The duke took the paper, unfolded it slowly, and read: —

To-morrow I will thank Monsieur de Choiseul for his services. I promise it positively.

LOUIS.

"Is that clear?" said the countess.

"Perfectly clear," replied the marshal, with a grimace.

"Well, what?" said Jean.

"Well, it is to-morrow that we shall be victorious, and nothing is lost as yet."

"What! to-morrow? The king signed that for me yesterday; therefore 'to-morrow' is to-day."

"Pardon me, Madame!" said the duke; "as there is no date to the note, to-morrow will always be the day after you wish to see Monsieur de Choiseul dismissed. In the Rue de la Grange-Batalière, about one hundred paces from my house, there is a tavern, on the signboard of which is written in red characters, 'Credit given here to-morrow.' To-morrow, — that is, never."

"The king mocks us!" said Jean, furiously.

"Impossible," said the alarmed countess; "impossible! Such a trick would be unworthy —"

"Ah, Madame, his Majesty is so merry!" said Richelieu.

"He shall pay for this, Duke," said the countess, in a tone of anger.

"After all, Countess, we must not be angry with the king. We cannot accuse his Majesty of cheating or tricking us, for the king has performed what he promised."

"Oh!" said Jean, with a more than vulgar shrug of his shoulders.

"What did he promise?" cried the countess. "To thank Choiseul for his services?"

"And that is precisely what he has done, Madame. I heard his Majesty myself thank the Duke for his services. The word has two meanings: in diplomacy, each takes the one he prefers. You have chosen yours, the king has chosen his. Therefore there is no more question of to-morrow. It is indeed to-day, according to your opinion, that the king should have kept his promise; and he has done so. I who speak to you heard him thank Choiseul."

"Duke, this is no time for jesting, I think."

"Do you think I am jesting, Countess? Ask Comte Jean."

"No, *pardieu!*" said Jean, "it is no laughing matter. This morning Choiseul was embraced, flattered, feasted by the king; and even now he is walking arm in arm with him in the Trianons."

"Arm in arm!" exclaimed Chon, who had slipped into the room, and who raised her snowy arms like a second Niobe in despair.

"Yes, I have been tricked," said the countess; "but we shall see. Chon, countermand my carriage for the chase. I will not go."

"Good!" said Jean.

"One moment," cried Richelieu. "No hurry, no pouting! Ah, forgive me, Countess, for daring to advise you! I entreat you to pardon me!"

"Go on, Duke; do not apologize. I think I am losing my senses. See how I am placed! I did not wish to meddle with politics, and the first time I touch upon them self-love launches me so far. You were saying —"

"That pouting now would not be prudent. The position is difficult, Countess. If the king is so decidedly in favor of these Choiseuls, if the dauphiness has so much influence over him, if he thus openly breaks a lance with you, you must —"

"Well, what?"

"You must be even more amiable than usual, Countess. I know it is impossible; but in a position like ours, the impossible becomes necessary. Attempt the impossible, then."

The countess reflected.

"For, in short," said the duke, "if the king should adopt German manners —"

"If he should become virtuous!" exclaimed Jean, horrified.

"Who knows, Countess?" said Richelieu; "novelty is so attractive."

"Oh, as for that," replied the Countess, with a nod of incredulity, "I do not believe it!"

"More extraordinary things have happened, Countess. You know the proverb of the devil turning hermit. So you must not pout."

"But I am suffocating with rage."

"*Parbleu!* Countess, I can believe you; but suffocate before us, breathe freely before the enemy. Do not let the king — that is to say, Monsieur de Choiseul — perceive your anger."

"And shall I go to the chase?"

"It would be most politic."

"And you, Duke?"

"Oh! I? If I should have to crawl on all-fours, I shall go."

"Come in my carriage, then!" cried the countess, to see what face her ally would put on.

"Oh, Countess!" replied the duke, smirking to hide his vexation, "it is such an honor —"

"That you refuse?"

"I? God forbid!"

"Take care; you will compromise yourself."

"I have no wish to compromise myself."

"He confesses it, — he dares to confess it!" cried Madame Dubarry.

"Countess, Countess! Monsieur de Choiseul will never forgive me."

"Are you already on such good terms with Monsieur de Choiseul?"

"Countess, Countess! I shall get into disgrace with the dauphiness."

"Would you rather we should each continue the war

separately, without sharing the spoil? There is still time. You are not compromised, and you may yet withdraw from the partnership."

"You misunderstand me, Countess," said the duke, kissing her hands. "Did I hesitate on the day of your presentation to send you a dress, a hairdresser, and a carriage? Well, I shall not hesitate any more to-day. Oh! I am bolder than you imagine, Countess."

"Then it is agreed. We will go to this hunt together, and that will serve me as a pretext for not seeing or speaking to any one."

"Not even to the king?"

"Oh! on the contrary, I will give him such sweet words that he will be in despair."

"Bravo! that is good tactics."

"But you, Jean, what are you doing there? Do endeavor to rise from those cushions; you are burying yourself alive, my good friend."

"You want to know what I am doing, do you? Well, I am thinking —"

"Of what?"

"I am thinking that all the ballad-writers of the town and of the department are setting us to all possible tunes; that the 'Nouvelles à la Main' is cutting us up like meat for pies; that the 'Gazetier Cuirassé' is piercing us for want of a cuirass; that the 'Journal des Observateurs' observes us even to the marrow of our bones; that, in short, to-morrow we shall be in so pitiable a state that even a Choiseul might pity us."

"And what is the result of your reflections?" asked the duke.

"Why, that I must hasten to Paris to buy a little lint and no inconsiderable quantity of ointment to put upon our wounds. Give me some money, my little sister."

"How much?" asked the countess.

"A trifle; two or three hundred louis."

"You see, Duke," said the countess, turning to Richelieu, "that I am already paying the expenses of the war."

"That is only the beginning of the campaign; and what you sow to-day, to-morrow you will reap."

The countess shrugged her shoulders slightly, rose, went to her chiffonniere, and opening it, took out a handful of bank-notes, which, without counting them, she handed to Jean, who, also without counting them, pocketed them with a deep sigh. Then rising, yawning, and stretching himself like a man overwhelmed with fatigue, he took a few steps across the room. "See," said he, pointing to the duke and the countess, "these people are going to amuse themselves at the chase, while I have to gallop to Paris. They will see gay cavaliers and lovely women, and I shall see nothing but the hideous faces of scribbling drudges. Certainly, I am the turnspit of the establishment."

"Mark me, Duke," said the countess, "he will never bestow a thought on us. Half my bank-notes will be squandered on some opera-girl, and the rest will disappear in a gambling-house. That is his errand to Paris, and yet he bemoans himself, the wretch! Leave my sight, Jean, you disgust me."

Jean emptied three plates of bonbons, stuffed the contents into his pockets, stole a Chinese figure with diamond eyes from the landing, and stalked off with a most majestic strut, pursued by the exclamations of the countess.

"What a delightful youth!" said Richelieu, in the tone of a parasite who praises a spoiled brat, while all the time he is inwardly devoting him to the infernal regions; "he is very dear to you, I suppose, Countess?"

"As you say, Duke, he has fixed all his happiness in me, and the speculation brings him three or four hundred thousand francs a year."

The clock struck.

"Half-past twelve, Countess," said the duke. "Luckily you are almost dressed. Show yourself a little to your courtiers, who might otherwise think there is an eclipse, and then let us to our carriage. You know how the chase is ordered?"

"His Majesty and I arranged it yesterday; they were to proceed to the forest of Marly, and take me up in passing."

"Oh! I am very sure the king has not changed the programme."

"In the mean time, Duke, let me hear your plan; it is your turn now."

"Madame, I wrote yesterday to my nephew, who, if I may believe my presentiments, is already on his way hither."

"Monsieur d'Aiguillon?"

"I should not be surprised if he crosses my letter on the road, and if he were here to-morrow or the day after at the latest."

"Then you count upon him?"

"Oh! Madame, he does not want for sense."

"No matter who it is, for we are at the last extremity. The king might perhaps submit, if he had not such a mortal antipathy to business."

"So that —"

"So that I fear he will never consent to give up Monsieur de Choiseul."

"Shall I speak frankly to you, Countess?"

"Certainly."

"Well! I think so too. The king will find a hundred

stratagems like that of yesterday; his Majesty has so much wit! And then, on your side, Countess, you will never risk losing his love by an unheard-of obstinacy."

"Perhaps. I must reflect upon that."

"You see, Countess, Monsieur de Choiseul is there for an eternity; nothing but a miracle can dislodge him."

"Yes, a miracle," repeated Jeanne.

"And unfortunately we are not now in the age of miracles."

"Oh!" said Madame Dubarry, "I know some one who works miracles yet."

"You know a man who works miracles?"

"By my faith, yes!"

"And you have not told me?"

"I thought of it only just now, Duke."

"Do you think he could assist us in this affair?"

"I think he can do everything."

"Oh, indeed! And what miracle has he worked? Tell me that, Countess, so that I may judge of his skill by the example."

"Duke," said Madame Dubarry, approaching Richelieu and involuntarily lowering her voice, "he is a man who, ten years ago, met me upon the Place Louis XV., and told me I should be queen of France."

"Indeed! that is miraculous; and could he tell me, think you, that I shall die prime minister?"

"Don't you think so?"

"Oh, I don't doubt it in the least! What is his name?"

"His name will tell you nothing."

"Where is he?"

"Ah! that I don't know."

"He did not give you his address?"

"No; he was to come to me for his recompense."

"What did you promise him?"

"Whatever he should ask."

"And he has not come?"

"No."

"Countess, that is even more miraculous than his prediction. We must certainly have this man."

"But how shall we proceed?"

"His name, Countess, his name!"

"He has two."

"Proceed according to order, — the first?"

"The Comte de Fenix."

"What! the man you pointed out to me on the day of your presentation?"

"Yes; the Prussian officer."

"Oh! I have no longer any faith in him. All the sorcerers I have ever known had names ending in *i* or *o*."

"That exactly suits, Duke; for his second name is Joseph Balsamo."

"But have you no way of finding him?"

"I shall task my brain, Duke. I think I know some one who knows him."

"Good! But make haste, Countess. It is now a quarter to one."

"I am ready. My carriage, there!"

Ten minutes afterward Madame Dubarry and Monsieur de Richelieu were seated side by side, and driving rapidly on their way to the hunting party.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SORCERER CHASE.

A LONG train of carriages filled the avenues of the forest of Marly, where the king was hunting. It was what was called the afternoon chase. In the latter part of his life Louis XV. neither shot at nor rode after the game; he was content with watching the progress of the chase.

Those of our readers who have read Plutarch will perhaps remember that cook of Mark Antony's who put a boar on the spit every hour, so that among the six or seven boars which were roasting, there might always be one ready whenever Mark Antony wished to dine. The reason of this was that Mark Antony, as governor of Asia Minor, was overwhelmed with business. He was the dispenser of justice, and as the Cilicians are great thieves (the fact is confirmed by Juvenal), Mark Antony had abundance of work on his hands. He had therefore always five or six roasts in various degrees of progress on the spit, waiting for the moment when his functions as judge would permit him to snatch a hasty morsel.

Louis XV. acted in a similar manner. For the afternoon chase there were three or four stags started at different hours; and accordingly as the king felt disposed he chose a nearer or more distant "view halloo." On this day his Majesty had signified his intention of hunting until four o'clock. A stag was therefore chosen, which had been started at noon, and which might consequently be expected to run until that hour.

Madame Dubarry intended to follow the king as faithfully as the king intended to follow the stag. But hunters propose, and fate disposes. A combination of circumstances frustrated this happy project of Madame Dubarry's, and the countess found in fate an adversary almost as capricious as herself.

While the countess, talking politics with Monsieur de Richelieu, drove rapidly after the king, who in his turn drove rapidly after the stag, and while the duke and she returned in part the bows which greeted them as they passed, they suddenly perceived, about fifty paces from the road, beneath a magnificent canopy of verdure, an open carriage turned upside down, while the two black horses which should have drawn it were peaceably munching, the one the bark of a beech-tree, the other the moss growing at his feet.

Madame Dubarry's horses, a magnificent pair presented to her by the king, had distanced — as we say nowadays — all the other carriages, and were the first to arrive in sight of the broken carriage.

"Ha, an accident!" said the countess, calmly.

"Faith, yes!" said the Duc de Richelieu, with equal coolness, for sensibility is little in fashion at court; "the carriage is broken to pieces."

"Is that a corpse upon the grass?" asked the countess. "Look, Duke."

"I think not; it moves."

"Is it a man or a woman?"

"I don't know; I cannot see well."

"Ha! it bows to us."

"Then it cannot be dead;" and Richelieu at all hazards took off his hat. "But, Countess," said he, "it seems to me —"

"And to me also —"

"That it is his Eminence Prince Louis."

"The Cardinal de Rohan in person!"

"What the devil is he doing there?" asked the duke.

"Let us go and see," replied the countess. "Champagne, drive on to the broken carriage."

The coachman immediately left the highroad and dashed in among the lofty trees.

"Faith, yes! it is Monseigneur le Cardinal," said Richelieu.

It was in truth his Eminence, who was lying stretched upon the grass, waiting until some of his friends should pass. Seeing Madame Dubarry approach, he rose. "A thousand compliments to the countess!" said he.

"What, Cardinal! is it you?"

"Myself, Madame."

"On foot?"

"No, sitting."

"Are you hurt?"

"Not in the least."

"And how in all the world do you happen to be in this condition?"

"Do not speak of it, Madame; that brute of a coachman, a rascal whom I imported from England, when I told him to cut across the wood in order to join the chase, turned so suddenly that he upset me and broke my best carriage."

"You must not complain, Cardinal," said the countess; "a French coachman would have broken your neck, or at least your ribs."

"Very possibly."

"Therefore be consoled."

"Oh! I am somewhat of a philosopher, Countess. But I shall have to wait, and that is fatal."

"How, Prince! to wait? A Rohan wait?"

"There is no alternative."

"Oh, no! I would rather alight and leave you my carriage."

"In truth, Madame, your kindness makes me ashamed."

"Come, jump in, Prince; jump in."

"No, thank you, Madame; I am waiting for Soubise, who is at the chase, and who cannot fail to pass in a few moments."

"But if he should have taken another road?"

"Oh! it is of no consequence."

"Monseigneur, I entreat you."

"No, thank you."

"But why not?"

"I am unwilling to incommode you."

"Cardinal, if you refuse to enter, I will order one of the footmen to carry my train, and I will roam through the woods like a dryad."

The cardinal smiled, and thinking that a longer resistance might be interpreted unfavorably by the countess, he consented to enter the carriage. The duke had already given up his place, and moved over to the seat in front. The cardinal entreated him to resume his former position, but the duke was inflexible. The countess's splendid horses soon made up for the time which had thus been lost.

"Pardon me, Monseigneur," said the countess, addressing the cardinal, "has your Eminence been reconciled to the chase?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because this is the first time I have seen you join in that amusement."

"By no means, Countess. I had come to Versailles to have the honor of paying my respects to his Majesty, when I was told he was at the chase. I had to speak to him on some important business, and therefore followed, hoping to overtake him; but thanks to this cursed coachman, I

shall not only lose his Majesty's ear, but also my assignation in town."

"You see, Madame," said the duke, laughing, "Monseigneur makes a free confession, — he has an assignation!"

"Which, I repeat, I shall fail to meet," replied the cardinal.

"Does a Rohan, a prince, a cardinal, ever fail in anything?" said the countess.

"It looks so now," said the prince, "unless a miracle comes to my assistance."

The duke and the countess looked at each other; this word recalled their recent conversation.

"Faith! Prince," said the countess, "speaking of miracles, I will confess frankly that I am very happy to meet a dignitary of the Church, that I may ask him if he believes in them."

"In what, Madame?"

"*Parbleu!* in miracles," said the duke.

"The Scriptures give them as an article of faith, Madame," said the cardinal, trying to look devout.

"Oh! I am not speaking of ancient miracles," replied the countess.

"And of what miracles do you speak, Madame?"

"Of modern miracles."

"Those indeed, I confess, are rather more rare," said the cardinal; "but still —"

"But still, what?"

"Faith! I have seen things which, if they were not miraculous, were at least very incredible."

"You have seen such things, Prince?"

"On my honor."

"But you know, Madame," said Richelieu, laughing, "that his Eminence is said to be in communication with spirits, which, perhaps, is not very orthodox."

"No, but which must be very convenient," said the countess. "And what have you seen, Prince?"

"I have sworn not to reveal it."

"Oh! that begins to look serious."

"It is a fact, Madame."

"But if you have promised to observe secrecy respecting the sorcery, perhaps you have not done so as regards the sorcerer?"

"No."

"Well, then, Prince, I must tell you that the duke and myself came out to-day with the intention of seeking some magician."

"Really?"

"Upon my honor."

"Take mine."

"I desire nothing better."

"He is at your disposal, Countess."

"And at mine also, Prince?"

"And at yours also, Duke."

"What is his name?"

"The Comte de Fenix."

The countess and the duke looked at each other and turned pale. "That is strange," said they together.

"Do you know him?" asked the prince.

"No. And you think him a sorcerer?"

"I am positive of it."

"You have spoken to him, then?"

"Of course."

"And you found him —"

"Perfect."

"On what occasion, may I ask?"

"Why —" the cardinal hesitated, — "on the occasion of his foretelling my fortune."

"Correctly?"

"He told me things of the other world."

"Has he no other name than the Comte de Fenix?"

"Yes; I have heard him called —"

"Speak Monseigneur," said the countess, impatiently.

"Joseph Balsamo, Madame."

The countess clasped her hands and looked at Richelieu. Richelieu rubbed the end of his nose and looked at the countess.

"Is the devil very black?" asked Madame Dubarry, suddenly.

"The devil, Countess? I have not seen him."

"What are you thinking of, Countess?" cried Richelieu. "*Pardieu!* that would be respectable company for a cardinal!"

"And did he tell you your fortune without showing you the devil?" asked the countess.

"Oh! certainly," said the cardinal; "they show the devil only to people of no consideration. We can dispense with him."

"But say what you will, Prince," continued Madame Dubarry, "there must be a little deviltry at the bottom of it."

"Faith! I think so."

"Blue fire, spectres, infernal caldrons which smell horribly while they boil, eh?"

"Oh, no! my sorcerer is most polite and well-bred; he is a very gallant man, and receives his visitors in good style."

"Will you not have your horoscope drawn by this man, Countess?" said Richelieu.

"I long to do so, I confess."

"Do so, then, Madame."

"But where does all this take place?" asked Madame Dubarry, hoping that the cardinal would give her the wished-for address.

"In a very handsome room, fashionably furnished."

The countess could scarcely conceal her impatience. "Very well," said she; "but the house?"

"A very fine house, though in a singular style of architecture."

The countess stamped with rage at being so ill understood. Richelieu came to her assistance. "But do you not see, Monseigneur," said he, "that madame is eager to know where your sorcerer lives?"

"Where he lives, you say? Oh! well," replied the cardinal, "eh! faith — wait a moment — no — yes — no. It is in the Marais, near the corner of the boulevard, Rue St. François, St. Anastasie — no. However, it is the name of some saint."

"But what saint? You must surely know them all."

"No, faith! I know very little about them," said the cardinal. "But stay — my fool of a footman must remember."

"Oh! very fortunately he got up behind," said the duke. "Stop, Champagne, stop!" and the duke pulled the cord which was attached to the coachman's little finger, who suddenly reined in the foaming horses, throwing them on their sinewy haunches.

"Olive," said the cardinal, "are you there, you scoundrel?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Where did I stop one evening in the Marais, — a long time back?"

The lackey had overheard the whole conversation, but took care not to appear as if he had done so. "In the Marais?" said he, seeming to search his memory.

"Yes, near the boulevards."

"What day, Monseigneur?"

"One day when I was returning from St. Denis."

"From St. Denis?" said Olive, to give himself importance, and to make his hesitation seem more natural.

"Eh! yes, from St. Denis; the carriage, I think, waited for me in the boulevards."

"Oh, yes, Monseigneur," said Olive, "I remember now. A man came and threw a very heavy parcel into the carriage; I remember it perfectly."

"Very possibly," replied the cardinal; "but who asked you about that, you scoundrel?"

"What does your Eminence wish, then?"

"To know the name of the street."

"Rue St. Claude, Monseigneur."

"Claude, that is it!" cried the cardinal. "I would have laid any wager it was the name of a saint."

"Rue St. Claude!" repeated the countess, darting such an expressive glance at Richelieu that the marshal, fearing to let any one into his secrets, especially when they related to a conspiracy, interrupted Madame Dubarry by these words: "Ha! Countess, — the king!"

"Where?"

"Yonder."

"The king! the king!" exclaimed the countess. "To the left, Champagne, to the left, that his Majesty may not see us."

"And why, Countess?" asked the astonished cardinal. "I thought that, on the contrary, you were taking me to his Majesty."

"Oh, true! you wish to see the king, do you not?"

"I came for that alone, Madame."

"Very well! you shall be taken to the king —"

"But you?"

"Oh! we shall remain here."

"But, Countess —"

"No apologies, Prince, I entreat; every one to his own

business. The king is yonder, under those chestnut-trees; you have business with the king, — very well, the affair is easily arranged. Champagne!"

Champagne pulled up.

"Champagne, let us alight here, and you may take his Eminence to the king."

"What! alone, Countess?" exclaimed the cardinal.

"You wish to have an audience of his Majesty, Cardinal?"

"It is true."

"Well! you shall have him entirely to yourself."

"Ah! this kindness overwhelms me;" and the prelate gallantly kissed Madame Dubarry's hand. "But where will you remain yourself, Madame?" he inquired.

"Here, under these trees."

"The king will be looking for you."

"So much the better."

"He will be uneasy at not seeing you."

"And that will torment him, — just what I wish."

"Countess, you are adorable."

"That is precisely what the king says when I have tormented him. Champagne, when you have taken his Eminence to the king, you will return at full gallop."

"Yes, Madame."

"Adieu, Duke," said the cardinal."

"Au revoir, Monseigneur," replied the duke.

And the valet having let down the step, the duke alighted and handed out the countess, who leaped to the ground as lightly as a nun escaping from a convent, while the carriage rapidly bore his Eminence to the hillock from which his most Christian Majesty was seeking, with his short-sighted eyes, the naughty countess whom every one had seen but himself.

Madame Dubarry lost no time. She took the duke's

arm, and drawing him into the thicket, — "Do you know," said she, "it must have been Providence who sent that dear cardinal to us."

"To get rid of him for a moment, — I understand that," replied the duke.

"No, to put us on the trace of our man!"

"Then we are going to his house?"

"I think so; but —"

"What, Countess?"

"I am afraid, I confess it."

"Of whom?"

"Of the sorcerer. Oh, I am very superstitious!"

"The devil!"

"And you, do you believe in sorcerers?"

"I can't say I do not, Countess."

"My story of the prediction —"

"Is a startling fact. And I myself," said the old marshal, scratching his ear, "once met a certain sorcerer —"

"Bah!"

"— Who rendered me a very important service."

"What service, Duke?"

"He resuscitated me."

"He resuscitated you?"

"Certainly; I was dead, — no less."

"Oh! tell me the whole affair, Duke."

"Let us conceal ourselves, then."

"Duke, you are a dreadful coward."

"Oh, no! I am only prudent."

"Are we well placed here?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Well, the story, the story!"

"Well, I was at Vienna. It was when I was ambassador there. One evening, while I was standing under a lamp, I received a sword-thrust through my body. It

was a husband's sword, — devilishly unwholesome. I fell. Some one picked me up; I was dead."

"What! you were dead?"

"Yes, or nearly so. A sorcerer passes, who asks who is the man whom they are carrying. He is told it is I; he stops the litter, pours three drops of some unknown liquid into the wound, three more between my lips, and the bleeding stops, respiration returns, my eyes open, and I am cured."

"It is a miracle from heaven, Duke."

"That is just what frightens me; for, on the contrary, I believe it is a miracle of the devil."

"True, Marshal; God would not have saved a dissipated rake like you. Honor to whom honor is due. And does your sorcerer still live?"

"I doubt it, unless he has found the elixir of life."

"Like you, Marshal?"

"Do you believe these stories, then?"

"I believe everything. He was old?"

"Methuselah in person."

"And his name?"

"Ah! a magnificent Greek name, — Althotas."

"What a terrible name, Marshal!"

"Is it not, Madame?"

"Duke, there is the carriage returning. Are we decided? Shall we go to Paris and visit the Rue St. Claude?"

"If you like. But the king is waiting for you."

"That would determine me, Duke, if I had not already determined. He has tormented me. Now, France, it is your turn to suffer."

"But he will think you are lost, — carried off."

"And so much the more, that I have been seen with you, Marshal."

"Stay, Countess! I will be frank with you; I am afraid."

"Of what?"

"I am afraid that you will tell all this to some one, and that I shall be laughed at."

"Then we shall both be laughed at together, since I go with you."

"That decides me, Countess. However, if you betray me, I shall say —"

"What will you say?"

"I shall say that you came with me *tête-à-tête*."

"No one will believe you, Duke."

"Ah, Countess, if the king were not there!"

"Champagne, Champagne! Here, behind this thicket, that we may not be seen. Germain, the door. That will do. Now to Paris, Rue St. Claude, in the Marais, and let the pavement smoke for it."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE COURIER.

It was six o'clock in the evening. In that chamber in the Rue St. Claude into which we have already introduced our readers, Balsamo was seated beside Lorenza, now awake, and was endeavoring by persuasion to soften that rebellious spirit. But the young woman looked askance at him, as Dido looked at Æneas when he was about to leave her, she spoke only to reproach him, and moved her hand only to repulse him. She complained that she was a prisoner, a slave; that she could no longer breathe the fresh air, nor see the sun. She envied the fate of the poorest creatures, of the birds, of the flowers. She called Balsamo her tyrant. Then, passing from reproaches to rage, she tore into shreds the rich stuffs which her husband had given her to cheer, by this semblance of gayety, the solitude he imposed on her.

Balsamo, on the other hand, spoke gently to her, and looked at her lovingly. It was evident that this weak, irritable creature filled a large place in his heart, if not in his life.

"Lorenza," said he to her, "my beloved, why do you display this spirit of resistance and hostility? Why will you not live with me, who love you inexpressibly, as a gentle and devoted companion? You would then have nothing to wish for; you would be free to bloom in the sun like the flowers of which you spoke just now, — to stretch your wings like the birds whose fate you envy.

We would go everywhere together. You would not only see the sun which delights you so much, but the factitious sun of splendor and fashion, — those assemblies to which the women of this country resort. You would be happy according to your tastes, while rendering me happy in mine. Why will you refuse this happiness, Lorenza, — you who, with your beauty and riches, would make so many women envious?"

"Because I abhor you!" said the proud young woman.

Balsamo cast on Lorenza a glance expressive at once of anger and pity. "Live, then, as you condemn yourself to live," said he; "and since you are so proud, do not complain."

"I should not complain, if you would leave me alone; I should not complain, if you did not force me to speak to you. Do not come into my presence, or when you do enter my prison, do not speak to me, and I will do as the poor birds from the South do when they are imprisoned in cages, — they die, but they do not sing."

Balsamo made an effort to control himself.

"Come, Lorenza," said he, "a little more gentleness and resignation. Look into my heart, which loves you above all things. Do you wish for books?"

"No."

"Why not? Books would amuse you."

"I wish to weary myself to death."

Balsamo smiled, or rather endeavored to smile. "You are mad," said he; "you know very well that you cannot die while I am here to take care of you and to cure you when you fall ill."

"Oh!" cried Lorenza, "you will not cure me when you find me strangled with this scarf against the bars of my window."

Balsamo shuddered.

"Or when," continued she, furiously, "I have opened this knife and stabbed myself to the heart."

Balsamo, pale as death, and bathed in cold perspiration, gazed at Lorenza, and with a threatening voice, "No, Lorenza," said he, "you are right; I shall not cure you then, I shall bring you back to life."

Lorenza gave a cry of terror. She knew no bounds to Balsamo's power, and believed his threat. Balsamo was saved. While she was plunged in this new abyss of suffering, which she had not foreseen, and while her vacillating reason saw itself encircled by a never-ceasing round of torture, the sound of the signal-bell pulled by Fritz reached Balsamo's ear. It struck three times quickly, and at regular intervals.

"A courier," said he.

Then after a pause another ring was heard.

"And in haste," he said.

"Ah!" said Lorenza, "you are about to leave me, then!"

He took the young woman's cold hand in his. "Once more and for the last time, Lorenza," said he, "let us live on good terms with each other like brother and sister. Since destiny unites us to each other, let us make destiny a friend, and not an executioner."

Lorenza did not reply. Her eye, motionless and sad, seemed to seek some thought which she could not find, perhaps because she had sought it too long and too earnestly, — like those who, after having lived in darkness, gaze too ardently on the sun, and are blinded by excess of light. Balsamo took her hand and kissed it without her giving any sign of life. Then he advanced toward the chimney. Immediately Lorenza started from her torpor, and eagerly fixed her gaze upon him.

"Oh!" said he, "you wish to know how I leave this,

in order to leave it one day after me and flee from me as you threatened. And therefore you awake; therefore you look at me."

Then, passing his hand over his forehead, as if he imposed a painful constraint on himself, he stretched his hand toward Lorenza, and said in a commanding voice, looking at her as if he were darting a javelin against her head and breast: "Sleep!"

The word was scarcely uttered when Lorenza bent like a flower upon its stem; her head, for a single moment unsteady, drooped and rested against the cushion of the sofa; her hands, of an opaque and waxen whiteness, glided down her sides, rustling her silken dress. Balsamo, seeing her so beautiful, approached her and pressed his lips upon her lovely forehead.

Then Lorenza's features brightened, as if a breath from the God of Love himself had swept away the cloud which rested on her brow. Her lips opened tremulously, her eyes swam in voluptuous tears, and she sighed as the angels must have sighed when in earth's youthful prime they stooped to love the children of men. Balsamo looked upon her for a moment, as if unable to withdraw his gaze; then as the bell sounded anew, he turned toward the chimney, touched a spring, and disappeared behind the flowers.

Fritz was waiting for him in the salon with a man dressed in the closely fitting jacket of a courier, and wearing thick boots armed with long spurs. The commonplace and inexpressive features of this man showed him to be one of the people; but his eye had in it a spark of sacred fire which seemed to have been breathed into him by some superior intelligence. His left hand grasped a short and knotty whip, while with his right hand he made some signs to Balsamo, which the latter instantly recog-

nized, and to which, without speaking, he replied by touching his forehead with his forefinger.

The postilion's hand moved upward to his breast, where it traced another sign, which an indifferent observer would not have remarked, so closely did it resemble the movement made in fastening a button. To this sign the Master replied by showing a ring which he wore upon his finger. Before this powerful signet the messenger bent his knee.

"Whence come you?" asked Balsamo.

"From Rouen, Master."

"What is your profession?"

"I am a courier in the service of the Duchesse de Grammont."

"Who placed you there?"

"The will of the Great Copt."

"What orders did you receive when you entered the service?"

"To have no secret from the Master."

"Whither are you going?"

"To Versailles."

"What are you carrying?"

"A letter."

"For whom?"

"For the minister."

"Give it me."

The courier took a letter from a leathern bag fastened upon his shoulders behind, and gave it to Balsamo.

"Shall I wait?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I wait."

"Fritz!"

The German appeared.

"Keep Sebastian concealed in the office."

"He knows my name," murmured the courier, with superstitious fear.

"He knows everything," said Fritz, drawing him away.

When Balsamo was once more alone, he looked at the unbroken, deeply cut seal of the letter, which the imploring glance of the messenger had entreated him to respect as much as possible. Then, slowly and pensively, he once more mounted toward Lorenza's apartment, and opened the door of communication.

Lorenza was still sleeping, but seemingly tired and enervated by inaction. He took her hand, which she closed convulsively, and then he placed the letter, sealed as it was, upon her heart.

"Do you see?" he asked.

"Yes I see," replied Lorenza.

"What is the object which I hold in my hand?"

"A letter."

"Can you read it?"

"I can."

"Do so, then."

With closed eyes and palpitating bosom, Lorenza repeated, word for word, the following lines, which Balsamo wrote down as she spoke:—

DEAR BROTHER,—As I had foreseen, my exile will be at least of some service to us. I have this morning seen the president of Rouen; he is for us, but timid. I urged him in your name; he has at last decided, and the remonstrance of his division will be in Versailles within a week. I am about setting off for Rennes to rouse Karadeuc and La Chalotais, who are sleeping on their post. Our agent from Caudebec was in Rouen. I have seen him. England will not stop midway; she is preparing a sharp notification for the cabinet of Versailles. X— asked me if he should produce it, and I authorized him to do so. You will receive the last pamphlets of Morande and Delille against the Dubarry. They are petards

which might blow up a town. A sad report reached me, that there was disgrace in the air; but as you have not written to me, I laugh at it. Do not leave me in doubt, however, and reply courier for courier. Your message will find me at Caen, where I have some of our gentlemen to gain over. Adieu; I salute you.

DUCHESSE DE GRAMMONT.

After reading thus far Lorenza stopped.

"You see nothing more?" asked Balsamo.

"I see nothing."

"No postscript?"

"No."

Balsamo, whose brow had gradually smoothed as Lorenza read the letter, now took it from her. "A curious document," said he, "and one for which they would pay me well. Oh! how can any one write such things?" he continued. "Yes, it is always women who are the ruin of great men. This Choiseul could not have been overthrown by an army of enemies, or by a world of intrigues; and now the breath of a woman crushes while it caresses him. Yes, we all perish by the treachery or the weakness of women. If we have a heart, and in that heart a sensitive chord, we are lost."

And as he spoke Balsamo gazed with inexpressible tenderness at Lorenza, who palpitated under his glance. "Is it true, what I think?" said he.

"No, no, it is not true!" she replied, eagerly; "you see plainly that I love you too dearly to do you any hurt, like those women you spoke of, without sense and without heart."

Balsamo allowed himself to be embraced by the arms of his enchantress. Suddenly a double ring of Fritz's bell sounded twice.

"Two visitors," said Balsamo.

A single violent ring completed the telegraphic message. Balsamo, disengaging himself from Lorenza's arms, hastened from the apartment, leaving the young girl still asleep. On his way he met the courier, who was waiting for orders. "Here is your letter," said he.

"What must I do with it?"

"Deliver it as addressed."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

The courier looked at the envelope and at the seal, and seeing them intact, as when he had brought them, expressed his satisfaction, and disappeared in the darkness.

"What a pity not to keep such an autograph," said Balsamo, "and, above all, what a pity not to be able to forward it by a safe hand to the king."

Fritz now appeared.

"Who is there?" asked Balsamo.

"A man and a woman."

"Have they been here before?"

"No."

"Do you know them?"

"No."

"Is the woman young?"

"Young and handsome."

"The man?"

"From sixty to sixty-five years of age."

"Where are they?"

"In the salon."

Balsamo entered.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE EVOCATION.

THE countess had completely concealed her face in a hood. As she had found time in passing to call at the family residence, she had assumed the dress of a citizen's wife. She had come in a carriage with the marshal, who, even more timid than she, had donned a gray dress like that of a superior servant in a respectable household.

"Do you recognize me, Count?" said Madame Dubarry.

"Perfectly, Madame la Comtesse."

Richelieu had remained in the background.

"Deign to be seated, Madame, and you also, Monsieur."

"This is my intendant," said the countess.

"You err, Madame," said Balsamo, bowing; "the gentleman is the Maréchal Duc de Richelieu, whom I recognize easily, and who would be very ungrateful if he did not recognize me."

"How so?" asked the duke, quite confounded.

"Monsieur le Duc, a man owes a little gratitude, I think, to those who have saved his life."

"Ah, ah, Duke!" said the countess, laughing; "do you hear, Duke?"

"What! you saved my life, Count?" asked Richelieu, astonished.

"Yes, Monseigneur, — at Vienna, in the year 1725, when you were ambassador there."

"In 1725! But you were not born, then, my dear Monsieur."

Balsamo smiled. "It seems to me that I was, Monsieur le Duc," said he, "since I met you dying, or rather dead, upon a litter. You had just received a sword-thrust right through your body, and I poured three drops of my elixir upon the wound. There, hold! in the place where you are ruffling your Alençon lace, — rather fine for an intendant."

"But," interrupted the marshal, "you are scarcely thirty-five years of age, Count."

"There, Duke," cried the countess, laughing heartily, "there you are before the sorcerer! Do you believe now?"

"I am stupefied, Countess! But at that period," continued the duke, addressing Balsamo, "you called yourself —"

"Oh, Duke, we sorcerers change our names in each generation! Now, in 1725 names ending in *us*, *os*, or *as*, were the fashion; and I should not be surprised if at that time I had been seized with the whim of bartering my name for one taken from the Latin or Greek. This being disposed of, I am at your service, Madame la Comtesse, — at your service, Monsieur le Duc."

"Count, the Marshal and I have come to consult you."

"You do me too much honor. Madame, especially if this idea arose naturally in your minds."

"Oh, in the most natural manner in the world, Count! Your prediction still haunts my thoughts; only I fear it will not be realized."

"Never doubt what science says, Madame."

"Oh, oh!" said Richelieu; "but our crown is a hazardous game, Count. It is not here an affair of a wound which three drops of elixir can cure."

"No; but of a minister whom three words can ruin," replied Balsamo. "Well, have I rightly divined? Tell me."

"Perfectly," said the countess, trembling. "Really, Duke, what do you say to all this?"

"Oh, do not let such a trifle astonish you, Madame!" said Balsamo; "whoever sees Madame Dubarry and Richelieu uneasy, may divine the cause without magic."

"And so," added the marshal, "I shall adore you if you will point out to us the remedy."

"The remedy for your complaint?"

"Yes; we are ill of the Choiseul."

"And you wish to be cured?"

"Yes, great magician."

"Count, you will not leave us in our embarrassment!" said the countess; "your honor is engaged."

"My best services are at your command, Madame; but I first wish to know if the duke had not some definite plan formed when he came here?"

"I confess it, Monsieur le Comte! Really, it is delightful to have a sorcerer who may be addressed as 'Monsieur le Comte;' we do not need to change our modes of speech."

Balsamo smiled. "Come," said he, "let us be frank."

"'Pon honor, I wish for nothing else," replied the duke.

"You had some plan to submit to me?"

"That is true."

"Ah, deceiver!" said the countess, "you never spoke of that to me."

"I could speak of it only to the count, and that in the most secret corner of his ear," replied the marshal.

"Why, Duke?"

"Because you would have blushed, Countess, to the whites of your eyes."

"Oh, tell it now, Marshal, to satisfy my curiosity! I am rouged, so you will see nothing."

"Well," said Richelieu, "this is what I thought. Take

care, Countess, I am going to take a most extravagant flight!"

"Fly as high as you will, Duke, I am prepared."

"Oh! but I fear you will beat me when you hear what I am about to say."

"You are not accustomed to be beaten, Monsieur le Duc," said Balsamo to the old marshal, who was delighted with the compliment.

"Well," he replied, "here it is. With all deference to Madame, to his Majesty, how am I to express it?"

"How tiresome he is!" cried the countess.

"You will have it, then?"

"Yes, yes; a hundred times, yes!"

"Then I will venture. It is a sad thing to say, Count, but his Majesty is no longer amusable! The word is not mine, Countess; it is Madame de Maintenon's."

"There is nothing in that which hurts me, Duke," said Madame Dubarry.

"So much the better; then I shall feel at my ease. Well, the Count, who discovers such precious elixirs, must — "

"Find one which shall restore to the king the faculty of being amused."

"Exactly."

"Oh, Duke, that is mere child's play, — the *a b c* of our craft! Any charlatan can furnish you with a philter — "

"Whose virtue," continued the duke, "would be put to the account of Madame's merit?"

"Duke!" exclaimed the countess.

"Oh! I knew you would be angry, but you would have it."

"Monsieur le Duc," replied Balsamo, "you were right. Look! the countess blushes. But just now we agreed that it is not now a question of wounds or of love. A

philter will not rid France of Monsieur de Choiseul. In fact, if the king loved Madame ten times more than he does, — and that is impossible, — Monsieur de Choiseul would still retain the same influence over his mind which Madame exerts over his heart."

"Very true," said the marshal; "but it was our only resource."

"You think so?"

"Certainly; find another."

"Oh! that would be easy."

"Easy! do you hear, Countess? These sorcerers stop at nothing."

"Why should I stop, when the only thing necessary is to prove to the king that Monsieur de Choiseul betrays him, — that is to say, regarding the matter from the king's point of view, you understand; for Monsieur de Choiseul has no thought of treachery in acting as he does."

"And what does he do?"

"You know as well as I do, Countess, — he supports the parliament in their revolt against the royal authority."

"Certainly; but we must know by what means."

"By the means of agents who encourage them by promising them impunity."

"Who are the agents? We must know that."

"Do you believe, for example, that Madame de Grammont is gone for any other purpose than to sustain the ardent and warm the timid?"

"Certainly; she left for no other reason," replied the countess.

"Yes; but the king thinks it a simple exile."

"It is true. How can you prove to him that in this departure there is anything more than he supposes?"

"By accusing Madame de Grammont."

"Ah! if there were nothing necessary but to accuse her, Count!" said the marshal.

"But, unfortunately, the accusation must be proved," added the countess.

"And if this accusation were proved, incontrovertibly proved, do you think Monsieur de Choiseul would still be minister?"

"Certainly not," said the countess.

"Nothing is necessary, then, but to discover the treachery of Monsieur de Choiseul," pursued Balsamo, with assurance, "and to display it clearly, precisely, and palpably before the eyes of his Majesty."

The marshal threw himself back upon an armchair and burst into peals of laughter. "Charming!" he exclaimed; "he stops at nothing! Discover Monsieur de Choiseul in the act of committing treason, — that is all; nothing more!"

Balsamo remained calm and unmoved, waiting until the marshal's mirth had subsided. Then he said: "Come, let us speak seriously; let us recapitulate."

"So be it."

"Is not Monsieur de Choiseul suspected of encouraging the revolt of the parliament?"

"Granted; but the proof?"

"Is not Monsieur de Choiseul supposed," continued Balsamo, "to be attempting to bring about a war with England, in order that he may become indispensable?"

"It is so believed; but the proof?"

"Is not Monsieur de Choiseul the declared enemy of the countess, and does he not seek, by all possible means, to drag her from the throne I promised her?"

"Ah! all this is very true," said the countess; "but once more I repeat, it must be proved. Oh that I could prove it!"

"What is necessary for that? A mere trifle."

The marshal gave a low whistle. "Yes, a mere trifle!" said he, sarcastically.

"A confidential letter, for example," said Balsamo.

"Yes; that is all, — a mere nothing."

"A letter from Madame de Grammont would do, would it not, Marshal?" continued the count.

"Sorcerer, my good sorcerer, find me such a letter!" cried Madame Dubarry. "I have been trying for five years; I have spent in that quest a hundred thousand francs a year, and have never succeeded."

"Because you never applied to me, Madame," said Balsamo.

"How so?" said the countess.

"Without doubt, if you had applied to me, I could have assisted you."

"Could you? Count, is it yet too late?"

The count smiled. "It is never too late," said he.

"Oh, my dear Count!" said Madame Dubarry, clasping her hands.

"You want a letter, then?"

"Yes."

"From Madame de Grammont?"

"If it is possible."

"Which shall compromise Monsieur de Choiseul on the three points which I have mentioned?"

"I would give — one of my eyes to have it."

"Oh, Countess, that would be too dear! — especially as I will give it to you for nothing;" and Balsamo drew a folded paper from his pocket.

"What is that?" asked the countess, devouring the paper with her eyes.

"Yes, what is that?" repeated the duke.

"The letter you wished for;" and the count, amid

the most profound silence, read the letter, with which our readers are already acquainted, to his two astonished auditors. As he read, the countess opened her eyes to their utmost width, and began to lose countenance.

"It is a forgery," said Richelieu, when the letter had been read. "The devil! we must take care."

"Monsieur, it is the simple and literal copy of a letter from the Duchesse de Grammont, which a courier, despatched this morning from Rouen, is now carrying to the Duc de Choiseul at Versailles."

"Oh, my God!" cried the marshal, "do you speak truly, Monsieur Balsamo?"

"I always speak the truth, Marshal."

"The duchess has written such a letter?"

"Yes, Marshal."

"She has been so imprudent?"

"It is incredible, I confess; but so it is."

The old duke looked at the countess, who had no longer the power to utter a word.

"Well," said she at last, "I am like the duke, I can scarcely believe — pardon me, Count — that Madame de Grammont, a woman of sense, should compromise her own position and that of her brother by a letter so strongly expressed. Besides, to know of such a letter, one must have read it —"

"And then," said the marshal, quickly, "if the Count had read this letter, he would have kept it; it is a precious treasure."

Balsamo gently shook his head. "Oh!" said he, "such a plan might suit those who have to break open letters in order to ascertain their contents; but not those who, like myself, can read through the envelopes. Fie upon you! Besides, what interest could I have in ruining Monsieur de Choiseul and Madame de Grammont? You come to

consult me, — as friends, I presume, — and I answer you in the same manner. You wish me to render you a service; I do so. You do not mean, I suppose, to ask me my charge for the interview, as you would the fortune-tellers of the Quai de la Ferraille?"

"Oh, Count!" said Madame Dubarry.

"Well, I give you this advice, and you seem not to comprehend it. You express a wish to overthrow Monsieur de Choiseul, and you seek the means. I tell you one; you approve it. I put it into your hands, and — you do not believe it."

"Because — because — Count — I —"

"The letter exists, I tell you, for I have the copy."

"But who told you of its existence, Count?" cried Richelieu.

"Ah! that is a great word, — who told me? You wish to know in one moment as much as I know, — I the worker, the sage, the adept who has lived three thousand seven hundred years."

"Oh, oh!" said Richelieu, discouraged, "you are going to spoil the good opinion I had formed of you, Count."

"I do not ask you to believe me, Monsieur le Duc; it is not I who brought you hither from the chase."

"Duke, he is right," said the countess. "Monsieur de Balsamo, pray do not be impatient."

"He who has time never gets impatient, Madame."

"Will you be so good as to add another favor to those you have already conferred upon me, and tell me how these secrets are revealed to you."

"I will not hesitate, Madame," said Balsamo, as slowly as if he were searching for each word separately; "the revelation is made to me by a voice."

"By a voice!" cried the duke and the countess simultaneously, — "a voice which tells you everything?"

"Everything I wish to know, yes."

"Was it a voice that told you what Madame de Grammont had written to her brother?"

"I repeat, Madame, it is a voice which tells me."

"Miraculous!"

"But you do not believe it."

"Well, no, Count," said the duke; "how do you imagine I can believe such things?"

"Would you believe it if I told you what the courier who carries the letter to Monsieur de Choiseul is doing at this moment?"

"Certainly!" exclaimed the countess.

"I would believe it," cried the duke, "if I heard the voice: but messieurs the necromancers and magicians have the privilege of seeing and hearing the supernatural without witnesses."

Balsamo looked at Richelieu with a singular expression, which made a shudder pass through the veins of the countess, and even sent a slight chill to the heart of the sceptical egotist called the Duc de Richelieu. "Yes," said he, after a long silence, "alone, I see and hear supernatural objects and sounds; but when I am in the society of people of rank, — of your talent, Duke, and of your beauty, Countess, — I display my treasures and share them. Would it please you very much to hear the mysterious voice which speaks to me?"

"Yes," said the duke, clenching his hands tightly, that he might not tremble.

"Yes," stammered the countess, trembling.

"Well, Duke, — well, Countess, you shall hear it. What language shall it speak?"

"French, if you please," said the countess. "I know no other; any other would frighten me."

"And you, Duke?"

"As Madame says, French; for then I shall be able to repeat what the devil says, and to discover if he is well educated and speaks correctly the language of my friend Monsieur de Voltaire."

Balsamo, his head drooping on his breast, crossed over to the door leading into the little salon, which opened, as we are aware, on the stairs.

"Permit me," said he, "to conceal you here, in order not to expose you to the risk of discovery."

The countess turned pale, approached the duke, and took his arm. Balsamo, almost touching the door leading to the stairs, made a step toward that part of the house in which Lorenza was, and pronounced in a low voice the following words, in the Arabic tongue, which we translate: "My friend, do you hear me? If so, pull the cord of the bell twice."

Balsamo waited to see the effect of these words, and looked at the duke and countess, who opened their eyes and ears, — with the more eager curiosity that they could not understand what the count said. The bell sounded twice distinctly. The countess started from her sofa, and the duke wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Since you hear me," continued Balsamo in the same language, "press the marble button which forms the right eye of the sculptured figure on the mantelpiece, the back will open; pass out by this opening, cross my room, descend the stairs, and enter the apartment adjoining the one in which I am."

A moment later a faint noise, like a scarcely audible breath, told Balsamo that his order had been understood and obeyed.

"What language is that," asked the duke, affecting assurance, — "the cabalistic language?"

"Yes, Duke; the language used for the summoning of spirits."

"You said we should understand it."

"What the voice said, but not what I say."

"Has the devil come yet?"

"Who spoke of the devil, Duke?"

"Whom do you evoke but the devil?"

"Every superior spirit, every supernatural being, can be evoked."

"And the superior spirit, the supernatural being —"

Balsamo extended his hand toward the tapestry which closed the door of the next apartment.

"Is in direct communication with me, Monseigneur."

"I am afraid," said the countess; "are you, Duke?"

"Faith, Countess! I confess to you that I would almost as soon be at Mahon or at Philipsburg."

"Madame la Comtesse, and you, Monsieur le Duc, listen, since you wish to hear," said Balsamo, severely; and he turned toward the door.

CHAPTER XL.

THE VOICE.

THERE was a moment of solemn silence. Then Balsamo asked in French, "Are you there?"

"I am," replied a clear, silvery voice, which, penetrating through the hangings and the portières, seemed to those present rather like a metallic sound than a human voice.

"*Peste!* it is becoming interesting," said the duke; "and all without torches, magic, or Bengal lights."

"It is fearful," whispered the countess.

"Listen attentively to my questions," continued Balsamo.

"I listen with my whole being."

"First tell me how many persons are with me at this moment."

"Two."

"Of what sex?"

"A man and a woman."

"Read the man's name in my thoughts."

"The Duc de Richelieu."

"And the woman's?"

"Madame the Comtesse Dubarry."

"Ha!" said the duke, "this is becoming serious."

"I never saw anything like it," murmured the trembling countess.

"Good!" said Balsamo; "now read the first sentence of the letter I hold in my hand."

The voice obeyed. The duke and the countess looked at each other with astonishment bordering upon admiration.

"What has become of the letter I wrote at your dictation?"

"It is hastening on."

"In which direction?"

"Toward the East."

"Is it far?"

"Yes, very far."

"Who is carrying it?"

"A man dressed in a green vest, leathern cap, and large boots."

"On foot or on horseback?"

"On horseback."

"What kind of a horse?"

"A piebald horse."

"Where do you see him?"

There was a moment's silence.

"Look," said Balsamo, imperatively.

"On a wide road planted with trees."

"But on which road?"

"I do not know; all the roads are alike."

"What! does nothing indicate what road it is, — no post nor inscription?"

"Stay, stay! A carriage is passing near the man on horseback; it crosses his course, coming toward me."

"What kind of carriage?"

"A heavy carriage, full of abbés and soldiers."

"A stage coach," murmured Richelieu.

"Is there no inscription upon the carriage?" asked Balsamo.

"Yes," said the voice.

"Read it."

"'VERSAILLES' is written in yellow letters upon the carriage, but the word is nearly effaced."

"Leave the carriage, and follow the courier."

"I do not see him now."

"Why do you not see him?"

"Because the road turns."

"Turn the corner, and follow him."

"Oh! he is going as fast as he can urge on his horse; he looks at his watch."

"What do you see in front of the horse?"

"A long avenue, splendid buildings, a large town."

"Follow him still."

"I follow."

"Well?"

"The courier redoubles his blows, the animal is bathed in perspiration; its iron-shod hoofs strike the pavement so loudly that all the passers-by look round. Ah! the courier dashes into a long street which descends. He turns to the right. He slackens his horse's speed. He stops at the door of a large hôtel."

"Now you must follow him attentively, do you hear?"

The voice heaved a sigh.

"You are tired. I understand."

"Oh! crushed with weariness."

"Cease to be fatigued; I will it."

"Ah! thanks."

"Are you still fatigued?"

"No."

"Do you still see the courier?"

"Yes, yes; he ascends a large stone staircase. He is preceded by a valet in blue and gold livery. He crosses large salons full of splendid gilt ornaments. He stops at a small lighted cabinet. The valet opens the door and retires."

"What do you see?"

"The courier bows."

"To whom does he bow?"

"He bows to a man seated at a desk, with his back toward the door."

"How is the man dressed?"

"Oh! in full dress, as if he were going to a ball."

"Has he any decoration?"

"He wears a broad blue ribbon crosswise on his breast."

"His face?"

"I cannot see it. Ah! —"

"What?"

"He turns."

"What sort of features has he?"

"A keen glance, irregular features, beautiful teeth."

"What is his age?"

"From fifty to fifty-eight years."

"The duke!" whispered the countess to the marshal; "it is the duke!"

The marshal made a sign as if to say, "Yes, it is he; but listen."

"Well?" asked Balsamo.

"The courier gives a letter to the man with the blue ribbon —"

"You may say to the duke; he is a duke."

"The courier," repeated the obedient voice, "takes a letter from the leathern bag behind him and gives it to the duke. The duke breaks the seal and reads it attentively."

"Well?"

"He takes a pen and a sheet of paper and writes."

"He writes?" said Richelieu. "The devil! if we could only know what he writes!"

"Tell me what he writes," commanded Balsamo.

"I cannot."

"Because you are too far away. Enter the room. Are you there?"

"Yes."

"Look over his shoulder."

"I am doing so."

"Now read."

"The writing is bad, small, irregular."

"Read it; I will it."

The countess and Richelieu held their breaths.

"Read!" repeated Balsamo, more imperatively still.

"'My sister,'" said the voice, trembling and hesitating.

"It is the reply," said the countess and Richelieu in the same breath.

"'My sister,'" continued the voice, "'do not be uneasy. The crisis took place, it is true; it was a dangerous one, — that is true also; but it is over. I am anxiously awaiting to-morrow, for to-morrow it will be my turn to act on the offensive, and everything leads me to expect a decisive triumph. What you say of the parliament of Rouen, Milord X., and the petards, is all satisfactory. To-morrow, after my interview with the king, I shall add a postscript to my letter, and send it you by the same courier.'"

Balsamo, with his left hand extended, seemed to drag each word painfully from the voice, while with the right hand he hastily took down those lines which Monsieur de Choiseul was at the same time writing in his cabinet at Versailles.

"Is that all?" asked Balsamo.

"That is all."

"What is the duke doing now?"

"He folds the paper on which he has just written, and puts it into a small portfolio, which he takes from the pocket in the left side of his coat."

"You hear?" said Balsamo to the almost stupefied countess. "Well?"

"Then he sends away the courier."

"What does he say to him?"

"I heard only the end of the sentence."

"What was it?"

"'At one o'clock at the postern gate of Trianon.' The courier bows and retires."

"Yes," said Richelieu, "he makes an appointment to meet the courier when his audience is over, as he says in his letter."

Balsamo made a sign with his hand to command silence. "What is the duke doing now?" he asked.

"He rises. He holds in his hand the letter he has received. He goes straight toward his bed, enters the passage between it and the wall, and presses a spring which opens an iron box. He throws the letter into the box and closes it."

"Oh," cried the countess and the duke, turning pale, "this is magic, indeed!"

"Do you know now all that you wished to know, Madame?" asked Balsamo.

"Count," said Madame Dubarry, approaching him with terror, "you have rendered me a service which I would pay with ten years of my life, — or rather, which I can never pay. Ask what you wish."

"Oh, Madame, you know we already have an account!"

"Speak; say what you wish."

"The time has not yet come."

"Well, when it comes, if it were a million — "

Balsamo smiled.

"Oh, Countess," exclaimed the marshal, "you should rather ask the count for a million! Cannot a man who knows what he knows, and who sees what he sees, discover diamonds and gold in the bosom of the earth as easily as he discovers the thoughts in the heart of man?"

"Then, Count," said the countess, "I prostrate myself before you in my weakness."

"No, Countess. One day you will pay your debt to me; I shall give you the opportunity."

"Count," said Richelieu to Balsamo, "I am conquered, crushed. I believe."

"As Saint Thomas believed, Duke. I do not call that believing, but seeing."

"Call it what you will, I will make the *amende honorable;* and in future if I am asked about sorcerers I shall know what to say."

Balsamo smiled. "Madame," said he to the countess, "will you permit me to do one thing now?"

"Speak."

"My spirit is wearied. Let me restore it to liberty by a magic formula."

"Do so, Monsieur."

"Lorenza," said Balsamo in Arabic, "thanks! I love you. Return to your apartment by the same way you came, and wait for me. Go, my beloved."

"I am very tired," replied in Italian the voice, softer still than even during the evocation. "Hasten, Acharat."

"I come;" and the footsteps were heard retreating with the same rustling noise with which they had approached.

Then Balsamo, after a few moments' interval, during which he convinced himself of Lorenza's departure, bowed profoundly, but with majestic dignity, to his visitors, who returned to their carriage more like intoxicated persons than human beings gifted with reason, so much were they occupied by the crowd of tumultuous ideas which assailed them.

CHAPTER XLI.

DISGRACE.

THE next morning, as the great clock of Versailles struck eleven, King Louis XV. issued from his apartment, and crossing the adjoining gallery, called in a loud and stern voice, "Monsieur de la Vrillière."

The king was pale, and seemed agitated. The more he endeavored to hide his emotion, the more it was manifest in the embarrassment of his looks and the rigid tension of his usually impassive features.

A death-like stillness pervaded the long ranks of courtiers, among whom the Duc de Richelieu and Comte Jean Dubarry might be seen, both seemingly calm, and affecting indifference or ignorance as to what was going on.

The Duc de la Vrillière approached, and took a *lettre-de-cachet* from the king's hand.

"Is the Duc de Choiseul at Versailles?" asked the king.

"Yes, Sire. He returned from Paris yesterday, at two o'clock in the afternoon."

"Is he in his hôtel, or in the chateau?"

"In the chateau, Sire."

"Carry this order to him, Duke," said the king.

A shudder ran through the whole file of spectators, who bent down whispering, like ears of corn under the blast of a tornado. The king, frowning as if he wished to add terror to this scene, haughtily entered his cabinet, followed by the captain of the guard and the commandant of the Light Horse.

All eyes followed Monsieur de la Vrillière, who slowly crossed the courtyard and entered Monsieur de Choiseul's apartments, rather uneasy at the commission with which he was charged.

In the mean time loud and eager conversations, some threatening, some timid, burst forth on all sides around the old marshal, who pretended to be even more surprised than the others, but who, thanks to his cunning smile, deceived no one.

Monsieur de la Vrillière returned, and was immediately surrounded.

"Well?" cried every one.

"Well, it was an order of banishment."

"Of banishment?"

"Yes, in due form."

"Then you have read it, Duke?"

"I have."

"Really?"

"Judge for yourselves."

And the Duc de la Vrillière repeated the following lines, which he had treasured up with the retentive memory which marks the true courtier: —

My Cousin, — The displeasure which your conduct causes me obliges me to exile you to Chanteloup, whither you must repair in four and twenty hours from this time. I should have sent you farther, had it not been for the particular esteem I feel for Madame de Choiseul, in whose health I am much interested. Take care that your conduct does not force me to proceed to further measures.

A long murmur ran through the group which surrounded Monsieur de la Vrillière.

"And what did he reply to you, Monsieur de St. Florentin?" asked Richelieu, affecting not to give to the duke either his new name or his new title.

"He replied, 'Monsieur le Duc, I am satisfied that you find much pleasure in being the bearer of this letter.'"

"That was severe, my poor Duke," said Jean.

"What could you expect, Monsieur le Vicomte? A man does not receive such a tile on his head without crying out a little."

"Do you know what he will do?" asked Richelieu.

"Why, according to all probability he will obey."

"Ahem!" said the marshal.

"Here is the duke coming!" said Jean, who stood as sentinel at the window.

"Coming here?" exclaimed the Duc de la Vrillière.

"I said so, Monsieur de St. Florentin. He is crossing the courtyard," continued Jean.

"Alone?"

"Quite alone, — his portfolio under his arm."

"Oh, good heavens!" said Richelieu, "is yesterday's scene to be repeated?"

"Do not speak of it; I shudder at the thought," replied Jean.

He had scarcely spoken, when the Duc de Choiseul appeared at the entrance of the gallery, with head erect and confident look, alarming his enemies, or those who would declare themselves such on his disgrace, by his calm and piercing glance. As no one expected this step after what had happened, no one opposed his progress.

"Are you sure you read correctly, Duke?" asked Jean.

"Of course!"

"And he returns after such a letter as you have described?"

"Upon my honor, I cannot understand it."

"The king will send him to the Bastille."

"That would cause a fearful commotion."

"I should almost pity him."

"Look, he is going to the king! It is incredible."

In fact, without paying attention to the show of resistance which the astounded usher offered, Monsieur de Choiseul entered the king's cabinet. Louis, on seeing him, uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

The duke held his *lettre-de-cachet* in his hand, and showed it to the king almost smilingly. "Sire," said he, "as your Majesty had the goodness to forewarn me yesterday, I have indeed received a letter to-day."

"Yes, Monsieur," replied the king.

"And as your Majesty had the goodness yesterday to tell me not to look upon any letter as serious which was not ratified by the express words of the king, I have come to request an explanation."

"It will be very short, Monsieur le Duc," replied the king. "To-day the letter is valid."

"Valid?" said the duke. "So offensive a letter to so devoted a servant?"

"A devoted servant, Monsieur, does not make his master play a ridiculous part."

"Sire," replied the minister, haughtily, "I was born near the throne that I might comprehend its majesty."

"Monsieur," replied the king, in a severe voice, "I will not keep you in suspense. Yesterday evening you received a courier from Madame de Grammont in your cabinet at Versailles."

"It is true, Sire."

"He brought you a letter."

"Are a brother and sister forbidden to correspond?"

"Wait a moment, if you please. I know the contents of that letter."

"Oh, Sire!"

"Here it is; I took the trouble to copy it with my own

hand." And the king handed to the duke an exact copy of the letter he had received.

"Sire!"

"Do not deny it, Duke; you placed the letter in an iron coffer standing at your bedside."

The duke became pale as a ghost.

"That is not all," continued the king, pitilessly; "you have replied to Madame de Grammont's letter. I know the contents of that letter also. It is there in your portfolio, and wants only the postscript, which you are to add when you leave me. You see I am well informed, do you not?"

The duke wiped his forehead, on which the large drops of perspiration were standing, bowed without uttering a word, and left the cabinet tottering as if he had been struck with apoplexy. Had it not been for the fresh air which fanned his face, he must have fallen. But he was a man of strong will. When he reached the gallery he had regained his strength, and with head erect he passed the hedge of courtiers, and entered his apartments in order to burn divers papers and lock up others. A quarter of an hour afterward he left the chateau in his carriage.

Monsieur de Choiseul's disgrace was a thunderbolt which set all France in flames. The parliament, sustained in reality by the tolerance of the minister, proclaimed that the State had lost its firmest pillar. The nobility supported him as being one of themselves. The clergy felt themselves soothed by this man, whose personal dignity, often carried even to the extent of pride, gave a sacerdotal effect to his ministerial functions.

The encyclopedist, or the philosophical, party, who were very numerous and also very strong, because they were reinforced by all the enlightened, clever, and cavilling spirits of the age, cried out loudly when the government

was taken from the hands of a minister who admired Voltaire, pensioned the "Encyclopédie," and preserved, by developing them in a more useful manner, the traditions of Madame de Pompadour, the female Mecænas of the writers for the "Mercure" and of philosophers in general.

The people had far better grounds for complaint than any of the other malecontents. They also complained, but without reasoning; and, as they always do, they hit the truth and laid bare the bleeding wound.

Monsieur de Choiseul, absolutely speaking, was a bad minister and a bad citizen; but relatively he was a paragon of virtue, of morality, and of patriotism. When the people, dying of hunger in the fields, heard of his Majesty's prodigality and of Madame Dubarry's ruinous whims; when open warnings were sent him, such as "L'homme aux Quarante Écus," or counsels like those in "Le Contrat Social," or, secretly, revelations like the "Nouvelles à la Main," and the "Idées Singulières d'un Bon Citoyen," — then the people were terrified at the prospect of falling back into the impure hands of the favorite, "less respectable than a collier's wife," as Bauveau said, and into the hands of the favorite's favorites; and wearied with so much suffering, they were alarmed to behold the future looking even blacker than the past.

It was not that the people, who had antipathies, had any well-defined sympathies. They did not like the parliament, because they who ought to have been their natural protectors had always abandoned them for idle inquiries, questions of precedence, or selfish interests, and because, dazzled by the reflected light of the royal omnipotence, they imagined themselves something like an aristocracy, occupying an intermediate place between the nobility and the people.

The people disliked the nobility by instinct and by remembrance. They feared the sword as much as they

hated the Church. Their position could not, therefore, be affected by the disgrace of Monsieur de Choiseul, but they heard the complaints of the nobility, of the clergy, of the parliament; and this noise, joined to their own murmurs, made an uproar which intoxicated them.

The consequence of these feelings was regret, and a sort of a quasi-popularity for the name of Choiseul. All Paris — the word in this case can be justified by the facts — accompanied the exile on his way to Chanteloup as far as the town gates. The people lined the road which the carriage was to take, while the members of the parliament and the court who could not be received by the duke stationed themselves in their carriages in advance of the crowd of people, that they might salute him as he passed and bid him adieu.

The procession was the densest at the Barrière d'Enfer, which is on the road to Touraine, at which place there was such a conflux of foot-passengers, horsemen, and carriages that the traffic was interrupted for several hours.

When the duke had crossed the barrier, he found himself escorted by more than a hundred carriages, which formed a sort of triumphal halo around him. Acclamations and sighs still followed him; but he had too much sense and penetration not to know that all this noise was not so much occasioned by regret for him personally, as by the fear of those persons unknown, who were to be lifted up by his downfall.

At a short distance from the barrier a post-chaise, driven at great speed along the crowded road, met the procession; and had it not been for the skill of the postilion, the horses, white with foam and dust, would have dashed against Monsieur de Choiseul's equipage. A head leaned forward from the carriage window, and Monsieur de Choiseul also leaned from his.

Monsieur d'Aiguillon bowed profoundly to the fallen minister whose heritage he had come to obtain. Monsieur de Choiseul threw himself back in the carriage : a single second had sufficed to wither the laurels which had crowned his disgrace.

But at the same moment, as a compensation, no doubt, a carriage drawn by eight horses and bearing the royal arms of France, which was seen advancing along the cross road from Sèvres to St. Cloud, and which, whether by accident or on account of the crowd, did not turn into the highroad, also crossed before Monsieur de Choiseul's carriage. The dauphiness, with her lady of honor, Madame de Noailles, was on the back seat of the carriage ; on the front was Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney. Monsieur de Choiseul, crimson with exultation and joy, bent forward out of the door and bowed profoundly.

" Adieu, Madame," said he, in a low voice.

" Au revoir, Monsieur de Choiseul," replied the dauphiness, with an imperial smile and a majestic contempt of all etiquette.

" Long live Monsieur de Choiseul ! " cried a voice enthusiastically, after the dauphiness had spoken.

At the sound of the voice Mademoiselle Andrée turned round quickly.

" Make way ! make way ! " cried her Highness's grooms, forcing Gilbert, pale as death and eager to see, to range himself with the other people on the road.

It was indeed our hero, who in his philosophical enthusiasm had cried out, " Long live Monsieur de Choiseul ! "

CHAPTER XLII.

THE DUC D'AIGUILLON.

WHILE melancholy visages and red eyes were the order of the day on the road from Paris to Chanteloup, Luciennes was radiant with blooming faces and charming smiles. It was because at Luciennes was enthroned, no longer a mere mortal, the most beautiful and most adorable of mortals, as the poets and courtiers declared, but a veritable divinity who governed France.

The evening after Monsieur de Choiseul's disgrace, therefore, the road leading to Luciennes was thronged with the same carriages which in the morning had rolled after the exiled minister. There were, besides, the partisans of the chancellor, and the votaries of corruption and self-interest; and altogether they made an imposing procession.

But Madame Dubarry had her police, and Jean knew, to a baron, the names of those who had strewn the last flowers over the expiring Choiseuls. He gave a list of these names to the countess, and those who bore them were pitilessly excluded; while the courage of others in braving public opinion was rewarded by the protecting smile and frank welcome of the goddess of the day. What joy and what congratulations echoed on all sides! Pressings of the hand, little smothered laughs, and enthusiastic applause, seemed to have become the habitual language of the inhabitants of Luciennes.

After the great throng of carriages and the general crowd followed the private receptions. Richelieu, the secret and modest hero, indeed, but yet the real hero of the day, saw the crowd of visitors and petitioners pass away, and remained the last in the countess's boudoir.

"It must be confessed," said the countess, "that the Comte de Balsamo, or de Fenix, whichever name you give him, Marshal, is one of the first men of the age. It would be a thousand pities if they still burned sorcerers."

"Certainly, Countess, he is a great man," replied Richelieu.

"And a very handsome man too; I have taken quite a fancy for him, Duke."

"You will make me jealous," said Richelieu, laughing, and eager besides to direct the conversation to a more serious subject. "The Comte de Fenix would make a dreadful minister of police."

"I was thinking of that," replied the countess; "only it is impossible."

"Why, Countess?"

"Because he would render colleagues impossible."

"How so?"

"Knowing everything, seeing all their play —"

Richelieu blushed beneath his rouge. "Countess," he replied, "if he were my colleague, I would wish him to see into mine always, and communicate the cards to you; for you would ever see the knave of hearts on his knees before the queen, and prostrate at the feet of the king."

"No one has more wit than you, my dear Duke," replied the countess. "But let us talk a little of our ministry. I think you mentioned that you had sent word to your nephew —"

"D'Aiguillon? He has arrived, Madame, and with what Roman augurs would have called the best conjunc-

tion of omens possible, — his carriage met Choiseul's leaving Paris."

"That is indeed a favorable omen," said the countess. "Then he is coming here?"

"Madame, I thought that if Monsieur d'Aiguillon was seen at Luciennes at such a time, it would give rise to unpleasant comment; I begged him, therefore, to remain in the village until I should send for him by your orders."

"Send for him immediately, then, Marshal, for we are alone, or very nearly so."

"The more willingly that we quite understand each other, — do we not, Countess?"

"Certainly, Duke. You prefer war to finance, do you not? Or do you wish for the marine?"

"I prefer war, Madame; I can be of most service in that department."

"True; I will speak of it to the king. You have no antipathies?"

"For whom?"

"For any colleagues his Majesty might present to you?"

"I am the least difficult man in the world to live with, Countess; but allow me to send for my nephew, since you are good enough to grant him the favor of an audience."

Richelieu approached the window and looked into the courtyard, now illumined by the last rays of the setting sun. He made a sign to one of his footmen, who was watching the window, and who darted off as soon as he received the signal.

Lights were now brought in.

Ten minutes after the footman had disappeared, a carriage rolled into the courtyard. The countess turned quickly toward the window. Richelieu saw the move-

ment, which seemed to him an excellent prognostic for Monsieur d'Aiguillon's affairs, and consequently for his own. "She likes the uncle," said he to himself, "and she is in a fair way to like the nephew. We shall be masters here." While he was in the enjoyment of these chimerical visions, a slight noise was heard at the door, and the confidential valet, throwing it open, announced the Duc d'Aiguillon.

The duke was a very handsome and graceful nobleman, richly, and at the same time elegantly and tastefully, dressed. Monsieur d'Aiguillon had passed the age of youth, but he was one of those men who, whether judged by their looks or by their minds, seem young until old age renders them infirm. The cares of government had traced no wrinkles on his brow; they had only enlarged the natural fold which seems to be the birthplace of great thoughts both in statesmen and in poets. His air and carriage were lofty and commanding, and his handsome features wore an expression at once of intelligence and melancholy, as if he knew that the hatred of ten millions of men weighed upon his head, but at the same time wished to prove that the weight was not beyond his strength.

Monsieur d'Aiguillon had the most beautiful hands in the world; they looked white and delicate even when buried in the softest folds of lace. A well-turned leg was prized very highly at that period, and the duke's was a model of manly elegance and aristocratic form. He combined the suavity of the poet with the nobility of the lord and the suppleness and ease of the dashing guardsman. He was thus a beau-idéal for the countess in the three several qualities which the instinct of this beautiful sensualist taught her to love.

By a remarkable coincidence, or rather by a chain of

circumstances skilfully contrived by Monsieur d'Aiguillon, these two objects of public animadversion, the favorite and the courtier, had never yet encountered one another at court, with all their respective attractions.

For the last three years Monsieur d'Aiguillon had managed to be very busy either in Brittany or in his cabinet, and had not once shown himself at court, knowing well that a favorable or unfavorable crisis must soon take place. In the first case it would be better to be comparatively unknown; in the second, to disappear without leaving any trace behind, and thus be able easily to emerge from the gulf under new auspices and in a new character. Another motive influenced his calculations, — a motive which is the mainspring of romance, but which nevertheless was the most powerful of all.

Before Madame Dubarry was a countess, and every evening touched the crown of France with her lips, she had been a lovely creature, smiling and adored; she had been loved, — a happiness she could no longer hope for, since she was feared.

Among the young, rich, powerful, and handsome men who had paid court to Jeanne Vaubernier, among the rhymers who had harnessed in verse the words *Lange* and *ange*, the Duc d'Aiguillon had formerly figured in the first rank; but either because the duke was not sufficiently ardent, or because Mademoiselle Lange was not so easily pleased as her detractors pretended, or because the sudden attachment of the king separated two hearts ready to unite, Monsieur d'Aiguillon reclaimed his verses, acrostics, bouquets, and perfumes, and Mademoiselle Lange closed her door in the Rue des Petits-Champs. The duke hastened to Brittany, suppressing his sighs; Mademoiselle Lange wafted all hers toward Versailles, to the Baron de Gonesse, — that is, the king of France.

D'Aiguillon's sudden disappearance had at first troubled Madame Dubarry very little, for she feared the remembrances of the past; but when subsequently she observed the continued silence of her former admirer, she at first had been annoyed, then astonished, and being in a good position for judging of men, she had concluded by thinking him a man of tact and discretion. For the countess this was a great distinction; but it was not all, and the time might come when she would think D'Aiguillon a man of heart.

We have seen that the marshal, in all his conversations with Madame Dubarry, had never touched upon the subject of his nephew's acquaintance with Mademoiselle Lange. This silence on the part of a man accustomed, as the old duke was, to say the most difficult things in the world, had much surprised, and even alarmed, the countess. She therefore impatiently awaited Monsieur d'Aiguillon's arrival, to know how to conduct herself, and to ascertain whether the marshal had been discreet, or merely ignorant.

The duke entered, respectful, but with an air of freedom, and sufficiently confident in himself to draw a distinction in his salutation between the reigning sultana and the court lady. By this discriminating tact he instantly gained a protectress quite disposed to find good perfect, and perfection wonderful.

Monsieur d'Aiguillon then took his uncle's hand, and the latter, advancing toward the countess, said in his most insinuating voice: "The Duc d'Aiguillon, Madame. It is not so much my nephew as one of your most ardent servants whom I have the honor to present to you."

The countess glanced at the duke as the marshal spoke, and looked at him as women can look, — that is to say, with eyes which nothing escapes. But she saw only two

heads bowing respectfully before her, and two faces serene and calm after the salutation.

"I know, Marshal, that you love the duke," said the countess. "You are my friend. I shall request Monsieur d'Aiguillon, therefore, in deference to his uncle, to imitate him in all that will be agreeable to me."

"That is the conduct I have already marked out for myself, Madame," said D'Aiguillon, with another bow.

"You have suffered much in Brittany?" asked the countess.

"Yes, Madame; and it is not yet over," replied D'Aiguillon.

"I believe it is, Monsieur; besides, here is Monsieur de Richelieu, who will be a powerful aid to you."

D'Aiguillon looked at Richelieu as if surprised.

"Ah!" said the countess, "I see that the marshal has not yet had time to have any conversation with you. That is very natural, as you have just arrived from a journey. Well, you must have a thousand things to say to each other, and I will therefore leave you, Marshal, for the present. Monsieur le Duc, consider yourself at home here."

So saying, the countess retired; but she did not go far away. Behind the boudoir opened a large cabinet filled with all sorts of fantastic baubles, with which the king was accustomed to amuse himself when he came to Luciennes. He preferred this cabinet to the boudoir, because in it one could hear all that was said in the next room. Madame Dubarry, therefore, was certain to hear the whole conversation between the duke and his nephew, and she counted upon forming from it a correct and final opinion of the latter.

But Richelieu was not duped; he knew most of the secrets of every royal and ministerial residence. To listen

when people were speaking of him was one of his devices; to speak while others were overhearing him was one of his ruses. He determined, therefore, still animated by the favorable reception of D'Aiguillon, to proceed in the same vein, and to reveal to the favorite, under cover of her supposed absence, a plan of secret happiness and great power, complicated with intrigues, — a double allurement, which a pretty woman, and especially a woman of the court, rarely can resist. He desired the duke to be seated, and said to him, "You see, Duke, I am installed here?"

"Yes, Monsieur, I see it."

"I have had the good-fortune to gain the favor of this charming woman, who is looked upon as a queen here, and who is one in reality."

D'Aiguillon bowed.

"I must tell you, Duke," continued Richelieu, "what I could not say in the open street, — that Madame Dubarry has promised me a portfolio."

"Ah!" said D'Aiguillon, "that is only your desert, Monsieur."

"I do not know whether I deserve it or not; but I am to have it, — rather late in the day, it is true. Then, situated as I shall be, I shall endeavor to advance your interests, D'Aiguillon."

"Thank you, Monsieur le Duc; you are a kind relative, and have often proved it."

"You have nothing in view, D'Aiguillon?"

"Absolutely nothing, except to escape being degraded from my title of duke and peer, as the parliament demand."

"Have you supporters anywhere?"

"Not one."

"You would have fallen, then, but for this new turn in public affairs?"

"At full length, Monsieur le Duc."

"Ah! you talk like a philosopher. The devil! for that reason I speak to you roughly, my poor D'Aiguillon, — more like a minister than an uncle."

"Uncle, your goodness penetrates me with gratitude."

"When I sent for you in such a hurry you may be sure it was because I wished you to play an important part here. Let me see. Have you reflected on the part Monsieur de Choiseul played for ten years?"

"Yes; certainly his was an enviable position."

"Enviable! Yes, enviable, when with Madame de Pompadour he governed the king and exiled the Jesuits; but very sad when, having quarrelled with Madame Dubarry, who is worth a hundred Pompadours, he was dismissed from office in twenty-four hours. You do not reply."

"I am listening, Monsieur, and endeavoring to discover your meaning."

"You like Monsieur de Choiseul's first part best, do you not?"

"Certainly."

"Well, my dear Duke, I have decided upon playing this part."

D'Aiguillon turned abruptly toward his uncle. "Do you speak seriously?" said he.

"Yes. Why not?"

"You will be Madame Dubarry's lover?"

"Ah, the devil! you go too fast. But I see you understand me. Yes, Choiseul was very lucky; he governed the king, and governed his mistress. It is said that he was a lover of Madame de Pompadour, — in fact, why not? Well, no, I cannot act the lover; your cold smile tells me that plainly! You, with your young eyes, look at my furrowed brow, my bending knees, and my

withered hands, which were once so beautiful. Instead of saying, when I was speaking of Choiseul's part, that I would play it, I should have said we will play it."

"Uncle!"

"No, she cannot love me, I know it; nevertheless, — I may confess it to you without fear, for she will never learn it, — I could have loved this woman beyond everything — but — "

D'Aiguillon frowned.

"But," continued Richelieu, "this part, which my age renders impossible for me, I will divide."

"Ah, ah!" said D'Aiguillon.

"Some one of my family," continued Richelieu, "will love Madame Dubarry. *Parbleu!* a glorious chance, — such an accomplished woman!" and Richelieu, in saying these words, raised his voice. "You know it cannot be Fronsac, — a degenerate wretch, a fool, a coward, a rogue, a gambler. Duke, will you be the man?"

"I?" cried D'Aiguillon; "are you mad, Uncle?"

"Mad! What! you are not already on your knees before him who gives you this advice? What! you do not bound with joy; you do not burn with gratitude? You are not already out of your senses with delight at the manner in which she received you? You are not yet mad with love? Go, go!" cried the old marshal; "since the days of Alcibiades there has been but one Richelieu in the world, and I see there will be no more after him."

"Uncle," replied the duke, with much agitation, either feigned, and in that case it was admirably counterfeited, or real, for the proposition was sudden, "I perceive all the advantage you would gain by the position of which you speak; you would govern with the authority of Monsieur de Choiseul, and I should be the lover who would establish that authority. The plan is worthy of the cleverest

man in France; but you have forgotten one thing in projecting it."

"What!" cried Richelieu, uneasily, "is it possible you do not love Madame Dubarry? Is that it? Fool! triple fool! wretch! is that it?"

"Ah, no! it is not that, my dear uncle," cried D'Aiguillon, as if he knew that not one of his words was lost; "Madame Dubarry, whom I scarcely know, seems to me the most beautiful and the most charming of women. I should, on the contrary, love Madame Dubarry madly, — I should love her only too well; that is not the question."

"What is it, then?"

"This, Monsieur le Duc. Madame Dubarry will never love me, and the first condition of such an alliance is love. How do you imagine that the beautiful countess could distinguish among all the gentlemen of this brilliant court — surrounded as she is by the homage of so much youth and beauty — how could she distinguish one who has no merit, who is already no longer young, who is overwhelmed with sorrows, and who hides himself from all eyes because he feels that he will soon disappear forever? Uncle, if I had known Madame Dubarry in the period of my youth and beauty, when women admired in me all that is lovable in a man, then she might have given me a place in her memory. That would have been much. But now there is nothing, — neither past, nor present, nor future. No, Uncle, we must renounce this chimera. You have pierced my heart by presenting it to me in such bright and glowing colors."

During this tirade, which was delivered with a fire which Molé might have envied, and Lekain would have thought worthy of imitation, Richelieu bit his lips, muttering to himself: "Has the man understood that the

countess is listening? *Peste!* he is a clever dog. He is a master of his craft. In that case I must take care!"

Richelieu was right; the countess was listening, and every word D'Aiguillon spoke sank deep into her heart. She eagerly drank in the charm of this confession, and appreciated his exquisite delicacy in not betraying the secret of their former intimacy to his nearest confidant, for fear of throwing a shadow over a perhaps still dearly cherished portrait.

"Then you refuse?" said Richelieu.

"Oh! as for that, yes, Uncle; for unfortunately I see it is impossible."

"But try, at least, unhappy man!"

"And how?"

"You are here one of us; you will see the countess every day, — please her, *morbleu!*"

"With an interested aim? Never! If I should be so unfortunate as to please her, with this selfish end in view, I should flee to the end of the world, for I should be ashamed of myself."

Richelieu scratched his chin. "The thing is done," said he to himself, "or D'Aiguillon is a fool."

Suddenly a noise was heard in the courtyard, and several voices cried out, "The king!"

"The devil!" cried Richelieu; "the king must not see me here, — I will make my escape."

"And I?" said D'Aiguillon.

"It is different with you, — he must see you. Remain; and for God's sake, do not throw the handle after the axe."

With these words Richelieu stole out by the back-stairs, saying as he left the room, "Adieu till to-morrow!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE KING DIVIDES THE SPOILS.

WHEN the Duc d'Aiguillon was left alone, he felt at first somewhat embarrassed. He had perfectly understood all his uncle had said to him, perfectly understood that Madame Dubarry was listening, perfectly understood, in short, that it was necessary to a man of intelligence to be, in this emergency, a man of heart, and to play alone that part in which the old marshal sought to obtain a share.

The king's arrival very opportunely prevented the explanation which must have resulted from the puritanical declaration of Monsieur d'Aiguillon; for the marshal was not a man to remain long a dupe, — especially was he not likely to consent to make another's virtue shine with exaggerated brilliancy at the expense of his own. But being left alone, D'Aiguillon had time to reflect.

The king had in truth arrived. Already his pages had opened the door of the antechamber, and Zamore had darted toward the monarch, begging for bonbons, — a touching familiarity which Louis, when he was in a bad temper, punished by sundry fillips on the nose or boxes on the ears, both exceedingly disagreeable to the young African.

The king installed himself in the Chinese cabinet; and what convinced D'Aiguillon that Madame Dubarry had not lost a word of his conversation with his uncle, was the fact that he, D'Aiguillon, overheard the entire interview between Madame Dubarry and the king.

His Majesty seemed fatigued, like a man who has raised an immense weight. Atlas was less enfeebled when his day's work was done, and when he had held the world suspended on his shoulders for twelve hours. Louis XV. allowed his favorite to thank, applaud, and caress him, and tell him all the particulars of Monsieur de Choiseul's departure, which amused him exceedingly.

Then Madame Dubarry ventured. It was fair weather for politics; and besides, she felt herself strong enough at that moment to move one of the four quarters of the world. "Sire," said she, "you have destroyed, that is well; you have demolished, that is superb: but now you must think about rebuilding."

"Oh! it is done," said the king, carelessly.

"You have a ministry?"

"Yes."

"What! all at once, without breathing?"

"See what it is to want common-sense. Oh! — woman that you are — before sending away your cook, must you not, as you said the other day, have a new one in readiness?"

"Repeat to me that you have formed the cabinet."

The king raised himself upon the immense sofa on which he was lying rather than sitting, using the shoulders of the beautiful countess for his principal cushion. "One would think, Jeannette," said he, "to hear you making yourself so uneasy, that you know my ministry, and wish to find fault with them, or propose another."

"Well," said the countess, "that would not be so absurd as you seem to imagine."

"Indeed? Then you have a ministry."

"You have one, have you not?" she replied.

"Oh! it is my place to have one, Countess. Tell me your candidates."

"By no means; tell me yours."

"Most willingly, to set you the example."

"In the first place, then, the navy, where that dear Monsieur de Praslin was?"

"Ah! something new, Countess, — a charming man, who has never seen the sea."

"Who is it?"

"'Pon honor, it is a splendid idea. I shall make myself very popular, and I shall be crowned in the most distant seas, — in effigy, of course."

"But who, Sire, who is it?"

"I would wager you do not guess in a thousand attempts. It is a member of parliament, my dear, — the first president of the parliament of Besançon."

"Monsieur de Boynes?"

"Himself. *Peste*, how learned you are! You know all these people?"

"I cannot help it; you talk parliament to me the whole day. Why, the man would not know an oar if he saw it."

"So much the better. Monsieur de Praslin knew his duties too well, and cost me too much with his naval constructions."

"Well, the finance department, Sire?"

"Oh! that is a different affair; I have chosen a specialist."

"A financier?"

"No; a soldier. The financiers have crushed me too long already."

"Good heavens! And the war department?"

"Do not be uneasy; for that I have chosen a financier, Terray. He is a terrible scrutinizer of accounts. He will find errors in all Monsieur de Choiseul's additions. I may tell you that I had some idea of putting a wonderful man

in the war department, — every inch a man, as they say; it was to please the philosophers."

"Good. But who, — Voltaire?"

"Almost. The Chevalier de Muy, — a Cato."

"Oh, Heaven! You alarm me."

"It was all arranged. I had sent for the man, his commission was signed, he had thanked me, when my good or my evil genius — judge which — prompted me to ask him to come to Luciennes this evening to sup and chat with us."

"Fie! Horrible!"

"Well, Countess, that was exactly what De Muy replied."

"He said that to you?"

"Expressed in other words, Countess. He said that his most ardent wish was to serve the king; but as for serving Madame Dubarry, it was impossible."

"Well, that was polite of your philosopher."

"You must know, Countess, I held out my hand to him, — for his appointment, which I tore in pieces with a most patient smile, and the chevalier disappeared. Louis XIV. would have let the rascal rot in one of those ugly dens in the Bastille; but I am Louis XV., and I have a parliament which gives me the whip, in place of my giving it to the parliament. That is the difference."

"No matter, Sire," said the countess, covering her royal lover with kisses, "you are not the less a clever man."

"That is not what the world in general says. Terray is execrated."

"Who is not? And for foreign affairs?"

"That honest fellow Bertin, whom you know."

"No."

"Then whom you do not know."

"But among them all I cannot find one good minister."

"So be it; now tell me yours."

"I will tell you only one."

"You do not tell me; you are afraid."

"The marshal."

"The marshal! What marshal?" said the king, making a wry face.

"The Duc de Richelieu."

"That old man? That milksop?"

"Good! The conqueror of Mahon a milksop!"

"An old debauchee —"

"Sire, your companion."

"An immoral man, who makes all the women run away."

"That is only since he no longer runs after them."

"Do not speak to me of Richelieu; he is my *bête noire.* The conqueror of Mahon took me into all the bad places in Paris. We were lampooned. No, no! Richelieu, — the very name puts me beside myself!"

"You hate them so much?"

"Whom?"

"The Richelieus."

"I abhor them."

"All?"

"All. What a worthy duke and peer Monsieur Fronsac makes! He has deserved the rack twenty times."

"I give him up; but there are more Richelieus in the world than he."

"Ah! yes, — D'Aiguillon."

"Well?"

The reader may judge whether, at these words, the nephew in the boudoir did not listen intently.

"I ought to hate him more than the others, for he hounds all the bawlers in France upon me; and yet — it is a weakness which I cannot conquer — he is bold, and does not displease me."

"He is a man of spirit," cried the countess.

"A brave man, and zealous in the defence of the royal prerogative. He is a model of a peer."

"Yes, yes, — a hundred times, yes! Make something of him."

The king looked at the countess and folded his arms. "What, Countess! Is it possible that you propose such a thing to me, when all France demands that I should exile and degrade this man?"

Madame Dubarry folded her arms in her turn. "Just now," said she, "you called Richelieu a milksop; the name belongs more properly to yourself."

"Oh, Countess!"

"You are very proud because you have dismissed Monsieur de Choiseul."

"Well, it was not an easy task."

"You have done it, and you have done well; but you are afraid of the consequences."

"I?"

"Of course. What do you accomplish by sending away Monsieur de Choiseul?"

"I give the parliament a kick in the seat of honor."

"And you will not give two! What the devil! Raise both your feet, — one after the other, be it understood. The parliament wished to keep Choiseul; you send him away. They want to send away D'Aiguillon; keep him."

"I do not send him away."

"Keep him, — improved and considerably enlarged."

"You want an office for this firebrand?"

"I want a recompense for him who defended you at the risk of his position and fortune."

"Say of his life; for he will be stoned some fine morning, in company with your friend Maupeou."

"You would encourage your defenders very much, if they could only hear you."

"They pay me back with interest, Countess!"

"Do not say so; facts contradict you in this case."

"Ah, well! But why this eagerness for D'Aiguillon?"

"Eagerness! I do not know him; I have seen and spoken to him to-day for the first time."

"Ah! that is a different affair. Then it is from conviction of his merit? I respect conviction in others, because I never have it myself."

"Then give Richelieu something in D'Aiguillon's name, since you will not give D'Aiguillon anything in his own."

"Richelieu, nothing! Never, never, never!"

"Then something to Monsieur d'Aiguillon, since you refuse Richelieu?"

"What, give him a portfolio? That is impossible at present."

"I understand that; but after some time, perhaps. Remember that he is a man of resources and action, and that with Terray, D'Aiguillon, and Maupeou, you will have the three heads of Cerberus. Remember, too, that your ministry is only a jest, which cannot last."

"You are mistaken, Countess; it will last three months."

"In three months, then, I have your promise?"

"Oh, oh, Countess!"

"That is enough; in the mean time, something for the present."

"But I have nothing."

"You have the Light Horse; Monsieur d'Aiguillon is an officer, — what is called a sword. Give him your Light Horse."

"Very well; he shall have them."

"Thanks!" exclaimed the countess, transported with joy, "a thousand thanks!" and Monsieur d'Aiguillon

could hear a very plebeian kiss resound on the cheeks of his Majesty Louis XV.

"In the mean time," said the king, "order supper to be served, Countess."

"No," said she, "there is nothing here; you have overpowered me with politics. My people have made speeches and fireworks, but no supper."

"Then come to Marly; I will take you with me."

"Impossible! my poor head is splitting in pieces."

"With headache?"

"A terrible headache."

"You must go to bed, Countess."

"I am just going to do so, Sire."

"Adieu, then!"

"Au revoir, rather!"

"I am somewhat like Monsieur de Choiseul; I am dismissed."

"Yes, but accompanied, feasted, cajoled," said the giddy creature, pushing the king gently toward the door, and thence to the foot of the stairs, laughing loudly, and turning round at each step. On the peristyle the countess stopped, candle in hand.

"Countess," said the king, turning round and ascending a step.

"Sire?"

"I trust the poor marshal will not die of it."

"Of what?"

"Of the portfolio which he has missed."

"How ill-natured you are!" said the countess, escorting him with another loud laugh; and his Majesty drove off, very much delighted with his last witticism upon the duke, whom he really hated.

When Madame Dubarry returned to her boudoir, she found D'Aiguillon on his knees before the door, his hands

clasped, his eyes ardently fixed upon her. She blushed. "I have failed," said she. "The poor marshal!"

"Oh, I know all!" said he; "I could hear. Thanks, Madame, thanks!"

"I thought I owed you that," she replied, with a sweet smile; "but rise, Duke, else I shall think your memory is as retentive as your mind is highly cultivated."

"That may well be, Madame; my uncle has told you I am nothing but your admiring and zealous servant."

"And the king's; to-morrow you must go and pay your respects to his Majesty. Rise, I beg;" and she gave him her hand, which he kissed respectfully.

The countess seemed to be deeply moved, for she did not add a single word. Monsieur d'Aiguillon was also silent, as deeply moved as she. At last Madame Dubarry, raising her head, said: "Poor marshal! he must be informed of this defeat."

Monsieur d'Aiguillon looked upon these words as a dismissal, and bowed. "Madame," said he, "I am going to him."

"Oh, Duke! unpleasant news is always soon enough told. Do something better, — stay and have supper with me!"

The duke was stirred by a fragrance of youth and love which inflamed and rejuvenated the blood of his heart. "You are not a woman," said he, "you are — "

"An angel, am I not?" the warm lips of the countess said in his ear, touching him at the same time; and she conducted him to the table.

That evening Monsieur d'Aiguillon might well call himself fortunate, for he gained his uncle's portfolio and ate from the dish of the king.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE ANTECHAMBERS OF THE DUC DE RICHELIEU.

Monsieur de Richelieu, like all the courtiers, had a house at Versailles, one at Paris, one at Marly, and another at Luciennes, — a residence, in short, near each of the palaces or residences of the king.

Louis XIV., when he multiplied his places of residence so much, had imposed on all men of rank, — on all those privileged to attend at the grand and little receptions and levees, — the obligation of being very rich, that they might keep pace at once with the splendor of his household and the flight of his caprices.

At the period of the disgrace of Messieurs de Choiseul and de Praslin, Monsieur de Richelieu was living in his house at Versailles ; and thither he returned after having presented his nephew to Madame Dubarry at Luciennes.

Richelieu had been seen in the forest of Marly with the countess ; he had been seen at Versailles after the minister's disgrace ; his long and secret audience at Luciennes was known, — and this, with the indiscretions of Jean Dubarry, was sufficient reason for the whole court to think themselves obliged to go and pay their respects to Monsieur de Richelieu.

The old marshal was now in his turn about to inhale that delightful incense of praises, flatteries, and caresses which every interested person offered, without discrimination, to the idol of the day.

Monsieur de Richelieu, however, was far from expecting all that was to happen to him; but he rose that morning with the firm resolution of closing his nostrils against the incense, as Ulysses closed his ears with wax against the songs of the sirens. The result which he expected could not be known until the next day, when the nomination of the new minister would be announced by the king himself.

Great was the marshal's surprise, therefore, when he awoke, or rather was awakened by the loud noise of carriages, to hear from his valet that the courtyards of the hôtel, as well as the ante-rooms and salons, were filled with visitors. "Oh!" said he, "it seems I make some noise already."

"It is still early, Monsieur le Maréchal," said his valet, seeing the duke's haste in taking off his nightcap.

"Henceforward," replied the duke, "there will be no such word as 'early' for me; remember that."

"Yes, Monsieur."

"What did you reply to the visitors?"

"That you were not up yet."

"Nothing more?"

"Nothing more."

"That was exceedingly stupid. You should have added that I was late up last night, or better still, you should have — Let me see, where is Rafté?"

"Monsieur Rafté is asleep," said the valet.

"What, asleep? Let him be called, the wretch!"

"Well," said a fresh and smiling old man who appeared at the door, "here is Rafté; what is he wanted for?"

All the duke's bombast ceased at these words. "Ah! I was certain that you were not asleep."

"And if I had been asleep, where would have been the wonder? It is scarcely daylight."

"But, my dear Rafté, you see that I do not sleep."

"That is another thing; you are a minister, — how should you sleep?"

"Oh! now you are going to scold me," said the marshal, grimacing before the glass; "are you not satisfied?"

"I! What benefit is it to me? You will fatigue yourself to death, and then you will be ill. The consequence will be that I shall have to govern the State, and that is not so amusing, Monseigneur."

"How old you are growing, Rafté!"

"I am just four years younger than yourself, Monseigneur. Yes, I am growing old."

The marshal stamped with impatience. "Did you come through the antechamber?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Who is there?"

"Everybody."

"What do they speak of?"

"Every one is telling what favors he is going to ask from you."

"That is very natural. But what did you hear about my appointment?"

"Oh! I would much rather not tell you that."

"What! criticisms already?"

"Yes, and from those who have need of your assistance! What will those say, Monseigneur, whose assistance you need?"

"Ah! Rafté," said the old man, affecting to laugh, "those who would say you flatter me — "

"Well, Monseigneur," said Rafté, "why the devil did you harness yourself to this wagon called a ministry? Are you tired of living and of being happy?"

"My dear fellow, I have tasted everything but that."

"*Corbleu!* you have never tasted arsenic! Why do you not take some in your chocolate, from curiosity?"

"Rafté, you are an idle dog; you think that, as my secretary, you will have more work, and you shrink from it, — you confessed as much, indeed."

The marshal dressed himself with care. "Give me a military air," said he to his valet, "and hand me my military orders."

"It seems we are in the war department?" said Rafté.

"Why, yes; it seems we are there."

"Oh! but I have not seen the king's appointment," continued Rafté; "this is irregular."

"The appointment will come in good time, no doubt."

"Then 'no doubt' is the official word to-day?"

"You become more disagreeable, Rafté, as you get older. You are a formalist and purist. If I had known that, I would not have allowed you to deliver my inauguration speech at the Académie; it is that which made you pedantic."

"But listen, Monseigneur; since we are in the government, let us be regular. This is a very odd affair."

"What is odd?"

"Monsieur le Comte de la Vaudraye, whom I met just now in the street, told me that nothing had yet been settled about the ministry."

Richelieu smiled.

"Monsieur de la Vaudraye is right," said he. "But have you already been out, then?"

"*Pardieu!* I was obliged to go out. This cursed noise of carriages awoke me. I dressed, put on my military orders also, and took a turn in the town."

"Ah! Monsieur Rafté makes merry at my expense."

"Oh, Monseigneur, God forbid! But —"

"But what?"

"On my walk, I met some one."

"Whom?"

"The secretary of the Abbé Terray."

"Well?"

"Well! he told me that his master was appointed to the war department."

"Oh! ho!" said Richelieu, with his eternal smile.

"What does Monseigneur conclude from this?"

"That if Monsieur Terray is appointed to the war department, I am not; that if he is not, perhaps I am."

Rafté had satisfied his conscience; he was a bold, indefatigable, ambitious man, as clever as his master, and much better armed than he, for he knew that his master was of humble origin, and that he had been in dependent circumstances, — two defects in his coat of mail which for forty years had exercised all his cunning, strength, and activity of mind. When Rafté saw his master so confident, he believed that he himself had nothing more to fear.

"Come, Monseigneur," said he, "make haste; do not oblige them to wait too long; that would be a bad beginning."

"I am ready; but tell me once more who is there?"

"Here is the list." He presented a long list to his master, who read with increasing satisfaction names prominent among the nobility, in the law, and in finance.

"Suppose I should be popular, hey, Rafté?"

"We are in the age of miracles," replied the latter.

"Ha, Taverney!" said the marshal, continuing to peruse the list. "What does he come here for?"

"I have not the least idea, Monseigneur; but come, make your entrée;" and the secretary, with an authoritative air, almost pushed his master into the grand salon.

Richelieu ought to have been satisfied; his reception

might have contented the ambition of a prince of the blood. But the refined cunning and craft which characterized the period, and particularly the class of society we are speaking of, only too well assisted Richelieu's unlucky star, which had such a severe disappointment in store for him.

Through regard for propriety and respect for etiquette, all the assembly abstained from pronouncing the word "minister" before Richelieu; some were bold enough to venture as far as the word "congratulation," but they knew that they must pass quickly over the word, and that Richelieu would scarcely reply to it. For one and all, this morning visit was a simple demonstration of respect, a mere expression of good-will; at this period such almost imperceptible shades of distinction were frequently understood and acted upon by the general mass of the community.

There were certain of the courtiers who ventured, in the course of conversation, to express some desire or hope. This one would have wished, he said, to have his government rather nearer Versailles, and it gratified him to have an opportunity of speaking on the subject to a man of so great influence as Monsieur de Richelieu. Another said he had been three times forgotten by Monsieur de Choiseul in the promotions of the knights of the order, and he reckoned upon Monsieur de Richelieu's obliging memory to refresh the king's, now that there existed no obstacle in the way of his Majesty's good-will. In short, a hundred requests, more or less grasping, but all veiled by the highest art, were preferred to the delighted ears of the marshal.

Gradually the crowd retired; they wished, as they said, to leave the marshal to his "important occupations." One man alone remained in the salon. He had not approached

as the others had; he had asked for nothing; he had not even presented himself. When the courtiers had gone, this man advanced toward the duke with a smile upon his lips.

"Ah, Monsieur de Taverney!" said the marshal, "I am enchanted to see you, truly enchanted."

"I was waiting, Duke, to pay you my compliments and to offer you my sincere congratulations."

"Ah! indeed, and for what?" replied Richelieu; for the cautious reserve of his visitors had imposed upon him the necessity of being discreet, and even mysterious.

"On your new dignity, Duke."

"Hush, hush!" said the marshal; "let us not speak of that. Nothing is settled; it is a mere rumor."

"Nevertheless, my dear Marshal, there are many people of my opinion, for your salons were full."

"In truth, I do not know why."

"Oh! I know very well."

"Why then? Why?"

"It was owing to a single word from me."

"What word?"

"Yesterday I had the honor of paying my respects to the king at Trianon. His Majesty spoke to me of my children, and ended by saying: 'You know Monsieur de Richelieu, I think; pay your compliments to him.'"

"Ah! his Majesty said that?" replied Richelieu, with a glow of pride, as if these words had been the official appointment, the issue of which Rafté doubted, or at least deplored the delay.

"So that," continued Taverney, "I suspected the truth, — in fact, it was not difficult to do so, when I saw the eagerness of all Versailles; and I hastened to obey the king by paying my compliments to you, and to gratify my own feelings by reminding you of our old friendship."

The duke had now reached the excitement of intoxication. It is a defect in our nature from which the highest minds cannot always preserve themselves. He saw in Taverney only one of those expectants of the lowest order, — poor devils who have fallen behind on the road of favor, who are useless even as protégés, useless as acquaintances, and who are reproached with coming forth from their obscurity, after a lapse of twenty years, to warm themselves at the sun of another's prosperity.

"I see what you are aiming at," said the marshal, harshly; "you have some favor to ask of me."

"You have said it, Duke."

"Ah!" grumbled Richelieu, seating himself on, or rather plumping into, the sofa.

"I told you I had two children," continued Taverney, pliant and cunning; for he perceived the coolness of his great friend, and therefore only advanced the more eagerly. "I have a daughter whom I love very dearly, and who is a model of virtue and beauty. She is placed with her Highness the Dauphiness, who has been condescending enough to grant her her particular esteem. Of my beautiful Andrée, therefore, I need not speak to you. Her path is smoothed; her fortune is made. Have you seen my daughter? Did I not once present her to you somewhere? Have you not heard of her?"

"Pshaw! I don't know," said Richelieu, carelessly; "perhaps so."

"No matter," pursued Taverney, "there is my daughter settled. For my own part, I want nothing; the king grants me a pension upon which I can live. I confess I should like to have some emolument to enable me to rebuild Maison Rouge, where I wish to end my days, and with your interest and my daughter's — "

"Eh!" said Richelieu to himself, who until now had

not listened, so lost was he in contemplation of his grandeur, but whom the words, "my daughter's interest," had roused from his revery. "Eh! eh! your daughter! Why, she is a young beauty who annoys our good countess; she is a little scorpion who is sheltering herself under the wings of the dauphiness, in order to bite some one at Luciennes. Come, I will not be a bad friend; and as for gratitude, this dear countess who has made me a minister shall see if I am wanting in time of need." Then aloud, "Proceed," said he to the Baron de Taverney, in a haughty tone.

"Faith, I am near the end," replied the latter, promising himself to laugh in his sleeve at the vain marshal if he could only get what he wanted from him. "I am anxious therefore only about my son Philippe, who bears a lofty name, but who will never be able to support it worthily, unless some one assists him. Philippe is a bold and thoughtful youth, — rather too thoughtful, perhaps; but that is the result of his embarrassed position. You know the horse which is reined in too tightly droops its head."

"What is all this to me?" thought Richelieu, giving most unequivocal signs of weariness and impatience.

"I want some one," continued Taverney, remorselessly, "some one in authority like yourself, to procure a company for Philippe. Her Highness the Dauphiness, on entering Strasburg, raised him to the rank of captain; but he still wants a hundred thousand francs to enable him to purchase a company in some privileged regiment of cavalry. Procure that for me, my powerful friend."

"Your son," said Richelieu, "is the young man who rendered the dauphiness a service, is he not?"

"A great service," replied Taverney. "It was he who forced the last relay for her Royal Highness from that Dubarry who wanted to seize it by force."

"Oh, oh!" thought Richelieu, "that is just it, — the most violent enemies of the countess. He comes at the right time, this Taverney! He advances claims which are sufficient to damn him forever."

"You do not answer, Duke!" said Taverney, rather soured by the marshal's obstinate silence.

"All that is impossible, my dear Monsieur de Taverney," replied the marshal, rising, to show that the audience was over.

"Impossible? Such a trifle impossible? An old friend tells me that?"

"Why not? Is it any reason, because you are a friend, as you say, that you should seek to make me commit treason both against friendship and justice? You never came to see me for twenty years, for during that time I was nothing; now that I am a minister, you come."

"Monsieur de Richelieu, it is you who are unjust at this moment."

"No, my dear friend, no; I do not wish to see you dangling in my antechambers. I am a true friend, and therefore — "

"You have some reason for refusing me, then?"

"I!" exclaimed Richelieu, much alarmed at the suspicion Taverney might perhaps form; "I, a reason!"

"Yes; I have enemies."

The duke might have replied what he thought; but that would have been to discover to the baron that he tried to please Madame Dubarry through gratitude; it would have been to confess that he was the minister of the favorite, — and that the marshal would not have confessed for an empire. He therefore hastily replied: "You have no enemy, my dear friend, but I have many. To grant requests at once, without examining claims, would expose me

to the accusations of continuing the Choiseul system. My dear fellow, I wish to leave behind some trace of my administration of affairs. For twenty years I have projected reforms, improvements; and now they shall blossom. Favoritism is the ruin of France; I will protect merit. The writings of our philosophers are bright torches, whose light has not shone for me in vain; they have dissipated all the mists of ignorance and superstition which brooded over the past; and it was full time it should be so for the well-being of the State. I shall therefore examine your son's claims, neither more nor less than I should do those of any other citizen. I must make this sacrifice to my conscience, — a grievous sacrifice, no doubt, but which after all is only that of one man for the benefit of three hundred thousand. If your son, Monsieur Philippe de Taverney, proves that he merits my favor, he shall have it, not because his father is my friend, not because he bears the name he does, but because he is a man of merit. That is my plan of conduct."

"You mean your system of philosophy," replied the old baron, biting his nails with rage, and adding to his anger by reflecting how much humiliation and how many petty cowardices this interview had cost him.

"Philosophy if you will, Monsieur; it is a noble word."

"Which dispenses good things, Marshal, does it not?"

"You are a bad courtier," said Richelieu, with a cold smile.

"Men of my rank are courtiers only of the king."

"Oh! Monsieur Rafté, my secretary, has a thousand of your rank in my antechambers every day," replied Richelieu; "they generally come from some obscure den or other in the provinces, where they have learned to be rude to their pretended friends while they preach concord."

"Oh! I am well aware that a Maison Rouge, of a rank which dates from the crusades, does not understand concord so well as a Vignerot fiddler."

The marshal had more tact than Taverney. He could have had him thrown out of the windows, but he only shrugged his shoulders, and replied: "You are rather behind the time, Monsieur, of the crusades; you remember only the calumnious memoir presented by parliament in 1720, and have not read that of the peers and dukes in reply. Be kind enough to walk into my library, my dear Monsieur; Rafté will give it to you to read."

As Richelieu was bowing his antagonist out with this apt repartee, the door opened, and a man entered noisily, crying, "Where is my dear duke?"

This man, with ruddy visage, eyes dilated with satisfaction, and joyous air, was neither more nor less than Jean Dubarry.

On seeing this new-comer, Taverney started back with surprise and vexation. Jean saw the movement, recognized the face, and turned his back.

"I understand," said the baron, quietly, "and I shall retire. I leave Monsieur the minister in fitting company." And he left the room with dignity.

CHAPTER XLV.

DISENCHANTMENT.

Furious at this very irritating exit, Jean made two steps after the baron; then, returning to the marshal, he said, shrugging his shoulders, "You receive such people here?"

"Oh, my dear fellow, you mistake! On the contrary, I send such people away."

"Do you know who this gentleman is?"

"Alas! yes."

"No, but do you know, really?"

"He is a Taverney."

"He is a man who wishes to make his daughter the king's favorite —"

"Oh, come!"

"A man who wishes to supplant us, and who takes all possible means to do so. But Jean is there, and Jean has his eyes about him."

"You think he wishes —"

"It is a very difficult matter to see what he wishes, is it not? One of the dauphin's party, my dear man; and they have their little stabber too."

"Bah!"

"A young man quite ready to fly at people's throats, — a bully, who pinks Jean's shoulder, — poor Jean!"

"Yours? Is it a personal enemy of yours, my dear Viscount?" asked Richelieu, feigning surprise.

"Yes; he was my adversary in that affair of the relay, you know."

"Indeed! What a strange sympathy! I did not know that, and yet I refused all his demands; only, if I had known, I should not only have refused him, but kicked him out. But do not be uneasy, Viscount; I have now this worthy bully under my thumb, and he shall find it out."

"Yes, you can cure him of his taste for attacking people on the highway. For in fact — Oh, by the by, I have not yet congratulated you!"

"Why, yes, Viscount; it seems the affair is definitively settled."

"Oh! it is all completed. Will you permit me to embrace you?"

"With all my heart."

"Faith! there was some trouble; but the trouble is nothing when you succeed. You are satisfied, are you not?"

"Shall I speak frankly? Yes! for I think I can be useful."

"No doubt of that. But it is a bold stroke; there will be some growling."

"Am I not liked by the public?"

"You? Why, there is no question of you, either one way or other; it is he who is execrated."

"He?" said Richelieu, with surprise; "who is he?"

"Of course," interrupted Jean. "Oh! the parliament will revolt; it will be a second edition of the flagellation of Louis XIV. They are whipped, Duke, they are whipped."

"Explain."

"Why, it explains itself. The parliament, of course, hate the author of their persecutions."

"Ah! you think that?"

"I am certain of it, as all France is. No matter, Duke,

it was a capital stroke of you to send for him that way, just at the very heat of the affair."

"Whom? Whom, Duke? I am on thorns; I do not understand one word of what you say."

"Why, I speak of Monsieur d'Aiguillon, your nephew."

"Well, what then?"

"Well, I say it was well-advised of you to send for him."

"Ah! very good, very good. You mean to say he will assist me?"

"He will assist us all. Do you know he is on the best terms with little Jeanne?"

"Oh! really?"

"On the best terms. They have already had a chat together, and understand each other perfectly, as it seems to me."

"You know that?"

"It is very clear. Jeannette is the laziest dormouse in existence."

"Ah!"

"She does n't leave her bed before nine, ten, or eleven o'clock."

"Yes; well?"

"Well, this morning, at Luciennes, it was six o'clock at the latest when I saw D'Aiguillon's carriage starting off."

"At six o'clock?" cried Richelieu, smiling.

"Yes."

"In the morning, — this morning?"

"In the morning, — this morning. You can judge that, to get up so early to give an audience to your nephew, Jeanne must be pretty fond of him."

"Yes, yes," said Richelieu; "six o'clock! Bravo, D'Aiguillon!"

"The audience must have begun at five o'clock, — in the night! It is wonderful."

"It is wonderful," repeated the marshal; "wonderful indeed, my dear Jean."

"And so there you are all three, like Orestes and Pylades, with the addition of another Pylades."

At this moment, and as the marshal was rubbing his hands in great glee, D'Aiguillon entered the salon. The nephew saluted his uncle with an air of condolence which was sufficient to enable Richelieu, without understanding the whole truth, at least to guess the greatest part of it. He turned pale, as though he had received a mortal wound. It flashed across his mind that at court there exist neither friends nor relatives, and that every one seeks only his own aggrandizement. "I was a great fool!" he said to himself. "Well, D'Aiguillon?" continued he, aloud, repressing a deep sigh.

"Well, Marshal?"

"It is a heavy blow to the parliament," said Richelieu, repeating Jean's words.

D'Aiguillon blushed. "You know it?" said he.

"The count has told me all," replied Richelieu, "even of your visit at Luciennes before daylight this morning. Your appointment is indeed a triumph for my family."

"Be assured, Marshal, of my extreme regret."

"What the devil does he mean by that?" said Jean, folding his arms.

"Oh! we understand each other," interrupted Richelieu; "we understand each other."

"That is a different affair; but for my part, I do not understand you. Regret! Ah! yes, because he will not be recognized as minister immediately, — yes, yes; I see."

"Oh! there will be an interim?" said the marshal, feeling a ray of hope — that constant guest in the heart of

the ambitious man and the lover — once more dawn in in his breast.

"Yes, Marshal, an interim."

"But in the mean time," cried Jean, "he is tolerably well paid, — the finest command in Versailles."

"Ah! a command?" said Richelieu, pierced by a new wound.

"Monsieur Dubarry perhaps exaggerates a little," said the Duc d'Aiguillon.

"But, in one word, what is this command?"

"The king's Light Horse."

Richelieu's furrowed cheeks again turned pale. "Oh! yes," said he, with a smile which it would be impossible to describe, "yes, it is indeed a trifling appointment for such a charming man. But what can you expect, Duke? The loveliest woman in the world, were she even the king's favorite, can give only what she has."

It was now D'Aiguillon's turn to grow pale. Jean was scrutinizing the beautiful Murillos which adorned Richelieu's walls. Richelieu slapped his nephew on the shoulder. "Luckily," said he, "you have the promise of approaching advancement. Accept my congratulations, Duke, — my sincere compliments. Your address, your cleverness in negotiations, is only equalled by your good fortune. Adieu; I have some business to transact. Do not forget me in the distribution of your favors, my dear minister."

D'Aiguillon replied only, "Your interests and mine, Monsieur le Maréchal, are henceforth one and the same;" and saluting his uncle, he left the room with the dignity which was natural to him, — thus escaping from one of the most embarrassing positions he had ever experienced in a life strewn with so many difficulties.

"An admirable trait in D'Aiguillon's character," said

Richelieu, the moment the former had disappeared, to Jean, who was rather at a loss to know what to think of this exchange of politeness between the nephew and uncle, "and one that I admire particularly, is his artlessness. He is at once frank and high-spirited; he knows the court, and is withal as simple-minded as a girl."

"And then he loves you so well," said Jean.

"Like a lamb."

"Oh!" said Jean, "he is more like your son than Monsieur de Fronsac."

"By my faith, yes, Viscount; by my faith, yes!" While replying thus, Richelieu kept walking round his chair in great agitation; he sought, but could not find.

"Ah, Countess!" he muttered, "you shall pay me for this!"

"Marshal," said Jean, with a cunning look, "we four will realize that famous fagot of antiquity, — you know, the one that could not be broken."

"We four, my dear Monsieur Jean! How do you understand that?"

"My sister as power, D'Aiguillon as authority, you as advice, and I as vigilance."

"Very good, very good!"

"And now let them attack my sister; I defy them all."

"*Pardieu!*" said Richelieu, whose brain was boiling.

"Let them set up rivals now!" exclaimed Jean, in ecstasies with his plans and his visions of triumph.

"Oh!" said Richelieu, striking his forehead.

"Well, my dear Marshal, what is the matter?"

"Nothing! I think your idea of a league admirable."

"Is it not?"

"And I enter body and soul into your plans."

"Bravo!"

"Does Taverney live at Trianon with his daughter?"

"No; he lives in Paris."

"The girl is very handsome, my dear Viscount."

"If she were as beautiful as Cleopatra or — my sister, I do not fear her, now that we are leagued together."

"You say Taverney lives in Paris? In the Rue St. Honoré, I think."

"I did not say Rue St. Honoré; it is the Rue Coq-Héron in which he lives. Have you any plan of chastising these Taverneys, that you ask?"

"Yes, Count, I think I have found a capital plan."

"You are an incomparable man. I must leave you; I wish to see what they say in town."

"Adieu, then, Count. By the way, you have not told me who the new ministers are."

"Oh, mere birds of passage, — Terray, Bertin, and I know not who else. Mere counters in the hands of D'Aiguillon, the real minister, though his appointment is deferred for a short time."

"Perhaps indefinitely deferred," thought the marshal, directing his most gracious smile to Jean as an affectionate adieu.

Jean retired. Rafté entered. He had heard all, and knew how to conduct himself; all his suspicions were now realized. He did not utter a word to his master; he knew him too well. He did not even call the valet; he assisted him with his own hands to undress, and conducted him to his bed, in which the old marshal, shivering with fever, immediately buried himself, after taking a pill which his secretary made him swallow.

Rafté drew the curtains and retired. The antechamber was thronged with eagerly listening valets. Rafté took the head valet aside.

"Attend to the marshal carefully," said he, "he is ill.

He has had a serious vexation this morning; he was obliged to disobey the king."

"Disobey the king!" exclaimed the alarmed valet.

"Yes, his Majesty sent a portfolio to Monseigneur, but as he was aware that he owed it to the solicitations of the Dubarry, he refused. Oh! it was a noble resolve, and the Parisians ought to build him a triumphal arch; but the shock was great, and our master is ill. Look to him carefully!"

After these words, whose circulating power he knew beforehand, Rafté returned to his closet. A quarter of an hour afterward all Versailles was informed of the noble conduct and lofty patriotism of the marshal, who in the mean time slept soundly upon the popularity his secretary had gained for him.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE DAUPHIN'S FAMILY REPAST.

THE same day, about three o'clock, Mademoiselle Taverney left her apartment to attend upon the dauphiness, who had the custom of listening to reading before dinner. The abbé who had held the post of first reader to her Royal Highness no longer exercised his functions, as for some time previous, after certain diplomatic intrigues in which he had displayed a very great talent for business, he had employed himself entirely in important political affairs.

Mademoiselle Taverney set out, then, dressed as well as circumstances would permit, to fulfil her office. Like all the guests at Trianon, she still suffered considerable inconvenience from the rather sudden installation in her new abode, and had not yet been able to arrange her furniture, or make the necessary provisions for establishing her modest household. She had, therefore, on the present occasion, been assisted in her toilet by one of the maids of Madame de Noailles, that starched lady of honor whom the dauphiness nicknamed Madame Etiquette.

Andrée was dressed in a blue silk robe, with long waist, which fitted admirably to her slender figure. This robe opened in front, and displayed a muslin skirt relieved with three falls of embroidery. Short sleeves, also of muslin, embroidered in the same manner as the dress, festooned, and tapering to the shoulder, were admirably in keeping with a neckerchief embroidered in the peasant style, which modestly concealed her neck and shoulders.

Her beautiful hair, which fell in long and luxuriant ringlets upon her shoulders, was simply tied with a ribbon of the same color as her dress, — a mode of arrangement which harmonized infinitely better with the noble, yet modest and retiring air of the lovely young girl, and with her pure and transparent complexion, never yet sullied by the touch of rouge, than the feathers, ornaments, and laces which were then in vogue.

As she walked, Andrée drew on a pair of white silk mittens upon the slenderest and roundest fingers in the world, while the tiny points of her high-heeled shoes of pale-blue satin left their traces on the gravel of the garden walk. When she reached the pavilion of Trianon, she was informed that the dauphiness was taking a turn in the grounds with her architect and her head-gardener. In the apartment of the first story overhead she could hear the noise of a turning-lathe, with which the dauphin was making a safety-lock for a coffer which he valued very highly.

In order to rejoin the dauphiness, Andrée had to cross the parterre, where, notwithstanding the advanced period of the season, flowers, carefully covered through the night, raised their pale heads to bask in the setting rays of a sun even paler than themselves. And as the evening was already closing in, for in that season it was dark at six o'clock, the gardener's apprentices were employed in placing the bell-glasses over the most delicate plants in each bed.

While traversing a winding alley of evergreens clipped into the form of a hedge, bordered on each side by beds of Bengal roses, and opening on a beautiful lawn, Andrée suddenly perceived one of these gardeners, who, when he saw her, stood up, leaning on his spade, and bowed with a more refined and studied politeness than was to be expected in one of his station. She looked again, and in this workman recognized Gilbert, whose hands, notwith-

standing his labor, were yet white enough to excite the envy of Monsieur de Taverney.

Andrée blushed in spite of herself; it seemed to her that Gilbert's presence in this place was too remarkable a coincidence to be the result of chance. Gilbert repeated his bow, and Andrée returned it, but without slackening her pace. She was too upright and too courageous, however, to resist the promptings of her heart, and leave the question of her restless soul unanswered. She turned back; and Gilbert, whose cheek had already become as pale as death, and whose dark eye followed her retreating steps with a sombre look, felt as if suddenly restored to life, and bounded forward to meet her.

"You here, Monsieur Gilbert?" said Andrée, coldly.

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

"By what chance?"

"Mademoiselle, one must live, and live honestly."

"But do you know that you are very fortunate?"

"Oh, yes, Mademoiselle, very fortunate!" said Gilbert.

"I beg your pardon! What did you say?"

"I said, Mademoiselle, that I am, as you think, very fortunate."

"Who introduced you here?"

"Monsieur de Jussieu, a protector of mine."

"Ah!" said Andrée, surprised, "then you know Monsieur de Jussieu?"

"He is the friend of my first protector, — of my master, Monsieur Rousseau."

"Courage, then, Monsieur Gilbert?" said Andrée, making a movement to proceed.

"Do you find yourself better, Mademoiselle?" asked Gilbert, in a trembling voice.

"Better? What do you mean?" said Andrée, coldly.

"Why, the accident."

"Oh, yes, thank you, Monsieur Gilbert; I am better, — it was nothing."

"Oh, you were nearly perishing!" said Gilbert, almost speechless with emotion; "the danger was terrible."

Andrée now began to think that it was high time to cut short this interview with a workman in the most public part of the royal park.

"Good-day, Monsieur Gilbert," said she.

"Will Mademoiselle not accept a rose?" said Gilbert, trembling, and with drops of perspiration standing on his forehead.

"But, Monsieur," replied Andrée, "you offer me what is not yours to give."

Gilbert, surprised and overwhelmed by this reply, could not utter a word. His head drooped; but as he saw Andrée looking at him with something like a feeling of satisfaction at having manifested her superiority, he drew himself up, tore a branch covered with flowers from the finest of the rose-trees, and began to pull the roses to pieces with a coolness and dignity which surprised and startled the young girl.

She was too just and too kind-hearted not to see that she had gratuitously wounded the feelings of an inferior who had unthinkingly committed a breach of propriety. But like all proud natures who feel themselves in the wrong, she preserved silence, when perhaps an apology or a reparation was hovering upon her lips; and she immediately resumed her walk.

Gilbert added not a word either; he threw away the branch and resumed his spade. But his character was a mixture of pride and cunning; and while stooping to his work, he kept his eye stealthily fixed on Andrée's retreating figure. At the end of the walk she could not help looking round; she was a woman.

This weakness was sufficient for Gilbert; he said to himself that in this last struggle he had been victorious. "She is weaker than I am," thought he, "and I shall govern her. Proud of her beauty, of her name, of her advancing fortunes, indignant at my love, which she perhaps suspects, she is only the more an object of adoration to the poor working-man who trembles while he looks at her. Oh, this trembling, this emotion, unworthy of a man! Oh, these acts of cowardice which she makes me commit, — she shall one day repay me for them all! But to-day I have done enough," he added; "I have conquered the enemy. I, who ought to have been the weakest, since I love, have been a hundred times stronger than she."

He repeated these words with a wild burst of joy as he convulsively dashed back the dark hair from his thoughtful brow. Then he stuck his spade deep into the flower-bed, bounded through the hedge of cypress and yew-tree with the speed of a roe-buck, and light as the wind threaded a parterre of plants under bell-glasses, not one of which he touched, notwithstanding the furious rapidity of his career, and posted himself at the end of the diagonal he had made, in advance of Andrée, who followed the winding of the path. From his new position he saw her advancing, thoughtful and almost humble, her lovely eyes cast down, her motionless hand gently lying against her rustling dress. Concealed behind the thick hedge, Gilbert heard her sigh twice as if she were speaking to herself. At last she passed so close to the trees which sheltered him that had he stretched out his arm he might have touched hers, as a mad and feverish impulse prompted him to do. But he knit his brow with an energetic movement almost akin to hatred. and placing his trembling hand upon his heart. "Coward again!" said he

to himself. Then he added, softly, "But she is so beautiful!"

Gilbert might have remained for a considerable time sunk in contemplation, for the walk was long, and Andrée's step was slow and measured; but this walk was crossed by others, from which some troublesome visitor might at any moment make his appearance, — and Fate treated Gilbert so scurvily that a man did in fact advance from the first alley upon the left; that is to say, almost opposite the clump of evergreens behind which he was concealed.

This intruder walked with a methodic and measured step; he carried his head erect, held his hat under his right arm, and his left hand rested upon his sword. He wore a velvet coat underneath a pelisse lined with sable fur, and pointed his foot as he walked, which he did with the easy grace of a man of high rank and breeding.

This gentleman as he advanced perceived Andrée, and the young girl's figure evidently pleased him; for he quickened his pace and crossed over in an oblique direction, so as to reach as soon as possible the path on which Andrée was walking, and intercept her course.

When Gilbert perceived this personage he involuntarily gave a slight cry, and took to flight like a startled lapwing. The intruder's manœuvre was successful; he was evidently accustomed to it, and in less than three minutes he was in advance of Andrée, whom three minutes before he had been following at some distance.

When Andrée heard his footstep behind her, she moved aside a little to let the man pass; and when he had passed, she looked at him in her turn. The gentleman looked also, and most eagerly, he even stopped to see better; and returning after he had seen her features, "Ah! Mademoiselle," said he, in a very kind voice, "whither are you hastening so quickly, may I ask?"

At the sound of this voice Andrée raised her head and saw, about twenty paces behind her, two officers of the guards following slowly; she spied a blue ribbon peeping from beneath the sable pelisse of the person who addressed her, and pale and startled at this unexpected rencontre, and at being accosted thus graciously, she said, bending very low, "The king!"

"Mademoiselle —," replied Louis XV., approaching her; "pardon me, I have such bad eyes that I am obliged to ask your name."

"Mademoiselle de Taverney," stammered the young girl, so confused and trembling that her voice was scarcely audible.

"Oh, yes, I remember! I esteem myself fortunate in meeting you in Trianon, Mademoiselle," said the king.

"I was proceeding to join her Royal Highness the Dauphiness, who expects me," said Andrée, trembling more and more.

"I will conduct you to her, Mademoiselle," replied Louis XV.; "for I am just going, as a country neighbor, to pay a visit to my daughter. Be kind enough to take my arm, as we are going in the same direction."

Andrée felt a cloud pass before her eyes, and the blood flow in tumultuous waves to her heart. In fact, such an honor for the poor girl as the proffered arm of the king, the sovereign lord of all France, — such an unhoped-for, incredible piece of good fortune, a favor which the whole court might envy, — seemed to her like a dream. She made a reverence so profound and so expressive of an almost religious veneration that the king felt himself obliged to bow a second time. When Louis XV. was inclined to remember Louis XIV., it was always in matters of ceremonial and politeness. Such traditions, however, dated farther back; they were handed down from Henry IV.

The king offered his hand therefore to Andrée, who placed the burning points of her fingers upon the king's glove, and they continued to advance toward the pavilion, where, as the king had been informed, the dauphiness with her architect and her head-gardener would be found.

We can assure the reader that Louis XV., although not particularly fond of walking, chose to conduct Andrée to the little Trianon by the longest road. Although the king was apparently unaware of his error, the two officers who walked behind perceived it but too plainly, and bemoaned themselves bitterly, as they were lightly clad and the weather was cold.

They arrived too late to find the dauphiness where they had expected, as Marie Antoinette had just set out for Trianon, that she might not keep the dauphin waiting, for he liked to have his supper between six and seven o'clock. Her Royal Highness arrived therefore at the exact hour; and as the punctual dauphin was already upon the threshold of the salon, that he might lose no time in reaching the dining-room the moment the butler appeared, the dauphiness threw her mantle to a maid, took the dauphin's arm with a winning smile, and drew him into the dining-room.

The table was laid for the two illustrious hosts. They occupied the middle of the table, so as to leave vacant the upper end of the table, which, since several unexpected visits of the king, was never occupied in his Majesty's absence, even when there were many guests. At that end of the table the king's cover occupied a considerable space; but the butler, not expecting it to be occupied this evening, was conducting the service from that end.

Behind the dauphiness's chair, leaving the necessary space between for the valets to pass, was stationed Madame de Noailles, stiff and upright, and yet wearing as

amiable an expression on her features as she could conjure up for the festive occasion.

Near Madame de Noailles were some other ladies, whose position at the court gave them the right or entitled them to the favor of being present at the supper of their Royal Highnesses.

Three times a week Madame de Noailles sat at the same table with the dauphin and dauphiness; but on the other days she would not for anything in the world have missed being present. Besides, it was a delicate mode of protesting against the exclusion on the four days out of seven.

Opposite the Duchesse de Noailles, surnamed by the dauphiness Madame Etiquette, was the Duc de Richelieu, on a raised seat very similar to her own. He also was a strict observer of forms; but his etiquette was undistinguishable to a casual observer, being always veiled beneath the most polished elegance, and sometimes the wittiest raillery. A consequence of this antithesis between the first gentleman of the bedchamber and the first lady of honor of the dauphiness was that the conversation, always dropped by the Duchesse de Noailles, was incessantly renewed by Monsieur de Richelieu.

The marshal had travelled through all the courts of Europe, and had adopted the tone of elegance in each which was best adapted to his character; so that, strong in tact and sense of fitness, he knew both what anecdotes to relate at the table of the youthful couple, and what would be seasonable at the private suppers of Madame Dubarry.

Perceiving this evening that the dauphiness had a good appetite, and that the dauphin was voracious, Richelieu concluded that they would give no heed to the conversation going on around them, and that he had consequently only to make Madame de Noailles suffer an hour of purga-

tory in anticipation. He began therefore to speak of philosophy and theatrical affairs, — two subjects of conversation doubly offensive to the venerable duchess. He related the subject of one of the last philanthropic sallies of the philosopher of Ferney, — the name already given to the author of the "Henriade;" and when he saw that the duchess was uneasy, he changed the text, and detailed all the squabbles and disputes which, in his office of gentleman of the chamber, he had to undergo in order to make the actresses in ordinary to the king play more or less badly.

The dauphiness loved the arts, and above all the theatre; she had sent a complete costume for Clytemnestra to Mademoiselle Raucourt, and she therefore listened to Monsieur de Richelieu not only with indulgence, but with pleasure.

Then the poor lady of honor, in violation of all etiquette, was forced to fidget on her bench, blow her nose noisily, and shake her venerable head, without thinking of the cloud of powder which at each movement fell upon her forehead, like the cloud of snow which envelops the summit of Mont Blanc at every gust of the north wind.

But it was not enough to amuse the dauphiness, the dauphin must also be pleased. Richelieu abandoned the subject of the theatre, for which the heir to the crown had never displayed any great liking, to discourse of humanity and philosophy. When he spoke of the English, he did so with all the warmth and energy which Rousseau displays in drawing the character of Edward Bromston.

Now, Madame de Noailles hated the English as much as she did philosophers. To admit a new idea was a fatiguing operation for her, and fatigue deranged the economy of her whole person. Madame de Noailles, who felt herself intended by nature for a conservative, growled at all new ideas like a dog at a frightful mask.

Richelieu in playing this game had a double end in view, — he tormented Madame Etiquette, which evidently pleased the dauphiness, and he threw in, here and there, some virtuous apophthegm, some axiom in mathematics, which was rapturously received by the dauphin, the royal amateur of exact sciences. He was paying his court, therefore, with great skill and address, and from time to time directing an eager glance toward the door, as if he expected some one who had not yet arrived, when a cry from the foot of the staircase echoed along the arched corridors, was repeated by two valets stationed at regular intervals from the entrance-door, and at last reached the dining-salon, "The king!"

At this magic word Madame de Noailles started bolt upright from her seat, as if moved by a spring; Richelieu rose more slowly, and with easy grace; the dauphin hastily wiped his mouth with his napkin, and stood up before his seat, his face turned toward the door. As for the dauphiness, she hastened toward the staircase to meet the king and do the honors of her mansion to him.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE QUEEN'S HAIR.

THE king still held Mademoiselle de Taverney by the hand when they reached the landing-place, and it was only on arriving there that he bowed to her, so courteously and so low that Richelieu had time to see the bow, to admire its grace, and to ask himself to what lucky mortal it was addressed. His ignorance did not long continue.

Louis XV. took the arm of the dauphiness, who had seen all, and had already clearly recognized Andrée. "My daughter," said he, "I come without ceremony to ask you for my supper. I crossed the entire park on my way hither, and happening to meet Mademoiselle de Taverney, requested her to accompany me."

"Mademoiselle de Taverney!" murmured Richelieu, almost dizzy at this unexpected stroke. "Faith, I am almost too fortunate!"

"I shall not only refrain from scolding Mademoiselle for being late," replied the dauphiness, graciously, "but I have to thank her for bringing your Majesty to us."

Andrée, whose cheeks were dyed with as deep a red as the ripe and tempting cherries which graced the epergne in the centre of the table, bowed without replying.

"The devil! the devil! she is indeed beautiful," thought Richelieu; "and that old scoundrel Taverney gave her no more praise than she deserves."

The king had already taken his seat at the table after having saluted the dauphin. Gifted, like his grandson, with an obliging appetite, the monarch did justice to the improvised supper which the butler placed before him as if by magic. But while eating, the king, whose back was turned toward the door, seemed to seek something, or rather some one.

In fact, Mademoiselle de Taverney, who enjoyed no privilege, as her position in the dauphiness's household was not yet fixed, had not entered the dining-room; and after her profound reverence in reply to the king's salutation, had returned to the dauphiness's apartment, that she might be ready, in case it should be required of her, as already it had been two or three times, to read to her Highness after she had retired to bed.

The dauphiness saw that the king was looking for the beautiful companion of his walk. "Monsieur de Coigny," said she to a young officer of the guards who was standing behind the king, "pray request Mademoiselle de Taverney to come up; with Madame de Noailles' permission, we will discard etiquette for this evening."

Monsieur de Coigny left the room, and almost immediately afterward returned, introducing Andrée, who, totally at a loss to comprehend the reason for such a succession of unusual favors, entered trembling.

"Seat yourself there, Mademoiselle," said the dauphiness, "beside Madame de Noailles."

Andrée mounted timidly on the raised seat; but she was so confused that she had the audacity to seat herself only about a foot distant from the lady of honor. She received, in consequence, such a terrific look that the poor child started back at least four feet, as if she had come in contact with a Leyden jar highly charged. The king looked at her and smiled.

"Ah!" said the duke to himself, "it is scarcely worth my while to meddle with the affair; the thing goes on by its own motion."

The king turned, and perceived the marshal, who was quite prepared to meet his look.

"Good day, Duke," said Louis; "do you agree well with the Duchesse de Noailles?"

"Sire," replied the marshal, "the duchess always does me the honor to treat me as a madcap."

"Oh! Were you also on the road to Chanteloup, Duke?"

"I, Sire? Faith, no! I am too grateful for the favors your Majesty has showered on my family."

The king did not expect this blow; he was prepared to banter, but he found himself anticipated.

"What favors have I showered, Duke?"

"Sire, your Majesty has given the command of your Light Horse to the Duc d'Aiguillon."

"Yes, it is true, Duke."

"And for that was needed all your Majesty's energy and skill. It is almost a *coup d'état.*"

The repast was now over; the king waited for a moment, and then rose from table. The conversation was taking an embarrassing turn, but Richelieu was determined not to let go his prey. Therefore when the king began to chat with Madame de Noailles, the dauphiness, and Mademoiselle de Taverney, Richelieu manœuvred so skilfully that he soon found himself in the full flow of a conversation which he directed according to his pleasure. "Sire," said he, "your Majesty knows that success emboldens."

"Do you say so for the purpose of informing us that you are bold, Duke?"

"Sire, it is for the purpose of requesting a new favor

from your Majesty, after the one the king has already deigned to grant. One of my best friends, an old servant of your Majesty, has a son in the gendarmes; the young man is highly deserving, but poor. He has received from an august princess the brevet title of captain, but he has not yet obtained his company."

"The princess, — my daughter?" asked the king, turning toward the dauphiness.

"Yes, Sire," said Richelieu; "and the father of this young man is called the Baron de Taverney."

"My father!" involuntarily exclaimed Andrée, "Philippe! Is it for Philippe, Monsieur le Duc, that you are asking for a company?" Then, ashamed of this breach of etiquette, she made a step backward, blushing, and clasping her hands with emotion.

The king turned to admire the blush which mantled the cheek of the lovely girl, and then glanced at Richelieu with a pleased look, which informed the courtier how agreeable his request had been.

"In truth," said the dauphiness, "he is a charming young man, and I had promised to make his fortune. How unfortunate princes are! When God gives them the best intentions, he deprives them of the memory and reasoning powers necessary to carry their intentions into effect. Ought I not to have known that this young man was poor, and that it was not enough to give him the epaulette without at the same time giving him the company?"

"Eh, Madame! how could your Highness have known that?"

"Oh, I knew it!" replied the dauphiness, quickly, with a gesture which recalled to Andrée's memory the modest but yet happy home of her childhood; "yes, I knew it, but I thought I had done everything necessary in giving a

step to Monsieur Philippe de Taverney. He is called Philippe, is he not, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes, Madame."

The king looked round on these noble and ingenuous faces, and then rested his gaze on Richelieu, whose face was also brightened by a ray of generosity, borrowed doubtless from his august neighbor.

"Duke," said he, in a low voice, "I shall embroil myself with Luciennes." Then, addressing Andrée, he added, quickly, "Say that it will give you pleasure, Mademoiselle."

"Ah, Sire!" said Andrée, clasping her hands, "I request it as a boon from your Majesty."

"In that case, it is granted," said Louis. "You will choose a good company for this young man, Duke; I will furnish the necessary funds, if the charges are not already paid and the post vacant."

This good action gladdened all who were present. It procured the king a heavenly smile from Andrée, and Richelieu a warm expression of thanks from those beautiful lips, from which, in his youth, he would have asked for even more.

Several visitors arrived in succession, among whom was the Cardinal de Rohan, who since the installation of the dauphiness at Trianon had paid his court to her assiduously. But during the whole evening the king had kind looks and pleasant words only for Richelieu. He even commanded the marshal's attendance when, after bidding farewell to the dauphiness, he set out to return to his own Trianon. The old marshal followed the king, his heart bounding with joy.

While the king, accompanied by the duke and his two officers, set forth toward the dark alleys which lead from the palace, the dauphiness dismissed Andrée. "You will

be anxious to write this good news to Paris, Mademoiselle," said the princess; "you may retire."

Preceded by a footman, carrying a lantern, the young girl traversed the walk, of about a hundred paces in length, which separates Trianon from the offices. In advance of her, concealed by the thick foliage of the shrubbery, bounded a shadowy figure, which followed all her movements with sparkling eyes. It was Gilbert.

When Andrée had arrived at the entrance, and begun to ascend the stone steps, the valet left her and returned to the antechambers of Trianon.

Then Gilbert, gliding into the vestibule, reached the courtyard, and climbed by a small staircase as steep as a ladder into his attic, which was opposite Andrée's windows and was situated in a corner of the building. From this position he could see Andrée call an attendant of Madame de Noailles to assist her, as that lady had her apartments in the same corridor. But when the girl had entered the room, the window curtains fell like an impenetrable veil between the ardent eyes of the young man and the object of his wishes.

At the palace there now remained only Monsieur de Rohan, redoubling his gallant attentions to the dauphiness, who received them but coldly. The prelate, fearing at last to be indiscreet, inasmuch as the dauphin had already retired, took leave of her Royal Highness with the expression of the deepest and most tender respect.

As the cardinal was entering his carriage, a waiting-woman of the dauphiness approached, and almost leaned inside the door. "Here," said she; and she put into his hand a small paper parcel, carefully folded, the touch of which made the cardinal start.

"Here," he replied, hastily thrusting into the girl's hand a heavy purse, the contents of which would have been a

handsome salary. Then, without losing time, the cardinal ordered the coachman to drive to Paris, and to ask for new orders at the barrier. During the journey, in the darkness of the carriage he felt the paper, and kissed the contents like some intoxicated lover. At the barrier he cried, "Rue St. Claude." A short time afterward he crossed the mysterious courtyard, and once more found himself in the little salon occupied by Fritz, the silent usher.

Balsamo kept the cardinal waiting about a quarter of an hour. At last he appeared, and gave as a reason for his delay the lateness of the hour, which had prevented his expecting the arrival of visitors. In fact, it was now nearly eleven o'clock at night.

"That is true, Baron," said the cardinal; "and I must request you to excuse my unseasonable visit. But, you may remember, you told me one day that to be assured of certain secrets —"

"I must have a portion of the person's hair of whom we were speaking on that day," interrupted Balsamo, who had already spied the little paper which the unsuspecting prelate held carelessly in his hand.

"Precisely, Baron."

"And you have brought me this hair, Monseigneur? Very good."

"Here it is. Do you think it would be possible to return it to me again after the examination?"

"Unless fire should be necessary; in which case —"

"Of course, of course," said the cardinal. "However I can procure some more. Can I have a reply?"

"To-day?"

"You know I am impatient."

"I must first ascertain, Monseigneur;" and Balsamo took the packet of hair and hastily mounted to Lorenza's apartment.

"I shall now know," said he, on the way, "the secret of this monarchy; I shall know the hidden design of God!"

And from the other side of the wall, even before opening the secret door, he plunged Lorenza into the magnetic sleep. The young woman received him, therefore, with an affectionate embrace. Balsamo could scarcely extricate himself from her arms. It would be difficult to say which was the more grievous for the poor baron, — the reproaches of the beautiful Italian when she was awake, or her caresses when she slept. When he had succeeded in loosening the chain which her snowy arms formed around his neck, "My beloved Lorenza," said he, putting the paper in her hand, "can you tell me to whom this hair belongs?"

Lorenza took it and pressed it against her breast, and then to her forehead. Though her eyes were open, it was by her head and her breast that she saw in her sleep. "Oh!" said she, "it is an illustrious head from which this hair has been taken."

"Is it not? — and a happy head too? Speak."

"She may be happy."

"Look well, Lorenza."

"Yes, she may be happy; there is no shadow as yet upon her life."

"Yet she is married."

"Oh!" said Lorenza, with a sweet smile.

"Well! — what? What means my Lorenza?"

"She is married, dear Balsamo," added the young woman, "and yet — "

"And yet?"

"And yet — " Lorenza still smiled. "I too am married," she said.

"Certainly."

"And yet — "

Balsamo looked at Lorenza with profound astonishment. Although she was asleep, a blush of modesty covered her face.

"And yet?" repeated Balsamo. "Finish."

She again threw her arms around the neck of her lover, and hid her face on his breast. "And yet I am not married," she said.

"And that woman, that princess, that queen," cried Balsamo, "married though she is — ?"

"That woman, that princess, that queen," repeated Lorenza, "is as pure and as chaste as I am, — purer and more chaste, even; for, unlike me, she does not love."

"Oh, fatality!" said Balsamo. "Thanks, Lorenza; I know all I wished to know."

He embraced her, put the hair carefully into his pocket, and then, cutting a lock off the Italian's black tresses, he burned it at the wax-light, and enclosed the ashes in the paper which had been wrapped round the hair of the dauphiness. Then he left the room; and while descending the stairs he awoke the young woman.

The prelate, agitated and impatient, was waiting and doubting.

"Well, Count?" said he.

"Well, Monseigneur, the oracle has said you may hope."

"It said so!" exclaimed the prince, transported with joy.

"Draw what conclusion you please, Monseigneur; the oracle has said that this woman does not love her husband."

"Oh!" said Monsieur de Rohan, with a thrill of joy.

"I was obliged to burn the hair to obtain the revelation by its essence. Here are the ashes, which I restore

to you most scrupulously, after having gathered them up as if each atom were worth a million."

"Thanks, Monsieur, a thousand thanks; I can never repay you."

"Do not speak of that, Monseigneur. I must recommend you, however, not to swallow these ashes in wine, as lovers sometimes do; it causes such a dangerous sympathy that your love would become incurable, while the lady's heart would cool toward you."

"Oh! I shall take care," said the prelate, almost terrified. "Adieu, Count, adieu!"

Twenty minutes afterward his Eminence's carriage crossed Monsieur de Richelieu's at the corner of the Rue des Petits Champs so suddenly that it was nearly upset in a deep trench which had been dug for the foundation of a new building.

The two noblemen recognized each other.

"Ha! Prince," said Richelieu, with a smile.

"Ha! Duke," replied Louis de Rohan, with his finger upon his lips.

And they disappeared in opposite directions.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

MONSIEUR DE RICHELIEU APPRECIATES NICOLE.

Monsieur de Richelieu drove straight to Monsieur de Taverney's modest hôtel in the Rue Coq-Héron.

Thanks to the privilege we possess, in common with the devil on two sticks, of entering every house, be it ever so carefully locked, we are aware, before Monsieur de Richelieu discovers it, that the baron is seated before the fireplace, his feet resting upon the immense andirons which support a smouldering log, and is lecturing Nicole, sometimes pausing to chuck her under the chin, in spite of the rebellious and scornful poutings of the young waiting-maid. But whether Nicole would have been satisfied with the caress without the sermon, or whether she would have preferred the sermon without the caress, we can give no satisfactory information.

The conversation between the master and the servant turned upon the very important point that at a certain hour of the evening Nicole never came when the bell was rung, — that she had always something to do in the garden or in the greenhouse ; and that everywhere but in these two places she neglected her service.

Nicole, turning backward and forward with a charming and voluptuous grace, replied : " So much the worse ! I am dying with weariness here ; you promised I should go to Trianon with Mademoiselle."

It was thereupon that the baron thought it proper in charity to pat her cheeks and chuck her chin, no doubt to

distract her thoughts from dwelling on so unpleasant a subject; but Nicole continued in the same vein, and refusing all consolation, deplored her unhappy lot. "Yes," she sighed, "I am shut up within four horrible walls, I have no company, I have no air; while I had the prospect of a pleasant and fortunate future before me."

"What prospect?" said the baron.

"Trianon," replied Nicole, — "Trianon, where I should have seen the world; where I should have looked about me; where I should have been looked at."

"Oh! oh! my little Nicole," said the baron.

"Well, Monsieur, I am a woman, and as well worth looking at as another, I suppose?"

"*Cordieu!* how she talks," said the baron to himself. "What fire, what ambition! Oh, if I were young, and if I were rich!" and he could not help casting a look of admiration at so much youth and beauty. Nicole was thoughtful, and at times impatient.

"Come, Monsieur," said she, "will you retire to bed, that I may go to mine?"

"One word more, Nicole."

A sudden ringing of the street-bell made Taverney start and Nicole jump.

"Who can be coming," said the baron, "at half-past eleven o'clock at night? Go, child, and see."

Nicole hastened to open the door, asked the name of the visitor, and left the street-door half open. Through this lucky opening a shadow, which had apparently emerged from the court-yard, glided out, not without making noise enough to attract the attention of the marshal, — for it was he, — who turned and saw the flight. Nicole preceded him, candle in hand, with a beaming look.

"Oh, oh!" said the marshal, smiling, and following

her into the room, "this old rogue of a Taverney spoke to me only of his daughter."

The duke was one of those men who do not require a second glance to see, and see completely. The shadowy figure which he had observed escaping made him think of Nicole, and Nicole of the shadow. When he saw her pretty face he guessed what errand the shadow had come upon; and judging from her saucy and laughing eye, her white teeth and small waist, he had nothing more to learn concerning her character and tastes.

At the door of the salon Nicole, not without a palpitation of the heart, announced, "Monsieur le Duc de Richelieu."

This name was destined to cause a sensation that evening. It produced such an effect upon the baron that he rose from his armchair and walked straight to the door, not being able to believe the evidence of his ears. But before he reached the door he perceived Monsieur de Richelieu in the shadow of the corridor.

"The duke!" he stammered.

"Yes, my dear friend, the duke himself," replied Richelieu, in his most friendly manner. "Oh! that surprises you, after your visit the other day? Well, nevertheless, nothing can be more real. In the mean time your hand, if you please."

"Monsieur le Duc, you overwhelm me."

"You have lost your wits, my dear friend," said the old marshal, giving his hat and cane to Nicole, and seating himself comfortably in an armchair. "You are getting rusty; you dote. You seem no longer to know the world!"

"But yet, Duke," replied Taverney, much agitated, "it seems to me that the reception you gave me the other day was so significant that I could not mistake its character."

"Hark ye, my old friend," answered Richelieu, "the other day you behaved like a school-boy, and I like a pedant. Between us there was but little difference. You are going to speak, — I will save you the trouble; you might say foolish things to me, and I might reply in the same vein. Let us leave the other day aside, therefore, and come direct to the present time. Do you know what I have come for this evening?"

"No, certainly."

"I have come to bring you the company which you asked of me for your son the other day, and which the king has granted. What the devil, can't you understand the difference? The day before yesterday I was a quasi-minister, and to ask a favor was an injustice; but to-day, when I am simply Richelieu, and have refused the portfolio, it would be absurd not to ask. I have therefore asked and obtained, and I now bring it to you."

"Duke, can this be true? And is this kindness on your part — "

"It is the natural consequence of my duty as your friend. The minister refused; Richelieu asks and gives."

"Ah, Duke, you enchant me! You are then really my friend?"

"I should say so!"

"But the king, — the king, who confers such a favor on me — "

"The king scarcely knows what he has done; or perhaps I am mistaken, and he knows very well."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that his Majesty has, no doubt, some motive for provoking Madame Dubarry just now; and you owe this favor, which he bestows upon you, more to that motive than to my influence."

"You think so?"

"I am certain of it, for I am aiding and abetting. You know it is on account of that creature that I refused the portfolio?"

"I was told so, but —"

"But you did not believe it. Come, say it frankly!"

"Well, I confess that —"

"You always thought me not likely to be troubled by many scruples of conscience, — is that it?"

"At least, I thought you without prejudices."

"My friend, I am getting old, and I no longer care for pretty faces, except when they can be useful to me. And besides, I have some other plans. But to return to your son; he is a splendid fellow!"

"But on bad terms with that Dubarry who was at your house when I had the folly to present myself."

"I am aware of it, and that is why I am not a minister."

"Oh! you refused the portfolio in order not to displease my son?"

"If I told you so, you would not believe me. No, that is not the reason. I refused it because the requirements of the Dubarrys, which began with the exclusion of your son, would have ended in enormities of all kinds."

"Then you have quarrelled with those creatures?"

"Yes, and no. They fear me, — I despise them; it is tit for tat."

"It is heroic, but imprudent."

"Why?"

"The countess has still some power."

"Pooh!" said Richelieu.

"How you say that!"

"I say it like a man who perceives the weak point of a situation, and who, if necessary, would place the miner in a good position to blow up the whole concern."

"I see the true state of the case: you do my son a favor partly to vex the Dubarrys."

"Principally for that reason; and your perspicacity is not at fault. Your son serves me as a grenade; I shall cause an explosion by his means. But, by the way, Baron, have you not also a daughter?"

"Yes."

"Young?"

"Sixteen years."

"Beautiful?"

"As Venus."

"Who lives at Trianon?"

"Ah! then you know her?"

"I have spent the evening in her company, and have conversed about her for a full hour with the king."

"With the king?" cried Taverney, his cheeks in a flame. "The king has spoken of my daughter, — of Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney?"

"Whom he devours with his eyes, — yes, my dear fellow."

"Ah! really?"

"Do I annoy you in telling you this?"

"Me? No, certainly not. The king honors me by looking at my daughter; but — the king —"

"Is immoral; is that what you were going to say?"

"God forbid that I should speak evil of his majesty! He has a right to adopt whatever morals he chooses."

"Well, what does this astonishment mean, then? Do you pretend to say that Mademoiselle Andrée is not an accomplished beauty, and that therefore the king may not have looked upon her with admiration?"

Taverney did not reply; he only shrugged his shoulders and fell into a revery, during which the unrelenting, inquisitorial eye of the Duc de Richelieu was still fixed upon him.

"Well, I know what you would say, if, instead of thinking to yourself, you would speak aloud," continued the old marshal, moving his chair nearer the baron's. "You would say that the king is accustomed to bad society, that he mixes with low company, and that therefore he is not likely to admire this noble girl, so modest in her demeanor and so pure and lofty in her ideas, and is not capable of appreciating the treasures of her grace and beauty."

"Certainly, you are a great man, Duke; you have read my thoughts exactly," said Taverney.

"But confess, Baron," continued Richelieu, "that our master should no longer force us gentlemen, peers and companions of the king of France, to kiss the vile, open hand of a creature like Dubarry. It is time that he should restore us to our proper position. After having sunk from La Chateauroux, who was a marquise and of stuff to make duchesses, to La Pompadour, who was the daughter and the wife of a farmer of the public revenues, and from La Pompadour to the Dubarry, who calls herself simply Jeanneton, may he not fall still farther, and plunge us into the lowest pitch of degradation? It is humiliating for us, Baron, who wear a coronet on our caps, to bow the head before such worthless creatures."

"Oh! you speak only the truth," said Taverney. "How evident is it that the court is deserted on account of these new fashions!"

"No queen, no ladies; no ladies, no courtiers. The king takes up a grisette, and the people are upon the throne, represented by Mademoiselle Jeanne Vaubernier, a sempstress of Paris."

"It is so, and yet —"

"You see then, Baron," interrupted the marshal, "what

a noble career is open for a woman of mind who should reign at this time over France."

"Without doubt," said Taverney, whose heart was beating fast; "but unluckily the place is occupied."

"For a woman," continued the marshal, "who would have the boldness of these creatures without their vice, and who would direct her views and calculations to a loftier aim; for a woman who would advance her fortune so high that she should be talked of when the monarchy itself should no longer exist. Do you know if your daughter has intellect, Baron?"

"Lofty intellect, and above all, good sense."

"She is very lovely."

"Is she not?"

"Her beauty is of that soft and charming character which pleases men so much, while her whole being is stamped with that air of candor and virgin purity which imposes respect even upon women. You must take great care of that treasure, my old friend."

"You speak of her with such fire—"

"I! I am madly in love with her, and would marry her to-morrow, were I twenty, instead of seventy-four years of age! But is she comfortably placed? Has she the luxury which befits such a lovely flower? Only think, Baron! this evening she returned alone to her apartments, without waiting-women or lackey. An attendant of the dauphin carried a lantern before her! That looks as if she were a servant rather than a lady of rank."

"What can I do, Duke? You know I am not rich."

"Rich or not, your daughter must at least have a waiting-maid."

Taverney sighed. "I know very well," said he, "that she wants one, or at least that she ought to have one."

"Well, have you none?"

The baron did not reply.

"Who is that pretty girl you had here just now?" continued Richelieu. "A fine, spirited-looking girl, i' faith."

"Yes, but — I — I cannot send her to Trianon."

"Why not, Baron? On the contrary, she seems to me perfectly suited for the post; she would make a capital attendant."

"You did not look at her face then, Duke?"

"I, — I did nothing else!"

"You looked at her, and did not remark her strange resemblance?"

"To whom?"

"To — guess. Come hither, Nicole."

Nicole advanced; like a true waiting-woman, she had been listening at the door. The duke took her by both hands and looked her steadily in the face; but the impertinent gaze of this great nobleman and debauchee did not alarm or embarrass her for a moment.

"Yes," said he, "it is true; there is a resemblance."

"You know to whom, and you see therefore that it is impossible to expose the fortunes of our house to such an awkward trick of fate. Is it a pleasant thing that this little minx of a Nicole resembles the most illustrious lady in France?"

"Oh, ho!" replied Nicole, sharply, and disengaging herself from the marshal's grasp, the better to reply to Monsieur de Taverney, "is it so certain that this little minx resembles this illustrious lady so exactly? Has the illustrious lady the low shoulder, the quick eye, the round ankle, and the plump arm of the little minx?"

Nicole was crimson with rage, and therefore ravishingly beautiful.

The duke once more took her pretty hands in his, and with a look full of caresses and promises: "Baron," said he, "Nicole has certainly not her equal at court, — at least in my opinion. As for the illustrious lady to whom she has, I confess, a slight resemblance, we shall know how to spare her self-love. You have fair hair of a lovely shade, Mademoiselle Nicole; you have eyebrows and nose of a most imperial form: well, in one quarter of an hour employed before the mirror, these imperfections, since the baron thinks them such, will disappear. Nicole, my child, would you like to be at Trianon?"

"Oh!" said Nicole, and her whole soul, full of longing, was expressed in this monosyllable.

"You shall go to Trianon, then, my dear, and without prejudicing in any way the fortunes of others. Baron, one word more."

"Speak, my dear Duke."

"Go, my pretty child," said Richelieu, "and leave us alone a moment."

Nicole retired. The duke approached the baron. "I press you the more to send your daughter a waiting-maid," said he, "because it will please the king. His Majesty does not like poverty, and pretty faces do not frighten him. Let me alone; I understand what I am about."

"Nicole shall go to Trianon, if you think it will please the king," replied the baron, with a meaning smile.

"Then, if you will allow me, I will take her with me."

"But still, her resemblance to the dauphiness! We must think of that, Duke."

"I have thought of it. This resemblance will disappear in a quarter of an hour under Rafté's hands, I will answer for it. Write a note to your daughter to tell her of what importance it is that she should have a maid, and that this maid should be Nicole."

"You think it important that it should be Nicole?"

"I do."

"And that no other than Nicole would do?"

"Upon my honor I think so."

"Then I will write immediately;" and the baron sat down and wrote a letter, which he handed to Richelieu.

"And the instructions, Duke?"

"I will give them to Nicole. Is she intelligent?"

The baron smiled.

"Then you confide her to me, do you not?" said Richelieu.

"That is your affair, Duke. You asked me for her; I give her to you: make of her what you like."

"Mademoiselle, come with me," said the duke, rising, and calling into the corridor, "and that quickly."

Nicole did not wait to be told twice. Without asking the baron for his consent, she made up a packet of clothes in five minutes, and light as a bird, she flew downstairs and took her place beside the coachman.

Richelieu took leave of his friend, who repeated his thanks for the service he had rendered Philippe. Of Andrée not a word was said.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE TRANSFORMATION.

NICOLE was overjoyed. To leave Taverney for Paris was not so great a triumph as to leave Paris for Trianon. She was so gracious with Monsieur de Richelieu's coachman that the next morning the reputation of the new waiting-maid was established throughout all the coach-houses and antechambers, in any degree aristocratic, of Paris and Versailles.

When they arrived at the Hôtel de Hanover, Monsieur de Richelieu took the young girl by the hand and led her to the first story, where Monsieur Rafté was awaiting his arrival, and writing a multitude of letters on his master's account.

Among the various acquirements of the marshal, war occupied the foremost rank, and Rafté had become, at least in theory, such a skilful strategist that Polybius and the Chevalier de Folard, if they had lived at that period, would have esteemed themselves fortunate could they have perused the pamphlets on fortifications and manœuvring, of which Rafté wrote one every week. Monsieur Rafté was busy revising the plan of a war against the English in the Mediterranean when the marshal entered and said, "Rafté, look at this child, will you?"

Rafté looked.

"Very pretty, Monseigneur," said he, with a most significant movement of the lips.

"Yes, but the likeness, Rafté? It is of the likeness I speak."

"Eh! it is true. Ah! the devil!"

"You see it, do you not?"

"It is extraordinary; it will either make or mar her fortune."

"It will ruin her at once. But we will provide against it. You observe she has fair hair, Rafté; but that will not signify much, will it?"

"It will only be necessary to make it black, Monseigneur," replied Rafté, who had acquired the habit of completing his master's thoughts, and sometimes even of thinking entirely for him.

"Come to my dressing-table, child," said the marshal. "This gentleman, who is a very clever man, will make you the handsomest and the least easily recognized waiting-maid in France."

In fact, ten minutes afterward, with the assistance of a composition which the marshal used every week to dye the white hairs black beneath his wig, — a piece of coquetry which he often affected to confess by the bedside of some of his acquaintances, — Rafté had dyed the beautiful auburn hair of Nicole a splendid jet black. Then he passed the end of a pin, blackened in the flame of a candle, over her thick, fair eyebrows, and by this means gave such a fantastic look to her joyous countenance, such an ardent and even sombre fire to her bright, clear eyes, that one would have said she was some fairy bursting by the power of an incantation from the magic prison in which her enchanter had held her confined.

"Now, my sweet child," said Richelieu, after having handed a mirror to the astonished Nicole, "see how charming you are, and how little like the Nicole you were just now. You have no longer ruin to fear, but a fortune to make."

"Oh, Monseigneur!" exclaimed the young girl.

"Yes, and for that purpose it is only necessary that we understand each other."

Nicole blushed, and looked down; the cunning one expected, no doubt, words such as Richelieu knew so well how to say.

The duke perceived this, and to cut short all misunderstanding said: "Sit down in this armchair beside Monsieur Rafté, my dear child. Open your ears wide, and listen to me. Oh! do not let Monsieur Rafté's presence embarrass you; do not be afraid; he will, on the contrary, give us his advice. You are listening, are you not?"

"Yes, Monseigneur," stammered Nicole, ashamed at having thus been led away by her vanity.

The conversation between Monsieur de Richelieu, Monsieur Rafté, and Nicole lasted more than an hour, after which the marshal sent the young girl to sleep with the other waiting-women in the hôtel.

Rafté returned to his military pamphlet, and Richelieu retired to bed, after having looked over the different letters which conveyed to him intelligence of all the acts of the provincial parliaments against Monsieur d'Aiguillon and the Dubarry clique.

Early the next day one of his carriages, without his coat-of-arms, conducted Nicole to Trianon, set her down at the gate with her little packet, and immediately disappeared. Nicole, with head erect, mind at ease, and hope dancing in her eyes, after having made the necessary inquiries, knocked at the door of the offices.

It was ten o'clock in the morning. Andrée, already up and dressed, was writing to her father to inform him of the happy event of the preceding day, of which Monsieur de Richelieu, as we have already seen, had conveyed the intelligence. Our readers will not have forgotten that a flight of stone steps led from the garden to the little

chapel of Trianon; that on the landing-place of this chapel a staircase branched off toward the right to the first story, which contained the apartments of the ladies-in-waiting, which apartments opened off a long corridor, like an alley, looking upon the garden.

Andrée's chamber was the first upon the left hand in this corridor. It was tolerably large, well-lighted by windows looking upon the stable court, and was entered through an antechamber, on each side of which was a small room. This apartment, however insufficient, if one considers the ordinary establishments pertaining to the officers of a brilliant court, was yet a charming retreat, very habitable, and very cheerful as an asylum from the noise and bustle of the palace. Thither an ambitious soul could fly to devour the affronts or the mistakes of the day, and there a humble and melancholy spirit could repose in silence and in solitude, apart from the grandeur of the gay world around.

In fact, the stone steps once ascended and the chapel passed, there no longer existed either superiority, duty, or display. There reigned the calm of a convent, and the personal liberty of prison life. The slave of the palace was a monarch when she had crossed the threshold of her modest dwelling. A gentle yet lofty soul such as Andrée's found consolation in this reflection; not that she flew hither to repose after the fatigues of a disappointed ambition or of unsatisfied longings, but she felt that she could think more at her ease in the narrow bounds of her chamber than in the rich salons of Trianon, or in those marble halls which her feet trod with a timidity amounting almost to terror.

From this sequestered nook, where the young girl felt herself so well and so appropriately placed, she could look without emotion on all the splendor which, during the

day, had dazzled her eyes. Surrounded by her flowers, her harpsichord, and her German books, — such sweet companions to those who read with the heart, — Andrée defied fate to inflict on her a single grief, or to deprive her of a single joy.

" Here," said she, when in the evening, after her duties were over, she returned to throw around her shoulders her dressing-gown with its wide folds, and to breathe with all her soul, as with all her lungs, — " here I possess nearly everything I can hope to possess till my death. I may one day perhaps be richer, but I can never be poorer than I now am. There will always be flowers, music, and a consoling page to cheer the poor recluse."

Andrée had obtained permission to breakfast in her own apartment when she felt inclined. This was a precious boon to her, for she could thus remain in her own domicile until twelve o'clock, unless the dauphiness should command her attendance for some morning reading or some early walk. Thus free, in fine weather she set out every morning with a book in her hand, and traversed alone the extensive woods which lie between Versailles and Trianon; then, after a walk of two hours, during which she gave full play to meditation and revery, she returned to breakfast, often without having seen either nobleman or servant, man or livery.

When the heat began to pierce through the thick foliage Andrée had her little chamber, fresh and cool with the double current of air from the door and the window. A small sofa covered with Indian silk, four chairs to match, a simple yet elegant bed with a circular top, from which the curtains of the same material as the covering of the furniture fell in deep folds, two china vases placed upon the mantelpiece, and a square table with brass feet, furnished and adorned her little world, whose narrow

confines bounded all her hopes and limited all her wishes.

Andrée was seated in her apartment, as we have said, and busily engaged in writing to her father, when a modest knock at the door of the corridor attracted her attention. She raised her head on seeing the door open, and uttered a slight cry of astonishment when the radiant face of Nicole appeared, entering from the little antechamber.

CHAPTER L.

HOW PLEASURE TO SOME IS DESPAIR TO OTHERS.

"GOOD-DAY, Mademoiselle; it is I," said Nicole, with a joyous reverence, which nevertheless, from the young girl's knowledge of her mistress's character, was not unmixed with anxiety.

"You! And how do you happen to be here?" replied Andrée, putting down her pen, the better to follow the conversation which was thus opened.

"Mademoiselle had forgotten me, so I came —"

"But if I forgot you, Mademoiselle, it was because I had my reasons for so doing. Who gave you permission to come?"

"Monsieur the baron, of course, Mademoiselle," said Nicole, smoothing with a very dissatisfied air the handsome black eyebrows which she owed to the generosity of Monsieur Rafté.

"My father requires your services in Paris, and I do not require you here at all. You may return, child."

"Oh! then Mademoiselle does not care, — I thought Mademoiselle had been more pleased with me. It is well worth while loving," added Nicole, philosophically, "to meet with such a return at last;" and she did her utmost to bring a tear to her beautiful eyes.

There was enough of heart and feeling in this reproach to excite Andrée's compassion. "My child," said she, "I have attendance here already, and I cannot permit myself

unnecessarily to increase the household of the dauphiness by another mouth."

"Oh, as if this mouth was so large!" said Nicole, with a charming smile.

"No matter, Nicole, your presence here is impossible."

"On account of that resemblance?" said the young girl. "Then you have not looked at my face, Mademoiselle."

"In fact you seem changed."

"I think so! A fine gentleman, he who got the promotion for Monsieur Philippe, came to us yesterday, and as he saw the baron quite melancholy at your being here without a waiting-maid, he told him that nothing was easier than to change me from fair to dark. He brought me with him, dressed me as you see, and here I am."

Andrée smiled. "You must love me very much," said she, "since you are determined at all risks to shut yourself up in Trianon, where I am almost a prisoner."

Nicole cast a rapid but intelligent glance round the room. "The chamber is not very gay," said she, "but you are not always in it?"

"I? Of course not," replied Andrée; "but you?"

"Well, I?"

"You, who will never enter the salons of Madame the Dauphiness, — you, who will have neither the resource of the theatre, nor the walk, nor the evening circle, but will always remain here; you will die of weariness."

"Oh!" said Nicole, "there is always some little window or other; one can surely see some little glimpse of the gay world without, were it only through the chinks of the door. If one can see, one can also be seen. That is all I require; so do not be uneasy on my account."

"I repeat, Nicole, that I cannot receive you without express orders from my father."

"Is that your settled determination?"

"It is."

Nicole drew the Baron de Taverney's letter from her bosom. "There," said she, "since my entreaties and my devotion to you have had no effect, let us see if the order contained in this will have more power."

Andrée read the letter, which was in the following terms:—

I am aware, and indeed it is already remarked, my dear Andrée, that you do not occupy the position at Trianon which your rank imperatively requires. You ought to have two maids and a valet, as I ought to have twenty thousand francs per annum; but as I am content with one thousand francs, imitate my example, and content yourself with Nicole, who, though alone, is sufficient for all the domestic service necessary to you.

Nicole is quick, intelligent, and devoted to you, and will readily adopt the tone and manners of the place. Your chief care indeed will be not to stimulate her, but to repress her willingness to serve. Keep her, then; and do not imagine that I am making any sacrifice in depriving myself of her services. In case you should think so, remember that his Majesty, who had the goodness to think of us, remarked on seeing you (this was confided to me by a good friend) that you required a little more attention to your toilet and general appearance. Think of this; it is of great importance.

YOUR AFFECTIONATE FATHER.

This letter threw Andrée into a state of grief and perplexity. She was then to be haunted, even in her prosperity, by the remembrance of that poverty which she alone did not feel to be a fault, while all around seemed to consider it as a crime.

Her first impulse was to break her pen indignantly, to tear the letter she had begun, and to reply to her father's epistle by some lofty tirade expressive of philosophical self-denial, which Philippe would have approved of with

all his heart. But she imagined she saw the baron's satirical smile on reading this masterpiece, and her resolution vanished. She merely replied to the baron's order, therefore, by a paragraph annexed to the news of Trianon which she had already written to him according to his request.

"My father," she added, "Nicole has this moment arrived, and I receive her, since you wish it; but what you have written on this subject has vexed me. Shall I be less ridiculous with this village girl as waiting-maid than when I was alone among those opulent courtiers? Nicole will be unhappy at seeing me humiliated. She will be discontented; for servants feel proud or humiliated in proportion to the wealth or poverty of their masters. As to his Majesty's remark, my father, permit me to tell you that the king has too much good sense to be displeased at my incapacity to play the grand lady; and besides, his Majesty has too much heart to have noticed or criticised my poverty without transforming it into a wealth to which your name and services would have seemed a legitimate claim in the eyes of all."

This was Andrée's reply, and it must be confessed that her ingenuous innocence, her noble pride, had an easy triumph over the cunning and corruption of her tempters.

Andrée said no more respecting Nicole. She agreed to her remaining, so that the latter, joyous and animated, she well knew why, at once prepared a little bed in the cabinet on the right of the antechamber, and made herself as small, as aerial, and as exquisite as possible, in order not to inconvenience her mistress by her presence in this modest retreat. One would have thought she wished to imitate the rose-leaf which the Persian sages let fall upon a vase filled with water, to show that something could be added without causing the water to overflow.

Andrée set out for Trianon about one o'clock. She had never been more quickly or more gracefully attired. Nicole had surpassed herself; she had been all politeness, attention, and zeal, — nothing had been wanting in her services.

When Mademoiselle de Taverney had gone, Nicole considered herself mistress of the domicile, and instituted a thorough examination of it. Everything was scrutinized, from the letters to the smallest knick-knack on the toilet-table, from the mantelpiece to the most secret corners of the closets. Then she looked out of the windows to take a survey of the neighborhood.

Below her was a large courtyard, in which several ostlers were dressing and currying the splendid horses of the dauphiness. Ostlers! pshaw! Nicole turned away her head.

On the right was a row of windows on the same story as those of Andrée's apartment. Several heads appeared at these windows, apparently those of chambermaids and floor-scrubbers. Nicole disdainfully proceeded in her examination.

On the opposite side, in a large apartment, some music-teachers were drilling a class of choristers and instrumentalists for the mass of Saint Louis. Without ceasing her dusting operations, Nicole began to sing after her own fashion, thus distracting the attention of the masters, and causing the choristers to sing out of tune.

But this pastime could not long satisfy Mademoiselle Nicole's ambition. When the masters and the singers had quarrelled, and been mystified sufficiently, the little waiting-maid proceeded to the inspection of the higher story. All the windows were closed, and moreover they were only attics, so Nicole continued her dusting. But a moment afterward, one of these attic windows was opened

without her being able to discover by what mechanism, for no one appeared. Some one, however, must have opened that window; this some one had seen Nicole, and had not remained to look at her; it was some one very impertinent, — at least, such was Nicole's opinion. But she, who examined everything so conscientiously, wished to examine the features of this impertinent; and she therefore returned every moment from her different avocations to the window, to give a glance at this attic, — that is, at this open eye from which the eyeball was so obstinately absent. Once she imagined that the person fled as she approached; but this was incredible, and she did not believe it. Another time she was almost sure of it, having seen the back of the fugitive, — surprised, no doubt, by a prompter return than he had anticipated. Then Nicole had recourse to stratagem; she concealed herself behind the curtain, leaving the window wide open, to drown all suspicion.

She waited a long time, but at last a head of black hair made its appearance; then came two timid hands, which supported, buttress-like, a body bending over cautiously; and finally, a face showed itself distinctly at the window. Nicole almost fell, and grasped the curtain so tightly, in her surprise, that it shook from top to bottom.

It was Monsieur Gilbert's face which was looking at her from this lofty attic. But the moment Gilbert saw the curtain move, he comprehended the trick, and did not again appear; furthermore, the attic window was closed.

No doubt Gilbert had seen Nicole; he had been astonished, and had wished to convince himself of the presence of his enemy, and when he found himself discovered instead, he had fled in agitation and in anger. At least, Nicole interpreted the scene thus, and she was right, for this was the exact state of the case.

In fact, Gilbert would rather have seen the devil than Nicole. The arrival of this spy caused him a thousand terrors. He had an old leaven of jealousy against her, for she knew his secret of the garden in the Rue Coq-Héron.

Gilbert had fled in agitation, and not in agitation alone, but also in anger, and biting his nails with rage. "Of what use now is my foolish discovery, of which I was so proud?" said he to himself. "Even if Nicole had a lover in Paris, the evil is done, and she will not be sent away from here on that account; but if she tells what I did in the Rue Coq-Héron I shall be dismissed from Trianon. It is not I who govern Nicole, — it is she who governs me. Oh, fury!"

And Gilbert's inordinate self-love, serving as a stimulant to his hatred, made his blood boil with frightful violence. It seemed to him that Nicole, in entering that apartment, had chased from it, with a diabolical smile, all the happy dreams which he from his garret had sent thither every day with his vows, his ardent love, and his flowers. Had Gilbert been too much occupied to think of Nicole before, or had he banished the subject from his thoughts on account of the terror with which it inspired him? We cannot determine; but this we know, at least, — that Nicole's appearance was a most disagreeable surprise for him.

Gilbert saw plainly that sooner or later war would be declared between them; but as he was prudent and politic, he did not wish the war to begin until he felt himself strong enough to make it energetic and effective. With this intention he determined to counterfeit death until chance should present him a favorable opportunity of reviving, — or until Nicole, from weakness or necessity, should venture on some step which would deprive her of

her present vantage-ground. Therefore, exercising the greatest vigilance where Andrée was concerned, but at the same time circumspect and careful, he continued to make himself acquainted with the state of affairs in the first apartment of the corridor, without Nicole ever having once met him in the gardens.

Unluckily for Nicole she was not irreproachable, and even had she been so at that time, there was always one stumbling-block in the past over which she could be made to fall.

At the end of a week's ceaseless watching, — morning, noon, and night, — Gilbert at last saw through the bars of his window a plume, which he fancied he recognized. This plume was a source of constant agitation to Nicole, for it belonged to Monsieur Beausire, who, following the rest of the court, had emigrated from Paris to Trianon.

For a long time Nicole was cruel; for a long time she left Monsieur Beausire to shiver in the cold and melt in the sun; and her prudence drove Gilbert to despair. But one fine morning, when Monsieur Beausire had doubtless overleaped the barrier of mimic eloquence, and found an opportunity of bringing persuasive words to his aid, Nicole profited by Andrée's absence to descend to the court-yard and join Monsieur Beausire, who was assisting his friend, the superintendent of the stables, to train a small Irish horse.

From the court they passed into the garden, and from thence into the shady avenue which leads to Versailles. Gilbert followed the amorous couple with the ferocious joy of a tiger who scents his prey. He counted their steps, their sighs, and learned by heart all he heard of their conversation. It may be presumed that the result pleased him, for the next day, freed from all embarrassment, he displayed himself openly at his attic window,

humming a song and looking quite at ease, and so far from fearing to be seen by Nicole, that, on the contrary, he seemed to brave her look.

Nicole was mending an embroidered silken mitten belonging to her mistress; she heard the song, raised her head, and saw Gilbert. The first evidence she gave of his presence was a contemptuous pouting, which gave place to a bitter expression, indicating the intensest hostility. But Gilbert sustained this look with such a singular smile, and there was such provoking intelligence in his air and in his manner of singing, that Nicole looked down and blushed.

"She understands me," thought Gilbert; "that is all I wished." Then he began again the same course of conduct, and Nicole trembled. At length she began to wish for an interview with him, in order to free her heart from the load with which the satirical manner of the young gardener had burdened it.

Gilbert noticed that she sought him. He could not misunderstand the short dry coughs which sounded near the window whenever Nicole knew him to be in his attic, nor the goings and comings of the young girl in the corridor when she supposed he might be ascending or descending the stairs. For a short time he was very proud of this triumph, which he attributed entirely to his strength of character and wise precautions. Nicole watched him so well that once she spied him as he mounted to his attic. She called him, but he did not reply.

Prompted either by curiosity or fear, Nicole went still farther. One evening she took off her pretty, high-heeled slippers, — a present from Andrée, — and with a trembling and hurried step she ventured into the attic, at the end of which she saw Gilbert's door. There was still sufficient daylight to enable Gilbert, aware of Nicole's approach, to

see her distinctly through the joining, or rather through the crevices, of the panels. She knocked at the door, knowing well that he was in his room; but Gilbert did not reply.

It was, nevertheless, a dangerous temptation for him. He could at his ease humble her who thus came to entreat his pardon; and prompted by this thought, he had already raised his hand to draw the bolt which, with his habitual precaution and vigilance, he had fastened, to avoid surprise.

"But no," thought he, "no. She is all calculation; it is from fear or interest alone that she comes to seek me. She therefore hopes to gain something by her visit; but if so, what may I not lose?" And with this reasoning he let his hand fall again by his side.

Nicole, after having knocked at the door two or three times, retired frowning. Gilbert therefore kept all his advantage, and Nicole had to redouble her cunning in order not to lose hers entirely. At last all these projects and counter-projects reduced themselves to this dialogue, which took place between the belligerent parties one evening at the chapel door, where chance had brought them together.

"Ha! good evening, Monsieur Gilbert; you are here then, are you?"

"Oh! good evening, Mademoiselle Nicole; you are at Trianon?"

"As you see, — waiting-maid to Mademoiselle."

"And I am assistant-gardener."

Then Nicole made a graceful reverence to Gilbert, who returned her a most courtly bow, and they separated. Gilbert ascended to his attic as if he had been on his way thither, and Nicole left the offices and proceeded on her errand; but Gilbert glided down again stealthily, and

followed Nicole, supposing that she was going to meet Monsieur Beausire.

A man was indeed waiting for her beneath the shadows of the alley. Nicole approached him. It was too dark for Gilbert to recognize any one; and the absence of the plume puzzled him so much that he let Nicole return to her domicile, and followed the man as far as the gate of Trianon. It was not Monsieur Beausire, but a man of a certain age, or rather certainly aged, with a distinguished air and a brisk gait, notwithstanding his advanced years. When he approached, Gilbert, who carried his assurance so far as almost to brush past him, recognized Monsieur le Duc de Richelieu.

"*Peste!*" said Gilbert; "first an officer, now a marshal of France! Mademoiselle Nicole is promoted."

CHAPTER LI.

THE PARLIAMENTS.

WHILE all these minor intrigues, hatched and brought to light beneath the linden-trees and among the alleys of Trianon, constituted a sufficiently animated existence for the insects of this little world, the great intrigues of the town, like threatening tempests, spread their vast wings over the palace of Themis, as Monsieur Jean Dubarry wrote in mythological parlance to his sister.

The parliaments — those degenerate remains of the ancient French opposition — had taken breath beneath the capricious government of Louis XV.; but since their protector, Monsieur de Choiseul, had fallen, they felt the approach of danger, and they prepared to meet it by measures as energetic as circumstances would permit.

Every great general commotion is kindled at first by some personal quarrel, as the pitched battles of armies are begun by skirmishes of outposts. Since Monsieur de la Chalotais in attacking Monsieur d'Aiguillon had personified the struggle of the third estate with the feudal lords, the public mind had seized on the question, and would not permit it to be deferred or displaced.

Now the king — whom the parliament of Brittany and those of all France had deluged with a flood of petitions, more or less submissive and filial — the king, thanks to Madame Dubarry, had just given his countenance to the feudal party, against the party of the people, by nominating Monsieur d'Aiguillon to the command of his Light

Horse. Monsieur Jean Dubarry had described it very correctly : it was a smart blow in the face of the dear and trusty counsellors sitting in high court of parliament.

"How would the blow be taken?" Town and court asked itself this question every morning at sunrise; but members of parliament are clever people, and where others are much embarrassed, they see clearly. They began with agreeing among themselves as to the application and the result of this blow, and then, when it had been clearly ascertained that the blow had been given and received, they adopted the following resolution:—

"The court of parliament will deliberate upon the conduct of the ex-governor of Brittany, and give its opinion thereon."

But the king parried the blow by sending a message to the peers and princes, forbidding them to repair to the palace, or be present at any deliberation which might take place concerning Monsieur d'Aiguillon. They obeyed to the letter.

Then the parliament, determined to do its business itself, passed a decree, in which, after declaring that the Duc d'Aiguillon was seriously inculpated and tainted with suspicion, even on matters which touched his honor, it proclaimed that that peer was suspended from the functions of the peerage until, by a judgment given in the court of peers, with the forms and solemnities prescribed by the laws and customs of the kingdom, — "the place of which nothing can supply," — he had fully cleared himself from the accusations and suspicions now resting on his honor.

But such a decree, passed merely in the court of parliament before those interested, and inscribed in their reports, was nothing; public notoriety was wanting, and, above all, that uproar which song alone ventures to raise in France, and which makes song the sovereign controller

of events and rulers. This decree of parliament must be heightened and strengthened by the power of song.

Paris desired nothing better than to take part in this commotion. Little disposed to view either court or parliament with favor, Paris in its ceaseless movement was waiting for some good subject for a laugh, as a transition from all the causes for tears which had been furnished it for a hundred years.

The decree was therefore properly and duly passed, and the parliament appointed commissioners, who were to have it printed under their own eyes. Ten thousand copies of the decree were to be struck off, and the distribution was provided for without delay.

Then, as it was one of their rules that the person interested should be informed of what the court had done respecting him, the same commissioners proceeded to the hôtel of the Duc d'Aiguillon, who had just arrived in Paris for an important interview, — no less, indeed, than to have a clear and open explanation, which had become necessary between the duke and his uncle, the marshal.

Thanks to Rafté, all Versailles had been informed within an hour of the noble resistance of the old duke to the king's orders, in reference to the portfolio of Monsieur de Choiseul. Thanks to Versailles, all Paris and all France had learned the same news; so that Richelieu had found himself for some time past on the summit of popularity, from which he made political grimaces at Madame Dubarry and his dear nephew.

The position was unfavorable for Monsieur d'Aiguillon, who was already so unpopular. The marshal, hated, but at the same time feared, by the people, because he was the living type of that nobility which was so respected and so respectable under Louis XV., — the marshal, so versatile in his character that, after having chosen a part, he was

able to withdraw from it without difficulty when circumstances required it, or when a bon-mot might be the result, — Richelieu, we say, was a dangerous enemy ; the more so as the worst part of his enmity was always that which he concealed, in order, as he said, to create a surprise.

The Duc d'Aiguillon, since his interview with Madame Dubarry, had two flaws in his coat of mail. Suspecting how much anger and thirst for revenge Richelieu concealed under the apparent equability of his temper, he acted as mariners do in certain cases of difficulty, — he burst the waterspout with his cannon, assured that the danger would be less if it were faced boldly. He set about looking everywhere for his uncle, therefore, in order to have a serious conversation with him ; but nothing was more difficult than this, since the marshal had discovered his wish.

Marches and countermarches were made. When the marshal saw his nephew at a distance, he sent him a smile, and immediately surrounded himself by people who rendered all communication impossible ; thus putting the enemy at defiance as from an impregnable fort.

The Duc d'Aiguillon burst the waterspout. He simply presented himself at his uncle's hôtel at Versailles ; but Rafté, from his post at the little window of the hôtel looking upon the court, recognized the liveries of the duke, and warned his master. The duke entered the marshal's bedroom, where he found Rafté alone, who, with a most confidential smile, was so indiscreet as to inform the nephew that his uncle had not slept at home that night.

Monsieur d'Aiguillon bit his lips and retired. When he returned to his hôtel, he wrote to the marshal to request an audience. The marshal could not refuse to

reply. If he replied, he could not refuse an audience; and if he granted the audience, how could he refuse a full explanation? Monsieur d'Aiguillon resembled too much those polite and engaging duellists who hide their evil designs under a fascinating and graceful exterior, lead their man upon the ground with bows and reverences, and there put him to death without pity.

The marshal's self-love was not so powerful as to mislead him; he knew his nephew's power. Once in his presence, his opponent would force from him either a pardon or a concession. Now, Richelieu never pardoned any one, and concessions to an enemy are always a dangerous fault in politics. Therefore, on receipt of Monsieur d'Aiguillon's letter, he pretended to have left Paris for several days.

Rafté, whom he consulted upon this point, gave him the following advice: "We are in a fair way to ruin Monsieur d'Aiguillon. Our friends of the parliament will do the work. If Monsieur d'Aiguillon, who suspects this, can lay his hand upon you before the explosion, he will force from you a promise to assist him in case of misfortune; for your resentment is of that kind that you cannot openly gratify it at the expense of your family interest. If, on the contrary, you refuse, Monsieur d'Aiguillon will leave you, knowing you to be his enemy and attributing all his misfortunes to you; and he will go away comforted, as people always are when they have found out the cause of their complaint, even although the complaint itself be not removed."

"That is quite true," replied Richelieu; "but I cannot conceal myself forever. How many days will it be before the explosion takes place?"

"Six days, Monseigneur."

"Are you sure?"

Rafté drew from his pocket a letter from a counsellor of the parliament. This letter contained only the two following lines : —

It has been decided that the decree shall be passed. It will take place on Thursday, the final day fixed on by the company.

"Then the affair is very simple," replied the marshal; "send the duke back his letter, with a note from your own hand : —

MONSIEUR LE DUC, — You have doubtless heard of the departure of Monsieur le Maréchal for . . . This change of air has been judged indispensable by the marshal's physician, who thinks him rather overworked. If, as I believe is the case, after what you did me the honor to tell me the other day, you wish to have an interview with Monseigneur, I can assure you that on Thursday evening next the duke, on his return from . . . , will sleep in his hôtel in Paris, where you will certainly find him.

And now," added the marshal, "hide me somewhere until Thursday."

Rafté punctually fulfilled these instructions; the letter was written and sent, the hiding-place was found. Only, one evening, Richelieu, who began to feel very much wearied, slipped out and proceeded to Trianon to speak to Nicole. He risked nothing, or thought he risked nothing, by this step, knowing the Duc d'Aiguillon to be at the pavilion of Luciennes.

The result of this manœuvre was that, even if Monsieur d'Aiguillon suspected something, he could not foresee the blow which menaced him until he had actually met his enemy's sword. The delay until Thursday satisfied him ; on that day he left Versailles with the hope of at last meeting and combating this impalpable antagonist.

This Thursday was, as we have said, the day on which parliament was to proclaim its decree.

An agitation, low and muttering as yet, but quite intelligible to the Parisian, who knows so well the level of these popular waves, reigned in the wide streets through which Monsieur d'Aiguillon's carriage passed. No notice was taken of him, for he had observed the precaution of coming in a carriage without a coat-of-arms or other heraldic distinctions.

Here and there he saw busy-looking persons, who were showing each other some paper which they read with many gesticulations, and collecting in noisy groups, like ants round a piece of sugar fallen to the ground. But this was the period of inoffensive agitation; the people were then in the habit of congregating together in this manner for a corn-tax, for an article in the "Gazette de Holland," for a verse of Voltaire's, or for a song against Dubarry or Maupeou.

Monsieur d'Aiguillon drove straight to Monsieur de Richelieu's hôtel. He found there only Rafté. "The marshal," the secretary said, "was expected every moment; some delay of the post must have detained him at the barrier."

Monsieur d'Aiguillon proposed waiting, — not without expressing some impatience to Rafté, for he took this excuse as a new defeat. His ill-humor increased, however, when Rafté told him that the marshal would be in despair on his return to find that Monsieur d'Aiguillon had been kept waiting; that besides, he was not to sleep in Paris, as he had at first intended; and that, most probably, he would not return from the country alone, and would just call in passing at his hôtel to see if there were any news; that therefore Monsieur d'Aiguillon would do better to return to his house, where the marshal could call as he passed.

"Listen, Rafté," said D'Aiguillon, who had become more gloomy during this mysterious reply; "you are my uncle's conscience, and I trust you will answer me as an honest man. I am played upon, am I not, and the marshal does not wish to see me? Do not interrupt me, Rafté; you have been a valuable counsellor to me, and I might have been, and can yet be, a good friend to you; must I return to Versailles?"

"Monsieur le Duc, I assure you, upon my honor, you will receive a visit at your own house from the marshal in less than an hour."

"Then I can as well wait here, since he will come this way."

"I have had the honor of informing you that he will probably not be alone."

"I understand, — and I have your word, Rafté." At these words the duke retired in deep thought, but with an air as noble and graceful as the marshal's was the reverse when, after his nephew's departure, he emerged from a cabinet with a glass door.

The marshal smiled like one of those hideous demons which Callot has introduced in his "Temptations." "He suspects nothing, Rafté?" said he.

"Nothing, Monseigneur."

"What time is it?"

"The time has nothing to do with the matter, Monseigneur. You must wait until our little attorney of the Châtelet makes his appearance. The commissioners are still at the printer's."

Monsieur Rafté had scarcely finished, when a footman opened a secret door, and introduced a personage, very ugly, very greasy, very black, — one of those living pens for which Monsieur Dubarry professed such a profound antipathy.

Rafté pushed the marshal into the cabinet, and hastened, smiling, to meet this man.

"Ah! it is you, Maître Flageot?" said he; "I am delighted to see you."

"Your servant, Monsieur Rafté. Well, the business is done."

"Is it printed?"

"Five thousand are struck off. The first proofs are already scattered over the town; the others are drying."

"What a misfortune, my dear Monsieur Flageot! What a blow to the marshal's family!"

Monsieur Flageot, to avoid the necessity of answering, — that is, of telling a lie, — drew a large silver box from his pocket and slowly inhaled a pinch of Spanish snuff.

"Well, what is to be done now?" asked Rafté.

"The forms, my dear Monsieur, the forms. The commissioners, now that they are sure of the printing and the distribution, will immediately enter their carriages, which are waiting at the door of the printing-office, and proceed to make known the decree to Monsieur le Duc d'Aiguillon, who happens luckily — I mean unfortunately, Monsieur Rafté — to be in his hôtel in Paris, where they can have an interview with him in person."

Rafté hastily seized an enormous bag of legal documents from a shelf, which he gave to Monsieur Flageot, saying: "These are the suits which I mentioned to you, Monsieur. The marshal has the greatest confidence in your abilities, and leaves this affair, which ought to prove most remunerative, entirely in your hands. I have to thank you for your good offices in this deplorable conflict of Monsieur d'Aiguillon with the all-powerful parliament of Paris, and also for your very valuable advice."

Rafté gently, but with some haste, pushed Monsieur

Flageot, delighted with the weight of his burden, toward the door of the antechamber. Then, releasing the marshal from his prison, "Quick, Monseigneur," said he; "to your carriage! You have no time to lose, if you wish to be present at the scene. Take care that your horses go more quickly than those of the commissioners."

CHAPTER LII.

IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN THAT THE PATH OF A MINISTER IS NOT ALWAYS STREWN WITH ROSES.

THE Maréchal de Richelieu's horses did go more quickly than those of the commissioners, for the marshal entered first into the courtyard of the Hôtel d'Aiguillon.

The duke did not expect his uncle, and was preparing to return to Luciennes to inform Madame Dubarry that the enemy had been unmasked, when the announcement of the marshal's arrival roused his discouraged mind from its torpor.

The duke hastened to meet his uncle, and took both his hands in his with a warmth of affection proportionate to the fear he had experienced. The marshal was as affectionate as the duke; the tableau was touching. The Duc d'Aiguillon, however, was manifestly endeavoring to hasten the period of explanation, while the marshal, on the contrary, delayed it as much as possible, by looking at the pictures, the bronzes, or the tapestry, and complaining of great fatigue.

The duke cut off the marshal's retreat, imprisoned him in an armchair, as Monsieur de Villars imprisoned the Prince Eugene in Marchiennes, and began the attack. "Uncle," said he, "is it true that you, the most discriminating man in France, have judged so ill of me as to think that my ambition did not include us both?"

There was no longer room for retreat; Richelieu decided on his plan of action. "What do you mean by that?"

he replied; "and in what do you perceive that I judged unfavorably of you, or the reverse, my dear nephew?"

"Uncle, you are offended with me."

"But for what, and how?"

"Oh! no more of these evasions, Monsieur le Maréchal; in one word, you avoid me when I need your assistance."

"Upon my honor, I do not understand you."

"I will explain, then. The king refused to nominate you for his minister; and because I, on my part, accepted the command of the Light Horse, you imagine that I have deserted and betrayed you. That dear countess, too, who loves you so well —"

Here Richelieu listened eagerly, but not to his nephew's words alone. "You say she loves me well, this dear countess?" he interrupted.

"And I can prove it."

"But, my dear fellow, I never doubted it. I send for you to assist me to push the wheel; you are younger, and therefore stronger than I am; you succeed, I fail. That is in the natural course of things, and on my faith I cannot imagine why you have all these scruples. If you have acted for my interest, you will be a hundredfold repaid; if against me — Well! I shall only return the blow. Does that require explanation?"

"In truth, Uncle —"

"You are a child, Duke. Your position is magnificent, — a peer of France, a duke, a commander of the Light Horse, minister in six weeks; you ought to be beyond the influence of all futile intrigues. Success absolves, my dear child. Suppose — I like apologues — suppose that we are the two mules in the fable. But what noise is that?"

"Nothing, my dear uncle; proceed."

"There is something; I hear a carriage in the courtyard."

"Do not let it interrupt you, Uncle, pray; your conversation interests me extremely. I like apologues too."

"Well, my friend, I was going to say that when you are prosperous, you will never meet with reproaches, nor need you fear the spite of the envious; but if you limp, if you fall — ah, the devil! you must take care; then it is that the wolf will attack you. But you see I was right; there is a noise in the antechamber, — it is the portfolio which they are bringing you, no doubt. The little countess must have exerted herself for you."

The usher entered. "Messieurs the commissioners of the parliament," said he, uneasily.

"Ha!" exclaimed Richelieu.

"The commissioners of the parliament here! What do they want with me?" replied the duke, not at all reassured by his uncle's smile.

"In the king's name!" cried a sonorous voice at the end of the antechamber.

"Oh, ho!" cried Richelieu.

Monsieur d'Aiguillon turned very pale; he rose, however, and advanced to the threshold of the apartment to introduce the two commissioners, behind whom were stationed two motionless ushers, and in the distance a host of alarmed footmen.

"What is your errand here?" asked the duke, in a trembling voice.

"Have we the honor of speaking to the Duc d'Aiguillon?" said one of the commissioners.

"I am the Duc d'Aiguillon, gentlemen."

The commissioner, bowing profoundly, drew from his belt an act in proper form, and read it in a loud and distinct voice.

It was the decree, detailed, complete, and circumstantial, which declared D'Aiguillon seriously affected and incul-

pated by suspicions, even by deeds, involving his honor, and suspended him from his functions as peer of the realm.

The duke listened to the reading like a man thunderstruck. He stood motionless as a statue on its pedestal, and did not even hold out his hand to take the copy of the decree which the commissioners of the parliament offered him.

It was the marshal who, also standing, but alert and active, took the paper, read it, and returned the bow of the commissioners. They had already withdrawn when the Duc d'Aiguillon recovered from his stupor.

"This is a severe blow," said Richelieu; "you are no longer a peer of France, — it is humiliating."

The duke turned to his uncle as if he had only at that moment recovered the power of life and thought.

"You did not expect it?" asked Richelieu in the same tone.

"And you, Uncle?" rejoined D'Aiguillon.

"How do you imagine any one could suspect that the parliament would strike so bold a blow at the favored courtier of the king and his favorite? These people will ruin themselves."

The duke sat down, and leaned his burning cheek on his hand.

"But if," continued the old marshal, forcing the dagger deeper into the wound, "if the parliament degrades you from the peerage because you are nominated to the command of the Light Horse, they will decree you a prisoner and condemn you to the stake when you are appointed minister. These people hate you, D'Aiguillon; do not trust them."

The duke bore this cruel irony with the fortitude of a hero; his misfortune raised and strengthened his mind. Richelieu thought this fortitude was only insensibility, or

want of comprehension, perhaps, and that the wound was not deep enough.

"Being no longer a peer," said he, "you will be less exposed to the hatred of these fellows. Have recourse to a few years of obscurity. Besides, look you, this obscurity, which will be your safeguard, will come without your seeking it. Deprived of your functions of peer, you will have more difficulty in reaching the ministry, and may perhaps escape the business altogether. But if you will struggle, my dear fellow, why, you have Madame Dubarry on your side; she loves you, and she is a powerful support."

Monsieur d'Aiguillon rose. He did not even cast an angry look upon the marshal in return for all the suffering the old man had inflicted upon him.

"You are right, Uncle," he replied, calmly, "and your wisdom is shown in this last advice. The Comtesse Dubarry, to whom you had the goodness to present me, and to whom you spoke so favorably of me and with so much zeal that every one at Luciennes can bear witness to it, — Madame Dubarry will defend me. Thank God, she loves me; she is brave, and exerts an all-powerful influence over the mind of the king! Thanks, Uncle, for your advice; I fly thither as to a haven of safety. My horses! Bourgignon, to Luciennes!"

The marshal remained with an unfinished smile upon his lips. Monsieur d'Aiguillon bowed respectfully to his uncle and quitted the apartment, leaving the marshal very much perplexed, and above all very much confused, at the eagerness with which he had attacked this noble and sensitive victim.

There was some consolation for the old marshal in the mad joy of the Parisians when they read in the evening the ten thousand copies of the decree, which were scrambled for in the streets. But he could not help sighing

when Rafté asked for an account of the evening. Nevertheless he gave it, without concealing anything.

"Then the blow is parried?" said the secretary.

"Yes, and no, Rafté; but the wound is not mortal, and we have at Trianon something better, which I reproach myself for not having made my sole care. We have started two hares, Rafté; it was very foolish."

"Why, if you seize the best?" replied Rafté.

"Oh! my friend, remember that the best is always the one we have not taken; and we would invariably give the one we hold for the one which has escaped."

Rafté shrugged his shoulders; and yet Monsieur de Richelieu was in the right.

"You think," said Rafté, "that Monsieur d'Aiguillon will get out of this?"

"Do you think the king will, simpleton?"

"Oh! the king finds an opening everywhere; but this matter does not concern the king, I think."

"Where the king can pass, Madame Dubarry will pass, as she holds fast by his skirts; where Madame Dubarry has passed, D'Aiguillon will pass also. But you understand nothing of politics, Rafté."

"Monseigneur, Maître Flageot is not of your opinion."

"Well, what does this Maître Flageot say? But first of all, tell me what he is."

"He is an attorney, Monseigneur."

"Well?"

"Well! Monsieur Flageot thinks that the king himself cannot get out of this matter."

"Oh, ho! — and who will stop the lion?"

"Faith, Monseigneur, — the rat!"

"And you believe him?"

"I always believe an attorney who promises to do evil."

"We shall see what means Maître Flageot intends to employ, Rafté."

"That is what I say, Monseigneur."

"Come to supper, then, that I may get to bed. It has quite upset me to see that my poor nephew is no longer peer of France, and will not be minister. I am an uncle, Rafté, after all!" Monsieur de Richelieu sighed, and then began to laugh.

"You may have every quality, however, requisite for a minister," replied Rafté.

CHAPTER LIII.

MONSIEUR D'AIGUILLON TAKES HIS REVENGE.

THE morning succeeding the day on which the terrible decree had thrown Paris and Versailles into an uproar, when every one was anxiously awaiting the result of this decree, the Duc de Richelieu, who had returned to Versailles and had resumed his usual mode of life, saw Rafté enter his apartment with a letter in his hand. The secretary scrutinized and weighed this letter with such an appearance of anxiety that his emotion quickly communicated itself to his master.

"What is the matter now?" asked the marshal.

"Something not very agreeable, I imagine, Monseigneur, which is enclosed in this letter."

"Why do you imagine so?"

"Because the letter is from the Duc d'Aiguillon."

"Ha!" said the duke; "from my nephew?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Maréchal; after the king's council broke up, an usher of the chamber called on me and handed me this paper for you. I have been turning it over and over for the last ten minutes, and I cannot help suspecting that it contains some evil tidings."

The duke held out his hand. "Give it to me," said he; "I am brave."

"I warn you," interrupted Rafté, "that when the usher gave me the paper, he chuckled outrageously."

"The devil! that bodes ill," replied the marshal; "but give it to me, nevertheless."

"And he added: 'Monsieur le Duc d'Aiguillon wishes Monsieur le Maréchal to have this immediately.'"

"Pain! thou shalt not make me say that thou art an evil," said the marshal, breaking the seal with a firm hand; and he read the letter.

"Ha! you change countenance," said Rafté, standing, with his hands crossed behind him, in an attitude of observation.

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Richelieu, continuing to read.

"It seems, then, that it is serious?"

"You look quite delighted."

"Of course, — I see that I was not mistaken."

The marshal read on. "The king is good," said he, after a moment's pause.

"He appoints Monsieur d'Aiguillon minister?"

"Better than that."

"Oh! what, then?"

"Read and ponder."

Rafté in his turn read the note. It was in the handwriting of D'Aiguillon, and was couched in the following terms: —

My dear Uncle, — Your good advice has borne its fruit. I confided my wrongs to that excellent friend of our house, the Comtesse Dubarry, who has deigned to lay them at his Majesty's feet. The king is indignant at the violence with which the gentlemen of the parliament pursue me, and in consideration of the services I have so faithfully rendered him, his Majesty, in this morning's council, has annulled the decree of parliament, and has commanded me to continue my functions as peer of France.

Knowing the pleasure this news will cause you, my dear Uncle, I send you the tenor of the decision which his Majesty in council came to to-day. I have had it copied by a secretary, and you have the announcement before any one else.

Deign to believe in my affectionate respect, my dear Uncle, and continue to bestow on me your good-will and your good advice.

DUC D'AIGUILLON.

"He mocks at me into the bargain!" cried Richelieu.

"Faith, I think so, Monseigneur!"

"The king throws himself into the hornets' nest!"

"You would not believe me yesterday, when I told you so."

"I did not say he would not throw himself into it, Rafté; I said he would contrive to get out of it. Now, you see, he does get out of it."

"The fact is, the parliament is beaten."

"And I also."

"For the present, yes."

"Forever! Yesterday I foresaw it; and you consoled me so well that some misfortune could not fail to ensue."

"Monseigneur, you despair a little too soon, I think."

"Maître Rafté, you are a fool! I am beaten, and I must pay the stake. You do not fully comprehend, perhaps, how disagreeable it is to me to be the laughing-stock of Luciennes. At this moment the duke is mocking me in the arms of Madame Dubarry; Mademoiselle Chon and Monsieur Jean are roaring themselves hoarse at my expense, while the little negro ceases to stuff himself with dainties to make game of me. *Parbleu!* I have a tolerably good temper, but all this makes me furious."

"Furious, Monseigneur?"

"I have said it, — furious!"

"Then you have done what you should not have done," said Rafté, philosophically.

"You urged me on, Master Secretary."

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"Why, what is it to me whether Monsieur d'Aiguillon is a peer of France or not, I ask you, Monseigneur? Your nephew does me no injury, I think."

"Master Rafté, you are impertinent!"

"You have been telling me so for the last forty-nine years, Monseigneur."

"Well, I shall repeat it again."

"Not for forty-nine years more, that is one comfort."

"Rafté, if this is the way you care for my interests —"

"The interests of your little passions? No, Monsieur le Duc, never! Man of genius as you are, you sometimes commit follies which I could not forgive even in an understrapper like myself."

"Explain yourself, Rafté; and if I am wrong, I will confess it."

"Yesterday you thirsted for vengeance, did you not? You wished to behold the humiliation of your nephew; you wished, as it were, to be the bearer of the decree of parliament, and gloat over the tremblings and palpitations of your victim, as Monsieur Crébillon the younger says. Well, Monsieur le Maréchal, such sights as these must be well paid for; such pleasures cost dear. You are rich; pay, pay, Monsieur le Maréchal!"

"What would you have done in my place, then, O most skilful of tacticians? Come, let me see!"

"Nothing! I would have waited without giving any sign of life. But you itched to oppose the parliament to the Dubarry from the moment she found that Monsieur d'Aiguillon was a younger man than yourself."

A groan was the marshal's only reply.

"Well," continued Rafté, "the parliament was tolerably well prompted by you before it did what it has done. The decree once passed, you should have offered your services to your nephew, who would have suspected nothing."

"That is all well and good, and I admit that I did wrong; but you should have warned me."

"I hinder any evil? You take me for some one else, Monsieur le Maréchal; you repeat to every one that comes that I am your creature, that you have trained me, and yet you would have me not delighted when I see a folly committed or a misfortune approaching. Fie! fie!"

"Then a misfortune is to come, Master Sorcerer?"

"Certainly."

"What misfortune?"

"You will be stubborn, and between the parliament and Madame Dubarry, Monsieur d'Aiguillon will take the joint; then he will be minister, and you exiled, or in the Bastille."

The marshal in his anger upset the contents of his snuff-box upon the carpet. "In the Bastille!" said he, shrugging his shoulders; "is Louis XV., think you, Louis XIV.?"

"No; but Madame Dubarry, supported by Monsieur d'Aiguillon, is quite equal to Madame de Maintenon. Take care! I do not know any princess in the present day who would bring you bonbons and eggs."

"That is enough for prognostics," replied the marshal, after a long silence. "You read the future; but what of the present, if you please?"

"Monsieur le Maréchal is too wise for me to give him advice."

"Come, Master Witty-pate, are you too not mocking me?"

"I beg you to remark, Monsieur le Maréchal, that you confound dates. A man is never called a witty-pate after forty; now, I am sixty-seven."

"No matter, assist me out of this scrape; and quickly too, — quickly!"

"By an advice?"

"By anything you please."

"The time has not come yet."

"Now you are certainly jesting."

"Would to God I were! When I jest, the subject will be a jesting matter, — and unfortunately this is not."

"What do you mean by saying that it is not yet time?"

"No, Monseigneur, it is not time. If the announcement of the king's decree were known in Paris, I would not say — Shall we send a courier to the President d'Aligre?"

"That they may laugh at us all the sooner?"

"What a ridiculous self-love, Monsieur le Maréchal! You would make a saint lose patience. Stay! let me finish my plan of a descent on England, and you can finish drowning yourself in your portfolio intrigue, since the business is already half-done."

The marshal was accustomed to these sullen humors of his secretary. He knew that when his melancholy had once declared itself, he was dangerous to touch with ungloved fingers.

"Come," said he, "do not sulk at me; and if I do not understand, explain yourself."

"Then Monseigneur wishes me to trace out a line of conduct for him?"

"Certainly, since you think I cannot conduct myself."

"Well, then, listen."

"I am all attention."

"You must send by a trusty messenger to Monsieur d'Aligre," said Rafté, abruptly, "the Duc d'Aiguillon's letter; and also the decree of the king in council. You must then wait till the parliament has met and deliberated upon it, which will take place immediately; whereupon,

you must order your carriage and pay a visit to your attorney, Maître Flageot."

"Eh!" said Richelieu, whom this name startled as it had on the previous day, "Monsieur Flageot again! What the devil has Maître Flageot to do with all this, and what am I to do at his house?"

"I have had the honor to tell you, Monseigneur, that Maître Flageot is your attorney."

"Well, what then?"

"Well, if he is your attorney, he has certain bags of yours, — certain lawsuits on hand; you must go and ask him about them."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Maréchal, to-morrow."

"But all this is your affair, Monsieur Rafté."

"By no means; by no means! When Maître Flageot was a simple scribbling drudge, then I could treat with him as an equal; but as, dating from to-morrow, Maître Flageot is an Attila, a scourge of kings, — neither more nor less, — it is not asking too much of a duke, a peer, a marshal of France, to converse with this all-powerful man."

"Is this serious, or are we acting a farce?"

"You will see to-morrow if it is serious, Monseigneur."

"But tell me what will be the result of my visit to your Maître Flageot."

"I should be very sorry to do so; you would endeavor to prove to me to-morrow that you had guessed it beforehand. Good-night, Monsieur le Maréchal. Remember, a courier to Monsieur d'Aligre immediately; a visit to Maître Flageot to-morrow. Oh! the address? — The coachman knows it; he has driven me there frequently during the last week."

CHAPTER LIV.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL ONCE MORE MEET AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE WHOM HE THOUGHT LOST, AND WHOM PERHAPS HE DID NOT REGRET.

THE reader will no doubt ask why Maître Flageot, who is about to play so important a part in our story, was called attorney instead of advocate; and as the reader is justified in asking that question, we will satisfy his curiosity.

The vacations had for some time been frequent in parliament, and the advocates pleaded so seldom that their speeches were not worth speaking of. Maître Flageot, foreseeing the time when there would be no pleading at all, made certain arrangements with Maître Guildou, the attorney, in virtue of which the latter yielded him up office and clients on consideration of the sum of twenty-five thousand francs paid down. That is how Maître Flageot became an attorney. But if we are asked how he managed to pay the twenty-five thousand francs, we reply, by marrying Mademoiselle Marguerite, to whom this sum was left as an inheritance about the end of the year 1770, — three months before Monsieur de Choiseul's exile.

Maître Flageot had been long distinguished for his persevering adherence to the opposition party. Once an attorney, he redoubled his violence, and by this violence succeeded in gaining some celebrity. It was this celebrity, together with the publication of an incendiary pamphlet

on the subject of the conflict between Monsieur d'Aiguillon and Monsieur de la Chalotais, which attracted the attention of Monsieur Rafté, who had occasion to keep himself well informed concerning the affairs of parliament.

But notwithstanding his new dignity and his increasing importance, Maître Flageot did not leave the Rue du Petit-Lion-Saint-Sauveur. It would have been too cruel a blow for Mademoiselle Marguerite not to have heard the neighbors call her Madame Flageot, and not to have inspired respect in the breasts of Monsieur Guildou's clerks, who had entered the service of the new attorney.

The reader may readily imagine what Monsieur de Richelieu suffered in traversing Paris — the filthy Paris of that region — to reach the disgusting hole which the Parisian magistrature dignified by the name of "street." In front of Maître Flageot's door, Monsieur de Richelieu's carriage was stopped by another carriage, which pulled up at the same moment. The marshal perceived a woman's headdress protruding from the window of this carriage; and as his sixty-five years of age had not quenched the ardor of his gallantry, he hastily jumped out on the muddy pavement, and proceeded to offer his hand to the lady, who was unaccompanied.

But this day the marshal's evil star was in the ascendant. A long, withered leg which was stretched out to reach the step betrayed the old woman. A wrinkled face, adorned with a dark streak of rouge, proved further that the woman was not only old, but decrepit.

Nevertheless there was no room for retreat; the marshal had made the movement, and the movement had been seen. Besides, Monsieur de Richelieu himself was no longer young. In the mean time the litigant — for what woman with a carriage would have entered that street had she not been a litigant? — the litigant, we say, did not

imitate the duke's hesitation; with a ghastly smile she placed her hand in Richelieu's.

"I have seen that face somewhere before," thought Richelieu; then he added: "Does Madame also intend to visit Maître Flageot?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Duc," replied the old lady.

"Oh, I have the honor to be known to you, Madame!" exclaimed the duke, disagreeably surprised, and stopping on the threshold of the dark passage.

"Who does not know the Duc de Richelieu?" was the reply. "I should not be a woman if I did not."

"This she-ape thinks she is a woman!" murmured the conqueror of Mahon, and he made a most graceful bow.

"If I may venture to ask the question," added he, "to whom have I the honor of speaking?"

"I am the Comtesse de Béarn, at your service," replied the old lady, curtseying with courtly reverence upon the dirty floor of the passage, and about three inches from an open trap-door, through which the marshal, with malicious anticipation, expected her to disappear as she bowed the third time.

"I am delighted, Madame — enchanted," said he; "and I return a thousand thanks to fate. You also have lawsuits on hand, Countess?"

"Oh! Duke, I have only one; but what a lawsuit! Is it possible that you have never heard of it?"

"Oh! frequently, frequently, — that great lawsuit. True; I entreat your pardon. How the devil could I have forgotten that?"

"Against the Saluces."

"Against the Saluces, yes, Countess, — the lawsuit about which the song was written."

"A song?" said the old lady, piqued, — "what song?"

"Take care, Madame, there is a trap-door here," said

the duke, who saw that the old woman was decided not to throw herself into the cellar; "take hold of the balustrade, — I mean the cord."

The old lady mounted the first steps. The duke followed her. "Yes, a very humorous song," said he.

"A humorous song on my lawsuit?"

"To be sure! I will leave you to judge, — but perhaps you know it?"

"Not at all."

"It is to the tune of 'The Bourbonnaise;' it runs so: —

"'Embarrassed, Countess, as I stand,
Give me, I pray, a helping hand,
And I am quite at your command.'

It is Madame Dubarry who speaks, you must know."

"That is very impertinent toward her."

"Oh! what can you expect? — the ballad-mongers respect no one. Heavens! how greasy this cord is! Then you reply as follows: —

"'I 'm very old, and stubborn too;
I 'm forced at law my rights to sue.
Ah, who can help me? Tell me, who?"

"Oh, Monsieur, it is frightful!" cried the countess; "a woman of quality is not to be insulted in this manner."

"Madame, excuse me if I have sung out of tune; these stairs heat me so. Ah! here we are at last. Allow me to pull the bell."

The old lady, grumbling all the time, made way for the duke to pass. The marshal rang, and Madame Flageot, who in becoming an attorney's wife had not ceased to fill the functions of portress and cook, opened the door. The two litigants were ushered into Maître Flageot's office,

where they found that worthy in a state of furious excitement, and with a pen in his mouth, hard at work dictating a terrible plea to his head-clerk.

"Good heavens, Maître Flageot! what is the matter?" cried the countess, at whose voice the attorney turned round.

"Ah! Madame, your most humble servant, — a chair here for the Comtesse de Béarn. This gentleman is a friend of yours, Madame? Eh! I cannot be mistaken, — the Duc de Richelieu in my house! Another chair, Bernardet, — another chair."

"Maître Flageot," said the countess, "how does my lawsuit get on, pray?"

"Ah, Madame! I was just now working for you."

"Very good, Maître Flageot, very good."

"And after a fashion, my lady, which will make some noise, I hope."

"Ahem! Take care!"

"Oh! Madame, there is no longer any occasion for caution."

"Then if you are busy about my affair, you can give an audience to the duke."

"Excuse me, Monsieur le Duc," said Maître Flageot; "but you are too gallant not to understand —"

"I understand, Maître Flageot; I understand."

"But now I can attend to you exclusively."

"Don't be uneasy; I shall not abuse your good-nature. You know what brings me here?"

"The bags which Monsieur Rafté gave me the other day."

"Some papers relative to my lawsuit of — my suit about — What the devil! you must know what suit I mean, Maître Flageot?"

"Your lawsuit about the lands of Chapenat?"

"Very probably; and will you gain it for me? That would be very kind on your part."

"Monsieur le Duc, it is postponed indefinitely."

"Postponed! And why?"

"It will not be brought forward in less than a year, at the earliest."

"For what reason, may I ask?"

"Circumstances, Monsieur le Duc, circumstances; you have heard of his Majesty's decree?"

"I think so; but which one? His Majesty issues so many."

"The one which annuls ours."

"Very well; and what then?"

"Well! Monsieur le Duc, we shall reply by burning our ships."

"Burning your ships, my dear friend? — you will burn the ships of the parliament? I do not quite comprehend you; I was not aware that the parliament had ships."

"The first chamber refuses to register, perhaps?" inquired the Comtesse de Béarn, whom Richelieu's lawsuit in no way prevented from thinking of her own.

"Better than that."

"The second one also?"

"That would be a mere nothing. Both chambers have resolved not to render any more judgments until the king shall have dismissed Monsieur d'Aiguillon."

"Bah!" exclaimed the marshal, rubbing his hands.

"Render no more judgments on what?" asked the countess, alarmed.

"On the lawsuits, Madame."

"They will not give judgment on my lawsuit?" exclaimed the Comtesse de Béarn, with a dismay which she did not even attempt to conceal.

"Neither on yours, Madame, nor the duke's."

"It is iniquitous! It is rebellion against his Majesty's orders, that!"

"Madame," replied the attorney, majestically, "the king has forgotten himself; we also shall forget ourselves."

"Monsieur Flageot, you will be sent to the Bastille. Remember, I warn you."

"I shall go singing, Madame; and if I am sent thither, all my fellow-members of parliament will follow me, carrying palms in their hands."

"He is mad!" said the countess to Richelieu.

"We are all the same," replied the attorney.

"Oh, oh!" said the marshal, "that is becoming rather curious."

"But, Monsieur, you said just now that you were working for me," replied Madame de Béarn.

"I said so, and it is quite true. You, Madame, are the first example I cite in my narration; here is the paragraph which relates to you."

He snatched the draft from his clerk's hand, fixed his spectacles upon his nose, and read with emphasis: —

"Their position ruined, their fortune compromised, their rights trampled under foot! His Majesty will understand how much they must have suffered. Thus the petitioner had intrusted to his care a very important suit, upon which the fortune of one of the first families in the kingdom depends; by his zeal, his industry, and, he ventures to say, his talents, this suit was progressing favorably, and the rights of the most noble and most powerful lady, Angélique Charlotte Véronique, Comtesse de Béarn, were on the point of being recognized, proclaimed, when the breath of discord — engulfing — "

"I had just got so far, Madame," said the attorney, drawing himself up; "but I think the simile is not amiss."

"Monsieur Flageot," said the countess, "it is forty years ago since I first employed your father, who proved most worthy of my patronage; I continued that patronage to you; you have gained ten or twelve thousand francs by my suit, and you would probably have gained as many more."

"Write down all that," said Flageot, eagerly, to his clerk; "it is a testimony, a proof. It shall be inserted in the confirmation."

"But now," interrupted the countess, "I take back all my papers from your charge; from this moment you have lost my confidence."

Maître Flageot, thunderstruck by this disgrace, remained for a moment almost stupefied; but rising under the blow like a martyr who dies for his religion, "Be it so," said he. "Bernardet, give the papers back to madame; and you will insert this fact," he added, "that the petitioner preferred his conscience to his fortune."

"I beg your pardon, Countess," whispered the marshal in the countess's ear, "but it seems to me that you have acted without reflection."

"In what respect, Monsieur le Duc?"

"You take your papers from this honest attorney, but for what purpose?"

"To take them to another attorney, to another advocate!" exclaimed the countess.

Maître Flageot raised his eyes to heaven with a mournful smile of self-denial and stoic resignation.

"But," continued the marshal, still whispering in the countess's ear, "if it has been decided that the chambers will not adjudicate, my dear Madame, another attorney can do no more for you than Maître Flageot."

"It is a league, then?"

"*Pardieu!* do you think Maître Flageot fool enough

to protest, to lose his practice, if his fellow-lawyers were not agreed to do the same, and consequently support him?"

"But you, Monsieur, what will you do?"

"For my part, I think Maître Flageot a very honest attorney, and that my papers are as safe in his possession as in my own. Consequently, I shall leave them with him, of course paying him as if my suit were going on."

"It is well said, Monsieur le Maréchal, that you are a generous, liberal-minded man!" exclaimed Maître Flageot; "I will extend your fame, Monseigneur."

"You overwhelm me, my dear attorney," replied Richelieu, bowing.

"Bernardet," cried the enthusiastic attorney to his clerk, "you will insert in the peroration a eulogy on the Maréchal de Richelieu!"

"No, no, by no means, Maître Flageot! I beg you will do nothing of the kind!" replied the marshal, hastily. "Oh, the devil! that would be a pretty action! I prefer secrecy in what it is customary to call good actions. Do not disoblige me, Maître Flageot; I shall deny it, look you,—I shall positively contradict it; my modesty is sensitive. Well, Countess, what say you?"

"I say my suit shall be judged. I must have a judgment, and I will."

"And I say, Madame, that if your suit is judged, the king must first send the Swiss guards, the Light Horse, and twenty pieces of cannon into the great hall," replied Maître Flageot, with a belligerent air which completed the consternation of the litigant.

"Then you do not think his Majesty can get out of this affair?" said Richelieu, in a low voice to Flageot.

"Impossible, Monsieur le Maréchal! It is an unheard-of case. No more justice in France: it is as if you were to say no more bread!"

"Do you think so?"

"You will see."

"But the king will be angry."

"We are resolved to brave everything."

"Even exile?"

"Even death, Monsieur le Maréchal! We have courage, although we wear the gown;" and Monsieur Flageot struck his breast vigorously.

"In fact, Madame," said Richelieu to his companion, "I believe that this is an unfortunate step for the ministry."

"Oh, yes!" replied the old countess, after a pause; "it is very unfortunate for me, who never meddle in anything that is taking place, to be dragged into this conflict."

"I think, Madame," said the marshal, "there is some one who could help you in this affair, — a very powerful person. But would that person do it?"

"Is it displaying too much curiosity, Duke, to ask the name of this powerful person?"

"Your goddaughter," said the duke.

"Oh! Madame Dubarry?"

"Yes."

"In fact, that is true; I am obliged to you for the hint."

The duke bit his lips. "Then you will go to Luciennes?" he asked.

"Without hesitation."

"But the Comtesse Dubarry cannot overcome the opposition of parliament."

"I will tell her I must have my suit judged; and as she can refuse me nothing, after the service I have rendered her, she will tell the king she wishes it. His Majesty will speak to the chancellor, and the chancellor has a long arm, Monsieur le Duc. Maître Flageot, be kind enough to continue to study my case well; it may come on sooner than you think. Mark my words."

Maître Flageot turned away his head with an air of incredulity which did not shake the countess in the least. In the mean time the duke had been reflecting.

"Well, Madame, since you are going to Luciennes, will you have the goodness to present my most humble respects?"

"Most willingly, Monsieur le Duc."

"We are companions in misfortune; your suit is in abeyance, and mine also. In supplicating for yourself, you will do so for me too. Moreover, you may express yonder the displeasure these stubborn-headed parliament men cause me; and you will add that it was I who advised you to have recourse to the divinity of Luciennes."

"I will not fail to do so, Monsieur le Duc. Adieu, gentlemen."

"Allow me the honor of conducting you to your carriage. Once more, adieu, Maître Flageot; I leave you to your occupations."

The marshal handed the countess to her carriage. "Rafté was right," said he; "the Flageots will cause a revolution. Thank Heaven, I am supported on both sides! I am of the court, and of the parliament. Madame Dubarry will meddle with politics, and fall alone; if she resists, I have my little petard at Trianon. Decidedly, that devil of a Rafté is of my school; and when I am minister he shall be my chief secretary."

CHAPTER LV.

THE CONFUSION INCREASES.

Madame de Béarn followed Richelieu's advice literally. Two hours and a half after the duke had left her she was waiting in the antechamber at Luciennes, in the company of Monsieur Zamore. It was some time since she had been seen at Madame Dubarry's, and her presence therefore excited a feeling of curiosity in the countess's boudoir when her name was announced.

Monsieur d'Aiguillon had not lost any time either, and he was plotting with the favorite when Chon entered to request an audience for Madame de Béarn. The duke made a movement to retire, but the countess detained him. "I would rather you would remain," said she. "In case my old alms-gatherer comes to ask a loan, you would be most useful to me, for she will ask less."

The duke remained. Madame de Béarn, with a face composed for the occasion, took the chair opposite the countess, which the latter offered to her; and after the first civilities were exchanged, "May I ask to what fortunate chance I am indebted for your presence, Madame?" said Madame Dubarry.

"Ah! Madame," said the old litigant, "a great misfortune."

"What! Madame, — a misfortune?"

"A piece of news which will deeply afflict his Majesty."

"I am all impatience, Madame — "

"The parliament —"

"Ah! ah!" growled the Duc d'Aiguillon.

"Monsieur le Duc d'Aiguillon," said the countess, hastily presenting her guest to her lady visitor, for fear of some unpleasant misunderstanding. But the old countess was as cunning as all the other courtiers put together, and never caused a misunderstanding, except wittingly, and when it seemed likely to benefit her. "I know," said she, "all the baseness of those rascals, and their want of respect for merit and for rank."

This compliment, aimed directly at the duke, drew a graceful bow from him to the litigant, who rose and bowed in her turn. "But," she continued, "it is not the duke alone who is now concerned, but the entire population; the parliament refuses to act."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Madame Dubarry, throwing herself back upon the sofa; "there will be no more justice in France! Well, what change will that produce?"

The duke smiled. As for Madame de Béarn, instead of taking the affair pleasantly, her morose features darkened still more. "It is a great calamity, Madame," said she.

"Ah! indeed?" replied the favorite.

"It is evident, Madame, that you are happy enough to have no lawsuits."

"Ahem!" said D'Aiguillon, to recall the attention of Madame Dubarry, who at last comprehended the insinuation of the litigant. "Alas! Madame," said she, "it is true; you remind me that if I have no lawsuit, you have a very important one."

"Ah, yes! Madame; and delay will be ruinous to me."

"Poor lady!"

"Unless, Countess, the king takes some decided step."

"Oh! Madame, the king is well inclined to do so. He

will exile messieurs the councillors, and all will be right."

"But, Madame, that would surely be an indefinite adjournment."

"Do you see any remedy, then? Will you be kind enough to point it out to us?"

The litigant concealed her face beneath her hood, like Cæsar expiring under his toga.

"There is one remedy, certainly," said D'Aiguillon; "but perhaps his Majesty might shrink from employing it."

"What is it?" asked the Comtesse de Béarn, with anxiety.

"The ordinary resource of royalty in France when it is rather embarrassed. It is to hold a bed of justice, and to say, 'I will!' when all the opponents say, 'I will not.'"

"An excellent idea!" exclaimed Madame de Béarn, with enthusiasm.

"But which must not be divulged," replied D'Aiguillon, diplomatically, and with a gesture which Madame de Béarn fully comprehended.

"Oh! Madame," said she, instantly, "you who have so much influence with the king, persuade him to say, 'I will have the suit of Madame de Béarn determined.' Besides, you know, it was promised long ago."

Monsieur d'Aiguillon bit his lips, bowed to Madame Dubarry, and left the boudoir. He had heard the sound of the king's carriage in the courtyard.

"Here is the king!" said Madame Dubarry, rising to dismiss her visitor.

"Oh! Madame, why will you not permit me to throw myself at his Majesty's feet?"

"To ask him for a bed of justice?" replied the countess, quickly. "Most willingly! Remain here, Madame, since such is your desire."

Scarcely had Madame de Béarn adjusted her headdress when the king entered.

"Ah!" said he, "you have visitors, Countess!"

"Madame de Béarn, Sire."

"Sire, justice!" exclaimed the old lady, making a most profound reverence.

"Oh!" said Louis XV., in a bantering tone imperceptible to those who did not know him, "has any one offended you, Madame?"

"Sire, I ask for justice."

"Against whom?"

"Against the parliament."

"Ah! good," said the king, rubbing his hands; "you complain of my parliament. Well! do me the pleasure to bring them to reason. I too have to complain of them, and I beg you to grant me justice also," added he, imitating the reverence of the old countess.

"But, Sire, you are the king; you are the master."

"The king — yes; the master — not always."

"Sire, proclaim your will."

"I do that every evening, Madame; and they proclaim theirs every morning. Now, as these two wills are diametrically opposed to each other, it is with us as with the earth and the moon, which are ever running the one after the other, without coming together."

"Sire, your voice is powerful enough to drown all the bawlings of these fellows."

"There you are mistaken; I am not an advocate, as they are. If I say yes, they say no; it is impossible for us to come to any arrangement. If, when I have said yes, you can find any means to prevent their saying no, I will make an alliance with you."

"Sire, I have the means."

"Let me hear it quickly."

"I will, Sire. Hold a bed of justice."

"That is another embarrassment," said his Majesty; "a bed of justice, remember, Madame, is almost a revolution."

"It is simply telling these rebellious subjects that you are the master. You know, Sire, that when the king proclaims his will in this manner, he alone has a right to speak; no one answers. You say to them, 'I will,' and they bow their assent."

"The fact is," said the Comtesse Dubarry, "the idea is a magnificent one."

"Magnificent it may be, but not good," replied Louis.

"But what a noble spectacle!" resumed Madame Dubarry, with warmth: "the procession, the nobles, the peers, the entire military staff of the king! Then the immense crowd of people; then the bed of justice, composed of five cushions embroidered with golden fleurs-de-lys. It would be a splendid ceremony!"

"You think so?" said the king, rather shaken in his resolution.

"Then the king's magnificent dress, — the cloak lined with ermine, the diamonds in the crown, the golden sceptre, — all the splendor which so well suits an august and noble countenance! Oh, how handsome you would look, Sire!"

"It is a long time since we had a bed of justice," said Louis, with affected carelessness.

"Not since your childhood, Sire," said Madame de Béarn. "The remembrance of your brilliant beauty on that occasion has remained engraven on the hearts of all."

"And then," added Madame Dubarry, "there would be an excellent opportunity for the chancellor to display his keen and concise eloquence, — to crush these people with his truth, dignity, and power."

"I must wait for the parliament's next wrong-doing," said Louis; "then I shall see."

"What can you wait for, Sire, more outrageous than what they have just committed?"

"Why, what have they done?"

"Do you not know?"

"They have teased Monsieur d'Aiguillon a little, but that is not a hanging offence; although," said the king, looking at Madame Dubarry, "although this dear duke is a friend of mine. Besides, if the parliament has teased the duke a little, I have punished them for their ill-nature by my decree of yesterday or the day before, — I do not remember which. We are now even."

"Well, Sire," said Madame Dubarry, with warmth, "Madame de Béarn has just informed us that this morning these black-gowned gentlemen have taken the start of you."

"How so?" said the king, frowning.

"Speak, Madame; the king permits it," said the favorite.

"Sire, the councillors have determined not to hold a court of parliament until your Majesty yields to their wishes."

"What say you?" said the king. "You mistake, Madame; that would be an act of rebellion, and my parliament dares not revolt, I hope."

"Sire, I assure you — "

"Oh! Madame, it is a mere rumor."

"Will your Majesty deign to hear me?"

"Speak, Countess."

"Well, my attorney has this morning returned me all the papers relating to my lawsuit. He can no longer plead, since they will no longer judge."

"Mere reports, I tell you, — rumors, bugbears;" but

while he spoke, the king paced up and down the boudoir in agitation.

"Sire, will your Majesty believe Monsieur de Richelieu, if you will not believe me? In my presence his papers were returned to him also, and the duke left the house in a rage."

"Some one is tapping at the door," said the king, to change the conversation.

"It is Zamore, Sire."

Zamore entered. "A letter, Mistress," said he.

"With your permission, Sire," said the countess. "Ah! good heavens!" exclaimed she, suddenly.

"What is the matter?"

"From the chancellor, Sire. Monsieur de Maupeou, knowing that your Majesty has deigned to pay me a visit, solicits my intervention to obtain an audience for him."

"What is in the wind now?"

"Show the chancellor in," said Madame Dubarry. The Comtesse de Béarn rose to take her leave.

"You need not go, Madame," said the king. "Good-day, Monsieur de Maupeou. What news?"

"Sire," said the chancellor, bowing, "the parliament embarrassed you; you have no longer a parliament."

"How so? Are they all dead? Have they taken arsenic?"

"Would to Heaven they had! No, Sire, they live; but they will not sit any longer, and have sent in their resignations. I have just received them in a mass."

"The councillors?"

"No, Sire, the resignations."

"I told you, Sire, that it was a serious matter," said the countess, in a low voice.

"Most serious," replied Louis, impatiently. "Well, chancellor, what have you done?"

"Sire, I have come to receive your Majesty's orders."

"We will exile these people, Maupeou."

"Sire, they will not judge any better in exile."

"We will command them to judge. Bah! injunctions are out of date, — letters of commandment likewise — "

"Ah! Sire, this time you must be determined."

"Yes, you are right."

"Courage!" said Madame de Béarn, aside to the countess.

"And act the master, after having too often acted only the father," said the countess.

"Chancellor," said the king, slowly, "I know only one remedy; it is serious, but efficacious. I will hold a bed of justice; these people must be made to tremble once for all."

"Ah! Sire," exclaimed the chancellor, "that is well spoken; they must bend, or break!"

"Madame," added the king, addressing Madame de Béarn, "if your suit be not judged, you see it will not be my fault."

"Sire, you are the greatest monarch in the world!"

"Oh! yes," echoed the countess, Chon, and the chancellor.

"The world does not say so, however," murmured the king.

END OF VOL. II.

MEMOIRS OF A PHYSICIAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE BED OF JUSTICE.

THIS famous bed of justice took place with all the ceremonies which royal pride, on the one hand, and the intrigues which drove the master to this step, on the other, demanded.

The household of the king was placed under arms; an abundance of short-robed archers, soldiers of the watch, and police-officers were commissioned to protect the lord chancellor, who, like a general upon the decisive day, would have to expose his sacred person to secure the success of the enterprise.

The chancellor was execrated. Of this he was well aware, and if his vanity made him fear assassination, those better acquainted with the sentiments of the public toward him could, without exaggerating, have predicted some downright insults, or at least hootings, as likely to fall to his share. The same perquisites were promised to Monsieur d'Aiguillon, who was equally offensive to the popular instincts, improved perhaps by parliamentary debates. The king affected serenity, yet he was not easy.

But he donned with great satisfaction his magnificent robes, and straightway came to the conclusion that nothing protects so surely as majesty. He might have added, "and the love of the people;" but this phrase had been so frequently repeated to him at Metz during his illness that he imagined he could not repeat it now without being charged with plagiarism.

The dauphiness, for whom the sight was a new one, and who at heart perhaps wished to see it, assumed her plaintive look, and wore it during the drive to the ceremony, — which disposed public opinion very favorably toward her.

Madame Dubarry was brave. She possessed that confidence which is given by youth and beauty. Besides, had not everything been said that could be said of her? What could be added now? She appeared, radiant with beauty, as if the splendor of her august lover had been reflected upon her.

The Duc d'Aiguillon marched boldly among the peers who preceded the king. His noble and impressive countenance betrayed no symptoms of grief or discontent, nor did he bear himself triumphantly. To see him walking thus, none would have suspected that the struggle of the king with his parliament was on his account. Fingers were pointed at him in the crowd, terrible glances were darted at him from the parliament, and that was all.

The great hall of the Palais was crammed to overflowing; actors and spectators together made a total of more than three thousand persons.

Outside the Palais the crowd, kept in order by the staves of the officers and the bâtons and maces of the archers, gave token of its presence only by that indescribable hum which is not a voice, which articulates nothing,

but which nevertheless makes itself heard, and which may justly be called the utterance of the people.

The same silence reigned in the great hall when, the sound of footsteps having ceased, and every one having taken his place, the king, majestic and gloomy, had commanded his chancellor to begin the proceedings.

The parliament knew beforehand what the bed of justice held in reserve for them. They fully understood why they had been convoked. They were to hear the unmitigated expression of the royal will; but they knew the patience, not to say the timidity, of the king, and if they feared, it was rather for the consequences of the bed of justice than for the sitting itself.

The chancellor began his address. He was an excellent orator; his exordium was clever, and the amateurs of a demonstrative style found ample scope for study in it. As it proceeded, however, the speech degenerated into a tirade so severe that all the nobility had a smile on their lips, while the parliament felt very ill at ease.

The king, by the mouth of his chancellor, ordered them to cut short the affairs of Brittany, of which he had had enough. He commanded them to be reconciled to the Duc d'Aiguillon, whose services pleased him, and not to interrupt the service of justice, so that everything might go on as in that happy period of the golden age when the flowing streams murmured judicial or argumentative discourses, when the trees were loaded with bags of law papers placed within reach of the advocates and attorneys, who had the right to pluck them as fruit belonging to them.

These flippancies did not reconcile the parliament to the lord chancellor nor to the Duc d'Aiguillon. But the speech had been made, and all reply was impossible.

The members of the parliament, although scarcely able

to contain their vexation, assumed, with that admirable unity which gives so much strength to constituted bodies, a calm and indifferent demeanor, which highly displeased his Majesty and the aristocratic world upon the platform.

The dauphiness turned pale with anger. For the first time she found herself in the presence of popular resistance, and she coldly calculated its power. She had come to this bed of justice with the intention of opposing, at least by her look, the resolution which was about to be adopted there; but gradually she felt herself drawn to make common cause with those of her own caste and race, — so that in proportion as the chancellor attacked the parliament more severely, this proud young creature was indignant to find his words so weak. She fancied she could have found words which would have made this assembly start like a troop of oxen under the goad. In short, she found the chancellor too feeble, and the parliament too strong.

Louis XV. was a physiognomist, as all selfish people would be if they were not sometimes idle as well as selfish. He cast a glance around to observe the effect of his will, expressed in words which he thought tolerably eloquent. The paleness and the compressed lips of the dauphiness showed him what was passing in her mind. As a counterpoise, he turned to look at Madame Dubarry; but instead of the victorious smile he hoped to find there, he saw only an anxious desire to attract the king's looks, as if to judge what he thought.

Nothing intimidates weak minds so much as being forestalled by the wills and minds of others. If they find themselves observed by those who have already taken a resolution, they conclude that they have not done enough; that they are about to be, or have been, ridiculous; that the spectators have a right to expect more than has been done. Then they pass to extremes; the timid man

becomes furious, and a sudden manifestation betrays the effect of this reaction produced by fear upon a fear less powerful.

The king had no need to add a single word to those his chancellor had already spoken; it was not according to etiquette, it was not even necessary. But on this occasion he was possessed of the babbling demon, and making a sign with his hand, he signified that he intended to speak.

Immediately attention was changed to stupor. The members of parliament were all seen to wheel round toward the bed of justice with the precision of a file of soldiers upon drill. The princes, peers, and military felt uneasy. It was not impossible that after so many excellent things had been said, his most Christian Majesty might add something which, to say the least, would be quite useless. Their respect prevented them from giving any other description to the words which might fall from the royal lips.

Monsieur de Richelieu, who had affected to keep aloof from his nephew, now sought communication with him by a glance of the eye and an expression of mysterious intelligence. But his glance, which was becoming rebellious, met the penetrating eye of Madame Dubarry. Richelieu possessed, as no one else did, the precious power of transition; he passed easily from the satirical to the admiring expression, and chose the beautiful countess as the point of intersection between these two extremes. He addressed a smile of gallantry and congratulation, therefore, to Madame Dubarry; but the latter was not duped by it, especially since the old marshal, who had given signs of an understanding with the parliament and the opposing princes, was obliged to continue them, that he might not appear what he really was.

What sights there are in a drop of water, — that ocean for an observer! What centuries in a second, — that indescribable eternity! All we have related took place while Louis was preparing to speak and was opening his lips. "You have heard," said he, in a firm voice, "what my chancellor has told you of my wishes. Prepare, therefore, to execute them; for such are my intentions, and I shall never change!"

Louis XV. uttered these last words with the noise and force of a thunderbolt. The whole assembly was literally thunderstruck. A shudder passed over the parliament, and was quickly communicated like an electric spark to the crowd. A like thrill was felt by the partisans of the king. Surprise and admiration were on every face and in every heart. The dauphiness involuntarily thanked the king by a lightning glance from her beautiful eyes. Madame Dubarry, electrified, could not refrain from rising, and would have clapped her hands, but for the very natural fear of being stoned as she left the house, or of receiving hundreds of couplets the next morning, each more odious than the others.

Louis could from this moment enjoy his triumph. The parliament bent low, still with the same unanimity. The king rose from his embroidered cushions. Instantly the captain of the guards, the commandant of the household, and all the gentlemen of the king's suite, rose. Drums beat and trumpets sounded outside. The almost silent stir of the people on the arrival was now changed into a deep murmur, which died away in the distance, repressed by the soldiers and archers.

The king proudly crossed the hall, without seeing anything on his way but humbled foreheads. The Duc d'Aiguillon still preceded his Majesty, without abusing his triumph.

The chancellor, having reached the door of the hall, saw the immense crowd of people extending on all sides, and heard their execrations, which reached his ears notwithstanding the distance. He trembled, and said to the archers: "Close around me."

Monsieur de Richelieu bowed low to the Duc d'Aiguillon as he passed, and whispered, "These heads are very low, Duke; some day or other they will rise devilishly high. Take care!"

Madame Dubarry was passing at the moment, accompanied by her brother, the Marquise de Mirepoix, and several ladies. She heard the marshal's words; and as she was more inclined to repartee than malice, she said: "Oh! there is nothing to fear, Marshal; did you not hear his Majesty's words? The king, I think, said he would never change."

"Terrible words indeed, Madame," replied the duke, with a smile; "but happily for us, these poor parliament men did not remark that while saying he would never change, the king looked at you;" and he finished this compliment with one of those inimitable bows which are no longer seen, even upon the stage.

Madame Dubarry was a woman, and by no means a politician. She saw only the compliment, where D'Aiguillon detected plainly the epigram and the threat. Therefore she replied with a smile, while her ally turned pale and bit his lips with vexation upon seeing that the marshal's resentment was still unappeased.

The effect of the bed of justice was for the moment favorable to the royal cause. But it frequently happens that a great blow only stuns, and it is remarked that after the stunning effect has passed away, the blood circulates with more vigor and purity than before. Such at least were the reflections made by a little group of plainly

dressed persons who were stationed as spectators at the corner of the Quai-aux-Fleurs and the Rue de la Barillerie, on seeing the king, attended by his brilliant cortége, leave the hall. They were three in number. Chance had brought them together at this corner, and there they seemed to study with interest the impressions of the crowd. Without previous acquaintance with one another, they had been placed in sympathy by the exchange of a few words, and had discussed the sitting even before it was over.

"These passions are well ripened," said one of them, an old man with bright eyes, and a mild and honest expression. "A bed of justice is a great work."

"Yes," replied a young man, smiling bitterly; "yes, if the work realize the title."

"Monsieur," replied the old man, turning round, "I think I should know you; I fancy I have seen you before."

"On the night of the 30th of May. You are not mistaken, Monsieur Rousseau."

"Oh! you are that young surgeon, — my countryman, Monsieur Marat!"

"Yes, Monsieur, at your service."

The two men exchanged salutations. The third had not yet spoken. He was also young, eminently handsome, and aristocratic in his appearance, and during the whole ceremony had unceasingly observed the crowd. The young surgeon moved away the first, and plunged into the densest masses of the people, who, less grateful than Rousseau, had already forgotten him, but whose memory he expected some day to revive.

The other young man waited until he was gone; and then, addressing Rousseau, "Monsieur," said he, "you do not go."

"Oh! I am too old to venture into such a mob."

"In that case," said the unknown, lowering his voice, "I will see you again this evening in the Rue Plastrière, Monsieur Rousseau, — do not fail."

The philosopher started as if a ghost had risen before him. His complexion, always pale, became livid. He made an effort to reply to this strange appeal, but the man had already disappeared.

CHAPTER II.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE WORDS OF THE UNKNOWN UPON J. J. ROUSSEAU.

On hearing these singular words spoken by a man whom he did not know, Rousseau, trembling and unhappy, plunged into the crowd; and without remembering that he was old and naturally timid, elbowed his way through it. He soon reached the bridge of Notre-Dame; then, still plunged in his revery, and muttering to himself, he crossed the quarter of La Grève, taking the shortest way to his own dwelling.

"So," said he to himself, "this secret, which the initiated guard at the peril of their lives, is in possession of the first comer. This is what mysterious associations gain by passing through the popular sieve. A man recognizes me who knows that I shall be his associate, perhaps his accomplice, yonder. Such a state of things is absurd and intolerable;" and while he spoke, Rousseau walked forward quickly, — he, usually so cautious, especially since his accident in the Rue Ménilmontant.

"Thus," continued the philosopher, "I must wish, forsooth, to sound to the bottom these plans of human regeneration which some spirits who boast of the title of 'illuminati' propose to carry out. I was foolish enough to imagine that any good ideas could come from Germany, — that land of beer and fog, — and may have compromised my name by joining it to those of fools or plotters, whom it will serve as a cloak to shelter their folly.

Oh, no! it shall not be thus. No; a flash of lightning has shown me the abyss, and I will not rashly throw myself into it."

Rousseau paused to take breath, resting upon his cane, and standing motionless for a moment. "Yet it was a beautiful chimera," he continued. "Liberty in the midst of slavery, — the future conquered without noise and struggle, — the snare mysteriously woven while earth's tyrants slept. It was too beautiful! I was a fool to believe it! I will not be the sport of fears, of suspicions, of shadows, which are unworthy of a free spirit and an independent body."

He had thus far communed with himself, and was continuing his progress, when the sight of some of Monsieur de Sartines' agents gazing round with their ubiquitous eyes frightened the free spirit, and gave such an impulse to the independent body that he plunged into the deepest shadows of the pillars near which he was walking. From these pillars it was not far to the Rue Plastrière. Rousseau passed rapidly over that distance, ascended the stairs to his domicile, breathing like a stag pursued by the hunters, and sank upon a chair, unable to utter a word in answer to all Thérèse's questions.

At last he recovered sufficiently to account for his emotion; it was the walk, the heat, the news of the king's angry remarks at the bed of justice, the commotion caused by the popular terror, — a sort of panic, in short, which had spread among all who witnessed what had happened.

Thérèse grumblingly replied that all that was no reason for allowing the dinner to cool; and, moreover, that a man ought not to be such a cowardly weakling as to be frightened at the least noise.

Rousseau could make no reply to this last argument, which he himself had so frequently stated in other terms.

Thérèse added that these philosophers, these imaginative people, were all the same; that they always talked very grandly in their writings, they said that they feared nothing; that God and man were very little to them: but at the slightest barking of the smallest poodle, they cried, "Help!" — at the least feverishness they exclaimed, "My God! I am dead."

This was one of Thérèse's favorite themes, that which most excited her eloquence, and to which Rousseau, who was naturally timid, found it most difficult to reply. Rousseau, therefore, pursued his own thoughts to the sound of this discordant music, — thoughts which were certainly as valuable as Thérèse's, notwithstanding the abuse the latter showered so plentifully on him.

"Happiness," said he, "is composed of perfume and noise; now, noise and perfume are conventional things. Who can prove that the onion smells less sweet than the rose, or that the peacock sings less melodiously than the nightingale?" after which axiom, which might pass for an excellent paradox, they sat down to table.

After dinner Rousseau did not, as usual, sit down to his harpsichord. He paced up and down the apartment, and stopped a hundred times to look out of the window, apparently studying the physiognomy of the Rue Plastrière. Thérèse was forthwith seized with one of those fits of jealousy which peevish people — that is to say, the least really jealous people in the world — often indulge in for the sake of opposition. For if there is a disagreeable affectation in the world, it is the affectation of a fault; the affectation of virtue may be tolerated.

Thérèse, who held Rousseau's age, complexion, mind, and manners in the utmost contempt; who thought him old, sickly, and ugly, — did not fear that any one would run off with her husband; she never dreamed that other

women might look upon him with other feelings than her own. But as the pains inflicted by jealousy constitute woman's favorite mode of punishment, Thérèse sometimes indulged herself in the pleasure of administering them. Seeing Rousseau, therefore, approach the window so frequently, and observing his dreaming and restless air, she said: "Very good! I understand your agitation; you have just left some one."

Rousseau turned to her with a startled look, which served as an additional proof of the truth of her suspicions.

"Some one you wish to see again?" she continued.

"What do you say?" asked Rousseau.

"Yes, we make assignations, it seems."

"Oh!" said Rousseau, comprehending that Thérèse was jealous, — "an assignation! You are mad, Thérèse!"

"I know perfectly well that it would be madness in you," said she; "but you are capable of any folly. Go, go, with your papier-mâché complexion, your palpitations, and your coughs, — go, and make conquests! It is one way of getting on in the world!"

"But, Thérèse, you know there is not a word of truth in what you are saying!" said Rousseau, angrily. "Let me think in peace."

"You are a libertine!" said Thérèse, with the utmost seriousness.

Rousseau reddened as if she had hit the truth, or as if he had received a compliment. Thérèse forthwith thought herself justified in putting on a terrible countenance, turning the whole household upside down, slamming the doors violently, and playing with Rousseau's tranquillity as children play with those metal rings which they shut up in a box and shake to make a noise.

Rousseau took refuge in his cabinet; this uproar had

rather confused his ideas. He reflected that there would doubtless be some danger in not being present at the mysterious ceremony of which the stranger had spoken at the corner of the Quai. "If there are punishments for traitors, there will also be punishments for the lukewarm or careless," thought he. "Now I have always remarked that great dangers mean in reality nothing, just like loud threats. The cases in which either are productive of any result are extremely rare; but petty revenges, underhand attacks, mischievous tricks, and other such small coin, — these we must be on our guard against. Some day the masonic brothers may repay my contempt by stretching a string across my staircase; I shall stumble over it and break a leg, or the six or eight teeth I have left. Or else they will have a stone ready to fall upon my head when I am passing under a scaffolding; or, better still, there may be some pamphleteer belonging to the fraternity living quite near me, upon the same floor, perhaps, looking from his windows into my room. That is not impossible, since the reunions take place even in the Rue Plastrière. Well, this wretch will write stupid lampoons on me, which will make me ridiculous all over Paris. Have I not enemies everywhere?"

A moment afterward Rousseau's thoughts took a different turn. "Well," said he to himself, "but where is courage? Where is honor? Shall I be afraid of myself? Shall I see in my glass only the face of a coward, — a slave? No, it shall not be so. Though the whole world should combine to ruin me, though the houses of the street should fall upon me, I will go. What pitiable reasoning does fear produce! Since I met this man I have been continually turning in a circle of absurdities. I doubt every one, even myself! That is not logical. I know myself, I am not an enthusiast; if I thought I saw

wonders in this projected association, it is because there are wonders in it. Who will say I may not be the regenerator of the human race, — I, who am sought after, — I, whom the mysterious agents of an unlimited power have come to consult on the faith set forth in my works? Shall I recoil when the time has come to follow up my work, to substitute practice for theory?"

Rousseau became animated. "What can be more beautiful! Ages roll on; the people rise out of their brutishness; step follows step in the darkness, toward the hand stretched out in the shadows; the immense pyramid is raised, upon the summit of which, as its crowning glory, future ages shall place the bust of Rousseau, citizen of Geneva, who risked his liberty, his life, that he might act as he had spoken, — that he might be faithful to his motto, 'Vitam impendere vero.'"

Thereupon Rousseau, in a fit of enthusiasm, seated himself at his harpsichord, and exalted his imagination by the loudest, the most sonorous, and the most warlike melodies he could call forth from its sounding cavity.

Night closed in. Thérèse, wearied with her vain endeavors to torment her captive, had fallen asleep upon her chair. Rousseau, with beating heart, took his new coat, as if to go out on a pleasure excursion, glanced for a moment in the glass at the play of his black eyes, and was charmed to find that they were sparkling and expressive.

He grasped his knotted stick in his hand, and slipped out of the room without awakening Thérèse. But when he arrived at the foot of the stairs, and had drawn back the bolt of the street-door, Rousseau paused and looked out, to assure himself as to the condition of the neighborhood.

No carriage was passing. The street, as usual, was full of idlers gazing at each other, as they do at this day, while

many stopped at the shop-windows to ogle the pretty girls; a new-comer would therefore be quite unnoticed in such a crowd. Rousseau plunged into it; he had not far to go. A ballad-singer, with a cracked violin, was stationed before the door which had been pointed out to him. This music, to which every true Parisian's ear is extremely sensitive, filled the street with echoes which repeated the last bars of the air sung by the violin or by the singer himself. Nothing could be more unfavorable, therefore, to the free passage along the street than the crowd gathered at this spot, and the passers-by were obliged to turn either to the right or left of the group. Those who, going in one direction, turned to the left, took the centre of the street; those to the right, brushed along the side of the house indicated, and *vice versa* with those going in the other direction.

Rousseau remarked that several of these passers-by disappeared on the way, as if they had fallen into some trap. He concluded that these people had come with the same purpose as himself, and determined to imitate their manœuvre. It was not difficult to accomplish. Having stationed himself in the rear of the assembly of listeners, as if to join their number, he watched the first person whom he saw entering the open alley. More timid than they, probably because he had more to risk, he waited until a particularly favorable opportunity should present itself.

He did not wait long. A cabriolet which drove along the street divided the circle, and caused the two hemispheres to fall back upon the houses on either side. Rousseau thus found himself driven to the very entrance of the passage; he had only to walk on. He observed that all the idlers were looking at the cabriolet, and had turned their backs on the house; he took advantage of this circumstance, and disappeared in the dark passage.

After advancing a few steps he perceived a lamp, beneath which a man was seated quietly, like a stall-keeper after the day's business was over, reading, or seeming to read, a newspaper. At the sound of Rousseau's footsteps this man raised his head and placed his finger upon his breast, upon which the lamp threw a strong light. Rousseau replied to this symbolic gesture by raising his finger to his lips.

The man then immediately rose, and pushing open a door at his right hand, so artificially concealed in the wooden panel, of which it formed a part, as to be wholly invisible, he showed Rousseau a very steep staircase which descended underground. Rousseau entered, and the door closed quickly but noiselessly after him.

The philosopher descended the steps slowly, assisted by his cane. He thought it rather disrespectful that the brothers should cause him, at this his first interview, to run the risk of breaking his neck or his legs. But the stair, if steep, was not long. Rousseau counted seventeen steps, and then felt as if suddenly plunged into a highly heated atmosphere.

This moist heat proceeded from the breath of a considerable number of men who were assembled in the low hall. Rousseau remarked that the walls were tapestried with red and white drapery, on which figures of various implements of labor, rather symbolic, doubtless, than real, were depicted. A single lamp hung from the vaulted ceiling, and threw a gloomy light upon the faces of those present, who were conversing with each other on the wooden benches, and who had the appearance of honest and respectable citizens.

The floor was neither polished nor carpeted, but was covered with a thick mat of plaited rushes, which deadened the sound of the footsteps. Rousseau's entrance

therefore produced no sensation; no one seemed to have remarked it.

Five minutes previously Rousseau had longed for nothing so much as such an entrance; and yet when he had entered, he felt annoyed that he had succeeded so well. He saw an unoccupied place on one of the back benches, and installed himself as modestly as possible on this seat, behind all the others. He counted thirty-three heads in the assembly. A desk, placed upon a platform, seemed to wait for a president.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOUSE IN THE RUE PLASTRIÈRE.

ROUSSEAU remarked that the conversation of those present was very cautious and reserved. Many did not open their lips, and scarcely three or four couples exchanged a few words. Those who did not speak endeavored even to conceal their faces, which was not difficult, thanks to the great body of shadow cast by the platform of the expected president. The refuge of these last, who seemed to be the timid individuals of the assembly, was behind this platform. But in return, two or three members of the company gave themselves a great deal of trouble to recognize their colleagues. They came and went, talked among themselves, and frequently disappeared through a door before which was drawn a black curtain, ornamented with red flames.

In a short time a bell was rung. A man immediately rose from the end of the bench upon which he was seated, and where he had been associated with the other free-masons, and took his place upon the platform. After making signs with the hands and fingers, which were repeated by all those present, and adding a last sign more explicit than the others, he declared the sitting opened.

This man was entirely unknown to Rousseau. Beneath the exterior of a working-man in easy circumstances he concealed great presence of mind, aided by an elocution as flowing as could have been wished for in an orator. His speech was brief, and to the point. He declared that

the lodge had been assembled to proceed to the election of a new brother.

"You will not be surprised," said he, "that we have assembled you in a place where the usual ceremonies cannot be performed. These ceremonies have seemed useless to the chiefs; the brother whom we are to receive to-day is one of the lights of contemporary philosophy, — a thoughtful spirit, who will be devoted to us from conviction, not from fear. One who has discovered all the mysteries of nature and of the human heart cannot be treated in the same manner as the simple mortal from whom we demand the help of his arm, his will, and his gold. That we may have the co-operation of his distinguished mind, of his honest and energetic character, his promise and his assent are sufficient."

The speaker, when he had concluded, looked round to mark the effect of his words. Upon Rousseau the effect had been magical; the Genevese philosopher was acquainted with the preparatory mysteries of freemasonry, and looked upon them with the repugnance natural to enlightened minds. The concessions, absurd because they were useless, which the chiefs required from the candidates, that they might simulate fear when every one knew there was nothing to fear, seemed to him to be the acme of puerility and senseless superstition.

Besides this, the timid philosopher, an enemy to all personal exhibitions and manifestations, would have felt most unhappy had he been obliged to serve as a spectacle for people whom he did not know, and who would have certainly played their jokes upon him with more or less good faith. That these ceremonies should in his case be omitted was therefore more than a satisfaction to him. He knew the strictness with which equality was enforced by the masonic principles; therefore an exception in his

favor constituted a triumph. He was preparing to say some words in reply to the gracious address of the president, when a voice was heard among the audience.

"At least," said this voice, which was sharp and discordant, "since you think yourself obliged to treat in this princely fashion a man like ourselves, since you dispense in his case with physical pains, as if the pursuit of liberty through bodily suffering were not one of our symbols, we hope you will not confer a precious title upon an unknown person without having questioned him according to the usual ritual, and without having received his profession of faith."

Rousseau turned round to discover the features of the aggressive person who so rudely jostled his triumphant car, and with the greatest surprise recognized the young surgeon whom he had that morning met upon the Quai-aux-Fleurs. A conviction of his own honesty of purpose, perhaps also a feeling of disdain for the "precious title," prevented him from replying.

"You have heard?" said the president, addressing Rousseau.

"Perfectly," replied the philosopher, who trembled slightly at the sound of his voice as it echoed from the vaulted roof of the dark hall, "and I am the more surprised at the interpellation when I see from whom it proceeds. What! a man whose profession it is to combat what is called physical suffering, and to assist his brethren, who are common men as well as freemasons, preaches the utility of physical suffering! He chooses a singular path through which to lead the creature to happiness, the sick to health."

"We do not here speak of this or that person," replied the young man, warmly; "I am supposed to be unknown to the candidate, and he to me. I am merely the utterer of an abstract truth, and I assert that the chief has done

wrong in making an exception in favor of any one. I do not recognize in him," pointing to Rousseau, "the philosopher, and he must not recognize the surgeon in me. We shall perhaps walk side by side through life, without a look or gesture betraying our intimacy, which nevertheless, thanks to the laws of the association, is more binding than all vulgar friendships. I repeat, therefore, that if it has been thought well to spare this candidate the usual trials, he ought at least to have the usual questions put to him."

Rousseau made no reply. The president saw depicted on his features disgust at this discussion, and regret at having engaged in the enterprise. "Brother," said he, authoritatively to the young man, "you will please be silent when the chief speaks, and do not venture on light grounds to blame his actions, which are sovereign here."

"I have a right to speak," replied the young man, more gently.

"To speak, yes; but not to blame. The brother who is about to enter our association is so well known that we have no wish to employ in our masonic relations with him a ridiculous and useless mystery. All the brothers here present know his name, and his name itself is a perfect guarantee. But as he himself, I am certain, loves equality, I request him to answer the question which I shall put to him merely for form: 'What do you seek in this association?'"

Rousseau made two steps forward in advance of the crowd, and his dreamy and melancholy eye wandered over the assembly. "I seek," said he, "that which I do not find, — truths, not sophisms. Why should you surround me with poniards which do not wound, with poisons which are only clear water, and with traps under which mattresses are spread! I know the extent of human endurance. I know the vigor of my physical frame. If you

were to destroy it, it would not be worth your while to elect me a brother, for when dead I could be of no use to you. Therefore you do not wish to kill me, still less to wound me; and all the doctors in the world would not make me approve of an initiation in the course of which my limbs had been broken. I have served a longer apprenticeship to pain than any of you; I have sounded the body, and probed even to the soul. If I consented to come among you when I was '*solicited*," — and he laid particular emphasis on the word, — "it was because I thought I might be useful. I give, therefore; I do not receive. Alas! before you could do anything to defend me, before you could restore me to liberty were I imprisoned, before you could give me bread if I were starving, or consolation if I were afflicted, — before, I repeat, you could do anything, the brother whom you admit to-day, if this gentleman," turning to Marat, "permits it, — this brother will have paid the last tribute of nature; for progress is halting, light is slow, and from the grave into which he will be thrown, none of you can raise him."

"You are mistaken, illustrious brother," said a mild and penetrating voice, which charmed Rousseau's ear; "there is more than you think in the association into which you are about to enter, — there is the whole future destiny of the world. The future, you are aware, is hope, is science, — the future is God, who will give his light to the world, since he has promised to give it; for God cannot lie."

Astonished at this elevated language, Rousseau looked around and recognized the young man who had made the appointment with him in the morning at the bed of justice. This man, who was dressed in black with great neatness, and was characterized especially by a marked air of distinction, was leaning against the side of the platform, and

his face, illumined by the lamp, shone in all its beauty, grace, and expressiveness.

"Ah!" said Rousseau, "science, — the bottomless abyss! You speak to me of science, consolation, futurity, hope; another speaks of matter, of rigor, and of violence. Whom shall I believe? Shall it be, then, in this assembly of brothers as it is among the devouring wolves of the world which stirs above us? Wolves and sheep! Listen to my profession of faith, since you have not read it in my books."

"Your books!" exclaimed Marat. "They are sublime, — I confess it; but they are Utopias. You are useful in the same point of view as Pythagoras, Solon, and Cicero the sophist. You point out the good, but it is an artificial, unsubstantial, unattainable good. You are like one who would feed a hungry crowd with air-bubbles, more or less illumined by the sun."

"Have you ever seen," said Rousseau, frowning, "great commotions of nature take place without preparation? Have you seen the birth of a man, — that common and yet sublime event? Have you not seen him collect substance and life in the womb of his mother for nine months? Ah! you wish me to regenerate the world with actions. That is not to regenerate, Monsieur, it is to revolutionize!"

"Then," retorted the young surgeon, violently, "you do not wish for independence; you do not wish for liberty!"

"On the contrary," replied Rousseau; "independence is my idol, liberty is my goddess. But I wish for a mild and radiant liberty, — a liberty which warms and vivifies. I wish for an equality which will connect men by ties of friendship, not by fear. I wish for education, for the instruction of each element of the social body, as the mechanic wishes for harmonious movement, as the cabinet-maker wishes for perfect exactness, for the closest fitting,

in each piece of his work. I repeat it, I wish that for which I have written, — progress, concord, devotion."

A smile of disdain flitted over Marat's lips. "Yes," he said, "rivulets of milk and honey, Elysian fields like Virgil's, poetic dreams which philosophy would make a reality."

Rousseau made no reply. It seemed to him too hard that he should have to defend his moderation, — he whom all Europe called a violent innovator.

He took his seat in silence, after having satisfied his ingenuous and timid mind by appealing with a glance to the person who had just before defended him, and obtaining his tacit approbation.

The president rose. "You have all heard?" said he.

"Yes," replied the entire assembly.

"Does the candidate appear to you worthy of entering the association, and does he comprehend its duties?"

"Yes," replied the assembly again; but this time with a reserve which did not evince much unanimity.

"Take the oath," said the president to Rousseau.

"It would be disagreeable to me," said the philosopher, with some pride, "to displease any members of this association; and I must repeat the words I made use of just now, as they are the expression of my earnest conviction. If I were an orator, I would put them in a more eloquent manner; but my organ of speech is rebellious, and always betrays my thoughts when I ask it for an immediate translation. I wish to say that I can do more for the world and for you out of this assembly, than I could were I strictly to follow your usages. Leave me, therefore, to my work, to my weakness, to my loneliness. I have told you I am descending to the grave; grief, infirmity, and want hurry me on. You cannot delay this great work of nature. Abandon me; I am not made for the society of men, — I

hate and avoid them. Nevertheless, I serve them, because I am a man myself; and in serving them I fancy them better than they are. Now you have my whole thought; I shall not say another word."

"Then you refuse to take the oath?" said Marat, with some emotion.

"I refuse positively; I do not wish to join the association. I see too many convincing proofs to assure me that I should be useless to it."

"Brother," said the unknown personage with the conciliatory voice, — "allow me to call you so, for we are brothers, independently of all combinations of the human mind, — brother! do not give way to a very natural feeling of irritation; sacrifice your legitimate pride; do for us what is repulsive to yourself. Your advice, your ideas, your presence, are light to our paths. Do not plunge us in the twofold darkness of your absence and your refusal."

"You are in error," said Rousseau; "I take nothing from you, since I should never have given you more than I have given to the whole world, — to the first chance reader, to the first consulter of the journals. If you wish for the name and essence of Rousseau — "

"We do wish for them!" said several voices, politely.

"Then make a collection of my books; place them upon the table of your president; and when you are taking the opinions of the meeting, and my turn to give one comes, open my books, — you will find my counsel and my vote there."

Rousseau made a step toward the door.

"Stop one moment!" said the surgeon. "Mind is free, and that of the illustrious philosopher more than any other; but it would not be regular to have allowed a stranger even to enter our sanctuary, who, not being

bound by any tacit agreement, might, without dishonesty, reveal our mysteries."

Rousseau smiled compassionately. "You want an oath of secrecy?" said he.

"You have said it."

"I am ready."

"Be good enough to read the formula, venerable brother," said Marat.

The venerable brother read the following form of oath: "I swear, in the presence of the Eternal God, the Architect of the Universe, and before my superiors and the respectable assembly which surrounds me, never to reveal or to make known or write anything which has happened in my presence, under penalty, in case of indiscretion, of being punished according to the laws of the Great Founder, of my superiors, and the anger of my fathers."

Rousseau had already raised his hand to swear, when the unknown, who had followed the progress of the debate with a sort of authority which no one seemed to dispute, although he was not distinguished from the crowd, approached the president, and whispered some words in his ear.

"True," said the venerable chief; and he added: "You are a man, not a brother; you are a man of honor, placed toward us only in the position of a fellow-man. We here abjure, therefore, our distinguishing peculiarity, and ask from you merely your word of honor to forget what has passed between us."

"Like a dream of the morning, — I swear it upon my honor," said Rousseau, with emotion. With these words he retired, and many of the members followed him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REPORT.

When the members of the second and third orders had gone, seven of the associates remained. They were the leading members of the chapter. They recognized each other by means of signs which proved their initiation to a superior degree.

Their first care was to close the doors. Then their president made himself known by displaying a ring, on which were engraved the mysterious letters, L. P. D.[1]

This president was charged with the most important correspondence of the order. He was in communication with the six other chiefs, who dwelt in Switzerland, Russia, America, Sweden, Spain, and Italy. He brought with him some of the most important documents he had received from his colleagues, in order to communicate their contents to the superior circle of initiated brothers, who were above the others but beneath him. We have already recognized this chief; it was Balsamo.

The most important of the letters contained threatening intelligence. It was from Sweden, and had been written by Swedenborg. "Watch the South, brothers," it said; "under its burning rays has been hatched a traitor who will ruin you. Watch in Paris, brothers, — the traitor dwells there; he possesses the secrets of the order; a feeling of hatred urges him on. A murmuring voice, a rustling flight, whispers the denunciation in my ear. I see a ter-

[1] Lilia pedibus destrue.

rible vengeance coming, but perhaps it will be too late. In the mean time, brothers, watch! watch! A traitorous tongue, even though it be uninstructed, is sometimes sufficient to overthrow our most skilfully constructed plans."

The brothers looked at each other in mute surprise. The language of the fierce old sage, his prescience, which had acquired an imposing authority from many striking examples, contributed in no small degree to cast a gloom over the meeting at which Balsamo presided. Balsamo himself, who placed implicit faith in Swedenborg's second-sight, could not resist the serious and painful impression made on him by the reading of that letter. "Brothers," said he, "the inspired prophet is rarely deceived. Watch, then, as he bids you. You know now, as I do, that the struggle has begun. Let us not be conquered by these ridiculous enemies, whose power we sap in the utmost security. You must not forget that they have mercenary swords at their command, — powerful weapons in this world, among those who do not see beyond the limits of our terrestrial life. Brothers, let us distrust these hired traitors."

"These fears seem to me puerile," said a voice; "we gather strength daily, and we are directed by brilliant genius and powerful hands."

Balsamo bowed his thanks for the flattering eulogy.

"Yes, but as our illustrious president has said, treason creeps everywhere," replied a brother, who was no other than the surgeon Marat, promoted, notwithstanding his youth, to a superior grade, in virtue of which he now sat for the first time on a consulting committee. "Remember, brothers, that by doubling the bait, you may make a more important capture. If Monsieur de Sartines with a bag of crown-pieces can purchase the revelations of one of our obscurer brothers, with a million or with holding out

the hope of advancement, he may buy over one of our superiors. Now, with us, the obscurer brother knows nothing. At the most he is cognizant of the names of some of his colleagues, and these names signify nothing. Ours is an excellent constitution, but it is eminently aristocratic; the inferiors know nothing, can do nothing. They are called together to say or to hear trifles, and yet they contribute their time and their money to increase the solidity of our edifice. Reflect that the workman brings only the stone and the mortar; but without stone and mortar could you build the house? Now, the workman receives a very small salary, but I consider him equal to the architect who plans, creates, and superintends the whole work; and I consider him equal because he is a man, and in the eyes of a philosopher one man is worth as much as another, seeing that he bears his misfortunes and his fate equally, and because, even more than another man, he is exposed to the fall of a stone or the breaking of a scaffold."

"I must interrupt you, brother," said Balsamo. "You diverge from the question which alone ought to occupy our thoughts. Your failing, brother, is that you are over-zealous, and prone to generalize discussions. Our business on the present occasion is not to decide whether our constitution be good or bad, but to uphold the integrity of that constitution in all its strength. If I wished, however, to discuss the point with you, I should answer, No; the instrument which receives the impulse is not equal to the creating genius; the workman is not equal to the architect; the arm is not equal to the brain."

"Suppose Monsieur de Sartines should seize one of our least important brethren," cried Marat, warmly, "would he not send him to rot in the Bastille equally with you or me?"

"Granted; but the misfortune in that case is for the individual only, not for the order, which with us should take precedence of all else. If, on the contrary, the chief is imprisoned, the whole conspiracy is at an end. When the general is absent, the army loses the battle. Therefore, brothers, watch over the safety of the chiefs!"

"Yes, but let them in return watch over ours."

"That is their duty."

"And let their faults be doubly punished."

"Again, brother, you wander from the constitution of the order. Have you forgotten that the oath which binds all the members of the association is the same, and threatens all with the same punishment?"

"The great ones always escape."

"That is not the opinion of the great themselves, brothers. Listen to the conclusion of the letter which one of the greatest among us, our prophet Swedenborg, has written. This is what he adds: 'The blow will come from one of the mighty ones, one of the mightiest of the order; or if it comes not directly from him, the fault will be traceable to him. Remember that fire and water may be accomplices; one gives light, the other revelation. Watch, brothers, over all and over each, watch!'"

"Then," said Marat, seizing upon those points in Balsamo's speech and Swedenborg's letter which suited his purpose, "let us repeat the oath which binds us together, and let us pledge ourselves to maintain it in its utmost vigor, whosoever he may be who shall betray us or be the cause of our betrayal."

Balsamo paused for a moment, and then, rising from his seat, he pronounced the consecrated words, with which our readers are already acquainted, in a slow, solemn, terrible voice:—

"In the name of the crucified Son, I swear to break all

the bonds of nature which unite me to father, mother, brother, sister, wife, relation, friend, mistress, king, benefactor, and to any being whatever to whom I have promised faith, obedience, gratitude, or service. I swear to reveal to the chief, whom I acknowledge according to the statutes of the order, all that I have seen or done, read or heard, learned or divined, and henceforward to search out and penetrate into that which may not openly present itself to my eyes. I will honor poison, steel, and fire as a means of ridding the world, by death or idiocy, of the enemies of truth and liberty. I subscribe to the law of silence. I consent to die, as if struck by lightning, on the day when I shall have merited this punishment, and I await, without murmuring, the knife which will reach me, in whatsoever part of the world I may be."

Then the seven men who composed this solemn assembly repeated the oath, word for word, standing, and with uncovered heads.

When the words of the oath had been repeated by all, "We are now guaranteed against treachery," said Balsamo; "let us no longer mingle extraneous matter with our discussion. I have to make my report to the committee of the principal events of the year. My summary of the affairs of France may have interest for enlightened and zealous minds like yours; I will begin with it.

"France is situated in the centre of Europe, as the heart in the centre of the body; it lives, and radiates life. It is in its palpitations that we must look for the cause of all the disorder in the general organization. I came to France, therefore, and approached Paris as a physician approaches the heart. I listened, I felt, I experimented. When I entered it a year ago, the monarchy harassed it; to-day, vices kill it. I found it necessary to hasten the effect of these fatal debauches, and therefore I assisted them.

"An obstacle was in my way; this obstacle was a man, not only the first, but the most powerful man in the State, next to the king. He was gifted with some of those qualities which please other men. He was too proud, it is true, but his pride was applied to his works. He knew how to lighten the subjection of the people by making them believe, even sometimes to see, that they were a portion of the State; and by consulting them on their grievances, he raised a standard around which the mass will always rally, — the spirit of nationality. He hated the English, the natural enemies of the French; he hated the favorite, the natural enemy of the working-classes. Now, if this man would have been a usurper, if he would have been one of us, if he would have trodden in our path and acted for our ends, — I would have assisted him; I would have kept him in power; I would have upheld him by the resources I am able to create for my protégés; for instead of patching up decayed royalty, he would have assisted us in overthrowing it on the appointed day. But he belonged to the aristocracy; he was born with a feeling of respect for that first rank to which he could not aspire, — for the monarchy, which he dared not attack; he served royalty while despising the king; he did worse, — he acted as a shield to this royalty against which our blows were directed. The parliament and the people, full of respect for this living dike which opposed itself to the encroachments of the royal prerogative, limited themselves to a moderate resistance, certain as they were of having in him a powerful assistant when the moment should arrive.

"I understood the position; I undertook Monsieur de Choiseul's fall. This laborious task, at which for ten years so much hatred and interest had labored in vain, I began and terminated in a few months, by means which it would be useless to reveal to you. By a secret, which

constitutes one of my powers, — a power the greater, because it will remain eternally hidden from the eyes of all, and will manifest itself only by its effects, — I overthrew and banished Monsieur de Choiseul, and attached to his overthrow a long train of regret, disappointment, lamentation, and anger. You see now that my labor bears its fruit; all France asks for Choiseul, and rises to demand him back, as orphans turn to heaven when God has taken away their earthly parents.

"The parliament employs the only right it possesses, — the right of inertia; it has ceased to act. In a well-organized body, such as a State of the first rank ought to be, the paralysis of any essential organ is fatal. Now, the parliament in the social, is what the stomach is in the human, body. When the parliament ceases to act, the people — the intestines of the State — can work no longer; and consequently must cease to pay, and the gold — that is, the blood — will be wanting.

"There will be a struggle, no doubt; but who can combat against the people? Not the army, that daughter of the people, which eats the bread of the laborer and drinks the wine of the vine-grower. There remain then the king's household, the privileged classes, the guards, the Swiss, the musketeers, — in all, scarce five or six thousand men. What can this handful of pygmies do when the nation shall rise like a giant?"

"Let them rise, then; let them rise!" cried several voices.

"Yes, yes, to the work!" exclaimed Marat.

"Young man, I have not yet consulted you," said Balsamo, coldly. "This sedition of the masses," continued he, "this revolt of the weak become strong by their number against the powerful single-handed, less thoughtful, less ripened, less experienced minds would arouse

immediately, and would succeed with a facility which terrifies me. But I have reflected and studied; I have mixed with the people, and assuming their dress, their perseverance, even their coarseness, I have viewed them so closely that I have made myself, as it were, one of themselves. I know them now; I cannot be deceived in them. They are strong, but ignorant; irritable, but not revengeful. In a word, they are not yet ripe for sedition such as I mean and wish for. They want the instruction which will make them see events in the double light of example and utility; they want the memory of their past experience.

"They resemble those daring young men whom I have seen in Germany, at the public festivals, eagerly climb a vessel's mast, at the top of which hung a ham and a silver cup. They started at first burning with eagerness, and mounted with surprising rapidity; but when they had almost reached the goal, when they had only to extend the arm to seize their prize, their strength abandoned them, and they slipped to the bottom amid the hootings of the crowd. The first time it happened as I have said; the second time they husbanded their strength and their breath, but taking more time, they failed by their slowness, as they had before failed from too great haste. At last, the third time, they took a middle course between precipitation and delay; and this time they succeeded. This is the plan I propose: efforts, never-ceasing efforts, which gradually approach the goal, until the day arrives when they will be crowned by infallible success."

Balsamo ceased, and looked around upon his audience, among whom the passions of youth and inexperience were boiling over. "Speak, brother," said he to Marat, who was more agitated than the others.

"I will be brief," said Marat. "Efforts soothe the

people when they do not discourage them. Efforts! that is the theory of Monsieur Rousseau, citizen of Geneva, a great poet, but a slow and timid genius, — a useless citizen, whom Plato would have driven from his republic! Wait! Ever wait! Since the emancipation of the commons, since the revolt of the *maillotins*, — for seven centuries we have waited! Count the generations which have died in the mean time, and then dare to pronounce the fatal word 'wait' as your motto of the future! Monsieur Rousseau speaks to us of opposition as it was practised in the reign of the Grand Monarque, as Molière practised it in his comedies, Boileau in his satires, and La Fontaine in his fables, — in the society of marchionesses and at the feet of kings. Poor and feeble opposition, which has not advanced the cause of humanity one jot! Lisping children recite these veiled theories without understanding them, and go to sleep while they recite. Rabelais also was a politician in your sense of the word; but with such political views people laugh, and correct nothing. Have you seen one single abuse redressed for the last three hundred years? Enough of poets and theorists! Let us have deeds, not words. We have given France up to the care of physicians for three hundred years, and it is time now that surgery should enter in its turn, scalpel and saw in hand. Society is gangrened; let us stop the gangrene with the steel. He may wait who rises from his table to recline upon a couch of roses, from which the ruffled leaves are blown by the breath of his slaves; for the satisfied stomach exhales grateful vapors which mount into the brain, and recreate and vivify it. But hunger, misery, despair, are not satiated nor consoled with verses, with sentences and fables. They cry out loudly in their sufferings; deaf indeed must he be who does not hear their lamentations, — accursed he who does not reply to them!

A revolt, even should it be crushed, will enlighten the minds more than a thousand years of precepts, more than three centuries of examples. It will enlighten the kings, if it do not overthrow them. That is much; that is enough!"

A murmur of admiration rose from several lips.

"Where are our enemies?" pursued Marat. "Above us! above us! They guard the doors of the palaces, they surround the steps of the throne. Upon this throne is their palladium, which they guard more vigilantly and apprehensively than the Trojans guarded theirs. This palladium, which makes them all-powerful, rich, and insolent, is royalty. This royalty cannot be reached save by passing over the bodies of those who guard it, as one can reach the general only by overthrowing the battalions which protect him. Well, history tells us of many battalions which have been captured, many generals who have been overthrown, from Darius down to King John, from Regulus down to Duguesclin.

"If we overthrow the guard, we reach the idol. Let us begin by striking down the sentinels, — we can afterward strike down the chief. Let the attack be first on the courtiers, the nobility, the aristocracy; afterward upon the kings. Count the privileged heads; there are scarcely two hundred thousand. Walk through this beautiful garden called France, with a sharp switch in your hand, and cut down these two hundred thousand heads as Tarquin did the poppies of Latium, and all will be done. There will then be only two powers opposed to each other, — the people and the kingship. Then let this kingship, this symbol, try to struggle with the people, this giant, — and you will see! When dwarfs wish to overthrow a colossus, they begin with the pedestal. When the woodmen wish to cut down the oak, they attack it at the foot. Woodmen!

woodmen! seize the hatchet, attack the oak at its roots, and the ancient tree with its proud branches will soon bite the dust!"

"And will crush you like pygmies in its fall, unhappy schemers that you are!" exclaimed Balsamo, in a voice of thunder. "Ah! you rail against the poets, and you speak in metaphors even more poetical and more imaginative than theirs! Brother! brother!" continued he, addressing Marat, "I tell you, you have quoted these sentences from some romance which you are composing in your garret!"

Marat reddened.

"Do you know what a revolution is?" continued Balsamo; "I have seen two hundred, and can tell you. I have seen that of ancient Egypt, that of Assyria, those of Rome and Greece, and that of the Netherlands. I have seen those of the Middle Ages, when the nations rushed one against another, — East against West, West against East, — and murdered without knowing why. From the Shepherd Kings to our own time there have been perhaps a hundred revolutions, and yet now you complain of being slaves. Revolutions, then, have done no good. And why? Because those who caused the revolutions were all struck with the same vertigo, — they were too hasty. Does God, who presides over the revolutions of the world, as genius presides over the revolutions of men, — does he hasten?

"'Cut down the oak!' you cry; and you do not calculate that the oak, which needs but a second to fall, covers as much ground when it falls as a horse at a gallop would cross in thirty seconds. Now, those who throw down the oak, not having time to avoid the unforeseen fall, will be lost, crushed, killed, beneath its immense trunk. That is what you want, is it not? You will never get that from

me. Like God, I have lived through twenty, thirty, forty, generations of human life. Like God, I am eternal. Like God, I shall be patient. I carry my fate, yours, the world's, in the hollow of this hand. No one can make me open this hand, full of overwhelming truth, unless I wish to open it. There is thunder in it, I know. Well! the thunderbolt shall remain in it, as if hidden in the murky cloud. Brothers! brothers! descend from these sublime heights, and let us once more walk upon the earth.

"I tell you plainly, and with sincere conviction, that the time has not yet come. The king who is on the throne is the last reflection of the great monarch whom the people still venerate; and in this fading monarchy there is yet something dazzling enough to outweigh the lightning shafts of your petty anger. This man was born a king, and will die a king. His race is insolent, but pure. You can read his origin on his brow, in his gestures, in his voice, — he will always be king. Overthrow him, and that will happen to him which happened to Charles the First; his executioners will kneel before him, and the courtiers who accompany him in his misfortune will, like Lord Capel, kiss the axe which has struck off the head of their master.

"Now, brothers, you all know that England was too hasty. King Charles the First died upon the scaffold, indeed; but King Charles the Second, his son, died upon the throne.

"Wait, wait, brothers! for the time will soon be propitious. You wish to destroy the lilies. That is our motto, — 'Lilia pedibus destrue.' But not a single root must leave to the flower of Saint Louis the hope of blooming again. You wish to destroy royalty? To destroy royalty forever, you must weaken her *prestige* as well as her essence. You wish to destroy royalty? Wait till

royalty is no longer a sacred office, but merely a trade, — till it is practised in a shop, not in a temple. Now, what is most sacred in royalty — namely, the legitimate transmission of the throne, authorized for centuries by God and the people — is about to be lost forever. Listen, listen! This invincible, this impervious barrier between us nothings and these quasi divine creatures; this limit which the people have never dared to cross, and which is called legitimacy; this word, brilliant as a lighted watch-tower, and which until now has saved the royal family from shipwreck, — this word will be extinguished by the breath of a mysterious fatality!

"The dauphiness, called to France to perpetuate the race of kings by the admixture of imperial blood, — the dauphiness, married now for a year to the heir of the French crown, — approach, brothers, for I fear to let the sound of my words pass beyond your circle — "

"Well?" asked the six chiefs, with anxiety.

"Well, brothers, the marriage of the dauphiness is still not fully consummated."

A sinister murmur, which would have frozen the monarchs of the world with terror had they heard it, — such deep hatred, such revengeful joy did it breathe, — escaped like a deadly vapor from the little circle of six heads, which almost touched each other, Balsamo's being bent over them from his rostrum.

"In this condition of affairs," continued Balsamo, "two possibilities are presented, equally profitable to our cause.

"The first possibility is that the dauphiness will continue childless, that then the race will be extinguished, and the future will have for our friends neither wars, difficulties, nor troubles. That will happen to this family, foredoomed to perish, which has always happened in France when three brothers have succeeded to the throne;

which happened to the sons of Philippe le Bel, — Louis le Hutin, Philippe le Long, and Charles IV., — who all reigned and died leaving no issue; which happened to the three sons of Henri II., — François II., Charles IX., and Henri III., — who all reigned, and died without issue. Like these, Monseigneur le Dauphin, Monseigneur le Comte de Provence, and Monseigneur le Comte d'Artois will all reign, and will die leaving no children, as died these others, — it is the law of destiny. Then, as after Charles IV., the last king of the house of Capet, came Philippe VI. de Valois, of a family collateral to that of the kings preceding; as, after Henri III., the last king of the house of Valois, came Henri IV. de Bourbon, of a family collateral to that which preceded, — after the Comte d'Artois, whose name is written in the book of fate as that of the last king of the elder branch, will come perhaps some Cromwell or some William of Orange, — some stranger to the race or to the natural order of succession.

"This is what the first possibility offers us. The second is that the dauphiness will not continue childless. And here is the trap into which our enemies will throw themselves, while expecting us to be caught in it. Oh! if the dauphiness does not continue childless, if she becomes a mother, then, while all the court will rejoice, and will believe that royalty is more firmly established in France, we ourselves shall rejoice also; for we shall possess a secret so terrible that no prestige, no power, no efforts can make head against the crimes which that secret will involve, and the unhappiness which that maternity will bring upon the future queen. The heir she will give to the throne we shall easily show to be illegitimate, for we shall easily prove that maternity to be adulterous. So that, in comparison with that factitious good fortune which Heaven will seem to have granted them, barrenness would have

been a blessing from on high. This is why I refrain, gentlemen; this is why I wait, brothers; in short, this is why I consider it useless to unchain to-day the passions of the people, which I shall employ effectively when the fit time shall arrive.

"Now, gentlemen, you know this year's work; you see the progress of our mines. Be assured that we shall succeed only by the genius and the courage of some, who will serve as the eyes and the brain; by the perseverance and labor of others, who will represent the arms; by the faith and the devotion of others again, who will be the heart. Above all, remember the necessity of a blind submission, which ordains that even your chief must sacrifice himself to the statutes of the order, whenever those statutes require it.

"After this, gentlemen and beloved brothers, I would dissolve the meeting, if there were not still a good act to perform, an evil to point out. The great writer who came among us this evening, and who would have been one of us but for the stormy zeal of one of our brothers who alarmed his timid soul, — this great author proved himself in the right before our assembly; and I deplore it as a misfortune that a stranger should be victorious in the presence of a majority of brothers who are imperfectly acquainted with our rules, and utterly ignorant of our aim.

"Rousseau, triumphing over the truths of our association with the sophisms of his books, represents a fundamental vice which I would extirpate by steel and fire, if I had not the hope of curing it by persuasion. The self-love of one of our brothers has exhibited itself with mischievous results. He has led us to defeat in the discussion. No such manifestation, I trust, will again be made; and if it is, I shall have recourse to the laws of discipline.

"In the mean time, gentlemen, propagate the faith by gentleness and persuasion. Insinuate it, do not impose it; do not force it into rebellious minds with wedges and blows, as the inquisitors tortured their victims. Remember that we cannot be great until after we have been acknowledged good; and that we cannot be acknowledged good but by appearing better than those who surround us. Remember, too, that among us the great, the good, the best, are nothing without science, art, and faith; nothing, in short, compared with those whom God has marked with a peculiar stamp, to give them authority to govern men and rule empires.

"Gentlemen, the meeting is dissolved."

After pronouncing these words, Balsamo put on his hat and folded himself in his cloak.

Each of the initiated left in his turn, alone and silently, in order not to awaken suspicion.

CHAPTER V.

THE BODY AND THE SOUL.

THE last who remained beside the master was Marat, the surgeon. He was very pale, and humbly approached the terrible orator of unlimited power.

"Master," said he, "have I indeed committed a fault?"

"A great one, Monsieur," said Balsamo; "and, what is worse, you do not believe that you have committed one."

"Well, yes, I confess that not only do I not believe that I committed a fault, but I think that I spoke as I ought to speak."

"Pride, pride!" muttered Balsamo; "pride, — destructive demon! Men combat the fever in the blood of the patient, they dispel the plague from the water and the air; but they let pride strike such deep roots in their hearts that they cannot exterminate it."

"Oh, Master," said Marat, "you have a very despicable opinion of me! Am I indeed so worthless that I cannot count for anything among my fellows? Have I gathered the fruits of my labor so ill that I cannot utter a word without being taxed with ignorance? Am I such a lukewarm member that my earnestness is suspected? If I have no other good quality, I have at least that of living in devotion to the holy cause of the people."

"Monsieur," replied Balsamo, "it is because the principle of good yet struggles in you against the principle of evil, which appears to me likely to carry you away one day, that I will try to correct these defects in you. If I

can succeed — if pride has not yet subdued every other sentiment in your breast — I shall succeed in one hour."

"In one hour?" said Marat.

"Yes; will you grant me that time?"

"Certainly."

"Where shall I see you?"

"Master, it is my place to seek you in any place you may choose to point out to your servant."

"Well," said Balsamo, "I will come to your house."

"Mark the promise you are making, Master. I live in an attic in the Rue des Cordeliers. An attic, remember!" said Marat, with an affectation of proud simplicity, with a boasting display of poverty, which did not escape Balsamo, "while you —"

"Well, while I?"

"While you, it is said, inhabit a palace."

Balsamo shrugged his shoulders, like a giant who looks down with contempt on the anger of a dwarf. "Well, even so, Monsieur," he replied; "I will come to see you in your garret."

"And when, Monsieur?"

"To-morrow."

"At what time?"

"In the morning."

"At daybreak I go to my lecture-room, and from thence to the hospital."

"That is precisely what I want. I would have asked you to take me with you, had you not proposed it."

"But early, remember," said Marat; "I sleep little."

"And I do not sleep at all," replied Balsamo. "At daybreak, then."

"I shall expect you."

Thereupon they separated, for they had reached the

door opening on the street, now as dark and solitary as it had been noisy and populous when they entered. Balsamo turned to the left, and rapidly disappeared. Marat followed his example, striding toward the right with his long, meagre limbs.

Balsamo was punctual. The next morning at six o'clock he knocked at the door of a long corridor, which, with the six rooms opening into it, formed the upper story of an old house in the Rue des Cordeliers.

It was evident that Marat had made great preparations to receive his illustrious guest. The small bed of walnut-tree, and the wooden chest of drawers beside it, shone bright beneath the sturdy arm of the charwoman, who was busily engaged scrubbing the decayed furniture.

Marat himself lent a helping hand to the old woman, and was refreshing the withered flowers which were arranged in a blue delft pot, and which formed the principal ornament of the attic. He still held a dusting-cloth under his arm, which showed that he had not touched the flowers until he had given a rub to the furniture.

As the key was in the door, and as Balsamo had entered without knocking, he interrupted Marat in his occupation. Marat, at the sight of the master, blushed much more deeply than was becoming in a true stoic. "You see, Master," said he, stealthily throwing the tell-tale cloth behind a curtain, "I am a domestic man, and assist this good woman. It is from preference that I choose this task, which is, perhaps, not quite plebeian, but it is still less aristocratic."

"It is that of a poor young man who loves cleanliness," said Balsamo, coldly, "nothing more. Are you ready, Monsieur? You know my moments are precious."

"I have only to slip on my coat, Monsieur. Dame Grivette, my coat! She is my portress, Monsieur, — my

footman, my cook, my housekeeper, and she costs me one crown a month."

"Economy is praiseworthy," said Balsamo; "it is the wealth of the poor, and the wisdom of the rich."

"My hat and cane," said Marat.

"Stretch out your hand," said Balsamo; "there is your hat, and no doubt this cane which is near your hat is yours."

"Oh! I beg your pardon, Monsieur; I am quite confused."

"Are you ready?"

"Yes, Monsieur. My watch, Dame Grivette!"

Dame Grivette bustled about the room as if in search of something, but did not reply.

"You have no occasion for a watch, Monsieur, to go to the lecture-room and the hospital; it will perhaps not be easily found, and that would cause some delay."

"But Monsieur, I attach great value to my watch, which is an excellent one, and which I bought with my savings."

"In your absence, Dame Grivette will look for it," replied Balsamo, with a smile; "and if she searches carefully, it will be found when you return."

"Oh, certainly!" said Dame Grivette, "it will be found, unless Monsieur has left it somewhere else. Nothing is lost here."

"You see," said Balsamo. "Come, Monsieur, come!"

Marat did not venture to persist, and followed Balsamo, grumbling. When they reached the door, Balsamo said, "Where shall we go first?"

"To the lecture-room, if you please, Master; I have marked a subject which must have died last night of acute meningitis. I want to make some observations on his brain, and I do not wish my colleagues to take it from me."

"Then let us go to the lecture-room, Monsieur Marat."

"Moreover, it is only a few yards from here; the lecture-room is close to the hospital, and we shall need only to go in and come out again, — you might even wait for me at the door."

"On the contrary, I wish to accompany you inside; you will give me your opinion on this subject."

"When he was alive, Monsieur?"

"No, since he has become a corpse."

"Take care," said Marat, smiling; "I may gain a point over you, for I am well acquainted with this part of my profession, and am said to be a skilful anatomist."

"Pride! pride! ever pride!" murmured Balsamo.

"What do you say?" asked Marat.

"I say that we shall see, Monsieur," replied Balsamo. "Let us enter."

Marat preceded Balsamo in the narrow alley leading to the lecture-room, which was situated at the extremity of the Rue Hautefeuille. Balsamo followed him unhesitatingly until they reached a long narrow room, where two corpses, a male and a female, lay stretched upon a marble table.

The woman had died young; the man was old and bald. A soiled sheet was thrown over their bodies, leaving their faces half-uncovered. They were lying side by side upon this cold bed, —they who had perhaps never met before in the world, and whose souls, then voyaging in eternity, must, could they have looked down on earth, have been struck with astonishment at the proximity of their mortal remains.

Marat with a single movement raised and threw aside the coarse linen which covered the two bodies, whom death had thus made equal before the anatomist's scalpel.

"Is not the sight of the dead repugnant to your feelings?" asked Marat, in his usual boasting manner.

"It makes me sad," replied Balsamo.

"Want of custom," said Marat. "I, who see this sight daily, feel neither sadness nor disgust. We practitioners live with the dead, and do not interrupt any of the functions of our existence on their account."

"It is a sad privilege of your profession, Monsieur."

"Besides," added Marat, "why should I be sad, or feel disgust? In the first case, reflection forbids it; in the second, custom."

"Explain your ideas," said Balsamo; "I do not understand you clearly. Reflection first."

"Well, why should I be afraid? Why should I fear an inert mass, — a statue of flesh instead of stone, marble, or granite?"

"In short, you think there is nothing in a corpse?"

"Nothing, — absolutely nothing."

"Do you believe that?"

"I am sure of it."

"But in the living body."

"There is motion," said Marat, proudly.

"And the soul, — you do not speak of it, Monsieur."

"I have never found it in the bodies which I have dissected."

"Because you have dissected only corpses."

"Oh, no, Monsieur! I have frequently operated upon living bodies."

"And you have found nothing more in them than in the corpses?"

"Yes, I have found pain. Do you call pain the soul?"

"Then you do not believe in it?"

"In what?"

"In the soul?"

"I believe in it, because I am at liberty to call it motion, if I wish."

"That is well. You believe in the soul; that is all I asked. I am glad you believe in it."

"One moment, Master. Let us understand each other, and above all, let us not exaggerate," said Marat, with his serpent smile. "We practitioners are rather disposed to materialism."

"These bodies are very cold," said Balsamo, dreamily, "and this woman was very beautiful."

"Why, yes."

"A lovely soul would have been suitable in this lovely body."

"Ah! there was the mistake of him who created her. A beautiful scabbard, but a vile sword. This corpse, Master, is that of a wretched woman who had just left Saint Lazarus when she died of cerebral inflammation in the Hôtel Dieu. Her history is long, and tolerably scandalous. If you call the motive power which impelled this creature 'soul,' you wrong our souls, which must be of the same essence, since they are derived from the same source."

"Her soul should have been cured," said Balsamo; "it was lost for want of the only physician who is indispensable, — a physician of the soul."

"Alas, Master, that is another of your theories! There are only physicians for the body," replied Marat, with a bitter smile. "Now you have a word on your lips which Molière has often employed in his comedies; and it is this word which makes you smile."

"No," said Balsamo, "you mistake; you cannot know why I smile. What we concluded just now was that these corpses are void, was it not?"

"And insensible," added Marat, raising the young woman's head, and letting it fall noisily upon the marble, while the body neither moved nor shuddered.

"Very well," said Balsamo; "let us now go to the hospital."

"Wait one moment, Master, I entreat you, until I have separated from the trunk this head, which I am most anxious to have, as it was the seat of a very strange disease. Will you allow me?"

"Do you ask?" said Balsamo.

Marat opened his case, took from it a bistoury, and picked up in a corner a large wooden mallet stained with blood. Then with a practised hand he made a circular incision, which separated all the flesh and the muscles of the neck; and having thus reached the bone, he slipped his bistoury between two joints of the vertebral column, and struck a sharp blow upon it with the mallet.

The head rolled upon the table, and from the table upon the floor. Marat was obliged to seize it with his damp hands. Balsamo turned away, not to give too much joy to the triumphant operator.

"One day," said Marat, who thought he had hit the master in a weak point, — "one day some philanthropist will occupy himself with the details of death as others do with those of life, and will invent a machine which shall sever a head at a single blow, and cause instantaneous annihilation, which no other instrument of death does. The wheel, quartering, and hanging, are punishments suitable for savages, but not for civilized people. An enlightened nation like France should punish, but not revenge. Those who condemn to the wheel, who hang or quarter, revenge themselves upon the criminal by inflicting pain before punishing him by death; and that, in my opinion, is too much by half."

"And in mine also, Monsieur. But what kind of an instrument do you mean?"

"I can fancy a machine cold and impassive as the law itself. The man who is charged with fulfilling the last office is moved at the sight of his fellow-man, and sometimes strikes badly, as in the case of the Duke of Monmouth and that of Chalais. This could not happen with a machine having, for instance, two arms of oak wielding a cutlass."

"And do you believe, Monsieur, that because the knife would pass with the rapidity of lightning between the base of the occiput and the trapezoid muscles, death would be instantaneous and the pain momentary?"

"Certainly; death would be instantaneous, for the iron would sever at a blow the nerves which cause motion. The pain would be momentary, for the blade would separate the brain, which is the seat of feeling, from the heart, which is the centre of life."

"Monsieur," said Balsamo, "the punishment of decapitation exists in Germany."

"Yes, but by the sword; and, as I said before, a man's hand may tremble."

"Such a machine exists in Italy; an arm of oak wields it. It is called the *mannaja*."

"Well?"

"Well, Monsieur, I have seen criminals decapitated by the executioner raise their headless bodies from the bench on which they were seated, and stagger off, to fall ten steps from there. I have picked up heads which had rolled to the foot of the *mannaja*, — as that head you are holding by the hair has just rolled from the marble table, — and on pronouncing in their ears the name by which those persons had been called, I have seen the eyes open again and turn in their orbits, seeking to discover who

from the earth had called to them in that passage from time to eternity."

"A nervous movement, — nothing else."

"Are the nerves not the organs of sensibility?"

"What do you conclude from that, Monsieur?"

"I conclude that it would be better, instead of inventing a machine which kills in order to punish, that man should seek a means of punishing without killing. The society which will invent this means will assuredly be the best and the most enlightened of societies."

"Utopia again, — always Utopia!" said Marat.

"Perhaps you are right," said Balsamo; "time will show. But did you not speak of the hospital? Let us go!"

"Come, then," said Marat; and he tied the woman's head in his pocket-handkerchief, carefully knotting the four corners. "Now I am sure, at least," said he, as he left the hall, "that my comrades will have only my leavings."

They took the way to the Hôtel Dieu, — the dreamer and the practitioner side by side.

"You have cut off this head very coolly and very skilfully, Monsieur," said Balsamo. "Do you feel less emotion when you operate upon the living than the dead? Does the sight of suffering affect you more than that of immobility? Have you more pity for living bodies than for corpses?"

"No; that would be as great a fault as for the executioner to be moved. You may kill a man by cutting his thigh unskilfully, just as well as by severing the head from the body. A good surgeon operates with his hand, not with his heart; though he knows well at the same time, in his heart, that for one moment of suffering he gives years of life and health. That is the fair side of our profession, Master."

"Yes, Monsieur; but in the living bodies you meet with the soul, I hope."

"Yes, if you will agree with me that the soul is motion, or sensibility. Yes, certainly, I meet with it; and it is very troublesome too, for it kills far more patients than any scalpel."

They had by this time arrived at the threshold of the Hôtel Dieu, and now entered the hospital. Guided by Marat, who still carried his funereal burden, Balsamo penetrated to the hall where the operations were performed, in which the head-surgeon and the students in surgery were assembled. The attendant had just brought in a young man who had been run over the preceding week by a heavy carriage, the wheel of which had crushed his foot. A hasty operation performed upon the limb when benumbed by pain had not been sufficient; the inflammation had rapidly extended, and the amputation of the leg had now become an urgent necessity.

The unfortunate man, stretched upon his bed of anguish, looked, with a horror which would have melted tigers, at the band of eager students who were watching for the moment of his martyrdom, perhaps of his death, that they might study the science of life, — that marvellous phenomenon behind which lies the gloomy phenomenon of death.

He seemed to implore a pitying look, a smile, or a word of encouragement from each of the students and attendants; but the beatings of his heart were responded to only by indifference, his beseeching looks encountered only steel. A remnant of courage and of pride kept him silent. He reserved all his strength for the cries which pain would soon wring from him. But when he felt the heavy hand of the attendant upon his shoulder, when the arms of the assistants twined around him like

the serpents of Laocoön, when he heard the operator's voice cry, "Courage!" the unfortunate man ventured to break the silence, and asked in a plaintive voice, "Shall I suffer much?"

"Oh, no! make your mind easy," replied Marat, with a hypocritical smile, which to the patient seemed kind, but to Balsamo ironical.

Marat saw that Balsamo had understood him; he approached and whispered: "It is a dreadful operation. The bone is full of cracks, and fearfully sensitive. He will die, not of the wound, but of the pain. That is what the soul does for this poor man."

"Then why do you operate? Why do you not let him die in peace?"

"Because it is the surgeon's duty to attempt a cure, even when the cure seems impossible."

"And you say he will suffer?"

"Fearfully."

"And that his soul is the cause?"

"His soul, which has too much sympathy with the body."

"Then why not operate upon the soul? Perhaps the tranquillity of the one would cause the cure of the other."

"I have done so," said Marat, while the attendants continued to bind the patient.

"You have prepared his soul?"

"Yes."

"How so?"

"As one always does,—by words. I spoke to his soul, his intelligence, his sensibility,—to that organ which caused the Greek philosopher to exclaim, 'Pain, thou art no evil,'—the language suitable for it. I said to him: 'You will not suffer.' That is the only remedy hitherto

known, as regards the soul, — falsehood! Why is this she-devil of a soul connected with the body? When I cut off this head just now, the body said nothing, yet the operation was a serious one. But motion had ceased, sensibility was extinguished, the soul had fled, as you spiritualists say. This is the reason why the head I severed said nothing, why the body which I mutilated allowed me to do so; while this body which is yet inhabited by a soul — for a short time indeed, but still inhabited — will cry out fearfully. Stop your ears well, Master, you who are moved by this union of body and soul, which will always defeat your theory until you succeed in isolating the body from the soul."

"And you believe we shall never arrive at this isolation?"

"Try," said Marat; "this is an excellent opportunity."

"Well, yes, you are right," said Balsamo; "the opportunity is a good one, and I will make the attempt."

"You will make the attempt?"

"I will."

"How will you do it?"

"This young man interests me; he shall not suffer."

"You are an illustrious chief," said Marat, "but you are neither God the Father, nor God the Son, and you cannot prevent this man from suffering."

"If he were not to feel the pain, do you think he would recover?"

"His recovery would be more probable, but not certain."

Balsamo cast an inexpressible look of triumph upon Marat, and placed himself before the young patient, whose frightened eyes, already dilated with the anguish of terror, met his.

"Sleep," said Balsamo, not alone with his lips, but

with his look, with his will, with all the heat of his blood, all the vital energy of his body.

The head-surgeon was just beginning to feel the injured leg, and to point out the aggravated nature of the case to his students; but at Balsamo's command the young man, who had raised himself upon his seat, oscillated for a moment in the arms of his attendants, his head drooped, and his eyes closed.

"He is ill," said Marat.

"No, Monsieur."

"But do you not see that he loses consciousness?"

"He is sleeping."

"What, he sleeps?"

"Yes."

Every one turned to look at the strange physician, whom they took for a madman. An incredulous smile hovered on Marat's lips.

"Is it usual for people to talk while in a swoon?" asked Balsamo.

"No."

"Well, question him, — he will reply."

"Eh! young man!" cried Marat.

"You need not speak so loud," said Balsamo; "speak in your usual tone."

"Tell us what is the matter with you."

"I was ordered to sleep, and I sleep," replied the patient.

His voice was perfectly calm, and contrasted strangely with that they had heard a few moments before. All the attendants looked at each other.

"Now," said Balsamo, "release him."

"That is impossible," said the head-surgeon; "the slightest movement will spoil the operation."

"He will not stir."

"Who can assure me of that?"

"I, and he also, — ask him."

"Can you be left untied, my friend?"

"Yes."

"And will you promise not to move?"

"I will promise it, if you command me."

"I command it."

"Faith! Monsieur, you speak so positively that I am tempted to make the trial."

"Do so, Monsieur; and fear nothing."

"Untie him."

The assistants obeyed. Balsamo advanced to the bedside. "From this moment," said he, "do not stir until I order you."

A statue upon a tombstone could not have been more motionless than the patient, upon this injunction.

"Now operate, Monsieur," said Balsamo; "the patient is quite ready."

The surgeon took his bistoury; but when upon the point of using it, he hesitated.

"Cut, Monsieur! cut, I tell you!" said Balsamo, with the air of an inspired prophet.

And the surgeon, yielding — like Marat, like the patient, like every one present — to the irresistible influence of Balsamo's words, made ready to begin. The sound of the knife passing through the flesh was heard, but the patient did not stir, nor even sigh.

"From what country do you come, my friend?" asked Balsamo.

"I am a Breton, Monsieur," replied the patient, smiling.

"And you love your country?"

"Oh, Monsieur, it is so beautiful!"

In the mean time the surgeon was making the circular

incisions in the flesh, by means of which, in amputations, the bone is laid bare.

"You left it when young?" asked Balsamo.

"At ten years of age, Monsieur."

The incisions were made; the surgeon placed the saw on the bone.

"My friend," said Balsamo, "sing me that song which the salt-makers of Batz chant as they return to their homes after the day's work is over. I can remember only the first line, —

"'My salt covered o'er with its mantle of foam.'"

The saw was now severing the bone; but at Balsamo's command the patient smiled, and began to sing in a low, melodious, ecstatic voice, like a lover or like a poet, the following verses: —

"My salt covered o'er with its mantle of foam,
The lake of pure azure that mirrors my home,
My stove where the peats ever cheerfully burn,
And the honeyed wheat-cake which awaits my return;

"The wife of my bosom, my silver-haired sire,
My urchins who sport round the clear evening fire;
And there, where the wild flowers, in brightest of bloom,
Their fragrance diffuse round my loved mother's tomb, —

"Blest, blest be ye all! Now the day's task is o'er,
And I stand once again at my own cottage door;
And richly will love my brief absence repay,
And the calm joys of eve the rude toils of the day."

The leg fell upon the bed while the patient was still singing.

CHAPTER VI.

BODY AND SOUL.

EVERY one looked with astonishment at the patient, — with admiration at the physician. Some said that both were mad. Marat communicated this opinion to Balsamo in a whisper. "Terror has made the poor devil lose his senses," said he; "that is why he feels no pain."

"I think not," replied Balsamo; "and far from having lost his senses, I am sure that if I asked him, he could tell us the day of his death if he is to die, or the period of his convalescence if he is to recover."

Marat was almost inclined to adopt the general opinion, — that Balsamo was as mad as his patient. In the mean time, however, the surgeon was tying up the arteries, from which spouted streams of blood.

Balsamo drew a small phial from his pocket, poured a few drops of the liquid it contained upon a little ball of lint, and begged the chief surgeon to apply the lint to the arteries. The latter obeyed, with a certain feeling of curiosity. He was one of the most celebrated practitioners of that period, — a man truly enamoured of his profession, who repudiated none of its mysteries, and for whom chance was but the makeshift of ignorance.

He applied the lint to the artery, which quivered, bubbled, and then allowed the blood to escape only drop by drop. He could now tie up the artery with the greatest ease.

This time Balsamo obtained an undoubted triumph, and all present asked him where he had studied, and of what school he was.

"I am a German physician of the school of Göttingen," he replied, "and I have made this discovery you have just witnessed. However, gentlemen and fellow-practitioners, I wish this discovery to remain a secret for the present, as I have a wholesome terror of the stake, and the parliament of Paris might perhaps resume their functions once more, for the pleasure of condemning a sorcerer to be burned."

The head-surgeon was still plunged in a revery. Marat also seemed thoughtful, but he was the first to break the silence. "You said just now," said he, "that if you were to question this man about the result of this operation, he would reply truly, though the result is still veiled in futurity."

"I assert it again," replied Balsamo.

"Well, let us have the proof."

"What is this poor fellow's name?"

"Havard," replied Marat.

Balsamo turned to the patient, whose lips were yet murmuring the last words of the plaintive air.

"Well, my friend," asked he, "what do you augur from the state of this poor Havard?"

"What do I augur from his state?" replied the patient. "Stay! I must return from Brittany, where I was, to the Hôtel Dieu, where he is."

"Just so. Enter, look at him, and tell me the truth respecting him."

"Oh! he is very ill; his leg has been cut off."

"Indeed!" said Balsamo. "And has the operation been successful?"

"Exceedingly so; but —"

The patient's face darkened.

"But what?" asked Balsamo.

"But," resumed the patient, "he has a terrible trial to pass through. The fever — "

"When will it come on?"

"At seven o'clock this evening."

All the spectators looked at each other.

"And this fever?" asked Balsamo.

"Oh! it will make him very ill; but he will recover from the first attack."

"Are you sure?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then, after this first attack, will he be saved?"

"Alas! no," said the wounded man, sighing.

"Will the fever return, then?"

"Oh, yes! and more severely than before. Poor Havard! poor Havard!" he continued, "he has a wife and several children;" and his eyes filled with tears.

"Must his wife be a widow, then, and his children orphans?" asked Balsamo.

"Wait, wait!"

He clasped his hands.

"No, no," he exclaimed, his features lighting up with an expression of sublime faith; "no, his wife and children have prayed so much that they have obtained God's mercy for him."

"Then he will recover?"

"Yes."

"You hear, gentlemen," said Balsamo; "he will recover."

"Ask him in how many days," said Marat.

"In how many days, do you say?"

"Yes; you said he could indicate the phases, and the duration of his convalescence."

"I ask nothing better than to question him on the subject."

"Well, then, question him now."

"And when do you think Havard will recover?" said Balsamo.

"Oh! his cure will take a long time, — a month, six weeks, two months. He entered this hospital five days ago, and he will leave it two months and two weeks after having entered."

"And he will leave it cured?"

"Yes."

"But," said Marat, "unable to work, and consequently unable to maintain his wife and children."

Havard again clasped his hands. "Oh! God is good; God will provide for him!"

"And how will God provide for him?" asked Marat. "As I am in the way of learning to-day, I should much like to learn that."

"God has sent to his bedside a charitable man, who has taken pity upon him, and who has said to himself, 'poor Havard shall not want.'"

The spectators were amazed; Balsamo smiled.

"This is in truth a strange scene," said the head-surgeon, at the same time taking the patient's hand, and feeling his chest and forehead; "this man is dreaming."

"Do you think so?" said Balsamo.

Then darting upon the sick man a look of authority and energy, "Awake, Havard!" said he.

The young man opened his eyes with some difficulty, and gazed with profound surprise upon all these spectators, who had so soon laid aside their threatening attitude, and assumed an inoffensive manner toward him.

"Well," said he, sadly, "have you not operated yet? Are you still going to make me suffer?"

Balsamo was quick to make the reply, for he feared the invalid's emotion. But there was no need for such haste; the surprise of all the spectators was so great that none would have anticipated him.

"My friend," said he, "be calm. The head-surgeon has operated upon your leg in such a manner as to satisfy all the requirements of your condition. It seems, my poor fellow, that you are not very strong-minded, for you fainted at the first incision."

"Oh! so much the better," said the Breton, smilingly; "I felt nothing, and my sleep was even sweet and refreshing. What happiness, — my leg will not be cut off!"

But just at that moment the poor man looked down, and saw the bed full of blood, and his amputated leg lying near him. He uttered a scream, and this time fainted in reality.

"Now question him," said Balsamo, coldly, to Marat; "you will see if he replies."

Then, taking the head-surgeon aside, while the nurses carried the poor young man back to his bed, "Monsieur," said Balsamo, "you heard what your poor patient said?"

"Yes, Monsieur, that he would recover."

"He said something else; he said that God would take pity upon him, and would send him wherewithal to support his wife and children."

"Well?"

"Well, Monsieur, he told the truth on this point, as on the others. Only you must undertake to be the charitable medium of affording him this assistance. Here is a diamond, worth about twenty thousand francs; when the poor man is cured, sell it, and give him the proceeds. In the mean time, since the soul, as your pupil Monsieur Marat said very truly, has a great influence upon the body, tell Havard, as soon as he is restored to

consciousness, that his future comfort and that of his children is secured."

"But, Monsieur," said the surgeon, hesitating to take the ring which Balsamo offered him, "if he should not recover?"

"He will recover."

"Then allow me at least to give you a receipt."

"Monsieur!"

"That is the only condition upon which I can receive a jewel of such value."

"Do as you think right, Monsieur."

"Your name, if you please?"

"The Comte de Fenix."

The surgeon passed into the adjoining apartment, while Marat, overwhelmed, confounded, but still struggling against the evidence of his senses, approached Balsamo.

In five minutes the surgeon returned, holding in his hand the following receipt, which he gave Balsamo:

I have received from the Comte de Fenix a diamond, which he affirms to be worth twenty thousand francs, the value of which is to be given to the man Havard when he leaves the Hôtel Dieu.

This 15th of September, 1771.

GUILLOTIN, M.D.

Balsamo bowed to the doctor, took the receipt, and left the room, followed by Marat.

"You are forgetting your head," said Balsamo, for whom the wandering of the young student's thoughts was a great triumph.

"Ah, true!" said he; and he again picked up his dismal burden.

When they emerged into the street, both walked forward very quickly, without uttering a word; then, having

reached the Rue des Cordeliers, they ascended the steep stairs which led to the attic.

Marat, who had not forgotten the disappearance of his watch, stopped before the lodge of the portress, — if the den which she inhabited may be called by that name, — and asked for Dame Grivette.

A thin, stunted, miserable-looking child, about seven years old, replied, in a whining voice : " Mamma is gone out ; she said that when you came home I was to give you this letter."

" No, no, my little friend," said Marat ; " tell her to bring it me herself."

" Yes, Monsieur."

And Marat and Balsamo proceeded on their way.

" Ah ! " said Marat, pointing out a chair to Balsamo, and falling upon a stool himself, " I see the master has some fine secrets."

" It is because I have entered further than most men into the confidence of Nature and of God," replied Balsamo.

" Oh ! " said Marat, " how science proves man's omnipotence, and how proud one should be that he is a man ! "

" True, — and a physician, you should have added."

" Therefore I am proud of you, Master," said Marat.

" And yet," replied Balsamo, smiling, " I am but a poor physician of souls."

" Oh ! do not say that, Monsieur, — you, who stopped the patient's bleeding by material means."

" I thought my best cure was that of having prevented him from suffering. True, you assured me he was mad."

" He was so for a moment, certainly."

" What do you call madness ? Is it not an abstraction of the soul ? "

" Or of the mind," said Marat.

"We will not discuss the point. The soul serves me as a term for what I mean. When the object is found, it matters little how you call it."

"There is where we differ, Monsieur. You pretend you have found the thing, and seek only the name; I maintain that you seek both the object and the name."

"We will return to that immediately. You said, then, that madness was a temporary abstraction of the mind?"

"Certainly."

"Involuntary, is is not?"

"Yes; I have seen a madman at Bicêtre, who bit the iron bars of his cell, crying out all the time, 'Cook, your pheasants are very tender, but they are badly dressed.'"

"But you admit, at least, that this madness passes over the mind like a cloud, and that when it has passed, the mind resumes its former brightness?"

"That scarcely ever happens."

"Yet you saw our patient recover his senses perfectly after his insane dream."

"I saw it, but I did not understand what I saw. It is an exceptional case, — one of those strange events which the Israelites called miracles."

"No, Monsieur," said Balsamo; "it is simply the abstraction of the soul, the twofold isolation of spirit and matter, — of matter, a thing inert, dust, which will return to dust; and soul, the divine spark which was enclosed for a short period in that dark lantern called the body, and which, being the child of heaven, will return to heaven after the body has sunk to earth."

"Then you abstracted the soul momentarily from the body?"

"Yes, Monsieur; I commanded it to quit the miserable abode which it occupied. I raised it from the abyss of suffering in which pain had bound it, and transported it

into pure and heavenly regions. What, then, remained for the surgeon? That which remained for your dissecting knife, when you severed from the dead body that head you are carrying, — nothing but inert flesh, matter, clay."

"And in whose name did you command the soul?"

"In his name who created all souls by his breath, — the souls of worlds, the souls of men, — in the name of God."

"Then," said Marat, "you deny free-will?"

"I!" said Balsamo; "on the contrary, what am I doing at this moment? I show you, on the one hand, free-will; on the other, abstraction. I show you a dying man, a prey to excruciating pain; this man has a stoical soul, he anticipates the operation, he asks for it, he bears it, but he suffers. That is free-will. But when I approach the dying man, — I, the ambassador of God, the prophet, the apostle, — and taking pity upon this man who is my fellow-creature, I abstract, by the powers which the Lord has given me, the soul from the suffering body, this blind, inert, insensible body becomes a spectacle which the soul contemplates with a pitying eye from the height of its celestial sphere. Did you not hear Havard, when speaking of himself, say 'this poor Havard'? He did not say 'myself.' It was because this soul had in truth no longer any connection with the body, — it was already winging its way to heaven."

"But, by this way of reckoning, man is nothing," said Marat; "and I can no longer say to the tyrant, 'You have power over my body, but none over my soul.'"

"Ah! now you pass from truth to sophism; I have already told you, Monsieur, it is your failing. God lends the soul to the body, it is true; but it is no less true that during the time the soul animates this body, there is a

union between the two, an influence of one over the other, — a supremacy of matter over mind, or mind over matter, according as, for some purpose hidden from us, God permits either the body or the soul to be the ruling power. But it is no less true that the soul which animates the beggar is as pure as that which reigns in the bosom of the king. That is the dogma which you, an apostle of equality, ought to preach. Prove the equality of the spiritual essences in these two cases, since you can establish it by the aid of all that is most sacred in the eyes of men, by holy books and traditions, by science and faith. Of what importance is the equality of two substances? With physical equality you do not soar to the throne of God. Just now this poor wounded man, this ignorant child of the people, told you things concerning his illness which none among the doctors would have ventured to say. How was that? It was because his soul, temporarily freed from earthly ties, floated above this world, and saw from on high a mystery which our opaqueness of vision hides from us."

Marat turned his dead head back and forward upon the table, seeking a reply which he could not find. "Yes," muttered he, at last, "yes; there is something supernatural in all this."

"Perfectly natural, on the contrary, Monsieur. Cease to call supernatural what has its origin in the functions fulfilling the destiny of the soul. These functions are natural, although perhaps not known."

"But though unknown to us, Master, these functions cannot surely be a mystery to you. The horse, unknown to the Peruvians, was yet familiar to the Spaniards, who had tamed him."

"It would be presumptuous in me to say, 'I know.' I am more humble, Monsieur; I say, 'I believe.'"

"Well, what do you believe?"

"I believe that the first, the most powerful, of all laws is the law of progress. I believe that God has created nothing without having a beneficent design in view; only, as the duration of this world is uncalculated and incalculable, the progress is slow. Our planet, according to the Scriptures, was sixty centuries old when printing came like an immense beacon-light to illuminate the past and the future. With the advent of printing, obscurity and forgetfulness vanished. Printing is the memory of the world. Well! Gutenberg invented printing, and I have recovered my confidence."

"Ah!" said Marat, ironically, "you will perhaps be able at last to read men's hearts."

"Why not?"

"Then you will open that little window in men's breasts which the ancients so much desired to see?"

"There is no need for that, Monsieur. I shall separate the soul from the body; and the soul — the pure, immaculate daughter of God — will reveal to me all the turpitudes of the mortal covering it is condemned to animate."

"Can you reveal material secrets?"

"Why not?"

"Can you tell me, for instance, who has stolen my watch?"

"You lower science to a base level, Monsieur. But no matter. God's greatness is proved as much by a grain of sand as by the mountain, — by the flesh-worm as by the elephant. Yes, I will tell you who has stolen your watch."

Just then a timid knock was heard at the door. It was Marat's servant, who had returned, and who came, according to the young surgeon's order, to bring the letter.

CHAPTER VII.

MARAT'S PORTRESS.

THE door opened, and Dame Grivette entered. This woman, whom we have not before taken the trouble to sketch, because she was one of those characters whom the painter keeps in the background so long as he has no occasion for them, — this woman now advances in the moving picture of this history, and demands her place in the immense picture we have undertaken to unroll before the eyes of our readers, in which, if our genius equalled our good-will, we would introduce all classes of beings, from the beggar to the king, from Caliban to Ariel, from Ariel to God.

We shall now therefore attempt a sketch of Dame Grivette, who steps forth out of the shade, and advances toward us. She was a tall, withered creature, from thirty to thirty-five years of age, with dark sallow complexion, and blue eyes encircled with black rings, — the fearful type of that decline, that wasting-away, which is produced in densely populated towns by poverty, bad air, and every sort of degradation, mental as well as bodily, among those creatures whom God created so beautiful, and who would otherwise have become magnificent in their perfect development, as all living denizens of earth, air, and sky are when man has not made their life one long punishment, — when he has not tortured their limbs with chains and their stomachs with hunger, or with food almost as fatal.

Thus Marat's portress would have been a beautiful woman, if from her fifteenth year she had not dwelt in a den without air or light; if the fire of her natural instincts, fed by this oven-like heat, or by the icy cold, had not ceaselessly burned. She had long, thin hands, which the needle of the sempstress had furrowed with little cuts, which the suds of the wash-house had cracked and softened, which the burning coals of the kitchen had roasted and tanned, — but in spite of all, hands which, by their form, that indelible trace of the divine mould, would have been called royal, if, instead of being blistered by the broom, they had wielded the sceptre. So true is it that this poor human body is only the outward sign of our profession.

But in this woman the mind, which was superior to the body, and which consequently had resisted external circumstances better, kept watch like a lamp; it illumined, as it were, the body by a reflected light, and at times a ray of beauty, youth, intelligence, and love was seen to glance from her dulled and stupid eyes, — a ray of all the finest feelings of the human heart.

Balsamo gazed attentively at the woman, or rather at this singular nature, which from the first had arrested his attention.

The portress entered, holding the letter in her hand, and in a soft, insinuating voice, in the voice of an old woman, — for women condemned to poverty are old at thirty, — said, "Monsieur Marat, here is the letter you asked for."

"It was not the letter I wanted," said Marat; "I wished to see you."

"Well! here I am at your service, Monsieur Marat." Dame Grivette made a reverence. "What do you want with me?"

"You know very well what I want; I want to know something about my watch."

"Ah! well, there! I can't tell what has become of it. I saw it all day yesterday hanging from the nail over the mantelpiece."

"You mistake, all day yesterday it was in my fob; but when I went out at six o'clock in the evening, I put it under the candlestick, because I was going among a crowd, and I feared it might be stolen."

"If you put it under the candlestick, it must be there yet;" and with feigned simplicity, which she was far from suspecting to be so transparent, she raised the very candlestick of the pair which ornamented the mantelpiece, under which Marat had concealed his watch.

"Yes, that is the candlestick, sure enough," said the young man; "but where is the watch?"

"No; I see it is no longer there. Perhaps you did not put it there, Monsieur Marat."

"But when I tell you —"

"Look for it carefully."

"Oh! I have looked carefully," said Marat, with an angry glance.

"Then you have lost it."

"But I tell you that yesterday I put it under that candlestick myself."

"Then some one must have entered," said Dame Grivette; "you see so many people, so many strangers."

"All an excuse!" cried Marat, more and more enraged. "You know very well that no one has been here since yesterday. No, no; my watch is gone where the silver top of my last cane went, where the little silver spoon you know of went, and my knife with the six blades. I am robbed, Dame Grivette! I have borne much, but I shall not tolerate this; so take notice."

"But, Monsieur," said Dame Grivette, "do you mean to accuse me?"

"You ought to take care of my effects."

"I am not the only one to have the key."

"You are the portress."

"You give me a crown a month, and you expect to be as well served as if you had ten domestics."

"I do not care about being badly served, but I do care whether I am robbed or not."

"Monsieur, I am an honest women."

"Yes, an honest woman whom I shall give in charge to the police if my watch is not found in an hour."

"To the police?"

"Yes."

"To the police, — an honest woman like me?"

"An honest woman! an honest woman!"

"Yes, — and of whom nothing bad can be said; do you hear that?"

"Come, come! enough of this, Dame Grivette."

"Ah! I thought that you suspected me, when you went out."

"I have suspected you ever since the top of my cane disappeared."

"Well! Monsieur Marat, I will tell you something, in my turn."

"What will you tell me?"

"While you were away I have consulted my neighbors."

"Your neighbors, — for what purpose?"

"Respecting your suspicions."

"I had said nothing of them to you at the time."

"But I saw them plainly."

"And the neighbors? I am curious to know what they said."

"They said that if you suspect me, and have even gone so far as to impart your suspicions to another person, you must pursue the affair to the end."

"Well!"

"That is to say, you must prove that the watch has been taken."

"It has been taken, since it was there, and is now gone."

"Yes, but taken by me, — taken by me, do you understand? Oh! justice requires proofs; your word will not be sufficient, Monsieur Marat; you are no more than one of ourselves, Monsieur Marat."

Balsamo, calm as ever, looked on during this scene. He saw that though Marat's conviction was not altered, he had, nevertheless, lowered his tone.

"Therefore," continued the portress, "if you do not render justice to my probity, if you do not make some reparation to my character, it is I who will send for the police, as our landlord just now advised me to do."

Marat bit his lips. He knew there was a real danger in this. The landlord was an old, rich, retired merchant. He lived on the third story; and the scandal-mongers of the quarter did not hesitate to assert that, some ten years before, he had not been indifferent to the charms of the portress, who was then kitchen-maid to his wife.

Now, Marat attended mysterious meetings. Marat was a young man of not very settled habits, besides being addicted to concealment and suspected by the police; and for all these reasons he was not anxious to have an affair with the commissary, seeing that it might tend to place him in the hands of Monsieur de Sartines, who liked much to read the papers of young men such as Marat, and to send the authors of such noble writings to houses of meditation such as Vincennes, the Bastille, Charenton, and Bicêtre.

Marat, therefore, lowered his tone; but in proportion as he did so, the portress raised hers. The result was that this nervous and hysterical woman raged like a flame

which is fed by a current of air. Threats, oaths, cries, tears, — she employed all in turn ; it was a regular tempest.

Then Balsamo judged that the time had come for him to interfere. He advanced toward the woman, and looking at her with an ominous and fiery glance, he stretched two fingers toward her, uttering, not so much with his lips as with his eyes, his thought, his whole will, a word which Marat could not hear.

Immediately Dame Grivette became silent, tottered, and, losing her balance, staggered backward, her eyes fearfully dilated, and fell upon the bed without uttering a word. After a short interval her eyes closed and opened again, but this time the pupils could not be seen ; her tongue moved convulsively, but her body was motionless ; and yet her hands trembled as if shaken by fever.

"Oh ! oh !" said Marat; "like the wounded man in the hospital !"

"Yes."

"Then she is asleep ?"

"Silence !" said Balsamo. Then, addressing Marat, "Monsieur," said he, "the moment has now come when all your incredulity must cease. Pick up that letter which this woman was bringing you, and which she dropped when she fell."

Marat obeyed. "Well ?" he asked.

"Wait !" and taking the letter from Marat's hands, "You know from whom this letter comes ?" asked Balsamo of the somnambulist.

"No, Monsieur," she replied.

Balsamo held the sealed letter close to the woman. "Read it to Monsieur Marat, who wishes to know the contents."

"She cannot read," said Marat.

"Yes, but you can read ?"

"Of course."

"Well, read it, and she will read it after you, in proportion as the words are engraven upon your mind."

Marat broke the seal of the letter and read it, while Dame Grivette, standing, and trembling beneath the all-powerful will of Balsamo, repeated, word for word, as Marat read them to himself, the following words: —

MY DEAR HIPPOCRATES, — Apelles has just finished his portrait; he has sold it for fifty francs, and these fifty francs are to be eaten to-day at the tavern in the Rue St. Jacques. Will you come?

P. S. — It is understood part is to be drunk.

Your friend,
L. DAVID.

It was word for word what was written. Marat let the paper fall from his hand.

"Well," said Balsamo, "you see that Dame Grivette also has a soul, and that this soul wakes while she sleeps."

"And a strange soul," said Marat, — "a soul which can read when the body cannot."

"Because the soul knows everything; because the soul can reproduce by reflection. Try to make her read this when she is awake, — that is to say, when the body has wrapped the soul in its shadow, — and you will see."

Marat was dumb; all his materialistic philosophy rebelled within him, but he could not find a reply.

"Now," continued Balsamo, "we will pass on to what interests you most, — that is to say, to what has become of your watch. Dame Grivette," said he, turning to her, "who has taken Monsieur Marat's watch?"

The somnambulist made a violent gesture of denial. "I do not know," said she.

"You know perfectly well," persisted Balsamo, "and

you shall tell me." Then, with a more decided exertion of his will, "Who has taken Monsieur Marat's watch? Speak!"

"Dame Grivette has not stolen Monsieur Marat's watch. Why does Monsieur Marat believe she has?"

"If it is not she who has taken it, tell me who has?"

"I do not know."

"You see," said Marat, "conscience is an impenetrable refuge."

"Well, since you have only this last doubt," said Balsamo, "you shall be convinced." Then, turning again to the portress, "Tell me who took the watch; I will it."

"Come, come," said Marat; "what you ask is an impossibility!"

"You heard?" said Balsamo; "I have said that I will it."

Then, under the pressure of this imperious command, the unhappy woman began to wring her hands and arms as if she were mad; a shudder like that of an epileptic fit ran through her whole body; her mouth was distorted with a hideous expression of terror and weakness; she threw herself back, rigid, as if she were in a painful convulsion, and fell upon the bed.

"No, no," said she, "I will rather die!"

"Well," said Balsamo, with a burst of anger which made the fire flash from his eyes, "you shall die, if necessary, but you shall speak. Your silence and your obstinacy are sufficient indications for me; but for an incredulous person we must have irrefragable proofs. Speak! I will it; who has taken the watch?"

The nervous excitement was at its height; all the strength and power of the somnambulist struggled against Balsamo's will; inarticulate cries escaped from her lips, which were stained with a reddish foam.

"She will fall into an epileptic fit," said Marat.

"Fear nothing; it is the demon of falsehood who is in her, and who refuses to come out!"

Then, turning toward the woman, and throwing into her face as much magnetic fluid as his hands could contain, "Speak!" said he; "who has taken the watch?"

"Dame Grivette," replied the somnambulist, in an almost inaudible voice.

"When did she take it?"

"Yesterday evening."

"Where was it?"

"Under the candlestick."

"What has she done with it?"

"She has taken it to the Rue St. Jacques."

"Where in the Rue St. Jacques?"

"To No. 29."

"Which story?"

"The fifth."

"To whom did she give it?"

"To a shoemaker's apprentice."

"What is his name?"

"Simon."

"What is this man to her?"

The woman was silent.

"What is this man to her?"

The somnambulist was still silent.

"What is this man to her?" repeated Balsamo.

The same silence.

Balsamo extended toward her his hand impregnated with the fluid, and the unfortunate woman, overwhelmed by this terrible attack, had only strength to murmur, "Her lover."

Marat uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"Silence!" said Balsamo; "allow conscience to speak."

Then, continuing to address the woman, who was trembling all over, and bathed in perspiration, "And who advised Dame Grivette to steal the watch?" he asked.

"No one. She raised the candlestick by accident; she saw the watch, and the demon tempted her."

"Did she do it from want?"

"No; for she did not sell the watch."

"She gave it away, then?"

"Yes."

"To Simon?"

The somnambulist made a violent effort.

"To Simon," said she.

Then she covered her face with her hands, and burst into a flood of tears.

Balsamo glanced at Marat, who, with gaping mouth, disordered hair, and dilated eyes, was gazing at the fearful spectacle.

"Well, Monsieur," said Balsamo, "you see at last the struggle between the body and the soul. You see conscience forced to yield, even in a redoubt which it had believed impregnable. Do you confess now that God has forgotten nothing in this world, and that he is in everything? Then deny no longer that there is a conscience; deny no longer that there is a soul; deny no longer the unknown, young man! Above all, do not deny faith, which is power supreme. And since you are ambitious, Monsieur Marat, study; speak little, think much, and do not judge your superiors lightly. Adieu! my words have opened a vast field before you; cultivate this field, which contains hidden treasures. Adieu! Happy will you be if you can conquer the demon of incredulity which is in you, as I have conquered the demon of falsehood which was in this woman;" and with these words, which caused

the blush of shame to tinge the young man's cheeks, he left the room.

Marat did not even think of taking leave of him. But after his first stupor was over, he perceived that Dame Grivette was still sleeping. This sleep struck terror to his soul. Marat would rather have seen a corpse upon his bed, even if Monsieur de Sartines should interpret the fact after his own fashion.

He gazed on this lifeless form, these turned-up eyes, these palpitations, and he felt afraid. His fear increased when the living corpse rose, advanced toward him, took his hand, and said, "Come with me, Monsieur Marat."

"Whither?"

"To the Rue St. Jacques."

"Why?"

"Come, come; he commands me to take you."

Marat, who had fallen upon a chair, rose. Then Dame Grivette, still asleep, opened the door, and descended the stairs with the stealthy pace of a cat, scarcely touching the steps. Marat followed, fearing every moment that she would fall, and in falling break her neck. Having reached the foot of the stairs, she crossed the threshold and entered the street, still followed by the young man, whom she led in this manner to the house and the garret she had pointed out. She knocked at the door; Marat felt his heart beat so violently that he thought it must be audible.

A man was in the garret; he opened the door. In this man Marat recognized a workman of from twenty-five to thirty years of age, whom he had several times seen in the porter's lodge. Seeing Dame Grivette followed by Marat, the man started back. But the somnambulist walked straight to the bed, and putting her hand under the thin bolster, she drew out the watch, which she gave

to Marat, while the shoemaker Simon, pale with terror, dared not utter a word, and watched with alarmed gaze the least movements of this woman, whom he believed to be mad.

Scarcely had her hand touched Marat's, in returning him the watch, when she gave a deep sigh and murmured: "He awakes me! He awakes me!"

Her nerves relaxed like a cable freed from the capstan, the vital spark again animated her eyes, and finding herself face to face with Marat, her hand in his, and still holding the watch, — that is to say, the irrefragable proof of her crime, — she fell upon the floor of the garret in a deep swoon.

"Does conscience really exist, then?" asked Marat of himself as he left the room, doubt in his heart, and revery in his eyes.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN AND HIS WORKS.

WHILE Marat was employing his time so profitably in philosophizing on conscience and a dual existence, another philosopher in the Rue Plastrière was also busy in reconstructing, piece by piece, every part of the preceding evening's adventures, and asking himself if he were or were not a very wicked man. Rousseau, with his elbows leaning upon the table, and his head drooping heavily on his left shoulder, was deep in thought. His philosophical and political works, "Émile" and "Le Contrat Social," were lying open before him.

From time to time, when his reflections required it, he stooped down to turn over the leaves of these books, which he knew by heart. "Ah! good heavens!" said he, reading a paragraph from "Émile" upon liberty of conscience, "what incendiary expressions! What philosophy! Just Heaven! was there ever in the world a firebrand like me? What!" he added, clasping his hands above his head, "have I written such violent outbursts against the throne, — the altar of society? I can no longer be surprised if some dark and brooding minds have taken advantage of my sophisms, and have gone astray in the paths which I have strewed for them with all the flowers of rhetoric. I have acted as the disturber of society!"

He rose from his chair and paced the room in great agitation. "I have," he continued, "abused those men

in power who exercise tyranny over authors. Fool, barbarian that I was! Those people are right, — a thousand times right! What am I, if not a man dangerous to the State? My words, written to enlighten the masses, — at least, such was the pretext I gave myself, — have become a torch which will set the world on fire. I have sown discourses on the inequality of ranks, projects of universal fraternity, plans of education; and now I reap a harvest of passions so ferocious that they would overturn the whole framework of society, of intestine wars capable of depopulating the world, and of manners so barbarous that they would roll back the civilization of ten centuries! Oh, I am a great criminal!"

He read once more a page of his "Savoyard Vicar." "Yes, that is it! 'Let us unite to form plans for our happiness.' I have written it! 'Let us give our virtues the force which others give to their vices.' I have written that also." And Rousseau became still more agitated and unhappy than before.

"Thus, by my fault," said he, "brothers are united to brothers, and one day or other some of these concealed places of meeting will be invaded by the police; the whole nest of these men, who have sworn to eat one another in case of treachery, will be arrested, and one bolder than the others will take my book from his pocket and will say: 'What do you complain of? We are disciples of Monsieur Rousseau; we are going through a course of philosophy?' Oh, how Voltaire will laugh at that! There is no fear of that courtier's ever getting into such a wasps' nest!" The idea that Voltaire would ridicule him, put the Genevese philosopher into a violent rage. "I a conspirator!" he muttered; "I must be in my dotage, certainly! Am I not, in truth, a fine conspirator?"

He was at this point when Thérèse entered with the

breakfast; but he did not see her. She perceived that he was attentively reading a passage in the "Réveries d'un Solitaire." "Very good," said she, placing the hot milk noisily upon the very book; "my peacock is looking at himself in the glass! Monsieur reads his books! Monsieur Rousseau admires himself!"

"Come, Thérèse," said the philosopher, "patience, — leave me; I am in no humor for laughing."

"Oh, yes, it is magnificent, is it not?" said she, mockingly. "You are delighted with yourself. What vanity authors have! and how angry they are to see it in us poor women! If I happen only to look in my little mirror, Monsieur grumbles, and calls me a coquette."

She proceeded in this strain, making him the most unhappy man in the world, as if Rousseau had not been richly enough endowed by nature in this respect. He drank his milk without moistening his bread. He reflected.

"Very good," said she; "there you are, thinking again. You are going to write another book full of horrible things."

Rousseau shuddered.

"You dream," continued Thérèse, "of your ideal women, and you write books which young girls ought not to read, or else profane works which ought to be burned by the hands of the common executioner."

The martyr shuddered again. Thérèse had touched him to the quick. "No," he replied; "I will write nothing more which can cause an evil thought. On the contrary, I wish to write a book which all honest people will read with transports of joy."

"Oh, oh!" said Thérèse, taking away the cup, "that is impossible; your mind is full of obscene thoughts. Only the other day I heard you read some passage or other, and in it you spoke of women whom you adored. You are a satyr; a magus!"

This word "magus" was one of the most abusive in Thérèse's vocabulary; it always made Rousseau shudder. "There, there now!" said he; "my dear woman, you will find that you will be satisfied. I intend to write that I have found the means of regenerating the world without causing pain to a single individual by the changes which will be effected. Yes, yes; I will mature this project. No revolutions! Great heavens! my good Thérèse, no revolutions!"

"Well, we shall see," said the housekeeper. "Stay! some one rings."

Thérèse went out, and returned almost immediately with a handsome young man, whom she requested to wait in the outer apartment. Then rejoining Rousseau, who was already taking notes with his pencil, "Be quick," said she, "and lock up all these infamous things. There is some one who wishes to see you."

"Who is it?"

"A nobleman of the court."

"Did he not tell you his name?"

"A good idea! as if I would receive a stranger!"

"Tell it me, then."

"Monsieur de Coigny."

"Monsieur de Coigny!" exclaimed Rousseau; "Monsieur de Coigny, gentleman-in-waiting to the dauphin?"

"It must be the same; a charming youth, a most amiable young man."

"I will go, Thérèse."

Rousseau gave a glance at himself in the mirror, dusted his coat, wiped his slippers, which were only old shoes trodden down in the heels by long wear, and entered the dining-room, where the gentleman was waiting. The latter had not sat down. He was looking, with a sort of curiosity, at the dried plants pasted by Rousseau upon

paper, and enclosed in frames of black wood. At the noise Rousseau made in entering, he turned, and bowing most courteously, "Have I the honor," said he, "of speaking to Monsieur Rousseau?"

"Yes, Monsieur," replied the philosopher, in a morose voice, not unmingled, however, with a kind of admiration for the remarkable beauty and unaffected elegance of the person before him.

Monsieur de Coigny was, in fact, one of the handsomest and most accomplished gentlemen in France. It must have been for him, and such as he, that the costume of that period was invented. It displayed to the greatest advantage the symmetry and beauty of his well-turned leg, his broad shoulders, and deep chest; it gave a majestic air to his exquisitely formed head, and added to the ivory whiteness of his aristocratic hands.

His examination satisfied Rousseau, who, like a true artist, admired the beautiful wherever he met with it.

"Monsieur," said he, "what can I do for you?"

"You have been perhaps informed, Monsieur," replied the young nobleman, "that I am the Comte de Coigny. I may add that I come from her Royal Highness the Dauphiness."

Rousseau reddened and bowed. Thérèse, who was standing in a corner of the dining-room, with her hands in her pockets, gazed with complacent eyes at the handsome messenger of the greatest princess in France.

"Her Royal Highness sends to me! For what purpose?" asked Rousseau. "But take a chair, if you please, Monsieur."

Rousseau sat down, and Monsieur de Coigny drew forward a straw-bottomed chair and followed his example.

"Monsieur, here is the fact. The other day, when his Majesty dined at Trianon, he expressed a good deal of

admiration for your music, which is indeed charming. His Majesty sang your prettiest airs, and the dauphiness, who is always anxious to please his Majesty in every respect, thought that it might give him pleasure to see one of your comic operas performed in the theatre at Trianon."

Rousseau bowed low.

"I come, therefore, to ask you, from the dauphiness —"

"Oh, Monsieur!" interrupted Rousseau, "my permission has nothing to do in the matter. My pieces, and the airs belonging to them, are the property of the theatre where they are represented. The permission must therefore be sought from the comedians, and her Royal Highness will, I am assured, find no obstacles in that quarter. The actors will be too happy to play and sing before his Majesty and the court."

"That is not precisely what I am commissioned to request, Monsieur," said Monsieur de Coigny. "Her Royal Highness the Dauphiness wishes to give a more complete and more recherché entertainment to his Majesty. He knows all your operas, Monsieur."

Another bow from Rousseau.

"And sings them charmingly."

Rousseau bit his lips. "It is too much honor, Monsieur," he stammered.

"Now," pursued Monsieur de Coigny, "as several ladies of the court are excellent musicians and sing delightfully, and as several gentlemen also have studied music with some success, whichever of your operas the dauphiness may choose will be performed by this company of ladies and gentlemen, the principal actors being their Royal Highnesses."

Rousseau bounded in his chair. "I assure you, Monsieur," said he, "that this is a signal honor conferred

upon me, and I beg you will offer my most humble thanks to the dauphiness."

"Oh! that is not all," said Monsieur de Coigny, with a smile.

"Ah!"

"The troupe thus composed is more illustrious, certainly, than that usually employed, but also more inexperienced. The superintendence and the advice of a master are therefore indispensable. The performance ought to be worthy of the august spectator who will occupy the royal box, and also of the illustrious author."

Rousseau rose to bow again. This time the compliment had touched him, and he saluted Monsieur de Coigny most graciously.

"For this purpose, Monsieur," continued the gentleman-in-waiting, "her Royal Highness requests your company at Trianon, to superintend the general rehearsal of the work."

"Oh!" said Rousseau, "her Royal Highness cannot surely think of such a thing. I at Trianon?"

"Well?" said Monsieur de Coigny, with the most natural air possible.

"Oh! Monsieur, you are a man of taste and judgment; you have more tact than the majority of men: answer me, on your conscience, is not the idea of Rousseau, the philosopher, the outlaw, the misanthrope, attending at court, enough to make the whole cabal split their sides with laughter?"

"I do not see," replied Monsieur de Coigny, coldly, "how the laughter and the remarks of that foolish set which persecutes you should disturb the repose of a gallant man, and an author who may lay claim to be the first in the kingdom. If you have this weakness, Monsieur Rousseau, conceal it carefully; it alone would be sufficient to

raise a laugh at your expense. As to what remarks may be made, you will confess that they may be modified by the fact that the pleasure and the wishes of her Royal Highness the Dauphiness, presumptive heiress of the French kingdom, are in question."

"Certainly," said Rousseau, "certainly."

"Can it be, possibly, a lingering feeling of false shame?" said Monsieur de Coigny, smiling. "Because you have been severe upon kings, do you fear to humanize yourself? Ah! Monsieur Rousseau, you have given valuable lessons to the human race, but I hope you do not hate them. And, besides, you certainly except the ladies of the blood royal."

"Monsieur, you are very kind to press me so much; but think of my position, — I live retired, alone, unhappy."

Thérèse made a grimace. "Unhappy!" said she; "he is hard to please!"

"Whatever effort I may make, there will always be something in my features and manner unpleasing to the eyes of the king and the princesses, who seek only joy and happiness. What should I do there; what should I say?"

"One might suspect that you distrust yourself! But, Monsieur, do you not think that he who has written the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' and the 'Confessions' must have more talent for speaking and acting than all of us others put together, no matter what position we occupy?"

"I assure you, Monsieur, it is impossible."

"That word, Monsieur, is not known to princes."

"And for that very reason, Monsieur, I shall remain at home."

"Monsieur, you will not inflict on me — the rash messenger who undertook to give satisfaction to Madame the Dauphiness — the mortal injury of obliging me to return

to Versailles vanquished and ashamed? It would be such a blow to me that I should immediately retire into exile. Come, my dear Monsieur Rousseau, grant to me, a man full of the deepest sympathy for your works, this favor, — a favor which you would refuse to supplicating kings."

"Monsieur, your kindness gains my heart, your eloquence is irresistible, and your voice moves me more than I can tell you."

"Will you allow yourself to be persuaded?"

"No, I cannot, — no, decidedly; my health forbids such a journey."

"A journey! Oh! Monsieur Rousseau, what are you thinking of? An hour and a quarter in a carriage!"

"Yes, for you and your prancing horses."

"But all the equipages of the court are at your disposal, Monsieur Rousseau. The dauphiness charged me to tell you that there is an apartment prepared for you at Trianon; for she is unwilling that you should have to return so late to Paris. The dauphin, who knows all your works by heart, said, before the whole court, that he would be proud to show the room in his palace where Monsieur Rousseau had slept."

Thérèse uttered a cry of admiration, not for Rousseau, but for the good prince.

Rousseau could not withstand this last mark of goodwill. "I must surrender," said he, "for never have I been so well attacked."

"Your heart only is vanquished, Monsieur," replied De Coigny; "your mind is impregnable."

"I will go then, Monsieur, in obedience to the wishes of her Royal Highness."

"Oh, Monsieur, receive my personal thanks! As regards the dauphiness's, permit me to abstain. She would feel annoyed at being forestalled, as she means to pay

them to you in person this evening. Besides, you know, it is the man's part to thank a young and adorable lady who is good enough to make advances to him."

"True, Monsieur," replied Rousseau, smiling; "but old men have the privilege of pretty women, — they are sought after."

"If you will name your hour, Monsieur Rousseau, I will send my carriage for you; or rather, I will come for you myself."

"No, thank you, Monsieur. I must positively refuse your kind offer. I will go to Trianon, but let me go freely, in my own way. From this moment leave me to myself. I shall come, that is all. Tell me the hour."

"What, Monsieur! you will not allow me to introduce you? I know I am not worthy of the honor, and that a name like yours needs no announcement."

"Monsieur, I am aware that at court you are more than I am anywhere in the world. I do not refuse your offer, therefore, from any motives personal to yourself, but I love my liberty. I wish to go as if I were merely taking a walk, and — in short, that is my ultimatum."

"Monsieur, I bow to your decision, and should be most unwilling to displease you in any particular. The rehearsal begins at six o'clock."

"Very well. At a quarter before six I shall be at Trianon."

"But by what conveyance?"

"That is my affair, — these are my horses." He pointed to his legs, which were still well formed, and clad with some pretension.

"Five leagues!" said Monsieur de Coigny, alarmed; "you will be exhausted. Take care, — it will be a fatiguing evening!"

"In that case I have my carriage and my horses also,

— a fraternal carriage, the popular vehicle, which belongs to my neighbor as well as to myself, and which costs only fifteen sous."

"Oh, good heavens! The omnibus! You make me shudder!"

"Its benches, which seem to you so hard, are to me like the Sybarite's couch. To me they seem stuffed with down, or with rose-leaves. Adieu, Monsieur, till this evening!"

Monsieur de Coigny, seeing himself thus dismissed, took his leave after a multitude of thanks, instructions more or less precise, and repeated offers of service. He descended the dark staircase, accompanied by Rousseau to the landing, and by Thérèse half-way down the stairs. He entered his carriage, which was waiting in the street, and drove back to Versailles, smiling to himself.

Thérèse returned to the apartment, slamming the door with angry violence, which foretold a storm for Rousseau.

CHAPTER IX.

ROUSSEAU'S TOILET.

When Monsieur de Coigny was gone, Rousseau, whose ideas this visit had entirely changed, threw himself into a little armchair, with a deep sigh, and said in a sleepy tone: "Oh, how tiresome this is! How these people weary me with their persecutions!"

Thérèse caught the last words as she entered, and placing herself before Rousseau, "How proud we are!" said she.

"I?" asked Rousseau, surprised.

"Yes; you are a vain fellow, — a hypocrite!"

"I?"

"Yes, you; you are enchanted to go to court, and you conceal your joy under this pretended indifference."

"Oh, good heavens!" replied Rousseau, shrugging his shoulders, and humiliated at being so truly described.

"Do you not wish to make me believe that it is not a great honor for you to perform for the king the airs which you thump here upon your spinet, idler that you are?"

Rousseau looked angrily at his wife. "You are a simpleton," said he; "it is no honor for a man such as I am to appear before a king. To what is this man indebted that he is on the throne? To a caprice of nature, which gave him a queen as his mother; but I am worthy of being called before the king to minister to his recreation.

It is to my labor I owe it, and to the fame acquired by my labor."

Thérèse was not a woman to be so easily conquered. "I wish Monsieur de Sartines heard you talking in this style; he would give you a lodging in Bicêtre, or a cell at Charenton."

"Because this Monsieur de Sartines is a tyrant in the pay of another tyrant, and because man is defenceless against tyrants with the aid of his genius alone. But if Monsieur de Sartines were to persecute me — "

"Well, what then?" asked Thérèse.

"Ah, yes!" sighed Rousseau; "yes, I know that would delight my enemies!"

"Why have you enemies?" continued Thérèse. "Because you are ill-natured, and because you have attacked every one. Ah, Monsieur de Voltaire knows how to make friends, he does!"

"True!" said Rousseau, with an angelic smile.

"But Monsieur de Voltaire is a gentleman; he is the intimate friend of the king of Prussia; he has horses, he is rich, and lives in his chateau at Ferney. And all that he owes to his merit. Therefore, when he goes to court, he does not act the disdainful man, he is quite at home there."

"And do you think," said Rousseau, "that I shall not be at home there? Think you that I do not know where all the money that is spent there comes from, or that I am duped by the respect which is paid to the master? Oh! my good woman, who judgest everything falsely, remember, if I am disdainful, it is because I really feel contempt; remember that if I despise the pomp of these courtiers, it is because they have stolen their riches!"

"Stolen!" said Thérèse, with inexpressible indignation.

"Yes, stolen, — from you, from me, from every one. All the gold they have upon their fine clothes should be

restored to the unhappy ones who want bread. That is the reason why I, who know all these things, go so reluctantly to court."

"I do not say that the people are happy; but the king is always the king."

"Well, I obey him; what more does he want?"

"Ah, you obey because you are afraid! You must not say in my hearing that you go against your will, or that you are a brave man; for if so, I shall reply that you are a hypocrite, and that you are very glad to go."

"I do not fear anything!" said Rousseau, superbly.

"Good! Just go and say to the king one quarter of what you have been telling me the last half-hour."

"I shall assuredly do so, if my feelings prompt me."

"You?"

"Yes. Have I ever recoiled?"

"Bah! You dare not take a bone from a cat when she is gnawing it, for fear she should scratch you! What would you be if surrounded by guards and swordsmen? Look you, I know you as well as if I were your mother. You will just now go and shave yourself afresh, oil your hair, and make yourself beautiful; you will display your leg to the utmost advantage; you will put on your interesting little winking expression, because your eyes are small and round, and if you opened them naturally, that would be seen, while when you wink, you make people believe that they are as large as carriage entrances. You will ask me for your silk stockings, you will put on your chocolate-colored coat with steel buttons, and your beautiful new wig; you will order a coach, and my philosopher will go and be adored by the ladies! And to-morrow — ah, to-morrow! — there will be such ecstatic reveries, such interesting languor! You will have come

back amorous; you will sigh and write verses, and you will dilute your coffee with your tears. Oh, how well I know you!"

"You are wrong, my dear," said Rousseau. "I tell you I am reluctantly obliged to go to court. I go because, after all, I fear to cause scandal, as every honest citizen should. Moreover, I am not one of those who refuse to acknowledge the supremacy of one citizen in a republic; but as to making advances, as to brushing my new coat against the gold spangles of these gentlemen of the Œil-de-Bœuf, — no, no! I shall do nothing of the sort; and if you catch me doing so, laugh at me as much as you please."

"Then you will not dress?" said Thérèse, sarcastically.

"No."

"You will not put on your new wig?"

"No."

"You will not wink with your little eyes?"

"I tell you I will go like a free man, without affectation and without fear. I will go to court as if I were going to the theatre; and let the actors like me or not, I care not for them."

"Oh! you will at least trim your beard," said Thérèse; "it is half a foot long!"

"I tell you I shall make no change."

Thérèse burst into so loud and prolonged a laugh that Rousseau was obliged to take refuge in the next room. But the housekeeper had not finished her persecutions; she had them of all colors and kinds. She opened the closet and took out his best coat, his clean linen, and beautifully polished shoes. She spread all these articles out upon the bed and over the chairs in the apartment; but Rousseau did not seem to pay the least attention.

At last Thérèse said: "Come, it is time for you to dress.

A court toilet is no small matter. You will have barely time to reach Versailles at the appointed hour."

"I have told you, Thérèse, that I shall do very well as I am. It is the same dress in which I present myself every day among my fellow-citizens. A king is but a citizen like myself."

"Come, come!" said Thérèse, trying to tempt him and bring him to her purpose by artful insinuation; "do not pout, Jacques, and don't be foolish. Here are your clothes. Your razor is ready; I have sent for the barber, in case your nerves to-day —"

"Thank you, my dear," replied Rousseau; "I will just give myself a brush, and I will take my shoes, because I cannot go out in slippers."

"Is he going to be firm, I wonder?" thought Thérèse.

She tried to coax him, sometimes by coquetry, sometimes by persuasion, and sometimes by the violence of her raillery. But Rousseau knew her, and saw the snare. He knew that the moment he should give way, he would be unmercifully disgraced and ridiculed by his better-half. He determined, therefore, not to give way, and abstained from looking at the fine clothes, which would set off what he termed his natural advantages.

Thérèse watched him. She had only one resource left, — this was the glance which Rousseau never failed to give in the glass before he went out; for the philosopher was neat to excess, if there can be excess in neatness.

But Rousseau continued to be on his guard; and as he had caught Thérèse's watchful look, he turned his back to the looking-glass. The hour arrived; the philosopher had filled his head with all the disagreeable remarks he could think of to say to the king. He repeated some scraps of them to himself while he buckled his shoes, then tucked

his hat under his arm, seized his cane, and taking advantage of a moment when Thérèse could not see him, he pulled down his coat and his waistcoat with both hands, to smooth the creases.

Thérèse now returned, handed him a handkerchief, which he plunged into his huge pocket, and then accompanied him to the landing-place, saying: "Come, Jacques, be reasonable; you look quite frightful, — you have the air of a counterfeiter."

"Adieu!" said Rousseau.

"You look like a thief, Monsieur," said Thérèse; "take care!"

"Take care of fire," said Rousseau, "and do not touch my papers."

"You have just the air of a spy, I assure you!" said Thérèse, in despair.

Rousseau made no reply; he descended the steps singing, and favored by the obscurity, he gave his hat a brush with his sleeve, smoothed his shirt-frill with his left hand, and touched up his toilet with a rapid but skilful movement.

Arrived at the foot of the stairs, he boldly stepped into the mud of the Rue Plastrière, but walking on tiptoe, and reached the Champs-Elysées, where those honest vehicles which for the sake of exactness we will call *patachès* were stationed, and which, so late as ten years ago, still carried, or rather bundled, from Paris to Versailles those travellers who were obliged to use economy.

CHAPTER X.

THE SIDE-SCENES OF TRIANON.

THE adventures of Rousseau's journey are of no importance. A Swiss, an assistant-clerk, a citizen, and an abbé were of course among his travelling companions.

He arrived at half-past five. The court was already assembled at Trianon, and the performers were going over their parts while waiting for the king; as to the author, no one thought of him. Some were aware that Monsieur Rousseau, of Geneva, was to come to direct the rehearsal; but they took no greater interest in seeing Monsieur Rousseau than they would in seeing Monsieur Rameau, or Monsieur Marmontel, or any other of those singular animals, to a sight of which the courtiers sometimes treated themselves in their drawing-rooms or country houses.

Rousseau was received by the usher-in-waiting, who had been ordered by Monsieur de Coigny to inform him as soon as the philosopher should arrive. This young nobleman hastened with his usual courtesy, and received Rousseau with most amiable greetings. But as soon as he had taken a comprehensive view of Rousseau's person, he began to stare at him with astonishment; and he could not refrain from repeating the examination.

Rousseau was dusty, pale, and dishevelled, and his paleness rendered conspicuous such a beard as no master of the ceremonies had ever seen reflected in the mirrors of Versailles.

Rousseau felt deeply embarrassed under Monsieur de Coigny's scrutiny, but more embarrassed still when, approaching the hall of the theatre, he saw the profusion of splendid dresses, valuable lace, diamonds, and blue ribbons, which, with the gilding of the hall, produced the effect of a bouquet of flowers in an immense basket.

Rousseau felt ill at ease also when he had breathed this perfumed atmosphere, so intoxicating to plebeian nerves. Yet he was obliged to proceed and put a bold face on the matter. Multitudes of eyes were fixed upon him who thus formed a stain, as it were, on the polish of the assembly. Monsieur de Coigny, still preceding him, led him to the orchestra, where the musicians were awaiting him. When there, he felt rather relieved, and while his music was performed, he seriously reflected that the worst danger was past, that the step was taken, and that all the reasoning in the world could now be of no avail.

Already the dauphiness was on the stage, in her costume as Colette; she waited for Colin. Monsieur de Coigny was changing his dress in his box. Suddenly the king entered, surrounded by a crowd of bending heads. Louis smiled, and seemed to be in the best humor possible. The dauphin seated himself at his right hand, and the Comte de Provence, arriving soon after, took his place on the left. On a sign from the king, the fifty persons who composed the assembly, private as it was, took their seats.

"Well, why do you not begin?" asked Louis.

"Sire," said the dauphiness, "the shepherds and shepherdesses are not yet dressed; we are waiting for them."

"They can perform in their usual dresses," said the king.

"No, Sire," replied the dauphiness; "for we wish to try the stage-dresses and costumes by candle-light, to be certain of the effect."

"You are right, Madame," said the king; "then let us take a stroll;" and Louis rose, to make the circuit of the corridor and the stage. Besides, he was rather uneasy at not seeing Madame Dubarry.

When the king had left the box, Rousseau contemplated in a melancholy mood and with an aching heart the empty hall and his own solitary position, — it was a singular contrast to the reception he had anticipated. He had pictured to himself that on his entrance all the groups would open before him; that the curiosity of the courtiers would be even more importunate and more significant than that of the Parisians; he had feared questions and presentations; and lo, no one paid any attention to him! He thought that his long beard was not yet long enough, that rags would not have been more remarked than his old clothes, and he applauded himself for not having been so ridiculous as to aim at elegance. But in the bottom of his heart he felt humiliated at being thus reduced to the simple post of leader of the orchestra. Suddenly an officer approached, and asked him if he was not Monsieur Rousseau?

"Yes, Monsieur," he replied.

"Her Royal Highness the Dauphiness wishes to speak to you, Monsieur," said the officer.

Rousseau rose, much agitated.

The dauphiness was waiting for him. She held in her hand the air of Colette, —

"My happiness is gone."

The moment she saw Rousseau she advanced toward him. The philosopher bowed very humbly, saying to himself that his bow was for the woman, not for the princess.

The dauphiness, on the contrary, was as gracious to the savage philosopher as she would have been to the most

finished gentleman in Europe. She requested his advice about the inflection she ought to give to the third line, —

"Colin leaves me."

Rousseau forthwith began to develop a theory of declamation and melody, which, learned as it was, was interrupted by the noisy arrival of the king and several courtiers.

Louis entered the room in which the dauphiness was taking her lesson from the philosopher. The first impulse of the king when he saw this carelessly dressed person was the same that Monsieur de Coigny had manifested; only Monsieur de Coigny knew Rousseau, and the king did not. He stared, therefore, long and steadily at our freeman while still receiving the thanks and compliments of the dauphiness. This look, stamped with royal authority; this look, not accustomed to be lowered before any one, — produced a powerful effect upon Rousseau, whose quick eye was timid and unsteady.

The dauphiness waited until the king had finished his scrutiny; then, advancing toward Rousseau, she said, "Will your Majesty allow me to present our author to you?"

"Your author?" said the king, affecting to search his memory.

During this short dialogue Rousseau was upon burning coals. The king's eye had successively rested upon and burned — like the sun's rays under a powerful lens — the long beard, the dubious shirt-frill, the dusty garb, and the old wig of the greatest writer in his kingdom.

The dauphiness took pity on Rousseau. "Monsieur Jean Jacques Rousseau, Sire," said she, "the author of the charming opera we are going to execute before your Majesty."

The king raised his head. "Ah!" said he, coldly, "Monsieur Rousseau, I greet you." And he continued to look at him in such a manner as to point out all the imperfections of his dress.

Rousseau asked himself how he ought to salute the king of France, without being a courtier, but also without impoliteness, for he admitted that he was in that prince's house. But while he was making these reflections, the king addressed him with that graceful ease of princes who have said everything when they have uttered an agreeable or a disagreeable remark to the person before them. Rousseau, petrified, had at first stood speechless. All the phrases he had prepared for the tyrant were forgotten.

"Monsieur Rousseau," said the king, still looking at his coat and wig, "you have composed some charming music, which has caused me to pass very pleasant moments."

Then the king, in a voice which was diametrically opposed to all harmony and melody, began singing, —

"'Had I turned a willing ear,
The gallants of the town to hear,
Ah! I had found with ease
Other lovers then to please.'

"It is charming!" said the king, when he had finished.

Rousseau bowed.

"I do not know if I shall sing it well," said the dauphiness.

Rousseau turned toward the dauphiness to make some remark in reply; but the king had begun again, and was singing the romance of Colin: —

"'From my hut, obscure and cold,
Care is absent never;
Whether storm, or sun, or cold,
Suffering, toil, forever.'"

His Majesty's singing was very trying to a musician. Rousseau, half flattered by the monarch's good memory, half wounded by his detestable execution, looked like a monkey nibbling an onion, — crying on one side of his face, and laughing on the other. The dauphiness preserved her composure with that imperturbable self-possession which is found only at court.

The king, without the least embarrassment, continued :

" ' If thou 'lt come to cast thy lot
In thy Colin's humble cot,
My sweet shepherdess, Colette.
I 'll bid adieu to all regret.' "

Rousseau felt the color rising to his face.

" Tell me, Monsieur Rousseau," said the king, " is it true that you sometimes dress in the costume of an Armenian ? "

Rousseau blushed more deeply than before, and his tongue was so glued to his throat that not for a kingdom could he have pronounced a word at this moment.

The king continued to sing, without waiting for a reply :

" ' Ah ! but little, as times go,
Doth love know
What he 'd let, or what he 'd hinder.'

" You live in the Rue Plastrière, I believe, Monsieur Rousseau ? " said the king.

Rousseau made a gesture in the affirmative with his head, but his strength could go no farther. Never had he summoned to his support so much of his reserved energy. The king hummed, —

" ' She is a child,
She is a child.'

" It is said you are on bad terms with Voltaire, Monsieur Rousseau ? "

At this blow Rousseau lost the little presence of mind he had remaining, and was totally put out of countenance. The king did not seem to have much pity for him; and continuing his ferocious melomania, he moved off, singing:

" ' Come, dance with me beneath the elms;
Young maidens, come, be merry,' "

with orchestral accompaniments which would have killed Apollo, as the latter killed Marsyas.

Rousseau remained alone in the centre of the room. The dauphiness had gone away to finish her toilet.

Rousseau, trembling and confused, regained the corridor; but on his way he stumbled against a couple dazzling with diamonds, flowers, and lace, who filled up the entire width of the corridor, although the young man squeezed his lovely companion tenderly to his side.

The young woman, with her fluttering laces, her towering headdress, her fan, and her perfumes, was radiant as a star. It was she against whom Rousseau brushed in passing.

The young man, slender, elegant, and charming, with his blue ribbon rustling against his English shirt-frill, every now and then burst into a laugh of most engaging frankness, and then suddenly interrupted it with little confidential whispers, which made the lady laugh in her turn, and showed that they were on excellent terms.

Rousseau recognized the Comtesse Dubarry in this beautiful lady, — this seducing creature; and the moment he perceived her, true to his habit of concentrating all his thoughts on a single object, he no longer saw her companion. The young man with the blue ribbon was no other than the Comte d'Artois, who was merrily toying with his grandfather's favorite.

When Madame Dubarry perceived Rousseau's dark figure, she exclaimed, "Ah, good heavens!"

"What!" said the Comte d'Artois, also looking at the philosopher; and already he had stretched out his hand to make way for his companion.

"Monsieur Rousseau!" exclaimed Madame Dubarry.

"Rousseau of Geneva?" said the Comte d'Artois, in the tone of a schoolboy in the holidays.

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied the countess.

"Ah, good-day, Monsieur Rousseau!" said the young fop, seeing Rousseau making a despairing effort to force a passage, — "good-day; we are going to hear your music."

"Monseigneur!" stammered Rousseau, seeing the blue ribbon.

"Ah, most charming music!" exclaimed the countess; "and completely in harmony with the heart and mind of the author."

Rousseau raised his head, and his eyes met the burning gaze of the countess.

"Madame!" said he, ill-humoredly.

"I will play Colin, Madame!" cried the Comte d'Artois; "and I entreat that you, Madame la Comtesse, will play Colette!"

"With all my heart, Monseigneur; but I should never dare — I, who am not an artist — to profane the music of a master!"

Rousseau would have given his life to look again at her; but the voice, the tone, the flattery, the beauty, had each planted a baited hook in his heart. He tried to escape.

"Monsieur Rousseau," said the prince, blocking up the passage, "I wish you would teach me the part of Colin."

"I dare not ask Monsieur Rousseau to give me his advice respecting Colette!" said the countess, feigning timidity, and thus completing the overthrow of the philosopher. But yet his eyes inquired why.

"Monsieur Rousseau hates me!" said she to the prince, with her enchanting voice.

"You are jesting!" exclaimed the Comte d'Artois. "Who could hate you, Madame?"

"You see it plainly," she replied.

"Monsieur Rousseau is too great a man, and has written too many noble works, to fly from such a charming woman," said the Comte d'Artois.

Rousseau heaved a sigh as if he were ready to give up the ghost, and made his escape through a narrow loophole which the Comte d'Artois had imprudently left between himself and the wall.

But Rousseau was not in luck this evening. He had scarcely proceeded four steps when he met another group, composed of two men, one old, the other young. The young one wore the blue ribbon; the other, who might be about fifty years of age, was dressed in red, and looked austere and pale. These two men overheard the merry laugh of the Comte d'Artois, who exclaimed loudly: "Ah! Monsieur Rousseau! Monsieur Rousseau! I shall say that the countess put you to flight; and in truth no one would believe it."

"Rousseau!" murmured the two men.

"Stop him, brother!" said the prince, still laughing; "stop him, Monsieur de Vauguyon!"

Rousseau now comprehended on what rock his evil star had shipwrecked him. The Comte de Provence and the governor of the royal youths were before him.

The Comte de Provence also barred the way. "Good day, Monsieur," said he, with his dry, pedantic voice.

Rousseau, almost at his wits' end, bowed, muttering to himself: "I shall never get away!"

"Ah! I am delighted to have met you," said the prince, with the air of a schoolmaster who finds a pupil in fault.

"More absurd compliments!" thought Rousseau. "How insipid these great people are!"

"I have read your translation of Tacitus, Monsieur."

"Ah! true," thought Rousseau; "this one is a pedant, a scholar."

"Do you know that it is very difficult to translate Tacitus?"

"Monseigneur, I said so in a short preface."

"Yes, I know, I know; you said in it that you had only a slight knowledge of Latin."

"It is true, Monseigneur."

"Then, Monsieur Rousseau, why translate Tacitus?"

"Monseigneur, it improves one's style."

"Ah! Monsieur Rousseau, it was wrong to translate 'imperatoria brevitate' by 'a grave and concise discourse.'"

Rousseau, uneasy, consulted his memory.

"Yes," said the young prince, with the confidence of an old savant who discovers a fault in Saumaise; "yes, you translated it so. It is in the paragraph where Tacitus relates that Pison harangued his soldiers."

"Well, Monseigneur?"

"Well, Monsieur Rousseau, 'imperatoria brevitate' means, 'with the conciseness of a general,' or of a man accustomed to command. 'With the brevity of command; that is the expression, is it not, Monsieur de la Vauguyon?"

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied the governor.

Rousseau made no reply. The prince added: "That is an evident mistake, Monsieur Rousseau. Oh! I will find you another."

Rousseau turned pale.

"Stay, Monsieur Rousseau, there is one in the paragraph relating to Cecina. It begins thus: 'At in superiore Germania.' You know he is describing Cecina, and Tacitus says, 'Cito sermone.'"

"I remember it perfectly, Monseigneur."

"You translated that, 'speaking well.'"

"Yes, Monseigneur, and I thought —"

"'Cito sermone' means 'speaking quickly,' — that is to say, 'easily.'"

"I said 'speaking well.'"

"Then it should have been 'decoro,' or 'ornato,' or 'eleganti sermone;' 'cito' is a picturesque epithet, Monsieur Rousseau. So, in portraying the change in Otho's conduct, Tacitus says: 'Delata voluptate, dissimulata luxuria, cunctaque ad imperii decorem composita.'"

"I have translated that: 'Dismissing luxury and effeminacy to other times, he surprised the world by industriously applying himself to re-establish the glory of the empire.'"

"Wrong, Monsieur Rousseau, wrong! In the first place, you have run the three little phrases into one, which obliges you to translate 'dissimulata luxuria' badly. Then you made a blunder in the last portion of the phrase. Tacitus did not mean that the Emperor Otho applied himself to re-establishing the glory of the empire; he meant to say that, no longer gratifying his passions, and dissimulating his luxurious habits, Otho accommodated all, made all turn, — all, you understand, Monsieur Rousseau; that is to say, even his passions and his vices, — to the glory of the empire. That is the sense, — it is rather complex; yours, however, is too restricted, is it not, Monsieur de la Vauguyon?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

Rousseau perspired and panted under this pitiless infliction. The prince allowed him a moment's breathing-time, and then continued: "You are much more in your element in philosophy, Monsieur."

Rousseau bowed.

"But your 'Émile' is a dangerous book."

"Dangerous, Monseigneur?"

"Yes, from the quantity of false ideas it will put into the humbler citizens' heads!"

"Monseigneur, as soon as a man is a father, he can enter into the spirit of my book, whether he be the first or the last in the kingdom. To be a father — is — is —"

"Tell me, Monsieur Rousseau," asked the satirical prince, suddenly, "your 'Confessions' is a very amusing book. How many children have you had?"

Rousseau turned pale, staggered, and raised an angry and stupefied glance to his young tormentor's face, the expression of which only increased the malicious humor of the Comte de Provence. It was only malice, for without waiting for a reply the prince moved away arm-in-arm with his preceptor, continuing his commentaries on the works of the man whom he had so cruelly crushed.

Rousseau, left alone, was gradually recovering from his stupefaction, when he heard the first bars of his overture executed by the orchestra. He proceeded in that direction with a faltering step, and when he had reached his seat, he said to himself: "Fool! coward! stupid ass that I am! Now only do I find the answer I should have made the cruel little pedant. 'Monseigneur,' I should have said, 'it is not charitable in a young person to torment a poor old man.'"

He had just reached this point, quite content with his phrase, when the dauphiness and Monsieur de Coigny began their duet. The preoccupation of the philosopher was disturbed by the suffering of the musician: the ear was to be tortured after the heart.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REHEARSAL.

THE rehearsal once fairly commenced, and the general attention drawn to the stage, Rousseau was no longer remarked. He began to look around him. He heard noblemen who sang completely out of tune in their shepherd's garb, and saw ladies arrayed in their court-dresses coquetting like shepherdesses.

The dauphiness sang correctly, but she was a bad actress; her voice, moreover, was so weak that she could scarcely be heard. The king, not to intimidate any one, had retired to an obscure box, where he chatted with the ladies. The dauphin prompted the words of the opera, which went off royally badly.

Rousseau determined not to listen, but he felt it very difficult to avoid hearing. He had one consolation, however, for he had just perceived a charming face among the illustrious figurantes, and the village maiden who was the possessor of this charming face had incomparably the finest voice in the entire company.

Rousseau's attention became at once completely riveted, and from his position behind his desk he gazed with his whole soul at the charming figurante, and listened with all his ears to drink in the enchanting melody of her voice.

When the dauphiness saw the author so attentive, she was convinced by his smile and his sentimental air that he was pleased with the execution of his work; and eager

for a compliment, — for she was a woman, — she leaned forward to the desk, saying: "Is our performance very bad, Monsieur Rousseau?"

But Rousseau, with lips apart and absent air, did not reply.

"Oh! we have made some blunders," said the dauphiness, "and Monsieur Rousseau dares not tell us! I entreat you, Monsieur Rousseau!"

Rousseau's gaze followed the beautiful personage, who on her side did not perceive the attention which she excited.

"Ah!" said the dauphiness, observing the direction of our philosopher's eyes, "it is Mademoiselle Taverney who has been in fault!"

Andrée blushed; she saw all eyes directed toward her.

"No, no!" exclaimed Rousseau; "it was not Mademoiselle, for Mademoiselle sings like an angel!"

Madame Dubarry darted at the philosopher a look keener than a javelin. The Baron de Taverney, on the contrary, felt his heart bound with joy, and greeted Rousseau with a most enchanting smile.

"Do you think that young girl sings well?" said Madame Dubarry to the king, who was evidently struck by Rousseau's words.

"In a chorus I cannot hear distinctly," said Louis XV.; "only a musician can properly distinguish."

Meanwhile Rousseau was busy in the orchestra directing the chorus: —

> "Colin returns to his shepherdess;
> Hail we all a return so gay."

As he turned to resume his seat, he saw Monsieur de Jussieu bowing to him graciously. It was no slight

pleasure for the Genevese to be seen thus giving laws to the court by a courtier who had wounded him a little by his superiority. He returned his bow most ceremoniously, and continued to gaze at Andrée, who looked even more lovely for the praises she had received.

As the rehearsal proceeded, Madame Dubarry became furious; twice had she surprised Louis XV.'s attention wandering, distracted by the spectacle before him from the sweet speeches she whispered. To her jealous observation Andrée was the chief feature of the spectacle.

The dauphiness, however, received many compliments, and was in gay spirits. Monsieur de Richelieu fluttered around her with the agility of a young man, and succeeded in forming, at the extremity of the stage, a circle of laughers, of which the dauphiness was the centre, and which rendered the Dubarry party extremely uneasy. "It appears," said he aloud, "that Mademoiselle de Taverney has a sweet voice."

"Charming!" said the dauphiness; "and had I not been too selfish, I should have allowed her to play Colette; but as it is for my amusement that I undertook the character, I will give it up to no one."

"Oh! Mademoiselle de Taverney would not sing it better than your Royal Highness," said Richelieu, "and —"

"Mademoiselle is an excellent musician," said Rousseau, with enthusiasm.

"Excellent!" responded the dauphiness; "and, to confess the truth, it is she who teaches me my part, — besides, she dances enchantingly, and I dance very badly."

The effect of this conversation upon the king, upon Madame Dubarry, and the whole crowd of curious newsmongers and envious intriguers, may be imagined. All

either tasted the pleasure of inflicting a wound, or received the blow with shame and grief. There were no indifferent spectators, except perhaps Andrée herself.

The dauphiness, incited by Richelieu, finally made Andrée sing the air, —

"I have lost my love ;
Colin leaves me."

The king's head was seen to mark the time with such evident tokens of pleasure that Madame Dubarry's rouge fell off in little flakes, as paintings are scaled by moisture.

Richelieu, more malicious than a woman, enjoyed his revenge. He had drawn near the elder Taverney, and the two old men formed a tableau which might have been taken for Hypocrisy and Corruption sealing a compact of union. Their joy increased the more as Madame Dubarry's features grew by degrees darker and darker. She added the finishing stroke to it by rising angrily, which was contrary to all etiquette, as the king was still seated.

The courtiers, like ants, felt the storm approach, and hastened to seek shelter with the strongest. The dauphiness was more closely surrounded by her own friends, Madame Dubarry was more courted by hers.

By degrees the interest of the rehearsal was diverted from its natural course into quite a different direction. Colin and Colette were no more thought of, and many spectators thought that it would soon be Madame Dubarry's turn to sing, —

"I have lost my love ;
Colin leaves me."

"Do you mark," whispered Richelieu to Taverney, "your daughter's immense success ?" and he drew him into the corridor, pushing open a glass-door, and causing a

looker-on, who had been clinging to the framework in order to see into the hall, to fall backward.

"Confound the fellow!" growled Richelieu, dusting his sleeve, which the door had brushed against on its rebound; and he seemed still more angry when he saw that the looker-on was dressed like a workman of the chateau.

It was, in fact, a workman, with a basket of flowers under his arm, who had succeeded in climbing up behind the glass, from which position he had looked into the hall and witnessed the entire spectacle. He was pushed back into the corridor, and almost overturned; he himself escaped falling, but his basket was upset.

"Ah! I know the rascal," said Taverney, angrily.

"Who is it?" asked the duke.

"What are you doing here, scoundrel?" said Taverney.

Gilbert — the reader has doubtless already recognized him — replied haughtily, "You see, — I am looking."

"Instead of being at your work," said Richelieu.

"My work is done," said Gilbert, humbly addressing the duke, without deigning to look at Taverney.

"Am I fated to meet this lazy rascal everywhere?" said Taverney.

"Gently, Monsieur," interrupted a voice; "gently. My little Gilbert is a good workman and an industrious botanist."

Taverney turned, and saw Monsieur de Jussieu, who was patting Gilbert on the head. The baron reddened with anger and moved off.

"Valets here!" muttered he.

"Hush!" said Richelieu, "there is Nicole! Look, — up there, in the corner by that door. The little witch! she is not making bad use of her eyes either."

The marshal was correct. Partially concealed behind a score of the domestics of Trianon, Nicole raised her charm-

ing head above all the others, and her eyes, dilated with surprise and admiration, seemed to magnify the scene at which she gazed. Gilbert perceived her, and turned another way.

"Come, come!" said the duke to Taverney; "I think the king wishes to speak to you. He is looking this way;" and the two friends disappeared in the direction of the royal box.

Madame Dubarry was standing behind the king and interchanging signs with Monsieur d'Aiguillon, who was also standing, and who did not lose one of his uncle's movements.

Rousseau, now left alone, admired Andrée; he was endeavoring, if we may use the expression, to fall in love with her.

The illustrious actors proceeded to disrobe in their boxes, which Gilbert had decorated with fresh flowers.

Taverney, left alone in the passage by Monsieur de Richelieu, who had gone to rejoin the king, felt his heart alternately chilled and elated. At last the duke returned, and placed his finger upon his lips. Taverney turned pale with joy, and advanced to meet his friend, who drew him beneath the royal box. There they overheard the following conversation, which was quite inaudible to the rest of the company. Madame Dubarry was saying to the king: "May I expect your Majesty to supper this evening?"

And the king replied: "I feel fatigued, Countess; excuse me."

At the same moment the dauphin entered, almost treading on Madame Dubarry's toes, without seeming to see her.

"Sire," said he, "will your Majesty do us the honor of taking supper with us at Trianon?"

"No, my son; I was just saying to the countess that I

feel fatigued. Our young people have made me giddy; I shall sup alone."

The dauphin bowed and retired. Madame Dubarry made a profound reverence, and, trembling with rage, left the box. When she had gone, the king made a sign to the Duc de Richelieu.

"Duke," said he, "I wish to speak to you about an affair which concerns you."

"Sire —"

"I have not been pleased — I wish you to explain to me — Stay, I am alone; you shall take supper with me;" and the king looked at Taverney. "You know this gentleman, I think, Duke?"

"Monsieur de Taverney? Yes, Sire."

"Ah! the father of the charming singer?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Listen, Duke!"

The king stooped to whisper in Richelieu's ear. Taverney clenched his hands till the nails entered the flesh, to avoid showing any emotion. Immediately afterward Richelieu brushed past Taverney, and said: "Follow me, without seeming to do so."

"Whither?" asked Taverney, in the same tone.

"No matter; follow me."

The duke moved away. Taverney followed him at a little distance to the king's apartment. The duke entered; Taverney waited in the ante-room.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CASKET.

MONSIEUR DE TAVERNEY had not to wait long. Richelieu, having asked the king's valet for something his Majesty had left upon his dressing-table, soon returned, carrying a parcel, the nature of which the baron could not distinguish, on account of the covering of silk which enveloped it. But the marshal soon relieved his friend from all anxiety. Drawing him into a corner of the gallery, "Baron," said he, as soon as he saw that they were alone, "you have at times seemed to doubt my friendship for you?"

"Never since our reconciliation," replied Taverney.

"At least, you were in doubt concerning your fortune and that of your children?"

"Oh! as to that,—yes."

"Well, you were wrong. Your children's fortune and your own is made with a rapidity which should make you giddy."

"Bah!" said Taverney, who suspected part of the truth, but who, as he was not quite certain, took care to guard against mistakes; "how is the fortune of my children so quickly made?"

"Monsieur Philippe is already a captain, with a company paid for by the king."

"It is true; I owe that to you."

"By no means. Now we shall have Mademoiselle de Taverney a marchioness, perhaps."

"Come, come!" exclaimed Taverney. "What, — my daughter!"

"Listen, Taverney! the king has great taste; and beauty, grace, and virtue, when accompanied by talent, delight his Majesty. Now, Mademoiselle de Taverney unites all these qualities in a very high degree. The king is therefore delighted with Mademoiselle de Taverney."

"Duke," replied Taverney, assuming an air of dignity at which the marshal could scarcely repress a smile, — "Duke, what do you mean by 'delighted'?"

Richelieu did not like pretension, and replied, dryly: "Baron, I am not a great linguist; I am not even well versed in orthography. I have always thought that 'delighted' signified 'pleased beyond measure.' If you are grieved beyond measure to see the king pleased with the beauty, the talent, the merit of your children, you have only to say so, — I will return to his Majesty;" and Richelieu turned on his heel with a movement quite juvenile.

"You misunderstand me, Duke!" exclaimed the baron, stopping him. "Confound it, how hasty you are!"

"Why did you say that you were not satisfied?"

"I did not say so."

"You asked for explanations of the king's pleasure; you are foolish!"

"But, Duke, I did not breathe a syllable of that. For my own part, I most certainly am satisfied."

"Ah, you! Well, who will be dissatisfied, — your daughter?"

"Eh! eh!"

"My dear fellow, you have brought up your daughter like a savage, as you are."

"My dear friend, the young lady educated herself; you

may easily imagine that I could not possibly trouble myself with any such matter. I had enough to do to support life in my den at Taverney. Virtue in her has sprung up spontaneously."

"And yet people say that country folks know how to pull up weeds! In short, your daughter is a prude."

"You mistake; she is a dove."

Richelieu made a grimace. "Well," said he, "the poor child has only to look out for a good husband, for opportunities of making a fortune will come to her rarely with this defect."

Taverney looked uneasily at the duke.

"Fortunately for her," continued Richelieu, "the king is so desperately in love with the Dubarry that he will never think seriously of another."

Taverney's alarm was changed to anguish.

"Therefore," continued Richelieu, "you and your daughter may make your minds easy. I will state the unavoidable obstacles to his Majesty, and the king will never bestow another thought on the matter."

"But obstacles to what? Good heavens!" exclaimed Taverney, turning pale, and shaking his friend's arm.

"To his making a little present to Mademoiselle Andrée, my dear Baron."

"A little present! What is it?" asked the baron, full of hope and avarice.

"Oh, a mere trifle!" said Richelieu, carelessly; and he took a casket from its silken covering.

"A casket?"

"A trifle, — a necklace worth a few million francs, which his Majesty, flattered at hearing her sing his favorite air, wished to present to the fair singer. It is quite in order; but since your daughter is easily frightened, we will drop the subject."

"Duke, you must not think of it, — that would be to offend the king."

"Of course it would; but is it not the attribute of virtue always to offend some person or some thing?"

"But, Duke, consider, — the child is not so unreasonable."

"That is to say, it is you, and not your child, who speaks."

"Oh, I know so well what she will do and say!"

"The Chinese are a very fortunate people," said Richelieu.

"Why?" asked Taverney, astonished.

"Because they have so many rivers and canals in the country."

"Duke, you turn the conversation. Do not drive me to despair; speak to me."

"I am speaking to you, Baron, and am not changing the conversation at all."

"Then why do you speak of China? What have its rivers to do with my daughter?"

"A great deal. The Chinese, I mean, have the happiness of being able to drown their daughters when they are too virtuous, and no one can forbid it."

"Come, Duke, you must be just! Suppose you had a daughter yourself?"

"*Pardieu!* I have one; and if any one were to tell me that she is too virtuous, it would be very ill-natured of him."

"In short, you would like her better otherwise, would you not?"

"Oh! for my part, I don't meddle with my children after they are eight years old."

"Listen to me, at least! If the king were to commission me to offer a necklace to your daughter, and if your daughter were to complain to you?"

"Oh, my friend, there is no comparison! I have always lived at court, — you have lived like a North American Indian; there is no similarity. What you call virtue, I think folly. Remember, for the future, that nothing is more ill-bred than to say, 'What would you do in this or that case?' And besides, your comparisons are erroneous, my friend. It is not true that I am about to present a necklace to your daughter."

"You said so."

"I said nothing of the sort. I said that the king had directed me to bring him a casket for Mademoiselle de Taverney, whose voice had pleased him; but I did not say that his Majesty had charged me to give it to her."

"Then, in truth," said the baron, in despair, "I know not what to think. I do not understand a single word; you speak in enigmas. Why give this necklace, if it is not to be given? Why do you take charge of it, if not to deliver it?"

Richelieu uttered an exclamation as if he had seen a spider. "Ah!" said he; "pouah! — pouah! the Huron — the ugly animal!"

"Who?"

"You, my good friend, — you, my trusty comrade; you seem as if you had fallen from the clouds, Baron!"

"I am at my wits' end."

"No, you never had any. When a king makes a lady a present, and when he charges Monsieur de Richelieu with the commission, the present is noble, and the commission well executed, — remember that. I do not deliver caskets, my dear fellow, — that was Monsieur Lebel's office. Did you know Monsieur Lebel?"

"What is your office, then?"

"My friend," said Richelieu, tapping Taverney on the shoulder, and accompanying this amicable action by a

sardonic smile, "when I have to do with such paragons of virtue as Mademoiselle Andrée, I am the most moral man in the world. When I approach a dove, as you call your daughter, I do not display the talons of the hawk. When I am deputed to wait on a young lady, I speak to her father. I speak to you, therefore, Taverney, and give you the casket to present to your daughter. Well! are you willing?" — and he offered the casket. "Or do you decline?" — and he drew it back.

"Oh! say, then, all that at once," exclaimed the baron; "say that I am commissioned by his Majesty to deliver the present! If so, it assumes quite a correct and paternal character; it is, so to speak, purified —"

"Purified! Why, you must have suspected his Majesty of evil intentions!" said Richelieu, seriously. "Now, you cannot have dared to do that?"

"God forbid! But the world, — that is to say, my daughter —"

Richelieu shrugged his shoulders. "Will you take it? — yes, or no?" he asked.

Taverney quickly held out his hand. "You are certain it is moral?" said he to the duke, with a smile, the counterpart of that which the duke had just addressed to him.

"Do you not think it pure morality, Baron," said the marshal, "to make the father, who, as you have just said, purifies everything, an intermediate party between the king's delight and your daughter's charms? Let Monsieur Jean Jacques Rousseau, of Geneva, who was hovering about here just now, be the judge; he would say that Joseph was impure in comparison with me."

Richelieu pronounced these few words with a calmness, an abrupt haughtiness, a precision, which silenced Taverney's objections, and assisted to make him believe that

he ought to be convinced. He seized his illustrious friend's hand, therefore, and pressing it, "Thanks to your delicacy," said he, "my daughter can accept this present."

"The source and origin of the good fortune to which I alluded at the commencement of our tiresome discussion on virtue."

"Thanks, dear Duke; most hearty thanks!"

"One word more. Conceal this favor carefully from the Dubarrys. It might make Madame Dubarry leave the king and take flight."

"And the king would be displeased?"

"I don't know; but the countess would not thank us. As for me, I should be lost! Be discreet, therefore."

"Do not fear. But present my most humble thanks to the king."

"And your daughter's — I shall not fail. But you have not yet reached the limits of the favor bestowed upon you. It is you who are to thank the king, my dear fellow; his Majesty invites you to take supper with him this evening."

"Me?"

"You, Taverney. We shall be a select party, — his Majesty, you, and myself. We will talk of your daughter's virtue. Adieu, Taverney; I see Dubarry with Monsieur d'Aiguillon. We must not be seen together;" and, agile as a page, he disappeared at the farther end of the gallery, leaving Taverney gazing at his casket like a Saxon child who awakens and finds the Christmas gifts which have been placed in his hands while he slept.

CHAPTER XIII.

KING LOUIS XV.'S PRIVATE SUPPER.

THE marshal found the king in the little salon whither several of the courtiers had followed him, preferring rather to lose their supper than to allow the wandering glance of their sovereign to fall on any others than themselves. But Louis XV. seemed to have something else to do this evening than to look at these gentlemen. He dismissed every one, saying that he did not intend to sup, or that, if he did, it would be alone. All the guests having thus received their dismissal, and fearing to displease the dauphin if they were not present at the fête which he was to give at the close of the rehearsal, instantly flew off like a cloud of parasite pigeons, and winged their way to him whom they were permitted to see, ready to assert that for him they had deserted his Majesty's drawing-room.

Louis XV., whom they left so rapidly, was far from bestowing a thought on them. At another time the meanness of all this swarm of courtiers would have excited a smile; but on this occasion it awoke no sentiment in the monarch's breast, — a monarch so sarcastic that he spared neither bodily nor mental defect in his best friends, if we may suppose that Louis XV. ever had a friend.

No; at that moment Louis XV. concentrated his entire attention on a carriage which was drawn up opposite the door of the offices of Trianon, the coachman seeming to wait only for the step which should announce the owner's

presence in the gilded vehicle to urge on his horses. The carriage was Madame Dubarry's, and was lighted by torches. Zamore, seated beside the coachman, was swinging his legs backward and forward like a child at play.

At last Madame Dubarry, who had no doubt waited in the corridors in the hope of receiving some message from the king, appeared, supported on Monsieur d'Aiguillon's arm. Her anger, or at least her disappointment, was apparent in the rapidity of her gait. She affected too much resolution not to have lost her presence of mind.

After Madame Dubarry followed Jean, looking gloomy in the extreme, and absently crushing his hat beneath his arm. He had not been present at the representation, — the dauphin having forgotten to invite him; but he had stolen into the ante-room somewhat after the fashion of a lackey, and stood pensive as Hippolytus, with his shirt-frill falling over his vest embroidered with silver and red flowers, and not even looking at his tattered ruffles, which seemed in harmony with his sad thoughts. Jean had seen his sister look pale and alarmed, and had concluded from this that the danger was great. Jean was brave in diplomacy only when opposed to flesh and blood, never when opposed to phantoms.

Concealed behind the window-curtain, the king saw this funereal procession defile before him and bury itself in the countess's carriage. Then, when the door was closed and the footman had mounted behind the carriage, the coachman shook the reins, and the horses started forward at a gallop.

"Oh," said the king, "without making an attempt to see me, to speak to me. The countess is furious!" And he repeated aloud, "Yes, the countess is furious!"

Richelieu, who had just glided into the room like an expected visitor, caught these last words. "Furious, Sire!"

said he; "and for what? Because your Majesty is amused for a moment? Oh, that is not amiable of the countess!"

"Duke," replied Louis XV., "I am not amused; on the contrary, I am wearied, and wish for repose. Music enervates me. If I had listened to the countess I should have supped at Luciennes; I should have eaten, and, above all, I should have drunk. The countess's wines are too strong; I do not know from what vineyards they come, but they overpower me. Upon my word, I prefer to take my ease here!"

"And your Majesty is perfectly in the right!" said the duke.

"Besides, the countess will find amusement elsewhere. Am I such an amiable companion? She may say so as much as she likes, but I do not believe her."

"Ah, this time your Majesty is in the wrong!" exclaimed the marshal.

"No, Duke; no, in truth. I count my years, and I reflect."

"Sire, the countess is well aware that she could not possibly have better company, and it is that which makes her furious."

"In truth, Duke, I do not know how you manage. You still lead the women as if you were only twenty years old. At that age it is for a man to choose; but at mine, Duke —"

"Well, Sire?"

"It is for the woman to make her calculations."

The marshal burst into a laugh. "Well, Sire," said he, "that is only an additional reason; "if your Majesty thinks the countess is amused, let us console ourselves."

"I do not say she is amused, Duke; I only say that she will in the end be driven to seek amusement."

"Ah! Sire, I dare not assert that such things have never happened."

The king rose, much agitated. "Who waits outside?" he inquired.

"All your suite, Sire."

The king reflected for a moment.

"But have you any one there?"

"I have Rafté."

"Very good."

"What shall he do, Sire?"

"He must find out if the countess really returned to Luciennes."

"The countess is already gone, I think, Sire."

"Yes, ostensibly."

"But whither does your Majesty think she is gone?"

"Who can tell? Jealousy makes her frantic, Duke."

"Sire, is it not rather your Majesty —"

"How? What?"

"Whom jealousy —"

"Duke!"

"In truth, it would be very humiliating for us all, Sire."

"I jealous?" said Louis, with a forced laugh; "are you speaking seriously, Duke?"

Richelieu did not in truth believe it. It must even be confessed that he was very near the truth in thinking that, on the contrary, the king only wished to know if Madame Dubarry was really at Luciennes, in order to be sure that she would not return to Trianon. "Then, Sire," said he, aloud, "it is understood that I am to send Rafté on a voyage of discovery?"

"Send him, Duke."

"In the mean time, what will your Majesty do before supper?"

"Nothing; we shall sup instantly. Have you spoken to the person in question?"

"Yes, he is in your Majesty's antechamber."

"What did he say?"

"He expressed his deep thanks."

"And the daughter?"

"She has not been spoken to yet."

"Duke, Madame Dubarry is jealous, and might readily return."

"Ah, Sire, that would be in very bad taste! I think the countess would be incapable of committing such an enormity."

"Duke, she is capable of anything in such moods, especially when hatred is combined with jealousy. She execrates you; I don't know if you were aware of that."

Richelieu bowed. "I know she does me that honor, Sire."

"She execrates Monsieur de Taverney also."

"If your Majesty would be good enough to reckon, I am sure there is a third person whom she hates even more than me, — even more than the baron."

"Whom?"

"Mademoiselle Andrée."

"Ah!" said the king; "I think that is natural enough."

"Then — "

"Yes, but that does not prevent its being necessary to watch that Madame Dubarry does not cause some scandal this evening."

"On the contrary, it proves the necessity of such a measure."

"Here is the butler. Hush! give your orders to Rafté, and join me in the dining-room with — you know whom!"

Louis rose, and passed into the dining-room, while

Richelieu made his exit by the opposite door. Five minutes afterward he rejoined the king, accompanied by the baron.

The king in the most gracious manner bade Taverney good-evening. The baron was a man of talent, and replied in that peculiar manner which betokens a person accustomed to good society, and which puts kings and princes instantly at their ease. They sat down to table. Louis XV. was a bad king, but a delightful companion; when he pleased, his conversation was full of attraction for boon-companions, talkers, and voluptuaries. The king, in short, had studied life carefully in its most agreeable aspects. He ate heartily, made his guests drink, and turned the conversation on music.

Richelieu caught the ball at the rebound. "Sire," said he, "if music makes men agree, as our ballet-master says, and as your Majesty seems to think, will you say as much of women?"

"Oh, Duke!" replied the king, "let us not speak of women. From the Trojan war to the present time, women have always exercised an influence contrary to that of music. You, especially, have too many quarrels to compound with them, to wish to see that subject brought forward. Among others, there is one, and that not the least dangerous, with whom you are at daggers drawn."

"The countess, Sire? Is that my fault?"

"Of course it is."

"Ah, indeed! Your Majesty, I trust, will explain."

"In two words, and with the greatest pleasure," said the king, slyly.

"I listen, Sire."

"What! she offers you the portfolio of I don't know which department, and you refuse, because, you say, she is not very popular?"

"I?" exclaimed Richelieu, a good deal embarrassed by the turn the conversation was taking.

"Certainly! the report is quite public," said the king, with that feigned good-nature which was peculiar to him. "I forget now who told it to me, — probably the gazette."

"Well, Sire!" said Richelieu, taking advantage of the freedom which the unusual gayety of the august host afforded his guests, "I must confess that on this occasion rumors, and even the gazettes, have reported something not quite so absurd as usual."

"What!" exclaimed Louis XV., "then you have really refused a portfolio, my dear Duke?"

Richelieu, it may easily be imagined, was in an awkward position. The king well knew that he had refused nothing; but it was necessary that Taverney should continue to believe what Richelieu had told him. The duke had therefore to frame his reply so as to avoid furnishing matter for amusement to the king, without at the same time incurring the reproach of falsehood, which was already hovering upon the baron's lips and twinkling in his smile.

"Sire," said Richelieu, "pray let us not speak of effects, but of the cause. Whether I have or have not refused a portfolio, is a State secret which your Majesty is not bound to divulge over the bottle; but the cause for which I should have refused the portfolio, had it been offered to me, is the important point."

"Oh, oh, Duke!" said the monarch, laughing; "and this cause is not a State secret?"

"No, Sire, and especially not for your Majesty, who is at this moment — I beg pardon of the divinity — the most amiable earthly Amphytrion in the universe for my friend the Baron de Taverney and myself. I have no secrets, therefore, from my king. I give my whole soul up to

him, for I do not wish it to be said that the King of France has not one servant who would tell him the entire truth."

"Let us hear the truth, then, Duke," said the king, while Taverney, fearing that Richelieu might go too far, pinched his lips and composed his countenance scrupulously after the king's.

"Sire, in your dominions there are two powers which a minister must obey, — the first is your will; the second, that of your Majesty's most intimate friends. The first power is irresistible, — none dare to rebel against it; the second is yet more sacred, for it imposes duties of the heart on whosoever serves you. It is termed your confidence. To obey it, a minister must have the most devoted regard for the favorite of the king."

Louis XV. laughed. "Duke," said he, "that is a very good maxim, and one I am delighted to hear from your lips; but I dare you to proclaim it aloud by sound of trumpet upon the Pont Neuf."

"Oh, I know, Sire," said Richelieu, "that the philosophers would be up in arms; but I do not think that their objurgations would matter much to your Majesty or to me. The chief point is that the two dominant wills in the kingdom may be satisfied. Well! the will of a certain person, — I will confess it openly to your Majesty, even should my disgrace, that is, my death, be the consequence, — Madame Dubarry's will I could not obey."

Louis was silent.

"It occurred to me the other day," continued Richelieu, "to look around in your Majesty's court; and in truth I saw so many noble girls, so many women of dazzling beauty, that had I been king of France, I should have found it almost impossible to choose."

Louis turned to Taverney, who, seeing things take such

a favorable turn for him, sat trembling with hope and fear, aiding the marshal's eloquence with eyes and breath, as if he would waft forward the vessel loaded with his fortunes to a safe harbor.

"Come, Baron, what is your opinion?" said the king.

"Sire," replied Taverney, with swelling heart, "the duke, as it seems to me, has been saying excellent things to your Majesty."

"Then you are of his opinion in what he says of lovely girls?"

"In fact, Sire, I think there are indeed very lovely young girls at the French court."

"Then you are of his opinion?"

"Yes, Sire."

"And, like him, you advise me to choose among the beauties of the court?"

"I would venture to confess that I am of the marshal's opinion, if I dared to believe that it was also your Majesty's."

There was a short silence, during which the king looked complaisantly at Taverney. "Gentlemen," said he, "no doubt I should follow your advice, if I were only thirty years of age. I should have a very natural predilection for it; but I find myself at present rather too old to be credulous."

"Credulous! pray, Sire, explain the meaning of the word."

"To be credulous, my dear Duke, means to believe. Now, nothing will make me believe certain things."

"What are they?"

"That at my age it is possible to inspire love."

"Ah, Sire!" exclaimed Richelieu, "until this moment I thought your Majesty was the most polite gentleman in

your dominions; but with deep regret I see that I have been mistaken."

"How so?" asked the king, laughing.

"Because, in that case, I must be as old as Methuselah, as I was born in '94. Remember, Sire, I am sixteen years older than your Majesty."

This was an adroit piece of flattery on the duke's part. Louis XV. had always admired this man's age, who had outlived so many younger men in his service; for having this example before him, he might hope to reach the same advanced period.

"Granted," said Louis; "but I hope you no longer have the pretension to be loved for yourself, Duke?"

"If I thought not, Sire, I would instantly quarrel with two ladies who told me so only this very morning."

"Well! Duke," said Louis, "we shall see; Monsieur de Taverney, we shall see. Youth rejuvenates, it is very true."

"Yes, yes, Sire; and we must not forget that a powerful constitution, like your Majesty's, always gains, and never loses."

"Yet I remember," said Louis, "that my predecessor, when he became old, no longer courted women with the same boldness."

"Come, come, Sire!" said Richelieu. "Your Majesty knows my great respect for the late king, who twice sent me to the Bastille; but that ought not to prevent me from saying that there is a vast difference between the ripe age of Louis XV. and that of Louis XIV. What the devil! your most Christian Majesty, although honoring fully your title of eldest son of the Church, does not carry asceticism so far as to forget your humanity?"

"Faith, no!" said Louis. "I may confess it, since neither my doctor nor confessor is present."

"Well, Sire! the king, your grandfather, frequently astonished Madame de Maintenon, who was even older than he, by his excess of religious zeal and his innumerable penances. I repeat it, Sire, can there be any comparison made between your two Majesties?"

The king this evening was in a good humor. Richelieu's words acted upon him like so many drops of water from the fountain of youth. Richelieu thought the time had come; he touched Taverney's knee with his.

"Sire," said the latter, "will your Majesty deign to accept my thanks for the magnificent present you have made my daughter?"

"You need not thank me for that, Baron," said the king. "Mademoiselle de Taverney pleased me by her modest and ingenuous grace. I wish my daughters had still their households to form; certainly, Mademoiselle Andrée — that is her name, is it not —?"

"Yes, Sire," said Taverney, delighted that the king knew his daughter's Christian name.

"A very pretty name. Certainly Mademoiselle Andrée should have been the first upon the list; but every post in my house is filled up. In the mean time, Baron, you may reckon upon my protection for your daughter. I think I have heard she has not a rich dowry?"

"Alas! no, Sire."

"Well, I will make her marriage my especial care."

Taverney bowed to the ground.

"Then your Majesty must be good enough," said he, "to select a husband; for I confess that, in our confined circumstances, — our almost poverty —"

"Yes, yes; rest easy on that point," said Louis. "But she seems very young; there is no haste."

"The less, Sire, that your protégée has a horror of marriage."

"Ha!" said Louis, rubbing his hands and looking at Richelieu. "Well! at all events, Monsieur de Taverney, command me whenever you are at all embarrassed."

Then, rising, the king beckoned the duke, who approached. "Was the little one satisfied?" he asked.

"With what?"

"With the casket."

"Your Majesty must excuse my speaking low, but the father is listening, and he must not overhear what I have to tell you."

"Bah!"

"No, I assure you, Sire."

"Well, speak!"

"Sire, the little one has indeed a horror of marriage; but of one thing I am certain, — she has not a horror of your Majesty."

Uttering these words in a tone of familiarity which pleased the king from its very frankness, the marshal, with his little, pattering steps, hastened to rejoin Taverney, who, from respect, had moved away to the door of the gallery.

Both retired by the gardens. It was a lovely evening. Two servants walked before them, holding torches in one hand, and with the other pulling aside the branches of the flowering shrubs. The windows of Trianon were blazing with light, and flitting across them could be discerned a crowd of joyous figures, the honored guests of the dauphiness. His Majesty's band gave life and animation to the minuet, for dancing had begun after supper, and was still continued.

Concealed in a dense thicket of lilac and snowball shrubs, Gilbert, kneeling upon the ground, was gazing at the movements of the shadows through the transparent curtains. A thunderbolt cleaving the earth would scarcely

have distracted the attention of the gazer, so much was he entranced by the lovely forms he was following with his eyes through all the mazes of the dance. Nevertheless, when Richelieu and Taverney passed, and brushed against the thicket in which this night-bird was concealed, the sound of their voices, and above all a certain word, made Gilbert raise his head; for this word was an all-important one for him.

The marshal, leaning upon his friend's arm, and bending down to his ear, was saying: "Everything well weighed and considered, Baron, — it is a hard thing to tell you, — but you must at once send your daughter to a convent."

"Why so?" asked the baron.

"Because I would wager," replied the marshal, "that the king is in love with Mademoiselle de Taverney."

At these words Gilbert started, and turned paler than the flaky snow-berries which at his abrupt movement showered down upon his head and shoulders.

CHAPTER XIV.

PRESENTIMENTS.

THE next day, as the clock at Trianon was striking twelve, Nicole's voice was heard calling Andrée, who had not yet left her chamber, "Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle, here is Monsieur Philippe!"

The exclamation came from the foot of the stairs. Andrée, at once surprised and delighted, drew her muslin robe closely over her neck and shoulders, and hastened to meet the young man, who was in fact dismounting in the court-yard of Trianon, and inquiring of the servants at what time he could see his sister.

Andrée therefore opened the door in person, and found herself face to face with Philippe, whom the officious Nicole had gone to meet in the courtyard, and was accompanying up the stairs. The young girl threw her arms round her brother's neck, and they entered Andrée's apartments together, followed by Nicole.

It was then that Andrée for the first time remarked that Philippe was more serious than usual, that his smile was not free from sadness, that he wore his elegant uniform with the most scrupulous neatness, and that he held a travelling cloak over his arm.

"What is the matter, Philippe?" she asked, with that instinct of tender souls to which a look is a sufficient revelation.

"My sister," said Philippe, "this morning I received an order to join my regiment."

"And you are going?"

"And I am going."

"Oh!" said Andrée; and with this plaintive exclamation all her courage, and almost all her strength, seemed to desert her. Although this departure was a very natural occurrence, and one which she might have foreseen, yet she felt so overpowered by the announcement that she was obliged to lean for support on her brother's arm.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Philippe, astonished, "does this departure afflict you so much, Andrée? You know, in a soldier's life, it is a most commonplace event."

"Yes, yes, it is in truth common," murmured the young girl. "And whither do you go, brother?"

"My garrison is at Rheims. You see, I have not a very long journey to undertake. But it is probable that from there the regiment will return to Strasburg."

"Alas!" said Andrée, "and when do you set out?"

"The order commands me to start immediately."

"You have come to bid me good-by, then?"

"Yes, sister."

"A farewell!"

"Have you anything particular to say to me, Andrée?" asked Philippe, fearing that this extreme dejection might have some other cause than his departure.

Andrée understood that these words were meant to call her attention to Nicole, who, astonished at Andrée's extreme grief, was gazing at this scene with much surprise; for, in fact, the departure of an officer to his garrison was not a catastrophe to cause such a flood of tears.

Andrée, therefore, noticed at the same instant Philippe's feelings and Nicole's surprise. She took up a mantle, threw it over her shoulders, and leading her brother to the staircase, "Come," said she, "as far as the park-gates,

Philippe. I will accompany you through the covered alley. I have indeed many things to tell you, brother."

These words were equivalent to a dismissal for Nicole, who returned to her mistress's chamber, while the latter descended the staircase with Philippe.

Andrée led the way to the passage which still, even at the present day, opens into the garden; but although Philippe's look anxiously questioned her, she remained for a long time silent, leaning upon his arm, and supporting her head upon his shoulder. But at last her heart was too full; her features were overspread with a death-like paleness, a deep sigh escaped her lips, and tears rushed from her eyes.

"My dear sister, my sweet Andrée!" exclaimed Philippe, "in the name of Heaven, what is the matter?"

"My friend, my only friend!" said Andrée, "you depart, you leave me alone in this great world, which I entered but yesterday, and yet you ask me why I weep? Ah! remember, Philippe, I lost my mother at my birth; it is dreadful to acknowledge it, but I have never had a father. All my little griefs, all my little secrets, I could confide to you alone. Who smiled upon me? Who took care of me? Who caressed me? Who rocked me in my cradle? It was you. Who has protected me since I grew up? You. Who taught me that God's creatures were not cast into the world only to suffer? You, Philippe, — you alone. For since the hour of my birth, I have loved no one in the world but you, and no one but you has loved me in return. Oh, Philippe, Philippe!" continued Andrée, sadly, "you turn away your head, and I can read your thoughts. You think I am young, that I am beautiful, and that I am wrong not to trust to the future and to love. And yet you see, alas! Philippe, it is not enough to be young and handsome, for no one thinks of me.

"You will say the dauphiness is kind; and she is so. She is all perfection; at least, she seems so in my eyes, and I look upon her as a divinity. But it is exactly because she holds this exalted station that I can feel only respect for her, and not affection. Yet, Philippe, affection is necessary for my heart, which, if always thrust back on itself, must at last break. My father — I tell you nothing new, Philippe — my father is not only no protector or friend, but I cannot even look at him without feeling terror. Yes, yes, I fear him, Philippe; and still more now that you are leaving me. Why do I fear him? I do not know. Eh, *mon Dieu!* do not the birds of the air and the flocks of the field feel and dread the approaching storm? You will say they are endowed with instinct; but why will you deny the instinct of misfortune to our immortal souls? For some time past everything has prospered with our family, I know it well. You are a captain; I am in the household, and almost in the intimacy, of the dauphiness; my father, it is said, supped last night almost *tête-à-tête* with the king. Well, Philippe, I repeat it, even should you think me mad, all this alarms me more than our peaceful poverty and obscurity at Taverney."

"And yet, dear sister," said Philippe, sadly, "you were alone there also; I was not with you there to console you."

"Yes, but at least I was alone, — alone with the memories of childhood. It seemed to me as if the house where my mother lived and breathed her last would bestow upon me, if I may so speak, a protecting care. All there was peaceful, gentle, friendly. I could see you depart with calmness, and welcome you back with joy. But whether you departed or returned, my heart was not all with you; it was attached also to that dear house, to my gardens, to my flowers, to the whole scene of which formerly you

were but a part. Now you are all to me, Philippe, and when you leave me I am indeed alone."

"And yet, Andrée, you have now a protection far more powerful than mine."

"True."

"A happy future before you."

"Who can tell?"

"Why do you doubt it?"

"I do not know."

"This is ingratitude toward God, sister."

"Oh! no, thank Heaven, I am not ungrateful to God. Morning and evening I offer up thanks to him; but it seems to me as if, instead of receiving my prayers with favor, every time I bend the knee, a voice from on high says to me, 'Take care, young girl, take care!'"

"But against what are you to guard? Answer me. I will admit that a misfortune threatens you: have you any presentiment of the nature of this misfortune? Do you know how to act so as best to confront it, or how to avoid it?"

"I know nothing, Philippe, except that my life seems to hang by a thread, that nothing will look bright to me from the moment of your departure. In a word, it seems as if during my sleep I had been placed on the declivity of a precipice too steep for me to arrest my progress when roused to a sense of my danger; that I see the abyss, and yet am dragged down; and that, you being far away, and your helping hand no longer ready to support me, I shall be dashed down and crushed in the fall."

"Dear sister! my sweet Andrée!" said Philippe, agitated in spite of himself by the expression of deep and unaffected terror in her voice and manner, "you exaggerate to yourself a tenderness for which I feel deeply grateful. Yes, you will lose your friend, but only for a time. I

shall not be so far distant but that you can send for me if necessity should arise. Besides, remember that except for your chimerical fears, nothing really threatens you."

Andrée placed herself in her brother's way. "Then, Philippe," said she, "how does it happen that you, who are a man, and gifted with so much more strength, are at this moment as sad as I am? Tell me, my brother, how do you explain that?"

"Easily, dear sister," said Philippe, arresting Andrée's steps, for she had again moved forward, on ceasing to speak. "We are brother and sister not only by blood, but in heart and affection; therefore we have lived in an intimate communion of thoughts and feelings, which, especially since our arrival in Paris, has become to me a delightful necessity. I break this chain, my dear sister, or rather it is broken by others, and I feel the blow in my heart. I am therefore sad, but only for the moment, Andrée. I can look beyond our separation; I do not believe in any misfortune, except in that of not seeing you for some months, perhaps for a year. I am resigned, and do not say 'adieu,' but rather, 'au revoir.'"

In spite of these consolatory words, Andrée could reply only by sobs and tears.

"Dear sister," exclaimed Philippe, grieved at this dejection, which seemed so incomprehensible to him, "you have not told me all, — you hide something from me. In Heaven's name, speak!" and he took her in his arms, pressing her to his heart, and gazing earnestly in her eyes.

"I!" said she. "No, no, Philippe, I assure you solemnly. You know that all the most secret recesses of my heart are open before you."

"Well, then, Andrée, for pity's sake, take courage; do not grieve me so."

"You are right," said she, "and I am mad. Listen!

I never had a strong mind, as you, Philippe, know better than any one; I have always been timid, dreaming, melancholy. But I have no right to make so tenderly beloved a brother a sharer in my fears, above all when he labors to give me courage, and proves to me that I am wrong to be alarmed. You are right, Philippe; it is true, everything here is conducive to my happiness. Forgive me, Philippe! You see, I dry my tears, I weep no longer; I smile, Philippe, — I do not say 'adieu,' but rather, 'au revoir;'" and the young maiden tenderly embraced her brother, hiding her head on his shoulder, to conceal from his view a tear which still dimmed her eye, and which dropped like a pearl upon the golden epaulette of the young officer.

Philippe gazed upon her with that infinite tenderness which partakes at the same time of a father's and a brother's affection. "Andrée," said he, "I like to see you bear yourself thus bravely. Be of good courage! I must go, but the courier will bring you a letter every week; and every week let me receive one from you in return."

"Yes, Philippe," said Andrée; "yes, it will be my only happiness. But you have informed my father, have you not?"

"Of what?"

"Of your departure."

"Dear sister, it was the baron himself who brought me the minister's order this morning. Monsieur de Taverney is not like you, Andrée, and it seems will easily part with me. He appeared pleased at the thought of my departure, and in fact he was right. Here I can never get forward, while there many occasions may present themselves."

"My father is glad to see you go?" murmured Andrée. "Are you not mistaken, Philippe?"

"He has you," replied Philippe, eluding the question; "that is a consolation for him, sister."

"Do you think so, Philippe? He never sees me."

"My sister, he bade me tell you that this very day, after my departure, he would come to Trianon. Believe me, he loves you; only it is after his own fashion."

"What is the matter now, Philippe? You seem embarrassed."

"Dear Andrée, I heard the clock strike, — what time is it?"

"A quarter of one."

"Well, dear sister, I seem embarrassed because I ought to have been on the road an hour ago; and here we are at the gate, where my horse is waiting. Therefore — "

Andrée assumed a calm demeanor, and taking her brother's hand, "Therefore," said she, in a voice too firm to be quite natural, "therefore, brother, adieu!"

Philippe gave her one last embrace.

"Au revoir," said he; "remember your promise."

"What promise?"

"One letter a week at least."

"Oh! do you think it necessary to ask it?"

She pronounced these last words with a violent effort. The poor girl's voice was scarcely audible.

Philippe waved his hand to her, and walked quickly toward the gate. Andrée followed his retreating form with her eyes, holding in her breath in the endeavor to repress her sighs. Philippe mounted his horse, shouted a last farewell from the other side of the gate, and was gone.

Andrée remained standing motionless till he was out of sight; then she turned, darted like a wounded fawn among the shady trees, perceived a bench, and had only strength sufficient to reach it, and to sink on it powerless

and almost lifeless. Then, heaving a deep and heartrending sigh, she exclaimed: "Oh, my God! why dost thou leave me thus alone upon earth?"

She buried her face in her hands, while the big tears she did not seek to restrain made their way between her slender fingers. At this instant a slight rustling was heard amid the shrubs behind her. Andrée thought she heard a sigh. She turned, alarmed; a melancholy form stood before her. It was Gilbert.

CHAPTER XV.

GILBERT'S ROMANCE.

As pale, as despairing as Andrée, Gilbert stood downcast before her. At the sight of a man, and of a stranger, — for such he seemed at first sight through the thick veil of tears which obscured her gaze, — Andrée hastily dried her eyes, as if the proud young girl would have blushed to be seen weeping. She controlled her agitation, and restored calmness to her marble features, only an instant before quivering with the shudder of despair. Gilbert was much longer in regaining his calmness, and his features still wore an expression of grief when Mademoiselle de Taverney, looking up, at last recognized him.

"Oh! Monsieur Gilbert again!" said Andrée, with that trifling tone which she affected to assume whenever chance — as she believed — brought this young man into her presence.

Gilbert made no reply; his feelings were still too deeply moved. The grief which had shaken Andrée's frame to the centre had violently agitated his own. It was Andrée, therefore, who again broke the silence, wishing to have the last word with this apparition. "But what is the matter, Monsieur Gilbert," she inquired. "Why do you gaze at me in that woe-begone manner? Something must grieve you. May I ask what it is?"

"Do you wish to know?" asked Gilbert, mournfully, for he felt the irony concealed beneath this appearance of interest.

"Yes."

"Well, what grieves me, Mademoiselle, is to see you suffer," replied Gilbert.

"And who told you that I am suffering, Monsieur?"

"I see it."

"You mistake, Monsieur; I am not suffering," said Andrée, passing her handkerchief over her face.

Gilbert perceived the storm rising, but he resolved to turn it aside by humility. "I entreat your pardon, Mademoiselle," said he, "but I heard your sobs."

"Ah! you were listening; better and better!"

"Mademoiselle, it was by accident," stammered Gilbert, for he knew that he was telling a falsehood.

"Accident! I regret exceedingly, Monsieur Gilbert, that chance should have brought you here. But even so, may I ask in what manner these sobs which you heard me utter grieved you? Tell me that, if you please?"

"I cannot bear to see a woman weep," said Gilbert, in a tone which highly displeased Andrée.

"Am I then a woman in Monsieur Gilbert's eyes?" replied the haughty young girl. "I sue for no one's sympathy, but Monsieur Gilbert's still less than any other's."

"Mademoiselle," said Gilbert, sadly, "you do wrong to taunt me thus. I saw you sad, and I felt grieved. I heard you say that now Monsieur Philippe was gone, you would be alone in the world. Never, Mademoiselle! for I am beside you; and never did a heart beat more devoted to you. I repeat it, Mademoiselle de Taverney cannot be alone in the world while my head can think, my heart beat, or my arm retains its strength."

While he spoke these words Gilbert was indeed an example of manly strength and beauty, although he pronounced them with all the humility which the most sincere respect commanded. But it was fated that every-

thing which the young man did should displease Andrée, should offend her, and urge her to offensive retorts, — as if his very respect were an insult, and his prayers a provocation. At first she attempted to rise, that she might second her harsh words with as harsh gestures; but a nervous shudder retained her on her seat. Besides, she reflected that if she were standing, she could be seen from a distance, and seen talking to Gilbert. She therefore remained seated; for she was determined, once for all, to crush the importunate insect before her under foot. She therefore replied, —

"I thought I had already informed you, Monsieur Gilbert, that you are highly displeasing to me, that your voice annoys me, that your philosophical speeches disgust me. Then why, when you know this, do you still persist in addressing me?"

"Mademoiselle," replied Gilbert, pale, but self-possessed, "an honest-hearted woman is never disgusted by sympathy. An honest man is the equal of every human being; and I, whom you maltreat so cruelly, deserve, more than any other, perhaps, the sympathy which I regret to perceive you do not feel for me."

At this word "sympathy," thus twice repeated, Andrée opened her large eyes to their utmost extent, and fixed them impertinently upon Gilbert. "Sympathy!" said she; "sympathy between you and me, Monsieur Gilbert! In truth I was deceived in my opinion of you. I took you for insolent, and I find you are even less than that, — you are only an idiot."

"I am neither insolent nor an idiot," said Gilbert, with an apparent calm, which it must have caused his proud disposition much to assume. "No, Mademoiselle; nature has made me your equal, and chance has made you my debtor."

"Chance again!" said Andrée, sarcastically.

"Perhaps I should have said Providence. I never intended to speak to you of this, but your insults refresh my memory."

"I your debtor, Monsieur? Your debtor, I think you said? Explain yourself, Monsieur Gilbert."

"I should be ashamed to find you ungrateful, Mademoiselle. God, who has made you so beautiful, has given you, to compensate for your beauty, sufficient defects without that."

This time Andrée rose.

"Stay! pardon me!" said Gilbert; "at times you irritate me too much, and then I forget for a moment the interest with which you inspire me."

Andrée burst into a fit of laughter so prolonged that it was calculated to rouse Gilbert's anger to the utmost; but to her great surprise Gilbert did not take fire. He folded his arms on his breast, retained the same hostile and determined expression in his fiery glance, and patiently awaited the end of this insulting laugh.

"Mademoiselle," said Gilbert, coldly, "will you condescend to answer one question? Do you respect your father?"

"You take the liberty of catechising me, it seems, Monsieur Gilbert?" replied the young girl, with sovereign hauteur.

"Yes, you respect your father," continued Gilbert; "and it is not on account of his good qualities or his virtues, but simply because he gave you life. A father, unfortunately, — and you must know it, Mademoiselle, — is respected in only one relation; but still it gives him a claim. Even more; for this sole benefit,"— and Gilbert, in his turn, felt himself animated by an emotion of scornful pity, — "you are bound to love your benefactor.

Well, Mademoiselle, this being established as a principle, why do you insult me? why do you scorn me? why do you hate me, — me, who, it is true, did not give you life, but who saved it to you?"

"You!" exclaimed Andrée; "you saved my life?"

"Ah! you did not even dream of that," said Gilbert, "or rather you have forgotten it. That is very natural; it occurred nearly a year ago. Well, Mademoiselle, I must therefore inform you of it, or recall it to your memory. Yes, I saved your life at the risk of my own."

"At least, Monsieur Gilbert," said Andrée, deadly pale, "you will do me the favor of telling me when and where."

"The day, Mademoiselle, when a hundred thousand persons, crushed one against another, fleeing from the fiery horses, and the sabres which thinned the crowd, left a long train of dead and dying upon the Place Louis XV."

"Ah! the 30th of May?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

Andrée seated herself, and her features again assumed a pitiless smile. "And on that day, you say you risked your life to save mine, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"I have already told you so."

"Then you are the Baron Balsamo; I beg your pardon, I was not aware of it."

"No, I am not the Baron Balsamo," replied Gilbert, with flashing eye and quivering lip; "I am the poor child of the people, — Gilbert, who has the folly, the madness, the misfortune to love you; who, because he loved you like a madman, like a fool, like a sot, followed you into the crowd; who, separated from you for a moment, recognized you by the piercing shriek you uttered when you lost your footing; who, forcing his way to you, shielded you with his arms until twenty thousand arms, pressing against his, broke their strength; who threw himself upon

the stone wall against which you were about to be crushed, to afford you the softer repose of his corpse; and perceiving among the crowd that strange man who seemed to govern his fellow-men, and whose name you have just pronounced, collected all his strength, all his energy, and raised you in his exhausted arms that this man might see you, seize hold of you, and save you! — Gilbert, who in yielding you up to a more fortunate protector than himself, retained nothing but a shred of your dress, which he pressed to his lips! And it was time; for already the blood was rushing to his heart, to his temples, to his brain. The rolling tide of executioners and victims swept over him, and buried him beneath its waves, while you, like an angel of the resurrection, ascended from his abyss toward heaven."

Gilbert in these hurried words had shown himself as he was, — uncultivated, simple, almost sublime, in his resolution as in his love. Notwithstanding her contempt, Andrée could not refrain from gazing at him with astonishment. For a moment he believed that his narrative had been as irresistible as truth — as love. But poor Gilbert did not take into his calculations incredulity, — that insincerity of hatred. Andrée, who hated Gilbert, did not allow herself to be moved by any of the forcible arguments of her despised lover. She did not reply immediately, but looked at Gilbert, while something like a struggle took place in her mind.

The young man, therefore, ill at ease during this freezing silence, felt himself obliged to add, as a sort of peroration: "And now, Mademoiselle, do not detest me as you did formerly; for now it would not only be injustice, but ingratitude, to do so. I said so before, and I now repeat it."

At these words Andrée raised her haughty brow, and in

the most indifferent and cutting tone she asked: "How long, Monsieur Gilbert, did you remain under Monsieur Rousseau's tutelage?"

"Mademoiselle," said Gilbert, ingenuously, "I think about three months, without reckoning the few days of my illness, which was caused by the accident on the 30th of May."

"You misunderstand me," said she; "I did not ask you whether you had been ill or not, or what accidents you may have received. They add an artistic finish to your story, but otherwise they are of no importance to me. I merely wished to tell you that, having resided only three months with the illustrious author, you have profited well by his lessons, and that the pupil at his first essay composes romances almost worthy of his master."

Gilbert had listened with calmness, believing that Andrée was about to reply seriously to his impassioned narration; but at this stroke of cutting irony he fell from the summit of his buoyant hopes to the dust. "A romance!" murmured he, indignantly; "you treat what I have told you as a romance!"

"Yes, Monsieur," said Andrée, "a romance, — I repeat the word; only you did not force me to read it, — for that I have to thank you. I deeply regret that, unfortunately, I am not able to repay its full value; but I should make the attempt in vain, — the romance is invaluable."

"And this is your reply?" stammered Gilbert, a pang darting through his heart, and his eyes becoming dim from emotion.

"I do not reply at all, Monsieur," said Andrée, pushing him aside, that she might pass before him.

The fact was that Nicole had at that moment made her appearance at the end of the alley, calling her mistress while still a considerable distance off, in order not to in-

terrupt this interview too suddenly, ignorant as she was as to who Andrée's companion might be, for she had not recognized Gilbert through the foliage. But as she approached, she saw the young man, recognized him, and stood astounded. She then repented not having made a detour, in order to overhear what Gilbert had to say to Mademoiselle de Taverney. The latter addressed her in a softened voice, as if to mark more strongly to Gilbert the haughtiness with which she had spoken to him.

"Well, child," said she, "what is the matter?"

"The Baron de Taverney and the Duc de Richelieu have come to present their respects to Mademoiselle," replied Nicole.

"Where are they?"

"In Mademoiselle's apartments."

"Come, then;" and Andrée moved away.

Nicole followed, not without throwing, as she passed, a sarcastic glance back at Gilbert, who, livid with agitation, and almost frantic with rage, shook his clenched hand in the direction of his departing enemy, and grinding his teeth, muttered: "Oh, creature without heart, without soul! I saved your life, I concentrated all my love on you, I extinguished every feeling which might offend what I called your purity; for in my madness you were to me a holy virgin, like the Virgin who is in heaven. Now that I have seen you more nearly, I find you are no more than a woman, and I am a man. Oh, one day or another, Andrée de Taverney, I shall avenge myself! I have had you twice in my power, and twice I have respected you. Andrée de Taverney, beware of the third time! Au revoir, Andrée." He rushed from the spot, bounding through the thickest of the shrubs like a young wolf wounded by the hunter, who turns and shows his sharp teeth and his bloodshot eyeballs.

CHAPTER XVI.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

When she reached the opposite extremity of the alley, Andrée saw her father and the marshal walking up and down before the vestibule waiting for her. The two friends seemed in high spirits, and as they stood with their arms interlaced, presented a better representation of Orestes and Pylades than the court had ever witnessed. As Andrée approached, the two old men seemed still more joyous, and remarked to each other on her radiant beauty, heightened by her walk and by the emotion she had previously undergone.

The marshal saluted Andrée as he would have saluted a declared Madame Pompadour. This distinction did not escape Taverney, who was delighted at it; but it surprised Andrée by its mixture of respect and gallantry, for the cunning courtier could put as many shades of meaning into a bow as Covielle could put French phrases into a single Turkish word. Andrée returned the marshal's salutation, made one equally ceremonious to her father, and then, with fascinating grace, she invited both to follow her to her apartment.

The marshal admired the exquisite neatness, which was the only ornament of the furniture and architecture of this retreat. With a few flowers and a little white muslin, Andrée had made her rather gloomy chamber, not a palace, but a temple.

The duke seated himself upon an armchair covered with green chintz, beneath a Chinese cornucopia, from which

drooped bunches of perfumed acacia and maple, mingled with iris and Bengal roses. Taverney occupied a similar chair; and Andrée sank upon a folding stool, her arm resting on a harpsichord, also ornamented with flowers arranged in a large Dresden vase.

"Mademoiselle," said the marshal, "I come as the bearer, on the part of his Majesty, of the compliments which your charming voice and your musical talents drew from every auditor of yesterday's rehearsal. His Majesty feared to arouse jealousy by praising you too openly at the time, and he therefore charged me to express to you the pleasure you have caused him."

Andrée blushed; and her blush made her so lovely that the marshal proceeded, as if speaking on his own account. "The king has assured me," said he, "that he never saw any one at his court who united to such a high degree the gifts of mind and the charms of personal beauty."

"You forget those of the heart," said Taverney, with effusion; "Andrée is the best of daughters."

The marshal thought for a moment that his old friend was about to weep. Admiring deeply this display of paternal sensibility, he exclaimed: "The heart, alas! My dear friend, you alone can judge of the tenderness of which Mademoiselle's heart is capable. Were I but twenty-five years of age, I would lay my life and my fortune at her feet!"

Andrée did not yet know how to receive lightly a courtier's homage. Richelieu elicited from her only a murmur without significance.

"Mademoiselle," he continued, "the king requests you will accept a slight testimony of his satisfaction; and he has charged the baron, your father, to transmit it to you. What reply shall I make to his Majesty from you?"

"Monsieur," replied Andrée, animated by no feeling but

that respect which is due to a monarch from all his subjects, "assure his Majesty of my deep gratitude; tell him that he honors me too highly by deigning to think of me, and that I am not worthy the attention of so powerful a monarch."

Richelieu seemed in raptures at this reply, which Andrée pronounced with a firm voice, and without hesitation. He took her hand, kissed it respectfully, and devouring her with his eyes, "A royal hand," said he, "a fairy foot, — mind, purity, resolution. Ah, Baron, what a treasure! It is not a daughter whom you have, — it is a queen!"

With these words he retired, leaving Taverney alone with Andrée, his heart swelling with pride and hope.

Whoever had seen this advocate of antiquated theories, this sceptic, this scoffer, inhaling with delight the atmosphere of favor through its most disreputable channel, would have said that God had blinded at the same moment both his intellect and heart. Taverney alone might have replied, with reference to this change, "It is not I who have changed, — it is the times."

He remained, then, seated near Andrée, and could not help feeling somewhat embarrassed; for the young girl, with her air of unconquerable serenity, and her clear, limpid, unfathomable look, seemed as if she would penetrate his most secret thoughts.

"Did not Monsieur de Richelieu, Monsieur, say that his Majesty had intrusted you with a testimony of his satisfaction? May I ask what it is?"

"Ah!" thought Taverney, "she is curious, — so much the better! I could not have expected it. So much the better!"

He drew the casket, which the marshal had given him the evening before, slowly from his pocket, just as a kind papa produces a paper of bonbons or a toy, which the

children have devoured with their eyes before their hands can reach it.

"Here it is," said he.

"Ah, jewels!" said Andrée.

"Are they to your taste?"

It was a set of pearls of great value. Twelve large diamonds connected together the rows of pearls, while a diamond clasp, earrings, and a tiara of the same precious material, made the present worth at least thirty thousand crowns.

"Good heavens, father!" exclaimed Andrée.

"Well?"

"It is too handsome. The king has made some mistake. I should be ashamed to wear that. I have no dresses to match the splendor of these diamonds."

"Oh! complain of it, I beg!" said Taverney, ironically.

"You do not understand me, Monsieur. I regret that I cannot wear these jewels because they are too beautiful."

"The king, who gives the casket, Mademoiselle, is sufficiently the grand seigneur to add the dresses."

"But, Monsieur, this goodness on the king's part —"

"Do you not think I have deserved it by my services?"

"Ah! pardon me, Monsieur; that is true," said Andrée, drooping her head, but not quite convinced.

After a moment's reflection she closed the casket. "I shall not wear these diamonds," said she.

"And why not?" said Taverney, uneasily.

"Because, my dear father, you and my brother are in want of every necessity, and this superfluity offends my eyes when I think of your embarrassments."

Taverney smiled, and pressed her hand. "Oh!" said he, "do not think of that, my daughter. The king has

done more for me than for you. We are in favor, my dear child. It would neither be respectful as a subject nor grateful as a woman to appear before his Majesty without the present he has made you."

"I will obey, Monsieur."

"Yes, but you must obey as if it gave you pleasure to do so. These ornaments seem not to be to your taste."

"I am no judge of diamonds, Monsieur."

"Learn, then, that the pearls alone are worth fifty thousand francs."

Andrée clasped her hands. "Monsieur," said she, "it is most strange that his Majesty should make me such a present. Reflect!"

"I do not understand you, Mademoiselle," replied Taverney, dryly.

"If I wear these jewels, I assure you, Monsieur, every one will be greatly surprised."

"Why?" asked Taverney, in the same tone, and with a cold and imperious glance which made Andrée lower her eyes.

"I feel a scruple."

"Mademoiselle, you must confess that it is strange you should entertain scruples, when even I, your father, feel none. Give me your young modest girls for seeing evil and finding it out, however closely hidden it is, and when none other had remarked it! None like maidenly and simple girls for making old grenadiers like myself blush!"

Andrée hid her blushing face in her lovely white hands. "Oh! my brother," she murmured to herself, "why are you already so far away from me?"

Did Taverney hear these words, or did he divine their purport with that wonderful perspicacity which we know he possessed? We cannot tell; but he immediately changed his tone, and taking Andrée's hand in his,

"Come, my child," said he, "is not your father your friend?"

A sweet smile chased the shadow from Andrée's brow.

"Shall I not be here to love you, — to advise you? Are you not proud to contribute to my happiness and that of your brother?"

"Oh, yes!" said Andrée.

The baron fixed a caressing look upon his daughter.

"Well," said he, "you shall be, as Monsieur de Richelieu said just now, the queen of Taverney. The king has distinguished you, and the dauphiness also," added he, hastily. "In your intimacy with these two august personages, you will found our future fortunes by making them happy. The friend of the dauphiness and — of the king! What a glorious career! You have superior talents and unrivalled beauty, a pure and healthy mind, untainted by avarice and ambition. Oh, my child, what a part you might play! Do you remember the maiden who soothed the last moments of Charles VI.? Her name is cherished in France. Do you remember Agnes Sorel, who restored the honor of the French crown? All good Frenchmen respect her memory. Andrée, you will be the support of the old age of our glorious monarch. He will cherish you as his daughter, and you will reign in France by the divine right of beauty, courage, and fidelity!"

Andrée opened her eyes wide with astonishment. The baron resumed, without giving her time to reflect. "With a single look you will drive away these wretched creatures who dishonor the throne; your presence will purify the court. To your generous influence the nobility of the kingdom will owe the return of pure morals, politeness, and real gallantry. My daughter, you may be, you must be, the regenerating star of your country, and a crown of glory to your name."

"But," said Andrée, all bewildered, "what must I do to effect all this?"

The baron reflected for a moment. "Andrée," said he, "I have often told you that in this world you must force men to be virtuous by making them love virtue. Sullen, melancholy, sermonizing virtue makes even those fly who wish most to approach her. Lend to your virtue all the allurements of coquetry, — even of vice. It is an easy task for a talented and high-minded girl such as you are. Make yourself so lovely that the court will talk only of you; make yourself so agreeable to the king that he cannot do without you. Be so reserved and discreet toward all, except his Majesty, that people will soon attribute to you all that power which you cannot fail ultimately to obtain."

"I do not exactly understand your last advice," said Andrée.

"Trust yourself to my guidance; you will fulfil my wishes without understanding them, — the best plan for such a wise and generous creature as you are. But, by the by, to enable you to put in practice my first counsel, I must furnish your purse. Take these hundred louis-d'or and dress in a manner worthy of the rank to which you belong, since the king has done us the honor to distinguish us."

Taverney gave the hundred louis to his daughter, kissed her hand, and left her. He returned with rapid steps along the alley by which he had come, so much engrossed in his reflections that he did not perceive Nicole in close conference with a nobleman at the extremity of the Bosquet des Amours.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT ALTHOTAS WANTED TO COMPLETE HIS ELIXIR.

On the day after that on which this conversation took place, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, Balsamo was seated in his cabinet, in the Rue Saint Claude, occupied in reading a letter which Fritz had just brought him. The letter was without signature. He turned it over and over in his hands. "I know this writing," said he, — "large, irregular, slightly tremulous, and full of faults in orthography;" and he read it once more. It ran as follows: —

Monsieur le Comte, — A person who consulted you some time before the fall of the late ministry, and who had consulted you a long time previously, will wait upon you to-day, in order to have another consultation. Will your numerous occupations permit you to grant this person a quarter of an hour between four and five this evening?

After reading this for the second or third time, Balsamo fell back into his train of reflection. "It is not worth while to consult Lorenza for such a trifle," said he; "besides, can I no longer divine anything by myself? The writing is large, — a sign of aristocracy; irregular and trembling, — a sign of age; full of faults in orthography, — it must be a courtier. Ah, stupid creature that I am! it is the Duc de Richelieu. Most certainly I shall have an hour at your service, Monsieur le Duc, — an hour did I say? — a day! Make my time your own. Are you not,

without knowing it, one of my mysterious agents, one of my familiar demons? Do we not both pursue the same task? Do we not both shake the monarchy at the same time, — you by making yourself its presiding genius, I by declaring myself its enemy? Come, then, Duke, I am ready!" and Balsamo consulted his watch, to see how long he must yet wait for the duke.

At that moment a bell sounded in the cornice of the ceiling. "What can be the matter?" said Balsamo, starting. "Lorenza calls me; she wishes to see me. Can anything unpleasant have happened to her? or is it a return of those fits of passion which I have so often witnessed, and of which I have been at times the victim? Yesterday she was thoughtful, gentle, resigned; she was as I love to see her. Poor child! I must go to her." He arranged his dress, glanced at the mirror, to see if his hair was not too much in disorder, and proceeded toward the stairs, after having replied to Lorenza's request as she had made it, by ringing a bell.

But, according to his custom, Balsamo paused in the apartment adjoining that occupied by the young woman; and turning, with his arms crossed, toward the place where he supposed her to be, he commanded her to sleep, with that powerful will which recognized no obstacles. Then, as if doubting his own power, or as if he thought it necessary to redouble his precautions, he looked into the apartment through an almost imperceptible crevice in the woodwork.

Lorenza was sleeping upon a couch, where, no doubt, tottering under the influence of her master's will, she had sought a support for her sinking limbs. A painter could not have suggested a more poetic attitude. Panting and subdued beneath the power of the subtle fluid which Balsamo had poured upon her, Lorenza seemed like one of

those beautiful Ariadnes of Vanloo, with rounded breasts, and features expressive of fatigue or despair.

Balsamo entered by his usual passage, and stopped for a moment before her, to contemplate her sleeping countenance. He then awoke her; she was too dangerous thus.

As she opened her eyes, a piercing glance escaped from between the half-closed lids; then, as if to collect her scattered thoughts, she smoothed back her long hair with her hands, dried her lips, moist with slumber, and searching deeply her memory, she brought together her scattered recollections.

Balsamo looked at her with some anxiety. He had been long accustomed to the sudden transition from winning love to outbursts of anger and hatred; but this appearance, to which he was entirely unused, — the calmness with which Lorenza on this occasion received him, instead of with one of her customary bursts of hatred, — announced something more serious, perhaps, than he had yet witnessed.

Lorenza sat up on the couch; and fixing her deep, soft eyes upon Balsamo, she said, "Pray be good enough to take a seat near me."

Balsamo started at the sound of her voice, expressing, as it did, such unusual mildness.

"Near you!" said he. "You know, my Lorenza, that I have but one wish, — to pass my life at your feet."

"Monsieur," replied Lorenza, in the same tone, "I pray you to be seated, — although, indeed, I have not much to say to you; but, short as it is, I shall say it better, I think, if you are seated."

"Now, as ever, my beloved Lorenza, I will do as you wish;" and he took a chair near Lorenza, who was still seated upon the couch.

"Monsieur," said she, fixing her heavenly eyes upon Balsamo, "I have summoned you to request from you a favor."

"Oh, my Lorenza!" exclaimed Balsamo, more and more delighted, "anything you wish! Speak; you shall have everything!"

"I wish for only one thing; but I warn you that I wish for that most ardently."

"Speak, Lorenza, speak! should it cost my fortune, or half my life!"

"It will cost you nothing, Monsieur, but a moment of your time," replied the young woman.

Balsamo, enchanted with the turn the conversation was taking, was already tasking his fertile imagination to supply a list of those wishes which Lorenza was likely to form, and above all, those which he could satisfy. "She will, perhaps," thought he, "ask for a servant or a companion. Well, even this immense sacrifice — for it would compromise my secret and my friends — I will make, for the poor child is in truth very unhappy in her solitude. Speak quickly, my Lorenza!" said he aloud, with a smile full of love.

"Monsieur," said she, "you are aware that I am dying of melancholy and weariness."

Balsamo sighed, and bent his head in token of assent.

"My youth," continued Lorenza, "is wasting; my days are one long sigh, — my nights a continual terror. I am growing old in solitude and anguish."

"Your life is what you have made it, Lorenza," said Balsamo; "it is not my fault that this life which you have made so sad is not one to make a queen envious."

"Be it so. Therefore, you see, I have recourse to you in my distress."

"Thanks, Lorenza!"

"You are a good Christian, you have sometimes told me, although —"

"Although you think me a lost soul, you would say. I complete your thought, Lorenza."

"Suppose nothing except what I tell you, Monsieur; and I beg you will conjecture nothing."

"Proceed, then."

"Well, instead of leaving me buried in these angers and despairs, grant me, since I am of no service to you —"

She stopped to glance at Balsamo; but he had regained his command over himself, and she saw only a cold look and contracted brow. She became animated as she met his almost threatening eye. "Grant me," she continued, "not liberty, — for I know that the will of God, or rather your will, which seems all-powerful to me, condemns me to perpetual captivity, — but at least to see human faces, to hear other voices than yours; permit me, in short, to go out, to walk, to have a part in life."

"I had foreseen this request, Lorenza," said Balsamo, taking her hand; "and you know that long since your wish has been also my own."

"Well, then!" exclaimed Lorenza.

"But," resumed Balsamo, "you have yourself prevented it. Like a madman that I was, — and every man who loves is a madman, — I allowed you to penetrate into some of my secrets, both of science and politics. You know that Althotas has discovered the philosopher's stone, and seeks the elixir of life. You know that I and my companions conspire against the monarchies of the world. The first of these secrets would cause me to be burned as a sorcerer; the other would be sufficient to condemn me to be broken on the wheel for high treason. Besides, you have threatened me, Lorenza; you have told me that you

would try every means to regain your liberty, and this liberty once regained, that the first use you would make of it would be to denounce me to Monsieur de Sartines. Did you not say so?"

"What can you expect? At times I lash myself to fury, and then I am half-mad."

"Are you calm and sensible now, Lorenza; and can we converse quietly together?"

"I hope so."

"If I grant you the liberty you desire, shall I find in you a devoted and submissive wife, a faithful and gentle companion? You know, Lorenza, this is my most ardent wish."

The young woman was silent.

"In one word, will you love me?" asked Balsamo, with a sigh.

"I am unwilling to promise what I cannot perform," said Lorenza; "neither love nor hatred depends upon ourselves. I hope that God, in return for your good actions, will permit my hatred toward you to take flight, and love to return."

"Unfortunately, Lorenza, such a promise is not a guarantee which will enable me to trust you. I require a positive, sacred oath, to break which would be a sacrilege, — an oath which binds you in this world as in the next; which involves your death in this world and your damnation in that which is to come."

Lorenza was silent.

"Will you take this oath?"

Lorenza hid her face in her hands, and her breast heaved under the influence of contending emotions.

"Take this oath, Lorenza, as I shall dictate it, with the solemnity in which I shall clothe it, and you shall be free."

"What must I swear, Monsieur?"

"Swear that you will never, under any pretext, betray what has come to your knowledge relative to the secrets of Althotas."

"Yes, I will swear it."

"Swear that you will never divulge what you know of our political meetings?"

"I will swear that also."

"With the oath and in the form which I shall dictate?"

"Yes. Is that all?"

"No; swear, — and this is the principal thing, Lorenza; for the other matters would endanger only my life, while upon what I am about to say depends my entire happiness, — swear that you will never leave me, Lorenza! Swear this, and you are free!"

The young woman started as if cold steel had pierced her heart.

"And in what form must the oath be taken?"

"We will enter a church together, and communicate at the same altar. You will swear on the host never to betray anything relating to Althotas or my companions. You will swear never to leave me. We will then divide the host in two, and each will take the half, you swearing before God that you will never betray me, and I that I will ever do my utmost to make you happy."

"No!" said Lorenza; "such an oath is a sacrilege."

"An oath, Lorenza, is never a sacrilege," replied Balsamo, sadly, "but when you make it with the intention of not keeping it."

"I will not take this oath," said Lorenza; "I should fear to imperil my soul."

"It is not — I repeat it — in taking an oath that you imperil your soul; it is in breaking it."

"I will not do it."

"Then nave patience, Lorenza," said Balsamo, without anger, but with the deepest sadness.

Lorenza's brow darkened like an overshadowed plain when a cloud passes between it and the sun.

"Ah! you refuse?" said she.

"Not so, Lorenza; it is you who refuse."

A nervous movement indicated all the impatience the young woman felt at these words.

"Listen, Lorenza!" said Balsamo. "This is what I will do for you, and, believe me, it is much."

"Speak," said the young girl, with a bitter smile. "Let me see how far that generosity of which you make so much will extend."

"God, chance, or fate — call it what you will, Lorenza, — has united us by an indissoluble bond; do not attempt to break this bond in this life, for death alone can accomplish that."

"Proceed; I know that," said Lorenza, impatiently.

"Well, in one week, Lorenza, — whatever it may cost me, and however great the sacrifice I make, — in one week you shall have a companion."

"Where?" asked she.

"Here."

"Here!" she exclaimed, "behind these bars; behind these inexorable doors, these iron doors? — a fellow-prisoner? Oh! you cannot mean it, Monsieur; that is not what I ask."

"Lorenza, it is all that I can grant."

The young woman made a more vehement gesture of impatience.

"My dear child," resumed Balsamo, mildly, "reflect a little; with a companion you will more easily support the weight of this necessary misfortune."

"You mistake, Monsieur. Until now I have grieved

only for myself, not for others. This trial only was wanting, and I see that you wish to make me undergo it. Yes, you will immure beside me a victim like myself; I shall see her grow thinner and paler, and pine away with grief, even as I do. I shall see her beat, as I do, these walls, that hateful door, which I examine twenty times each day to see where it opens to give you egress; and when my companion, your victim, has, like me, wounded her hands against the marble blocks in her endeavors to disjoin them; when, like me, she has worn out her eyelids with her tears; when she is dead as I am, in soul and mind, and you have two corpses in place of one, you will say, in your infernal benevolence: 'These two young creatures amuse themselves; they keep each other company; they are happy!' Oh! no, no, no! — a thousand times no!" And she passionately stamped her foot upon the floor, while Balsamo endeavored in vain to calm her.

"Come, Lorenza," said he, "I entreat you to show a little more mildness and calmness. Let us reason on the matter."

"He asks me to be calm, to be gentle, to reason! The executioner tells the victim whom he is torturing, to be gentle, and the innocent martyr to be calm!"

"Yes, Lorenza, I ask you to be gentle and calm, for your anger cannot change our destiny; it only embitters it. Accept what I offer you, Lorenza; I will give you a companion who will hug her chains, since they have procured for her your friendship. You shall not see a sad and tearful face, such as you fear, but smiles and gayety which will smooth your brow. Come, dear Lorenza, accept what I offer; for I swear to you that I cannot offer you more."

"That means that you will place near me a hireling, to whom you will say: 'I give you in charge a poor insane

creature, who is ill and about to die; soothe her, share her confinement, attend to her comforts, and I will recompense you when she is no more.'"

"Oh, Lorenza! Lorenza!"

"No, that is not it; I am mistaken," continued Lorenza, with bitter irony; "I conjecture badly. But what can you expect? I am so ignorant, I know so little of the world. You will say to the woman: 'Watch over the madwoman, she is dangerous; report all her actions, all her thoughts, to me. Watch over her, waking and sleeping.' And you will give her as much gold as she requires, for gold costs you nothing, — you make it!"

"Lorenza, you wander; in the name of Heaven, Lorenza, read my heart more truly! In giving you a companion, my beloved, I compromise such mighty interests that you would tremble for me if you did not hate me. In giving you a companion, I endanger my safety, my liberty, my life; and yet I will risk all that to save you a little weariness."

"Weariness!" exclaimed Lorenza, with a wild and frantic laugh which made Balsamo shudder. "He calls it weariness!"

"Well, suffering! Yes, you are right, Lorenza; they are poignant sufferings. I repeat, Lorenza, have patience. A day will come when all your sufferings will cease; a day will come when you shall be free and happy."

"Will you permit me to retire to a convent and take the vows?"

"To a convent?"

"I will pray, — first for you, and then for myself. I shall be closely confined, indeed, but I shall at least have a garden, air, space. I shall have a cemetery to walk in, and can seek beforehand among the tombs for the place of my repose. I shall have companions who grieve for their

own sorrows, and not for mine. Permit me to retire to a convent, and I will take any vows you wish. A convent, Balsamo! I implore you on my knees to grant this request."

"Lorenza, Lorenza! we cannot part. Mark me well, we are indissolubly connected in this world! Ask for nothing which exceeds the limits of this house."

Balsamo pronounced these last words in so calm and determined a tone that Lorenza did not even repeat the request. "Then you refuse me?" said she, dejectedly.

"I cannot grant it."

"Is what you say irrevocable?"

"It is."

"Well, I have something else then to ask," said she, with a smile.

"Oh! my dear Lorenza, smile again, and still again. With such a smile you will compel me to do all you wish!"

"Oh, yes! I shall make you do all that I wish, provided I do everything that pleases you. Well! be it so; I will be as reasonable as possible."

"Speak, Lorenza, speak!"

"Just now you said: 'One day, Lorenza, your sufferings shall cease; one day you shall be free and happy.'"

"Oh, yes! I said so; and I swear before Heaven that I await that day as impatiently as yourself."

"Well, this day may arrive immediately, Balsamo," said the young Italian, with a caressing smile, which her husband had hitherto seen only in her sleep. "I am weary, very weary, — you can understand my feelings; I am so young, and have already suffered so much! Well, my friend, — for you say you are my friend, — listen to me: grant me this happy day immediately."

"I hear you," said Balsamo, inexpressibly agitated.

"I end my appeal by the request I should have made at the commencement, Acharat." The young woman shuddered.

"Speak, my beloved!"

"Well, I have often remarked, when you made experiments on some unfortunate animal, and when you told me that these experiments were necessary to the cause of humanity, — I have often remarked that you possessed the secret of inflicting death, sometimes by a drop of poison, sometimes by an opened vein; that this death was calm, rapid as lightning, and that these unfortunate and innocent creatures, condemned, as I am, to the miseries of captivity, were instantly liberated by death, — the first blessing they had received since their birth. Well — " She stopped, and turned pale.

"Well, my Lorenza?" repeated Balsamo.

"Well, what you sometimes do to these unfortunate animals for the interest of science, do now to me in the name of humanity. Do it for a friend, who will bless you with her whole heart, who will kiss your hands with the deepest gratitude, if you grant her what she asks. Do it, Balsamo, for me, who kneel here at your feet, who promise you with my last sigh more love and happiness than you have awakened in me during my whole life, — for me, Balsamo, who promise you a frank and beaming smile as I leave this earth! By the soul of your mother, by the sufferings of our Blessed Lord, by all that is holy and solemn and sacred in the world of the living and of the dead, I implore you, kill me, kill me!"

"Lorenza!" exclaimed Balsamo, taking her in his arms as she rose after uttering these last words, "Lorenza, you are delirious. Kill you, — you! my love! my life!"

Lorenza disengaged herself by a violent effort from Balsamo's grasp, and fell on her knees. "I will never

rise," said she, "until you have granted my request. Kill me without a shock, without violence, without pain. Grant me this favor, since you say you love me; send me to sleep as you have often done, — only, take away the awaking; it is despair!"

"Lorenza, my beloved!" said Balsamo. "O God! do you not see how you torture my heart? What! you are really so unhappy, then? Come, my Lorenza, rise; do not give way to despair. Alas! do you hate me then so very much?"

"I hate slavery, constraint, solitude; and as you make me a slave, unhappy, and solitary, — well, yes, I hate you!"

"But I love you too dearly to see you die, Lorenza. You shall not die, therefore; I will effect the most difficult cure I have yet undertaken, my Lorenza, — I will make you love life."

"No, no, that is impossible; you have made me long for death."

"Lorenza, for pity's sake! — I promise that soon — "

"Life or death!" exclaimed the young woman, becoming more and more excited. "This is the decisive day. Will you give me life, — that is to say, liberty? Will you give me death, — that is to say, repose?"

"Life, my Lorenza, life!"

"Then that is liberty."

Balsamo was silent.

"If not, death, — a gentle death; by a draught, a needle's point, — death during sleep! Repose, repose, repose!"

"Life and patience, Lorenza!"

Lorenza burst into a terrible laugh, and making a spring backward, drew from her bosom a knife, with a blade so fine and sharp that it glittered in her hand like a flash of lightning.

Balsamo cried out, but he was too late. When he rushed forward, when he reached the hand, the arm had already described its course, and had fallen on Lorenza's breast. Balsamo had been dazzled by the flash; he was blinded by the sight of blood. In his turn he uttered a terrible cry, and seized Lorenza round the waist, meeting midway her arm descending to deal a second blow, and grasping the weapon in his undefended hand. Lorenza with a mighty effort drew the weapon away, and the sharp blade glided through Balsamo's fingers. The blood streamed from his mutilated hand.

Then, instead of continuing the struggle, Balsamo extended his bleeding hand toward the young woman, and said, with a voice of irresistible command: "Sleep, Lorenza, sleep! I will it."

But on this occasion her irritation was such that her obedience was not as prompt as usual.

"No, no," murmured Lorenza, tottering and attempting to strike again. "No, I will not sleep!"

"Sleep, I tell you!" said Balsamo, a second time, advancing a step toward her; "sleep, I command it!"

This time the power of Balsamo's will was so great that all resistance was in vain. Lorenza heaved a sigh, let the knife fall from her hand, and sank back upon the cushions. Her eyes still remained open, but their threatening glare gradually died away, and finally they closed; her stiffened neck drooped; her head fell upon her shoulder like that of a wounded bird; a nervous shudder passed through her frame, — Lorenza was asleep.

Balsamo hastily opened her robe, and examined the wound, which seemed to him slight, although the blood flowed from it freely. He then pressed the lion's eye, the spring acted, and the back of the fireplace opened; then, detaching the counterpoise which made the trap-door of

Althotas's chamber descend, he leaped upon it, and mounted to the old man's laboratory.

"Ah! it is you, Acharat?" said the latter, who was still seated in his armchair. "You are aware that in a week I shall be a hundred years old. You are aware that before that time I must have the blood of a child, or of a virgin."

But Balsamo heard nothing. He hastened to the cupboard in which the magic balsams were kept, seized one of the phials of which he had often proved the efficacy, again mounted upon the trap, stamped his foot, and descended to the lower apartment.

Althotas rolled his armchair to the mouth of the trap, with the intention of seizing Balsamo by his garments. "Do you hear, unhappy man?" said he; "do you hear? If in a week I have not a child or a virgin to complete my elixir, I am a dead man!"

Balsamo turned; the old man's eyes seemed to glare in the midst of his unearthly and motionless features, as if they alone were alive. "Yes, yes," he replied, — "yes, be calm; you shall have what you want." He touched the spring, and the trap mounted again, fitting like an ornament in the ceiling of the room. Then he rushed into Lorenza's apartment, which he had just reached when Fritz's bell rang.

"Monsieur de Richelieu!" muttered Balsamo. "Oh! duke and peer as he is, he must wait."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MONSIEUR DE RICHELIEU'S TWO DROPS OF WATER.

Monsieur de Richelieu left the house in the Rue Saint Claude at half-past four. What his errand with Balsamo was, will appear in what follows.

Monsieur de Taverney had dined with his daughter, as the dauphiness had given her leave to absent herself on this day in order that she might receive her father. They were at dessert, when Monsieur de Richelieu, ever the bearer of good news, made his appearance to announce to his friend that the king had declared that very morning that he would give not merely a company to Philippe, but a regiment. Taverney was exuberant in his expressions of joy, and Andrée warmly thanked the marshal.

The conversation took a turn which may be easily imagined after what had passed; Richelieu spoke of nothing but the king, Andrée of nothing but her brother, and Taverney of nothing but Andrée. The latter announced in the course of conversation that she was set at liberty from her attendance on the dauphiness; that her Royal Highness was receiving a visit from two German princes, her relations; and that in order to pass a few hours of liberty with them, which might remind her of the court of Vienna, Marie Antoinette had dismissed all her attendants, even her lady of honor, — which had so deeply shocked Madame de Noailles that she had gone to lay her grievances at the king's feet.

Taverney was, he said, delighted at this freedom of Andrée, since he had thus an opportunity of conversing with her about many things relating to their fortune and name. This observation made Richelieu propose to retire, in order to leave the father and daughter quite alone : but Mademoiselle de Taverney would not permit it : he therefore remained.

Richelieu was in a vein of moralizing ; he painted most eloquently the degradation into which the French nobility had fallen, forced as they were to submit to the ignominious yoke of those favorites of chance, those contraband queens, instead of burning incense to the favorites of the olden times, who were almost as noble as their august lovers, — women who reigned over the sovereign by their beauty and their love, and over his subjects by their rank, their strength of mind, and their loyal and pure patriotism.

Andrée was surprised at the close analogy between Richelieu's words and those she had heard from the Baron de Taverney a few days previously.

Richelieu then launched into a theory of virtue so spiritual, so pagan, so French that Andrée was obliged to confess that she was not at all virtuous according to Monsieur de Richelieu's theories, and that true virtue, as the marshal understood it, was the virtue of Madame de Châteauroux, Mademoiselle de la Vallière, and Mademoiselle de Fosseuse.

From argument to argument, from proof to proof, Richelieu at last became so clear that Andrée no longer understood a word of what he said. On this footing the conversation continued until about seven o'clock in the evening, when the marshal rose, being obliged, as he said, to pay his court to the king at Versailles. In passing through the apartment to take his hat, he met Nicole, who had always something to do wherever Monsieur de Riche-

lieu was. "My girl," said he, tapping her on the shoulder, "you shall see me out. I want you to carry a bouquet which Madame de Noailles cut for me in her garden, and which she commissioned me to present to the Comtesse d'Egmont."

Nicole bowed like the peasant girls in Monsieur Rousseau's comic operas, whereupon the marshal took leave of father and daughter, exchanged a significant glance with Taverney, made a bow to Andrée which was quite juvenile in its graceful ease, and retired.

With the reader's permission we will leave the baron and Andrée conversing about the fresh mark of favor conferred on Philippe, and follow the marshal. In this way we shall discover what was his errand at the Rue Saint Claude, where he arrived at such a fearful moment. Besides, the moralizing of the baron even surpassed that of his friend the marshal, and might startle ears less pure than Andrée's, which would perhaps partly understand it.

Richelieu descended the stairs leaning on Nicole's shoulder; and as soon as they were in the garden he stopped, and looking her in the face said: "Ah! little one, so we have a lover?"

"I, Monsieur le Maréchal!" exclaimed Nicole, blushing crimson, and retreating a step backward.

"Oh! perhaps you are not called Nicole Legay?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Maréchal."

"Well, Nicole Legay has a lover."

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes, faith! a certain good-looking rascal whom she used to meet in the Rue Coq-Héron, and who has followed her to Versailles."

"Monsieur le Duc, I swear to you —"

"A sort of officer, called — Shall I tell you, child, the name of Mademoiselle Legay's lover?"

Nicole's last hope was that the marshal was ignorant of the name of that happy mortal.

"Oh, yes, Monsieur le Maréchal! tell me, since you have made a beginning."

"Who is called Monsieur de Beausire," repeated the marshal, "and who in truth does not belie his name."

Nicole clasped her hands with an affectation of prudery which did not in the least impose on Richelieu. "It seems," said he, "we make appointments with him at Trianon. *Peste!* in a royal chateau, — that is a serious matter. One may be discharged for these freaks, my sweet one; and Monsieur de Sartines sends all young ladies who are discharged from the royal chateau to the Salpêtrière."

Nicole began to be uneasy.

"Monseigneur," said she, "I swear to you that if Monsieur Beausire boasts of being my lover, he is a fool and a villain; for indeed I am innocent."

"I shall not contradict you," said Richelieu; "but have you made appointments with him, or not?"

"Monseigneur, a rendezvous is no proof of — "

"Have you, or have you not? Answer me."

"Monseigneur — "

"You have. Very well; I do not blame you, my dear child. Besides, I like pretty girls who make use of their attractions, and I have always assisted them in so doing to the utmost of my power. Only, as your friend and protector, I warn you."

"But have I been seen, then?" asked Nicole.

"It seems so, since I know about it."

"Monseigneur," said Nicole, resolutely, "I have not been seen; it is impossible!"

"As to that, I know nothing; but the report is very prevalent, and must tend to fasten attention on your mis-

tress. Now, you must be aware that being more the friend of the Taverneys than of the Legays, it is my duty to give the baron a hint."

"Oh, Monseigneur!" exclaimed Nicole, terrified at the turn the conversation was taking, "you will ruin me! Although innocent, I shall be discharged on the mere suspicion."

"Well, my poor child, you will be discharged, then; for even now some evil-minded person or other, having taken offence at these meetings, innocent though they be, has informed Madame de Noailles of them."

"Madame de Noailles, — good heavens!"

"Yes; you see the danger is urgent."

Nicole clasped her hands in despair.

"It is unfortunate, I am aware," said Richelieu; "but what the devil can you do about it?"

"And you, who said just now you were my protector, — you, who have proved yourself to be such, — can you no longer protect me?" asked Nicole, with a wheedling cunning worthy of a woman of thirty years.

"Yes, *pardieu!* I can protect you."

"Well, Monseigneur?"

"Yes; but I will not."

"Oh, Monsieur le Duc!"

"Yes, you are pretty, I know that, and your beautiful eyes say all sorts of things to me; but I have lately become rather blind, my poor Nicole, and I no longer understand the language of lovely eyes. Once I would have offered you an asylum in my pavilion of Hanovre; but now it would be of no use, — it is not even to be spoken of."

"Yet you have once already taken me there," said Nicole, angrily.

"Ah! that is ungrateful in you, Nicole, to reproach me

with having taken you there, when I did so to render you a service; for, confess that without Monsieur Rafté's assistance, who made you a charming brunette, you would never have entered Trianon, — which, after all, perhaps, would have been better than to be dismissed from it now. But why the devil did you give a rendezvous to Monsieur de Beausire, and at the very gate of the stables too?"

"So you know that also?" said Nicole, who saw that she must change her tactics, and place herself at the marshal's discretion.

"*Parbleu!* you see that I know it, and Madame de Noailles too. This very evening you have a rendezvous —"

"That is true, Monsieur le Duc; but, on my faith, I will not go."

"Of course, you are warned; but Monsieur de Beausire will go. He is not warned, and he will be seized. Then, as he will not like, of course, to be taken for a thief and be hanged, or for a spy and be whipped, he will prefer to say, — especially as there is no disgrace in confessing it, — 'Unhand me; I am the lover of the pretty Nicole!'"

"Monsieur le Duc, I will send to warn him."

"Impossible, my poor child! by whom could you send? By him who betrayed you, perhaps?"

"Alas! that is true," said Nicole, feigning despair.

"What a becoming thing remorse is!" exclaimed Richelieu.

Nicole covered her face with her hands, taking care, however, to leave space enough between her fingers to allow her to observe every look and gesture of Richelieu.

"You are really adorable!" said the duke, whom none of these little tricks could escape. "Why am I not fifty years younger? No matter, *parbleu!* Nicole, I will bring you out of the scrape."

"Oh, Monseigneur! if you do that, my gratitude —"

"I don't want it, Nicole. On the contrary, I shall give you most disinterested assistance."

"Oh, how good of you, Monseigneur! I thank you from the bottom of my heart!"

"Do not thank me yet; as yet you know nothing. What the devil! wait till you hear more."

"I will submit to anything, provided Mademoiselle Andrée does not dismiss me."

"Ah! then your heart is set on remaining at Trianon?"

"By all means, Monseigneur."

"Well, Nicole, in the very first place, get rid of this feeling."

"But why so, if I am not discovered, Monsieur le Duc?"

"Whether you are discovered or not, you must leave Trianon."

"Oh! why?"

"I will tell you: because if Madame de Noailles has found you out, no one, not even the king, can save you."

"Ah, if I could only see the king!"

"Well, really, little one, that indeed would be sufficient. In the second place, even if you are not found out, I myself shall cause your departure."

"You?"

"Immediately."

"In truth, Monsieur le Maréchal, I do not understand you."

"It is as I have had the honor of telling you."

"And that is your protection, is it?"

"If you do not wish for it, there is yet time; you have only to say the word, Nicole."

"Oh, yes, Monsieur le Duc! on the contrary, I do wish for it."

"And I will grant it."

"Well?"

"Well, this is what I will do for you. Hark ye!"

"Speak, Monseigneur!"

"Instead of getting you discharged, and perhaps imprisoned, I will make you free and rich."

"Free and rich?"

"Yes."

"And what must I do in order to be free and rich? Tell me quickly, Monsieur le Maréchal!"

"Almost nothing."

"But what —"

"What I am about to tell you."

"Is it difficult?"

"Mere child's play."

"Then," said Nicole, "there is something to do?"

"Ah, of course! you know the motto of the world, Nicole, — 'Nothing for nothing.'"

"And that which I have to do, is it for myself, or for you?"

The duke looked at Nicole. "*Tudieu!*" said he; "the little masker, how cunning she is!"

"Well, finish, Monsieur le Duc."

"Well! it is for yourself," replied he, boldly.

"Ah!" said Nicole, who, perceiving that the marshal had need of her services, already feared him no longer, while her ingenious brain was busily endeavoring to discover the truth amid the windings which, from habit, her companion always used; "what shall I have to do for myself, Monsieur le Duc?"

"This: Monsieur de Beausire comes at half-past seven, does he not?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Maréchal, that is his time."

"It is now ten minutes past seven."

"That is also true."

"If I say the word he will be arrested."

"Yes, but you will not say it."

"No. You will go to him and tell him. But in the first place, Nicole, do you love this young man?"

"Why, I have given him a rendezvous."

"That is no reason; you may wish to marry him. Women take such strange caprices."

Nicole burst into a loud laugh. "I marry him!" said she. "Ha! ha! ha!"

Richelieu was astounded: he had not, even at court, met many women of this stamp.

"Well," said he, "so be it. You do not wish to marry him, but you love him. So much the better."

"Agreed! I love Monsieur de Beausire. Let us take that for granted, Monseigneur, and proceed!"

"*Peste!* what strides you make!"

"Of course. You may readily imagine that I am anxious to know what remains for me to do."

"In the first place, since you love him, you must fly with him."

"Oh! if you absolutely insist upon it, I suppose I must."

"Oh, oh! I insist upon nothing; not so fast, little one."

Nicole saw that she was going too far, and that as yet she had neither the secret nor the money of her cunning opponent. She stooped, therefore, only to rise again afterward.

"Monseigneur," said she, "I await your orders."

"Well! you must go to Monsieur de Beausire and say to him: 'We are discovered; but I have a protector who will save you from Saint Lazarus, and me from the Salpêtrière. Let us fly.'"

Nicole looked at Richelieu. "Fly?" she repeated.

Richelieu understood her cunning and expressive look. "*Parbleu!*" said he, "of course I shall pay the expenses."

Nicole asked for no further explanation. It was plain that she would know all, since she was to be paid.

The marshal saw what an important point Nicole had gained, and hastened to say all he had to say, just as a gambler is eager to pay when he has lost, in order to get through the disagreeable task.

"Do you know what you are thinking of, Nicole?" said he.

"Faith, no," replied the girl; "but I suppose you, Monsieur le Maréchal, who know so many things, have divined it."

"Nicole," he replied, "you were reflecting that if you fled, your mistress might require you during the night; and not finding you, might give the alarm, which would expose you to the risk of being overtaken and seized."

"No," said Nicole, "I was not thinking of that; because, on reflection, Monseigneur, I would prefer remaining here."

"But if Monsieur de Beausire is taken?"

"Well, I cannot help it."

"But if he confess?"

"Let him confess."

"Ah!" said Richelieu, beginning to be uneasy, "but in that case you are lost."

"No; for Mademoiselle Andrée is kindness itself, and as she loves me at heart, she will speak to the king for me. So, even if Monsieur de Beausire is punished, I shall not share his punishment."

The marshal bit his lips.

"Nicole," said he, "I tell you you are a fool. Mademoiselle Andrée is not on good terms with the king, and

I will have you arrested immediately if you do not listen to me as I wish. Do you hear, you little viper?"

"Oh, oh! Monseigneur, my head is neither flat nor horned. I listen, but I form my own conclusions."

"Good! Then you will go at once and arrange your plan of flight with Monsieur de Beausire."

"But how? Do you imagine, Monsieur le Maréchal, that I shall expose myself to the risk of flight, when you tell me yourself that Mademoiselle might awake, might ask for me, give the alarm, and a great deal more which I did not think of, but which you, Monseigneur, who are a man of experience, have foreseen?"

Richelieu bit his lip again; but this time more deeply than before. "Well, you rogue," said he, "if I have thought of these consequences, I have also thought of how to avoid them."

"And how will you manage to prevent Mademoiselle from calling me?"

"By preventing her awaking."

"Bah! she awakes ten times during the night; impossible!"

"Then she has the same malady that I have?" said Richelieu, calmly.

"The same that you have?" said Nicole, laughing.

"Yes. I also awake ten times every night, only I have a remedy for this sleeplessness. She must do as I do, or if not, you must do it for her."

"What do you mean, Monseigneur."

"What does your mistress take in the evening before she goes to bed?"

"What does she take?"

"Yes, it is the fashion now to guard thus against thirst. Some take orangeade or lemonade; others eau-de-mélisse; others —"

"Mademoiselle drinks only a glass of pure water in the evening before going to bed, — sometimes sweetened and flavored with orange-water, if her nerves are weak."

"Ah, excellent!" said Richelieu; "just as I do myself. My remedy will suit her admirably."

"How so?"

"I pour one drop of a certain liquid into my beverage, and I then sleep all night."

Nicole tasked her brain to discover to what end the marshal's diplomacy tended.

"You do not answer?" said he.

"I was just thinking that Mademoiselle has not your cordial."

"I will give you some."

"Ah!" thought Nicole, seeing at last a ray of light through the darkness.

"You must put two drops of it in your mistress's glass, — neither more nor less, remember; and she will sleep soundly, so that she will not call you, and consequently you will have time to escape."

"Oh! if that is all, it is very simple."

"You will give her the two drops?"

"Certainly."

"You promise me?"

"I presume it is for my own interest to do so; besides, I will lock the door so carefully —"

"By no means," said Richelieu, hastily; "that is exactly what you must not do. On the contrary, you must leave the door of her chamber open."

"Ah!" exclaimed Nicole, with an inward illumination; she now understood all. Richelieu saw it plainly. "Is that all?" she inquired.

"Absolutely all. Now you may go and tell your soldier to pack up his trunks."

"Unfortunately, Monsieur, it would be useless to tell him to fill his purse."

"You know that is my affair."

"Yes, I remember your lordship was kind enough to say — "

"Come, Nicole, how much do you want?"

"For what?"

"For pouring out those two drops of water."

"For that, nothing, Monseigneur, since you assure me I pour them out for my own advantage; it would not be just that you should pay me for attending to my own interest. But for leaving Mademoiselle's door open, — ah! for that, I warn you, I must have a good round sum."

"In one word, how much?"

"I must have twenty thousand francs, Monseigneur."

Richelieu started. "Nicole," said he, with a sigh, "you will go far."

"I ought to do so, Monseigneur, for I begin to believe, with you, that they will pursue me; but with your twenty thousand francs I shall make the journey."

"Go and warn Monsieur de Beausire, Nicole; and when you return, I will give you the money."

"Monseigneur, Monsieur de Beausire is very incredulous, and he will not believe what I tell him, unless I can give him proofs."

Richelieu pulled out a handful of bank-notes from his pocket. "Here is something on account," said he; "and in this purse there are a hundred double louis."

"Monseigneur will settle the account in full and give me the balance then when I have spoken to Monsieur de Beausire?"

"No, *pardieu!* I will settle it on the spot. You are a careful girl, Nicole; it will bring you good fortune."

And Richelieu handed her the promised sum, partly in bank-notes, and partly in louis-d'or and half-louis.

"There!" said he; "is that right?"

"I think so," said Nicole. "And now, Monseigneur, I want only the principal thing."

"The cordial?"

"Yes; of course your lordship has a flask?"

"I have my own, which I always carry about with me."

Nicole smiled. "And then," said she, "Trianon is locked every night, and I have not a key."

"But I have one, as first gentleman of the chamber."

"Ah, really?"

"Here it is."

"How fortunate all this is!" said Nicole; "it is one succession of miracles. And now, Monsieur le Duc, adieu!"

"Why adieu?"

"Certainly. I shall not see your lordship again, since I shall go as soon as Mademoiselle is asleep."

"Quite right. Adieu, then, Nicole!"

And Nicole, laughing in her sleeve, disappeared in the increasing darkness.

"I shall still succeed," said Richelieu. "But in truth it would seem that I am getting old, and fortune is turning against me. I have been outwitted by this little one. But what matters it, if I return the blow?"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FLIGHT.

Nicole was a conscientious girl. She had received Monsieur de Richelieu's money, and received it in advance too; and she felt anxious to prove herself worthy of this confidence by earning her pay. She ran, therefore, as quickly as possible to the gate, where she arrived at forty minutes past seven, instead of at half-past. Now, Monsieur de Beausire, who, being accustomed to military discipline, was a punctual man, had been waiting there for ten minutes. About ten minutes before, too, Monsieur de Taverney had left his daughter, and Andrée was consequently alone. Now, being alone, the young girl had closed the blinds.

Gilbert, as usual, was gazing eagerly at Andrée from his attic; but it would have been difficult to say whether his eyes sparkled with love or with hatred. When the blinds were closed, Gilbert could see nothing. Consequently, he looked in another direction; and thus looking, he perceived Monsieur de Beausire's plume, and recognized the officer, who was walking up and down, whistling an air to kill time while he was waiting.

In about ten minutes — that is to say, at forty minutes past seven — Nicole made her appearance. She exchanged a few words with Monsieur de Beausire, who made a gesture with his head as a sign that he understood her, and disappeared by the shady alley leading to the

little Trianon. Nicole, light as a bird, returned in the direction from which she had come.

"Oh, oh!" thought Gilbert. "Monsieur the officer, and Mademoiselle the waiting-maid, have something to do or to say which they fear to have witnessed. Very good!"

Gilbert no longer felt any interest in respect to Nicole's movements; but actuated by the idea that the young girl was his natural enemy, he merely sought to collect a mass of proofs against her morality, with which he might successfully repulse any attack, should she attempt one against him. And as he knew the campaign might begin at any moment, like a prudent soldier he collected his munitions of war.

A rendezvous with a man in the very grounds of Trianon was one of the weapons which a cunning enemy such as Gilbert could not neglect, especially when it was imprudently placed under his very eyes. He consequently wished to have the testimony of his ears as well as that of his eyes, and to catch some fatally compromising phrase which would completely floor Nicole at the first onset. He quickly descended from his attic, therefore, hastened along the passage-way, and gained the garden by the chapel-stairs. Once in the garden, he had nothing to fear, for he knew all its hiding-places as a fox knows his cover. He glided beneath the linden-trees, then along the espalier, until he reached a small thicket situated about twenty paces from the spot where he counted upon seeing Nicole. As he had foreseen, Nicole was there. Scarcely had he installed himself in the thicket when a strange noise reached his ears. It was the chink of gold upon stone, — that metallic sound of which nothing except the reality can give a correct idea.

Like a serpent Gilbert glided along to a raised terrace,

surmounted by a hedge of lilacs, which at that season (early in May) diffused their perfume around, and showered down their flowers upon those who took the shady alley on their way from the great to the little Trianon.

Having reached this retreat, Gilbert, whose eyes were accustomed to pierce the darkness, saw Nicole emptying the purse, which Monsieur de Richelieu had given her, upon a stone on the inner side of the gate, and prudently placed out of Monsieur de Beausire's reach. The large louis-d'or came forth from it in bright profusion, while Monsieur de Beausire, with sparkling eye and trembling hand, looked at Nicole and her louis-d'or as if he could not comprehend how the one should possess the other.

Nicole spoke first. "You have more than once, my dear Monsieur de Beausire," said she, "proposed to elope with me."

"And even to marry you," exclaimed the enthusiastic officer.

"Oh, my dear Monsieur! that is a matter of course; just now flight is the most important point. Can we fly in two hours?"

"In ten minutes, if you like."

"No; I have something to do first, which will occupy me two hours."

"In two hours, as in ten minutes, I shall be at your orders, my love."

"Very well. Take these fifty louis." Nicole counted out the fifty louis, and handed them through the gate to Monsieur de Beausire, who, without counting them, stuffed them into his waistcoat pocket. "And in an hour and a half," she continued, "be here with a carriage."

"But —" objected Beausire.

"Oh! if you do not wish, forget what has passed between us, and give me back my fifty louis."

"I do not shrink, dear Nicole, but I fear the future."

"For whom?"

"For you."

"For me?"

"Yes; the fifty louis once vanished, — and vanished they will soon be, — you will complain, you will regret Trianon, you will — "

"Oh, how thoughtful you are, dear Monsieur de Beausire! But fear nothing; I am not one of those women who are easily made miserable. Have no scruples on that score; when the fifty louis are gone, we shall see;" and she shook the purse which contained the other fifty.

Beausire's eyes were absolutely phosphorescent. "I would charge through a blazing furnace for your sake!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, well, well, I shall not require so much from you, Monsieur de Beausire! Then it is agreed that you will be here with the chaise in an hour and a half, and in two hours we will fly?"

"Agreed!" exclaimed Beausire, seizing Nicole's hand, and drawing it through the gate to kiss it.

"Hush!" said Nicole, "are you mad?"

"No, I am in love."

"Hum!" muttered Nicole.

"Do you not believe me, sweetheart?"

"Yes, yes, I believe you. Above all, be sure to have good horses."

"Oh, yes!"

They separated. But a moment afterward Beausire returned, quite alarmed. "Hist!" he whispered.

"Well, what is it?" asked Nicole, already some distance off, and putting her hand to her mouth, so as to convey her voice farther.

"And the gate?" asked Beausire; "will you creep under it."

"How stupid he is!" murmured Nicole, who at this moment was not ten paces distant from Gilbert. Then she added in a louder tone, "I have the key."

Beausire uttered a prolonged "oh!" of admiration, and this time took to his heels for good. Nicole hastened back with drooping head and nimble step to her mistress.

Gilbert, now left sole master of the field, put the following four questions to himself: —

"Why does Nicole fly with Beausire, when she does not love him?

"How does Nicole come to possess such a large sum of money?

"Why has Nicole the key of the gate?

"Why does Nicole return to Andrée when she might go at once?"

Gilbert found an answer to the second question, but to the others he could find none. Thus checked at the outset, his natural curiosity and his acquired distrust were so much excited that he determined to remain in the cold, beneath the dew-covered trees, to await the end of this scene, of which he had witnessed the beginning.

Andrée had conducted her father to the barriers of the great Trianon, and was returning alone and pensive, when Nicole appeared issuing from the alley leading to the famous gate where she had been concerting her measures with Monsieur Beausire.

Nicole stopped on perceiving her mistress, and upon a sign which Andrée made to her, she followed her to her apartment. It was now about half-past eight in the evening. The night had closed in earlier than usual; for a huge cloud, sweeping from south to north, had overspread the whole sky, and all around, as far as the eye

could reach over the lofty forest of Versailles, the gloomy shroud was gradually enveloping in its folds the stars, a short time before sparkling in the azure dome. A light breeze swept along the ground, breathing warmly on the drooping flowers, which bent their heads, as if imploring heaven to send them rain or dew.

The threatening aspect of the sky did not hasten Andrée's steps; on the contrary, melancholy and thoughtful, the young girl seemed to ascend each step leading to her room with regret, and she paused at every window as she passed, to gaze at the sky, so much in harmony with her saddened mood, and thus to delay her return to her own little retreat.

Nicole, impatient, angry, fearing that some whim might detain her mistress beyond the usual hour, grumbled and muttered, as servants never fail to do when their masters are imprudent enough to satisfy their own caprices at the expense of those of their domestics.

At last Andrée reached the door of her chamber, and sank rather than seated herself upon a couch, gently ordering Nicole to leave the window, which looked upon the court, half-open. Nicole obeyed; then, returning to her mistress with that affectionate air which the flatterer could so easily assume, she said: "I fear Mademoiselle feels ill this evening; her eyes are red and swollen, yet bright. I think that Mademoiselle is in great need of repose."

"Do you think so?" asked Andrée, who had scarcely listened; and she carelessly placed her feet upon a cushion of tapestry-work.

Nicole took this as an order to undress her mistress, and began to unfasten the ribbons and flowers of her headdress, — a species of edifice which the most skilful could not demolish in less than a quarter of an hour. While she was thus employed, Andrée did not utter a word; and

Nicole, left to follow her own wishes, did her work rapidly, without disturbing Andrée, whose preoccupation was so great that she permitted Nicole to pull out her hair with impunity.

When the night-toilet was finished, Andrée gave her orders for the morrow. In the morning some books were to be brought from Versailles which Philippe had left there for his sister, and the tuner was to be ordered to attend to put the harpsichord in proper order.

Nicole replied that if she were not called during the night, she would rise early, and would have both these commissions executed before her young lady was awake.

"To-morrow also I will write to Philippe," said Andrée, speaking to herself; "that will console me a little."

"Come what will," thought Nicole, "I shall not carry the letter."

And at this reflection the girl, who was not quite lost yet, began to think, in saddened mood, that she was about for the first time to leave that excellent mistress under whose care her mind and heart had been awakened. The thought of Andrée was linked in her mind with so many other recollections that to touch it was to stir the whole chain which carried her back to the first days of infancy.

While these two young creatures, so different in their character and their condition, were thus reflecting beside each other, without any connection existing between their thoughts, time was rapidly flying, and Andrée's little time-piece, which was always in advance of the great clock of Trianon, struck nine. Beausire would be at the appointed place, and Nicole had but half an hour to join her lover. She finished her task as quickly as possible, not without uttering some sighs, which Andrée did not even notice. She folded a night-shawl around her mistress, and as Andrée still sat immovable, with her eyes fixed on the

ceiling, she drew Richelieu's phial from her bosom, put two pieces of sugar into a goblet, added the water necessary to melt it, and without hesitation, and by the resolute force of her will, so strong in one so young, she poured two drops of the fluid from the phial into the water, which immediately became turbid, then changed to a slight opal tint, which soon died away.

"Mademoiselle," said Nicole, "your glass of water is prepared, your clothes are folded, the night-lamp is lighted. You know I must rise very early to-morrow morning: may I go to bed now?"

"Yes," replied Andrée, absently.

Nicole made her reverence, heaved a last sigh, which, like the others, was unnoticed, and closed behind her the glass-door leading to the ante-room. But instead of retiring into her little cell adjoining the corridor and lighted from Andrée's ante-room, she softly took to flight, leaving the door of the corridor ajar, so that Richelieu's instructions were scrupulously followed. Then, not to arouse the attention of the neighbors, she descended the stairs on tiptoe, bounded down the outer steps, and ran quickly to join Monsieur de Beausire at the gate.

Gilbert had not left his post of observation. He had heard Nicole say that she would return in two hours, and he waited. But as it was now ten minutes past the appointed time, he began to fear that she would not return. Suddenly he saw her running, as if some one were pursuing her.

Nicole approached the gate, passed the key through the bars to Beausire, who opened it; she rushed out, and the gate closed with a dull, grating noise. The key was then thrown into the grass in the ditch, near the spot where Gilbert was stationed. He heard it fall with a dead sound, and marked the place where it had dropped.

Nicole and Beausire in the mean time gained ground. Gilbert heard them move away; and soon he could distinguish, not the noise of a carriage, as Nicole had required, but the pawing of a horse, which, after some moments' delay, — occupied doubtless by Nicole in recrimination, who had wished to depart, like a duchess, in her carriage, — changed to the clattering of his iron-shod feet on the pavement, and at last died away in the distance.

Gilbert breathed freely; he was free, free from Nicole, — that is to say, from his enemy. Andrée was alone. Perhaps in taking flight Nicole had left the key in the door; perhaps he could penetrate to Andrée's chamber. This idea excited the impetuous young man to a frenzy of fear and doubt, of curiosity and desire. He took the direction contrary to that which Nicole was pursuing, and hurried toward the offices of Trianon.

CHAPTER XX.

DOUBLE SIGHT.

When Andrée was alone, she gradually recovered from the mental torpor into which she had fallen; and while Nicole was flying *en croupe* behind Monsieur de Beausire, she knelt down and offered up a fervent prayer for Philippe, the only being in the world she loved with a true and deep attachment; and while she prayed, her trust in God assumed new strength, and inspired her with fresh courage.

The prayers which Andrée offered were not composed of a succession of words strung one to the other, they were uttered in a kind of heavenly ecstasy, during which her soul rose to her God and mingled with his spirit.

In these impassioned supplications of the mind freed from earthly concerns, there was no alloy of self. Andrée in some degree abandoned herself, like a shipwrecked mariner who has lost hope, and who prays no longer for himself, but only for his wife and children, soon to become orphans. This inward grief had sprung up in Andrée's bosom since her brother's departure; but it was not entirely without another cause. Like her prayer, it was composed of two distinct elements, one of which was quite inexplicable to her. It was, as it were, a presentiment, — the perceptible approach of some impending misfortune. It was a sensation resembling that of darting pains in a cicatrized wound. The continuous pain is over, but the remembrance of it survives, and reminds the

sufferer of the calamity, as the wound itself had previously done.

Andrée did not even attempt to explain her feelings to herself. Devoted heart and soul to Philippe, she centred in her beloved brother her every thought and every affection. Then she rose, took a book from her modestly furnished library, placed the light within reach of her hand, and lay down on the bed. The book she had chosen, or rather upon which she had accidentally placed her hand, was a dictionary of botany. It may readily be imagined that this book was not calculated to absorb her attention; on the contrary, it made her sleepy. Gradually drowsiness weighed down her eyelids, and a filmy veil obscured her vision. For a moment the young girl struggled against sleep; twice or thrice she collected her scattered thoughts, which soon escaped again from her control; then, raising her head to blow out the candle, she perceived the glass of water prepared by Nicole, stretched out her hand and took the glass, stirred the sugar with the spoon, and already half-asleep, she approached the glass to her lips.

Suddenly, just as her lips were already touching the beverage, a strange emotion made her hand tremble, a moist and burning weight fell on her brow, and Andrée recognized with terror, by the current of the fluid which rushed through her nerves, that supernatural attack of mysterious sensations which had several times already triumphed over her strength and overpowered her mind. She had only time to place the glass upon the plate, when instantly, without a murmur, but with a sigh which escaped from her half-open lips, she lost the use of voice, sight, and reason, and seized with a death-like torpor, fell back, as if struck by lightning, upon her bed. But this quasi-annihilation was but the momentary transition to

another state of existence. For a moment she seemed lifeless, and her eyes were apparently closed in the slumber of death; but suddenly she rose, opened her eyes, which stared with a fearful fixity of gaze, and stepped down from her bed to the floor, like a marble statue descending from a tomb.

There was no longer room for doubt. Andrée was sunk in that marvellous sleep which had several times already suspended her vital functions. She crossed the chamber, opened the glass-door, and entered the corridor with the fixed and rigid attitude of breathing marble. She reached the stairs, descended step by step without hesitation and without haste, and emerged upon the portico. Just as Andrée placed her foot upon the topmost step to descend, Gilbert reached the lowest on his way up. Seeing this white and solemn figure advancing as if to meet him, he recoiled before her, and, still retreating as she advanced, he concealed himself in a clump of shrubs. It was thus, he recollected, that he had already seen Andrée de Taverney at the Château of Taverney.

Andrée passed close by him, even touched him, but did not see him. The young man, thunderstruck, speechless with surprise, sank to the ground on one knee. His limbs refused to support him, — he was afraid. Not knowing to what cause to attribute this strange excursion, he followed her with his eyes; but his reason was confounded, his blood beat impetuously against his temples, and he was in a state nearer to madness than to the coolness and circumspection necessary for an observer.

Gilbert remained, therefore, crouching on the grass among the leaves, watching, as he had never ceased to do since this fatal attachment had entered his heart. Immediately the mystery was explained: Andrée was neither mad nor bewildered, as he had for a moment supposed;

Andrée, with this slow, sepulchral step, was going to a rendezvous. A gleam of lightning now furrowed the sky, and by its blue and livid light Gilbert saw a man concealed beneath the sombre avenue of linden-trees; and notwithstanding the rapidity of the flash, he had recognized the pale face and disordered garments of the man relieved against the dark background. Andrée advanced toward this man, whose arm was extended as if to draw her to him.

A sensation like the branding of a red-hot iron rushed through Gilbert's heart; he raised himself upon his knees to see more clearly. At that moment another flash of lightning illumined the sky. He recognized Balsamo, covered with dust and perspiration, — Balsamo, who by some mysterious means had succeeded in entering Trianon, and thus drew Andrée toward him as invincibly, as fatally, as the serpent fascinates its prey.

When two paces from him Andrée stopped. Balsamo took her hand; her whole frame shuddered.

"Do you see?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Andrée; "but in summoning me so suddenly, you have nearly killed me."

"Pardon, pardon!" replied Balsamo; "but my brain reels, I am beside myself, I am nearly mad, I am dying."

"You are indeed suffering," said Andrée, conscious of Balsamo's feelings by the contact of his hand.

"Yes, yes," replied Balsamo; "I suffer, and I come to you for consolation. You alone can save me."

"Question me."

"Once more, do you see?"

"Oh! perfectly."

"Will you follow me to my house? Can you do so?"

"I can, if you will conduct me there in thought."

"Come!"

"Ah!" said Andrée, "we are entering Paris; we follow the boulevard, we plunge into a street lighted by a single lamp."

"Yes, that is it. Enter, enter!"

"We are in an antechamber. There is a staircase to the right, but you draw me toward the wall. The wall opens; steps appear —"

"Ascend!" exclaimed Balsamo; "that is our way."

"Ah! we are in a sleeping-chamber; there are lions' skins, arms — Stay, the back of the fireplace opens."

"Pass through: where are you?"

"In a strange sort of room, without any outlet, and the windows of which are barred. Oh! how disordered everything in the room appears."

"But empty, — it is empty is it not?"

"Yes, empty."

"Can you see the person who inhabited it?"

"Yes, if you give me something which has touched her, which comes from her, or which belongs to her."

"Hold! there is some of her hair."

Andrée took the hair and placed it on her heart. "Oh! I recognize her," said she; "I have already seen this woman. She was flying toward Paris."

"Yes, yes; can you tell me what she has been doing during the last two hours, and how she escaped?"

"Wait a moment; yes, — she is reclining upon a sofa; her breast is half bared, and she has a wound on one side."

"Look, Andrée, look! do not lose sight of her."

"She was asleep; she awakes, she looks around; she takes a handkerchief and climbs upon a chair. She ties the handkerchief to the bars of the window — oh! my God!"

"She is really determined to die, then?"

"Oh, yes! she is resolute. But this sort of death terrifies her. She leaves the handkerchief tied to the bars; she descends — ah! poor woman!"

"What?"

"Oh! how she weeps, how she suffers, and wrings her hands! She searches for a corner of the wall against which to dash her head!"

"Oh, my God! my God!" murmured Balsamo.

"She rushes toward the chimney-piece! It represents two marble lions: she will dash out her brains against the lions!"

"What then? Look, Andrée, look; I will it!"

"She stops."

Balsamo breathed again.

"She looks—"

"What does she look at?" asked Balsamo.

"She has perceived some blood upon the lion's eye."

"Oh, heavens!"

"Yes, blood, and yet she did not strike herself against it. Oh, strange! the blood is not hers, it is yours."

"Mine?" asked Balsamo, frantic with excitement.

"Yes, yours. You had cut your finger with a knife, with a poniard — and had touched the lion's eye with your bleeding hand. I see you."

"True, true. But how does she escape?"

"Stay, I see her examining the blood; she reflects; then she places her finger where you had placed yours. Ah! the lion's eye gives way; a spring acts; the chimney slab swings open!"

"Oh! imprudent, wretched fool that I am, — I have betrayed myself!"

Andrée was silent.

"And she leaves the room?" asked Balsamo; "she escapes?"

"Oh! you must forgive the poor woman; she was very miserable."

"Where is she? Whither does she fly? Follow her, Andrée; I will it."

"She stops for a moment in the chamber of furs and armor; a closet is open; a casket, usually locked in this closet, is upon the table; she recognizes the box; she takes it."

"What does the box contain?"

"Your papers, I think."

"Describe it."

"It is covered with blue velvet, and studded with brass nails, — has clasps of silver, and a silver lock."

"Oh!" exclaimed Balsamo, stamping with anger, "it is she, then, who has taken the casket?"

"Yes. She descends the stairs leading into the anteroom, opens the door, draws back the chain of the street-door, and goes out."

"Is it late?"

"It must be late, for it is dark."

"So much the better; she must have fled shortly before my return, and I shall perhaps have time to overtake her. Follow her, Andrée; follow her!"

"Once outside the house, she runs as if she were mad; she reaches the boulevard; she hastens on without pausing."

"In which direction?"

"Toward the Bastille."

"You see her yet?"

"Yes; she looks like a madwoman; she jostles against the passers-by. At length she stops; she endeavors to discover where she is; she inquires."

"What does she say? Listen, Andrée, listen; in Heaven's name do not lose a syllable! You say she inquires?"

"Yes, she addresses a man dressed in black."

"What does she ask?"

"She wishes to know the address of the lieutenant of police."

"Oh! then it was not a vain threat. Does the person give it her?"

"Yes."

"What does she do?"

"She retraces her steps and turns down a winding street. She crosses a large square."

"The Place Royale, — it is the direct way. Can you read her intention?"

"Follow her quickly; hasten! She goes to betray you! If she arrives before you, and sees Monsieur de Sartines, you are lost!"

Balsamo uttered a terrible cry, plunged into the thicket, rushed through a little door which a shadowy apparition opened and closed after him, and leaped with one bound on his faithful Djerid, who was pawing the ground at the little gate. The animal, urged on at once by voice and spur, darted like an arrow toward Paris; and soon nothing was heard but the clattering of his hoofs on the paved causeway.

As for Andrée, she remained standing there, cold, mute, and pale. Then, as if Balsamo had borne away with him life and strength, she tottered, drooped, and fell. Balsamo, in his eagerness to follow Lorenza, had forgotten to awaken her.

CHAPTER XXI.

CATALEPSY.

As we have said, Andrée did not sink all at once, but gradually, in the manner we will attempt to describe.

Alone, abandoned, overpowered with that interior coldness which succeeds any violent nervous shock, Andrée began to tremble and totter like one seized by an epileptic fit. Gilbert still remained in the same place, — rigid, immovable, leaning forward, and devouring her with his gaze. But as it may readily be imagined, Gilbert, entirely ignorant of magnetic phenomena, thought neither of sleep nor of subjected will. He had heard nothing, or almost nothing, of her dialogue with Balsamo. But for the second time, at Trianon as at Taverney, Andrée had appeared to obey the summons of this man, who had acquired such a strange and terrible power over her. To Gilbert, therefore, the situation was summed up in these words : " Mademoiselle Andrée has, if not a lover, at least a man whom she loves, and to whom she grants a rendezvous at night."

The dialogue which had taken place between Andrée and Balsamo, although sustained in a low voice, had all the appearance of a quarrel. Balsamo, excited, flying, frantic, seemed like a lover in despair; Andrée, left alone, mute and motionless, like a loving girl abandoned. It was at this moment that he saw the young girl totter, wring her hands, and turn around bewildered. Then she uttered dull groans that seemed to rend her burdened heart. She

endeavored, or rather Nature endeavored, to throw back the overpowering mass of fluid which, during the magnetic sleep, had endowed her with that double sight whose phenomena we saw manifested in the last chapter.

But Nature was overpowered; Andrée could not succeed in throwing off the bonds of that mysterious will which Balsamo had forgotten to withdraw. She could not loose the marvellous, inexplicable ties which had bound her hand and foot; and by dint of struggling, she fell into those convulsions which in the olden time the Pythoness suffered upon her tripod before the crowd of religious questioners who swarmed around the peristyle of the temple.

Andrée lost her balance, and with a moan of pain sank toward the ground as if she had been struck by the flash which at that moment furrowed the vault of heaven. But she had not yet touched the earth when Gilbert, strong and agile as a tiger, darted toward her, seized her in his arms, and without being conscious that he carried a burden, bore her back into the chamber which she had left to obey Balsamo's summons, and in which the candle was yet burning beside the disarranged couch.

Gilbert found all the doors open as Andrée had left them. As he entered, he stumbled against the sofa, and placed on it the cold and inanimate form of the young girl. His contact with that lifeless frame had stirred a fever within him; his nerves quivered, his blood boiled. His first thought, however, was chaste and pure. It was necessary, first of all, to recall this beautiful statue to life. He looked round for the carafe, in order to sprinkle some drops of water in Andrée's face. But just as his trembling hand was stretched forth to grasp the thin neck of the crystal ewer, it seemed to him that a firm but light step sounded on the stairs leading to Andrée's chamber. It

could not be Nicole, for Nicole had fled with Monsieur de Beausire; it could not be Balsamo, for Balsamo was spurring with lightning haste to Paris. It must therefore be a stranger. Gilbert, if discovered, was lost; Andrée was to him like one of those princesses of Spain whom a subject may not touch, even to save from death.

All these ideas rushed like a whirlwind through Gilbert's mind in less time than that fatal step required to mount another stair. He could not calculate the exact distance of the footstep, which every moment approached still nearer, for the storm which raged without dulled every other sound; but gifted with extraordinary coolness and foresight, the young man understood that that was no place for him, and that the most important matter was to conceal himself from sight. He hastily blew out the candle which illumined Andrée's apartment, and entered the cabinet which served as Nicole's sleeping-chamber. From this hiding-place he could see through the glass-door into Andrée's apartment, and also into the antechamber.

In this antechamber a night-lamp was burning upon a little table. Gilbert had at first thought of extinguishing it, as he had extinguished the candle; but he had not time. The step creaked in the corridor, a repressed breathing was heard, the figure of a man appeared upon the threshold, glided timidly into the antechamber, closed the door, and bolted it.

Gilbert had only time to hasten into Nicole's cabinet and to close the glass-door after him. He held his breath, pressed his face against the stained-glass panes, and listened eagerly.

The storm still howled wildly outside, large rain-drops beat against the windows of Andrée's apartment and those of the corridor, where a casement, accidentally left open,

creaked upon its hinges, and every now and then, dashed back by the wind which rushed into the corridor, struck noisily against its frame.

But the war of the elements, terrible as it was, produced no effect on Gilbert. His whole soul was concentrated in his gaze, which was riveted upon this man, who crossed the antechamber, passed not two paces distant from Gilbert, and unhesitatingly entered the chamber.

Gilbert saw the man advance, feeling his way, to Andrée's bed, make a gesture of surprise on seeing the bed unoccupied, and almost immediately jostle with his arm the candle upon the table. The candle fell, and Gilbert heard the crystal socket break in falling on the marble table. Then the man called twice in a subdued voice, "Nicole! Nicole!"

"What, Nicole!" thought Gilbert, in his hiding-place. "Why does this man call Nicole instead of Andrée?"

But as no voice replied to his, the man lifted the candle from the floor, and proceeded on tiptoe to light it at the night-lamp in the antechamber. It was then that Gilbert fixed his whole attention upon this strange nocturnal visitor; he gazed as if his vision could have pierced the wall. Suddenly he trembled, and even in his hiding-place recoiled a step.

By the light of the two flames combined, Gilbert, trembling and half-dead with affright, recognized in this man who held the candle in his hand — the king!

Then all was explained, — Nicole's flight, the money she had given Beausire, the door left open, the interviews between Richelieu and Taverney, and all that dark and mysterious intrigue of which the young girl was the centre.

Then Gilbert understood why the king had called Nicole, the instrument of that crime, the complaisant

Judas who had sold and delivered up her mistress! But at the thought of the king's purpose in coming to that chamber, at the thought of what was about to take place before him, the blood rushed to his eyes and blinded him. He had the impulse to cry out; but fear, that unreflecting, capricious, irresistible sentiment, — the fear he had of that man, still full of prestige, who was called the king of France, tied his tongue.

Louis XV. meanwhile had returned to the chamber, candle in hand. Immediately he saw Andrée, in a robe of white muslin which left her person partially uncovered, her head leaning against the back of the sofa, one leg resting on the cushion, and the other, inflexible and bare, resting on the carpet. At that sight the king smiled. The candle lighted up that sinister smile; but almost at the same time a smile equally sinister appeared on Andrée's face. Louis XV. murmured a few words, which Gilbert understood to be words of love, and placing his light on the table, glancing as he turned at the illumined sky, he went and knelt down before the young girl and kissed her hand.

Gilbert wiped away the perspiration coursing down his face. Andrée did not stir.

The king, perceiving that Andrée's hand was cold, took it in his own to warm it, and passing his other arm around that body so beautiful and so sweet, he leaned forward to murmur in her ear some of that fond nonsense which is breathed sometimes in the ears of young girls asleep. At that moment his face approached Andrée's so closely as to touch it lightly.

Gilbert felt in his pocket, and breathed more freely as he grasped the handle of a long knife which he was wont to use in trimming the trees of the park.

The king found Andrée's face as cold as her hand. He

rose to his feet. His eyes fell on Andrée's naked foot, white and small as that of Cinderella. He took it between his hands; it was as cold as that of a marble statue. The king was startled.

Gilbert, whom the king's luxurious appetite threatened with, so to speak, a theft committed on himself, of all that beauty uncovered to his gaze, ground his teeth and opened the knife, which until then he had held closed in his hand.

But the king had already abandoned Andrée's foot, as he had abandoned her hand and her face, and, surprised by the young girl's sleep, which at first he had ascribed to a coquettish prudery, he sought to account for the deathly coldness which had seized upon the extremities of that lovely body ; he asked himself if the heart could still beat when hand, foot, and face were so cold. He parted, therefore, Andrée's robe, exposing her virginal breast, and with a touch at once timid and cynical he questioned the heart, silent beneath that flesh, cold as alabaster, and as white and firm in its rounded form.

Gilbert glided half through the doorway, with his knife in his hand, his eyes flashing, his teeth pressed together, determined, should the king continue his enterprises, to stab him and then to stab himself.

Just then a fearful peal of thunder made every article of furniture in the room shake, even to the couch before which Louis was kneeling. A livid and sulphureous flash of lightning threw so dazzling a light over Andrée's countenance that Louis, alarmed at her paleness, her motionless attitude, and her silence, started back, murmuring: "This girl is surely dead!"

At the same instant the idea of having kissed a corpse sent an icy chill through the king's veins. He seized the candle, held it close to Andrée's face, and hastily examined her features by the light of the trembling flame.

Beholding her livid lips, her swollen and discolored eyes, her dishevelled hair, her chest which no breath stirred, he uttered a cry, let the light fall, staggered back, and reeled like a drunken man into the ante-room, against the walls of which he stumbled in his alarm. His hasty step sounded upon the stairs, then on the gravel walks of the garden, and was soon lost in the howling storm which raged through the long alleys and shady groves of Trianon.

Then Gilbert, silent and gloomy, still holding his knife, went out from his hiding-place. He advanced to the threshold of Andrée's chamber, and for several seconds looked at the young girl buried in her deep sleep. Meanwhile the candle dropped by the king was still burning, overturned upon the carpet, and threw its light on the delicate foot and the leg so pure of that adorable body.

Gilbert slowly closed his knife, while his face gradually assumed the expression of an inexorable resolution ; then he went to listen at the door by which the king had departed. He listened more than a full minute. Then he, as the king had done, closed the door and pushed home the bolt. Then he blew out the light in the antechamber. Finally, with the same deliberation, with the same sombre fire in his eyes, he returned to Andrée's chamber and put his foot on the candle, still wasting on the carpet. A sudden darkness obscured the fatal smile which hovered on his lips. "Andrée, Andrée!" he murmured, "I promised you that the third time you should fall into my power you would not escape me as you had before. Andrée, Andrée! to the terrible romance which you accused me of inventing, there must be a terrible end!" And with arms extended, he went straight to the sofa where Andrée was lying, still cold, motionless, and unconscious.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WILL.

We have seen Balsamo depart. Djerid bore him on with the speed of lightning, while the rider, pale with terror and impatience, bent forward over the flowing mane, breathing with half-opened lips the air which the crest of the noble steed cleft as the rapid prow of the vessel cuts the waves. Behind him houses and trees disappeared like fantastic visions. He scarcely perceived, as he passed, the clumsy wagon groaning on its axle-tree, while its five huge horses started with affright at the approach of this living meteor, which they could not imagine to belong to the same race as themselves.

Balsamo proceeded at this rate for a league, with whirling brain, sparkling eyes, and panting breath. Horse and rider had traversed Versailles in a few seconds. The startled inhabitants who happened to be in the streets had seen a train of sparks flash past them, — nothing more. A second league was passed in like manner. Djerid had accomplished the distance in little more than a quarter of an hour, and yet this quarter of an hour had seemed to his rider a century. Suddenly a thought darted through his brain. He pulled up suddenly, throwing the noble courser back upon his haunches, while his fore-feet ploughed the ground.

Horse and rider breathed for a moment. Drawing a long breath, Balsamo raised his head. Then wiping the perspiration from his forehead, while his nostrils dilated in

the breeze of night, he murmured: "Oh! madman that you are, neither the rapidity of your steed nor the ardor of your desire will ever equal the instantaneous effect of thunder or the rapidity of the electric flash; and yet it is that which you require to avert the danger impending over you! You require the rapid effect, the instantaneous, the all-powerful shock, which will paralyze the feet whose activity you fear, the tongue whose speech destroys you. You require, at this distance, the victorious sleep which restores to you the possession of the slave who has broken her chain. Oh! if she should ever again be in my power!" and Balsamo, grinding his teeth, made a gesture of despair.

"Oh! you do well to wish, Balsamo; you do well to fly!" he exclaimed. "Lorenza has already arrived, she is about to speak, — she has perhaps already spoken. Oh! wretched woman, no punishment can be terrible enough for you.

"Let me try," continued Balsamo, frowning, his eyes fixed, and his chin resting on his hand; "let me try. Either science is a dream or a fact; it is either impotent or powerful, — let me try. Lorenza, Lorenza! it is my will that you sleep, wheresoever you may be. Lorenza, sleep, — sleep! it is my will! I reckon upon your obedience!

"Oh, no, no!" he murmured, despairingly; "no, I utter a falsehood; I do not believe, — I dare not reckon upon it; and yet the will is all. Oh! I will it with my whole soul, with all the strength of my being. Cleave the air, my potent will; traverse all the currents of opposing or indifferent wills; pass through walls in thy course like a bullet from a gun; follow her wherever she is. Go, strike, destroy! Lorenza, Lorenza! it is my will that you sleep; be dumb at my command!"

And for some moments he concentrated his thoughts upon this aim, imprinting it on his brain as if to lend it more speed in its flight toward Paris. Then after this mysterious operation — in which doubtless all the divine atoms animated by God, the master and lord of all things, assisted — Balsamo, once more setting his teeth hard and clenching his hands, gave the reins to Djerid, but this time without using either the knee or the spurs. It seemed as if Balsamo wished to convince himself.

The noble speed paced gently onward in obedience to the tacit permission of his master, placing his hoof gently upon the pavement with the light and noiseless step peculiar to his race. During all this time, which to a superficial observer would have seemed entirely lost, Balsamo was arranging a complete plan of defence. He concluded it just as Djerid entered the streets of Sèvres. Arrived opposite the park-gates, he stopped and looked round, as if expecting some one. Almost immediately a man emerged from beneath a carriage entrance, and advanced toward him.

"Is that you, Fritz?" asked Balsamo.

"Yes, Master."

"Have you made inquiries?"

"Yes."

"Is Madame Dubarry in Paris, or at Luciennes?"

"She is in Paris."

Balsamo raised his eyes to heaven with a triumphant look.

"How did you come?"

"On Sultan."

"Where is he?"

"In the court-yard of this inn."

"Saddled?"

"Yes."

"Very well; get ready to follow me."

Fritz hastened to bring out Sultan, — one of those strong German horses, of good disposition, who grumble a little at forced marches, but who, nevertheless, go as long as they have breath in their lungs, or while there is a spur at their master's heel. Fritz returned to Balsamo, who was writing by the light of a street-lantern.

"Return to Paris," said he, "and manage by some means to give this note to Madame Dubarry in person. You have half an hour for this purpose. After which you will return to the Rue Saint Claude, where you will wait for Madame Lorenza, who cannot fail to return soon. You will let her pass without any observation and without offering any opposition. Go, and remember, above all, that in half an hour your commission must be executed."

"It is well," said Fritz; "it shall be done." As he gave this confident reply to Balsamo, he attacked Sultan with whip and spur, and the good steed started off, astonished at this unusual aggression, and neighing piteously.

Balsamo by degrees resumed his composure, and took the road to Paris, which he entered three quarters of an hour afterward, appearing quite fresh, and wearing a calm, or rather a thoughtful, expression.

Balsamo's reasoning had been correct. However swift Djerid, that whinnying son of the desert, might be, his speed was in this case useless; thought alone could hope to overtake Lorenza in her flight from prison. From the Rue Saint Claude she had gained the boulevard; and turning to the right, she soon saw the walls of the Bastille rise before her. But Lorenza, constantly a prisoner, was entirely ignorant of Paris. Moreover, her first aim was to escape from that accursed house in which she saw only a dungeon; vengeance was a secondary consideration. She had just entered the Faubourg Saint Antoine, hastening

onward with bewildered steps, when she was accosted by a young man who had been following her for some moments with astonishment.

In fact, Lorenza, an Italian girl from the neighborhood of Rome, having almost always lived a secluded life, far from all knowledge of the fashions and customs of the age, was dressed more like an Oriental than a European lady; that is, in flowing and sumptuous robes, — very unlike the charming dolls of that time, confined, like wasps, in long, tight waists, rustling with silk and muslin, under which it was almost useless to seek a body, their utmost ambition being to appear immaterial.

Lorenza had only adopted from the French costume of that period the shoes with heels two inches high, — that strange-looking invention which stiffened the foot, displayed the beauty of the ankle, and which rendered it impossible for the Arethusas of that rather mythological age to fly from the pursuit of their Alpheuses.

The Alpheus who pursued our Arethusa easily overtook her, therefore. He had seen her lovely ankles peeping from beneath her petticoats of satin and lace, her unpowdered hair, and her dark eyes sparkling with a strange fire from under a mantilla thrown over her head and neck, and he imagined he saw in Lorenza a lady disguised for a masquerade or for a rendezvous, and proceeding on foot, for want of a coach, to some little house of the faubourg. He approached her, therefore, and walking beside her, hat in hand, "Good heavens! Madame," said he, "you cannot go far in this costume and with these shoes, which retard your progress. Will you accept my arm until we find a coach, and allow me the honor of accompanying you to your destination?"

Lorenza turned her head abruptly, gazed with her dark, expressive eyes at the man who thus made her an offer

which to many ladies would have appeared an impertinent one, and stopping, "Yes," said she, "most willingly."

The young man gallantly offered his arm. "Whither are we going, Madame?" he asked.

"To the hôtel of the lieutenant of police."

The young man started. "To Monsieur de Sartines?" he inquired.

"I do not know whether his name is Monsieur de Sartines or not; I wish to speak to whoever is lieutenant of police."

The young man began to reflect. A young and handsome woman wandering alone in the streets of Paris at eight o'clock in the evening, in a strange costume, holding a box under her arm, and inquiring for the hôtel of the lieutenant of police, while she was going in the contrary direction, seemed to him suspicious.

"Ah, *diable!*" said he; "the hôtel of the lieutenant of police is not in this direction at all."

"Where is it, then?"

"In the Faubourg Saint Germain."

"And how must I go to the Faubourg Saint Germain?"

"This way, Madame," replied the young man, calm, but always polite; "and if you wish, we can take the first coach we meet —"

"Oh, yes! a coach; you are right."

The young man conducted Lorenza back to the boulevard, and having met a fiacre, he hailed it. The coachman answered his summons.

"Where to, Madame?" he asked.

"To the hôtel of Monsieur de Sartines," said the young man; and with a last effort of politeness, or rather of astonishment, having opened the coach-door, he bowed to Lorenza; and after assisting her to get in, stood looking after her as one stands gazing in a dream. The coachman,

full of respect for the dreadful name, gave his horse the whip, and drove rapidly in the direction indicated.

It was while Lorenza was thus crossing the Place Royale that Andrée in her magnetic sleep had seen and heard her, and denounced her to Balsamo. In twenty minutes Lorenza was at the door of the hôtel.

"Must I wait for you, my fair lady?" asked the coachman.

"Yes," replied Lorenza, mechanically; and stepping lightly from the coach, she disappeared beneath the portal of the splendid hôtel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE HOTEL OF MONSIEUR DE SARTINES.

THE moment Lorenza entered the courtyard, she found herself surrounded by a crowd of soldiers and officers. She addressed the guardsman who stood nearest to her, and begged him to conduct her to the lieutenant of police. The guardsman handed her over to the porter, who, seeing a beautiful stranger, richly dressed, and holding a magnificent coffer under her arm, thought that the visit might prove to be an important one, and preceded her up the grand staircase to an antechamber, where, after the sagacious scrutiny of the porter, every visitor could be admitted to present an explanation, an accusation, or a request, to Monsieur de Sartines, at any hour of the day or night. It is needless to say that the first two classes of visitors were more favorably received than the last.

Lorenza, when questioned by the usher, replied only, "Are you Monsieur de Sartines?"

The usher was profoundly astonished that any one could mistake his black dress and steel chain for the embroidered coat and flowing wig of the lieutenant of police; but as no lieutenant is ever angry at being called captain, as he marked the foreign accent of the lady, and as her firm and steady gaze was not that of a lunatic, he felt convinced that the fair visitor had something important in the coffer which she held so carefully and so securely under her arm.

Nevertheless, since Monsieur de Sartines was a prudent and suspicious man, since traps had been laid for him with baits not less enticing than that of the beautiful Italian, there was good watch kept around him, and Lorenza had to undergo the investigation, the questioning, and the suspicions of half a dozen secretaries and valets. The upshot of all these questions and replies was that Monsieur de Sartines had not yet returned, and that Lorenza must wait. Then the young woman sank into a moody silence, and her eyes wandered over the bare walls of the vast antechamber.

At last the ringing of a bell was heard; a carriage rolled into the courtyard, and a second usher entered, and announced to Lorenza that Monsieur de Sartines was waiting for her.

Lorenza rose, and crossed two halls full of people with suspicious-looking faces, and dresses still more strange than her own. At last she was introduced into a large cabinet of an octagon form, lighted by a number of wax candles.

A man of from fifty to fifty-five years of age, enveloped in a dressing-gown, his head surmounted by a wig profusely powdered and curled, was seated at work before a lofty piece of furniture, the upper part of which, somewhat resembling in form a cupboard, was closed with two doors of looking-glass, in which the person seated could, without moving, see those who entered the room, and could examine their features before they had time to compose them in harmony with his own.

The lower part of this article of furniture formed a secretary. A number of rosewood drawers composed the front, each of which closed by the combination of some letters of the alphabet. Monsieur de Sartines kept in them his papers, and the ciphers which no one could read

while he lived, since the drawers opened for him alone, and which none could decipher after his death, unless in some drawer, still more secret than the others, he should find the key to the cipher.

This secretary, or rather this cupboard, contained behind the glasses of the upper part, twelve drawers, also closed by an invisible mechanism. This piece of furniture, constructed expressly by the regent to contain his chemical or political secrets, had been given by that prince to Dubois, and left by Dubois to Monsieur Dombreval, lieutenant of police. It was from the latter that Monsieur de Sartines had inherited the secretary and the secret.. However, Monsieur de Sartines had not consented to use it until after the death of the donor, and even then he had had all the arrangements of the locks altered.

This piece of furniture had some reputation in the world, and shut too closely, people said, for Monsieur de Sartines to keep only his wigs in it. The grumblers, and their name was legion at this period, said that if it were possible to read through the panels of this secretary, there would most certainly have been discovered, in one of its drawers, the famous treaty by virtue of which Louis XV. speculated in grain, through the intervention of his devoted agent, Monsieur de Sartines.

The lieutenant of police therefore saw, reflected in the glass, the pale, serious face of Lorenza as she advanced toward him with the coffer still beneath her arm. In the centre of the apartment the young woman stopped. Her costume, her figure, and the strangeness of her proceedings, struck the lieutenant. "Who are you?" he asked, without turning round, but looking at her in the glass. "What do you want with me?"

"Am I in the presence of Monsieur de Sartines, lieutenant of police?" replied Lorenza.

"Yes," replied he, abruptly.

"Who will assure me of that?"

Monsieur de Sartines turned round.

"Will it be a proof that I am the man you seek," said he, "if I send you to prison?"

Lorenza made no reply. Only, she looked around her with the indescribable dignity peculiar to the women of Italy, seeking the chair which Monsieur de Sartines did not offer her. He was vanquished by this look, for Monsieur le Comte d'Alby de Sartines was a remarkably well-bred man. "Be seated," said he, sharply.

Lorenza drew a chair forward and sat down.

"Speak quickly," said the magistrate. "Come! let me know what you want."

"Monsieur," said Lorenza, "I come to place myself under your protection."

Monsieur de Sartines looked at her with the sarcastic look peculiar to him.

"Ah, ah!" said he.

"Monsieur," continued Lorenza, "I have been carried off from my family, and have, by a false marriage, fallen into the power of a man who for the last three years has oppressed me and made my life miserable."

Monsieur de Sartines looked with admiration upon this noble countenance, and felt touched and charmed by this voice, so soft that its utterance seemed like a strain of music.

"From what country do you come?" he asked.

"I am a Roman."

"What is your name?"

"Lorenza."

"Lorenza what?"

"Lorenza Feliciani."

"I do not know that family. Are you a demoiselle?"

"Demoiselle" at this period meant a lady of quality. In our days a lady thinks herself noble enough when she is married, and wishes thenceforth to be called only "madame."

"I am a demoiselle," replied Lorenza.

"Well, what do you demand?"

"I demand justice against this man who has stolen and incarcerated me."

"That is no affair of mine," said the lieutenant of police; "are you his wife?"

"He says so, at least."

"What! he says so?"

"Yes; but I do not remember anything of it, as the marriage was contracted while I slept."

"*Peste!* you sleep soundly."

"What do you say?"

"I say that it is not in my province. Apply to an attorney and bring an action; I do not like to meddle in family matters." Monsieur de Sartines waved his hand with a gesture which meant, "Begone!" Lorenza did not move.

"Well?" asked Monsieur de Sartines, astonished.

"I have not done yet," said she; "and if I come to you, you must understand that it is not to complain of a trifling matter, but to revenge myself. I have told you my country; the women of my country revenge themselves, but never complain."

"That is another affair," said Monsieur de Sartines; "but speak quickly, fair lady, for my time is precious."

"I told you that I came to you to ask for your protection. Shall I have it?"

"Protection against whom?"

"Against the man upon whom I wish to revenge myself."

"He is powerful, then?"

"More powerful than a king."

"Come, explain, my dear Madame! Why should I protect you against a man who is, in your opinion, more powerful than a king, by reason of an act which is perhaps a crime? If you wish to be revenged on this man, revenge yourself. That is nothing to me; only, if you commit a crime, I shall have to arrest you. After which, we shall see: that is the routine."

"No, Monsieur," said Lorenza; "no, you will not have me arrested, for my vengeance is of the greatest utility to you, to the king, and to France. I shall revenge myself by revealing this man's secrets."

"Ah, ah! he has secrets?" said Monsieur de Sartines, beginning to feel interested in spite of himself.

"Important secrets, Monsieur."

"Of what kind?"

"Political."

"Mention them."

"But, in short, will you protect me?"

"What sort of protection do you require?" said the magistrate, with a cold smile, — "gold, or affection?"

"I only ask permission, Monsieur, to retire to a convent, and to live there concealed and unknown. I ask that this convent may become my tomb, but that this tomb may never be violated by any one in the world."

"Ah!" said the magistrate, "that is not a very exacting demand. You shall have the convent; speak!"

"Then I have your word, Monsieur?"

"I think I said so."

"Then," said Lorenza, "take this coffer, — it contains mysteries which will make you tremble for the safety of the king and his dominions."

"Then you know these mysteries?"

"Only partially; but I know they exist."

"And that they are important?"

"That they are terrible."

"Political secrets, you say?"

"Have you never heard that there existed a secret society?"

"Ah! the freemasons?"

"The invisibles."

"Yes; but I do not believe it."

"When you have opened this coffer, you will believe."

"Ah!" said Monsieur de Sartines, eagerly, "let me see;" and he took the coffer from Lorenza's hands. But suddenly, after a moment's reflection, he placed it upon the desk.

"No," said he, with an air of suspicion; "open the coffer yourself."

"But I have not the key."

"What! you have not the key? You bring me a coffer which contains the safety of a kingdom, and you forget the key?"

"Is it so very difficult, then, to open a lock?"

"No, not when one knows it." Then, after a moment's pause, he added: "We have in this place keys for all kinds of locks; you shall have a bunch (and he looked fixedly at Lorenza), and you shall open it yourself."

"Give it me," said Lorenza, simply.

Monsieur de Sartines held out a bunch of little keys of all kinds to the young woman. She took them; he touched her hand; it was cold as marble.

"But why," said he, "did you not bring the key of the coffer?"

"Because the master of the coffer never lets it out of his possession."

"And who is the master of the coffer, — this man who is more powerful than a king?"

"Who he is, no one can say. The Almighty alone knows how long he has lived; the deeds he accomplishes none see but God."

"But his name, — his name?"

"I have known him change it ten times."

"Well, that by which you generally address him?"

"Acharat."

"And he lives — "

"Rue Saint — "

Suddenly Lorenza started, shuddered, and let the coffer, which she held in the one hand, and the keys, which she held in the other, fall to the ground. She made an effort to reply, her lips were distorted convulsively, she raised her hands to her throat, as if the words she was about to utter had suffocated her; then, tossing her trembling arms aloft, she fell her whole length upon the carpet, unable to utter a single word.

"Poor girl!" murmured Monsieur de Sartines, "what the deuce is the matter with her? She is really very pretty. Ah! there is some jealousy at work in this project of revenge."

He rang the bell hastily, and in the mean time raised the young woman in his arms, who, with staring eyes and motionless lips, seemed already dead and unrelated to the world. Two valets entered.

"Carry this young lady carefully into the adjoining apartment," said he; "endeavor to revive her, but above all, use no violence. Go."

The valets obeyed, and carried Lorenza out.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COFFER.

When he was alone, Monsieur de Sartines turned the coffer round and round with the air of a man who can appreciate the value of a discovery. Then he stretched out his hands and picked up the bundle of keys which had fallen from Lorenza's hands. He tried them all; none would fit. He took several similar bunches from his drawer. These bunches contained keys of all sizes, — keys of all sorts of articles, coffers included; common keys and microscopic keys. Monsieur de Sartines might be said to possess a pattern of every key known. He tried twenty, fifty, a hundred; not one would even turn round.

The magistrate concluded, therefore, that the lock was only a semblance of a lock, and that consequently his keys were only make-believe keys. He then took a small chisel and a little hammer from the same drawer, and with his white hand, buried in an ample frill of Mechlin lace, he burst open the lock, the faithful guardian of the coffer. A bundle of papers appeared, instead of the destructive machine he had feared to find there, or poisons which should diffuse a fatal odor around, and deprive France of its most useful magistrate.

The first words which met the magistrate's eye were the following, written in a handwriting which was evidently feigned: "Master, it is time to abandon the name of Balsamo." There was no signature, but merely the three letters, L. P. D. "Ha!" said he, twitching the curls of his

wig, "if I do not know the writing, I think I know the name. Balsamo, — let me see; I must search the B's."

Monsieur de Sartines opened one of his twenty-four drawers, and took from it a list, arranged in alphabetical order, written in a fine handwriting full of abbreviations, and containing three or four hundred names, preceded, followed, and accompanied by flaming notes. "Oh, oh!" he murmured, "here is a long article on this Balsamo;" and he read the whole page with unequivocal signs of dissatisfaction. Then he replaced the list in the drawer, and continued the examination of the coffer. He had not proceeded far before his brow assumed a darker hue, and soon he came to a note full of names and ciphers.

This paper seemed important; it was much worn at the edges, and filled with pencil-marks. Monsieur de Sartines rang the bell; a servant appeared. "The assistance of the chancery clerk," said the minister, — "immediately. Let him come through the reception-rooms from the office, to save time."

The valet retired. Two minutes afterward a clerk with a pen in his hand, his hat under one arm, a large register under the other, and wearing sleeves of black serge over his coat-sleeves, appeared on the threshold of the cabinet. Monsieur de Sartines perceived his entrance in the mirror before him, and handed him the paper over his shoulder. "Decipher this," said he.

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied the clerk.

This decipherer of riddles was a little thin man, with pinched lips, eyebrows contracted by study, pale features, and head pointed both at top and bottom, a narrow chin a receding forehead, projecting cheek-bones, hollow and dull eyes, which sometimes sparkled with intelligence. Monsieur de Sartines called him La Fouine.

"Sit down," said the magistrate to him, on seeing him

rather embarrassed, by his note-book, his code of ciphers, his paper, and his pen.

La Fouine modestly took his seat upon the corner of a stool, drew his knees together, and began to write upon them, turning over his dictionary and searching his memory, with an impassive countenance. In five minutes he had written : —

§

" An order to assemble three thousand brothers in Paris.

§

" An order to form three circles and six lodges.

§

" An order to form a guard for the Grand Copt, and to institute four dwellings for him, one in a royal household.

§

" An order to place five hundred thousand francs at his disposal for a police.

§

" An order to enrol in the first of the Parisian circles the flower of literature and philosophy.

§

" An order to hire or to gain over the magistracy, and particularly to make sure of the lieutenant of police, by corruption, violence, or cunning."

Here La Fouine stopped for a moment, — not that the poor man was reflecting, he took care not to do that ; it would have been a crime, — but because his page was filled and the ink yet wet, so that he was obliged to wait for its drying before he could proceed.

Monsieur de Sartines, becoming impatient, snatched the paper from his hands and read it.

At the last paragraph, such an expression of fear was painted on his face that he turned a deeper pale at seeing

himself change color in the mirror of his secretary. He did not return the paper to his clerk, but handed him a fresh sheet. The clerk began again, and wrote as fast as he deciphered, — which he did with a facility terrifying for all writers in cipher. This time Monsieur de Sartines read over his shoulder : —

§

"To drop the name of Balsamo, which is already too well known in Paris, and to take that of the Comte de Fe — "

A large blot of ink concealed the rest of the word.

While Monsieur de Sartines was endeavoring to make out the last syllable, which would complete the name, a bell was rung outside, and a valet entering, announced : "The Comte de Fenix."

Monsieur de Sartines uttered a cry ; and at the risk of demolishing the harmonious edifice of his wig, he clasped his hands above his head, and hastened to dismiss his clerk by a secret door. Then, resuming his place before the desk, he said to the valet : "Introduce him."

A few seconds afterward Monsieur de Sartines perceived in his glass the marked profile of the count, which he had already seen at court on the day of Madame Dubarry's presentation. Balsamo entered without hesitation.

Monsieur de Sartines rose, bowed coldly to the count, and crossing one leg over the other, he seated himself ceremoniously in his armchair. At the first glance the magistrate had divined the cause and the aim of this visit. At the first glance also Balsamo had perceived the opened box, half emptied upon Monsieur de Sartines' desk. His look, however hasty, at the coffer, did not escape the lieutenant of police.

"To what chance do I owe the honor of your presence, Monsieur le Comte ?" asked Monsieur de Sartines.

"Monsieur," replied Balsamo, with a most affable smile, "I have had the honor of being presented to all the sovereigns, ministers, and ambassadors of Europe, but I have not found any one to present me to you; I have therefore come to introduce myself."

"In truth, Monsieur," replied the lieutenant of police, "you arrive most opportunely; for I am quite sure that had you not come of yourself, I should have had the honor of sending for you."

"Ah, indeed!" said Balsamo; "that is a coincidence!"

Monsieur de Sartines inclined his head with a sarcastic smile.

"Shall I be so fortunate as to be of any use to you?" asked Balsamo; and these words were uttered without a shadow of emotion or of uneasiness clouding his smiling features.

"You have travelled much, Monsieur le Comte?" asked the lieutenant of police.

"A great deal, Monsieur."

"Ah!"

"You wish for some geographical information, perhaps? A man of your capacity does not confine his observations to France alone; he surveys Europe, — the world."

"'Geographical,' is not exactly the word, Count. 'Moral' would be more correct."

"Have no scruples I beg; for the one, as for the other, I am wholly at your service."

"Well, Monsieur le Comte, picture to yourself that I am in search of a most dangerous man, — a man who, on my word, is a complete atheist."

"Oh!"

"A conspirator."

"Oh!"

"A forger."

"Oh!"

"A debauchee, a false coiner, a quack, a charlatan, the chief of a society, a man whose history I have in my books, in this box that you see here, — everywhere, indeed."

"Ah! yes, I comprehend," said Balsamo; "you have the history, but not the man."

"No."

"The devil! The latter is the more important, it seems to me."

"Of course; but you will see that we are not far from having him. Certainly Proteus had not more forms, nor Jupiter more names, than this mysterious traveller. Acharat in Egypt, Balsamo in Italy, Somini in Sardinia, the Marquis d'Anna in Malta, the Marquis Pellegrini in Corsica, and lastly, the Comte de —?"

"Comte de —?" added Balsamo.

"The last name, Monsieur, I have not been able to read. But I am sure you will assist me, will you not? For there is no doubt you must have met this man during your travels in each of the countries I have just now named."

"Enlighten me a little, I entreat," said Balsamo, quietly.

"Ah! I understand; you wish for a description of his person, do you not, Monsieur le Comte?"

"Yes, Monsieur, if you please."

"Well!" said Monsieur de Sartines, fixing a glance which he intended to be inquisitorial upon Balsamo, "he is a man of your age, of your size, of your figure. He is sometimes a great lord, scattering money on all sides; sometimes a charlatan, searching into the secrets of Nature; sometimes a gloomy member of some mysterious brotherhood which meets by night and swears death to kings, and the destruction of thrones."

"Oh!" said Balsamo, "that is very vague."

"How, vague?"

"If you knew how many men I have seen who resemble this description."

"Really?"

"Of course; and you must be a little more precise if you wish me to assist you. In the first place, do you know in which country he prefers to live?"

"He dwells in all."

"But at present, for instance?"

"At present he is in France."

"And what is he doing in France?"

"He is directing an immense conspiracy."

"Ah! that is indeed some clew; and if you know what conspiracy he directs, you hold the thread at the end of which, in all probability, you will find your man."

"I am quite of your opinion."

"Well, if you think so, why do you ask my advice? It is useless."

"Ah! but I am not yet decided."

"On what point?"

"Whether I shall arrest him or not."

"I do not understand the *not*, Monsieur; for if he conspires —"

"Yes, but if he is partially defended by some name or by some title?"

"Ah, I understand! But what name? — what title? You must tell me that before I can assist you in your search, Monsieur."

"Why, Monsieur, I have told you that I know the name under which he conceals himself; but —"

"But do you not know the one under which he shows himself, — is that it?"

"Yes, otherwise —"

"Otherwise you would arrest him?"

"Instantly."

"Well, my dear Monsieur de Sartines, it is very fortunate, as you said just now, that I arrived at this moment; for I will do you the service you require."

"You?"

"Yes."

"You will tell me his name?"

"Yes."

"The name under which he shows himself?"

"Yes."

"Then you know him?"

"Very well."

"And what is his name?" asked Monsieur de Sartines, expecting some falsehood.

"The Comte de Fenix."

"What! the name by which you were announced?"

"The name by which I was announced, — yes."

"Your name?"

"My name."

"Then this Acharat, this Somini, this Marquis d'Anna, this Marquis Pellegrini, this Joseph Balsamo, is you?"

"Yes," said Balsamo, quietly, "is myself."

It was a minute before Monsieur de Sartines could recover from the vertigo which this frank avowal caused him.

"You see, I knew it," said he. "I recognized you. I knew that Joseph Balsamo and the Comte de Fenix were the same."

"Ah!" said Balsamo, "you are a great minister, — I confess it!"

"And you are most imprudent," said the magistrate, advancing toward the bell.

"Imprudent, why?"

"Because I am going to have you arrested."

"What say you?" replied Balsamo, stepping between the magistrate and the bell. "You are going to arrest me?"

"*Pardieu!* what can you do to prevent me, may I ask?"

"You ask me?"

"Yes."

"My dear lieutenant of police, I will blow your brains out;" and Balsamo drew from his pocket a charming little pistol mounted in silver gilt, — which, from its appearance, might have been chased by Benvenuto Cellini, — and calmly levelled it at the forehead of Monsieur de Sartines, who turned pale and sank into an armchair.

"There," said Balsamo, drawing another chair close to that occupied by the lieutenant of police, and sitting down, "now that we are comfortably seated, we can chat a little."

CHAPTER XXV.

CONVERSATION.

Monsieur de Sartines was a moment or two recovering from his rather severe alarm. He had seen the threatening muzzle of the pistol presented before his very eye; he had even felt the cold metal of the barrel upon his forehead. At last he recovered. "Monsieur," said he, "you have an advantage over me. Knowing what sort of a man I had to deal with, I did not take the precautions usually adopted against common malefactors."

"Oh, Monsieur!" replied Balsamo, "now you are getting angry, and use injurious expressions. Do you not see how unjust you are? I come to do you a service."

Monsieur de Sartines made a movement.

"Yes, Monsieur, to serve you," resumed Balsamo, "and you misunderstand my intentions; you speak to me of conspirators at the very time when I come to denounce a conspiracy to you."

But Balsamo talked in vain. Monsieur de Sartines did not at that moment pay any great attention to the words of his dangerous visitor; and the word "conspiracy," which on other occasions would have been sufficient to make him bound from his seat, he hardly noticed.

"Since you know so well who I am, Monsieur, you are aware of my mission in France. Sent by his Majesty the great Frederick, I am more or less secretly the ambassador of his Prussian Majesty. Now by ambassador is understood an inquirer; in my capacity as inquirer I am igno-

rant of nothing that happens; and a subject upon which I am particularly well informed is the monopoly of grain."

However unpretendingly Balsamo uttered these last words, they nevertheless produced more effect upon the lieutenant of police than all the others, for they made him attentive. He slowly raised his head.

"What is that about grain?" said he, affecting as much assurance as Balsamo himself had displayed at the beginning of the interview. "Be good enough, in your turn, to instruct me, Monsieur."

"Willingly, Monsieur," said Balsamo. "This is the whole matter — "

"I am all attention."

"Oh, you do not need to tell me that! Some very clever speculators have persuaded his Majesty the king of France that he ought to construct granaries for his people in case of scarcity. These granaries, therefore, have been constructed. While they were doing it, they thought it as well to make them large. Nothing was spared, neither stone nor brick, and they were made very large."

"Well?"

"Well, they had then to be filled. Empty granaries were useless, therefore they were filled."

"Well! Monsieur," said Monsieur de Sartines, not seeing very clearly as yet what Balsamo was driving at.

"Well! you may readily conceive that to fill these very large granaries, a great quantity of grain was required. Is that not evident?"

"Yes."

"To continue, then. A large quantity of grain withdrawn from circulation is one way of starving the people; for, mark this: any amount taken from the circulation is equivalent to a failure in the production. A thousand sacks of corn more in the granary are a thousand sacks of

corn less in the market-place. If you only multiply these thousand sacks by ten, the corn will rise considerably."

Monsieur de Sartines was seized with an irritating cough. Balsamo paused, and waited till the cough was quieted.

"You see, then," he continued, as soon as the lieutenant of police would permit him, "you see that the speculator in these granaries is enriched by the amount of the rise in value. Is that clear to you?"

"Perfectly clear, Monsieur," said Monsieur de Sartines; "but, as far as I can understand, it seems that you have the presumption to denounce to me a conspiracy or a crime of which his Majesty is the author?"

"Exactly," said Balsamo; "you understand me very well."

"That is a bold step, Monsieur; and I confess that I am rather curious to see how his Majesty will take your accusation; I fear much the result will be precisely the same that I proposed to myself on looking over the papers in this box before your arrival. Take care, Monsieur; your destination in either case will be the Bastille."

"Ah! now you do not understand me at all."

"How so?"

"Good heavens! how incorrect an opinion you form of me, and how deeply you wrong me, Monsieur, in taking me for a fool! What! you imagine I intend to attack the king, — I, an ambassador, an inquirer? Why, that would be the work of a simpleton! Hear me to the end, I beg of you."

Monsieur de Sartines bowed.

"The persons who have discovered this conspiracy against the French people (forgive me for taking up your valuable time, Monsieur, but you will see directly that it is not lost), — they who have discovered this conspiracy against

the French people are economists, — laborious and exact men, who by their careful investigation of this underhand game have discovered that the king does not play alone. They know well that his Majesty keeps an exact register of the rate of corn in the different markets; they know that his Majesty rubs his hands with glee when the rise has produced him eight or ten thousand crowns; but they know also that beside his Majesty there stands a man whose position facilitates the sales, a man who naturally, thanks to certain functions (he is a functionary, you must know), superintends the purchases, the receipts, the storage, — a man, in short, who manages for the king. Now, these economists — these microscopic observers, as I call them — will not attack the king, for of course they are not mad, but they will attack, my dear Monsieur, the man, the functionary, the agent, who thus intrigues for his Majesty."

Monsieur de Sartines endeavored in vain to restore the equilibrium of his wig.

"Now," continued Balsamo, "I am coming to the point. Just as you, who have a police, knew that I was the Comte de Fenix, so I know that you are Monsieur de Sartines."

"Well, what then?" said the embarrassed magistrate. "Yes, I am Monsieur de Sartines, — a fine discovery?"

"Ah! but cannot you understand that this Monsieur de Sartines is precisely the man of the price list, of the underhand dealings, of the stowing away, — he who, either with or without the king's cognizance, traffics with the food of twenty-seven millions of French people, whom his office requires him to feed on the best possible terms? Now, just imagine the effect of such a discovery. You are not much beloved by the people; the king is not a very considerate man: as soon as the cries of the famishing

millions demand your head, the king — to avert all suspicion of connivance with you, if there is connivance, or if there is no connivance, to do justice — will cause you to be hanged upon a gibbet, like Enguerrand de Marigny. Do you recollect Enguerrand?"

"Imperfectly," said Monsieur de Sartines, turning very pale; "and it is a proof of very bad taste, I think, Monsieur, to talk of gibbets to a man of my rank."

"Oh! if I alluded to it," replied Balsamo, "it was because I think I see poor Enguerrand still before me. I assure you he was a perfect gentleman, from Normandy, of a very ancient family and a noble descent. He was chamberlain of France, captain of the Louvre, comptroller of finance and of buildings; he was Count of Longueville, which county is more considerable than yours of Alby. Well, Monsieur, I saw him hanged upon the gallows of Montfaucon, which he had himself constructed! Thank God, it was not a crime to have said to him, 'Enguerrand, my dear Enguerrand, take care! You are dipping into the finances to an extent that Charles of Valois will never pardon.' He would not listen to me, Monsieur, and unfortunately he perished. Alas! if you knew how many prefects of police I have seen, from Pontius Pilate down to Monsieur Bertin de Belle-Isle, Comte de Bourdeilles, Lord of Brantôme, your predecessor, who first introduced the lantern, and prohibited the scales!"

Monsieur de Sartines rose, and endeavored in vain to conceal the agitation which preyed upon him. "Well," said he, "you can accuse me if you like. Of what importance is the testimony of a man such as you, who has no influence or connections?"

"Take care, Monsieur," said Balsamo; "frequently those who seem to have no connections are connected far and wide. And when I shall write the history of these

corn speculations to my correspondent Frederick, who, you know, is a philosopher; when Frederick shall hasten to communicate the affair, with his comments upon it, to Monsieur Arouet de Voltaire; when the latter, with his pen, whose reputation, at least, I hope you know, shall have metamorphosed it into a little comic tale in the style of 'L'homme aux quarante Écus;' when Monsieur d'Alembert, that excellent geometrician, shall have calculated that the corn withdrawn from the public consumption by you might have fed a hundred millions of men for two or three years; when Helvetius shall have shown that the price of this corn, converted into crowns of six francs and piled up, would touch the moon, or, into bank-notes placed side by side, would reach to St. Petersburg; when this calculation shall have inspired Monsieur de la Harpe to write a bad drama, Diderot a family conversation, and Monsieur Jean Jacques Rousseau, of Geneva, who has a tolerably sharp bite when he chooses, a terrible paraphrase of this conversation, with commentaries; when Monsieur Caron de Beaumarchais — may Heaven preserve you from treading on his toes! — shall have written a memoir, Monsieur Grimm a little letter, Monsieur d'Holbach a thundering attack, Monsieur de Marmontel an amiable moral tale, in which he will kill you by defending you badly; when you shall be spoken of in the Café de la Régence, the Palais Royal, at Audinot's, among the king's dancers, — maintained, as you know, by Monsieur Nicolet, — ah! Comte d'Alby, you will be in a much worse case than was that poor Enguerrand de Marigny, whom you would not hear me mention, when he stood under the gallows; for he asserted his innocence, and that with so much earnestness that, on my word of honor, I believed him when he affirmed it to me."

At these words Monsieur de Sartines, no longer paying

any heed to decorum, took off his wig and wiped his bald head, which was bathed in perspiration. "Well," said he, "so be it! But all that will not prevent me in the least. Ruin me if you can; you have your proofs, I have mine. Keep your secret, I shall keep the coffer."

"Oh! Monsieur," said Balsamo, "that is another error into which I am surprised that a man of your talents should fall; this coffer —"

"Well, what of it?"

"You will not keep."

"Oh!" exclaimed Monsieur de Sartines, with a sarcastic smile, "true; I had forgotten that the Comte de Fenix is a gentleman of the highway who rifles travellers with the strong hand. I forgot your pistol, because you have replaced it in your pocket. Excuse me, my lord ambassador."

"But, good heavens! why speak of pistols, Monsieur de Sartines? You surely do not believe that I mean to carry off the coffer by main force; that when on the stairs I may hear your bell ring and your voice cry, 'Stop thief!' Oh, no! When I say that you will not keep this coffer, I mean that you will restore it to me willingly, and without constraint."

"What, I?" exclaimed the magistrate, placing his clenched hand upon the disputed object with so much weight that he nearly broke it.

"Yes, you."

"Oh! very well, Monsieur, mock away; but as to taking this coffer, I tell you you shall have it only with my life. And have I not risked my life a thousand times? Do I not owe it, to the last drop, to the service of his Majesty? Kill me, — you can do so; but the noise will summon my avengers, and I shall have voice enough left to convict you of all your crimes. Ah! give you back

this coffer," added he, with a bitter smile, — "all hell should not wrest it from me!"

"And therefore I shall not employ the intervention of the subterranean powers. I shall be satisfied with that of the person who is just now knocking at the gate of your court-yard."

And in fact, just at that moment, three blows, struck with an air of command, were heard outside.

"And whose carriage," continued Balsamo, "is just now entering the court."

"It seems, then, that it is some friend of yours who is coming to honor me with a visit?"

"As you say, — a friend of mine."

"And I shall hand this coffer to that friend?"

"Yes, my dear Monsieur de Sartines, you will give it to that friend."

The lieutenant of police had not finished his gesture of lofty disdain when a valet opened the door hastily, and announced that Madame Dubarry wished for an interview.

Monsieur de Sartines started, and looked in stupefied amazement at Balsamo, who required all his self-command to avoid laughing in the face of the honorable magistrate. Close behind the valet appeared a lady who seemed to have no need of permission to enter. It was the beautiful countess, whose flowing and perfumed skirts gently rustled as they brushed through the doorway of the cabinet.

"You, Madame, you!" exclaimed Monsieur de Sartines, who in the instinct of terror had seized the open coffer in both hands, and clasped it to his breast.

"Good-day, Sartines," said the countess, with her gay smile; then, turning to Balsamo, "Good-day, dear Count," she added; and she gave her hand to the latter, who familiarly bent over the white fingers, and pressed his lips

where the royal lips had so often rested. In this movement Balsamo managed to whisper a few words aside to the countess, which Sartines could not hear.

"Ah!" exclaimed the countess, "there is my coffer."

"Your coffer!" stammered Monsieur de Sartines.

"Of course, my coffer. Oh! you have opened it; you do not observe much ceremony!"

"But, Madame —"

"Oh, it is delightful! The idea occurred to me at once that some one had stolen this coffer; and then I said to myself, 'I must go to Sartines; he will find it for me.' You did not wait till I asked you; you found it beforehand, — a thousand thanks!"

"And as you see," said Balsamo, "Monsieur has even opened it."

"Yes, really, — who could have thought it? Why, it is abominable, Sartines!"

"Madame, notwithstanding all the respect I have for you," said the lieutenant of police, "I fear that you are imposed upon."

"Imposed, Monsieur!" said Balsamo. "Do you perchance mean that word for me?"

"I know what I know," replied Monsieur de Sartines.

"And I know nothing," whispered Madame Dubarry in a low voice to Balsamo. "Come, tell me what is the matter, my dear Count! You have claimed the fulfilment of the promise I made you, to grant the first favor you should ask. I keep my word like a woman of honor, and here I am. Tell me what must I do for you?"

"Madame," replied Balsamo, aloud, "you confided the care of this coffer and everything it contains to me, a few days ago."

"Of course," answered Madame Dubarry, replying by a look to the count's appealing glance.

"Of course!" exclaimed Monsieur de Sartines; "you say 'of course,' Madame?"

"Yes; Madame pronounced the words loud enough for you to hear them, I should think."

"A box which contains perhaps ten conspiracies!"

"Ah! Monsieur de Sartines, you are aware that that word is rather an unfortunate one for you; do not repeat it. Madame asks for her box again; give it her, — that is all."

"Do you ask me for it, Madame?" said Monsieur de Sartines, trembling with anger.

"Yes, my dear magistrate."

"But learn, at least —"

Balsamo looked at the countess.

"You can tell me nothing I do not know," said Madame Dubarry; "give me the coffer. You may believe I did not come for nothing!"

"But in the name of the living God, Madame! in the name of his Majesty's safety —"

Balsamo made an impatient gesture.

"The coffer, Monsieur!" said the countess, abruptly; "the coffer, — yes or no? Reflect well before you refuse."

"As you please, Madame!" said Monsieur de Sartines, humbly; and he handed the coffer, in which Balsamo had already replaced all the papers scattered over the desk, to the countess.

Madame Dubarry turned toward Balsamo with a charming smile. "Count," said she, "will you carry this coffer to my carriage for me, and give me your hand through all these antechambers, in which are so many ugly faces? Thanks, Sartines!"

And Balsamo was already advancing toward the door with his protectress, when he saw Monsieur de Sartines moving toward the bell. "Countess," said Balsamo,

stopping his enemy with a look, "be good enough to tell Monsieur de Sartines, who is quite enraged with me for having reclaimed your coffer, — be good enough to tell him how much grieved you would be if any misfortune were to happen to me through the agency of the lieutenant of police, and how displeased you would be with him."

The countess smiled on Balsamo. "You hear what the count says, my dear Sartines? Well, it is the simple truth! The count is an excellent friend of mine, and I should be mortally angry with you if you offended him in any way whatsoever. Adieu, Sartines!" and placing her hand in Balsamo's, who carried the coffer, Madame Dubarry left the cabinet of the lieutenant of police.

Monsieur de Sartines saw them depart without displaying that fury which Balsamo expected him to manifest. "Go!" said the conquered magistrate; "go, you have the box, but I have the woman!" and to compensate himself for his disappointment, he rang in a way to break all the bells in the house.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SARTINES BEGINS TO THINK BALSAMO A SORCERER.

At the violent ringing of Monsieur de Sartines' bell, an usher entered.

"Well," asked the magistrate, "that woman?"

"What woman, Monseigneur?"

"The woman who fainted here just now, and whom I confided to your care."

"Monseigneur, she is quite well," replied the usher.

"Very good; bring her to me."

"Where shall I find her, Monseigneur?"

"What do you mean? In that room, of course."

"But she is no longer there, Monseigneur."

"Not there! Then where is she?"

"I do not know."

"She has gone?"

"Yes."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"But she could not stand!"

"Monseigneur, it is true that for some moments she remained in a swoon; but five minutes after the Comte de Fenix entered Monseigneur's cabinet, she awoke from this strange fit, which neither essences nor salts affected in the least. Then she opened her eyes, rose, and breathed with an air of satisfaction."

"Well, what then?"

"She proceeded toward the door; and as Monseigneur had not ordered that she should be detained, she was allowed to depart."

"Gone!" cried Monsieur de Sartines. "Ah, wretch that you are! I shall send you all to rot at Bicêtre! Quick, quick! send me my head-clerk!"

The usher retired hastily to obey the order he had received.

"The scoundrel is a sorcerer!" muttered the unfortunate magistrate. "I am lieutenant of police to the king, but he is lieutenant of police to the devil!"

The reader has no doubt understood what Monsieur de Sartines could not explain to himself. Immediately after the incident of the pistol, and while the lieutenant of police was endeavoring to regain his equanimity, Balsamo, profiting by the momentary respite, had turned successively to the four cardinal points, quite sure of finding Lorenza in the direction of one of them, and had ordered her to rise, to go out, and to return, by the way she had come, to the Rue Saint Claude. The moment this wish had been formed in Balsamo's mind, a magnetic current was established between him and the young woman, and the latter, obeying the order she had received by intuition, rose and went away without meeting any opposition.

Monsieur de Sartines that same evening took to his bed, and caused himself to be bled, — the revulsion had been too strong for him to bear it with impunity; and the doctor assured him that a quarter of an hour more would have brought on an attack of apoplexy.

Meanwhile Balsamo had accompanied the countess to her carriage, and had attempted to take his leave of her; but she was not a woman to let him go thus without knowing, or at least without endeavoring to discover, the solution of the strange event which had taken place before

her. She begged the count to enter her carriage. The count obeyed, and a groom led Djerid behind.

"You see now, Count," said she, "whether I am true or not, and whether, when I have called any one my friend, I have spoken with the lips merely, or from the heart. I was just setting out for Luciennes, where the king had said he would pay me a visit to-morrow morning; but your letter arrived, and I left everything for you. Many would have been frightened at the words 'conspiracies' and 'conspirators' which Monsieur de Sartines threw in your teeth; but I looked at your countenance before I acted, and did as you wished me."

"Madame," replied Balsamo, "you have amply repaid the slight service I was able to render you; but with me nothing is lost, — you will find that I can be grateful. Do not imagine, however, that I am a criminal, — a conspirator, as Monsieur de Sartines said. That worthy magistrate had received, from some person who betrayed me, this coffer, containing some chemical and hermetical secrets, — which I shall share with you, that you may preserve your wonderful, your splendid beauty, and your dazzling youth. Now, seeing the ciphers of my formulas, this excellent Monsieur de Sartines called the chancery clerk to assist him, who, in order not to be found wanting, interpreted them after his own fashion. I think I have already told you, Madame, that the profession is not yet entirely freed from the dangers which were attendant on it in the Middle Ages. Only young and intelligent minds like yours favor it. In short, Madame, you have saved me from a great embarrassment; I thank you for it, and shall prove my gratitude."

"But what would he have done with you if I had not come to your assistance?"

"To annoy King Frederick, whom his Majesty hates,

he would have imprisoned me in Vincennes or the Bastille. I should have escaped from it, I know, — thanks to my process for melting stone with a breath, — but I should have lost my coffer, which contains, as I have had the honor of telling you, many curious and invaluable formulas, wrested by a happy venture of science from the eternal shades."

"Ah, Count! you at once delight and reassure me. Then you promise me a philtre to make me young again?"

"Yes."

"And when will you give it me?"

"Oh! you need be in no hurry. You may ask for it twenty years hence, beautiful countess. In the mean time I think you do not wish to become quite a child again."

"You are, in truth, a charming man. One question more, and I will let you go, for you seem in haste."

"Speak, Countess."

"You said that some one had betrayed you. Is it a man, or a woman?"

"A woman."

"Ah, ah! Count, — a love affair?"

"Alas! yes, complicated by an almost frantic jealousy, which has produced the pleasant effect you have seen. It is a woman who, not daring to stab me with a knife because she knows I cannot be killed, wanted to imprison and ruin me."

"What, ruin you?"

"She endeavored to do so, at least."

"Count, I will stop here," said the countess, laughing. "Is it the quicksilver in your veins that gives you that immortality which makes people betray you, instead of killing you? Shall I set you down here, or drive you to your own house?"

"No, Madame, I cannot allow you to inconvenience yourself on my account. I have my horse Djerid."

"Ah! that wonderful animal which, it is said, outstrips the wind?"

"He seems to please you, Madame."

"He is in truth a magnificent steed."

"Allow me to offer him to you, on the condition that you alone ride him."

"Oh! no, thank you; I do not ride on horseback, — or, at least, I am a very timid horsewoman. I am as much obliged to you, however, as if I accepted your offer. Adieu! my dear Count; do not forget my philtre, — in ten years."

"I said twenty."

"Count, you know the proverb, — 'a bird in the hand—;' and if you could even give it me in five years — There is no knowing what may happen."

"Whenever you please, Countess. Are you not aware that I am entirely at your command?"

"Only one word more, Count."

"I listen, Madame."

"It proves that I have great confidence in you to speak of it."

Balsamo, who had already alighted from the carriage, suppressed his impatience, and approached the countess.

"It is reported everywhere," continued Madame Dubarry, "that the king is rather taken with that little Taverney."

"Ah! Madame," said Balsamo, "is it possible?"

"A very great partiality, it is said. You must tell me if it is true. Count, do not deceive me; I beseech you to treat me as a friend. Tell me the truth, Count."

"Madame," replied Balsamo, "I will do more; I will promise you that Mademoiselle Andrée shall never be the king's mistress."

"And why not?" cried Madame Dubarry.

"Because I do not wish it," said Balsamo.

"Oh!" said Madame Dubarry, incredulously.

"You doubt."

"Is it not allowed?"

"Never doubt the truths of science, Madame. You have believed me when I said yes; believe me when I say no."

"But, in short, have you the means—?" she paused, smiling.

"Well?"

"Means capable of destroying the king's will, or conquering his whims?"

Balsamo smiled. "I create sympathies," said he.

"Yes, I know that."

"You believe it, even."

"I believe it."

"Well, I can create aversions also, and if needful, impossibilities. Therefore, Countess, make your mind easy; I am on guard."

Balsamo uttered all these fragments of sentences with an absence of mind which Madame Dubarry would not have taken as she did for inspiration, had she known the feverish anxiety which Balsamo felt to be with Lorenza as quickly as possible.

"Well, Count," said she, "assuredly you are not only my prophet of happiness, but also my guardian angel. Count, mark my words; defend me, and I will defend you. Alliance, alliance!"

"Agreed, Madame," replied Balsamo, kissing the countess's hand. Then closing the door of the carriage, which the countess had stopped upon the Champs Élysées, he mounted his horse, who neighed joyously, and was soon lost to view in the shadows of night.

"To Luciennes!" said the countess, consoled.

Balsamo whistled softly, and gently pressed his knees against Djerid's side, who started off at a gallop. Five minutes afterward he was in the vestibule of the Rue Saint Claude looking at Fritz. "Well?" asked he, anxiously.

"Yes, Master," replied the domestic, who was accustomed to read his looks.

"She has returned?"

"She is upstairs."

"In which room?"

"In the chamber of furs."

"In what state is she?"

"Oh! very much exhausted. She ran so quickly that although I saw her coming, for I was watching for her, I had scarcely time to hasten to meet her."

"Indeed!"

"Oh! I was quite alarmed. She swept on like a tempest; rushed upstairs without taking breath; and when she entered the room, she fell upon the large black lion's skin. You will find her there."

Balsamo hastily ascended, and found Lorenza where Fritz had said. She was struggling in vain against the first convulsions of a nervous crisis. The fluid had weighed upon her too long already, and forced her to violent efforts. She suffered, she moaned; it seemed as if a mountain weighed upon her breast, and that she endeavored with both hands to remove it.

Balsamo looked at her with eyes angrily flashing; and taking her in his arms, he carried her into her apartment, the mysterious door of which closed behind him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

Balsamo had just entered Lorenza's apartment, and was preparing to awake her and overwhelm her with all the reproaches which his gloomy anger prompted, fully determined to punish her according to the dictates of that anger, when a triple knock upon the ceiling announced that Althotas had watched for his return, and wished to speak to him.

Nevertheless Balsamo waited; he was hoping either that he had been mistaken, or that the signal had been accidental, when the impatient old man repeated his blows. Balsamo, therefore, — fearing, no doubt, to see him descend, as he had done before, or that Lorenza, awakened by an influence opposed to his own, might acquire the knowledge of some new matter no less dangerous for him than that of his political secrets, — Balsamo, therefore, after having, if we may so express it, charged Lorenza with an additional quantity of the electric fluid, left the room to visit Althotas.

It was high time; the trap-door was already half-way from the ceiling. Althotas had left his wheeled armchair, and was seen squatting down upon the movable part of the ceiling, which rose and fell. He saw Balsamo leave Lorenza's room.

Squatting thus, the old man was at once hideous and terrible to behold. His white face, or rather some parts of

that face, which still seemed to be alive, were purple with the violence of his rage. His meagre and bony hands, like those of a human skeleton, trembled and shook; his hollow eyes seemed to vacillate in their deep caverns; and in a language unknown even to his disciple, he was loading him with the most violent invectives.

Having left his armchair to touch the spring, Althotas seemed to live and move only by the aid of his long arms, lean and angular as those of a spider; and issuing, as we have said, from his chamber, inaccessible to all but Balsamo, he was about to descend to the lower apartment. In order that this feeble old man, indolent as he was, should leave his armchair, that cleverly constructed machine which spared him all fatigue, and consent to perform one of the actions of common life, — in order that he should undergo the care and fatigue of such a change in his usual habits, it was necessary that some extraordinary excitement should have withdrawn him from his meditative life, and compelled him to enter again reality.

Balsamo, taken as it were in the fact, seemed at first astonished, then uneasy.

"Ah!" exclaimed Althotas, "there you are, you good-for-nothing, you ingrate! There you are, coward, who desert your master!"

Balsamo called all his patience to his aid, as he invariably did when he spoke to the old man. "But," he replied, quietly, "I think, my friend, you have only just called me."

"Your friend?" exclaimed Althotas; "your friend? you vile human creature! You dare to speak the language of equality to me! I have been a friend to you, — more than a friend, a father, — a father who has educated, instructed, and enriched you. But you my friend? Oh, no! for you abandon me; you assassinate me!"

"Come, Master, you disturb your bile; you irritate your blood; you will make yourself ill."

"Ill? Nonsense! Have I ever been ill, except when you made me a sharer, in spite of myself, in some of the miseries of your impure human-kind? Ill! Have you forgotten that it is I who heal others?"

"Well, Master," replied Balsamo, coldly, "I am here. Let us not lose time in vain."

"Yes, I advise you to remind me of that. Time, time! which you oblige me to economize, — me, for whom this element, circumscribed to all the world, should be endless, unlimited! Yes, my time flies; yes, my time is lost, — my time, like the time of other people, falls minute by minute into the gulf of eternity, when for me it ought to be eternity itself!"

"Come, Master," said Balsamo, with unalterable patience, lowering the trap to the ground as he spoke, placing himself upon it, and causing it to rise again to its place in the room; "come, what is it you want? You say I starve you; but are you not in your forty days of fasting?"

"Yes, yes, doubtless; the work of regeneration began thirty-two days ago."

"Then tell me, of what do you complain? I see two or three bottles of rain-water, the only kind you drink, still remaining."

"Of course; but do you imagine I am a silkworm to complete the grand work of renovation of youth and of transformation alone? Do you imagine that, powerless as I am, I can compose alone the elixir of life? Or think you that, sitting here in my chair, enervated by cooling drinks, my sole nourishment, I could have power of mind enough, when left to my own resources, without your assistance, to complete the minute work of my regeneration,

in which, as you, unhappy man, well know, I must be aided and supported by a friend?"

"I am here, Master, I am here. Answer me now," said Balsamo, replacing the old man in his chair almost in spite of himself, as he would have handled a hideous infant; "answer me, — you have not been in want of distilled water, for, as I said before, there are three bottles still remaining. This water, as you know, was all collected in the month of May; there are your biscuits of barley and of sesamum, and I myself administered to you the white drops you prescribed."

"Yes, but the elixir! The elixir is not made! You do not remember it, for you were not there; it was your father, — your father, who was far more faithful than you are; but at the last fiftieth I had the elixir ready a month beforehand. I had my retreat on Mount Ararat. A Jew provided me with a Christian child still at its mother's breast, for its weight in gold. I bled it according to the rule; I took the last three drops of its arterial blood, and in an hour my elixir, which wanted only this ingredient, was composed. Therefore my first regeneration succeeded wonderfully well. My hair and teeth fell out during the convulsions which succeeded the absorption of that wondrous elixir, but they grew again, — the latter badly enough, I know, because I neglected the precaution of letting the elixir flow into my throat through a golden conduit. But my hair and my nails grew again in this second youth, and I began again to live as if I were only fifteen years of age. Now I am old again; I am bordering on the extreme limit; and if the elixir is not ready, if it is not safely enclosed in this bottle, if I do not bestow all possible care upon this work, the science of a century will be annihilated with me, and the admirable, the sublime secret I possess will be lost for man, who in me and

through me approaches divineness! Oh! if I fail, if I am mistaken, if I miss it, Acharat, it will be your fault; and take care, for my anger will be terrible, — terrible!" and as he uttered these last words, a livid glare shot from his dying eyeball, and the old man fell into a brief convulsion, which ended in a violent fit of coughing.

Balsamo instantly lavished the most eager attentions on him, and the old man recovered. His complexion had become death-like instead of pale. This feeble attack had weakened his strength so much that one would have thought he was dying.

"Come, Master," said Balsamo, "tell me plainly what you want."

"What I want!" said he, looking fixedly at Balsamo.

"Yes."

"What I want is this —"

"Speak; I hear you, and I will obey, if what you ask is possible."

"Possible, possible!" muttered the old man, contemptuously. "You know that everything is possible."

"Yes, with time and science."

"Science I have, and I am on the point of conquering time. My dose has succeeded. My strength has almost entirely left me. The white drops have caused the expulsion of all the remaining portion of my former nature. Youth, like the sap of the trees in May, rises under the old bark, and buds, so to speak, through the old wood. You may remark, Acharat, that the symptoms are excellent, — my voice is weak, my sight is three-quarters gone; sometimes I feel my mind wander; I have become insensible to the transition from heat to cold. I must therefore hasten to finish my elixir, in order that, on the completion of my second fifty years, I may at once pass from a hundred years old to twenty. The ingredients for the elixir

are all made, the conduit is ready ; I want nothing but the three drops of blood I told you of."

Balsamo made a gesture of repugnance.

"Very well," said Althotas, "let us abandon the child, since it is so difficult, and since you prefer to shut yourself up the whole day with your mistress, to seeking it for me."

"You know, Master, that Lorenza is not my mistress," replied Balsamo.

"Oh ! oh ! oh ! " exclaimed Althotas ; "you say that ! You think to impose on me as on the mass ; you would make me believe in an immaculate creature, — and yet you are a man ! "

"I swear to you, Master, that Lorenza is as pure as an angel ; I swear to you that love, earthly felicity, domestic happiness, — I have sacrificed all to my project. For I also have my regenerating work ; only, instead of applying it to myself alone, I shall apply it to all the world."

"Fool ! poor fool ! " cried Althotas ; "I verily believe he is going to speak to me of his cataclysm of fleshworms, his revolutions of ant-hills, when I speak to him of life and eternal youth ! "

"Which can be acquired only at the price of a fearful crime ; and besides — "

"You doubt ; I see you doubt, unhappy man ! "

"No, Master ; but since you give up the idea of procuring a child, tell me what do you want ? "

"I must have the first virginal creature you can find, — man or woman ; but a woman would be better, by reason of the affinity of the sexes, as I have discovered. Find me that, and quickly, for I have only eight days longer."

"Very well, Master, I will see, — I will search."

Another lightning flash, more terrible than the first,

sparkled in the old man's eyes. "You will see! you will search!" he cried. "Oh! is that your reply? I expected it, and I don't know why I am surprised. And since when, thou worm of the earth, was the creature entitled to speak thus to its master? Ah! you see me powerless, disabled, supplicating, and you are fool enough to think me at your mercy! Yes or no, Acharat? And answer me without embarrassment or falsehood, for I can see and read your heart; for I can judge you, and shall punish you."

"Master," replied Balsamo, "take care; your anger will do you an injury."

"Answer me! answer!"

"I can say to my master only what is true; I will see if I can procure what you desire, without injuring ourselves. I will endeavor to find a man who will sell you what you want; but I will not take the crime upon myself. That is all I can say."

"That is very delicate," said Althotas, with a bitter smile.

"It is so, Master," said Balsamo.

Althotas made so violent an effort that with the help of his two arms resting on the arms of the chair, he raised himself to his feet. "Yes, or no?" said he.

"Master, yes, if I find it; no, if I do not."

"Then you will expose me to death, wretch! you will save three drops of the blood of an insignificant, worthless creature such as I require, and let a perfect creature such as I am fall into the eternal gulf! Listen, Acharat!" said the old man, with a smile fearful to behold, "I no longer ask you for anything; I ask absolutely nothing; I will wait. But if you do not obey, I will serve myself; if you desert me, I will help myself! You have heard me, have you not? Now go!"

Balsamo, without replying to this threat, prepared everything the old man might want. He placed the drinks and the food within his reach, and performed all the services a watchful servant would perform for his master, a devoted son for his father; then, absorbed by a thought very different from that which tormented Althotas, he lowered the trap to descend, without remarking that the old man followed him with a sardonic and ominous grin.

Althotas was still grinning like an evil genius when Balsamo stood before the still sleeping Lorenza.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE STRUGGLE.

Balsamo stood before Lorenza, his heart swelling with sad emotion; his wrath had given place to sorrow. His interview with Althotas had led him to reflect on the vanity of all human affairs, and had driven anger from his heart. He remembered the practice of the Greek philosopher who repeated the entire alphabet before listening to the voice of that black divinity, the counsellor of Achilles. After a moment of mute and cold contemplation before the couch on which Lorenza was lying, "I am sad," said he to himself, "but resolved, and I can look my situation fair in the face. Lorenza hates me; Lorenza has threatened to betray me, and has betrayed me. My secret is no longer my own; I have given it into this woman's power, and she casts it to the winds. I am like the fox who has withdrawn from the steel trap only the bone of his leg, but who has left behind his flesh and his skin, so that the huntsman can say on the morrow, 'The fox has been taken here; I shall know him again, living or dead.'

"And this dreadful misfortune, which Althotas cannot comprehend, and which therefore I have not even mentioned to him, — this misfortune, which destroys all my hopes in this country, and consequently in this world, of which France is the soul, I owe to the creature sleeping before me, to this beautiful statue with her entrancing

smile. To this tempting angel I owe dishonor and ruin, and shall owe to her, captivity, exile, and death.

"Therefore," continued he, becoming more animated, "the sum of evil has exceeded that of good, and Lorenza is dangerous to me. Oh, serpent! with thy graceful folds, which nevertheless strangle, with thy golden throat, which is nevertheless full of venom, sleep; on for when thou awakest I shall be obliged to kill thee!"

And with a gloomy smile Balsamo slowly approached the young woman, whose languid eyes were turned toward him as he approached, as the sunflower and volubilis open to the first rays of the rising sun.

"Oh!" said Balsamo, "and yet I must forever close those eyes which now beam so tenderly on me, — those beautiful eyes which are filled with lightning as soon as they cease to glow with love."

Lorenza smiled sweetly, and, smiling, she displayed the double row of her pearly teeth.

"But if I kill her who hates me," said Balsamo, wringing his hands, "I shall also kill her who loves me;" and his heart was filled with the deepest grief, strangely mingled with a vague desire. "No, no!" he murmured. "I have sworn in vain; I have threatened in vain, — no, I shall never have the courage to kill her! She shall live, but she shall live without ever being awakened again! She shall live this factitious life, which is happiness for her, while the other is despair. Would that I could make her happy! What matters to me the rest? She shall have but one existence, that which I create, that in which she loves me, that in which she lives at this moment;" and he returned Lorenza's tender look by a look as tender as her own, placing his hand as he did so gently on her head.

Lorenza, who seemed to read Balsamo's thoughts as if they were an open book, gave a long sigh, rose gradually

with the graceful languor of sleep, and placed her two white arms upon Balsamo's shoulders, who felt her perfumed breath upon his cheek.

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Balsamo, passing his hand over his burning forehead and his dazzled eyes; "no, this intoxicating life will make me mad, and with this siren, glory, power, immortality, will all vanish from my thoughts. No, no, she must awake! I wish it; it is necessary."

Distracted, beside himself, Balsamo suddenly shook off Lorenza, who loosened her hold upon him, and, like a floating veil, like a shadow, like a flake of snow, she fell on the sofa. The most finished coquette would not have chosen an attitude more seductive in which to present herself to her lover's view. Balsamo still had the strength to take a few steps in retreat; but, like Orpheus, he looked back, — like Orpheus, he was lost. "Oh, if I awake her," he thought, "the struggle will begin again! If I awake her, she will kill herself, or she will kill me, or force me to destroy her. Oh, what an abyss! Yes, this woman's destiny is written; it stands before me in letters of fire, — love, death! Lorenza, Lorenza! thou art doomed to love and to die! Lorenza, Lorenza! I hold thy life and thy love in my hands!"

Instead of a reply, the enchantress rose, advanced toward Balsamo, fell at his feet, and gazed into his eyes with a tender smile. Then she took one of his hands and placed it on her heart. "Death!" said she, in a low voice, with lips moist and brilliant as coral when it issues from the caverns of the deep; "death, but love!"

Balsamo took two steps backward, his head thrown back, his hand over his eyes. Lorenza, breathless, followed him on her knees. "Death!" she repeated, with her intoxicating voice, "but love, love, love!"

Balsamo could resist no longer; a cloud of flame enveloped him. "Oh!" he said, "it is too much; I have struggled as long as a human being could struggle. Demon, or angel of futurity, whichever thou art, thou must be content. I have long enough sacrificed all the generous passions in my heart to egotism and pride. Oh, no, no! I have no right thus to rebel against the only human sentiment which lives in my heart. I love this woman; I love her, and this passionate love injures her more than the most terrible hatred could do. This love kills her. Oh, coward! oh, ferocious fool that I am! I cannot even compromise with my desires. What! when I breathe my last sigh, when I appear before God, — I, the deceiver, the false prophet, — when I throw off my mantle of hypocrisy before the Sovereign Judge, shall I not have one generous action to confess, the recollection of a single happiness to console me in the midst of my eternal sufferings? Oh, no, no, Lorenza! I know that in loving thee I lose the future; I know that my revealing angel will wing its flight to heaven when once the woman shall descend into my arms. But, Lorenza, you wish it, do you not?"

"My beloved!" she sighed.

"Then you accept this life instead of the real life?"

"I ask for it on my knees, — I pray for it, I implore it. This life is love and happiness."

"And will it suffice for you when you are my wife? For you know that I love you passionately."

"Oh! I know it, — I can read your heart."

"And you will never accuse me, before men or before God, of having taken you by surprise, or of having deceived you?"

"Never! Oh! before men, before God, on the contrary, I will bless you for giving me love, — the only good, the only pearl, the only diamond in the world!"

"You will never regret your wings, poor dove? For you must know that you will never again roam through radiant space for me to seek the ray of light Jehovah once deigned to bestow upon his prophets. When I would know the future, when I would command men, alas! alas! your voice will no longer reply to me. I have had in you the beloved woman and the helping spirit; I shall have only one of the two now; and yet —"

"Ah! you doubt, you doubt," cried Lorenza; "I see doubt like a dark stain upon your heart."

"You will always love me, Lorenza?"

"Always! always!"

Balsamo passed his hand over his forehead.

"Well! so be it," said he. "Besides —" He remained a moment buried in thought. "Besides, am I in absolute need of her?" he continued. "Is she the only one in the world? No, no; while this one will make me happy, the other will continue my riches and my power. Andrée is as prophetic, as clairvoyant as you are. Andrée is young, pure, virginal, and I do not love her; and yet in her sleep Andrée is obedient to me, like you. I have in Andrée a subject ready to replace you; and to me she is the physician's *corpus vile* which may serve for experiments. She flies as far as you do — farther, perhaps — into the shadows of the unknown. Andrée, Andrée! I take you for my kingdom. Lorenza, come to my arms; I keep you for my love and my mistress. With Andrée I am powerful; with Lorenza I am happy. From this moment, only, my life is complete, and, except for immortality, I have realized the dream of Althotas, — except for immortality, I am equal to the gods!" and raising Lorenza, he opened his panting bosom, to which she clung as the ivy clings to the oak.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LOVE.

For Balsamo another life had begun, — a life hitherto unknown in his active, troubled, multifarious experience. For three days there had been for him no more anger, no more apprehension, no more jealousy; for three days he had not heard the subject of politics, conspirators, or conspiracies as much as whispered. By Lorenza's side — and he had not left her for an instant — he had forgotten the whole world. This strange, wonderful love, which, as it were, soared above humanity, this intoxicating and mysterious love, this love of a shadow, — for he could not conceal from himself that with a word he could change his gentle bride into an implacable enemy, — this love snatched from hatred, thanks to an inexplicable caprice of nature or of science, plunged Balsamo into happiness which bordered on madness.

More than once during these three days, rousing himself from the opiate torpor of love, Balsamo looked at his ever-smiling, ever-ecstatic companion, — for thenceforth, in the existence he had created for her, she rested from her life of factitious ecstasy by a sleep equally factitious; and when he saw her calm, gentle, happy, when she called him by the most affectionate names, and dreamed aloud her mysterious love, he more than once asked himself if God were not angry with the modern Titan who had attempted to wrest from him his secrets; if he had not inspired Lorenza with the idea of deceiving him with a false-

hood in order to lull his vigilance, and when it was lulled, of escaping, to appear again as an avenging fury.

In such moments Balsamo doubted of the truth of a science received by tradition from antiquity, but of which he had no evidence but examples. Immediately, however, that perpetual flame, that thirst for caresses, reassured him. "If Lorenza was feigning," he argued with himself, "if she intended to fly from me, she would seek opportunities for sending me away, she would invent excuses for occasional solitude; but far from that, her arms are always embracing me, her ardent look says to me, 'Do not go away;' her gentle voice ever whispers, 'Stay!'"

Then Balsamo's confidence in himself and in science returned. Why, indeed, should the magic secret to which alone he owned his power have become all at once, and without any transition, a chimera fit only to throw to the winds as a vanished recollection, as the smoke of an extinguished fire? Never with relation to him had Lorenza been more lucid, more clear-sighted. All the thoughts which sprang up in his mind, all the feelings which made his heart bound, were instantly reproduced in hers. It remained to be seen if this lucidity were not sympathy; if, beyond himself and the young girl, beyond the circle which their love had traced, and which their love illuminated with its light, the eyes of her soul, so clear-sighted before the fall of this new Eve, could yet pierce the surrounding darkness. Balsamo dared not make the decisive trial; he hoped still, and this hope was the resplendent crown of his happiness.

Sometimes Lorenza said to him, with gentle melancholy: "Acharat, you think of another than me, of a woman of the North, with fair hair and blue eyes. Acharat, Acharat, this woman always moves beside me in your thoughts!"

Balsamo looked tenderly at Lorenza. "You see that in me?" said he.

"Oh, yes! as clearly as I read the surface of a mirror."

"Then you know it is not love which makes me think of that woman," replied Balsamo. "Read in my heart, dear Lorenza!"

"No," she replied, bending her head; "no, I know it well. But yet your thoughts are divided between us two, as in the days when Lorenza Feliciani tormented you, — the naughty Lorenza, who sleeps, and whom you will not again awake."

"No, my love, no," exclaimed Balsamo; "I think only of you, — at least with the heart. Have I not forgotten all, neglected everything, — study, politics, work, — since our happiness?"

"And you are wrong," said Lorenza; "for I can help you in your work."

"How?"

"Yes; did you not formerly spend whole hours in your laboratory?"

"Certainly. But I renounce all these vain endeavors. They would be so many hours taken from my life; for during that time I should not see you."

"And why should I not be with you in your labors as in your love? Why should I not make you powerful as I make you happy?"

"Because my Lorenza, it is true, is beautiful, but she has not studied. God gives beauty and love, but study alone gives knowledge."

"The soul knows everything."

"Then you can really see with the eyes of your soul?"

"Yes."

"And you can guide me in the grand search after the philosopher's stone?"

"I think so."

"Come, then;" and Balsamo, encircling her waist with his arm, led her into his laboratory. The fire in the gigantic furnace, which no one had replenished for four days, was extinguished, and the crucibles had grown cold upon their chafing-dishes.

Lorenza looked around on all these strange instruments, the last combinations of expiring alchemy, without surprise. She seemed to know the purpose which each was intended to fulfil. "You are attempting to make gold?" said she, smiling.

"Yes."

"All these crucibles contain preparations in different stages of progress."

"All stopped, — all lost; but I do not regret it."

"You are right, for your gold would never be anything but colored mercury; you can render it solid, perhaps, but you cannot transform it."

"But gold can be made?"

"No."

"And yet Daniel of Transylvania sold the receipt for the transmutation of metals to Cosmo the First for twenty thousand ducats."

"Daniel of Transylvania deceived Cosmo the First."

"And yet the Saxon Payken, who was condemned to death by Charles the Second, ransomed his life by changing a leaden ingot into a golden one, from which forty ducats were coined, and gold enough was taken to make a medal, which was struck in honor of the clever alchemist."

"The clever alchemist was nothing but a clever juggler. He merely substituted the golden ingot for the leaden

one, — nothing more. Your surest way of making gold, Acharat, is to melt into ingots, as you do already, the riches which your slaves bring you from the four quarters of the world."

Balsamo remained pensive. "Then the transmutation of metals is impossible?" said he.

"Impossible."

"And the diamond, — is that, too, impossible?"

"Oh! the diamond is another matter," said Lorenza.

"The diamond can be made, then?"

"Yes; for to make the diamond, you have not to transmute one body into another, — to make the diamond is merely to attempt the simple modification of a known element."

"Then you know the element of which the diamond is formed?"

"To be sure; the diamond is pure carbon crystallized."

Balsamo was almost stunned. A dazzling, unexpected, unheard-of light flashed before his eyes; he covered them with both hands, as if the flame had blinded him.

"Oh! my God," said he, "my God, thou dost for me too much; some danger threatens me! What precious ring must I throw into the sea to appease thy jealousy? Enough, Lorenza, for to-day!"

"Am I not yours? Order, command me!"

"Yes, you are mine. Come, come!"

And he drew her out of the laboratory, crossed the chamber of furs, and without paying any attention to a light, creaking noise he heard overhead, he once more entered the barred room with Lorenza.

"So you are pleased with your Lorenza, my beloved Balsamo?"

"Oh!" he exclaimed.

"What did you fear, then? Speak, — tell me all."

Balsamo clasped his hands, and looked at Lorenza with an expression of such terror that a spectator ignorant of what was in his heart would have been totally at a loss to account for it.

"Oh!" he murmured, "and I was near killing this angel; I was near dying of despair before resolving the problem of being at once powerful and happy! I forgot that the limits of the possible always exceed the horizon traced by the existing state of science, and that the majority of truths which have become facts have always in their infancy been looked upon as dreams. I thought I knew everything, and I knew nothing!"

The young Italian smiled divinely.

"Lorenza, Lorenza!" continued Balsamo, "the mysterious design of the Creator is, then, accomplished, which makes woman to be born of the substance of the man, and which commands them to have only one heart in common! Eve is revived for me, — an Eve who will not have a thought that is not mine, and whose life hangs by the thread which I hold. It is too much, my God, for a creature to possess! I sink under the weight of thy gift!" and he fell upon his knees, embracing with adoration the gentle beauty, who smiled on him as none smile on earth.

"Oh, no!" he continued; "no, you shall never leave me more! I shall live in all safety under the protection of your clairvoyance, which can pierce into the future. You will assist me in those laborious researches which you alone, as you have said, can complete, and which one word from you will render easy and successful. You will show me, — since I cannot make gold, gold being a homogeneous substance, a primitive element, — you will show me in what corner of the world the Creator has concealed it; you will tell me where the rich treasures lie which have

been swallowed up in the vast depths of the ocean. With your eyes I shall see the pearl grow in the veined shell, and man's thoughts spring up under the thick layers of his flesh. With your ears I shall hear the dull sound of the worm beneath the ground, and the footsteps of my enemy as he approaches! I shall be great as God, and happier than God, my Lorenza; for God has not in heaven his equal and companion, — for God is almighty, but he is alone in his divine majesty, and does not share with any other divine being that almightiness which makes him God."

Lorenza still smiled upon him, and as she smiled she replied to his words by affectionate caresses. "And yet," she whispered, as if she could see each thought which whirled through his restless brain, "and yet you doubt still, Acharat, as you have said, if I can cross the circle of our love, — you doubt if I can see into the distance; but you console yourself by thinking that if I cannot see, she can."

"She! Who?"

"The fair-haired beauty. Shall I tell you her name?"

"Yes."

"Stay, — Andrée!"

"Ah, yes; you can read my thoughts! Yes, a last fear still troubles me. Can you still see through space, though material obstacles intervene?"

"Try me."

"Give me your hand, Lorenza."

The young girl passionately seized Balsamo's hand.

"Can you follow me?"

"Anywhere?"

"Come!" and Balsamo, leaving in thought the Rue Saint Claude, drew Lorenza's thoughts along with him.

"Where are we?" he asked.

"We are upon a hill," replied the young woman.

"Yes, you are right," said Balsamo, trembling with delight. "But what do you see?"

"Before me?—to the right, or to the left?"

"Before you."

"I see a long alley, with a wood on one side, a town on the other, and a river which separates them and loses itself in the horizon, after flowing under the walls of a large chateau."

"That is right, Lorenza. The forest is that of Vésinet; the town St. Germain; the chateau is the Château de Maisons. Let us enter the pavilion behind us. What do you see there?"

"Ah! in the first place, in the antechamber, a little negro, fantastically dressed, eating sugar-plums."

"Yes, Zamore. Proceed, proceed!"

"An empty salon, splendidly furnished; the spaces above the doors painted with goddesses and cupids."

"The salon is empty, you say?"

"Yes."

"Let us go still farther."

"Ah! we are in a splendid boudoir, lined with blue satin embroidered with flowers of natural colors."

"Is that empty also?"

"No; a woman is reclining upon a sofa."

"What woman? Do you not remember to have seen her before?"

"Yes; it is the Comtesse Dubarry."

"Right, Lorenza! I shall go frantic with delight! What does the woman do?"

"She is thinking of you, Balsamo."

"Of me?"

"Yes."

"Then you can read her thoughts?"

"Yes, for I repeat it, she is thinking of you."

"And what is she thinking?"

"You have made her a promise."

"Yes."

"You promised her that water of beauty which Venus, to revenge herself on Sappho, gave to Phaon."

"Yes, yes, you are right again! And what does she do while thinking?"

"She comes to a decision."

"What decision?"

"She reaches out her hand toward the bell; she rings; another young woman enters."

"Dark or light haired?"

"Dark."

"Tall or short?"

"Short."

"Her sister. Listen to what she says to her."

"She orders the horses to be harnessed to her carriage."

"To go whither?"

"To come here."

"Are you sure?"

"She is giving the order. Stay,—she is obeyed; I see the horses and the carriage. In two hours she will be here."

Balsamo fell upon his knees. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "if in two hours she should really be here, I shall have nothing left to ask of thee, my God, except to have mercy on my happiness."

"My poor friend! then you still feared?"

"Yes, yes!"

"And why did you fear? Love, which completes the material existence, increases also our mental powers. Love, like every generous emotion, brings us nearer to God, and all wisdom comes from God."

"Lorenza, Lorenza, you will drive me mad with joy!" said Balsamo, letting his head fall on Lorenza's knees.

Balsamo now waited for but one more proof to be completely happy.

This proof was the arrival of Madame Dubarry. The two hours of suspense were short. All measure of time had completely ceased for Balsamo. Suddenly the young woman started, and took Balsamo's hand. "You are doubting yet," said she, "and you wish to know where she is at this moment."

"Yes," said Balsamo, "you are right."

"Well," replied Lorenza, "she is thundering along the Boulevards at the full speed of her horses; she approaches; she turns into the Rue Saint Claude; she stops before the door and knocks."

The apartment in which they were, was so retired and so quiet that the noise of the iron knocker could not penetrate its recesses; but Balsamo, rising on one knee, was anxiously listening. At this moment two knocks struck by Fritz made him bound to his feet; for, as the reader will remember, two knocks were the signal of an important visit.

"Oh!" said he, "then it is true?"

"Go and convince yourself, Balsamo; but return quickly."

Balsamo advanced toward the fireplace.

"Let me accompany you," said Lorenza, "as far as the door of the staircase."

"Come!" and they both passed together into the chamber of furs.

"You will not leave this room?" asked Balsamo.

"No; I will await you here. Oh! do not fear; you know the Lorenza who loves you is not the Lorenza whom you fear. Besides—" She stopped, and smiled.

"What?" asked Balsamo.

"Can you not read in my soul as I read yours?"

"Alas! no."

"Besides, you can command me to sleep until you return. Command me to remain immovable upon this sofa, and I shall sleep, and be motionless."

"Well, my Lorenza, it shall be so. Sleep, and await my return here!"

Lorenza, already struggling with sleep, pressed her lips to Balsamo's in a last kiss, and fell back upon the sofa, murmuring: "You will return soon, my Balsamo, will you not?"

Balsamo waved his hand. Lorenza was already asleep; but so beautiful, so pure, with her long, flowing hair, the feverish glow upon her cheeks, her half-opened and swimming eyes, so little like a mortal, that Balsamo came back to her, took her hand, kissed her arms and her neck, but dared not kiss her lips.

Two knocks were heard a second time. The lady was becoming impatient, or Fritz feared that his master had not heard him. Balsamo hastened to the door. As he closed it behind him, he thought he heard a second creaking noise like the former one. He opened the door again, looked round, and saw nothing, — nothing but Lorenza lying down, and breathing quickly under the pressure of her love. He closed the door, and hastened toward the salon without uneasiness, without fear, without foreboding, — all heaven in his heart!

Balsamo was mistaken; it was not love alone which oppressed Lorenza's bosom and made her breathe so heavily. It was a kind of dream which seemed to belong to the lethargy in which she was plunged, — a lethargy which so nearly resembled death.

Lorenza dreamed, and in the hideous mirror of her

gloomy dreams she fancied she saw, through the darkness which began to close around her, the oaken ceiling open, and something like a large circular platform descend slowly, with a regular, slow, measured movement, accompanied by a disagreeable hissing noise. It seemed to her as if she breathed with difficulty, as if she were almost suffocated by the pressure of this moving circle. It seemed to her as if upon this moving trap something moved, — some misshapen being like Caliban in "The Tempest," — a monster with a human face, an old man whose eyes and arms alone were living, and who looked at her with his frightful eyes, and stretched his fleshless arms toward her. And she — she, poor child! — writhed in vain, without power to escape, without understanding the danger which threatened her, without consciouness of anything but the grasp of two living flesh-hooks seizing upon her white dress, lifting her from her sofa, and placing her upon the trap, which reascended slowly toward the ceiling with the grating noise of iron scraping against iron, and with a hideous, mocking laugh from the monster with the human face, who was raising her aloft without shock and without pain.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PHILTRE.

As Lorenza had foretold, it was Madame Dubarry who had just knocked at the gate. The beautiful countess had been ushered into the salon. While awaiting Balsamo's arrival, she was looking over that curious "Book of Death," engraved at Mayence, the plates of which, designed with marvellous skill, show death presiding over all the acts of man's life, — waiting for him at the door of the ball-room after he has pressed the hand of the woman he loves, dragging him to the bottom of the water in which he is bathing, or hiding in the barrel of the gun he carries to the chase.

Madame Dubarry was contemplating the plate which represents a beautiful woman daubing her face with rouge and looking at herself in the glass, when Balsamo opened the door and bowed to her, with the smile of happiness still beaming upon his face. "Excuse me, Madame," said he, "for having made you wait; but I had not well calculated the distance, or was ignorant of the speed of your horses. I thought you still at the Place Louis XV."

"What do you mean?" asked the countess. "You knew I was coming, then?"

"Yes, Madame; it is about two hours ago that I saw you, in your boudoir lined with blue satin, giving orders for your horses to be put to the carriage."

"And you say I was in my blue satin boudoir?"

"Embroidered with flowers colored after nature. Yes, Countess, you were reclining upon a sofa; a pleasing thought passed through your mind. You said to yourself, 'I will go and visit the Comte de Fenix;' then you rang the bell."

"And who entered?"

"Your sister, Countess. Am I right? You requested her to transmit your orders, which were instantly executed."

"Truly, Count, you are a sorcerer! Can you look into my boudoir like that every moment of the day? If so, you should have warned me, do you see?"

"Ah! be assured, Countess, I can look only through open doors."

"And looking through open doors, you saw that I was thinking of you?"

"Yes; and even that you thought of me with benevolent intentions."

"Ah, you are right, my dear Count! I have the best possible intentions toward you; but confess that you deserve more than intentions, — you who are so kind and so useful, and who seem destined to play in my life the part of tutor, which is the most difficult part, I know."

"In truth, Madame, you make me very happy! Then I have been of use to you?"

"What! you are a sorcerer, and you do not know?"

"Allow me at least the merit of being modest."

"As you please, my dear Count; then I will first speak of what I have done for you."

"I cannot permit it, Madame; on the contrary, speak of yourself, I beseech you!"

"Well, my dear Count, in the first place, give me that talisman which renders one invisible; for on my journey hither, rapid as it was, I thought I recognized one of Monsieur de Richelieu's grays."

"And this gray?"

"Followed my carriage, carrying on his back a courier."

"What do you think of this circumstance, and for what purpose could the duke have caused you to be followed?"

"With the intention of playing me some scurvy trick. Modest as you are, my dear Comte de Fenix, you must be aware that Nature has gifted you with personal advantages enough to make a king jealous of my visits to you, or of yours to me."

"Monsieur de Richelieu cannot be dangerous to you in any way, Madame," replied Balsamo.

"But he was so, my dear Count; he was dangerous before this last event."

Balsamo comprehended that there was a secret concealed beneath these words which Lorenza had not yet revealed to him. He did not therefore venture on the unknown ground, and replied merely by a smile.

"He was indeed," repeated the countess; "and I was near falling a victim to a most skilfully constructed plot, — a plot in which you also had some share, Count."

"I, engaged in a plot against you? Never, Madame!"

"Was it not you who gave the Duc de Richelieu the philtre?"

"What philtre?"

"A draught which causes the most ardent love."

"No, Madame; Monsieur de Richelieu composes those draughts himself, for he has long known the receipt. I merely gave him a simple narcotic."

"Ah! really?"

"Upon my honor!"

"And on what day did Monsieur de Richelieu ask for this narcotic? Remember the date, Count; it is of importance."

"Madame, it was last Saturday, — the day previous to that on which I had the honor of sending you, through Fritz, the note requesting you to meet me at the house of Monsieur de Sartines."

"The eve of that day!" exclaimed the countess. "The eve of the day on which the king was seen going to the little Trianon? Oh! now everything is explained."

"Then, if all is explained, you see I gave only the narcotic."

"Yes, it is the narcotic which saved us."

This time Balsamo waited; he was profoundly ignorant of the subject.

"I am delighted, Madame," he replied, "to have been useful to you, even unintentionally."

"Oh! you are always kindness itself. But you can do more for me than you have ever yet done. Oh, doctor! I have been very ill, politically speaking, and even now I can scarcely believe in my recovery."

"Madame," said Balsamo, "the doctor, since there is a doctor in the case, always requires the details of the illness he is to cure. Will you give me the exact particulars of what you have experienced? — and if possible, do not forget a single symptom."

"Nothing can be more simple, my dear doctor, or dear sorcerer, whichever you prefer. The eve of the day on which this narcotic was used, his Majesty refused to accompany me to Luciennes. He remained, like a deceiver as he is, at Trianon, pretending fatigue; and yet, as I have since learned, he supped at Trianon with the Duc de Richelieu and the Baron de Taverney."

"Ha!"

"Now you understand. At supper the love-draught was given to the king. He was already captivated by Mademoiselle Andrée; it was known that he would not see me

the next day; it was therefore with reference to that young lady that the philtre was to operate."

"Well, what happened?"

"Oh! that is difficult to discover positively. The king was seen going in the direction of the offices of Trianon, — that is to say, toward Mademoiselle Andrée's apartment."

"I know where she lives; but what followed?"

"Ah! 'What followed?' *Peste*, how fast you are, Count. The king cannot be followed without risk when he wishes to conceal himself."

"But, in short?"

"In short, all I can tell you is that his Majesty returned to Trianon through a fearful storm, pale, trembling, and feverish, — almost on the verge of delirium."

"And you think," said Balsamo, smiling, "that it was not the storm alone which alarmed his Majesty?"

"No, for the valet heard him cry several times, 'Dead, dead, dead!'"

"Oh!" said Balsamo.

"It was the narcotic," continued Madame Dubarry. "Nothing alarms the king so much as death, and next to death its semblance. He had found Mademoiselle de Taverney sleeping a strange sleep, and must have thought her dead."

"Yes, yes; dead indeed," said Balsamo, who remembered having fled without awakening Andrée, —"dead, or at least presenting all the appearance of death. Yes, yes, — it must be so. Well, Madame, and what then?"

"No one knows, then, what happened that night, or rather, in the first part of the night. The king, on his return, was attacked by a violent fever and a nervous trembling, which did not leave him until the morning, when it occurred to the dauphiness to open the shutters and show his Majesty a lovely morning, with the sun

shining upon merry faces. Then all these unknown visions disappeared with the night which had produced them. At noon the king was better, took some broth, and ate a partridge's wing; and in the evening — "

"And in the evening —?" repeated Balsamo.

"In the evening," continued Madame Dubarry, "his Majesty, who no doubt would not stay at Trianon after his fright, came to see me at Luciennes, where, dear Count, I discovered, upon my word, that Monsieur de Richelieu was almost as great a sorcerer as you are."

The triumphant countenance and graceful but roguish look of the countess reassured Balsamo as to the power the favorite yet exercised over the king. "Then you are satisfied with me, Madame?" he asked.

"Delighted, Count! and when you spoke of impossibilities you could create, you told the exact truth;" and in token of thanks she gave him her soft, white, perfumed hand, which was not so fresh as Lorenza's, but whose warmth had also its own eloquence.

"And now, Count, let us speak of yourself."

Balsamo bowed like a man ready to listen.

"If you have preserved me from a great danger," continued Madame Dubarry, "I think I have also saved you from no inconsiderable peril."

"Me!" said Balsamo, concealing his emotion. "I do not require that to feel grateful to you; but yet, be good enough to inform me what — "

"Yes. The coffer in question — "

"Well, Madame?"

"Contained a multitude of ciphers, which Monsieur de Sartines caused all his clerks to translate. All signed their several translations, executed apart, and all gave the same result. In consequence of this, Monsieur de Sartines arrived at Versailles this morning while I was there, bring-

ing with him all these translations and the dictionary of diplomatic ciphers."

"Ha! — and what did the king say?"

"The king seemed surprised at first, then alarmed. His Majesty easily listens to those who speak to him of danger. Since the stab of Damiens' penknife, there is one word which is ever eagerly hearkened to by Louis XV., — it is, 'Take care!'"

"Then you say that Monsieur de Sartines accused me of plotting?"

"At first Monsieur de Sartines endeavored to make me leave the room; but I refused, declaring that as no one was more attached to his Majesty than myself, no one had a right to make me leave him when danger was in question. Monsieur de Sartines insisted, but I resisted; and the king, smiling and looking at me in a manner I know well, said, 'Let her remain, Sartines; I can refuse her nothing to-day.'

"Then you understand, Count, that as I was present, Monsieur de Sartines, remembering our adieu, so clearly expressed, feared to displease me by attacking you. He therefore spoke of the evil designs of the King of Prussia toward France; of the disposition prevalent to facilitate the march of rebellion by supernatural means. In a word, he accused a great many people, proving always by the papers he held that these persons were guilty."

"Guilty of what?"

"Of what! Count, ought I to disclose secrets of State?"

"Which are our secrets, Madame. Oh, you risk nothing! I think it is my interest not to speak."

"Yes, Count, I know that Monsieur de Sartines wished to prove that a numerous and powerful sect, composed of bold, skilful, resolute agents, were silently undermining

the respect due to the king, by spreading certain reports concerning his Majesty."

"What reports?"

"Saying, for instance, that his Majesty was accused of starving his people."

"To which the king replied —"

"As the king always replies, by a joke."

Balsamo breathed again.

"And what was the joke?" he asked.

"'Since I am accused of starving the people,' said he, 'there is only one reply to make to the accusation, — let us feed them.' 'How so, Sire?' said Monsieur de Sartines. 'I will take the charge of feeding all those who spread this report, and moreover will give them safe lodging in my chateau of the Bastille.'"

A slight shudder passed through Balsamo's limbs, but he retained his smiling countenance. "What followed?" he asked.

"Then the king seemed to consult me by a smile. 'Sire,' said I, 'I can never believe that those little black characters which Monsieur de Sartines has brought to you mean that you are a bad king.' Then the lieutenant of police exclaimed loudly. 'Any more,' I added, 'than they prove that your clerks can read.'"

"And what did the king say, Countess?" asked Balsamo.

"That I might be right, but that Monsieur de Sartines was not wrong."

"Well, and then?"

"Then a great many *lettres-de-cachet* were made out, and I saw that Monsieur de Sartines tried to slip among them one for you; but I stood firm, and arrested him by a single word. 'Monsieur,' I said aloud, and before the king, 'arrest all Paris, if you like, — that is your business;

but you had better reflect a little before you lay a finger on one of my friends. If not — ' 'Oh, ho!' said the king, 'she is getting angry; take care, Sartines!' 'But, Sire, the interest of the kingdom — ' 'Oh, you are not a Sully!' said I, crimson with rage; 'and I am not a Gabrielle.' 'Madame, they intend to assassinate the king, as Henri IV. was assassinated!' For the first time the king turned pale, trembled, and put his hand to his head. I feared I was vanquished. 'Sire,' said I, 'you must let Monsieur de Sartines have his own way; for his clerks have no doubt read in these ciphers that I also am conspiring against you;' and I left the room. But, bless me, it was the morning after the philtre, my dear Count! The king preferred my company to that of Monsieur de Sartines, and ran after me. 'Ah, for pity's sake, my dear Countess,' said he, 'pray do not get angry!' 'Then send away that horrid man, Sire; he smells of dungeons.' 'Go, Sartines; off with you!' said the king, shrugging his shoulders. 'And for the future I forbid you, not only to visit me, but even to bow to me,' added I. At this blow our magistrate became alarmed; he approached me, and humbly kissed my hand. 'Well,' said he, 'so be it; let us speak no more of it, fair lady. But you will ruin the State. Since you absolutely insist upon it, your protégé shall be respected by my agents.'"

Balsamo seemed plunged in a deep revery.

"Well," said the countess, "so you do not even thank me for having saved you from the pleasure of lodging in the Bastille, which perhaps might have been unjust, but assuredly no less disagreeable on that account?"

Balsamo made no reply. He drew a small phial, filled with a fluid red as blood, from his pocket. "Hold, Madame!" said he; "for the liberty you have procured for me, I give you twenty years' additional youth!"

The countess slipped the phial into her bosom, and took her leave joyous and triumphant. Balsamo still remained thinking. "They might perhaps have been saved," said he, "but for the coquetry of a woman. This courtesan's little foot dashes them down into the depths of the abyss. Decidedly, God is with us!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

BLOOD.

THE door had no sooner closed upon Madame Dubarry than Balsamo ascended the secret staircase and entered the chamber of furs. The conversation with the countess had been long, and for two reasons he was impatient. The first was the desire to see Lorenza; the second, the fear that she might be fatigued, for in the new life he had given her there was no room for *ennui*. She might be fatigued, inasmuch as she might pass, as she sometimes did, from the magnetic sleep to ecstasy; and to this ecstatic state always succeeded those nervous crises which prostrated Lorenza's strength, if a new supply of the regenerating fluid did not restore the necessary equilibrium among the various functions of her organization.

Balsamo, then, having entered and closed the door, immediately glanced at the couch where he had left Lorenza. She was no longer there. Only the fine shawl of cashmere embroidered with golden flowers, which had enveloped her like a scarf, was still lying upon the cushions, as an evidence that she had been in the room and had been reclining on them.

Balsamo stood motionless, gazing at the empty sofa. Perhaps Lorenza had felt herself incommoded by a strange odor which seemed to have filled the room since he left it; perhaps, by a mechanical movement, she had usurped some of the functions of actual life, and instinctively changed her place.

Balsamo's first idea was that Lorenza had returned to the laboratory, whither she had accompanied him a short time previously. He entered the laboratory. At the first glance it seemed empty; but in the shadow of the gigantic furnace, or behind the Oriental tapestry, a woman could easily conceal herself. He raised the tapestry, therefore; he made the circuit of the furnace; nowhere could he discover even a trace of Lorenza. There remained only the young girl's chamber, to which she had, no doubt, returned; for this chamber was a prison to her only in her waking state. He hastened to the chamber, and found the secret door closed. This was no proof that Lorenza had not entered. Nothing was more probable, in fact, than that Lorenza, in her lucid sleep, had remembered the mechanism, and remembering it, had obeyed the hallucination of a dream barely effaced from her mind. Balsamo pressed the spring. The chamber was empty, like the laboratory; it did not appear as if Lorenza had even entered it.

Then a heart-rending thought — a thought which, it will be remembered, had already stung his heart — chased away all the suppositions, all the hopes of the happy lover. Lorenza had been playing a part; she must have feigned to sleep in order to banish all distrust, all uneasiness, all watchfulness from her husband's mind; and at the first opportunity had fled again, this time with surer precautions, warned as she had been by a first, or rather by two former experiences.

At this idea Balsamo started up and rang for Fritz. Then, as Fritz, to his impatient mind, seemed to delay, he hastened to meet him, and found him on the secret staircase. "The signora?" said he.

"Well, Master?" said Fritz, seeing by Balsamo's agitation that something extraordinary had taken place.

"Have you seen her?"

"No, Master."

"She has not gone?"

"From where?"

"From this house, to be sure!"

"No one has left the house but the countess, behind whom I have just closed the gate."

Balsamo rushed up the stairs again like a madman. Then he fancied that the giddy young creature, so different in her sleep from what she was when waking, had concealed herself in a moment of childish playfulness; that from the corner where she was hid she was now reading his heart, and amusing herself by terrifying him, in order to reassure him afterward. Then he began a minute search. Not a nook was omitted, not a closet forgotten, not a screen left in its proper place. There was something in this search of Balsamo's like the frantic efforts of a man blinded by passion, alternating with the feeble and tottering gait of a drunkard. He could then only stretch out his arms and cry, "Lorenza, Lorenza!" hoping that the adored creature would rush forth suddenly, and throw herself into his arms with an exclamation of joy. But silence alone, a gloomy and uninterrupted silence, replied to his extravagant thoughts and mad appeals.

In running wildly about, dashing aside the furniture, shouting to the naked walls, calling Lorenza, staring without seeing any object or forming a single coherent thought, Balsamo passed three minutes — that is to say, three centuries — of agony.

He recovered by degrees from this half-insane hallucination, dipped his hand in a vase of iced water, moistened his temples, and pressing one hand in the other, as if to force himself to be cool, he chased back by his iron will the blood which was beating wildly against his brain, with

that fatal, incessant, monotonous movement which indicates life when there is merely motion and silence, but which is a sign of death or madness when it becomes tumultuous and perceptible.

"Come!" said he, "let me reason. Lorenza is not here, — no more false pretences with myself. Lorenza is not here; she must be gone, — yes, gone, quite gone!" And he looked around once more, and once more shouted her name. "Gone!" he continued. "In vain Fritz asserts that he has not seen her. She is gone, — gone! Two cases present themselves: Either he has not seen Lorenza, — and, after all, that is possible, for man is liable to error, — or he has seen her, and has been bribed by her. Fritz bribed! Why not? In vain does his past fidelity plead against this supposition. If Lorenza, if love, if science, could so deeply deceive and lie, why should the frail nature of a fallible human being not deceive also? Oh, I will know all! I will know all! Is there not Mademoiselle de Taverney left? Yes, through Andrée I shall know if Fritz has betrayed me, if Lorenza is false! And this time, — oh! this time as love has proved false, as science has proved an error, as fidelity has become a snare, — oh! this time Balsamo will punish without pity, without sparing, like a strong man who revenges himself, who chases pity from his heart, and keeps only pride. Let me see; the first step is to leave this as quickly as possible, not to let Fritz suspect anything, and to fly to Trianon."

Balsamo, seizing his hat, which had rolled on the floor, rushed toward the door. But suddenly he stopped. "Oh!" said he, "before anything else — my God! poor old man, I had forgotten him — I must see Althotas. During my delirium, during this spasm of forced and unnatural love, I have neglected the unfortunate old man; I have been ungrateful and inhuman!"

And, with the feverishness which now animated all his movements, Balsamo approached the spring which put in motion the trap in the ceiling, and the movable scaffold quickly descended. He placed himself upon it, and, aided by the counterpoise, mounted again, still overwhelmed by the anguish of his mind and heart, and without thinking of anything but Lorenza. Scarcely had he attained the level of the floor, when the voice of Althotas struck upon his ear, and roused him from his gloomy revery.

But, to Balsamo's great astonishment, the old man's first words were not reproaches, as he had expected; he was received with an outburst of simple and natural gayety. The pupil looked with an astonished gaze upon his master.

The old man was reclining upon his spring-chair. He breathed noisily and with delight, as if at each inspiration he added a day to his life; his eyes, full of a gloomy fire, but the expression of which was enlivened by the smile upon his lips, were fixed eagerly upon his visitor.

Balsamo summoned up all his strength and collected his ideas, in order to conceal his grief from his master, who had so little indulgence for human weaknesses. During this moment of reflection he felt a strange oppression weigh upon his breast. No doubt the air was vitiated by being too constantly breathed, for a heavy, dull, close, nauseous odor, like the one he had already noticed below, but there in a slighter degree, floated in the air, and like the vapors which rise from lakes and marshes in autumn at sunrise and sunset, had taken substance and rested on the windows.

In this dense and acrid atmosphere Balsamo's heart throbbed, his head felt confused, a vertigo seized upon him, and he felt that respiration and strength were fast

failing him. "Master," said he, seeking some object on which to support himself, and endeavoring to dilate his lungs, — "Master, you cannot live here; there is no air."

"You think so?"

"Oh!"

"Nevertheless, I breathe very well in it," replied Althotas, gayly, "and I live as you see!"

"Master, Master!" replied Balsamo, growing more and more giddy, "let me open a window! It rises from the floor like an exhalation of blood!"

"Of blood! Ah! you think so? Of blood?" cried Althotas, bursting into a laugh.

"Oh, yes, yes; I feel the miasma which is exhaled from a newly killed body. I could weigh it, so heavily does it press upon my brain and heart."

"That is it;" said Althotas, with his sardonic laugh, — "that is it; I also perceived it. You have a tender heart and a weak brain, Acharat."

"Master," said Balsamo, pointing with his finger at the old man, — "Master, you have blood upon your hands; Master, there is blood upon this table; there is blood everywhere, even in your eyes, which shine like two torches; Master, the smell which I breathe, and which makes me giddy, which is suffocating me, is the smell of blood!"

"Well, what then?" said Althotas, quickly; "is this the first time in your life that you have smelt it?"

"No."

"Have you never seen me make experiments? Have you never made any yourself?"

"But human blood!" said Balsamo, pressing his hand upon his burning forehead.

"Ah! you have a subtle sense of smell," said Althotas.

"Well, I did not think human blood could be distinguished from that of any other animal."

"Human blood!" muttered Balsamo. And as he reeled backward and felt for some projecting point to support him, he perceived with horror a vast copper basin, the shining sides of which reflected the purple color of the freshly spilled blood. The enormous vase was half-filled.

Balsamo started back, terrified. "Oh, this blood!" he exclaimed; "whence comes this blood?"

Althotas made no reply, but his watchful eyes lost nothing of Balsamo's suspicion, bewilderment, and terror. Suddenly the latter uttered a terrible roar. Then, stooping like some wild beast darting upon its prey, he rushed to a corner of the room and picked up from the floor a silken ribbon embroidered with silver, to which was hanging a long tress of black hair.

After that wild, mournful, terrible cry, a deathlike silence reigned for a moment in the old man's apartment. Balsamo slowly raised the ribbon, shuddered as he examined the tresses which a golden pin fastened to the silk at one end, while, cut off sharply at the other, they seemed like a fringe the end of which had been dipped in a wave of blood, the red and sparkling drops of which were still apparent on the edge.

In proportion as Balsamo raised his hand, it trembled still more. As he looked more intently at the ribbon, his cheeks became more livid. "Whence does this come?" murmured he, in a hollow voice, loud enough, however, for another to hear and to reply to his question.

"That?" asked Althotas.

"Yes, that."

"Well! it is a silken ribbon tying some hair."

"But the hair, — in what is it steeped?"

"You can see, — in blood."

"In what blood?"

"*Parbleu!* in the blood I wanted for my elixir, — in the blood which you refused me, and which, therefore, I was forced to procure for myself."

"But this hair, these tresses, this ribbon, — from whom did you take them? This is not a child's hair."

"And who told you it was a child I had killed?" asked Althotas, quietly.

"Did you not want the blood of a child for your elixir?" said Balsamo. "Did you not tell me so?"

"Or of a virgin, Acharat, — or of a virgin." And Althotas stretched his long, bony hand from the chair, and took a phial, the contents of which he tasted with delight. Then, in his most natural tone and with his most affectionate smile, "I have to thank you, Acharat," said he; "you were wise and far-sighted in placing that woman beneath my trap, almost within reach of my hand. Humanity has no cause for complaint. The law has nothing to lay hold upon. He, he! — it was not you who gave me the young creature without whom I should have perished. No! I took her. He, he! — thanks, my dear pupil! thanks, my dear Acharat!" And he once more put the phial to his lips.

Balsamo let fall the tress of hair which he held; a horrible light dazzled his eyes. Opposite to him was the old man's table, — a large marble slab always heaped with plants, books, and phials. This table was covered with a long cloth of white damask with dark flowers, on which the lamp of Althotas shed a reddish light, and which displayed an ominous outline which Balsamo had not before remarked. He seized a corner of the cloth and hastily pulled it away. But instantly his hair stood on end; his gaping mouth could not utter the horrible cry which almost suffocated him.

Under this shroud Balsamo had perceived Lorenza's corpse stretched upon the table, her face livid and yet smiling, and her head hanging backward as if dragged down by the weight of her long hair.

A large wound gaped underneath the collar-bone, from which not a single drop of blood escaped. Her hands were rigid, and her eyes closed beneath their purple eyelids.

"Yes, blood! the last three drops of a virgin's blood, — that is what I wanted," said the old man, putting the phial to his lips for the third time.

"Wretch!" thundered Balsamo, whose cry of despair at last burst from each pore, "die, then, for in the last four days she has been my mistress, my love, my wife! You have murdered her in vain! She was not a virgin."

The eyes of Althotas quivered at these words as if an electric shock had made them dance in their orbits; his pupils were fearfully dilated, his toothless gums chattered, the phial fell from his hand upon the floor and broke into a thousand pieces, while he, stupefied, annihilated, struck at once in heart and brain, fell back heavily upon his chair.

Balsamo bent with a sob over Lorenza's body, and pressing his lips to her blood-stained hair, sank senseless on the floor.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DESPAIR.

THE Hours, those mysterious sisters, who cleave the air hand-in-hand with a flight so slow for the wretched, so rapid for the happy, paused in their onward motion, folding their heavy wings over this chamber filled with sighs and groans. Death on one side, agony on the other, and between them despair, — grievous as agony, deep as death.

Balsamo had not uttered a word since the terrible cry which had been wrung from his breast. Since the terrible revelation which had cast down the ferocious joy of Althotas, he had not moved.

As for the hideous old man, thus violently thrown back into life such as God grants to man, he seemed as much bewildered in this new element as the bird struck by a leaden bullet and fallen from the skies into a lake, on whose surface it flutters, unable to employ its wings. The horror expressed in his pale and agonized features revealed the immeasurable extent of his disappointment.

In fact, Althotas no longer even took the trouble to think, since he had seen the goal at which his spirit aimed, and which he had thought firm as a rock, vanish like empty vapor. His deep and silent despair seemed almost like insensibility. To a mind unaccustomed to measure his, it might have seemed an indication of reflection; to Balsamo, who however did not even look upon him, it marked the death-agony of power, of reason, and of life.

Althotas fixed his gaze upon the broken phial, — the image of the nothingness of his hopes. One would have said he counted the thousand scattered fragments, which, in falling, had diminished his life by so many days. One would have said he wished to drink in with his look the precious fluid which was spilled upon the floor, and which for a moment he had believed to be immortality.

At times, also, when the grief of this disenchantment was too poignant, the old man raised his dull eyes to Balsamo, then from Balsamo his glance wandered to Lorenza's corpse. He resembled at these moments those savage animals which the huntsman finds in the morning caught in the trap by the leg, and which he stirs for a long time with his foot without making them turn their heads, but which, when he pricks them with his hunting-knife, or with the bayonet of his fowling-piece, obliquely raise their bloodshot eyes, throwing on him a look of hatred, vengeance, reproach, and surprise.

"Is it possible," said this look, so expressive even in its atony, — "is it credible, that so many misfortunes, so many shocks, should overwhelm me, caused by such an insignificant being as the man I see kneeling there a few yards from me, at the feet of such a vulgar object as that dead woman? Is it not a reversion of Nature, an overturning of science, a cataclysm of reason, that the pupil so gross should have deceived the master so sublime? Is it not monstrous that the grain of sand should have arrested the wheel of the superb chariot, so rapid in its all-powerful, its immortal flight?"

As for Balsamo, stunned, heart-broken, without voice or motion, almost without life, no human thought had yet dawned amid the dark vapors of his brain.

Lorenza, his Lorenza! His wife, his idol, doubly precious to him as his revealing angel and his love, — Lorenza,

his delight and his glory, the present and the future, his strength and faith; Lorenza, all he loved, all he wished for, all he looked forward to in this world, — Lorenza was lost to him forever!

He did not weep, he did not groan, he did not even sigh. He hardly had time as yet for astonishment that so frightful a calamity had fallen upon him. He was like those unfortunates whom an inundation seizes in their bed, in the midst of darkness. They dream that the water gains upon them; they awake, they open their eyes and see a roaring billow breaking over their heads, and have not even time to utter a cry in their passage from life to death.

For a long time Balsamo felt himself buried in the deepest abyss of the tomb. In his overwhelming grief, he looked upon what had happened to him as one of the dark dreams which torment the dead in the eternal silent night of the sepulchre. For him there was no more Althotas, — that is to say, no more hate, no more revenge. For him there was no more Lorenza, — that is to say, no more life, no more love. All was sleep, night, nothingness! Thus the minutes glided past, gloomily, silently, heavily, in this chamber where the blood congealed and the lifeless form grew rigid.

Suddenly, amid the death-like silence, a bell sounded three times. Fritz, doubtless, was aware that his master was with Althotas, for the bell sounded in the room itself. But in vain it sounded three time, with an insolently strange noise; the sound died away in space. Balsamo did not raise his head.

In a few moments the same ringing, only louder this time, sounded again; but, like the first, it could not rouse Balsamo from his torpor. Then, at a measured interval, but not so far from the second as that had been from the

first, the angry bell a third time made the room resound with multiplied echoes of its wailing and impatient sounds.

Balsamo did not start, but slowly raised his head and interrogated the empty space before him with the cold solemnity of a corpse rising from the tomb. So must Lazarus have looked when the voice of Christ called him three times. The bell continued ringing. Its increasing energy aroused at last the intelligence of Lorenza's lover. He withdrew his hand from that of the corpse. All the heat had left his body, without passing into that of Lorenza.

"Some important news or some great danger," muttered Balsamo to himself. "May it prove a great danger!" And he rose to his feet. "But why should I reply to this summons?" he continued aloud, without heeding the gloomy sound of his words echoing beneath the sombre vault of this funereal chamber; "can anything in this world henceforth interest or alarm me?"

Then, as if in reply, the bell struck its iron tongue so rudely against its brazen sides that the clapper broke and fell upon a glass retort, which flew in pieces with a metallic sound, and scattered its fragments upon the floor. Balsamo resisted no longer; besides, it was important that none, not even Fritz, should come to seek him where he was. He walked, therefore, with steady step to the spring, pressed it, and placed himself upon the trap, which descended slowly and deposited him in the chamber of furs. As he passed the sofa, he brushed against the scarf which had fallen from Lorenza's shoulders when the pitiless old man, impassive as death itself, had carried her off in his arms.

This contact, more living seemingly than Lorenza herself, sent an icy shudder through Balsamo's veins. He took the scarf and kissed it, using it to stifle the cries

which burst from his heaving breast. Then he proceeded to open the door of the staircase.

On the topmost steps stood Fritz, all pale and breathless, holding a torch in one hand, and in the other the cord of the bell, which, in his terror and impatience, he continued to pull convulsively. On seeing his master, he uttered a cry of satisfaction, and then a cry of surprise and fear. But Balsamo, ignorant of the cause of this double cry, replied only by a mute interrogation.

Fritz did not speak, but he ventured — he, usually so respectful — to take his master's hand, and led him to the large Venetian mirror that ornamented the mantelpiece at the back of which was the passage into Lorenza's apartment. "Oh, look, your Excellency!" said he, showing him his own image in the glass.

Balsamo shuddered. Then a smile — one of those smiles which spring from infinite and incurable grief, a deathly smile — flitted over his lips. He had understood the cause of Fritz's alarm. Balsamo had grown twenty years older in an hour. There was no more brightness in his eyes, no more color in his cheek; an expression of dulness and stupefaction overspread his features; a bloody foam fringed his lips; a large spot of blood stained the whiteness of his cambric shirt.

Balsamo looked at himself in the glass for a moment without being able to recognize himself, then he determinedly fixed his eyes upon the strange person reflected in the mirror. "Yes, Fritz," said he, "you are right." Then, remarking the anxious look of his faithful servant, "But why did you call me?" he asked.

"Oh! Master, for *them*."

"For them?"

"Yes."

"Whom do you mean by *them?*"

"Excellency," whispered Fritz, putting his mouth close to his master's ear, "the Five Masters."

Balsamo shuddered. "All?" he asked.

"Yes, all."

"And they are here?"

"Here."

"Alone?"

"No; each has an armed servant waiting in the court-yard."

"They came together?"

"Yes, Master, together, and they are impatient; that is why I rang so many times and so violently."

Balsamo, without even concealing the spot of blood beneath the folds of his frill, without attempting to repair the disorder of his dress, began to descend the stairs, after having asked Fritz if his guests had installed themselves in the salon or in the great cabinet.

"In the salon, Excellency," replied Fritz, following his master. Then at the foot of the stairs, venturing to stop Balsamo, he asked: "Has your Excellency no orders to give me?"

"None, Fritz."

"Excellency —" stammered Fritz.

"Well?" asked Balsamo, with infinite gentleness.

"Will your Excellency go unarmed?"

"Unarmed? yes."

"Even without your sword?"

"And why should I take my sword, Fritz?"

"I do not know," said the faithful servant, casting down his eyes, "but I thought — I believed — I feared —"

"It is well, Fritz; you may go."

Fritz moved away a few steps in obedience to the order he had received, but returned.

"Did you not hear?" asked Balsamo.

"Excellency, I merely wished to tell you that your double-barrelled pistols are in the ebony case upon the gilt stand."

"Go, I tell you!" replied Balsamo. And he entered the salon.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE JUDGMENT.

Fritz was quite right; Balsamo's guests had not entered the Rue Saint Claude with a pacific display nor with a benevolent exterior. Five horsemen escorted the travelling carriage in which the Masters had come; five men with a haughty and sombre mien, armed to the teeth, had closed the outer gate and were guarding it while appearing to await their masters' return.

A coachman and two footmen on the carriage seat concealed under their overcoats each a small hanger and a musket. It was rather on an expedition than on a visit that so many persons had come to the Rue Saint Claude. And therefore the nocturnal invasion of these terrible men, whom Fritz had recognized, the forcible taking possession of the hôtel, had inspired the German with an unspeakable terror. He had at first attempted to refuse entrance to the whole party, when he had seen the escort through the wicket, and had suspected them to be armed; but the all-powerful signals they had used — that irresistible testimony of the right of the new-comers — had left him no option.

As soon as they were masters of the place, the strangers, like skilful generals, posted themselves at each outlet of the house, taking no pains to dissemble their hostile intentions. The pretended valets in the courtyard and in the passages, the pretended masters in the salon, seemed to Fritz to bode no good; and that was why he had broken the bell.

Balsamo, without displaying any astonishment, without making any preparation, entered the room, which Fritz, to do proper honor to all visitors, had lighted up as usual. He saw, seated in armchairs, the five visitors, of whom not one rose when he entered. He, as master of the house, having looked at them, bowed politely; then only did they rise and gravely return his salute.

Balsamo took a chair in front of them, without noticing or seeming to notice the strange order of their position. In fact, the five armchairs formed a semicircle like those of the ancient tribunals, with a president, supported by two assistants, and with Balsamo's chair placed in front of that of the president, and occupying the place accorded to the accused in a council or prætorium.

Balsamo did not speak first, as in other circumstances he would have done; he looked around without seeing any object clearly, — still affected by a kind of painful drowsiness, which had remained after the shock.

"It seems, Brother, that you have understood our errand," said the president, or rather he who occupied the centre seat; "yet you delayed to come, and we were already deliberating if we should send to seek you."

"I do not understand your errand," said Balsamo, calmly.

"I should not have imagined so, from seeing you take the position and attitude of an accused before us."

"An accused?" stammered Balsamo, vacantly, shrugging his shoulders. "I do not understand you."

"We will soon make you understand us. Not a difficult task, if I may believe your pale cheeks, your vacant eyes, and trembling voice. One would think you did not hear."

"Oh, yes; I hear," replied Balsamo, shaking his head, as if to banish the thoughts which oppressed it.

"Do you remember, Brother," continued the president,

"that in its last communication the superior committee warned you against a treasonable attempt meditated by one of the great ones of the order?"

"Perhaps so — yes — I do not deny it."

"You reply as a disordered and troubled conscience might be expected to do; but rouse yourself. Be not cast down; reply with that clearness and precision which your terrible position requires. Reply to my questions with the certainty that we are open to conviction, for we have neither prejudice nor hatred in this matter. We are the law; it does not pronounce a verdict until the evidence is heard."

Balsamo made no reply.

"I repeat it, Balsamo, and my warning once given, let it be to you like the warning which combatants give to each other before beginning their struggle. I will attack you with just but powerful weapons; defend yourself!"

The assistants, seeing Balsamo's indifference and imperturbable demeanor, looked at each other with astonishment, and then again turned their eyes upon the president.

"You have heard me, Balsamo, have you not?" repeated the latter.

Balsamo made a sign of the head in the affirmative.

"Like a well-meaning and loyal brother, I have warned you, and given you a hint of the aim of my questionings. You are warned, guard yourself; I am about to begin again."

"After this announcement," continued the president, "the association appointed five of its members to watch in Paris the proceedings of the man who was pointed out to us as a traitor. Now our revelations are not subject to error. We gather them, as you yourself know, either from devoted agents, from the aspect of events, or from infallible indications and signs among the mysterious combinations

which Nature has as yet revealed to us alone. Now one of us had a vision respecting you; we know that he has never been deceived, we were upon our guard, and watched you."

Balsamo listened without giving the least sign of impatience or even of intelligence. The president continued:

"It was not an easy task to watch a man such as you. You enter everywhere; your mission is to have a footing wherever our enemies have a residence or any power whatever. You have at your disposal all your natural resources — which are immense — and those which the association intrusts to you to make its cause triumphant. For a long time we hovered in a sea of doubt when we saw enemies visit you, such as a Richelieu, a Dubarry, a Rohan. Moreover, at the last assembly in the Rue Plastrière, you made a long speech full of clever paradoxes, which led us to imagine that you were playing a part in flattering and associating with this incorrigible race, which it is our duty to exterminate from the face of the earth. For a long time we respected the mystery of your behavior, hoping for a happy result; but at last the illusion was dispelled."

Balsamo retained his motionless, impassive demeanor, insomuch that the president became impatient.

"Three days ago," said he, "five *lettres-de-cachet* were issued. They had been demanded from the king by Monsieur de Sartines; they were filled as soon as signed, and the same day were presented to five of our principal agents, our most faithful and devoted brothers, residing in Paris. All five were arrested: two were taken to the Bastille, where they are kept in the most profound secrecy; two are at Vincennes, in the dungeon; one in the most noisome cell in Bicêtre. Did you know this circumstance?"

"No," said Balsamo.

"That is strange, after what we know of your relations

with those in power in the kingdom; but there is something stranger still."

Balsamo listened.

"To enable Monsieur de Sartines to arrest these five faithful friends, he must have had the only paper which contains the names of the victims in his possession. This paper was sent to you by the supreme council in 1769; and to you it was assigned to receive the new members, and immediately invest them with the rank which the supreme council assigned them."

Balsamo expressed by a gesture that he did not recollect the circumstance.

"I shall assist your memory. The five persons in question were represented by five Arabic characters; and these characters, in the paper you received, corresponded with the names and ciphers of the new brothers."

"Be it so," said Balsamo.

"You acknowledge it?"

"I acknowledge whatever you please."

The president looked at his assistants, as if to order them to take a note of this confession.

"Well," continued he, "on this paper — the only one, remember, which could have compromised the brothers — there was a sixth name. Do you remember it?"

Balsamo made no reply.

"The name was — *the Comte de Fenix.*"

"Agreed," said Balsamo.

"Then why, — if the names of the five brothers figured in five *lettres-de-cachet,* — why was yours respected, caressed, and favorably received at court and in the antechambers of ministers? If our brothers merited prison, you merited it also. What have you to reply?"

"Nothing."

"Ah! I can divine your answer. You may say that

the police had by private means discovered the names of the obscurer brethren, but that they were obliged to respect yours as an ambassador and a powerful man. You may even say that they did not suspect this name."

"I shall say nothing."

"Your pride outlives your honor. These names the police could have discovered only by reading the confidential note which the supreme council had sent you; and this is the way it was seen. You kept it in a coffer. Is that true?"

"It is."

"One day a woman left your house carrying the coffer under her arm. She was seen by our agents, and followed to the hôtel of the lieutenant of police, in the Faubourg St. Germain. We might have arrested the evil at its source; for if we had stopped the woman and taken the coffer from her, everything would have been safe and sure. But we obeyed the rules of our constitution, which command us to respect the secret means by which some members serve the cause, even when these means have the appearance of treason or imprudence."

Balsamo seemed to approve of this assertion, but with a gesture so little marked, that, had it not been for his previous immobility, it would have been unnoticed.

"This woman reached the lieutenant of police," said the president; "she gave him the coffer, and all was discovered. Is this true?"

"Perfectly true."

The president rose.

"Who was this woman?" he exclaimed, — "beautiful, impassioned, devotedly attached to you body and soul, tenderly loved by you, as spiritual, as subtle, as cunning as one of the angels of darkness who assist man to commit evil! Lorenza Feliciani is your wife, Balsamo!"

Balsamo uttered a groan of despair.

"You are convinced?" said the president.

"Conclude," replied Balsamo.

"I have not yet finished. A quarter of an hour after she had entered the hôtel of the lieutenant of police, you arrived. She had sown the treason; you came to reap the reward. The obedient servant had taken upon herself the perpetration of the crime; you came to add the finishing stroke to the infamous work. Lorenza departed alone. You renounced her, doubtless, and would not compromise yourself by accompanying her; you left triumphantly along with Madame Dubarry, summoned there to receive from your own lips the information you sold her. You entered the carriage with that prostitute, as the boatman entered the boat with the sinner, Mary the Egyptian. You left behind the papers which ruined us with Monsieur de Sartines, but you brought away the coffer which might have ruined you with us. Fortunately we saw you, — God's light is with us when we need it most."

Balsamo bowed without speaking.

"I now conclude," added the president. "Two criminals have been pointed out to the order; a woman, your accomplice, who may be innocent, perhaps, but who, in point of fact, has injured our cause by revealing one of our secrets; and you, the Master, the Great Copt, the enlightened mind, who have had the cowardice to shelter yourself behind this woman, that your treason may be less clearly seen."

Balsamo raised his head, and fixed a look upon the commissioners, burning with all the rage which had smouldered in his breast since the beginning of the interrogation.

"Why do you accuse this woman?" he asked.

"Ah! we know that you will endeavor to defend her;

we know that you love her almost to idolatry, that you prefer her to everything in the world. We know that she is your treasure of science, of happiness, and of fortune; we know that she is more precious to you than all the world beside."

"You know all this?" said Balsamo.

"Yes, we know it; and we shall punish you through her more than through yourself."

"Finish!"

The president rose.

"This is the sentence: Joseph Balsamo is a traitor,—he has broken his oath; but his knowledge is immense, and he is useful to the order. Balsamo must live for the cause he has betrayed. He belongs to his brothers, though he has cast them off."

"Ah, ah!" said Balsamo, gloomily, almost savagely.

"A perpetual prison will protect the association against any renewal of his treachery, at the same time that it will permit the brothers to receive the service from him which it has a right to expect from all its members. As to Lorenza Feliciani, a terrible punishment—"

"Hold!" said Balsamo, with perfect calmness in his voice, "you forget that I did not defend myself; the accused must be heard in his own justification. A word, a single proof, will suffice; wait one moment, and I will bring you the proof I have promised."

The commissioners seemed to deliberate for a moment.

"Ah, you fear lest I should kill myself!" said Balsamo, with a bitter smile. "If that had been my wish, it would have been already done. There is that in this ring which would have killed you all five times over had I opened it. You fear I should escape; let me be guarded if you wish it."

"Go!" said the president.

Balsamo disappeared for a short time. Then he was heard heavily descending the staircase. He entered, bearing the cold, rigid, and discolored body of Lorenza upon his shoulder, her white hand hanging to the ground.

"Here is the woman I adored, who was my treasure, my only happiness, my life! — the woman who, as you say, has betrayed you. Here, take her! God did not wait for you to punish, gentlemen!"

And with a movement quick as lightning he let the corpse glide from his arms, and sent it rolling on the carpet to the feet of the judges, whom her cold hair and the dead and motionless hands touched, to their great horror, while by the light of the lamps they saw the wide gash gaping in her neck, white as a swan's.

"Now pronounce the sentence!" added Balsamo.

The horrified judges uttered a cry, and seized with maddening terror fled in indescribable confusion. Soon their horses were heard neighing and trampling in the courtyard, the outer gate grated on its hinges, and then silence, the solemn silence of the tomb, returned to seat itself beside despair and death.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DOOM.

WHILE the terrible scene, which we have just described, was taking place between Balsamo and the Five Masters, nothing apparently had changed in the rest of the house. The old man had seen Balsamo enter his apartment and bear away Lorenza's corpse; and this new incident had recalled him to what was passing around him. But when he saw Balsamo take up the dead body and descend with it into the lower rooms, he fancied it was the last and eternal adieu of this man whose heart he had broken, and fear descended on his soul with an overwhelming force, which for him who had done all to avoid death doubled the horror of the grave. Not knowing for what purpose Balsamo had left him, nor whither he was going, he began to call out, "Acharat! Acharat!" It was the name his pupil had borne in childhood, and he hoped it would have retained its influence over the man.

But Balsamo continued to descend. Having touched the floor, he even forgot to make the trap reascend, and disappeared in the corridor.

"Ah!" cried Althotas, "see what man is, — a blind, ungrateful animal! Return, Acharat, return! Ah, you prefer the ridiculous object called a woman to the perfection of humanity which I represent! You prefer a fragment of life to immortality!

"But no!" he exclaimed, after a moment's pause, "the wretch has deceived his master! He has betrayed my

confidence like a vile robber; he feared that I should live because I surpass him so much in science; he wanted to inherit the laborious work I had nearly concluded; he laid a trap for me, his master and benefactor! Oh, Acharat!"

And gradually the old man's anger was aroused, his cheeks were dyed with a hectic tinge, his half-closed eyes seemed to glow with the gloomy brightness of those phosphorescent lights which sacrilegious children place in the cavities of a human skull. Then he cried: "Return, Acharat, return! Look to yourself! You know that I have conjurations which evoke fire and raise up supernatural spirits! I have evoked Satan, — him whom the magi called Phegor, in the mountains of Gad, — and Satan was forced to leave his bottomless pit and appear before me! I have conferred with the seven angels who were ministers of God's anger upon the same mountain where Moses received the ten commandments! By my will alone I have kindled the great tripod with its seven flames which Trajan stole from the Jews! Take care, Acharat, take care!"

But there was no reply. Then his brain became more and more clouded. "Do you not see, wretch," said he, in a choking voice, "that death is about to seize me as it would the meanest mortal? Listen, Acharat! you may return; I will do you no harm. Return! I renounce the fire; you need not fear the evil spirit, nor the seven avenging angels. I renounce vengeance, and yet I could strike you with such terror that you would become an idiot and as cold as marble, for I can stop the circulation of the blood. Come back, then, Acharat! I will do you no harm, but on the contrary I can do you much good. Acharat, instead of abandoning me, watch over my life, and you shall have all my treasures and all my secrets. Make me live, Acharat, that I may teach them to you.

See, see!" and with gleaming eyes and trembling fingers he pointed to the numerous objects, papers, and rolls scattered through the vast apartment. Then he waited, collecting all his fast-failing faculties to listen.

"Ah, you come not!" he cried. "You think I shall die thus, and through this murder — for you are murdering me — everything will belong to you. Madman! were you even capable of reading the manuscripts which I alone am able to decipher; were the spirit even to grant you my wisdom for a lifetime of one, two, or three centuries, to make use of the materials I have gathered, — you should not inherit them! No, no, a thousand times no! Return, Acharat, return for a moment, were it only to behold the ruin of this whole house, — were it only to contemplate the beautiful spectacle I am preparing for you! Acharat! Acharat! Acharat!"

There was no answer, for Balsamo was during this time replying to the accusation of the Five Masters by showing them the mutilated body of Lorenza. The cries of the deserted old man grew louder and louder; despair redoubled his strength, and his hoarse yellings, reverberating in the long corridors, spread terror afar, like the roaring of a tiger who has broken his chain or forced the bars of his cage.

"Ah, you do not come!" shrieked Althotas; "you despise me; you calculate upon my weakness! Well, you shall see! Fire! fire! fire!"

He articulated these cries with such vehemence that Balsamo, now freed from his terrified visitors, was roused by them from the depth of his despair. He took Lorenza's corpse in his arms, reascended the staircase, laid the dead body upon the sofa where two hours previously it had reposed in sleep, and mounting upon the trap, he suddenly appeared before Althotas.

"Ah, at last!" cried the old man, with savage joy. "You were afraid; you saw I could revenge myself, and you came! You did well to come, for in another moment I should have set this chamber on fire!"

Balsamo looked at him, shrugged his shoulders slightly, but did not deign to reply.

"I am athirst!" cried Althotas, — "I am athirst! Give me drink, Acharat!"

Balsamo made no reply; he did not move; he looked at the dying man as if he would not lose an atom of his agony.

"Do you hear me?" howled Althotas, — "do you hear me?"

The same silence, the same immobility on the part of the gloomy spectator.

"Do you hear me, Acharat?" vociferated the old man, almost tearing his throat in his efforts to give emphasis to this last burst of rage; "water! give me water!"

Althotas's features were rapidly decomposing. There was no longer fire in his looks, but only an unearthly glare; the blood no longer coursed beneath his sunken and cadaverous cheek; motion and life were almost dead within him. His long sinewy arms, in which he had carried Lorenza like a child, were raised, but inert and powerless as the membranes of a polypus. His fury had worn out the feeble spark which despair had for a moment revived in him.

"Ah!" said he, "ah! you think I do not die quickly enough! You mean to make me die of thirst! You gloat over my treasures and my manuscripts with longing eyes! Ah, you think you have them already! Wait, wait!" And with an expiring effort, Althotas took a small bottle from beneath the cushions of the armchair and uncorked it. At the contact with the air, a liquid

flame burst from the glass vessel, and Althotas, like some potent magician, shook this flame around him.

Instantly the manuscripts piled round the old man's armchair, the books scattered over the room, the rolls of paper disinterred with so much trouble from the pyramid of Cheops and the subterranean depths of Herculaneum, took fire with the rapidity of gunpowder. A sheet of flame overspread the marble slab, and seemed to Balsamo's eyes like one of those flaming circles of hell of which Dante sings.

Althotas no doubt expected that Balsamo would rush into the flames to save this valuable inheritance which the old man was annihilating along with himself, but he was mistaken. Balsamo did not stir, but stood calm and isolated upon the trap-door, where the fire could not reach him.

The flames wrapped Althotas in their embrace, but instead of terrifying him, it seemed as if the old man found himself once more in his proper element, and that, as with the salamanders sculptured on our ancient castles, the fire caressed instead of consuming him.

Balsamo still stood gazing at him. The fire had seized upon the woodwork, and completely surrounded the old man; it roared around the feet of the massive oaken chair on which he was seated, and what was most strange, though it was already consuming the lower part of his body he did not seem to feel it.

On the contrary, at the contact with the seemingly purifying element, the dying man's muscles seemed gradually to distend, and an indescribable serenity overspread his features like a mask. Isolated from his body at this last hour, the old prophet on his car of fire seemed ready to wing his way aloft. The mind, all-powerful in its last moments, forgot its attendant matter, and sure of having

nothing more to expect below, it stretched ardently upward to those higher spheres to which the fire seemed to bear it.

From this moment the eyes of Althotas, which at the first reflection of the flames seemed to have been reendowed with life, gazed vaguely and abstractedly at some point in space which was neither heaven nor earth; they seemed trying to pierce the horizon. Calm and resigned, analyzing all sensation, listening to all pain, with his last breath on earth the old magician muttered, in a hollow voice, his adieus to power, to life, and hope. "Ah!" said he, "I die without regret. I have possessed everything on earth, and have known all; I have had all power which is granted to a human creature; I had almost reached immortality!"

Balsamo uttered a sardonic laugh, whose gloomy echo arrested the old man's attention. Through the flames which surrounded him as with a veil, he cast a look of savage majesty upon his pupil. "You are right," said he; "one thing I had not foreseen, — God!"

Then, as if this mighty word had uprooted his whole soul, Althotas fell back upon his chair. He had given up to God that last breath which he had hoped to withhold from him.

Balsamo heaved a sigh, and without endeavoring to save anything from the precious pile upon which this second Zoroaster had stretched himself to die, he again descended to Lorenza, and touched the spring of the trap, which readjusted itself in the ceiling, veiling from his sight the immense furnace, which roared like the crater of a volcano.

During the whole night the fire roared above Balsamo's head like a whirlwind, without his making an effort either to extinguish it or to escape. Stretched beside Lorenza's

body, he was insensible to all danger. But contrary to his expectations, when the fire had devoured all, and laid bare the vaulted walls of stone, annihilating all the valuable contents, it extinguished itself; and Balsamo heard its last roarings, which, like those of Althotas, gradually died away in plaints and sighs.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PERPLEXITIES.

THE Duc de Richelieu was in his bed-chamber at his house in Versailles, taking his vanilla chocolate in company with Monsieur Rafté who was going over his accounts. The duke, deeply engaged in looking at his face reflected in a mirror a short distance from him, was giving very little attention to the calculations, more or less exact, of his secretary.

Suddenly a noise of creaking shoes in the antechamber gave notice of a visit, and the duke hastily finished his chocolate, looking uneasily toward the door. There were times when Monsieur de Richelieu, like coquettes of advanced age, did not like to receive visitors.

The valet announced Monsieur de Taverney. The duke doubtless was about to send some excuse, which would have put off until another day, or at least until another hour, his friend's visit, but as soon as the door was opened the petulant old man darted into the room, offered while passing by him the end of his finger to the marshal, and hastened to bury himself in an immense easy-chair which groaned under the shock rather than under his weight.

Richelieu saw his friend go by him like one of those fantastic men in whose existence Hoffman has since persuaded us to believe. He heard the creaking of the chair, he heard a heavy sigh, and turning to his guest, "Eh!

Baron," said he, "what is the news? You seem as sad as death."

"Sad," said Taverney, — "sad!"

"*Pardieu!* that did not seem to me a sigh of joy."

The baron looked at the marshal in a manner which said that while Rafté was present there would be no explanation of the sigh. Rafté understood without taking the trouble to turn around; for he, as well as his master, sometimes looked in mirrors. And he discreetly withdrew. The baron looked after him, and as the door closed behind him, said, "Do not say 'sad,' Duke; say 'anxious,' and mortally anxious."

"Bah!"

"Indeed," cried Taverney, clasping his hands, "I advise you to pretend surprise. For more than a month you have put me off with vague words, such as, 'I have not seen the king,' or again, 'The king has not seen me,' or perhaps, 'The king treats me coolly.' *Cordieu!* Duke, that is not the way to answer an old friend. A month, — why, that is eternity!"

Richelieu shrugged his shoulders. "What the devil do you want me to say, Baron?" he replied.

"Eh! the truth!"

"*Mordieu!* I have told you the truth; *mordieu!* I drum it into your ears, but you will not believe it, that is all."

"What! you would like me to believe that you, duke and peer, a marshal of France, a gentleman of the bed-chamber, do not see the king, — you who go to the levée every morning? Nonsense!"

"I have said so, and I repeat it, although it may not be credible; for three weeks I have been present every day at the levée, — I, duke and peer, marshal of France, gentleman of the bed-chamber!"

"And the king does not speak to you, and you do not speak to the king? And you expect me to swallow such a fib as that?" said Taverney.

"Eh! Baron, my friend, you are getting impertinent; you give me the lie as if we were at least forty years younger and still skilful with the small-sword."

"But I am enraged, Duke."

"Ah, that is another thing; be enraged my dear friend, — I am enraged myself."

"You are enraged?"

"And with reason, as you must admit when I tell you that since that day the king has not looked at me; when I tell you that his Majesty has constantly turned his back on me; that whenever I have smiled pleasantly upon him, the king has responded with a frightful grimace. In short, I am weary of going to Versailles to be mocked at! Come! What would you have me do about it?"

Taverney was fiercely biting his finger-nails during this reply of the marshal. "I do not understand it at all," said he, at last.

"Nor I, Baron."

"Indeed, I suppose the king laughs at these anxieties; for in short — "

"Yes; that is just what I say, Baron, in short — "

"Come, Duke, we must find some way out of this perplexity; we must contrive some skilful plan by which we can reach an explanation of all this."

"Baron, Baron," replied Richelieu; "there is danger in provoking explanations from kings."

"You think so?"

"Yes. Do you want me to tell you something?"

"Speak."

"Well, I suspect something."

"And what?" asked the baron, haughtily.

"Ah! now you are getting angry."

"With reason, it seems to me."

"Then, let us stop talking."

"On the contrary, let us go on; but explain yourself."

"The devil is in you with your explanations. Indeed, it is a monomania; beware of it."

"You are charming, Duke; you see all our plans obstructed, you see an unaccountable delay in the progress of my affairs, and you advise me to wait!"

"What delay? Tell me."

"In the first place, see this."

"A letter?"

"Yes, from my son."

"Ah! The colonel."

"Fine colonel!"

"Good! and what is there new down there?"

"That for nearly a month Philippe has been awaiting at Rheims the appointment promised him by the king; that he has not received this appointment; and that the regiment sets out in two days."

"The devil! The regiment sets out?"

"Yes, for Strasburg."

"So that if Philippe does not receive this commission within two days —"

"Well, in two days Philippe will be here."

"Yes, I understand, — they have forgotten the poor boy; it is often so in the bureaus organized like those of the new minister. Ah! if I had been minister, the appointment would have been sent!"

"Ahem!" said Taverney.

"What do you say?"

"I say that I do not believe a word of it."

"What!"

"If you had been minister, you would have sent Philippe to the five hundred devils."

"Oh!"

"And his father too."

"Oh, oh!"

"And his sister farther still."

"It is pleasant to talk with you, Taverney; you are full of spirit. But let us say no more about it."

"I ask nothing better for my own part; but it will not do for my son, — his position is intolerable. Duke, it is absolutely necessary to see the king."

"Eh! that is all I do, I tell you."

"To speak to him, then."

"Eh! my dear friend, you cannot speak to the king if he will not speak to you."

"Force him."

"Ah! I am not the pope."

"Then," said Taverney, "I am determined to speak to my daughter; for there is something equivocal in all this, Monsieur le Duc."

This word had a magical effect. Richelieu had studied Taverney; he knew him for a roué like Monsieur Lafare or Monsieur de Nocé, friends of his youth, whose reputation was unblemished. He feared the alliance of father and daughter; he feared something, he knew not what, which might disgrace him. "Well, do not be angry," said he; "I will try one more plan. But I must have a pretext."

"You have a pretext."

"What is it?"

"The king has made a promise."

"To whom?"

"To my son. And this promise —"

"Well?"

"He must be reminded of it."

"Indeed, that is an expedient. Have you that letter?"

"Yes."

"Let me have it."

Taverney drew it from his vest pocket and handed it to the duke, urging him to the exercise both of caution and of boldness.

"Fire and water," said Richelieu. "Come, we are talking extravagantly. No matter, the wine is drawn, we must drink."

He rang the bell.

"Bring my clothes and see that the carriage is ready," said the duke. Then turning to Taverney, he said with an uneasy manner, "Will you assist at my toilet, Baron?"

Taverney knew that he would trouble his friend by accepting, and replied, "No, my friend, it is impossible; I must take a turn about the city. Where will you meet me?"

"Why, at the château. It is important that you too should see his Majesty."

"You think so?" said Taverney, delighted.

"I insist upon it; I wish you to see for yourself that what I said is true."

"I do not doubt it; but since you wish —"

"You are very glad to, eh?"

"To be frank, yes."

"Well, in the Glass Gallery at eleven o'clock, while I go in to see his Majesty."

"I will be there; adieu."

"Without ill-will, dear Baron," said Richelieu, who even up to the last moment sought to avoid making an enemy of a man the extent of whose power he did not know.

Taverney got into his carriage and went off, solitary and thoughtful, to take a long drive in the gardens, while Richelieu, left to the care of his valet, made himself young again at his ease, which important business occupied the illustrious hero of Mahon not less than two hours. It was, however, much less time than Taverney in his own mind had allowed him for it; and the baron, on the lookout, saw, at eleven o'clock precisely, the marshal's carriage stop before the entrance of the palace, where the officers in waiting saluted Richelieu, and the ushers conducted him forward.

Taverney's heart beat violently. More slowly than his eager spirit would have urged he repaired to the Glass Gallery, where numerous courtiers, officers bearing petitions, and ambitious lordlings, stood like statues on the slippery floor, — appropriate support for the courtiers of Fortune.

Taverney mingled with the crowd, taking the precaution to place himself in a corner within reach of the marshal when the latter should leave the presence of his Majesty.

"Oh!" muttered he, between his teeth, "that I should be excluded with these country squires and dirty soldiers, — I, who a month ago took supper in private with his Majesty!" And his frowning brow gave expression to more than one infamous suspicion which would have made poor Andrée blush.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE MEMORY OF KINGS.

Richelieu, in fulfilment of his promise, went bravely and placed himself in view of his Majesty just when Monsieur de Condé was handing him his shirt.

The king, on seeing the marshal, turned away with so sudden a movement that the shirt fell to the floor, and the prince drew back in surprise.

"Pardon, my cousin," said Louis XV., to show the prince that there was nothing personal to him in this quick movement. Richelieu was thus apprised that this expression of anger was directed against him. But as if he had come determined to provoke this anger, if it should be necessary, with a view to a serious explanation, he faced about, as at Fontenoy, and placed himself where the king would pass him in going into his cabinet.

The king, no longer seeing the marshal, began to speak freely and graciously; he finished dressing, arranged for a hunt at Marly, and held a long consultation with his cousin about it, — for Messieurs de Condé have always had the reputation of being great sportsmen. But when he was passing into his cabinet after everybody else had gone away, he perceived Richelieu posing with all his grace for the most charming reverence which had been made since that of Lauzun, who, it will be remembered, bowed so finely.

Louis XV. stopped, almost abashed. "Still here, Monsieur de Richelieu?" said he.

"At your Majesty's service; yes, Sire."

"You have not, then, left Versailles?"

"For forty years, Sire, I have seldom gone away, except when in your Majesty's service."

The king stopped in front of the marshal and said, "You want something of me, do you not?"

"I, Sire?" said Richelieu, smiling. "Eh, what should I want?"

"But you pursue me, Duke, *morbleu!* I perceive it clearly enough."

"Yes, Sire, with my love and my respect. Thanks, Sire."

"Oh! you pretend not to understand me; but you understand me wonderfully well. And I, believe me, Monsieur le Maréchal, have nothing to say to you."

"Nothing, Sire?"

"Absolutely nothing."

Richelieu armed himself with a profound indifference. "Sire," said he, "I have always had the pleasure of believing, in my soul and conscience, that my diligence in the service of the king was disinterested. A great thing to say, Sire, of these forty years of which I have spoken to your Majesty; also, the envious will not say that the king has ever granted me a favor. On that point, fortunately, my reputation is secure."

"Eh, Duke, if you want anything, ask, — but ask quickly."

"Sire, I want absolutely nothing; and for the present I confine myself to begging your Majesty —"

"What?"

"That you will admit to your presence to express his gratitude — "

"Who is it?"

"Sire, one who is under great obligation to the king."

"What do you mean?"

"One, Sire, on whom your Majesty has bestowed a signal honor. Ah! when one has had the honor of sitting at your Majesty's table, when one has enjoyed that graceful conversation, that charming humor which makes your Majesty the most admirable companion, — then, Sire, one never forgets, and he eagerly seeks to continue a custom so delightful."

"Your language is very extravagant, Monsieur de Richelieu."

"Oh, Sire — "

"In short, of whom do you speak?"

"Of my friend Taverney."

"Of your friend?" cried the king.

"Pardon, Sire!"

"Taverney!" replied the king, with an accent of terror which to the duke was very surprising.

"What could you expect, Sire? An old comrade — " he stopped a moment — "a man who served under Villars with me — " He stopped again. "You know, Sire, that in this world we call friends all whom we know; those whom we do not know are our enemies. It is a polite word, which often does not mean anything."

"It is a compromising word, Duke," replied the king, sharply; "it is a word to be used with reserve."

"The utterances of your Majesty are precepts of wisdom. Monsieur de Taverney, then — "

"Monsieur de Taverney is an immoral man."

"Indeed, Sire, on the word of a gentleman, I had mistrusted it myself."

"A man without delicacy, Monsieur le Maréchal."

"As for his delicacy, I will not speak of it before your Majesty. I vouch only for what I know."

"What! you do not vouch for the delicacy of your

friend, of an old comrade, of a man who has served with you under Villars, of a man whom you have presented to me, — in short — You know *him*, however!"

"Him, certainly, Sire; but not his delicacy. Sully told your ancestor, Henri IV., that he had seen his fever go off dressed in a green robe; but I humbly confess, Sire, that I have never known how the delicacy of Taverney was dressed."

"Indeed, Marshal, — it is I who say it, — he is a bad man, who has played a villanous rôle."

"Oh! if your Majesty says so —"

"Yes, Monsieur, I say it."

"Your Majesty relieves my mind by speaking in this way. No, I confess Taverney is not a flower of delicacy; and I have perceived it already. But, Sire, while your Majesty did not deign to tell me your opinion —"

"This is it, Monsieur, I detest him."

"Ah! the judgment is pronounced, Sire. Happily for this unfortunate," continued Richelieu, "a powerful intercessor pleads for him with your Majesty."

"What do you mean?"

"If the father has had the misfortune to displease the king —"

"And very much."

"I do not deny it, Sire."

"What do you say, then?"

"I say that an angel with blue eyes and blond hair —"

"I do not understand you, Duke."

"That may be, Sire."

"I wish to understand you, however, I confess."

"An ordinary person like me, Sire, trembles at the idea of lifting even a corner of the veil which shelters so many charming mysteries of love; but I repeat it, how much

indulgence Taverney must owe to the one who mitigates in his favor the royal indignation. Oh, yes; Mademoiselle Andrée must be an angel!"

"Mademoiselle is a little monster physically, as her father is a monster morally!" cried the king.

"Oh!" cried Richelieu, astounded; "are we all mistaken, and this beautiful appearance —"

"Never speak to me of that girl, Duke; it makes me shudder only to think of her."

Richelieu clasped his hands affectedly. "Oh, my God!" said he, "appearances have turned out — Had not your Majesty, the best judge in the kingdom, infallibility itself, assured me of that, how could I believe it? What, Sire, so deformed?"

"More than that, Monsieur; affected with a malady, — a dreadful, lurking malady, Duke. But, for God's sake, not a word more about her, or you will kill me!"

"Oh, Heaven!" cried Richelieu, "I will not open my mouth again on the subject, Sire. To kill your Majesty! — oh, what a sorrow! What a family it is! He must be unhappy, the poor boy!"

"Of whom do you speak to me now?"

"Oh, this time of a faithful, sincere, devoted servant of your Majesty. Oh, Sire, he is a model, and you have judged him correctly. This time, I vouch for it, your favor has been bestowed upon the right person."

"But whom are you talking about, Duke? Finish what you have to say, for I am in a hurry."

"I speak," replied Richelieu, gently, "of the son of the one, and the brother of the other. I speak of Philippe de Taverney, that gallant young man to whom your Majesty has given a regiment."

"I! I have given a regiment to some one?"

"Yes, Sire; a regiment which Philippe de Taverney

is still waiting for, it is true, but which you have really given him."

"I?"

"Bless me, I believe so, Sire!"

"You are mad!"

"Oh!"

"I have given nothing at all, Marshal."

"Truly?"

"But what the devil is that to you?"

"But, Sire —"

"Does this affair concern you?"

"Not the least in the world."

"You have perhaps sworn to burn me by a slow fire with this fagot of thorns?"

"What do you mean, Sire? I thought — I see now that I was mistaken — I thought that you had promised — "

"But it is not my business, Duke; I have a minister of war. I never give regiments. A regiment! — a pretty story they have told you! Ah! you are the advocate of this brood? I told you that you did wrong to speak to me; see how you have set all my blood flowing the wrong way."

"Oh, Sire!"

"Yes, the wrong way. Though the Devil be the advocate, I will not submit to this any longer;" and with these words the king turned his back upon the duke, and quite furious, took refuge in his cabinet, leaving Richelieu in the deepest misery.

"Ah! now," muttered the old marshal, "I know where I stand."

And dusting off with his handkerchief the powder which in the heat of the encounter had fallen upon his clothes, Richelieu directed his steps toward the gallery in

the corner of which his friend was waiting with burning impatience.

No sooner did the marshal appear than, like a spider pouncing on his prey, the baron ran to get the latest intelligence. With eager eye, his heart in his mouth, his arms extended, he presented himself. "Well! what news?" he asked.

"There is something new, Monsieur," replied Richelieu, straightening himself up, with a scornful curl of the lips and a gesture of contempt; "it is that I beg you never to address me another word."

Taverney looked at the duke with wondering eyes.

"Yes; you have greatly displeased the king," continued Richelieu, "and in displeasing the king, you offend me."

Taverney in his stupefaction stood riveted to the marble floor as if his feet had taken root there.

Richelieu meantime continued on his way. Then arriving at the Glass Gallery, where his valet was in waiting, "To Luciennes!" cried he. And he disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ANDRÉE'S SWOONS.

TAVERNEY, when he had come to himself and examined thoroughly this misfortune, as he called it, knew that the moment had come for a serious explanation with the first cause of these great alarms. Consequently, boiling with anger, he directed his steps to the residence of Andrée.

The young girl was giving the last touch to her toilet, raising her rounded arms to fasten behind her ear two rebellious tresses of hair. She heard the step of her father in the antechamber just as, with book under her arm, she was leaving her apartment.

"Ah! good-day, Andrée," said Monsieur de Taverney, "are you going out?"

"Yes, father."

"Alone?"

"As you see."

"Are you, then, still alone?"

"Since the disappearance of Nicole, I have not procured a maid."

"But you cannot dress yourself, Andrée, that will be injurious to you; a woman carelessly dressed has no success at court. I should recommend to you quite another course, Andrée."

"Excuse me, father, but Madame la Dauphine is waiting for me."

"I assure you, Andrée," replied Taverney, getting excited as he went on, "I assure you, Mademoiselle, that with this simplicity you will be ridiculous."

"Father —"

"Ridicule kills everywhere, and especially at court."

"Monsieur, I will think of it. But just now Madame la Dauphine will be pleased to have me dressed less elegantly that I may be more prompt in responding to her summons."

"Go, then, and return, I beg, as soon as you are free; for I wish to talk with you of a serious matter."

"Yes, father," said Andrée, and she tried to go on her way.

The baron gave her a searching look. "Stop, stop," he cried, "you cannot go out so; you have forgotten your rouge, Mademoiselle, you are so pale as to be repulsive."

"I, father?" said Andrée, stopping.

"Why, when you look at yourself in the mirror what do you think? Your cheeks are as white as wax, and you have circles under your eyes. You will frighten people if you go out in that condition, Mademoiselle."

"I have not time to make any change in my toilet, father."

"It is provoking; indeed, it is disgusting!" cried Taverney, shrugging his shoulders; "there is only one such woman in the world, and I have her for a daughter. What a cruel fate! Andrée! Andrée!"

But Andrée was already at the bottom of the stairs. She came back.

"At least," cried Taverney, "say that you are sick; make yourself interesting, *mordieu!* if you cannot make yourself beautiful!"

"That will be very easy to do, father, and I can truthfully say that I am sick; for I am really suffering at this moment."

"Well," grumbled the baron; "we needed only that, — sick!" Then between his teeth, "Plague take the haughty prudes!" And he returned to his daughter's chamber where he occupied himself in looking carefully for anything which might aid his conjectures and help him form an opinion.

Meantime Andrée crossed the square and walked along by the flower-beds. From time to time she raised her head to breathe more deeply; for the perfume of the newly opened flowers went to her head and made her dizzy. Thus disturbed, almost staggering under the heat of the sun, the young girl arrived, struggling with an unfamiliar sickness, at the antechambers of Trianon, when Madame de Noailles, standing upon the threshold of the cabinet of the dauphiness, gave Andrée to understand with the first words she spoke that it was time for her to arrive and that they were expecting her.

The abbé, reader by appointment to the princess, was taking breakfast with her Royal Highness, who often admitted to such privileges those persons with whom she was intimate. The abbé was praising the excellence of those French rolls which German housekeepers pile up so carefully around a cup of coffee and cream. The abbé was talking instead of reading, and was relating to the dauphiness all the news from Vienna which he had received at the houses of the journalists and diplomatists; for at this period politics were openly discussed, — as freely indeed as in the most secret recesses of government offices; and it was not unusual for the ministry to acquire information which these gentlemen of the Palais-Royal or of the parks of Versailles had divined or perhaps fabricated.

The abbé spoke especially of the recent rumors of a threatened outbreak, occasioned by the high price of grain, which Monsieur de Sartines had quickly sup-

pressed by sending to the Bastille five of the heaviest monopolizers.

Andrée came in. The dauphiness too had her days of caprice and headache; the abbé had interested her; the thought of Andrée's book following his conversation vexed her. Consequently she warned her second reader not to be late again, adding that punctuality, good in itself, was especially so when the occasion called for it.

Andrée, confounded by the reproach and wounded by its injustice, made no reply, although she might have said that she had been detained by her father and forced to come slowly because she was suffering so much. No; troubled and oppressed, she bent her head, and as if she were going to die, closed her eyes and lost her balance. But for the support of Madame de Noailles she would have fallen.

"How awkward your bearing is, Mademoiselle!" muttered Madame Etiquette.

Andrée did not answer.

"But, Duchess, she is sick!" cried the dauphiness, rising to go to Andrée.

"No, no," said Andrée, quickly, her eyes full of tears; "no, your Highness, I am well; or rather I am better."

"But see, she is as white as her handkerchief, Duchess. It is my fault, I scolded her. Poor child, sit down, I wish it."

"Madame —"

"Come, when I command! Give her your folding chair, Abbé."

Andrée sat down, and gradually, under the gentle influence of this kindness, her mind became composed and the color returned to her cheeks.

"Well, Mademoiselle, can you read now?" asked the dauphiness.

"Oh, yes, indeed; I hope so, at least."

And Andrée opened the book at the place where she had left off reading the evening before, and with a voice which she tried to steady, to make her reading as intelligible and agreeable as possible, she began. But she had read hardly two or three pages when the little black letters dancing before her eyes began to go round and round, and finally became illegible.

Andrée grew pale again; cold perspiration rose from her breast to her forehead, and that black circle around the eyes with which Taverney had reproached his daughter so bitterly increased to such a degree that the dauphiness, who had looked up when Andrée stopped reading, cried out, "See, Duchess, indeed this child is very sick; she is fainting."

And the dauphiness herself ran to get a bottle of salts which she made her reader inhale. Thus revived, Andére tried to pick up the book, but the effort was in vain; her hands kept up a nervous trembling which for some time nothing could quiet.

"Most assuredly, Duchess," said the dauphiness, "Andrée is suffering, and she must not aggravate her trouble by staying here."

"Then Mademoiselle must return directly home," said the duchess.

"And why so, Madame?" asked the dauphiness.

"Because," replied the lady of honor, with a low bow, "because the small-pox begins in this way."

"The small-pox?"

"Yes, fainting-fits, swoons, chills."

The abbé thought himself materially concerned in the danger indicated by Madame de Noailles, for he got up, and thanks to the liberty which this indisposition of a woman gave him, he slipped away on tip-toe so quietly that no one noticed his departure.

When Andrée saw herself, so to speak, in the arms of the dauphiness, the shame of having annoyed to this degree so great a princess renewed her strength, or rather her courage. She went to the window to breathe more freely.

"There is no need of going to the window for fresh air, my dear Demoiselle," said Madame la Dauphine; "return home, I will go with you."

"Oh, I assure you, Madame," said Andrée, "that I am quite recovered; I can go alone very well if your Highness will give me permission to retire."

"Yes, yes; and be calm," replied the dauphiness; "you shall not be scolded any more since you are so sensitive, little rogue."

Andrée, touched by this kindness, which seemed like a sister's friendship, kissed the hand of her protectress and left the apartment, while the dauphiness looked after her anxiously. When she was at the foot of the steps, the dauphiness called to her from the window, "Do not go in immediately, Mademoiselle. Walk a little while in the garden; this sunshine will do you good."

"Oh, *mon Dieu*, Madame! Thanks!" murmured Andrée.

"And please ask the abbé to return; he is taking his botanical course down there in that bed of Holland tulips."

Andrée was obliged to make a detour in order to meet the abbé. She crossed the flower-garden, and went on with bowed head, a little dull still from the effect of the strange dizziness she had suffered with all the morning; she paid no attention to the birds which, startled, flew over the hedges and flower-beds, nor to the bees humming over the thyme and lilacs. She did not even notice, twenty feet from her, two men who were talking together,

one of whom followed her with a troubled and anxious gaze.

These two men were Gilbert and Monsieur de Jussieu. The former, leaning upon his spade, was listening to the learned professor, who was explaining the manner of watering delicate plants so that the water would pass into the ground and not remain on the surface. Gilbert seemed to be listening eagerly, and Monsieur de Jussieu saw nothing but what was natural in this ardor for science; for the demonstration was one which drew applause from the benches of students in the public course. Now, for a poor young gardener, was it not an unusual good fortune to receive this lesson of so great a master, given in the very presence of Nature?

"There are here, you see, my child, four kinds of earth," said Monsieur de Jussieu; "and if I chose, I could discover ten others mixed with these four primary ones. But for the inexperienced gardener, the distinction would be a little too fine. The florist must always taste the earth, as the gardener his fruits. You understand me, Gilbert?"

"Yes, Monsieur," answered Gilbert, his eyes staring, his mouth open; for he had seen Andrée, and from the place where he stood he could watch her without letting the professor suspect that he was not religiously listening to and comprehending the demonstration.

"In order to get the taste of the earth," said Monsieur de Jussieu, all the time deceived by the absent-mindedness of Gilbert, "shut up a handful in a sieve, pour some drops of water gently over it, and taste this water when it shall have filtered through the earth into a vessel underneath the sieve. The saline savors, whether acrid or insipid or flavored with certain natural essences, suit wonderfully the juices of the plants which you wish to place in it;

for in Nature, says Monsieur Rousseau, your old patron, all is analogy, assimilation, a tendency to homogeneity."

"Oh, my God!" cried Gilbert, extending his arms before him.

"What is the matter?"

"She has fainted, Monsieur, she has fainted!"

"Who, then? Are you mad?"

"She, she!"

"She?"

"Yes," replied Gilbert, eagerly, "a lady;" and his fright and paleness would have betrayed him, as well as the word "she," if Monsieur de Jussieu had not looked up to follow the direction of his hand. In doing this, Monsieur de Jussieu saw, indeed, Andrée, who had dragged herself behind a hedge and fallen prostrate on a bench. There she lay motionless, and at the point of losing consciousness.

It was the hour at which the king made his daily visit to the dauphiness, and crossed the orchard in passing from the great to the little Trianon. He now suddenly appeared. He held a vermilion peach (marvel of precocity), and was asking himself — royal egotist that he was — if it would not tend more to the happiness of France if this peach were enjoyed by him rather than by Madame la Dauphine.

The haste of Monsieur de Jussieu in running to Andrée, whom the king with his feeble sight scarcely saw and did not recognize at all, and the stifled cries of Gilbert which indicated the most profound terror, quickened the step of his Majesty.

"What is the matter? What is it?" demanded Louis XV., approaching the hedge from which only the width of a path separated him.

"The king!" cried Monsieur de Jussieu, supporting the young girl in his arms.

"The king?" murmured Mademoiselle Andrée, fainting away completely.

"But who is it?" repeated Louis XV., — "a woman? What has happened to this woman?"

"Sire, a swoon."

"Ah! let us see," said Louis XV.

"She is unconscious, Sire," added Monsieur de Jussieu, pointing to the young girl lying rigid and motionless upon the bench where he had just placed her.

The king approached, recognized Andrée, and exclaimed, shuddering, "Again! Oh, that is frightful! Those who have such maladies should stay at home. It is not proper to be dying like this all day long in public;" and Louis XV. retraced his steps toward the pavilion of the little Trianon, muttering a thousand things hostile to poor Andrée.

Monsieur de Jussieu, who was ignorant of the antecedents, stood a moment stupefied; then, turning round and seeing Gilbert ten steps off in an attitude of fear and anxiety, "Come here, Gilbert," cried he. "You are strong; you can carry Mademoiselle de Taverney to her apartments."

"I!" cried Gilbert, trembling; "I carry her, — touch her? No, no; she would never pardon me, — no, never!" and he fled distracted, calling for aid.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

DOCTOR LOUIS.

At a short distance from the place where Andrée had fainted two gardeners were working, who ran up on hearing Gilbert's cries, and obedient to the order of Monsieur de Jussieu, bore Andrée to her apartment. Gilbert followed at a distance, with head bowed, and shambling in his gait, like an assassin marching behind the body of his victim.

Monsieur de Jussieu, having reached the principal entrance, relieved the gardeners of their burden. Andrée had just opened her eyes.

The sound of voices and that significant commotion which accompanies every accident, drew Monsieur de Taverney from the apartment; he saw his daughter, tottering still, try to hold herself erect so as to ascend the steps with the help of Monsieur de Jussieu. He ran up, asking like the king, "What is the matter? what is it?"

"Nothing, father," replied Andrée, feebly, — "an ill-turn, a headache."

"Mademoiselle is your daughter?" said Monsieur de Jussieu, saluting the baron.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"I cannot leave her in better hands, then; but in the name of Heaven consult a doctor."

"Oh! it is nothing," said Andrée.

And Taverney repeated, "Certainly, it is nothing."

"I hope so," said Monsieur de Jussieu; "but indeed, Mademoiselle was very pale." And then, having assisted

Andrée to the top of the stairs, he took leave. The father and daughter were left alone.

Taverney, who during the absence of Andrée had spent his time profitably in good reflections, took the hand of Andrée, who was still standing, led her to a seat on the sofa, and sat down by her.

"Pardon, Monsieur," said Andrée; "but be so good as to open the window. I need air."

"I wished to talk seriously with you, Andrée, and in this cage they have given you for a dwelling, a breath can be heard on all sides; but no matter, I will speak low." And he opened the window.

Then, reseating himself by the side of his daughter, he said, shaking his head, "It must be confessed that the king who at first displayed so much interest in us does not show much consideration in letting you live in such a den."

"Father," replied Andrée, "there are no accommodations at Trianon; you know that is the great defect of that residence."

"That there should be no accommodations for others," said Taverney, with an insinuating smile, "I can thoroughly understand, my daughter; but as regards yourself, I do not understand it."

"You have too good an opinion of me, Monsieur," replied Andrée, smiling; "and unfortunately everybody does not think as you do."

"All who know you, my daughter, on the contrary, think as I do."

Andrée bowed as she would have done in thanking a stranger; for she began to be uneasy at these compliments from her father.

"And," continued Taverney, in the same insinuating manner, "and — the king knows you, I suppose?" And

while speaking, he cast a look upon the young girl of intolerable inquisitiveness.

"Indeed, the king hardly knows me," replied Andrée, very naturally, "and I am of slight importance to him, as I suppose."

These words made the baron start. "Of slight importance!" he cried; "indeed, I do not understand your words, Mademoiselle. Of slight importance! indeed, you set a low value on your person."

Andrée looked at her father in astonishment.

"Yes, yes," continued the baron; "I say it, and I repeat it, you are so modest as to forget personal dignity."

"Oh, Monsieur, you exaggerate; the king has been interested by the misfortunes of our family, it is true; the king has deigned to do something for us; but there are so many unfortunates about his Majesty's throne, so many gifts fall from the royal hand that he would naturally forget us after the bestowal of his favor."

Taverney looked steadily at his daughter, not without a certain admiration of her reserve and impenetrable discretion. "Come," said he, drawing nearer to her, "come, my dear Andrée; your father shall be the first solicitor who addresses you, and in this character I hope that you will not repulse him."

Andrée in her turn looked at her father like a woman asking an explanation.

"Come," continued he, "we beg you, intercede for us, do something for your family —"

"What do you mean? what do you want me to do?" cried Andrée, stupefied by his tone and the import of his word.

"Are you willing, or not, to ask something for me and for your brother? Speak!"

"Monsieur," replied Andrée, "I will do all that you

tell me to do; but indeed, do you not fear that we shall seem too avaricious? The king has already given me a necklace worth, you say, more than one hundred thousand francs; his Majesty has besides promised a regiment to my brother. We take you see a considerable part of the gifts of the court."

Taverney could not restrain a burst of harsh and scornful laughter. "So," said he, "you think that is sufficient compensation, Mademoiselle?"

"I know, Monsieur, that your services are of great value," replied Andrée.

"Eh!" cried Taverney, impatient; "who the devil is talking of my services?"

"What are you talking about, then?"

"Indeed, you are playing with me a game of foolish dissembling!"

"Why should I dissemble, *mon Dieu?*" asked Andrée.

"But I know all, my daughter!"

"You know?"

"All, I tell you."

"All what, Monsieur?" An instinctive blush, born of this gross attack upon the most modest of consciences, mantled the cheeks of Andrée.

The respect of the father for the child arrested Taverney in the rapid flow of his questions. "Well!" said he, "as you please; you wish to play the coy, it appears, the mysterious! So be it. You leave your father and your brother to the obscurity of oblivion. Very well, but mark my words; when one does not have power from the outset, one is liable never to have it at all." And Taverney turned about on his heel.

"I do not understand you, Monsieur," said Andrée.

"Very well, I understand myself," replied Taverney.

"That is not enough when two are talking together."

"Well, I will be more clear. Make use of all the diplomacy with which you are endowed, and which is a virtue of our family, in making, while there is an opportunity, the fortune of your family and your own; and the first time you see the king tell him that your brother is waiting for his appointment, and that you are growing thin in an apartment without air and light, — in a word, do not be so ridiculous as to have too much love or too much disinterestedness."

"But, Monsieur — "

"Say that to the king, this evening, even."

"But where do you wish me to see the king?"

"And add that it is not even suitable for his Majesty to come — "

Just when Taverney, doubtless, by using more explicit terms, was about to rouse the tempest which was quietly gathering in Andrée's breast, and to provoke the explanation which would have solved the mystery, steps were heard on the stairs.

The baron stopped immediately and ran to the baluster to see who was coming to visit his daughter. Andrée was astonished to see her father step aside against the wall. Almost at the same moment the dauphiness, followed by a man dressed in black and leaning on a cane, entered the little apartment.

"Your Highness!" cried Andrée, mustering all her strength to go to meet the dauphiness.

"Yes, little invalid," replied the princess; "I bring you consolation and the doctor. Come, Doctor. Ah! Monsieur de Taverney," continued the princess, recognizing the baron, "your daughter is ill, and you take no care of this child."

"Madame —" stammered Taverney.

"Come, Doctor," said the dauphiness, with that charm-

ing kindliness which belonged only to her, — "come, feel this pulse, question these heavy eyes, and tell me what is the matter with my protegée."

"Oh, Madame, Madame, what goodness!" murmured the young girl, "how shall I have courage to receive your Royal Highness?"

"In this poor place, you mean, dear child; so much the worse for me who have given you so wretched an apartment. I will attend to that. Come, my child, give your hand to Monsieur Louis, my physician, and take care; he is a philosopher who divines, as well as a scholar who sees clearly."

Andrée, smiling, held out her hand to the doctor. The latter, a young man still, whose intelligent face expressed all that the dauphiness had said of him, had occupied himself since coming into the room in observing, first the invalid, then the locality, afterward the strange appearance of the father, which indicated annoyance but no anxiety. The scholar was about to see clearly; the philosopher had perhaps already divined.

Doctor Louis studied for a long time the pulse of the young girl and questioned her as to her symptoms.

"Complete distaste for all food," answered Andrée; "sudden twinges of pain, flushes of heat rushing suddenly to the head, spasms, palpitations, fainting-fits."

The doctor grew more and more sober as Andrée went on speaking. He finally relinquished the young girl's hand and looked away.

"Well, Doctor," said the princess to the physician, "*quid?* as the consulting physicians say. Is the child in danger, and do you condemn her to death?"

The doctor looked at Andrée and watched her a little while longer in silence. "Madame," said he, "this sickness of Mademoiselle is a very natural one."

"And dangerous?"

"No, not usually," replied the doctor, smiling.

"Ah! very well," said the princess, breathing more freely; "do not make her suffer too much."

"Oh, I shall not make her suffer at all, Madame."

"What! you order no prescription?"

"There is absolutely nothing to be done for the sickness of Mademoiselle."

"Really?"

"Nothing, Madame." And the doctor, as if to avoid an explanation, took leave of the princess under the pretext that his patients needed his attention.

"Doctor, Doctor," said the dauphiness, "if what you say is true, I am much more sick than Mademoiselle de Taverney; bring me, then, without fail, when you visit me this evening, the pills you promised me to make me sleep."

"Madame, I will prepare them myself as soon as I reach home." And he went away.

The dauphiness remained with her reader. "Do not be uneasy, my dear Andrée," said she, with a friendly smile; "your sickness need not cause any anxiety, for Doctor Louis goes away without prescribing for you."

"So much the better, Madame," replied Andrée; "for then my service with your Royal Highness need not be interrupted; and I feared that above everything. However, with all due deference to the learned doctor, I am quite ill, Madame, I assure you."

"It cannot, however, be a serious illness, since the doctor makes light of it. Go to sleep then, my child; I will send some one to wait on you, for I see that you are alone. Be so kind as to attend me, Monsieur de Taverney." She gave her hand to Andrée, and went away, having brought consolation to her as she had promised.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MONSIEUR DE RICHELIEU'S WORD-PLAY.

Monsieur le Duc de Richelieu, as we have seen, proceeded to Luciennes with that rapidity of decision and that sure intelligence which characterized the ambassador at Vienna and the conqueror of Mahon.

He arrived joyous and unconstrained, ascended the stairs like a young man, pulled the ears of Zamore as in the pleasant days of their friendship, and forced, so to speak, the door of that famous boudoir of blue satin where poor Lorenza had seen Madame Dubarry preparing for her journey to the Rue Saint Claude.

The countess, lying upon her sofa, was giving Monsieur d'Aiguillon her orders for the morning. Both turned round on hearing the noise, and were astounded at seeing the marshal.

"Ah, Monsieur le Duc!" cried the countess.

"Ah, my uncle!" said Monsieur d'Aiguillon.

"Eh! yes, Madame; eh! yes, nephew."

"What, it is you?"

"It is I, myself, in person."

"Better late than never," said the countess.

"Madame," said the marshal, "when we grow old we become capricious."

"Which means that you have recovered for Luciennes—"

"A great love which I should not have lost except through caprice. It is just that, and you complete my thought admirably."

"So that you return —"

"So that I return, yes;" said Richelieu, seating himself in the best chair, which he had recognized at the first glance.

"Oh, oh!" said the countess, "there is perhaps some other reason, which you do not give; caprice, — that is not enough for a man like you."

"Countess, it would be wrong in you to press me; I am better than my reputation, and if I return, do you see, it is —"

"It is?" asked the countess.

"With all my heart."

Monsieur d'Aiguillon and the countess burst out laughing.

"How fortunate we are in having a little sense with which to comprehend the sense of which you have so much!" said the countess.

"Why?"

"Yes; I assure you that fools would not understand, would wonder at, and would seek everywhere the reason for your return. Indeed, on the word of a Dubarry, you alone, dear Duke, can make entrances and exits; Molé himself is a wooden actor in comparison with you."

"Then you do not believe that it is the heart which brings me back?" cried Richelieu. "Countess, Countess, take care! you will give me a bad opinion of yourself; oh, do not laugh, nephew, or I shall call you Pierre, and shall not build anything upon you."

"Not even a little ministry?" asked the countess, and for the second time she burst out laughing, with a freedom which she did not try to conceal.

"Good! strike, strike!" said Richelieu, with affected anger, "I will not return the blows; alas, I am too old, I

can only defend myself; abuse me, Countess, abuse me!" it is now a pleasure without danger."

"On the contrary, take care, Countess," said D'Aiguillon; "if my uncle talks of his weakness, we are lost. No, Monsieur le Duc, we will not strike you; for feeble as you are, or rather pretend to be, you would return the blows with interest. No, the truth is, we are delighted to see you return to us."

"Yes," said the countess, playfully, "and in honor of your return, we fire off cannon, rockets; and you know, Duke —"

"I know nothing, Madame!" said the marshal, with child-like innocence.

"Well, in fire-works there is always some wig scorched by the sparks, some hat crushed by the rocket-stick."

The duke touched his wig and looked at his hat.

"That is the explanation," said the countess; "but you have come back to us, — that is the principal thing; as for me, I am, as Monsieur d'Aiguillon has told you, in high spirits. Do you know why?"

"Countess, Countess, you are going to say something spiteful!"

"Yes; but it will be the last."

"Well, go on."

"I am in good spirits, Marshal, because your return foretells fine weather."

Richelieu bowed.

"Yes," continued the countess, "you are like those poetic birds which predict a calm. What is the name of those birds, Monsieur d'Aiguillon? — you who write poetry can tell me."

"Halcyons, Madame."

"Precisely. Ah, Marshal, you will not take offence, I hope! I am comparing you to a bird with a pretty name."

"I shall take offence so much the less, Madame," said Richelieu, with a little grimace which expressed satisfaction, — and Richelieu's satisfaction always foreboded some great wickedness, — "I shall take offence so much the less that the comparison is good."

"Do you see?"

"Yes, I bring good news."

"Ah!" said the countess.

"What is it?" asked D'Aiguillon.

"The devil! my dear Duke, you are in great haste," said the countess; "give the marshal time to make it."

"No, the devil take me! I can tell you immediately; it is made already, and even of ancient date."

"Marshal, if you have brought us any old trash —"

"Indeed!" said the marshal; "it is take, or leave, Countess."

"Well, let us take, then."

"It seems, Countess, that the king has fallen into the trap."

"Into the trap?"

"Yes, completely."

"Into what trap?"

"Into the one you have set for him."

"I!" said the countess; "I have set a trap for the king?"

"*Parbleu!* you know it very well."

"No, upon my word, I do not know it."

"Ah, Countess, it is not kind to mystify me so."

"Truly, Marshal, I do not mean to. Explain yourself, I beg you!"

"Yes, uncle, explain yourself," said D'Aiguillon, who thought he saw some evil design beneath the ambiguous smile of the marshal; "Madame is waiting, and is very anxious."

The old duke turned to his nephew. "*Pardieu!*" said he, "it would be strange if Madame la Comtesse had not taken you into her confidence, my dear D'Aiguillon. Ah, in that case, it would show that she is even deeper than I supposed."

"Me, uncle?"

"Him?"

"Doubtless you, — doubtless him. Come, Countess, let us be frank. Have you taken him in partnership in your little conspiracies against his Majesty, — this poor duke, who has played so noble a part in them?"

Madame Dubarry blushed. It was so early in the day that she had neither rouge nor patches on her face, therefore blushing was possible; but blushing was also especially dangerous.

"You look at me, both of you, with your great, handsome, wondering eyes," said Richelieu; "do I need, then, to give you information about your own affairs?"

"Yes, Marshal," said, at the same time, the duke and the countess.

"Well, the king has discovered everything, thanks to his wonderful sagacity; and he has taken fright."

"What has he discovered?" asked the countess; "tell us, for indeed, Marshal, I am dying with impatience."

"But your show of friendship with my fine nephew here — "

D'Aiguillon grew pale, and his glance at the countess seemed to say, "Do you see? I was sure there was something malicious coming."

Women are courageous in such an emergency, — much more so than men. The countess returned immediately to the combat. "Duke," said she, "I am afraid of enigmas when you fill the rôle of sphinx; for sooner or later you are sure to get the better of me. Relieve me of

anxiety, and if it is a jest indeed, let me judge the evil of it."

"Evil, Countess! it is, on the contrary, excellent!" cried Richelieu; "it is not mine, but yours, be it understood."

"I am not at all concerned in it, Marshal," said Madame Dubarry, biting her lips with an impatience which her little rebellious foot betrayed still more.

"Come, come, no pride, Countess!" continued Richelieu. "It is very good; you have feared that the king would become attached to Mademoiselle de Taverney. Oh, do not dispute it! I have had evidence of it."

"Oh, it is true! I do not deny it."

"Well, fearing this, you wished on your part to pique the king as much as possible."

"I do not deny it. Then?"

"We are coming to it, Countess. But to pique his Majesty, who is rather thick-skinned, you needed a very sharp thorn[1] — Ah, ah, ah! upon my word, what a wretched pun escaped me! Do you understand?" and the marshal begun to laugh, or to feign to laugh, boisterously, so that he could better observe, while convulsed with that hilarity, the very anxious faces of his victims.

"What play of words do you find in that, uncle?" asked D'Aiguillon, the first to recover composure, and affecting simplicity.

"You have not understood it?" said the marshal. "Ah, so much the better! it was execrable. Well, I mean that Madame la Comtesse had wished to make the king jealous, and that she had chosen for this purpose a nobleman who is handsome, witty, — in short, a marvel of Nature."

[1] French: *aiguillon.*

"Who says that?" cried the countess, furious, like all those who are powerful and in the wrong.

"Who says that? — why, everybody, Madame."

"Everybody means nobody; you know it very well, Duke."

"On the contrary, Madame, everybody means one hundred thousand people in Versailles alone; it means six hundred thousand in Paris; it means twenty-five millions in France; and you will see that I am not counting the Hague, Hamburg, Rotterdam, London, Berlin, where there are as many newspapers, in proportion, as in Paris."

"And they say in Versailles, in Paris, in France, in the Hague, in Hamburg, in Rotterdam, in London, and in Berlin — ?"

"Well, they say that you are the most intellectual, the most charming woman in Europe; they say that, thanks to that ingenious stratagem of seeming to have secured a lover — "

"A lover! and what foundation has that stupid accusation, I should like to know?"

"Accusation! what do you mean, Countess? Admiration! They know there is nothing at the bottom of it all, but they admire the stratagem. Upon what is this admiration, this enthusiasm founded? Why upon your manner, sparkling with intelligence; upon your skilful tact; upon your having pretended, with wonderful art, to remain alone that night, — you know, the night when I was at your house, when the king was at your house, and when Monsieur d'Aiguillon was at your house; the night when I left first, when the king went out second, and Monsieur d'Aiguillon the third — "

"Well! go on."

"Upon your having pretended to stay alone with D'Aiguillon, as if he were your lover; to send him out quietly

in the morning from Luciennes, also as if he were your lover; and in such a way that two or three fools, two or three gulls, like me for example, might see it and cry it from the house-tops; so that the king would know, would take fright, and not to lose you would quickly leave the little Taverney."

Madame Dubarry and D'Aiguillon could no longer retain their composure. Richelieu troubled them neither by looks nor by gestures; on the contrary, his snuff-box and his frill seemed to absorb all his attention. "In short," continued the marshal, playing with his shirt-frill, "it appears that the king has certainly left that little one."

"Duke," replied Madame Dubarry, "I declare that I do not comprehend one word of all your imaginings; and I am sure of one thing, that if the king should be questioned about it, he would not comprehend it any better."

"Really!" said the duke.

"Yes, really; and you attribute to me, and the world attributes to me more imaginative faculty than I possess. I have never wished to excite the jealousy of his Majesty by the means of which you speak."

"Countess!"

"I swear it."

"Countess, perfect diplomacy,—and there are no better diplomatists than women, — perfect diplomacy never confesses failure; for there is an anxiom in politics — I know it, who have been an ambassador — which says, 'Do not communicate to any one the means which has brought you success once, for it may bring you success twice.'"

"But Duke —"

"The means has succeeded, that is all, and the king is on very bad terms with the whole Taverney family."

"But, indeed, Duke," cried Madame Dubarry, "you have a way of supposing things peculiar to yourself."

"Ah, you do not believe that the king is at variance with the Taverney family?" said Richelieu, eluding a quarrel.

"That is not what I mean."

Richelieu tried to take the countess's hand. "You are a bird," said he.

"And you are a serpent."

"Ah, very good! I shall be eager to bring you good news again, if I am to be rewarded in this way."

"Be undeceived, uncle," said D'Aiguillon, quickly, who had understood the full significance of this manœuvre of Richelieu, "no one appreciates you so highly as Madame la Comtesse, and she was saying so to me at the very moment when you were announced."

"The fact is," said the marshal, "that I am very fond of my friends; also I wished to be the first to bring you the assurance of your triumph, Countess. Do you know that Taverney the father wished to sell his daughter to the king?"

"It has been done, I think," said Madame Dubarry.

"Oh, Countess, how crafty that man is! it is he who is the serpent. Imagine it! I was lulled to sleep by stories of friendship, of old comradeship in arms. Any one can lead me by my affections. And then to think that this rural Aristides should come straight to Paris to cut the grass under the feet of Jean Dubarry, one of the brightest of men! It has indeed required all my devotion to your interests, Countess, to give me a little good sense and penetration; upon my honor I was blind—"

"And according to what you say it is all over then?" asked Madame Dubarry.

"Oh, entirely, I assure you; I have handled this worthy purveyor so roughly that there is probably no more fight in him, and we are now masters of the situation."

"But the king?"

"The king?"

"Yes."

"Upon three points I have confessed his Majesty."

"The first?"

"The father."

"The second?"

"The daughter."

"And the third?"

"The son. Now his Majesty has condescended to call the father a — pander; his daughter an impertinent minx; and as for the son, his Majesty has not called him anything for he did not even remember him."

"Very well, we are now rid of the whole brood."

"I think so."

"Is it worth while to send that fellow back to his hole?"

"I think not; they are reduced to extremities."

"And you say that this son, to whom the king had promised a regiment — ?"

"Ah, you have a better memory than the king, Countess. It is true that Monsieur Philippe is a very pretty boy, who sends you killing glances. Indeed! he is neither colonel, nor captain, nor brother of the favorite; but at least he has been distinguished by you."

In saying this, the old duke was trying to tear the heart of his nephew with jealousy, but Monsieur d'Aiguillon was not thinking of jealousy; he was trying to account for the actions of the old marshal, and to discover the real motive for his return. After some reflections he hoped that the wind of favor alone had brought Richelieu to Luciennes. He made a sign to Madame Dubarry which the old duke saw in a pier-glass while adjusting his wig, and immediately the countess invited Richelieu to take chocolate with her.

D'Aiguillon took leave with a thousand expressions of endearment for his uncle which were returned by Richelieu. The latter remained alone with the countess before the round table which Zamore had just spread.

The old marshal observed all this manœuvring of the favorite, saying in a low tone, "Were I twenty years younger I should now be looking at the clock, saying, 'In one hour I shall be a minister,' and I should be one. What a foolish thing life is," he continued, all the time speaking to himself; "during the first part one gives the body to the service of the mind; during the second the mind, which alone has survived, becomes the servant of the body; it is absurd."

"Dear Marshal," said the countess, interrupting the private monologue of her guest, "now that we are good friends, and especially since we are by ourselves, tell me why you gave yourself so much trouble to put that little piece of affectation into the king's bed."

"Upon my word, Countess," replied Richelieu, sipping his cup of chocolate, "that is what I asked myself. I know nothing about it."

CHAPTER XL.

THE RETURN.

Monsieur de Richelieu knew what course Philippe would take, and he might safely have foretold his return; for that morning, setting out from Versailles to go to Luciennes, he had met him on the high-road going toward Trianon, and had passed near enough to observe on his countenance indications of sadness and anxiety.

Philippe, indeed, forgotten at Rheims, first having passed through every degree of favor, then of indifference and neglect; Philippe, bored at first by expressions of friendship from the officers jealous of his advancement, then by attentions even from his superiors, — Philippe, in proportion as disfavor had tarnished with its breath this brilliant fortune, was disgusted to see friendships changed to coldness, and civility to rudeness; and in this refined soul, sorrow had taken on the characteristic of regret.

Philippe regretted very much his lieutenantship at Strasburg, now that the dauphiness had come to France; he regretted his good friends, his equals, his comrades; he regretted especially the quiet and pure private life of the paternal home, about the fireside of which La Brie was the grand priest. All trouble found consolation in silence and forgetfulness, — that sleep of active minds; then in the solitude of Taverney, which bore witness to the decay of things as well as to the ruin of individuals, there was something philosophical which spoke powerfully to the heart of the young man.

But Philippe above all felt the loss of his sister's companionship, and of her judgment, always so correct, — a judgment born of elevation of mind rather than the result of experience; for it is a remarkable and conspicuous characteristic of noble souls that they soar involuntarily, and by nature even, above the vulgar crowd, and often on account of their very elevation they escape the wounds and snares which all the cleverness of human insects of a lower order cannot always avoid, however accustomed they may be to manœuvre, to craft, to contemplation of low thoughts.

As soon as Philippe had felt ennui, discouragement overtook him, and the young man became so unhappy in his loneliness that he could not believe that Andrée, that half of himself, could be happy at Versailles when he, the half of Andrée, was suffering so cruelly at Rheims.

He wrote then to the baron the letter with which we are acquainted, and in which he announced his approaching return. This letter surprised no one, especially not the baron; what did surprise him, on the contrary, was that Philippe had had patience to wait so long, when he himself was very anxious, and for fifteen days had begged Richelieu, every time he saw him, to hasten the progress of his affairs.

Philippe, not having received the commission within the time which he himself had allowed, took leave of his officers without seeming to notice their disdain and their sarcasms, — disdains and sarcasms quite hidden under a veil of politeness, which was still at that period a French virtue, and restrained by the natural respect which a brave man always inspires.

Consequently at the hour when he had determined to depart, — the hour up to which he had awaited his commission with more fear than desire for its coming, — he mounted his horse and took the road to Paris.

The three days' journey which he had before him looked very long, and as he proceeded on his way, his father's silence toward him, and especially that of his sister who had promised faithfully to write to him at least twice a week, assumed an ominous significance.

We have said that Philippe arrived about noon at Versailles, just as Monsieur de Richelieu was leaving it. Philippe had travelled a part of the night, having slept only a few hours at Melun; he was so preoccupied that he did not see Monsieur de Richelieu in his carriage, and did not even recognize his livery. He went straight to the railing in the park where he had bade Andrée good-by on the day of his departure, when the young girl without any cause for distress, since the prosperity of the family was at its height, felt mounting to her brain the prophetic sense of an incomprehensible sorrow.

Philippe too on that day had been affected by a superstitious sympathy with Andrée's griefs. But gradually his mind, having recovered command of itself, had shaken off the burden; and by a strange chance it was he, Philippe, who now without reason, after all, returned to the same place a prey to the same fears, and without finding, alas! even in his thought, consolation for that insuperable sadness which having no cause, seemed like a presentiment. When his horse stepped upon the flint stones of the pavement with a clatter of his hoofs, some one, attracted doubtless by this sound, came out from the trimmed hedge-rows. It was Gilbert, holding in his hand a pruning-bill. The gardener recognized his old master. Philippe also recognized Gilbert.

Gilbert had been wandering about in this way for a month; like a soul in trouble, he knew not where to stop. On that day with his usual cleverness in the execution of his designs, he was occupied in choosing points of view in

the alleys where he might see the pavilion or the window of Andrée, and have constant watch upon that house without any one noticing his preoccupation, his tremblings, and his sighs.

With pruning-bill in hand to keep up appearances he ran through corpse and parterre, cutting here the branches laden with flowers, under pretext of trimming, stripping there the sound bark from the young lindens, under pretext of getting resin and gum; at the same time ever listening, ever watching, wishing, and regretting.

The young man had become very pale in the month just passed; his face no longer showed signs of youth, except by the strange fire of his eyes and the dead and smooth whiteness of his complexion; but his mouth shrivelled by dissimulation, his furtive glance, the trembling of the muscles of his face, belonged to the more sombre years of ripe age. Gilbert had recognized Philippe, as we have said; and on recognizing him, he turned to go back into the hedge-row. But Philippe rode toward him, crying out, "Gilbert! I say, Gilbert!"

Gilbert's first thought had been to fly; a second more and the vertigo of terror, and that delirium, impossible to explain, which the ancients who sought a cause for everything attributed to the god Pan, would have seized upon him and dragged him like a madman through the paths, through the shrubbery, through the hedge-rows, even into the ponds.

A word full of sweetness spoken by Philippe was fortunately heard and comprehended by the furious fellow.

"You do not recognize me, then, Gilbert?" cried Philippe to him.

Gilbert saw his folly and stopped short. Then he turned back, but slowly and defiantly. "No, Monsieur le Chevalier," said he, trembling, "no, I did not recognize

you; I had taken you for one of the guards, and as I am not at my work I had feared to be seen here, and reported for punishment."

Philippe was satisfied with the explanation, jumped to the ground, put the horse's bridle over his arm, and placing the other hand upon Gilbert's shoulder, who shuddered visibly, asked, "What is the matter with you, Gilbert?"

"Nothing, Monsieur," replied the latter.

Philippe smiled sadly. "You do not like us, Gilbert," said he.

The young man shuddered again.

"Yes, I know," continued Philippe; "my father has treated you unjustly and harshly; but I, Gilbert?"

"Oh, you —" murmured the young man.

"I have always loved you, and upheld you."

"It is true."

"So, forget the evil in the good; my sister has also been good to you."

"Oh, no, — as to that, — no," the young man replied quickly, with an incomprehensible expression; for it included an accusation against Andrée, and an excuse for himself. It flashed out like pride, while it groaned like remorse.

"Yes, yes," said Philippe, in his turn, — "yes, I know my sister is rather haughty, but she is good at heart." Then after a pause, — for all this conversation was only delaying an interview which he looked forward to with gloomy forebodings, — "Do you know where my good Andrée is at this moment, Gilbert?"

This name smote Gilbert's heart painfully; he answered, with choking voice, "At home, Monsieur, I suppose, — how should I know?"

"Alone as usual, with nothing to amuse her; poor sister!" interrupted Philippe.

"Alone at this moment, yes, Monsieur, most probably; for since the flight of Nicole — "

"What! Nicole has fled?"

"Yes, Monsieur, with her lover."

"With her lover?"

"At least, I presume so," said Gilbert, who saw that he had gone too far. "That is the common report."

"But, indeed, Gilbert," said Philippe, more and more uneasy, "I do not understand it at all. I have to drag the words from you. Be a little more agreeable. You have intelligence, and you are not wanting in natural distinction of manner; come, do not spoil these good qualities by an affected unsociableness, by a gruffness which suits neither your station in life nor any other."

"But I do not know all that you ask me, Monsieur; and when you think of it, you will see that I cannot know it. I work all day in the gardens, and how can I know what they are doing at the chateau?"

"Gilbert, Gilbert, I thought that you had eyes."

"I?"

"Yes, and that you would take an interest in all who bear my name; for however poor the hospitality of Taverney may have been, you at least shared it."

"So I do take great interest in you, Monsieur Philippe," said Gilbert, in a voice harsh and rough; for the gentleness of Philippe, and another sentiment which the latter could not divine, had softened this fierce heart. "Yes, I like you, *you;* that is why I will tell you that Mademoiselle, your sister, is very ill."

"Very ill, my sister!" Philippe burst out, — "very ill, my sister, very ill! and you did not tell me so at once!" And immediately abandoning his slow pace for a quicker one, "What is the matter with her, *mon Dieu?*" he asked.

"Indeed," said Gilbert, "nobody knows."

"But what is it?"

"Only that she has fainted three times to-day in the garden, and that, early as it is, the doctor of Madame la Dauphine has already visited her, and Monsieur le Baron also."

Philippe heard no more. His forebodings were realized; and confronted with real danger, all his courage had returned to him. He left his horse in Gilbert's hands, and went hastily toward the offices.

As for Gilbert, left alone, he quickly led the horse to the stable, and fled, like those wild or noxious birds which can never stay within range of man.

CHAPTER XLI.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

PHILIPPE found his sister lying on the little sofa of which we have already had occasion to speak.

On entering the antechamber, the young man noticed that Andrée had carefully put away all the flowers, — she who was so fond of them; for since her sickness the fragrance of the flowers had caused her unbearable pains, and she attributed to this irritation the affection of the cerebral fibres which had lasted now fifteen days.

When Philippe entered, Andrée was dreaming; her beautiful brow was clouded, and her eyes moved painfully in the sockets. Her hands were hanging down, and although in this situation the blood would naturally flow into them, they were as white as those of a wax statue. So motionless was she that she seemed lifeless, and it was necessary to hear her breathe to be sure that she was not dead.

Philippe had walked more rapidly after Gilbert had told him that his sister was sick, so that he was almost breathless when he arrived at the foot of the stairs. But there he had stopped, his reason had returned to him, and he had ascended the stairs with a calmer step; so that at the threshold of the chamber he trod as noiselessly and quietly as if he had been a sylph. He wished to examine for himself the illness by its symptoms, with the solicitude characteristic of those who love; he knew that Andrée was so tender and good, that, as soon as she had

seen him, she would assume such a conduct and demeanor as not to alarm him.

He went in, opening the glass-door so gently that Andrée did not hear him, and was in the middle of the chamber before she suspected anything.

Philippe had therefore time to look at her, to notice that paleness, that immobility, that atony; he perceived the strange expression of those eyes, which were sunk in deep hollows; and more alarmed than he had thought possible, he discovered that the sufferings of his sister were in a great degree of a moral nature. At this sight, which sent a chill to his heart, he could not restrain a movement of fright.

Andrée looked up, and uttering a loud cry she stood up like a dead person come to life, and in her turn panting for breath, ran to throw her arms around her brother's neck.

"You, you, Philippe!" said she; and her strength left her before she could say anything more. Besides, what else could she say, when that was all her thought?

"Yes, yes, I," replied Philippe, embracing and supporting her, for he felt her sinking within his arms, — "I, who come back to find you sick! Ah, poor sister, what is the matter with you?"

Andrée began to laugh in a nervous way, which troubled Philippe instead of reassuring him, as the invalid had wished.

"Do you ask what is the matter with me? Do I look sick, then, Philippe?"

"Oh, yes, Andrée! you are very pale, and you tremble all over."

"But where have you seen that, brother? I am not even indisposed; who has informed you so incorrectly? Who has been so foolish as to frighten you? But indeed

I do not know what you mean; and I am remarkably well, with the exception of some slight attacks of dizziness, which will pass away as they have come."

"Oh! but you are so pale, Andrée —"

"Have I, then, usually much color?"

"No; but you are alive at least, while to-day —"

"It is nothing."

"See, see! your hands, which a little while ago were burning, are now as cold as ice."

"It is very simple, Philippe; when I saw you enter —"

"Well?"

"I felt a lively sensation of joy, and the blood went to my heart, that is all."

"But you totter, Andrée; you lean upon me."

"No; I am embracing you, that is all. Do you not wish me to embrace you, Philippe?"

"Oh, dear Andrée!" and he pressed the young girl to his heart.

At that very moment Andrée felt her strength leaving her again; in vain she tried to cling to her brother's neck, her hand slipped, stiff, and almost inanimate, and she fell back on the sofa whiter than the muslin curtains upon which her charming figure was outlined.

"You see, you see that you deceive me!" cried Philippe. "Ah, dear sister, you are suffering, you are ill!"

"The flask!" murmured Andrée, forcing upon her countenance a smile which he would remember to his dying day. And her feeble glance and hand raised with pain pointed out to Philippe a flask on the little desk by the window.

Philippe rushed toward it, his eyes fixed on his sister whom he dreaded to leave. Then opening the window he came back and put the flask to her pinched nostrils.

"There, there," said she, inhaling in long draughts air and life, "you see that I am revived. Come, do you think I am very sick? Speak."

But Philippe did not even think of answering, he was looking at his sister. Andrée recovered gradually, sat up on the sofa, took in her moist hands Philippe's trembling hand, and her face taking on a softened expression, the blood mounting to her cheeks, she appeared more beautiful than she had ever been.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" said she; "you see, Philippe, it is over, and I am sure that but for the surprise which you gave me with such good intention, the spasms would not have returned, and I should have been well; but coming so suddenly before me, you know, Philippe (before me who love you so much), — you who are the moving power, the substance of my life, — why, that was enough to kill me, even if I had been strong."

"Yes, all that is very pleasant and very charming, Andrée; meanwhile tell me, I beg you, to what you attribute this illness?"

"How do I know, dear? To the return of spring, the season of flowers. You know how nervous I am; yesterday the odor of the Persian lilacs suffocated me. You know what an intoxicating perfume is exhaled from those magnificent plumes which sway in the early breezes of spring; well, yesterday — Oh, *mon Dieu!* Philippe, I do not wish to think of it, for I am afraid the illness will return."

"Yes, you are right, and perhaps it is that; flowers are very harmful sometimes. Do you remember that when a child at Taverney I took it into my head to surround my bed with a border of cut lilacs? It was pretty as an altar we both said; but the next day I did not wake up, you know, and everybody thought me dead except you, who would not believe that I could leave you without saying

good-by; and it was you alone, poor Andrée, — you were six years old at that time, — it was you alone who revived me with kisses and tears."

"And air, Philippe, for it is air that one needs in such a case; I seem never to have air enough."

"Ah, sister, sister! you have forgotten all about that; you have had flowers brought into your chamber!"

"No, Philippe, no indeed; for fifteen days there has not been even an Easter daisy here! What a strange thing! I who loved flowers so much, now hold them in abhorrence. But let us leave the flowers alone. Then I have had headache; Mademoiselle de Taverney has had headache, dear Philippe, and what a fortunate person this Demoiselle de Taverney is! for on account of this headache which brought on a fainting-fit, both the court and the town have become interested in her condition."

"How is that?"

"To be sure, Madame la Dauphine has been kind enough to come to see me, — oh, Philippe what a charming protectress and refined friend Madame la Dauphine is! She has taken care of me, nursed me, brought me her own physician, and when that grave personage, whose decrees are infallible, felt my pulse, looked at my eyes and tongue, — can you think of the latest piece of good fortune which has befallen me?"

"No."

"Well, it was proved unqualifiedly that I was not sick the least in the world; Doctor Louis did not think it necessary to order me a single potion, to prescribe me a single pill, — he who, it is said, every day cuts off arms and legs which it makes one shudder to think of. So, Philippe, you see, I am remarkably well. Now tell me who has frightened you?"

"It is that little fool of a Gilbert, *pardieu!*"

"Gilbert?" said Andrée, with a gesture of impatience.

"Yes, he told me that you were very sick."

"And you believed that little idiot, that fellow good for nothing but to do or speak evil?"

"Andrée, Andrée!"

"Well?"

"You are growing pale again."

"No, but Gilbert irritates me; it is not enough to meet him in my path, but I must hear him spoken of when he is not by."

"Come, you are going to faint again."

"Oh, yes, yes! *mon Dieu!* But it is as—" And Andrée's lips blanched, and her voice stopped.

"How strange this is!" murmured Philippe.

Andrée made an effort. "No, it is nothing," she said; "do not mind all my nervous feelings. See, I am standing up, Philippe; if you agree, we will take a walk together, and in ten minutes I shall be well."

"I think you are mistaken as to the amount of your strength, Andrée."

"No; Philippe's return would bring me health even if I were dying. Shall we go out, Philippe?"

"Presently, dear Andrée," said Philippe, gently detaining his sister. "You have not wholly reassured me; wait until you are better."

"Very well."

Andrée fell back upon the sofa, drawing after her Philippe, whose hand she held. "And why," she continued, "do you come so suddenly without sending word?"

"But answer me, dear Andrée, why did you cease writing to me?"

"It is only a few days since I wrote."

"Almost fifteen days, Andrée."

Andrée bowed her head.

"Negligent!" said Philippe, with gentle reproach.

"No, but suffering, Philippe. Well, you are right; my

illness began on the day when you ceased to hear from me. Since that day things most dear have wearied me and been distasteful to me."

"And in the midst of all this I am much pleased with what you have just said."

"What have I said?"

"You have said that you were happy; so much the better, for if you are loved and respected, it is not so with me."

"With you?"

"Yes, with me, who was entirely neglected yonder, even by my sister."

"Oh, Philippe!"

"Could you believe, my dear Andrée, that since my departure, which they told me was so urgent, I have heard nothing of that pretended regiment which they sent me to take possession of, and which the king had promised me through Monsieur de Richelieu, through my father, even?"

"Oh, that does not surprise me," said Andrée.

"What! that does not surprise you?"

"No. If you knew, Philippe! Monsieur de Richelieu and my father are unsettled in their relations with each other; they seem like two bodies without souls. I do not understand the life of such people. On a certain morning my father runs over to see his old friend, as he calls him; he sends him to Versailles to see the king; then he returns here to wait, where he occupies himself in putting to me questions I do not understand. The day passes; no news. Then Monsieur de Taverney enters in great anger. The duke drives him away, he says; the duke is a traitor. Whom does the duke betray? I ask you; for I know nothing about it, and I confess I have but little desire to understand it. Monsieur de Taverney lives like a lost soul in purgatory, expecting always something which does not happen, — some one who never comes."

"But the king, Andrée, the king?"

"What, the king?"

"Yes, the king; so well disposed toward us."

Andrée looked timidly about her.

"What?"

"Listen! The king — let us speak low — I think I am very whimsical, Philippe. His Majesty at first seemed to be interested in me as well as in you, our father, and the family; but suddenly this interest grew cold without any apparent reason for it. The fact is, that his Majesty no longer looks at me, — he even turns his back on me, — and only yesterday, when I fainted in the garden —"

"Ah, you see, Gilbert was right; you did faint then, Andrée?"

"That miserable little Monsieur Gilbert had great need to tell you that, indeed; to tell everybody, perhaps! What concern is it of his whether I faint or not? I know very well, dear Philippe," added Andrée, smiling, "that it is not the thing to faint in a royal mansion; but in short, one does not faint for the pleasure of it, and I did not do it on purpose."

"But who blames you for it, dear sister?"

"Eh! why, the king."

"The king?"

"Yes, his Majesty was crossing the orchard on his way from the great Trianon just at the fatal moment. I was stretched quite senseless on a bench, in the arms of good Monsieur de Jussieu, who was helping me the best he could, when the king perceived me. You know, Philippe, fainting does not take away all perception, all consciousness of what is passing around us. Well, when the king saw me, insensible as I seemed, I noticed a knitting of the eyebrows, a look of anger, and I heard some very disagreeable words which the king muttered between his teeth; then his Majesty hurried off, very much scandalized, I

suppose, that I allowed myself to be ill on his grounds. Indeed, dear Philippe, it was, however, not my fault."

"Poor dear," said Philippe, pressing affectionately the hands of the young girl, "I believe, indeed, that it was not your fault; and then?"

"That is all, my dear. And Monsieur Gilbert might have spared his remarks."

"Come, now, you are hard on the poor fellow."

"Oh, yes, assume his defence, — a charming subject!"

"Andrée, for mercy's sake, do not be so unkind toward this boy. You wound him; you treat him harshly. I have seen you doing it — Oh, my God! Andrée, what is the matter now?"

This time Andrée had fallen backward upon the sofa-cushions without uttering a word. This time the flask could not revive her; it was necessary to wait until the swoon was over, — until circulation was restored.

"Decidedly," murmured Philippe, "you are suffering, my sister, in a way to frighten persons more courageous than I am where your sufferings are concerned. You may say what you please, but it seems to me that you ought not to treat this indisposition so lightly as you do."

"But, indeed, Philippe, since the doctor has said — "

"The doctor does not convince, and will never convince me; I wish I could have spoken to him myself! Where is this doctor to be found?"

"He comes every day to Trianon."

"But at what hour every day? In the morning?"

"Morning and evening, when he is in attendance."

"Is he on duty now?"

"Yes, my dear, and at seven in the evening precisely, for he is punctual, he will ascend the flight of stairs which leads to the apartments of Madame la Dauphine."

"Well," said Philippe, more composed, "I will wait here."

CHAPTER XLII.

A MISUNDERSTANDING.

PHILIPPE continued the conversation unaffectedly, meanwhile secretly observing his sister, who tried to gain command over herself so that she might not increase his anxiety by new fainting-fits.

Philippe spoke much of his disappointments, of the neglect of the king, the inconstancy of Monsieur de Richelieu. And when he heard seven o'clock strike he went out hastily, troubling himself but little to conceal from Andrée what he was about to do.

He went straight to the pavilion of the queen, and stopped at a distance sufficient to prevent his being questioned by persons in the service of the house, but so near that no one could pass without being recognized by him. In about five minutes he saw approaching him the stately and almost majestic figure of the doctor, whom Andrée had described to him. The day was declining, and in spite of the difficulty he found in reading, the worthy doctor was conning a treatise recently published at Cologne upon the causes and results of paralysis of the stomach. Darkness was gradually settling about him and the doctor was already guessing rather than reading, when a moving and opaque body shut out the last ray of light from the eyes of the learned practitioner. He looked up, saw a man in front of him, and asked, "What is the matter?"

"Pardon, Monsieur!" said Philippe; "have I the honor of speaking to Monsieur le Docteur Louis?"

"Yes, Monsieur," replied the doctor, shutting his book.

"Then a word with you, Monsieur, if you please!" said Philippe.

"Monsieur, excuse me! It is the hour for my visit to Madame la Dauphine, and I must not delay."

"Monsieur," and Philippe, with a gesture of entreaty, placed himself in the doctor's way, — "Monsieur, the person for whom I ask your aid is in the service of Madame la Dauphine. She is very ill, while Madame la Dauphine is not ill at all."

"In the first place, of whom are you speaking?" asked the doctor.

"Of a person to whom you have been introduced by Madame la Dauphine herself."

"Ah, ah! it might perhaps be Mademoiselle de Taverney?"

"Precisely, Monsieur."

"Ah, ah!" said the doctor, looking up quickly to observe the young man.

"You know, then, that she is very sick?"

"Yes; spasms, is it not?"

"Continual swoons, — yes, Monsieur. To-day, in the space of a few hours, she has fainted three or four times in my arms."

"Is the young lady worse?"

"Alas! I do not know; but you understand, Doctor, when one loves — "

"Do you love Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney?"

"Oh, more than my life, Doctor!" Philippe pronounced these words with such exaltation of fraternal love, that Doctor Louis mistook their meaning.

"Ah, ah!" said he, "it is you, then — " The doctor hesitated.

"What do you mean, Monsieur?" asked Philippe.

"It is you, then, who are —"

"Who am what, Monsieur?"

"Eh, *parbleu!* who are her lover?" said the doctor, impatiently.

Philippe took two steps backward, putting his hand to his brow, and becoming pale as death. "Monsieur," he said, "take care; you insult my sister!"

"Your sister! is Mademoiselle your sister?"

"Yes, Monsieur; and I did not think I had said anything to give rise, on your part, to such a misunderstanding."

"Excuse me, Monsieur! the hour at which you accost me, the air of mystery with which you spoke, — I have thought, I have supposed, that an interest more tender even than that of a brother —"

"Oh, Monsieur! neither lover nor husband will ever love my sister with a more profound love than mine."

"Very well, in that case I understand that my supposition may have wounded you, and I offer you an apology. Will you allow me, Monsieur?" and the doctor made a movement to go on.

"Doctor," insisted Philippe, "I beg of you, do not leave me without having reassured me as to the condition of my sister."

"But what has made you anxious about her condition?"

"Eh, *mon Dieu!* what I have seen."

"You have seen symptoms which indicate an indisposition —"

"Grave, Doctor!"

"That depends upon circumstances."

"Listen, Doctor! there is in all this something strange; it would seem that you will not, that you dare not, answer me."

"Suppose rather, Monsieur, that in my impatience to go to Madame la Dauphine, who is expecting me — "

"Doctor, Doctor!" said Philippe, passing his hand over his streaming brow, "you have taken me for the lover of Mademoiselle de Taverney?"

"Yes; but you have undeceived me."

"You think, then, that Mademoiselle de Taverney has a lover?"

"Pardon, Monsieur! I am not accountable to you for my thoughts."

"Doctor, have pity on me! Doctor, you have let fall a word which sticks in my heart like the broken blade of a poniard. Doctor, do not try to put me off; as you are a gentleman and a skilful doctor, what is that malady which you could explain to a lover, and which you wish to conceal from a brother? Doctor, I entreat you to answer me!"

"I will ask you, on the contrary, to excuse me from answering you, Monsieur; for by the way in which you question me, I see that you are not master of yourself."

"Oh, my God! you do not know, then, Monsieur, how each one of your words drives me toward that abyss, — the thought of which makes me shudder."

"Monsieur!"

"Doctor!" cried Philippe, with added vehemence, "you have as much as said that you have a terrible secret to disclose to me, to hear which I need all my composure and all my courage."

"But I do not know what supposition is misleading you. I have said nothing of the kind."

"Oh, you do a hundred times more than say! You let me think things. Oh, it is not kindness, Doctor; you see how my heart is consuming before you; you see how I beg, how I entreat. Speak, speak! See, I swear to

you, I am composed, I have courage — This sickness, this dishonor perhaps — Oh, my God! you do not contradict me, Doctor, Doctor!"

"Monsieur de Taverney, I have said nothing, neither to Madame la Dauphine, nor to your father, nor to you. Do not ask me anything more."

"Yes, yes; but you see how I interpret your silence. You see how I follow your thought into the dark and fatal road into which it plunges; stop me, at least, if I wander."

"Adieu, Monsieur," replied the doctor, sharply.

"Oh, you will not leave me without saying yes or no? One word, only one, — it is all I ask."

The doctor stopped. "Monsieur," he said, "just now — and that brings us back to the fatal mistake which has wounded you —"

"Do not let us speak of that, Monsieur."

"On the contrary, we will speak of it. Just now — a little late, perhaps — you told me that Mademoiselle de Taverney was your sister; but previously, with an exaltation which caused my error, you had told me that you loved Mademoiselle Andrée more than your life."

"It is true."

"If your love for her is so great, she must love you in return?"

"Oh, Monsieur! Andrée loves me better than she loves any one else."

"Well, then, return to her, question her, Monsieur, — question her on that mystery in which I am obliged to leave you; and if she loves you as you love her, why she will answer your questions. There are many things one will say to a friend which one will not say to a physician; then, perhaps, she will consent to tell you that of which I would not give you even a hint to save a finger of my

right hand. Adieu, Monsieur;" and the doctor turned again toward the pavilion.

"Oh, no, no, it is impossible!" cried Philippe, mad with grief, and sobbing at every word; "no, Doctor, I have misunderstood, — you cannot have said that!"

The doctor quietly moved away. Then, with a gentleness full of commiseration, "Do as I have just advised you, Monsieur de Taverney," he said, "and believe me, it is the best thing for you to do."

"Oh, but think of it! To believe you is to renounce the religion of my whole life; it is to accuse an angel; it is to tempt God, Doctor. If you require me to believe it, prove it, at least prove it!"

"Adieu, Monsieur."

"Doctor!" cried Philippe, in despair.

"Take care, if you speak so violently you will make known what I had determined to hide from the world, and had wished to conceal from yourself."

"Yes, yes; you are right, Doctor," said Philippe, in a tone so low that the words died on his lips; "but, indeed, science can make mistakes, and you will confess that you yourself are sometimes mistaken."

"Rarely, Monsieur," replied the doctor; "I am a man of hard study, and my lips never affirm until my eyes and my mind have said, 'I have seen, I know, I am sure.' Yes, certainly, you are right, Monsieur; sometimes I am mistaken, like every fallible creature; but according to all probability, it is not the case now. Come, be calm and let us part."

But Philippe could not be resigned. He put his hand upon the doctor's arm with such an air of entreaty that the latter stopped. "One last, one supreme favor, Monsieur," he said; "you see how agitated I am; I feel something which resembles madness; to know whether I

am going to live or die I need confirmation of that reality which threatens me. I am going to my sister; I will not speak to her until you shall have seen her again; consider."

"It is for you to consider, Monsieur; for I have not a word to add to what I have said."

"Monsieur, promise me, — my God! it is a favor that the executioner would not refuse his victim, — promise me to see my sister again after your visit to her Highness Madame la Dauphine; Doctor, in the name of Heaven promise me that!"

"It is useless, Monsieur; but you wish it, it is my duty to do what you desire. On leaving Madame la Dauphine, I will go to see your sister."

"Oh, thanks, thanks! Yes, come, and then you will confess that you have been mistaken."

"I hope so with all my heart, Monsieur; and if I am mistaken, I will confess it joyfully. Adieu." And the doctor, restored to freedom, went away, leaving Philippe upon the esplanade, shaking with fever, covered with cold perspiration, and in his delirium conscious neither of the place where he was nor of the man with whom he had been talking, nor of the secret which he had just learned. For some minutes he gazed without intelligence at the sky, gradually illumined by stars, and at the pavilion, in which lights appeared.

CHAPTER XLIII.

AN INVESTIGATION.

As soon as Philippe had recovered his senses and succeeded in gaining control over his reason, he directed his steps toward the apartment of Andrée. Indeed, as he approached the pavilion the phantom of his unhappiness gradually vanished; it seemed to him a dream and not a reality against which he had for a moment struggled. The farther he went from the doctor the less he believed in his threatening intimations. Surely science was mistaken, and virtue had not failed. Had not the doctor completely justified his incredulity in promising to come to see his sister?

Nevertheless, when Philippe came into Andrée's presence he was so changed, so pale, so haggard, that she was anxious in her turn to know how so terrible a change could have taken place in him in so short a time. One thing alone could have produced such an effect on Philippe.

"Good Heavens! brother," she said, "I am then very ill?"

"Why do you ask?" said Philippe.

"Because the consultation with Doctor Louis has frightened you."

"No, sister," said Philippe; "the doctor is not anxious, and you told me the truth. I could hardly induce him to come again."

"Ah, is he coming again?"

"Yes; that does not vex you, Andrée?" and Philippe, saying this, gazed into the eyes of the young girl.

"No," she replied simply, "and if it reassures you, that is all I ask; but meanwhile tell me, whence comes this frightful paleness which troubles me?"

"Does that disturb you, Andrée?"

"You ask that!"

"You love me, then, tenderly, Andrée?"

"What did you say?" said the young girl.

"I ask, Andrée, if you love me as well now as in our childhood?"

"Oh, Philippe, Philippe!"

"So I am one of the dearest friends you have on earth?"

"Oh, the dearest, the only one!" cried Andrée. Then, blushing and confused, "Excuse me, Philippe," she said, "I forgot —"

"Our father, is it not Andrée?"

"Yes."

Philippe took his sister's hand and looking at her tenderly, said, "Andrée, do not think that I should blame you if your heart held still another affection than the love you have for my father, or that you feel for me." Then sitting down by her, he continued, "You are at an age, Andrée, when the hearts of young girls are stirred more deeply than they themselves wish, and, you know, a divine precept commands women to leave parents and family to follow their husband."

Andrée looked at Philippe for some time as if he had spoken a strange language which she did not understand. Then beginning to laugh, with a simplicity nothing could describe. "My husband!" she said, "did you not say 'husband,' Philippe? Eh, *mon Dieu!* he is yet unborn, or at least, I do not know him."

Philippe touched by this exclamation of Andrée, evidently so sincere, approached her, and taking her hand

between his own he answered, "Before having a husband, my good Andrée, one must have a lover."

Andrée looked at Philippe in amazement, permitting him to gaze into the very depths of her clear, pure eyes in which her whole soul was reflected.

"My sister," said Philippe, "since your birth I have been your best friend, as you have been my only one; I never left you, to go to play with my comrades. We have grown up together, and nothing has disturbed the perfect confidence we placed in each other; why is it that for some time, Andrée, and without apparent reason, you have been so changed toward me?"

"Changed, I! I changed toward you, Philippe? Explain yourself. Indeed, I understand nothing you have said to me since you came in."

"Yes, Andrée," said the young man, pressing her to his breast; "yes, my sweet sister, the passions of youth have succeeded to the affections of childhood, and now that you are in love I am no longer worthy of your confidence."

"My brother, my friend," said Andrée, more and more astonished, "why do you say that? Why do you speak of love to me?"

"Andrée, I come courageously to a question full of dangers for you, full of anguish for me. I know very well that in asking or rather demanding your confidence at this time, I fall in your esteem; but I would rather — and believe me, it is a hard thing to say — I would rather feel that you love me less, than leave you a prey to the misfortunes which threaten you, — terrible misfortunes, Andrée, if you persist in the silence which I deplore, and of which I could not have thought you capable toward a friend, a brother."

"My brother, my friend," said Andrée, "I swear to you I do not understand your reproaches."

"Andrée, do you wish me to make you understand them?"

"Oh, yes; certainly, yes."

"Well, then, if, encouraged by you, I speak too plainly, if I call the color to your brow, and shame to weigh heavily upon your heart, blame only yourself, who have driven me by unjust distrust to search your soul to its very depths that I may tear your secret from it."

"Do so, Philippe, and I assure you that I shall not be offended."

Philippe looked at his sister, then arose and strode about the floor in great agitation. The composure of the young girl contradicted so strangely the charge against her he had made in his own mind, that he did not know what to think.

Andrée on her part contemplated her brother with astonishment, and became chilled in contact with this solemnity, so different from the sweet fraternal authority.

So, before Philippe had recovered speech, Andrée arose in her turn and went to her brother, putting her arm in his. Then looking at him with an unspeakable tenderness, she said, "Listen, Philippe, look at me as I look at you!"

"Oh, I ask nothing better," the young man replied, fixing upon her his burning eyes; "what do you wish to say to me?"

"I wish to say to you, Philippe, that you have always been a little jealous of my friendship; that is natural, since I also have been jealous of your care and affection; well, look at me as I told you to." The young girl smiled. "Do you see a secret in my eyes?" she said.

"Yes, yes, I see one," said Philippe; "Andrée, you love some one."

"I?" cried the young girl, with an expression of aston-

ishment so natural that the most skilful actress could not have imitated the accent of that utterance. And she began to laugh; "I love some one?" she said.

"Some one loves you, then?"

"Upon my word, so much the worse; for as that unknown person has never become acquainted with me and consequently has not declared himself, it is a dead waste of love."

Then, seeing his sister laugh and jest upon this question so frankly, observing the limpid blue of her eyes, the pure frankness of her demeanor, Philippe, who felt Andrée's heart beating against his with so steady a motion, said to himself that a month's absence could not make such a change in the character of an irreproachable young girl; that poor Andrée was suspected unjustly; that science lied. He confessed that there was some excuse for Doctor Louis, who did not know Andrée's purity and exquisite instincts; who thought her like all those girls of noble rank, who, fascinated by unworthy examples, or carried away by the excessive ardor of corrupted blood, surrender themselves without regret, or even without ambition.

A last glance at Andrée persuaded Philippe of the doctor's error; and he was so happy in this conviction, that he embraced his sister like those martyrs who confessed the purity of the Virgin Mary, confessing at the same time their belief in her divine Son.

While in the midst of these changes of feeling Philippe heard on the stairs the step of Doctor Louis, faithful to his promise. Andrée trembled; in her situation, everything was an event. "Who is coming?" she asked.

"Doctor Louis, probably," said Philippe.

At the same moment the door opened, and the doctor, expected so anxiously by Philippe, entered the room. He was, as we have said, one of those grave and honorable

men to whom science is a priesthood, and who study its mysteries religiously. Doctor Louis sought to discover the diseases of the soul beneath the diseases of the body, — which was an unusual thing at this very materialistic period. He went on his way boldly, gruffly, paying little attention to rumors and obstacles, economizing his time, that patrimony of laboring men, with an avarice which made him rude toward the idle and garrulous. It was for this reason that he had answered Philippe so roughly at their first interview. He had taken him for one of those fops of the court who come to fawn upon the doctor in order to procure congratulations upon their feats of prowess in love, and who are very proud of having a secret to pay for. But as soon as the medallion was turned, and instead of the fop, more or less amorous, the doctor had seen the dark, threatening face of the brother; as soon as in the place of an offence he had seen a misfortune, — the philosophic practitioner, the man of heart, was moved, and after the last words of Philippe, the doctor had said to himself, "Not only may I have been mistaken, but I sincerely wish I may be." That is the reason why even without the urgent entreaty of Philippe, he would have come to see Andrée, to satisfy himself by a more decisive examination that his first opinion had been correct. He came in, and his first glance, that "taking possession" of the doctor and the observer, was fastened upon Andrée as he entered the antechamber, and he continued to observe her closely. Immediately, either by reason of the excitement caused by the doctor's visit, or by natural accident, Andrée was seized with one of those attacks which had frightened Philippe, and she tottered, putting her handkerchief to her lips with an expression of pain. Philippe, engaged in receiving the doctor, had not seen it. "Doctor," he said, "you are welcome. Pardon the somewhat unceremonious manner in which I addressed you, when I ac-

costed you an hour ago, I was as agitated as I am now calm."

The doctor ceased looking at Andrée for a moment, and his observation fell upon the young man, whose smile and effusiveness he tried to comprehend.

"You have talked with Mademoiselle, your sister, as I advised you?" he asked.

"Yes, Doctor, yes."

"And you are reassured?"

"I have more of heaven and less of hell in my heart."

The doctor took Andrée's hand and felt her pulse a long time.

Philippe looked on as if to say, "Oh, go on, Doctor; I dread no longer the physician's diagnosis. — Well, Monsieur?" he said, with an air of triumph.

"Monsieur le Chevalier," replied Doctor Louis, "will you leave me alone with your sister?" These words, simply pronounced, shook the young man's confidence. "What! do you still wish it?" he said.

The doctor made an affirmative gesture.

"Very well, I will leave you, Monsieur," replied Philippe, with a serious air. Then to his sister, "Andrée," he continued, "be frank and straightforward with the doctor." The young girl shrugged her shoulders as if she could not understand what he meant. Philippe continued, "While he is talking to you about your health I will take a turn in the park. The hour for which I ordered my horse has not arrived, so that I shall be able to see you again before my departure and to have a moment's conversation with you." And he pressed Andrée's hand, trying to smile. But to the young girl the pressure and the smile seemed constrained and convulsive. The doctor accompanied Philippe to the door, which he closed after him. Then he sat down on the same sofa with Andrée.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE CONSULTATION.

THE most profound silence reigned without. Not a breath of wind was stirring; not a human voice could be heard, — all Nature was still.

Andrée, in the depths of her heart, was considerably disturbed to see the importance which Philippe and the doctor attributed to this disease. She was rather surprised at the return of Doctor Louis, who that very morning had declared her illness insignificant, and remedies useless; but thanks to her deep purity, the resplendent mirror of the soul was not even dulled by the breath of all these different suspicions.

Suddenly the doctor, who had not ceased looking at her, after having turned upon her the full light of the lamp, took her hand like a friend or a confessor, no longer trying the pulse like a doctor. This unexpected movement surprised the susceptible Andrée; she came near drawing away her hand.

"Mademoiselle," asked the doctor, "did you wish to see me, or have I acceded only to the desire of your brother in coming again to see you?"

"Monsieur," replied Andrée, "my brother, on his return, informed me that you would come again to see me; but since you had done me the honor this morning to speak so lightly of my illness, I should not have taken the liberty to trouble you again."

The doctor bowed. "Monsieur, your brother," he replied, "seems very passionate, jealous of his honor and

unreasonable in some matters; that is probably the reason why you have declined to open your heart to him."

Andrée looked at the doctor as she had looked at Philippe. "You too, Monsieur?" she said, with a supreme haughtiness.

"Pardon, Mademoiselle, let me finish."

Andrée made a gesture of impatience, or rather of resignation.

"It is, then, natural," continued the doctor, "that, seeing the sorrow and dreading the anger of this young man, you have obstinately kept your secret; but with me, Mademoiselle, — with me, who am, you may well believe, the doctor of souls as well as of bodies; with me, who see and who know; with me, who, consequently, meet you half-way on the difficult road of confession, — with me, I have the right to expect that you will be more frank."

"Monsieur," replied Andrée, "if I had not seen my brother's face grow sad and take on the expression of a real sorrow; if I did not consider your grave appearance and the reputation for seriousness which you enjoy, — I should think that you were putting your heads together to play a comedy at my expense, and to make me take, after a consultation, through the fear which you would have caused me, some very black and bitter medicine."

The doctor frowned. "Mademoiselle," he said, "I beg you, stop short in this course of dissimulation."

"Dissimulation!" cried Andrée.

"Would you prefer to have me call it hypocrisy?"

"But, Monsieur," cried the young girl, "you insult me!"

"Say that I understand you."

"Monsieur!" Andrée rose, but the doctor forced her gently, to sit down again.

"No," he continued, "no, my child, I do not insult

you, — I serve you; and if I convince you, I save you! So neither your expression of anger nor your pretended indignation will change my resolution."

"But what do you wish? What do you demand?"

"Confess, or, upon my honor, I shall have a very bad opinion of you."

"Monsieur, once more, my brother is not here to defend me, and I say that you insult me, that I do not understand, and that I demand a clear and complete explanation in regard to this pretended disease."

"For the last time, Mademoiselle," replied the astonished doctor, "will you not spare me the pain of making you blush?"

"I do not understand! I do not understand! I do not understand!" Andrée exclaimed three times, with flashing eyes, which questioned, defied, and almost threatened.

"Well, I understand about you, Mademoiselle; you doubt science, and you hope to conceal your condition from the world. But, be undeceived, with one single word I will humble all your pride, — you are enceinte!"

Andrée uttered a terrible cry, and fell back on the sofa. This cry was followed by the sound of a door opened with violence, and Philippe bounded into the middle of the room, sword in hand, with blood-shot eyes and trembling lips. "Scoundrel!" he said to the doctor, "you lie!"

The doctor turned slowly toward the young man without letting go the scarcely beating pulse of Andrée. "I have said what I have said, Monsieur," he replied, "and the fear of your sword, naked or sheathed, will not make me say what is not true."

"Doctor!" murmured Philippe, letting his sword fall.

"You wished me to verify by a second trial my first examination; I have done so. Now that certainty is established, nothing can destroy my faith in it. I regret it

extremely, young man; for you have inspired me as much with sympathy as this young girl has inspired me with aversion, through her persistence in falsehood."

Philippe started, but Andrée was motionless.

"I am a family man, Monsieur," continued the doctor, "and I understand how much you must suffer. I offer you my services, then, and I promise secrecy. My word is sacred, Monsieur, and everybody will tell you that I think more of my word than of my life."

"Oh! but, Monsieur, it is impossible!"

"I do not know whether it is impossible; but it is true. Adieu, Monsieur de Taverney." And the doctor turned away with the same steady and slow step, looking affectionately at the young man, who was writhing with pain, and who, as soon as the door was shut, sank overcome with grief into a chair two steps from Andrée.

The doctor having gone, Philippe arose, shut the doors of the corridor and of the chamber, closed the windows, and approaching Andrée, who was astonished to see him making these inauspicious preparations, "You have deceived me in a stupid and cowardly manner," he said, folding his arms, — "cowardly, because I am your brother, because I was so weak as to love you, to prefer you to all, to esteem you above all, and because this confidence on my part ought at least to call forth your own, even if affection could not inspire it; stupidly, because now the infamous secret which dishonors us is in the power of a third person; because in spite of your secrecy it may have been seen by others; because, in short, if you had confessed your situation to me at first, I might have saved you from shame, if not through affection for you, at least for my own sake; for indeed I should save myself in saving you. See, now, the full measure of your guilt. Your honor, so long as you are not married, is shared by

all those whose name you bear, — that is to say, whose name you soil. Now, then, I am no longer your brother, since you have denied me that right; now, I am a man interested in wresting from you by all possible means the whole secret, so that from this confession may spring forth for myself some reparation. I come, then, to you full of anger and resolution, and I say to you, Since you have been coward enough to trust in a lie, you will be punished as cowards are punished. Confess, then, your crime, or — "

"Threats!" cried the proud Andrée, — "threats to a woman!" and she arose pale and threatening herself.

"Yes, threats, — not to a woman, but to a creature without honesty, without honor."

"Threats!" continued Andrée, gradually becoming exasperated, — "threats to me, who know nothing, who understand nothing, who regard you all as bloodthirsty lunatics, conspiring together to kill me with grief, if not with shame!"

"Well, yes!" cried Philippe; "die, then! die, then, unless you confess, — die this instant! God judges you, and I will strike you;" and the young man took up, convulsively, his sword, and quick as lightning placed the point at his sister's breast.

"Well, well, kill me!" she cried, without showing fear of the light which flashed from the blade, without trying to avoid the pain of the wound; and she threw herself forward, full of grief and madness, and her movement was so quick that the sword would have pierced her breast if it had not been for the sudden terror of Philippe, and the sight of drops of blood which stained the muslin thrown around his sister's neck. The young man had lost his strength and his anger; he started back, dropped his sword, and falling on his knees, sobbing, he put his arms around the body of the young girl.

"Andrée! Andrée!" he cried, "no, no! it is I who will die! You love me no longer, you know me no more; I have nothing more to do in this world. Oh, you love some one so much, Andrée, that you prefer death to confiding in me! Oh, Andrée, you shall not die! it is I who will die;" and he attempted to escape, but already Andrée had put both arms about his neck, beside herself, covering him with kisses, bathing him with tears.

"No, no," she said; "you were right at first. Kill me, Philippe, for they say that I am guilty. But you, so noble, so pure, so good, — you whom no one accuses, live and pity me instead of cursing me."

"Well, sister," replied the young man, "in the name of Heaven, in the name of our former friendship, come, fear nothing, neither for yourself nor for him whom you love; he, whoever he may be, shall be sacred to me, were he my greatest enemy, were he the vilest of men. But I have no enemy, Andrée; and you are so noble in heart and thought that your lover must be well chosen. Well, I will go to find him, I will call him brother. You say nothing; do you mean that marriage between you and him is impossible? Well, so be it! I will be resigned; I will keep all my grief to myself; I will stifle this imperious voice of honor which demands blood. I ask you nothing, not even the name of this man. You have loved this man, therefore he is dear to me — Only, let us leave France, let us go together. The king has given you a valuable present, they say; well, we will sell it; we will send half of the money to our father; then with the other half we will live unknown. I will be all to you, Andrée; you shall be all to me. I love no one; you see that I am devoted to you, Andrée; you see what I am doing; you see that you can rely on my friendship, — come, will you refuse me still your confidence, after what I have just said to you? Come, come, will you not call me your brother?"

Andrée had listened in silence to what the distracted young man had said. The beating of her heart alone gave sign of life; her look alone indicated reason.

"Philippe," she said, after a long silence, "you thought that I loved you no longer, poor brother! you thought that I loved another man; you thought that I had forgotten the law of honor, — I, who am a girl of noble birth, and who understand all the duties that word imposes upon me! My dear, I forgive you. Yes, yes; in vain have you believed me base; in vain have you called me cowardly. Yes, yes, I forgive you; but I will not forgive you if you believe me so impious, so vile as to swear falsely to you. I swear to you, Philippe, by the God who hears me, by the soul of my mother, — which has not sufficiently protected me, alas! as it would seem, — I swear to you by my ardent love for you, that never a thought of love has distracted my reason; that never has a man said to me, 'I love you;' that never have lips kissed my hand; that I am pure in mind, virgin in desire as on the day of my birth. Now, Philippe, God has my soul, take you my body in your hands."

"It is well," said Philippe, after a long silence, — "it is well, Andrée, I thank you. Now I see clearly into the very depths of your heart. Yes, you are pure, innocent, dear victim; but there are magic drinks, poisoned philtres; some one has set for you an infamous trap; some one has taken from you in your sleep that which living no one could have torn from you but with your life. You have fallen into some snare, Andrée; but now we are united, consequently we are strong. You trust to me the care of your honor and of your vengeance, do you not?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" said Andrée, quickly, with bitter emphasis; "yes, for if you avenge me it will be for a crime."

"Well," continued Philippe, "aid me, support me.

Let us search together; let us go back hour by hour over the past days; let us follow the helpful thread of memory, and at the first clew — "

"Oh, I wish it! I wish it!" said Andrée; "let us search."

"Well, have you noticed any one following you, watching you?"

"No."

"No one has written to you?"

"No one."

"No man has told you he loved you?"

"No one."

"Women have a remarkable instinct in this respect; have you ever noticed that any one — desired you?"

"I have never noticed anything of the kind."

"Dear sister, search the circumstances of your life, its inmost details."

"Lead me."

"Have you walked out alone?"

"Never, that I can remember, except to go to see Madame la Dauphine."

"When you went off into the park, into the woods?"

"Nicole always accompanied me."

"Speaking of Nicole, she has left you?"

"Yes."

"On what day?"

"The very day of your departure, I think."

"She was a girl of questionable conduct; do you know the particulars of her flight? Think carefully."

"I only know that she went off with her lover."

"What were your last relations with that girl?"

"Oh, at nine o'clock, she came as usual into my chamber, undressed me, prepared my glass of water, and went out."

"You did not notice whether she mixed any cordial with the water?"

"No; besides, that circumstance would have had no importance, for I remember that at the moment when I lifted the glass to my lips, I experienced a very strange sensation."

"What was it like?"

"Like that I experienced one day at Taverney."

"At Taverney?"

"Yes, when that stranger was passing by."

"What stranger?"

"Comte de Balsamo."

"Comte de Balsamo? And what was this sensation?"

"Oh, something like vertigo, like dizziness; then the loss of all my faculties."

"And you felt this impression at Taverney, you say?"

"Yes."

"Under what circumstances?"

"I was at my piano; I felt myself fainting; I looked before me and saw the count in a mirror. From that moment I remember nothing more, except that when I awoke I was still at the piano, and could not judge of the length of my sleep."

"It is the only time, you say, that you experienced this singular sensation?"

"Once more, on the day or rather the night of the fire-works. I was dragged along by all that crowd, upon the point of being crushed, destroyed; I collected all my strength for the struggle; all at once my arms relaxed, a cloud enveloped my eyes, but through this cloud I had yet time to see this very man."

"The Comte de Balsamo?"

"Yes."

"And you went to sleep?"

"I went to sleep or fainted, I cannot tell which. You know how he carried me away, and brought me back to my father."

"Yes, yes; and that night, — the night that Nicole went away, — did you see him then?"

"No; but I experienced all the symptoms which gave notice of his presence, — the same strange sensations, the same nervous dizziness, the same torpor, the same sleep."

"The same sleep?"

"Yes, sleep full of vertigos, of which, even while struggling against them, I recognized the mysterious source before yielding to them."

"Great God!" cried Philippe, "go on, go on!"

"I went to sleep."

"Where did you go to sleep?"

"On my own bed, I am very sure; and I awoke upon the floor, alone, ill, and cold, like a dead person reviving. I called Nicole, but in vain; Nicole had disappeared."

"And this sleep was the very same?"

"Yes."

"The same as at Taverney? the same as on the day of the fêtes?"

"Yes, yes."

"On the first two occasions, just before yielding, you had seen this Joseph Balsamo, this Comte de Fenix?"

"Certainly."

"And the third time you did not see him?"

"No," said Andrée, in terror, for she was beginning to understand; "no, but I felt his presence."

"Good!" cried Philippe; "now be calm, be reassured, be proud, Andrée; I know the secret. Thanks, dear sister, thanks. Ah, we are saved!"

Philippe took Andrée in his arms, pressed her tenderly to his heart, and carried away by the ardor of resolution, he rushed out of the chamber. He ran to the stables, saddled his horse himself, mounted, and took in great haste the road to Paris.

CHAPTER XLV.

GILBERT'S CONSCIENCE.

All the scenes we have just described had reacted powerfully upon Gilbert. The unbalanced susceptibility of this young man was subjected to too severe a trial when, in the depths of the retreat which he knew how to choose in some corner of the garden, he saw every day the progress of the disease on the face and in the step of Andrée; when this paleness, which had alarmed him the evening before, seemed next morning more marked, more accusing, when Mademoiselle de Taverney came to the window to get the first rays of the morning sun. Then whoever had observed Gilbert's countenance would not have failed to see in it the characteristic traits of that remorse which was so favorite a subject among the painters of antiquity.

Gilbert loved the beauty of Andrée, and on the other hand he detested it. This brilliant beauty, together with so many other superior qualities, established a new barrier between him and the young girl; nevertheless this beauty seemed to him a new treasure to acquire. Such were the reasons for his love and his hatred, for his desire and his scorn.

But from the time this beauty was sullied, when the features of Andrée became a revelation of suffering, or of shame, from the time when there was danger for Andrée, danger for Gilbert, the situation was wholly changed; and Gilbert, who was eminently just, changed also his point of view. We may say that his first feeling was one of

profound sadness. He did not see without pain the beauty of his mistress fading, her health failing. He experienced the delicious pride of pitying this haughty woman, so scornful of him, and of rewarding her with compassion for all the opprobrium with which she had loaded him. But we do not on this account make excuses for Gilbert; pride justifies nothing. But pride was not the only sentiment in Gilbert's heart as he confronted the situation. Every time that Mademoiselle de Taverney, pale, suffering, and sad, appeared like a phantom before the eyes of Gilbert, his heart leaped, the blood rushed to his eyelids like tears, and he pressed to his breast a clinched, restless hand, which tried to restrain the revolt of his conscience.

"It is through me that she is ruined," he murmured. And devouring her with a furious look, he fled, imagining all the time that he could see her, and hear her groan. Then he was stricken to the heart; he experienced one of the most poignant griefs that it is given man to endure. His furious love needed consolation, and he would have given his life for the right to fall on his knees before Andrée, to take her by the hand, to console her, to recall her to life when she fainted. His powerlessness on these occasions was a punishment, the tortures of which no words could describe. Gilbert bore this martyrdom three days. On the first day he had noticed the change, the slow working of the disease on Andrée. Where others saw nothing more, he, the cause, could divine and interpret everything. More than this, he had studied the course of the disease, and could calculate the exact time of the crisis.

The day of Andrée's faintings he spent in frights, in agitations, in wild wanderings, — certain indications of a conscience at bay. All this running to and fro, these airs of indifference or of eagerness, these bursts of sympathy or

sarcasm which Gilbert considered as master-pieces of dissimulation and manœuvring, any clerk of the Châtelet, any turnkey of Saint Lazare, would have analyzed and interpreted them as the ferret of Monsieur de Sartines could read and write cipher. One does not see a man run until out of breath, then suddenly stop, utter inarticulate sounds, then plunge all at once into the deepest silence, — one does not see him listening in the air for indifferent sounds, or dig the ground, or hack the trees in rage, without thinking of him, "This man is mad if he is not a culprit."

After this first outpouring of remorse, Gilbert had passed from commiseration to egotism. He knew that these frequent fainting fits of Andrée would not seem to be a natural sickness, and that the cause of them would be sought for. Gilbert called to mind the brutal and expeditious forms of justice which investigate all kinds of crime which can dishonor a man, — the questions, the examinations, the analogies unknown to the rest of the world, and which put on the track of a criminal those blood-hounds, full of resources, called "instructors." Now that which Gilbert had done seemed to him morally most odious and deserving of punishment. He began to tremble in earnest; for he feared that the sickness of Andrée would instigate inquiry. From this time, like the criminal in that celebrated picture pursued by the angel of remorse by the pale light of his touch, Gilbert cast frightened looks upon everything about him. He was suspicious; every sound and every whisper, every word he heard spoken, however insignificant, seemed to have some relation to Mademoiselle de Taverney or to himself.

He had seen Monsieur de Richelieu go to see the king, and Monsieur de Taverney go to visit his daughter. The

house had seemed on that day to take on an extraordinary air of conspiracy and suspicion. It was still worse when he saw the doctor and the dauphiness repair to the chamber of Andrée. Gilbert was one of those sceptics who believe in nothing. He cared but little for God or man; but he recognized science as God, and proclaimed its omnipotence. There were times when Gilbert would have denied the infallible knowledge of the Supreme Being; he never doubted the clear-sightedness of the doctor. The visit of Doctor Louis to Andrée was a blow from which Gilbert's mind could not recover. He ran to his chamber, leaving his work, and deaf as a statue to the injunctions of his superiors. There, behind the poor curtain which he had improvised to conceal his spyings, he addressed all his faculties to the endeavor to discover a word or movement which would reveal the result of the consultation. Nothing happened which would enlighten him. Only once he saw the face of the dauphiness, who came to the window to take a look at the court, which she had probably never seen. He could also see Doctor Louis opening this window to let into the chamber a little fresh air. As for hearing what was said, or seeing the expression of their faces, that was not possible; a thick curtain, which served as a blind, fell the whole length of the window, and prevented all knowledge of what was going on.

The anguish of the young man may be conceived. The doctor, with the eye of a lynx, had solved the mystery. Disclosure must follow, not immediately, as Gilbert justly supposed, on account of the presence of the dauphiness, but very soon between the father and daughter when the two visitors should leave them alone. Gilbert, wild with grief and impatience, beat his head against the walls of his garret. He saw Monsieur de Taverney go out with Madame la Dauphine, the doctor having already left.

"The explanation will take place between Monsieur de Taverney and the dauphiness," he said to himself.

The baron did not return to his daughter; Andrée remained alone in her room, and spent the time upon her sofa, partly in reading, interrupted by spasms and headaches, partly in meditations so deep and quiet that Gilbert took them for trances, when he caught a glimpse of her through an opening in the curtain which the wind occasionally blew aside.

Andrée, worn out with pain and emotion, went to sleep. Gilbert profited by this respite to go out of doors to gather rumors and comments. This time was precious to him, because it gave him opportunity for reflection. The danger was so imminent that he must combat it by a sudden, heroic resolution. This was the first point of support upon which this mind, vacillating because subtle, found strength and tranquillity. But what resolution to take? Any change, in such circumstances, would attract attention. Flight? Ah, yes! flight, with that energy of youth, that vigor of despair and of fear, which doubles the strength of a man and renders it equal to that of an army, — hide by day, travel by night, and arrive at length — where? In what place could he hide where the avenging arm of justice could not find him?

Gilbert knew the customs of the country. What would they think in countries almost savage, almost deserted, — for as to cities he must not think of them, — what would they think in a small town, a hamlet, of the stranger who comes some day to beg his bread, or whom they suspect of stealing it? And then Gilbert knew himself by heart, — a noticeable face, a face which henceforth would bear the indelible impress of a terrible secret, would attract the attention of every observer. To fly was already a danger; but to be discovered was a disgrace.

Flight would condemn him; he rejected this idea, and as if his mind had strength for only one idea, the unhappy man, after dismissing the idea of flight, entertained that of death. It was the first time he had thought of it; the apparition of this lugubrious phantom he had evoked occasioned him no fear. "It will be time enough to think of death when all resources are exhausted. Besides, it is cowardly to kill one's self. Rousseau has said, 'To suffer is more noble.'" With the utterance of this paradox, Gilbert raised his head and renewed his wandering course through the gardens. He had obtained the first glimpse of security, when, all at once, Philippe, arriving as we have seen, overturned all his ideas, and threw him into a fresh series of perplexities.

The brother, the brother sent for! it has been then satisfactorily proved! The family have determined on silence. Yes; but with all the investigations, all the refinement of details which for Gilbert meant the tortures of the Conciergerie, of the Châtelet, and of the Tournelle. They would drag him before Andrée; they would force him to kneel, to confess ignominiously his crime; and they would kill him like a dog with a cudgel or knife, — a legitimate vengeance justified in advance by numerous precedents.

Louis XV. was very indulgent to the nobility in such cases. And then Philippe was the most formidable avenger that Mademoiselle de Taverney could call to her aid. Philippe, who alone of the family had shown toward Gilbert the sentiments of a man and almost of an equal, — would not Philippe as surely kill the criminal with a word as with the sword; if this word were, "Gilbert, you have eaten of our bread, and you have dishonored us!"

So we have seen Gilbert stealing away at the first appearance of Philippe; and in returning he obeyed only

his instinct not to accuse himself; and from that moment, he concentrated all his strength into a single purpose, — resistance. He followed Philippe, saw him go to the apartments of Andrée, and talk with Doctor Louis; he watched everything, judged everything, understood the despair of Philippe. He saw that grief spring up and increase; his terrible scene with Andrée he discovered from the play of the shadows behind the curtains. "I am lost," he thought. And immediately, his reason wandering, he seized a knife to kill Philippe whom he expected to see appear at his door, or to kill himself, if necessary.

But, on the contrary, Philippe was reconciled with his sister. Gilbert saw him on his knees kissing Andrée's hands; here was a fresh hope, a door of safety. If Philippe had not come up to him with cries of rage, it was because Andrée was wholly ignorant of the name of the criminal. If she, the only witness, the only accuser, knew nothing, why no one knew anything. If Andrée, foolish hope, knew and did not speak, it was more than safety, — it was happiness, it was triumph. From this moment Gilbert rose to the level of the situation. Nothing arrested his progress now that he had recovered his clearness of vision. "Where is the evidence," he said, "if Mademoiselle de Taverney does not accuse me? And, fool that I am, is it the result she will accuse me of, or the crime itself? Now, she has not reproached me for the crime; nothing for three weeks past has indicated to me that she detested me, or avoided me more than formerly. If, then, she has not known the cause, nothing in the effect will point to me more than to another. I saw the king himself in the chamber of Mademoiselle Andrée. I will prove it, if need be, to the brother, and in spite of every denial of his Majesty, they will believe me. Yes; but this would be a dangerous

game. I will be silent; the king has too many ways of proving his innocence, or of crushing my evidence. But in default of the king, whose name cannot be brought into this affair under pain of imprisonment for life, or of death, have I not that unknown man who the same night led Mademoiselle de Taverney into the garden? This man, how will he defend himself? What will be their reason for suspecting him? How will they find him if they do suspect him? He is but an ordinary man; I am as good as he, and I will defend myself stoutly against him. Besides, they will not even think of me. God alone saw me," he added, laughing bitterly; "but this God who so often sees my grief and my tears without saying anything, why should he be so unjust as to betray me on this first chance for happiness that he has given me? Moreover, if there has been a crime, it is his, and not mine; and Monsieur de Voltaire proves incontestably that there are no longer any miracles. I am saved, I am calm; my secret is my own, the future is mine." After these reflections, or rather this compromise with his conscience, Gilbert locked up his garden-tools, and took his evening meal with his companions. He was gay, careless, defiant even. He had had remorse, he had been afraid, — a two-fold weakness which a man, a philosopher, must hasten to forget. Only he reckoned without his conscience; Gilbert did not sleep.

CHAPTER XLVI.

TWO GRIEFS.

GILBERT had rightly judged the position when he said, speaking of the unknown man surprised by him in the gardens on that evening which had been so fatal to Mademoiselle de Taverney, "Will they find him?" In fact Philippe was wholly ignorant of the place of residence of Joseph Balsamo, Comte de Fenix. But he remembered that lady of quality, that Marquise de Savigny, to whom, on the thirtieth of May, Andrée had been conducted to be cared for. It was not yet too late to present himself at the house of this lady, who lived in the Rue Saint Honoré. Philippe restrained the agitation of his mind and of his senses; he ascended to the apartments of the lady, and the servant gave him immediately without hesitation the address of Balsamo, Rue Saint Claude, au Marais. Philippe hastened directly to the address indicated.

But it was not without profound emotion that he touched the knocker of this suspicious house, where, as he thought, were forever buried the repose and honor of poor Andrée. But with an appeal to his will he sufficiently overcome indignation and emotion to preserve the strength which he was sure to need. He knocked, then, with a firm hand at the gate of the house which, according to the custom of the place, flew open. Philippe entered the court, holding his horse by the bridle. But he had not taken four steps when Fritz, coming out from the vestibule

and appearing at the top of the steps, stopped him with this question, "What does Monsieur want?"

Philippe trembled as if he had met with an unforeseen obstacle. He looked at the German, knitting his brow as if Fritz had not performed his simple duty as an attendant.

"I wish to speak to the master of the house, — to Comte de Fenix," replied Philippe, passing the bridle of his horse through a ring, and walking toward the house, which he entered.

"Monsieur is not at home," said Fritz, letting Philippe pass, however, with the politeness of a well-trained servant. Strange thing! Philippe seemed to have anticipated nothing less than this simple reply. He remained for a moment abashed. "Where can I find him?" he asked.

"I do not know, Monsieur."

"But you ought to know."

"I beg pardon, Monsieur does not account to me for his movements."

"My friend," said Philippe, "I must, however, speak to your master this evening."

"I doubt if it is possible."

"It must be; it is on business of the greatest importance."

Fritz bowed without answering.

"He has gone out, then?" asked Philippe.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"He will return of course?"

"I think not, Monsieur."

"Ah, you think not?"

"Yes."

"Very well," said Philippe, growing impatient; "meanwhile go tell your master —"

"But I have the honor of informing you," replied the imperturbable Fritz, "that Monsieur is not here."

"I know the importance of orders, my friend," said Philippe, "and yours ought to be regarded; but it cannot indeed apply to me, whose visit your master could not anticipate, and who come here accidentally."

"The order is for everybody, Monsieur," replied Fritz, blundering.

"Then since there is an order," said Philippe, "the Comte de Fenix is here?"

"Well, what then?" said Fritz, becoming impatient in his turn at such persistence.

"Why, I will wait for him."

"Monsieur is not here, I tell you," he replied; "the house took fire some time ago, and consequently it is not habitable."

"You live in it, however," said Philippe, blundering in his turn.

"I live here as keeper."

Philippe shrugged his shoulders like a man who does not believe a word of what is told him. Fritz began to get angry. "For the rest," he said, "whether Monsieur le Comte is here or not, it is not usual for persons to enter his house by force; and if you do not conform to custom, I shall be obliged —" Fritz stopped.

"To what?" asked Philippe, forgetting himself.

"To put you out," replied Fritz, calmly.

"You?" cried Philippe, his eyes flashing.

"I!" replied Fritz, resuming with the characteristic of his nation every appearance of coolness in proportion as his anger increased. And he took a step toward the young man, who, exasperated beyond control, drew his sword. Fritz, not alarmed at the sight of the blade, without calling for help, — he might, indeed, have been alone, —

seized from an armory a sort of stake armed with a short but sharp blade, and throwing himself upon Philippe like a cudgel-player rather than a fencer, he broke into a thousand pieces, at the first stroke, the blade of that little sword. Philippe uttered a cry of rage, and rushing in his turn toward the armory, tried to seize a weapon from it. At this moment the secret door of the corridor was opened, and the count appeared coming out from the shadow.

"What is the matter, Fritz?" he asked.

"Nothing, Monsieur," replied the servant, putting down his stick, but placing himself like a barrier before his master, who, standing on the steps of the private staircase, was more elevated than he by half his height.

"Monsieur le Comte de Fenix," said Philippe, "is it the custom in your country for lackeys to receive a gentleman spear in hand, or is it an order peculiar to your noble mansion?"

Fritz lowered his spear, and at a sign from his master put it in the corner of the vestibule.

"Who are you, Monsieur?" asked the count, who could scarcely see Philippe in the faint light of the lamp which lighted the antechamber.

"Some one who insists on speaking with you."

"Who insists?"

"Yes."

"That is a word which fully excuses Fritz, Monsieur; for I wish to speak to no one, and when I am at home I do not recognize the right of any one to insist on speaking to me. You are then guilty of a wrong toward me; but," Balsamo added with a sigh, "I pardon you, — on the condition, however, that you retire and trouble me no more."

"It well becomes you, indeed," cried Philippe, "to ask for peace, — you, who have destroyed mine."

"I have destroyed your peace?"

"I am Philippe de Taverney!" cried the young man, thinking that to the conscience of the count this name would explain everything.

"Philippe de Taverney? Monsieur," said the count, "I was well received at your father's house, you are welcome to mine."

"Ah, that is very fortunate," murmured Philippe.

"Please to follow me, Monsieur."

Balsamo shut the door of the private staircase, and preceding Philippe, he conducted him to the salon, where some of the scenes of this story have been unfolded to our view, — particularly the most recent of all which had taken place there, that of the Five Masters. The salon was lighted up as if some one had been expected; but it was evident that this was one of the luxurious customs of the house.

"Good evening, Monsieur de Taverney," said Balsamo, in a tone so mild and suppressed that Philippe involuntarily looked up at him. But at the sight of Balsamo he stepped back. The count indeed was but the shadow of himself, — his hollow eyes had no lustre; his cheeks, in growing thin, had encircled the mouth with two folds, and the facial angle, bare and bony, made the whole head look like a death's head. Philippe was astounded. Balsamo saw his astonishment, and a smile of mortal sadness passed over his white lips. "Monsieur," he said, "let me apologize for my servant; but indeed he followed his orders, and you — allow me to say so — were wrong in forcing him."

"Monsieur," said Philippe, "there are, you know, in life extreme situations, and I was in one of these situations." Balsamo did not answer. "I wished to see you," continued Philippe; "I wished to speak to you; I would have braved death in order to gain admission to you."

Balsamo remained silent and seemed to await an explanation of the words of the young man, without having the strength or the curiosity to ask for it.

"I have you now," continued Philippe, — "I have you now at length, and we will come to an explanation if you please; but in the first place be so good as to dismiss that man." And Philippe pointed to Fritz, who had just raised the portière as if to ask his master his last orders respecting the importunate visitor.

Balsamo fixed upon Philippe a look, the object of which was to discover his intentions; but finding himself in the presence of a man his equal in rank and distinction, Philippe had recovered calmness and presence of mind; he was impenetrable. Balsamo, therefore, by a simple motion of the head, or rather eyebrows, dismissed Fritz, and the two men sat down opposite each other, Philippe with his back to the fireplace, Balsamo with his elbow resting on a small table.

"Speak quickly, and clearly, if you please, Monsieur," said Balsamo, "for I listen to you only through kindness, and I warn you that I shall be quickly fatigued."

"I shall speak as I ought, Monsieur, and as long as I think proper," said Philippe; "and with your permission, I will begin with a question."

At this word a terrible frown shot from the eyes of Balsamo an electric flash. This word brought to his mind such memories that Philippe would have trembled if he had known what commotion he had excited in the depths of this man's heart. However, after a moment's silence to gain command over himself, Balsamo said, "Ask your question."

"Monsieur," replied Philippe, "you have never explained satisfactorily how you spent the time during that famous night of the thirtieth of May, from the moment

when you raised my sister from among the dying and the dead who crowded the Place Louis XV.?"

"What does that signify?" asked Balsamo.

"It signifies, Monsieur le Comte, that your whole conduct on that night has been and is now more than ever subject to suspicion."

"Suspicion?"

"Yes; and in all probability, it has not been the conduct of a man of honor."

"Monsieur," said Balsamo, "I do not understand you; you must see that my head is weary, weak, and that this weakness naturally makes me impatient."

"Monsieur!" cried Philippe, in his turn irritated by Balsamo's tone, at once haughty and calm.

"Monsieur," continued Balsamo, in the same tone, "since I last had the honor of seeing you I have met with a great misfortune: my house has been partly burned, and I have lost many precious treasures, — very precious, understand; in consequence of this trouble I am somewhat confused. Be, therefore, very clear, I beg, or I shall take leave of you immediately."

"Oh, no, Monsieur," said Philippe, "no, you will not take leave of me so easily as you say. I shall respect your sorrow if you show yourself considerate of mine; to me, also, Monsieur, there has come a great misfortune, — much greater than yours, I am sure."

Balsamo smiled with that smile of despair which Philippe had already seen upon his lips.

"I, Monsieur," continued Philippe, "have lost the honor of my family."

"Well, Monsieur," replied Balsamo, "how can I help you in this misfortune?"

"How can you help me?" cried Philippe, with flashing eyes.

"Certainly."

"You can restore me what I have lost, Monsieur!"

"Ah, you are mad, Monsieur!" cried Balsamo, and he reached for the bell. But he made this movement so gently and with so little anger that Philippe's arm easily stopped him.

"I am mad?" cried Philippe, in an angry tone. "But you do not understand that I refer to my sister, whom you held fainting in your arms on the thirtieth of May, — my sister, whom you conveyed to a house, which you said was respectable, but, as I think, infamous, — to my sister, in a word, whose honor I demand sword in hand?"

Balsamo shrugged his shoulders. "Eh, good God!" he murmured, "how many turnings to reach a thing so simple!"

"Scoundrel!" cried Philippe.

"What a deplorable voice you have, Monsieur!" said Balsamo, with the same gloomy impatience; "you stun me. Why, you do not come here to tell me that I have insulted your sister?"

"Yes, coward!"

"Again an exclamation, and a useless insult, Monsieur; who the devil has told you that I have insulted your sister?"

Philippe hesitated; the tone with which Balsamo pronounced these words amazed him. It was the height of impudence, or it was the cry of a clear conscience. "Who told me?" replied the young man.

"Yes, I demand it of you."

"My sister herself, Monsieur."

"Well, Monsieur, your sister —"

"You are about to say?" cried Philippe, with a threatening gesture.

"I was about to say, Monsieur, that you give me a very

poor idea both of yourself and your sister. It is the worst speculation in the world, do you know, that which certain women make on their dishonor. Now you have come with insult in your mouth, like the bearded brothers of the Italian comedy, sword in hand, to force me either to marry your sister, which shows that she is in great want of a husband, or to give you money because you know that I make gold. Well, you are very much mistaken on both points, — you will not have money, and your sister will remain unmarried."

"Then, I will have the blood which flows in your veins," cried Philippe, "if there is any."

"No, not even that, Monsieur."

"Why not?"

"The blood I have, I keep, and I could have had, if I wished, a cause for shedding it more serious than the one you offer me. Therefore, Monsieur, do me the favor to return peacefully; and if you make a noise, as the noise will make my head ache, I shall call Fritz. Fritz will come, and at a sign from me, he will break you in two like a twig. Go!" This time Balsamo rang, and as Philippe tried to prevent him, he opened an ebony box sitting on the little table, and took from it a double-barrelled pistol.

"Well, I like that better," cried Philippe; "kill me!"

"Why should I kill you?"

"Because you have dishonored me." The young man pronounced, in his turn, these words with such an accent of truth that Balsamo, looking at him with eyes full of kindness, said, "Is it possible then that you are in earnest?"

"You doubt it? you doubt the word of a gentleman?"

"And that Mademoiselle de Taverney could have herself conceived this infamous idea, and that she could have urged you to carry it out? Well, if it be so, I will give

you satisfaction. I swear to you on my honor that my conduct toward Mademoiselle your sister on the night of the thirtieth of May was irreproachable; that neither honor, nor human tribunal, nor divine justice, could discover in it anything contrary to the most perfect probity; do you believe me?"

"Monsieur!" said the young man, astonished.

"You know that I do not fear a duel, — you read that in my eyes, do you not? As to my weakness, do not be deceived; it is only apparent. I have little blood in my face, it is true; but my muscles have lost nothing of their strength. Do you wish for a proof of it? See!" And Balsamo raised with a single hand, and without effort, an enormous bronze vase placed on a stand carved by Boule.

"Well, so be it, Monsieur," said Philippe; "I believe you as to the thirtieth of May. But you employ subterfuge; you take advantage of an error in time. Since that you have seen my sister again."

Balsamo hesitated in his turn. "It is true," said he, "I have seen her since;" and his brow, clear for a moment, grew dark in a terrible manner.

"Ah, you see plainly!" said Philippe.

"Well, I have seen your sister again. What does that prove against me?"

"It proves that you have put her into this inexplicable sleep, of which, three times already, at your approach, she has felt the effect, and that you have taken advantage of this insensibility to cover the secret of your crime."

"Once more, who says that?" cried Balsamo.

"My sister."

"How does she know it, since she was asleep?"

"Ah, you confess, then, that she was put to sleep?"

"More, Monsieur; I confess to having magnetized her myself."

"Magnetized her?"

"Yes."

"And with what object, if not to dishonor her?"

"With what object, alas!" said Balsamo, dropping his head upon his breast.

"Speak, speak, then!"

"With the object, Monsieur, of making her reveal a secret which was more precious to me than life."

"Oh, trickery, subterfuge!"

"And it was during this night," continued Balsamo, following out his own thought, rather than answering Philippe's insulting question, "that your sister —"

"Was dishonored; yes, Monsieur."

"Dishonored?"

"My sister is a mother!"

Balsamo uttered a cry. "Oh, true, true!" said he, "I remember; I went off without waking her."

"You confess! you confess!" cried Philippe.

"And some villain, during that terrible night, — oh, terrible for us all, Monsieur! — took advantage of her sleep."

"Ah! would you mock me, Monsieur?"

"No; I would convince you."

"That will be difficult."

"Where is your sister at this moment?"

"There, where you so conveniently discovered her."

"At Trianon?"

"Yes."

"I will go to Trianon with you, Monsieur."

Philippe was motionless with astonishment.

"I have committed a fault, Monsieur, but I am guiltless of crime. I left that child in a magnetic sleep. Well, as satisfaction for this fault, which may justly be forgiven me, I myself will tell you the name of the guilty man."

"Tell it! tell it!"

"I do not know it myself," said Balsamo.

"Who does know it, then?"

"Your sister."

"But she has refused to tell me."

"Perhaps, but she will tell it to me."

"My sister?"

"If your sister accuses any one, will you believe her?"

"Yes; for my sister is an angel of purity."

Balsamo rang. "Fritz, a carriage," said he, when the German appeared.

Philippe paced the room like a madman. "The guilty one!" said he; "you promise to inform me who he is?"

"Monsieur," said Balsamo, "your sword has been broken in the struggle. Permit me to offer you another;" and he took from a chair a magnificent sword, with hilt of silver-gilt, which he drew through Philippe's belt.

"But you?" said the young man.

"I, Monsieur, do not need weapons," replied Balsamo; "my defence is at Trianon, and my defender will be yourself, when your sister shall have spoken." A quarter of an hour after, they entered the carriage, and Fritz, driving two excellent horses at a rapid pace, conveyed them to Versailles.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE RIDE TO TRIANON.

ALL these journeys and all this explanation had taken time, so that it was nearly two o'clock in the morning when they left the Rue Saint Claude. It took an hour and a quarter to reach Versailles, and ten minutes to go from Versailles to Trianon, so that it was half-past three before the two men reached their destination. During the last part of the way, the dawn already spread its rosy tint on the green forests and the hillsides of Sèvres. As if a veil had been slowly withdrawn from their eyes, the fish-ponds of Ville d'Avray, and the more distant ones of Buc, were shining like mirrors. Then at last appeared the colonnades and roofs of Versailles, already red with the rays of a sun not yet visible. From time to time a window sparkled with the reflection of a ray of fire, which penetrated with its light the violet tint of the morning's mist. On coming to the end of the avenue that leads from Versailles to Trianon, Philippe stopped the carriage, and addressing his companion, who during the journey had preserved a gloomy silence, "Monsieur," said he, "we shall be obliged, I am afraid, to wait here some time. At Trianon the gates are not opened before five in the morning, and I am afraid that if we enter earlier our arrival will look suspicious to the watchmen and the guards."

Balsamo did not reply, but showed by a movement of the head that he acquiesced in the proposition.

"However, Monsieur," continued Philippe, "this delay will give me time to impart to you some reflections made during our journey hither."

Balsamo gave Philippe a look full of weariness and indifference. "As you please, Monsieur," said he; "speak, I am listening!"

"You told me, Monsieur," replied Philippe, "that during the night of the thirtieth of May you placed my sister in the house of Madame la Marquise de Savigny?"

"You were assured of it yourself, Monsieur," said Balsamo, "since you called to thank that lady."

"You then added that, as an attendant in the king's stables had accompanied you from the hôtel of the marchioness to our house, that is, to the Rue Coq-Héron, you had not been alone with her; I believed you on your word of honor."

"And you did well, Monsieur."

"But in recalling to myself the more recent circumstances, I am forced to think that a month since at Trianon, that night when you found a way to slip into the gardens, you must have entered her chamber."

"I never entered the chamber of your sister at Trianon, Monsieur."

"Listen, however! you see that before coming into the presence of Andrée, all things must be made clear."

"Clear up matters, Monsieur le Chevalier. I ask nothing better, and we have come here for that purpose."

"Well, on that night, — be careful in your answer, for what I say is true, and I have it from the lips of my sister, — on that night, I say, my sister retired early; you must then have surprised her in bed?"

Balsamo shook his head by way of denial.

"You deny it; take care!" said Philippe.

"I do not deny, Monsieur; you question me, I answer."

"Well, I shall go on questioning; continue therefore to reply."

Balsamo did not become angry, but on the contrary made a sign to Philippe to go on.

"When you ascended to the apartments of my sister," continued Philippe, becoming more and more excited, "when you surprised her, and magnetized her by your infernal power, Andrée was in bed; she was reading; she felt the approach of that torpor which your presence always brings upon her, and she lost consciousness. Now you say that you did nothing but question her; only, you add that you forgot when going away to awaken her; and yet," added Philippe, seizing Balsamo's arm, and pressing it convulsively, — "yet, when she came to her senses the next day, she was no longer in bed, but at the foot of her sofa, half-naked. Reply to this accusation, Monsieur, without evasion."

During this appeal, Balsamo, like a man waking up, drove away one by one the gloomy thoughts which obscured his mind. "Indeed, Monsieur," said he, "you need not have returned to this subject, thus seeking with me a lasting quarrel. I have come here out of condescension and from interest in you, — you seem to forget that. You are young, you are an officer, you are accustomed to speak out with your hand on the pommel of your sword. All this makes you reason falsely in serious circumstances. At my own house I did more than I ought to have done to convince you, and obtain from you a little peace. You begin again; take care, for if you fatigue me, I shall go to sleep in the midst of my troubles, in comparison with which yours are, I assure you, mere trifles; and when I sleep thus, Monsieur, woe to him who wakes me! I did not enter your sister's chamber; that is all I can tell you.

Your sister of her own free will, in which I confess my will had great share, came to me in the garden."

Philippe made a movement, but Balsamo stopped him. "I promised you proof," continued he; "you shall have it. Shall it be immediately? So be it. Let us enter Trianon instead of wasting time in useless talking. Do you prefer to wait? We will wait, then; but in silence and without excitement if you please." This said, with the air with which our readers are acquainted, Balsamo, the momentary gleam fading from his eyes, became absorbed in meditation.

Philippe uttered a low growl, like the ferocious beast which is preparing to bite; then changing suddenly his attitude and thought, "With this man," said he, "one must persuade or dominate by some superiority. I have just now no means of domination or persuasion; I must have patience." But as it was impossible for him to be patient in the presence of Balsamo, he jumped out of the carriage and began pacing the verdant alley in which the carriage had stopped. At the end of ten minutes, Philippe felt that it was impossible to wait any longer. He preferred to have the gate opened before the hour, at the risk of arousing suspicions. "Besides," he murmured, cherishing an idea which many times before had presented itself to his mind, — "besides, what suspicions can the porter entertain, if I say to him that anxiety about the health of my sister impelled me to go to Paris for a physician, and bring him here by sunrise?"

Adopting this idea, which by reason of his desire to put it into execution, had gradually lost its dangerous aspect, he ran to the carriage. "Yes, Monsieur," he said, "you are right; it is useless to wait longer, come, come!"

But it was only on a repetition of this request that

Balsamo threw off his cloak, fastened his great coat with burnished steel buttons, and left the carriage. Philippe took a path which led by a short cut to the gate of the park. "Let us walk quickly," he said to Balsamo. And he went on so rapidly that Balsamo could with difficulty keep up with him. The gate was opened, Philippe gave his explanation, and the two men passed in. When the gate was closed behind them, Philippe stopped once more. "Monsieur," he said, "one final word. We are at the end of our journey; I do not know what question you are about to ask my sister. Spare her at least the details of the horrible scene which took place during her sleep. Spare the purity of mind, though the purity of the body has been soiled."

"Monsieur," replied Balsamo, "observe carefully what I say; I never entered the park beyond the tall trees you see yonder, opposite the house in which your sister lives. I have consequently never gone into the chamber of Mademoiselle de Taverney, as I have already had the honor of telling you. As to the scene whose effect you dread upon the mind of Mademoiselle, your sister, this effect will be produced only upon you, because from this very moment I order Mademoiselle, your sister, to fall into a magnetic sleep."

Balsamo stopped, folded his arms, turned toward the pavilion where Andrée lived, and stood one moment motionless, with knitted brow and with the expression of all-powerful will upon his countenance.

"And stay," he said, letting his arms fall, "Mademoiselle Andrée must be sleeping at this moment."

Philippe's face expressed doubt.

"Ah, you do not believe me," said Balsamo. "Well, listen. To prove to you that I have no occasion to go in to her, I will command her, asleep as she is, to come to us

at the foot of the steps, at the very spot where I spoke to her at our last interview."

"Be it so," said Philippe; "when I see that I shall believe."

"Let us go into this walk, and wait behind the hedge."

Philippe and Balsamo repaired to the place designated. Balsamo extended his hand toward the apartment of Andrée; but he had scarcely done so, when a slight noise was heard in the adjoining hedge-row.

"A man," said Balsamo; "let us be careful."

"Where?" asked Philippe, searching for the person whom the count had spoken of.

"There, in the shrubbery on the left," said the latter.

"Ah, yes," said Philippe; "it is Gilbert, an old servant of ours."

"Have you anything to fear from this young man?"

"No, I think not; but no matter. Stop, Monsieur; if Gilbert has risen, others may have risen as well."

Meantime Gilbert had fled in fright; for seeing Philippe and Balsamo together, he comprehended instinctively that he was lost.

"Well, Monsieur, on what do you decide?"

"Monsieur," said Philippe, experiencing in spite of himself the sort of magnetic charm which this man diffused around him, "if your power is really so great as to lead Mademoiselle de Taverney to us, show it by some sign; but do not bring my sister to a place exposed like this, where the first-comer might hear your questions and her answers."

"You spoke in time," said Balsamo, seizing the arm of the young man and pointing out to him, at the window of the main corridor, Andrée, white and rigid, who had left her chamber, and obeying Balsamo's command was preparing to descend the stairs.

"Stop her; stop her!" said Philippe, frightened and astonished at the same time.

"Be it so," said Balsamo. The count extended his arm in the direction of Mademoiselle de Taverney, who immediately stopped. Then after stopping a moment, she turned right about and entered her chamber. Philippe hurried after her, Balsamo following him, and entered the room almost as soon as Andrée, and taking the young girl in his arms, he made her sit down. A few moments later Balsamo came in and shut the door behind him. But brief as the interval between these entrances, a third person had had time to slip in between the two men and enter Nicole's cabinet, where he hid himself, knowing that his life depended on this interview. This third person was Gilbert.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE REVELATION.

Balsamo closed the door behind him, and appeared on the threshold just as Philippe was looking at his sister with mingled terror and curiosity. "Are you ready, Chevalier?" he asked.

"Yes, Monsieur, yes," stammered Philippe, trembling.

"We can begin then, to question your sister?"

"If you please," said Philippe, trying to raise by force of respiration the weight which was crushing his breast.

"But before we begin, observe your sister."

"I see her, Monsieur."

"You really believe that she sleeps, do you not?"

"Yes."

"And that consequently she has no consciousness of what takes place here?"

Philippe made no reply, except by a gesture which expressed doubt. Balsamo then went to the fireplace and lighted a candle, which he passed before Andrée's eyes without causing her to move an eyelid.

"Yes, yes; she sleeps, it is evident," said Philippe; "but, good Heavens! what a strange sleep!"

"Well, I will question her," continued Balsamo; "or rather, since you have manifested fear lest I address her some indiscreet interrogation, question her yourself, Chevalier."

"But I have spoken to her; I touched her just now. She did not seem to hear me, she did not seem to feel my touch."

"I will put you in connection with her," and Balsamo placed Philippe's hand in that of Andrée.

Immediately the young girl smiled, and murmured, "Ah, it is you, brother?"

"You see," said Balsamo, "she recognizes you now."

"Yes; it is strange."

"Question her, she will answer."

"But if she does not remember when awake, how can she remember when asleep?"

"It is one of the mysteries of science," and Balsamo, sighing, sat down upon an easy chair in a corner.

Philippe sat motionless, his hand in Andrée's. How should he begin his questioning, the result of which would assure him of his dishonor, and reveal a criminal whom perhaps his vengeance could not reach? As for Andrée, she was in a state of calmness bordering on ecstasy, and her face expressed peace rather than any other feeling. Trembling all over, he obeyed nevertheless the expressive glance of Balsamo, which bade him begin. But in proportion as he contemplated his misfortune, as his face grew dark, that of Andrée was covered with a cloud, and it was she who began by saying, "Yes, you are right, brother; it is a great misfortune for the family."

Andrée interpreted thus the thought which she read in her brother's mind. Philippe was not expecting this beginning; he started, "What misfortune?" he asked, without considering his answer.

"Ah, you know well, brother."

"Force her to speak, Monsieur; she will speak."

"How can I force her?"

"Will her to speak, that is all."

Philippe looked at his sister, forming a wish in his mind. Andrée blushed.

"Oh!" said the young girl, "how bad it is of you, Philippe, to think that Andrée has deceived you."

"You love no one, then?"

"No one."

"Then it is not an accomplice, it is a criminal I must punish!"

"I do not understand you, brother."

Philippe looked at the count as if to ask advice.

"Press her," said Balsamo.

"Press her?"

"Yes, question her freely."

"Without respect for the modesty of this child?"

"Oh, do not be alarmed; on awaking she will remember nothing of it."

"But can she answer my questions?"

"Do you see clearly?" Balsamo asked Andrée.

Andrée started at the sound of this voice; she turned her lustreless eyes toward Balsamo. "Not so clearly as if you questioned me; but still I see."

"Well," Philippe asked, "if you see, sister, give me an account in detail of that night when you fainted away."

"Do you not begin with the night of the thirtieth of May, Monsieur? Your suspicions date from that night, I think. The time has come to clear up everything at once."

"No, Monsieur," replied Philippe; "it is useless, and now I trust your word. He who wields a power like yours, does not use it for the attainment of any common object. Sister," repeated Philippe, "tell me everything that happened on that night of your swoon."

"I do not remember," said Andrée.

"You hear, Monsieur le Comte?"

"She must remember; she must speak. Order her to."

"But if she was asleep?"

"The mind was awake." Then he arose, held out his hand to Andrée, and with a knitting of the brows which indicated a redoubling of will and action, "Remember," he said; "I will it."

"I remember," said Andrée.

"Oh!" said Philippe, wiping his forehead.

"What do you wish to know?"

"Everything."

"From what moment?"

"From the moment when you retired to bed."

"Do you see yourself?" said Balsamo.

"Yes, I see myself; I hold in my hand the glass prepared by Nicole — Oh, my God!"

"What? what is it?"

"Oh, the wretch!"

"Speak, sister; speak!"

"This glass contains a drink which has been drugged; if I drink it, I am lost."

"A drink which has been drugged!" cried Philippe; "for what object?"

"Wait! wait!"

"First, about the drink."

"I was about to raise it to my lips; but — at that moment —"

"Well?"

"The count called me."

"What count?"

"He," said Andrée, pointing to Balsamo.

"And then?"

"Then I put down the glass and went to sleep."

"What next? what next?" asked Philippe.

"I arose and joined him."

"Where was the count?"

"Under the lime-trees opposite my window."

"And the count never entered your room, sister?"

"Never."

A glance from Balsamo toward Philippe said clearly, "You see whether I deceive you, Monsieur?"

"And you say you went to join the count?"

"Yes; I obey him when he calls me."

"What did the count want of you?"

Andrée hesitated.

"Say, say!" cried Balsamo; "I will not listen," and he fell back into his chair, burying his head in his hands as if to prevent the sound of Andrée's words from reaching him.

"Speak! What did the count want?" repeated Philippe.

"He wished to seek intelligence from me —" She again stopped; one would have said that she was afraid of breaking the count's heart.

"Go on, sister, go on."

"Of a person who had escaped from his house, and —" Andrée lowered her voice, —"and who has since died." Softly as Andrée had pronounced these words Balsamo heard or divined them, for he uttered a deep groan. Philippe stopped; there was a moment's silence.

"Continue, continue," said Balsamo; "your brother wishes to know everything, Mademoiselle; your brother must know all. After this man had received the information he desired, what did he do?"

"He fled," said Andrée.

"Leaving you in the garden?" asked Philippe.

"Yes."

"What did you do then?"

"As he retreated from me, since the strength which sustained me went with him, I fell."

"In a swoon?"

"No; still a sleep, but a leaden sleep."

"Can you remember what happened to you during that sleep?"

"I will try."

"Well, what happened? Speak!"

"A man came out from a thicket, took me in his arms, and carried me —"

"Where?"

"Here into my chamber."

"Ah! — and this man, do you see him?"

"Stay — yes — yes — Oh!" continued Andrée, with an expression of disgust and uneasiness; "oh, it is again that little Gilbert!"

"Gilbert?"

"Yes."

"What did he do?"

"He put me down on the sofa."

"Afterward?"

"Wait."

"See! see!" said Balsamo; "I will that you see."

"He listens; he goes into the other chamber; he draws back as if in fear; he enters Nicole's cabinet — My God! my God!"

"What?"

"A man follows him; and I, — I, who cannot rise, defend myself, or cry out; I, who sleep —"

"Who is this man?"

"Brother, brother!" and Andrée's countenance expressed the profoundest grief.

"Tell who this man is," commanded Balsamo; "I will it!"

"The king!" murmured Andrée; "it is the king!"

Philippe shuddered.

"Ah!" muttered Balsamo, "I suspected it."

"He approaches me," continued Andrée; "he speaks to me, he takes me in his arms, he kisses me. Oh, brother, brother!"

Great tears came into Philippe's eyes, while his hand grasped the handle of the sword given him by Balsamo.

"Speak! speak!" continued the count, in a tone more and more imperative.

"Oh, what happiness! he is perplexed; he stops; he looks at me; he is afraid; he flies; Andrée is saved!"

Philippe drank in, breathless, every word that issued from Andrée's lips. "Saved! Andrée is saved!" he repeated mechanically.

"Wait, brother, wait!" and the young girl sought the arm of her brother as if to support herself.

"Afterward?" asked Philippe.

"I had forgotten."

"What?"

"There, there, in Nicole's cabinet, a knife in his hand —"

"A knife in his hand?"

"I see him; he is pale as death."

"Who?"

"Gilbert."

Philippe held his breath.

"He follows the king," continued Andrée; "he closes the door after him; he puts his foot upon the candle which is burning the carpet; he comes toward me. Oh!" The young girl raised herself in the arms of her brother. Every muscle in her body grew stiff, almost to breaking.

"Oh, the villain!" said she, at last; and she fell back powerless.

"My God!" said Philippe, not daring to interrupt her.

"It is he; it is he!" murmured the young girl. Then

raising herself up to speak in her brother's ear, with flashing eye and trembling voice, "You will kill him, will you not, Philippe?"

"Oh, yes!" cried the young man, jumping up, and upsetting a small table behind him covered with china. The china was broken into pieces. With the noise of this fall was mingled a dull sound and a sudden shaking of the partitions; then a cry from Andrée, which was heard above all.

"What is that?" said Balsamo. "A door was opened."

"Was any one listening?" cried Philippe, grasping his sword.

"It was he," said Andrée, — "it was he again."

"But who is he?"

"Gilbert, Gilbert, still! Ah, you will kill him, Philippe, you will kill him?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes!" cried the young man; and he rushed to the antechamber sword in hand, while Andrée fell back on the sofa. Balsamo rushed after the young man, and held him by the arm.

"Take care, Monsieur!" said he, "that which is secret would become public; it is daylight, and the echo of royal houses is loud."

"Oh, Gilbert, Gilbert!" murmured Philippe; "and he was hidden there. He heard us; I could kill him. Oh, the accursed villain!"

"Yes, but silence! You can find this young man another time; your sister needs you now, Monsieur. You see she begins to be fatigued by so much emotion."

"Oh, yes; I understand her suffering by my own; this misfortune is so terrible, so irreparable! Oh, Monsieur, Monsieur, it will kill me!"

"On the contrary, you will live for her, Chevalier; for she needs you, having only you. Love her, pity her, take

care of her! And now," continued he, after a moment's silence, "have you further need of me?"

"No, Monsieur. Pardon me my suspicions, my insults; and yet all the injury comes from you, Monsieur."

"I do not excuse myself, Chevalier; but do you forget what your sister said?"

"What did she say? My mind wanders."

"If I had not come, she would have taken the draught prepared by Nicole, and then it would have been the king. Would the misfortune have been less?"

"No, Monsieur, it would have been still the same; and I see clearly that we were doomed. Awake my sister, Monsieur."

"But she will see me; she will, perhaps, understand what has been going on. It is better that I awake her, as I put her to sleep, — at a distance."

"Thanks, thanks!"

"Then, adieu, Monsieur."

"One word more, Count. You are a man of honor?"

"Oh, the secret you mean?"

"Count —"

"A needless charge, Monsieur; in the first place, because I am a man of honor; then, having decided to have nothing more to do with men, I shall forget men and their secrets. At all times call upon me, if I can be of use to you. But, no, no, I am no longer good for anything; I am of no more use upon the earth. Adieu, Monsieur, adieu!" and bowing to Philippe, Balsamo looked once more at Andrée, whose head was leaning back with every appearance of grief and lassitude. "O Science!" he murmured, "how many victims for a result without value!" and he disappeared.

As he retreated Andrée revived. She raised her head, heavy as if it had been made of lead, and looking at her

brother with wondering eyes, "Oh, Philippe!" she murmured, "what has happened?"

Philippe restrained the sob which was choking him, and smiling heroically, "Nothing, sister!" said he.

"And yet I seem to have been mad, and to have dreamed."

"Dreamed? and what have you dreamed, my dear and good Andrée?"

"Oh, Doctor Louis, Doctor Louis, brother!"

"Andrée," cried Philippe, pressing her hand, "Andrée, you are pure as the light of day; but everything accuses you, everything is against you. A terrible secret is imposed upon us two. I will go and find Doctor Louis, and ask him to say to Madame la Dauphine that you are attacked by an unconquerable homesickness, which a stay at Taverney alone can cure; and then we will depart either for Taverney or for some other part of the world. Then both, in seclusion there, loving, consoling each other —"

"Yet, brother," said Andrée, "if I am as pure as you say —"

"Dear Andrée, I will explain it all to you; meantime, prepare for departure."

"But my father?"

"Father," said Philippe, with a serious air, "father, — that is my concern; I will prepare him."

"He will accompany us, then?"

"Father? oh, impossible, impossible! We two, Andrée, — we two alone, I say."

"Oh, how you frighten me, dear! how you alarm me, brother! how I suffer, Philippe!"

"God is everywhere, Andrée," said the young man; "courage, then! I will seek the doctor. What makes you ill, Andrée, is sorrow at leaving Taverney, — sorrow which

you conceal for the sake of Madame la Dauphine. Come, come, be brave, sister, the honor of both of us is at stake!" and Philippe embraced his sister hastily, for he was choking with emotion. Then he picked up his sword, which he had dropped, sheathed it with trembling hand, and rushed out on to the stairs. A quarter of an hour after he knocked at Doctor Louis's door, who, while the court was at Trianon, lived at Versailles.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE LITTLE GARDEN OF DOCTOR LOUIS.

Doctor Louis, at whose door we have left Philippe, was walking in a little garden surrounded by four high walls, which formed a part of the dependencies of an old Ursuline convent, and had been converted into a storehouse for Messieurs the dragoons of the king's household.

Doctor Louis read, while walking, the proofs of a new work he was about to have printed, and stooped from time to time to pull from the path in which he was walking, or from the parterre on either side, the weeds which offended his instinct of symmetry and order. A single servant, rather surly, like every domestic of an industrious man who does not like to be disturbed, took the whole care of the doctor's house. In answer to Philippe's resounding knock, she approached the door and half opened it. But the young man, instead of parleying with the servant, pushed the door open and went in. Once master of the passage he saw the garden and in it the doctor. Then, without paying any attention to the speeches and outcries of the vigilant guardian, he rushed into the garden. At the sound of his steps the doctor looked up. "Ah, ah!" he said, "is it you?"

"Pardon me, Doctor, for having forced your door and disturbed your solitude; but the moment you had foreseen has arrived; I need you, and I come to implore your assistance."

"I have promised you, Monsieur," said the doctor; "and I promise it now."

Philippe bowed, too much affected to begin the conversation himself. Doctor Louis understood his hesitation. "How is the invalid?" he asked, anxious on account of Philippe's paleness, and fearing some catastrophe as a crisis of this drama.

"Very well, thank God, Doctor; and my sister is so worthy and so honest a girl that really God would not be just to send her suffering and danger."

The doctor looked at Philippe as if to question him; his words seemed to him a continuation of the denials of the evening before.

"Then," said he, "she was the victim of some surprise, or some plot."

"Yes, Doctor, victim of an unheard of surprise, — victim of an infamous plot."

The doctor clasped his hands, and lifted his eyes toward heaven. "Alas!" said he, "we live, in this respect, in horrible times; and I think there is pressing need of physicians of nations, as there have been so long physicians of individuals."

"Yes," said Philippe, "yes, let them come; no one will be more glad to see them than I; meanwhile —" And Philippe made a threatening gesture.

"Ah!" said the doctor, "you are, I see, Monsieur, one of those who make the reparation of crime consist in violence and murder."

"Yes, Doctor," Philippe calmly replied, "yes, I am one of those."

"A duel," sighed the doctor, — "a duel, which will not restore your sister's honor, even if you kill the criminal, and which will plunge her in despair if you are killed. Ah, Monsieur, I thought that you had a sound mind and

an intelligent heart; I thought I had heard you express the desire that everything relating to this affair should be kept secret."

Philippe laid his hand upon the doctor's arm. "Monsieur," said he, "you are strangely mistaken in me; I have a steadfast purpose which springs from deep conviction and a clear conscience. I wish to do justly, not to do myself justice; I wish, not to expose my sister to abandonment and death by getting myself killed, but to avenge her by killing the scoundrel."

"You will kill him, — you, a gentleman? You will commit a murder?"

"Monsieur, if I had seen him ten minutes before the crime, stealing like a thief into that chamber, into which, on account of his low station, he had no right to put his foot, and had then killed him, every one would have said that I had done well; why, then, should I spare him now? Has crime made him sacred?"

"So this bitter purpose is determined upon in your mind, fixed in your heart?"

"Fixed, determined upon! I shall find him some time, however carefully he hides; and then, I tell you, Monsieur, without pity, without remorse, I will kill him like a dog!"

"Then," said Doctor Louis, "you will commit a crime equal to his, — a more odious crime, perhaps; for one never knows whether an imprudent word, or the coquettish look of a woman may not have urged on the desire and lust of the man. Kill him! when you have other reparation, — when a marriage —"

Philippe looked up. "Are you unaware, Monsieur, that the family of Taverney-Maison-Rouge dates from the Crusades, and that my sister is as noble as an infanta or an archduchess?"

"Yes, I understand; and the culprit, he is not; he is a wretch, a clodhopper, as you high-bred men say. Yes, yes," he continued, with a bitter smile, "yes, it is true; God has made men of a certain inferior clay to be killed by other men of finer clay; oh, yes! you are right, — kill, Monsieur, kill!" And the doctor turned his back on Philippe and began to pull up here and there the weeds in his garden.

Philippe folded his arms. "Doctor, listen to me," he said; "it is not a question of a seducer to whom a coquette has given more or less encouragement; it is not a question of a man provoked, as you say, — we speak of a miserable fellow brought up by us, and who, after having eaten the bread of pity, in the night, taking advantage of an artificial sleep, of a swoon, of death, so to speak, has basely and treacherously profaned the holiest and purest of women, whom in the light of day he did not dare look in the face. Before a tribunal this guilty man would certainly be doomed to death; well, I will judge him as impartially as a tribunal, and I will kill him. Now, Doctor, will you, whom I have thought so generous and so noble, — will you make me purchase this service, or impose on me a condition? In rendering it to me, will you do like those who seek to oblige, and to satisfy themselves at the same time? If it is so, Doctor, you are not that wise man I have admired; you are only an ordinary man, and in spite of the disdain which you showed me just now, I am superior to you, — I, who have confided to you, without reservation, my whole secret."

"You say," replied the doctor, thoughtfully, "that the guilty man has fled?"

"Yes, Doctor; no doubt he foresaw that the affair would become known; he heard that he was accused, and immediately took flight."

"Good! Now what do you desire, Monsieur," asked the doctor.

"Your assistance in removing my sister from Versailles, to bury in a thicker and more silent darkness the terrible secret that would dishonor us if it should become known."

"I will ask you but one question."

Philippe was indignant.

"Listen to me," continued the doctor, with a gesture which commanded calmness. "A Christian philosopher, of whom you have just made a confessor, is obliged to impose upon you a condition, not with reference to the service rendered, but in pursuance of the law of conscience. Humanity is a duty, Monsieur, not a virtue. You speak to me of killing a man; I must prevent it, as I would have prevented by all the means in my power, by violence even, the accomplishment of the crime committed upon your sister. Therefore, Monsieur, I adjure you, make me an oath."

"Oh, never! never!"

"You will do it," cried Doctor Louis, vehemently, — "you will do it, man of blood; recognize everywhere the hand of God, and do not assume to direct its stroke. The culprit, you say, was within your reach?"

"Yes, Doctor; by opening a door, if I could have divined that he was there, I should have been face to face with him."

"Well, he has fled, he trembles, his punishment has begun. Ah, you smile; what God does appears to you feeble! remorse seems insufficient! Wait, wait, then! You will stay with your sister, and you will promise me never to pursue the criminal. If you meet him, that is, if God delivers him up to you — well, I am also a man! — in that case you will see!"

"Nonsense, Monsieur; will he not always fly from me?"

"Who knows? The assassin flies, the assassin seeks refuge, the assassin fears the scaffold; and yet as if he were magnetized, the sword of justice draws this criminal to itself, and he finally falls under the hand of the executioner. Besides, it is a question now of giving up all that you have undertaken so painfully to do? It is for the world in which you live and to whom you cannot explain the innocence of your sister, it is for all these curious idlers that you kill a man; and you would feed their curiosity twice, — by the avowal of the attempt in the first place, afterward by the scandal of the punishment. No, no, believe me; keep silence, bury this misfortune."

"Oh, who will know when I shall have killed this villain, that it was on my sister's account?"

"You would have to give a reason for this murder."

"Well, Doctor, I will obey; I will not pursue the criminal. But God will be just; oh, yes! God uses impunity as a bait; God will again show me the criminal."

"In that case it will be God who has condemned him. Give me your hand, Monsieur."

"There it is."

"What must I do for Mademoiselle de Taverney? Tell me."

"You must, dear Doctor, find a pretext with Madame la Dauphine for taking her away for a time, — longing for the country, fresh air, regimen —"

"That is easy."

"Yes; that is your affair, and I rely upon you. I will then take my sister to some corner of France, Taverney for example, far from all eyes, from all suspicions."

"No, no, Monsieur, that would be impossible. The poor child needs constant care and solace; she will need all the

aid of science. Let me then find for her near here, in a village I know of, a retreat a hundred times more secluded, a hundred times more safe than the wild country into which you would take her."

"Oh, Doctor, you think so?"

"Yes, I have reason to think so. Suspicion always moves from the centre outward like those circles caused by a stone thrown into the water; the stone however does not move, and when the undulations are obliterated no one sees the cause of them, buried as it is under the depths of the water."

"Then, Doctor, go to work."

"From to-day, Monsieur?"

"Apprise Madame la Dauphine."

"This very morning."

"And for the rest?"

"In twenty-four hours, you shall have my answer."

"Oh, thanks, Doctor; you are for me a god!"

"Well, young man, now that everything is arranged between us, accomplish your mission; return to your sister, console her, protect her."

"Adieu, Doctor, adieu!"

The doctor, after having watched Philippe until he was out of sight, returned to his walk, his proofs, and the weeding of his little garden.

CHAPTER L.

FATHER AND SON.

When Philippe returned to his sister he found her very much agitated, very uneasy. "My dear," said she, "I have been thinking while you were away of all that has happened to me for some time past. It is an abyss which will swallow up the little reason that remains to me. Well, you have seen Doctor Louis?"

"I have just been to his house, Andrée."

"That man has brought a terrible accusation against me; is it just?"

"He was not mistaken, sister."

Andrée grew pale, and her small and delicate hands contracted nervously.

"The name," said she, then, — "the name of the wretch who ruined me?"

"My sister, you must remain ignorant of it forever."

"Oh, Philippe, you do not speak the truth; Philippe, you are false to your own conscience. This name, I must know it; so that feeble as I am, and having nothing for myself but prayer, I may by prayer direct against the criminal all the anger of God. The name of this man, Philippe?"

"Let us never speak of it, sister."

Andrée seized his hand, and looked him in the face. "Oh!" said she, "this is what you reply to me, — you who have a sword by your side!"

Philippe grew pale at this exhibition of anger, and restraining his own fury, "Andrée," he said, "I cannot tell

you what I do not know myself. Secrecy is ordered me by the destiny which overwhelms us; this secret, exposure of which would compromise the honor of our family, a last favor of God renders inviolable to all."

"Except for one man, Philippe,— for a man who laughs, for a man who defies us!— oh, my God! for a man who laughs infernally at us, perhaps, in his dark retreat."

Philippe wrung his hands, looked upward, and answered nothing.

"This man," cried Andrée, with increasing anger and indignation, "I know him, perhaps,— in short, Philippe, permit me to present him to you. I have already described his strange influence over me; I think I sent you to him —"

"That man is innocent; I have seen him; I have proof. So do not seek farther, Andrée, seek no farther."

"Philippe, let us ascend a little higher than this man, will you? Let us go to the first ranks of the powerful men of this kingdom. Let us go even to the king!"

Philippe encircled with his arms this poor child, sublime in her ignorance and in her indignation, "There," he said, "all those whom you have mentioned while awake, you have named in your sleep; all these whom you accuse with the ferocity of virtue you have vindicated in your magnetic sleep, when you saw, so to speak, the crime committed."

"Did I name the guilty one?" she said, with flashing eyes.

"No," Philippe replied, "no. Ask no more, follow my example,— submit to destiny. The misfortune is irreparable; it is doubled for you by the impunity of the criminal; but hope, hope! God is above all; God reserves for those who are oppressed a savage joy which is called vengeance."

"Vengeance!" she murmured, frightened at the terrible emphasis with which Philippe pronounced this word.

"Meantime rest, sister, from all the troubles, all the shame, which my mad curiosity has caused you. If I had known! oh, if I had known!" And he hid his face in his hands in fearful despair. Then suddenly looking up, "What have I to complain of?" said he, with a smile. "My sister is pure, she loves me; she has never betrayed confidence nor friendship. My sister is young like myself, kind like myself; we will live together, we will grow old together. Together we shall be stronger than the whole world!"

In proportion as the young man spoke in a manner to console Andrée, she became gloomy; she bent down her pale face; she took the attitude and settled look of dull despair, which Philippe had just shaken off so courageously. "You never speak but of us two!" she said, looking steadily, with her searching blue eyes upon her brother's changing countenance.

"Of whom would you have me speak, Andrée?" said the young man, meeting her look.

"But — we have a father; how will he treat his daughter?"

"I told you yesterday," Philippe coldly replied, "to forget all trouble, all fear, — to dismiss, as the wind dispels the morning mist, every memory and every affection except mine. Indeed, my dear Andrée, nobody in the world loves you but myself; I am loved only by you. Poor abandoned orphans, why should we bear the yoke of gratitude or relationship? Have we received kindness? Have we enjoyed the protection of a father? Oh!" he added, with a bitter smile, "you know my very thoughts, you know the state of my heart. If you must love him you speak of, I will say, 'Love him!' I am silent. Andrée, forbear."

"Then, brother, I must believe —"

"Sister, in great misfortunes man involuntarily hears those words so little understood in childhood, 'Fear God!' Oh, yes! God has cruelly recalled it to our memory! 'Respect thy father' — Oh, my sister, the strongest proof of respect you could give your father would be to blot him from your memory."

"It is true —" murmured Andrée, gloomily, leaning back in her chair.

"My dear, let us not waste time in useless words. Collect all your effects; Doctor Louis will see Madame la Dauphine, and inform her of your departure. The causes he will allege, you know, — the need of change of air, unaccountable suffering. Be all ready, I say, for departure."

Andrée arose. "The furniture?" she said.

"Oh, no, — linen, clothes, jewels."

Andrée obeyed. She set in order in the first place the boxes from the closet, the clothes from the wardrobe where Gilbert had hidden; then she took some jewel-cases which she was about to put in the principal box.

"What is that?" said Philippe.

"It is the casket of jewels sent me by the king, for my representation at Trianon."

Philippe turned pale on seeing the richness of the present.

"With only these jewels," said Andrée, "we can live respectably anywhere. I have heard that the pearls alone are worth one hundred thousand francs."

Philippe closed the casket. "They are indeed very valuable," he said. And taking the casket from Andrée's hands, "I think there are some other jewels, sister."

"Oh, my dear, they are not worthy to be compared with these; they adorned, however, the toilet of our mother fifteen years ago. The watch, the bracelets, the earrings, are enriched with brilliants. There is also the

portrait. Father wished to sell them all, because, he said, they were no longer fashionable."

"This is, however, all that remains to us," said Philippe, "our only resource. My sister, we will melt the gold articles; we will sell the jewels of the portrait. We shall thus have twenty thousand francs, which is a sufficient sum for the unhappy."

"But — this case of pearls is mine," said Andrée.

"Never touch those pearls, Andrée; they will burn you. Each one of these pearls is of a strange nature, sister; they stain the foreheads which they touch."

Andrée shuddered.

"I will keep this case, sister, to return it to whom it belongs. I tell you it is not our property, and we have no wish to claim it, have we?"

"As you please, brother," Andrée replied, with a shudder of shame.

"Dear sister, dress yourself for the last time to go to see Madame la Dauphine; be very calm, very respectful, and much affected at leaving so noble a protectress."

"Oh, yes! much affected," murmured Andrée, with emotion; "it is a great grief in my misfortune."

"I am going to Paris, sister, and I will return to-night; as soon as I arrive I will take you away. Pay all that you owe here."

"Nothing, nothing; I had Nicole, she has fled, — ah, I forgot the little Gilbert."

Philippe started, his eyes kindled. "You owe Gilbert?" he cried.

"Yes," said Andrée, naturally, "he has furnished me with flowers through the season. But, as you told me yourself, I have been at times unjust and harsh toward this fellow, who was after all polite. I will recompense him differently."

"Do not seek Gilbert," said Philippe.

"Why not? He must be in the garden; I will send for him then."

"No, no; you will lose precious time. I, on the contrary, shall meet him; I will speak to him; I will pay him."

"Very well, then, that will do."

"Yes, adieu until this evening;" and he kissed the hand of the young girl, who threw herself into his arms. He restrained even the beating of his heart in this gentle embrace.

Without delay Philippe departed for Paris, where the carriage set him down before the door of the little hôtel in the Rue Coq-Héron. Philippe knew that he should find his father there. The old man, since his strange rupture with Richelieu, had not found life tolerable at Versailles, and he sought, like all minds of exuberant activity, to beguile mental torpor by the excitement of change of place.

Now the baron, when Philippe rang at the gate of the court-yard, was pacing, with terrible oaths, the little garden of the hôtel and the court adjoining it. He started at the sound of the bell, and answered it himself. As he expected no one, this unforeseen visit gave him hope; the unhappy man in his fall caught at every branch. He therefore received Philippe with a feeling of spite and vague curiosity. But he had no sooner glanced at the face of his visitor than that dull pallor, those rigid lines, and that contracted mouth froze the reservoir of questions which he was prepared to open.

"You?" he said only, "and by what chance?"

"I shall have the honor of explaining to you, Monsieur," said Philippe.

"Good! is it serious?"

"Very serious; yes, Monsieur."

"This boy always has ceremonious ways that disturb me. Is it a misfortune, or is it good fortune, which you bring?"

"It is a misfortune!" Philippe said gravely. The baron staggered. "We are quite alone?" asked Philippe.

"Why, yes."

"Would you like to go into the house, Monsieur?"

"Why not in the open air under these trees?"

"Because there are some things which are not spoken of under the open sky."

The baron looked at his son, obeyed his silent gesture, and affecting to be unmoved, even smiling, he followed him into the hall, the door of which Philippe had already opened. When the doors were carefully closed, Philippe waited for a sign from his father to begin the conversation; and the baron being seated comfortably in the best chair in the salon, —

"Monsieur," said Philippe, "my sister and I intend to take leave of you."

"What!" said the baron, very much surprised, "you — you go away! And the service?"

"There is no more service for me. You know the promises made by the king have not been realized, — fortunately."

"I do not see any 'fortunately' about it."

"Monsieur — "

"Explain it to me; how can you be fortunate in not being colonel of a fine regiment? You carry your philosophy to extremes."

"I carry it so far as not to prefer dishonor to prosperity, that is all. But we will not enter upon considerations of this kind, if you please, Monsieur — "

"We will, *pardieu!*"

"I entreat you —" replied Philippe, with a firmness which signified, "I will not!"

The baron frowned. "And your sister, does she also forget her duties, — her service with Madame?"

"There are some duties which she must subordinate to others, Monsieur."

"Of what nature, Monsieur?"

"Of the most imperious necessity."

The baron rose. "It is a foolish sort of people," he growled, "they who make enigmas."

"Is all this that I am saying really an enigma to you?"

"Absolutely!" replied the baron, with a coolness that astonished Philippe.

"I will explain, then. My sister goes away because she is obliged to fly to avoid dishonor!"

The baron burst out laughing. "Oh, what model children I have!" he cried. "The son abandons the hope of a regiment because he fears dishonor; the daughter gives up a sure position because she is afraid of dishonor. Really, I have returned to the times of Brutus and Lucretia! In my time (a miserable time, doubtless, and not equal to these fine days of philosophy) when a man saw dishonor approaching in the distance; and when he, like you, carried a sword at his side; and when, like you, he had taken lessons from two masters and three provost-marshals, — he ran the first dishonor through with the point of his sword."

Philippe shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes, it is hardly the thing to say to a philanthropist who does not like to see blood flow; but then, officers are not exactly born to be philanthropists."

"Monsieur, I know as well as you the necessities imposed by a point of honor; but the shedding of blood will not redeem —"

"Phrases, phrases of a philosopher!" said the old man, angry almost to the point of becoming majestic. "I think I was going to say of a coward!"

"You did well not to say so," replied Philippe, pale and trembling.

The baron met proudly the implacable and threatening look of his son. "I said," he replied, — "and my logic is not so bad as they would make me believe, — I said that all dishonor in this world comes, not from an action, but from the tattling about it. Ah, it is thus: If you are criminal before the deaf, the blind, the dumb, are you dishonored? You will answer me by that stupid line, 'The crime makes the disgrace, not the scaffold.' That is very well to say to children or women, but to a man, *mordieu!* we speak a different language. Now I imagine that I have created a man. So, then, if the blind man has seen anything, if the deaf man has heard, if the dumb man has spoken, you seize your sword, and you tear out the eyes of one, and the tympanum of another, and you cut out the tongue of the third, — this is how an attack of dishonor is met by a gentleman of the name of Taverney-Maison-Rouge!"

"A gentleman of that name, Monsieur, always knows that among all obligations the first is that of refusing to commit a dishonorable action; that is the reason why I will not reply to your arguments. But it sometimes happens that opprobrium springs from an inevitable misfortune; this is the case with my sister and myself."

"I come now to your sister. If, according to my system, man ought never to fly from a thing which he can fight against and conquer, woman ought also to stand firm. Of what use is virtue, Monsieur Philosopher, except to repel the attacks of vice? Where is the triumph of this same virtue, if not in the defeat of vice?" and Taverney began to laugh. "Mademoiselle de Taverney has

been much frightened, has she not? She feels very weak, then? If so —"

Philippe suddenly drew nearer. "Monsieur," he said, "Mademoiselle de Taverney has not been weak; she was overcome by force! She has fallen helpless into a trap."

"Into a trap?"

"Yes. Keep, I beg, a little of that fervor which animated you just now to blast those scoundrels who have basely plotted the ruin of this spotless honor."

"I do not understand —"

"You shall understand. A villain, I tell you, has introduced some one into the chamber of Mademoiselle de Taverney."

The baron grew pale.

"A villain," continued Philippe, "has resolved that the name of Taverney — mine, yours, Monsieur — should be soiled by an indelible stain. Well! where is your young man's sword to shed a little blood? Is it worth the trouble?"

"Monsieur Philippe —"

"Ah, fear nothing; I accuse no one, I know no one. The crime was plotted in the dark, accomplished in the dark; the result shall disappear in the dark, I am determined! — I who understand in my own way the glory of my house."

"But how do you know?" cried the baron, aroused from his stupor by the allurement of an infamous ambition, of an ignoble hope; "what indications have you?"

"It is a question which no one who may see my sister, your daughter, in a few months will ask, Monsieur le Baron!"

"But, then, Philippe," cried the old man, with eyes full of joy, "in that case the fortune and glory of our house have not vanished; in that case we shall triumph!"

"In that case, you are really the man I believed you,"

said Philippe, with supreme disgust; "you have betrayed yourself, and you have failed in intelligence before a judge, after failing in heart before your son."

"Insolent!"

"Enough!" replied Philippe. "Tremble lest you awaken, in speaking so loud, the spirit, alas! too insensible, of my mother, who, if she had lived, would have watched over her daughter."

The baron lowered his eyes before the dazzling brightness which flashed from the eyes of his son. "My daughter," he continued after a moment, "shall not leave me without my consent."

"My sister will never see you again, father."

"Has she said so?"

"She sends me to inform you."

The baron wiped, with a trembling hand, his white and moist lips. "Be it so," he said. Then, shrugging his shoulders, "I have been unfortunate in my children," he cried, —"a fool and a brute."

Philippe made no reply. "Good, good!" continued Taverney; "I have no further need of you; go — if the thesis is recited."

"I had still two things more to say to you, Monsieur."

"Speak."

"The first is this; the king has given you a casket of pearls —"

"To your sister, Monsieur."

"To you, Monsieur. Besides, it matters little; my sister never wears such jewels. Mademoiselle de Taverney is not a prostitute; she begs you to return the casket to the one who gave it, or if you fear to disoblige his Majesty, who has done so much for our family, to keep it yourself."

Philippe handed the case to his father. The latter took

it, opened it, looked at the pearls, and threw it upon a chiffonniere. "What next?" he said.

"Then, Monsieur, as we are not rich; since you have pledged, or spent even, the property of our mother, for which I will not reproach you — God forbid — "

"You had better not," said the baron, grinding his teeth.

"But still, as we have only Taverney left of this moderate inheritance, we beg you to choose between Taverney and this little hôtel in which we are. Live in one, we will retire to the other."

The baron rumpled his lace frill with a rage which was betrayed only by the movement of his fingers, the moisture of his forehead, and the trembling of his lips. Philippe did not even notice it. He had turned away his head. "I prefer Taverney," said the baron.

"Then we will keep the hôtel."

"As you like."

"When will you set out?"

"This very evening; no, immediately."

Philippe bowed.

"At Taverney," continued the baron, "one may be a king with three thousand francs' income. I shall be twice king." He stretched his hand toward the chiffonniere to take the casket, which he put in his pocket. Then he went toward the door. Suddenly retracing his steps, he said, with a wicked smile, "Philippe, I permit you to sign our name to the first treatise of philosophy which you publish. As for Andrée — for her first work — advise her to call it Louis or Louise; it is a name which brings luck;" and he left with a sneer. Philippe, with blood-shot eye, head on fire, pressed the hilt of his sword, murmuring, "My God! give me patience, grant me forgetfulness!"

CHAPTER LI.

A CASE OF CONSCIENCE.

AFTER having copied with scrupulous care some pages of his "Réveries d'un Promeneur Solitaire," Rousseau had finished a frugal breakfast. Although a retreat had been offered him in the delicious gardens of Ermenonville, Rousseau, hesitating to submit to the slavery of the great, as he said in his mania of misanthropy, still lived in this little lodging of the Rue Plastrière with which we are acquainted.

On her part, Thérèse, having put in order her little house, had just taken her basket to go to market. It was nine o'clock in the morning. The housekeeper, according to her custom, came to ask Rousseau what he would like for dinner that day. Rousseau emerged from his revery, slowly raised his head, and looked at Thérèse like a man half-awake.

"Whatever you wish," he said, "provided there are cherries and flowers."

"We will see, — if all this is not too dear."

"Of course," said Rousseau.

"For indeed," continued Thérèse, "I do not know whether what you do is worth anything; but it seems to me that they do not pay you as formerly."

"You are mistaken, Thérèse. They pay me the same; but I get tired and work less, and then my bookseller is in arrears with me to the extent of half a volume."

"You will see that this one will make you bankrupt again."

"I hope not; he is an honest man."

"An honest man, an honest man! When you have said that, you think you have said all."

"I have said much, at least," replied Rousseau, smiling; "for I cannot say it of everybody."

"It is not surprising; you are so cross."

"Thérèse, we are wandering from the question."

"Yes; you want your cherries, gourmand! you want your flowers, sybarite!"

"What would you have, my good housewife?" replied Rousseau, with the patience of an angel; "my heart and my head are so bad that not being able to go out, I take delight at least in the sight of what God spreads over the country with bountiful hand."

Indeed, Rousseau was pale and exhausted, and his listless hands turned over the leaves his eyes did not read.

Thérèse shook her head. "Very well, very well," said she; "I am going out for an hour; remember that I shall put the key under the mat, and that if you need —"

"Oh, I shall not go out," said Rousseau.

"I know very well that you will not go out, since you cannot stand up; but I say this to you, that you may pay a little attention to persons who may call, and that you may answer the bell if it rings. You may be sure that it is not I."

"Thanks, good Thérèse, thanks; go."

The housekeeper went out, grumbling as usual; and the sound of her heavy and slow step was heard for a long time on the stairs. But as soon as the door was closed Rousseau took advantage of his seclusion to stretch him-

self deliciously on his chair, looked at the birds that pecked upon the window-sill at some crumbs of bread, and enjoyed the sunlight which shone in between the chimneys of the neighboring houses. His fancy, young and active, had no sooner felt its liberty than it spread its wings like the sparrows after their joyous repast. Suddenly the entrance door creaked on its hinges, which disturbed the philosopher's delightful repose. "What!" he said to himself, "already returned! have I slept, when I thought myself only dreaming?"

The door of the cabinet slowly opened in its turn. Rousseau turned his back to this door; convinced that it was Thérèse who was entering, he did not trouble himself. There was a moment's silence. Then in the midst of this silence, "Pardon, Monsieur," said a voice that made the philosopher start.

Rousseau hastily turned round. "What, Gilbert!" he said.

"Yes, Gilbert; once more, pardon, Monsieur Rousseau."

It was, indeed, Gilbert, — but Gilbert pale, his hair dishevelled, his disordered garments scarcely covering his thin and trembling limbs. His appearance made Rousseau shudder, and drew from him an exclamation of pity which resembled anxiety. Gilbert had the fixed and eager eyes of hungry birds of prey; a smile of affected timidity contrasted with this look, as would the upper part of the eagle's solemn head with the lower portion of the cunning head of a wolf or fox.

"What have you come here for?" cried Rousseau, who did not like disorder, and regarded it in another as the sign of an evil purpose.

"Monsieur, I am hungry," replied Gilbert.

Rousseau shuddered at hearing the sound of this voice, uttering the most terrible word in the human language.

"And how did you get in here?" he asked. "The door was locked."

"Monsieur, I knew that Madame Thérèse generally puts the key under the mat. I waited until Madame Thérèse had gone out, for she does not like me, and perhaps would have refused to receive me or take me to you; then, when you were alone, I came up, took the key from its hiding place, and here I am."

Rousseau raised himself on the two arms of his chair.

"Listen to me," said Gilbert, "for a moment, one single moment; I swear to you, Monsieur Rousseau, that I deserve to be heard."

"Well," replied Rousseau, full of amazement at sight of this face, which no longer expressed any of the sentiments common to men.

"I should tell you that I am reduced to such an extremity that I do not know whether to steal, kill myself, or do something still worse. Oh, do not be alarmed, my master and protector," said Gilbert in a voice full of gentleness, "for I think, on reflection, that I shall die without having to kill myself. During the eight days since I fled from Trianon I have wandered in the woods and fields without eating anything but green vegetables or wild fruits. I am weak. I am perishing with fatigue and hunger. As for stealing, it is not from you that I shall attempt it; I like your house too well, Monsieur Rousseau. As for that third thing, oh! to accomplish it —"

"Well?" said Rousseau.

"Well, it needs resolution, which I have come here to seek."

"Are you mad?" cried Rousseau.

"No, Monsieur; but I am very unhappy, full of despair, and would have drowned myself in the Seine this morning, but for a reflection which occurred to me."

"What reflection?"

"Why, that you have written, 'Suicide is a robbery committed on mankind.'"

Rousseau looked at the young man as if to say to him, "Do you flatter yourself that I was thinking of you in writing this?"

"Oh, I understand," murmured Gilbert.

"I do not think so," said Rousseau.

"You mean to say, 'Would your death, yours, — the death of a worthless fellow, who possesses nothing, who does nothing, — be worthy to be called an event?'"

"That is not the question," said Rousseau, ashamed of being divined; "but you were hungry, I think."

"Yes; I said so."

"Well, since you knew where the door was, you also know where the bread is; go to the cupboard, take some bread, and go away."

Gilbert did not stir.

"If it is not bread you want, but money, I do not think you wicked enough to maltreat an old man, who was your protector, in the very house that has given you shelter. Be satisfied, then, with this little — here;" and he offered him some pieces of money which he took from his pocket.

Gilbert stayed his hand. "Oh!" he said, with poignant grief, "it is a question neither of money nor bread; you did not understand what I meant when I spoke of killing myself. If I do not kill myself, it is because my life may now be useful to some one, — because my death might rob some one, Monsieur. You, who know all the social laws, all the natural obligations, tell me if there is in this world any tie which should bind a man to life who wishes to die!"

"There are many," said Rousseau.

"To be a father," murmured Gilbert, "is that one of the ties? Look at me while you answer, Monsieur Rousseau, that I may read it in your eyes."

"Yes," stammered Rousseau, — "yes, most certainly. Why this question from you?"

"Monsieur, your words will be a law to me," said Gilbert; "consider them carefully, I entreat you, Monsieur. I am so unhappy that I would like to kill myself; but — but I have a child!"

Rousseau started in astonishment.

"Oh, do not mock at me, Monsieur!" Gilbert said humbly; "you will think you are only pricking my heart when indeed you are opening it as with a poniard. I repeat it, I have a child!"

Rousseau looked at him without answering.

"But for this I should be already dead," continued Gilbert; "in this alternative I said to myself that you would give me good advice, and so I came."

"But," asked Rousseau, "why have I advice to give you? Did you consult me when you committed the fault?"

"Monsieur, this fault — " and Gilbert, with a strange expression, approached Rousseau.

"Well?" said the latter.

"This fault," replied Gilbert, "there are those who call it a crime."

"A crime! All the more reason, then, that you should not speak to me of it. I am a man like you, and not a confessor. Besides, what you tell me does not surprise me. I always foresaw that you would turn out badly; you have a wicked nature."

"No, Monsieur," replied Gilbert, shaking his head, gloomily, — "no, Monsieur, you are mistaken; my mind is unnatural, or rather, perverted. I have read many

books which taught me the equality of castes, pride of spirit, the dignity of instincts. These books, Monsieur, had so illustrious authors that a poor peasant like myself might well be led astray. I am lost."

"Ah, ah! I see what you are aiming at, Monsieur Gilbert."

"I?"

"Yes; you are blaming my doctrine. Have you not free will?"

"I do not blame, Monsieur; I say only that I have read. I blame my credulity; I believed, I fell. There are two causes for my crime, — you are the first, and I come, in the first place, to you; I shall next go to the second, but in his turn, and at the proper time."

"In short, what is it you ask of me?"

"Neither gifts, nor shelter, nor bread even, although I am an outcast and hungry. No, I ask of you moral support; I ask you to confirm your doctrine. I ask you to restore by a word my strength, which is broken down, not by inanition in my arms and legs, but by doubt in my head and heart. Monsieur Rousseau, I entreat you, therefore, to tell me if what I have felt for the past eight days is the pain of hunger in the muscles of my stomach, or if it is the torture of remorse in the organs of my mind. In committing a crime, Monsieur, I have begotten a child. Well, then, tell me, must I tear my hair in bitter despair, and roll in the dust crying, Pardon! or must I exclaim, like the woman in Scripture, 'I have done as others; if there is among men a better one than I, let him stone me'? In a word, Monsieur Rousseau, you who must have felt what I feel, answer this question. Say, say, is it natural for a father to abandon his child?"

Gilbert had no sooner spoken thus than Rousseau became paler than Gilbert himself, and losing self-control,

"What right have you to speak to me thus?" he stammered.

"Because, in your house, Monsieur Rousseau, in this garret where you showed me hospitality, I read what you have written on this subject; because you have declared that children born in misery belong to the State, which ought to take care of them; because, in short, you have always considered yourself an honest man, although you have not shrunk from abandoning children which were born to you."

"Miserable fellow," said Rousseau, "you have read my book, and you use such language to me!"

"Well?" said Gilbert.

"Well, you have a wicked mind joined to a wicked heart."

"Monsieur Rousseau!"

"You have misread my books, as you misread human life! You have seen but the surface of the pages, as you see only that of the face! Ah, you expect to make me an accomplice in your crime by citing to me the books I have written, — by saying to me, 'You confess having done this, therefore I may do it!' But, unhappy man, what you do not know, what you have not read in my books, what you have not divined, is that the whole life of him whom you take as an example, this life of misery and suffering, I could exchange for a gilded existence, — voluptuous, full of splendor and pleasure. Have I less talent than Monsieur de Voltaire, and could I not produce as much as he? By applying myself less than I do, could I not sell my books as dear as he sells his, and bring the money rolling into my coffer, keeping always a coffer half-full at the disposal of my book-sellers? Gold attracts gold; do you not know it? I also could have had a carriage for a young and beautiful mistress to ride in, and

you may be sure this luxury would not have dried up the source of an inexhaustible poesy. Have I not passions still? Observe carefully my eyes, which at sixty years yet glow with the ardors of youth and desire. You who have read or copied my books, come, do you not recall that in spite of the decline of years, notwithstanding very real and very serious troubles, my heart, still young, seems to have inherited, in order to suffer more, all the strength of the other parts of my organization? Weighed down with infirmities which prevent me from walking, I feel that I have more vigor and life for sustaining sorrow than I ever had in my youth for the reception of the rare felicities which God has bestowed upon me."

"I know all that, Monsieur," said Gilbert. "I have observed you closely and have understood you."

"Then, if you have observed me closely, if you have understood me, has not my life for you a meaning which others do not see? Does not this strange self-denial, which is unnatural to me, mean that I wish to expiate —"

"Expiate!" murmured Gilbert.

"Have you not understood," continued the philosopher, "that this misery having driven me in the very first place to make an unreasonable resolution, I have since been unable to find any other excuse for this resolution than disinterestedness and perseverance in misery? Have you not understood that I have punished my mind by humiliation? For it was my mind that was guilty, — my mind, which had recourse to paradoxes to justify itself, while on the other hand, I punished my heart by ceaseless remorse."

"Ah!" cried Gilbert, "it is thus you reply to me! it is thus that you philosophers, who fling your written precepts at mankind, plunge us in despair, and then blame us if we are angry with you! Eh! of what consequence is your humiliation to me, when it is secret; your remorse,

when it is unknown? Oh, woe! woe to you, woe! and may the crimes committed in your name fall upon your own head!"

"On my head, you say, curses, — and with them, punishment; for you forget the punishment. Oh, that would be too much! You who have sinned as I have, you condemn yourself as severely as you do me!"

"More severely even," said Gilbert; "for my punishment will be terrible; for since I have no longer faith in anything, I shall let my adversary, or rather my enemy, kill me, — a suicide which my misery recommends, which my conscience excuses; for now my death is no longer a robbery of mankind, and when you wrote that, you wrote what you did not think."

"Stop, unhappy man!" said Rousseau, "stop! have you not done harm enough with foolish credulity? Must you do more still with stupid scepticism? You have spoken to me of a child? You said that you were, or were about to be, a father?"

"I said so," repeated Gilbert.

"Do you realize what it is," murmured Rousseau, in a low voice, "to drag with you, not to death, but to shame, creatures born to breathe freely and innocently the pure air of virtue, a gift of God to every man born into the world? Let me tell you nevertheless, how horrible my condition is. When I abandoned my children, I imagined that society, which all superiority offends, would throw this wrong in my face as an ignominious reproach; then I justified myself with paradoxes; then I employed ten years of my life in advising mothers how to educate their children, — I who did not know what it was to be a father; in advising the nation how to make its citizens brave and honest, — I who had been weak and corrupt. Then one day the executioner, who avenges society, the nation, and the

orphan, unable to reach me, seized my book and burned it as a living shame to the country whose air it had poisoned. Decide, divine judge! was I right in action; was I wrong in my precepts? You do not answer; God himself would be perplexed, — God, who holds in his hand the unerring scales of justice. Well, I have a heart which solves the question; and this heart has said to me from its very depths: 'Woe to you, unnatural father, who have abandoned your children! Woe to you, if you meet the young prostitute who laughs brazenly at night at the street corners; for it may be your abandoned daughter, whom hunger has driven to infamy! Woe to you, if you meet in the street the arrested thief, with his guilt fresh upon him; for he may be your abandoned son, whom hunger has driven to crime!'"

After saying these words, Rousseau who had risen, fell back upon his chair. "And yet," he continued, with a broken voice which had the accent of a prayer, "I have not been as guilty as they believe; I have seen an unfeeling mother, an accomplice in my crime, forget like the animals, and I said to myself, 'God has allowed the mother to forget; it is therefore right for her to forget.' Well, I was at that time in error; and now — since you have heard me say to you what I never before said to any one — you must remain in error no longer."

"So," asked the young man, knitting his brow, "you would never have abandoned your children if you had had money enough to support them?"

"If only what was absolutely needful, — no, never; I swear it, never!" and Rousseau solemnly stretched his trembling hand toward heaven.

"Twenty thousand francs," asked Gilbert, "is that enough to support a child?"

"Yes; it is enough," said Rousseau.

"Good," said Gilbert; "thanks, Monsieur; now I know what remains for me to do."

"And in any event, young as you are, with your labor, you can support your child," said Rousseau. "But you have spoken of crime; they are looking for you, pursuing you perhaps?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Well, conceal yourself here, my boy; you are always welcome to the little garret."

"You are a man I love, Master!" cried Gilbert, "and your offer fills me with joy. Indeed, I ask only a shelter; as for my bread, I will earn it. You know that I am not an idler."

"Well," said Rousseau, appearing uneasy, "if the thing is settled, go up; do not let Madame Rousseau find you here. She never goes up to the garret now; for since your departure we lock up nothing. Your mattress is still there; make yourself as comfortable as possible."

"Thanks, Monsieur; if that is so I am more fortunate than I deserve to be."

"Now is that all you desire?" said Rousseau, looking toward the door.

"No, Monsieur; one word more, if you please."

"Speak."

"One day at Luciennes you accused me of having betrayed you; I did not betray any one, Monsieur, I was pursuing my love affair."

"Let us not speak of that. Is that all?"

"Yes; now, Monsieur Rousseau, when we are ignorant of the address of any one at Paris, can we obtain it?"

"Undoubtedly, when that person is known."

"He of whom I speak is very well known."

"His name?"

"Monsieur le Comte Joseph Balsamo."

Rousseau shuddered; he had not forgotten the meeting in the Rue Plastrière. "What do you want with this man?" he asked.

"A very simple thing. I have accused you — you, my master — of being morally the cause of my crime, since I believed I was only obeying a natural law."

"And I have undeceived you?" cried Rousseau, trembling at the idea of this responsibility.

"You have enlightened me, at least."

"Well, what were you going to say?"

"That my crime had not only a moral cause, but also a physical one."

"And this Comte de Balsamo is the physical cause, is he not?"

"Yes. I have copied examples, I have seized an opportunity; and in this — I see it now — I have acted like a wild animal, and not like a man. You gave me the example; Monsieur le Comte de Balsamo, the opportunity. Do you know where he lives?"

"Yes."

"Give me his address, then."

"Rue Saint Claude."

"Thanks; I shall go to his house immediately."

"Take care, child," exclaimed Rousseau; "he is powerful and adroit."

"Fear nothing, Monsieur Rousseau. I am determined, and you have taught me to keep my temper."

"Quick, quick, — go upstairs!" cried Rousseau; "I hear the gate shut; it is, doubtless, Madame Rousseau coming in. Hide yourself in the garret until she has come in, then you can go away."

"The key, if you please?"

"On the nail, in the kitchen, as usual."

"Adieu, Monsieur, adieu."

"Take some bread; I will prepare you some work for to-night."

"Thanks!" And Gilbert slipped out so quickly that he was already in his garret before Thérèse had reached the second floor.

Furnished with the precious information given him by Rousseau, Gilbert made no delay in putting his project into execution. Indeed, Thérèse had no sooner closed the door of her apartment than the young man, who from the door of his garret had watched all her movements, descended the stairs as rapidly as if he had not been weakened by a long fast. His head was full of hopeful plans, of bitter memories, and over all hovered an avenging spirit which spurred him on with its complaints and accusations. He arrived at Rue Saint Claude in a state difficult to describe. As he entered the court of the hôtel, Balsamo was accompanying to the door the Prince de Rohan, who was paying his generous alchemist a visit. As the prince was leaving, stopping once more to renew his thanks to Balsamo, the poor ragged fellow slipped in like a dog, not daring to look about him for fear of being dazzled.

The carriage of Prince Louis awaited him on the boulevard; the prelate slowly crossed the space that separated him from his carriage, which rapidly rolled away as soon as the door was closed upon him. Balsamo had looked after him sadly, and when the carriage had disappeared he turned toward the steps, upon which stood a sort of beggar in the attitude of supplication. Balsamo stepped up to him, and although his lips were silent, his expressive look was an interrogatory.

"A quarter of an hour's audience, if you please, Monsieur le Comte," said the young man in the ragged clothes.

"Who are you, my friend?" asked Balsamo, with supreme gentleness.

"Do you not recognize me?" asked Gilbert.

"No, — but no matter; come," replied Balsamo, not disturbed by the strange expression of the solicitor, any more than by his ragged garments and his importunity. Walking before him he led him into the nearest apartment, where, seating himself, without change of tone or expression, he said, "You asked if I recognized you?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Comte."

"Indeed, I think I have seen you somewhere."

"At Taverney, Monsieur, when you came there on the night before the arrival of the dauphiness."

"What were you doing at Taverney?"

"I lived there."

"As servant of the family?"

"No; as member of the family."

"You have left Taverney?"

"Yes, Monsieur; nearly three years since."

"And you came —"

"To Paris, where at first I studied with Monsieur Rousseau; after which I was placed in the gardens at Trianon in the capacity of under-gardener, through the influence of Monsieur de Jussieu."

"These are great names you mention, my friend. What do you want with me?"

"I will tell you;" and pausing, he looked at Balsamo steadily. "Do you remember," he continued, "coming to Trianon during the night of the great storm, six weeks ago next Friday?"

Balsamo's seriousness was changed to melancholy, as he said, "Yes, I remember; you saw me there, perhaps?"

"I saw you."

"Then you come to be paid for the secret?" said Balsamo, in a threatening tone.

"No, Monsieur; for I am more interested than you in keeping this secret."

"Then you are the one they call Gilbert?" said Balsamo.

"Yes, Monsieur le Comte."

Balsamo looked with long and searching gaze at the young man whose name carried with it so terrible a charge. He was surprised, he who was a judge of men, at the assurance of his bearing, at his dignity of speech. Gilbert was standing before a table upon which he did not lean. One of his thin hands, white, even though accustomed to garden work, was hidden in his bosom; the other fell gracefully at his side.

"I see by your countenance," said Balsamo, "why you have come here; you know that Mademoiselle de Taverney has brought a terrible charge against you, that by the aid of science I have forced her to tell the truth; you have come to upbraid me for obtaining this evidence, have you not? to reproach me with this conjuring of a secret which, but for me, would have remained buried in darkness as in a tomb?"

Gilbert only nodded his head.

"You are wrong, however," continued Balsamo; "for, admitting that I had wished to inform against you without being driven to it in my own interest, — for they accused me, — admitting that I had treated you as an enemy, that I had attacked you while defending myself; admitting, I say, all this, you have no right to say anything, for indeed you have committed a base deed."

Gilbert tore his breast with his finger-nails, but answered nothing.

"The brother will pursue you, and the sister will have

you killed," replied Balsamo, "if you have the imprudence to walk as you do about the streets of Paris."

"Oh, as to that, it is of little consequence to me," said Gilbert.

"What! of little consequence to you?"

"Yes; I loved Mademoiselle Andrée. I loved her as no other will ever love her; but she scorned me, — me whose sentiments for her were so respectful; she scorned me, — me who had already held her twice in my arms without even daring to touch with my lips the hem of her dress."

"Precisely, and you have made her pay for this respect; you have avenged yourself for her scorn, by what, — by a snare?"

"Oh, no, no! the snare did not originate with me; an opportunity for committing the crime was furnished me."

"By whom?"

"By you."

Balsamo drew himself up as if a serpent had stung him. "By me?" he cried.

"By you; yes, Monsieur, by you," repeated Gilbert. "Monsieur, you magnetized Mademoiselle Andrée; then you fled. As you went away, her limbs failed her, and she fell. I took her in my arms to carry her to her chamber; I felt her body touching mine, — that contact would have animated a marble statue! I, who loved, yielded to my love. Am I then so criminal as they say, Monsieur? I ask it of you, — of you, the cause of my misfortune."

Balsamo fixed upon Gilbert a look filled with sadness and pity. "You are right, child," he said; "it is I who have caused your crime and the misfortune of this young girl."

"And instead of providing a remedy for it, — you who are so powerful, and who ought to be so good, — you have

aggravated the misfortune of the young girl, you have exposed the criminal to death."

"It is true," replied Balsamo, "and what you say is reasonable. For some time past, look you, young man, I have been a thing accursed, and all the projects of my brain assume, when executed, threatening and pernicious forms. This is the consequence of misfortunes that I also have suffered, and which you do not comprehend. At the same time it is no reason why I should make others suffer; tell me what you want."

"I ask the means of repairing all, Monsieur le Comte, — crime and misfortune."

"You love this young girl?"

"Oh, yes!"

"There are many kinds of love. In what way do you love her?"

"Before possessing her, I loved her to distraction; now, I love her madly. I should die of grief if she received me with anger; I should die of joy if she allowed me to kiss her feet."

"She is of noble birth, but she is poor," said Balsamo, reflecting.

"Yes."

"Yet her brother is a man of heart, who, I think, cares but little for the prerogative of birth. What would happen if you asked this brother for his sister in marriage?"

"He would kill me," Gilbert replied coldly; "however, as I desire death more than I fear it, if you advise me to make this demand, I will do so."

Balsamo considered. "You are a man of sense," he said, "and we may say that you are a man of heart, although your action was really criminal, my complicity apart. Well, seek out not Monsieur de Taverney the son, but the Baron de Taverney, his father, and say to him that on

the day he permits you to marry his daughter, you will bring a dowry to Mademoiselle Andrée."

"I cannot say that, Monsieur le Comte; I have nothing."

"And I tell you that you shall bring her a dowry of one hundred thousand crowns, which I will give you to repair the misfortune and the crime, as you said just now."

"He will not believe me; he knows that I am poor."

"Well, if he does not believe you, show him these bank-notes, and he will no longer doubt." While saying this, Balsamo opened the drawer of a table, and counted thirty notes of ten thousand francs each. He then handed them to Gilbert.

"And is this money?" said the young man.

"Read."

Gilbert cast an eager glance at the roll he was holding in his hand, and saw the truth of what Balsamo said. A joyful light shone in his eyes. "It may be possible!" he cried. "But, no; such generosity would be too sublime."

"You are distrustful," said Balsamo; "you are right; but accustom yourself to choose your subjects for suspicion. Take, then, these hundred thousand crowns, and go to Monsieur de Taverney."

"Monsieur," said Gilbert, "while such a sum is given by word only I cannot believe in the reality of the gift."

Balsamo took a pen and wrote: —

I give to Gilbert as dowry, the day he signs his contract of marriage with Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney, the sum of one hundred thousand crowns, which I have delivered him in advance, in the hope of a successful negotiation.

JOSEPH BALSAMO.

"Take this paper, go, and doubt no longer."

Gilbert received the paper with a trembling hand, "Mon-

sieur," he said, "if I owe you so much happiness, you shall be the god I will worship upon the earth."

"There is but one God to worship," Balsamo answered seriously, "and I am not he. Go, my friend."

"A last favor, Monsieur."

"What is it?"

"Give me fifty francs."

"You ask me for fifty francs when you already have three hundred thousand in your hand?"

"These three hundred thousand francs are not mine," said Gilbert, "until the day when Mademoiselle Andrée consents to marry me."

"And for what are these fifty francs?"

"To purchase a decent coat in which I may present myself to the baron."

"There, my friend," said Balsamo; and he gave him the fifty francs. Upon this he dismissed Gilbert, and with the same slow and melancholy step returned to his apartments.

CHAPTER LII.

GILBERT'S PROJECTS.

Once in the street, Gilbert's feverish imagination was cooled, which at the last words of the count had carried him beyond not only the probable, but also the possible. Arrived at the Rue Pastourel, he sat down upon a milestone, and casting his eyes about him to assure himself that he was not watched, he drew from his pocket the bank-notes all rumpled by the pressure of his hand. A terrible thought had occurred to him, and brought the perspiration to his brow. "Let us see," he said, looking at the notes, "if this man has not deceived me; let us see if he has not set a trap for me; let us see if he does not send me to certain death under pretence of securing my happiness; let us see if he does not treat me as they do the sheep which they allure to the shambles by offering it a bunch of flowering herbs. I have heard it said that there are a great many false notes in circulation, with which the roués of the court cheat the girls of the opera. Let us see if the count has not taken me for a dupe." And he took out of the roll one of the notes of ten thousand francs; then going into a shop, he asked, showing the note, the address of a banker who would change it, having been charged with this commission by his master, he said.

The shop-keeper looked at the note, turned it over and over admiringly, — for it was a magnificent sum, and his

shop was small; then he directed him to the banker in the Rue Sainte Avoie, — therefore the note was good.

Gilbert, happy and elated, gave reins to his imagination, secured more carefully than ever the roll of bills in his handkerchief, and noticing in the Rue Sainte Avoie a dealer in second-hand clothes whose display attracted him, he purchased, for twenty-five francs, — that is, for one of the two louis Balsamo had given him, — a complete suit of maroon cloth whose neatness pleased him, a pair of black silk stockings, a little faded, and shoes with bright buckles, a good linen shirt completed the costume, neat rather than rich, at which Gilbert gave one admiring glance in the mirror of the establishment. Then, leaving his old garments in addition to the twenty-five francs, he put the precious handkerchief in his pocket, and went from the shop of the tailor to that of the hair-dresser, who in a quarter of an hour made this very remarkable head of Balsamo's protégé elegant, and even beautiful.

At last, when all these operations had been accomplished, Gilbert bought a small loaf in a baker's shop near the Place Louis XV., and ate it quickly as he took the road to Versailles. At the fountain of the Conférence he stopped to drink. Then he continued his journey, refusing every proposition of the coachmen, who could not comprehend why a young man so neatly dressed should wish to save fifteen sous at the expense of his polished shoes. What would they have said if they had known that this young man who was travelling on foot had in his pocket three hundred thousand francs? But Gilbert had his reasons for travelling on foot, — in the first place, his firm resolution not to spend more than was absolutely necessary; secondly, the need of seclusion to indulge at his pleasure in pantomime and monologues. God alone knows what happy dreams of the future filled the head of

this young man during his walk of two hours and a half. In this time he had walked more than four leagues without noticing the distance, without feeling the least fatigue, so vigorous was his constitution.

All his plans were made, and he had determined to introduce his demand in the following manner: To approach Taverney with ceremonious words; then, when he had the authority of the baron, to address Mademoiselle Andrée with so much eloquence that she would not only pardon him, but would conceive a respect and affection for the author of the pathetic speech he had prepared. The more he thought of it, the more hope triumphed over fear; and it seemed impossible to Gilbert that a girl in Andrée's position should not accept the reparation offered by love, when this love was accompanied by a fortune of one hundred thousand crowns.

Gilbert, in building these castles in the air, was as innocent and honest as the most simple child of primitive times. He forgot all the wrong he had done, and was perhaps more true-hearted than one would think. All these batteries prepared, he arrived with anxious heart at the grounds of Trianon. Once there, he was ready for everything, — for the first wrath of Philippe, which the generosity of his proposal must, he thought, assuage; for the first disdain of Andrée, which must yield to his love; for the first insults of the baron, which his gold would soothe.

Indeed, Gilbert, quite removed from the society in which he had lived, knew instinctively that three hundred thousand francs in his pockets was a safe armor. What he dreaded most was the sight of Andrée's sufferings; in presence of this misfortune only he feared his weakness, — a weakness that would take from him a part of the means necessary for the success of his cause. He entered the

gardens, looking, not without pride, which suited his face well, upon all these workmen, yesterday his companions, to-day his inferiors. The first question he asked was in reference to the Baron de Taverney. He addressed himself naturally to the lackey on service at the offices.

"The baron is not at Trianon," replied the latter.

Gilbert hesitated a moment. "And Monsieur Philippe?" he asked.

"Oh, Monsieur Philippe has gone away with Mademoiselle Andrée!"

"Gone away!" cried Gilbert.

"Yes."

"Mademoiselle Andrée has gone, then?"

"Five days ago."

"To Paris?"

The lackey made a movement as if to say, "I know nothing about it."

"What! you know nothing about it?" cried Gilbert. "Mademoiselle Andrée has gone away without any one knowing where she was going? There must be a reason for her going away, however."

"What nonsense!" replied the lackey, showing little respect for Gilbert's maroon coat; "of course there was a cause for her going away."

"And why did she go?"

"For change of air."

"For change of air?" repeated Gilbert.

"Yes; it seemed that the air of Trianon did not agree with her, and by the doctor's orders she has left Trianon."

It was useless to question further; it was evident that the lackey had said all that he knew about Mademoiselle de Taverney. And yet Gilbert, amazed, could not believe what he had heard. He ran to Andrée's chamber, and found the door closed. Fragments of glass, bits of straw

and hay, threads from the mattress strewing the floor, proved to him plainly that there had been a removal. Gilbert entered his old chamber, which remained just as he had left it. Andrée's window was open to admit air to the apartment; he could look through into the antechamber. The apartment was quite empty.

Gilbert then gave way to extravagant grief; he beat his head against the wall, he wrung his hands, he rolled on the floor. Then like a madman, he rushed out of the garret, descended the stairs as if he had wings, plunged into the woods, his hands clutching his hair, and with cries and imprecations he fell down in the midst of the bushes, cursing life and those who had given him birth.

"Oh, it is over, all over!" he murmured. "God does not wish me to find her again; God wishes me to die of remorse, of despair and love. Thus I shall expiate my crime; thus I shall avenge her whom I have wronged. Where can she be? At Taverney! Oh, I will go, I will go! I will go even to the end of the world; I will mount to the clouds, if necessary. Oh, I will trace her, and follow her even if I sink by the way from hunger and fatigue!"

But relieved by degrees by this outburst of grief, Gilbert arose, breathed more freely, looked about him more calmly, and continued at a slow pace his journey to Paris, which he was five hours in accomplishing.

"The baron," he said to himself, with some show of reason, "may not have left Paris; I will speak to him. Mademoiselle Andrée has fled. Indeed, she could not remain at Trianon; but her father must know where she has gone. A word from him will put me on her track; and besides he may recall his daughter if I can succeed in satisfying his avarice."

Gilbert, strong in this new idea, entered Paris about

seven o'clock, — that is, at about the hour when the crowd in the Champs-Élysées were enjoying the cool evening air, when Paris fluctuated between the early fogs of evening and the first rays of that artificial light which extended the day to twenty-four hours.

The young man, carrying out his resolution, went directly to the door of the little hôtel in the Rue Coq-Héron, and knocked without waiting a moment. Silence only answered him. He redoubled his knocks, but without result. This last resource, then, upon which he had relied, had failed him. Mad with rage, biting his hands to punish his body for suffering less than his soul, Gilbert quickly turned the corner of the street, pushed the spring of Rousseau's door, and ascended the stairs. The handkerchief which enclosed the thirty bank-notes also held the key of the garret door. Gilbert rushed in, as he would have thrown himself into the Seine if it had been there. Then, as the evening was fine and the fleecy clouds were sporting in the azure of the sky, as a sweet perfume rose from the lime and chestnut trees in the evening twilight, as the bat beat with its silent wings on the panes of the little window, Gilbert, recalled to life by all these sensations, approached the window, and seeing in the midst of the trees the pavilion of the garden, where once he found Andrée whom he thought to be forever lost, his heart was at the point of breaking, and he fell almost fainting on the edge of the gutter, lost in vague and stupid contemplation.

CHAPTER LIII.

A VAIN STRUGGLE; IN WHICH GILBERT FINDS THAT IT IS EASIER TO COMMIT A CRIME THAN TO CONQUER A PREJUDICE.

As the sensation of grief which had had possession of Gilbert decreased, his ideas became clearer and more definite. In the mean time the increasing darkness prevented him from distinguishing anything; then an unconquerable desire seized him to see the trees, the house, the walks, which the darkness blended into one mass, over which the air wandered as over an abyss. He remembered that one evening, in happier times, he had wished to procure news of Andrée, to see her, to hear her speak even, and that at the peril of his life, suffering still from a sickness which followed the thirtieth of May, he had slid down by the gutter-pipe from the second floor to the bottom, — that is, into the blessed garden itself. At that time there was great danger in forcing a way into that house in which the baron lived, and where Andrée was so well guarded; and yet Gilbert remembered how delightful the situation was, in spite of its danger, and how joyously beat his heart when he heard the sound of her voice. "What if I should do it again," he said to himself; "what if I should go once more, and on my knees search the sanded paths for the adored footprints of my mistress."

This word Gilbert spoke almost aloud, taking a strange pleasure in uttering it. He interrupted his monologue to look searchingly at the place where he thought the pavilion

should be. Then, after a moment's silence and investigation, "There is no indication," he added, "that the pavilion is inhabited by other tenants, — neither light, nor sound, nor open doors. I will go!"

Gilbert had the merit of quickly putting into execution a resolution once formed. He opened the door of the garret, descended on tiptoe like a sylph to the door of Rousseau, and having reached the second floor he boldly seized the gutter-pipe and slid to the ground, at the risk of ruining the pair of breeches new that morning. Having reached the foot of the trellis he experienced once more all the emotions of his first visit to the pavilion; the gravel creaked under his feet, and he recognized the little door by which Nicole had introduced Monsieur de Beausire. At last he went to the steps to press his lips upon the brass button of the window-blind, saying to himself that doubtless Andrée's hand had touched this button. Gilbert's crime had turned his love into a sort of religion.

Suddenly a sound from the inside startled the young man, — a faint and dull sound like that of a light step on the floor. Gilbert retreated. His face was livid; and for the past eight or ten days he had been so distressed in mind that, on seeing a glimmer of light through the door, he thought that superstition — that daughter of ignorance and remorse — held before his eyes one of her sinister torches, and that it was this torch which was shining through the slats of the blinds. He imagined that his soul, loaded with terror, conjured another soul, and that one of those hallucinations which visit madmen or enthusiasts had now come upon him. Nevertheless the step and the light approached nearer. Gilbert saw and heard without belief. But the blind suddenly opening, just when the young man drew near to look through the slats, he was thrown by the shock against the wall; he uttered

a loud cry and fell upon his knees. It was not so much the shock which prostrated him thus as the sight exposed to his view; in this house, which he thought deserted, at the door of which he had knocked without answer, he had just seen Andrée.

The young girl, for it was she and not a spirit, uttered a cry as Gilbert had; then, less frightened, for she doubtless expected some one; "What is it?" she asked. "Who are you? What do you want?"

"Oh, pardon, pardon, Mademoiselle!" murmured Gilbert, his face humbly turned toward the ground.

"Gilbert, Gilbert here!" cried Andrée, with a surprise free from fear or anger; "Gilbert in this garden! Why have you come here, my friend?"

This last title vibrated painfully in the heart of the young man. "Oh!" he said, with emotion, "do not crush me, Mademoiselle; be merciful, I have suffered so much!"

Andrée looked at Gilbert in astonishment, and like a woman who did not understand such humility. "In the first place," she said, "get up, and explain to me why you are here."

"Oh, Mademoiselle," cried Gilbert, "I will not rise until you have pardoned me!"

"What have you done to me that I should pardon you? Speak, explain yourself. At all events," she continued, with a sad smile, "as the offence cannot be great, the pardon will be easy. Did Philippe give you the key?"

"The key?"

"Certainly; it was agreed that I should admit no one in his absence, and he must have given you the means to enter, unless you have climbed over the walls."

"Your brother, Monsieur Philippe?" stammered Gilbert. "No, no, it is not he; but never mind your brother,

Mademoiselle. You have not gone away, then? you have not, then, left France? Oh, happiness! unhoped for happiness!"

Gilbert had risen on one knee, and with arms extended, he returned thanks to Heaven with strange earnestness.

Andrée leaned toward him and looking at him uneasily, she said, "You speak like a madman, Monsieur Gilbert, and you will tear my dress; let go my dress, I beg you, and put an end to this comedy."

Gilbert rose. "You are angry," he said; "but I must not complain, for I have deserved it well. I know that I ought not to have presented myself in this way; but I did not know that you were living in this pavilion; I believed it empty, solitary; what I came to seek was a remembrance of you, — nothing more. Chance alone — Indeed, I no longer know what I am saying. Pardon me; I wished to speak first to Monsieur your father, but he had disappeared."

Andrée made a movement. "To my father," she said; "and why to my father?"

Gilbert was deceived by this reply. "Oh, because I fear you too much," he said; "and yet I know very well that it is better that everything should be arranged between you and me; it is the surest way of repairing all."

"Repairing! what is that?" asked Andrée, "and what must be repaired? Speak!"

Gilbert looked at her with eyes full of love and humility. "Oh, do not be angry," he said; "certainly it is a great boldness on my part, I who am of so little consequence; it was a great boldness, I say, to look so high, but the injury is done."

Andrée started.

"The crime, if you will," continued Gilbert; "yes, the

crime, for really it was a great crime. Well, of this crime accuse fatality, Mademoiselle, but never my heart —"

"Your heart! your crime! fatality! You are mad, Monsieur Gilbert, and you frighten me."

"Oh, it is impossible that with so much respect, so much remorse, with bowed head, clasped hands, I can inspire in you any other sentiment than that of pity. Mademoiselle, listen to what I am about to say, and it is a sacred pledge I make before God and men. I wish my whole life to be consecrated to expiating the wrong of a moment. I wish your future happiness to be so great that it shall efface all the griefs of the past. Mademoiselle —" Gilbert hesitated. "Mademoiselle, consent to a marriage which will sanctify a criminal union."

Andrée drew back a step.

"No, no," said Gilbert; "I am not a madman; do not attempt to fly, do not snatch away the hands which I clasp; for pity's sake, consent to be my wife."

"Your wife?" exclaimed Andrée, believing that she herself had become mad.

"Oh," continued Gilbert, with heart-rending sobs; "oh, say that you pardon me that horrible night; say that my crime filled you with horror, but say also that you forgive me; say that my love, restrained so long, justified my crime!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed Andrée, with savage fury, "it was you, then? Oh, my God! my God!" and Andrée held her head between her hands as if to prevent the revolting thought from escaping.

Gilbert drew back silent and petrified before this beautiful and pale Medusa's face, which expressed both terror and astonishment.

"Was this misfortune reserved for me, my God!" cried the young girl, with growing excitement, "to see my name

doubly dishonored, — dishonored by the crime, dishonored by the criminal? Answer, wretch! answer villain! It was you, then?"

"She did not know it!" murmured Gilbert, astounded.

"Help! help!" cried Andrée, returning to her apartment. "Philippe! Philippe! here Philippe!"

Gilbert, who had followed her, gloomy and in despair, looked about him, seeking either a place in which to fall nobly under the blows he expected, or something with which to defend himself. But no one came at Andrée's call; she was alone in the apartment.

"Alone! oh, alone!" cried the young girl, in a burst of rage. "Away, villain; do not tempt the anger of God!"

Gilbert gently raised his head. "Your anger," he murmured, "is to me the most fearful of all anger; do not overwhelm me, then, Mademoiselle, have pity!" and he clasped his hands in supplication.

"Assassin! assassin!" screamed the young woman.

"But you will not hear me, then?" exclaimed Gilbert. "Listen to me first at least, and have me killed afterward, if you wish."

"Listen to you! listen to you! — still more torture; and what have you to say? let me hear!"

"What I said just now; that I have committed a crime, — a crime very excusable to one who will read my heart, — and that I bring reparation for that crime."

"Oh!" cried Andrée, "this, then, is the meaning of the word which horrified me even before I comprehended it, — a marriage! I think that was what you said?"

"Mademoiselle!" stammered Gilbert.

"A marriage," continued the proud young girl, more and more excited; "oh, it is not anger I feel toward you, it is scorn, it is hatred! with this scorn there is a feeling so humiliating and at the same time so appalling that

I do not understand how any one living can bear the expression of it as I fling it in your face."

Gilbert turned pale; tears of rage sparkled on his eyelashes; his lips were pinched, whitening like two threads of pearl. "Mademoiselle," he said, trembling, "I am not of so little consequence that I cannot serve to repair the loss of your honor."

Andrée drew herself up. "If there were any question of the loss of honor, Monsieur," she said proudly, "it would be of your honor, not of mine. Such as I am, my honor is unsullied, and it would be in marrying you that I should be dishonored!"

"I did not think," said Gilbert, in a cold and incisive tone, "that a woman when she became a mother ought to consider anything in the world but the future of her child."

"And I do not suppose that you dare to interest yourself in that, Monsieur," retorted Andrée, with sparkling eyes.

"On the contrary, Mademoiselle, I am interested in it," replied Gilbert, beginning to rise from beneath the infuriated foot that trampled on him. "I am interested, for I do not wish this child to perish with hunger, as often happens in the houses of the great, where girls interpret honor in a manner of their own. All men are equal; some of the greatest men have proclaimed this maxim. That you should not love me I can conceive, for you do not see my heart; that you should scorn me I can conceive also, for you do not know my thoughts; but that you should refuse me the right to be interested in my child, I can never understand. Alas! in seeking to marry you I have not sought to satisfy a desire, a passion, an ambition; I have performed a duty, I have devoted myself to be your slave, I have offered you my life. Eh, *mon Dieu!* you would never have borne my name; had you wished, you might have continued to treat me as the gardener Gilbert; that would be just. But it would not be just for you to sacri-

fice your child. Here are three hundred thousand francs which a generous protector, who has judged me differently from you, gives me for a dowry. If I marry you this money belongs to me. Now, for myself, Mademoiselle, I need nothing but a little air to breathe if I live, and a hole in the ground to hide my body if I die. Everything else I give to my child. See, here are the three hundred thousand francs," and he laid the bunch of bank-notes on the table, almost under Andrée's hand.

"Monsieur," said Andrée, "you are making a serious mistake; you have no child."

"I?"

"Of what child are you speaking, then?" asked Andrée.

"Why, that of which you are the mother. Have you not admitted in the presence of two persons — your brother Philippe and the Comte de Balsamo — that you were enceinte, and that it was I, I, unhappy —"

"Ah, you heard that?" cried Andrée; "well, so much the better, so much the better. Then, Monsieur, this is my reply to you: You have basely done me violence; you have possessed me in my sleep; you have possessed me by a crime. I am a mother, it is true; but my child has only a mother, — do you understand? You have violated me, it is true; but you are not the father of my child," and seizing the bank-notes she threw them disdainfully out of the room, in such a manner that they touched in their flight the whitening face of the unhappy Gilbert. Then he felt an impulse of anger so profound that Andrée's good angel might well have trembled for her a second time. But that fury was restrained by its own violence, and Gilbert went out from Andrée's presence without even looking at her. He had no sooner passed over the threshold than she darted after him, and closed doors, blinds, windows, and shutters, as if by this violent action she would place the universe between the present and the past.

CHAPTER LIV.

RESOLUTION.

How Gilbert returned to his room; how, without expiring of pain and anger, he sustained the anguish of the night; how he rose without at least a blanching of his hair, — we shall not attempt to explain to the reader.

When daylight came Gilbert had a strong desire to write to Andrée and state to her all the arguments, so solid and so straightforward, which had sprung up in his mind during the night. But under too many circumstances already had he observed the young girl's unbending character to cherish now any further hope. Besides, to write would be concession revolting to his pride; and his letter would perhaps be crumbled up and thrown away without being read; it might put upon his track a pack of furious, unintelligent enemies. He then thought that his proposition would perhaps be more favorably received by the father, who was avaricious and ambitious, or by the brother, who was a man of heart, and whose first movement alone was to be feared. "But," said he, to himself, "of what use to be supported by Monsieur de Taverney or by Monsieur Philippe, since Andrée will pursue me with her eternal 'I do not know you'? It is well," he added, "nothing now pushes me to that woman; she herself has taken pains to sunder the bonds that united us." He said this while rolling with anguish on his mattress, while recalling with rage the smallest details of Andrée's voice and face; he said this while suffering indescribable torment, for he loved her to distraction.

When the sun, already high above the horizon, penetrated the garret, Gilbert rose, shaken by a last hope of seeing his enemy in the garden or even in the pavilion. It was still a joy in his misery. But suddenly a bitter flood of hatred, remorse, and rage overwhelmed his thought; he recalled all the scorn and contempt which the young girl had inflicted on him, and stopping in the middle of the room, by a command suddenly imposed by will on matter, "No," he said, "you shall not go to look out at that window; you shall not inhale that poison of which you would be glad to die. She is a cruel person, who never, when you bowed your head before her, smiled at you, or gave you a word of consolation or of friendship; who took pleasure in rending your heart, when still full of innocence and chaste love. She is a creature without honor and without religion, who has denied to her child its father, its natural support, and who condemns the poor little thing to neglect, to misery, to death, perhaps; because that child dishonors the womb in which it was conceived. Well, no, Gilbert; criminal as you were, amorous and base as you are, I forbid you to approach that window, or cast a glance in the direction of that pavilion. I forbid you to commiserate the fate of that woman, or to weaken the springs of your life by dwelling on what is past. Employ your life, like the brute, in work and the satisfaction of material wants. Make use of the time that will elapse between the affront and vengeance; and remember always that the only way to self-respect and to a position higher than that of these haughty nobles is to be more noble still than they."

Pale, trembling, urged by the impulses of his heart in the direction of the window, Gilbert nevertheless obeyed the command of his reason. He might have been seen moving little by little, slowly, step by step, toward the

door of the stairway. At last he went out on his way to Balsamo's house. But suddenly he returned, saying to himself, "Fool! wretched fool that I am! I spoke, I think of vengeance; and what is the vengeance I would have? Kill the woman? Oh, no; she would die happy in having inflicted on me an additional burden. Dishonor her publicly? Oh, that is a coward's way. Is there a sensitive place in that creature's soul where my needle thrust may cause as much pain as a thrust of a dagger? It is humiliation; she must be humiliated, — yes, for she has even more pride than I. How, then, can I humiliate her? I am nothing, I have nothing, and doubtless she is about to disappear. To be sure, my presence, my frequent appearance, my look of scorn or of defiance would punish her cruelly. I know well that a mother without pity must be a sister without heart, and she might send her brother to kill me. But what prevents my learning how to kill a man, as I have learned how to reason and to write? What prevents my overcoming Philippe, disarming him, and laughing in the face of the avenger, as in that of the offended person herself? No, that savors too much of comedy; in doing that one reckons on his skill and experience, without considering the intervention of God or of chance. Alone, I alone, with my bare arm, with my reason clipped of imagination, with the strength of my muscles given by nature, with the force of my mind, I will reduce to nothing the projects of those miserable — What does Andrée wish; what does she possess; what does she place before her for her defence and my injury? Let me think."

Then, sitting on the edge of the projection of the wall, bending forward and gazing with fixed eyes, Gilbert meditated profoundly. "Whatever might please Andrée," he said, "is what I detest; I must therefore destroy whatever

I detest. Destroy? Oh, no; my vengeance must never drive me to evil deeds; it must never persuade me to use fire or the sword. What, then, remains? This: to seek the cause of Andrée's superiority, — to discover by what chain she will restrain at the same time my heart and my arm — Oh, to see her no more! — to be no more looked upon by her! Oh, to pass within two steps of that woman when, smiling with her insolent beauty, she holds by the hand her child — her child who will never know me — Heavens and earth!"

Gilbert accentuated that phrase with a furious blow of the fist on the wall, and with an oath more terrible still. "Her child! here is the whole secret. It is not necessary that she should ever possess that child, whom she would accustom to execrate the name of Gilbert. It is necessary, on the contrary, for her to learn that the child will grow up execrating the name of Andrée. In a word, that child, whom she would not love, whom she would torture, perhaps, for she has a bad heart, — that child, with whom they would continually scourge me, Andrée must never see, but, losing it, she must rage and moan like a lioness deprived of her young."

Gilbert rose, handsome in his wrath and savage joy. "That is it," he said, extending his fist toward Andrée's pavilion. "You have condemned me to shame, to loneliness, to remorse, to love; I condemn you to suffering without result, to loneliness, to shame, to terror, to hate without vengeance. You will seek for me, — I shall have fled. You will cry out for your child, if only to tear it to pieces on recovering it; but it will be at least a rage of desire which I shall have kindled in your soul; it will be a blade without a hilt which I shall have plunged into your heart. Yes, yes; the child! I shall have the child, Andrée. I shall have, not your child, as you said,

but mine. Gilbert will have his child! — a child noble on the mother's side. My child! — my child!" and gradually he excited himself to transports of intoxicating joy. "Now," said he, "I have nothing to do with vulgar spite or pastoral lamentation; I have to do with a serious undertaking. There is no longer any reason to order my eyes not to seek yonder pavilion; I must order all my energy, all my soul, to watch, that the success of my enterprise may be assured. I will watch, Andrée," he said solemnly, and going nearer to the window, "day and night. You will not make a movement that I shall not see; you will not utter a cry of grief for which I shall not promise you a grief more bitter; you will not exhibit a smile to which I shall not reply by a sardonic and insulting laugh. You are my prey, Andrée; a part of you is my property. I watch, I watch!"

Gilbert then went to the window, and saw the blinds of the pavilion opened; then Andrée's shadow glide over the curtains and the ceiling of the chamber, reflected doubtless by some mirror. Presently Philippe entered, who had risen earlier, but who had been at work in his own room, situated behind Andrée's. Gilbert noticed that their conversation was animated. Doubtless they spoke of him, and of the scene of the evening before. Philippe walked about, showing signs of perplexity. That visit by Gilbert had perhaps induced them to modify their plans; perhaps they would go away in search of peace, obscurity, oblivion. At that idea Gilbert's eyes became luminous rays, which might have set fire to the pavilion and penetrated to the centre of the world.

But very soon a servant-girl entered by the garden-door; she brought a recommendation of some kind. Andrée came to an agreement with her, for she installed herself at once, with her little bundle of clothes, in the chamber

formerly occupied by Nicole. Furthermore, certain recent purchases of furniture, utensils, and provisions satisfied the vigilant Gilbert that the brother and sister intended to remain quietly in that habitation.

Philippe examined with close scrutiny the locks on the garden-door. What especially convinced Gilbert that he was suspected of having entered by using a false key, given him perhaps by Nicole, was that the locksmith, in Philippe's presence, changed the wards of the locks. It inspired Gilbert with the first joy he had experienced since these events began. He smiled ironically. "Poor creatures!" he murmured; "they are not very dangerous. They strengthen the lock, and do not even suspect that I had the daring to scale the wall. A poor idea they have of you, Gilbert! So much the better. Yes, proud Andrée, in spite of the locks on your door, if I wished to penetrate to you I could do it. But it is my turn for good fortune; I scorn you, and unless caprice —" He pirouetted on his heels, imitating the roués of the court. "But no," he continued bitterly, "this is more worthy of me; I want no more of you. Sleep in peace; I have what is better than possession of you, with which to torture you at my ease. Sleep!"

Gilbert left the window, and after giving a glance at his clothes, he descended the stairs, and started out to visit Balsamo.

CHAPTER LV.

THE FIFTEENTH OF DECEMBER.

GILBERT found no difficulty, as far as Fritz was concerned, in being admitted to Balsamo.

The count was resting on a sofa, like a rich and idle man, from the fatigue of having slept all night, — at least so Gilbert thought, seeing him lying there at so early an hour. The order must have been given to the valet to admit Gilbert whenever he should present himself, for he had no occasion to give his name.

As Gilbert entered, Balsamo rose upon his elbow and closed his book, which he held open without reading. "Oh, oh!" said he, "here is a fellow who is going to be married."

Gilbert did not answer.

"Good!" said the count, resuming his insolent attitude; "you are happy and almost grateful. You come to thank me; it is superfluous. Keep that, Gilbert, for new occasions. Thanks are a currency which is generally satisfactory when bestowed with a smile. There, my friend, there!"

There was in these words and in Balsamo's tone an accent mournful and gentle, which struck Gilbert as conveying at the same time a reproach and a revelation.

"No," he said; "you are mistaken, Monsieur. I am not to marry at all."

"Ah!" said the count, "what are you going to do? What has happened?"

"I have been rejected," replied Gilbert.

The count turned completely round. "You have misunderstood, my friend."

"No, Monsieur; I think not, at least."

"Who rejected you?"

"The young lady."

"Of course; why did you not speak to her father?"

"Because fate ordered otherwise."

"Ah, we are fatalist?"

"I have not the capacity for possessing faith."

Balsamo frowned, and looked at Gilbert with a sort of curiosity. "Do not speak of things of which you are ignorant," he said; "with men it is stupidity, with children it is presumption. I will permit you to have pride, but not to be an idiot; tell me that you have not the capacity to be a fool, and I will approve. In short, what have you done?"

"This: Like the poets, I wished to dream instead of act; I wished to walk in the avenues where I had enjoyed dreaming of love, and suddenly the reality presented itself to me before I was prepared for it. The reality killed me at once."

"Again it serves you right, Gilbert; for a man in such a situation as yours resembles the scouts of the army. Those men must march with the musket in the right hand and a dark-lantern in the left hand."

"In short, Monsieur, I have failed. Mademoiselle Andrée called me villain, assassin, and said that she would have me killed."

"Good! but her child?"

"She told me that the child was hers, not mine."

"What next?"

"Then I retired."

"Ah!"

Gilbert looked up. "What would you have done?" he said.

"I do not know yet. Tell me what you wish to do."

"To punish her for subjecting me to such humiliations."

"Mere words, that."

"No, Monsieur; it is a resolution."

"But you allowed her, perhaps, to wrest your secret from you, your money?"

"My secret is my own, and no one shall have it. The money is yours; I have brought it back," and Gilbert opened his vest and drew from it the thirty notes, which he counted carefully, spreading them out on Balsamo's table.

The count took them, folded them, all the time watching Gilbert, whose face betrayed not the slightest emotion. "He is honest; he is not covetous. He has sense, firmness; he is a man," he thought.

"Now, Monsieur le Comte," said Gilbert, "I have to give you an account of the two louis you gave me."

"Do not overdo it," replied Balsamo; "it is handsome to return one hundred thousand crowns; it is childish to return forty-eight francs."

"I did not wish to return them; I only wished to tell you what I had done with these louis, that you may know that I need others."

"That is different. You ask, then?"

"I ask."

"For what?"

"For means to do what just now you called 'mere words.'"

"Be it so. You wish to avenge yourself."

"Nobly, I think."

"I do not doubt it; but cruelly?"

"Yes, cruelly."

"How much do you need?"

"Twenty thousand francs."

"And you will not touch this young woman?" said Balsamo, expecting to check Gilbert by this question.

"I will not touch her."

"Her brother?"

"Neither her brother, nor her father."

"You will not calumniate her?"

"I will never speak her name."

"Good; I understand you. But it is equally as bad to kill a woman with continual insults, as to stab her with a weapon. You wish to defy her by showing yourself, by following her, by heaping upon her smiles full of insult and hatred."

"I have so little desire to do this, that I come to ask for means for crossing the sea without expense to myself, in case I should desire to leave France."

"Master Gilbert," exclaimed Balsamo, with eager and caressing tone, which contained however neither grief nor joy, — "Master Gilbert, it seems to me that you are not consistent with your display of disinterestedness. You ask me for twenty thousand francs, and from this sum you cannot take one thousand for passage money?"

"No, Monsieur; and there are two reasons for that."

"Let me hear the reasons?"

"In the first place, I shall not have a farthing on the day I embark; for mark this well, Monsieur le Comte, it is not for myself I ask it, — I ask it for the reparation of a wrong which you facilitated — "

"Ah, you are tenacious!" said Balsamo, with pinched lips.

"Because I am right. I ask you for money for reparation, I tell you, and not for my living or for my own comfort. Not a sou of these twenty thousand francs will touch my pocket; they have their destination."

"Your child; I see that —"

"My child; yes, Monsieur," replied Gilbert, with a certain pride.

"But yourself?"

"I am strong, free, and intelligent; I can always live. I wish to live."

"Oh, you will live! God never gives such strength of will to souls which are to leave this earth prematurely. God clothes warmly the plants which have to endure long winters; he gives armor of steel to hearts which must bear heavy trials. But you have, it seems to me, told me of two reasons for not appropriating one thousand francs, — int he first place, delicacy."

"Secondly, prudence. When I leave France, I must do so secretly. Now, I cannot succeed in this, if I seek out some captain in the port, paying him myself, — for I presume it is done in that way, — it is not, I say, by going out to sell myself that I shall succeed in hiding myself."

"Then you suppose that I can aid you in disappearing?"

"I know that you can."

"Who told you so?"

"Oh, you have too many supernatural means at your disposal not to have a whole storehouse of natural means. A sorcerer is never so sure of himself that he has not some haven of safety."

"Gilbert," said Balsamo, suddenly, extending his hand to the young man, "you are a bold, adventurous spirit; you are made up of evil and good like a woman; you are stoical and unaffectedly upright, — I will make a very great man of you. Stay here, I say; this hôtel is a safe asylum; besides, I leave Europe in a few months, — I will take you away."

Gilbert listened. "In a few months I would not decline your offer; but to-day I must say, Thanks, Monsieur

le Comte, your proposal is dazzling to a poor man; at the same time I refuse it."

"A moment's vengeance is worth more than a future of fifty years, perhaps?"

"Monsieur, while my fancy or my caprice possesses me it is always worth to me more than the whole universe; and besides vengeance, I have a duty to fulfil."

"There are your twenty thousand francs," replied Balsamo, without hesitation.

Gilbert took two bank-notes, and looking at his benefactor, "You give like a king!" he said.

"Oh, better, I hope," said Balsamo; "for I do not ask even to be remembered."

"But I am grateful, as you said just now; and when my task shall be accomplished, I will pay you these twenty thousand francs."

"How can you do that?"

"By putting myself in your service for as many years as will be required for a servant to pay his master twenty thousand francs."

"You are again illogical, Gilbert. You said to me a moment ago, 'I ask you for twenty thousand francs, *which you owe me.*'"

"That is true; but you have won my heart."

"I am glad of it," said Balsamo, coldly. "So, you will be mine, if I wish it?"

"Yes."

"What do you know how to do?"

"Nothing; but I am capable of everything."

"That is true."

"But I wish to have in my pocket the means for leaving France in two hours, if necessary."

"Ah, my service is then deserted."

"I shall be sure to return to you."

"And I shall be sure to find you again. Well, let us finish; it tires me to talk so long. Draw up the table."

"There it is."

Balsamo took from it some papers, and began to read half-aloud the following lines upon one of the papers, inscribed with three signatures, or rather three strange ciphers: "'The fifteenth of December, from Havre for Boston, P. J. the Adonis.' What do you think of America, Gilbert?"

"That it is not France, and that I shall be very glad to go by sea, at a certain moment, into any country whatever that is not France."

"Good! About the fifteenth of December; is not that the time to which you allude?"

Gilbert counted on his fingers, reflecting. "Precisely," he said.

Balsamo took a pen and wrote upon a fresh sheet these two lines, —

Receive upon the "Adonis" a passenger.

JOSEPH BALSAMO.

"But this paper is dangerous," said Gilbert, "and I who seek a shelter may find the Bastille."

"By having too much imagination one becomes absurd," said the count. "The 'Adonis,' my dear Monsieur Gilbert, is a merchant vessel of which I am the principal owner."

"Pardon me, Monsieur le Comte," said Gilbert, bowing; "I am indeed an unhappy fellow whose head is sometimes turned, — but never twice in succession. Pardon me, and believe in my gratitude."

"Go, my friend."

"Adieu, Monsieur le Comte."

"Au revoir," said Balsamo, turning away.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE LAST AUDIENCE.

In November, that is, several months after the events we have related had taken place, Philippe de Taverney went out very early in the morning, considering the season, — that is to say, at daybreak, — from the house in which he lived with his sister. Already all the little Parisian industries were astir under the lamps still lighted. There were the little smoking cakes which the poor merchant from the country devours as a feast in the keen morning air, the trucks loaded with vegetables, the carts full of fish and oysters going to market; and there was, in all this bustle of the laborious crowd, a sort of restraint imposed upon the workmen by respect for the sleep of the rich.

Philippe hurried across the populous and crowded quarter in which he lived, to reach the Champs-Élysées, absolutely deserted.

The leaves were turning red upon the tops of the trees; the beaten walks of the Queen's Court, and the bowling-greens, abandoned at this hour, were hidden under a thick carpet of these rustling leaves.

The young man was dressed like the rich bourgeois of Paris, in a coat with long skirts, in breeches and silk stockings; he carried a sword; his carefully arranged hair indicated that he must have been in the hands of his hairdresser long before daybreak. So, when Philippe saw that the morning wind was deranging his hair and scattering the powder, he threw a glance full of displeasure upon the

avenue of the Champs-Élysées, to see if any of the public carriages on this route were not already running. Nor did he have long to wait. A carriage worn out, faded, broken, drawn by a starved, dun mare, came jolting along the street; its driver, with a watchful eye and dejected expression, searched afar among the trees for a passenger, as Æneas watched for one of his vessels on the waves of the sea. On perceiving Philippe he applied his whip, and the carriage came up with the passenger.

"Arrange," said Philippe, "to have me at Versailles at nine o'clock precisely, and you shall have half a crown."

In fact, at nine o'clock Philippe had with the dauphiness one of those morning audiences which she had begun to give. Alert, and freeing herself from every law of etiquette, the princess was accustomed to inspect every morning the work which she was having done at Trianon; and meeting on her way the solicitors to whom she had granted an interview, she disposed of them rapidly, with a presence of mind and an affability which did not exclude dignity, sometimes even haughtiness when she perceived that her condescension was misconstrued.

Philippe had at first resolved to make the journey on foot, for he was reduced to the severest economy; but the sentiment of self-respect, or perhaps only that of the respect, which no military man ever loses, for his correct appearance in the presence of a superior, had constrained the young man to dispense with economy for one day, that he might present himself properly at Versailles. He expected, indeed, to return on foot. So, on the same step of the ladder, starting from two opposite points, the patrician Philippe and the plebeian Gilbert had, as we may see, come together.

Philippe beheld again with heavy heart that Versailles,

still magical, where so many golden and roseate dreams had enchanted him with their promises. He beheld again, with broken heart, Trianon, memorial of misfortune and disgrace. At nine o'clock exactly, provided with his letter of audience, he sauntered in the little walk near the pavilion. He perceived, at a distance of a hundred paces, the princess conversing with her architect, enveloped in furs though the weather was not cold. The young dauphiness, with a little hat in the style of that worn by the ladies of Watteau, was distinctly outlined against the green hedges. At times the sound of her silvery and vibrating voice reached Philippe, and awakened in him sentiments which ordinarily efface all chagrin in a wounded heart.

Several persons, favored like Philippe with an audience, presented themselves one after another at the door of the pavilion, in the antechamber of which an usher came to seek them in their turn. Placed along the course of the princess, whenever she returned, with Mique upon her footsteps, these persons received a word from Marie Antoinette, or even the special favor of an exchange of several words spoken privately. Then the princess would wait for another visitor to present himself.

Philippe remained the last. He had seen already the eyes of the princess turning toward him, as if she tried to recognize him; then he blushed and endeavored to assume in his place a modest and patient attitude. The usher came to him at length, and asked if he would not also present himself, since Madame la Dauphine was about to go in, and once having returned she would receive no one. Philippe therefore went forward. The dauphiness did not lose sight of him while he advanced over that distance of a hundred paces, and he chose the most favorable moment to make his respectful salutation.

The dauphiness turned to the usher, saying, "The name of this person who salutes?"

The usher read the letter of audience. "Monsieur Philippe de Taverney, Madame," he replied.

"It is true," said the princess; and she looked at the young man with an expression of interest. Philippe stood in an attitude of deference.

"Good-day, Monsieur de Taverney," said Marie Antoinette; "how is Mademoiselle Andrée?"

"Quite ill, Madame," replied Philippe; "but my sister will be made happy by this evidence of interest your Highness deigns to show her."

The dauphiness did not reply. She read the traces of suffering on Philippe's pale and wasted features, and could scarcely recognize, in the modest garb of a citizen, that handsome officer who had first served her as guide upon the soil of France.

"Monsieur Mique," said she, approaching the architect, "we have, then, agreed concerning the ornamentation of the dancing-hall; the grove in the neighborhood is already decided upon. Pardon me for keeping you so long in the cold."

This was equivalent to a dismissal; Mique saluted and went away. The dauphiness bowed to those persons who still were waiting, and they immediately retired.

Philippe understood that signal to be addressed to him as well as to the rest, and already his heart was oppressed, when the dauphiness, coming to him, said, "You say, then, Monsieur, that your sister is ill?"

"If not ill, Madame, at least drooping."

"Drooping!" cried the dauphiness, with interest, — "she, in so good health!"

Philippe bowed. The young princess cast at him one of those searching glances which, in speaking of a man of

her rank, we should call an eagle's glance. Then after a pause, "Allow me to walk a little," said she; "the wind is chilly."

She advanced a few steps; Philippe remained in his place.

"What! you do not follow me?" said Marie Antoinette, turning.

Philippe made two bounds, and rejoined her.

"Why have you not sooner informed me of the condition of Mademoiselle Andrée, in whom I am interested?"

"Alas!" said Philippe, "your Highness has just said the word; your Highness was interested in my sister, but now —"

"I am interested in her still, Monsieur; and yet it seems to me that Mademoiselle de Taverney left my service unseasonably."

"Necessity, Madame!" said Philippe, in a low voice.

"What! that word 'necessity' is alarming; explain that word to me, Monsieur."

Philippe made no reply.

"Doctor Louis," continued the dauphiness, "has stated to me that the air of Versailles was injurious to the health of Mademoiselle de Taverney, which might be restored by a residence in the family home. This is all that I have learned. Now, your sister paid me but one visit before her departure. She was pale; she was sad. I must say that she showed me much devotion in that interview, for she wept copiously."

"Sincere tears, Madame," said Philippe, whose heart beat violently, "the source of which is not exhausted."

"I fancied," continued the princess, "that your father had compelled his daughter to come to court, and that the child regretted your country — some attachment —"

"Madame," Philippe hastened to say, "my sister regrets only your Highness."

"And she suffers — Strange illness, which the country air was to cure, and which it aggravates."

"I will not longer deceive your Highness," said Philippe; "my sister's illness is a profound sorrow, which has driven her nearly to despair. Mademoiselle de Taverney, however, loves in this world only your Highness and myself; but she begins to prefer God to all affections. And the audience which I have had the honor to solicit, Madame, is for the purpose of asking your aid respecting this desire of my sister."

The dauphiness raised her head. "She wishes to enter the religious life, does she not?"

"Yes, Madame."

"And you will suffer it, — you, who love that child?"

"I think I judge rightly her position, Madame; and this counsel came from me. Still, I love my sister too much for this counsel to be suspected, and the world will not ascribe it to avarice on my part. I have nothing to gain by Andrée's withdrawing to a cloister; neither of us possess anything."

The dauphiness paused, and with a stealthy glance at Philippe, "That is what I was saying just now, when you would not understand me, Monsieur; you are not rich."

"Your Highness — "

"No false shame, Monsieur; the happiness of that poor girl is at stake. Answer me sincerely, like an honest man, — as I am sure you are."

The brilliant and loyal eyes of Philippe met the gaze of the princess, and were not lowered. "I will reply, Madame," he said.

"Well, is it through necessity that your sister wishes to leave the world? Let her speak. Good God! princes

are unfortunate. God has given them hearts to pity the suffering; but he has refused them that supreme clear-sightedness which can discover suffering under the veil of reserve. Answer, then, frankly; is that it?"

"No, Madame," said Philippe, with firmness, "it is not that; nevertheless, my sister wishes to enter the convent of Saint Denis, and we have but a third of the entrance-money."

"The entrance-money is sixty thousand francs!" cried the princess; "you have, then, only twenty thousand francs?"

"Hardly that, Madame; but we know that your Highness can, by a word, and without opening your purse, give admission to the convent."

"Certainly I can."

"This, then, is the single favor which I shall venture to solicit from your Highness, unless you have already promised to some one else your intercession with Madame Louise."

"Colonel, you surprise me strangely," said Marie Antoinette. "What! so near to me I have so much noble poverty! Eh, Colonel, you should not thus have deceived me."

"I am not colonel, Madame," replied Philippe, gently; "I am only your Highness's devoted servant."

"Not colonel, you say? And since when?"

"I have never been colonel, Madame."

"The king promised in my presence a regiment —"

"The commission for which was never sent."

"But you had a rank —"

"Which I have resigned, Madame, having fallen into disgrace with the king."

"Why?"

"I do not know."

"Oh!" said the dauphiness, with deep sadness, — "oh, the court!"

Philippe smiled sorrowfully. "You are an angel from heaven, Madame," he said; "and I regret not serving the house of France, that I might have an opportunity of dying for you."

A light so vivid and so warm came into the eyes of the dauphiness that Philippe hid his face in his hands. The princess did not even try to console him, or to draw from him the sentiment that overpowered him at that moment. Silent, and breathing with effort, she picked the petals of some Bengal roses, plucked from their stem by her nervous and trembling hand.

Philippe recovered himself. "Pardon me, Madame," he said.

Marie Antoinette did not reply to these words. "Your sister will enter Saint Denis to-morrow, if she wishes," she said, with feverish excitement; "and you in a month will be at the head of a regiment. I am determined."

"Madame," replied Philippe, "will you still have the goodness to hear me in my last explanations? My sister accepts the gift of your Royal Highness; as for myself, I must refuse it."

"You refuse?"

"Yes, Madame; I have received an affront from the court; the enemies who have inflicted it on me would find a way to wound me more severely, on seeing me in higher station."

"What! even under my protection?"

"Especially because of your gracious protection, Madame," said Philippe, resolutely.

"It is true," said the princess, turning pale.

"And then, Madame, — no, I forget, in speaking with you, that there is no more happiness on earth; I forget

that once entered into obscurity, I must no more leave it. In obscurity a man of heart prays and remembers."

Philippe pronounced these words with an accent that made the princess start. "A day will come," said she, "when I shall have the right to say what now I can only think. Monsieur, your sister may enter at Saint Denis whenever she pleases."

"Thanks, Madame, thanks."

"As to yourself — I wish you to make me a request."

"But, Madame — "

"I wish it."

Philippe saw the gloved hand of the princess extended toward him; it remained suspended, as if in expectation, perhaps it expressed only command. The young man knelt, took the hand, and slowly, with a swelling and palpitating heart touched it with his lips.

"The request! come!" said the dauphiness, so moved that she did not withdraw her hand.

Philippe bowed his head. A flood of bitter thoughts overwhelmed him. He remained some seconds silent and motionless; then, rising, pale and dull-eyed, "A passport to leave France," said he, "the day my sister enters the convent of Saint Denis."

The dauphiness recoiled as if terrified. Then, seeing all that grief, which doubtless she comprehended, which perhaps she shared, she could reply only by the words, hardly intelligible, "It is well." And she disappeared in an avenue of cypress-trees, the only ones that had preserved intact their everlasting leaves, a mantle of the tomb.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE CHILD WITHOUT A FATHER.

THE day of pain, the day of shame drew near. Andrée, notwithstanding the visits, more and more frequent, of the good Doctor Louis, notwithstanding the affectionate care and consolations of Philippe, became continually more depressed, like the condemned whose last hour approaches. The unhappy brother sometimes found Andrée dreamy and trembling; her eyes were dry; for whole days she would not speak; then suddenly she would rise and make several turns around her chamber, trying, like Dido, to get away from herself, — that is to say, from the sorrow that was killing her.

At length, seeing her one evening paler, more uneasy, more nervous than usual, Philippe sent for the doctor to come at once. It was the twenty-ninth of November. Philippe had had the art to keep Andrée sitting up until a late hour; he had entered with her upon subjects of conversation the most gloomy, the most intimate, those even which the young girl dreaded, as the wounded man dreads a rough and heavy hand approaching his wound. He was sitting near the fire. The servant, on starting for Versailles to get the doctor, had forgotten to close the blinds, so that the reflection of the lamp, that of the fire even, cast a soft light on the carpet of snow thrown on the soil of the garden by the first frosts of winter.

Philippe waited till Andrée's mind began to grow calm, and then, without preamble, "Dear sister," he said, "have you at last come to a decision?"

"On what subject?" replied Andrée, with a sigh of pain.

"On the subject — of your child, sister."

Andrée started.

"The time approaches," continued Philippe.

"My God!"

"And I should not be surprised if to-morrow —"

"To-morrow?"

"To-day, even, dear sister."

Andrée became so pale that Philippe, alarmed, took hold of her and kissed her hand. She presently recovered, "Brother," she said, "I will not practise toward you the hypocrisies which dishonor vulgar souls. Expectation of good is in my mind confounded with expectation of evil. What is evil I no longer know, since I have lost confidence in what is good. So do not judge me more severely than one would judge a foolish person, — unless you prefer to take seriously the philosophy which I am about to outline to you, and which, I assure you, is the perfect, consummate expression of my sentiments as I gather it from my experience."

"Whatever you may say, Andrée, whatever you may do, you will always be to me the dearest, the most respected of women."

"Thank you, my only friend. I dare to say that I am not unworthy of what you promise me. I am a mother, Philippe; but God has appointed, — I think so, at least," she added, blushing, — "that maternity should be, with the creature, a state analogous to that of fructification in the plant. The fruit comes only after the flower. In the flowering the plant is prepared, transformed; for the flowering, according to my idea, is love."

"You are right, Andrée."

"I," continued the young girl, quickly, — "I have known

neither preparation nor transformation; I am an anomaly. I have not loved, I have not desired; my mind and heart are as virginal as my body; and yet, sad prodigy! what I have not desired, what I have not even dreamed of, God sends me, — he who has never given fruit to the tree created to be sterile. Where in me are the aptitudes, the instincts; where are the resources, even? The mother who suffers the pains of confinement knows and understands her lot; I — I know nothing. I tremble at thought; I go to that last day as I would go to the scaffold. Philippe, I am accursed."

"Andrée, sister!"

"Philippe," she resumed vehemently, "do I not well know that I hate that child? Oh, yes! I hate it! I shall remember all my life, if I live, Philippe, the day when for the first time the mortal enemy I bear stirred within me. I shudder yet as I remember how that movement, so sweet to mothers, of the innocent creature kindled in my blood a fever of wrath, and brought blasphemy to my lips, till then so pure. Philippe, I am a bad mother; Philippe I am accursed!"

"In the name of Heaven, dear Andrée, calm yourself. Let not your mind lead your heart astray. That child is your life, your blood; I love it, because it comes from you."

"You love it!" she exclaimed, furious and livid; "you dare to tell me, me, that you love my dishonor and your own! you dare to tell me that you love that memorial of a crime, that representation of the base criminal! Well, Philippe, I am not base, I am not false; I hate the child because it is not my child, and I have not called it. I execrate it because it will, perhaps, resemble its father. Its father! — Oh! I shall die some day in pronouncing that horrible word! My God!" she cried, falling to her knees on the floor, "I cannot kill that child at its birth,

for thou dost give it life. I could not kill myself while I bore it, for thou hast forbidden suicide as well as murder. But I pray thee, I beseech thee, I implore thee, if thou art just, my God, if thou carest for the miseries of this world, if thou hast not decreed that I shall die of despair after having lived in disgrace and tears, — my God, take back that child! My God, kill that child! My God, deliver me! avenge me!" Terrible with rage, and grand in movement, she struck her forehead against the marble chimney-piece in spite of Philippe's efforts, who pressed her in his arms. Suddenly the door opened; the servant returned, conducting the doctor, who at the first glance understood the whole scene.

"Madame," said the doctor, with that professional quiet which always imposes restraint or submission, "do not aggravate the pains of this labor which is now approaching. You," he said to the servant, "prepare everything as I told you on the way. You," speaking to Philippe, "will be more reasonable than Madame, and instead of sharing her fears and her weakness, you will add your encouragements to mine."

Andrée rose almost ashamed. Philippe led her to an armchair. The patient then turned red and threw herself back in a painful convulsion; her clenched hands clung to the fringes of the chair, and the first cry issued from her violet lips.

"That sorrow, that fall, that anger, have hastened the crisis," said the doctor; "withdraw to your chamber, Monsieur de Taverney, and — courage!"

Philippe, with swelling heart, rushed to Andrée, who had heard, who trembled, and who, rising in spite of her pain, threw her arms around her brother's neck. She embraced him closely, kissed his cold cheek, and said in a low voice, "Adieu! adieu! adieu!"

"Doctor! Doctor!" cried Philippe, in despair; "do you hear!"

Louis separated the unhappy couple with gentle force, replaced Andrée in the easy chair, conducted Philippe to his chamber, and bolted the door which separated it from Andrée's room; then closing curtains and doors, he shrouded thus the scene which was about to take place between the physician and the woman, between God and both.

At three o'clock in the morning the doctor opened the door behind which Philippe wept and prayed. "Your sister has given birth to a son," he said.

Philippe clasped his hands.

"Do not come in," said the doctor; "she is asleep."

"She sleeps — Oh, Doctor! is it really true that she sleeps?"

"If it were otherwise, Monsieur, I should say to you: Your sister has given birth to a son, but that son has lost his mother. Look, then."

Philippe advanced his head.

"Listen to her breathing."

"Yes! oh, yes!" murmured Philippe, embracing the doctor.

"Now, you know that we have engaged a nurse. In passing the Point-du-Jour, where that woman lives, I notified her to be ready. But you alone can bring her; take advantage, then, of the patient's sleep, and set off with the carriage in which I came."

"But you, Doctor, you?"

"I have in the Place Royale a patient very ill with pleurisy. I will finish the night at his bedside."

"The cold, Doctor —"

"I have my cloak."

"The town is not very safe."

"Twenty times in twenty years I have been stopped by

night. I have always replied: 'My friend, I am a physician, on my way to a patient. Do you wish for my cloak? Take it; but do not kill me, for without me my patient may die.' And observe, Monsieur, this cloak has seen twenty years' service. The thieves have always left it to me."

"Good, Doctor — To-morrow, is it not?"

"To-morrow, at eight o'clock, I shall be here?"

The doctor directed the servant to perform certain services, and bestow careful attention on the patient. He wished the child to be placed by its mother's side. Philippe begged him to remove it, recalling his sister's last words.

Louis therefore placed the child in the servant's chamber, and then departed by way of the Rue Montorgueil, while the carriage took Philippe in the direction of Roule. The servant fell asleep in the easy chair near her mistress.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE ABDUCTION.

In the intervals of the refreshing sleep that follows great fatigue, the mind seems to acquire a double force, — the faculty of appreciating the comfort of the situation, and the faculty of watching over the body in its prostration.

Andrée, returning to a consciousness of life, opened her eyes and saw at her side the sleeping servant. She heard the joyous crackling on the hearth, and wondered at the silence of the chamber where everything was, like herself, in repose. This consciousness was not that of complete wakefulness, nor was it a dream. Andrée took pleasure in prolonging that state of indecision, of soft somnolence; she suffered ideas to spring up one after another in her tired brain, as if she feared the sudden invasion of reason in its completeness. Suddenly a cry, distant, feeble, hardly heard, reached her ear through the thickness of the partition. This noise again produced in Andrée the tremblings from which she had suffered so much. It brought back to her that feeling of hatred which for some months had troubled her innocence and her kindness, as a shock disturbs a liquid in a vessel in which dregs are sleeping.

From this moment there was for Andrée no more sleep nor repose; she remembered, — she hated. But the force of sensations is commonly in proportion to corporeal strength. Andrée no longer had the vigor she had mani-

fested in the scene with Philippe the evening before. The cry of the child reached her brain, first as a pain, and then as an annoyance. At length she asked herself if Philippe, in removing that child, with his usual consideration, had not been the executor of a will somewhat cruel.

The thought of the evil we wish to any creature is not so repulsive as the sight of it. Andrée, who execrated that child when invisible, an idea, who had even desired its death, was hurt at hearing the unfortunate being cry. "He is suffering," she thought. And then she replied to herself, "Why should I be concerned for his sufferings, — I, the most miserable of living creatures?"

The child uttered another cry, louder and more painful. Andrée then perceived that this voice awoke in her, as it were, a troubled voice, and felt her heart drawn as by an invisible chain toward the abandoned, crying child. That of which the young girl had felt the want was now realized in her. Nature had accomplished one of its preparations. Physical pain, that strong tie, had bound the mother's heart to the slightest movement of her child.

"It must not be," thought Andrée, "that this poor orphan cries to Heaven for vengeance against me. God has given to these little creatures, hardly born, the most eloquent of voices. One may kill them, — that is, put them out of suffering; but one has no right to inflict pain upon them. If we had that right, God would not have permitted them to cry so."

Andrée raised her head, and tried to call her servant; but her feeble voice could not arouse the robust peasant. The child had ceased crying.

"Doubtless," thought Andrée, "the nurse has arrived; I heard the noise of the outer door. Yes, some one is moving in the next room; and the little creature no longer cries. The care of a stranger is already extended over it,

and reassures its unformed intelligence. Oh, she, then, is the mother who takes care of the child! For a few crowns the child born of my body will find a mother. And later, passing near me who have suffered so much, near me whose life has produced its own, that child will not look at me; it will say 'mother' to a mercenary more generous in her hired love than I in my first resentment. That shall not be. I have suffered; I have purchased the right to look on the face of that child; I have the right to compel it to love me for my care, to respect me for my sacrifice and my sorrow." She made a more determined effort, summoned all her forces, and called, "Marguerite! Marguerite!"

The servant awoke lazily, and without moving from her easy chair, to which she was bound by a heaviness almost lethargic.

"Do you hear me?" said Andrée.

"Yes, Madame, yes," said Marguerite, coming to her senses. And she approached the bed. "Madame wishes to drink?"

"No."

"Madame perhaps wishes to know what time it is?"

"No, no," replied Andrée, looking steadily at the door of the next chamber.

"Ah, I understand; Madame wishes to know if Monsieur her brother has returned."

Andrée struggled against her desire with all the weakness of a proud soul, with all the energy of a warm and generous heart.

"I wish," she stammered at length, — "I wish — Open that door, Marguerite."

"Yes, Madame — Ah, how cold it is there! The wind, Madame, — what a wind!"

The wind in fact came into Andrée's chamber, and shook the flame of the candles and of the night-lamp.

"It is the nurse, who has left open a door or a window. See, Marguerite, see! That child must be cold."

Marguerite turned toward the adjoining chamber. "I will go and cover him up, Madame," she said.

"No, no!" murmured Andrée, with a feeble and broken voice; "bring it to me."

Marguerite stopped in the middle of the chamber. "Madame," she said softly, "Monsieur Philippe expressly directed the child to be left there, — fearing, no doubt, that Madame might be disturbed or excited."

"Bring me my child!" cried the young mother, with a burst that must have broken her heart; for from her eyes, which had continued dry in the midst of her sufferings, issued tears on which must have smiled, in heaven, the protecting angels of little children.

Marguerite hastened into the chamber. Andrée, sitting up, hid her face in her hands. The servant returned immediately, with a look of stupefaction.

"Well?" said Andrée.

"Well — Madame — some one, then, has come?"

"What, — some one? Who?"

"Madame, the child is no longer there."

"Indeed, I heard a noise a little while ago," said Andrée, — "steps; the nurse must have come while you were asleep, — she did not wish to wake you. But where is my brother? Look in his chamber."

Marguerite ran to Philippe's room. No one there!

"It is strange," said Andrée, anxiously; "can he have gone out again without seeing me?"

"Ah, Madame!" cried the servant.

"What is it?"

"The street-door was just opened."

"Look! look!"

"It is Monsieur Philippe returning. Enter, Monsieur, enter."

Philippe, in fact, entered. Behind him a peasant woman, enveloped in a thick cloak of striped wool, bestowed upon the house that benevolent smile with which the hireling welcomes every new connection.

"Sister, sister, I am here," said Philippe, coming into the chamber.

"Dear brother! what troubles, what sorrows I cause you! Ah, here is the nurse; I was so afraid she had gone —"

"Gone? she has just come."

"Has returned, you mean. No; I heard her plainly a little while ago, softly as she walked."

"I don't understand you, sister; no one —"

"Oh, I thank you, Philippe," said Andrée, drawing him to her, and accenting each word, — "I thank you for having understood me so well that you would not take away that child till I had seen it — kissed it. Philippe, you have well read my heart. Yes, yes; be tranquil, I shall love my child."

Philippe seized Andrée's hand, and covered it with kisses.

"Tell the nurse to restore it to me," added the young mother.

"But, Monsieur," said the servant, "you know well that the child is no longer there."

"What! what are you saying?" replied Philippe.

Andrée looked at her brother with terror in her eyes. The young man ran to the servant's bed; he searched, and finding nothing, uttered a terrible cry. Andrée followed his movements in the mirror. She saw him return, pale, with arms inert; she understood a part of the truth,

and replying like an echo to her brother's cry, she sighed, and fell back unconscious upon the pillow.

Philippe was not prepared either for this new misfortune or for Andrée's great grief. He collected all his forces, and by dint of caresses, consolations, and tears, he recalled her to life.

"My child!" Andrée murmured, — "my child!"

"Let us save the mother!" said Philippe to himself. "Sister, my dear sister, we are all crazy, it seems to me; we forget that the good doctor has taken the child away with him."

"The doctor?" cried Andrée, with the pain of doubt, with the joy of hope.

"Why, yes! why, yes! Ah, why, we lose our senses here!"

"Philippe, you swear to me — "

"Dear sister, you are no more reasonable than I. How do you imagine that that child could have disappeared?" and he forced a laugh which deceived both nurse and servant.

Andrée came to herself. "Yet I heard — " she said.

"What?"

"Steps."

Philippe shuddered. "Impossible!" he said; "you were asleep."

"No, no; I was wide awake! I heard — I heard — "

"Very well, you heard that good doctor, who, returning after my departure, because he feared for the health of that child, took him away. Besides, he had spoken to me about it."

"You reassure me."

"How could it be that I should not reassure you; it is so simple?"

"But then," objected the nurse, "what am I doing here?"

"Sure enough! The doctor is waiting for you at your house."

"Oh!"

"Go to him, then. That Marguerite slept so soundly that she heard nothing of what the doctor said, or else he did not speak to her."

Andrée fell back, more tranquil after that terrible shock. Philippe dismissed the nurse, and gave some directions to the servant. Then taking a lamp he examined carefully the door of the adjoining chamber, found a door of the garden open, saw footprints in the snow, and followed them to the garden-door, where they were lost. "Steps of a man!" he cried. "The child is stolen. Misfortune! misfortune!"

CHAPTER LIX.

THE VILLAGE OF HARAMONT.

THOSE footsteps in the snow were Gilbert's, who, since his last interview with Balsamo, had followed up his task of surveillance, and had made ready his vengeance. He had spared no pains. By dint of pleasant words and small services he had succeeded in making himself acceptable, even pleasing, to Rousseau's wife. His method was simple. Of the thirty sous a day which Rousseau allowed his copyist, the prudent Gilbert set aside one franc, three times every week, with which he purchased some little present for Thérèse, — a ribbon for her bonnet, a delicacy for the table, or a bottle of cordial. The good lady, sensitive to everything that flattered her taste or her small pride, was now and then gratified by exclamations of Gilbert at table in praise of her culinary skill.

For the Genevan philosopher had succeeded in getting his young protégé admitted to the table; and during the last two months Gilbert, thus favored, had accumulated two louis in his treasury, which slept under his pallet, side by side with Balsamo's twenty thousand francs.

But what a life! What persistency of resolution and of will! Rising at daybreak Gilbert began by examining with his keen eyes the situation of Andrée, that he might discover the least change introduced into the dull and regular life of the recluse. Nothing, then, escaped his observation, — neither the sand of the garden-walks,

where his piercing sight measured Andrée's footprints; nor the folds of the curtains, more or less closely drawn, the opening in which was for him a sure index of Andrée's humor, for on her days of gloom she refused even to see the light of day. Thus Gilbert knew what was going on in her soul, and in the house. He had also learned to interpret all Philippe's movements; and making his inferences with skill, he divined Philippe's purpose when he went out, and what result he brought on his return. He pushed detail so far as to follow Philippe one evening when he went to Versailles to find Doctor Louis. This visit to Versailles had slightly puzzled him; but when, two days later, he saw the doctor stealing furtively into the garden he understood the mystery.

Gilbert knew the dates, and was aware that the time for the realization of all his hopes was at hand. He had taken all the precautions necessary to assure success in an enterprise bristling with difficulties. This was his plan as laid out: the two louis enabled him to hire in the Faubourg Saint Denis a cabriolet with two horses. That carriage was to be at his orders whenever he should need it. He had also explored the suburbs of Paris in a vacation of three or four days which he had taken. During that vacation he had visited a little town of Soissonnais, lying eighteen leagues from Paris, and surrounded by a vast forest. This little town was called Villers-Cotterets. On arriving he had immediately called upon the only notary in the place, Maître Niquet. To him Gilbert presented himself as the son of a great nobleman's intendant. This great nobleman, wishing to do a kindness to the child of one of his peasants, had charged Gilbert to find a nurse for it. In all probability the munificence of the great nobleman would not be limited to the nurse's monthly pay; and besides, he would place in the hands of Maître Niquet a certain sum for the use of the child.

Then Maître Niquet, the father of three fine boys, had mentioned to him the daughter of the nurse of his three sons, who lived in the little village of Haramont, a league from Villers-Cotterets, and who, after being legitimately married in his office, continued the occupation of madame her mother. This honest woman was named Madeleine Pitou, and was the happy mother of a son, four years old, who showed every indication of robust health; besides, she had recently been confined, and consequently would be at Gilbert's service whenever he should bring or send his nursling.

These arrangements having been made, Gilbert, always punctual, had returned to Paris two hours before the expiration of his leave of absence.

Why had Gilbert chosen the little town of Villers-Cotterets, in preference to all others? In this, as in many other matters, he had been guided by the influence of Rousseau, who had once spoken of the forest of Villers-Cotterets as one of the most fertile in existence, and had named three or four villages hidden in that forest like nests in deep foliage. It would be impossible, then, for any one to discover Gilbert's child in one of those villages.

Haramont especially had interested Rousseau, — so much indeed, that he, the misanthrope, the hermit, said again and again: "Haramont is the end of the world; Haramont is the desert; one can live and die there like the birds, — on the branch while he lives, under the leaves when he dies." Gilbert had also heard the philosopher describe the interior of a cottage, lighting up details with the fire of his genius, — from the smile of the nurse to the bleating of the goat; from the appetizing odor of the thick vegetable soup to the perfumes of the wild mulberry and the violet-colored heather.

"I will go there," Gilbert had said; "my child shall

grow up beneath the shades where the master has breathed his wishes and his sighs."

To Gilbert a caprice was an inexorable command, especially when that caprice presented itself in the guise of a moral necessity. His joy, then, was great when Maître Niquet, anticipating his wishes, mentioned Haramont to him as a village that would suit his purposes exactly.

On his return to Paris, Gilbert had given his attention to the cabriolet. It was not handsome, but it was strong, — it was all that he needed. The horses were of heavy build; the postilion was a dull fellow from the stables. But what Gilbert had in mind was to fulfil his intentions, and without awakening any curiosity. His story had not been questioned by Maître Niquet; with his new garments he was of sufficiently good appearance to resemble the son of the intendant of a good family, or the valet, in disguise, of a duke and peer. Nor had his proposition been received with any suspicion by the owner of the cabriolet. It was a period when there was still confidence between the people and gentlemen. Money paid was received in those times with a degree of gratitude and without the asking of questions. Besides, two louis were then worth as much as four are worth to-day; and to-day four louis are good to earn. The proprietor agreed therefore that on two hours' notice his carriage should be at Gilbert's service.

This enterprise had for the young man all the attractiveness which the imagination of poets and that of philosophers, — two fairies very differently clad, — lend to good actions and to good resolutions. To remove the child from its cruel mother, — that is, to plant shame and sorrow in the enemy's camp, — and then with a change of front, to enter the cottage of virtuous villagers, as painted by Rousseau, and deposit on a child's cradle a large sum of

money, to be regarded as a tutelary god by those poor villagers, to pass for a grand personage, — this was more than enough to satisfy pride, resentment, love for neighbors, hatred for enemies.

The fatal day at length arrived. It followed ten other days which Gilbert had spent in anxiety, ten nights in which he had hardly slept. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather he lay with his window open, and every movement of Andrée or of Philippe was repeated in his ear, as the bell answers to the hand that pulls the cord. On this last day he saw Philippe and Andrée talking together near the fireplace; he saw the servant set out hastily for Versailles, forgetting to close the blinds. He ran immediately to notify the owner of the carriage, and waited in front of the stable while they harnessed the horses, biting his hands in the effort to control his impatience. At length the postilion mounted his horse, and Gilbert the cabriolet, which he stopped at the corner of a little deserted street near the market. He then returned to Rousseau's, and wrote a letter of farewell to the good philosopher, and of thanks to Thérèse, announcing that a small inheritance called him to the South, and that he should return, — all without precise information. Then with his money in his pocket and a long knife in his sleeve he was about to slide down the gutter-pipe into the garden, when a sudden idea arrested him. The snow! He had been so occupied that he had not thought of that. On the snow his footprints would be visible. Those footprints, leading from the wall of Rousseau's house would cause Philippe and Andrée to make an investigation, and his disappearance at the very time of the abduction would reveal the whole secret.

It was therefore necessary to go round by way of the Rue Coq-Héron, and enter by the garden-door, a key to which Gilbert had obtained a month previously, and from

which ran a well-beaten path in which his feet would leave no tracks. He lost no time, and arrived while the carriage that had brought Doctor Louis was waiting before the principal entrance of the little hôtel. He opened the door cautiously, saw no one, and went and hid himself in the corner of the pavilion, near the summer-house.

It was a terrible night. He could hear all, — the groans and cries wrested by suffering, even the first wail of the child that was born to him. Meanwhile, leaning against the naked wall, he received, without knowing it, the snow which fell thick and heavy from the darkened sky. His breast beat against the handle of the knife which he pressed despairingly to his breast. His fixed eyes had the color of blood, the glow of fire.

At length the doctor went out; at length Philippe exchanged with the doctor a few last words. Then Gilbert approached the blind, leaving a track on the carpet of snow which, ankle-deep, crackled under his step. He saw Andrée sleeping on her bed, Marguerite dozing in the easy chair, and looking for the child near its mother, he did not see it. He understood immediately and turned toward the entrance. He opened the door, not without making a noise that alarmed him, and finding his way to the bed which had been Nicole's, feeling around he put his icy fingers on the poor child's face, who thereupon uttered the cries which Andrée had heard. Then enveloping the new-born infant in a woollen wrap, he carried it away, leaving the door half-open, to avoid the risk of noise. A minute later he had gained the street by way of the garden; he hastened to his carriage, aroused the postilion whom he found asleep, and closing the leather curtain while the man mounted his horse, he said, —

"A half-louis for you, if in a quarter of an hour we have passed the barrier."

The horses, sharp-shod for ice, started off at a gallop.

CHAPTER LX.

THE PITOU FAMILY.

During the journey everything frightened Gilbert. The noise of the carriages that followed or passed by his own, the moaning of the wind in the dismantled trees, seemed to him sounds of an organized pursuit, or the cries of those from whom the child had been taken. Nothing threatened him, however. The postilion bravely did his duty, and the steaming horses arrived at Dammartin at the time Gilbert had expected, — that is, before the first light of day. Gilbert paid his half-louis, changed horses and postilion, and resumed his journey.

During the first part of the way, the child, carefully sheltered by the covering and shielded by Gilbert himself, had not felt the cold, and had not uttered a single cry. As soon as it was light Gilbert, seeing the country in the distance, felt more courageous, and to drown the cries which the child was beginning to make, he started on one of those everlasting songs which he used to sing at Taverney when he was returning from the chase. The creaking of the axle-tree and the traces, the noise of the iron-work about the carriage, the little bells of the horses, made a diabolical accompaniment, the volume of which the postilion himself increased by mingling with Gilbert's refrain fragments of a *Bourbonnaise* of a character somewhat seditious.

This last driver did not even suspect that Gilbert had a child in the cabriolet. He stopped his horses just before reaching Villers-Cotterets, received the stipulated fare for

his journey, a crown and six francs, and Gilbert, taking up his burden carefully enveloped in the folds of the blanket, singing his song as seriously as possible, quickly moved away, crossed a ditch, and disappeared in a path strewed with leaves, which led to the village of Haramont.

The weather had become very cold. The snow had ceased falling; the ground was hard and bristling with underbrush and thorny bushes. Above could be seen the outlines of the trees of the forests, leafless and gloomy, through whose branches shone the pale blue of a sky still hazy. The keen air, the fragrance of the oaks, the pearls of ice suspended on the ends of the branches, all this freedom, all this poetry excited the young man's imagination. He walked with a rapid and proud step through the little ravine, without stumbling, without looking around; for in the midst of the groups of trees, he took for his guide the steeple of the hamlet and the blue smoke of the chimneys which could be seen through the gray lattice-work of the branches. Within half an hour he crossed a stream bordered with ivy and yellow cress, and asked, at the first cottage, the children of a laborer to direct him to the house of Madeleine Pitou.

Silent and attentive, instead of stupid and inactive like some peasants, the children rose, and staring at the stranger, led him, holding each other by the hand, to a cottage rather large, of very good appearance, and situated by the banks of a stream which flowed by most of the houses in the village. The limpid waters of this stream were swollen somewhat by the first melting of the snow. A wooden bridge — that is, a large plank — joined the road to the steps of earth that led to the house.

One of the children, his guides, showed Gilbert where Madeleine Pitou lived.

"There?" repeated Gilbert.

The child nodded his head without saying a word.

"Madeleine Pitou?" Gilbert asked the child once more.

The latter having reiterated his silent affirmation, Gilbert crossed the little bridge, and knocked at the door of the cottage; while the children, who had again taken each other's hands, looked with all their might to see what had brought to Madeleine's house this fine gentleman in a brown suit and buckled shoes.

Gilbert, however, had not yet noticed in the village any living creature but these children. Haramont was really the desert so much desired.

As soon as the door was opened, a spectacle full of charm for everybody, but particularly so for a young philosopher, met Gilbert's view. A stout peasant woman was nursing a fine child, a few months old, while kneeling before her, another child, a vigorous boy four or five years of age, was saying his prayer in a loud voice. In a corner by the fireplace, near a window, or rather a hole cut in the wall and closed with glass, another peasant woman, about thirty-five years old, was spinning flax, — her wheel on her right, a wooden stool under her feet, a large poodle on the stool.

The dog, seeing Gilbert, barked in a very hospitable and civil manner, just enough to show his vigilance. The child at prayers turned round, cutting short the utterance of the *Pater*, and the two women uttered a sort of exclamation of surprise mingled with joy.

Gilbert began by smiling at the nurse. "Good dame Madeleine," he said, "I salute you."

The woman started up, "Monsieur knows my name!" she said.

"As you see; but don't let me disturb you, I beg. In fact, instead of one nursling which you have now, you are about to have two;" and he deposited in the homely

cradle of the country child the little city child he had brought.

"Oh, how pretty he is!" exclaimed the woman who was spinning.

"Yes, Sister Angélique, very pretty," said Madeleine.

"Madame is your sister?" said Gilbert, pointing to the spinner.

"My sister, yes, Monsieur," replied Madeleine; "my husband's sister."

"Yes, my aunt Gélique," murmured the little fellow, in a low voice, who joined in the conversation without rising.

"Be still, Ange; be still!" said the mother; "you interrupt Monsieur."

"What I have to propose to you is very simple, good dame. This child is the son of one of my master's tenants, a ruined farmer. My master, godfather to this child, wishes him to be brought up in the country, and become a good workman, with good health and good manners; will you take charge of this child?"

"But, Monsieur —"

"He was born yesterday, and has not yet been nursed," interrupted Gilbert. "Besides, it is the child of which Maître Niquet, notary of Villers-Cotterets, must have spoken to you."

Madeleine immediately seized the child, and gave it the breast with a generous impetuosity which moved Gilbert, deeply.

"They did not deceive me," he said; "you are a good woman. I confide to your care this child in the name of my master. I see that he will be happy here, and I hope that he will bring into this cottage a dream of happiness in exchange for that which he will find here. How much a month did you have for the children of Maître Niquet, of Villers-Cotterets?"

"Twelve francs, Monsieur; but Monsieur Niquet is rich, and he added now and then a few francs for sugar and maintenance."

"Mother Madeleine," said Gilbert, with pride, "for this child you shall be paid twenty francs a month, which makes two hundred and forty francs a year."

"Jesus!" cried Madeleine; "thanks, Monsieur."

"This is for the first year," said Gilbert, laying on the table ten handsome louis, which made the two women stare, and toward which the little Ange stretched his rapacious hand.

"But, Monsieur, if the child should not live?" the nurse objected timidly.

"That would be a great misfortune, — which will not happen," said Gilbert. "You are satisfied with the monthly pay for nursing, then?"

"Oh, yes, Monsieur!"

"Let us pass to the payments of an allowance for the other years."

"Will the child remain with us?"

"Probably."

"In that case, Monsieur, we should be his father and mother."

Gilbert turned pale. "Yes," he said, in a suppressed tone.

"Then, Monsieur, this poor little one is abandoned?"

Gilbert was not expecting such emotion, such questions. He composed himself, however. "I have not told you all," he added; "the poor father has died from grief."

The two good women clasped their hands expressively.

"And the mother?" asked Angélique.

"Oh, the mother, the mother!" replied Gilbert, breathing painfully, "no child, born or unborn, can ever count on her."

It was at this point in their conversation that Father Pitou returned from the fields, appearing calm and happy. His was one of those dull and honest natures, full of gentleness and health, which Greuze has represented in his excellent paintings. A few words explained to him the situation. Besides, he comprehended things through pride, especially those things which he did not understand.

Gilbert explained that the allowance of the child was to be paid until he became a man and capable of supporting himself by the use of his mind and his arms.

"Be it so," said Pitou; "I think we shall love this child, he is so pretty."

"He too," said Angélique and Madeleine, — "he thinks as we do."

"Come, then, with me, I beg, to see Maître Niquet; I will deposit with him the necessary money, that you may be satisfied, and the child may be happy."

"Immediately, Monsieur," replied Pitou, rising from his seat.

Then Gilbert took leave of the good women, and approached the cradle in which the new-comer had already displaced the child of the house. He bent over the cradle with a gloomy look, and for the first time noticing the face of his son, he saw that it resembled Andrée. This sight broke his heart; he had to bury his finger-nails in his flesh to restrain a tear which rose from his wounded heart to his eyelid. He placed a timid kiss on the fresh cheek of the newly born, and drew back tottering.

Father Pitou was already on the threshold, a stout stick in his hand, his best coat on his back.

Gilbert gave a half-louis to the chubby Ange Pitou, who crawled between his legs, and the two women requested the honor of embracing him, with the touching familiarity of country people.

This father of eighteen years had been so weighed down with emotions that he was nearly crushed by them. Pale, nervous, he began to grow bewildered.

"Let us go," he said to Pitou.

"As you please, Monsieur," replied the peasant, walking on; and they took their departure.

Suddenly Madeleine cried out from the door. "Monsieur! Monsieur!"

"What is it?" said Gilbert.

"His name! his name! What do you wish him to be called?"

"His name is Gilbert!" replied the young man, with a manly pride.

CHAPTER LXI.

THE DEPARTURE.

At the notary's, the business was soon disposed of. Gilbert deposited, under his own name, a sum of twenty thousand francs, lacking a few hundred, designed to defray the expenses of education and maintenance of the child, and also to establish him in some business when he reached manhood. He allowed for the education and maintenance the sum of five hundred francs a year for fifteen years, and decided that the rest of the money should be set aside for the purchase of some business or a piece of land.

Having thus provided for the child, Gilbert thought of the guardians. He wished that two thousand four hundred francs should be given to Pitou by the boy when he attained the age of eighteen years. Until then Maître Niquet was to pay out annually only five hundred francs. Maître Niquet was to enjoy the use of the money as compensation for his trouble.

Gilbert took a proper receipt for the money from Niquet, and for the child from Pitou, — Pitou witnessing the signature of Niquet, Niquet that of Pitou; so that at about noon Gilbert was ready to take his departure, leaving Niquet in a state of admiration for this precocious wisdom, and Pitou rejoicing in his good fortune.

On leaving the village of Haramont, Gilbert fancied himself separating from the whole world. Nothing had for him now either meaning or promise. He had left

behind the careless life of a young man, and had committed what men call a crime, which perhaps God would severely punish. At the same time, confident in his own strength of mind and body, Gilbert had the courage to tear himself away from Maître Niquet, who had accompanied him, and had taken a great liking to him, and who tempted him by a thousand allurements.

But the mind is capricious; human nature is subject to weaknesses. In proportion as a man has will, spontaneity of action, energy in the execution of his plans, he measures the distance which already separates him from his first step. It is then that the most courageous are alarmed; it is then that they say, like Cæsar, "Have I done well in passing the Rubicon?"

Gilbert, finding himself on the verge of the forest, turned to look once more upon the brown tops of the trees which hid all Haramont except the steeple. This charming picture of happiness and peace plunged him into a revery full of regrets and delights.

"Fool that I am!" he said to himself; "where am I going? Will not God turn away in anger in the depths of heaven? What! an idea presented itself to me; what! circumstances favored the accomplishment of that idea; what! a man created by God to cause the wrong which I have done, has consented to repair this wrong, and I find myself to-day possessor of riches and my child! So, with ten thousand francs, ten thousand being reserved for the child, I can live here like a happy husbandman, among these good villagers, in the bosom of this sublime and fruitful Nature. I can bury myself forever in peaceful blessedness, in work and contemplation; I can forget the world, and be forgotten by it; I can — unbounded happiness! — bring up this child myself, and thus enjoy my labor. Why not? Are not these good chances compen-

sation for all my past suffering? Oh, yes; I can live thus! yes, I can share in the division of this money with that child, which, besides, I shall have brought up myself, earning thus the money which would be given to these hirelings. I can confess to Maître Niquet that I am his father; I can do everything." And his heart was filled by degrees with inexpressible joy, and with a hope which he had not yet tasted, even in the most pleasant hallucinations of his dreams.

Suddenly the worm which slumbered at the core of this beautiful fruit awoke, and showed its hideous head; it was remorse, it was shame, it was misery. "I cannot," said Gilbert, turning pale; "I have robbed this woman of her child, as I robbed her of her honor. I have robbed this man of money, to make, I said, reparation. I have, then, no longer the right to use it for my own happiness; I have no longer the right to keep the child, since the mother cannot have it; it belongs to both of us or to neither."

And with these words, painful as wounds, Gilbert rose in despair; his face now expressed the most gloomy, the most hateful of passions. "Well, then," said he, "I will be miserable; I will suffer; I will give up love and fortune; but the portion of good which I should have done, I will turn to evil. My patrimony henceforth is vengeance and misery. Do not fear, Andrée, I will share faithfully with you!" He turned to the right, and after a moment's reflection as to the direction he should take, plunged into the woods, where he walked all day in the direction of Normandy, which he had reckoned on reaching after a four days' journey.

He possessed nine francs and a few sous. His appearance was irreproachable, his face calm and quiet. Carrying a book under his arm, he looked very much like a

student of good family returning to the paternal mansion. He was accustomed to walk at night in the fine roads, and to sleep by day in the fields in the sun's rays. Twice only the wind disturbed him so much that he was obliged to enter a cottage, where, upon a chair by the fireplace, he slept to his heart's content without noticing the approach of night. He always had a pretext and a destination. "I am going to Rouen," he said, "to my uncle's, and I come from Villers-Cotterets; I wished, like other young men, to make a journey on foot by way of amusement."

There was no suspicion on the part of the peasants; at that time a book carried respect with it. If Gilbert saw an expression of doubt upon some more compressed lips, he spoke of a school to which his vocation called him. This quickly dispelled every suspicion. Eight days passed thus, during which Gilbert lived like a peasant, spending ten sous a day and walking ten leagues. He arrived at last at Rouen, and once there, had no need of information, nor of asking his way.

The book which he carried was a copy of "La Nouvelle Héloise," richly bound. Rousseau had given it to him, and had written his name on the first leaf of the book. Gilbert, reduced to four francs ten sous, tore out this leaf, which he carefully preserved, and sold the book to a book-seller for three francs.

Thus the young man was enabled to arrive, three days later, in sight of Havre, and at sunset he beheld the sea. His shoes were in a condition not at all becoming to a young gentleman who daintily put on silk stockings for travelling through the towns. But Gilbert had another idea; he sold his silk stockings, or rather exchanged them, for a pair of shoes of irreproachable stoutness. As to their elegance, we will say nothing.

This last night he passed in Harfleur, lodged and fed for

sixteen sous. There he ate oysters for the first time in his life. "A dish of the rich," he said to himself, "for the poorest of men; so true is it that God has done nothing but good, while men have done the evil, according to the maxim of Rousseau."

At ten o'clock in the morning on the thirteenth of December, Gilbert entered Havre, and the first thing he saw was the "Adonis," a fine brig of three hundred tons, lying in a dock. The wharves were deserted. Gilbert ventured to go on board the brig over a gang-plank. A cabin-boy approached to question him.

"The captain?" said Gilbert.

The boy pointed to the companion-way, and directly a voice from below cried out, "Let him come down."

Gilbert descended. He was led into a small room, constructed of mahogony and furnished with the most quiet simplicity. A man, thirty years old, pale, nervous, with keen and restless eye, was reading a paper upon a table made of mahogany like the walls. "What does Monsieur wish?" he said to Gilbert.

Gilbert made a sign to the man to dismiss his boy, and the boy withdrew.

"You are the captain of the 'Adonis,' Monsieur?" said Gilbert, immediately.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"This note is addressed to you, then?" He handed to the captain Balsamo's note.

Scarcely had he looked at the writing, when the captain rose and said hastily to Gilbert, with a smile full of affability, "Ah, you too? So young? Good! good!"

Gilbert merely bowed.

"You are going?" he said.

"To America."

"You start?"

"I go with you."

"Good. In eight days, then."

"What shall I do in the mean time, Captain?"

"Have you a passport?"

"No."

"Then you must come on board to-night, after having walked all day outside the town, — at Sainte-Adresse, for instance. Do not speak to any one."

"I must eat; I have no money."

"You must dine here; you shall have supper to-night."

"And afterward?"

"Once embarked, you will not again land; you will remain in hiding here. You will depart without looking again at the sky. Once at sea, twenty leagues out, you shall be free as you please."

"Good."

"Finish to-day all that you have to do."

"I have a letter to write."

"Write it on this table; here is pen, ink, and paper. The post-office is in the faubourg; the boy will conduct you."

"Thanks, Captain," and Gilbert, left alone, wrote a short letter upon which he placed this address: "Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney; Paris, Rue Coq-Héron, 9, — the first door beyond the Rue Plastrière." Then he put the letter in his pocket, ate what the captain himself served him, and followed the boy, who conducted him to the post-office, where the letter was mailed.

All day long Gilbert watched the sea from the top of the cliffs. At night he returned. The captain was on the lookout for him, and brought him on board.

CHAPTER LXII.

GILBERT'S LAST FAREWELL.

PHILIPPE had passed a terrible night. Those footprints in the snow were sufficient proof that some one had made his way into the house to carry off the child; but whom could he accuse? There was nothing to fix his suspicions upon any one.

Philippe knew his father so well that he did not doubt his complicity in the affair. Monsieur de Taverney believed Louis XV. to be the father of this child; he would attach great importance to the preservation of this living witness of the king's infidelity to Madame Dubarry. The baron would also believe that, sooner or later, Andrée would be restored to favor, and would wish to regain at any price the principal means of her coming fortune. These reflections, based upon a revelation, still quite fresh, of the paternal character, comforted Philippe somewhat, who thought it possible to recover this child since he knew who had stolen it. He watched therefore for the coming of Doctor Louis at eight o'clock, to whom, as they walked back and forth in the street, he related the frightful event of the night.

The doctor was a man of good judgment; he examined the footprints in the garden, and after consideration decided in favor of Philippe's suppositions. "I know the baron well enough," he said, "to believe him capable of this wicked deed. At the same time, may not some other interest, more immediate, have led to the abduction of this child?"

"What interest, Doctor?"

"That of the real father."

"Oh!" cried Philippe, "for a moment I had this idea; but the miserable man has not even bread for himself. He is a madman, a fanatic, a fugitive by this time, who must be afraid of my very shadow. Let us make no mistake, Doctor. The miserable fellow committed this crime under the temptation of opportunity; but now that I am no longer angry, although I hate this criminal, I think that I shall avoid meeting him, so that I may not kill him. I think he must have feelings of remorse which punish him; I think that hunger and exile will avenge me as efficiently as my sword."

"Let us say no more about it," said the doctor.

"You will, dear and good friend, consent to just one last falsehood; for we must, first of all, reassure Andrée. You will tell her that yesterday you were alarmed about the health of this child; that you returned in the night, and took him to carry him to his nurse. This fiction which I have improvised for Andrée is the first one that presents itself to my mind."

"I will say that; you will, however, seek for this child?"

"I have a plan for finding him. I have decided to leave France. Andrée will enter the monastery of Saint Denis; then I will seek Monsieur de Taverney. I will tell him that I know all; I will make him disclose to me the hiding-place of the child. His resistance I will overcome by threats of public exposure, by threats of intervention on the part of Madame la Dauphine."

"And what will you do with the child, your sister being in the convent?"

"I will place him at nurse with a woman whom you will recommend to me; afterward I will send him to college,

and when he is grown up I will keep him with me, if I live."

"And do you think that the mother will consent to leave either you or her child?"

"Andrée will henceforth consent to anything I wish. She knows that I have approached Madame la Dauphine on the subject, whose promise I have; she will not allow me to be wanting in respect toward our protectress."

"Let us go in to see the poor mother," said the doctor; and he entered the apartment of Andrée, who was sleeping quietly, comforted by Philippe's attentions. Her first word was a question to the doctor, who had already reassured her by his happy expression. She, from that time, became so calm that her convalescence was much accelerated; and ten days later she rose, and could walk in the conservatory when the sun was shining upon the glass.

On the very day of this walk, Philippe, who had been away for some days, returned to the house in the Rue Coq-Héron with a face so gloomy that the doctor, on opening the door for him, divined some great misfortune.

"What is the matter, then? Does your father refuse to restore the child?"

"My father," said Philippe, "has been seized with an attack of fever, which confined him to his bed three days after his departure from Paris, and he was very low when I arrived. I looked upon all this sickness as a trick, as a pretence, as a proof even of his complicity in the abduction. I insisted, I threatened; but Monsieur de Taverney swore to me by the Christ that he understood nothing I said to him."

"So you return to Paris without having obtained any intelligence?"

"Yes, Doctor."

"And convinced of the baron's veracity?"

"Almost convinced."

"More artful than you, he has not disclosed his secret."

"I threatened him with the intervention of Madame la Dauphine, and the baron turned pale. 'Ruin me if you like,' he said; 'bring dishonor upon your father and yourself; it will be an egregious folly without any result. I do not know what you mean.'"

"So that —"

"So that I return in despair."

At this moment Philippe heard his sister's voice saying, "Has not Philippe returned?"

"Great God! here she is! What shall I say to her?" murmured Philippe.

"Silence!" said the doctor.

Andrée entered the room, and embraced her brother with a joyous tenderness which chilled the young man's heart.

"Well," she said, "where do you come from?"

"I come from my father, in the first place, as I told you."

"Monsieur le Baron is well?"

"Yes, Andrée; but that was not the only visit I have made. I have seen several persons respecting your entrance at Saint Denis. Thank God, everything is now ready; you are saved, you can think of your future with intelligence and firmness."

Andrée approached her brother and with a tender smile, "Dear friend," she said, "my future no longer concerns me; neither must my future trouble any one. The future of my child is all to me, and I shall consecrate myself solely to the son God has given me. This is my resolution, irrevocably taken, since, with the return of my strength, I can no longer doubt the steadiness of my

mind. To live for my son, to suffer privation, to labor even, if necessary, but never to leave him, day or night, — such is the future I have laid out for myself. No more convent, no more egotism; I belong to some one; God no longer wants me!"

The doctor looked at Philippe as if to say: "Well, what did I predict?"

"My sister," cried the young man, "what are you saying?"

"Do not blame me, Philippe, this is no caprice of a weak and vain woman; I will not incommode you. I will impose nothing upon you."

"But — but, Andrée, I cannot remain in France; I wish to leave everything. I have no longer any fortune; no longer any future. I might consent to abandon you at the foot of an altar, but in the world, in the midst of toil, — Andrée, take care!"

"I have considered everything. I love you sincerely, Philippe; but if you leave me, I will restrain my tears, and take refuge near the cradle of my son."

The doctor approached. "This is extravagance, madness," he said.

"Ah, Doctor, what would you have? It is a state of madness to be a mother, but God sent me this madness. So long as this child needs me I shall persist in my resolution."

Philippe and the doctor exchanged glances.

"My child," said the doctor, "I am not a very eloquent preacher; but I think I remember that God forbids too strong an attachment to any creature."

"Yes, sister," added Philippe.

"God does not forbid a mother's strong love for her son, I think, Doctor."

"Pardon me, my child. For every law that comes from God, search out, not the moral cause alone, but also the

material cause. God forbids a mother to love her child to excess, because the child is a frail, delicate plant, exposed to all misfortunes, to all sufferings; and because to love intensely an ephemeral creature is to expose one's self to despair."

"Doctor," murmured Andrée, "why do you say this to me? And you, Philippe, why are you regarding me with this compassion, this paleness?"

"Dear Andrée," interrupted the young man, "follow my advice. Your health is re-established; enter as soon as possible the convent of Saint Denis."

"I! I have told you that I will not leave my son."

"So long as he shall have need of you," said the doctor, gently.

"My God!" cried Andrée, "what is it? Speak! Something sad, cruel?"

"Be careful," the doctor whispered in Philippe's ear; "she is too weak to bear a decided blow."

"Brother, you do not answer; explain yourself."

"Dear sister, you know that on my return I passed through Point-de-Jour, where your child is at nurse."

"Yes, well?"

"Well, the child was somewhat ill."

"Ill! that dear child! Quick, Marguerite; Marguerite, a carriage! I am going to see my child!"

"Impossible!" cried the doctor; "you are not in a condition to go out, or to bear the motion of a carriage."

"You told me this morning that this was possible; you told me that to-morrow on Philippe's return, I should go to see the poor little one."

"I thought you would be stronger than you are."

"Are you deceiving me?"

The doctor remained silent.

"Marguerite!" repeated Andrée, "obey me; a carriage!"

"But it may kill you," interrupted Philippe.

"Well, let it kill me! I do not care so very much for life."

Marguerite waited, regarding in turn her mistress, her master, and the doctor.

"Come! when I command!" cried Andrée, whose cheeks suddenly reddened.

"Dear sister!"

"I will hear nothing more; and if you refuse me a carriage, I will go on foot."

"Andrée," said Philippe, suddenly, "you will not go; no, there is no need of your going."

"My child is dead!" said the young girl, coldly, letting her hands fall over the sides of the chair in which Philippe and the doctor had seated her.

Philippe answered only by kissing one of her cold and listless hands. By degrees Andrée's neck lost its rigidity; her head drooped on her bosom, and she shed copious tears.

"God has willed," said Philippe, "that we should submit to this new misfortune, — God, who is so great, so just, who may have other plans for you, who judged, no doubt, that the presence of this child at your side would be a punishment undeserved."

"But yet," sighed the poor mother, "why has God made this innocent creature suffer?"

"God has not made him suffer, my child," said the doctor; "he died on the very night of his birth. Have no more regret for him than for a shadow that comes and goes."

"The cries that I heard?"

"Were his farewell to life."

Andrée hid her face in her hands, while the two men, expressing their thought in an eloquent look, congratulated themselves on their pious lie.

Suddenly Marguerite entered with a letter addressed to Andrée in the following manner: "Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney, Paris, Rue Coq-Héron, — the first door beyond the Rue Plastrière."

Philippe showed the letter to the doctor over Andrée's head, who was no longer weeping, but was absorbed in her grief. "Who could have written it?" he thought. "No one knew her address, and it is not our father's writing."

"Here, Andrée," said Philippe, "is a letter for you."

Without thinking, without hesitating, without surprise, Andrée tore open the envelope, and wiping her eyes, unfolded the paper to read; but she had scarcely run over the lines which composed this letter when she uttered a loud cry, rose up like a mad woman, and with a terrible contraction of her arms and feet fell, heavy as a statue, into the arms of Marguerite who was standing near.

Philippe picked up the letter and read,—

AT SEA, December 15, 17—

I go, driven away by you, and you will not see me again; but I carry away my child, which shall never call you mother!

GILBERT.

Philippe crushed the paper, with a roar of anger. "Oh!" he said, grinding his teeth, "I had almost pardoned the crime committed on the spur of temptation; but this deliberate crime shall be punished. Over your lifeless head, Andrée, I swear to kill the miserable fellow the first time I meet him. God will permit me to meet him, for he has filled the measure to the brim. Doctor, will Andrée recover?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Doctor, Andrée must enter the monastery of Saint Denis to-morrow; by the day after to-morrow I must be at the nearest seaport. The villain has fled, I will follow him. Besides, I must have this child. Doctor, which is the nearest seaport?"

"Havre."

"I will be at Havre in thirty-six hours," replied Philippe.

CHAPTER LXIII.

ON BOARD.

From that moment Andrée's house was dull and silent as a tomb.

The knowledge that her son was dead would perhaps have killed Andrée. It would have been one of those heavy, abiding sorrows which perpetually undermine. Gilbert's letter was a blow so violent that it aroused all the aggressive force and feeling that still remained in Andrée's generous soul. Coming to herself, she looked at Philippe, and the wrath which she read in his eyes was a new source of courage for herself. She remained silent until her strength was so far recovered that her voice would not tremble, and then, taking Philippe's hand, "My friend," she said, "you spoke to me this morning of the monastery of Saint Denis, in which a cell has been granted me by Madame la Dauphine?"

"Yes, Andrée."

"You will conduct me thither to-day, if you please."

"Thanks, sister."

"To you, Doctor," Andrée continued, "for so many kindnesses a word of thanks would be a barren recompense. Your recompense, Doctor, cannot be found on earth." She went to him and kissed him. "This little medallion," she said, "contains my portrait, which my mother caused to be made when I was two years old. It should resemble my son. Keep it, Doctor, and let it speak to you sometimes of the child whom you have ushered into life, and of the mother whom your care has saved."

Having spoken thus, Andrée, without giving way to emotion, made her preparations for the change, and at six o'clock in the evening she passed through the wicket-door of the parlor of Saint Denis, before the bars of which Philippe, unable to control his emotions, uttered within himself a farewell, perhaps eternal.

Poor Andrée's fortitude suddenly left her. She turned and ran back to her brother with outstretched arms; he also extended his arms toward her. They met, notwithstanding the cold barrier of bars between them, and their tears were mingled on their burning cheeks.

"Adieu! adieu!" murmured Andrée, whose grief burst forth in sobs.

"Adieu!" replied Philippe, stifling his despair.

"If you ever find my son," said Andrée, in a low voice, "do not let me die till I have embraced him."

"Be assured. Adieu! adieu!"

Andrée tore herself from her brother's arms, and supported by a lay sister went forward, constantly looking back at him as he stood in the deep shadow. So long as he could see her he made signs to her with his head and by shaking his handkerchief. At length he received a last farewell, which she sent to him from the end of the dim passage-way. Then an iron gate fell between them with a melancholy sound, and all was over.

Philippe took post at Saint Denis; with his portmanteau behind him he journeyed all that night, all the following day, and in the evening arrived at Havre. He slept at the first hostelry he found, and at daybreak the next day was out on the wharves inquiring about the earliest departures for America. He learned that the brig "Adonis" would sail that very day for New York. He sought out the captain, who was finishing his preparations, and on paying the price for the passage was admitted as a

passenger. Then, having written a last letter to Madame la Dauphine, declaring his respectful devotion and his gratitude, he sent his baggage on board, and himself embarked at the time of high tide.

Four o'clock was striking in the tower of François I. when the "Adonis" left the channel under foresail and topsails. The sea was of a sombre blue, the sky red on the horizon. Philippe, leaning on the railing, after having saluted the few passengers, his travelling companions, stood gazing at the coast of France, which gradually became embrowned with a purplish smoke, as the brig, unfurling more sail, moved rapidly to the right and gained the open sea. Very soon the shore of France, fellow-passengers, and the ocean disappeared; dark night had covered all with its extended wings. Philippe went to his little cabin to read over the copy of his letter to the dauphiness, which might serve for a prayer addressed to the Creator, as well as for a farewell addressed to a fellow-creature. Philippe had written as follows: —

MADAME, — A man without hope and without support withdraws himself from you with regret at having done so little for your future Majesty. He goes to encounter the storms and tempests of the sea while you remain amid the troubles and dangers of government. Young, beautiful, adored, surrounded by respectful friends and idolizing servants, you will forget him whom your royal hand has condescended to lift above the crowd. But I shall never forget you. I am going to a new world to study the means of serving you more effectively upon your throne. I leave to you my sister, poor abandoned flower, who will have no other sun than the light of your countenance. Deign sometimes to condescend to her; and in the midst of your joy, of your almightiness, in the chorus of unanimous devotion, listen, I beseech you, to the benediction of an exile who will no longer hear you, and perhaps will never see you again.

After reading this letter Philippe's heart was oppressed. The melancholy sound of the groaning vessel and the rush of the waves which broke against the prow made a combination of noises which would have saddened the happiest imaginations. The night was long and painful to the young man. A visit which the captain made him in the morning did not restore him to a satisfactory state of mind. That officer informed him that the greater part of the passengers feared the sea and confined themselves to their berths, and that the passage promised to be short, but disagreeable, owing to the violence of the wind.

Philippe fell into the custom of dining with the captain, and having breakfast served in his cabin; and not finding himself well-hardened against the inconveniences of a sea-voyage, he acquired the habit of spending some hours on the deck reclining on his large military cloak. The rest of the time he employed in planning his future course, and in supporting his mind by solid reading. Sometimes he met his fellow-passengers. There were two ladies on their way to take possession of an inheritance in North America, and four men, one of whom, already old, had with him two sons. These were the cabin passengers. On the other side Philippe once noticed some men of an appearance and bearing more common; he found nothing there to occupy his attention.

In proportion as habit diminished his suffering, Philippe recovered his serenity. Some fine days, clear and free from storms, announced to the passengers the approach to temperate latitudes. Then they remained longer on deck; then, in the night, Philippe, who had concealed his name even from the captain, that he might not have to talk on any subject he dreaded to approach, — Philippe heard, in his cabin, steps over his head; he even heard the voice of the captain, who doubtless was walking

with a passenger. It was a reason why he should not go up. He therefore opened his port-hole, to breathe a little fresh air, and waited for the morning.

Once only during the night, hearing neither voices nor footsteps, he ascended to the deck. The night was warm, the sky clouded, and in the wake of the vessel were seen, springing up in whirls, thousands of phosphorescent atoms. The night apparently had seemed to the passengers too dark and too stormy; for Philippe saw no one on the stern-deck. But forward, on the bow and leaning against the mast of the bowsprit, motionless in sleep or meditation, was a dark figure, which in the dim light Philippe could hardly distinguish, — doubtless some second-class passenger, some poor exile looking forward to the arrival in America, while Philippe himself was regretting the departure from France.

Philippe contemplated that motionless passenger a long time; then feeling the cold of the early morning, he prepared to return to his cabin. Meantime the passenger at the prow gazed at the sky, which began to grow light. Philippe heard the captain coming, and turned round. "You are taking the morning air, Captain?" he said.

"Monsieur, I am just out of bed."

"You have been anticipated by some of your passengers, as you see."

"By you; but officers are, like sailors, early birds."

"Oh, not by me, only!" said Philippe. "See, yonder, that man who meditates so profoundly; he also is one of your passengers, is he not?"

The captain looked and appeared to be surprised.

"Who is that man?" asked Philippe.

"A — merchant," said the captain, with hesitation.

"Who is running after a fortune?" murmured Philippe. "This brig goes too slowly for him."

The captain, instead of replying, went forward to the passenger, and spoke to him, and Philippe saw him disappear down the companion-way.

"You have disturbed his meditations," said Philippe to the captain, who rejoined him. "He did not annoy me, however."

"No, Monsieur, I warned him that the morning cold is dangerous in these latitudes. Passengers of the second-class have not good cloaks, like you."

"Where are we, Captain?"

"Monsieur, to-morrow we shall see the Azore Islands, at one of which we will take in a little fresh water, for it is very warm."

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE AZORE ISLANDS.

THE next day, as the captain had predicted, the passengers could see islands in the northeast, far off under the dazzling sun. They were the Azores. The wind was fair, and the brig made good progress. Toward three o'clock they were near enough for a complete view. When they had approached within the distance of a cannon-shot from the nearest island, the brig was brought up into the wind, and the crew prepared to go ashore for some barrels of fresh water, as the captain had promised. All the passengers welcomed the pleasure of a trip to the shore. To place the feet on solid ground after twenty days and nights of painful navigation is a sort of pleasure which those only can appreciate who have made a long voyage.

"Gentlemen," said the captain to the passengers who he thought were undecided, "you have five hours for a trip to the shore. Take advantage of the opportunity. You will find on that little island, entirely uninhabited, springs of ice-water for you who are naturalists, and rabbits and red partridges for you who are sportsmen."

Philippe took his gun and ammunition. "But, Captain," said he, "do you remain on board? Why do you not come with us?"

"Because yonder," replied the captain, pointing out to sea, "comes a vessel of suspicious appearance, — a vessel which has followed me for four days. I wish to see what she means to do."

Philippe, satisfied with the explanation, got into the last boat and started for the shore. The ladies and several other passengers, of both classes, did not care to take the chances of the trip, or awaited their turn. The two boats then moved away, carrying joyous sailors, and passengers more joyous still.

The captain's last words were : " At eight o'clock, gentlemen, the last boat will go for you. Consider that as settled ; those who are behind time will be left."

When all the party, naturalists and sportsmen, had landed, the sailors immediately entered a cavern, situated about a hundred paces from the shore, and which turned at a right angle near the entrance, as if to avoid the rays of the sun. From a living spring, clear, bluish water glided over the mossy rocks, and was lost in fine sand within the cavern. Here the sailors stopped and filled their casks, which then they rolled toward the shore.

Philippe watched them at their work. He admired the tinted shades of the cavern, and the freshness and gentle noise of the water as it glided from fall to fall. He was surprised at finding at first dense darkness and intense cold, while after a few minutes the temperature became mild, and the darkness was pierced by a soft, mysterious light. Thus with arms outstretched and knocking against the rocky sides, he had begun to follow the sailors without seeing them ; and then by degrees every face, every form, became clear and distinct. Philippe preferred, as to clearness, the light of that grotto to the light of heaven, so glaring and harsh in full day in those latitudes. Meantime he heard the voices of his companions die away in the distance. One or two gunshots echoed along the mountain ; then all noises ceased, and Philippe was alone. The sailors had accomplished their task, and would not return to the grotto.

Philippe yielded himself to the charm of that solitude and to the thoughts whirling in his brain. He stretched himself out upon the soft, luxurious sand, with his back against the rocks carpeted with aromatic herbs, and sank into meditation. The hours rolled on. He had forgotten the world. At his side his gun, discharged, leaned against the rock, and that he might lie more comfortably, he had taken from his pockets the pistols which were his inseparable companions. All his past life came up before him, slowly, solemnly, as a warning or a reproach; all his future took flight before him, like the timid bird which one may touch with a look, but never with the hand.

While Philippe thus dreamed, doubtless others, within a hundred feet of him, dreamed, laughed, and hoped. He had an insensible perception of that movement, and more than once he thought he heard the boatmen's oars as they conveyed passengers to the vessel or brought other passengers to the shore, — the former surfeited with the day's pleasures, the latter eager to enjoy them in their turn. But his meditation had not yet been disturbed, — either because the entrance to the grotto had escaped notice, or because those who observed it disdained to enter.

Suddenly a shadow, timid, undecided, interposed itself between the light of day and the grotto, at its very entrance. Philippe saw some one walking, with his hands extended before him, and his head bent down, in the direction of the murmuring water. This person fell once against the rocks, his foot having slipped on some herbs. Then Philippe rose and went forward, offering his hand to the visitor to help him find a safe path. In this courteous action his fingers touched the hand of the traveller in the darkness. "This way," he said, with politeness; "Monsieur, the water is in this direction."

At the sound of that voice the stranger quickly raised

his head, and prepared to answer, exposing his face in the azure twilight of the grotto. But Philippe, with a sudden cry of horror, started back. The unknown also drew back with an exclamation of fright.

"Gilbert!"

"Philippe!"

These two words burst forth at the same time, like subterranean thunder. Then ensued the sound of a sort of struggle. Philippe had seized with both hands his enemy's throat and dragged him to the depths of the cavern. Gilbert suffered himself to be dragged, without uttering a word of protest. Pushed against the rocky wall of the interior, he could recoil no farther.

"Scoundrel! I have you at last!" roared Philippe. "God has delivered you into my hands; God is just."

Gilbert was very pale, but made no movement; his arms hung idly by his sides.

"Oh, coward and villain!" said Philippe; "he has n't even the instinct of the wild beast, which defends itself."

But Gilbert replied in gentle tones, "Defend myself! and why?"

"True, you know well that you are in my power; you know well that you have deserved the most terrible punishment. All your crimes are proved. You have loaded a woman with shame; you have killed her by cruelty. It was not enough for you to dishonor a virgin; you wished also to assassinate a mother!"

Gilbert made no reply. Philippe, who gradually became wild with the heat of his own fury, again raised violent hands against Gilbert. The young man offered no resistance.

"You are not a man, then?" said Philippe, shaking him in his rage; "you have only the face of a man?

What! — not even resistance? But I am strangling you, — you see it plainly. Resist, then; defend yourself, coward! coward! assassin!"

Gilbert felt the sharp fingers of his enemy in his throat. He drew himself up, stiffened himself, and vigorous as a lion, by a single movement of his shoulders cast Philippe off from him. Then he crossed his arms. "You see," said he, "that I could defend myself if I wished; but why should I? Now you run to your gun. I would rather be killed at once than torn by finger-nails and crushed by shameful blows."

Philippe had, in fact, seized his gun, but at these words he laid it aside. "No," he murmured. Then, aloud, "Where are you going? How are you here?"

"I embarked in the 'Adonis.'"

"You hid yourself, then? you saw me?"

"I did not even know you were on board."

"You lie!"

"I do not lie."

"How is it that I have not seen you?"

"Because I have left my berth only at night."

"You see! — you hide yourself!'

"Certainly."

"From me?"

"No, I tell you; I go to America on a mission, and I must not be seen. The captain has lodged me apart for that reason."

"You hide yourself, I tell you, to conceal from me your presence, and especially to hide the child which you have stolen."

"The child?" said Gilbert.

"Yes; you have stolen and carried away that child, to make of him a weapon by which some day you may profit, villain!"

Gilbert shook his head. "I have taken the child," he said, "so that no one may teach him to despise or to deny his father."

Philippe paused for a moment. "If that is true," said he, "if I could believe it, you would be less villanous than I thought; but you have stolen, — why have you not denied it?"

"Stolen? I have stolen?"

"You have stolen the child."

"He is my son! he is mine! We do not steal, Monsieur, when we take our own."

"Listen!" said Philippe, trembling with rage. "Just now I thought I would kill you. I had sworn it; I had the right to do it."

Gilbert did not answer.

"Now God enlightens me. God has thrown you in my way as if to say to me: 'Vengeance is useless; vengeance is right only when one is abandoned by God.' I will not kill you, I will only destroy the structure of misery you have erected. This child is your means of mischief for the future; you must give me this child."

"But I have him not," said Gilbert. "One does not take to sea a child fifteen days old."

"You must have procured a nurse for him; why did you not bring away the nurse?"

"I tell you that I have not brought away the child."

"Then you have left him in France. In what part have you left him?"

Gilbert was silent.

"Answer! where have you placed him at nurse, and with what means of support?"

Gilbert was silent.

"Ah, scoundrel, you defy me!" said Philippe. "Are you not afraid of arousing my anger? Will you tell me

where my sister's child is hidden? Will you give me this child?"

"My child is my own," murmured Gilbert.

"Villain! you see plainly that you will die!"

"I will not give up my child."

"Gilbert, listen; I speak to you kindly. Gilbert, I will try to forget the past; I will try to pardon you. Gilbert, you understand my generosity, do you not? I pardon you! I forgive all the shame and misfortune you have brought upon our house; it is a great sacrifice. Give me back this child. Would you have more? Would you have me try to overcome the so justifiable repugnance of Andrée? Would you have me intercede for you? Well, I will do it if you give me back this child! One word more: Andrée loves her son — your son — madly; she will be moved by your repentance, I promise you. But give me back this child, Gilbert, give it back to me!"

Gilbert folded his arms, fixing upon Philippe a glance of gloomy determination. "You have not believed me," he said; "I do not believe you. Not that you are a dishonest man, but because I have sounded the depth of the prejudice of caste. There is no possible return, — no more pardon! We are mortal enemies. You are the stronger, therefore be the conqueror. I do not ask you for your weapon, do not ask me for mine."

"You confess, then, that it is a weapon?"

"Against scorn, yes; against ingratitude, yes; against insult, yes!"

"Once more, Gilbert," said Philippe, foaming at the mouth, "will you?"

"No."

"Take care!"

"No."

"I do not wish to murder you; I wish you to have the chance of killing Andrée's brother. One crime more! Ah, ah! that is tempting. Take this pistol; here is another. Let us each count three and fire," and he threw one of the pistols at Gilbert's feet.

The yonng man stood motionless. "A duel," he said, "is precisely what I refuse."

"You prefer to have me kill you!" cried Philippe, mad with rage and despair.

"I prefer to be killed by you."

"Reflect. I am beside myself."

"I have reflected."

"It is my right; God will absolve me."

"I know it, — kill me."

"For the last time, will you fight?"

"No."

"You refuse to defend yourself?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, die like a villain of whom I rid the earth! die like a heathen, die like a thief, die like a dog!" and Philippe discharged his pistol at Gilbert, almost touching him with the muzzle. The latter stretched out his arms, swayed first backward, then forward, and fell upon his face without uttering a cry. Philippe felt the sand under his feet wet with the warm blood; he completely lost his senses, and rushed out of the cavern. Before him was the shore; a boat was waiting. Eight o'clock had been announced as the hour of departure; it was now some minutes after eight.

"Ah, here you are, Monsieur!" said the sailors. "You are the last; every one is on board. What have you killed?"

Philippe, hearing this word, lost consciousness. They took him on board the ship, which was unfurling its sails.

"Is every one on board?" asked the captain.

"Here is the last passenger," replied the sailors. "He must have had a fall, for he has fainted."

The captain gave the necessary orders, and the brig sailed rapidly away from the Azores, at the same time that the unknown vessel, which had annoyed them so long, entered the harbor under the American flag.

The captain of the "Adonis" exchanged signals with this vessel, and reassured, apparently at least, he continued his course toward the east, and was soon lost in the darkness of night.

It was not until the next day that they discovered that one passenger was missing.

EPILOGUE.

On the ninth of May, 1774, at eight o'clock in the evening, Versailles presented a most curious and interesting spectacle.

From the first day of the month the king, Louis XV., attacked with a malady the serious nature of which his physicians at first dared not confess to him, had been confined to his bed, anxiously consulting the countenances of those who surrounded him, to discover in them some reflection of the truth or some ray of hope.

The physician Bordeu had pronounced the king suffering from an attack of small-pox of the most malignant nature, and the physician La Martinière, who had agreed with his colleague as to the nature of the king'scomplaint, gave it as his opinion that his Majesty should be informed of the real state of the case, in order that, both spiritually and temporally, as a king and as a Christian, he might take measures for his own safety and that of his kingdom. "His most Christian Majesty," said he, "should have extreme unction administered to him."

La Martinière represented the party of the dauphin,—the opposition. Bordeu asserted that the bare mention of the serious nature of the disease would kill the king, and said that for his part he would not be a party to such regicide.

Bordeu represented Madame Dubarry's party. In fact, to call in the aid of the Church to the king was to expel

the favorite. When God enters at one door, it is full time for Satan to make his exit by the other.

In the mean time, during all these intestine divisions of the faculty, of the royal family, and of the different parties of the court, the disease took quiet possession of the aged, corrupt, and worn-out frame of the king, and set up such a strong position that neither remedies nor prescriptions could dislodge it.

From the first symptoms of the attack, Louis beheld his couch surrounded by his two daughters, the favorite, and the courtiers whom he especially delighted to honor. They still laughed and stood firm by one another.

Suddenly the austere and ominous countenance of Madame Louise of France appeared at Versailles. She had left her cell to give to her father, in her turn, the cares and consolations he so much required. She entered, pale and stern as a statue of Fate. She was no longer a daughter to a father, a sister to her fellow-sisters; she rather resembled those ancient prophetesses who in the evil day of adversity poured in the startled ears of kings the boding cry, "Woe! woe! woe!" She fell upon Versailles like a thunder-shock at the very hour when it was Madame Dubarry's custom to visit the king, who kissed her white hands, and pressed them in soft caresses to his aching brow and burning cheeks. At sight of her all fled. The sisters, trembling, sought refuge in a neighboring chamber. Madame Dubarry bent the knee and hastened to her apartment; the privileged courtiers retreated in disorder to the antechambers; the two physicians alone remained standing by the fireside.

"My daughter!" murmured the king, opening his eyes, heavy with pain and fever.

"Yes, Sire," said the princess, "your daughter."

"And you come —"

"To remind you of God!"

The king raised himself in an upright posture and attempted to smile.

"For you have forgotten God," resumed Madame Louise.

"I!"

"And I wish to recall him to your thoughts."

"My daughter, I am not so near death, I trust, that your exhortations need to be so very urgent. My illness is very slight, — a slow fever, attended with some inflammation."

"Your malady, Sire," interrupted the princess, "is that which, according to etiquette, should summon around your Majesty's couch all the great prelates of the kingdom. When a member of the royal family is attacked with small-pox, the rites of the Church should be administered without loss of time."

"Madame!" exclaimed the king, greatly agitated, and becoming deadly pale, "what is that you say?"

"Madame!" broke in the terrified physicians.

"I repeat," continued the princess, "that your Majesty is attacked with the small-pox."

The king uttered a cry.

"The physicians did not tell me so," he replied.

"They had not the courage. But I look forward to another kingdom for your Majesty than the kingdom of France. Draw near to God, Sire, and solemnly review your past life."

"The small-pox!" muttered Louis; "a fatal disease! — Bordeu! — La Martinière! — can it be true?"

The two practitioners hung their heads.

"Then I am lost!" said the king, more and more terrified.

"All diseases can be cured, Sire," said Bordeu, taking

the initiative, "especially when the patient preserves his composure of mind."

"God gives peace to the mind and health to the body," replied the princess.

"Madame," said Bordeu, boldly, although in a low voice, "you are killing the king!"

The princess deigned no reply. She approached the sick monarch, and, taking his hand, which she covered with kisses, "Break with the past, Sire," said she, "and give an example to your people. No one warned you; you ran the risk of perishing eternally. Promise solemnly to live a Christian life if you are spared; die like a Christian if God calls you hence."

As she concluded she imprinted a second kiss on the royal hand, and with slow step took her way through the antechambers. There she let her long black veil fall over her face, descended the staircase with a grave and majestic air, and entered her carriage, leaving behind her a stupefaction and terror which cannot be described.

The king could not rouse his spirits, except by dint of questioning his physicians; but the blow had been struck. "I do not wish," said he, "that the scenes of Metz with the Duchesse de Châteauroux should be re-enacted here. Send for Madame d'Aiguillon, and request her to take Madame Dubarry with her to Rueil."

This order was equivalent to an expulsion. Bordeu attempted to remonstrate, but the king ordered him to be silent. Bordeu, moreover, saw his colleague ready to report all that passed to the dauphin, and well aware what would be the issue of the king's malady, he did not persist; but going out from the royal chamber he proceeded to acquaint Madame Dubarry with the blow which had just fallen on her fortunes.

The countess, terrified at the ominous and insulting

expression which she saw already on every face around her, hastened to withdraw. In an hour she was without the walls of Versailles, seated beside the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, who, like a trustworthy and grateful friend, was taking the disgraced favorite to her chateau of Rueil, which had descended to her from the great Richelieu.

Bordeu, on his side, shut the door of the king's chamber against all the royal family, under pretext of contagion. Louis's apartment was thenceforward walled up; no one might enter but Religion and Death.

The king had the last rites of the Church administered to him that same day, and this news soon spread through Paris, where the disgrace of the favorite was already known, and circulated from mouth to mouth.

All the court hastened to pay their respects to the dauphin, who closed his doors and refused to see any one.

But the following day the king was better, and sent the Duc d'Aiguillon to carry his compliments to Madame Dubarry. This day was May 9, 1774.

The court deserted the pavilion occupied by the dauphin, and flocked in such crowds to Rueil, where the favorite was residing, that since the banishment of Monsieur de Choiseul to Chanteloup such a string of carriages had never been witnessed.

Things were in this position, therefore: would the king live, and Madame Dubarry still remain queen; or would the king die, and Madame Dubarry sink to the condition of an infamous and execrable courtesan? This was why Versailles, on the evening of May 9, in the year 1774, presented such a curious and interesting spectacle.

On the Place d'Armes, before the palace, several groups of persons had formed in front of the railing who seemed affected and anxious to hear the news. They were citizens of Versailles or of Paris, and every now and then,

with all the politeness imaginable, they questioned the guards who were pacing slowly up and down the Court of Honor, with their hands behind their backs, respecting the king's health.

Gradually these groups dispersed. The inhabitants of Paris took their seats in the stage-coaches to return peaceably to their own homes; while those of Versailles, sure of having the earliest news from the fountain-head, also retired to their several dwellings. No one was to be seen in the streets but the patrols of the watch, who performed their duty a little more quietly than usual; and that gigantic world, called the Palace of Versailles, became by degrees shrouded in darkness and silence, like that greater world which contained it.

At the angle of the street bordered with trees which extends in front of the palace, a man advanced in years was seated on a stone-bench overshadowed by the already leafy boughs of the horse-chestnuts, with his expressive and poetic features turned toward the chateau, leaning with both hands on his cane, and supporting his chin on his hands. He was an old man, bent by age and ill-health, but his eye still sparkled with something of its youthful fire, and his thoughts glowed even more brightly than his eyes. He was absorbed in melancholy contemplation, and did not perceive a second personage who, after peeping curiously through the iron railing and questioning the guards, crossed the esplanade in a diagonal direction, and advanced straight toward the bench with the intention of seating himself upon it.

This personage was a young man with projecting cheek-bones, low forehead, aquiline nose slightly bent to one side, and a sardonic smile. While advancing toward the stone-bench he chuckled sneeringly, although alone, seeming to reply by this laughter to some secret thought.

When within three paces of the bench he perceived the old man, and paused, scanning him with his oblique and stealthy glance, although evidently fearing to let his purpose be seen. "You are enjoying the fresh air, Monsieur?" said he, approaching him with an abrupt movement.

The old man raised his head.

"Ha!" exclaimed the new-comer, "it is my illustrious master!"

"And you are my young practitioner?" said the old man.

"Will you permit me to take a seat beside you, Monsieur?"

"Most willingly," and the old man made room on the bench beside him.

"It appears that the king is doing better?" said the young man. "The people rejoice," and he burst a second time into his sneering laugh.

The old man made no reply.

"The whole day long the carriages have been rolling from Paris to Rueil, and from Rueil to Versailles. The Comtesse Dubarry will marry the king as soon as his health is re-established," and he burst into a louder laugh than before.

Still the old man made no reply.

"Pardon me if I laugh at Fate," continued the young man, with a gesture of nervous impatience, "but every good Frenchman, look you, loves his king, and my king is better to-day."

"Do not jest thus on such a subject, Monsieur," said the old man, gently. "The death of a man is always a misfortune for some one, and the death of a king is frequently a great misfortune for all."

"Even the death of Louis XV.?" interrupted the young man, in a tone of irony. "Oh, my dear master, a distin-

guished philosopher like you to sustain such a proposition! I know all the energy and skill of your paradoxes, but I cannot compliment you on this one."

The old man shook his head.

"And besides," added the new-comer, "why think of the king's death? Who speaks of such an event? The king has the small-pox; well, we all know that complaint. The king has beside him Bordeu and La Martinière, who are skilful men. Oh, I will wager a trifle, my dear master, that Louis the Well-Beloved will recover! Only this time the French people do not suffocate themselves in churches, putting up vows for him, as on the occasion of his former illness. Mark me, everything grows antiquated and is abandoned!"

"Silence!" said the old man, shuddering, — "silence! for I tell you, you are speaking of a man over whom the destroying angel hovers at this moment."

His young companion, surprised at this strange language, looked at the speaker, whose eyes were fixed on the façade of the chateau.

"Then you have more positive intelligence?" he asked.

"Look!" said the old man, pointing with his finger to one of the windows of the palace; "what do you behold yonder?"

"A window lighted up, — is that what you mean?"

"Yes; but lighted in what manner?"

"By a wax candle placed in a little lantern."

"Precisely."

"Well?"

"Well, young man, do you know what the flame of that wax-light represents?"

"No, Monsieur."

"It represents the life of the king."

The young man looked more fixedly at his aged companion, as if to be certain that he was in his senses.

"A friend of mine, Monsieur de Jussieu," continued the old man, "has placed that wax-light there, which will burn as long as the king is alive."

"It is a signal, then?"

"A signal which Louis XV.'s successor devours with his eyes from behind some neighboring curtain. This signal, which shall warn the ambitious of the dawn of a new reign, informs a poor philosopher like myself of the instant when the breath of the Almighty sweeps away, at the same moment, an age and a human existence."

The young man shuddered in his turn, and moved closer to his companion.

"Oh," said the aged philosopher, "mark well this night, young man! Behold what clouds and tempests it bears in its murky bosom! The morning which will succeed it I shall witness no doubt, for I am not yet old enough to abandon hope of seeing the morrow; but a reign is perhaps about to begin which you will witness even to the end, and which includes — like this night — mysterious events which I shall not see. It is not, therefore, without interest that I watch yonder trembling flame, whose signification I have just explained to you."

"True, my master," murmured the young man, "most true."

"Louis XIV. reigned seventy-three years," continued the old man. "How many will Louis XVI. reign?"

"Ah!" exclaimed the younger of the two, pointing to the window, which had just become shrouded in darkness.

"The king is dead!" said the old man, rising with a sort of terror; and both kept silence for some minutes.

Suddenly a chariot, drawn by eight fiery horses, started

at full gallop from the court-yard of the palace. Two outriders preceded it, each holding a torch in his hand. In the chariot were the dauphin, Marie Antoinette, and Madame Elizabeth, the sister of the king. The flame of the torches threw a gloomy light on their pale features. The carriage passed close to the two men, within ten paces of the bench from which they had risen.

"Long live King Louis XVI.! Long live the queen!" shouted the young man in a loud, harsh voice, as if he meant to insult this new-born Majesty instead of saluting it.

The dauphin bowed; the queen showed her face at the window, sad and severe. The carriage dashed on and disappeared.

"My dear Monsieur Rousseau," said the younger of the two spectators, "then Madame Dubarry is a widow."

"To-morrow she will be exiled," said his aged companion. "Adieu, Monsieur Marat!"

THE END.

THE QUEEN'S NECKLACE.

PROLOGUE.

On one of the early days in April, 1784, at about quarter past three in the afternoon, our old acquaintance Maréchal de Richelieu, having with his own hands colored his eyebrows with a perfumed dye, pushed away the mirror held before him by his valet, — the successor, but not the equal, of his faithful Rafté, — and shaking his head in the manner peculiar to himself, said: "Ah, that will do very well!"

He arose from his armchair, brushing from his blue-velvet small-clothes, with a movement of the finger almost juvenile, the atoms of white powder which had floated down from his wig. Then, after taking two or three turns up and down the room, stretching his instep, and straightening his knee, "My major-domo!" said he.

In five minutes the major-domo presented himself, in full dress.

The marshal assumed a grave air, befitting the occasion. "Monsieur," said he, "I suppose you have prepared me a good dinner;"

"Most certainly, Monseigneur."

"I have sent you the list of my guests, have I not?"

"And I have carefully noted their number, — a dinner for nine, is it not?"

"There are dinners and dinners, Monsieur."

"Yes, Monseigneur, but —"

The marshal interrupted him with a slightly impatient movement, though tempered with dignity. "'But' — that is not an answer, Monsieur. Every time I hear the word 'but,' and I have heard it many times in eighty-eight years, — well, Monsieur, every time I have heard that word, I am sorry to say, Monsieur, it has preceded some folly."

"Monseigneur!"

"In the first place, at what hour are we to dine?"

"Monseigneur, the common people dine at two, the bar at three, the nobility at four —"

"And I, Monsieur?"

"Monseigneur will dine to-day at five."

"Oh, oh, at five!"

"Yes, Monseigneur, like the king."

"And why like the king?"

"Because on the list Monseigneur has done me the honor to send me, is the name of a king."

"Not at all, Monsieur, you are mistaken; among my guests to-day are none but simple gentlemen."

"Monseigneur doubtless is inclined to jest with his humble servant, and I thank him for the honor he does me; but Monsieur le Comte de Haga, who is among the guests —"

"Well, Monsieur?"

"Well, the Comte de Haga is a king."

"I know no king of that name."

"Monseigneur must pardon me, then," said the major-domo, bowing; "but I had believed, I had supposed —"

"Your business is not to believe, Monsieur; your duty

is not to suppose. What you have to do is to read the orders which I give you, without adding to them any comments. When I wish a thing to be known I tell it; when I do not tell it I wish it unknown."

The major-domo bowed again, and this time more respectfully, perhaps, than he would have bowed in talking with a reigning monarch.

"Therefore, Monsieur," continued the old marshal, "since I have only gentlemen to dinner, you will let us dine at my usual hour, four o'clock."

At this order the major-domo's face darkened as if he had heard his death-warrant. He grew pale, and bent under the blow. Then arousing himself, with the courage of despair he said: "Let come what God wills; but Monseigneur will not dine till five o'clock."

"Why, and what does that mean?" said the marshal, straightening himself up.

"Because it is a material impossibility that Monseigneur should dine earlier."

"Monsieur," said the old marshal, shaking his head haughtily, like one still young and vigorous, "it is now, I believe, twenty years since you entered my service?"

"Twenty-one years, one month, and two weeks."

"Well, Monsieur, to these twenty-one years, one month, and two weeks, you will not add a day, — not an hour. You understand me, Monsieur," he continued, biting his thin lips and knitting his dyed eyebrows; "this evening you seek a new master. I will not have the word 'impossible' pronounced in my house. I have no wish, at my age, to begin an apprenticeship to that word. I have no time to waste."

The major-domo bowed a third time. "This evening," he said, "I shall take leave of Monseigneur. But at any rate, up to the last moment my service will be performed

as it ought to be;" and he made two steps toward the door.

"What do you mean by 'as it ought to be'?" cried the marshal. "Understand, Monsieur, that things must be done here according to my will; that is the only 'ought.' Now, it is my will to dine at four, and it is against my will that you make me wait till five."

"Monseigneur," replied the major-domo, gravely, "I have served as butler to his Highness the Prince de Soubise, and as steward to his Eminence the Cardinal de Rohan. With the former his Majesty the late king of France dined once a year; with the latter his Majesty the emperor of Austria dined once a month. I know, therefore, how sovereigns should be treated, Monseigneur. King Louis XV., when he visited the Prince de Soubise, vainly called himself the Baron de Gonesse; he was always a king. In the house of Monsieur de Rohan the Emperor Joseph was vainly called the Comte de Packenstein; he was always the emperor. To-day, Monsieur le Maréchal receives a guest who vainly calls himself the Comte de Haga. The Comte de Haga is none the less the king of Sweden. I will leave the hôtel of Monsieur le Maréchal this evening; but meantime Monsieur le Comte de Haga will have been treated like a king."

"But that is the very thing that I kill myself with trying to prevent, you obstinate fellow. The Comte de Haga wishes to keep himself strictly, absolutely, unknown. *Pardieu!* I understand your absurd vanities, gentlemen of the napkin. It is not that you would honor the crown; you would magnify yourselves with our crowns."

"I do not imagine," said the major-domo, gloomily, "that Monseigneur speaks to me seriously of money."

"Eh, no, Monsieur!" said the marshal, almost ashamed. "No! Money! — who the devil said anything to you

about money? Don't evade the question, if you please. I repeat, I want nothing said about the presence here of a king."

"Why, Monsieur le Maréchal, for whom do you take me? Do you think I am blind? Why, there will not be the slightest mention of a king."

"Then do not be obstinate; let us dine at four."

"But at four o'clock, Monseigneur, what I am expecting will not have arrived."

"What are you expecting?—a fish, like Monsieur Vatel?"

"Monsieur Vatel, Monsieur Vatel," murmured the major-domo.

"Well, are you shocked by the comparison?"

"No; but for a miserable sword-thrust which Monsieur Vatel gave himself through the body, Monsieur Vatel is immortalized."

"Ah, ah, and you think, Monsieur, that your brother artist obtained glory at too cheap a price?"

"No, Monseigneur; but how many others in our profession suffer more than he did, devouring griefs and humiliations a hundred times worse than a sword-thrust, who nevertheless are not immortalized!"

"Eh, Monsieur! do you not know that to be immortalized one must be a member of the Academy or must be dead?"

"Monseigneur, if that is so it is much better for one to be alive, and do his duty. I will not die, and my service will be performed as that of Monsieur Vatel would have been if Monsieur le Prince de Condé had had the patience to wait half an hour."

"Oh, now you are promising me wonders; it is adroit."

"No, Monseigneur; nothing wonderful."

"But what, then, are you expecting?"

"Monseigneur wishes me to tell him?"

"Faith, yes; I am curious."

"Then, Monseigneur, I am expecting a bottle of wine."

"A bottle of wine! explain yourself, Monsieur; the thing begins to interest me."

"Listen then, Monseigneur; his Majesty the king of Sweden — I beg pardon, the Comte de Haga I should have said — drinks nothing but Tokay."

"Well, am I so poor as to have no Tokay in my cellar? If so, I must dismiss my butler."

"Not so, Monseigneur; on the contrary, you have about sixty bottles."

"Well, do you think the Comte de Haga will drink sixty-one bottles with his dinner?"

"Patience, Monseigneur; when the Comte de Haga first visited France, while he was only Prince Royal, he dined with the late king, who had received twelve bottles of Tokay from the emperor of Austria. You are aware that the Tokay of the finest vintages is reserved exclusively for the cellar of the emperor, and that kings themselves can drink it only when he pleases to send it to them."

"I know it."

"Well, Monseigneur, of these twelve bottles, from one of which the Prince Royal drank with much satisfaction, only two remain."

"Oh! oh!"

"One is still in the cellar of his Majesty Louis XVI."

"And the other?"

"Ah, Monseigneur," said the major-domo, with a triumphant smile, — for he felt that, after the long battle he had been fighting, the moment of victory was at hand, — "the other was stolen."

"By whom?"

"By one of my friends, the late king's butler, who was under great obligations to me."

"Oh, and so he gave it to you?"

"Certainly, Monseigneur," said the major-domo, with pride.

"And what did you do with it?"

"I placed it carefully in my master's cellar, Monseigneur."

"Your master; and who was your master at that time Monsieur?"

"His Eminence the Cardinal de Rohan."

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* at Strasburg?"

"At Saverne."

"And you have sent to seek this bottle for me!" cried the old marshal.

"For you, Monseigneur," replied the major-domo, in a tone which plainly said, "ungrateful as you are."

The Duc de Richelieu seized the hand of the old servant and cried, "I beg your pardon, Monsieur; you are the king of major-domos."

"And you would have dismissed me!" he replied, with an indescribable shrug of his shoulders.

"Oh, I will pay you one hundred pistoles for that bottle of wine!"

"And the expense of bringing it here will be another hundred, that will make two hundred pistoles; but Monseigneur will admit that it is a trifle."

"I will admit anything you please, Monsieur; and meantime, from to-day I double your salary."

"But, Monseigneur, there is no occasion for that; I have but done my duty."

"And when will your hundred-pistole courier arrive?"

"Monseigneur may judge if I have lost time; on what day did I have my orders for the dinner?"

"Why, three days ago, I believe."

"It takes a courier, at his utmost speed, twenty-four hours to go, and the same to return."

"There still remained to you twenty-four hours. Prince of major-domos, what have you done with those twenty-four hours?"

"Alas, Monseigneur, I lost them! The idea came to me only the day after I received the list of your guests. Now calculate the time necessary for the negotiation, and you will perceive that in asking you to wait till five, I am asking only for the time that is absolutely necessary."

"What! the bottle is not yet here?"

"No, Monseigneur."

"Ah, Monsieur, if your colleague at Saverne is as devoted to the Prince de Rohan as you are to me, and refuses the bottle, as you would do in his place —"

"I, Monseigneur?"

"Yes; you would not, I suppose, give away such a bottle if it were in my cellar?"

"I humbly beg Monseigneur's pardon; but should a friend, having a king to provide for, ask me for your best bottle of wine, I would give it to him immediately."

"Oh!" said the marshal, with a grimace.

"It is only through helping others that we can expect help in our own need, Monseigneur."

"Then I may feel somewhat reassured," said the marshal, with a sigh; "but there is still another risk, — if the bottle should be broken?"

"Oh, Monseigneur, no man ever broke a bottle of wine worth two thousand francs!"

"I was wrong; let us say no more about it. At what time, then, do you expect your courier?"

"At four o'clock, precisely."

"Then why not dine at four?" replied the marshal, with the obstinacy of a Castilian mule.

"Monseigneur, the wine must rest for an hour; and but for an invention of my own, it would need three days."

Beaten at all points, the marshal saluted his major-domo in token of surrender.

"Besides," continued the old servant, "Monseigneur's guests, knowing that they will have the honor of dining with the Comte de Haga, will not arrive until half-past four."

"Here is still another reason!"

"Certainly, Monseigneur; the guests are the Comte de Launay, the Comtesse Dubarry, Monsieur de Lapeyrouse, Monsieur de Favras, Monsieur de Condorcet, Monsieur de Cagliostro, and Monsieur de Taverney."

"Very well?"

"Well, Monseigneur, let us take them in their order. Monsieur de Launay comes from the Bastille, and with the ice at present covering the roads he will be three hours coming from Paris."

"Yes; but he will leave immediately after the prisoners' dinner, at twelve o'clock."

"Pardon, Monseigneur, but the dinner hour at the Bastille has been changed since Monseigneur was there; it is now one."

"Monsieur, one learns something every day, and I thank you! Go on."

"Madame Dubarry comes from Luciennes, one continued descent, and in this frost —"

"That would not prevent her being punctual. Since she is now only a duke's favorite, she plays the queen only among barons. But let me tell you, Monsieur, that I desired to have dinner early on account of Monsieur de Lapeyrouse, who sets off to-night, and will not wish to be late."

"Monseigneur, Monsieur de Lapeyrouse is with the

king, discussing geography and cosmography; he will not get away too early."

"It is possible."

"It is certain, Monseigneur; and it will be the same with Monsieur de Favras, who is with the Comte de Provence, talking, no doubt, of the new play, by Monsieur Caron de Beaumarchais."

"You mean the 'Mariage de Figaro'?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Why, you are quite literary also, it seems, Monsieur."

"In my leisure moments I read, Monseigneur."

"We have, however, Monsieur de Condorcet, who, being a geometrician, should at least be punctual."

"Yes; but he will be deep in some calculation, from which when he rouses himself, he will find that he is half an hour too late. As for the Comte de Cagliostro, as he is a stranger, and not well acquainted with the customs of Versailles, he will, in all probability, make us wait for him."

"Well," said the marshal, "you have disposed of all my guests, except Monsieur de Taverney, in a manner worthy of Homer, or of my poor Rafté."

The major-domo bowed. "I have not," said he, "named Monsieur de Taverney; because being an old friend, he will probably be punctual. I believe, Monseigneur, these eight are all the guests, are they not?"

"Precisely. Where will you have us dine, Monsieur?"

"In the great dining-room, Monseigneur."

"But we shall freeze there."

"It has been warmed for three days, Monseigneur; and I believe you will find it perfectly comfortable."

"Very well, but there is a clock striking. Why, it is half-past four!" cried the marshal.

"Yes, Monseigneur, and there is the courier entering the court-yard, with my bottle of Tokay."

"May I continue for another twenty years to be served in this manner," said the marshal, turning again to his looking-glass, while the major-domo ran downstairs.

"Twenty years!" said a laughing voice, interrupting the marshal in his survey of himself, — "twenty years, my dear Duke! I hope you may have them; but then I shall be sixty, — I shall be very old."

"You, Countess!" cried the marshal. "You are the first, and *mon Dieu!* you look as young and charming as ever."

"Duke, I am frozen."

"Come into the boudoir, then."

"Oh, *tête-à-tête*, Marshal?"

"Not so," replied a somewhat broken voice.

"Ah, Taverney," said the marshal; and then whispering to the countess, "Plague take him for disturbing us."

Madame Dubarry laughed, and they all entered the adjoining room.

At the same moment the noise of carriages in the street warned the marshal that his guests were arriving; and soon after, thanks to the punctuality of his major-domo, nine persons were seated round the oval table in the dining-room. Nine lackeys, silent as shadows, quick without bustle, and attentive without importunity, glided over the carpet, and moved among the guests, without ever touching their chairs, placed in the midst of furs, which covered to their knees the legs of those who occupied them. These furs, with the heat from the stoves, and the odors from the wine and the dinner, diffused a degree of comfort which manifested itself in the gayety of the guests, who had just finished their soup.

No sound was heard from without and none within, save that made by the guests themselves; for the plates were

changed, and the silver-ware was brought to the table without the slightest noise. Nor from the major-domo could a whisper be heard; he seemed to give his orders with his eyes. The guests, therefore, began to feel as though they were alone. It seemed to them that servants so silent must also be deaf.

Monsieur de Richelieu broke the silence by saying to the guest on his right hand, "Monsieur le Comte, you do not drink."

This was addressed to a man about thirty-eight years of age, short, fair-haired, and with high shoulders; his eye, a clear blue, was sometimes bright, but oftener melancholy. Nobility was stamped unmistakably on his open and manly forehead.

"I drink only water, Marshal," he replied.

"Excepting with Louis XV.," returned the marshal; "I had the honor of dining at his table with you, and you deigned that day to drink wine."

"Ah, you recall a pleasing remembrance, Marshal. That was in 1771; it was Tokay, from the imperial cellar."

"It was like that with which my major-domo will now have the honor to fill your glass, Monsieur le Comte," replied Richelieu, bowing.

The Comte de Haga raised his glass, and looked through it. The wine sparkled in the light like liquid rubies. "It is true, Monsieur le Maréchal," said he; "I thank you."

These words were uttered in a manner so noble that the guests, as if by a common impulse, rose, and cried, "Long live his Majesty!"

"Yes," said the Comte de Haga, "long live his Majesty the king of France. What say you, Monsieur de Lapeyrouse?"

"Monsieur le Comte," replied the captain, with the

tone, at once flattering and respectful, common to those accustomed to address crowned heads, "I have just left the king, and his Majesty has shown me so much kindness that no one will more willingly cry, 'Long live the king,' than I. But as in one hour I shall be travelling post to the seashore, to join the two ships which the king has placed at my disposal, I will ask your permission, as soon as I have left this house, to cry, 'Long life to another king,' whom I should be proud to serve, had I not already so good a master;" and raising his glass, Monsieur de Lapeyrouse bowed humbly to the Comte de Haga.

"This health that you propose," said Madame Dubarry, who sat at the marshal's left hand, "we are all ready to drink; but the oldest of us should take the lead as in parliament."

"Is it to you that this remark applies or to me, Taverney?" said the marshal, laughing.

"I do not believe —" said a new speaker, sitting opposite the marshal.

"What is it that you do not believe, Monsieur de Cagliostro?" asked the Comte de Haga, fixing his piercing look on the speaker.

"I do not believe, Monsieur le Comte," said Cagliostro, bowing, "that Monsieur de Richelieu is the senior of our party."

"Oh, that is good," said the marshal; "apparently it is you, Taverney."

"Come, now; I am eight years younger than you. I was born in 1704," returned the old nobleman.

"How rude," said the marshal, "to expose my eighty-eight years!"

"Really! Monsieur le Duc; you are eighty-eight years old?" said Monsieur de Condorcet.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* yes. It is a calculation easy to make,

and therefore unworthy of an algebraist like you, Marquis. I am of the last century, — the great century, as we call it. My date is 1696."

"Impossible!" cried De Launay.

"Oh, if your father were here, he would not say impossible, — he who when governor of the Bastille had me for a lodger in 1714."

"The senior in age, here, however," said Monsieur de Favras, "is the wine which the Comte de Haga is at this moment pouring into his glass."

"You are right, Monsieur de Favras; this wine is a hundred and twenty years old. To the wine then belongs the honor of proposing the health of the king."

"One moment, gentlemen," said Cagliostro, raising his eyes, beaming with intelligence and vivacity; "I claim the precedence."

"You claim precedence over the Tokay!" exclaimed all the guests in chorus.

"Assuredly," returned Cagliostro, calmly; "since it was I who bottled it."

"You?"

"Yes, I; on the day of the victory won by Montecuculli over the Turks in 1664."

A burst of laughter followed these words, which Cagliostro had pronounced with quiet gravity.

"By this calculation, you would be something like one hundred and thirty years old," said Madame Dubarry; "for you must have been at least ten years old when you bottled the wine."

"I was more than ten when I performed that operation, Madame; as on the following day I had the honor of being deputed by his Majesty the emperor of Austria to congratulate Montecuculli, who by the victory of Saint Gothard had avenged the day at Especk in Sclavonia, — a day on

which the infidels treated the imperialists so roughly, who were my friends and companions in arms in 1536."

"Oh," said the Comte de Haga, as coldly as Cagliostro himself, "you must have been at least ten years old when you were at that memorable battle."

"A terrible defeat, Monsieur le Comte," returned Cagliostro, bowing.

"Less terrible than Cressy, however," said Condorcet, smiling.

"True, Monsieur, for at the battle of Cressy, it was not only an army, but all France, that was beaten. But then this defeat was scarcely a fair victory to the English; for King Edward had cannon, a circumstance of which Philippe de Valois was ignorant, or rather which he would not believe, although I warned him that I had with my own eyes seen four pieces of artillery, which Edward had bought from the Venetians."

"Ah," said Madame Dubarry, "you knew Philippe de Valois?"

"Madame, I had the honor to be one of the five noblemen who escorted him off the field of battle," replied Cagliostro; "I came to France with the poor old king of Bohemia, who was blind, and who threw away his life when he heard that the battle was lost."

"Ah, Monsieur," said Monsieur de Lapeyrouse, "how much I regret that instead of the battle of Cressy, it was not that of Actium at which you assisted."

"Why so, Monsieur?"

"Oh, because you might have given me some nautical details, which, in spite of Plutarch's fine narration, have ever been obscure to me."

"Which, Monsieur? I should be happy to be of service to you."

"You were there, then?"

"No, Monsieur; I was then in Egypt. I had been employed by Queen Cleopatra to restore the library at Alexandria, — an office for which I was better qualified than any one else, from having personally known the best authors of antiquity."

"And you have seen Queen Cleopatra, Monsieur de Cagliostro?" said Madame Dubarry.

"As I now see you, Madame."

"Was she as pretty as they say?"

"Madame, you know beauty is only comparative; a charming queen in Egypt, in Paris she would have been only a pretty grisette."

"Say no harm of grisettes, Monsieur le Comte."

"God forbid!"

"Then Cleopatra was —"

"Little, slender, lively, and intelligent; with large almond-shaped eyes, a Grecian nose, teeth like pearls, and a hand like your own, Madame, — a fit hand to hold a sceptre. See, here is a diamond which she gave me, and which she had from her brother Ptolemy; she wore it on her thumb."

"On her thumb?" cried Madame Dubarry.

"Yes. It was an Egyptian fashion, and I, you see, can hardly put it on my little finger;" and taking off the ring, he handed it to Madame Dubarry.

It was a magnificent diamond of such fine water, and so beautifully cut, as to be worth thirty thousand or forty thousand francs.

The diamond was passed round the table and returned to Cagliostro, who, putting it quietly on his finger again, said, "Ah, I see well you are all incredulous; this fatal incredulity I have had to contend against all my life. Philippe de Valois would not listen to me when I told him to leave open a retreat to Edward; Cleopatra would

not believe me when I warned her that Antony would be beaten; the Trojans would not credit me when I said to them, with reference to the wooden horse, 'Cassandra is inspired; listen to Cassandra.'"

"Oh, but this is marvellous!" said Madame Dubarry, shaking with laughter; "I have never met a man at once so serious and so diverting."

"I assure you," replied Cagliostro, bowing, "that Jonathan was much more so. Oh, he was a charming companion; until he was killed by Saul he nearly drove me crazy with laughing."

"Do you know, Count," said the Duc de Richelieu, "if you go on in this way you will drive poor Taverney crazy; he is so afraid of death that he is staring at you with all his eyes, thinking you to be immortal. Come, frankly, are you immortal, — yes, or no?"

"Immortal?"

"Immortal."

"I cannot say, but one thing I can affirm —"

"What?" cried Taverney, who was the most eager listener.

"That I have seen all the people and events of which I have been speaking to you."

"You have known Montecuculli?"

"As well as I know you, Monsieur de Favras; and, indeed, much better; for this is but the second or third time I have had the honor of seeing you, while I lived nearly a year under the same tent with the skilful strategist of whom you speak."

"You knew Philippe de Valois?"

"As I have already had the honor of telling you, Monsieur de Condorcet; but when he returned to Paris, I left France and returned to Bohemia."

"And Cleopatra?"

"Yes, Madame la Comtesse; Cleopatra, I can tell you, had eyes as black as yours, and shoulders almost as beautiful."

"But what do you know of my shoulders?"

"They are like what Cassandra's once were; and there is still a further resemblance, — she had like you, or rather you have like her, a little black spot on your left side, just above the sixth rib."

"Oh, Count, now you really are a sorcerer."

"No, no," cried the marshal, laughing; "it was I who told him."

"And pray how do you know?"

The marshal bit his lips, and replied, "Oh, it is a family secret."

"Well, really, Marshal," said the countess, "one should put on a double coat of rouge before visiting you;" and turning again to Cagliostro, "then, Monsieur, you have the art of renewing your youth; for although you say you are three or four thousand years old you scarcely look forty."

"Yes, Madame, I do possess that secret."

"Oh, then, Monsieur, impart it to me."

"To you, Madame? It is useless, — your youth is already renewed; your age is only what it appears to be, and you do not look thirty."

"Ah! you flatter."

"No, Madame, I speak only the truth, but it is easily explained; you have already tried my receipt."

"How so?"

"You have taken my elixir."

"I?"

"You, Countess. Oh, you cannot have forgotten it. Do you not remember a certain house in the Rue Saint Claude, and coming there on some business respecting Monsieur de

Sartines? You remember rendering a service to one of my friends, called Joseph Balsamo; and that this Joseph Balsamo gave you a bottle of elixir, recommending you to take three drops every morning? Do you not remember having done this regularly until the last year, when the bottle became exhausted? If you do not remember all this, Countess, it is more than forgetfulness, — it is ingratitude."

"Oh! Monsieur de Cagliostro, you are telling me things — "

"Which were only known to yourself, I am aware; but what would be the use of being a sorcerer if one did not know one's neighbor's secrets?"

"Then, Joseph Balsamo has, like you, the secret of this famous elixir?"

"No, Madame; but he was one of my best friends, and I gave him three or four bottles."

"And has he any left?"

"Oh, I know nothing of that; for the last two or three years, poor Balsamo has disappeared. I saw him for the last time in America, on the banks of the Ohio; he was setting off on an expedition to the Rocky Mountains, and since then I have heard that he is dead."

"Come, come, Count," said the marshal, "a truce to compliments, for pity's sake! The secret, Count, the secret!"

"Are you speaking seriously, Monsieur?" asked the Comte de Haga.

"Very seriously, Sire, — I beg pardon; I mean Monsieur le Comte," and Cagliostro bowed in such a way as to indicate that his error was a voluntary one.

"Then," said the marshal, "Madame Dubarry is not old enough to be made young again?"

"No, on my conscience."

"Well, then, I will give you another subject. Here is my friend Taverney, — what do you say to him? Does he not look like a contemporary of Pontius Pilate? But perhaps he, on the contrary, is too old."

Cagliostro looked at the baron. "No," said he.

"Ah, my dear Count," exclaimed Richelieu; "if you will renew his youth, I will proclaim you a pupil of Medea."

"You wish it?" asked Cagliostro, of the host, and looking round at the same time on all assembled.

All present signified their assent.

"And you also, Monsieur de Taverney?"

"I more than any one, *morbleu!*" said the baron.

"Well, it is easy," said Cagliostro; and he drew from his pocket a small bottle, and poured into a glass a few drops of the liquid it contained. Then mixing these drops with half a glass of iced-champagne, he passed it to the baron. All eyes followed his movements eagerly.

The baron took the glass, but as he was about to drink he hesitated. Every one, on observing his hesitation, began to laugh, — so noisily that Cagliostro became impatient, and said, "Make haste, Baron, or you will waste a cordial of which each drop is worth a hundred louis d'or."

"The devil!" cried Richelieu, trying to jest; "that is even better than Tokay."

"I must, then, drink?" said the baron, almost trembling.

"Or pass the glass to another, Monsieur, that some one at least may profit by the elixir."

"Pass it to me," said Richelieu, holding out his hand.

The baron raised the glass, and decided doubtless by the delicious smell and the beautiful rose color which those few drops had given to the champagne, he swallowed the magic cordial. In an instant a kind of shiver ran through him; he seemed to feel all the old and sluggish blood

stagnant in his veins flowing toward the surface of his body; his wrinkled skin became smooth; his eyes, half-covered by their lids, opened without his will; the pupils became larger and brighter; the trembling of his hands was arrested; his voice strengthened; and his limbs recovered their former youthful elasticity. In fact it seemed as if the liquid in its descent had regenerated his whole body.

A cry of surprise, stupefaction, and admiration rang through the room. Taverney, who had been slowly chewing with his gums, began to feel famished; he seized a plate, knife, and fork, and helped himself largely to a ragoût, and then demolished a partridge, bones and all, calling out that his teeth were coming back to him. He ate, laughed, and cried for joy for about half an hour, while the others remained gazing at him in stupefied wonder; then little by little he failed again, like a lamp whose oil is burning out. First, his forehead, from which the wrinkles had disappeared, became wrinkled anew; his eyes were veiled and darkened; he lost his sense of taste; his back was bent again; his appetite departed; his knees began again to tremble.

"Oh!" he groaned, "once more, adieu to my youth!" and he gave utterance to a deep sigh, while two tears rolled over his cheeks.

Instinctively, at this mournful spectacle of the old man first made young again, and then, by contrast, seeming to become yet older than before, the sigh breathed by the old man was echoed around the table.

"It is easy to explain, gentlemen," said Cagliostro; "I gave the baron but thirty-five drops of the elixir, and he became young for only thirty-five minutes."

"Oh, more, more, Count!" cried the old man, eagerly.

"No, Monsieur; for perhaps the second trial would kill you."

Of all the guests, Madame Dubarry, who had already tested the virtue of the elixir, seemed most deeply interested while old Taverney's youth seemed thus to renew itself. As by degrees youth and life flowed through the arteries of the old man, the eyes of the countess eagerly followed the changes in his appearance. She laughed and applauded, and appeared regenerated simply by watching him.

When the success of the elixir was at its height the countess was about to seize the hand of Cagliostro, for the purpose of snatching from him the precious bottle. But at the moment when Taverney became old again, so much more suddenly than he had become young, "Alas! I see plainly," said she, sorrowfully, "all is vanity and deception; the effect of this marvellous secret lasts thirty-five minutes."

"That is to say," said the Comte de Haga, "in order to resume your youth for two years, you would have to drink a river."

Every one laughed.

"No," said Condorcet, "the calculation is simple; as thirty-five drops last thirty-five minutes, it would require only a mere nothing of three million one hundred and fifty-three thousand drops for one year's youth."

"An inundation," said Lapeyrouse.

"However, Monsieur," continued Madame Dubarry, "according to you, I have not needed so much; as a small bottle of about four times the size of that you hold, given me by your friend Joseph Balsamo, has been sufficient to arrest the march of time for ten years."

"Precisely, Madame, and you alone approach this mysterious truth. The man who has already grown old

needs this large quantity to produce an immediate and powerful effect; but a woman of thirty years, like you, Madame, or a man of forty years, — which was my age when I began to drink this elixir, — still full of life and youth, needs but ten drops at each period of decay; and with these ten drops may eternally continue life and youth at the same point of attractiveness and force."

"What do you call the periods of decay?" asked the Comte de Haga.

"The natural periods, Monsieur le Comte. In a state of nature man's strength increases until he is thirty-five years of age. It then remains stationary until forty; and from that time forward it begins to diminish, but almost imperceptibly until fifty; then the process becomes quicker and quicker to the day of his death. In our state of civilization, when the body is weakened by excess, cares, and maladies, increase of strength is arrested at thirty years; the failure begins at thirty-five. The time, then, to take Nature is when she is stationary, so as to combat the tendency to decay at the very moment when it begins to operate. He, who, possessing as I do the secret of this elixir, knows how to seize the happy moment, will live as I live, — always young, or at least always young enough for what he has to do in the world."

"Oh, Monsieur Cagliostro!" cried the countess, "why, if you could choose your own age, did you not stop at twenty years instead of at forty?"

"Because, Madame," said Cagliostro, smiling, "it suits me better to be a man forty years old, healthy and vigorous, than a raw youth of twenty."

"Oh!" said the countess.

"Doubtless, Madame," continued Cagliostro, "at twenty years of age one pleases women of thirty years; at

forty years we govern women of twenty and men of sixty."

"I yield, Monsieur," said the countess, "for you are a living proof of the truth of your own words."

"Then I," said Taverney, piteously, "am condemned; it is too late for me!"

"Monsieur de Richelieu has been more skilful than you," said Lapeyrouse, naïvely, with the frankness of a sailor; "and I have always heard that he had a certain receipt —"

"It is a report that the women have spread," laughed the Comte de Haga.

"Is that a reason for disbelieving it, Count?" asked Madame Dubarry.

The old marshal colored, — a rare thing for him, — but replied, "Do you wish, gentlemen, to have my receipt?"

"Oh, by all means!"

"Well, then, it is simply to take care of yourself."

"Oh, oh!" cried all.

"I would contest the receipt," continued the countess, "if I had not seen the effect of that of Monsieur de Cagliostro. So be on your guard, Monsieur the Sorcerer; I am not yet through with my questions."

"Well, Madame."

"You said that when you used your elixir of life for the first time, you were forty years old?"

"Yes, Madame."

"And that since that time, — that is, since the siege of Troy —"

"A little before, Madame."

"You have always remained forty years old?"

"You see me now."

"But, then, Monsieur," said Condorcet, "you prove to us more than your theorem requires."

"What do I prove to you, Monsieur le Marquis?"

"You prove, not only the perpetuation of youth, but the preservation of life; for if since the siege of Troy you have been always forty years old, you have never died."

"True, Marquis; I humbly admit it. I have never died."

"Yet you are not invulnerable, like Achilles; and even Achilles was not invulnerable, for Paris killed him by wounding his heel with an arrow."

"No, I am not invulnerable, and that is my great regret," said Cagliostro.

"Then, Monsieur, you may be killed; you may die a violent death?"

"Alas! yes."

"How, then, have you escaped all accidents for three thousand five hundred years?"

"It is chance, Monsieur le Comte; but will you follow my reasoning?"

"Yes, yes!" cried all, with eagerness; and with these expressions of unusual interest, every one leaned on the table and prepared to listen.

Cagliostro continued: "What is the first requisite to life?" he asked, spreading out his white and beautiful hands, covered with rings, among which Cleopatra's shone conspicuously. "Is it not health?"

"Certainly."

"And the way to preserve health is —"

"Proper diet," said the Comte de Haga.

"You are right, Monsieur le Comte. It is proper diet that produces good health. Well, then, why should not these drops of my elixir constitute the best possible diet?"

"Who knows that?"

"You, Count."

"Yes, without doubt; but —"

"But no others," said Madame Dubarry.

"That, Madame, is a question which we will not discuss now. Well, then, I have always followed the regimen of my drops; and since they fulfil the dream of men of all times, since they are that which the ancients searched for under the name of the 'Water of Youth,' and which the moderns have sought to discover under the name of the 'Elixir of Life,' I have constantly preserved my youth, and consequently my health, and consequently my life. That is clear enough."

"But all things get worn out, Count, — the most excellent body as well as everything else."

"That of Paris, like that of Vulcan," said the countess. "You knew Paris, doubtless, Monsieur de Cagliostro?"

"Perfectly, Madame; he was a fine young man, but really did not deserve all that Homer said of him, and that women think of him. In the first place, he had red hair."

"Red hair? Horrible!"

"Unluckily, Madame, Helen was not of your opinion. But let us return to our elixir."

"Yes, yes!" all exclaimed.

"You say, Monsieur de Taverney, that all things get worn out; but you also know that everything recovers again, is regenerated, or replaced, whichever you please to call it. The famous knife of Saint Hubert, which so often changed both blade and handle, is an example; for through every change it still remained the knife of Saint Hubert. The wine which the monks of Heidelberg preserve so carefully in their cellars still remains the same wine, although each year they pour into it a fresh supply. Therefore, this wine always remains clear, bright, and delicious;

while the wine which Opimus and I hid in the earthen jars was, when I tried it a hundred years after, only a thick mud, which might, indeed, have been eaten, but certainly could not have been drunk. Well, I follow the example of the monks of Heidelberg, and preserve my body by introducing into it every year new elements, which regenerate the old. Every morning a new and fresh atom replaces in my blood, my flesh, and my bones, a worn-out, inert molecule. I stay that ruin which most men allow insensibly to invade their whole being, and I force into action all those powers which God has given to the human constitution as a defence against destruction, — powers which commonly are misdirected, or abandoned to the paralysis of inactivity; those powers I have compelled to continuous labor, which has facilitated, has caused even, the introduction of a stimulant always new. In consequence of that assiduous study of life, my thought, my movements, my nerves, my heart, my soul, have never failed in their operation; and as all things are bound together in this world, — as those succeed best in anything who are always doing that thing, — I have naturally become more skilful than any one else by avoiding the dangers of an existence of three thousand years; and that because I have succeeded in acquiring from everything such an experience that I foresee misfortunes, — I feel the dangers of any situation, be it what it may. Thus, you would not get me to enter a house which is in danger of falling. Oh, no! I have seen too many houses not to tell at a glance the safe from the unsafe. You would not see me go out hunting with a man who managed his gun badly. From Cephalus, who killed his wife Procris, down to the regent who shot the prince in the eye, I have seen too many unskilful people. You could not make me accept, in battle, the post which many a man would take

without thinking, because I should have calculated in a moment all the chances of danger at that point. You will tell me that one cannot foresee a stray bullet; but the man who has escaped a million gunshots is inexcusable if he allows himself to be killed by a stray bullet. Ah, you look incredulous! but am I not a living proof? I do not tell you that I am immortal, only that I know better than others how to avoid danger. For instance, I would not remain here now alone with Monsieur de Launay, who is thinking that if he had me in the Bastille he would put my immortality to the test of starvation. Neither would I remain with Monsieur de Condorcet; for he is thinking that he might just empty into my glass the contents of that ring which he wears on his left hand, and which is full of poison, — not with any evil intent, but only as a scientific experiment, to see if I should die."

The two people named made a movement.

"Confess, Monsieur de Launay! We are not in a court of justice; besides, thoughts are not punished. Did you not think what I said? And you, Monsieur de Condorcet, would you not have liked to let me taste the poison in your ring, in the name of your beloved mistress, science?"

"Indeed," said Monsieur de Launay, laughing and blushing, "I confess you are right; it was folly, but that folly did pass through my mind at the very moment when you accused me."

"And I," said Monsieur de Condorcet, "will not be less candid; I did think that if you tasted the contents of my ring, I would not give a farthing for your immortality."

A cry of admiration burst from the rest of the party; these avowals confirming not the immortality, but the penetration of the Comte de Cagliostro.

"You see," said Cagliostro, quietly, "that I divined

these dangers; well, it is the same with other things. The experience of a long life reveals to me, at a glance, the past and the future of those whom I meet. My infallibility on this point is such that it extends even to animals and inanimate objects. If I get into a carriage, I can tell from the look of the horses that they are likely to run away; and from that of the coachman that he will overturn me. If I go on board ship, I can see that the captain is ignorant or obstinate, and consequently cannot, or will not, navigate his vessel skilfully. Thereupon I avoid the coachman and the captain, and leave those horses or that ship. I do not deny chance, I only lessen it, and instead of incurring a hundred chances, like the rest of the world, I prevent ninety-nine of them, and endeavor to guard against the hundredth. This is the advantage of having lived three thousand years."

"Then," said Lapeyrouse, laughing, amid the wonder and enthusiasm created by Cagliostro's words, "my dear prophet, you should come with me when I embark to make the tour of the world; you would render me a signal service."

Cagliostro did not reply.

"Monsieur de Richelieu," continued Lapeyrouse, "since the Comte de Cagliostro, — and I understand that, — does not wish to leave so good company, you must permit me to go without him. Excuse me, Comte de Haga, and you, Madame, but it is seven o'clock, and I have promised his Majesty to start at a quarter past. But since Comte de Cagliostro will not be tempted to come with me and see my ships, perhaps he can tell me what will happen to me between Versailles and Brest. From Brest to the Pole, I ask nothing, — that is my own business. But, *pardieu!* he ought to give me an opinion on what may happen on the way to Brest."

Cagliostro looked at Lapeyrouse with such a melancholy air, so full both of pity and kindness, that the others were struck by it. The navigator himself, however, did not remark it. He took leave of the company; his valet threw over his shoulders a large fur riding-coat, and Madame Dubarry slipped into his pocket some of those exquisite cordials which are so pleasing to the traveller, but which he rarely thinks of providing for himself, and which recall to him his absent friends during the long nights of a journey under wintry skies.

Lapeyrouse, still full of gayety, bowed respectfully to the Comte de Haga, and held out his hand to the old marshal.

"Adieu, dear Lapeyrouse," said the latter.

"No, Monsieur le Duc, au revoir," replied Lapeyrouse. "One would think I was departing for eternity; now I have but to circumnavigate the globe, — five or six years' absence only; it is scarcely worth while to say 'adieu' for that."

"Five or six years," said the marshal; "you might almost as well say five or six centuries; days are years at my age, — therefore I say adieu."

"Bah! ask the sorcerer," returned Lapeyrouse, still laughing, "he will promise you twenty years more life. Will you not, Monsieur de Cagliostro? Oh, Count, why did I not hear sooner of those precious drops of yours? Whatever the price, I should have shipped a tun of them on the 'Astrolabe.' Madame, another kiss of that beautiful hand; I shall certainly not see such another till I return; au revoir," and he left the room.

Cagliostro still preserved the same mournful silence. They heard the steps of the captain as he left the house, his gay voice in the court-yard, and his farewells to the persons assembled there to see him depart. Then the

horses shook their heads covered with bells, the door of the carriage shut with some noise, and the wheels were heard rolling along the street.

Lapeyrouse had started on that voyage from which he was destined never to return.

When the last sound had died away all eyes were directed, as if controlled by a superior power, toward Cagliostro. At that moment there was a pythonic illumination in his face which startled all the company. A strange silence lasted some moments. The Comte de Haga was the first to speak. "And why," said he, "did you not reply to him, Monsieur?"

Cagliostro started, as if the question had roused him from a revery. "Because," said he, "I must either have told a falsehood or a sad truth."

"How so?"

"I must have said to him, Monsieur de Lapeyrouse, the duke is right in saying to you 'adieu' and not 'au revoir.'"

"Eh! but," said Richelieu, turning pale, "what the devil, Monsieur Cagliostro, are you saying, then, about Lapeyrouse?"

"Oh, reassure yourself, Monsieur le Maréchal," replied Cagliostro, quickly, "it is not as regards you that the prediction is ominous."

"What!" cried Madame Dubarry, "is poor Lapeyrouse, who has just kissed my hand —"

"Not only, Madame, will never kiss it again, but he will never again see those he has just left," said Cagliostro, looking attentively at his glass full of water, which, from the position in which it was placed, exhibited a luminous surface of an opal tint, crossed by the shadows of surrounding objects.

A cry of astonishment burst from all. The interest of

the conversation deepened every moment, and it might have been thought, from the solemn and anxious air with which all regarded Cagliostro, that they were awaiting the infallible predictions of an ancient oracle.

In the midst of this preoccupation, Monsieur de Favras, representing the general feeling, rose, made a sign, and went on tiptoe to listen in the antechamber, and ascertain whether any of the servants were within hearing. But, as we have said, the house of Monsieur le Maréchal de Richelieu was well regulated, and Monsieur de Favras found in the antechamber only an old intendant, who, implacable as a sentinel at an exposed post, defended the approaches to the dining-room at the solemn hour of dessert. He therefore returned to his seat, making a sign to the guests that they were alone.

"In that case," said Madame Dubarry, replying to the assurance of Monsieur de Favras as if it had been uttered aloud, "tell us what is to happen to that poor Lapeyrouse."

Cagliostro still maintained the same ominous silence.

"Oh, yes; let us hear," cried all the rest.

"Well, then, Monsieur de Lapeyrouse intends, as you know, to make the tour of the globe, and continue the researches of poor Captain Cook, who was killed in the Sandwich Islands."

"Yes, yes, we know," said all the company, by signs, rather than in words.

"Everything should foretell a happy termination to this voyage; Monsieur de Lapeyrouse is a good seaman, and his route has been most skilfully traced by the king."

"Yes," interrupted Comte de Haga, "the king of France is a clever geographer; is he not, Monsieur de Condorcet?"

"More skilful than is needful for a king," replied the marquis. "Kings ought to know things only slightly; then they will let themselves be guided by those who know them thoroughly."

"Is this a lesson, Marquis?" said the Comte de Haga, smiling.

Condorcet blushed. "Oh, no, Monsieur le Comte," said he; "only a simple reflection, a general truth."

"Well, he has set out?" said Madame Dubarry, anxious to bring the conversation back to Lapeyrouse.

"Yes, he has set out," replied Cagliostro; "but don't believe, in spite of his haste, that he will soon embark. I foresee much time lost at Brest."

"That would be a pity," said Condorcet; "this is the proper time for sailing; it is even now rather late, — February or March would have been better."

"Oh, do not grudge him these two or three months, Monsieur de Condorcet; he lives, at least, during that time, — he lives and hopes."

"He has good officers, I suppose," said Richelieu.

"Yes, he who commands the second ship is a distinguished officer. I see him — young, adventurous, brave, unhappily."

"Why unhappily?"

"A year later I look for him, and see him no more," said Cagliostro, anxiously consulting his glass. "No one here is related to Monsieur de Langle?"

"No."

"No one knows him?"

"No."

"Well, death will begin with him; I see him no longer."

A murmur of affright escaped from all the guests.

"But he, Lapeyrouse?" cried several voices, eagerly.

"He sails, he lands, he re-embarks; I see one, two

years of successful navigation. We hear news of him,[1] and then —"

"Then?"

"Years pass —"

"But at last?"

"The sea is vast, the heavens are clouded. Here and there appear unknown lands, and figures hideous as the monsters of the Grecian Archipelago. They watch the ship, which in a fog is drifting among the rocks, at the mercy of the currents. At last the tempest, the tempest more hospitable than the land, and then — ominous flames. Oh, Lapeyrouse! Lapeyrouse! if you could hear me, I would cry to you. You set out, like Columbus, to discover a world; Lapeyrouse, beware of unknown isles." He ceased, and an icy shiver ran through the assembly.

"But why did you not warn him?" asked the Comte de Haga, submitting like the others to the influence of this extraordinary man, who moved all hearts at his will.

"Yes," cried Madame Dubarry, "why not send after him and bring him back? The life of a man like Lapeyrouse is surely worth the journey of a courier, my dear Marshal."

The marshal understood, and rose to ring the bell. Cagliostro extended his arm to stop him. The marshal returned to his chair.

"Alas!" said Cagliostro, "all advice would be useless. The man who can foresee destiny cannot change it. Monsieur de Lapeyrouse would laugh if he heard my words, as the son of Priam laughed when Cassandra prophesied; and see, you begin to laugh yourself, Monsieur le Comte de Haga, and laughing is contagious, — your companions are

[1] The officer who brought the last news received from Lapeyrouse was Monsieur de Lesseps, — the only man on the expedition who returned to France.

catching it. Oh, do not restrain yourself, Monsieur de Favras; I have never yet found a hearer who believed."

"Oh, we believe," said Madame Dubarry and the old Duc de Richelieu.

"I believe," murmured Taverney.

"I, also," said the Comte de Haga, politely.

"Yes," replied Cagliostro, "you believe, because it concerns Lapeyrouse; but if I spoke of you, you would not believe."

"Oh!"

"I am sure of it."

"I confess that what would have made me believe," returned the Comte de Haga, "would have been that you should say to him, 'Beware of unknown isles;' then he would, at least, have had the chance of avoiding them."

"I assure you, no, Monsieur le Comte; and if he had believed me, consider the horrible effect of that revelation. Then in presence of danger, at sight of those unknown isles which were to be fatal to him, the unhappy man, believing in my prediction, would have felt the mysterious approach of death without being able to flee from it. And so he would have suffered not one death but a thousand; for it is suffering a thousand deaths to wander in gloom with despair at one's side. That hope which I should take from him — think of it! — is the last consolation to which the wretched victim still clings under the executioner's knife, when even the knife has touched him, when he feels its sharp edge, when his blood begins to flow. Life is extinguished while still the man is hoping."

"That is true!" said several of the guests, in a suppressed whisper.

"Yes," said Condorcet; "the veil which hides from us our future is the only real good which God has vouchsafed to man."

"Nevertheless," said the Comte de Haga, "did a man like you tell me to shun a certain man, or a certain thing, I would beware, and I would thank you for the counsel."

Cagliostro gently shook his head, with a serious smile.

"I mean it, Monsieur de Cagliostro," continued the Comte de Haga, "warn me, and I will thank you."

"You wish me to tell you what I would not tell Lapeyrouse?"

"Yes; I wish it."

Cagliostro made a movement as if to begin, and then stopped, and said, "Oh no, Monsieur le Comte, no!"

"I beg you."

Monsieur de Cagliostro turned away his head, "Never!" he murmured.

"Take care," said the count, smiling; "you are making me incredulous."

"Incredulity is better than misery."

"Monsieur de Cagliostro," said the count, gravely, "you forget one thing."

"And what is that?" asked the prophet, respectfully.

"It is that though there are men who had better remain ignorant of their destiny, there are others who should know it, as it concerns not themselves alone, but millions of others."

"I must have an order, then. Without an order I will do nothing."

"What do you mean?"

"That if your Majesty commands," said Cagliostro, in a low voice, "I will obey."

"I command you to reveal to me my destiny, Monsieur de Cagliostro," said the king, with an air at once courteous and dignified.

At this moment, as the Comte de Haga had dropped his

incognito in giving that order, Monsieur de Richelieu advanced toward him, and humbly saluting the prince, said, "Thanks, Sire, for the honor which the king of Sweden has done my house; will your Majesty assume the place of honor? From this moment it belongs to you alone."

"Let us remain as we are, Marshal; I wish to hear what Monsieur de Cagliostro is about to say."

"One does not speak the truth to kings, Sire."

"Bah! I am not in my kingdom; take your place again, Monsieur le Duc. Proceed, Monsieur de Cagliostro, I beg."

Cagliostro looked again in his glass. Globules like those seen in champagne rose from the bottom to the surface. The water seemed to be attracted by his powerful gaze, and to become agitated at his will. "Sire," said he, "tell me what you wish to know; I am ready to answer."

"Tell me by what death I shall die."

"By a gunshot, Sire."

The eyes of Gustavus grew bright. "Ah, in a battle," said he; "the death of a soldier! Thanks, Monsieur de Cagliostro, a hundred times I thank you. Oh, I foresee battles! and Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. have shown me how a king of Sweden should die."

Cagliostro drooped his head, without replying.

The Comte de Haga frowned. "Oh, oh!" said he, "is it not in battle that the gunshot will be discharged?"

"No, Sire."

"In a sedition? Yes, that is possible."

"No, not in a sedition, Sire."

"But where, then?"

"At a ball, Sire."

The king remained silent, and Cagliostro buried his head in his hands.

Every one looked pale and frightened; and all watched

the author of the prophecy and him whom it chiefly concerned. Then Monsieur de Condorcet took the glass of water, in which the fatal augury had been read, and raising it to his eye, examined carefully the glittering facets of the glass and its mysterious contents. His look seemed to be inquiring of both the solid and liquid crystal the solution of the problem, which his reason reduced to the import of a purely physical speculation.

In fact, the scientist was trying to compute the water's depth, luminous refractions, and microscopic play. He was asking himself the cause and explanation of this jugglery, practised upon men so enlightened as those who surrounded the table, by a man to whom he could not deny the possession of extraordinary power. Doubtless he found no solution of his problem, for he ceased his examination of the glass, returned it to the table, and amid the stupefaction caused by the prediction of Cagliostro, "Well, I also," he said, "will beg our illustrious prophet to consult for me his magic mirror. Unfortunately, I am not a powerful lord; I cannot command, and my obscure life concerns no millions of people."

"Monsieur," said the Comte de Haga, "you command in the name of science, and your life belongs not only to a nation, but to all mankind."

"I thank you, Monsieur le Comte!" said Condorcet; "but perhaps your opinion on this subject is not shared by Monsieur de Cagliostro."

Cagliostro quickly raised his head. "Yes, Marquis," said he, with a beginning of nervous irritability, which in ancient times would have been attributed to the presence of the god that inspired him, "you are indeed a powerful lord in the kingdom of intelligence; look me, then, in the face, and tell me seriously if you also wish that I should prophesy to you."

"Seriously, Monsieur le Comte, — upon my honor."

"Well, Marquis," said Cagliostro, in a hollow voice, and closing his eyelids, "you will die of that poison which you carry in your ring; you will die — "

"Oh! but if I throw it away?"

"Throw it away."

"You allow that it is very easy?"

"Then throw it away, I tell you."

"Oh, yes, Marquis!" cried Madame Dubarry; "throw away that horrid poison, — throw it away, if it be only to falsify this prophet of evil who threatens us all with his prophecies. For if you throw it away you cannot die by it, as Monsieur de Cagliostro predicts; so there, at least, he will have been wrong."

"Madame la Comtesse is right," said the Comte de Haga.

"Bravo, Countess!" said Richelieu. "Come, Marquis, throw away that poison, for now that I know you carry it, I shall tremble every time we drink together; the ring might open of itself, and — "

"And two glasses touched together come very close," said Taverney. "Throw it away, Marquis, — throw it away!"

"It is useless," said Cagliostro, quietly; "Monsieur de Condorcet will not throw it away."

"No," returned Condorcet, "I will not throw it away, — not that I wish to aid my destiny, but because this is a unique poison, prepared by Cabanis, which chance has completely hardened, and that chance might never occur again; therefore I will not throw it away. Triumph if you will, Monsieur de Cagliostro!"

"Destiny," replied Cagliostro, "ever finds faithful agents to aid in the execution of her decrees."

"Then I shall die by poison!" said the marquis.

"Well, so be it. It is an admirable death, I think, — a little poison on the tip of the tongue, and I am gone. That is not death; it is only minus life, as we say in algebra."

"It is no wish of mine that you should suffer, Monsieur," said Cagliostro, coldly; and he made a sign indicating that he desired to say no more regarding Monsieur de Condorcet.

"Then, Monsieur," said Monsieur de Favras, "we have a shipwreck, a gunshot, and a poisoning; they make my mouth water. Will you not do me the favor to predict to me, also, some little catastrophe of the same kind?"

"Oh, Marquis!" replied Cagliostro, beginning to grow warm under this irony, "it would be wrong in you to envy these gentlemen, for I assure you that you will have still better."

"Better!" said Monsieur de Favras, laughing; "that is pledging yourself to a great deal. Better than the sea, fire, poison, — that is difficult."

"There remains the rope, Monsieur le Marquis," said Cagliostro, bowing.

"The rope! Oh, oh! what are you telling me?"

"I am telling you that you will be hanged!" replied Cagliostro, with a sort of prophetic rage, which he could no longer control.

"Hanged! The devil!" cried the guests.

"Monsieur forgets that I am a nobleman," said Monsieur de Favras, coldly; "or if he means to speak of a suicide, I warn him that I shall respect myself sufficiently, even in my last moments, not to use a rope while I have a sword."

"I do not speak of a suicide, Monsieur."

"Then you speak of a punishment?"

"Yes."

"You are a foreigner, Monsieur, and therefore I pardon you."

"For what?"

"Your ignorance, Monsieur. In France we decapitate noblemen."

"You will arrange that matter with the executioner," replied Cagliostro, crushing his interlocutor with that rough answer.

There was a moment's hesitation among those present.

"Do you know that I begin to tremble?" said Monsieur de Launay; "my predecessors have had so bad luck that I am afraid I shall find only evil if I plunge my hand into the same bag."

"Then you are more reasonable than they, and do not seek to know the future. You are right. Be it good or bad, let us respect the secret of God."

"Oh, Monsieur de Launay!" said Madame Dubarry, "I hope you will not be less courageous than the others have been."

"I hope so too, Madame," said the governor, bowing. Then turning to Cagliostro, "Monsieur," he said, "favor me in my turn with my horoscope, if you please."

"It is easy," replied Cagliostro; "a blow on the head with a hatchet, and all will be over."

A cry of terror sounded through the hall. Richelieu and Taverney begged Cagliostro to say no more, but feminine curiosity prevailed.

"To hear you talk, Count," said Madame Dubarry, "one would think the whole universe must die by violence. Here we are, eight of us, and five are already condemned by you."

"Oh, you understand that it is all a prearranged affair, and that we laugh at it, Madame," said Monsieur de Favras, trying to laugh in fact.

"Certainly we will laugh at it," said the Comte de Haga, "be it true or false."

"Oh, I will laugh too, then," said Madame Dubarry; "I will not dishonor the assembly by my cowardice; but alas! I am only a woman, and shall not have the honor to be ranked with you by a tragical death; a woman dies in her bed. Alas, my death, that of a sorrowful old woman abandoned by every one, will be the worst of all. Will it not, Monsieur de Cagliostro?"

She stopped and seemed to wait for the prophet to reassure her. Cagliostro did not speak; so her curiosity obtaining the mastery over her fears, she went on, "Well, Monsieur de Cagliostro, will you not answer me?"

"How can I answer you, Madame, when you ask me no questions?"

"But —" said she.

"Decide," said Cagliostro; "do you question me, — yes, or no?"

The countess made an effort, and drawing courage from the smiles of the company, "Yes," she cried, "I will run the risk. Tell me the fate of Jeanne de Vaubernier, Comtesse Dubarry."

"On the scaffold, Madame," replied the prophet of evil.

"A jest, Monsieur, is it not?" stammered she, looking at him with a supplicating air.

Cagliostro did not observe that look. "Why do you think I jest?" said he.

"Oh, because to die on the scaffold one must have committed some crime, — stolen, or committed murder, or done something dreadful; and it is not likely I shall do that. It was a jest, was it not?"

"Oh, my God! yes," said Cagliostro; "all I have said is but a jest."

The countess laughed, but a skilled observer would

have thought her laugh too noisy to be quite natural. "Come, Monsieur de Favras," said she, "let us order our funeral coaches."

"Oh, that will be needless for you, Madame," said Cagliostro.

"Why so, Monsieur?"

"Because you will go to the scaffold in a cart."

"Oh, how horrible! oh, the dreadful man! Marshal, for Heaven's sake choose more cheerful guests next time, or I will never visit you again."

"Excuse me, Madame," said Cagliostro; "but you, like all the rest, would have me speak."

"I, like all the rest. At least, you will grant me time to choose my confessor?"

"It will be superfluous, Countess."

"Why?"

"The last one to mount the scaffold with a confessor will be—"

"Will be?" asked all the company.

"Will be the king of France;" and Cagliostro said these words in a voice so hollow and melancholy that it was to the company like a blast of death, and it chilled them to the bottom of their hearts.

Then ensued a silence which lasted several minutes. Meantime, Cagliostro raised to his lips the glass of water in which he had read these fearful prophecies; but scarcely had it touched his mouth when he set it down, and pushed it from him with a movement of disgust. He turned his eyes to Monsieur de Taverney.

"Oh," cried the latter in terror, "do not tell me anything, I do not wish to know."

"Well, then, I will ask in his place," said Richelieu.

"You, Marshal, be happy; you are the only one of us all who will die in his bed."

"Coffee, gentleman, coffee!" cried the marshal, enchanted with the prediction.

Every one rose.

But before passing into the salon, the Comte de Haga, approaching Cagliostro, said: "Monsieur, I have no idea of trying to escape my destiny; but tell me what I ought to distrust."

"A muff, Sire," replied Cagliostro.

Monsieur de Haga withdrew.

"And I?" said Condorcet.

"An omelette."

"Good, I renounce eggs;" and he followed the count.

"And I?" said Monsieur de Favras, — "what must I fear?"

"A letter."

"Very good; I thank you."

"And I?" asked De Launay.

"The taking of the Bastille."

"Oh, you quite reassure me;" and he went away, laughing.

"Now for me, Monsieur," said the countess, with anxiety.

"You, beautiful Countess, beware of the Place Louis XV."

"Alas!" said the countess, "one day already, I lost myself there; that day I suffered much; I nearly lost my head."

"Well, Countess, this time it will be lost never to be regained."

Madame Dubarry uttered a cry, and fled to the salon to join the other guests. Cagliostro was about to follow her, when Richelieu stopped him. "One moment," said he. "There remain only Taverney and I, to whom you have predicted nothing, my dear sorcerer."

"Monsieur de Taverney begged me to say nothing, and you, Monsieur le Maréchal, have asked me nothing."

"Oh, I still entreat you to tell me nothing," said Taverney, clasping his hands.

"But come, to prove your power, tell us something that only Taverney and I know," said Richelieu.

"What?" asked Cagliostro, smiling.

"Tell us what makes Taverney come to Versailles, instead of living quietly in his beautiful house at Maison-Rouge, which the king repurchased for him three years ago."

"Nothing more simple, Marshal," said Cagliostro. "Ten years ago, Monsieur de Taverney wished to give his daughter, Mademoiselle Andrée, to the King Louis XV.; but he did not succeed."

"Oh! oh!" groaned Taverney.

"Now Monsieur wishes to give his son, Philippe de Taverney, to the Queen Marie Antoinette; ask him if I speak the truth."

"On my word," said Taverney, trembling, "this man is a sorcerer; devil take me if he is not."

"Oh, oh! do not speak so cavalierly of the Devil, my old comrade," said the marshal.

"Frightful! frightful!" murmured Taverney; and he turned to implore Cagliostro to be discreet, but he had disappeared.

"Come, Taverney, to the salon," said the marshal; "or they will drink their coffee without us." But when they arrived there the room was empty; not one of the guests had courage to face again the author of these terrible predictions.

The wax lights burned in the candelabra, the coffee was smoking in the urn, the fire burned on the hearth, — but all for nothing.

"Faith, old friend, it seems we must take our coffee *tête-à-tête*. Why, what the devil has become of you?" Richelieu looked all round him, but Taverney had vanished like the rest. "Never mind," said the marshal, chuckling as Voltaire might have done, and rubbing his withered though still white hands; "I shall be the only one to die in my bed. Eh, eh! in my bed. Well, Comte de Cagliostro, at least I believe. In my bed, that was it; I shall die in my bed, and I trust not for a long time. Hola! my valet and my drops."

The valet entered with the bottle, and the marshal went with him into the bed-room.

CHAPTER I.

TWO UNKNOWN LADIES.

THE winter of 1784, that monster which devoured a sixth part of France, we could not see, although he growled at the doors, while at the house of Monsieur de Richelieu, shut in, as we were, in that warm and comfortable dining-room.

A little frost on the windows seems but the luxury of Nature, added to that of man. Winter has its diamonds, its powder, and its silver embroidery for the rich man wrapped in his furs, or packed in his carriage, or snug among the wadding and velvet of a well-warmed room. Hoar-frost is a beauty, ice a change of decoration by the greatest of artists, which the rich admire through their windows. He who is warm can admire the withered trees, and find a charm in the sombre perspective of the snow-covered plain. He who finds mounting to his brain the savory odors of the dinner awaiting him, can inhale from time to time, through the partly opened window, the sharp, perfume of the north wind and the icy vapor of the snows which are refreshing to his mind. He, in short, who after a day without suffering, when millions of his fellow-creatures are enduring dreadful privations, throws himself on his bed of down, between his fine and well-aired sheets, may find out that all is for the best, in this best of all possible worlds.

But he who is cold sees nothing of all these splendors of Nature, — as richly clad in her white as in her green mantle. He who is hungry looks toward the earth, and avoids

looking at the sky, — the sky without a sun, and therefore without a smile for the unhappy.

Now, at the time of which we write, — that is, about the middle of the month of April, — three hundred thousand miserable beings, dying from cold and hunger, groaned in Paris alone: in Paris, where, in spite of the boast that scarcely another city contained so many rich people, nothing had been prepared to prevent the poor from perishing of cold and want.

For the last four months a sky of brass had driven the poor from the villages into the town, as in winter wolves are driven from the woods into the villages.

No more bread; no more wood. No more bread for those who felt this cold; no more wood to cook bread. All the provisions which had been collected, Paris had devoured in a month. The provost, shortsighted and incapable, did not know how to procure for Paris, which was under his care, two hundred thousand cords of wood which might be obtained within a radius of ten leagues. He gave as an excuse, when it was cold, that the ice hindered the horses; if it thawed, he pleaded the insufficient number of horses and conveyances. Louis XVI., ever good and humane, always ready to attend to the physical wants of his people, although he overlooked their social wants, began by contributing a sum of two hundred thousand francs for the hiring of horses and carts, and insisting on their immediate use.

Still the demand continued greater than the supply. It was necessary to restrict the purchaser. At first, no one was allowed to carry away from the public timber-yard more than a cart-load of wood; then they were limited to half this quantity. Soon long lines of applicants might be seen waiting outside the doors, as they were afterwards seen at the bakers' shops. The king gave away the whole

of his private income in charity. He raised three million francs on the impost receipts, and applied them to the relief of the sufferers, declaring that every other need must give way before that of cold and famine. The queen, on her part, gave five hundred louis from her purse. The convents, the hospitals, and the public buildings were thrown open as places of asylum for the poor; every gate to the larger houses was thrown open by order of their owners, who followed the example given at the royal residences, to admit into their court-yards the suffering poor, who came to crouch around the large fires burning there.

Thus they hoped to reach the period of the desired thaw. But the sky was unrelenting. Every evening a copper-colored veil extended up from the horizon; the stars shone bright and cold, like funeral torches, and the frosts of the night congealed anew into a lake of diamonds the pale snow which the noon-day sun had for a moment melted.

During the day thousands of workmen, with spades and shovels, cleared away the snow from before the houses; so that on each side of the streets, already too narrow for the traffic, rose a high, thick wall, blocking up the way. Heavy carriages with wheels slipping, horses stumbling and falling, crowded the foot-passengers against these icy walls, and exposed them to the threefold risk of falling, of being run over, and of being covered by the snow. Soon these masses of snow and ice became so large that the shops were obscured by them; the passage-ways were obstructed, and it was found necessary to suspend the removal of it, — the means at command were insufficient.

Paris could do no more. She yielded, and allowed the winter to do its worst. December, January, February, and March passed thus, although now and then a few

days' thaw changed all Paris, whose sewers were blocked up, into an ocean. Horses were drowned, and carriages destroyed in the streets, some of which could be traversed only in boats. Paris, faithful to its character, sang through this destruction by the thaw, as it had done through that by famine. Processions were made to the markets to see the fisherwomen serving their customers with immense leather boots on, inside which their trousers were pushed, and with their petticoats tucked round their waists, all laughing, gesticulating, and splashing each other as they stood in the water. These thaws, however, were but transitory; the frost returned, harder and more obstinate than ever, and recourse was had to sledges, pushed along by skaters, or drawn by rough-shod horses along the causeways, which were like polished mirrors. The Seine, frozen many feet deep, had become the rendezvous for all idlers, who assembled there to skate or slide, until, warmed by exercise, they ran to the nearest fire, lest the perspiration should freeze upon them. The time seemed to be approaching when the water communications being stopped, and the roads impassable, provisions could no longer be sent in, and Paris, that gigantic body, would perish for want of food, — like those cetaceous monsters of the polar regions which, having devoured everything within their reach, remain enclosed in the polar ice, and die of starvation; since they are not able, like the smaller fish on which they prey, to escape by the fissures, and seek more temperate zones and waters more productive.

The king, in this extremity, assembled his council. It was decided to effect a removal of a portion of the population, — that is to say, to request the bishops, the abbés, and the monks, too careless of their residential duties, to return to their homes; also the governors, the intendants of provinces, who had made Paris their seat of govern-

ment, and the magistrates who preferred the opera and Parisian society to their official chairs. Indeed, all these persons used large quantities of wood in their hôtels, and consumed no small amount of food. There were still the noblemen from places in the provinces, who were also to be requested to leave. But Monsieur Lenoir, lieutenant of police, observed to the king that as none of these were criminals, and as they could not therefore be compelled to leave Paris in a day, they would probably delay their departure, partly by reason of their unwillingness to go at all, and partly on account of the state of the roads; so that the thaw would arrive before any advantage could be gained from that measure, while all the inconveniences of it would have been produced.

Meantime that pity on the part of the king, who had emptied his private coffers, and that compassion of the queen, who had exhausted her personal resources, had awakened the ingenious gratitude of the people, who commemorated by monuments as ephemeral as the calamity, and as the benefits conferred, the charities which Louis XVI. and the queen had bestowed upon the poor. As in other times soldiers raised trophies to the victorious general, constructed of the arms of the conquered enemy, so the Parisians, upon the field of battle where they had fought against the winter, raised obelisks of snow and ice in honor of the king and queen. Every one helped. The workman gave the strength of his arm, the artisan his industry, the artist his talent, and at the crossings of the principal streets the obelisks arose, elegant, bold, and solid. The poor man of letters whom the king's benevolence had sought out in his attic chamber, brought the offering of an inscription which expressed the feelings of his heart even more than it did the power of his mind.

At the end of March came a thaw, but it was partial

only, and unsettled. Returns of cold weather prolonged the misery, the hunger, and suffering of the Parisian population, while preserving, upright and solid, the obelisks of snow. Never had the misery of the people been so profound as in this latter period. The intermittent warmth of the sun made the cold and windy nights even more unendurable. Great masses of ice were melted, and flowing into the Seine caused it to overflow its banks. But in the early days of April, one of those returns of cold weather of which we have spoken, declared itself. The obelisks, down whose sides coursed already the gathering moisture, presage of destruction, — the obelisks, half-melted, were solidified anew, deformed, and reduced in size. A fine mantle of snow covered the boulevards and the quays, and sledges reappeared there, with their prancing horses. They went well upon the quays and the boulevards; but in the streets the coaches and the rapid cabriolets were the terror of pedestrians, who, not hearing their approach and hindered by the walls of ice, were unable to get out of their way, and frequently fell under the wheels while trying to escape.

In a few days there were in Paris many persons wounded or dying. There were legs broken by a fall on the ice, ribs broken by the shafts of cabriolets which, in the rapidity of their course, could not be stopped upon the icy surface. Then the police gave attention to the task of preserving from the carriage-wheels those who had been spared by cold, hunger, and inundation. The rich who injured the poor were compelled to pay damages. In those days, during the reign of aristocracies, there was even an aristocratic way of driving horses. A prince of the blood rode at full speed and with no cry of warning; a duke, a gentleman, or an opera-girl drove at a fast trot; a president or a financier at a trot; the dandy drove him-

self in his cabriolet, and his footman, standing behind, cried, "Take care!" when his master had run against or run over some unfortunate pedestrian; and then, as Mercier says, he got up again who was able to do so.

But while the Parisian could see beautiful swan-necked sledges coursing on the boulevards; while he could admire the lovely ladies of the court, flying like meteors over the ice, in their sable and ermine cloaks; while the gilded bells, the purple netting, and the horses' plumes amused the children, standing in rows to gaze at all these fine sights, — the Paris citizen forgot the carelessness of the police and the brutality of the coachmen, and the poor forgot their misery, for the moment at least, accustomed as they were to be patronized by the rich or by those who pretended to be rich.

It was under the circumstances we have just described, a week after the dinner given at Versailles by Monsieur de Richelieu, that one might have seen, on a bright, cold day, four elegant sledges gliding over the hardened snow which covered the ground. Outside of Paris the snow can long keep its virginal whiteness, there are so few to soil it with their footsteps; but in Paris a hundred thousand steps an hour soon darken and spoil the splendid mantle of winter.

The sledges, which glided easily over the road till they came to the city, stopped first at the boulevard, — that is to say, where mud began to take the place of snow. In fact, the noon-day sun had softened the atmosphere, and a temporary thaw had set in, — we say "temporary" because the clearness of the atmosphere gave promise that with the night would come that cold north wind which ruthlessly destroys in April the early leaves and the budding flowers.

In the foremost sledge were two men in brown riding-

coats with double capes; the only difference in the coats was that on one the buttons and embroidery were of gold, and on the other they were of silk. They were drawn by a black horse with smoking nostrils, and turned from time to time as if to watch the sledge that followed them, and which contained two ladies so enveloped in furs that it was impossible to see their faces. It might even have been difficult to distinguish their sex, if the height of their head-dresses, on which were little hats with nodding plumes, had not proclaimed them to be women. From these colossal edifices, covered with ribbons and jewels, escaped, occasionally, a cloud of white powder, as in winter the wind shakes the snow from the branches of the trees.

These two ladies, seated side by side, were conversing so earnestly as scarcely to see the numerous spectators who watched their progress along the boulevards. One of them, taller and more majestic than the other, and holding to her mouth a finely embroidered cambric handkerchief, carried her head erect and stately, in spite of the wind made by the rapid motion of the sledge.

It had just struck five by the clock of the Church Saint Croix d'Antin, and night was beginning to descend upon Paris, and with the night the cold. They had just reached the Porte Saint Denis, when the lady who held a handkerchief to her mouth made a sign to the men in front, who thereupon quickened the pace of their horse, and soon disappeared among the evening mists, which were fast thickening around the colossal structure of the Bastille.

This signal she then repeated to the other two sledges, which also vanished along the Rue Saint Denis. Meanwhile the one in which she sat, having arrived at the Boulevard de Menilmontant, stopped.

In this place few people were to be seen; night had dispersed them. Besides, in this out-of-the-way quarter not many citizens would trust themselves without torches and an escort, since winter had sharpened the teeth of three or four thousand beggars who might easily become thieves.

The lady whom we have already designated to our readers as giving the orders, touched with her finger the shoulder of the coachman who was driving her, and said, "Weber, how long will it take the cabriolet to reach — you know where?"

"Matame will go in de gabriolet?" asked the coachman, with a strong German accent.

"Yes, I shall return by the streets, to see the fires. Now the streets are still more muddy than the boulevards, and we should not get on in the sledge. Besides, I begin to feel the cold; do not you, little one?" said the lady, addressing her companion.

"Yes, Madame," replied the latter.

"You understand, Weber, where to take the cabriolet?"

"Ferry vell, Matame."

"How much time will you need?"

"Alf ein hour."

"Good. What is the time, little one?"

The young lady looked at her watch, which however she could hardly see as it was growing dark, and said, "A quarter to six, Madame."

"Then at a quarter to seven, Weber." And saying these words the lady leaped lightly from the sledge, gave her hand to her friend, and walked away quickly, while the coachman, with gestures of respectful despair, murmured, loud enough for his mistress to hear, —

"Oh, mein Gott, vot imprutence!"

The two ladies laughed, drew closely around them their cloaks, the collars of which reached even to the tops of

their ears, and crossed the foot-path on the boulevard, amusing themselves by crunching the snow under their little feet shod with well furred shoes.

"You have good eyes, Andrée," said the lady who seemed the elder of the two, although she could not have been more than thirty or thirty-two years of age; "try to read the name at the corner of that street."

"Rue du Pont-aux-Choux, Madame," said the young lady, smiling.

"Rue du Pont-aux-Choux! Ah, *mon Dieu!* we must have lost our way. They told me the second street on the right — but what a smell of hot bread, Andrée!"

"That is not astonishing," said her companion, "for here is a baker's shop."

"Well, let us ask here for the Rue Saint Claude," said the elder lady, moving toward the door.

"Oh, do not go in, Madame; allow me," said Andrée.

"The Rue Saint Claude, my pretty ladies?" said a cheerful voice. "Are you asking for the Rue Saint Claude?"

The two ladies turned round at the same moment, and looking in the direction of the voice they saw, leaning against the door of the shop, a man with a jacket over his shoulders, but with legs and breast quite bare, notwithstanding the intense cold.

"Oh! a naked man!" cried the young lady, half hiding behind her companion; "are we, then, in Oceanica?"

"You are looking for the Rue Saint Claude?" repeated the baker's man, who did not understand the movement of the younger lady, and who, accustomed to his costume, was far from attributing to it the centrifugal force, the result of which we have just seen.

"Yes, my friend, the Rue Saint Claude," said the elder lady, hardly able to keep from laughing.

"Oh, it is not difficult to find; besides, I will conduct you there myself," replied the jolly, flour-sprinkled youth, who, suiting the action to the words, began to move his long bony legs, which terminated in two old shoes as large as boats.

"No, no!" cried the elder lady, who did not fancy such a guide; "do not disturb yourself. Tell us the way, and we shall easily find it."

"First street to the right, Madame," replied the guide, discreetly withdrawing.

"Thanks," said the ladies, simultaneously; and they set off, running in the direction indicated, stifling their laughter in their muffs.

CHAPTER II.

AN INTERIOR.

If we have not calculated too much on the memory of our reader, we may hope that he already knows the Rue Saint Claude, the eastern end of which joins the boulevard, and the western, the Rue Saint Louis; indeed, he has seen more than one of the personages who have played or will play a part in this history, passing through it in former times, — that is, when the great physician Joseph Balsamo lived there with his sibyl Lorenza and his master Althotas. In 1784 as in 1770, the time at which we first introduced our readers to the place, the Rue Saint Claude was a respectable street, rather dark, it is true, certainly not very clean; in short, not much frequented, not much built up, and little known. But it had its name of a saint and its rank as a street of the *Marais;* and as such it sheltered in the three or four houses of which it consisted, several gentlemen of small property, several poor trades-people, and several paupers omitted in the parish lists.

Besides these three or four houses, there was at the corner of the boulevard a hôtel of grand appearance of which the Rue Saint Claude might have been proud, as of an aristocratic building; but this house whose high windows would on festal days have illuminated the whole street merely by the reflection of its candelabra and chandeliers, — this house, we say, was the darkest, the most silent, and the most completely closed of all the houses in that quarter.

The gate was never opened; the windows, lined with leather cushions, had on each leaf of the window-blind, upon every moulding of the shutters, a coating of dust which physiologists or geologists would have said had been accumulating for ten years.

Sometimes an idle passer-by, some curious person, or a neighbor approached the gate, and through the huge key-hole examined the interior of the court-yard; all he could see, however, was masses of weeds growing between the stones, and green moss spreading itself over everything. Occasionally, an enormous rat, sovereign of this deserted domain, quietly crossed the yard and disappeared in the cellar, — superfluous modesty, when he had the choice of so many fine sitting-rooms where he need never fear the intrusion of a cat.

If it happened to be a passer-by or a curious person, after having established for himself the fact of the solitude of this hôtel, he would go on his way; but if it was a neighbor, since the interest which he took in the hôtel was much greater, he remained almost always long enough to be joined by a second neighbor, attracted by curiosity like his own; and then almost always a conversation took place of which we are very sure that we can recall the substance, if not the details.

"Neighbor," said the one who was not looking to the one who looked, "what do you see in the house of Monsieur le Comte de Balsamo?"

"Neighbor," replied the latter, "I see the rat."

"Ah, will you allow me?" and the second curious person placed himself in his turn at the key-hole.

"Do you see him?" said the dispossessed neighbor to the one in possession.

"Yes," replied the latter, "I see him. Ah, Monsieur! he has grown fat."

"You think so?"

"Yes, I am sure of it."

"I believe you! He has nothing to trouble him."

"And certainly, whatever they may say, there must be some good tid-bits in the house."

"Good tid-bits, you say?"

"Why, Monsieur de Balsamo disappeared too suddenly not to have forgotten something."

"Indeed, neighbor, you may be right."

And after having looked again at the rat, they separated, alarmed at having said so much on a matter so mysterious and delicate.

Indeed, after the burning of this house, or rather a part of it, Balsamo had disappeared, no repairs had been made, and the hôtel was unoccupied.

We will leave it, rising sombre and damp in the darkness, with its terraces covered with snow, and its roof destroyed by the flames, — this old hôtel which we did not wish to pass without stopping before it, as before an old acquaintance; then crossing the street from left to right, we shall see, adjoining a little garden enclosed by a high wall, a narrow and high house, rising like a tall white tower against the deep gray-blue of the sky. At the top of the house a chimney rises like a lightning-rod, and right over the top of this chimney a brilliant star shines and sparkles.

The upper story of the house would be lost unseen in space except for a ray of light which illuminates two of the three windows in the front. The other stories are dark and gloomy. Are the tenants already asleep? Are they economizing, beneath their blankets, both the candles which are so dear, and the wood which is so scarce this year? Whatever the cause, the four stories give no sign

of life; while the fifth not only lives, but even shines forth with some ostentation.

Let us knock at the door and ascend the dark staircase which terminates at this fifth story, where our business calls us. A common ladder placed against the wall leads to the garret. A deer's foot hangs by the door; a straw mat and wooden coat-rack furnish the staircase. The first door being opened we enter a dark and unfurnished room; it is the one whose window is not lighted. It serves as antechamber and leads into a second room, the appearance and furniture of which deserve all our attention.

The floor is of tiles, instead of being inlaid; the doors are coarsely painted; there are three armchairs of white wood, upholstered in yellow velvet, and a poor sofa, whose cushions have become thin and creased by long use. Two portraits hung on the wall first attract our attention. A candle and a lamp, placed the one on a three-legged stand, the other on the mantel-piece, combine their rays so as to make these two portraits two centres of light. The first of these was a well-known and strikingly correct likeness of Henri III. king of France and Poland — with a cap on his head, face long and pale, pointed beard, and a ruff round his neck. Under it is inscribed in black letters, on a frame poorly gilded, "HENRI DE VALOIS."

The other portrait, more recently gilded, as fresh-looking as the other was ancient, represented a young woman with black eyes, a nose straight and delicately formed, high cheek-bones, and a mouth expressing circumspection. Her head was dressed, or rather crushed, by an edifice of hair and ribbons in comparison with which the cap of Henri III. was like a mole-hill beside a pyramid. Under this portrait could be read in black letters, "JEANNE DE VALOIS."

If you wish, after inspecting the fireless hearth, the cheap cotton bed-curtains, ornamented with yellowed green damask, — if you wish to know what connection there may be between those portraits and the occupants of that fifth story, it is necessary only to turn toward a small oak table upon which a woman, plainly dressed, rests her left arm while she examines several sealed letters, and takes note of their addresses. That young woman is the original of the portrait.

A few steps off, in an attitude half-curious, half-respectful, stands a little old woman, apparently about sixty years old.

"JEANNE DE VALOIS," says the inscription; but if this lady be indeed a Valois, one wonders how ever the portrait of Henri III., the sybarite king, the ruffed voluptuary, could endure, observing it only from his portrait, the sight of so much poverty suffered by a person not only of his race, but bearing his name.

In her person, however, this lady of the fifth story did no discredit to the origin which she claimed. She had white and delicate hands, which from time to time she warmed by placing them under her crossed arms; her feet also, which were encased in rather coquettish velvet slippers, she endeavored to warm by stamping on the tiled floor, shining and cold as the ice that covered Paris.

The wind whistled through all the old doors, and penetrated the crevices of the shaking windows; and the old servant sadly shrugged her shoulders as she looked at the fireless hearth. As to the lady, the mistress of the apartment, she continued counting the letters and reading their addresses. After reading each address she made a little calculation.

"Madame de Misery," she murmured; "first lady of the bedchamber to her Majesty, — I cannot expect more than six louis from her, for she has already given to me

once;" and she sighed. "Madame Patrix, lady's maid to her Majesty, two louis; Monsieur d'Ormesson, an audience; Monsieur de Calonne, some good advice; Monsieur de Rohan, a visit, — at least we will try to induce him," said she, smiling. "Well, then, I think I may hope for eight louis within a week." Then looking up, "Dame Clotilde," she said, "snuff this candle."

The old woman did as she was bid, and then resumed her place.

This kind of inquisition seemed to annoy the young woman, for she said, "Do go, my dear, and see if you cannot find the end of a wax candle for me; this tallow is odious."

"There is none," replied the old woman.

"But just look."

"Where?"

"In the antechamber."

"It is very cold there."

"Eh, stop! some one is ringing," said the young woman.

"Madame is mistaken," replied the obstinate old woman.

"I thought I heard it, Dame Clotilde;" then, abandoning the attempt to move the old woman, she turned again to her calculations. "Eight louis! three I owe for the rent." She took her pen and wrote. "Three louis; five promised to Monsieur de La Motte, to enable him to endure his stay at Bar-sur-Aube. Poor fellow, our marriage has not enriched him as yet, but patience!" and she smiled again, and looked at herself in the mirror that hung between the two portraits. "Well, then," she continued, "I want one louis for fares from Versailles to Paris and back again." And she wrote that additional figure in the column of expenses. "Living for a week, one louis; dress,

and gifts to the porters of the houses where I go, four louis. Is that all? Let me add." But in the midst of her addition she interrupted herself: "Some one is ringing, I tell you."

"No, Madame," replied the old woman. "It is below, on the next floor."

"Four, six, eleven, fourteen louis; there are six less than I need, — and my entire wardrobe is to be renewed, and this old brute to be paid off and dismissed." Then, suddenly, "But I tell you some one is ringing, you miserable creature!" she cried out angrily.

Even the old woman could deny it no longer; she hobbled off to open the door, while her mistress, agile as a squirrel, rapidly cleared away all the papers, and after a rapid glance about the room, to assure herself that everything was in order, seated herself on the sofa, assuming the humble and melancholy attitude of a person resigned but suffering.

It was, however, only her body that reposed; her eyes, restless and unquiet, questioned the mirror in which the door was reflected, and her ears were quickened to catch the smallest sound.

At last the door was opened, and she heard a young and sweet voice saying, "Is it here that Madame la Comtesse de La Motte lives?"

"Madame la Comtesse de La Motte Valois," replied Clotilde, with a nasal tone.

"It is the same person, my good woman; is Madame de La Motte at home?"

"Yes, Madame; she is too ill to go out."

During this colloquy, the pretended invalid saw reflected in the glass the figure of a lady talking to Clotilde, unquestionably belonging to the higher ranks. She immediately left the sofa, and seated herself in an armchair, so

that the stranger might have the seat of honor. While accomplishing this movement, she saw her visitor turn round, and heard her say to some one behind, "You can enter, Madame; this is the place." And the two ladies we have before seen asking the way to the Rue Saint Claude prepared to enter the room.

"Whom shall I announce to the countess?" said Clotilde.

"Announce a sister of charity," said the elder lady.

"From Paris?"

"No, from Versailles."

Clotilde entered the room, and the strangers followed her.

Jeanne de Valois seemed to rise with difficulty from her seat to receive her visitors. Clotilde placed chairs for them, and then withdrew so slowly that one could easily see that she intended to remain near the door, in order to hear what might follow.

CHAPTER III.

JEANNE DE LA MOTTE DE VALOIS.

THE first care of Jeanne de La Motte, when she could with propriety raise her eyes, was to examine the face of her visitors, so as to gather what she could of their character. The elder lady, who might have been, as we have said, about thirty-two years of age, was remarkably beautiful, although at first sight an air of hauteur detracted slightly from the charm of her expression; at least, so Jeanne thought, from the little she could see of her face. For the lady, preferring one of the armchairs to the sofa, had placed herself beyond the range of the rays of light emitted by the lamp, and sat in a corner of the room, having drawn over her forehead the hood of her cloak, which thus shaded her face. But she held her head so proudly, her eyes were so expressive and so naturally dilated, that all details were effaced, and at a cursory glance she was to be recognized as of a good family, and even of a noble family.

Her companion, less timid, in appearance at least, although four or five years younger, was not less beautiful. Her complexion was charming; her hair drawn back from her temples showed to advantage the perfect oval of her face. Two large blue eyes, calm and serene; a well-formed mouth, indicating great frankness of disposition, but to which discretion had been added by education; a nose, which in form rivalled that of the Venus de Medicis,

— such was the other face which presented itself to the gaze of Jeanne de Valois.

She inquired gently to what happy circumstance she owed the honor of their visit.

The elder lady signed to the younger, who thereupon said, "Madame, for I believe you are married — "

"I have the honor to be the wife of Monsieur le Comte de La Motte, Madame, an excellent gentleman."

"Well, Madame la Comtesse, we are at the head of a charitable institution, and having heard concerning your condition things that interest us, we wished to have more precise details on the subject."

Jeanne paused a moment before making a reply. "Ladies," she said, noticing the reserve of the second visitor, "you see there the portrait of Henri III., — that is to say, of the brother of my ancestor; for I am truly of the race of Valois, as you doubtless have been told." And she waited for the next question, looking at her visitors with a sort of proud humility.

"Madame," said the grave and sweet voice of the elder lady, "is it true, as we have also heard, that your mother was housekeeper at a place called Fontette, near Bar-sur-Seine?"

Jeanne colored at this question, but replied at once, and without embarrassment, "It is true, Madame; and," she went on, "as Marie Fossel, my mother, was possessed of rare beauty, my father fell in love with her, and married her. It is by my father that I am nobly descended; he was a Saint Remy de Valois, direct descendant of the Valois who were on the throne."

"But how have you been reduced to this degree of poverty, Madame."

"Alas! that is easily told. You are not ignorant that after the accession of Henri IV., by which the crown

passed from the house of Valois to that of Bourbon, there still remained many branches of the fallen family, obscure doubtless, but incontestably springing from the same root as the four brothers who all perished so miserably."

The two ladies made a sign of assent.

"Then," continued Jeanne, "these remnants of the Valois fearing, in spite of their obscurity, to be obnoxious to the reigning family, changed their name of Valois into that of Remy, which they took from the name of an estate; and they may be traced under this name down to my grandfather, who, seeing the monarchy so firmly established, and the old branch forgotten, thought he need no longer deprive himself of his illustrious name, his only inheritance. He resumed, therefore, the name of Valois, and bore that name in poverty and obscurity in a distant province, while no one at the court of France dreamed that beyond the radiance of the throne there vegetated a descendant of the ancient kings of France, who, if not the most glorious in the history of the monarchy, were at all events the most unfortunate."

Jeanne paused after saying these words. She had spoken with a simplicity and mildness which created a favorable impression.

"You have, doubtless, your proofs already arranged, Madame," said the elder lady, with kindness, but at the same time looking fixedly at her who claimed to be descended from the Valois.

"Oh, Madame!" she replied, with a bitter smile, "proofs are not wanting. My father arranged them, and left them to me as his sole legacy. But of what use are proofs of a truth which no one is willing to recognize?"

"Your father is, then, dead?" asked the younger lady.

"Alas! yes."

"Did he die in the provinces?"

"No, Madame."

"At Paris, then?"

"Yes."

"In this room?"

"No, Madame; my father, Baron de Valois, great-nephew of King Henri III., died of want and hunger."

"Impossible!" cried both ladies, at the same time.

"And not here," continued Jeanne; "not in this poor retreat, — not in his own bed, poor as that might be. No, my father died side by side with misery and suffering. My father died in the Hôtel Dieu!"

The ladies uttered an exclamation of surprise and distress.

Satisfied with the effect produced by her story on her visitors, and with the skill she had used in leading up to the denouement, Jeanne sat with her eyes lowered, her hands hanging motionless. The elder of the strangers regarded her attentively, and seeing nothing affected or vulgar in her grief, which appeared so simple and natural, she said: "From what you tell me, Madame, you have experienced, it is evident, great misfortunes; and the death of your father, especially — "

"Oh, if you heard all the story of my life, Madame, you would see that my father's death does not rank among its greatest misfortunes."

"What, Madame! you regard as a minor evil the loss of a father?" said the elder lady, with a frown.

"Yes, Madame; and in saying that I speak as an affectionate daughter, for my father in dying was delivered from all the ills which he experienced in this life, and which continue to assail his unhappy family. I feel, therefore, in the midst of the grief which his loss causes me, a certain joy in knowing that my father is dead, and that the descendant of kings is no longer obliged to beg his bread."

"To beg his bread?"

"Yes, Madame; I say it without shame, for in all our misfortunes there was no fault in my father or myself."

"But you do not speak of your mother?"

"Well, with the same frankness with which I told you just now that I blessed God for taking my father, I complain to him because he left my mother alive."

The two ladies looked at each other, almost shuddering at these strange words.

"Would it be indiscreet, Madame, to ask you for a more detailed account of your misfortunes?" asked the elder lady.

"The indiscretion, Madame, would be in me, if I fatigued your ears with a recital of sorrow which can have no interest for you."

"I listen, Madame," said the elder lady, so commandingly that her companion looked at her as if to warn her to be more guarded. Indeed, Madame de La Motte had been struck with this imperious accent, and stared at her with some astonishment.

"I listen, Madame," the lady repeated in a more gentle tone, "if you will do me the favor to begin;" and yielding to a sense of discomfort, caused doubtless by the cold, the lady who had just spoken restlessly moved her feet, chilled by contact with the damp floor. The younger lady thereupon pushed toward her a sort of foot-carpet which happened to be near her chair, — an attention which drew from her companion a warning glance. "Keep that carpet, sister," said she, pushing it back again, "you are more delicate than I."

"Indeed, Madame," said Jeanne, "it grieves me much to see you suffer from the cold; but wood is six francs higher than ever, and is now sold at seventy francs a cord. My stock was exhausted a week ago."

"You said, Madame, that you were unhappy in having a mother," said the elder lady, returning to the subject.

"Yes, Madame. Doubtless such a blasphemy shocks you much, does it not?" said Jeanne; "but hear my explanation, since you desire it. I have already had the honor to tell you that my father married beneath his rank."

"Yes, in marrying his housekeeper."

"Well, Marie Fossel, my mother, instead of feeling gratified and proud of the honor he had done her, began by ruining my father, which certainly was not difficult, while she satisfied with the little that her husband possessed the hunger of her caprices. Then having compelled him to sell everything, down to his last bit of ground, she induced him to go to Paris to claim the rights to which his name entitled him. My father was easily persuaded; perhaps he hoped in the justice of the king. He came, then, having first turned all he possessed into money. He had, besides me, another daughter and a son. The son, unfortunate like me, vegetates in the lowest ranks of the army; the daughter, my poor sister, was abandoned on the evening of our departure before the house of a neighboring farmer, her godfather.

"The journey exhausted our little resources. My father wore himself out in fruitless appeals. We scarcely ever saw him at home; and in his absence my mother, to whom a victim was necessary, vented her discontent and ill-humor upon me. She even reproached me with what I ate, and I came by degrees to prefer to eat only bread, or even not to eat at all, rather than sit down at our poor table. But my mother found no lack of pretexts for punishment; for the slightest fault I was unmercifully beaten. The neighbors, thinking to serve me, told my father of the treatment I experienced. He endeavored to protect me

against my mother, and did not know that by his interference he changed my enemy of the moment into an unrelenting tormentor. Alas! I could not warn him of what was for my interest; I was too young, too childish. I comprehended nothing; I experienced effects without seeking to know the cause. I knew the hardship, and that was all.

"At last my father fell ill, and was confined first to the house, and then to his bed. My mother banished me from his room on the pretext that I disturbed him. She made me now learn a sentence which she emphasized with blows and bruises; and when I knew that sentence by heart, — which instinctively I was unwilling to learn, — though my eyes were red with tears, she would drive me out into the street with blows, ordering me to repeat it to each passer-by if I did not wish to be beaten to death."

"Horrible! horrible!" murmured the younger of the two ladies.

"And what was this sentence?" asked the elder lady.

"It was this, Madame: 'Have pity on a little orphan who descends in a direct line from Henri de Valois.'"

"What a shame!" cried the elder lady, with a gesture of disgust.

"But what effect did this sentence have on those to whom it was addressed?" inquired the younger.

"Some listened and pitied me; others were angry and threatened me; others, more compassionate than the first, warned me that I ran a great risk in repeating such words, — but I knew no other danger than that of disobeying my mother."

"And what was the result?"

"*Mon Dieu!* Madame, that which my mother had desired; I brought back to the house a little money, and the

frightful prospect which my father had before him — the hospital — receded for a few days."

The features of the elder of the two young women became contracted; tears came to the eyes of the younger.

"At length, Madame, notwithstanding the relief it brought my father, this hideous trade became revolting to me. One day, instead of repeating my accustomed phrase, I sat on the doorstep all the time, and returned in the evening empty-handed. My mother beat me so that the next day I fell ill; then my poor father, deprived of all resources, was obliged to go to the Hôtel Dieu, where he died."

"Oh, what a horrible history!" murmured the two ladies.

"What became of you after your father's death?" asked the younger lady.

"God took pity upon me. A month after my father's death my mother ran away with a soldier, her lover, abandoning my brother and myself."

"You found yourselves orphans?"

"Oh, Madame, we, unlike others, were orphans only because we had a mother. Public charity adopted us. But as begging was repugnant to us, we begged only enough to procure the necessities of life. God commands his creatures to endeavor to live."

"Alas!"

"What shall I tell you, Madame? One day I saw a carriage going slowly along toward the Faubourg Saint Marcel. There were four footmen behind, and a beautiful lady inside; I held out my hand to her for charity. She questioned me, and my reply and my name seemed to strike her with surprise, and then with incredulity. She asked for my address, and the next day made inquiries, and finding that I had told her the truth, she took charge of my brother and myself; she placed my brother in the army

and me with a dressmaker. We were both saved from starvation."

"Was not this lady Madame de Boulainvilliers?"

"It was."

"She is dead, I believe?"

"Yes, and her death plunged me again into the abyss."

"Her husband still lives, and is rich."

"Ah, Madame, it is to him that I owe my later misfortunes, as to my mother I owe the miseries of my childhood. I had grown tall and perhaps attractive, and he wished to put a price upon his benefits, which I refused to pay. It was at just this time that Madame de Boulainvilliers died; and I — I, whom she had married to a brave and loyal soldier, Monsieur de La Motte — found myself, separated as I was from my husband, more desolate after her death than I had been after that of my father.

"This is my story, Madame. I have made it short. A tale of suffering is always tedious, and is not to be inflicted on those who are happy, though they be as benevolent as you, ladies, seem to be."

A long silence followed this conclusion of Madame de La Motte's story. The elder lady was the first to speak. "Where, then, is your husband?" she asked.

"He is in garrison, at Bar-sur-Aube; he serves in the gendarmerie, and is waiting, like myself, in hopes of better times."

"But you have laid your case before the court?"

"Certainly."

"The name of Valois must have awakened some sympathy?"

"I know not, Madame, what sentiments it may have awakened, for I have received no answer to any of my petitions."

"And yet you have seen the ministers, the king, the queen?"

"No one. Everywhere I have failed."

"You cannot beg, however."

"No, Madame; I have lost the habit, but — "

"But what?"

"But I can die of hunger, like my poor father."

"You have no child?"

"No, Madame; and my husband, by getting killed in the service of his king, will find for himself at least a glorious end to our miseries."

"Can you, Madame, — I beg pardon if I seem intrusive, — but can you bring forward the proofs of your genealogy?"

Jeanne rose, opened a drawer, and drew out some papers which she presented to the lady, who rose to come nearer the light that she might examine them; but seeing that Jeanne eagerly seized this opportunity to observe her more clearly than she had yet been able to do, turned away as if the light hurt her eyes, thus turning her back to Madame de La Motte. In this position she examined all the papers, one after the other.

"But," said she, at last, "these are only copies. I do not find a single original."

"Oh, Madame, I have the originals safe, and am ready to produce them — "

"If any important occasion should present itself, you mean?" said the lady, smiling.

"It is, doubtless, Madame, an important occasion which procures me the honor of your visit; but these papers are so precious — "

"That you cannot show them to every stranger. I understand you."

"Oh, Madame!" cried the countess, who at last had

obtained a clear view of her protectress's face, full of dignity, "I cannot think of treating you as a stranger; you shall see them;" and opening a secret drawer above the other, she drew out the originals, which were enclosed in an old portfolio, on which were the arms of the Valois.

The lady took them, and after examining them said, "You are right; these papers are perfectly regular, and I advise you to exhibit them without fail to the proper authorities."

"And what, in your opinion, Madame, should I gain by that?"

"Why, without any doubt, a pension for yourself, and advancement for Monsieur de La Motte, if he prove worthy of it."

"My husband is an honorable man, Madame, and has never failed in his military duties."

"It is enough, Madame," said the sister of charity, drawing her hood still more over her face. Madame de La Motte anxiously watched her every movement. She saw her feel in her pocket and draw out first the embroidered handkerchief with which she had shielded her face when in the sledge, then a small roll about an inch in diameter, and three or four in length, which she placed on the chiffonniere, saying, "The treasurer of our charity authorizes me, Madame, to offer you this small assistance, until you shall obtain something better."

Madame de La Motte threw a rapid glance at the little roll. "Three-franc pieces," thought she, "and there must be fifty, or even a hundred of them. So here are a hundred and fifty, perhaps three hundred, francs fallen from the sky. The roll is somewhat short for a hundred pieces, but it is also too long for fifty."

While she was thus thinking, the two ladies moved

quickly into the outer room, where Clotilde had fallen asleep in her chair.

The candle was burning out in the socket, and the smell which came from it made the ladies draw out their smelling-bottles. Jeanne woke Clotilde, who seized the remnant of the candle and held it like a beacon light over the gloomy staircase, notwithstanding the protests of the two strangers, whom she lighted and at the same time poisoned.

"Au revoir, Madame la Comtesse," they cried, as they hurried downstairs.

"Where may I have the honor of coming to thank you?" asked Jeanne.

"We will let you know," replied the elder lady, going down as fast as possible.

Madame de La Motte ran back into her room, impatient to examine her rouleau, but her foot struck against something which rolled from the mat on to the floor. On picking it up and holding it to the lamp, she found it to be a gold box, round, flat, and plainly ornamented. There were some chocolate confections in it, and evidently it also contained a secret compartment. The countess at last found the spring, and the lid to the secret compartment flew open and disclosed the portrait of a woman of masculine beauty and imperious majesty. The coiffure was German, and she wore a collar like that of an order. A monogram, composed of an M and a T encircled by a laurel wreath, ornamented the inside of the box. Madame de La Motte did not doubt, from the resemblance of the portrait to the lady who had just left her, that it was that of her mother or grandmother. She ran to the stairs to call to the ladies, but hearing the street-door shut, she ran back thinking to call them from the window, but arrived there only in time to see a cabriolet going rapidly away.

The countess, no longer hoping to recall her two protectresses, looked again at the box, and concluded that she would send it to Versailles. Then seizing the roulean, which was lying on the chiffonniere, "I was not mistaken," she said; "there are only fifty crowns here." When she opened it, she uttered a cry of joy, "Double louis! fifty double louis! two thousand and four hundred francs!" and transported at the sight of more gold than she had ever seen before in her life, she remained with clasped hands and open lips. "A hundred louis!" she repeated; "these ladies are, then, very rich. Oh, I will find them again!"

CHAPTER IV.

BÉLUS.

MADAME DE LA MOTTE was not wrong in thinking that the cabriolet which she saw going away contained the two sisters of charity. They had, in fact, found waiting for them near the house a cabriolet, of the style common at that period, — that is to say, with high wheels, a light body, elevated dasher, and a convenient seat for the groom who rode behind.

This cabriolet drawn by a magnificent bay horse of Irish breed, short-tailed and plump, had been brought to the Rue Saint Claude by the same servant who had driven the sledge, and whom the sister of charity had called Weber, as we have stated above.

Weber was holding the horse by the bit when the ladies arrived, and was trying to restrain the impatience of the spirited animal who with nervous foot pawed the snow, gradually hardening since the coming on of night. When the two ladies appeared, —

"Matame," said Weber, "I hat intented to pring Scibio, who is ferry gentle and eassy to manage. But Scibio hort von of his legs last efening. Only Pélus vas left, and Pélus, he pe hart to manage."

"Oh, for me, Weber," said the elder of the two ladies, "you know that is of no consequence; I have a strong hand, and am used to driving."

"I know dat Matame trives ferry vell, but de roats be ferry pad. Vere is Matame going?"

"To Versailles."

"Py de poolfards, den?"

"By no means, Weber. It freezes, and the boulevards will be covered with ice. The streets will be better, thanks to the thousands of pedestrians who keep the snow from freezing. Come, quick, Weber, quick!"

Weber held the horse for the ladies to get in, then jumped up behind, and they set off at a rapid pace.

"Well, Andrée, what do you think of the countess?" asked the elder lady.

"I think, Madame," she replied, "that Madame de La Motte is poor and unfortunate."

"She has good manners, has she not?"

"Yes, doubtless."

"You are somewhat cold about her, Andrée."

"If I must speak sincerely, there is a look of cunning in her face that does not please me."

"Oh, you are always difficult to please, Andrée; to please you, one must have every good quality. Now I find the little countess interesting and simple, both in her pride and in her humility."

"It is fortunate for her, Madame, that she has succeeded in pleasing your —"

"Take care!" cried the lady, at the same time endeavoring to check her horse, which nearly ran over a street porter at the corner of the Rue Saint Antoine.

"Dake gare!" shouted Weber with the voice of a stentor, and the cabriolet continued its course, followed by the imprecations of the man who had so narrowly escaped; and several other voices being added to his, a furious clamor was raised. But in a few seconds Bélus placed between his mistress and these blasphemers all the distance between the Rue Sainte Catherine and the Place Baudoyer.

There the street divides, and the skilful driver continued her rapid course down the Rue de la Tixéranderie, a narrow street, crowded, and not at all aristocratic. And therefore, notwithstanding her often repeated, "Take care!" notwithstanding Weber's loud roars of warning, one could hear only the furious cries of the foot-passengers, "Oh, the cabriolet! Down with the cabriolet!"

Bélus kept his course, and his driver, though her hand was delicate as a child's, urged him, rapidly and skilfully, through the pools of melted snow or over the more dangerous ice. And yet not the slightest accident had happened. A brilliant lantern threw its light forward upon the course, though this was an excess of precaution which the police had not yet required. No accident, we say, had happened. No passing carriage had been hit, not a post grazed, not a foot-passenger hurt. It was wonderful driving, and yet cries and threats were constantly vociferated.

The cabriolet passed with the same rapidity and the same good fortune through the Rue Saint Médéric, the Rue Saint Martin, and the Rue Aubry-le-Boucher.

It may seem to our readers that in the more civilized quarters of the city the hatred shown toward the aristocratic equipage would become less ferocious. On the contrary, Bélus had but just entered the Rue de la Ferronerie when Weber, always pursued by the vociferations of the populace, noticed that groups were formed as the cabriolet went by. Some had even the appearance of running after it as if to stop it.

But Weber was unwilling to disturb his mistress. He observed her steadiness and skill, and how adroitly she glided through among all those obstacles, animate and inanimate, which are at once the despair and the triumph of the Parisian coachman. As to Bélus, steady on his limbs of steel, he had not once slipped, so careful was the

guiding hand in directing his course among the inequalities of the surface.

The vociferations of the people increased. The lady who held the reins, attributing that hostility to some trivial cause, such as the severity of the weather and the general discontent, resolved to get through with the annoyance as soon as possible. She clicked with her tongue, and on that signal Bélus jumped, and changed his pace to a rapid trot. The shops seemed to fly by them; the foot-passengers leaped aside. The warning shouts, "Take care! Take care!" were continued.

The cabriolet had almost reached the Palais-Royal, and had just passed the end of the Rue du Coq-Saint Honoré where one of the finest of the snow obelisks still proudly stood, though its top was narrowed by the thaw, — it was like a stick of candy which children draw to a sharp point by sucking. This obelisk was surmounted by a glorious ornament of ribbons, — somewhat faded, to be sure, — which supported a placard on which the scrivener of that quarter had written in large characters the following quatrain, hung between two lanterns: —

"Queen, whose beauty is beyond thy grace,
Near a good king take here thy proper place.
If this frail structure be of snow and ice,
Our love for thee is not at all like this."

It was there that Bélus encountered the first serious obstacle. The obelisk, which they were just then lighting up, had attracted a crowd of spectators, who had massed themselves so that it was impossible to go through them at a trot. Bélus was obliged to walk.

But the crowd had seen Bélus coming on at lightning-speed; they had heard the pursuing cries; and although in presence of this obstacle he had stopped short, the sight of the cabriolet seemed to produce upon the crowd the

worst possible effect. However, this time the crowd opened and gave way.

The next obstacle was at the gates of the Palais-Royal, where, in a court-yard which had been thrown open, were a host of beggars crowding round fires which had been lighted there, and receiving soup, which the servants of Monsieur le Duc d'Orleans were distributing to them in earthen basins. But as in Paris a crowd collects to see everything, the number of the spectators of this scene far exceeded that of the actors.

The cabriolet, having surmounted the first obstacle, was obliged to stop at the second, like a ship in the midst of breakers. At the same time the cries which till then the two women had heard only as a vague, confused noise, came to them distinctly from the midst of the mob: "Down with the cabriolet! Down with those that crush the poor!"

"Can it be that those cries are addressed to us?" said the elder lady to her companion.

"Indeed, Madame, I fear so," replied the latter.

"Have we, then, run over any one?"

"I am sure we have not."

"Down with the cabriolet! Down with the crushers!" cried the mob, furiously.

A crowd soon gathered round them, and some even seized Bélus by the reins, who but little pleased by the touch of those rude hands pawed the ground and foamed with rage.

"To the commissary! to the commissary!" cried a voice.

The two ladies looked at each other in terror. Then a thousand voices repeated: "To the commissary! to the commissary!"

Curious heads peeped under the hood of the cabriolet. Remarks began to circulate through the crowd.

"Hold! they are women," said one.

"Yes; Soubise's dolls, D'Hennin's mistresses."

"Opera girls, doubtless," said others, "who think they have a right to crush the poor, because they receive ten thousand francs a month to pay hospital expenses."

A general shout hailed these words.

The two ladies manifested different emotions in that confusion.

The younger lady sank back trembling with fear; the other bent resolutely forward, with frowning brows and compressed lips.

"Oh, Madame!" cried her companion, drawing her back, "for Heaven's sake, take care!"

"To the commissary! to the commissary!" the mob continued crying furiously. "Let us know who they are."

"Ah, Madame, we are lost!" said the younger to her companion.

"Courage, Andrée! courage!" replied the other.

"But they will see you, will recognize you, perhaps."

"Look through the windows, and see if Weber is still there."

"He is trying to get down, but the mob surrounds him. Ah, here he comes."

"Weber," said the lady, in German, "help us to get out."

The man vigorously pushed aside those nearest the carriage, and opened the door. The ladies sprang lightly to the ground. Meantime the mob gave its attention to the horse and the cabriolet, the body of which they began to destroy.

"What, in Heaven's name, does it all mean? Do you understand it, Weber?" said the elder lady, still in German.

"Upon my word, no, Matame," he replied, much more at ease while speaking in his native tongue, and struggling to free a passage for them to pass.

"But they are not men, they are wild beasts," continued the lady; "with what can they reproach me?"

She was answered by a voice, whose polite and gentlemanly tone contrasted strangely with the savage murmurs of the people, and which said, in excellent German, "They reproach you, Madame, with having braved the police order which appeared this morning, and which prohibited, until spring, the use of cabriolets, which are always dangerous, but are especially fatal in this frost, when people can hardly escape being run over."

The lady turned around to see whence came that courteous voice in the midst of all those threatening cries. She perceived a young officer, who, in order to approach her, must have battled as valiantly as Weber had done to maintain his position. The graceful and distinguished appearance, the lofty stature and the martial air of the young man pleased the lady, who hastened to reply, in German, "Oh, *mon Dieu!* Monsieur, I was entirely ignorant of this order."

"You are a foreigner, Madame?" inquired the young officer.

"Yes, Monsieur; but tell me what I must do? They are destroying my cabriolet."

"You must let them destroy it, Madame, and take advantage of that time to escape. The people are furious just now against the rich, who display their luxury in presence of the general misery; and on the pretext of your breaking this regulation, would conduct you before the commissary."

"Oh, never!" cried Andrée.

"Then," said the officer, laughing, "profit by the space which I shall make in the crowd and vanish."

These words were spoken in an easy manner which enabled the strangers to understand that the officer had heard the remarks made about the mistresses of Soubise and D'Hennin. But it was not a time to be punctilious.

"Give us your arm, then, Monsieur, to the nearest place where we can hire a carriage," said the elder lady, in a voice full of authority.

"I was going to make your horse rear, and thereby clear you a passage," said the young man, who did not much wish to take the charge of escorting them through the crowd; "the people will become yet more enraged if they hear us speaking in a language unknown to them."

"Weber," cried the lady, in a firm voice, "make Bélus rear to disperse the crowd."

"And then, Matame?"

"Remain till we are gone."

"Bud dey vill destroy de garriage."

"Let them; what does that matter? Save Bélus if you can, but yourself above all."

"Yes, Matame;" and at the same moment he tickled the irritable Irish horse, who sprang into the midst of the crowd, and overturned the most eager among them, who were clinging to the bridle and to the shafts. At that moment the terror and confusion were very great.

"Your arm, Monsieur!" again said the lady, to the officer. "Come on, little one," turning to Andrée.

"Let us go then, courageous woman," murmured, in a low voice, the young officer, who immediately gave his arm, with real admiration, to her who asked for it.

In a few minutes he had conducted them to a cab-stand; but the men were all asleep on their seats, and the horses, with drooping heads and half-closed eyes, were awaiting their meagre evening rations.

CHAPTER V.

THE ROAD TO VERSAILLES.

THE ladies were free from the crowd for the present; but there was some danger that they might be followed and recognized, when the same tumult would doubtless be renewed, and escape a second time more difficult. The young officer knew this, and therefore hastened to awaken a coachman, held to his seat by the cold even more than by sleep. The cold was so intense that, contrary to the custom of coachmen generally on the alert to rob one another of customers, not one of the automedons at twenty-four sous an hour made any movement, — not even the one to whom the officer addressed himself. He seized the coachman by the collar of his poor overcoat, and shook him so violently that at last he roused him from his stupor.

"Holloa! Ho!" cried the young man in his ear, seeing that he gave signs of life.

"Here, Master, here," said the coachman, dreaming still, and reeling on his box like a drunken man.

"Where do you wish to go, ladies?" asked the officer.

"To Versailles," said the elder lady, still speaking German.

"To Versailles!" cried the coachman; "you said 'to Versailles'?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, to Versailles!" repeated the coachman; "four miles and a half over this ice. No, I would rather not."

"We will pay well," said the lady.

This was repeated to the coachman, in French, by the young officer.

"But how much?" said the coachman; "you see it is not only going, I must come back again."

"A louis; is that enough?" said the younger lady, to the officer, who, turning to the coachman, said, "These ladies offer you a louis."

"Well, that will do, though I risk breaking my horses' legs."

"Why, you rascal, you are entitled to only three francs for going from here to the Château de la Muette, which is half-way. You can see by a little calculation that if you are paid for going and for returning you are entitled to only twelve francs, and you are offered twenty-four."

"Oh, do not stop to bargain!" said the elder lady; "two louis, three louis, twenty louis, provided he will start at once and go on without stopping."

"One is enough, Madame," replied the officer; and then, turning to the coachman, "Come down, you rogue, and open the door."

"I will be paid first," said the man.

"You will!" said the officer, fiercely.

"It is my right."

The officer made a forward movement.

"Oh, let us pay!" said the lady, putting her hand in her pocket. She turned pale. "Oh, *mon Dieu!*" she said, in a low tone, "I have not my purse!"

"Really?"

"And you, Andrée, have you yours?"

The young woman searched, in her turn, with the same anxiety.

"I — I have not mine either!"

"Search all your pockets."

"It is useless!" cried the young woman, with vexation, for she saw that the officer was observing them, and that the coachman was opening his big mouth in a grin of self-congratulation over his precaution. The two ladies searched themselves in vain. Neither of them could find a sou. The officer saw them get impatient, turn red, and grow pale. The situation was becoming complicated.

The ladies were about to offer a gold chain as a pledge, when the young officer, to spare them that humiliation, drew out a louis and offered it to the man, who thereupon got down and opened the door.

The ladies thanked him warmly, and got in.

"And now, you rascal, drive these ladies carefully and honestly."

The ladies looked at each other in terror; they could not bear to see their protector leave them.

"Oh, Madame!" said Andrée, "do not let him go away."

"But why not? We will ask for his address, and return him his louis to-morrow, with a little note of thanks, which you shall write."

"But, Madame, suppose the coachman should not keep faith with us, and should turn us out half-way, what would become of us?"

"Oh, we will take his number!"

"Yes, Madame, I do not deny that you could have him punished afterwards; but meanwhile you would not reach Versailles, and what would they think?"

The elder of the two ladies reflected. "It is true," she said.

The officer advanced to take leave.

"Monsieur," said Andrée, "one word more, if you please."

"At your orders, Madame," replied the officer, visibly

annoyed, but maintaining in his manner, in his tone, and even in the accent of his voice, the most exquisite politeness.

"Monsieur," Andrée continued, "you cannot refuse us one more favor after serving us so much?"

"What is it, Madame?"

"We are afraid of the coachman, who seems so unwilling to go."

"You need not fear," replied he; "I have his number, and if he does not behave well, apply to me."

"To you, Monsieur?" said Andrée, in French, forgetting herself; "we do not even know your name."

"You speak French!" exclaimed the young man, stupefied; "and you have been condemning me all this time to blunder on in German. Oh, really, Madame, that was unkind!"

"Excuse us, Monsieur," said the other lady, coming to Andrée's rescue; "but you must see that, though not perhaps foreigners, we are strangers in Paris, and above all, out of place in a hired carriage. You are sufficiently a man of the world to see that we are in an unfamiliar situation. To oblige us half-way would be only to disoblige us. To be less discreet than you have been up to the present moment would be indiscreet. We judge well of you, Monsieur; be pleased not to judge us unkindly. If you can do us a service do it without reserve, or permit us to thank you and apply elsewhere."

"Madame," said the officer, struck with the tone of the unknown lady, at once charming and noble, "dispose of me."

"Then, Monsieur, have the kindness to get into the carriage with us and accompany us to Versailles."

The officer instantly placed himself opposite to them, and directed the man to drive on.

After proceeding in silence for some little time he began to feel himself surrounded with delicate and delicious perfumes, and gradually began to think better of the ladies' position. "They are," thought he, "ladies who have been detained late at some rendezvous, and are now anxious to regain Versailles, a little frightened and a little ashamed. But, then, how does it happen that these ladies," continued the officer, speaking to himself, "if indeed they are ladies of some distinction, are found riding in a cabriolet, and driving? Oh, to that there is an answer! The cabriolet was too narrow for three persons, and two ladies would not incommode themselves to place a lackey between them. But no money upon either of them! — a serious objection which calls for reflection. However, there was a servant behind, and probably he carried the purse. The carriage, which by this time is broken in pieces, was certainly a very elegant one; and the horse could not have been worth less than one hundred and fifty louis, — therefore they must be rich, so that the accidental want of money proves nothing. But why speak a foreign language when they must be French? However, that at least shows a good education. It is not common for women of intrigue to speak so pure German, and French like native Parisians; besides, there is an air of distinction about them. The supplication of the younger one was touching, and the request of the other was nobly imperious. Indeed, I begin to feel it dangerous to pass two or three hours in a carriage with two such pretty women, — pretty and discreet also; for they do not speak, but wait for me to begin."

On their part the ladies were doubtless thinking of the young officer as he was thinking of them; for just as he had arrived at these conclusions, the elder lady said to her companion, but this time in English, —

"Really, my dear, this coachman crawls along; we shall never reach Versailles. Our poor companion must be bored to death."

"Particularly," answered Andrée, smiling, "as our conversation has not been very amusing."

"Do you not think he has a most distinguished air?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Besides, he wears the uniform of a naval officer, and all naval officers are of good family. He looks well in it too, for he is very handsome, is he not?"

The young lady was about to reply, and doubtless in the same flattering strain, when she was stopped by a gesture of the officer, who said, in excellent English, "Your pardon, ladies, but I must tell you that I understand English perfectly. I do not, however, know Spanish; therefore if you are acquainted with and like to speak in that language, you at least will be sure of not being understood."

"Oh, Monsieur," replied the elder lady, laughing, "we had no harm to say of you, as you must have perceived; we will therefore not be too ceremonious, and if we have anything to say we will say it in French."

"Thanks, Madame; but if my presence be irksome to you —"

"You cannot suppose that, Monsieur, since we begged you to accompany us."

"Exacted it, even," said the younger of the two ladies.

"Oh, Madame, you make me ashamed. Pardon me my momentary hesitation; but you know Paris, do you not? Paris is full of snares and deceptions."

"You, then, took us for — Come, be frank."

"Monsieur took us for snares, that is all."

"Oh, ladies!" said the young man, quite humiliated, "I assure you, no such thought entered my mind."

"But what is the matter? The coach stops."

"I will see, Madame."

"Oh! I think we are overturning; take care, Monsieur!"

And the hand of the younger lady, suddenly extended, fell on the young man's shoulder. The pressure of the hand thrilled him, and by a movement quite natural, he tried to take hold of it; but Andrée, who had yielded to a momentary impulse of fear, had already thrown herself back again in the carriage. He therefore got out and found the coachman engaged in raising one of his horses, which had fallen on the ice.

The horse, with his aid, was soon on its legs again, and they pursued their way. It seemed, however, that this little interruption had destroyed the intimacy which had begun to spring up, for after the ladies had asked and been told the cause of their detention, silence again fell upon the trio of travellers.

The officer, moved by the touch of that warm and palpitating hand, wished at least to have a foot as a substitute; he therefore extended his leg, but with all his skill he encountered nothing, or rather he had the mortification of perceiving that what he touched was withdrawn from him. Once when he had barely grazed the foot of the elder lady, she said to him, with the greatest coolness, "Pardon me, Monsieur, I am very much in your way, am I not?"

He colored up to the ears, and felt thankful to the darkness, which hid his blushes. After this he desisted, and remained perfectly still, as if he were in a church, fearing even to breathe, and shrinking back into the corner of the carriage. But by degrees, and in spite of himself, a strange impression invaded his thought, his whole being. He felt the presence of the two charming women without

touching them; he saw them without looking at them. Gradually becoming accustomed to their proximity, it seemed to him that a portion of their existence had united with his. He would have given the world to renew the conversation; which, however, he did not dare to do, for he was afraid of uttering platitudes, — he, who on their departure from Paris even disdained to utter one of the commonplace phrases current in the language of society. He was afraid of appearing simple or impertinent in the eyes of these women, whom but an hour before he thought he was honoring too much by giving them a louis and showing them ordinary politeness.

In a word, as all sympathies in this life are explained by the affinities of fluids brought into contact at the right time, a powerful magnetism, emanating from the perfumes and youthful warmth of those three bodies brought together by chance, controlled the young man, and filled his thoughts while dilating his heart. Thus sometimes the most real, the sweetest, the most ardent passions are born, live, and die in the space of a few moments. They have charm because ephemeral; they have strength because they are restrained.

The officer said not another word. The ladies conversed in whispers.

However, as he was all the time listening, he now and then caught a word to which his imagination lent some sort of meaning. This was what he heard: "The late hour . . . the gates . . . pretext for the journey — "

The carriage stopped again. This time it was not on account of a fallen horse or a broken wheel. After three hours of courageous effort the worthy coachman had succeeded in warming his hands, — that is to say, he had lashed his horses into a foam and had reached Versailles, whose long avenues appeared gloomy and deserted under

the reddish rays of the street-lamps, which, whitened by the frost, looked like a double file of ghosts.

The young man understood that they had reached the end of their journey. By what magic, then, had the time seemed to him so short?

The coachman bent down to the front window. "Master," said he, "we are at Versailles."

"Where do you wish to go, ladies?" asked the officer.

"To the Place d'Armes."

"To the Place d'Armes!" the young man called out to the coachman.

"I must drive to the Place d'Armes?" said the latter.

"Yes, certainly, since you are so directed."

"There will be a little tip for that?" asked the Auvergnese, sniggering.

"Go on."

The cracking of the whip-lash was heard again.

"I must certainly say something," thought the officer. "I shall be taken for an imbecile, after having been considered impertinent."

"Ladies," he said, with some hesitation still, "you have reached home."

"Thanks to your generous aid."

"What trouble we have given you!" said the younger of the two ladies.

"Oh, I have more than forgotten it, Madame."

"Well, Monsieur, we shall not forget. Your name, if you please, Monsieur."

"My name? Oh!"

"It is the second time you have been asked for it. Take care! And you do not mean to bestow a louis upon us, do you?"

"Oh, Madame, if that is it," said the young man, rather piqued, "I yield; I am the Comte de Charny, and as Madame has already remarked, a naval officer."

"Charny," repeated the elder lady, in a tone that meant, "Very good; I shall not forget it."

"Georges, Georges de Charny," the officer added.

"Georges!" the younger lady murmured.

"And you live —"

"Hôtel des Princes, Rue de Richelieu."

The coach stopped. The elder lady opened the door and jumped out quickly, holding out a hand to her companion.

"But at least," said he, preparing to follow them, "take my arm, ladies; you are not yet at your own home, and the Place d'Armes is not a residence."

"Do not stir!" said both ladies, speaking together.

"What! I must not stir?"

"No; remain in the coach."

"You cannot walk alone at this time of night; it is impossible!"

"Now, you see," said the elder lady, gayly, "after almost refusing to oblige us, you wish to be too obliging."

"But, Madame —"

"Monsieur, remain to the end a loyal and gallant cavalier. We thank you, Monsieur de Charny, with all our hearts; and since you are, as I just said, a loyal and gallant cavalier, we will not even ask your word —"

"To do what, Madame?"

"To shut the door, and order the man to drive back to Paris; which you will do, — will you not? — without even looking back at us."

"You are right, ladies, and my word would be useless. Driver, we will return, my friend;" and he put a second louis into the coachman's brawny hand.

The worthy Auvergnese trembled with joy. "*Morbleu!*" said he, "the horses may founder if they choose!"

"To be sure; they are paid for," murmured the officer.

The carriage rolled on, and rapidly. The noise of the wheels covered the young man's sigh, — a voluptuous sigh; for the sybarite had stretched himself on the cushions still warm with the contact of the two lovely, unknown ladies.

As to them, they remained motionless till the carriage was out of sight, and then took their way toward the castle.

CHAPTER VI.

LAURENT.

JUST at the moment when the travellers were starting on their way, gusts of wind bore to their ears, from the church of Saint Louis, the striking of a clock.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* a quarter to twelve," they both cried out together.

"See, all the gates are shut," said the younger.

"Oh, that is nothing, dear Andrée; for if they were open, we would not go in here. Come, quick! quick! Let us go by way of the reservoirs." And they turned to the right, where there was a private entrance to the gardens.

When they arrived there, "The door is shut, Andrée," said the elder lady, rather uneasily.

"Let us knock, Madame."

"No, we will call. Laurent must be waiting for me; I told him that perhaps I should return late."

"Well, then, I will call," said Andrée, approaching the door.

"Who is there?" said a voice from inside.

"Oh, that is not Laurent's voice!" said the younger lady, in alarm. "No, indeed!"

The other lady advanced, and called softly, "Laurent!"

No answer.

"Laurent!" again she called, knocking.

"There is no Laurent here," replied the voice, rudely.

"But," said Andrée, peremptorily, "whether you are Laurent or not, open the gate."

"I will not open it."

"But, my friend, you should know that Laurent always opens to us."

"I have nothing to do with Laurent; I have my orders."

"Who are you, then?"

"Who am I?"

"Yes."

"Who are you?" said the voice.

The question was rudely put, but it was no time for ceremony; they must answer.

"We are ladies of her Majesty's suite; we lodge in the castle, and we wish to get home."

"Well, I, mesdames, am a Swiss of the Salischamade company, and I shall do just the opposite of what Laurent would do; for I shall leave you outside the gate."

"Oh!" murmured the ladies, one of whom pressed the hands of the other, with a movement of anger. Then making an effort over herself, she said: "My friend, I understand that you are obeying orders, and I do not quarrel with you for that, — it is a soldier's duty; only, do me the favor to call Laurent. He cannot be far away."

"I must not leave my post."

"Then send some one."

"I have no one to send."

"For pity's sake!"

"Eh, *mordieu!* Madame, sleep in the town. That is no great matter. Oh, if they should shut the door of the barracks in my face I should soon find a sleeping-place, you may be sure."

"Grenadier, listen," said the elder of the two ladies, with resolution; "twenty louis for you if you open."

"And ten years in irons. No, I thank you; forty-eight francs a year are not enough for that."

"I will have you appointed sergeant."

"Yes; and he who gave me the order will have me shot. I thank you!"

"Who, then, gave you the order?"

"The king."

"The king!" both ladies exclaimed, with terror; "oh, we are lost!" The younger lady seemed almost distracted.

"Let us see, let us see," said the elder, "is there no other gate?"

"Oh, Madame! if they have closed this one they have closed the others. And if we do not find Laurent here, at his usual post, where do you think we can find him? Oh, no! it has been all arranged."

"It is true. You are right. Andrée, Andrée, this is a frightful trick on the part of the king. Oh! oh!" To these last words the lady gave an accent of scorn and threatening.

This gate of the reservoirs was built so far into the thick wall as to make of the recess a sort of vestibule, and on each side of this vestibule there was a stone-bench. The ladies sank down on one of these benches, in a state of agitation bordering on despair. They could see the light under the gate, and could hear the steps of the sentinel, and the noise he made with his gun as he carried it to his shoulder or rested it on the ground. Beyond that thin obstacle of oak, safety; on the outside shame, scandal, almost death.

"Oh, to-morrow, to-morrow, when all will be discovered!" murmured the elder lady.

"But you will need only to state the truth."

"Will any one believe it?"

"You have proofs. Madame, the soldier will not stay here all night," said the younger lady, who seemed to gain courage in proportion as her companion lost it; "at some

time during the night he will be relieved, and his successor will perhaps be more considerate. Let us wait."

"Yes, but the patrol will come at midnight, and I shall be found waiting outside the gates, — hiding myself. It is infamous! See, Andrée, the blood mounts to my face; I am suffocating!"

"Oh, take courage, Madame! — you who are always so brave. I, just now so weak, I am supporting you."

"There is some plot under all this, Andrée, and we are the victims of it. This never happened before; this gate has never been closed. It will kill me, Andrée; I am dying!" And she threw herself back as if she were really suffocating.

At this moment a step resounded upon the dry, white pavement of Versailles, so little trodden in these days. At the same time the gay and joyous voice of a young man was heard singing one of those songs the affected style of which belongs particularly to the period we are endeavoring to describe.

"That voice!" cried the two ladies, at the same time.

"I recognize it," said the elder.

"It is that of —"

The young man continued his song.

"It is he!" whispered the lady who had been so much agitated, into the ear of Andrée; "it is he! he will save us."

A young man, wrapped up in a fur riding-coat, came quickly up, and without noticing them knocked at the door and called, "Laurent."

"Brother," said the elder lady, touching him on the shoulder.

"The queen!" cried he, starting back and taking off his hat.

"Hush! Good-evening, brother."

"Good-evening, Madame; good-evening, sister. You are not alone?"

"No; I am with Mademoiselle de Taverney."

"Ah! Good-evening, Mademoiselle."

"Monseigneur," murmured Andrée.

"Are you going out, ladies?" he asked.

"No."

"Then you are going in?"

"We would go in if we could."

"Have you not called Laurent?"

"Certainly we have."

"Well?"

"Just call Laurent and you will see."

The young man, whom the reader has perhaps already recognized as the Comte d'Artois, approached and again called, "Laurent," at the same time knocking on the door.

"Good! the play begins again. I warn you," answered the voice of the guard from within, "that if you trouble me any more, I will go and call my commanding officer."

"Who is this?" asked the count, turning round in astonishment to the queen.

"A guard who has been substituted for Laurent, that is all."

"By whom?"

"By the king."

"The king?"

"Certainly, the man told us so himself."

"And with special instructions?"

"Most strict, apparently."

"*Diable!* we must capitulate."

"How can we?"

"We will give the fellow some money."

"I have already offered it, and he has refused to take it."

"Offer him promotion."

"I have offered that also, but he would not listen."

"Then there is but one way."

"What?"

"I must make a noise."

"You will compromise us; my dear Charles, I entreat you!"

"Not the least in the world; you keep in the background. I will knock like a deaf man, I will cry out like a blind man; they will open at last, and you can slip in after me."

"Try, then."

The young prince began calling Laurent, knocking at the door and striking with his sword, until at last the guard cried out in a rage, "Ah, well! if you are going to carry on like that, I will call my officer."

"Eh, *pardieu!* call, you rascal, that is just what I want."

They soon heard other steps approaching on the other side of the door. The queen and Andrée kept close behind the Comte d'Artois, ready to slip in if the door should open; then they heard the guard explain the cause of the noise. "Lieutenant," he said, "there are some ladies with a gentleman who has just called me a rascal. They insist on entering."

"Well, as we belong to the palace," said the count, "what is there surprising in that?"

"It is no doubt a natural wish, Monsieur, but it is forbidden," replied the officer.

"Forbidden! by whom? *morbleu!*"

"By the king."

"I beg pardon; but the king would not wish an officer of the palace to sleep outside."

"Monsieur, it is not for me to scrutinize the intentions of the king; I must obey his orders, that is all."

"Come, Lieutenant, open the door; we cannot talk through this oak."

"Monsieur, I repeat to you that my orders are to keep it shut; and if you are an officer, as you say you are, you ought to know what an order is."

"Lieutenant, you are speaking to the colonel of a regiment."

"Excuse me then, Colonel, but my order is a formal one."

"But they cannot concern a prince. Come, Monsieur, a prince cannot sleep outside, and I am a prince."

"My prince, I am in despair; but the king has ordered —"

"The king has ordered you to turn away his brother like a beggar or a robber? I am the Comte d'Artois, Monsieur. *Mordieu!* you run a great risk by keeping me freezing at the gate."

"Monseigneur le Comte d'Artois," said the lieutenant, "God is my witness that I would shed every drop of my blood for your Royal Highness; but the king did me the honor to tell me, when he confided to me the care of this gate, to open it to no one, not even to himself, the king, if he presented himself after eleven o'clock. Therefore, Monseigneur, I ask your pardon humbly; but I am a soldier, and if, instead of you, I should see behind this gate her Majesty the queen benumbed with cold, I should answer her Majesty as I have just had the pain of answering you."

Having said this, the officer, after respectfully bidding the prince good-night, turned away, and went back to his post.

As for the soldier who was standing against the gate itself, he did not dare to breathe, and his heart beat so violently that the Comte d'Artois, by putting his back against the gate, might have felt the pulsations.

"We are lost!" said the queen.

"Do they know that you are out?" asked the count.

"Alas! I know not."

"Perhaps, then, this order is directed against me; the king knows I often go out at night, and stay late. Madame la Comtesse d'Artois must have heard something, and complained to him; hence this tyrannical order."

"Ah, no, brother! I thank you with all my heart for the delicacy with which you try to reassure me; but I feel that it is against me that these precautions are taken."

"Impossible, sister! the king has too much esteem —"

"Meanwhile, I am left at the door; and to-morrow a frightful scandal will be the result of a most innocent affair. I know well I have an enemy near the king."

"It may be so; however, I have an idea."

"An idea? tell it quickly."

"An idea which will make your enemy look more stupid than an ass hung by his own halter."

"Oh, if you can but save us from the ridicule of this position, it is all I ask!"

"If I can save you! of course I can. Oh, I am not more foolish than he, although he is more learned than I!"

"Than who?"

"Ah, *pardieu!* the Comte de Provence."

"Ah, then, you also see that he is my enemy!"

"Is he not the enemy of all who are young and beautiful, of all who can do — what he is not able to do?"

"Count, I believe you know something about this order!"

"Perhaps; but do not let us stop here, or we shall perish with the cold. Come with me, dear sister."

"Where?"

"You shall see; to some place where at least you will be warm. Come, and on the way I will tell you what I know about this closing of the gate. Ah, Monsieur de Provence, my dear and unworthy brother! Take my arm, sister, and you the other, Mademoiselle de Taverney, and let us turn to the right;" and they began their walk.

"You were saying of Monsieur de Provence —" said the queen.

"Well, this evening, after the king's supper, he came into the grand cabinet. He had been talking all day to the Comte de Haga, and you had not been seen —"

"At two o'clock I left to go to Paris."

"I knew that well. The king, allow me to tell you, dear sister, was thinking no more of you than of Haroun-al-Raschid, or his Vizier Giaffar, and was talking geography. I listened with some impatience, for I also wanted to go out. Ah, pardon me! we probably did not go out for the same purpose; so that I am wrong —"

"Go on; say what you please."

"Let us turn to the left."

"Where are we going?"

"Oh, close by; take care, there is a heap of snow! Mademoiselle de Taverney, if you leave my arm you will certainly fall! But to return to the king; he was thinking of nothing but latitude and longitude, when Monsieur de Provence said to him, 'I should like to pay my respects to the queen.'"

"Ah!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette.

"'The queen has supper in her own apartments,' replied the king. 'Oh, I thought she was at Paris,' added my brother. 'No, she is in her apartments,' said the king, quietly. 'I have just come from there, and been denied to her,' said Monsieur de Provence. Then I saw the king frown. He dismissed my brother and me, and doubtless

went to make inquiries. Louis is jealous by fits, you know; he must have asked to see you, and when they refused him admission he suspected something."

"Yes; Madame de Misery had orders to do so."

"That is it; and to assure himself of your absence, the king has given that strict order which turns us out of doors."

"Oh, it is shameful treatment. Confess, is it not?"

"Indeed, I think so; but here we are."

"This house?"

"Does it displease you, sister?"

"Oh, I do not say that, — it is charming, on the contrary. But your servants?"

"Well!"

"Should they see me."

"Come in, sister, and I will guarantee that no one sees you."

"Not even the one who will open the door?"

"Not even that one."

"Impossible!"

"We will try," said he, laughing. And he stretched out his hand to the door.

The queen caught his arm. "I beg you, brother, take care."

The prince pressed with his other hand upon an elegantly sculptured panel. The door opened.

The queen could not repress a movement of fear.

"Enter, I pray you," said he; "there is no one near."

The queen looked at Andrée with the expression of one who faces a danger; then she crossed the threshold, with one of those gestures so charming among women, and whose meaning was, "God have mercy!" And the door closed after them.

She found herself in a stuccoed vestibule with marble columns, small, but in perfect taste. The floor was of

mosaic work, representing bouquets of flowers, while numerous rose-trees on marble brackets scented the air with a perfume as delicious as at that time of the year it was rare.

A gentle heat and delicate odors so captivated the senses that when they reached the vestibule, the two ladies forgot not only a portion of their fears but also a portion of their scruples.

"So far well; we are under shelter," said the queen; "and it must be confessed the shelter is quite commodious. But there is one thing, brother, you had better attend to at once."

"What is that?"

"The removal of your servants."

"Oh! nothing easier." And the prince, seizing a bell-pull placed in the fluting of a column, a single stroke was immediately heard, which vibrated mysteriously through the lower part of the house.

The two ladies uttered a cry of terror.

"Is that the way in which you send away your servants, brother?" asked the queen. "On the contrary I should think that you were calling them."

"If I should ring a second time, yes, some one would come; but as I touched the bell only once, be easy, sister, no one will come."

The queen began to laugh.

"Well, you are a man of precaution," said she.

"Now, dear sister," continued the prince, "you cannot live in a vestibule; will you take the trouble to walk up stairs?"

"We obey," said the queen; "the genius of the house does not seem very malevolent." And she followed the prince upstairs.

Their steps could not be heard on the Aubusson carpet

which covered the stairs. Having reached the first story the prince touched another bell, the sound of which again startled the queen and Mademoiselle de Taverney, who were taken by surprise. But they were doubly astonished when they saw the doors of this story open of their own accord.

"Really, Andrée," said the queen, "I am beginning to tremble; how is it with you?"

"Oh, Madame, I shall follow fearlessly wherever your Majesty goes."

"Nothing can be more simple, sister, than that which is happening," said the young prince; "the door opposite you is the door of your apartment. See." And he pointed out to the queen a charming apartment of which we cannot avoid giving a description.

A little antechamber finished in rosewood, with two dressing-tables by Boule, ceiling painted by Boucher, and a floor of rosewood, led to a boudoir hung with white cashmere embroidered in flowers by the most skilful artists. The furniture of this boudoir was a tapestry worked in silk, and shaded with that art which rendered a Gobelins tapestry of that period equivalent to a picture by a master. Beyond the boudoir was a beautiful bedchamber in blue, hung with curtains of lace and silk, a sumptuous bed in a dark alcove, a bright fire in the fire-place of white marble, twelve perfumed candles burning in the candelabra of Clodion, a screen of blue lacquer with Chinese figures in gold, — such were the marvels which met the eyes of the ladies as they timidly entered this elegant apartment.

Not a living being was to be seen; everywhere warmth, light, without their being able to discover the causes of such delightful effects.

The queen, who had entered the boudoir with reserve, now paused a moment on the threshold of the bedchamber.

The prince apologized in a very polite manner for the necessity which required him to confide to his sister a secret unworthy of her.

The queen replied by a half-smile, which expressed more than any words she could have spoken.

"Sister," added the Comte d'Artois, "this apartment is my bachelor home; I alone enter here, and I always enter alone."

"Almost always," said the queen.

"No, always."

"Ah!" said the queen.

"Moreover," he continued, "there are in this boudoir a sofa and an easy-chair upon which many times, when night overtakes me at the chase, I have slept as well as in my bed."

"I understand now," said the queen, "why Madame la Comtesse is sometimes uneasy."

"Confess, however, that if she is uneasy about me to-night, it will be without reason."

"Of to-night I say nothing, but other nights — "

"He who is wrong once is always wrong."

"Let us stop talking," said the queen, sitting down in an easy-chair. "I am very tired," she said, "are not you, Andrée?"

"Oh! I can scarcely stand, and if your Majesty permits — "

"Indeed, you look pale, Mademoiselle," said the count.

"Do not stand on ceremony, my dear," said the queen; "sit down, or even go to bed. Monsieur le Comte gives us up this room, — do you not, Charles?"

"For your exclusive use, Madame."

"One moment, Count. If you go away, how can we recall you?"

"You will not need me, sister; once established, you are mistress of this house."

"But there are other rooms?"

"Certainly, there is a dining-room which I advise you to visit."

"With a table ready spread, doubtless."

"Why, certainly; and Mademoiselle de Taverney, who seems to me to need it much, will find there soup, the wing of a chicken, and a glass of wine, — and you, my sister, a collection of those preserved fruits you like so much."

"And all this without servants?"

"Not one."

"We will see; but afterwards?"

"Well?"

"Why, our return to the palace."

"You must not think of returning to-night. At six o'clock the gates will be opened, and you must leave here at a quarter before six. You will find in these drawers mantles of all colors and all shapes, if you wish to disguise yourselves. Return, then, to the palace, regain your rooms, go to bed, and all will be right."

"But you, what will you do?"

"Oh, I am going away."

"What! we turn you out, my poor brother?"

"It would not be proper for me to remain in the same house with you, sister."

"But you must sleep somewhere."

"Do not fear; I have three other houses like this."

The queen laughed. "And he pretends Madame la Comtesse has no cause to be anxious! Oh, I will tell her," said she, with a charming gesture.

"Then I will tell the king everything," replied the prince, in the same tone.

"He is right, we are in his power."

"Entirely. It is humiliating; but what can you do?"

"Submit. So you say that in order to go away to-morrow morning without seeing any one —"

"A single pull at the bell-cord on the column below —"

"On which, — the one on the right hand or on the left?"

"It makes no difference."

"The door will open?"

"And will close again."

"Of itself?"

"Of itself."

"Thanks. Good-night, brother."

"Good-night, sister." He bowed and disappeared, Andrée closing the door after him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE QUEEN'S BEDCHAMBER.

THE next day, or rather the same morning, for our last chapter brought us to two o'clock, King Louis XVI., in a violet-colored morning dress, wearing no orders, and with no powder in his hair, knocked at the door of the queen's antechamber.

A waiting-woman partly opened the door, and recognizing the king, "Sire!" said she.

"The queen?" asked Louis XVI., in a brusque manner.

"Her Majesty is asleep, Sire."

The king made a sign to the woman to move, but she did not stir.

"Well!" cried the king, "will you move? You see very well that I wish to pass."

The king had at times a promptness of action which his enemies called brutality.

"But the queen is asleep, Sire," objected the woman, timidly.

"I told you to let me pass," answered the king, going in as he spoke.

When he reached the door of the bedroom the king saw Madame de Misery, first lady-in-waiting to the queen, reading in her prayer-book.

This lady rose on perceiving the king. "Sire," she said, in a low voice and with a profound reverence, "her Majesty has not yet called me."

"Really!" said the king, in a mocking tone.

"But, Sire, it is only half-past six o'clock, and her Majesty never rings before seven."

"And you are sure that her Majesty is asleep in bed?"

"I cannot affirm that she is asleep, Sire, but I am certain that she is in bed."

"She is there, then?"

"Yes, Sire."

The king could contain himself no longer, but went straight to the door, and turned the gilded door-knob with obstreperous haste.

The queen's chamber was as dark as in the middle of the night; shutters, blinds, and curtains, hermetically closed, shut out the light of day. A night-lamp, burning on a small table in the most remote corner of the room, left the queen's alcove in shadow, where the large white silk curtains embroidered with *fleurs de lis* in gold, fell in waving folds around her.

The king walked rapidly toward the bed.

"Oh, Madame de Misery!" said the queen, "how noisy you are! You have awakened me!"

The king stopped, astounded.

"It is not Madame de Misery," he murmured.

"Ah, it is you, Sire!" added Marie Antoinette, raising herself on one elbow.

"Good morning, Madame," said the king, rather sharply.

"What good wind brings you, Sire?" asked the queen. "Madame de Misery! Madame de Misery! come and open the windows."

The women came in, and in accordance with the custom the queen had made them adopt, they opened both doors and windows to admit the fresh air, which Marie Antoinette took pleasure in breathing on first awaking.

"You sleep well, Madame," said the king, sitting down near the bed, after casting scrutinizing glances round the room.

"Yes, Sire; I read late, and consequently, if your Majesty had not awakened me, I should be asleep still."

"How was it that you did not receive yesterday, Madame?"

"Receive, and whom, — your brother, Monsieur de Provence?" said the queen, with presence of mind, anticipating the suspicions of the king.

"Precisely, — yes, my brother; he wished to pay his respects to you, and was refused."

"Well?"

"They told him you were away."

"Did they say that?" asked the queen, carelessly. "Madame de Misery! Madame de Misery!"

The first lady-in-waiting appeared at the door, bringing on a golden salver a number of letters addressed to the queen. "Did your Majesty call me?" asked Madame de Misery.

"Yes. Was Monsieur de Provence told yesterday that I was away from the palace?"

Madame de Misery, in order not to pass before the king, went behind him, and held out the salver on which were the letters to the queen. She kept under her thumb one of these letters, the hand-writing of which the queen recognized.

"Tell his Majesty," continued Marie Antoinette, with the same indifferent manner, "what reply was given Monsieur de Provence yesterday when he presented himself at my door. I do not remember myself what it was."

"Sire," said Madame de Misery, while the queen was opening the letter, "Monseigneur le Comte de Provence

called yesterday to pay his respects to her Majesty, and I told him that her Majesty was not receiving."

"And by whose order?"

"By order of the queen."

"Ah!" said the king.

Meantime the queen had opened the letter, and read these two lines: "You returned from Paris yesterday, and entered the palace at eight o'clock in the evening. Laurent saw you."

With the same air of indifference the queen had opened a half-dozen notes, letters, and petitions, which were scattered over the quilt of eider-down. "Well?" she said, turning to look at the king.

"I thank you, Madame," said the latter to Madame de Misery, who withdrew from the room.

"Pardon, Sire!" said the queen, "but will you answer me one question?"

"And what is that, Madame?"

"Am I, or am I not, at liberty to see Monsieur de Provence only when it pleases me?"

"Oh, perfectly at liberty, Madame; but —"

"Well, his conversation wearies me; besides, he dislikes me, and I certainly return the compliment. I expected his visit, and went to bed at eight o'clock to avoid it. But you look disturbed, Sire."

"Nothing, nothing!"

"One would imagine that you doubted."

"But —"

"But what?"

"I believed you to be in Paris, yesterday."

"At what time."

"At the time at which you pretend to have gone to bed."

"Doubtless, I went to Paris. Well, do not people return from Paris?"

"Of course. But all, Madame, depends on what time they return."

"Ah, ah! you wish to know at what time exactly I returned from Paris, then?"

"Why, yes."

"Nothing can be more easy, Sire. Madame de Misery!"

The lady reappeared.

"What time was it when I returned from Paris yesterday?" asked the queen.

"About eight o'clock, your Majesty."

"I do not believe it!" said the king; "you are mistaken, Madame de Misery. Inquire."

The lady-in-waiting, erect and unmoved, turned toward the door, "Madame Duval!" said she.

"Yes, Madame," replied a voice.

"At what time did her Majesty return from Paris yesterday?"

"About eight o'clock, Madame," replied the second lady-in-waiting.

"You must be mistaken, Madame Duval," said Madame de Misery.

Madame Duval put her head out of the window of the antechamber and cried, "Laurent!"

"Who is Laurent?" asked the king.

"The porter at the gate where her Majesty entered," said Madame de Misery.

"Laurent," said Madame Duval, "what time was it when her Majesty came home last evening?"

"About eight o'clock," answered Laurent, from the terrace below.

The king bent his head.

Madame de Misery dismissed Madame Duval, who dismissed Laurent.

The king and queen were left alone.

Louis XVI. felt very much ashamed, and was making every effort to conceal this feeling.

But the queen, instead of triumphing over the victory she had just won, said coldly, "Well, Sire, is there anything else you wish to know?"

"Oh, nothing," cried he, taking her hand in his, "forgive me; I do not know what came into my head. See my joy; it is as great as my repentance. You will not be angry, will you? I am in despair at having annoyed you."

The queen withdrew her hand from that of the king.

"Well! what are you doing, Madame?" asked Louis.

"Sire, a queen of France must not tell a falsehood."

"What do you mean?" asked the astonished king.

"I mean that I did not return at eight o'clock last evening."

The king drew back in surprise.

"I mean," continued the queen, in the same cold manner, "that I returned only at six o'clock this morning."

"Madame!"

"And that but for the kindness of Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, who gave me an asylum, and lodged me, out of pity, in one of his houses, I should have been left all night at the gate of the palace like a beggar."

"Ah, you had not then returned!" said the king, gloomily; "then I was right."

"I beg your pardon, Sire; but you are drawing from what I have just said an arithmetical conclusion, not the conclusion of a gentleman."

"In what, Madame?"

"In this,—that if you wish to know whether I return late or early, you have no need to close the gates, with orders not to open them, but simply to come to me and ask, 'Madame, at what time did you return?'"

"Oh!" cried the king.

"You are no longer permitted to doubt, Monsieur. Your spies have been deceived, your precautions nullified, and your suspicions dissipated. I saw you ashamed of having used violence toward a woman in the exercise of her right, and I might have continued to triumph in my victory; but I think your proceedings shameful for a king, and unworthy of a gentleman, and I would not refuse myself the satisfaction of telling you so.

"Oh, do what you will, Sire," she continued, seeing the king about to speak; "nothing can excuse your conduct toward me."

"On the contrary, Madame," he replied, "nothing is more easy. Not a single person in the chateau suspected that you had not already returned; therefore no one could think that my orders referred to you. That they may have been attributed to the dissipations of Monsieur le Comte d'Artois — for that I care nothing."

"Go on, Sire."

"Well, then, I recapitulate, and I say: If I have been careful of appearances with regard to you, Madame, I am right, and I tell you that you are wrong in not having done the same with regard to me; and if I wished simply to give you a private lesson, if you profit by this lesson as you will, to judge from your irritation, — well, I am still right, and I am not sorry for what I have done."

The queen had listened to the reply of her august husband, by degrees becoming calm; not that she was the less irritated, but she wished to reserve all her strength for the struggle which, in her opinion, instead of being finished had scarcely begun.

"Then, Sire," she said, "you think you need no excuse for keeping outside your palace-gate the daughter of Maria Theresa, your wife and the mother of your children? No!

it is in your eyes a pleasantry worthy of a king, the morality of which doubles its value. It is nothing to you, to have forced the queen of France to pass the night in a house where the Comte d'Artois receives the ladies of the Opera and the adventurous women of your court. Oh, no; that is nothing! A king — a philosopher-king, especially — is above all such considerations. And you are a philosopher, — you, Sire. But on this occasion I have reason to thank Heaven that my brother-in-law is a dissipated man, as his dissipation has saved me from disgrace, and his vices have sheltered my honor."

The king colored and moved uneasily on his chair.

"Oh, yes!" continued the queen, with a bitter laugh, "I know that you are a moral king; but your morality produces strange effects. You say that no one knew that I was out. Will you tell me that Monsieur de Provence, your instigator, did not know it, or Monsieur le Comte d'Artois; or my women, who, by my orders, told you falsehoods this morning; or Laurent, — bought by Monsieur d'Artois and myself? Let us continue this habit, Sire, — you, to set spies and guards; and I, to buy them over, and cheat you, — and in a month we will calculate together how much the dignity of the throne and of our marriage has gained by it."

It was evident that these words had made a great impression on him to whom they were addressed.

"You know," said the king, in an altered voice, "that I am always sincere, and willing to acknowledge if I have been wrong. Will you prove to me that you were right to go into Paris in a sledge attended by a gay party of gentlemen, which in the present unhappy state of things is likely to give offence? Will you prove to me that you were right to disappear with them in Paris, like maskers at a ball, and only to reappear scandalously late at night,

when every one else was asleep? You have spoken of the dignity of the throne, and of marriage, and of your position as a mother; think you that it befits a queen, a wife, and a mother, to act thus?"

"I will reply in a few words, Sire; for it seems to me that such accusations merit nothing but contempt. I left Versailles in a sledge, because it is the quickest way of going to Paris at present. I went with Mademoiselle de Taverney, whose reputation, thank God! is certainly one of the purest in our court. I went to Paris, I repeat, to verify the fact that the king of France, — that father of the great family, that royal philosopher, that moral support of all consciences, who takes care of the poor, warms the beggars, and earns the gratitude of the people by his charities, — that the king leaves dying of hunger, exposed to every attack of vice and misery, one of his own family, one who is as much as himself a descendant of the kings who have reigned in France."

"What!" cried the king, in surprise.

"I mounted," continued the queen, "into a garret, and there saw, without fire, almost without light, and without money, the granddaughter of a great prince; and I gave one hundred louis to this victim of royal forgetfulness and neglect. Then as I was detained late there, reflecting on the vanity of all our grandeurs, — for I also am a philosopher sometimes, — and as the cold was severe, and horses go slowly over ice, particularly the horses of a fiacre — "

"The horses of a fiacre!" cried the king. "You returned in a fiacre?"

"Yes, Sire, — in number one hundred and seven."

"Oh, oh!" said the king, with every sign of vexation.

"Yes, and only too happy to get it," said the queen.

"Madame!" interrupted the king, "you have done

well; you always have noble impulses, — too easily excited, perhaps, but the fault belongs to the warmth of generosity for which you are distinguished."

"Thank you, Sire," said the queen, ironically.

"Observe," continued the king, "I never suspected you of anything that was not perfectly pure and honest; it is the expedition itself and the queen's adventurous spirit which annoy me. You have, as usual, been doing good; but the way you set about it makes it injurious to yourself. This is what I reproach you with. You say that I have faults to repair, — that I have failed in my duty to a member of my own family. Tell me who the unfortunate is, and he shall no longer have reason to complain."

"The name of Valois, Sire, is sufficiently illustrious, I should imagine, not to have escaped your memory."

"Ah!" cried Louis, with a shout of laughter, "I know now whom you mean. The little Valois, is it not? — a countess of something or other."

"De La Motte, Sire."

"Precisely, De La Motte;" said the king, "her husband is a gendarme?"

"Yes, Sire."

"And the woman is an intriguer? Oh, don't get angry. She moves heaven and earth; she worries my ministers; she teases my aunts; she overwhelms me with supplications, memorials, and genealogies."

"Eh, Sire! that proves that until now she has applied in vain."

"I do not deny it."

"Is she, or is she not, a Valois?"

"Oh, I believe she is, really."

"Well, then, I ask an honorable pension for her, and a regiment for her husband, — in short, a decent position for this branch of a royal family."

"Oh, gently, Madame, *Diable!* how fast you get on! The little Valois is well able to pluck feathers from me without your help. She has a good beak, I can tell you."

"Oh, I have no fear for you, Sire; your feathers are hard to pluck!"

"An honorable pension? *Mon Dieu!* what are you thinking of, Madame? Do you know what a terrible hole this winter has made in my funds? A regiment for this little gendarme who speculated in marrying a Valois? Why, I have no regiments to give, even to those who deserve them, or who can pay for them. An income befitting a Valois for these people? — when we, monarchs as we are, have not one befitting a rich gentleman! Why, Monsieur d'Orléans has sent his horses and mules to England for sale, and has cut off a third of his establishment. I have put down my wolf-hounds, and given up many things. We are all on the privation list, — great and small, my dear."

"But, nevertheless, Sire, these Valois must not die of hunger!"

"Have you not just given them one hundred louis?"

"And what is that?"

"A royal gift."

"Then give another like it."

"I shall be very careful not to; what you have given is enough for both of us."

"Then a small pension."

"No, I will not bind myself to anything fixed; they will not let us forget them, — they belong to the rodent species. I will give when I have money to spare, but without committing myself to anything for the future. I do not think much of this little Valois."

Saying these words, Louis held out his hand to the

queen, who, yielding to her first impulse, began raising it to her lips. Then suddenly pushing it away, "No," she said.

"You bear malice against me?" said the king, — "you? Well, I on the contrary — "

"Oh, yes; say that you are not angry with me, — you, who order the gates of Versailles to be closed against me! you, who come to my room at half-past six in the morning, and force open the door in a passion, furiously rolling your eyes."

The king laughed. "No," said he; "I am not angry with you."

"You are not now, you mean."

"What will you give me if I prove that I was not, even when I came in?"

"Let me see the proof, in the first place."

"Oh, it is very easy; I have it in my pocket."

"Bah!" said the queen, — but curious, nevertheless. She sat up on the bed. "You have brought something to give me? Oh, really! you are, then, very kind. But I warn you I shall not believe you, unless you show it to me at once. Oh, no subterfuge. I will wager that you are about to give me another promise."

Then with a smile full of kindness, the king began searching in his pockets, with that slowness which makes the child doubly impatient for his toy, the animal for his food, and the woman for her present. At last he drew out a box of red-morocco leather, artistically ornamented with gold.

"A casket!" cried the queen.

The king laid it on the bed. The queen eagerly pounced upon it, and drew it toward her. She opened the casket, and intoxicated, dazzled by the sight, she exclaimed, "Oh, how beautiful it is! *mon Dieu!* how beautiful it is!"

The king smiled with delight. "Do you think so?" said he.

The queen could not answer; she was breathless with admiration. Then she drew out of the box a necklace of diamonds so large, so pure, so glittering, and so skilfully assorted that it seemed to her as if a stream of phosphoric flame glided over her beautiful hands. The necklace undulated like the rings of a serpent, emitting flashes of light from every scale.

"Then you are pleased?" said the king.

"Enchanted, Sire! You make me too happy."

"Really?"

"See this first row; the diamonds are as large as filberts, and so equal in size you could not tell one from another. Then how beautifully the gradation of the rows is managed! The jeweller who made this necklace is an artist."

"They are two."

"Then I wager it is Boehmer and Bossange."

"You have guessed right."

"Indeed, no one but they would risk making such a thing. How beautiful it is, Sire! how beautiful it is!"

"Madame, take care," said the king, "you are paying too much for this necklace!"

"Oh, Sire!" cried the queen, — all the delight fading from her countenance.

That change came so quickly, and was effaced so suddenly, that the king did not have time to notice it. "Come," said he, "grant me a pleasure."

"What is it?"

"That of putting this necklace around your neck."

The queen stopped him, saying, in a tone of sadness, "But, Sire, it is very costly, is it not?"

"Faith, yes!" said the king, laughing. "I have just

told you that you were paying for it more than it is worth; and it will attain to its full value only when in its place, — that is, around your neck."

In saying these words Louis approached the queen, holding in his hands the two ends of the magnificent necklace, to fasten it by the clasp, which was made of a large diamond.

"No, no!" said the queen, "let us not be childish. Put the necklace in your casket, Sire."

"You refuse, then, to allow me to be the first to see it on you?"

"God forbid that I should refuse you that pleasure, Sire, if I were to take the necklace; but —"

"But —" said the king, surprised.

"Neither you, nor any one else, shall see a necklace of this price round my neck."

"You will not wear it?"

"Never!"

"You refuse me?"

"I refuse to wear a million, or a million and a half, of francs around my neck; for this necklace cost fifteen hundred thousand francs, did it not?"

"I do not say it did not," said the king.

"Then I refuse to wear around my neck a million and a half when the king's coffers are empty, when he is forced to stint his charities, and to say to the poor, 'God help you! for I have no more to give.'"

"Are you serious in saying this?"

"Listen, Sire! Monsieur de Sartines told me a short time since that with that sum we could build a ship of the line; and in truth, Sire, the king of France has more need of a ship of the line than the queen of France has need of a necklace."

"Oh!" cried the king, joyfully, and with his eyes full

of tears, "what you have just done is sublime! Thanks, thanks, thanks, Antoinette! you are a good woman;" and to worthily crown this cordial and commonplace demonstration, the good king threw his arms round her neck and kissed her. "Oh, how France will bless you!" he continued, "when it shall hear what you have said."

The queen sighed.

"You regret," said he; "it is not too late."

"No, Sire; it was a sigh of relief. Shut this case, and return it to the jewellers."

"But listen, first; I have arranged the terms of payment, and I have the money. Come, now, what shall I do with it? Do not be so disinterested, Madame."

"No; I have decided. I will not have the necklace; but I want something else."

"*Diable!* then my sixteen hundred thousand francs are gone, after all."

"Sixteen hundred thousand francs! See, now, was it really so costly as that?"

"Faith, Madame! I let the word slip, but I will not take it back."

"Reassure yourself; what I ask is much less costly."

"What do you wish for?"

"That you will permit me to go again to Paris."

"Oh, that is easy enough, and not costly."

"But wait —"

"*Diable!*"

"To Paris, to the Place Vendôme."

"Oh, the deuce!"

"To the house of Monsieur Mesmer."

The king scratched his ear. "Well, as you have denied yourself a trifle of sixteen hundred thousand francs, I suppose I must let you go, — but on one condition."

"What is it?"

"You must be accompanied by a princess of the blood."

The queen reflected. "Shall it be Madame de Lamballe?" said she.

"Yes, if you like."

"It is agreed."

"Then I consent."

"Thanks, Sire."

"And now," said the king, "I shall order my ship of the line, and call it 'The Queen's Necklace.' You shall stand godmother, and then I will send it out to Lapeyrouse;" and kissing his wife's hand, he went away very happy.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE QUEEN'S MORNING HOUR.

No sooner was the king gone than the queen rose and went to the window to breathe the pure and frosty morning air. The day advanced, brilliant and full of that charm which the coming of spring imparts to certain days in April. To the frost of the night had succeeded the pleasing warmth of the sun, already to be felt. The wind had gone round to the east during the night, and if it remained in that quarter this terrible winter of the year 1784 was at an end. Already, in fact, could be seen on the rosy horizon that grayish vapor which is only moisture fleeing before the sun. In the gardens the frost was falling from the branches, and the little birds began to light upon the buds.

"If we wish to profit by the ice," cried the queen, "I believe we must make haste; for look, Madame de Misery, the spring seems to have begun."

"Your Majesty has long purposed to make up a party for the Swiss Lake."

"Very well, this very day we will make that party, for to-morrow it may be too late."

"Then at what hour will your Majesty wish to dress?"

"Immediately; I will take a light breakfast and then go."

"Are there any other orders, Madame?"

"See if Mademoiselle de Taverney has risen, and tell her I wish to speak to her."

"She is already waiting for you in the boudoir, Madame."

"Already?" said the queen, who knew at what time Andrée had gone to bed.

"She has been there more than twenty minutes, Madame."

"Ask her to come in."

Andrée entered as the clock was striking nine. She was dressed with care, as was required of every lady of the court in presence of her sovereign, and presented herself smiling, though somewhat anxious.

The queen's answering smile quite reassured her.

"Go, my good Misery," said the queen, "and send me Léonard and my tailor."

When the door had closed behind Madame de Misery, the queen said to Andrée, "The king has been charming; he has laughed, and is quite disarmed."

"But does he know, Madame?"

"You understand, Andrée, that a woman does not tell falsehoods when she has done no wrong and is the queen of France."

"Certainly, Madame."

"Still, my dear Andrée, it seems we have committed an error."

"An error, Madame? Oh, more than one, no doubt!"

"Possibly; but this is the first, — the error of pitying Madame de La Motte; the king dislikes her, but I confess she pleased me."

"Oh, your Majesty is too good a judge for me not to agree with you."

"Here is Léonard," said Madame de Misery, returning.

The queen seated herself before her silver-gilt toilet-

table, and the celebrated hairdresser began his operations. She had the most beautiful hair in the world, and was especially pleased with those who admired it. Léonard knew this, and therefore with her was always slow in his movements, that she might have time to look at herself.

That morning Marie Antoinette was pleased, even happy, and was more beautiful than usual. Her hair finished, she turned again to Andrée. "You have not been scolded," she said; "you are free and proud, — you, of whom every one is a little afraid, because, like Minerva, you are too wise."

"I, Madame?" stammered Andrée.

"Yes, you, the kill-joy of the court; but oh, *mon Dieu!* how happy you are to be unmarried, and especially in being contented that you are so."

Andrée blushed and tried to smile. "It is a vow that I have made," said she.

"And which you will keep, my beautiful vestal?"

"I hope so."

"By the way," said the queen, "I remember that although unmarried, you have a master since yesterday morning."

"A master, Madame?"

"Yes, your dear brother; what do you call him? Philippe, is it not?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Has he arrived?"

"He came yesterday, as your Majesty did me the honor to say."

"And have you not yet seen him? I took you away to Paris, — egotist that I was; it was unpardonable."

"Oh, Madame!" said Andrée, smiling, "I pardon you heartily, and so does Philippe."

"Are you sure?"

"I answer for both of us."

"How is he?"

"As usual, beautiful and good, Madame."

"How old is he now?"

"Thirty-two years."

"Poor Philippe! Do you know that it is fourteen years since I first met him? But I have not seen him now for nine or ten."

"Whenever your Majesty pleases to receive him, he will be but too happy to assure you that this long absence has not altered the sentiments of respectful devotion which he has ever felt for his queen."

"Can I see him immediately?"

"In a quarter of an hour he will be at your Majesty's feet."

"Very well, I permit it, — I even wish it."

The queen had hardly finished speaking when some one entered, bounded in a lively manner over the carpet, and placed his face, laughing and mocking, before the same mirror where Marie Antoinette was smiling at her own. "My brother D'Artois!" cried the queen; "how you frightened me!"

"Good-morning, your Majesty!" said the young prince; "how did your Majesty pass the night?"

"Very badly, thank you, brother."

"And the morning?"

"Very well."

"That is the important point. I guessed that all had gone right, for I have just met the king, and he smiled on me most graciously. What a good thing is confidence!"

The queen laughed, and he, knowing no more than she had told him, laughed also, but from a different cause.

"But how thoughtless I am," he said; "I did not even ask Mademoiselle de Taverney how she had passed her time."

The queen was looking in her mirror, and nothing could happen in the room without her seeing it. Léonard having finished his work, she exchanged her dressing-gown of India muslin for a morning-dress.

The door opened.

"Stay!" said the queen to the Comte d'Artois; "if you have anything to say to Andrée, here she is."

Andrée entered at that moment, leading by the hand a handsome man, with a brown complexion, noble black eyes profoundly expressive of melancholy, and a soldier-like carriage. He looked like one of Coypel's or Gainsborough's admirable portraits.

Philippe de Taverney was dressed in a dark-gray coat embroidered in silver, a white cravat, and a dark waistcoat; and this rather sombre style of dress seemed to suit the manly energy expressed in his complexion and his features.

Philippe advanced, one hand in his sister's, the other holding his hat.

"Your Majesty," said Andrée, "here is my brother."

Philippe bowed gravely and deliberately. When he raised his head the queen was still looking in her mirror. It is true that she saw him there as plainly as if she were looking at him face to face.

"Good-day, Monsieur de Taverney!" said the queen; and she turned toward him. She was beautiful, with that royal beauty which made all around her not only partisans of the throne, but adorers of the woman. She possessed the power of beauty; and if we may make use of the inversion, the beauty of power. Philippe, seeing her smile, and feeling those limpid eyes, at once soft and proud,

fixed upon him, turned pale, and could hardly restrain his emotion.

"It appears, Monsieur de Taverney," continued the queen, "that you pay me your first visit. I thank you for it."

"Your Majesty deigns to forget that it is I who should give thanks."

"How many years have passed since we last met, Monsieur! Alas, the most beautiful part of life!"

"For me, Madame; but not for your Majesty, to whom all days are happy days."

"You must have been pleased with America, Monsieur de Taverney, since you remained there after every one else returned."

"Madame," answered Philippe, "Monsieur de Lafayette, when he left the New World, had need of an officer in whom he could place confidence to take command of the French auxiliaries. He proposed me, therefore, to General Washington, who was pleased to accept me."

"It seems," said the queen, "that this New World, of which you speak, sends us home many heroes."

"Your Majesty does not mean that for me?" asked Philippe, laughing.

"Why not?" Then turning to the Comte d'Artois, "See, brother," she said, "has not Monsieur de Taverney a fine bearing and a martial air?"

Philippe seeing himself thus introduced to Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, whom he did not know before, advanced a step toward him, asking of the prince permission to salute him.

The count making a sign with his hand, Philippe bowed.

"A fine officer!" cried the young prince; "a noble gentleman, whose acquaintance I am happy to make. What are your intentions in returning to France?"

Philippe looked at his sister.

"Monsieur," said he, "my sister is my first consideration; whatever she wishes, I shall do."

"But she has a father, I believe?" said the count.

"Never mind him!" said the queen, quickly; "I prefer Andrée under her brother's protection, and he under yours, Count. You will take charge of Monsieur de Taverney, will you not?"

The count bowed an assent.

"For, do you know," continued she, "that very strong ties bind me to Monsieur de Taverney?"

"Very strong ties, — you, sister? Oh, tell me about that!"

"Yes, Monsieur de Taverney was the first Frenchman who presented himself to my eyes when I arrived in this country; and I had made a very sincere vow to promote the happiness of the first Frenchman I should meet."

Philippe felt the blood rush to his face. He bit his lips to control himself, and Andrée looked at him sadly.

The queen observed this interchange of glances between the brother and sister. But what could she know of all the sorrowful secrets concealed in that look, — not being aware of the events narrated in the previous chapters of this history?

She attributed the apparent sorrow which she perceived to another cause. And why was it not probable that Monsieur de Taverney had suffered a little from the epidemic of love for her which had pervaded all France when she was dauphiness, in 1774? There was nothing to render this supposition improbable, not even her reflection in the glass, which still reminded her of the beauty of the young girl, though she was now a wife and queen.

Marie Antoinette, therefore, attributed Philippe's sigh to some confidence of this kind which the brother had

made to the sister; and therefore she smiled still more upon him, and redoubled her kindness toward Andrée. She had not divined everything, neither was she altogether mistaken; and let no one see a shadow of crime in this innocent coquetry. The queen was a true woman, and gloried in being loved. The most generous souls feel the most deeply these aspirations for the love of all who surround them. Alas! a time is coming for thee, poor queen, when those smiles toward those who love thee, with which thou hast been reproached, thou shalt vainly bestow on those who love thee not!

The Comte d'Artois approached Philippe, while the queen consulted Andrée about the trimming for a hunting dress, and said, "Do you think Monsieur de Washington a great general?"

"Certainly a great man, Monseigneur."

"And what effect did the French produce out there?"

"As much good as the English did harm."

"Granted. You are a partisan of the new ideas, my dear Monsieur Philippe de Taverney; but have you reflected on one thing?"

"What, Monseigneur? I assure you that out there, encamped in the fields and in the savannas on the borders of the great lakes, I had plenty of time for reflection on many things."

"On this, — that in making war out there, it was neither against the Indians nor against the English, but against us that you were fighting."

"Ah, Monseigneur, I do not deny that that is possible."

"You admit — "

"I admit the unluckly reaction of an event by which the monarchy was saved."

"Yes; but to those who have survived the first attack of the disease, a reaction might be fatal."

"Alas! Monseigneur."

"Therefore I do not admire so much these victories of Monsieur Washington, and of the Marquis de Lafayette. It is egotism, perhaps, but excuse me, it is not egotism for myself alone."

"Oh, Monseigneur!"

"But do you know why I will still aid you with all my power?"

"Monseigneur, whatever may be your reason, I shall feel the most lively gratitude toward your Royal Highness."

"It is, my dear Monsieur de Taverney, because you are not one of those whose heroism has been trumpeted forth in public places. You have done your duty bravely, but your name has not incessantly flowed from the trumpet's mouth; you are not known in Paris, that is why I like you, unless — ah! upon my word, Monsieur de Taverney — unless — but I am an egotist you see."

The young prince then kissing the queen's hand, and bowing to Andrée with an affable and more respectful manner than he generally showed to ladies, left the room.

Then the queen turned again to Philippe, saying, "Have you seen your father, Monsieur?"

"Yes, Madame, I found him in the antechamber; my sister had sent for him."

"Why did you not go to see him in the first place?"

"I had sent home my valet and my luggage; but my father sent the servant back again, with orders for me to present myself first to the king or to your Majesty."

"And you have obeyed?"

"With joy, Madame, for it gave me a chance to embrace my sister."

"It is a lovely morning," said the queen, with a gesture of delight. "Madame de Misery, to-morrow the ice will

be melted; I must have a sledge instantly, — and send my chocolate to me here."

"Will not your Majesty take breakfast? You had no supper last night."

"You mistake, my good Misery, we had supper last night. Had we not, Andrée?"

"A very good one, Madame."

"It shall not prevent me from taking my chocolate," added the queen. "Quick, quick, my good Misery; this fine weather tempts me, and the Swiss Lake will be crowded."

"Your Majesty is going to skate?" asked Philippe.

"Ah, you will laugh at us, Monsieur American, — you who have traversed lakes that are measured by miles, while ours here are measured by feet."

"Madame," replied Philippe, "here your Majesty amuses yourself with the cold, but there they die of it."

"Ah, here is my chocolate; Andrée, take a cup with me."

Andrée bowed, coloring with pleasure.

"You see, Monsieur de Taverney, I am always the same, with the same horror of etiquette as in old times. Do you remember those old days? Are you changed since then, Monsieur Philippe?"

These words went to the young man's heart. Often the regret of a woman is like the thrust of a knife to one who is interested.

"No, Madame," replied the young man; "I am not changed, at least not in heart."

"Then if your heart is the same," said the queen, playfully, "and as the heart was a good one, we will thank you in our own way; a cup for Monsieur de Taverney, Madame de Misery."

"Oh, Madame!" cried Philippe, overwhelmed; "you

cannot mean it; such an honor for a poor, obscure soldier like me!"

"An old friend," said the queen. "This day seems to remind me of my youth; I am again happy, free, proud, and yet foolish. This day recalls to me that happy time at my dear Trianon, and all the frolics we had there, Andrée and I. This day brings back to my memory my roses, my strawberries, and my birds that I was so fond of, — all, even to my good gardeners, whose happy faces often announced to me a new flower or a delicious fruit; and Monsieur de Jussieu, and that original old Rousseau, who is since dead. But what is the matter, Andrée? You are red. What is the matter, Monsieur Philippe? You are pale."

The faces of the brother and sister plainly expressed the effect of these bitter recollections; but at the last words of the queen they regained their self-control.

"I have burned my mouth with the chocolate," said Andrée; "excuse me, Madame."

"And I," said Philippe, "cannot reconcile myself to the fact that your Majesty honors me as if I were the greatest nobleman in France."

"Come," interrupted Marie Antoinette, pouring the chocolate into his cup, "you are a soldier, and accustomed to fire; so burn yourself gloriously with this chocolate, for I am in a hurry."

She laughed, but Philippe, taking the matter seriously, heroically swallowed the hot chocolate.

The queen saw him, and laughing still more, said, "You have a perfect character, Monsieur de Taverney." She then rose, and her women brought her bonnet, ermine mantle, and gloves. Andrée's toilet was completed with the same rapidity. Philippe took his hat under his arm and followed them.

"Monsieur de Taverney, I do not mean you to leave me," said the queen. "Come round to my right."

They went down the great staircase; the drums were beating, the clarions of the body-guard were playing, and this whole scene, together with the enthusiasm everywhere shown toward the beautiful queen by whose side he was walking, completed the intoxication of the young man. The change was too sudden, — after so many years of exile and regret, to such great joy and honor.

Standing in the crowd outside was a little old man, who, forgetting all etiquette, kept his eyes fixed upon the queen and Taverney. When they had passed from view, and the crowd began to break up, he was seen to run off as fast as his little legs, which had supported him for seventy years, would permit.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SWISS LAKE.

EVERY one knows that rectangular body of water, greenish and changeable in summer, white and rough in winter, which still goes by the name of the Swiss Lake. An avenue of linden-trees skirts each bank, and these avenues are on this day thronged with pedestrians, of all ranks and ages, who have come to enjoy the sight of the sledges and the skating. The toilets of the ladies present a brilliant spectacle of luxury and gayety. Their high coiffures, gay bonnets with the veils half-down, fur mantles, and brilliant silks with deep flounces, mingling with the orange or blue coats of the gentlemen, form an interesting scene.

Gay lackeys also, in blue and red, pass among the crowd, looking like poppies and blue-bells waving in the wind among ears of corn or in a field of clover.

Now and then a cry of admiration bursts from the crowd as Saint-Georges, the celebrated skater, executes some circle so perfect that a geometrician could scarcely have found a fault in it.

While the banks of the lake are thus crowded, the ice itself presents a scene not less gay, and much more animated. Here may be seen a sledge drawn by three enormous bloodhounds. These dogs, caparisoned with velvet that is richly emblazoned with armorial bearings, and wearing flowing plumes upon their heads, somewhat resemble those chimerical animals in the extravagant creations of Callot or of Goya. Their master, Monsieur de

Lauzun, carelessly seated in the sledge, which is lined with tiger-skins, leans over the side to breathe more freely than he perhaps could do facing the wind.

Here and there sledges of less striking appointments appear to seek retirement. A lady, masked, probably on account of the cold, is seated in one of these sledges, while a handsome skater, in a velvet riding-coat, hangs over the back, to assist and direct her progress. Whatever they may be saying to each other is quite inaudible amid this busy hum of voices; but who can blame a rendezvous which takes place in the open air and under the eyes of all Versailles? As to what they are saying, how can it concern any one else, since they are in sight; and what is it to them that they are in sight, since no one can hear what they say? It is evident that in the midst of the crowd they are alone by themselves; they pass through the multitude like two migratory birds. Whither go they? — to that unknown world which every soul is seeking, and which is called Happiness.

Suddenly there is a general movement which quickly becomes a great tumult. The queen has appeared upon the border of the lake, and has been recognized. All are preparing to leave the place to her, when she makes a sign with her hand for them to remain. The cry, "Long live the queen!" resounds, and taking advantage of the permission given, the skaters and the sledge-drivers, as if by an electric movement, form a great circle around the place where the august visitor has paused. The general attention is fixed upon her. Then the men draw near by skilful manœuvres, and the women stand with respectful bearing; there is a general endeavor to mingle with the groups of noblemen and officers of rank who hasten to pay homage to the queen.

Among the principal personages noticed by the public,

there is one of high distinction who, instead of following the general impulse and drawing near to the queen, immediately on recognizing her and her companions, leaves his sledge and throwing himself into a by-path, disappears, together with his suite.

The Comte d'Artois, who had been remarked as one of the most elegant and accomplished among the skaters, hastened to the queen, and while kissing her hand said to her in a low tone: "Do you see how our brother Monsieur de Provence flies from you?" And he pointed with his finger toward a thicket through which Monsieur de Provence was hastening to his carriage.

"He does not wish me to reproach him," said the queen.

"Oh, as to the reproaches he expects, that is my affair; it is not on that account he fears you."

"It is his conscience, then," said the queen, gayly.

"Not even that, sister."

"What then?"

"I will tell you. He has just learned that Monsieur de Suffren, the glorious conqueror, will arrive this evening, and as the news is important he wishes to leave you in ignorance of it."

The queen observed that some curious persons in the crowd, forgetting their respect, had drawn so near as to overhear their conversation.

"Monsieur de Taverney," said she, "will you have the kindness to order my sledge? and if you find your father, I give you leave of absence for a quarter of an hour to pay your respects to him."

The young man bowed and made way through the crowd to execute the order of the queen. The crowd had understood, — it has sometimes marvellous instincts; it drew back, and the queen and the Comte d'Artois were left to themselves.

"Brother," then said the queen, "explain to me what my brother would gain by trying to keep from me the news of the arrival of Monsieur de Suffren."

"Oh, sister! is it possible that you, a woman, a queen, and an enemy, do not immediately see the intention of this scheming politician? Monsieur de Suffren arrives; no one at court knows it. Monsieur de Suffren is the hero of the Indian seas and consequently is entitled to a magnificent reception at Versailles. Well, Monsieur de Suffren arrives; the king is ignorant of his arrival; the king neglects him without knowing it, and therefore without intention; you do the same, sister. Meantime, on the contrary, Monsieur de Provence, who knows of the arrival of Monsieur de Suffren, welcomes the admiral, smiles upon him, courts him, makes verses in his honor, and by attaching himself to the hero of the Indies, becomes himself the hero of France."

"That is clear," said the queen.

"*Pardieu!*" said the count.

"You forget one single point, my dear gazetteer."

"What is that?"

"How do you know all about this fine project of our dear brother and brother-in-law?"

"How do I know it? As I know everything that he does. It is very simple; having seen that Monsieur de Provence keeps a watch on all my motions, I have agents who keep me informed as to his. Oh, this will be useful to us both, sister."

"Thank you for your alliance, brother; but the king?"

"Oh, the king is forwarned."

"By you?"

"Oh, not at all; but by his Minister of the Navy whom I have sent to him. I have nothing to do with all this,

you understand; I am too frivolous, too dissipated, too wild, to be interested in things of such importance."

"And was the Minister of the Navy also ignorant of the arrival in France of Monsieur de Suffren?"

"Ah, good Heavens! my dear sister, have you not learned enough of ministers during the fourteen years you have lived here, as dauphiness and queen, to know that they are always ignorant of precisely what they ought to know? However, I have told him about this, and he is extravagant in his expressions of gratitude."

"I should think so," said the queen.

"You see, dear sister, that this man will be grateful to me all his life; and I have need of his grateful service."

"And for what?"

"To negotiate a loan."

"Oh," cried the queen, laughing, "how disinterested you are!"

"Sister," said he, "you must want money. On the word of a son of France I offer you half of what I am going to receive."

"Oh, no, brother, keep it, keep it; thank Heaven! I want nothing just now."

"*Diable!* do not wait too long to claim the fulfilment of my promise."

"Well, in that case I must endeavor to find out some State secret for myself."

"Sister, you are taking cold," said the prince, "your cheeks are blue."

"Well, here is Monsieur de Taverney returning with my sledge."

"Then you do not want me any longer?"

"No."

"Then send me away, I beg."

"Why, do you imagine you will be in my way?"

"No; it is I, on the contrary, who want my liberty."

"Adieu, then."

"Au revoir, dear sister."

"Until when?"

"Until this evening."

"What takes place this evening?"

"Nothing, but something *will* take place."

"Well, then, what *will* take place?"

"Everybody will be at the king's card-party."

"And why so?"

"Because this evening the minister will bring Monsieur de Suffren there."

"Very well, then, — till this evening;" and the young prince, bowing with his habitual elegance, disappeared among the crowd.

The elder Taverney, who was one of the nearest spectators of all this, had been watching his son eagerly, and felt almost chagrined at this conversation between the queen and her brother-in-law, as it interrupted the familiar intercourse which his son had before been enjoying; therefore, when the young man returned with the queen's sledge, and seeing his father, whom he had not met for ten years, advanced toward him, the latter motioned him away, saying, "We will talk afterward, when you have left the queen."

Philippe, therefore, moved away, and the baron saw with joy that Monsieur le Comte d'Artois had taken leave of the queen.

The latter entered her sledge, and made Andrée get in with her, and as two tall attendants approached to push it, she said, "No, no; I do not wish to go in that way. You skate, Monsieur de Taverney, do you not?"

"Pardon me, Madame," replied Philippe.

"Give some skates to the chevalier," ordered the queen; then turning to him, "I do not know what gives me

the idea that you skate as well as Saint-Georges," she said.

"Philippe used to skate with much elegance," said Andrée.

"And now you acknowledge no rival; is it not so, Monsieur de Taverney?"

"I will do my best to justify your Majesty's opinion," said he; and putting on his skates he placed himself behind her sledge, and they started on their course.

Then might have been seen a curious spectacle.

Saint-Georges, the king of gymnasts; Saint-Georges, the elegant mulatto, the man who was the fashion, the man superior to all in bodily exercises, — Saint-Georges saw a rival in this young man who dared to compete with him. So he began immediately to fly about the queen's sledge with salutations so respectful, so full of charm, that no courtier upon the floor at Versailles could have executed them more skilfully; he described around the sledge the most rapid and most perfect circles, weaving them into a wonderful chain of rings joined together in such a way that each new curve always preceded the arrival of the sledge which left him behind; then, with a vigorous stroke of his skate he elliptically regained what he had lost. No one could observe this manœuvre without being dazzled and wonder-struck.

Then Philippe, moved to emulation, adopted a measure full of boldness: he pushed the sledge with such fearful rapidity that twice Saint-Georges, instead of finding himself in advance, finished his circle behind him; and as the velocity of the sledge was so great that many of the spectators uttered cries of terror which might alarm the queen, Philippe said, "If your Majesty desires it, I will stop, or at least go more slowly."

"Oh, no, no!" cried the queen, with that impetuous ardor with which she entered into everything, business as

well as pleasure; "no, I am not afraid; faster, if you can, Chevalier, faster!"

"Oh, so much the better; thanks for the permission, Madame. I hold you firmly, — rely on me."

And as his strong hand closed again upon the back of the sledge, it trembled throughout with the vigorous motion. He seemed to have raised it with his extended arm. Then placing upon the sledge his other hand, which he had disdained to use before, he drove forward the machine, which was a toy in his hands of iron.

From that moment he crossed each one of the circles of Saint-Georges by circles larger still, so that the sledge moved like the most agile man, turning again and again, notwithstanding its length, as quickly as could Saint-Georges upon his plain skates. In spite of its size and weight, it lived, it flew, it whirled like a dancer. Saint-Georges, more graceful, more adroit, more correct in his windings, soon began to be anxious. He had already been skating an hour. Philippe, noticing the perspiration on his face, and the efforts of his trembling knees, determined to conquer him through fatigue. He changed his method, and abandoning the circles, the making of which compelled him to lift the sledge, he pushed the equipage straight before him. The sledge flew forward with the rapidity of an arrow.

Saint-Georges with a single effort would have overtaken it at once, but Philippe seized the moment when the second stroke of the skate multiplies the velocity gained by the first, and pushed the sledge over a bit of ice as yet unmarred, with such force that he himself was left behind. Saint-Georges darted forward to catch the sledge, but Philippe, mustering all his strength, glided so skilfully on the outer edge of his skate that he passed before Saint-Georges and placed his hands on the sledge. Then by an

herculean effort he turned the sledge quickly, and sent it forward in another direction, while Saint-Georges, carried on by his momentum, and unable to check his speed, lost an irrecoverable space and remained completely distanced.

The air resounded with such acclamations that Philippe blushed in confusion. But he was much surprised when the queen, after clapping her hands, turned toward him, and with the accent of a voluptuous excitement, said to him, "Oh, Monsieur de Taverney! now that the victory is yours, mercy! mercy! you will kill me."

CHAPTER X.

THE TEMPTER.

PHILIPPE, at this order, or rather this request of the queen, compressed his muscles of steel, and the sledge stopped abruptly.

"And now rest yourself," said she, coming out of the sledge, trembling all over. "Indeed, I never could have believed there was such intoxication in speed. You have nearly driven me out of my senses;" and she leaned for support on Philippe's arm. A shudder of stupefaction which ran through that gilded and decorated company warned her that she had again committed one of those breaches of etiquette so culpable in the eyes of jealousy and servility.

As for Philippe, overwhelmed by this great honor, he felt more ashamed than if his sovereign had insulted him publicly; he lowered his eyes, and his heart beat as though it would burst.

A singular emotion, arising no doubt from her rapid ride, agitated the queen also; for she withdrew her arm almost immediately, taking that of Mademoiselle de Taverney, and asked for a seat. They brought her one.

"Thanks, Monsieur de Taverney," said she; then in a lower tone, "*mon Dieu!* how disagreeable it is to be always surrounded by spying fools!"

A number of ladies and gentlemen soon crowded round her, and all looked at Philippe with no little curiosity,

who, to hide his confusion, stooped to take off his skates, and then fell into the background.

The queen remained thoughtful a few moments; then raising her head, "Oh!" said she, "I shall take cold if I sit here, — I must take another turn;" and she remounted her sledge.

Philippe waited, but in vain, for another order.

Twenty gentlemen soon presented themselves, but she said, "No, I thank you; I have my attendants."

Then when the servants had taken their places, "Gently," she said, "gently;" and closing her eyes she gave herself up to meditation.

The sledge moved away slowly, as the queen had ordered, followed by an eager crowd of the curious and the jealous.

Philippe remained alone, wiping drops of perspiration from his face. He looked about for Saint-Georges to console him for his defeat by some compliment; but he had received a message from his patron the Duc d'Orléans, and had left the place.

Philippe, therefore, rather tired, somewhat melancholy, and half-frightened at all that had occurred, remained stationary, following with his eyes the queen's sledge, which was now at some distance, when he felt some one touch him; he turned round and saw his father.

The little old man, more shrunken than ever, enveloped in furs like a Laplander, had touched his son with his elbow, that he might not be obliged to take his hands out of the muff that hung from his neck.

"Will you not embrace me, my son?" said he; and he pronounced these words in the tone in which the father of a Greek athlete would thank his son for a victory gained on the arena.

"My dear father, I do it with all my heart;" but there

was no harmony between the tone in which these words were spoken and their actual meaning.

"And now," said the old man, — "now that you have embraced me, go, — go quickly;" and he pushed him away.

"Where do you wish me to go, Monsieur?"

"Why, *morbleu!* over there."

"Over there?"

"Yes, to the queen."

"Oh, no, father! no, I thank you."

"What! No, I thank you! Are you mad? You will not go after the queen?"

"My dear father, it is impossible!"

"Impossible to join the queen, who is expecting you?"

"Who is expecting me, — me?"

"Yes; who wishes for you."

"Wishes for me? Indeed, father," added he, coldly, "I think you forget yourself."

"It is astonishing!" said the old man, stamping his foot. "Ah, bah, Philippe! do me the pleasure to inform me whence you have come."

"Monsieur," said his son, sadly, "I fear to reach either one of two conclusions."

"What?"

"Either that you are laughing at me, or else — excuse me — that you are losing your senses!"

The old man seized his son by the arm so energetically that he made him start. "Listen, Monsieur Philippe!" said he; "America is, I am aware, a country distant a long way from here."

"Yes, father, very distant," replied Philippe; "but I don't know what you mean. I beg you to explain."

"A country where there is neither king nor queen."

"Nor subjects."

"Nor subjects, Monsieur Philosopher. I do not deny it; that point does not interest me. But what does interest me, what pains me, what humiliates me, is that I also fear to reach a conclusion."

"What is it, father? In any case, I think our conclusions must be very different."

"Mine is that you are a simpleton, my son! Just trouble yourself to look over there."

"Well, Monsieur?"

"Well, the queen looks back, and it is the third time she has done so. There! she turns again; and whom do you think she is looking for but for you, Monsieur Simpleton, Monsieur Puritan, Monsieur American — Oh!" and the old man, in his rage, bit his glove, which would have enclosed two such withered hands as his.

"Well, Monsieur," said the young man, "if it were true, which it probably is not, that the queen is looking for me —"

"Oh!" interrupted the old man, angrily, "he says, 'if it were true!' Why, the fellow is not of my blood; he is not a Taverney!"

"I am not of your blood?" murmured Philippe; then, in a low voice, raising his eyes toward heaven, "Ought I not to thank God for it?"

"Monsieur," said the old man, "I tell you that the queen wants you! Monsieur, I tell you that the queen is looking for you!"

"You have good sight, father," said his son, dryly.

"Come," said the old man, more gently, and trying to moderate his impatience, "trust my experience; are you, or are you not, a man?"

Philippe lightly shrugged his shoulders, and made no reply.

The old man, seeing that he would receive no answer,

hazarded a contemptuous look at his son, and perceived, for the first time, all the dignity, impenetrable reserve, and steadfast will, that his face expressed.

He suppressed his sense of disappointment, applied his muff to the end of his red nose, and with a voice as sweet as that with which Orpheus addressed the Thessalian rocks, "Philippe, my son," said he, "listen to me!"

"Eh!" replied the young man, "it seems to me that I have done nothing else the last quarter of an hour, father."

"Oh!" thought the old man, "I will draw you down from your majesty, Monsieur American. You have your weak side, Colossus; let me, with my old claws, get hold of you on that side, and you will see!" Then aloud, "You have overlooked one thing, Philippe."

"What is that?"

"A matter that it is creditable to your simplicity not to have suspected."

"Come, speak, Monsieur!"

"It is a simple matter. You have come from America. You left here at a time when there was only a king, — no queen except the Dubarry, whose majesty was not very imposing. You come back; you find we have a queen, and you say, 'Let us respect her person.'"

"Doubtless."

"Poor child!" said the old man, stifling with his muff the outbreak of a cough, and a burst of laughter.

"What, Monsieur! you pity me for respecting the monarchy, — you, a Taverney-Maison-Rouge, one of the real noblemen of France!"

"Mark you, I do not speak of the monarchy, but of the queen."

"And you make a distinction?"

"I should think so! What is royalty? A crown;

peste! that must not be touched. What is the queen? A woman; oh, it is different with a woman, — she may be touched."

"She may be touched?" cried Philippe, blushing with anger and contempt; and he accompanied these words with a gesture so superb that no woman could have seen him without loving him; no queen, without adoration.

"You do not believe me," continued the old man, almost fiercely; "well, ask Monsieur de Coigny, ask Monsieur de Lauzun, ask Monsieur de Vaudreuil."

"Silence, father!" cried Philippe; "or for these three blasphemies, not being able to strike you three blows with my sword, I swear to you I will pierce my own body, and that immediately."

Taverney recoiled a step, turned on his heel as Richelieu might have done at thirty years of age, and shaking his muff, "Oh, verily!" he said, "the animal is stupid. The horse is an ass, the eagle a goose, the cock a capon. Good-by; you have made me happy. I thought I was the old man, the Cassandra; but it seems that it is I who am Adonis, it is I who am Apollo. Good-by." And he pirouetted again upon his heels.

Philippe had become gloomy. He stopped the old man.

"You did not speak seriously, did you, father?" said he. "It is impossible that a gentleman of good blood like you should give ear to these calumnies, spread by the enemies, not only of the woman, not only of the queen, but of royalty itself."

"He will not believe, the double brute!" cried Taverney.

"You have spoken to me as you would speak before God?"

"Yes, truly."

"Before God, to whom you draw nearer every day?"

The young man had continued the conversation which he had himself so disdainfully interrupted. This was a point gained by the old man, and he came toward him.

"It seems to me, my son," replied he, "that I am a gentleman, and that I do not lie — always."

That "always" was slightly humorous, but Philippe did not smile.

"It is, then, your opinion that the queen has had lovers?"

"Certainly."

"Those whom you have named?"

"And others for ought I know. Ask all the town and the court. One must have just returned from America, to be ignorant of all that is said about the queen."

"And who says this, Monsieur, — vile pamphleteers?"

"Oh! do you, then, take me for a pamphleteer?"

"No; and therein lies the evil, — that men like you repeat such calumnies, which but for that would melt away like the unwholesome vapors which sometimes obscure the most brilliant sunshine; but you and others like you, repeating them, give them a terrible stability. Oh, Monsieur! in the name of religion, do not repeat such things!"

"I do repeat them, however."

"And why do you repeat them?" cried Philippe, stamping his foot.

"Eh!" said the old man, seizing his son's arm and leering at him with his devilish smile, "to prove to you that I was not wrong when I said, 'Philippe, the queen looks back; she is looking for you. Philippe, the queen wishes for you; run to her.'"

"Oh!" cried the young man, hiding his face in his hands, "for God's sake, not another word, father; you will drive me mad!"

"Really, Philippe, I do not understand you. Is it a crime to love? It shows that one has a heart; and in the eyes of this woman, in her voice, in her motions, — is not her heart to be perceived? She loves, she loves, I tell you. But you are a philosopher, a Puritan, a Quaker, an American; you do not love. Well, then, let her look; let her turn around; let her wait, — insult her, despise her, repulse her, Philippe, that is to say, *Joseph*, de Taverney."

Having spoken these words, accentuated with a savage irony, the little old man, seeing the effect he had produced, fled like the serpent who was the first tempter into crime.

Philippe remained alone, — his heart swelling and his blood boiling. He was hardly aware that he remained for half an hour fixed to one spot; that the queen had finished her ride upon the lake; that she was returning; that she looked at him, and from the midst of her cortège called out in passing, "You must be rested now, Monsieur de Taverney; come, then, for there is no one like you to guide a queen royally. Make way, gentlemen."

Philippe ran to her, dazzled, stunned, intoxicated. He placed his hand on the back of the sledge, but started as though he had burned his fingers; the queen had thrown herself negligently back in the sledge, and the fingers of the young man touched the locks of Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER XI.

THE "SUFFREN."

CONTRARY to the usual habits of a court, the secret had been faithfully kept by Louis XVI. and the Comte d'Artois. No one knew at what time or in what manner Monsieur de Suffren would arrive.

The king had announced a card party for the evening; and at seven o'clock he entered with the princes and princesses of his family. The queen came, holding by the hand the Princess Royal, then only seven years old. The assembly was numerous and brilliant. During the preliminaries of the meeting, while all were taking their places, the Comte d'Artois softly approached the queen, and said, "Look around you carefully, sister."

"Well?"

"What do you see?"

The queen looked all around, and seeing friends everywhere, among them Andrée and her brother, said, "I see only very agreeable faces, — the faces of friends."

"Rather, then, whom do you not see?"

"Ah, it is indeed true!" she cried.

The Comte d'Artois laughed.

"Again absent," resumed the queen. "Ah! shall I always thus put him to flight?"

"It is not that," said the Comte d'Artois; "it is only a continuation of the joke. Monsieur de Provence has gone to wait at the barrier for Monsieur de Suffren."

"Well, I do not see why you laugh at that; he has been the most cunning after all, and will be the first to receive, and pay his compliments to this gentleman."

"Come, dear sister," replied the young prince, laughing, "you have a very mean opinion of our diplomacy. Monsieur de Provence has gone to meet him at Fontainebleau, but we have sent some one to meet him at Villejuif; so that my brother will waste his time at the barrier, while our messenger will conduct Monsieur de Suffren straight to Versailles, without passing through Paris at all."

"That is excellently imagined."

"It is not bad, I flatter myself; but make up your game, sister."

There were at that moment in the card-room at least a hundred persons of the highest rank, — including Monsieur de Condé, Monsieur de Penthièvre, Monsieur de Trémouille, and the princesses.

The king alone noticed that Monsieur d'Artois was making the queen laugh, and guessing what it was about, gave them a significant glance, to show that he shared their amusement.

The news of the arrival of Monsieur de Suffren had been suppressed, as we have said; but there was a general, undefined anticipation of some unusual event, and all minds were preoccupied and expectant. Even the king, who was in the habit of playing six-franc pieces, in order to moderate the play of the court, placed on the table all the money he had in his pockets, without intending to do so. The queen, however, playing her part with more skill, diverted attention by her pretended interest in the game.

Philippe, admitted to the party, and placed opposite his sister, was absorbed in thoughts of the astounding, stupefying degree of favor unexpectedly shown to him. The words of his father recurred to his mind. He asked

himself if, indeed, this old man who had seen so much of courts was not right. He asked himself if that puritanism which confines itself to a religious adoration was not an additional absurdity which he had brought from a foreign land. This queen, so charming, so beautiful, and so friendly toward him, was she indeed only a terrible coquette, anxious to add one lover more to her list, as the entomologist transfixes a new insect or a butterfly, without thinking of the tortures of the poor creature whose heart he is piercing? "Coigny, Vaudreuil," he repeated to himself, "they have loved the queen, and have been loved by her; oh, why does this calumny haunt me so, or why will not some ray of light illumine that profound abyss, a woman's heart, — still more profound when it is the heart of a queen?"

Then Philippe turned his eyes to the other end of the table, where, by a strange chance, these gentlemen were sitting side by side, and both apparently forgetful of, and insensible to, the presence of the queen. He said to himself that it was impossible that these men could have loved and be so calm, or that they could have been loved, and could be so forgetful. Oh, were it he the queen loved, he should go wild with joy; if after loving him she were to forget him, he would kill himself in despair. From Messieurs de Coigny and de Vaudreuil, Philippe turned to look at Marie Antoinette herself. He interrogated that brow so pure, that mouth so imperious, that look so majestic; he sought in the charms of the woman to discover the secret of the queen. "Oh, no! calumnies, calumnies! only vague rumors, beginning to circulate among the people, to which the hatreds, the interests, and the intrigues of the court alone give any stability."

Philippe was at this point in his reflections when the clock in the guard-room struck a quarter to eight. At the

same moment a loud noise was heard; there were hurried steps; the butts of muskets struck the floor; a confusion of voices heard through the half-open door attracted the attention of the king, who threw back his head to listen, and then made a sign to the queen. She understood the sign, and immediately broke up the game. The players, gathering up the money, awaited some indication from the queen. The queen entered the large reception-hall, whither the king had already gone.

An aide-de-camp of Monsieur de Castries, Minister of the Navy, approached the king and said a few words to him in a low voice.

"Very well," replied the king. Then turning to the queen, he added, "All goes well."

Every one questioned his neighbor with a glance, — the "All goes well" giving them much to think of.

Suddenly Monsieur le Maréchal de Castries entered the hall, saying, in a loud voice, "Will your Majesty receive Monsieur le Bailli de Suffren, who has just arrived from Toulon?"

At that name, uttered in a loud, joyous, and triumphant tone, an indescribable tumult arose in the assembly.

"Yes, Monsieur," replied the king; "and with great pleasure."

Monsieur de Castries left the hall. The whole company made a movement toward the door by which he had disappeared.

To explain this interest in Monsieur de Suffren, and why king, queen, princes, and ministers contended who should be the first to receive him, a few words will suffice.

Suffren is a name essentially French, like Turenne, like Catinat, like Jean Bart. Since the last war with England, Monsieur de Suffren had fought seven great naval battles, without sustaining a defeat. He had taken Trincomalee

and Gondalore, assured the French possessions, scoured the seas, and taught the nabob Hyder Ali that France was the first power in Europe. He had carried into his profession all the skill of an able diplomatist, all the bravery and all the strategy of a soldier, and all the prudence of a wise ruler. Hardy, indefatigable, and proud when the honor of the French flag was in question, he had harassed the English, by land and by sea, till even those proud sailors never dared to complete a victory partially won, or to try an attack on Suffren when the lion showed his teeth. But after the battle in which he risked his life like the meanest sailor, he ever showed himself humane, generous, and compassionate. We will not attempt to describe the noise and enthusiasm which his arrival at Versailles elicited from the gentlemen invited to this assembly.

Suffren was now about fifty-six years of age, stout and short, with an eye of fire, and a noble carriage; like a man accustomed to surmount all difficulties, he had dressed in his travelling-carriage. He wore a blue coat embroidered with gold, a red waistcoat, and blue trousers. He had retained the military stiff cravat over which his massive chin rounded itself as the necessary complement of his colossal head. When he had entered the guard-room, some one whispered a word to Monsieur de Castries, who was impatiently walking back and forth, and who immediately cried out, "Monsieur de Suffren, gentlemen!" Immediately the guards, seizing their muskets, drew themselves up in line as if to receive the king of France; and De Suffren having passed them, they formed behind him, in good order, four by four, as if to serve him as an escort. He, pressing the hands of Monsieur de Castries, sought to embrace him. But the Minister of the Navy gently repelled him. "No, no, Monsieur," said he; "no,

I will not take the pleasure of first embracing you from one who is more worthy of that honor than myself." And he conducted Monsieur de Suffren into the presence of Louis XVI.

"Monsieur de Suffren!" cried the king, with a radiant countenance. "Welcome to Versailles. You bring to it glory; you bring to it all that heroes give to their contemporaries on earth. I do not speak to you of the future; that is your property. Embrace me, Monsieur de Suffren."

Monsieur de Suffren had already bent his knee. The king raised him and embraced him so cordially that a prolonged murmur of joy and triumph ran through the assembly. But for the respect due to the king, all present would have broken out in shouts of applause.

The king turned toward the queen. "Madame," said he, "this is Monsieur de Suffren, the conqueror of Trincomalee and of Gondalore, the terror of the English, — my own Jean Bart."

"Monsieur," said the queen, "I wish you to know that you have not fired a shot for the glory of France, but my heart has beat with admiration and gratitude."

When she ceased, the Comte d'Artois approached with his son, the Duc d'Angoulême. "My son," said he, "you see a hero; look at him well, for it is a rare sight."

"Monseigneur," replied the young prince, "I have read about the great men in Plutarch, but I could not see them; I thank you for showing me Monsieur de Suffren."

The young duke might know, from the murmur of approbation which he heard around him, that he had said something that would not soon be forgotten.

The king now took the arm of Monsieur de Suffren, in order to lead him to his study, and talk to him of his travels; but he made a respectful resistance.

"Sire," said he, "will you permit me, since your Majesty has shown me so much goodness —"

"Oh, whatever you wish, Monsieur."

"Sire, one of my officers has committed so grave a fault against discipline, that I thought your Majesty ought to be sole judge of the offence."

"Oh, Monsieur de Suffren, I hoped your first request would be for a favor, and not for a punishment."

"Your Majesty, as I have had the honor to say, shall judge what ought to be done. In the last battle the officer of whom I speak was on board the 'Sévère.'"

"Oh, the ship that struck her flag," cried the king, frowning.

"Yes, Sire, the captain of the 'Sévère' had indeed struck his flag, and already the English admiral had despatched a boat to take possession of his prize, when the lieutenant in command of the guns of the middle deck, perceiving that the firing above had ceased, and having received orders to stop his own fire, went on deck. He saw the flag lowered, and the captain ready to surrender. I ask your Majesty's pardon, Sire; but at this sight all his French blood revolted. He seized the flag, which lay within reach, caught up a hammer, ordered all hands to resume firing, and climbing aloft, nailed the flag to the mast, close under the pennant. It was by this action, Sire, that the 'Sévère' was preserved to your Majesty."

"A splendid action!" cried the king and queen, at once.

"Yes, Sire; yes, Madame; but a grave fault against discipline. The order had been given by the captain, and the lieutenant ought to have obeyed; I, however, ask for the pardon of the officer, and with the greater earnestness, as he is my own nephew."

"Your nephew!" cried the king, "and you have never mentioned him?"

"Not to you, Sire, but I made my report to the Minister of the Navy, begging him not to speak of the matter to your Majesty until I had obtained pardon for the offender."

"Granted! granted!" exclaimed the king; "and I promise my protection to every disobedient person who shall thus vindicate the honor of the flag and of the king of France. You should have presented that officer to me, Monsieur de Suffren."

"He is here," said De Suffren; "and since your Majesty permits —" He turned around. "Approach, Monsieur de Charny," he said.

The queen started. This name awakened in her mind a recollection too recent to be effaced.

Then a young officer stepped forth from a group formed near Monsieur de Suffren, and suddenly appeared before the king.

The queen had made a movement to go forward to meet the young man, roused to enthusiasm as she was by the recital of his noble action. But when she saw the officer whom Monsieur de Suffren was presenting to the king, and heard his name, she paused, turned pale, and uttered a slight murmur.

Mademoiselle de Taverney also turned pale and looked anxiously at the queen.

As for Monsieur de Charny, without seeing anything, without showing any other emotion but that of respect, he bowed before the king, who gave him his hand to kiss; then he returned, modest and trembling, to the circle of officers, who loudly congratulated him and overwhelmed him with attentions.

There was, then, a moment of silence and emotion, during which one might have seen the king radiant, the queen smiling and undecided, Monsieur de Charny with down-

cast eyes, and Philippe, who had not failed to notice the emotion of the queen, anxious and inquiring.

"Come, come," said the king, at last,— "come, Monsieur de Suffren, come and talk with me; I am eager to hear you and prove to you how much I have thought of you."

"Sire, so much goodness —"

"Oh, you shall see my charts, Monsieur de Suffren; you shall see that every phase of your expedition was foreseen or planned in advance, in my solicitude. Come, come." Then after going a few steps, dragging Monsieur de Suffren with him, he suddenly turned to the queen, "By the by, Madame," he said, "I am about to have built, as you know, a vessel of one hundred guns; I have changed my mind as to its name. Instead of calling it as we had agreed, is it not, Madame —"

Marie Antoinette, being somewhat restored to self-possession, instantly caught the king's idea. "Yes, yes," said she, "we will call it the 'Suffren,' and I will stand sponsor, together with Monsieur de Suffren."

Shouts, until then restrained, burst forth wildly, "Long live the king! long live the queen!"

"And long live the 'Suffren!'" added the king, with exquisite delicacy; for no one could shout, "Long live Monsieur de Suffren!" in presence of the king, while the most careful observers of etiquette might cry, "Long live his Majesty's ship!"

"Long live the 'Suffren!'" repeated, therefore, the whole assemblage with enthusiasm.

The king made a sign to thank them for having so quickly caught his meaning, and led Monsieur de Suffren away with him.

CHAPTER XII.

MONSIEUR DE CHARNY.

As soon as the king had disappeared, all the princes and princesses in the room grouped themselves about the queen.

Monsieur de Suffren had made a sign requesting his nephew to await his return; and with a low bow of assent, he remained in the group as before.

The queen, who had exchanged with Andrée many significant glances, hardly lost sight of the young man, and every time she looked at him she said to herself, "It is he, certainly."

To which Mademoiselle de Taverney replied in pantomime in such a way as to leave no doubt in the queen's mind, for it meant, "Oh, good Heavens! yes, Madame; it is he, it is certainly he!"

Philippe, as we have before said, noticed this preoccupation of the queen; he saw it, and if he did not actually understand its cause, at least he had a vague sense of it.

Those who love are never mistaken in the impression they receive from those they love. He guessed therefore that the queen had just been affected by some mysterious event unknown to everybody but herself and Andrée.

Indeed, the queen had been confused, and sought refuge behind her fan, — she who usually made every one lower their eyes before her.

While the young man was wondering what this preoccupation of the queen could mean; while he was trying to read the countenances of Coigny and Vaudreuil to

assure himself that they were not concerned in the mystery, and observing that they were very much occupied in talking with Monsieur de Haga, who had come to Versailles to present himself to their Majesties,—a personage, clothed in the majestic robe of a cardinal, followed by officers and prelates, entered the salon.

The queen recognized Monsieur Louis de Rohan; she saw him crossing the room, and immediately she turned away her head without even taking the trouble to conceal the frown upon her brow.

The prelate passed by the whole company without saluting any one, and came straight to the queen, before whom he bowed, as a man of the world saluting a lady rather than as a subject saluting a queen. Then he addressed a very gallant compliment to her Majesty, who scarcely turned her head, murmured two or three cold words of ceremony, and resumed her conversation with Madame de Lamballe and Madame de Polignac.

Prince Louis appeared not to notice the chilling reception of the queen. He made his bows, turned away without haste, and with the grace of a perfect courtier addressed himself to the aunts of the king, with whom he conversed a long time, receiving from them a reception as cordial as that of the queen had been cold.

Cardinal Louis de Rohan was a man in the prime of life, of imposing figure, and of noble bearing; his face shone with intelligence and gentleness; his mouth was well cut and handsome; and his hands were beautiful. A premature baldness indicated either a man of pleasure or a man devoted to study,—and he was both. He was much sought after by women, who liked his gallantry, dignified and quiet; he was noted for his magnificence. He had, indeed, found a way to feel himself poor with an income of sixteen hundred thousand francs.

The king liked him because he was learned; the queen, on the contrary, hated him. The reasons for this hate were twofold: first, when ambassador to Vienna, he had written to Louis XV. letters so full of sarcasm on Maria Theresa that her daughter had never forgiven him; and he had also written letters opposing her marriage, which had been read aloud by Louis XV. at a supper at Madame Dubarry's. The embassy at Vienna had been taken from Monsieur de Breteuil and given to Monsieur de Rohan. The former gentleman, not strong enough to avenge himself alone, had procured copies of these letters, which he had laid before the dauphiness, thus making her the eternal enemy of Monsieur de Rohan.

This hatred rendered the cardinal's position at court not a little uncomfortable. Every time he presented himself before the queen he met with the same discouraging reception. In spite of this he neglected no occasion of being near her, for which he had frequent opportunities, as he was chaplain to the court; and he never complained of the treatment he received. A circle of friends, among whom the Baron de Planta, a German officer, was the most intimate, helped to console him for these royal rebuffs, not to speak of the ladies of the court, who by no means imitated the severity of the queen toward him.

The cardinal had just passed as a shadow over the pleasing picture which the queen saw in imagination. When he was gone therefore, Marie Antoinette recovered her serenity, and said to Madame de Lamballe, "Do you not think that this action of the nephew of Monsieur de Suffren is one of the most remarkable during the war? By the way, what is his name?"

"Monsieur de Charny, I believe," replied the princess; "was it not, Mademoiselle de Taverney?" she said, turning to Andrée.

"Yes, your Highness," replied Andrée.

"Monsieur de Charny shall describe it to us himself," said the queen; "is he still here? Let him be sought for."

An officer who stood near hastened to obey her. At the same instant, on looking round, she saw Philippe, and said impatiently, "Monsieur de Taverney, why do you not search?"

Philippe colored, and went to find the happy officer; as he had not lost sight of him since his presentation, his task was not difficult.

Monsieur de Charny appeared immediately between the two messengers, and the circle around the queen made room for him to approach; the queen had then an opportunity to examine him more attentively than had been possible the evening before.

He was a young man, about twenty-eight years of age, tall, and well made; his face, animated and yet sweet, took a character of singular energy when he spoke and dilated his large blue eyes; and he was, strange to say of one who had been fighting in India, as fair as Philippe was dark.

When he approached the group, in the centre of which stood the queen, De Charny gave not the slightest intimation that he recognized either Mademoiselle de Taverney or the queen herself. Surrounded by officers asking all sorts of questions, to which he civilly replied, he seemed to forget that there was a king who had spoken to him, or a queen who had looked favorably upon him.

That politeness, that reserve, was of a kind to elicit still further interest on the part of the queen, herself so careful in all that related to social usages. It was not only that he concealed from others his surprise on meeting so

unexpectedly the lady of the fiacre; he even rose to that height of gallantry that he would, if he could, allow the lady to believe herself unrecognized.

"Monsieur de Charny," said the queen, "these ladies have the wish — a wish quite natural, which I share with them — to hear about the affair of the ship in all its particulars. Tell us about it, I beg of you."

"Madame," replied the young officer, in the midst of a profound silence, "I beg your Majesty to spare me the recital, not from modesty, but from humanity. What I did as lieutenant of the 'Sévère' a dozen other officers doubtless wished to do, only I was the first to put it in execution; and it is not worthy being made the subject of a narration to your Majesty. Besides, the captain of the 'Sévère' is a brave officer, who on that day lost his presence of mind. Alas, Madame! we all know that the most courageous are not always equally brave. He wanted but ten minutes to recover himself; my determination not to surrender gave him this breathing time. His natural courage returned to him, and from that moment he showed himself the bravest of us all. Therefore, I beg your Majesty not to exaggerate the merit of my action, and thereby crush this deserving officer, who deplores incessantly the forgetfulness of a single moment."

"Right!" said the queen, touched, and radiant with joy at hearing the murmur of satisfaction which the generous words of the young officer had raised about her; "you are a true gentleman, Monsieur de Charny, and such I already know you to be."

The young man colored, and looked almost frightened at Andrée, fearing what the queen's rash generosity might lead her to say.

"For," continued the intrepid queen, "I must tell you all that this is not the first time I have heard of Monsieur

de Charny, who deserves to be known and admired by all ladies." It was at once perceived that the queen was about to relate a story, from which every one might glean either some petty scandal or some little secret. They made a circle, therefore, and listened in silence.

"You must know," said the queen, "that Monsieur de Charny is as considerate toward the ladies as he is pitiless toward the English. I have heard a little story about him which, I tell you in advance, does him the greatest honor, in my opinion."

"Oh, Madame!" stammered the young man, who felt as if he would have given a year of his life to be back in India.

It may readily be imagined that the words of the queen, uttered in the presence of him whom they concerned, only redoubled curiosity.

"This, then, is it," continued the queen, to her eager listeners: "Two ladies, whom I know, were detained out late, and became embarrassed in a crowd; they ran a great risk, a real danger threatened them. Happily, Monsieur de Charny passed by at the moment; he dispersed the crowd, and although the two ladies were unknown to him, and it was impossible to recognize their rank, he took them under his protection and escorted them a long way, — ten leagues from Paris, I believe."

"Oh, your Majesty exaggerates!" said Monsieur de Charny, laughing, and now quite reassured.

"Well, we will call it five," said the Comte d'Artois, suddenly joining in the conversation.

"Let it be five, then, brother," said the queen; "but the most admirable part of the story is that Monsieur de Charny did not seek even to know the names of these ladies whom he had served; but left them at the place where they wished to stop, and went away without even

looking back, so that they escaped from his protecting hands without even a moment's disquietude."

All exclaimed, admired. Charny was complimented by twenty ladies at once.

"This was noble, was it not?" added the queen; "a knight of the Round Table could not have done better."

"It was superb!" exclaimed the chorus.

"Monsieur de Charny, as the king will doubtless take upon himself to reward Monsieur de Suffren, your uncle, I, for my part, wish to do something for the nephew of that great man."

As she spoke she held out her hand to him, and Charny, pale with joy, pressed his lips to this beautiful hand, while Philippe, pale with grief, looked on from an obscure corner.

Andrée had also turned pale, and yet she could not conceive all that her brother was suffering.

The voice of Monsieur d'Artois interrupted this scene, saying loudly, "Ah, Provence! you come too late! you have missed a fine sight, the reception of Monsieur de Suffren. Really, it was one that a Frenchman can never forget. How the devil did it happen that you were not here, — you, brother, who are noted for your punctuality?"

Monsieur de Provence bit his lips with vexation, bowed absently to the queen, and replied in words without special significance. Then he whispered to Monsieur de Favras, his captain of the guards, "How does it happen that Monsieur de Suffren is at Versailles?"

"Ah, Monseigneur! I have been asking myself that question for the last hour, and have not yet found an answer."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HUNDRED LOUIS.

Now that we have introduced to our readers the principal characters of this history, or rather have renewed their acquaintance with them; now that we have taken them, both into the pleasure-house of the Comte d'Artois, and into the king's palace at Versailles, — we will return to that house in the Rue Saint Claude where we saw the queen enter incognito, accompanied by Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney.

We left Madame de La Motte counting over, in great delight, the fifty double louis which had fallen to her so miraculously from the sky, — fifty beautiful double louis, each worth forty-eight francs, which spread out on the poor table seemed by their aristocratic presence to intensify the power of the humble garret. After the pleasure of possessing, Madame de La Motte knew no greater than that of displaying. The possession was of no value if it did not excite envy. For some time it had been repugnant to her feelings that her maid was acquainted with her poverty; she now hastened to confide to her this good fortune. She called Dame Clotilde, who was still in the antechamber, and placed the lamp in such a position that the gold would shine with brilliancy on the table.

When she entered, "Come and look here!" said her mistress.

"Oh, Madame!" cried the old woman, clasping her hands in astonishment.

"You were uneasy about your wages," said the countess.

"Oh, Madame! I never said that; I only asked Madame if she could pay me, which was very natural, as I had received nothing for three months."

"Do you think there is enough there to pay you?"

"Oh, Madame! if I had all that I should be rich for the rest of my life."

Madame de La Motte looked at the old woman, shrugging her shoulders with a movement of inexpressible disdain.

"It is very fortunate," she said, "that certain persons have some recollection of the name I bear, while those who ought to remember it seem to forget it."

"But in what way will Madame spend all this money?"

"In every way."

"The first thing, I think, Madame, will be to furnish the kitchen; for you will have good dinners cooked now, will you not, — now that you have money?"

"Listen!" said Madame de La Motte; "some one knocks."

"Madame is mistaken," said the old woman, always economical of her steps.

"But I tell you it is so; go at once."

"I heard nothing."

"Yes; as you heard nothing a little while ago. Well! suppose the two ladies had gone away without entering?"

This reasoning seemed to convince Clotilde, who started for the door.

"Do you hear now?" cried Madame de La Motte.

"Ah, it is true; I am going, I am going."

Madame de La Motte hastily gathered up her money, and put it into a drawer, murmuring, "Oh if Providence will but send me another hundred louis!" And these

words were spoken with an expression of such irreverent cupidity that they would have made Voltaire smile. Then she heard the steps of a man below, but could not distinguish what he said. Soon, however, the door opened, and Clotilde came in with a letter.

The countess examined it attentively, and asked, "Was this brought by a servant?"

"Yes, Madame."

"In livery?"

"No, Madame."

"I know these arms," said Jeanne to herself, glancing again at the seal. Then, bringing it to the lamp, — "Gules with nine mascles or. Who, then, bears gules with nine mascles or? But the letter will tell," and opening it, she read: "Madame, the person whom you have solicited will see you to-morrow evening, if it be agreeable to you to open your door." And that was all.

"I have written to so many people," thought the countess. "Let me reflect a little; to whom have I written? To every one. Is this a man or a woman? The writing is no guide, nor is the style; it might come from either." Then she repeated, "'the person whom you have solicited' — the phrase shows a purpose to humiliate, — it is certainly from a woman. '— If it be agreeable to you to open your door.' A woman would have said, 'Will expect you to-morrow evening,' — it is a man. And yet those ladies came here yesterday, and certainly they were of high rank. No signature — Who, then, bears gules with nine mascles or? Oh!" she broke out, "have I lost my head? — the Rohans, *pardieu!* Yes, I wrote to Monsieur de Guémenée, and to Monsieur de Rohan; one of them has answered. But the shield is not quartered, — it is therefore the cardinal. Ah, Monsieur de Rohan! the man of gallantry, the ladies' man, the man of ambition.

He will come to see Madame de La Motte, if Madame de La Motte will open her door to him. Good! he need not be anxious; the door will be open. And when? To-morrow evening." She paused and reflected. "A sister of charity, who gives a hundred louis, may be received in a garret, freeze in my cold room, and suffer on my chairs, as hard as Saint Lawrence's gridiron, though without fire; but a clerical prince, a ladies' man, — that is quite another thing. The misery visited by such an almoner must be attended by more luxury than some among those called rich can easily afford."

Then turning to Clotilde, who was getting her bed ready, she said, "Be sure to call me early to-morrow morning." Then doubtless that she might meditate more quietly, she made a sign to the old woman to leave her.

Clotilde stirred up the fire, which had been covered with ashes to give the room a more miserable appearance, and retired to the loft in which she slept.

Jeanne de Valois, instead of sleeping, was making plans all night long. She took notes in pencil by the light of the night-lamp; then having arranged her programme for the next day, she allowed herself, toward three o'clock in the morning, to sink into a sleep from which Clotilde, who had slept very little more than she, came, in obedience to her orders, to rouse her at break of day. Toward eight o'clock she had finished her toilet, which consisted of an elegant silk gown and a tasteful head-dress. Her shoes were such as were suitable both for the lady of rank and for the pretty woman; she wore a patch on her left cheek. She sent to the Rue Pont-au-Choux for a two-wheeled chaise. She would have preferred a sedan-chair, but it would have been necessary to send to a great distance for one.

This rolling chair was drawn by a robust Auvergnese, who was ordered to leave Madame at the Place Royale, where, under the arcades on the southern side, on the ground-floor of an old deserted mansion was the shop of Monsieur Fingret, an upholsterer, who had second-hand furniture for sale and to let at the lowest prices.

The Auvergnese wheeled his customer rapidly from the Rue Saint Claude to the Place Royale; so that ten minutes after setting out the countess reached the warehouses of Monsieur Fingret, where we shall find her presently admiring and choosing, in a kind of pandemonium of which we will endeavor to give a sketch.

Let the reader imagine warehouses fifty feet long by thirty feet wide, with a height of seventeen feet; upon the walls tapestries of the reign of Henri IV. and Louis XIII.; the ceilings hidden by the number of objects suspended, — chandeliers of the seventeenth century side by side with stuffed lizards, church lamps, and flying fishes.

On the floor were piles of carpeting and matting, furniture with twisted pillars and square feet, buffets of carved oak, Louis XV. consoles with gilt claws, sofas covered with rose-colored damask or Utrecht velvet, couches, capacious easy-chairs of leather, such as Sully liked, ebony wardrobes with panels in relief and brass mouldings, Boule tables with porcelain or enamelled tops, complete toilet-sets, desks inlaid with designs of musical instruments or flowers, and bedsteads in rosewood or in oak, with canopies. Curtains of every shape, of every design, of every kind of stuff, are hanging in confusion, their colors harmonizing or contrasting in every part of the warehouse. There were harpsichords, spinnets, harps, lyres, upon a table, and one might see the dog of Malborough, stuffed, with eyes of enamel. Then there was linen of every quality; dresses were to be seen hanging side by side with velvet

coats, and swords with hilts of steel, silver, or mother-of pearl. There were candlesticks, ancestral portraits, engravings, and all the imitations of Vernet, who was then in vogue, — that Vernet to whom the queen said so gracefully and so wittily, "Decidedly, Monsieur Vernet, you are the only one in France who can make both rain and fine weather."

CHAPTER XIV.

MONSIEUR FINGRET.

MADAME DE LA MOTTE, once admitted to view all these riches, understood for the first time how much she needed in the Rue Saint Claude. She needed a drawing-room to hold sofas and easy-chairs; a dining-room for tables and sideboards; a boudoir for Persian curtains, screens, and pretty tables; in short, what she needed most, if she had the drawing-room, dining-room, and boudoir, was money to buy furniture to put in this new apartment.

But with the upholsterers of Paris there has always been an opportunity for easy transactions, and we have never heard it said that a young and pretty woman had died on the threshold of a door which she was unable to get opened for her. In Paris, what one cannot buy he can hire, and it is the renters of furnished apartments who have given rise to the proverb, "To see is to have."

Madame de La Motte, in the hope of securing a suitable apartment, chose, after measuring some of the articles, a set of furniture of yellow silk with gilt nails, which had pleased her at first sight. She was a brunette.

But this set of furniture of ten pieces could never find room in the fifth story in the Rue Saint Claude. In order to arrange everything it would be necessary to hire the third story, — consisting of an antechamber, dining-room, parlor, and bedroom. She might, she thought, receive on the third story the alms of cardinals, and on the fifth those of the bureaux of charity, — that is to say, receive in

luxury those who give from ostentation, and in poverty the offerings of prejudiced persons who prefer giving to those only who are in need.

The countess, having made her decision, turned her eyes toward the obscurer portion of the warehouse, — that is, toward the place where the most splendid things were displayed. There she saw, standing hat in hand, with an impatient manner, the figure of a Parisian citizen, who twirled a key with his fingers and looked at her with a slight smile of condescension. That worthy man was no other than Monsieur Fingret himself, to whom his clerks had announced her arrival.

The same clerks might now be seen in the court-yard, occupied in the renovating of old furniture. Monsieur Fingret, fearing that his customer might observe the operations of his clerks and thus gain an insight into his methods prejudicial to his interests, closed the door which opened into the court-yard, — "for fear the dust might blind Madame — "

That "Madame — " was an interrogation.

"Madame la Comtesse de La Motte Valois," replied Jeanne, carelessly.

Monsieur Fingret, on hearing this high-sounding title, put his key in his pocket and approached the countess. "Oh!" said he, "there is nothing here suitable for Madame; I have furniture that is new, beautiful, magnificent. Madame la Comtesse must not imagine that the house of Fingret has not as handsome furniture as the king's upholsterer. Leave all this, Madame, if you please, and let me show you the other warehouse."

Jeanne colored. All this had seemed so splendid to her, — too splendid even to hope to possess it; and Monsieur Fingret's exalted opinion of her perplexed her not a little. She regretted that she had not announced herself

as a simple bourgeoise; but a skilful mind can withdraw with advantage from the most awkward situations.

"Nothing new, Monsieur," she said; "I do not want it."

"Madame has doubtless some friend's apartments to furnish."

"Precisely," she replied, "a friend's apartment. Now, you understand that for a friend's apartment — "

"Certainly, — if Madame will but choose," said Monsieur Fingret, who had no pride to prevent his selling old furniture instead of new, if he could make as much money on it.

"This set," said Jeanne, pointing to the one in yellow silk.

"Oh, but that is such a small set, Madame; there are only ten pieces."

"The chamber is not large," replied the countess.

"It is nearly new, as Madame may see."

"Yes, — for second-hand."

"Certainly," said Monsieur Fingret, smiling; "but, in short, such as it is, it is worth eight hundred francs."

That price made the countess tremble; and how was she to confess that the heiress of the Valois was content with second-hand things, and then could not afford to pay eight hundred francs for them. She thought the best thing to do was to appear angry. "Why," she said, "who thinks of buying, Monsieur? How could you imagine that I would buy such trash? I only want to hire."

Fingret made a grimace, — his customer began gradually to lose her value in his eyes. It was no longer a question of selling new furniture, or even old; the transaction had dwindled to a mere hiring. "You wish it for a year?" he asked.

"No, for only a month. It is for some one coming from the country."

"It will be one hundred francs a month."

"You jest, surely, Monsieur; why, in eight months I should have paid the full price of it."

"Granted, Madame la Comtesse."

"Well, and what then?"

"Why, then, Madame, if it belongs to you it will no longer belong to me; and I shall not have the trouble of repairing it, and making it new again,—which costs money."

Madame de La Motte reflected: "One hundred francs a month is very dear, certainly; but either I can return it at the end of that time, and say it is too dear, or I shall then perhaps be in a situation to buy. I thought of spending five, or six, hundred francs; let us do things in style, and spend three hundred."

"I will take it," she said, "with curtains to match."

"Yes, Madame."

"And carpets?"

"Here they are."

"What can you give me for another room?"

"These oak chairs, this table with twisted legs, and green damask curtains."

"Good; and for a bedroom?"

"A large and handsome bed, a counterpane of velvet, embroidered in rose-color and silver, excellent mattresses, blue curtains, and chimney ornaments in the Gothic style, but richly gilt."

"And for the dressing-room?"

"A toilet-table, hung with Mechlin lace; a chest of drawers, delicately ornamented with inlaid wood; a chiffonniere to match; sofa and chairs, covered with tapestry, and elegant fire-irons from the bedroom of Madame de Pompadour at Choissy."

"All this for what price?"

"For a month?"

"Yes."

"Four hundred francs."

"Come, Monsieur Fingret, do not take me for a grisette, to be dazzled by your fine descriptions. Please to reflect that you are asking at the rate of four thousand eight hundred francs a year, and for that I can take a house all furnished."

Monsieur Fingret scratched his ear.

"You disgust me with the Place Royale," continued the countess.

"I am very sorry, Madame."

"Prove it, then; I will give only three hundred francs for all that furniture."

Jeanne pronounced these words with so much authority that the merchant began again to think she might be worth conciliating.

"So be it, then, Madame."

"And on one condition, Monsieur Fingret."

"What, Madame?"

"That everything be arranged in its proper place by three o'clock."

"But consider, Madame, it is now ten."

"Can you do it, or not?"

"Where are they to go?"

"To the Rue Saint Claude in the Marais."

"Ah, two steps from here?"

"Precisely."

The upholsterer opened a door, and called, "Sylvain! Landry! Rémy!"

Three of the apprentices came running in, delighted to have a pretext for leaving their work, as well as a chance to see the fine lady.

"The carts and the trucks instantly. Rémy, you may take this yellow furniture; Sylvain, you take that for the dining-room; and you, Landry, that for the bedroom. We will make out the list, and if you please, Madame, I will receipt it."

"Here are six double louis, and a single louis," said the countess; "give me the change."

"Here are twelve francs, Madame."

"Of which I will give six to these gentlemen, if they do their work well;" and having given her address she returned to her wheeled chair.

An hour later she had rented the apartment on the third floor, and in less than two hours the work of furnishing the salon, the antechamber, and the bedroom was progressing rapidly. Messieurs Landry, Rémy, and Sylvain earned their six francs, with ten minutes to spare.

The lodgings thus transformed, the windows cleaned, and the fires lighted, Jeanne applied herself to making her toilet, and for two hours she was happy. She felt under her feet a thick carpet; around her were walls fittingly adorned; and she breathed a warm and perfumed atmosphere. Nothing had been forgotten; there were gilded branches from the walls for wax-lights, and glass lustres on each side of the mirror. Jeanne had also added flowers, to complete the embellishment of the paradise in which she intended to receive his Eminence. She took care even to leave the door of the bedroom a little open, through which the light of a bright fire gave a glimpse of the luxuries within.

Jeanne's coquetry went farther than this. If the light of the fire revealed the interior of that mysterious chamber, if the perfumes declared the woman, the woman herself showed signs of high birth, beauty, intelligence, taste, to make her worthy the attention of a cardinal. Her

toilet was arranged with so much elegance that Monsieur de La Motte, her absent husband, might have asked of her some explanation.

After a light repast, Jeanne buried herself in a large easy-chair near the fire in her bedroom. With a book in her hand, and one foot resting on a stool, she waited, listening to the ticking of the clock and the rumbling of distant carriages. The clock struck nine, ten, and eleven; no one came, either in a carriage or on foot.

Eleven o'clock! That is the hour for gallant prelates, who, having quickened their charity by a supper in the suburbs, can then make their way easily to the Rue Saint Claude, and thus may congratulate themselves on being humane, philanthropic, and pious at slight cost.

Midnight sounded solemnly from the steeple of the Filles-du-Calvaire. No prelate, no carriage. The wax-lights began to wane; the fire, often renewed, was reduced to ashes; the heat in the two chambers was torrid.

The old servant lamented the damage to her cap, bedecked with ribbons, which as she nodded in her sleep came in contact with the flame or the melting wax of the candles.

At half-past twelve Jeanne rose, furious, from her easy-chair, which more than a hundred times she had left during the evening to open the window and search the dimly-lighted street. The neighborhood was as quiet as before the creation of the world. She directed Clotilde to undress her, refused supper, and dismissed the old woman, who was beginning to ask disagreeable questions. Left alone, amid her silken draperies, under her fine curtains, in her excellent bed, she slept no better than she had the night before.

However, in the course of her reflections, Jeanne found excuses for the cardinal. In the first place, this excuse:

the cardinal, being grand-almoner of the court, had in hand a thousand perplexing affairs, more important than a visit to the Rue Saint Claude. And then this other excuse: "He does not know this little Comtesse de Valois," — an excuse very comforting to Jeanne. Oh, certainly she would have been inconsolable if Monsieur de Rohan had failed in an appointment after making her a first visit! This excuse Jeanne wished to test, for her complete satisfaction. She sprang from her bed, lighted the candles, and in her white night-dress looked at herself a long time in the mirror. Then she smiled, blew out the lights, and jumped into bed. She had found this second excuse a good one.

CHAPTER XV.

CARDINAL DE ROHAN.

THE next evening Jeanne without any feeling of discouragement renewed all her preparations of the night before; and on this occasion she had no time to grow impatient, for at seven o'clock a carriage drove up to the door, from which a gentleman alighted while the carriage was driven into a neighboring by-street there to await his return. At the sound of the door-bell Jeanne's heart beat so loud that its pulsations might almost have been heard; however, she composed herself, arranged some embroidery upon the table, placed a new piece of music on her harpsichord, and a newspaper on a corner of the mantel-piece. In a few minutes Clotilde opened the door and announced "The person who wrote the day before yesterday."

"Let him come in," said Jeanne; and a gentleman, dressed in silk and velvet, and with a lofty carriage, entered the room.

Jeanne, who was displeased at the incognito which he tried to preserve, decided to take all the advantage which she had gained by her reflections. She made a step forward, "To whom have I the honor of speaking?" she said, with the manner of one who patronizes rather than of one who is patronized.

"I am the Cardinal de Rohan," he replied; at which Madame de La Motte, feigning to be overwhelmed with the honor, made a reverence as though he were a king.

Then she drew forward an easy-chair for him, and placed herself in another.

The cardinal, observing this freedom from ceremony, laid his hat on the table, and looking at Jeanne, began, "It is true, then, Mademoiselle —"

"Madame," interrupted Jeanne.

"Pardon me, I forgot. It is true, then, Madame —"

"My husband is called the Comte de La Motte, Monseigneur."

"Oh, yes; a gendarme, is he not?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"And you, Madame, are a Valois?"

"Valois; yes, Monseigneur."

"A great name," said the cardinal, crossing his legs, "but rare — believed extinct."

Jeanne divined the cardinal's doubt.

"Not extinct, Monseigneur, since I bear it myself and have a brother, Baron de Valois."

"Recognized?"

"That has nothing to do with it. Recognized or unrecognized, rich or poor, he is still what he was born, — Baron de Valois."

"Madame, please explain to me this descent; you interest me."

Jeanne repeated all that the reader already knows.

The cardinal listened and looked. He did not take the trouble to conceal his impressions. And why should he? He did not believe either in her rank or her merit; but she was poor and pretty. "So that," he said carelessly, when she had finished, "you have really been unfortunate."

"I do not complain, Monseigneur."

"Indeed, I had heard a most exaggerated account of the difficulties of your position. This lodging is commodious and well furnished."

"For a grisette, no doubt," replied Jeanne, impatient to begin the attack.

"What! do you call these rooms fit for a grisette?"

"I do not think you can call them fit for a princess," replied Jeanne.

"And you are a princess," said he, in that tone of nearly imperceptible irony which so very few persons know how to impart to their utterance without becoming impertinent.

"I was born a Valois, Monseigneur, as you were a Rohan," said Jeanne, with so much dignity that the feelings of the prince were not wounded and the feelings of the man were touched.

"Madame," said he, "I forgot that my first words should have been an apology. I wrote to you that I would come yesterday; but I had to go to Versailles, to assist at the reception of Monsieur de Suffren. I was therefore obliged to forego the pleasure of visiting you."

"Monseigneur does me too much honor in remembering me to-day, and my husband will more than ever regret the exile to which poverty compels him, since it prevents him from sharing this favor with me."

The word "husband" caught the attention of the cardinal. "You live alone, Madame?" he asked.

"Entirely alone."

"That is praiseworthy in a young and pretty woman."

"I should be out of place, Monseigneur, in all society but that from which my poverty debars me."

"The genealogists do not contest your claim?"

"No; but what does that avail me," said Jeanne, disdainfully, raising with a charming gesture the little powdered curls on her temples.

The cardinal drew his chair nearer to the fire, "Madame,"

continued he, "I shall be glad to know in what I can serve you."

"In nothing, Monseigneur," she said.

"What! in nothing? Be more frank."

"I cannot be more frank than I am, Monseigneur."

"You were complaining just now."

"Certainly, I complain."

"Well, then?"

"Well, then, Monseigneur, I see that your Eminence wishes to bestow charity on me."

"Oh, Madame!"

"Nothing else. I have taken charity, but I will receive it no more."

"What can you mean?"

"Monseigneur, for some time past I have been very much humiliated; I can endure it no longer."

"Madame, you are wrong; there is no humiliation in misfortune."

"Not even with the name I bear! Come, would *you* beg, Monsieur de Rohan?"

"I do not speak of myself," said he, with embarrassment mingled with hauteur.

"Monseigneur, I know only two ways of begging, — in a carriage, or at a church door; in velvet, or in rags. Well, just now, I did not expect the honor of this visit; I thought you had forgotten me."

"Oh, you knew, then, that it was I who wrote?" said the cardinal.

"Were not your arms on the seal of the letter which you did me the honor to write me?"

"However, you feigned not to know me."

"Because you did not do me the honor to announce yourself."

"Well! this pride pleases me," said the cardinal, and

he regarded with attention the animated eyes and haughty countenance of Jeanne.

"I was saying, then," continued Jeanne, "that before seeing you I had taken the resolution of throwing off all this flimsy parade, which covers the nakedness of my name, and of going in rags, like other mendicants, to beg my bread from the passers-by."

"You are not at the end of your resources, I trust, Madame?"

Jeanne did not reply.

"You have some property, even if it be mortgaged? Some family jewels? — this, for example;" and he pointed to a box, with which the delicate fingers of the lady had been playing. "A singular box, upon my word! Will you permit me to look? Oh, a portrait!" he continued, with a look of great surprise.

"Do you know the original of this portrait?" asked Jeanne.

"It is that of Maria Theresa."

"Of Maria Theresa?"

"Yes, the Empress of Austria."

"Really!" cried Jeanne, "Are you sure, Monseigneur?"

The cardinal looked at the box more attentively than before. "Where did you get this?" he asked.

"From a lady who came the day before yesterday."

"To see you?"

"Yes."

"From a lady —" and the cardinal examined the box with minute attention.

"I am mistaken, Monseigneur, there were two ladies," continued Jeanne.

"And one of them gave you this box?" said he, with evident suspicion.

"No; she dropped it here."

The cardinal remained thoughtful for some time, — so thoughtful that the Comtesse de Valois was puzzled, and thought that it would be well for her to be on her guard.

Then the cardinal looked up, carefully observing the countess, and said, "What was the name of this lady? I beg pardon for being inquisitive. I am ashamed of seeming to play the part of a judge."

"Indeed, it is a somewhat strange question."

"Indiscreet, perhaps, but not strange."

"Yes, very strange; for if I had known the name of the lady who left this little box here, I should have returned it long before this."

"Then you know not who she is?"

"I know only that she is the head of some charitable institution."

"In Paris?"

"No; in Versailles."

"From Versailles? the head of a charitable house?"

"Monseigneur, I accept charity from ladies; that does not so much humiliate a poor woman; and this lady, who had heard of my wants, left with me a hundred louis when she went away."

"A hundred louis!" said the cardinal in surprise; then fearing lest he might wound Jeanne's susceptibility, he added, "I am not astonished, Madame, that they should give you such a sum. You deserve, on the contrary, all the solicitude of charitable persons, and your name makes it a duty to help you. What surprises me is that it was brought to you by the head of a charitable institution; they are not in the habit of giving such donations. Could you describe this lady to me, Countess?"

"Not easily, Monseigneur," replied Jeanne, to whet the curiosity of the cardinal.

"How so, since she came here?"

"Because, probably not wishing to be recognized, she hid her face in a very large hood, and was, besides, enveloped in furs." The countess had the air of trying to remember.

"However," repeated the cardinal.

"I thought I saw — but I do not affirm it, Monseigneur."

"What did you think you saw?"

"Blue eyes."

"The mouth?"

"Small, though the lips were rather thick, — the lower one, particularly."

"Tall or short?"

"Of middle height."

"Her hands?"

"Perfect."

"Her neck?"

"Long and slender."

"Her countenance?"

"Grave and noble."

"Her manner of speaking?"

"Somewhat embarrassed. But you, perhaps, know this lady, Monseigneur?"

"Why should you think so, Madame?" demanded the prelate, quickly.

"From the manner in which you question me; besides, there is a sympathy which all doers of good works have for one another."

"No, Madame, I do not know her."

"But Monseigneur, if you had some suspicion?"

"How should I?"

"Oh, suggested by this portrait, perhaps?"

"Yes, certainly, the portrait," said the cardinal,

rather uneasily, fearing that he had not been cautious enough.

"Well, Monseigneur, this portrait — "

"Oh, this portrait still appears to me to be that of — "

"That of Maria Theresa, is it not so?"

"I believe so, certainly."

"Then you think — "

"That you have received a visit from some German lady who has founded a charitable institution — "

"At Versailles?"

"At Versailles; yes, Madame." And the cardinal was silent. But it was evident that he doubted, and that the presence of this box in Jeanne's apartment renewed his distrust.

Jeanne did not wholly understand what foundation the prince could have for his suspicion — so unfavorable to her, certainly — that she was spreading a snare for him under false appearances.

Indeed, any one might have known the interest which the cardinal took in the queen's affairs; it was a court rumor which was by no means a secret, and we have already remarked upon the efforts of certain enemies to maintain the animosity between the queen and her grand-almoner.

This portrait of Maria Theresa, this box which the queen constantly carried with her, and which the cardinal had seen a hundred times in her hands, — how could it have come into the hands of Jeanne the mendicant? Had the queen really been to see her in this poor apartment? If so, was she indeed unknown to Jeanne? Was the latter, with some secret motive, concealing the honor which had been bestowed upon her?

The prelate doubted; he had already doubted the even-

ing before. The name of Valois had cautioned him to be on his guard; and if the queen had really been there, it was no longer a poor woman he had to deal with, but a princess succored by a queen who bestowed her gifts in person. Was Marie Antoinette charitable to this degree?

While the cardinal was thus pondering over his doubts, Jeanne, who watched him constantly, whom not an emotion of the prince escaped, was in agony. It is indeed real martyrdom for a conscience burdened with some mental reservation to be suspected by those whom one wishes to convince by the actual truth.

The silence was embarrassing to both.

At last, however, the cardinal broke the silence by saying, "And the other lady?"

"Oh, I could see her plainly! She is tall and beautiful, with a determined expression, a brilliant complexion, and a fine form."

"And the other lady did not call her by name?"

"Yes, once; but by her Christian name."

"What was it?"

"Andrée."

"Andrée!" repeated the cardinal, with a start which did not pass unnoticed by the countess.

The cardinal now knew everything; the name of Andrée put an end to all his doubts. It was known that the queen had gone to Paris on that day with Mademoiselle de Taverney.

The cardinal breathed again. There was neither snare nor plot in the Rue Saint Claude. Madame de La Motte appeared to him beautiful and pure as the angel of truth. Still, he would try one more test; the prince was a diplomatist.

"Countess," he said, "one thing astonishes me, — that you have not addressed yourself to the king."

"But Monseigneur, I have sent him twenty petitions."

"Without result?"

"Yes."

"Then, if the king failed you, any of the princes of the blood would have listened to your claim. Monsieur le Duc d'Orléans is charitable, and often likes to do what the king refuses to do."

"I have solicited his Highness the Duc d'Orléans, Monseigneur, but uselessly."

"That astonishes me."

"Oh, when one is poor, and not supported by any one — "

"There is still the Comte d'Artois; sometimes dissipated men perform more generous actions than charitable ones."

"It was the same with him as with the others."

"But the princesses, the aunts of the king, Madame Elisabeth particularly, would refuse assistance to no one."

"It is true, Monseigneur, her Royal Highness, to whom I wrote, promised to receive me; but I know not why, after having received my husband, she never deigned to notice me."

"It is strange, certainly," said the cardinal; then, as if the thought had just struck him, he cried, "But, good Heavens! we are forgetting the person to whom you should have addressed yourself first of all."

"And to whom ought I to have applied?"

"To the dispenser of all favors, to her who never refuses help where it is deserved, — to the queen. Have you seen her?"

"Never," answered Jeanne, with perfect simplicity.

"You have never presented your petition to the queen?"

"Never."

"You have not tried to obtain an audience of her?"

"I have tried, but did not succeed."

"At least, you must have tried to throw yourself in her way, that she might remark you, and send for you to court. That would have been a method worth trying."

"I have not employed it."

"But that is very strange!"

"I have been only twice to Versailles, and then saw but two persons there; one was Doctor Louis, who had attended my poor father at the Hôtel Dieu, and the other was Monsieur Baron de Taverney, to whom I had an introduction."

"What did Monsieur de Taverney say to you? He might have brought you to the queen."

"He told me that I was very unwise."

"How so?"

"To bring forward as a claim to the benevolence of the king a relationship which would be sure to displease him, as nobody likes poor relations."

"I recognize the egotistical and rude old baron." Then, reflecting on Andrée's visit to the countess, "It is very strange!" he thought. "The father rejects the solicitor, and the queen takes the daughter to her. Something must result from that singular contradiction." Then, aloud, "Upon my word, it surprises me to hear that you, a lady of the first rank, have never seen the king or queen!"

"Except in a portrait," replied Jeanne, smiling.

"Then," said the cardinal, "I will conduct you myself to Versailles, and will open the doors for you."

"Oh, Monseigneur, how good you are!" cried Jeanne, overwhelmed with joy.

The cardinal approached her, and said, "It is impossible but that before long everybody must become interested in you."

"Alas, Monseigneur!" said Jeanne, with an adorable sigh, "do you think so?"

"Oh, I am sure of it!"

"I fear you flatter me," she said, looking earnestly at him, for she could hardly believe in his sudden change of manner, who ten minutes before had treated her with the levity of a prince.

This look of Jeanne, thrown as if by the arrow of the archer, wounded the cardinal either in the heart or in his sensual being, awakening either the fire of ambition or the fire of desire, — fire in either case.

Monsieur de Rohan, who was a connoisseur in women, acknowledged to himself that he had seen few so seducing. "Ah, upon my word!" said he to himself, with the eternally scheming spirit of a man used to diplomacy, "it would be too extraordinary, and too fortunate, that at the same time I should meet a virtuous woman with the appearance of an intriguer, and should find in this state of poverty an all-powerful protectress."

"Monseigneur, your occasional silence disquiets me. Pardon me for saying so."

"Why so, Countess?"

"Because a man like you fails in politeness to only two kinds of women."

"Oh, good Heavens, Countess! what are you about to say? Upon my word, you frighten me!" and he took her hand.

"I repeat it," said she, — "with women whom you love too much, or with women for whom you have but little respect."

"Countess, Countess! you make me blush. Have I, then, failed in politeness toward you?"

"Certainly."

"Do not say that, — it would be terrible!"

"It is serious, indeed, Monseigneur; and yet you cannot love me too much, and I have given you no reason for not respecting me."

The cardinal took Jeanne's hand.

"Oh, Countess! you speak as if you were angry with me."

"No, Monseigneur, for you have not yet merited my anger."

"And I never will, Madame, from this day in which I have had the pleasure of making your acquaintance."

"Oh, my mirror! my mirror!" thought Jeanne.

"And from this day, my solicitude for you will not cease."

"Oh, no more, Monseigneur," said the countess, who had not withdrawn her hand; "that is enough."

"What do you mean?"

"Monseigneur, do not speak to me of your protection."

"God forbid that I should pronounce that word 'protection!' Ah, Madame, it is not you that it would humiliate, but myself."

"Then Monsieur le Cardinal, let us admit one thing which will flatter me exceedingly."

"If so, Madame, let us admit that thing."

"Let us admit that you have paid a visit to Madame de La Motte Valois, — nothing more."

"But nothing less, at least," replied the gallant cardinal, and raising Jeanne's hand to his lips he kissed it with some ardor.

The countess withdrew her hand.

"Oh, politeness, only," said the cardinal, with a graceful delicacy.

Jeanne restored to him her hand, which the cardinal now kissed very respectfully.

"Ah, that is as it should be, Monseigneur."

The cardinal bowed.

"To know," continued the countess, "that I shall have a place, small though it be, in the mind of a man so

occupied and so eminent, — I assure you, it is a year's consolation."

"A year? that is a short time; let us hope for more, Countess."

"Very well, I do not say no, Monsieur le Cardinal," said she, smiling.

This "Monsieur le Cardinal," was a familiarity of which Madame de La Motte was guilty for the second time. The prelate, sensitive in his pride, might have been astonished at it; but the affair had gone so far that not only was he not astonished, he was even pleased, as if he had received a favor. "Ah, this seems like confidence," he said, drawing still nearer to Jeanne. "So much the better; so much the better."

"I have confidence, yes, Monseigneur; because I perceive that your Eminence —"

"You said 'Monsieur' just now, Countess."

"You must pardon me, Monseigneur; I am not acquainted with court usage. I say, then, that I have confidence in you because you are capable of understanding a mind like mine, adventurous and brave, and a heart still pure in spite of the trials of poverty, in spite of attacks upon me by vile enemies. Your Eminence will know how to appreciate in me — that is, in my conversation — whatever you may find that is worthy of you; as to all the rest your Eminence will grant indulgence."

"We are, then, friends, Madame; it is agreed?"

"I, indeed, wish it."

The cardinal rose and advanced toward Madame de La Motte; but as his arms were rather more widely extended than the occasion required, the countess glided lightly beyond their reach.

"A friendship of three!" she said, with an inimitable accent of raillery and innocence.

"What do you mean by 'friendship of three'?" asked the cardinal.

"Why, is there not, somewhere in the world, a poor gendarme, an exile, called the Comte de La Motte?"

"Oh, Countess, what an unseasonable memory you have!"

"But I must speak to you of him, since you do not speak of him to me."

"Do you know why I do not speak of him to you, Countess?"

"Tell me, if you please."

"It is because he will always speak for himself quite enough; believe me, husbands are not easily silenced."

"And if he speaks for himself?"

"Then others will speak of you, — will speak of us."

"How is that?"

"They will say, for example, that Monsieur le Comte de La Motte was pleased, or was displeased, because Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan came three, four, or five times a week to visit Madame de La Motte in the Rue Saint Claude."

"Ah! but do you mean that, Monsieur le Cardinal? — three, four, or five times a week!"

"What, then, means our friendship, Countess? I said 'five times;' I was wrong. I should have said six or seven times, without counting the bissextile days."

Jeanne laughed. The cardinal observed that, for the first time, she appreciated his pleasantry, and he felt flattered.

"Can you keep people from talking?" she said. "You know well that it is impossible."

"Yes; I can," he replied.

"And how?"

"Oh, very easily. With, or without, reason, I am well known to the Parisians."

"Oh, certainly, and with reason, Monseigneur."

"But you, they have the misfortune not to know."

"Well?"

"Let us reverse the situation."

"Reverse it? You mean —"

"If you should be willing — if, for instance —"

"Go on."

"If you should go out, instead of making me go out?"

"You mean that I should go to your hôtel, — I, Monseigneur?"

"You would go readily enough to call on a minister."

"A minister is not a man, Monseigneur."

"You are adorable. Well, I am not speaking of my hôtel; I have a house —"

"A pleasure-house, to speak plainly."

"By no means, — a house of yours."

"Ah!" said the countess, "a house of mine? And where is that house? I know nothing of it."

"To-morrow morning at ten o'clock you shall have the address."

The countess blushed, and the cardinal gallantly took her hand. This time the kiss that he impressed upon it was at once respectful, tender, and bold. They then bowed to each other, smiling, with that attenuated ceremoniousness which indicates an approaching intimacy.

"A light for Monseigneur!" cried the countess.

The old woman appeared with a light, and the prelate departed.

"Well, well!" thought Jeanne; "it seems to me that I have made a great step in the world."

"Come, come!" said the cardinal to himself, as he got into his carriage; "I have made a double stroke. That woman is bright enough to catch the queen as she has caught me."

CHAPTER XVI.

MESMER, AND SAINT-MARTIN.

THERE was a time when Paris, free from business, with plenty of leisure, was entirely engrossed with questions which in our day are the monopoly of the rich, who are called useless, and of the scholars, who are called idle.

In 1784, the period which we have reached, the fashionable topic, the topic which superseded all others, was mesmerism, — a mysterious science, badly defined by its discoverers, who, not feeling the necessity of rendering a discovery democratic from its birth, had allowed it to assume the name of a man, — that is, an aristocratic title, instead of one of those scientific names taken from the Greek, by the aid of which the bashful modesty of modern scholars popularizes every scientific subject.

Indeed, of what use would it have been in 1784 to popularize a science? Did the people, who for more than a century and a half had not been consulted by the governing power, count for anything in the State? No; the people were the fertile soil, which produced, — a rich harvest to be reaped; but the lord of the soil was the king, the harvesters were the nobility.

In our day all this is changed. France is like a secular hour-glass: for nine hundred years it has marked the hour of royalty; the powerful hand of the Lord has turned it: for centuries to come it will mark the era of the people.

In 1784 the name of a man was a recommendation. In these days success depends upon the names of things.

But let us leave *to-day* and look back upon *yesterday.*

Doctor Mesmer was in Paris, as we have already heard from Marie Antoinette. This Doctor Mesmer deserves a few words from us, as his name was then on everybody's lips. He had, in 1777, brought from Germany, the land of mysteries, a science inflated with clouds and lightning. By the flashes of this lightning the man of science saw but the clouds forming above him a dark canopy; the vulgar saw only the lightning. He had begun his career in Germany by writing a thesis upon the influence of the planets. He had endeavored to prove that these celestial bodies, by virtue of that power which produces their mutual attraction, exercised an influence over living bodies, and particularly over the nervous system, by means of a subtle fluid which exists everywhere in the universe. But this first theory was too abstract; one must, to understand it, be initiated in the science of the Galileos and the Newtons; and in order that this theory should become popular, it would have been necessary for the whole body of the nobility to be converted into a scientific society. He therefore abandoned this theory, and as the basis of his doctrine, gave his attention to the magnet, which was then awakening much interest, and was supposed to be efficacious in curing disease.

Mesmer therefore added the action of magnets to his first system, and tried to see what he could derive from this combination. Unfortunately for Mesmer, on arriving at Vienna, he found a rival, named Hall, already established there; and this rival pretended that Mesmer had robbed him of his discoveries. Thereupon Mesmer — a man of imagination — announced that he had abandoned the magnet as useless, and that he effected cures not by mineral, but by animal, magnetism.

This, although called by a new name, was not in reality

a new science. Traditions in regard to it had been handed down from the ancient Greeks and Egyptians, and it had been revived from time to time by the sorcerers of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, many of whom had paid for their knowledge with their lives.

Urbain Grandier was nothing more than an animal magnetizer.

Mesmer had heard of the miracles of this science.

Joseph Balsamo, the hero of one of our books, had left some traces of his work in Germany and especially in Strasburg.

Mesmer set out in search of these fragments of knowledge, — scattered and fluttering like those will-o'-the-wisps which hover at night over stagnant pools, — and condensed them into a science to which he gave the name of mesmerism. He then communicated his system to the Academies of Science in Paris, London, and Berlin. The first two did not deign to reply to him; the third said that he was mad.

Mesmer recalled the Grecian philosopher who denied that there was such a thing as motion, and whom his antagonist confounded by walking away. He came to France, and took out of the hands of Doctor Storck, and of the oculist Wenzel, a young girl seventeen years old, who had disease of the liver and amaurosis, and after three months of his treatment, restored her health and her sight.

This cure convinced many people, — among them a doctor called Deslon, who, at first an antagonist, became his disciple.

From this time the reputation of Mesmer rapidly increased. The Academy declared against the innovator; the court was in his favor. Negotiations were opened by the ministry to induce Mesmer to enrich humanity by the

publication of his doctrine. The doctor fixed his price. There was some haggling, and at last the government offered him, in the king's name, an income for life of twenty thousand francs for public lectures, and ten thousand more for the instruction in his system of three persons to be chosen by the government.

Mesmer, however, indignant at the royal parsimony, refused, and set out for the Baths at Spa with one of his patients; but while he was gone Deslon, his pupil, possessor of the secret which he had refused to sell for thirty thousand francs a year, opened a public establishment for the treatment of patients.

Mesmer was informed of this disastrous fact; he denounced Deslon's conduct as treacherous and thievish; he was near going mad. Then one of his patients, Monsieur de Bergasse, conceived the idea of forming a company. A capital of three hundred and forty thousand francs was raised on the condition that the secret should be revealed to the shareholders. Mesmer agreed to this, and with the money returned to Paris.

The time was propitious. France was in that state when as often happens in communities where there is nothing of an excitable nature to occupy the minds of the people, every one feels dimly that a crisis is approaching. Under the apparent calmness there prevailed a general uneasiness, and all were seeking for something that would create excitement. They had lost all interest in questions of national import, and a new opera was to them of more moment than a treaty of peace with England, or the recognition of the independence of the United States. In fact, every one was ready to be carried away by anything so mysterious and strange as this theory, which proposed to cure invalids, restore intelligence to fools, and amuse the wise.

Everywhere Mesmer was talked of. What had he done? On whom had he performed these miracles? To what great lord had he restored sight or health? What lady's nerves, worn out by dissipation, had he soothed? What young girl had he compelled to predict the future in a magnetic trance?

The future! — that great word of all ages, that word of absorbing interest for all minds, the solution of all problems. But what, then, was the present?

A royalty without radiance, a nobility with authority, a country without commerce, a people without rights, a society without confidence. From the royal family, uneasy and isolated on its throne, to the plebeian family starving in its hovel, there was misery, shame, and fear everywhere.

To forget others while thinking of self, to draw from new, unknown sources the assurance of long life and unalterable health, to snatch something from avaricious fate, — was not this the object of an aspiration, easy to be understood, toward that unknown good from which Mesmer would lift the veil?

Voltaire was dead, and there was no longer in France a single burst of laughter, except the laugh of Beaumarchais, more bitter than that of the master. Rousseau was dead; there were no more religious philosophers in France. Rousseau had wished to sustain belief in God; but since Rousseau was no more, no one dared to venture that undertaking for fear of being crushed under its weight.

War had formerly been a serious occupation for the French people; but now the only war in which they were engaged was in America, where the people fought for what they called "independence," and what the French call by the more abstract word "liberty." And even this distant war — this war carried on not only in another country, but

in another world — had come to an end. All things considered, was it not better worth while to give attention to Mesmer, — that German doctor who, for the second time within six years, created an excitement in France, — than to Lord Cornwallis or Monsieur Washington, who were so far away that probably the people of Paris would never see either of them? Mesmer was there; they could see him, touch him, and — supreme ambition of three quarters of Paris — could be touched by him.

And so this man, who on his arrival in Paris had not been sustained by any one, not even by the queen, his compatriot, who aided so willingly those who came from her country; this man, who but for Doctor Deslon who betrayed him would have remained in obscurity, — this man reigned supremely over public opinion, leaving far behind the king, of whom the public had never talked, Monsieur de Lafayette, of whom they did not yet speak, and Monsieur Necker, of whom they spoke no longer.

And as if this age had undertaken the task of giving to every mind according to its aptitude, to every heart according to its sympathy, to every body according to its need, — in contrast with Mesmer arose Saint-Martin, the teacher of spiritualism, whose doctrine came to comfort the souls wounded by the positivism of the German doctor.

Imagine an atheist with a religion more attractive than religion itself; a republican full of consideration and respect for kings; a gentleman belonging to the privileged class, tender and loving toward the people, — endowed with the most logical, the most charming eloquence, attacking the religions of the world which he calls senseless, for the sole reason that they are divine!

Imagine Epicurus, powdered, in embroidered coat, spangled waistcoat, satin small-clothes, silk stockings and red shoes, — Epicurus, not content with overthrowing gods in

whom he does not believe, but attacking governments, which he treats like religions, because they can never agree among themselves, and almost always cause unhappiness to mankind, arguing against social law, which he attacks by saying: "It punishes in the same way crimes of different degrees; it punishes the effect without considering the cause."

Suppose now that this tempter, who calls himself "the unknown philosopher," instead of saying, "All men are equal," which is an absurdity, invents this formula: "Intelligent beings are all kings." And then conceive the effect of such a sentiment, falling on a society without hope, without direction. Remember that at this time women were tender and foolish, and men were eager after power, honor, and pleasure; that it was a time when kings allowed their crowns to rest lightly on their heads, — crowns toward which, for the first time, curious and threatening looks were cast from places of obscurity. It will not then seem strange that such a doctrine should find proselytes, — a doctrine which said: "Choose from among yourselves a superior soul, — superior in love, in charity, in the capability of loving well, of making others happy; then when this soul of a man shall be clearly revealed to you, bend the knee, humiliate yourselves, annihilate yourselves, inferior souls, in order to leave room for the dictatorship of this soul, whose mission it is to restore you to your normal condition, — that is, to an equality of suffering amid unequal gifts and opportunities."

Add to this that the unknown philosopher surrounded himself with mystery; that he sought the deepest obscurity to discuss in peace, far from spies and parasites, the grand social theory which might become the policy of the world.

"Listen to me," he said, "faithful souls, believing

hearts, — listen, and try to understand me; or rather do not listen, unless you have sufficient interest and desire for knowledge to understand me, for you will find it difficult, and I will not impart my secrets to any who will not tear away the veil from before them. I say things that I do not wish to seem to say, therefore I shall often appear to say what I really do not say."

Thus worked for the glorification of soul and of matter, while dreaming of the annihilation of God and the destruction of the religion of Christ, these two men, who had divided the more serious portion of the French people into two camps.

To the vat of Mesmer, from which flowed forth health and happiness, was drawn the sensual life, the elegant materialism of this degenerate nation; while for the study of truth and error were united the pious, charitable, loving souls, thirsting for realities after their long familiarity with delusions.

If within these privileged spheres ideas either diverged, or became confused, it must be remembered in what a crude state the citizens and the people — since called "the third estate" — still remained; they only guessed that something was being done for them, and in their impatience burned with a desire to steal the sacred fire, like Prometheus, to animate a world all their own in which they should manage their own affairs.

Conspiracies in the forming stage of conversations, associations in the form of clubs, social meetings in the form of quadrilles, — that is, civil war and anarchy, — would be discerned under all this by the thoughtful observer.

Alas! now that the veils have been torn away, now that the people have been ten times overthrown by the Promethean fire which they stole, tell us what the thinker could have seen at the end of this strange eighteenth cen-

tury, if not the decomposition of a world, if not something like that which happened after the death of Cæsar and before the eccassion of Augustus. Augustus was he who separated the Pagan from the Christian world, as Napoleon is he who has separated the feudal from the democratic world.

Perhaps we have led our readers into a digression which has seemed to them somewhat long; but indeed it would have been difficult to treat of that epoch without touching upon the serious problems which pertained to its very life and character.

Now the effort has been made, — the effort of a child who with his nails scratches off the rust from an antique statue, in order to read beneath the rust an inscription almost effaced.

Let us return to our story. If we continue to occupy ourselves with real events, we shall say too much for the romancer, too little for the historian.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VAT.

We have endeavored to give an idea, in the last chapter, of the interest and enthusiasm which drew such crowds of people to see the cures publicly performed by Mesmer.

The king, as we know, had given permission to the queen to go and see what all Paris was talking of, accompanied by one of the princesses. It was two days after the visit of Monsieur de Rohan to the countess. The weather was fine. The thaw had come, and hundreds of sweepers were employed in cleaning away the snow from the streets. The clear blue sky was just beginning to be illumined by its first stars, when Madame de La Motte, elegantly dressed, and presenting every appearance of opulence, arrived in a coach which Clotilde had carefully chosen as the best-looking at the Place Vendôme, and stopped before a brilliantly lighted house. This house was the one occupied by Doctor Mesmer. Numbers of other carriages were waiting at the door, and a crowd of people had collected to see the patients arrive and depart. These spectators, when they saw some rich invalid, enveloped in furs and satins, carried in by footmen, seemed to find some consolation in the evident proof it afforded that God made men healthy or unhealthy without reference to their purses or their genealogies. A general murmur would arise when they recognized some duke paralyzed in an arm or leg, or some marshal whose feet refused their office, less in consequence of military fatigues and marches

than of halts made with the ladies of the opera or of the Comédie Italienne. Sometimes it was a lady, carried in by her servants, with drooping head and languid eye, who, weakened by late hours and an irregular life, came to demand from Doctor Mesmer the health she had vainly sought to regain elsewhere.

Many of these ladies were as well known as the gentlemen, and their names circulated noisily through the crowd; but a great many — doubtless those whose names would have created the most scandal — avoided public gaze, on this evening at least, by wearing satin masks, for there was a ball at the Opera that night, and many of these ladies intended to go to it immediately on leaving the Place Vendôme.

Through this crowd Madame de La Motte walked erect and firm, with a mask on her face; she elicited from them only the exclamation, "Ah, that one cannot be very ill!"

But it is not to be supposed that this phrase implied the total absence of comments. For if Madame de La Motte was not sick, why should she come to Doctor Mesmer's? If the crowd had been acquainted, as we are, with the events we have before related, it would have seen that nothing was more natural than this visit.

Indeed, Madame de La Motte had been reflecting upon her conversation with Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan, and especially upon the particular attention with which the cardinal had honored that box containing the picture, which had been left in her house. And as in the name of the owner of this box lay the secret of the sudden change to graciousness in the manner of the cardinal, Madame de La Motte had decided upon two methods by which she might try to discover this name.

In the first place, she had resorted to the more simple of

the two. She had gone to Versailles to inquire at the bureau of charity for the German ladies. There, as we may imagine, she had received no information. There were a great many German ladies living at Versailles, on account of the avowed sympathy of the queen for her country-women; there were supposed to be one hundred and fifty or two hundred of them. They were very benevolent, but there was no bureau of charity supported by them.

Therefore Jeanne's inquiries about the two ladies who had come to visit her had proved fruitless. In vain did she say that one of them was called Andrée; no one knew in Versailles a lady of that name, which moreover was not German. To ask Monsieur de Rohan himself what name he suspected, would show him that she was interested in the subject; it would, moreover, detract from the pleasure and merit of a discovery made in spite of the whole world and apparently beyond the bounds of possibility.

Now, since there had been mystery in the conduct of these ladies at her house, mystery in the astonishment and reserve of Monsieur de Rohan, it was by way of mystery that she must reach the solution of these enigmas. Moreover, Jeanne found an enticing attractiveness in this struggle with the unknown.

She had heard that in Paris for some time past there had been a man of learning, a worker of miracles, who had discovered the means of expelling from the human body disease and pain, as Christ drove out demons from the bodies of the possessed. She learned that this man not only cured physical ills, but wrested from the soul the wretched secret which was destroying it. The most obstinate will of his patients had been seen to soften and change to the docility of the slave under his singular influence.

And then, in the sleep which succeeded the pain, — after the learned physician had quieted the most disturbed organization by plunging it into complete forgetfulness, — the soul, delighted with the rest it owed to the enchanter, gave itself up wholly to the control of this new master. From that moment he directed all its workings; it was subservient to him; and every thought of this grateful soul was transmitted to him in a language which had over ordinary language the advantage, or disadvantage perhaps, of being absolutely truthful.

Moreover, issuing from the body which served as its prison, at the first order of him who for the moment controlled it, this soul would roam through the world, mingle with other souls, probe them incessantly, search them pitilessly; and then like the hound who forces the game from the thicket where it is hiding, as it thinks in safety, it would finally drive this secret from the heart where it was buried, pursue it, overtake it, and bring it to the feet of the master.

Hence came the revelation of many marvellous secrets. Madame de Duras had recovered in this way a child stolen when out at nurse; Madame de Chautoné, an English dog no larger than her hand, for which she would have given all the children in the world; and Monsieur de Vaudreuil, a lock of hair for which he would have given half his fortune. These revelations had been made by clairvoyants, operated upon magnetically by Doctor Mesmer.

Thus persons could choose, in the house of the illustrious doctor, the secrets the best calculated to test this faculty of supernatural divination; and Madame de La Motte expected, in being present at one of the assemblies, to meet this phœnix, and by his means to discover the owner of the box which was for the time being the object

which occupied all her attention. With this purpose in mind she entered in great haste the room where the patients were assembled.

This apartment was divided into two principal salons. After crossing the antechambers and exhibiting the necessary passport to the ushers, the visitor was admitted to a salon, the windows of which were hermetically closed, excluding light and air during the day-time, and noise and air during the night. In the middle of the salon, under a chandelier whose candles gave a feeble and almost dying light, could be seen a large vat closed with a cover. It was not of elegant shape; it was not ornamented; no drapery concealed the nakedness of its metal sides. This vat was known as "Mesmer's tub."

What virtue did this vat contain? Nothing can be more easy to explain. It was almost entirely filled with water, impregnated with sulphur; and porous jars, arranged methodically on the bottom of this vat, inverse to one another in alternation, were saturated with this solution. Thus were established the mysterious cross-currents by the power of which cures were effected.

To the cover was attached, by an iron ring, a long rope. The patients were seated on chairs ranged around the vat, — men and women together, some indifferent, some serious, some anxious, awaiting the result of the experiment. A servant wound this rope around the diseased limbs of the patients, so that all should receive at the same time the charge of electricity from the vat. And besides, in order that the action of the animal fluids, transmitted from one to another, might not be interrupted, the patients were instructed to put themselves in contact with one another, shoulder to shoulder, elbow to elbow, or foot to foot, in such a manner that the warming

and regenerating influence should pass through all at the same moment.

This medicinal performance was indeed a curious spectacle, and it is not strange that Parisians were excited by it to a high degree.

Twenty or thirty patients were seated around the vat. A servant silently wound the cord about them, and then quietly withdrew, after indicating to them certain iron rods which, passing through holes in the vat, would conduct the healing fluid to any selected portion of the body.

Then a mild and penetrating warmth pervaded the room; the air was filled with delicate perfumes, under the influence of which the most rebellious brain must yield its force of will. Soon the invalids abandoned themselves to the voluptuous impressions induced by this atmosphere; and then was heard music, soft and thrilling, coming from invisible sources, rising and dying away again amid the perfumes and the warmth. It struck upon the nerves with irresistible power. It seemed like one of those mysterious, inexplicable sounds in Nature by which even animals are surprised and charmed, — like a wailing of the wind among the crevices of the rocks.

Upon all faces, at first animated by surprise, soon appeared signs of physical enjoyment, induced by all these sensuous influences. The soul yielded, and came forth from the refuge to which it resorts when attacked by bodily ills, and expanded itself in joy and freedom, controlling and transforming the material frame.

The invalids took in their hands the iron rods, and applied them to breast, heart, or head, according to the location of the special malady to be treated.

Imagine, then, on all these faces, happiness succeeding to suffering and anxiety; imagine the drowsy content resulting from these all-absorbing sensations; imagine the

heavy silence, interrupted only by sighs, which brooded over that assembly, — and you will have an exact idea of the scene which, two thirds of a century after it occurred, we have now endeavored to sketch.

The actors in this scene were divided into two classes. There were in the first place the invalids, but little concerned for what is called "respectability," — a barrier much regarded by the average citizen, but easily overstepped by the very high or by the very low, — who had come to that salon only to be healed, and who gave all their attention to the fulfilment of that purpose. Besides these, there were the sceptical, or simply curious, who, not suffering with any infirmity, had visited Mesmer's house as they would have gone to the theatre, wishing either to witness the effect produced on those who were seated around the enchanted vat, or as spectators, to study this new system of physics. These persons were chiefly interested in the patients, and in those who shared in the operation, though in good health.

Among those of the first class, zealous disciples of Mesmer, might be distinguished a young woman of fine form and beautiful face, somewhat extravagantly dressed, who, submitting herself to the action of the fluid, and by means of an iron rod applying to her person — to her head and the lower part of her chest — the strongest doses of the fluid that could be obtained, began soon to roll her lovely eyes, as if overcome with languor, while her hands trembled under those first titillations which indicate the invasion of the magnetic influence. When her head was leaning on the back of the easy-chair every one could examine at leisure that pale brow, those convulsed lips, and that beautiful neck, taking on by degrees the appearance of marble, as her blood circulated more rapidly.

The spectators looked at the young woman with aston-

ishment, and two or three among them, leaning toward one another, uttered words which doubtless had some strange significance, and which had the effect to increase the attention which these persons were bestowing on the woman.

Among the visitors of the second class above mentioned — the curious spectators — was Madame de La Motte, who, without fearing to be recognized, or caring much if she was, held in her hand the satin mask which she had worn while going through the crowd. She stood near the door, leaning against a pillar, and being veiled by a curtain she could see without being seen. And in all that scene what seemed to her most worthy of observation was the face of the young woman agitated by the magnetic fluid. In fact, that face had interested her to such a degree that for several minutes she had stood motionless, riveted to the spot by her eagerness to see, and her desire to ascertain something further. "Oh!" she murmured, without taking her eyes from the lovely patient, "there can be no doubt about it. It is the sister of charity who visited me, and who has occasioned all Monseigneur de Rohan's interest in me." Firmly convinced that she could not be mistaken, and eager to take advantage of the chance which had procured for her the information she had vainly sought, she left her place and went nearer to the young woman.

At that moment the person in question closed her eyes, contracted her lips, and beat the air feebly with her hands, — which, it must be admitted, were not precisely those delicate hands with tapering fingers, those hands white as wax, which Madame de La Motte had so much admired a few days before.

The contagion of the crisis suddenly seized upon the greater number of the patients, moved as they were already by the music and the perfumes. Every nervous

susceptibility had been addressed. Men and women, carried away by the example of their young companion, began to utter sighs, murmurs, shouts, and moving their arms, legs, and heads, gave themselves up, openly and irresistibly, to that paroxysm which the master called a "crisis."

At that moment a man appeared in the salon, without any one knowing how he had entered. He might have sprung from the vat, or perhaps was condensed from the perfumed atmosphere of the room. His lilac-colored coat, and his handsome face, pale, calm, and intellectual, were quite in harmony with the mystery of his apparition. He held in his hand a long wand, which was plunged, so to speak, into the famous vat. He made a sign; the doors opened, twenty robust servants rushed in, and with skilful address seized the patients as they wavered in their arm-chairs, and bore them into the neighboring hall.

While this was going on, and the young woman already referred to, abandoned herself to a paroxysm of delight, Madame de La Motte, who, with other curious spectators, had moved toward the hall intended for the patients, heard a man cry out: "It is she; it is certainly she!"

Madame de La Motte was about to ask, "She! who?" when suddenly two ladies entered the farther end of the first salon, leaning upon each other, and followed at a respectful distance by a man, who, though disguised as a bourgeois, had still the appearance of a servant.

The tournure of these ladies, one of them especially, struck Jeanne so forcibly that she made a step toward them, when a cry from the young woman near her startled every one. The same man whom Jeanne had heard speak before now called out, "But look, gentlemen, it is the queen."

At these words, Jeanne started.

"The queen!" cried many voices in surprise. "The queen here? The queen in that state? Impossible!"

"But look," said he again; "do you know the queen, or not?"

"Indeed," said many, "the resemblance is incredible."

Madame de La Motte had replaced her mask, and could therefore ask questions without fear of being recognized. "Monsieur," said she to the speaker, who was a stout man with quick, observant eyes, "did you say the queen?"

"Oh, Madame, there is no doubt of it."

"And where is she?"

"Why, that young lady that you see there, on the violet cushions, and in such a state that she cannot moderate her transports, is the queen."

"But on what do you found such an idea, Monsieur?"

"Why, simply upon this fact, Madame, that that woman is the queen," replied the accuser, imperturbably. And he left Jeanne to go and spread his news among the rest.

She turned from the almost revolting spectacle, and going near to the door, found herself face to face with the two ladies she had seen enter. When she saw the face of the elder one she uttered a cry of surprise.

"What is the matter?" asked the lady.

Jeanne quickly took off her mask, and asked, "Do you recognize me, Madame?"

The lady made, but quickly suppressed, a movement of surprise, and said, with a slight agitation, "No, Madame."

"Well, Madame, I recognize you, and will give you a proof."

On hearing these words the two ladies drew nearer together in fright. Jeanne drew the box from her pocket, saying, "You left this at my house."

"But supposing this to be true, what makes you so agitated?"

"I am agitated by the danger that your Majesty is incurring here."

"Explain yourself."

"Not before you have put on this mask, Madame;" and she offered hers to the queen, who hesitated, thinking herself sufficiently concealed by her hood.

"I beg your Majesty; there is not an instant to lose."

The queen put on the mask; "And now, come, come!" said Jeanne; and she drew away the two ladies so eagerly that they stopped only at the street-door, which they reached in a few seconds.

"But what is the matter?" said the queen, taking breath.

"Your Majesty has not been seen by any one?"

"I believe not."

"So much the better."

"But, in short, will you explain to me —"

"Will not your Majesty believe your humble servant when she tells you that you are incurring the greatest danger?"

"Still — that danger — what is it?"

"I shall have the honor to tell your Majesty whenever you will grant me an hour's audience; but it is a long story, and your Majesty might be seen and recognized." Then seeing that the queen looked displeased, "Oh, Madame!" said she, turning to the Princess Lamballe, "join your petitions to mine, and persuade the queen to leave this place, and to leave it immediately."

The princess made a gesture of entreaty.

"Then let us go," said the queen, "since it is your wish." Then turning to Madame de La Motte, "You ask for an audience?" she said.

"I beg for that honor, that I may explain my conduct to your Majesty."

"Well, bring this box with you, and apply to Laurent, the door-keeper; he will have his orders." Then going into the street, she called in German, "Kommen sie da, Weber!"

A carriage immediately drove up; they got in, and were soon out of sight.

When they were gone, Madame de La Motte said to herself, "I have done right so far; as to the future, I must reflect."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MADEMOISELLE OLIVA.

During this time the man who had pointed out the fictitious queen to the people, touched on the shoulder another man who stood near him, in a threadbare coat, and whose eyes were eagerly observant, and said, "For you, who are a journalist, here is a fine subject for an article."

"How so?" replied the man.

"Would you like an abstract of it?"

"Certainly."

"Here it is: The danger of being born the subject of a king governed by a queen who indulges in such paroxysms as these."

The journalist laughed. "But the Bastille?" he said.

"Nonsense, are there not anagrams, by the aid of which all royal censors can be avoided? Who can interfere with you, if you retail the history of Prince Silou and the Princess Etteniotna, queen of Narfec? What do you say to that?"

"It is an admirable idea!" said the journalist, with enthusiasm.

"And I do not doubt that an article entitled 'The Paroxysms of the Princess Etteniotna at the House of the Fakir Remsen' would have great success."

"I believe it would."

"Then go and write it with your best ink."

The journalist pressed the hand of the unknown. "Shall I send you some copies, Monsieur?" said he.

"I will do so with pleasure, if you will give me your name."

"Certainly, yes! The idea pleases me; and written out by you its value will be increased a hundred fold. What is the usual circulation of your journal?"

"Two thousand."

"Then do me a favor. Take these fifty louis, and publish six thousand."

"What! Monsieur, you overwhelm me; may I not know the name of so generous a patron of literature?"

"You shall know it when I call for one thousand copies at two francs each. Will they be ready in a week?"

"I will work night and day, Monsieur."

"Let it be amusing."

"It shall make all Paris laugh until the tears come, except one person."

"Who will weep tears of blood, will she not?"

"Oh, Monsieur, how witty you are!"

"You are very good. By the way, date the publication from London."

"As usual."

"Monsieur, I am your humble servant;" and the stout man dismissed the journalist, who, with his fifty louis in his pocket, hurried away silently, like a bird of evil omen.

The unknown again turned to look at the young woman, who had now subsided into a state of exhaustion. He noticed the fine and voluptuous lines in that delicate beauty, her noble grace in the unconscious attitude assumed in sleep; then retracing his steps, "Really," he said to himself, "the resemblance is frightful! God had his motives in creating it, and has no doubt condemned her to whom the resemblance is so strong."

While he made these reflections, the young woman rose slowly from the midst of the cushions, leaning on

the arm of a neighbor already roused from the ecstasy, and began to arrange her somewhat disordered toilet. She blushed a little on seeing the attention she attracted from the spectators, answered with coquettish politeness the grave but kindly questions of Mesmer; then stretching her round arms and pretty legs, like a cat waking out of sleep, she walked across the three rooms, meeting bravely the looks, whether of mockery, lust, or alarm, which the spectators fixed upon her. She was somewhat astonished, however, when she found herself saluted with deep and respectful bows by a group which had already been assembled by the indefatigable stranger, who placed himself behind them, and whispered, "Never mind, gentlemen, never mind, she is not the less the queen of France, — let us salute her."

The little person who was the object of so much respect hastened with some anxiety through the last vestibule, entered the court-yard, and looked about for a coach or chair. Seeing none, she was about to set off on foot, when a groom approached, and said, "Shall I call Madame's carriage?"

"I have none," she replied.

"Madame came in a coach?"

"Yes."

"From the Rue Dauphine?"

"Yes."

"I will take Madame home."

"Do so, then," said she, deliberately, feeling only for a moment the uneasiness which this unexpected proposal would have caused any other woman.

The man made a sign, and a carriage drove up. He opened the door for her, and then said to the coachman, "To the Rue Dauphine." They set off, and when they had reached the Pont Neuf, the little lady, who liked

very much this way of travelling, regretted that she did not live as far off as the Jardin-des-Plantes. They soon stopped, however; the footman handed her out, held out his hand for the key, opened the door to spare the little lady's fingers, and after seeing her safely inside the dark passage, bowed, and immediately drove off again.

"Really," said she to herself, "this is an agreeable adventure; it is very polite in Monsieur Mesmer. Oh, I am very tired! and he must have seen that. He is a great doctor;" saying these words, she mounted to the second story, and knocked at a door, which was quickly opened by an old woman.

"Oh, good-evening, mother! Is supper ready?"

"Yes, and growing cold."

"Has *he* come?"

"No, not yet; but the gentleman —"

"What gentleman?"

"He who was to speak to you this evening."

"To me?"

"Yes."

This colloquy took place in a kind of antechamber, with a glazed door, which opened into a large room fronting on the street. Through the glass could be distinctly seen the lamp which lighted this room, the aspect of which, if not exactly pleasant, was at least comfortable. Old curtains of yellow silk, faded in places, a few chairs covered with green Utrecht velvet, and an old yellow sofa, — such was the magnificence of this apartment.

The young girl abruptly opened the glazed door, and saw seated upon the sofa a man of good appearance, rather stout than thin, who with a handsome white hand was toying with a very elegant lace frill. Although she did not recognize him, it was the same man whom we have seen taking so much interest in her at Mesmer's.

She had not time to question him, for he began immediately, "I know all that you are going to ask, and will tell you without asking. You are Mademoiselle Oliva, are you not?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"A charming person, highly nervous, and much interested in the system of Monsieur Mesmer."

"I have just left there."

"All this, however, your beautiful eyes are saying plainly, does not explain what brings me here, and that is what you wish most particularly to know?"

"You are right, Monsieur."

"Will you not do me the favor to sit down, or I shall be obliged to get up also, and in that way we could not talk at our ease."

"Really, Monsieur, you have very extraordinary manners," replied the young woman, whom we shall henceforth call Mademoiselle Oliva, since she deigned to answer to that name.

"Mademoiselle, I saw you just now at Monsieur Mesmer's, and found you to be all I could wish."

"Monsieur!"

"Do not alarm yourself, Mademoiselle! I do not tell you that I found you charming, — that would seem like a declaration of love, and I have no such thing in my mind. Do not draw back, I beg, or you will oblige me to scream like a deaf man."

"What do you want, then?" said Oliva, innocently.

"I know," continued the stranger, "that you are accustomed to being called beautiful; but I, who also think that you are so, have other things to talk to you about."

"Really, Monsieur, the manner in which you speak to me —"

"Do not get angry before you have heard me. Is there any one that can overhear us?"

"No, Monsieur, no one. But still —"

"Then if no one can hear, we can converse at our ease. What do you say to a little partnership between us?"

"A partnership? You must know —"

"Do not misunderstand; I do not say 'liaison' — I say 'partnership.' I am not talking of love, but of business."

"What kind of business?" said Oliva, with astonishment and at the same time with curiosity.

"What do you do all day long?"

"Why —"

"Do not be afraid; I am not here to accuse you; tell me what you please."

"I do nothing, or, at least, as little as possible."

"You are indolent."

"Oh!"

"That is right."

"Ah, you say it is right?"

"Certainly. What is it to me if you are indolent? Do you like walking?"

"Very much."

"To see sights, and go to balls?"

"Exceedingly."

"To live well?"

"Above all things."

"If I gave you twenty-five louis a month, would you refuse me?"

"Monsieur!"

"My dear Mademoiselle Oliva, now you are beginning to doubt me again, and it was agreed that you were to listen quietly. I will say fifty louis if you like."

"I like fifty louis better than twenty-five; but what I

like better than either is to be able to choose my own lover."

"*Morbleu!* but I have already told you that I do not desire to be your lover. Set your mind at ease about that."

"'And I say, *morbleu!* too; what am I to do to earn my fifty louis?"

"You must receive me at your house, and always be glad to see me. Walk out with me whenever I desire it, and come to me whenever I send for you."

"But I have a lover, Monsieur."

"And what then?"

"What do you mean by 'what then'?"

"Well, dismiss him, *pardieu!*"

"Oh, Beausire cannot be sent away like that."

"Do you wish me to help you?"

"No; I love him."

"Oh!"

"A little."

"That is just a little too much."

"I cannot help it."

"Then Beausire can stay."

"You are very obliging, Monsieur."

"Well, — but do my conditions suit you?"

"Yes; if you have told me all."

"Listen, my dear; I have said all I wish to say now."

"On your honor?"

"On my honor. But there is one thing you must understand."

"And that is —"

"That should it be necessary, you must really be my mistress."

"Ah, you see; there can never be any necessity for that, Monsieur."

"But you will need only to appear to be so."

"Oh, as to that, I agree to it."

"Then that is settled; and here is the first month's pay in advance."

He held out the money, and as she still seemed to hesitate a little, slipped it himself into her pocket without even grazing that round and lithe form which the great connoisseurs of Spain would not have disdained as he did.

Scarcely had he done so, when a knock at the door made Oliva spring to the window. "Good God!" she cried; "escape quickly, — here he is!"

"Who?"

"Beausire, — my lover. Be quick, Monsieur!"

"Ah, upon my word, so much the worse!"

"What do you mean by 'so much the worse'? Why, he will tear you in pieces."

"Bah!"

"Do you hear how he knocks?"

"Well, open the door. Why the devil do you not give him a pass-key?" And he sat down again on the sofa, saying to himself, "I must see this fellow, and judge what he is like."

The knocks became louder, and were mingled with oaths.

"Go, mother, and open the door," cried Oliva, in rage. "As for you, Monsieur, if any harm happens to you, it is your own fault."

"My own fault, as you say," observed the imperturbable unknown, without stirring from the sofa.

Oliva listened at the head of the stairs, with a palpitating heart.

CHAPTER XIX.

MONSIEUR BEAUSIRE.

OLIVA threw herself before the new-comer, a furious man, who with hands extended before him, pale face, and clothes in disorder, rushed into the room uttering hoarse imprecations.

"Beausire! Come, now, Beausire!" said she, in a tone that betrayed but little fear on the part of that courageous woman.

"Let me alone!" cried the man, roughly breaking loose from her. And lashing himself into greater fury, "Ah!" he said, "it is because there is a man here that the door was not opened! Ah! ah!"

The unknown remained on the sofa, calm and motionless. His attitude seemed to Beausire to betray indecision or even fright. He went up to him, grinding his teeth in a threatening manner. "I suppose you will answer me, Monsieur?" he said.

"What is it that you would like to have me tell you, my dear Monsieur Beausire?" replied the unknown.

"What are you doing here; and in the first place, who are you?"

"I am a quiet man at whom you are just now glaring terribly, and I was conversing with Madame, very properly."

"Certainly," murmured Oliva, "very properly."

"Hold your tongue!" shouted Beausire.

"There, there!" said the unknown, "don't be so rude to Madame, who has done no wrong; and if you are angry —"

"Yes, I am angry!"

"He must have lost at cards," said Oliva, in a low tone.

"Death of all the devils!" bawled Beausire, "I am cleaned out!"

"And you would not be sorry to clean out some one else?" said the unknown, laughing. "That is easily understood, dear Monsieur Beausire."

"No more of your impudent pleasantry! Do me the favor to get out of this."

"Oh, Monsieur Beausire, indulgence!"

"Death of all the devils of hell! get up and be off, or I will smash the sofa and everything on it!"

"You did not tell me, Mademoiselle, that Monsieur Beausire was subject to these fits. Good Lord! what ferocity!"

Beausire, exasperated, made a theatrical gesture, and in drawing his sword, described with his arms and the blade a circle at least ten feet in circumference.

"Once more," he said, "get up, or I will nail you to the back of the sofa."

"Really you could not be more disagreeable," replied the unknown, quietly, and with his left hand drawing from its sheath a small sword which he had hidden behind the sofa.

Oliva uttered piercing shrieks.

"Ah, Mademoiselle, be quiet," said the man, calmly, holding his sword in his hand without rising from his seat, — "be quiet, or two things will happen: in the first place, you will confuse Monsieur Beausire, and he will be run through by my sword; in the second place, the

watch will come up and carry you straight off to Saint Lazare."

Oliva exchanged her shrieks for a most expressive pantomime.

The scene that ensued was curious. Beausire, with his breast uncovered, half-drunk, and furious with rage, was making wild and unskilful passes at his adversary, who, still seated on the sofa, parried them with the utmost ease, laughing in a way to terrify Saint-Georges himself.

Beausire began to grow tired, and his anger had given place to an involuntary terror; for he reflected that if this man, who was now content to stand on the defensive, were to attack instead, he, Beausire, would be done for in a moment. Suddenly, however, the man by a skilful movement, sent Beausire's sword flying across the room; it went through an open window and fell into the street. Beausire did not know which way to look.

"Oh, Monsieur Beausire," said the unknown, "you should be more careful; if your sword should fall point downward on any one he would be a dead man."

Beausire, recalled to himself, ran down at his utmost speed to get his sword, and prevent an accident which would have got him into trouble with the police. Meanwhile Oliva, seizing the hand of the victor, said, "Oh, Monsieur, you are very brave, but Monsieur Beausire is treacherous, and you compromise me by remaining; when you are gone he will certainly beat me."

"Then I will remain."

"Oh, no; when he beats me I beat him in return, and I always get the best of it, because I am not obliged to use any restraint; so if you would but go, Monsieur —"

"But my pretty one, if I go now, I shall meet Monsieur Beausire on the stairs; probably we shall fight again, and as I shall not feel inclined to stand on the staircase, I

shall have to kill Monsieur Beausire or be killed by him."

"*Mon Dieu!* it is true; what a scandalous thing that would be!"

"Well, then, to avoid that, I will remain here."

"For the love of Heaven! go away; go up to the next story, and as soon as he returns, I will lock the door and take the key, and you can walk away while we fight it out."

"You are a charming girl; au revoir."

"Au revoir! until when?"

"To-night, if you please."

"To-night! are you mad?"

"*Pardi!* yes, to-night. Is there not a ball at the Opera to-night?"

"But it is now midnight."

"I know it, but what matters that to me?"

"We must have dominos."

"Beausire will procure them, — when you have beaten him."

"You are right," said Oliva, laughing.

"And here are ten louis to buy them with."

"Adieu! Adieu! Thanks!" And she pushed him toward the landing.

"Good! he is just closing the door below," said the unknown.

"There is only a latch and a bolt inside. Adieu! he is coming up."

"But if by chance he should beat you, how will you let me know?"

She reflected a moment. "You have a servant?"

"Yes."

"Send him here, and let him wait under the window till I let a note fall."

"I will; adieu;" and he went upstairs.

Nothing could be easier, the stairway was dark, and Oliva drowned the sound of his footsteps by calling loudly to Beausire, "Are you coming back, madman?" Beausire while coming up the stairs was reflecting seriously upon the moral and physical superiority of this intruder, so insolently established in a stranger's house. He at last reached the landing-place where Oliva was waiting for him. His sword was in its scabbard, and he was thinking up a speech.

Oliva seized him by the shoulders, pushed him into the antechamber and double-locked the door as she had promised.

The unknown, before leaving the house, could hear the beginning of the combat, in which might be distinguished by their sharp sound, like brass instruments in an orchestra, that kind of blows called vulgarly and by onomatopœia, slaps. With these slaps were mingled screams and reproaches.

"Indeed," said the unknown, moving away, "I would not have believed that this woman, so terrified just now at the return of the master, possessed such power of resistance."

The unknown lost no time in awaiting the conclusion of the scene. "There is too much heat in the beginning for it to last long," he said, and he turned into the Rue Anjou Dauphin where he found his carriage awaiting him. He spoke a word to one of his servants, who left the carriage and took up a position opposite Oliva's windows, hiding himself in the deep shadow of a small piazza overhanging the entrance of an old house.

In this position the servant could see, on the curtains of the window, two shadows which at first were greatly agitated, and gave him some idea of what was going on inside. The shadows became quieter by degrees, and at last only one remained.

CHAPTER XX.

GOLD.

We must now return to the interior of the room. Beausire was much surprised to see Oliva lock the door, and still more so, not to see his adversary. He began to feel triumphant, for if he was hiding from him, he must, he thought, be afraid of him. He therefore began to look for him, but Oliva forced him to stop and answer her questions.

Beausire, feeling himself ill-treated, began to talk loud.

Oliva, who knew that she was no longer to blame, as the cause of offence had disappeared, — "Quia corpus delicti aberat," as the text has it, — cried out so loud that to silence her Beausire put his hand to her mouth, or tried to do so.

But he was mistaken; Oliva understood differently the very persuasive and conciliatory movement of Beausire. To this hand coming so swiftly in the direction of her face, she opposed a hand as adroit, as quick, as lately had been the sword of the unknown. This hand parried carte and tierce, thrust forward, downward, and gave Beausire a slap in the face.

Beausire gave back, by a side thrust with the right hand, a blow which beat down both hands of Oliva and with a scandalous noise reddened the left cheek.

Oliva replied to this blow of Beausire with a projectile heavy and dangerous, a pitcher of earthen-ware; and Beausire's answer was the whirling of a cane, which broke

several cups, cut down a wax candle, and ended by hitting the shoulder of the young woman. She, furious, flew at him and seized him by the throat, and he, trying to free himself, tore her dress.

Then with a cry she pushed him from her with such force that he fell in the middle of the room. He got up foaming with rage.

But as the valor of an enemy is measured by the defence made, and as a good defence must always be respected, even by the conqueror, Beausire, who had conceived much respect for Oliva, took up the conversation where he had left it.

"You are a wicked creature, you ruin me," he said.

"On the contrary, it is you who ruin me."

"Oh, I ruin her! — her who has nothing!"

"Say that I have nothing now; say that you have eaten, and drunk, and played away all that I had."

"You reproach me with my poverty?"

"Yes; for it comes from your vices."

"I will correct all yours at a single blow."

"By beating me?" and Oliva brandished a very heavy pair of tongs, the sight of which made Beausire start back.

"Do not talk of vices; it only remained for you to take a lover."

"And what do you call all those wretches who sit by you in the gambling den, where you pass your days and nights?"

"I play to live."

"And nicely you succeed — we die of hunger; charming profession, on my word!"

"And you with yours are obliged to cry if you get your dress torn, because you have not the means to buy another; a fine profession, *pardieu!*"

"Better than yours!" cried Oliva, furious, "and there is the proof of it!" And putting her hand in her pocket, she drew out some gold and threw it across the room.

The louis began to roll upon their edges, and tumble on their faces, some hiding under the furniture, others continuing their sonorous evolutions even under the doors. The others fell flat from fatigue, their faces shining like sparks of fire.

When Beausire heard this metallic ring upon the furniture and upon the floor, he was seized with a vertigo, or we ought rather to say, with remorse. "Louis! double louis!" cried he, astounded.

She took out some more, and threw them in his face.

"Oh," cried he, "Oliva has become rich!"

"This is the proceeds of my profession," cynically replied the creature, kicking vigorously both the gold which strewed the floor, and Beausire who was picking it up.

"Sixteen, seventeen, eighteen," counted he, joyfully.

"Miserable wretch!" muttered Oliva.

"Nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two."

"Coward!"

"Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five."

"Villain!"

Beausire got up. "And so, Mademoiselle, you have been saving money, while you deprived me of necessaries. You let me go about in an old hat, darned stockings, and patched clothes, while you had all this money. Where does it come from? Why, from the sale of my furniture, when I joined my sad destiny to yours."

"Scoundrel!" murmured Oliva, looking at him with contempt, which did not disturb him.

"I pardon you, not your avarice, but your economy," he continued.

"You would have killed me just now," said Oliva.

"Just now I was right; now I should be wrong to do it."

"Why, if you please?"

"Because now you are a good housekeeper, and contribute to our expenses."

"You are a base wretch!"

"My little Oliva!"

"Give me back my money."

"Oh, my darling!"

"If you do not, I will pass your own sword through your body."

"Oliva!"

"It is either yes or no."

"It is no, Oliva; I will never consent to be run through the body."

"Do not stir, or I run you through. The money!"

"Give it to me."

"Ah, coward! ah, degraded creature! you beg, you solicit the fruits of my bad conduct! Ah, this is what is called a man! I have always despised you, — have despised you all, do you hear? — and more still him who gives than him who receives."

"He who can give is fortunate. I have also given you, Nicole," replied Beausire, gravely.

"Do not call me Nicole."

"Pardon, then, Oliva; but is it not true?"

"Fine presents, certainly, — some silver buckles, six louis d'or, two silk dresses, and three embroidered handkerchiefs."

"It is a great deal for a soldier."

"Hold your tongue! The buckles you stole from some one else; the louis d'or you borrowed and never returned; the silk dresses —"

"Oliva! Oliva!"

"Give me back my money."

"What shall I give you instead?"

"Double the quantity."

"Well," said the rogue, "I will go to the Rue de Bussy, and play with it, and bring you back, not the double, but the quintuple;" and he made two steps to the door.

She caught him by the skirt of his too tender coat.

"There," said he, "you have torn my coat."

"So much the better, you shall have a new one."

"Six louis! Oliva, six louis! Luckily, at the Rue de Bussy they are not particular about dress."

Oliva seized hold of the other coat-tail and tore it off. Beausire became furious.

"Death of all the devils!" he cried; "you will make me kill you at last. See how this vixen has undressed me. Now I cannot go out."

"On the contrary, you must go out immediately."

"Without a coat?"

"Put on your great-coat."

"All holes and patches."

"Then do not put it on, if you like that better; but you must go out."

"Never."

She took out of her pocket another handful of gold, and jingled it between her hands.

Beausire was almost wild; he kneeled at her feet and cried, "Order, and I will obey."

"Go quickly to the Capucin, Rue de Seine, where they sell dominos for the ball, and buy me one complete, mask and all."

"Good."

"And one for yourself, black; but for me a white satin one, and I give you only twenty minutes to do it in."

"Are we going to the ball?"

"Yes, if you are obedient."

"Oh, always, always!"

"Go, then, and show your zeal."

"I am going."

"What! are you not gone yet?"

"But the money?"

"You have twenty-five louis."

"What! I have twenty-five louis! And how do you make that out?"

"Why, those you picked up."

"Oh, Oliva, I thought you meant to give me those."

"You shall have more another time; but if I give you them now, you will stop and play. Go, and come back quickly."

"She is right," said he to himself; "that is just what I intended to do."

"Twenty-five minutes, do you hear?" cried Oliva.

"I obey."

As soon as he was gone Oliva wrote rapidly these words: "The peace is signed, the division made, and the ball decided on. At two o'clock we shall be at the Opera; I shall wear a white domino, with a blue ribbon on my left shoulder." Then rolling this round a bit of the broken vase, she went to the window and threw it out.

The valet picked it up, and made off immediately.

In less than half an hour Monsieur Beausire returned, followed by two journeymen tailors, who had brought, for the sum of eighteen louis, two beautiful dominos, such as could be found only at the Capucin-Magique, the establishment of a celebrated tailor, costumer of her Majesty and the maids of honor.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PLEASURE-HOUSE.

We left Madame de La Motte at Monsieur Mesmer's door, watching the queen's carriage as it drove off. As soon as it was out of sight she went home for the purpose of procuring a domino and another mask, and at the same time to see if anything had occurred there while she was away. She had promised herself, for that happy night, some enjoyment after all the emotions of the day. She would go alone to the Opera and enjoy the charm of adventure. Therefore it was a disappointment to her to find a man waiting at her door with a note from the Cardinal de Rohan. She opened it and read as follows: —

"Madame la Comtesse, — You have doubtless not forgotten that we have business together; even if you have a short memory, I never forget what has pleased me. I shall have the honor to wait for you at a place to which my messenger will conduct you, if you please to come."

This letter was signed by a pastoral cross.

Jeanne, although somewhat annoyed, immediately reentered the coach, and told the messenger to get on the box with the coachman. Ten minutes sufficed to bring her to the entrance of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, where, in a hollow and completely hidden by great trees, was one of those pretty houses, built in the time of Louis XV., with all the taste of the sixteenth century, with the comfort of the eighteenth.

"Oh, oh! a pleasure-house," murmured the countess. "It is very natural on the part of Monsieur de Rohan, but very humiliating for a Valois. But, patience!"

That word, which resignation makes a sigh, or impatience an exclamation, betrayed the devouring ambition of her dreams and the mad cupidity of her desires. But as she crossed the threshold of the house she determined on her course of action.

She was led from room to room till she came to a small dining-room, fitted up with exquisite taste. There she found the cardinal waiting for her. He was looking over some pamphlets, but rose immediately on seeing her.

"Ah, here you are. Thanks, Madame la Comtesse," and he approached to kiss her hand; but she drew back with a reproachful and indignant air.

"What is the matter, Madame?" he asked.

"You are, doubtless, not accustomed, Monseigneur, to receive such a greeting from the women whom your Eminence is in the habit of summoning here."

"Oh, Madame!"

"We are in your pleasure-house, are we not, Monsieur?" continued she, looking disdainfully around her.

"But, Madame —"

"I had hoped, Monseigneur, that your Eminence would have deigned to remember in what rank I was born. I had hoped that you would have been pleased to consider that if God has made me poor, he has at least left me the pride of my race."

"Come, come, Countess, I took you for a woman of intellect."

"You call a woman of intellect, it appears, Monseigneur, every one who is indifferent to, and laughs at, everything, even dishonor. To these women — pardon me,

your Eminence — I have been in the habit of giving a different name."

"No, Countess, you deceive yourself; I call a woman of intellect one who listens when you speak to her, and does not speak before having listened."

"I listen, then."

"I had to speak to you of serious matters, Countess."

"Therefore you receive me in a dining-room."

"Why, would you have preferred my receiving you in a boudoir?"

"The distinction is delicate," said she.

"I think so, Countess."

"Then I am simply to sup with you?"

"Nothing else."

"I trust your Eminence is persuaded that I feel the honor as I ought."

"You are quizzing, Countess."

"No; I only laugh."

"You laugh?"

"Yes. Would you prefer to see me angry. You are difficult to please, Monseigneur."

"Oh, you are charming when you laugh, and I ask nothing better than to see you always doing so; but at this moment you are not laughing. Oh, no! there is anger in that smile which shows your beautiful teeth."

"Not the least in the world, Monseigneur; the dining-room reassured me."

"That is good."

"And I hope you will enjoy your supper."

"What! — that I shall enjoy my supper? And you?"

"Oh, I am not hungry."

"What, Madame, you refuse to give me a supper?"

"What do you say?"

"You drive me out?"

"I do not understand you, Monseigneur."

"Listen, dear Countess; if you were less in a passion I would tell you that it is useless to behave like this, — you cannot appear otherwise than charming; but as at each compliment I fear to be dismissed, I abstain."

"You fear to be dismissed? Really, I beg pardon of your Eminence, but you become unintelligible."

"What I say is, however, quite clear. The other day, when I came to see you, you complained that you were lodged unsuitably to your rank. That compelled me to shorten my visit; and besides it made you somewhat cold toward me. I thought, therefore, that to restore you to your proper place would be like restoring air to the bird whom the experimenter has placed under his air-pump."

"And then?" said the countess, anxiously, for she began to comprehend.

"Then, beautiful Countess, that you might receive me with pleasure, and that I, on my part, might visit you without compromising either you or myself —" He stopped and looked at her.

"Well?" she said.

"I hoped that you would deign to accept this small residence; you observe I do not call it a pleasure-house."

"Accept! you give me this house, Monseigneur?" said Jeanne, her heart beating with pride and eagerness.

"A very small gift, Countess; but if I had offered you more, you would have refused."

"Oh, Monseigneur, it is impossible for me to accept such a gift."

"Impossible, why? Do not say that word to me, for I do not believe in it. The house belongs to you; the keys are here on this silver plate. I treat you as if you were a conqueror; do you find any humiliation in this?"

"No, but — "

"Then accept."

"Monseigneur, I have told you — "

"How is this, Madame? You write to the ministers for a pension; you accept a hundred louis from an unknown lady — "

"Oh, Monseigneur, it is different. Who receives — "

"Who receives, obliges," said the cardinal, nobly. "Come, I have waited for you in your dining-room. I have not yet seen the boudoir, nor the drawing-room, nor the bed-rooms; but I suppose there are all these."

"Oh, Monseigneur, forgive me! You force me to confess that you are the most delicate of men;" and the countess, who had so long kept her feelings under control, blushed with pleasure at the thought that she would be able to say, "My house." But she perceived, by the appearance of the cardinal, that she had betrayed herself too freely. "Monseigneur," she said, drawing back a step, "I beg your Eminence to give me a supper."

The cardinal took off his cloak, which he had not yet removed, and entered on his duties as major-domo. The supper was speedily served. As the servants were coming through the antechamber Jeanne put on her mask.

"It is I who ought to wear a mask," said the cardinal, "for here you are at home, among your own servants. It is I who am the stranger."

Jeanne began to laugh, but retained her mask nevertheless; and in spite of her pleasure and surprise, which choked her, she did honor to the repast.

The cardinal, as we have already said on several occasions, was a man of a noble heart and of strong intelligence. A long-continued acquaintance with the most civilized courts of Europe, with courts governed by queens; familiarity with the society of women, who at

that period complicated, but also often decided, political questions; the experience transmitted to him, so to speak, by inheritance, and increased by personal observation, — all these advantages, so rare to-day, and already rare at that time, made the prince an extremely difficult man for rival diplomatists, or women who were his mistresses, to circumvent. And besides, his polished manners and dignified courtesy were a shield which nothing could penetrate.

The cardinal, therefore, considered himself very superior to Jeanne. That provincial, swollen with pretensions, who had been unable to conceal her avarice under her false pride, seemed to him an easy conquest, desirable, doubtless, by reason of her beauty, her wit, and a certain piquant charm which is especially seductive to men whose sensibilities have been dulled by experience. This time, perhaps, the cardinal, less penetrating than impenetrable, was in error; but Jeanne, beautiful as she was, inspired him with no distrust.

This was the ruin of that superior man. He not only made himself seem less than he was, — he made himself a pygmy. When once the struggle had begun, Jeanne, who was aware of her apparent inferiority, was careful to conceal her real superiority. She played the part of a country coquette, and made herself seem trivial and silly, so that her adversary, still confident in his strength, might be correspondingly feeble in his attacks.

The cardinal, who had observed all the signs of emotion which Jeanne had been unable to repress, thought her intoxicated by the present he had made her, — as indeed she was, for it was beyond her hopes, and even beyond her pretensions. What the cardinal overlooked was that the ambition and pride of a woman like Jeanne would soar to a height beyond his own. Jeanne's first intoxica-

tion was already somewhat abated by a succession of new desires.

"Come," said the cardinal, pouring some Cyprus wine into a small cup starred with gold, — "come, now that you have made a contract with me, do not be out of humor toward me, Countess."

"Out of humor toward you? Oh, no!"

"You will sometimes, then, receive me here without aversion?"

"I shall never be so ungrateful as to forget that here you are in your own house, Monseigneur."

"My house? Nonsense!"

"Yes, yours, — yours only."

"Ah, if you contradict me, beware!"

"Well, what will happen?"

"I shall impose on you other conditions."

"Ah, in your turn, beware!"

"Of what?"

"Of everything."

"Tell me."

"I am in my own house — "

"And — "

"And if I find your conditions unreasonable I shall call my servants."

The cardinal began to laugh.

"There, you see!" she said.

"I see nothing at all."

"Oh, yes! you see that you are making fun of me."

"Why do you say that?"

"You laugh — "

"And with reason, it seems to me."

"Yes, with reason, for you know that if I call my servants, they will not come."

"Oh, yes, they would, — the devil take me!"

"Fie, Monseigneur!"

"What, then, have I done?"

"You swore, Monseigneur."

"I am no longer a cardinal while I am here, Countess. I am simply your guest, — that is to say, in good luck;" and he laughed again.

"Come," said the countess to herself; "decidedly, he is a charming man!"

"By the way," said the cardinal, suddenly, as if something quite foreign to his thoughts had occurred to him, "what were you saying to me the other day of two sisters of charity, — two German ladies?"

"Of those two ladies with the portrait?" said Jeanne, who, having seen the queen, was ready with her parry and thrust.

"Yes, the ladies with the portrait."

"Monseigneur," said the countess, looking at him intently, "I am sure you know those ladies better than I do."

"I? Oh, Countess, you do me an injustice! Did you not express a desire to know who they were?"

"Certainly; it is natural to wish to know one's benefactors."

"Well, then, had I known who they were I should have told you."

"Monsieur le Cardinal, I tell you that you know those ladies."

"No."

"Repeat that 'no,' and I shall call you a liar!"

"And I shall take revenge for the insult."

"And how, if you please?"

"By kissing you."

"It is strange that the ambassador to the court of Vienna, the intimate friend of the Empress Maria Theresa,

should not recognize the portrait of his friend, unless, indeed, it were very unlike."

"What! Really, Countess, it was the portrait of Maria Theresa?"

"Oh, yes; pretend ignorance!"

"Well, then, suppose that I recognized the portrait, — what would you infer from that?"

"That on recognizing the portrait of Maria Theresa you must have some suspicion as to its owner."

"But why do you insist on my knowing that?" asked the cardinal, with some anxiety.

"Why, because ordinarily one finds the portrait of the mother only in the hands of —"

"Go on."

"Of the daughter."

"The queen!" cried the cardinal, with so truthful a tone of surprise that it duped even Jeanne. "Do you really think the queen came to see you?"

"And you did not suspect it?"

"*Mon Dieu!* no; how should I? I, who speak to you, am neither son, daughter, nor relation in any degree of Maria Theresa, yet I have a portrait of her about me at this moment. Look!" said he, — and he drew out a snuff-box and showed it to her. "If I, who am in no way related to the imperial house, carry about such a portrait, another might do the same, and yet not be of the august house of Austria."

Jeanne was silent; she had all the instincts of diplomacy, but was deficient in practice.

"Then, it is your opinion," he continued, "that you have had a visit from the queen, Marie Antoinette?"

"The queen and another lady."

"Madame de Polignac?"

"I do not know."

"Perhaps Madame de Lamballe?"

"A young lady, very beautiful and very serious."

"Oh, perhaps Mademoiselle de Taverney."

"It is possible; I do not know her."

"Well, if her Majesty has really come to visit you, you are sure of her protection. It is a great step toward your fortune."

"I believe it, Monseigneur."

"And her Majesty was generous to you?"

"She gave me a hundred louis."

"And she is not rich, — especially at this moment."

"That doubles my gratitude."

"Did she show much interest in you?"

"Very great."

"Then all goes well," said the prelate, thoughtfully, and overlooking the protégé in thinking of the possible protectress; "there remains now but one thing for you to do."

"What is it?"

"To gain admission at Versailles."

The countess smiled.

"Ah, Countess, let us not deceive ourselves; that is not so easy."

She smiled again, more significantly than before.

"Really, you provincials," said the cardinal, "doubt nothing; because you have seen Versailles with doors which open, and stairs for ascending, you think any one may open those doors, and ascend those stairs. Have you seen the monsters of brass, of marble, and of lead, which adorn the park and the terraces?"

"Why, yes, Monseigneur."

"Griffins, gorgons, ghouls, and other ferocious creatures. There are hundreds of them. Well, you will find ten times as many wicked living animals between you and the favor of sovereigns."

"Your Eminence will aid me to pass through the ranks of these monsters."

"I will try, but it will be difficult. And if you pronounce my name, if you show your talisman, after two visits it will be useless to you."

"Happily, then, I am guarded by the immediate protection of the queen, and I shall enter Versailles with a good key."

"What key, Countess?"

"Ah, Monsieur le Cardinal, that is my secret, — or rather it is not; for if it were mine I should feel bound to tell it to my generous protector."

"There is, then, an obstacle, Countess?"

"Alas, yes, Monseigneur. It is not my secret, and I must keep it. Let it suffice you to know that to-morrow I shall go to Versailles; that I shall be received, and I have every reason to hope, well received."

The cardinal looked at her with wonder. "Ah, Countess," said he, laughing, "I shall see if you will get in."

"You will push your curiosity so far as to follow me."

"Exactly."

"Very well."

"Be careful what you do from to-morrow, for your honor is committed to your entrance at Versailles."

"Yes, and into the private apartments, Monseigneur."

"Really, Countess, you are a living enigma."

"One of those monsters who inhabit the park of Versailles?"

"Oh, you believe me a man of taste, do you not?"

"Certainly, Monseigneur."

"Well, here I am at your knees, and I take your hand and kiss it. Should I do that if I thought you a monster?"

"I beg you, Monseigneur, to remember," said Jeanne, coldly, "that I am neither a grisette nor an opera girl, — that I am my own mistress, except as belonging to my husband, and am equal in rank to any man in this kingdom. I will accept freely and spontaneously, when it shall please me, the man who shall have gained my affections. Therefore, Monseigneur, respect me a little, and in me the noble rank to which we both belong."

The cardinal rose. "I see," said he, "you wish me to love you seriously."

"I do not say that; but I wish to be able to love you. When that day comes — if it does come — you will easily find it out, believe me. If you do not, I will let you know it; for I am young enough, and attractive enough, not to mind making the first advances, nor to fear a repulse."

"Countess, if it depends upon me, you shall love me."

"We shall see."

"You have already a friendship for me; have you not?"

"More than that."

"Really? then we are at least half-way."

"Let us not measure the road, but go forward."

"Countess, you are a woman whom I should adore, if —" He stopped and sighed.

"Well," said she, in surprise, "if —"

"If you would permit it," the cardinal hastened to reply.

"Monseigneur, I will permit it, perhaps, when fortune shall have smiled on me sufficiently to persuade you to dispense with falling at my feet, and so prematurely kissing my hands."

"What do you mean?"

"Yes; when I shall be independent of your kindness

you will no longer suspect that I welcome your visits through sordid motives. Then you will have a higher opinion of me; I shall gain by it, and you will not lose."

"Then you forbid me to pay my court now?"

"Not at all; but there are other ways besides kneeling and kissing hands."

"Well, Countess, let us hear; what will you permit?"

"All that is compatible with my tastes, my duties —"

"Oh, that is vague indeed."

"Stop; I was going to add, and my caprices."

"I am lost!"

"You draw back?"

The cardinal was at that moment controlled less by his inward thought than by the charm of that provoking enchantress. "No," said he; "I do not draw back."

"Not before my duties?"

"Nor before your tastes and caprices."

"Well, then, I want a proof."

"Speak."

"I want to go to the ball at the Opera."

"Well, Countess, that only concerns yourself. Are you not free as air to go where you wish?"

"Ah, but you have not heard all. I want you to go with me."

"I, to the Opera, Countess?" said he, with a start of horror.

"See, then, how much your desire to please me is worth."

"A cardinal cannot go to a ball at the Opera, Countess. It is as if I proposed to you to go into a — public-house."

"Then a cardinal does not dance, now-a-days?"

"Oh, no!"

"But I have read that Monsieur le Cardinal de Richelieu danced a saraband."

"Yes; before Anne of Austria."

"Before a queen, that is true," said Jeanne, looking at him intently. "Perhaps you would do as much for a queen?"

The cardinal could not help blushing, dissembler as he was. Jeanne, either because she pitied his confusion or because for policy's sake she was unwilling to prolong it, hastened to add, —

"Is it not natural that I should feel hurt when, after all your protestations, you will not do as much for me as you would for a queen, — especially when I only ask you to go concealed in a domino and a mask; and when it would shorten by a gigantic step that road you were measuring a little while ago, — for I could not be too grateful to you."

The cardinal, pleased with being let off so easily, and rejoicing especially in the continuing victory which Jeanne's address allowed him to derive from every one of her caprices, seized the countess's hand and pressed it tenderly. "For you," said he, "everything, — even the impossible."

"Thanks, Monseigneur; you are really amiable. But now that you have consented, I will release you."

"No, no! he who does the work can alone claim the reward. Countess, I will attend you, but in a domino."

"We shall pass through the Rue Saint Denis, close to the Opera," said the Countess; "I will go, masked, into a store, buy a domino and a mask for you, and you can put them on in the carriage."

"Countess, that is a capital idea of yours."

"Oh, Monseigneur, your goodness covers me with confusion. But now I think of it, perhaps at the Hôtel Rohan you might find a domino more to your taste than the one I should buy."

"Now, Countess, that is unpardonable malice. Believe me, if I go to the Opera, I shall be as surprised to find myself there, as you were to find yourself supping *tête-à-tête* with a man not your husband."

Jeanne had nothing to reply to this. Soon a carriage without arms drove up; they both got in, and drove off at a rapid pace.

CHAPTER XXII.

SOME WORDS ABOUT THE OPERA.

THE Opera, that temple of pleasure at Paris, was burned in the month of June, 1781. Twenty persons had perished in the ruins; and as it was the second time within eighteen years that this had happened, it created a prejudice against the place where it then stood in the Palais Royal, and the king had ordered its removal to a less central spot. The place chosen was the Porte Saint Martin.

The king, vexed to see Paris deprived of its Opera, became as sorrowful as if the arrivals of grain had ceased, or bread had risen to more than seven sous the quartern loaf. It was melancholy to see the nobility, the army, and the citizens without their after-dinner amusement; and to see the promenades thronged with the unemployed divinities, from the chorus singers to the prima donnas.

To console the king, — and the queen too was somewhat interested, — Monsieur Lenoir, an architect, was introduced to their Majesties; he promised to do wonderful things. The worthy man had new devices, including a system of ventilation so perfect that even in case of fire no one could be smothered. He would make eight doors for exit, besides five large windows, placed so low that any one could jump out of them without danger of worse harm than a sprained ankle. To replace the beautiful hall built by Moreau he was to erect a building, with

ninety-six feet of frontage toward the boulevard, ornamented with eight caryatides, on pillars forming three entrance doors; with eight columns resting on the foundation, a bas-relief above the capitals, and a gallery with three windows. The stage was to be thirty-six feet wide; the theatre, seventy-two feet deep, and eighty-four across from one wall to the other. There were to be ante-rooms adorned with mirrors, and decorated in a plain and noble style; under the hall an immense reservoir was to be provided, with two series of pumps, to the service of which twenty soldiers of the guards were to be detailed. And to crown all, the architect asked for only seventy-five days and nights to get the building ready for the reception of the public.

This appeared to all a mere gasconade, and was much laughed at. The king, however, went over the estimates with Monsieur Lenoir, and concluded the agreement with him.

Monsieur Lenoir applied himself to the work, and fulfilled his promise; the hall was finished at the appointed time.

Then the public, naturally distrustful, reflected that the structure was built of wood, and that having been built so rapidly, it could not be very stable; so that after longing for its erection, and watching with admiration the daily progress of the work, they were unwilling to enter it, when at last it was completed. A few foolhardy persons took tickets for the performance of "Adèle de Ponthieu," the music by Piccini, but at the same time made their wills.

On seeing this, the architect in his despair had recourse to the king, who gave him an idea.

"The cowards in France," said the king, "are those who have money. They might be willing to give you an

income of ten thousand francs, or to be stifled in a crowd; but they will not take the risk of being crushed under falling ceilings. Give them no further attention; address yourself to the worthy citizens who cannot pay for admission. The queen has presented me with a dauphin, and the city is wild with joy. Have it announced that to celebrate the birth of my son, the Opera will be thrown open to the public for a gratuitous performance. If twenty-five hundred persons crowded together — that is an aggregate of three hundred thousand pounds — do not sufficiently test the solidity of the structure, ask those good people to jump about a little; you know Monsieur Lenoir, that weight is quintupled in a fall of four inches. Your twenty-five hundred spectators will weigh fifteen hundred thousand pounds if you make them dance; give a ball, then, after the spectacle."

"Sire, I thank you," said the architect.

"But in the first place, reflect; that crowd will be heavy."

"Sire, I am sure of my work, and I shall go to the ball."

"And I," replied the king, "will attend the second representation."

The architect followed the king's advice. They played "Adèle de Ponthieu" before three thousand plebeians, who applauded louder than kings. They were willing enough to dance after the performance, and to enjoy themselves. Their weight was increased tenfold instead of fivefold. The structure stood unshaken.

Had there been anything to fear it would have been at the subsequent performances, when the timorous nobles crowded the hall, — that hall to which, three years after its opening, Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan and Madame de La Motte were going to attend a ball.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE OPERA-BALL.

THE ball was at its height when the Cardinal de Rohan and Madame de La Motte glided in stealthily — the prelate, at least — among thousands of dominos and masks of every kind. They were soon lost in the crowd. Two persons had taken refuge from the pressure under the queen's box; one of them wore a white domino and the other a black one. They were talking with great animation. "I tell you, Oliva," said the black domino, "that I am sure you are expecting some one. Your head is no longer a head, but a weathercock, and turns round to look after every new-comer."

"Well! is it astonishing that I should look at the people, when that is what I came here for?"

"Oh, that is what you came for?"

"Well, Monsieur; and for what do people generally come to the Opera?"

"A thousand things."

"Men, perhaps, but women only for one, — to see and be seen by as many persons as possible. You have brought me to the Opera-ball. I am here; you must be resigned."

"Mademoiselle Oliva!"

"Oh, do not speak in that big voice. You know it does not frighten me; and above all, do not call me by name. You know there is nothing in worse taste than to call people by name at the Opera-ball."

The black domino made an angry gesture; it was interrupted by a blue domino who approached them.

"Come, Monsieur," said he, "let Madame amuse herself. It is not mid-Lent every day, and it is not at every mid-Lent that one comes to the Opera-ball."

"Mind your own business," replied the black domino, rudely.

"Eh, Monsieur! learn once for all," said the blue domino, "that a little courtesy is never out of place."

"I do not know you, and why the devil should I have anything to do with you?"

"No; you do not know me, but I know you, Monsieur de Beausire."

At hearing his name thus pronounced, the black domino trembled, and betrayed his agitation by the shaking of his silken hood.

"Oh, do not be afraid, Monsieur de Beausire," continued the mask; "I am not what you think I am."

"Eh, *pardieu!* what do I think you are? Are you not content with guessing names? Must you pretend also to guess what one thinks?"

"Why not?"

"Then, tell me what I thought. I have never seen a sorcerer, and shall enjoy meeting one."

"Oh, what you ask is not difficult enough to entitle me to that name, which you seem to grant so readily."

"Tell me at all events."

"Well, then, you took me for an agent of Monsieur de Crosne."

"Monsieur de Crosne!" he repeated.

"Oh, yes; you do not know him, *pardieu!* Monsieur de Crosne, the lieutenant of police."

"Monsieur!"

"Softly, Monsieur de Beausire, you really look as if you were feeling for your sword."

"Certainly I was feeling for it."

"Good Heavens! what a warlike disposition; but I think, dear Monsieur Beausire, you left your sword at home, and you did well. But to speak of something else, will you let me have Madame's arm for a little while?"

"Madame's arm?"

"Yes, Monsieur; that is not uncommon, I believe, at a ball at the Opera, — or have I but just arrived from the Indies?"

"Certainly not, when it is agreeable to the lady's cavalier."

"It suffices sometimes, dear Monsieur Beausire, that it is agreeable to the lady."

"Do you ask it for a long time?"

"Really, Monsieur Beausire, you are too curious. Perhaps for ten minutes, perhaps for an hour, perhaps for all the evening."

"You are laughing at me, Monsieur."

"Dear Monsieur, answer, Yes or No. Yes or no, will you give me Madame's arm?"

"No."

"Come, come, do not be ill-tempered, — you, who were so pleasant a little while ago."

"A little while ago?"

"Yes; at the Rue Dauphine."

"Rue Dauphine!" exclaimed Beausire, stupefied.

Oliva laughed.

"Hold your tongue, Madame," said the black domino, grinding his teeth. Then to the stranger, "I do not understand you. Play your game honestly, if you can."

"My dear Monsieur, it seems to me that nothing can be more honest than the truth. Am I not right, Mademoiselle Oliva?"

"What, you know me also?" said she.

"Did not Monsieur just speak your name aloud?"

"And the truth," continued Beausire, — "the truth is —"

"That you were on the point of killing this poor lady, but stopped at the sound of twenty louis."

"Enough, Monsieur!"

"Well, then, if you have had enough, give me Madame's arm."

"Oh, I see; you and she have an understanding together."

"I swear to you it is not so."

"How can any one say such a thing?" cried Oliva.

"And if it were so," said the stranger, "it would be only for your benefit."

"For my benefit?"

"Certainly."

"When one asserts a thing he proves it," said Beausire, cavalierly.

"Willingly."

"Ah! I should be curious to know —"

"I will prove to you that your presence here is as injurious to you as your absence would be profitable. You are a member of a certain academy, are you not?"

"I?"

"Oh, do not get angry, dear Monsieur de Beausire. I am not speaking of the French Academy."

"Academy — academy —" muttered Beausire.

"In the Rue du Pot-de-Fer, in the second story, is it not, my dear Monsieur de Beausire?"

"Hush!" said Beausire.

The blue domino drew out his watch, which was studded with diamonds that made Beausire's eyes water to look at them. "Well!" continued he, "in a quarter of an hour they are going to discuss there a little project, by which they hope to secure two million francs among

the twelve members, of whom you are one, Monsieur de Beausire."

"And you must be another; if you are not —"

"Pray go on."

"A member of the police."

"Oh, Monsieur de Beausire, I thought you had more sense; but I am sorry to see that you are a fool. If I were of the police I should have taken you long ago, for some little affairs less honorable than this speculation of two millions which they are going to discuss in the academy in a few minutes."

Beausire reflected a moment.

"The devil! You must be right." Then still reflecting, "So, Monsieur, you wish to send me to the Rue du Pot-de-Fer; but I know why, — that I may be arrested there; I am not such a fool."

"More foolishness. If I had the power to do as you say; the power, greater still, of guessing what is going on at your academy, — I should have had you arrested at once, and we should have been rid of you, Madame and I; but on the contrary, my motto is 'with gentleness and persuasion,' dear Monsieur de Beausire."

"Oh, I know now," said Beausire, "you are the man who was on the sofa two hours ago, are you not?"

"What sofa?" inquired the blue domino, whose little finger Oliva pinched slightly; "the only sofa I know of is that of Monsieur Crébillon, junior."

"Never mind; you have induced me to go, and if you are sending a worthy man into harm, you will pay for it some day."

"Be tranquil," said the blue domino, laughing at this epithet "worthy;" "by sending you there, I give you one hundred thousand francs at least, for you know the rule of this society is that whoever is absent loses his share."

"Well, then, good-by!" said Beausire, and vanished.

The blue domino took possession of Oliva's arm, left at liberty by Beausire.

"Now!" said she, "I have let you manage poor Beausire at your ease, but I warn you, you will not find me, who know you, so easy to talk over; therefore, find something pretty to say to me, or — "

"I know nothing prettier in the world than your own history, dear Mademoiselle Nicole;" said he, pressing the pretty round arm of the little woman, who uttered a low cry at hearing this name, which the mask whispered in her ear, but recovering herself with marvellous quickness said:

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* what a name! Is it I whom you call Nicole? If so, you are shipwrecked on leaving port; you founder on the first rock, for that is not my name."

"At present I know that you call yourself Oliva. Nicole was too provincial. I know that there are two women in you, — Oliva and Nicole. We will talk afterward of Oliva; at present I want to speak of Nicole. Have you forgotten the time when you answered to that name? I do not believe it, my dear child; for the name that one bears as a young girl is ever the one enshrined in the heart, although one may have been forced to take another to hide the first. Poor Oliva! Happy Nicole!"

At that moment a swarm of maskers, pushing by them, obliged Oliva to cling closely to her companion to keep from being swept away.

"See," he said, "all this motley crowd. See how these groups form and separate, some with joyous laughter, and others with reproaches. All these people have, perhaps, as many names as you; and I might astonish many of them by speaking to them names which they remember themselves, but think forgotten by all others."

"You said 'Poor Oliva!' Do you, then, think that I am not happy?"

"It would be difficult to be happy with a man like Beausire."

Oliva sighed and said, "Indeed, I am not."

"You love him, however?"

"Oh, a little!"

"If you do not love him much, leave him."

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I should no sooner have done so than I should regret it."

"Do you think so?"

"I am afraid I should."

"What could you have to regret in a drunkard, a gambler, a man who beats you, and a blackleg who will one day come to the gallows."

"You would not understand me if I told you."

"Try."

"I should regret the excitement with which he surrounds me."

"I ought to have guessed it; that comes of passing your youth with such silent people."

"You knew about my youth?"

"Perfectly."

"Ah, my dear Monsieur!" said Oliva, laughing, and shaking her head with an air of distrust.

"You doubt it?"

"Really, I do."

"Then we will talk a little about your youth, Mademoiselle Nicole."

"Very well; but I warn you, I will answer you nothing."

"I do not wish it. I do not mean your childhood. I

begin at the time when you first perceived that you had a heart capable of love."

"Love for whom?"

"For Gilbert."

At this word, this name, a shudder ran through her whole body, and the blue domino felt her trembling on his arm. "Ah, my God!" she cried, "how do you know?" and she darted through her mask, with an indescribable emotion, a searching glance at the blue domino. Then with a sigh, she said, "Oh, Monsieur! you have pronounced a name indeed fertile in recollections. You knew Gilbert?"

"Yes, since I speak to you of him."

"Alas!"

"A charming lad, upon my word. You loved him?"

"He was handsome. No, perhaps not; but I thought him so. He was full of intelligence, my equal in birth; but Gilbert thought no woman his equal."

"Not even —"

"Not even who?"

"Not even Mademoiselle de Ta——"

"Oh, I know whom you mean, Monsieur! You are well informed. Yes, Gilbert loved higher than the poor Nicole. You are possessed of terrible secrets, Monsieur! Tell me, if you can," she continued, looking earnestly at him, "what has become of him?"

"You should know better than any one."

"Why, in Heaven's name?"

"Because, if he followed you from Taverney to Paris, you followed him from Paris to Trianon."

"Yes, that is true; but that is ten years ago, and I wish to know what has happened since the time when I ran away, and since he disappeared. Oh, how much can happen in ten years!"

Her companion looked at her in silence.

"I beg of you," persisted Nicole, almost supplicatingly, "tell me what has become of Gilbert! You turn away your head, and are silent. Perhaps the remembrances pain you."

The blue domino remained with his head bowed down, as if burdened by the weight of his recollections.

"When Gilbert loved Mademoiselle de Taverney —" continued Nicole.

"Speak lower when you mention names. Have you not noticed that I do not speak them?"

"When he loved her so much that every tree at Trianon was witness to his love —"

"You loved him no longer, then?"

"On the contrary, I loved him more than ever; and this love was my ruin. I am beautiful, proud, and when I please, insolent, and would allow my head to be cut off rather than confess myself despised."

"You have a heart, Nicole?"

"I had then," she said, sighing.

"This conversation makes you sad?"

"No; it does me good to speak of my youth. It is with life as with rivers; the most turbid stream has a pure source. Go on, and pay no attention to any poor, stray sigh which may issue from my breast."

"Oh," said the blue domino, with a gentle nod, which betrayed a smile hidden under the mask, "I know of you, of Gilbert, and another person, my poor child, all that you can possibly know yourself."

"Then," cried Oliva, "tell me why Gilbert fled from Trianon; and if you tell me —"

"You will be convinced? Well, I will not tell you, and you will be more thoroughly convinced still."

"How can that be?"

"In asking me why Gilbert left Trianon, you do not wish me to confirm a suspicion, but to tell you something which you do not know."

"That is true."

Then shuddering more violently than she had yet done, she seized both his hands in hers, "My God!" said she, "my God!"

"Well, what does this mean?"

Nicole appeared to recover herself, and to dismiss the idea which had produced this demonstration.

"Nothing," she said.

"Yes, you wished to ask me something."

"Yes; tell me frankly what has become of Gilbert?"

"Have you not heard that he was dead?"

"Yes; but —"

"Well, he is dead."

"Dead!" said Nicole, with an air of doubt. Then shuddering as before, "For mercy's sake, Monsieur, grant me one favor!"

"Two, ten, as many as you like, my dear Nicole."

"I saw you two hours ago, — for it was you, was it not?"

"Certainly."

"You did not, then, try to disguise yourself?"

"Not at all; on the contrary, I did all I could to make you see me."

"Oh, mad, mad woman that I am, — I who looked at you so much! Mad, mad, stupid woman, — only a woman! as Gilbert said."

"Well, now, spare your beautiful hair. Spare yourself."

"No; I wish to punish myself for having looked at you without seeing you."

"I do not understand."

"Do you know what I am going to ask of you?"

"No."

"Take off your mask."

"Here? Impossible!"

"Oh, you cannot fear being seen by others! Here, behind this column, you will be quite hidden, except from me. You fear that I should recognize you."

"Me!"

"And that I should cry, 'It is you; it is Gilbert!'"

"You did well to say, 'Mad! mad!'"

"Take off your mask."

"Yes, on one condition, — that you will take off yours if I ask it."

"I will take it off. If I do not, you may tear it off."

The blue domino yielded to Nicole's request. He went into the dark corner pointed out by her, and taking off his mask placed himself before Oliva, who looked earnestly at him for a whole minute.

"Alas, no!" she said, stamping her feet, and wounding the palms of her hands with her finger-nails. "Alas, it is not Gilbert!"

"And who am I?"

"Oh, I do not care, since you are not he!"

"And if it had been Gilbert?" said he, as he put on his mask again.

"Ah, if it had been!" she cried, passionately, "and he had said to me, 'Nicole, do you remember Taverney-Maison-Rouge?' oh, then —"

"Then?"

"There would have been, for me, no longer a Beausire in the world."

"But I have told you, my dear child, that Gilbert is dead."

"Ah, perhaps, then, it is for the best!" said Oliva, with a sigh.

"Yes; he would never have loved you, beautiful as you are."

"Do you, then, think he despised me?"

"No; he feared you, rather."

"That is possible. I was something like him; and he knew himself so well that I made him afraid."

"Then, as you said just now, it is better that he is dead."

"Do not repeat my words; in your mouth they hurt me. Why is it better that he is dead? Speak!"

"Because to-day, Mademoiselle Oliva, — you observe that I abandon Nicole, — because to-day, my dear Oliva, you have before you a future, happy, rich, and brilliant."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; if you will resolve to do everything to attain the end I promise you."

"You may rest easy on that score."

"But you must give up sighing, as you were just now."

"Very well! I sighed for Gilbert; and as he is dead, and there are not two Gilberts in the world, I sigh no more."

"Gilbert was young then; he had the faults and good qualities of youth. But now — "

"Gilbert is not now older than he was ten years ago."

"No, undoubtedly, since he is dead."

"You see, then, he is dead; the Gilberts do not grow old, — they die."

"Oh," cried the unknown, "O Youth! O Courage! O Beauty! — eternal springs of love, heroism, and devotion, — he who loses you loses life itself. Youth is paradise, heaven, everything. What God bestows upon us afterward is but a sad compensation for the loss of our youth. The more generous he has been to a man in his youth, the greater should be the compensation when that

youth has fled. But nothing can replace, great God! the treasures which that youth lavished on the man."

"Gilbert would have thought what you have so eloquently uttered," said Oliva. "But enough of this subject."

"Yes; we will speak of yourself. Why did you run away with Beausire?"

"Because I wished to leave Trianon, and I was obliged to go with some one. I could no longer remain after having been rejected by Gilbert."

"Ten years of fidelity through pride," said the blue domino. "Oh, how dearly have you paid for that vanity!"

Oliva laughed.

"Oh, I know what you are laughing at! You laugh because a man who pretends to know everything accuses you of having been ten years faithful, when you think you have not exposed yourself to that ridiculous reproach. However, I know all about you. I know that you went to Portugal with Beausire, where you remained two years; that you then left him, and went to the Indies with the captain of a frigate, who hid you in his cabin, and who left you at Chandernagor when he returned to Europe. I know that you had two million rupees to spend in the house of a nabob who kept you shut up, and that you escaped through the window on the shoulders of a slave. You were then rich, for you had carried away two beautiful pearl bracelets, two diamonds, and three large rubies. You came back to France, and, on landing at Brest your evil genius made you encounter Beausire on the quay, who almost fainted on recognizing you, bronzed and emaciated as you were on your return, poor exile!"

"Oh, *mon Dieu!*" cried Oliva, "who are you, then, who know all this?"

"I know, further, that Beausire carried you off again, persuaded you that he loved you, sold your jewels, and reduced you to poverty. Still you say you love him; and as love is the source of all happiness, of course you must be the happiest woman in the world."

Oliva hung her head, and covered her eyes with her hands; but two large tears might be seen forcing their way through her fingers, — liquid pearls, more precious, perhaps, than those in her bracelets, but which no one, alas! would have wished to purchase of Beausire.

"And this woman," at last she said, "so proud and so happy, you have bought this evening for fifty louis."

"I know it is too little, Madame," said the unknown, with that exquisite grace and perfect courtesy which never leaves the gentleman, even when addressing the lowest class of courtesans.

"No; on the contrary, I am surprised that a woman like me should be worth so much."

"You are worth much more than that, as I will show you. Oh, do not answer, for you do not understand; and besides," added the unknown, leaning toward her.

"And besides?"

"Just now I want all my attention."

"Then I will be silent."

"No; talk, on the contrary, — of anything, it does not matter what, so that we seem occupied."

"Be it so; but you are a very strange man."

"Take hold of my arm, and let us walk."

They walked on among the various groups, Oliva attracting the gaze of every connoisseur to her fine figure, elegantly shaped head, and flexible neck which her domino could not conceal; for in those days at the Opera-ball the passers-by followed the movements of a woman with as

much curiosity as in our days the lovers of horse-flesh watch the paces of a fine horse.

At the end of some moments Oliva ventured to ask a question.

"Silence!" said the unknown; "or rather, talk as much as you like, only do not ask questions at present, for I cannot answer now. When you speak, disguise your voice, hold your head up, and scratch your neck with your fan."

She obeyed. In a moment they passed a highly perfumed group, in the centre of which a very elegant-looking man was talking fast to three companions, who were listening respectfully.

"Who is that young man in that beautiful gray domino?" asked Oliva.

"Monsieur le Comte d'Artois," replied the unknown; "but do not speak just now, for mercy's sake!"

At this moment, when Oliva, astounded at the high-sounding name pronounced by her companion, stepped to one side to get a better view of its owner, two other dominos passed them and took refuge from the crowd in a place under the boxes, where there were no benches.

"Lean on this pillar, Countess," said one of them in a low voice, which was overheard by the blue domino, who started at its sound.

Almost at the same moment a yellow domino, whose bold manner revealed the useful man rather than the agreeable courtier, came up to the blue domino and said, "It is he."

"Very good," replied the other, dismissing the yellow domino by a gesture.

"Now, then," said Oliva's companion, turning to her; "we will begin to enjoy ourselves a little."

"I hope so, for you have twice made me sad, — first by

taking away Beausire, who always makes me laugh, and then by speaking of Gilbert, who has made me weep so many times."

"I will be both Gilbert and Beausire to you," said the unknown, gravely.

"Oh!" sighed Oliva.

"I do not ask you to love me, remember; I only ask you to accept the life I offer you, — that is, the accomplishment of all your fancies, provided you occasionally help me with mine. Just now I have one."

"What is it?"

"That black domino is a German of my acquaintance who refused to come to the ball with me, under the pretext of a headache."

"And to whom you also said that you would not come."

"Precisely."

"He has a lady with him?"

"Yes."

"Who is she?"

"I do not know; we will approach them. I will pretend that you are a German; you must not speak, lest he should recognize you by your accent as a native Parisian."

"Very well. And you will mystify him?"

"Oh, I will answer for that. Now, pretend to point him out to me with the end of your fan."

"Like that?"

"Yes, very well; now whisper to me."

Oliva obeyed with a docility and intelligence which charmed her companion.

The black domino, who had his back turned to them, did not see all this; but his companion did. "Take care, Monseigneur," said she; "there are two masks watching us."

"Oh, do not be afraid, Countess, they cannot recognize us. Do not mind them; but let me assure you that never form was so enchanting as yours, never eyes so brilliant; permit me to tell you —"

"All that one can say under the mask."

"No, Countess, all that one can say under —"

"Do not finish; you will condemn yourself. And besides, — danger greater still, — our spies would hear."

"Two spies!" cried the cardinal, with agitation.

"Yes, they have made up their minds to come to us."

"Disguise your voice, Countess, if they make you speak."

"And you, yours, Monseigneur."

Oliva and her blue domino indeed approached; the latter came up to the cardinal, and said, "Mask —"

"What do you want?" said the cardinal, in a voice as unlike his natural one as he could make it."

"The lady who accompanies me desires me to ask you some questions," replied the blue domino.

"Ask quickly," said Monsieur de Rohan.

"And let them be very indiscreet," said Madame de La Motte.

"So indiscreet that you must not hear them," replied the blue domino, and he pretended to whisper to Oliva, who made a sign in answer; then in irreproachable German, he said to the cardinal, "Monseigneur, are you in love with the lady who accompanies you?"

The cardinal trembled, "Did you say Monseigneur?" he asked.

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"You are mistaken, then; I am not the person you think."

"Oh, Monsieur le Cardinal! do not deny it; it is use-

less. If even I did not know you, the lady who accompanies me assures me she knows you perfectly." And he again whispered to Oliva, "Make a sign for yes. Do so every time I press your arm."

She made the sign.

"You astonish me," said the cardinal, completely taken a-back; "who is this lady?"

"Oh, Monseigneur! I thought you would have already recognized her. She knew you at once. It is true that jealousy —"

"Madame is jealous of me?" cried the cardinal.

"We do not say that," replied the unknown, rather haughtily.

"What are you talking about?" asked Madame de La Motte, who did not like this conversation in German which she could not understand.

"Oh, nothing, nothing!"

Madame de La Motte stamped her foot, impatiently.

"Madame," said the cardinal to Oliva, "one word from you and I promise to recognize you instantly."

Monsieur de Rohan had spoken German; Oliva did not understand a single word, and leaned toward the blue domino.

"Do not speak, Madame, I conjure you," said he.

All this mystery piqued the curiosity of the cardinal.

"One single German word," he said, "could not much compromise Madame."

The blue domino, who feigned to have received orders from Oliva, replied immediately, "Monsieur le Cardinal, these are Madame's words: 'He whose thoughts are not continually on the alert, he whose imagination does not perpetually bring before him the presence of the loved one, does not love, however much he may pretend that he does.'"

The cardinal seemed struck by the sentiment expressed in these words. His whole attitude evinced in the highest degree surprise, respect, and exalted devotion; then his arms fell at his sides.

"It is impossible!" he murmured in French.

"What is impossible?" asked Madame de La Motte, who seized eagerly on these few words she could understand.

"Nothing, Madame, nothing."

"Really, Cardinal, you are making me play but a sorry part," said she, angrily.

The cardinal did not even seem to notice her anger, so great was his preoccupation with the German lady.

"Madame," said he to her, "these words that your companion has repeated to me in your name are some German lines which I have read in a house which is perhaps known to you."

The blue domino pressed Oliva's arm, who thereupon bowed assent.

The cardinal shuddered. "That house," said he, hesitatingly, "is it not called 'Schoenbrunn'?"

"Yes," nodded Oliva.

"They were written on a table of cherry-wood, with a gold bodkin, by an august hand?"

"Yes," bowed Oliva, again.

The cardinal stopped, tottered, and leaned against a pillar for support.

Madame de La Motte stood by, watching this strange scene.

Then the cardinal, touching the blue domino, said, "This is the conclusion of the quotation: 'But he who sees everywhere the beloved object, who recognizes her by a flower, by a perfume, even through the thickest veils, he can still be silent; his voice is in his heart, and to be

understood by one other heart is sufficient for his happiness.'"

"Oh, they are speaking German here," said a young voice from an approaching group. "Let us listen. Do you speak German, Marshal?"

"No, Monseigneur."

"But you do, Charny?"

"Yes, your Highness."

"Here is Monsieur le Comte d'Artois," said Oliva, softly, to her companion.

At this moment the orchestra began a noisy prelude, and in the commotion caused by the dancers in hurrying to their places, the new-comer ran against the blue domino.

"Take care, gentlemen," said he, with a tone of authority.

"Monsieur," replied the prince, who continued masked, "the crowd urges us forward; your pardon, ladies."

At this instant some invisible hand pulled Oliva's hood from behind, her mask fell, and for a moment her features were visible. The blue domino uttered a cry of affected anxiety; Oliva a cry of alarm. Three or four cries of surprise responded to this exclamation.

The cardinal nearly fainted, and Madame de La Motte supported him. The pressure of the crowd separated the Comte d'Artois and his party from them. Then the blue domino approached the cardinal and said, "This indeed is an irreparable misfortune; this lady's honor is at your mercy."

"Oh, Monsieur, Monsieur!" murmured Prince Louis, bowing; and he passed over his forehead, streaming with perspiration, a handkerchief which trembled in his hand.

"Let us go quickly," said the blue domino to Oliva; and they moved away.

"Now I know," said Madame de La Motte to herself, "what it was the cardinal thought to be impossible; he took this woman for the queen. But what an effect it has had on him! Another observation to be retained."

"Would you like to leave the ball, Countess?" asked Monsieur de Rohan, in a feeble voice.

"As you please, Monseigneur," replied Jeanne.

"I do not find much interest here; do you?"

"None at all."

They pushed their way through the crowd. The cardinal, who was tall, looked all around him trying to catch another glimpse of the vision which had disappeared; but from that moment blue, red, yellow, green, and gray dominos whirled before his eyes in the luminous vapor like the varied colors of a prism. Everything at a distance was blue to the eyes of the unfortunate prince, but nothing near him was of that color. In this state he regained the carriage which awaited him and his companion. They started on their return, and for five minutes the cardinal did not utter a word.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SAPPHO.

MADAME DE LA MOTTE, who never forgot herself, roused the prelate from his revery. "Where is this carriage taking me, Cardinal?" she said.

"Back to your own house, Countess."

"My house! — in the faubourg?"

"Yes, Countess; a very small house to contain so many charms!" and saying this, the cardinal took one of her hands and kissed it gallantly.

The carriage stopped before the little house where so many charms were to try to find room. Jeanne alighted, and the cardinal was preparing to follow her.

"It is not worth the trouble, Monseigneur," whispered this female demon.

"What, not worth the trouble to spend a few hours with you, Countess?"

"And sleep, Monseigneur," said Jeanne.

"I believe there are several sleeping rooms in your house, Countess."

"For me, yes; but for you —"

"None for me?"

"Not yet," said she, with an air so gracious and so provoking that the refusal was equal to a promise.

"Adieu, then," replied the cardinal, so stimulated by the play in hand that for a moment he forgot the scene at the ball.

"Au revoir, Monseigneur."

"Well, I like it better so," said he, as the carriage drove off.

Jeanne entered her new house alone. Six lackeys waited for her in the hall, and she looked at them with that air of quiet superiority which fortune does not bestow upon all the rich.

"Where are my attendants?" she said.

One of the men advanced respectfully. "Two women wait for Madame in her room," said he.

"Call them."

The valet obeyed. A few minutes later two women entered.

"Where do you usually sleep?" said Jeanne.

"We have no place as yet," said one of them; "we can sleep wherever Madame pleases."

"Where are the keys?"

"Here, Madame."

"Well, for this night you will sleep out of the house."

The women looked at her in surprise.

"You have some place to go to?" said Jeanne.

"Certainly, Madame; but it is late. Still, if Madame wishes to be alone —"

"These men can accompany you," she continued, dismissing the valets also, who seemed rather pleased.

"When shall we return?" asked one of the women, timidly.

"To-morrow at noon."

The six valets and the two women looked at each other for a moment, and then, controlled by Jeanne's commanding appearance, they moved toward the door. Jeanne accompanied them, but before closing the door on them asked, "Is any one else in the house?"

"*Mon Dieu!* no, Madame; there will be no one. It is impossible that Madame should remain here thus aban-

doned. Let one of the women stay, — in the servants' hall, in the kitchen, anywhere; but let some one stay and watch."

"I have no need of any one."

"But a fire might break out, — Madame might be ill."

"Good-night; go, all of you." She drew out her purse. "Here," she added, "is something as a welcome to my service."

A joyous murmur — a mode of thanks used by well-bred servants — was the only answer, the last word of the valets. All disappeared, bowing to the floor. Jeanne overheard their remarks as they went away; they were saying to one another that fortune had given them a fanciful mistress. When the noise of their voices and footsteps had died away, Jeanne locked the door, and exclaimed triumphantly, "Here I am, alone in my own house!" She lighted a candle in a three-branched candlestick, and bolted the massive door of the vestibule. Then ensued a silent, extraordinary scene, which would have highly interested one of those nocturnal spectators who, according to the fictions of the poet, hover over cities and palaces.

Jeanne was inspecting her possessions. She admired, room by room, all this house, the least detail of which had acquired in her eyes an immense value, now that to the curiosity of the visitor had succeeded the egotism of the proprietor.

The ground-floor included a bath-room, dining-room, three drawing-rooms, and two reception-rooms. The furniture of these rooms was in keeping with the luxuriousness of its owner. It was not new, and it was more pleasing to Jeanne than it would have been if procured expressly for her. All those rich antiques, disdained by women of fashion, the marvellous pieces of carved ebony, the glass lustres, the gothic clocks masterpieces of chasing and

enamel, the screens embroidered with Chinese figures, and the enormous Japanese vases filled with rare flowers, — excited the new proprietress to an ecstasy of delight that cannot be described. On a mantel-piece two gilded tritons bore branches of coral from which were suspended, as fruit, articles of jewelry at that time fashionable. On a gilded table with a white marble top was an immense elephant, sea-green, from whose ears hung pendants of sapphire, supporting a tower filled with the flasks of perfumes. Books for women, gilded and illustrated, were conspicuous on rosewood shelves, the corners of which were ornamented with arabesques of gold. A complete set of furniture covered with Gobelin tapestry, a triumph of patient work, which had cost one hundred thousand francs at the manufactory, adorned a small salon finished in gray and gold, on the walls of which every panel was an oblong canvas painted by Vernet or by Greuze. One small salon was richly ornamented with the best portraits by Chardin, and the finest terra-cottas by Clodion. Everything evinced, not the eagerness of a rich *parvenu* to gratify his caprices or those of his mistress, but the long and patient labor of those whose riches are of ancient date, who add to the treasures received from their fathers other treasures to be handed down to their children.

Jeanne examined everything in detail. Then as her domino annoyed her, and her whalebone bodice was too tight, she went into her bedroom, quickly undressed, and slipped on a robe of wadded silk. Shivering, half-naked in the silk which caressed her bosom and her waist, her vigorous and finely proportioned leg rounding out the folds of her short robe, she boldly ascended the stairs, carrying her light in her hand. Familiarized with the solitude, and having no fear of encountering the gaze even of a servant, she bounded from room to room, permitting

her light robe to flutter in the wind which blew in under the doors, and which, ten times in ten minutes, lifted it to the height of her charming knees. When she raised her arm to open a closet door, and the robe opened sufficiently to disclose the white roundness of the shoulder, of that dazzling tint so familiar in the paintings of Rubens, then the invisible spirits concealed under the draperies, or lurking behind the painted panels, must have rejoiced at having in their possession so beautiful a hostess, who thought that she was their possessor.

At length, after roaming through all the house, exhausted, breathless, her candle nearly consumed, she returned to her bedroom, hung with blue satin, and embroidered with large, fantastic flowers. She had seen everything, had admired everything; there was now nothing else for her to admire but herself. Suddenly her eyes fell on a marble Endymion — a delicate and voluptuous figure by Bouchardon — falling, intoxicated with love, on a block of porphyry. She closed the door and the portières of her chamber, drew the heavy window-curtains, and went back to the statue, devouring with her gaze the beautiful lover of Diana, who had given him a last kiss as she ascended toward the sky.

Jeanne felt under her feet the soft wool of the thick carpet; her legs trembled and bent under her; a languor which was induced neither by fatigue nor by sleepiness pervaded her frame and weighed upon her eyelids, while a heat which did not come from the fireplace ascended from her feet through all her body, and filled her veins with that living electricity which is called love.

At the moment of these extraordinary sensations Jeanne perceived herself in a pier-glass placed behind the statue of Endymion. Her robe had fallen from her shoulders to the carpet. The fine cambric, dragged down by the heavier

silk, had fallen to the middle of her white and rounded arms. Two black eyes, soft with languor, brilliant with desire, — the eyes of Jeanne herself, — thrilled her to the depths of her heart. She saw that she was beautiful; she felt that she was young and ardent; she said to herself that in all that surrounded her nothing was so worthy of love, — not even Diana. She approached the marble to see if Endymion would not awake to life, and for the mortal disdain the goddess. She became intoxicated with the transport; she leaned her head toward her shoulder with a strange trembling, and applied her lips to the palpitating flesh. While she still gazed into the reflection of herself in the mirror, suddenly her eyes closed, her head drooped forward upon her breast, and sighing, she fell on the bed, without consciousness and without apparent life.

The candle shot forth a last ray of light from the midst of melted wax, and then yielded its last perfume with its last spark.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ACADEMY.

Beausire had followed to the letter the advice of the blue domino; he had repaired at once to his academy, as it was called. The worthy friend of Oliva, tempted by the enormous sum of two millions, was greatly alarmed at his apparent exclusion by his companions, who had not communicated to him a scheme promising so great reward. He knew that the associates in the academy did not pride themselves on being scrupulous, which in itself was a reason for haste, since the absent are always at a disadvantage, and especially so if their absence affords to others a chance for gain.

Beausire had acquired among his associates the reputation of a man to be feared. This was neither difficult nor astonishing. He had been a police officer and had worn a uniform. He knew how to draw his sword, and he had a habit of looking very fierce at the slightest word that displeased him, — all which appears rather terrifying to those of doubtful courage, especially when they have reason to shun the notoriety of a duel and the curiosity of the police. Beausire, then, calculated on avenging himself for the contempt with which they had treated him, by frightening his associates in the gaming-house of the Rue du Pot-de-Fer.

It was a long distance from the gate Saint Martin to the Church Saint Sulpice. But Beausire was rich; he jumped into a carriage and promised the driver an extra fare.

The horses started off at a rapid pace. Beausire, having

no hat and no sword, since he wore a domino, assumed an expression of ferocity, sufficient to alarm any belated passer-by. His entrance into the academy produced quite a sensation.

There were in the first salon about twenty players, who were drinking beer or syrups, and smiling upon seven or eight women horridly rouged, who were looking on the cards.

They were playing faro at the principal table; the stakes were low, and the excitement small in proportion.

On the arrival of the domino, who shook his hood and moved his arms about underneath his dress, some women began to titter, half mockingly and half coquettishly. Monsieur de Beausire was a favorite, and the ladies never ill-treated him. Meantime he advanced as if he had neither heard nor seen anything, and when he had reached the table, he awaited in silence some remark upon his ill-humor.

One of the players — an old financier of doubtful character, a fellow apparently good-natured — said to him, "*Corbleu!* Chevalier, you come from the ball looking out of sorts."

"That is true," said the ladies.

"Does your domino hurt your head?" said another.

"It is not my domino that hurts me," replied Beausire, harshly.

"Oh!" said the banker, who had just raked toward him a dozen louis, "Monsieur le Chevalier de Beausire has been unfaithful to us; do you not see that he has been to the Opera-ball, and that in that neighborhood he has played for a heavy stake and has lost it?"

Every one laughed at or pitied him, according to their dispositions; the women had compassion for him.

"It is not true that I have been unfaithful to my

friends," replied Beausire; "I am incapable of infidelity! It is well for certain persons of my acquaintance to be guilty of infidelity toward their friends;" and to give more weight to his words he had recourse to the gesture of striking his hat down over his head. But unfortunately he merely flattened his silk hood, and thus gave it a ridiculous width, producing a very ludicrous effect instead of the serious one he had intended.

"What do you mean, dear Chevalier?" asked two or three of his associates.

"I know what I mean," replied Beausire.

"But that is not enough for us," said the good-natured old man.

"That does not concern you, Monsieur," retorted Beausire, unwisely.

A very expressive glance from the banker warned him that his remark was indiscreet. Indeed, it was necessary in this assembly not to make any distinction between those who paid and those who pocketed the money.

Beausire understood the glance, but his blood was up; those who are really brave control themselves more easily than those who pretend to be courageous.

"I thought I had friends here," he said.

"Why, certainly," replied several voices.

"Well, I was deceived!"

"In what?"

"In this: that many things are done without me."

Another sign from the banker; new protestations from the others.

"It is enough that I know," said Beausire, "and the false friends shall be punished."

He put his hand to his side to feel for his sword, but only touched his pocket, which, being full of louis, yielded a sound which betrayed him.

"Oh, oh!" cried two ladies, "Monsieur de Beausire is well off to-night!"

"Yes, it seems so," said the banker, slyly; "it seems that if he has lost, he has not lost everything; and that if he has been unfaithful to us, it is an infidelity which can be atoned for. Come, put up something, dear Chevalier."

"I thank you!" said Beausire, dryly; "if every one else keeps what he has, I will keep what I have."

"What the devil do you mean?" whispered one of the players.

"We will have an explanation, presently."

"Play then," said the banker.

"Just one louis," said a lady, caressing Beausire's shoulder in order to get as near as possible to his pocket.

"I only play for millions," said Beausire, boldly; "and really I cannot conceive how people can play here for paltry louis. Millions! Come, gentlemen of the Pot-de-Fer, since there is a secret scheme a-foot for gaining millions, have done with pitiable stakes of a louis! Millions, millionnaires!"

Beausire had reached that moment of excitement when a man over-steps the bounds of common-sense. An intoxication more dangerous than that of wine excited him. Suddenly he received from behind a kick on the legs so violent as to make him pause and turn round; he saw by his side a broad, olive-colored face, stiff and rough, with black eyes as luminous as burning coals. To Beausire's gesture of anger, this strange personage replied with a ceremonious bow and a stare as long as a rapier.

"The Portuguese!" said Beausire, astounded at this salutation from a man who had just kicked him.

"The Portuguese!" repeated the ladies, who abandoned Beausire to flutter round the stranger.

This Portuguese was the pet of these ladies, to whom, on the pretext that he did not speak French, he was in the habit of bringing confectionery, sometimes wrapped up in bank-notes of fifty or sixty francs.

Beausire knew that this Portuguese was one of the partners. He always lost his money with the frequenters of the gaming-house. He fixed the amount of his stakes at a hundred louis a week, and these were always lost. He was the decoy of the society. While he allowed himself to be plucked of a hundred golden feathers, the other associates stripped the players thus entrapped. The Portuguese was therefore regarded by the associates as a useful man, and by the frequenters of the place as an agreeable man. Beausire had for him that tacit respect which is always inspired by what is mysterious, even when it inspires some distrust also. Beausire, therefore, on receiving the kick of the Portuguese, became silent and sat down.

The Portuguese took his place at the table, and put down twenty louis, which in about fifteen minutes had all passed into the hands of the other players. The clock struck three. Two servants entered. The banker dropped his money through a hole in the table, for the by-laws of the association were conformed to the degree of confidence which the members had in one another, and did not permit to any one member exclusive control of the common funds. They even provided that the banker should not wear long sleeves, or carry any money about him, — provisions designed to prevent his hiding money in his sleeve, and to reserve to the company the right to search his pockets and take from him whatever money was found.

The lackeys brought in cloaks, overcoats and swords. Some of the fortunate players offered their arms to the ladies; the unlucky ones squeezed themselves into sedan-

chairs, still in use in those quiet parts of the town, and the lights in the gambling-room were extinguished.

Beausire also had put on his domino as if to go out; but he did not leave the house, and as soon as the door was closed upon those departing, he returned and entered the salon where eleven of the associates had already assembled. "At last," said he, "we will have an explanation."

"Light your lamp, and do not speak so loud," said the Portuguese, in good French.

Beausire muttered a few words to which no one paid any attention; the Portuguese seated himself in the banker's place. Then they examined the doors and windows to make certain that all was secure, drew the curtain close, and seated themselves.

"I have a communication to make," said the Portuguese; "fortunately, I arrived in good time; for Monsieur Beausire was seized this evening with a most imprudent flow of eloquence."

Beausire tried to speak.

"Silence," said the Portuguese; "let us not waste time in talk. You have uttered words which were more than imprudent. You had become aware of my plan; that is all very good. You are a man of talent and may have guessed it; but it seems to me that vanity should not predominate over interest."

"I do not understand," said Beausire.

"We do not understand," said the respectable assembly.

"Yes; Monsieur de Beausire hoped to be the first to make this proposition."

"What proposition?" cried the rest.

"Concerning the two million francs!" said Beausire, with emphasis.

"Two million francs!" they cried.

"First," said the Portuguese, "you exaggerate; it is not as much as that. I will instantly prove it."

"We do not know of what you are talking," said the banker.

"But are not the less interested," said another.

"Speak first," said Beausire.

"Gladly," returned the Portuguese; and he turned out a large glass of Orgeat which he drank quietly, retaining all the time his cool manner. "You must know, then," he said — "I am not speaking for Monsieur de Beausire's information — that the necklace is not worth more than fifteen hundred thousand francs."

"Oh, then it concerns a necklace?" said Beausire.

"Yes; did you not mean the same thing?"

"Perhaps."

"Now he is going to be discreet after his former folly," and the Portuguese shrugged his shoulders.

"I see with regret that you are taking a tone which displeases me," said Beausire, with the manner of a cock getting ready to fight.

"Mira! Mira!" said the Portuguese, cold as marble; "when I have done you may say what you please; but time presses, and the ambassador will arrive in eight days."

"This matter becomes complicated," said the banker; "a necklace, fifteen hundred thousand francs, and an ambassador! What does all this mean?"

"Here is the whole thing in a nutshell," said the Portuguese: "Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange offered to the queen a diamond necklace worth fifteen hundred thousand francs. She refused it, and now they do not know what to do with it; for none but a royal fortune could buy it. Well, I have found the royal personage who will buy this necklace, and drag it forth from the iron chest of Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange."

"It is —"

"It is my gracious sovereign the queen of Portugal," and he looked very important.

"We understand it less than ever," said the associates.

"And I not at all," thought Beausire; then he said aloud, "Explain yourself clearly, dear Monsieur Manoel; our private differences should give place to the public interests. I acknowledge you the author of the idea, and renounce all claim to its paternity; but for God's sake, speak out!"

"That is as it should be," said Manoel, drinking a second glass of Orgeat.

"We are already assured that there exists a necklace worth fifteen hundred thousand francs," said the banker. "That is an important point."

"And this necklace is in the strong-box of Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange. That is the second point," said Beausire.

"But Don Manoel said that her Majesty the queen of Portugal would buy the necklace. That is what baffles us."

"Nothing can be clearer, however," said the Portuguese. "All you have to do is to pay attention to my words. The embassy is just now vacant. The new ambassador Monsieur de Souza will arrive in eight days, perhaps sooner."

"Good!" said Beausire.

"And what is there to prevent this ambassador, eager to see Paris, from arriving and establishing himself before that time?"

The partners looked at one another, gaping in wonder.

"Do you not understand," said Beausire, "that Don Manoel means that the ambassador who will arrive may be, perhaps, a false one?"

"Exactly," added the Portuguese. "If the ambassador who shall present himself wishes to purchase the necklace for her Majesty the queen of Portugal, has he not the right?"

"Of course he has," said the company.

"And then he negotiates with Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange. That is all."

"Nothing more?"

"Only, that after having negotiated, it will be necessary to pay," observed the banker.

"Certainly; yes," replied the Portuguese.

"Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange will not give the necklace into the hands of an ambassador, even if it were the real Souza, without good security."

"Oh, I have thought of all that!" said the future ambassador.

"And what is your plan?"

"The embassy, as we have said, is now vacant."

"Yes."

"The only person there is a chancellor, a worthy Frenchman who speaks Portuguese as badly as possible, and who is delighted when the Portuguese speak to him in French, because in that language he is at home, and delighted also when Frenchmen speak Portuguese to him, because it is a compliment to his knowledge."

"Well?" said Beausire.

"Well, gentlemen, we will present ourselves to this worthy man with all the appearances of the new legation."

"Appearances are good," said Beausire, "but credentials are much better."

"We shall have them," replied Manoel.

"No one can deny that Don Manoel is an invaluable man," said Beausire.

"Our appearances and our credentials having convinced the chancellor as to the identity of the legation, we will establish ourselves at the embassy."

"Oh, oh, it is bold!" interrupted Beausire.

"It is necessary," continued the Portuguese.

"It is very simple," affirmed the other partners.

"But the chancellor?" objected Beausire.

"We have agreed that he will be convinced."

"If he should become less credulous, ten minutes before he began to doubt, he would be dismissed. I believe that an ambassador has a right to change his chancellor."

"Certainly."

"Then, when we are masters of the hôtel, our first step will be to wait on Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange."

"But you forget one thing," said Beausire; "our first act should be to ask an audience of the king, and there we should break down. The famous Riza Bey, who was presented to Louis XIV. as ambassador from the Shah of Persia, spoke Persian at least, and there were no scholars here capable of discovering how well he spoke it; but we should be found out at once. We should be told directly that our Portuguese was remarkably French, and we should be sent to the Bastille."

"We will escape this danger by remaining quietly at home."

"Then Monsieur Boehmer will not believe in our ambassadorship."

"Monsieur Boehmer will be told that we have come to France merely to buy the necklace. We will show him our order to do this, as we shall before have shown it to the chancellor; only we must try to avoid showing it to the ministers, for they are suspicious, and might find a multitude of little flaws."

"Oh, yes!" cried they all, "let us avoid the ministers."

"But if Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange require money on account?" asked Beausire.

"That would complicate the affair," said the Portuguese, somewhat embarrassed.

"For," continued Beausire, "it is usual for an ambassador to have letters of credit, at least, if not ready money; and here we should fail."

"You find plenty of reasons why the enterprise should fail," said Manoel; "but nothing to make it succeed."

"It is because I wish it to succeed that I speak of the difficulties. But stop; a thought strikes me."

All the heads approached in a circle.

"Every ambassador has a strong-box."

"Yes; a strong-box and a credit."

"We will not speak of credit, for there is nothing so hard to procure," said Beausire. "To obtain credit, one must have horses, carriages, servants, and everything of that sort. Let us consider the strong-box. What do you know of the one belonging to the Portuguese embassy?"

"I have always regarded her Majesty as a magnificent queen. She has probably seen that everything is arranged properly."

"That is for us to verify; but supposing the strong-box to be empty?"

"As is possible," said the others, laughing.

"Well, if it be, we must ask Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange who are their correspondents at Lisbon, and we will sign and stamp for them letters of credit for the sum demanded."

"That will do," said Manoel, majestically. "I was engrossed with the grand idea, but had not sufficiently considered the details."

"Which are exquisite," said the banker, licking his lips.

"Now, let us think of arranging the parts," said Beausire. "Don Manoel will be ambassador."

"Certainly," they all said.

"And Monsieur Beausire my secretary and interpreter," said Manoel.

"Why so?" said Beausire, rather uneasily.

"I am Monsieur de Souza, and must not speak a word of French; for I know that that gentleman when he talks, which is very seldom, speaks nothing but Portuguese. You, on the contrary, Monsieur, who have travelled, who are familiar with Parisian customs, who speak Portuguese also —"

"Very badly," said Beausire.

"Well enough not to be taken for a Parisian; and then, you know," added Don Manoel, fixing his black eyes on Beausire, "the most useful agents will have the largest shares."

"Assuredly," said the others.

"Well, it is agreed, — I am secretary and interpreter."

"Let us settle this at once," interrupted the banker; "how shall we divide the profits?"

"It shall be divided into twelve parts; but I, as ambassador and author of the scheme, shall have a share and a half; Monsieur Beausire the same, as interpreter and because he partly shared my idea, and talked of millions on arriving here."

Beausire gave a sign of approval.

"Finally," said the Portuguese, "a share and a half to him who sells the jewels."

"Oh," said the others, in one voice, "he should have only half a share!"

"And why?" said Don Manoel, in surprise; "it seems to me that he will run a great deal of risk."

"Yes; but he will have a bonus, a premium, and

allowances, which will net him an enormous share," said the banker.

At this everybody laughed; these honest people understood one another wonderfully.

"So far, then, it is settled; we will arrange the minor details to-morrow, for it is very late," said Beausire, who was thinking of Oliva, left at the ball with the blue domino, in whom, in spite of his readiness to give away louis d'or, he did not feel implicit confidence.

"No, no; we will finish at once," said the others. "What is to be prepared?"

"A travelling-carriage, with the arms of Monsieur de Souza," said Beausire.

"That would take too long to paint and to dry," said Manoel.

"Then we must say that the ambassador's carriage broke down on the way, and that he was forced to use the secretary's."

"Have you a carriage, then?" asked the Portuguese.

"I shall have the first one I can find."

"But your arms?"

"Whatever may be on it."

"Oh, that simplifies everything. It must be dirty, — splashes of mud on the panels and on the back and all about the arms, so that the chancellor will see nothing but mud."

"But the rest of the embassy?" asked the banker.

"We will arrive in the evening," said Beausire; "it is the best time for a first entrance; and you shall all follow next day, when we have prepared the way."

"Very well."

"But every ambassador, besides a secretary, must have a valet, who will occupy a delicate position!" said Don Manoel.

"You, Captain," said the banker, addressing one of the sharpers, — "you will take the part of valet."

The captain bowed.

"And the money for the purchases?" said Manoel; "I have nothing."

"I have a little," said Beausire; "but it belongs to my mistress."

"What have we in our fund?" asked the members.

"Your keys, gentlemen," said the banker.

Each drew out a key which opened one of twelve locks; these locks secured the drawer under the table in such a manner that none of these honest associates could open it except in the presence of all the others. They proceeded to examine its contents.

"One hundred and ninety-eight louis, besides the reserve fund," said the banker.

"Give them to Monsieur de Beausire and to me; it is not too much," said Manoel.

"Give us two thirds and leave the other third for the rest of the embassy," said Beausire, with a generosity which won all their hearts.

Don Manoel and Beausire received, therefore, one hundred and thirty-two louis, and sixty-six remained for the others. They then separated, after appointing a rendezvous for the next day.

Beausire rolled up his domino under his arm and hastened to the Rue Dauphine, where he hoped to find Oliva in possession of additional louis d'or.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE AMBASSADOR.

On the evening of the next day a travelling-carriage passed through the Barrière d'Enfer, so covered with dust and mud that no one could discern the arms upon it. The four horses that drew it almost flew over the pavement; the postilions were driving at the pace of a prince, as the saying is. The carriage stopped before a hôtel of handsome appearance in the Rue de la Jussienne, at the door of which two men were waiting, one of whom was in full dress, and the other in the livery usually worn by officers connected with foreign embassies in Paris; in other words, the latter looked like a guard in his gala-costume. The carriage entered the court-yard of the hôtel, and the person first-mentioned respectfully approached the carriage-door and began, in somewhat tremulous tones, a speech in the Portuguese language.

"Who are you?" said a voice from the inside, speaking also in Portuguese, but with this difference, that he spoke the language perfectly.

"The unworthy chancellor of the embassy, your Excellency."

"Very well. How badly you speak our language, my dear chancellor; but where are we to alight?"

"Here, Monseigneur, here."

"This is a poor reception," said Don Manoel, who played the grand personage as he got out of the carriage, leaning on the arms of his secretary and valet.

"Your Excellency must pardon me," said the chancellor, "but the courier announcing your arrival reached the hôtel only at two o'clock to-day. I was absent on business of the legation, and when I returned found your Excellency's letter. I have had only time to have the rooms opened; the servants are now lighting them."

"Very good."

"It gives me great pleasure to see the illustrious person of our new ambassador."

"We desire to keep as quiet as possible," said Don Manoel, "until we receive further orders from Lisbon. But show me to my room, if you please, for I am dying with fatigue; my secretary will give you all necessary directions."

The chancellor bowed respectfully to Beausire, who cordially returned the salutation and said with ironical courtesy, "We will speak French, Monsieur; I think it will be easier for both of us."

"Yes," murmured the chancellor, "I shall be more at my ease; for I confess that my pronunciation — "

"Yes; I see," interrupted Beausire, coolly.

"I will take the liberty to say to you, Monsieur, as you seem so amiable, that I trust Monsieur de Souza will not be annoyed at my speaking Portuguese so badly."

"Oh, not at all, not at all, if you speak French well."

"I!" said the chancellor, joyfully; "I, a Parisian of the Rue Saint Honoré!"

"Indeed! that is delightful," said Beausire. "What is your name? Ducorneau, I believe?"

"Yes, Monsieur; an appropriate name, since it has a Spanish termination. It is very flattering to me that Monsieur knew my name."

"Oh, you are well known, — so well, that we did not bring with us a chancellor from Lisbon."

"I am very grateful, Monsieur; what a fortunate thing for me the nomination of Monsieur de Souza proves to be."

"But Monsieur is ringing, I believe."

"Let us go and see."

They found Manoel attired in a magnificent dressing-gown. Several boxes and dressing-cases of rich appearance were already unpacked and lying about. A large fire burned on the hearth.

"Enter, enter, Chancellor," said the ambassador, who had seated himself in a large cushioned arm-chair, in front of the fire.

"Will his Excellency be angry if I answer in French?"

"Oh, no; I am sure of it."

Monsieur Ducorneau therefore paid his compliments in French.

"Ah! why, this is convenient; you speak in French admirably, Monsieur du Corno."

"He takes me for a Portuguese," thought the chancellor, beside himself with joy; and he pressed Beausire's hand.

"Now," said Manoel, "can I have supper?"

"Certainly, your Excellency; the Palais Royal is only two steps from here, and I know an excellent caterer who will bring your Excellency a good supper in a very short time."

"As if it were for yourself, Monsieur du Corno."

"Yes, Monseigneur; and if your Excellency will permit me, I will add to it some bottles of wine from your own country, such as your Excellency can have found only at Oporto itself."

"Oh, our chancellor has a good cellar, then?" said Beausire, jokingly.

"It is my only luxury," replied he. And now, by the wax-lights, they could remark his rather red nose and puffed cheeks.

"Do as you please, Monsieur du Corno; bring your wine and take supper with us."

"Such an honor —"

"Oh, no formality; to-night I am only a traveller. I shall not begin to be ambassador till to-morrow; then we will talk of business."

"Monseigneur will permit me to arrange my toilet?"

"Oh, you are superb already," said Beausire.

"Yes, but this is only a reception-dress."

"Remain as you are, Monsieur, and give the time to expediting our supper."

Ducorneau, delighted, left the room to fulfil his orders. Then the three rogues, left alone in the bedroom, examined the situation.

"Does this chancellor sleep here?" said Manoel.

"No; the fellow has a good cellar, and I doubt not a pretty woman or a grisette somewhere or other. He is an old bachelor."

"And the porter?"

"We must get rid of him. I will see to that."

"And the other servants in the hôtel?"

"We must replace them to-morrow with our own friends."

"Who is in the kitchen department?"

"No one. The old ambassador did not live here; he had a house in the town."

"What about the strong-box?"

"Oh, on that point, we must consult the chancellor; it is a delicate matter."

"I charge myself with it," said Beausire; "we are already capital friends."

"Hush! here he comes."

Ducorneau entered quite out of breath. He had ordered the supper; he brought six bottles of very respectable appearance from his cellar, and his face was radiant with pleasing anticipation. "Will your Excellency descend to the dining-room?" said he.

"No; we will take supper here sociably by the fire."

"Monseigneur fills me with joy. Here is the wine."

"Sit down, Monsieur du Corno," said the ambassador, "my valet will wait upon us. What day did the last despatches arrive?"

"The evening before the departure of your Excellency's predecessor."

"Are the affairs of the embassy in good order?"

"Oh, yes, Monseigneur."

"No money difficulties; no debts?"

"Not that I know of."

"Because if there are, we must begin by paying them. My predecessor is a worthy man, for whom I would become guarantee."

"Oh, your Excellency will have nothing of that sort to do. All the accounts were settled three weeks ago; and the day after the departure of the late ambassador one hundred thousand francs arrived here."

"One hundred thousand francs?" exclaimed both Don Manoel and Beausire, transported with joy.

"Yes, in gold."

"In gold!" repeated the ambassador, the secretary, and even the valet.

"So," said Beausire, concealing his emotion, "the box contains—"

"One hundred thousand three hundred and twenty-eight francs, Monsieur."

"It is not much," said Don Manoel, coldly; "but

happily, her Majesty has placed funds at my disposal. I told you," he continued, turning to Beausire, "that I thought we should need it at Paris."

"Your Excellency took wise precautions," said Beausire, respectfully.

After this important communication of the chancellor the hilarity of the party went on increasing. A good supper, consisting of salmon, crabs, game, and roast meats, contributed to their satisfaction. Ducorneau, quite at his ease, ate enough for ten, and demonstrated to his superiors that a Parisian could do honor to port and sherry.

Monsieur Ducorneau was still blessing Heaven for sending him an ambassador who preferred the French language to the Portuguese, and Portuguese wines to French; he was revelling in that state of bliss which a satisfied and grateful stomach communicates to the brain, when Monsieur de Souza told him that it was time to go to bed. He arose and bowed himself out, hitting everything in his way until he reached the street-door.

Beausire and Don Manoel had not done such honor to the wine as to be ready at once to retire to bed. Besides, the valet must now follow the example of his masters by taking his supper.

Arrangements for the next day were then made; and the three associates made a tour of examination through the hôtel, after having assured themselves that the guard was asleep.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BOEHMER AND BOSSANGE.

THE next morning the embassy, thanks to the activity of the hungry Ducorneau, was aroused from its lethargy. Drawers, paper-boxes, desks, horses pawing in the court-yard, indicated bustle and life where the day before everything had seemed listless and dead.

The report spread quickly in the neighborhood that a grand personage had arrived from Portugal during the night. This rumor which ought to have been a credit to our three rascals could not but inspire them with alarm; for the police of Monsieur Crosne had quick ears and Argus eyes. Still they thought that by audacity, combined with prudence, they might easily keep the police from becoming suspicious until they had had time to complete their business.

At daylight, two hired chaises brought to the hôtel a cargo of nine rascals who were to compose the household of the embassy. They were soon installed or rather disposed of by Beausire. One was appointed to the cash department, another was made keeper of the archives, a third took the place of the porter, whom Ducorneau himself dismissed on the ground that he did not speak Portuguese. The hôtel was therefore peopled by this new garrison, whose duty it was to defend it from everything profane.

The police is profane in the highest degree to all those who have political or other secrets.

Toward noon Don Manoel, called Souza, handsomely dressed, entered a very decent carriage which Beausire had hired for five hundred francs a month. He drove to the house of Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange, accompanied by his secretary and his valet.

The chancellor had orders to settle no accounts except with the knowledge of the secretary. The conspirators wished to keep intact the sum of one hundred thousand francs, — the fundamental pivot of the whole scheme.

The ambassador learned that the jewellers of the crown lived on the Quai de l'École. Thither they took their course, and arrived about one o'clock. The valet knocked at the door, which was secured with immense locks, and studded with large-headed nails, like the door of a prison. These nails were arranged in such a way as to form designs more or less agreeable to the eye, and so that no gimlet, saw, or file could touch a particle of the wood without being damaged by encountering a piece of iron.

A latticed wicket was opened, and a voice asked the valet what he wanted.

"His Excellency the Ambassador of Portugal desires to speak to Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange," replied the valet.

A face quickly appeared at the window of the first story, then a hurried step was heard upon the stairs. The door opened.

Don Manoel alighted from the carriage with dignified deliberation, Monsieur de Beausire having first descended to assist his Excellency.

The man who advanced to meet the two Portuguese with so much haste, on hearing the word "ambassador," was Monsieur Boehmer himself, who made all sorts of apologies while they were ascending the stairs.

Monsieur Beausire observed that behind them a strong

woman-servant was fastening the bolts and locks. Monsieur Boehmer, seeing that Beausire's attention was attracted in that direction, said: "Your pardon, Monsieur; we are so exposed in our unfortunate business that we are obliged to take every precaution."

Don Manoel remained impassive, seeing which Boehmer repeated to him the remark which Beausire had received with an affable smile, but the ambassador was as silent as before.

"Your Excellency will pardon me," again said Boehmer, disconcerted.

"His Excellency does not speak French," said Beausire, "and does not understand you, Monsieur; you must communicate to him through me, — unless you speak Portuguese."

"No, Monsieur; I do not."

"I will speak for you, then."

Beausire spoke a few Portuguese words to Manoel, who replied in the same language.

"His Excellency Monsieur le Comte de Souza, ambassador from the queen of Portugal, graciously accepts your apologies, Monsieur, and desires me to ask you if you still have in your possession a beautiful diamond necklace?"

Boehmer looked at him scrutinizingly. Beausire met the look with the coolness of a diplomatist.

"A beautiful diamond necklace," said Boehmer, slowly, — "a very beautiful necklace?"

"The one which you offered to the queen of France; its renown has reached our gracious queen."

"Monsieur," said Boehmer, "is an officer of the ambassador?"

"His private secretary, Monsieur."

Don Manoel, with the air of a great personage, had seated himself, and was looking carelessly at the pictures which hung round the room.

"Monsieur," said Beausire, "it seems to me that you have not heard a word that I have said to you."

"And how so, Monsieur?" replied Boehmer, a little startled by the sharp tone of the secretary.

"I see his Excellency is becoming impatient."

"Excuse me, Monsieur," said Boehmer, coloring, "but I cannot show the necklace except in the presence of my partner, Monsieur Bossange."

"Well, Monsieur, call your partner."

Don Manoel approached Beausire, and with a freezing manner, somewhat majestic withal, began a harangue in Portuguese, during which Beausire many times bowed respectfully. Then Manoel turned his back, and gazed out of the window.

"His Excellency says, Monsieur, that he has already waited ten minutes, and that he is not accustomed to be kept waiting, not even by kings."

Boehmer bowed and rang the bell.

A moment later another person entered the room. It was Monsieur Bossange the partner. Boehmer explained the matter to him in a few words. Bossange gave a glance to the two Portuguese, and asked Boehmer for his key to the safe.

"It seems to me that honest men," thought Beausire, "take as many precautions toward one another as if they were thieves."

Ten minutes later Monsieur Bossange returned, carrying in his left hand a jewel-case; his right hand was hidden under his coat. Beausire saw the outline of two pistols.

"However respectable we may appear," said Manoel, gravely, in Portuguese, "these gentlemen evidently take us for thieves, rather than ambassadors." And he looked narrowly at the two jewellers to discover by any indication of emotion whether they understood the Portuguese

language. But he saw nothing, — nothing but a diamond necklace of dazzling beauty.

Monsieur Bossange advanced, and with much apparent confidence put the casket into Manoel's hands. Manoel opened it, and immediately said angrily, to his secretary, "Monsieur, say to these fellows that they exceed the shopkeeper's privilege of stupidity. I ask for a diamond necklace, and they bring me paste. Tell them I will complain to the ministers, and in the name of my queen will have thrown into the Bastille impertinent fellows who play tricks upon an ambassador;" and he threw down the case in such a passion that the jewellers needed no interpretation of his remarks. They apologized effusively, and explained that in France it was usual to show only the models of diamonds, so as not to tempt people to robbery, were they so inclined.

Manoel, with an angry gesture, walked toward the door.

"His Excellency desires me to tell you," said Beausire, "that he is sorry that people like Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange, jewellers to the queen, should not know better how to distinguish an ambassador from a rogue, and that he will return to his hôtel."

The jewellers looked at each other with decided uneasiness, and bowed humbly to the retiring ambassador. Beausire proudly followed his master. The old woman unfastened the door.

"To the hôtel of the embassy, Rue de la Jussienne!" cried Beausire to the coachman.

Boehmer, listening at the wicket, heard the order.

"A complete failure!" muttered Manoel.

"A complete success!" said Beausire. "In an hour these men will follow us."

The carriage rolled away as rapidly as if it had been drawn by eight horses.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT THE EMBASSY.

On returning to their hôtel, these gentlemen found Ducorneau dining quietly in his office. Beausire desired him, when he had finished, to go up and see the ambassador, and added, "You will see, my dear Chancellor, that Monsieur de Souza is not an ordinary man."

"I have perceived that already."

"His Excellency," continued Beausire, "wishes to take a distinguished position in Paris, and this residence will be insupportable to him. It will therefore be necessary to find a private residence for Monsieur de Souza."

"That will complicate the diplomatic business," said Ducorneau, "we shall have to go so often to obtain his signature."

"His Excellency will give you a carriage, dear Monsieur Ducorneau."

"A carriage for me!"

"It is to be regretted that you have not one already," continued Beausire. "Every chancellor of a great ambassador should have a carriage; but we will talk of that afterward. His Excellency wishes to know where the strong-box is."

"Upstairs in his own room, Monsieur."

"So far from you?"

"For greater safety, Monsieur. Robbers would find greater difficulty in getting to it there, than here on the ground-floor."

"Robbers!" said Beausire, disdainfully, "and for such a little sum?"

"One hundred thousand francs!" said Ducorneau. "It is easy to see that Monsieur de Souza is very rich; there is not so much money in all the other embassies."

"Shall we examine it now?" said Beausire. "I am rather in a hurry to attend to my own business."

"Immediately, Monsieur."

They went up, and found the money as Ducorneau had stated. Ducorneau gave his key to Beausire, who kept it for some time, pretending to admire its ingenious construction, while he cleverly took the impression of it in wax. Then he gave it back, saying, "Keep it, Monsieur Ducorneau, it is better in your hands than in mine; let us now go to the ambassador."

They found Don Manoel drinking the national chocolate, and apparently much occupied with a writing in cipher.

"Do you understand the cipher used in the late correspondence?" said he to the chancellor.

"No, your Excellency."

"I wish you henceforth to understand it; it will save me a great many annoying details. By the way, what about the box?" said he to Beausire.

"In good condition, like everything else under the charge of Monsieur Ducorneau."

"The hundred thousand francs?"

"Intact."

"Well, sit down, Monsieur du Corno; I want you to give me some information."

"At your Excellency's orders," replied the chancellor, delighted.

"The matter in question is an affair of State."

"Oh, I listen, Monseigneur!" and he drew his chair nearer to the ambassador.

"A very grave affair, in which I would take advantage of your experience. Do you know any honest jewellers in Paris?"

"There are Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange, jewellers to the queen."

"But they are precisely the people I do not wish to employ; I have just left them, and will have nothing more to do with them."

"Have they had the misfortune to displease your Excellency?"

"Seriously, Monsieur du Corno."

"Oh, if I might be a little less reserved, I would venture —"

"Speak!"

"I would ask how these people, who bear so high a name —"

"They are perfect Jews, Monsieur du Corno; and their bad behavior will make them lose a million or two."

"Oh!" cried Ducorneau, eagerly.

"I was sent by her gracious Majesty to make an offer to them for a diamond necklace."

"Oh, the famous necklace which had been ordered by the late king for Madame Dubarry, — I know, I know!"

"You are a valuable man, Monsieur; you know everything. Well, I had intended to buy that necklace; but as things are I shall not buy it."

"Shall I interfere?"

"Monsieur du Corno!"

"Oh, only as a diplomatic affair."

"If you knew them at all, it might be well."

"Bossange is a distant relation of mine."

Don Manoel and Beausire looked at each other. A silence followed. The two Portuguese were sharpening their wits.

At this moment a valet opened the door, and announced "Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange." Don Manoel rose quickly, and said, in an angry tone, "Send those men away!"

The valet was about to obey.

"No; dismiss them yourself, Monsieur the Secretary," said the ambassador.

"In the name of Heaven, allow me to execute the order of Monseigneur!" said Ducorneau. "I will dismiss them gently, since it cannot be avoided."

"Certainly, if you wish," said Manoel, carelessly. Beausire approached him as Ducorneau hurried out.

"It seems that this affair is destined to fail," said Manoel.

"No; Ducorneau will arrange it."

"He will spoil it, you unlucky fellow! You said at the jewellers' that I did not understand French, and Ducorneau will let out that I do understand it."

"I will go," said Beausire.

"Perhaps that is equally dangerous."

"Oh, no! only leave me full power to act."

Beausire went down. Ducorneau had found the jewellers much more disposed to politeness and confidence since entering the hôtel; and on seeing an old friend, Bossange was delighted.

"You here?" said he; and he approached to embrace him.

"Ah, ah, you are very amiable to-day, my rich cousin!" said Ducorneau; "you recognize me here. Is it because I belong to the embassy?"

"On my word, yes!" said Bossange. "If we have been a little estranged, forgive, and render me a service."

"I came for that."

"Thanks! you are, then, attached to the embassy?"

"Yes."

"I want to make an inquiry."

"What about?"

"About this embassy."

"I am the chancellor."

"We would speak to the ambassador."

"I come on his behalf."

"On his behalf! to tell us — "

"That he begs you to leave his hôtel as quickly as possible."

The two jewellers looked at each other disconcerted.

"Because," continued Ducorneau, "it seems you have been uncivil to him."

"But listen — "

"It is useless," said Beausire, who suddenly appeared. "Monsieur Ducorneau, his Excellency told you to dismiss them; do it."

"But, Monsieur — "

"Obey!" said Beausire, with disdain. "Dismiss them!" and he went away.

The chancellor took his relation by the shoulder, and pushed him out, saying, "You have spoiled your fortune."

"*Mon Dieu!* how susceptible these foreigners are," murmured Boehmer, who was a German.

"When one is called Souza, and has nine hundred thousand francs a year, one has a right to be what he pleases," said Ducorneau.

"Ah," sighed Bossange, "I told you, Boehmer, you were too stiff in business matters!"

"Well," replied the obstinate German, "at least, if we do not get his money he will not get our necklace."

Ducorneau laughed. "You do not understand either a Portuguese or an ambassador, bourgeois that you are. I will tell you what they are: one ambassador, Monsieur de

Potemkin, bought every year for his queen, on the first of January, a basket of cherries, which cost one hundred thousand crowns, — one thousand francs a cherry. Well, Monsieur de Souza will buy up all the mines of Brazil, and will find a diamond as big as all yours put together. Though it may cost him an amount equal to his income for twenty years, what will he care for that? — he has no children. So!"

As Ducorneau was about to close the door, Bossange stopped him, saying, "Arrange this affair for me, and you shall have —"

"We are incorruptible here!" replied Ducorneau, and closed the door.

That evening the ambassador received the following letter: —

MONSEIGNEUR, — A man who awaits your orders, desiring to present to you our respectful apologies, is at the door of your hôtel; and upon a word from your Excellency, he will place in the hands of one of your attendants the necklace of which you did us the honor to speak to us. Be pleased to receive, Monseigneur, the assurance of our profound respect.

BOEHMER AND BOSSANGE.

"So," said Manoel, on reading this letter, "the necklace is ours."

"Not so," said Beausire; "it will be ours only when we have bought it. We must buy it, therefore."

"But how?"

"Your Excellency does not understand French, — that is settled; and so, first of all, we must get rid of the chancellor."

"How can we do that?"

"Oh, I will send him away on some diplomatic mission."

"You are wrong," said Manoel; "he will be our security with these men."

"But he will say that you know French."

"No, he will not; I will tell him not to do so."

"Very well, then, he can stay. Let the man with the diamonds come in."

The man was introduced. It was Boehmer himself, who made many bows and excuses; after which he presented his diamonds, and seemed to intend leaving them for examination.

Don Manoel desired him to remain.

"Sit down," said Beausire, "and let us converse, since his Excellency pardons you."

"Oh, how much trouble a man must take to make a sale!" sighed Boehmer.

"How much trouble a man takes to steal," thought Beausire.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BARGAIN.

THEN the ambassador consented to examine the necklace in detail. Monsieur Boehmer showed each individual beauty.

"On the whole," said Beausire, interpreting for Manoel, "his Excellency sees nothing to complain of in the necklace; but there are ten of the diamonds slightly defective."

"Oh!" said Boehmer.

"His Excellency," interrupted Beausire, "knows more about diamonds than you do; the Portuguese nobility play with the diamonds of Brazil as children do here with glass beads."

In fact, Don Manoel placed his finger on some of the diamonds and showed, with great intelligence, faults which were almost imperceptible, and which even a connoisseur might have passed over without noticing.

"Such as it is, however," said Boehmer, somewhat surprised to find so great a nobleman a jeweller also, "this necklace is the finest collection of diamonds in all Europe."

"That is true," said Don Manoel.

Then Beausire went on, "Well, Monsieur Boehmer, her Majesty the queen of Portugal has heard of this necklace, and has given Monsieur de Souza a commission to buy it, if he should be satisfied as to the quality of the diamonds. He is satisfied; now what is the price?"

"Sixteen hundred thousand francs."

Beausire repeated this to the ambassador.

"It is one hundred thousand francs too much," replied Don Manoel.

"Monseigneur," replied the jeweller, "one cannot estimate profits with precision on an article so valuable as this. In getting together this collection it has been necessary to make voyages and researches that are almost beyond belief."

"One hundred thousand francs too dear," repeated the tenacious Portuguese.

"And if his Excellency says this," said Beausire, "it must be his firm conviction, for he never bargains."

Boehmer was shaken. Nothing reassures a suspicious merchant so much as a customer who haggles as to the price. "However," he said, after a minute's thought, "I cannot consent to a deduction which will make all the difference of loss or profit to myself and my partner."

Don Manoel, after hearing Beausire's interpretation, rose. Beausire returned the case to the jeweller.

"I will, however, speak to Monsieur Bossange about it," continued Boehmer. "I am to understand that his Excellency offers fifteen hundred thousand francs for the necklace?"

"His Excellency never retracts anything he has said; but he might refuse the necklace altogether rather than be subjected to the annoyance of bargaining for it."

"But, Monsieur, you understand that I must consult with my partner?"

"Certainly, Monsieur Boehmer."

"Certainly," replied Don Manoel, to whom Boehmer's question had been interpreted; "but I must have a speedy answer."

"Well, Monseigneur, if my partner will consent to that reduction in the price I also will consent."

"Good."

"It then only remains, besides obtaining the consent of Monsieur Bossange, to settle the mode of payment."

"There will be no difficulty about that," said Beausire. "How do you wish to be paid?"

"Oh," said Boehmer, laughing, "if ready money be possible —"

"What do you call ready money?" said Beausire, coldly.

"Oh, I know no one has a million and a half of francs ready to pay down," said Boehmer, with a sigh.

"It would be inconvenient, even for you, Monsieur Boehmer."

"Still, I cannot consent to dispense with some ready money."

"That is but reasonable." Then turning to Don Manoel, "How much will your Excellency pay down to Monsieur Boehmer?"

"One hundred thousand francs on signing the agreement."

Beausire repeated this.

"And the remainder?" asked Boehmer.

"At the expiration of the time necessary to transmit a draft signed by Monseigneur to Lisbon; unless you prefer to wait for information sent from Lisbon to Paris."

"Oh!" said Boehmer, "we have a correspondent in Lisbon; by writing to him —"

"The very thing," said Beausire, laughing ironically; "write to him; ask him if Monsieur de Souza is solvent, and whether her Majesty the queen can be trusted to the amount of fourteen hundred thousand francs."

"Monsieur —" said Boehmer, confused.

"Do you accept, or do you prefer other conditions?"

"Those which you at first proposed appear to me

acceptable. Would there be any fixed dates for the payments?"

"There would be three payments, Monsieur Boehmer, of five hundred thousand francs, and you might make that the object of a pleasant journey."

"A journey to Lisbon?"

"And why not? Is it not worth a little trouble to receive a million and a half within three months?"

"Oh, undoubtedly, but —"

"Moreover, you would travel at the expense of the embassy, and either the chancellor or myself would accompany you."

"I should take the diamonds with me?"

"Without any doubt, unless you would prefer to send the drafts from here, and allow the diamonds to go alone to Portugal."

"I do not know — I believe — that — the journey would be useful, and that —"

"That is also my opinion," said Beausire. "The signature would be made here. You would receive your one hundred thousand francs cash, you would sign the bill of sale, and you would carry the diamonds to her Majesty. What is the name of your correspondent?"

"Messieurs Nunez Balboa, Brothers."

Don Manoel raised his head. "They are my bankers," he said, smiling.

"They are his Excellency's bankers," said Beausire, smiling also.

Boehmer appeared radiant; every cloud had left his brow. He bowed as if to express thanks, at the same time taking leave. A sudden thought brought him back.

"What is it?" asked Beausire, with anxiety.

"Our bargain is made?" said Boehmer.

"Yes."

"Except —"

"Except the consent of Monsieur Bossange, as we have agreed."

"Except another thing," added Boehmer.

"Ah! ah!"

"Monsieur, this is a delicate question, and the honor of the Portuguese name is too strong a sentiment for his Excellency not to understand my meaning."

"What a round-about way you take! To the point!"

"This is the point. The necklace has been offered to her Majesty the queen of France."

"Who has refused it; what then?"

"We cannot, Monsieur, let this necklace leave France forever without informing the queen; and our respect and loyalty demand that we should give the preference to her Majesty."

"It is right," said Don Manoel, with dignity. "I should wish a Portuguese merchant to express the same sentiments."

"I am very happy that his Excellency approves of my conduct. Then all is settled, subject only to the consent of Monsieur Bossange, and the definite refusal of her Majesty the queen of France. I ask three days to settle these two points."

"On our side," said Beausire, "one hundred thousand francs down, three drafts amounting in all to fourteen hundred thousand francs placed in your hands. The case of diamonds to be delivered to the chancellor of the embassy or to me, whichever shall accompany you to Lisbon, to the house of Messieurs Nunez Balboa, Brothers. The whole of the money to be paid in three months. Your travelling expenses to be paid."

"Yes, Monseigneur; yes, Monsieur," said Boehmer.

"Ah!" said Don Manoel, in Portuguese.

"What is it, then?" said Boehmer, uneasy in his turn, and coming back.

"As gratuity," said the ambassador, "a ring worth one thousand pistoles to be given by you to my secretary or to the chancellor of the embassy; in short, to the one who accompanies you to Lisbon, Monsieur."

"That is but too just, Monseigneur," murmured Boehmer; "and I had already in my own mind determined to do so."

Don Manoel dismissed the jeweller with a wave of his hand.

When the two partners were left alone, Don Manoel said angrily to Beausire, "Please to explain what the devil you mean by this journey to Portugal? Are you mad? Why not have the jewels here in exchange for our money?"

"You are too sure of yourself as to this part you are playing," replied Beausire. "You are not yet altogether Monsieur de Souza in the opinion of Monsieur Boehmer."

"Come now! do you think he would have made an agreement if he had suspected anything?"

"As you please. Perhaps he would not have entered into an agreement; but every man in possession of fifteen hundred thousand francs holds himself above all the ambassadors in the world; and every one who gives that value in exchange for pieces of paper, wishes first to know what the papers are worth."

"Then you mean to go to Portugal, — you who cannot speak Portuguese? I tell you, you are mad."

"Not in the least. You will go there yourself."

"Oh, no!" cried Don Manoel, "I have too many good reasons for not wishing to return to Portugal. No! no!"

"I tell you that Monsieur Boehmer would never have given up his diamonds for mere paper."

"Paper signed 'Souza'?"

"I said that he thought himself a real Souza!" cried Beausire, striking his hands together.

"I would rather hear you admit that the affair is a failure," said Don Manoel.

"Not the least in the world. Come here, Captain," said Beausire to the valet, who appeared on the threshold. "You know what we are talking about?"

"Yes."

"You heard me?"

"Certainly."

"Very well. Do you think I have committed a folly?"

"I am sure that you were a thousand times right."

"Explain why."

"Because Monsieur Boehmer would have kept continual watch over the hôtel of the embassy and over the ambassador himself."

"Well?" said Don Manoel.

"Well," replied Beausire, "having both his money and his diamonds by his side, he will have no suspicions; he will set out quietly for Portugal."

"But he will not arrive," said the valet. "Is not that what you mean, Monsieur le Chevalier de Beausire?"

"Ah, you are a lad of discernment," replied Oliva's lover.

"Explain your plan," said Manoel.

"About fifty leagues from Paris," said Beausire, "this clever fellow here will come and present two pistols at the heads of our postilions, will steal from us all we have, including the diamonds, and will leave Monsieur Boehmer half-dead with blows."

"Oh, I was not thinking of that exactly," said the valet; "I thought you would embark for Portugal."

"Well, what then?"

"Monsieur Boehmer, since he is a German, will like being at sea, and will walk frequently on the deck. One day he will make a misstep and fall over, and the necklace will be supposed to have gone with him into the sea. Why should not the sea swallow diamonds worth fifteen hundred thousand francs since it has kept so well the Spanish galleons?"

"Oh, I understand," said Manoel.

"That is fortunate," muttered Beausire.

"But," continued Don Manoel, "for stealing diamonds we should be sent to the Bastille; for making the jeweller look into the sea we should be hanged."

"Yes, but for stealing the diamonds we might be taken," said the captain; "while we should never for a single moment be suspected of drowning this man."

"Well, we will settle all this when the time comes," said Beausire. "In the mean time, to our respective parts. We must administer the affairs of the embassy like model Portuguese, so that it may be said of us: 'If they were not real ambassadors, they appeared to be.' That is always flattering. Let us wait the three days."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE JOURNALIST'S HOUSE.

In the Rue Montorgueil, at the end of a court-yard the entrance to which was closed by an iron gate, was a rather high and narrow house, protected from the noise of the street by massive shutters which gave it the appearance of a house in the country.

On the first floor of this house lived a journalist who had acquired some degree of notoriety. The ground-floor was used for the storage of old journals, which were there piled up after being duly labelled. The two upper stories were occupied by peaceable tenants, whose quiet was broken several times a year by noisy incidents occurring in the rooms of the journalist, — when he was visited by the police or was assailed by actors or other persons to whom he had given special offence.

When these incidents occurred the tenants of the house, which was known in the neighborhood as "The Grate," closed their windows on the side toward the street that they might hear more distinctly the cries of the journalist when receiving chastisement.

Sometimes the journalist, pursued by such assailants, would seek escape by way of the Rue des Vieux-Augustins through a door opening on a level with his chamber. A concealed door opened, then closed; the noise ceased; the man assailed had disappeared, and the assailants found themselves face to face with four fusileers of the French

guards, hastily summoned by an old woman in the service of the journalist.

Aside from scenes like this, the tranquillity of "The Grate" was proverbial.

Monsieur Reteau was accustomed to go out in the morning and take a turn on the quays, the public squares, and the boulevards. He observed whatever was ridiculous, whatever was vicious, took notes of what he found, sketched vivid illustrations, and published his portraitures in his next issue. His journal was issued once a week. That is to say, Reteau spent four days looking for subjects and preparing his articles, three days more in printing them, and had his journal ready for issue on the day of publication.

On the day after that on which the agreement with Monsieur Boehmer had been made, three days after the Opera-ball at which Mademoiselle Oliva had enjoyed so much pleasure, leaning on the arm of the blue domino, Monsieur Reteau, on rising at eight o'clock, received from the hands of his old servant a copy of the issue for that day, still fresh from the press. He hastened to read it, with the attentive interest a tender father shows in examining the merits or defects of his beloved son. When he had read it through, "Aldegonde," said he to the old woman, "this is a capital number; have you read it?"

"Not yet; my soup is not made."

"I am satisfied with this number," said the journalist.

"Yes," replied Aldegonde; "but do you know what they say in the printing-room?"

"What do they say?"

"That this time you will not escape the Bastille."

"Aldegonde," replied Reteau, calmly, "make me a good soup, and don't meddle with literature."

"Oh, always the same," returned the old woman, — "rash and imprudent."

"I will buy you some buckles with the profits of this number. Have many copies been sold yet?"

"No; and I fear my buckles will not be very brilliant if this state of things continues. Do you remember the number containing an article on Monsieur de Broglie? Before ten o'clock on that day we had sold a hundred copies."

"And I had retreated three times to the Rue des Vieux-Augustins," said Reteau. "Every noise put me into a fever; those military men are rough!"

"I had inferred," persisted Aldegonde, "that this number of to-day will not be so profitable as was that on Monsieur de Broglie."

"So be it; but at any rate I shall not have to run away so often, and can take my soup in peace. Do you know why, Aldegonde?"

"Faith, no, Monsieur."

"It is because, instead of attacking a man, I attack a body; instead of attacking a soldier, I attack a queen."

"The queen! Thank God!" murmured the old woman. "Fear nothing, then. If you have attacked the queen you will be borne in triumph; we shall sell all our copies, and I shall have my buckles."

"Some one is ringing," said Reteau.

The old woman hastened to the shop to receive the visitor. A moment later she returned triumphant. "A thousand copies!" she said, — "a thousand copies, all at once; there's an order!"

"In what name?" asked Reteau, eagerly.

"I don't know."

"We must know; run and find out."

"Oh, there is time enough; it is no small matter to count and do up a thousand copies."

"Go at once, I tell you, and ask the valet. Is it a valet?"

"It is a messenger, an Auvergnese, with his pack."

"Good; ask him to whom he is to carry these numbers."

Aldegonde went with all speed. The wooden stairs creaked under her ponderous legs, and her loud voice was heard through the floor as she spoke to the messenger. He told her that he was to carry the copies to the Rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles, to the house of the Comte de Cagliostro.

The journalist bounded with joy, and hastened downstairs to assist in the delivery of the papers. The thousand copies were soon heaped on the back of the Auvergnese, who departed bending beneath the weight.

Monsieur Reteau prepared to jot down some notes for his next number regarding the extraordinary success of this, and proposed to write a few lines on the generous nobleman who had bought the thousand copies. He was congratulating himself on having so fortunately made acquaintance with that nobleman, when another ring at the bell was heard.

"Another thousand copies," said Aldegonde, excited by the first success. "Ah, Monsieur, it is not surprising; since the article is about the Austrian, every one will join in the chorus."

"Silence! silence! Aldegonde, don't speak so loud. 'The Austrian!' — that is an offence which might indeed send me to the Bastille you talked about."

"Very well, tell me," said the old woman, sharply; "is she, or is she not, an Austrian?"

"It is a word to which we journalists have given currency, but is not to be used too freely."

There was another ring at the bell.

"Go and see, Aldegonde; I don't think it is any one to buy papers."

"Why do you say that?"

"I think I see a man with a gloomy countenance waiting at the gate."

Aldegonde went down to open the gate; meanwhile Reteau looked on, from his window, with an anxiety that may be easily understood. Aldegonde opened to a man plainly dressed, who asked if he could see the editor of the journal.

"What have you to say to him?" asked Aldegonde, somewhat distrustful; and she held the gate slightly open, ready to shut it at the first sign of danger.

The man rattled some crown-pieces in his pocket, and the sound expanded the old woman's heart. "I have come," he said, "to pay for the thousand copies of to-day's paper, taken in the name of the Comte de Cagliostro."

"Ah, if that is so, come in."

The man entered; but he had not yet closed the gate when another visitor, coming up behind him, — young, tall, and of fine appearance, — held back the gate, saying, "Pardon, Monsieur." Without asking further permission he glided in after the messenger sent by the Comte de Cagliostro.

Aldegonde, intent on gain, and fascinated by the sound of the crown-pieces, hastened on to her master. "Come, come!" she cried; "all goes well. Here are the five hundred francs for the thousand copies."

"Let us receive them nobly," said Reteau, with a grand air; and he draped himself in a somewhat pretentious dressing-gown, for which he was indebted to the munificence, or rather to the fears, of Madame Dugazon, from whom, after her adventure with Astley the equestrian, he had procured numerous presents of every kind.

The messenger of the Comte de Cagliostro went forward and counted out one hundred six-franc pieces, which he arranged in twelve piles. Reteau carefully counted them and examined their quality. Then he thanked the messenger, gave him a receipt, and while dismissing him with a pleasant smile, asked him about the health of the Comte de Cagliostro. The man thanked him as for a common civility, and was taking his departure when Reteau added: "Say to the count that I await his wishes, and that he may rest undisturbed; I know how to keep a secret."

"It is unnecessary," the man replied; "Monsieur le Comte is independent. He does n't believe in magnetism; he wishes to raise a laugh against Monsieur Mesmer, and gives currency to the adventure of the vat for his own amusement."

"Very good," murmured a voice from the doorway; "we will try to raise a laugh at the expense of Monsieur le Comte de Cagliostro."

Monsieur Reteau beheld, advancing into his chamber, a person whose face seemed to him more gloomy than had that of the person he had noticed first. He was, as we have said, a man young and vigorous; but as to his fine appearance, Reteau was not of our opinion. To him the young man seemed to have a threatening expression in his eyes, and to conduct himself in a threatening manner. And in fact, the stranger's left hand rested on the hilt of his sword, and his right hand on the head of a cane.

"What can I do for you, Monsieur?" asked Reteau, with a certain tremulousness of utterance which always seized him on such occasions.

"Monsieur Reteau?" asked the unknown.

"That is my name."

"Who calls himself 'De Villette'?"

"I am he, Monsieur."

"Journalist?"

"I am a journalist."

"Author of this article," asked the unknown, coldly, drawing from his pocket a copy of the new number.

"I am, in fact, not its author," said Reteau, "but its publisher."

"Very well, that comes to exactly the same result; for if you have not had the courage to write the article, you have had the cowardice to allow its publication. I say 'cowardice,' because as a gentleman I wish to measure my words, even in this hole; but I do not thus give full expression to my thought. Were I to say what I think, I should say that he who wrote that article is infamous; he who published it is a scoundrel!"

"Monsieur!" said Reteau, turning pale.

"Ah, this is a wretched piece of business indeed!" continued the young man, with growing excitement; "but listen now, Monsieur, — everything in its turn; just now you received crowns, now you are to receive a caning."

"Oh!" cried Reteau, "we shall see about that."

"And what shall we see?" said the young man, in a sharp, military tone, advancing toward his adversary.

But this was by no means Reteau's first experience in affairs of this sort, and he was acquainted with the secrets of his house. He had only to turn around to find a door, open it, pass through, close it, and bar it, and so make it serve as a defence while he gained an adjacent room which opened into the Rue des Vieux-Augustins. Once there he would be safe; he would find there a small gate, which a turn of the key — and the key was always ready — would open, when he could escape by making good use of his legs.

But that was an unfortunate day for the poor journalist; for just when he put his hand on that key he perceived

another man, who seemed to him in his agitated state of mind a Hercules, and who, motionless, threatening, seemed to be waiting for his approach.

Reteau would have been glad to retrace his steps, but the young man with the cane, whom he had seen first, had burst through the door with a vigorous kick, had followed him, and now that he had stopped on seeing that other sentinel, also armed with sword and cane, had only to reach out his arm to lay hold on him. Reteau found himself, then, between two fires, — or rather, between two canes, — in an obscure court between his house and the gate opening into the street.

"Monsieur, I beg you to let me pass," said Reteau to the young man who guarded the gate.

"Monsieur," cried the young man in pursuit, "Monsieur, stop the rascal."

"Be content, Monsieur de Charny; he will not pass out," said the young man at the gate.

"Monsieur de Taverney, is it you?" cried Charny, — for it was he who had come first to Monsieur Reteau by way of the Rue Montorgueil.

On reading the paper that morning they had both conceived the same idea, for they had the same sentiment in their hearts; and without any communication with each other they had proceeded to put that idea into execution. Each of them, on perceiving the other, was affected by jealousy; for each discovered a rival in the man who had been actuated by sentiments identical with his own. It was therefore with a somewhat offensive accent that Monsieur de Charny uttered the words, "Monsieur de Taverney, is it you?"

"Myself," replied Philippe, in the same tone, and making a movement toward the suppliant journalist who had thrust his arms through between the bars of the gate;

"but it seems that I have come too late. Very well, I will be a spectator of the game, — unless you will have the kindness to open the gate for me."

"The game!" murmured the frightened journalist; "are you going to murder me, gentlemen?"

"Oh," said Charny, "that expression is too strong. No, Monsieur, we will not murder you; but we will question you, and then we will see. You allow me to do what I please with this man, do you not, Monsieur de Taverney?"

"Certainly, Monsieur," replied Philippe; "you have the right to precedence, since you arrived first."

"There, then, stick to the wall, and don't you stir," said Charny to Reteau, after thanking Taverney with a gesture. "You admit, then, my dear Monsieur, that you wrote and published that comic tale, as you call it, about the queen, which appeared this morning in your paper?"

"Monsieur, it is not against the queen."

"Ah, good! only that was wanting."

"You are very patient, Monsieur," said Philippe, raging on the other side of the gate.

"Don't be alarmed," replied Charny; "the fellow will lose nothing by waiting."

"Yes," murmured Philippe; "but I also am waiting."

Charny made no reply, but turning to the unhappy Reteau, he said: "'Etteniotna' is 'Antoinette' reversed. Oh, don't lie about it, Monsieur. That would be so stupid and so base that instead of beating you or killing you in an orderly manner, I shall flay you alive. Answer, then, are you the sole author of that article?"

"I am not an informer," said Reteau, drawing himself up.

"Very well; that is as much as to say that there is an accomplice. It must be he who bought a thousand copies

of that diatribe, — the Comte de Cagliostro, whom you named a little while ago. So be it; the count will pay his share when you have paid yours. But as I have got hold of you first, you shall pay first," and he raised his cane.

"Monsieur, if I had a sword!" roared the journalist.

Charny lowered his cane. "Monsieur Philippe," said he, "lend your sword to this rascal, I beg of you."

"Oh, by no means. I do not lend an honest sword to a fellow like that. Here is my cane if yours is not enough; but I can't conscientiously do anything more either for him or for you."

"*Corbleu!* a cane?" said Reteau, exasperated. "Do you know, Monsieur, that I am a gentleman?"

"Then lend your sword to me," said Charny, "and my only course will be never to touch this one again." He threw down his own sword at Reteau's feet, who turned pale.

Philippe could make no further objection. He drew his sword from its sheath, and passed it through the gate to Charny. Charny received it, bowing his thanks. "Ah, you are a gentleman," said he, turning toward Reteau, — "you are a gentleman, and you write such infamous things about the queen of France! Well, then, pick up that sword, and prove yourself a gentleman."

But Reteau did not stir. He seemed to be as much afraid of the sword at his feet as he had been of the cane when it was raised for a moment over his head.

"*Mordieu!*" said Philippe, in disgust, "open this gate for me."

"Pardon, Monsieur," said Charny; "but you have agreed that this man belongs to me first."

"Then make haste to get through with him, for I am in a hurry to begin."

"I was obliged to exhaust all other means before resorting to this extreme measure," said Charny; "for I find that blows with a cane cost almost as much to the giver as to the receiver; but since the fellow decidedly prefers blows of a cane to thrusts of a sword, he shall be served according to his choice."

Hardly had these words been spoken when a cry from Reteau showed that Charny had suited the action to the word. Five or six blows, vigorously applied, each of which extorted a cry equivalent to the pain it inflicted, followed the first. These cries brought out the old servant; but Charny was as little disturbed by her cries as by those of her master. Meanwhile Philippe, placed like Adam outside of Paradise, bit his fingers, and jumped about like a bear who smells fresh meat before the bars of his cage.

At length Charny stopped, tired of beating; and Reteau threw himself down, tired of being pommelled.

"There!" said Philippe, "are you through, Monsieur?"

"Yes," said Charny.

"Well, then, now return to me my sword, which has been useless to you, and I beg of you, open the gate."

"Monsieur! Monsieur!" implored Reteau, who saw a defender in the man who had settled accounts with him.

"You understand that I can't leave the gentleman outside the gate?" said Charny; "I must open to him."

"Oh, it is a murder!" cried Reteau. "Come, kill me at once, and have it over."

"Oh, now be quiet!" said Charny. "I have no idea that the gentleman will even touch you."

"And you are right!" said Philippe, with sovereign contempt, as he entered the court. "He has been beaten, and justly; but as the legal maxim says, 'Non bis in idem.'

But there are copies of this edition still remaining, and it is important that they should be destroyed."

"Ah, that is true!" said Charny. "You see that two are better than one alone; I should, perhaps, have forgotten that. But by what chance were you at that gate, Monsieur de Taverney?"

"I will tell you," said Philippe. "I inquired in the neighborhood as to the habits of this scoundrel. I ascertained that he was wont to run away when closely pressed. Then I inquired as to his means of escape, and thought that if I should enter by the secret door, and close it after me, I should catch my fox in his hole. The same idea of vengeance occurred to you; but being in more haste than I, your information was less complete. You came in by the usual entrance, and he was escaping from you when, fortunately, you found me there."

"And I am glad it so turned out. Come, Monsieur de Taverney, this fellow will conduct us to his press."

"But my press is not here," said Reteau.

"A lie!" cried Charny, threateningly.

"No, no," said Philippe; "he is right. The type is already distributed; there remains only the printed edition. Now, the edition must be still complete, except for the thousand copies sold to Monsieur de Cagliostro."

"Then he shall tear up that edition before our eyes."

"He shall burn it, — that is the surest method of destruction;" and Philippe, determined on that mode of satisfaction, pushed Reteau before him in the direction of the shop.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOW TWO FRIENDS BECOME ENEMIES.

In the mean time Aldegonde, having heard her master's cries, and finding the door locked, had gone to call the guard; but before she returned Philippe and Charny had had time to light a fire with the copies from the top of the pile. They were throwing in the rest, one after another, and had nearly completed the task, when the guard appeared followed by a crowd from the neighborhood. Happily, Monsieur Philippe and Charny knew Monsieur Reteau's secret exit, which he had so imprudently shown them; so that when they caught sight of the guard, they made their escape, carrying the key with them.

Then Reteau, once more at liberty, cried, "Help! murder! murder!" while Aldegonde, seeing the flames through the window, cried, "Fire! fire!"

The soldiers arrived; but finding that the young men had disappeared, and that the fire was nearly extinguished, they left Reteau to bathe his back with spirits of camphor, and withdrew to their guard-room. But the crowd, always more curious than the guard, lingered about until noon, hoping for a renewal of the scene of the morning.

When Taverney and Charny found themselves in the Rue des Vieux-Augustins, "Monsieur," said Charny, "now that we have finished that business, can I be of use to you in any way?"

"A thousand thanks, Monsieur! I was about to make you the same offer."

"Thank you; but I have private business, which will probably keep me in Paris most of the day."

"And I also, Monsieur."

"Permit me, then, to take leave of you. I am happy to have met you."

"Permit me to return the compliment, and to express also my sincere desire that this affair may terminate according to your wishes."

The two men bowed with smiling courtesy; but it was easy to see that this exchange of polite words proceeded only from the lips. On separating, they took opposite directions, Philippe ascending the street toward the boulevards, and Charny descending it toward the river; both turned round two or three times, until they lost sight of each other.

Charny, going in the direction of the river, hastened on toward the Rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles. As he approached it, his attention was attracted to the form of a young man who was ascending the Rue Saint Louis, whom, after a moment of doubt, he recognized as Philippe de Taverney. Philippe, by a different course, had reached the corner of the Rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles, where the two young men now found themselves face to face. They both stopped and looked at each other with eyes which on this occasion did not take the trouble to conceal their thoughts. Both had now also the same idea, — that of demanding satisfaction of the Comte de Cagliostro; and meeting there, neither could doubt the other's intention.

"Monsieur de Charny," said Philippe, "I left to you the seller, you should indeed have left to me the purchaser. I allowed you to strike with the cane, let me give the sword-thrusts."

"Monsieur," replied Charny, "you did me that favor because I had arrived first, and for no other reason."

"Yes; but here," said Taverney, "we arrive at the same time, and I tell you at once that I will make no concessions."

"And who says that I ask any, Monsieur? I will maintain my rights, that is all."

"And in your opinion, Monsieur de Charny, your right is —"

"To make Monsieur de Cagliostro burn the thousand copies which he purchased of that scoundrel."

"You will please remember, Monsieur, that it was I who first had the idea of burning those in the Rue Montorgueil."

"Well! you had them burned in the Rue Montorgueil, and I will have them torn up in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles."

"Monsieur, I am sorry to tell you that I very seriously wish to be the first to settle with Comte de Cagliostro."

"All that I can agree to, Monsieur, is to decide the matter by chance; I will throw up a louis, and he who wins shall take precedence."

"Thanks, Monsieur, but I am not generally lucky, and should probably lose;" and he stepped toward the door.

Charny stopped him. "One word, Monsieur, we will soon understand each other."

"Well, Monsieur," answered Philippe, turning back eagerly, for he noticed in Charny's tone an accent of menace which pleased him.

"Before asking satisfaction of Monsieur de Cagliostro, suppose we take a turn in the Bois de Boulogne. It will be out of our way, I know, but perhaps we can settle our dispute there. One of us will probably be left behind, and he who returns need not yield to any one."

"Really, Monsieur," said Philippe, "you anticipate my

own thoughts, — that will adjust everything; where shall we meet?"

"Well, if my society be not insupportable to you, we need not part. I ordered my carriage to wait for me in the Place Royale close by here."

"Then you will give me a seat?" said Philippe.

"Certainly, and with the greatest pleasure."

And the two young men, who at first sight had felt that they were rivals, and had become enemies at the first opportunity, now hastened toward the Place Royale where they perceived Charny's carriage. Before entering the carriage Charny wrote a few words on his tablets, which he asked his footman to leave at his hôtel in Paris.

Monsieur de Charny's horses were excellent, and in less than half an hour they reached the Bois de Boulogne. The weather was lovely, and the air was delightful; the fresh leaves were appearing on the trees, and the violets filled the place with their perfume.

"It is a fine day for our drive, is it not, Monsieur de Taverney?" said Charny.

"Beautiful, Monsieur."

"You may go," said Charny to his coachman, as they alighted.

"Are you not wrong, Monsieur, to send away your carriage? One of us may need it."

"No, Monsieur," replied Charny; "in such an affair as this, secrecy is the first thing to be considered; and once in the knowledge of a servant, by to-morrow all Paris might be talking about it."

"As you please, Monsieur; but the fellow who brought us here knows very well what is going on. These people know too well the habits of gentlemen to suppose when they take us to the Bois de Boulogne, and at the pace at which he brought us, that we come simply for a drive. So,

I repeat, your coachman knows what is going on. If he is not sure of it now, he may afterward see one of us wounded, and then he will have no doubt of it. Is it not better to keep him here to take back the one who may need help, than for either of us to be left here wounded and alone?"

"You are right, Monsieur," replied Charny. Then turning to the coachman, "Dauphin," he said, "stop, you may wait here."

Dauphin had expected to be recalled; he had driven very slowly and consequently was within hail. He therefore stopped; and as Philippe had foreseen, he suspected what was going forward. He placed himself so as to see, through the still leafless trees, everything that took place.

Philippe and Charny soon reached a spot which was near the centre of the wood. Philippe, who walked in front, found a dry place, and firm under-foot; it was an open place, well adapted to the purpose they had in view.

"With deference to your opinion, Monsieur de Charny," said Philippe, "it seems to me that this is a good place."

"Excellent, Monsieur," replied Charny, taking off his coat.

Philippe also took off his coat, threw down his hat, and drew his sword.

"Monsieur," said Charny, whose sword was still in the scabbard, "to any one but you I would say one word of kindness, if not of apology, and we should be friends again; but to you — a brave soldier who have just come from America, a country where they fight so well — I cannot —"

"And I, to any other," replied Philippe, "would say, 'Monsieur, in my relations toward you I am perhaps in the wrong;' but to you — to the brave sailor who lately received the admiration of the whole court for having per-

formed a glorious exploit in battle — to you, Monsieur de Charny, I can say nothing but this, 'Monsieur le Comte, do me the honor to draw your sword.'"

The count bowed, and in his turn drew his sword.

"Monsieur," said Charny, "I believe that neither of us has touched on the real cause of the quarrel."

"I do not understand you, Count," replied Philippe.

"Oh, on the contrary, you do understand me, Monsieur; and as you come from a country whose people know not how to lie, you blushed while saying that you did not understand me."

"Guard!" said Philippe.

Their swords crossed. At the first pass Philippe perceived that he had a marked superiority over his adversary. But this assurance, instead of increasing his ardor, appeared to chill it altogether, and he became as calm as if he were in a fencing academy, and instead of a sword was holding a foil in his hand. He contented himself with parrying, and the combat had lasted more than a minute without his giving a single blow.

"You are sparing me, Monsieur," said Charny; "may I ask why?" And making a rapid feint, he lunged heavily at Philippe. But Philippe covered the sword of his adversary with a counter still more rapid than the feint, and the thrust was parried.

Although Taverney's parry had thrown Charny's sword out of line, Taverney did not thrust in return. Charny made another attack which Philippe again warded off by a simple parry; Charny was forced to recover himself rapidly.

Charny was the younger of the two, and the most ardent; he was mortified, feeling his own blood boil, by his antagonist's coolness. He wished to disturb this calmness.

"I told you, Monsieur, that we had not touched upon the real cause of the quarrel."

Philippe did not answer.

"I will now tell you the real cause; you sought a quarrel with me, — for the quarrel began with you, — you sought a quarrel with me from jealousy."

Philippe remained silent.

"Come now," said Charny, as angry now as Philippe was cool, "what game are you playing, Monsieur de Taverney? Is it your intention to tire my hand? That would be a plan unworthy of you. *Morbleu!* kill me if you can, but at least kill me in full combat."

Philippe shook his head. "Yes, Monsieur," he said, "your reproaches are deserved; I sought the quarrel and I regret it."

"That is not the question now, Monsieur. You have a sword in your hand; use it for something besides parrying, or if you will not more directly attack, do not defend yourself so well."

"Monsieur," replied Philippe, "I have the honor to tell you a second time that I was wrong, and that I regret it."

But Charny's blood was too hot to comprehend his adversary's generosity; he took offence at it. "Ah!" said he, "I understand; you wish to play the magnanimous with me! That is it, am I not right, Chevalier? This evening, or to-morrow morning, you calculate on telling some beautiful ladies that you came upon the ground with me, and that you spared my life."

"Monsieur le Comte," said Philippe, "I really fear that you are going mad."

"You wished to kill Monsieur de Cagliostro to please the queen; and more surely still to please the queen, you wish to kill me also, but by ridicule."

"Ah, that is a word too much," cried Philippe, knitting his brow; "and this word proves that your heart is not so generous as I thought."

"Well, pierce that heart, then!" said Charny, exposing his breast just as Philippe was making a rapid lunge.

The sword glanced along the ribs, and cut a bleeding seam under the fine white shirt.

"At last!" said Charny, joyfully, "I am wounded! Now if I kill you, mine will be the glorious part!"

"Decidedly," said Philippe, "you are quite mad, Monsieur. You will not kill me, and your part will be altogether inglorious; you will only be disabled without cause and without profit, for no one will ever know for what you have fought."

Charny gave a straightforward thrust, so rapidly that it was with difficulty that Philippe parried it in time; which he not only succeeded in doing, but sent Charny's sword flying ten paces away. Then rushing upon it he broke it under his heel.

"Monsieur de Charny," he said, "it was not necessary for you to prove to me that you were brave; you must therefore detest me very much when you fight with such fury."

Charny did not reply, he was growing pale. Philippe looked at him a few moments, expecting either an avowal or a denial on his part. "Come, Monsieur le Comte," he said, "the die is cast, — we are to be enemies."

Charny tottered. Philippe rushed forward to support him; but he repulsed him, saying, "I thank you, but I hope to be able to get to my carriage."

"Take this handkerchief, at least, to stop the bleeding."

"Willingly," and he took the handkerchief.

"And my arm, Monsieur; the slightest obstacle you

meet will throw you down, exhausted as you are, and a fall would cause you useless pain."

"The sword has only penetrated the flesh," said Charny; "I feel nothing in the chest."

"So much the better, Monsieur."

"And I hope soon to be quite well."

"So much the better again, Monsieur. But I warn you that you will find it difficult to make me your adversary again."

Charny tried to answer, but the words died on his lips; he tottered again, and Philippe had only time to catch him in his arms. He lifted him as if he were an infant and carried him half-fainting to his carriage. Dauphin, having seen all that had happened, advanced to meet his master. They put Charny into the carriage; he thanked Philippe by an inclination of the head.

"Drive with care, coachman," said Philippe.

"But you, Monsieur," murmured the wounded man.

"Oh, do not make yourself uneasy about me;" and bowing in his turn, he closed the carriage-door.

Philippe watched the carriage until it disappeared round the corner of an avenue, and then slowly took his way toward Paris. Then, turning round once more and perceiving the carriage, which, instead of returning to Paris as he was about to do, was proceeding in the direction of Versailles and was already disappearing among the trees, he uttered these words, torn from the depths of his heart, "She will pity him!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

PHILIPPE AND CAGLIOSTRO.

At the gate near the guard-house Philippe leaped into a coach which he found standing near.

"To the Rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles," he said to the coachman, "and quickly."

A man who has just fought a duel, and who has preserved the air of a conqueror; a man of vigorous form, whose figure proclaims the nobleman; a man dressed as a citizen, whose deportment indicates the military man, — was more than enough to stimulate the automedon, who started off at a rapid pace, and carried Philippe in a state of great excitement to the house of the Comte de Cagliostro.

The exterior of the hôtel was simple in architectural form and majestic in outline, like most of the buildings constructed in the time of Louis XIV. A large carriage, to which were attached two good horses, stood in the court-yard. The coachman was asleep on his box, wrapped in a great-coat lined with fox-skin; two footmen, one of whom wore a hunting-knife, silently paced up and down before the entrance. With this exception, there was no sign of life about the hôtel.

Philippe's coachman, having been ordered to enter, hailed the guard, who immediately threw open the massive gates. Philippe jumped out, ran up the steps, and addressing both the servants at once, "Does the Comte de Cagliostro live here?" he asked.

"He is just going out," said one of the footmen.

"The more reason, then, for haste, for I wish to speak to him before he goes out. Announce the Chevalier Philippe de Taverney;" and he followed the servant so quickly that they reached the salon at the same time.

"The Chevalier Philippe de Taverney!" repeated after the valet, a voice manly and sweet at the same time, "Show him in."

Philippe entered the room under the influence of a strange emotion which this calm voice had excited. "Excuse me, Monsieur!" he said to a man whom we have already seen, first, at the table of Monsieur de Richelieu, and later, at the exhibition of Monsieur Mesmer, in Oliva's apartment, and with her at the Opera-ball.

"For what, Monsieur?" he replied.

"Because I prevent you from going out."

"You would indeed have needed to excuse yourself had you been much later, for I was waiting for you."

Philippe knit his brows. "What! you were waiting for me?" he said.

"Yes; I was forewarned of your visit."

"You were forewarned of my visit?"

"Yes; two hours ago. It is about that time, is it not, since you were on your way here, when an interruption, independent of your will, caused you to postpone the execution of your project?"

Philippe began to experience the same strange sensations with which this man inspired every one.

"Sit down, Monsieur de Taverney," continued the count; "this arm-chair was placed for you."

"A truce to pleasantry, Monsieur!" said Philippe, in a voice which he vainly tried to render calm.

"I do not jest, Monsieur; I was really waiting for you."

"Then a truce to charlatanism. I did not come to

make trial of your skill as a sorcerer; but if you are one, so much the better, for you must know what I am come to say to you, and therefore can protect yourself beforehand."

"I protect myself?" said the count, with a peculiar smile, "and from what, if you please?"

"Divine, since you claim that power."

"Oh, yes; to please you, I spare you the shame of exposing the motive of your visit! You have come to seek a quarrel."

"You know that? Perhaps you also know why?" cried Philippe.

"On account of the queen. Now, Monsieur, it is your turn. Go on; I am ready to listen;" and these last words were not pronounced with the courteous accent of a host, but in the hard and dry tone of an adversary.

"You are right, Monsieur; I like that better."

"We are both suited, then."

"Monsieur, there exists a certain publication —"

"There are many publications," said Cagliostro.

"Edited by a certain journalist —"

"There are many journalists."

"Be patient; this publication — we will speak of the journalist afterward —"

"Permit me to remind you, Monsieur," interrupted Cagliostro, smiling, "that you have spoken of him already."

"Well, this morning's number contained an article aimed against the queen."

Cagliostro made an affirmative sign.

"You know to what I refer?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"You have bought one thousand copies of it?"

"I do not deny it."

"Luckily, they have not reached your hands."

"What makes you think so, Monsieur?"

"Because I met the porter, paid him, and sent him with them to my house; and my servant, instructed by me, must have received them."

"You should always finish yourself the work you undertake, Monsieur."

"I did not finish my own work, because while my servant was employed in saving from your bibliomania these thousand copies, I was engaged in destroying the rest of the edition."

"You are sure, then, that these thousand copies are at your house?"

"Certainly."

"You are mistaken, Monsieur; they are here. Ah, you thought," said the count, phlegmatic as a Nestor, "that I, sorcerer that I am, would let myself be foiled in that way? You thought it a brilliant idea to buy off my messenger? Well, I have a steward, and you see it is natural for the steward of a sorcerer to be a sorcerer also. He divined that you would go to the journalist, and that you would meet my messenger, and that you would pay him; he followed him, and threatened to make him return the gold you had given him. The man was afraid, and instead of going to your hôtel, he followed my steward here. But I see you doubt."

"I do."

"'Vide pedes, vide manus!' Jesus said to Saint Thomas. I will say it to you, Monsieur de Taverney. See this closet, and touch those papers;" and opening an oak cabinet he showed the astonished chevalier the thousand copies lying there.

Philippe approached the count in a menancing attitude, but the latter did not stir. "Monsieur," he said, "you

appear to be a man of courage; I call upon you to give me immediate satisfaction."

"Satisfaction for what?"

"For the insult to the queen; in which you render yourself an accomplice, while you keep one number of this vile paper."

"Monsieur," said Cagliostro, without changing his posture, "you make a mistake which gives me pain. I like novelties, scandalous reports, and other amusing things, and collect them that I may remember at a later day what I should otherwise forget. Therefore I have bought these copies, and I do not see that I have insulted anybody by the purchase."

"You have insulted me."

"You?"

"Yes, me, Monsieur; do you understand?"

"No, upon my honor, I do not understand."

"But why, I ask you, did you persist in buying so infamous a publication?"

"As I told you, because of my mania for collecting."

"A man of honor, Monsieur, does not collect infamous things."

"You will excuse me, Monsieur; but I am not of your opinion in regard to this paper. It is injudicious, perhaps, but it is not infamous."

"You will allow, at least, that it is a lie."

"You deceive yourself, Monsieur. The queen was at Monsieur Mesmer's."

"It is false, Monsieur."

"You mean to tell me I lie?"

"I do."

"Well, I will reply in a few words, — I saw her there."

"You saw her!"

"As plainly as I now see you."

Philippe looked his interlocutor full in the face. He wished to combat with his frank, noble, fine look the luminous gaze of Cagliostro; but the struggle wearied him, and he looked away saying, "I still say, Monsieur, that you lie."

Cagliostro shrugged his shoulders as he would have done at the insult of a madman.

"Do you not hear me, Monsieur?" said Philippe.

"On the contrary, Monsieur, I have not lost a word of what you say."

"And do you not know what giving the lie deserves?"

"Yes, Monsieur; there is a French proverb which says it merits a box on the ear."

"Well, Monsieur, I am astonished that your hand has not been already raised to give it, as you are a French gentleman, and know the proverb."

"Before making me a gentleman and teaching me the French proverb, God made me a man and told me to love my fellow-man."

"Then you refuse me satisfaction with the sword?"

"I only pay what I owe."

"Then you will compel me to take satisfaction in another manner."

"How?"

"I will not treat you worse than one nobleman should treat another, but I demand that you burn every copy of that journal which you have in your cabinet."

"Which I refuse to do."

"Reflect."

"I have reflected."

"Then I shall be obliged to proceed with you as another did with the journalist."

"Oh, a beating!" said Cagliostro, laughing, and still as motionless as a statue.

"Neither more nor less, Monsieur. Oh, you will not call your servants?"

"I! Nonsense! And why should I call my servants? It is no concern of theirs; I can settle my own affairs. I am stronger than you. Do you doubt it? I swear it is so, therefore reflect yourself. If you approach me with your cane, I shall take you in my arms and throw you across the room, and shall repeat this as often as you repeat your attempt."

"An English wrestling-match, — that is, a porter's game. Well, Monsieur Hercules, I accept the challenge," said Philippe, throwing himself furiously upon Cagliostro, who, seizing him round the neck and waist with a grasp of iron, threw him on a pile of cushions which lay some way off, and then again took his position before the fire-place as if nothing had happened.

Philippe rose, foaming with rage. But the reaction of cool reasoning soon restored to him his moral faculties. He straightened himself up, arranged his coat and his ruffles, then with a sinister voice, said: "Monsieur, you are in fact as strong as four men, but your logic is not as strong as your arm; and you forgot, when you treated me thus, that you gave me the right to say, 'Defend yourself, Count, or I will kill you.'"

Cagliostro did not move.

"Draw your sword, I tell you, Monsieur, or you are a dead man."

"You are not yet sufficiently near for me to treat you as I did before, and I will not expose myself to be wounded and perhaps killed by you as poor Gilbert was."

"Gilbert!" cried Philippe, reeling back. "Did you say Gilbert?"

"Happily you have no gun this time, only a sword."

"Monsieur," cried Philippe, "you have pronounced a name —"

"Which has awakened a terrible echo in your memory, has it not? — a name that you never thought to hear again, for you were alone with the poor boy, in that grotto of Azores, when you assassinated him."

"Oh!" said Philippe, "defend yourself! defend yourself!"

"If you knew," said Cagliostro, "how easily I could make your sword fly from your hand."

"With your sword?"

"Yes; with my sword, if I wished."

"Then try! then try!"

"No, I have a still surer method."

"For the last time, draw your sword," said Philippe, springing toward the count; but the latter, now threatened by the sword's point, which was scarcely three inches from his breast, took from his pocket a small vial which he uncorked and threw the contents in Philippe's face. Scarcely had the liquid touched him, when he reeled, let his sword drop, and fell senseless.

Cagliostro picked him up, laid him on a sofa, waited for his senses to return, and then said, "At your age, Chevalier, we should have done with follies; cease therefore to act like a foolish boy, and listen to me."

Philippe made an effort to shake off the torpor which still held possession of him, and murmured, "Oh, Monsieur, do you call that the weapon of a gentleman?"

Cagliostro shrugged his shoulders. "You repeat forever the same word," he said. "When we of the nobility have opened our mouths wide enough to utter the word 'gentleman,' we think we have said everything. What do you call the weapon of a gentleman? Is it your sword, which served you so badly against me, or is it your gun,

which served you so well against Gilbert? What makes some men superior to others, Chevalier? Do you think it is that high-sounding word 'gentleman'? No; it is first reason, then strength, and most of all, science. Well, I have used all these against you. With my reason, I braved your insults; with my strength, I conquered yours; and with my science, I extinguished at once your moral and physical powers. Now I wish to show you that you have committed two faults in coming here with threats on your lips. Will you do me the honor to listen to me?"

"You have over-powered me," replied Philippe; "I can scarcely move. You have made yourself master of my muscles and of my mind, and then you ask me if I will listen."

Then Cagliostro took down from the chimney-piece another gold vial, which was held by a figure of Esculapius in bronze. "Smell this, Chevalier," said he, with a gentleness full of dignity.

Philippe obeyed, and it seemed to him that the cloud which hung over him was dispersed. "Oh, I revive!" he cried.

"And you feel free and strong?"

"Yes."

"With your full powers and memory of the past?"

"Yes."

"And as I have to deal with a man of courage and intelligence, that memory which returns to you gives me every advantage over you in regard to what has taken place between us."

"No," said Philippe; "for I have acted in defence of a vital and sacred principle."

"What do you mean?"

"I have defended the monarchy."

"You have defended the monarchy! — you, who went

to America to defend a republic! Ah, *mon Dieu!* be frank; either it was not the republic you were defending there, or it is not the monarchy you are upholding here."

Philippe cast down his eyes, a great sob almost broke his heart.

"Love," continued Cagliostro, — "love those who scorn you; love those who forget you; love those who deceive you. It is the fate of great souls to be ruined by their grand sentiments. It is the law of Jesus to return good for evil; you are a Christian, Monsieur de Taverney?"

"Monsieur," cried Philippe, terrified at hearing Cagliostro reading thus the present and the past, "not a word more; if I did not defend the monarchy, I defended the queen, — that is to say, an innocent woman, and to be respected even if she were not longer innocent, for it is a divine obligation to defend the weak."

"The weak! Do you call the queen weak? — her to whom twenty-eight million human beings bow the knee!"

"Monsieur, they calumniate her."

"How do you know?"

"I wish to believe it."

"You think it is your right?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then, my right is to believe the contrary."

"You act like an evil genius."

"Who tells you so?" cried Cagliostro, whose sparkling eyes suddenly inundated Philippe with their light. "How have you the temerity to assume that you are right, and that I am wrong? You defend royalty; well, I defend the people. You say, 'Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's;' and I say, 'Render to God the things that are God's.' Republican of America, Chevalier of the order

of Cincinnatus, I recall you to the love of the people, to the love of equality. You trample on the people to kiss the hands of queens. I trample on queens to elevate the people but one degree. I do not disturb you in your adoration, leave me at peace in my work. I leave you the broad daylight, the sun of the heavens and the sun of courts; leave me shadows and solitude. You comprehend the strength of my language, do you not, — as you just now comprehended the force of my personality? You say to me, 'Die, for you have offended the object of my worship;' and I say to you, 'Live, you who combat the principles I worship;' and if I say this to you it is because I know that with these principles I am so strong that neither you nor yours, whatever you may do, can for an instant retard my progress."

"Monsieur, you frighten me," said Philippe. "I am perhaps the first in this country, thanks to you, to see the depths of the abyss into which royalty is hurrying."

"Be prudent, then, if you have seen the precipice."

"You who tell me this," replied Philippe, moved at the paternal tone in which Cagliostro had spoken to him; "you who reveal to me secrets so terrible, — you are still wanting in generosity, for you well know that I should throw myself into the abyss rather than see it engulf those whom I defend."

"Well, I have warned you, and like the prefect of Tiberius shall wash my hands, Monsieur de Taverney."

"Well, I!" cried Philippe, running to Cagliostro with feverish ardor, "I, who am weak and inferior to you, — I will employ against you the weapons of the weak; I will approach you with tearful eye, trembling voice, clasped hands; I will ask you for this once to be merciful to those you are pursuing. I will ask you for myself, — for myself, do you hear? — for myself, who cannot, I know not why,

bring myself to think of you as an enemy. I will work upon your feelings, I will convince you, I will ask you to spare me the remorse of seeing the downfall of this poor queen, without having tried to avert it. In short, Monsieur, I shall prevail on you to destroy this paper, which would make a woman weep; I will obtain this from you, or upon my honor, by that fatal love you know so well, I swear that with this sword, so powerless against you, I will pierce my heart here at your feet."

"Ah!" murmured Cagliostro, regarding Philippe with eyes full of eloquent sorrow, "why are they not all like you? I should be on their side, and they would not perish!"

"Monsieur, Monsieur, I entreat you, answer me!"

"Count them," said Cagliostro, after a moment's silence; "see if the thousand numbers are there; burn them yourself, even to the last number."

Philippe's heart was in his mouth; he ran to the cabinet, took out the copies of the journal, threw them on the fire, and pressed with effusion the hand of Cagliostro.

"Adieu, adieu, Monsieur," he said. "A hundred times I thank you for what you have done for me;" and he left the room.

"I owed the brother," said Cagliostro, when Philippe had gone, "this compensation for the suffering his sister endured." Then raising his voice he cried, "My horses!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BARON DE TAVERNEY.

WHILE these things were taking place in the Rue Neuve-Saint-Gilles, Monsieur de Taverney the elder was walking in his garden, followed by two servants pushing a wheeled-chair.

There were then at Versailles, and perhaps there are some still existing, a few of those old hôtels with French gardens, which by servile imitation of the taste and ideas of the sovereign resembled somewhat the Versailles of Le Notre and of Mansard. Several courtiers, who must have taken Monsieur de le Feuillade for their model, had constructed a miniature subterranean orange-house, a Swiss lake, and baths of Apollo. There were also a court-yard of honor and the Trianons, all five hundred times smaller than the original; each pond was about as large as a bucket of water.

Monsieur de Taverney had followed the prevailing custom since Louis XV. had taken the Trianons. His house at Versailles had its Trianons, its orchards, and its flower-beds. Since Louis XVI. had his locksmith shops and turning lathes, Monsieur de Taverney had his forge and his chips. Since Marie Antoinette had laid out English gardens, artificial rivers, prairies, and Swiss chalets, Monsieur de Taverney had made in a corner of his garden a little Trianon suitable for dolls, and a river for young ducks.

However, at the moment when we find him, he was enjoying the sunshine in the only avenue laid out in

the time of Louis XIV. which remained to him, — an avenue of lindens with their long red suckers looking like irons just drawn from the fire. He was walking slowly, his hands in his muff, and every five minutes the two servants approached him with the chair that he might rest after his exercise.

He was enjoying this repose and winking in the strong sunshine, when a porter came running from the house calling out, "Monsieur le Chevalier!"

"My son!" said the old man, with proud joy. And turning he perceived Philippe, who had followed the servant. "My dear Chevalier," he said, dismissing the servants by a sign, "your arrival is very timely, for my mind is full of happy thoughts; but how strange you look. You are in bad humor."

"I, Monsieur? no."

"You know already the result of that affair?"

"What affair?"

The old man turned round to see that no one was listening, then said, "I speak of the ball."

"I do not understand."

"The Opera-ball."

Philippe colored, the sly old man observed it. "Imprudent!" he said, "you are like bad sailors who as soon as there is a favorable wind furl every sail. Sit down on this bench and let me entertain you with some moral reflections; I have some good ones."

"But Monsieur, in short —"

"In short, Monsieur, you are too audacious; you who were at first so timid and delicate now compromise her."

Philippe looked up. "Of whom are you speaking, Monsieur?" he said.

"*Pardieu!* of her."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Ah! Do you think I have not heard about the pranks you two were playing at the Opera-ball. A pretty piece of work."

"Monsieur, I protest —"

"Come, do not be angry; I speak only for your good. You are not careful enough, you will be caught sometime. You were seen with her at this ball; another time you will be seen with her somewhere else."

"I was seen?"

"*Pardieu!* Had you, or had you not, a blue domino?"

Taverney was about to explain that he had not a blue domino, that it was all a mistake, that he had not been to any ball, and that he did not even know of what ball his father was speaking; but it is repugnant to some natures to defend themselves under delicate circumstances. Those only defend themselves energetically who know that by defending themselves, they are rendering a service to the friend who loves them and who accuses them.

"But of what use," thought Philippe, "to make explanations to my father? Besides, I wish to know everything."

"You see," continued the old man, "that you were recognized; I was sure of it. Indeed, Monsieur de Richelieu, who was at the ball in spite of his eighty-four years, and who is very fond of you, wondered who the blue domino could be on whose arm the queen was leaning, and he could suspect only you, for he had seen all the others. And you know the great discernment of Monsieur le Maréchal."

"That I may have been suspected, I can conceive; but that the queen should have been recognized is more extraordinary."

"Not so very difficult, since she took off her mask.

Oh, that passes all comprehension. Such audacity! That woman must be mad about you."

Philippe blushed. To continue the conversation further would have been impossible.

"If it was not audacity," said Taverney, "it was a very unfortunate accident. Take care, Chevalier, you have jealous rivals to fear. To be the favorite of a queen is an envied post, especially when the queen is really the king;" and Taverney senior slowly inhaled a pinch of snuff. "You will forgive me my little sermon, will you not, Chevalier? Pardon it, my dear. I feel very grateful toward you, and I would prevent the breath of chance from demolishing the scaffolding which you have so skilfully raised."

Philippe rose, perspiring freely, his hands clenched. He was about to go away in order to break off this conversation, and with the same pleasure one would take in breaking the back-bone of a serpent; but one feeling held him back, — a painful feeling of curiosity; an overpowering desire to know the worst, — one of those pitiless arrows which lacerate hearts overflowing with love.

"I was telling you, then," said the old man, "that we are looked upon with envy; that is very natural. However, we have not yet reached the pinnacle to which you are raising us. To you belongs the glory of elevating the name of Taverney above its humble source. But unless you are prudent, we shall never arrive, and your plans will miscarry on the way. That would be a pity, for indeed we are progressing well."

Philippe turned away to conceal the profound disgust, the bitter contempt which imparted to his features at this moment an expression at which the old man would have been astonished, perhaps terrified.

"In a short time you will ask for some high post," said the old man, growing excited. "You will obtain for me a

lord-lieutenancy in some place not too far from Paris; you will then make a peerage of Taverney-Maison-Rouge; you will have me included in the first promotion of the order. You can be duke, peer, and lieutenant-general. In two years — I shall still be living — you will obtain for me — "

"Enough! enough!" groaned Philippe.

"Oh, if you are satisfied with that, I am not. You have a whole life before you; I have but a few months. These months must repay me for the sad and miserable past. But I do not complain. God has given me two children. That is much for a man without fortune; but if my daughter has been useless in repairing our fortunes, you will make up for it. You are the architect of the temple. I see in you the great Taverney, the hero. You inspire me with respect, and that is something, you know. It is true that your conduct with the court has been admirable. Oh, I have never seen anything more skilful."

"What do you mean?" said the young man, uneasy at being approved by this serpent.

"Your demeanor is superb. You show no jealousy. You leave the field apparently open to every one, while you really hold it alone."

"I do not understand you," said Philippe, more and more annoyed.

"No modesty, if you please! It is a repetition of the conduct of Monsieur Potemkin, who astonished the world by his success. He saw that Catherine liked variety in her loves; that if left at liberty she would flutter from flower to flower, returning always to the sweetest and most beautiful, but that if pursued she would fly out of reach. He took his resolution. It was he who praised and rendered agreeable to the empress the new favorites whom she distinguished with her favor, — leaving always

a vulnerable point of attack; it was he who wearied the sovereign with these passing caprices, instead of satiating her with the charms of Potemkin himself. By aiding the ephemeral reign of these favorites, ironically called the twelve Cæsars, Potemkin rendered his own reign eternal, indestructible."

"But these are incomprehensible infamies!" murmured poor Philippe, gazing at his father in stupefaction.

The old man continued, with imperturbable calmness, "According to the system of Potemkin, you have been slightly at fault. He never abandoned his surveillance, while you relax yours. I know very well that French policy is not Russian policy."

To these words, spoken with an expression of cunning which would have baffled the most hardened diplomatists, Philippe, who thought his father was raving, answered by a shrug of the shoulders which was anything but respectful.

"Yes, yes," cried the old man, quickly; "you think that I have not divined your plan? But you shall see."

"Well, let us see, Monsieur," said Philippe, folding his arms.

"Will you tell me," said the baron, "that you have not your probable successor already in training?"

"My successor?" said Philippe, turning pale.

"Do you mean to tell me that you do not know the stability of the queen's amorous inclinations when once she is possessed by them, and that in the event of a change on her part you do not wish to be wholly sacrificed, evicted, which always happens where the queen is concerned, for she cannot at the same time love the present and endure the past?"

"You speak Hebrew, Monsieur le Baron."

The old man burst into a harsh and ominous laugh,

which made Philippe shudder as if it were the summons of an evil genius.

"You will make me believe that it is not your tactics to stand well with Monsieur de Charny?"

"Charny?"

"Yes, your future successor, — the man who can, when he is in power, exile you, as you now can exile Messieurs de Coigny, de Vaudreuil, and others."

The blood rushed violently to Philippe's temples.

"Enough," cried he, once more, — "enough, Monsieur! I am ashamed indeed to have listened so long. He who asserts that the queen of France is a Messalina, that man, Monsieur, is a criminal calumniator!"

"Good, — very good!" cried the old man. "You play your part well; but I assure you that no one can possibly hear us."

"Oh!"

"And as for Charny, I have divined your plan, although skilfully made; the gift of divination runs in the Taverney blood. Go on, Philippe, go on; flatter, mollify, console your Charny. Help him to pass by gentle gradations from the state of the green blade to that of the full-blown flower; and be assured that he is a gentleman who will later, when in favor, repay your kindness;" and after uttering these words, Monsieur de Taverney, quite proud of his exhibition of perspicacity, made a little fantastic leap as if he had been a young man, and a young man insolent in his prosperity.

Philippe, who was furious, seized him by the sleeve and stopped him.

"That is what you mean, is it, Monsieur? Your logic is admirable."

"I have guessed, have I not, and you are angry? Bah! you will pardon me, if only for my good intention. Be-

sides, I like Charny, and am glad that you have conducted yourself so well toward him."

"Your Monsieur de Charny is at this moment so much my favorite, my darling, my trained bird, that a little while ago I passed a foot of this blade between his ribs;" and Philippe held out his sword to his father.

"What!" cried Taverney, terrified at the sight of those flashing eyes and at this warlike intelligence. "Did you not say that you had fought with Monsieur de Charny?"

"And that I spitted him! Yes."

"Great God!"

"That is my mode of caressing, mollifying, and standing well with my successors," added Philippe; "and now that you are acquainted with it, apply your theory to my practice;" and he made a desperate effort to get away.

The old man clung to his arm. "Philippe, Philippe, tell me that you jest!"

"Call it a jest, if you please, but it is done."

The old man raised his eyes to heaven, mumbled some incoherent words, and leaving his son ran to his house.

"Quick! quick!" he cried, "a man on horseback! Let him go instantly to make inquiries about Monsieur de Charny, who has been wounded; let him not forget to say that he comes from me. That traitor, Philippe!" he said, returning, "is he not the brother of his sister? And I thought him cured! Oh, there is only one head in my family, and that is mine!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE QUATRAIN OF MONSIEUR DE PROVENCE.

WHILE these events were taking place at Paris and Versailles, the king, tranquil as usual, since he knew that his fleets were victorious and the perils of the preceding winter were safely passed, was sitting in his cabinet, surrounded by charts, maps, and drawings, and was tracing new furrows in the seas for the vessels of Lapeyrouse. A light knock at the door interrupted him in this occupation, and a voice was heard saying, "May I come in, brother?"

"Monsieur le Comte de Provence, the marplot!" muttered the king, pushing from him an open book on astronomy. "Come in," he said.

A stout person, short and red-faced, with an alert expression, entered with a step too respectful for a brother, too familiar for a subject.

"You were not expecting me, brother?" he said.

"No, upon my word."

"Do I disturb you?"

"No; but have you anything interesting to say to me?"

"A rumor so droll, so grotesque —"

"Ah! ah! a scandal."

"Upon my word! yes, brother."

"Which has amused you?"

"Oh, on account of its singularity."

"Some villanous attack against me?"

"God is my witness that I should not laugh if it were so."

"Against the queen, then?"

"Sire, imagine that I have been told, and very seriously, that — I will give you a hundred, a thousand times to guess what."

"Brother, I have no patience with that oratorical trick. To the point."

"Well, brother," said the Comte de Provence, somewhat chilled by this harsh reception, "I have been told that the queen slept out the other night. Ah! ah! ah!" and he pretended to laugh.

"That would be deplorable if it were true."

"But it is not true, is it, brother?"

"No."

"It is not true either that the queen was seen waiting outside the gate?"

"No."

"That night, you know, when you ordered the gate shut at eleven o'clock."

"I do not remember."

"Well, imagine, brother, that the rumor claims — "

"What is rumor? Where is it? What is it?"

"That is well said, brother. Indeed, what is rumor? Well, then, this impalpable, imcomprehensible thing they call rumor affirms that the queen was seen arm in arm with Monsieur le Comte d'Artois on that very night at half-past twelve."

"Where?"

"Going to a house belonging to Monsieur d'Artois, which stands back of the stables. Has your Majesty not heard of this enormity?"

"Well, yes, brother; I have heard about it, of course."

"How 'of course,' Sire?"

"Yes; did you not do something that I might hear of it?"

"I?"

"You."

"What then, Sire, have I done?"

"A quatrain, for instance, which appeared in the 'Mercury.'"

"A quatrain!" said the count, ruddier than when he entered the room.

"You are known to be a favorite of the Muses."

"Not to the degree of —"

"Of writing a quatrain of which this is the last line, —

"'Helen said nothing about it to the good king Menelaus.'"

"I, Sire?"

"Do not deny it; I have here the original of the quatrain, — your handwriting. Eh! I know very little about poetry, but as to handwriting, oh, I am an expert."

"Sire, one folly leads to another."

"Monsieur de Provence, I assure you that the folly has been wholly on your side, and I am astonished that a philosopher should have committed this folly; let us reserve this qualification for your quatrain."

"Sire, your Majesty is hard on me."

"Retaliation, brother. Now, if you had informed yourself of what the queen really did that day, as I did, instead of writing these lines against her, and consequently against me, you would hav written an ode in favor of your sister-in-law. Perhaps the subject does not inspire you; but I should have liked a bad ode better than a good satire. Horace also says that, — Horace, your poet."

"Sire, you overwhelm me."

"If you had not been sure of the queen's innocence, as

I am," added the king, firmly; "you should have had recourse to your Horace. Is it not he who has written these beautiful words? Excuse me, if I murder the Latin, —

"'Reclius hoc est;
Hoc faciens vivam melius, sic dulcis amicis occurram.'

'That is the better course; if I act thus I shall be more honorable, and I shall be agreeable to my friends.' You would translate more elegantly, brother; but I think that is the sense of it." The good king, after this lesson, given in the manner of a father, rather than of a brother, waited for the culprit to say something in his justification.

The count considered, for some moments, his reply, not so much from lack of something to say, but as an orator in quest of fine sentences. "Sire," he said, "severe as is the judgment of your Majesty, I have a plea in excuse, and a hope of pardon."

"Say on, brother."

"You accuse me of being mistaken, do you not, and not of any bad intention?"

"Agreed."

"If it be so, your Majesty, who knows that every man is sometimes mistaken, will admit that I had some foundation for my mistake."

"I will never accuse your intelligence, which is broad and superior, brother."

"Well! Sire, how could I help being mistaken, hearing all the reports that are circulated? We princes live in an atmosphere of calumny, we are impregnated by it. I do not say that I believed it, I say that I was told so."

"Well and good! since it is so; but —"

"The quatrain? Oh, poets are strange beings; and then, is it not better to warn by gentle criticism than by a frowning brow? Verses of warning do not offend, Sire;

it is not so with newspaper articles, such as this one, for instance, which I have come to show you."

"An article?"

"Yes, Sire. An order for imprisonment must certainly be issued against the author of this vile work."

The king rose abruptly. "Let us see it!" he said.

"I do not know whether I ought, Sire —"

"Certainly you ought; there should be no concealment in a case like this. Have you this article?"

"Yes, Sire,"

"Give it to me."

The Comte de Provence drew from his pocket a copy of the "Histoire d' Etteniotna," — a fatal copy which notwithstanding the cane of Charny, the sword of Philippe, and the fire at Cagliostro's, had passed into circulation.

The king cast his eyes rapidly over the paper, and exclaimed, "Infamous! infamous!"

"You see, Sire, it affirms that my sister has been to Monsieur Mesmer's."

"Well, yes; she has been there."

"She has been there!" exclaimed the Comte de Provence.

"With my permission."

"Oh, Sire!"

"And it is not from the fact of her presence at Mesmer's that I infer imprudence on her part, since I allowed her to go to the Place Vendôme."

"Your Majesty did not give the queen permission to approach the vat to experience, in her own person —"

The king stamped his foot. The count said this just when Louis XVI. was running over the most insulting paragraph against Marie Antoinette, — in short, the relation of everything which had happened to Mademoiselle Oliva in Mesmer's house.

"Impossible! impossible!" said the king, turning pale. "Oh, the police shall deal with this!"

He rang. "Monsieur de Crosne," he said, — "let some one go for Monsieur de Crosne."

"Sire, it is the day for the weekly report, and Monsieur de Crosne is waiting in the antechamber."

"Let him come in."

"Allow me, brother," said the Comte de Provence, in a hypocritical tone; and he pretended to be about to take his leave.

"Remain," said Louis XVI. "If the queen is guilty, — well, Monsieur, you as one of the family may know it; if she is innocent, you must also know that, — you who suspected her."

Monsieur de Crosne entered the room. Seeing Monsieur de Provence with the king, he began by paying his respectful homage to the two greatest personages in the kingdom; then, addressing the king, "The report is ready, Sire," he said.

"In the first place, Monsieur," said Louis XVI., "explain how so infamous an article against the queen can be published in Paris."

"Etteniotna?" said Monsieur de Crosne.

"Yes."

"Well, Sire, it is by a journalist called Reteau."

"Yes; you know his name, and you have neither prevented him from publishing, nor arrested him after the publication!"

"Sire, nothing was easier than to arrest him; I will even show your Majesty an order for imprisonment already prepared in my portfolio."

"Then why was the arrest not made?"

Monsieur de Crosne now turned toward Monsieur de Provence.

"I take my leave of your Majesty," said the latter, slowly.

"No, no," replied the king; "I have told you to remain. Well, remain!"

The count bowed.

"Speak, Monsieur de Crosne, — speak openly, without reserve; speak quickly and clearly!"

"Well, this is the case," replied the lieutenant of police; "I have not arrested the journalist Reteau, because it was of the greatest importance, before taking this step, to consult with your Majesty."

"Well?"

"Perhaps, Sire, it would be better to give this journalist a bag of money, and send him away to get himself hanged elsewhere."

"Why?"

"Because, Sire, when these wretches tell a lie the public is glad enough to see them whipped, or even hanged, perhaps; but when, unfortunately, they hit upon a truth — "

"A truth?"

Monsieur de Crosne bowed.

"Yes, I know. The queen really was present at Mesmer's. She was there. It is unfortunate, as you say; but I had given her permission."

"Oh, Sire!" murmured Monsieur de Crosne.

This exclamation of the respectful subject had more effect on the king than when uttered by his jealous relation. "The queen is not ruined by that, I imagine," said he.

"No, Sire; but compromised."

"Monsieur de Crosne, what has your police told you on the subject?"

"Sire, many things, which, saving the respect I owe your Majesty, and the very respectful adoration I profess

for the queen, are in accordance with some allegations in the article."

"In accordance, do you say?"

"So far as this: a queen of France, who, dressed as an ordinary woman, mixes with that class of persons who are attracted by the magnetic extravagancies of Mesmer, and who goes alone —"

"Alone!" cried the king.

"Yes, Sire."

"You are mistaken, Monsieur de Crosne."

"I do not think so, Sire."

"You have incorrect reports."

"So exact, Sire, that I can give you a description of her dress, of her general appearance, her steps, her movements, her cries."

"Her cries!" The king turned pale, and crushed the journal in his hands.

"Even her sighs were observed by my agents," timidly added Monsieur de Crosne.

"Her sighs! Could the queen have forgotten herself to that degree? Could she have held so cheaply my honor as a king, — her honor as a woman?"

"It is impossible!" said the Comte de Provence; "that would be more than scandalous, and her Majesty is incapable of it."

This was an added accusation, rather than an excuse. The king felt it; it was all revolting to him. "Monsieur," he said, to the lieutenant of police, "you maintain what you have said?"

"Alas! even to the last word, Sire."

"I owe it to you, brother," said Louis XVI., "to prove what I have advanced. The honor of the queen is that of all my house. I never take chances with it. I allowed the queen to go to Mesmer's vat; but I had enjoined

upon her to take with her a reliable, irreproachable, even saintlike person."

"Ah!" said the Monsieur de Crosne, "if it had been so —"

"Yes," said the Comte de Provence, "if a woman like Madame de Lamballe, for example —"

"Precisely, brother; it is Madame la Princesse de Lamballe whom I had designated to the queen."

"Unfortunately, Sire, the princess did not accompany her."

"Well," added the king, trembling, "if she has disobeyed me so openly, I ought to punish, and I shall punish;" and he heaved a deep sigh which seemed to tear his heart.

"Only," he said in a lower tone, "I have still one doubt, which you will not share; that is natural. You are not the king, the husband, the friend of her who is accused. This doubt I am now about to solve."

He rang, the officer on duty appeared. "Let some one see whether Madame la Princesse de Lamballe is with the queen, or in her own apartment."

"Sire, Madame de Lamballe is walking in the private garden with her Majesty and another lady."

"Ask Madame la Princesse to come here immediately."

The officer left the room.

"Now, gentlemen, ten minutes more. I cannot come to a decision until then;" and Louis XVI., contrary to his usual habit, knit his brow and darted at the two witnesses of his profound sorrow a look almost threatening.

The two witnesses kept silence. Monsieur de Crosne was really sad; Monsieur de Provence affected an air of sorrow which would have saddened the god Momus himself.

A light rustling of silk behind the door warned the king that the Princesse de Lamballe was approaching.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE.

THE Princesse de Lamballe entered, calm and beautiful, her brow uncovered, the ringlets of her high head-dress drawn back from her temples, her eyebrows black and delicate as if traced with sepia, her eyes blue, clear, dilated, her nose straight and finely formed, her lips chaste and voluptuous at the same time. All this beauty, with an unrivalled figure, was charming and imposing. The princess seemed to diffuse about her that perfume of virtue, of grace, of spirituality, which surrounded La Vallière, both before her favor and after her disgrace.

When the king saw her approaching, smiling and modest, he was overwhelmed with grief. "Alas!" he thought, "that which issues from that mouth will be a condemnation without appeal."

"Be seated, Princess," he said, bowing low.

Monsieur de Provence approached to kiss her hand.

The king collected his thoughts.

"What does your Majesty wish of me?" said the princess, in the voice of an angel.

"Some information, Madame, — precise information, cousin."

"I am ready, Sire."

"On what day did you accompany the queen to Paris? Try to remember, exactly."

Monsieur de Crosne and the Comte de Provence looked at each other in surprise.

"You understand, gentlemen," said the king; "you have no doubts, but I still doubt; consequently I put my questions like a man who doubts."

"Wednesday, Sire," replied the princess.

"Pardon me," continued Louis XVI.; "but, cousin, I wish to know the exact truth."

"You will know it by questioning me, Sire," said Madame de Lamballe, simply.

"For what did you go to Paris, cousin?"

"I went to Monsieur Mesmer's, in the Place Vendôme, Sire."

The two witnesses started, the king grew red with emotion.

"Alone?" he said.

"No, Sire, with her Majesty the queen."

"With the queen? you said with the queen?" cried Louis XVI., eagerly taking her hand.

"Yes, Sire."

Monsieur de Provence and Monsieur de Crosne drew nearer each other, astounded.

"Your Majesty gave the queen permission," said Madame de Lamballe; "at least, so her Majesty told me."

"And her Majesty was right, cousin. Gentlemen, I breathe again; Madame de Lamballe never tells a falsehood."

"Never, Sire," said the princess, gently.

"Oh, never, Sire," said Monsieur Crosne, with perfect sincerity. "But will you permit me, Sire?"

"Certainly, Monsieur; question, search. I place my dear princess upon the rack; I give her up to you."

Madame de Lamballe smiled; "I am ready," she said; "but, Sire, the torture has been abolished."

"Yes, I have abolished it for others," said the king, with a smile, "but they have not abolished it for me."

"Madame," said the lieutenant of police, "have the goodness to tell his Majesty what you did at Monsieur Mesmer's; but in the first place how was the queen dressed?"

"Her Majesty wore a dress of gray taffeta, a mantle of embroidered muslin, an ermine muff, and a rose-colored velvet bonnet trimmed with black."

Monsieur de Crosne looked astonished. It was a very different description from that given of Oliva's dress. The Comte de Provence bit his lips with vexation, and the king rubbed his hands. "What did you do on entering?" he asked.

"Sire, you are right to say 'on entering,' for we had hardly entered —"

"Together?"

"Yes, Sire; and we had hardly entered the first salon, where no one could have seen us, for everybody was giving their attention to the magnetic mysteries, when a lady approached the queen, and offering her a mask, implored her to turn back."

"And you stopped?" asked the Comte de Provence, quickly.

"Yes, Monsieur."

"You did not go through the rooms?" asked Monsieur de Crosne.

"No, Monsieur."

"And you did not leave the queen?" asked the king.

"Not for a moment, Sire. Her Majesty's arm rested constantly on my own."

"Now!" cried the king, "what do you say, Monsieur de Crosne? and you, brother?"

"It is extraordinary, — quite supernatural," said the count, who affected a gayety which could not conceal his disappointment.

"There is nothing supernatural in it," said Monsieur de Crosne, in whom the king's happiness inspired something like remorse; "what Madame de Lamballe says is undoubtedly true; therefore my informants must have been mistaken."

"Do you speak seriously, Monsieur?" asked the count.

"Perfectly, Monseigneur. Her Majesty did what Madame de Lamballe states, and nothing more, I feel convinced; my agents were, somehow or other, deceived. As for this journalist, I will immediately send the order for his imprisonment."

Madame de Lamballe looked from one to the other with an expression of innocent curiosity.

"One moment," said the king; "there will be time enough to hang the journalist. You spoke of a lady who came to prevent the queen from entering the salon; tell us who she was."

"Her Majesty seemed to know her, Sire; I will even say, because I never speak falsely, that I am sure her Majesty knows her."

"Because, cousin, I must speak to this person; it is indispensable. There lies all the truth, there only is the key to the mystery."

"That is my opinion also, Sire," said Monsieur de Crosne.

"Bosh!" murmured the Comte de Provence. "Here is a woman who seems to be a sort of *deus ex machina.*" Then aloud, "Cousin, did the queen admit to you that she knew this person?"

"Her Majesty admitted nothing, Monseigneur; she told me so."

"Yes, yes; pardon."

"My brother means to say that if the queen knows that person, you also probably know her name."

"It is Madame de La Motte Valois."

"That intriguer!" cried the king, disgusted.

"That mendicant!" said the count. "The devil! she will be difficult to interrogate; she is cunning."

"We will be as cunning as she," said Monsieur de Crosne. "There is no chance for cunning after Madame de Lamballe's statement. So at the first word from the king —"

"No, no," said the king, with an air of weariness; "I am tired of seeing such persons about the queen; she is so benevolent that the pretext of poverty brings to her all doubtful characters among the lower nobility."

"Madame de La Motte is a true Valois," said the princess.

"However that may be, I will not see her here. I would rather renounce the immense joy which the complete justification of the queen would give, than look in the face of that creature."

"But you must see her, Sire," said the queen, entering at that moment, pale with anger, and beautiful with a noble indignation. "It is not now for you to say 'I do, or I do not, wish to see her.' She is a witness from whom the intelligence of my accusers," said she, looking at her brother-in-law, "and the justice of my judges," turning to the king and Monsieur de Crosne, "must draw the truth. I, the accused, demand that she be heard."

"Madame," said the king, "we will not do Madame de La Motte the honor of sending for her to give evidence either for, or against, you. I cannot stake your honor against the veracity of this woman."

"You need not send for her, she is here."

"Here!" cried the king, turning as if he had trodden on a snake.

"Sire, you know that I visited an unfortunate woman

who bears an illustrious name, on that day of which so many things were said," and she looked fixedly over her shoulder at the Comte de Provence, who felt ready to sink through the ground; "and while at her house I dropped a box containing a portrait, which she was to return to me to-day, — and she is here."

"No, no," said the king; "I am satisfied, and do not wish to see her."

"But I am not satisfied, and shall bring her in. Besides, why this repugnance? What has she done? If there be anything, tell me, you, Monsieur de Crosne; you know everything."

"I know nothing against this lady," he replied.

"Really?"

"Certainly not; she is poor, and perhaps ambitious, but that is all."

"Ambition is the voice of noble blood; if there be no more than that against her, the king can surely admit her."

"I do not know why," said Louis, "but I have a presentiment that this woman will be the cause of misfortune to me, of some disastrous event in my future life; that is quite enough."

"Oh, Sire, that is superstition; please bring her, Madame de Lamballe."

Five minutes later, Jeanne, with a timid air, although with a distinguished appearance, entered with dignity the cabinet of the king.

Louis XVI., strong in his antipathies, had turned his back toward her, and was leaning his head on his hands, seeming to take no longer a part in the conversation. The Comte de Provence cast on her glances so searching that, had her modesty been real, this woman would have been so paralyzed that she could not have spoken a word; but it required much more than that to trouble Jeanne.

"Madame," said the queen, leading her behind the king's chair, "have the goodness to tell the king exactly what took place the other day at Monsieur Mesmer's."

Jeanne did not speak.

"No reservations, nothing but the truth; tell everything just as you remember it;" and the queen sat down in an easy-chair, that she might not influence the witness even by a look.

Jeanne understood immediately that the queen had need of her, and knew that she could clear her in a moment by speaking the simple truth. Any one but Jeanne, having this conviction, would have yielded to the pleasure of exculpating the queen by enlarging upon the proofs; but she was so shrewd, so keen, so strong, that she confined herself to the simple relation of facts.

"Sire," said she, "I went to Monsieur Mesmer's from curiosity, like every one else. The spectacle appeared to me rather coarse; I was turning away when I suddenly saw her Majesty, whom I had already had the honor of seeing, but without knowing her until her generosity revealed her rank. When I saw those august features, which will never be effaced from my memory, it seemed to me that her Majesty was out of place in this room, where there was much suffering, and where many ridiculous exhibitions were made. I beg pardon for having taken it on myself to judge; it was a woman's instinct, but I humbly beg pardon if I passed the bounds of proper respect." She seemed overcome with emotion as she concluded.

Monsieur de Crosne was pleased. Madame de Lamballe felt drawn toward this woman who appeared at once delicate, timid, intelligent, and good. Monsieur de Provence was bewildered. The queen thanked Jeanne with a look, for which the latter was slyly watching.

"Well," said the queen, "you have heard, Sire."

He did not move, but said, "I did not need her testimony."

"I was told to speak," said Jeanne, timidly; "and I obeyed."

"Enough!" said Louis XVI., harshly. "When the queen says a thing she needs no witnesses to confirm what she has said; and when she has my approbation, which she has, she need care for that of no one else." He rose on saying these words, which overwhelmed Monsieur de Provence. The queen did not fail to add a disdainful smile. The king turned his back toward his brother, and kissing the hands of the queen and the princess, and begging pardon of the latter for having disturbed her "for nothing," made a very slight bow to Jeanne, to which she replied by a profound reverence calculated to display her gracefulness.

Madame Lamballe left the room first, then Madame de La Motte, whom the queen pushed before her, and finally the queen herself, who exchanged an almost loving look with the king as she went out.

"Brother," said Louis to the count, "now I will detain you no longer; I have work to do with Monsieur de Crosne. You have heard your sister's complete justification, and it is easy to see that you are as pleased as I am. Sit down, Monsieur de Crosne."

The Comte de Provence bowed, smiling; and when he could no longer hear the ladies, and felt safe from malicious smiles and bitter words, he left the cabinet.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN THE QUEEN'S APARTMENT.

THE queen went out from the king's cabinet fully understanding the peril to which she had been exposed. She appreciated the delicacy and reserve with which Jeanne had given her impromptu testimony, as well as the really remarkable discretion with which, after her success, she had kept herself in the background.

Indeed, Jeanne, who at her very first step had been admitted, by unprecedented good fortune, to a footing of confidential intimacy with the queen, for which courtiers the most adroit strive in vain for years, and who was sure of the queen's grateful remembrance of the service she had rendered at an important crisis, showed no consciousness of her position by any of those signs which the proud susceptibility of the great quickly discerns on the faces of inferiors.

The queen, then, instead of acceding to Jeanne's proposition to pay her respects and take leave, retained her with a pleasant smile, saying: "It is really fortunate, Countess, that you prevented me from entering Mesmer's house with the Princesse de Lamballe; for think of the baseness, — some one, who must have seen me either at the door, or in the antechamber, has made that the foundation of a rumor that I had been in the crisis-hall. Is not that what they call it?"

"The crisis-hall; yes, Madame."

"But," said the Princesse de Lamballe, "how could it have happened, even if the spectators had supposed the queen to be there, that the agents of Monsieur de Crosne should have been mistaken? That, in my opinion, is the mystery; the agents of the lieutenant of police affirm positively that the queen was in the crisis-hall."

"It is strange!" said the queen. "Monsieur Crosne is an honest man, and would not willingly injure me; but his agents may have been bought. I have enemies, dear Lamballe. Still, there must have been some foundation for this tale. This infamous libel represents me as intoxicated, and overcome to such a degree by the magnetic fluid that I lost all control over myself, and abandoned all womanly reserve. What is the truth in all this? Was there, in fact, a woman —"

Jeanne colored. The secret again presented itself, — the secret, one word of which would destroy her fatal influence on the queen's destiny. By revealing that secret, Jeanne would lose the chance of being useful, indispensable even, to her Majesty. She, therefore, as before, kept the secret to herself.

"Madame," said she, "there was a woman much agitated, who attracted great attention by her contortions and cries. But it seems to me —"

"It seems to you," said the queen, quickly, "that this woman was some actress, or some loose character, and not the queen of France?"

"Certainly not, Madame."

"Countess, you replied very well to the king, and I will not forget you. How have you advanced in your own affairs? But is not some one coming, Princess?"

At this moment Madame de Misery came in to say that Mademoiselle de Taverney wished to know if her Majesty would receive her.

"Assuredly," said the queen. "Oh, the ceremonious creature! She will never fail in any point of etiquette. Andrée, Andrée, come in!"

"Your Majesty is too good to me," said the latter, saluting gracefully. Jeanne, recognizing the second German lady from the bureau of charity, called to her face a blush and an expression of modesty.

Madame de Lamballe availed herself of Andrée's entrance to take leave. Andrée took her place by the side of Marie Antoinette, her calm and searching eyes fixed on Madame de La Motte.

"Well, Andrée," the queen then said, "here is this lady whom we went to see the last day of the frost."

"I recognize Madame," said Andrée, bowing.

Jeanne, already proud of the attention of the queen, tried to discover on the face of Andrée some sign of jealousy. She saw only complete indifference.

Andrée, having the same passions as the queen, — Andrée, who would have been superior to all other women in goodness, intelligence, and generosity if she had been happy, concealed herself in an impenetrable reserve, which all the court imagined to be the proud modesty of the chaste Diana.

"Do you know," said the queen, "what they have been saying of me to the king?"

"They must have said all that is bad, because they could not find words to say all that is good."

"That is," said Jeanne, with frankness, "the most beautiful thing I ever heard. I say beautiful, because it expresses fully the sentiment which is that of my whole life, and which my weak intelligence could never have rendered in these words."

"I will tell you about it, Andrée."

"Oh, I know, Madame! Monsieur de Provence has

been repeating the whole story. A friend of mine heard him."

"It is a happy way," said the queen, angrily, "of propagating falsehood, after paying homage to the truth. Let us leave that. I was speaking to the countess about her personal affairs. Who protects you, Countess?"

"You, Madame," replied Jeanne, boldly, — "you who permit me to come and kiss your hand."

"She has heart," said Marie Antoinette; "I like this impulsiveness."

Andrée did not reply.

"Few people," continued Jeanne, "dared to protect me when I was in obscurity; now that I shall have been once seen at Versailles, every one will contend for the honor of being agreeable to the queen, — I mean to one on whom the queen has deigned to look."

"What!" said the queen, "no one has been either brave enough, or corrupt enough, to protect you for yourself?"

"I had first Madame de Boulainvilliers, a brave woman; then her husband, a corrupt protector. But since my marriage, no one, — oh, no one!" she said, with a most skilful affectation of distress. "Oh, yes, I forget one brave man, — a generous prince!"

"Prince, Countess! Who is it?"

"Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan."

The queen made an abrupt movement toward Jeanne. "My enemy!" said she, smiling.

"Your enemy! he! the cardinal! Oh, Madame!" cried Jeanne.

"It seems you are astonished that a queen should have an enemy. It is evident you have not lived at court."

"But, Madame, he adores you, — at least I thought so;

and if I am not mistaken, his respect for the august spouse of his king equals his devotion."

"Oh, I believe you, Countess, I believe a part of what you say; yes, that is it, the cardinal is in a state of adoration," and she turned to Andrée with a hearty burst of laughter. "Well, Countess, Monsieur le Cardinal is in a state of adoration. That is why he is my enemy."

Jeanne affected the surprise of a country girl.

"And you are his protégé," continued the queen; "tell me all about it."

"It is very simple; his Eminence has assisted me in the most generous, yet the most considerate, manner."

"Good! Prince Louis is generous; no one can deny that. But do you not think, Andrée, that Monsieur le Cardinal also adores this pretty countess a little? Come, Countess, tell us," and Marie Antoinette laughed again in her frank, joyous manner.

"All this gayety must be put on," thought Jeanne; so she answered, with a grave air and penetrating tone, "Madame, I have the honor to affirm to your Majesty that Monsieur de Rohan —"

"Well," said the queen, interrupting the countess, "since you are so zealous in his defence, since you are his friend, ask him what he did with some hair of mine which he bribed a certain hair-dresser to steal; and which trick cost the poor man dear, for he lost my custom."

"Your Majesty surprises me; Monsieur de Rohan did that?"

"Oh, yes; all his adoration, you know. After having hated me at Vienna, and employing every means to prevent my marriage, he at last began to perceive that I was a woman and his queen, and that he had offended me forever. Then this dear prince began to fear for his future,

and like all of his profession, who seem most fond of those whom they most fear, since he knew me to be young and believed me to be foolish and vain, he changed to a Celadon. After sighs and languishing airs, he threw himself, as you say, into a state of adoration. He adores me, does he not, Andrée?"

"Madame!"

"Oh, Andrée will not compromise herself, but I say what I please; at least royalty should have some advantages. Countess, I know and you know, do we not, that the cardinal adores me? So it is a settled thing, and you may tell him, Countess, that he has my permission."

These words, which contained bitter irony, had a powerful effect on the corrupt heart of Jeanne de La Motte. If she had been noble, pure, and loyal she would have seen in them only the supreme disdain of a woman of sublime character, only the perfect contempt of a superior soul for the low intrigues which were carried on beneath her.

Women of this kind, these angels so rare, never defend their reputation against the snares which are set for them on the earth. They will not even suspect the existence of the mire which soils them, — that bird-lime in which they leave the most brilliant feathers of their gilded wings.

Jeanne, being of a corrupt and vulgar nature, thought she saw much spite in this manifestation of anger on the part of the queen against Monsieur de Rohan. She recalled the rumors, which, starting from the palace, had penetrated the suburbs of Paris, and had found many an echo.

The cardinal, a lover of women from the sexual point of view, had said to Louis XV., who admired them in the same way, that the dauphiness was not a complete woman. The singular remarks of Louis XV. at the

time of his grandson's marriage will be recalled, and his questions to a certain ingenuous ambassador.

Jeanne, a complete woman if there ever was one, a woman from head to foot, vain of the locks of hair which distinguished her, — Jeanne, who felt the need of pleasing and conquering by all her attractions, did not understand how a woman could feel otherwise on these delicate points.

"There is spite on the part of the queen," she said, "if so, there must be something else." Then reflecting that discussion produces knowledge, she began to defend Monsieur de Rohan with all the mind and all the curiosity with which Nature, like a good mother, had endowed her.

The queen listened.

"Good, she listens," thought Jeanne; and deceived by her own perverted nature, she did not perceive that the queen listened through generosity, and through pleasure at the novelty of hearing a person defended of whom the sovereign chose to speak ill. Marie Antoinette was pleased with her, thinking she saw a heart where God had placed a dry and thirsty sponge.

The conversation was continued on a footing of condescending intimacy on the part of the queen. Jeanne was upon thorns; she looked embarrassed; she saw no possibility of getting away without a dismissal, — she who had just now played the advantageous part of the stranger who asks leave to withdraw. But suddenly a youthful, joyous, and loud voice was heard in the next room.

"The Comte d'Artois!" said the queen.

Andrée rose immediately, and Jeanne prepared to withdraw, but the prince had entered so suddenly that it was almost impossible for them to go out. However, Madame de La Motte made a pretence of withdrawing. The prince stopped on seeing this pretty woman, and saluted her.

"Madame la Comtesse de La Motte," said the queen, presenting Jeanne to the prince.

"Ah! ah! do not let me send you away, Madame la Comtesse," said the Comte d'Artois.

The queen made a sign to Andrée, who detained Jeanne. That sign meant, "I intended to give something to Madame de La Motte; I have not had time, so will attend to it later."

"You have returned from the wolf-hunt, then?" said the queen, giving her hand to her brother after the English fashion, which was already coming into favor.

"Yes, sister, and have had good sport; I have killed seven, and that is something wonderful."

"You have killed them all yourself?"

"I am not sure," continued he, laughing; "but they say so. However, do you know I have gained seven hundred francs?"

"How?"

"Why, they pay a hundred francs a head for these beasts. It is dear, but I would give two hundred of them just now for the head of a certain journalist."

"Ah! you know the story, already?"

"Monsieur de Provence told me."

"He is indefatigable; but tell me how he related it?"

"So as to make you whiter than ermine, whiter than Venus Aphrodite."

"It is true, nevertheless, that he related to you that adventure?"

"Of the journalist? yes, sister. But your Majesty came out of it with honor. One might even say — to make a pun such as Monsieur de Bièvre is guilty of every day — the affair of the tub is washed."

"Oh, what a horrible pun!"

"Sister, do not ill-treat a knight who comes to place

his arm and his lance at your disposal. Happily, you need no aid. Ah, my dear sister, you are fortunate."

"You call that fortunate! Do you hear him, Andrée?"

Jeanne laughed. The count, who had not ceased looking at her, gave her courage. The queen had spoken to Andrée, Jeanne replied.

"Yes, fortunate," repeated the Comte d'Artois; "for it might easily have happened, my dear sister, in the first place, that Madame de Lamballe had not been with you."

"Should I have gone there alone?"

"In the second place, that Madame de La Motte had not been there to prevent your entrance."

"Ah, you know that Madame la Comtesse was there?"

"Sister, when Monsieur le Comte de Provence tells a story he tells it all. And finally, you might not have had Madame de La Motte at hand at that moment to give her testimony. You will tell me, doubtless, that virtue and innocence are like the violet, which does not require to be seen in order to be discovered; but sister, they make bouquets of violets when they find them, and throw them away when they have inhaled their perfume. That is my lesson."

"It is a fine one!"

"I take it as I find it, and I have proved that you are fortunate."

"Badly proved."

"Must I prove it more completely?"

"It would not be superfluous."

"Well! you are unjust to accuse fortune," said the count, twirling on his heel to the sofa, where he sat down by the queen's side, "for in short, saved from the famous escapade of the cabriolet —"

"One," said the queen, counting on her fingers.

"Saved from the vat —"

"So be it, I will count it. Two. And then?"

"And saved from the affair of the ball," he whispered in her ear.

"What ball?"

"The ball at the Opera."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean the ball at the Opera; but I beg pardon, I should not have mentioned it."

"Really, brother, you puzzle me; I know nothing about the ball at the Opera."

The words "ball" and "Opera" caught Jeanne's ear, and she listened intently.

"Mum!" said the prince.

"Not at all! not at all! You spoke of an affair at the Opera. Explain to me what you mean."

"I implore your mercy, sister."

"I insist, Count, on knowing."

"And I insist on holding my tongue."

"Do you wish to offend me?"

"No, sister, but I have told you quite enough for you to understand."

"You have told me nothing."

"Oh! little sister, it is you who are puzzling me. Come now — in earnest."

"Upon my honor, I am in earnest."

"You wish me to speak?"

"Immediately."

"Not here," said he, looking at Jeanne and Andrée.

"Yes, here; there cannot be too many witnesses of such an explanation."

"Beware, sister!"

"I will risk it."

"Then you mean to say you were not at the last Opera-ball?"

"I!" cried the queen, "at the Opera-ball?"

"Hush, I beg."

"No, I will not hush, I will speak it aloud. You say I was at the ball?"

"Certainly I do."

"Perhaps you saw me," she said, ironically, but even then jestingly.

"Yes, I did."

"Me!"

"Yes, you."

"Oh, it is too much; why did you not speak to me? That would have been still more droll."

"Upon my word I was just going to do so, when the crowd separated us."

"You are mad!"

"I was sure you would say so. I should not have spoken of it. I have been very foolish."

The queen rose, and walked up and down the room in great agitation. The count watched her in astonishment; Andrée trembled with fear and disquietude; and Jeanne could hardly keep from laughing.

Then the queen stopped and said. "My friend, do not jest any more; you see, I am so passionate that I have lost my temper already. Confess at once that you wished to amuse yourself at my expense, and I shall be very happy."

"I will say so, if you wish it, sister."

"Be serious, Charles."

"As a fish, sister."

"For mercy's sake, tell me that you have invented all this."

He winked at the ladies and said, "Oh, yes, of course, I invented it; forgive me."

"You do not understand me, brother," cried the queen,

vehemently. "Say yes, or no; in presence of these ladies retract what you have said. Do not tell falsehoods, I want only the truth!"

Andrée and Jeanne retired behind the tapestry.

"Well then, sister," said he, in a low voice, "I have told the truth; why did you not warn me sooner?"

"You saw me at the Opera-ball?"

"As plainly as I see you now; and you saw me."

The queen uttered a cry, and running up to Andrée and Jeanne dragged them out from behind the tapestry, one by each hand, crying, "Ladies, Monsieur le Comte d'Artois affirms that he saw me at the Opera-ball."

"Oh!" murmured Andrée.

"It is too late to retract," continued the queen; "prove it, prove it, —"

"Well," said he, "I was with Monsieur de Richelieu and others when your mask fell off."

"My mask!"

"I was about to say, 'This is too rash, sister,' but you had disappeared with the gentleman who attended you."

"Oh, my God! you will drive me mad. What gentleman?"

"The blue domino."

The queen passed her hand over her eyes. "What day was this?" she asked.

"Saturday; the day before I set out on my hunting excursion. You were asleep when I went away, so that I could not tell you what I have told you now."

"My God! my God! at what time do you say you saw me?"

"Between two and three."

"Decidedly, one of us is mad."

"Oh, it is I. It is all a mistake; do not be so afraid,

there is no harm done. At first I thought you were with the king; but the blue domino spoke German, and he does not."

"German — a German. Oh! I have a proof, brother. On Saturday I went to bed at eleven."

The count bowed, with an incredulous smile.

The queen rang, "Madame de Misery shall tell you."

"Why do you not call Laurent, the guard of the Reservoir gate; he will bear testimony also," said he, laughing; "It is I who cast that cannon, little sister; do not fire it off at me."

"Oh," cried the queen, in a rage; "not to be believed!"

"My dear sister, I would believe you if you would not get in such a passion; but how to prove it? If I say yes, others coming here will say no."

"What others?"

"*Pardieu!* those who saw you as I did."

"Ah, that is curious indeed! There were persons who saw me. Well, show them to me."

"At once. Philippe de Taverney was there."

"My brother!" said Andrée.

"He was there, Mademoiselle," replied the prince; "do you wish to question him, sister?"

"I demand it, instantly."

"My God!" murmured Andrée.

"What is it?" said the queen.

"My brother called as witness."

"Yes, yes; I wish it."

The queen called; a servant entered, and immediately set out in haste seeking Philippe. Philippe was found near his father's house, which he had just left, after the scene which we have described.

Philippe, master of the field of battle after his duel with Charny, — Philippe, who had just rendered a service to the queen, was walking joyously toward the palace at Versailles. The messenger met him on the way and communicated to him the queen's orders, which he hastened to obey.

Marie Antoinette rushed to meet him, and placing herself before him, "Monsieur," said she, "are you capable of speaking the truth?"

"Yes, Madame; and incapable of telling an untruth."

"Well, then, say frankly, have you seen me at any public place within the last week?"

"Yes, Madame," replied Philippe.

Every heart in the room might have been heard beating.

"Where have you seen me?" asked the queen, in a terrible voice.

Philippe was silent.

"Oh, no concealment, Monsieur; my brother says that he saw me at the Opera-ball; now where did you see me?"

"Like Monseigneur le Comte d'Artois, I saw you at the Opera-ball, Madame."

The queen sank on a sofa; then springing up like a wounded panther, she said, "It is impossible, for I was not there. Take care, Monsieur de Taverney, I see that you are putting on Puritan airs; that was all very well in America with Monsieur de Lafayette, but here, at Versailles, we are French, and polite and simple."

"Your Majesty overwhelms Monsieur de Taverney," said Andrée, pale with anger. "If he says that he saw you, he did see you."

"You too," said Marie Antoinette; "you too! It only remains now for you to have seen me. My God! if I

have friends to defend me, I also have enemies to assassinate me. One witness only is not sufficient evidence, gentlemen."

"You remind me," said the Comte d'Artois, "that at the moment when I saw you, and when I perceived that the blue domino was not the king, I thought that it was the nephew of Monsieur de Suffren. What is his name? I mean the brave officer who performed the great exploit. You received him so graciously the other day that I thought he might be your chevalier of honor."

The queen blushed, Andrée became pale as death. They exchanged glances, and trembled at each other's looks.

Philippe became livid. "Monsieur de Charny?" he murmured.

"Charny! that is it," continued the Comte d'Artois. "Do you not think, Monsieur Philippe, that the blue domino's figure resembled somewhat Monsieur de Charny's?"

"I did not notice it, Monseigneur," said Philippe, almost choking.

"But," continued Monsieur le Comte d'Artois, "I soon saw that I was mistaken, for Monsieur de Charny suddenly made his appearance near Monsieur de Richelieu, — just opposite you, sister, when your mask fell off."

"And he saw me?" cried the queen, losing all prudence.

"Unless he was blind," said the prince.

Making a gesture of despair, the queen rang again.

"What are you doing?"

"I wish to question Monsieur de Charny also, — to drain the cup to the dregs."

"I do not believe that Monsieur de Charny is at Versailles," murmured Philippe.

"Why do you think so?"

"I was told, I believe, that he was not well."

"Oh, the affair is so serious that he must come, Monsieur! I also am not well; but I would go to the end of the world barefoot to prove —"

Philippe, heart-broken, approached Andrée, who, looking out of a window opening on the gardens, had uttered a slight exclamation.

"What is the matter?" said the queen, coming up to her.

"Nothing, nothing — Monsieur de Charny was said to be ill, and I see him."

"You see him?" cried Philippe, with a sudden movement.

"Yes; it is he."

The queen, forgetting everything, opened the window herself, and called out, "Monsieur de Charny!"

The latter turned his head, and overcome with astonishment hastened to the palace.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN ALIBI.

MONSIEUR DE CHARNY entered, a little pale, but upright, and apparently not suffering. At sight of this illustrious company he assumed the respectful and dignified demeanor of the man of the world and the soldier.

"Take care, sister!" said the Comte d'Artois; "it seems to me you are questioning everybody?"

"Brother, I will ask the whole world, until I meet some one who will tell you that you are deceived."

Charny and Philippe bowed courteously to each other, and Philippe said, in a low voice, "You are surely mad to come out wounded; one would say you wished to die."

"One does not die from the scratch of a thorn in the Bois de Boulogne," replied Charny, happy in giving his enemy a moral thrust more painful than the thrust of a sword.

The queen approached and put an end to this conversation. "Monsieur de Charny," she said, "these gentlemen say that you were at the Opera-ball."

"Yes, your Majesty," said Charny, bowing.

"Tell us what you saw there."

"Does your Majesty mean what I saw there, or whom I saw there?"

"Precisely; whom did you see there, and no complaisant reserve, Monsieur de Charny."

"Must I tell all, Madame?"

The cheeks of the queen assumed once more a deadly paleness.

"Did you see me?" she asked.

"Yes, your Majesty, at the moment when your mask, unhappily, fell off."

Marie Antoinette clasped her hands. "Monsieur," she said, almost sobbing, "look at me attentively. Are you sure of what you say?"

"Madame, your features are engraved on the hearts of all your subjects. To have seen your Majesty once is to see you forever."

Philippe looked at Andrée, Andrée fixed her eyes upon Philippe. These two griefs, these two jealousies, made a sorrowful alliance.

"But, Monsieur," she said, "I assure you I was not at the Opera-ball."

"Oh, Madame!" said the young man, bowing almost to the ground, "has not your Majesty the right to go where you please?"

"I do not ask you to excuse my action; I only beg you to believe that I did not perform it."

"I will believe all your Majesty wishes me to believe," cried he, moved in the very depths of his heart by this persistence of the queen, by this touching humility of a woman so proud.

"Sister, sister, it is too much!" murmured the count, in Marie Antoinette's ear.

For this scene had chilled the hearts of all present, — some through the pain caused by their love, or their self-love; others through the emotion inspired by an accused woman, who defends herself with courage against overwhelming proofs.

"They believe it! they believe it!" cried the queen, beside herself with anger; and discouraged she sank into

an arm-chair, stealthily wiping away with the tip of her finger a scalding tear. Suddenly she rose.

"Sister, sister, forgive me!" said the Comte d'Artois, tenderly; "you are surrounded by devoted friends. This secret, which terrifies you so, we alone know; and no one can draw it from us except with our lives."

"Secrecy, secrecy!" cried the queen. "Oh, I do not wish it!"

"Sister!"

"No secret, but proof."

"Madame," said Andrée, "some one approaches."

"Madame," said Philippe, in a low tone, "the king."

"The king," cried an usher, in the antechamber.

"The king! so much the better. Oh, the king is my only friend! The king would not judge me guilty, even if he thought he had seen me. The king is welcome!"

The king entered with an air of calmness, in strange contrast with the disturbed countenances about the queen. "Sire," cried the latter, "you come most opportunely. Sire, here is another calumny, another insult to combat."

"What is the matter?" said Louis XVI., coming forward.

"Monsieur, a rumor, an infamous rumor. Come to my aid, Sire, for this time it is not my enemies who accuse me but my friends."

"Your friends?"

"These gentlemen — my brother (pardon, Monsieur le Comte d'Artois), Monsieur de Taverney, Monsieur de Charny — assure me that they saw me at the Opera-ball."

"At the Opera-ball!" cried the king, knitting his brows.

"Yes, Sire."

A terrible silence ensued. Madame de La Motte saw the gloomy uneasiness of the king; she saw the mortal pale-

ness of the queen; with a word, a single word, she might put an end to this painful struggle; with one word she could defend the queen from all past accusations and shield her against those of the future. But her heart did not prompt her to this course; her own interest dissuaded her. She said to herself that it was too late; that if she spoke now, they would see that she had deceived them before, at a time when the whole truth would have been of such advantage to the queen, and that she should forfeit her newly acquired favor. Therefore she was silent.

Then the king repeated, in a voice full of anguish, "At the Opera-ball? Who has spoken of this? Does Monsieur le Comte de Provence know this?"

"But it is not true," cried the queen, with the accent of despairing innocence. "It is not true; Monsieur le Comte d'Artois is mistaken, Monsieur de Taverney is mistaken. You are mistaken, Monsieur de Charny. In short, any one may be mistaken." All bowed.

"Come," cried the queen, "call my people, everybody; question them! The ball was on Saturday, was it not?"

"Yes, sister."

"Well, what did I do Saturday? Let some one tell me, for really I am going mad, and if this continues I shall believe myself that I went to this infamous Opera-ball; but if I had gone there, I would acknowledge it, gentlemen."

At this moment the king approached her with dilated eyes, smiling face, and outstretched hands. "Saturday," he said, — "Saturday, was it, gentlemen?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Well then," he continued, becoming more and more calm, more and more joyous, "you need question only your maid, Marie. She will perhaps remember at what hour I

went to your apartment; it was, I think, about eleven o'clock in the evening."

"Ah!" cried the queen, transported with joy, "yes, Sire." She threw herself into his arms; then blushing and confused, she hid her face on the king's breast, who kissed tenderly her beautiful hair.

"Well!" said the Comte d'Artois, bewildered with joy and surprise combined, "I will buy some spectacles. But, *mon Dieu!* I would not have lost this scene for a million; would you, gentlemen?"

Philippe was leaning against the wainscot as pale as death. Charny, cold and impassive, wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"Therefore, gentlemen," said the king, delighted at the effect he had produced, "it is impossible that the queen could have been that night at the Opera-ball. Believe it if you please; the queen, I am sure, is satisfied that I believe her."

"Well!" added the Comte d'Artois, "Monsieur de Provence may think as he pleases; but I defy his wife to prove an 'alibi' in the same way if she should be accused of spending the night abroad."

"Brother!"

"Sire, I kiss your hand."

"Charles, I will go with you," said the king, after giving a last kiss to the queen.

Philippe had not stirred.

"Monsieur de Taverney," said the queen, severely, "do you not accompany the Comte d'Artois?"

Philippe drew himself up; the blood rushed to his temples. He almost fainted. He had hardly strength to bow, to look at Andrée, to cast a terrible glance at Charny, and restrain the expression of his insensate grief. He left the room.

The queen retained with her Andrée and Monsieur de Charny.

The position of Andrée, thus placed between her brother and the queen, between her love and her jealousy, was such as to cause her great suffering. She felt that Philippe would have given his life to prevent a *tête-à-tête* between the queen and Charny; and she acknowledged that it would break her heart if, by following and consoling Philippe as she ought to do, she should leave Charny alone with Madame de La Motte and the queen. Indeed, she divined from Jeanne's modest, and at the same time familiar, manner that her presence would be no restraint. How could she explain what she felt? Was it love? Oh, love — she would have said to herself — does not spring up and grow with such rapidity in the cold atmosphere of the court. Love, that rare plant, delights to flower in generous, pure, innocent hearts. It will not take root in a heart profaned by recollections, in a soil chilled by tears which have been concentrating there for years. No, it was not love which Mademoiselle de Taverney felt for Monsieur de Charny. She repelled with all her might such an idea, because she had sworn never to love anything in this world.

But why had she suffered so much when Charny addressed a few words of respect and devotion to the queen? Yes, that must have been jealousy. Yes, Andrée acknowledged that she was jealous, not of the love which a man might feel for another woman than herself, but jealous of the woman who could inspire or receive this love. She observed, with melancholy, all the handsome suitors of the new court who were about her, — those gallant men, full of ardor, who did not understand her, and kept aloof after having offered her a few attentions, some because her coldness was not that of philosophy, others because this cold-

ness was in strange contrast with the old frivolities in which Andrée had been brought up.

And then men, whether in search of pleasure or dreaming of love, distrust the coldness of a woman twenty-five years of age who is beautiful, who is rich, who is the favorite of the queen, and who goes her way alone, cold, silent, and pale along a path where supreme joy and supreme happiness consists in making as much noise as possible.

To be a living problem is to be without attraction. Andrée had perceived this; she had observed that eyes little by little had been averted from her beauty, that intellect distrusted or denied her intellect. She saw even more: this abandonment became a habit with the old courtiers, an instinct with the new; it was no more the custom to approach Mademoiselle to converse with her, than it was usual to approach the statues of Latona or Diana at Versailles. Whoever bowed to Mademoiselle de Taverney and then turned away to smile on another woman, conceived that he had done his duty.

This did not escape the keen eye of the young girl. She whose heart had experienced so much trouble without knowing a single pleasure, she who felt age advancing upon her with its retinue of pallid cares and gloomy memories, meditated in her sorrowful, sleepless nights on the delights in store for the happy lovers at Versailles and sighed, in mortal bitterness, "And I, my God! and I!"

When she met Charny on that night of the severe cold, when she saw the eyes of the young man rest curiously upon her, and envelop her gradually in a network of sympathy, she was no longer sensible of this strange reserve evinced toward her by all the courtiers. To this man she was a woman. He had re-awakened youthfulness in her, he had revived the dead. He had caused the marble of Diana and Latona to blush.

Therefore Mademoiselle de Taverney became immediately attached to this regenerator who had made her conscious of vitality. She was happy in looking at this young man, to whom she was not a problem. She was unhappy in the thought that another woman was about to clip the wings of her bright-hued fancy, and appropriate her dream which had scarcely emerged from its golden portal.

All this explains why Andrée did not follow Philippe out of the queen's cabinet, although she felt deeply the outrage offered her brother, and although that brother was to her an object of idolatrous devotion.

Mademoiselle de Taverney, who was concerned only to prevent a private interview between the queen and Charny, had no thought of taking part in the conversation after her brother's dismissal. She sat in a corner by the fireplace, almost turning her back to the group which formed about the queen. The queen was sitting, Charny standing and bending forward, Madame de La Motte standing in the recess of a window, where her affected timidity had sought a refuge, and her actual curiosity a place of observation.

The queen remained silent for some moments. She could not readily start a new conversation in connection with the delicate explanation that had just taken place.

Charny appeared to be suffering, and his attitude was not displeasing to the queen.

At length Marie Antoinette broke the silence, and replying at the same time to her own thought and to that of the others, "This proves," she said, "that we have enemies. Would any one believe, Monsieur, that such disgraceful things could happen at the court of France?"

Charny made no reply.

"What happiness," continued the queen, "to live on your vessels, under the open sky, on the open sea! They

tell us of the wrath, the cruelty of the waves. Ah, Monsieur, consider your own case. Have not the waves of the ocean — the most furious waves — thrown upon you the foam of their wrath? Have not their assaults sometimes prostrated you on the deck? Well, look at yourself; you are in good health, you are young, you are honored."

"Madame!"

"Have not the English," continued the queen, gradually becoming more animated, "also discharged upon you their wrath, in flame and bullets, — a wrath dangerous to life, is it not? But of what moment is that to you? You are safe, you are strong; and by reason of that wrath of enemies you have conquered; the king has congratulated you, has caressed you, and the people know and love your name."

"Well, Madame?" murmured Charny, who saw with dread the increasing excitement of the queen.

"At what am I aiming?" she said; "it is this: Blessed be the enemies who launch against us flame, iron, and foaming waves! Blessed be the enemies who threaten us only with death!"

"*Mon Dieu!* Madame," replied Charny; "your Majesty has no enemies, — except as the serpent is enemy to the eagle. That which crawls, clinging to the ground, cannot annoy those who soar in the clouds."

"Monsieur," the queen quickly replied, "I know that you have returned from battle safe and sound; you have emerged safe and sound from the tempest; you have come forth triumphant and beloved. But those whose name an enemy like ours soils with the slime of calumny, although it is true their lives are not endangered, are made older by every tempest shock; they accustom themselves to bow their heads, in the fear of meeting, as I have done

to-day, a twofold injury by friends and foes combined in one attack. And then, Monsieur, if you knew how painful it is to be hated!"

Andrée anxiously awaited the young man's answer. She trembled lest he should reply in the words of tender consolation which the queen appeared to solicit. But Charny, on the contrary, wiped his brow with his handkerchief, sought for support by leaning on the back of a chair, and turned pale.

The queen, looking at him, said, "Is it not too warm here?"

Madame de La Motte opened the window with her delicate hand, attacking the fastening as vigorously as if her wrist had been that of a man. Charny breathed the air with delight.

"Monsieur is accustomed to the air of the sea; he will stifle in the boudoirs of Versailles."

"It is not that, Madame," replied Charny; "but I have a special order to fulfil at two o'clock, and unless your Majesty commands me to remain —"

"By no means, Monsieur," returned the queen; "we know what a special order is, do we not, Andrée?" Then turning toward Charny, she said, with a slight appearance of vexation, "You are free, Monsieur," and she dismissed the young officer with a wave of the hand.

Charny bowed with the air of a man in haste, and disappeared behind the tapestry. A few seconds later a noise was heard in the antechamber, as of some one groaning and others hastening to his relief. The queen was near the door, either by accident or because she had wished to observe Charny, whose hasty withdrawal had seemed to her extraordinary. She raised the tapestry, uttered a slight cry, and seemed about to rush forward. But Andrée, who had closely observed her movements, placed herself be-

tween the queen and the door. "Oh, Madame!" said she. The queen looked intently at Andrée, who firmly sustained the scrutiny. Madame de La Motte reached her head forward. Between the queen and Andrée was a small clear space, and looking through that she could see Charny lying in a swoon and several servants and guards attending him. The queen, noticing Madame de La Motte's movement, hastily closed the door. But it was too late, Madame de La Motte had seen.

Marie Antoinette, with a frown on her brow, moved slowly to her chair. She was a prey to that gloomy pre-occupation which succeeds all violent emotion. She seemed not to be aware that there was any one near her. Andrée also, though she remained standing, leaning against the wall, seemed not less pre-occupied than the queen. There ensued a moment of silence.

"Here is something extraordinary," said the queen, suddenly, startling her two companions by her abruptness; "Monsieur de Charny seems to me to be still in doubt!"

"In doubt of what, Madame?" asked Andrée.

"Why, about my being at home on the night of the ball."

"Oh, Madame!"

"Is it not so, Countess?" said the queen. "Am I not right? Is not Monsieur de Charny still in doubt?"

"Against the king's word? Oh, that is impossible, Madame!"

"He may think that the king came to my aid through his own self-respect. Oh, he does not believe! he does not believe! that is easy to see."

Andrée bit her lips. "My brother is not so incredulous as Monsieur de Charny," she said; "he seemed to be quite convinced."

"Oh, that would be bad!" continued the queen, who had not listened to Andrée's reply; "and in that case this young man's heart is not so pure and upright as I thought." Then striking her hands angrily together, "But after all," she cried, "if he saw me there, why should he believe that I was not there? Monsieur le Comte d'Artois also saw me, and Monsieur Philippe, — at least he says so. Every one saw me, and the king's word was needed to make them believe, or pretend to believe. Oh, there is something under all this, — something which I ought to clear up, since no one else thinks of doing so. Is it not true, Andrée, that I ought to search into and discover the meaning of all this?"

"Your Majesty is right," said Andrée; "and I am sure that Madame de La Motte is of my opinion, and thinks with me that your Majesty ought to search until the discovery is made. Do you not, Madame?"

Madame de La Motte, taken by surprise, was startled and made no reply.

"For, also," continued the queen, "they say they saw me at Mesmer's."

"Your Majesty was there," Madame de La Motte hastened to say, smiling.

"Yes," replied the queen; "but I did not do what is charged against me in that article. And then they saw me at the Opera, and I certainly was not there." She reflected a moment, and then cried out, eagerly, "Oh, I have hold of the truth!"

"The truth?" stammered the countess.

"Oh, so much the better!" said Andrée.

"Let Monsieur de Crosne be summoned immediately," said the queen, joyously, to Madame de Misery, who had come in.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MONSIEUR DE CROSNE.

Monsieur de Crosne found himself in a very embarrassing position after the explanation which had taken place between the king and queen. The full possession of a woman's secrets, especially when that woman is a queen, imposes on one no inconsiderable burden, when one's business is to watch over the interests of the crown and protect its fame.

Monsieur de Crosne believed that he was about to be exposed to a woman's anger and a queen's indignation; but he was strongly intrenched in his official obligations, and his well-known urbanity would serve as a shield to ward off the first blows. He entered quietly, with a smile on his lips. The queen, however, did not smile.

"Come, Monsieur de Crosne," said she, "it is now our turn to have an explanation."

"I am at your Majesty's orders."

"As lieutenant of police you should know the source of all this that is happening to me."

Monsieur de Crosne looked around him with a somewhat affrighted appearance.

"Do not be disturbed," continued the queen. "You know well these two ladies; you know every one."

"Very nearly," said the magistrate; "I know persons, I know effects; but I do not know the source of that to which your Majesty alludes."

"Then I am sorry to have to inform you," said the queen, annoyed by the calm demeanor of the lieutenant of police. "It is evident enough that I might give you my secret secretly, in a low voice, or in a place apart; but I prefer, Monsieur, the open daylight and the full voice. Well, then, I ascribe the effects, as you call them, — the effects of which I complain, — to the evil conduct of some one who resembles me, and who exhibits herself in those places where you and your agents think I have been seen."

"A resemblance!" cried Monsieur de Crosne, too much occupied in sustaining the queen's attack to notice Jeanne's momentary confusion and an exclamation by Andrée.

"Do you find the supposition impossible, Monsieur? Would you prefer to believe that I am deceiving myself, or deceiving you?"

"Madame, I do not say that. But whatever resemblance there might be between any other woman and your Majesty, there must still be so much difference that no experienced observer could be deceived."

"The observers can be deceived, Monsieur, because they have been deceived."

"I can give your Majesty an example," said Andrée.

"Ah!"

"When we were at home, at Taverney-Maison-Rouge, we had a girl in our service who, by a strange freak of Nature — "

"Resembled me!"

"Oh, your Majesty, so much as to deceive any one!"

"And that girl, — what became of her?"

"We did not then know your Majesty's generous and elevated disposition, and my father was afraid that the resemblance might be displeasing to the queen; so when we were at Trianon we kept the girl concealed from the eyes of all the court."

"You see, then, Monsieur de Crosne? Ah, this interests you?"

"Much, Madame."

"Go on, my dear Andrée."

"Well, Madame, that girl, being of a restless, ambitious spirit, soon wearied of being so isolated. She became acquainted, doubtless, with some evil-minded person, and one evening, on retiring for the night, I was surprised by her absence. She was searched for, but she had disappeared."

"My double had stolen something from you?"

"No, Madame; I had nothing."

Jeanne had listened to this conversation with an eagerness easily to be conceived.

"So you knew nothing of all that, Monsieur de Crosne?" asked the queen.

"No, Madame."

"So there lives a woman bearing a striking resemblance to me, and you do not know it! An event of this importance occurs in the kingdom, giving rise to grave disorders, and you are not the first to be informed of that event! Come, confess, Monsieur, the police service is very badly administered."

"But," replied the magistrate, "I assure you, Madame, it is not. Though to the eyes of the vulgar, the functions of the lieutenant of police are as exalted as are those of a god, your Majesty, who is placed so far above me in this terrestrial Olympus, is well aware that the king's magistrates are but men. I do not command events; and some events are so strange that human intelligence can hardly understand them."

"Monsieur, when a man has received all possible facilities for penetrating even to the thoughts of his fellow-beings; when through his agents he engages spies in his

service; when through his spies he is able to note even the gestures I make before my mirror, — if that man is not the master of events — "

" Madame, when your Majesty spent a night away from home, I knew it. Is my police well administered? Yes, it is, is it not? That day your Majesty had visited Madame, who is here present. That was no affair of mine. When you appeared at Mesmer's vat you had really gone thither, I suppose; and my police service is well performed, since my agents saw you there. When you went to the Opera — "

The queen quickly raised her head.

" Allow me to speak, Madame. I say 'you,' as Monsieur le Comte d'Artois has said 'you.' If the brother-in-law can be mistaken as to his sister's appearance, certainly an agent of the police may be deceived. The agent said he thought he had seen you. My police service was well performed on that day. Will you say also, Madame, that my agents did not well follow up that affair of the journalist Reteau, whom Monsieur de Charny has so soundly beaten? "

" Monsieur de Charny? " cried Andrée and the queen, at the same time.

" The event is not yet old, Madame, and the blows of the cane are still warm on the journalist's shoulders. This is one of those occurrences from which my predecessor, Monsieur de Sartines, would have made capital, in his spirited narrations to the late king, or to the favorite."

" Did Monsieur de Charny commit himself with this fellow? "

" I have heard it only through my police, which is so calumniated, as you know, Madame; and you will confess that it must have required some intelligence in that police to discover the duel which followed this affair."

"Monsieur de Charny engaged in a duel! Monsieur de Charny has fought a duel!" cried the queen.

"With the journalist?" Andrée said eagerly.

"Oh, no, ladies, the journalist was too well beaten to have been able to give Monsieur de Charny the wound which made him faint in your antechamber."

"Wounded! he is wounded!" cried the queen. "Wounded! but when was this? How did it happen? You must be mistaken, Monsieur de Crosne."

"Oh, Madame, your Majesty so often finds me at fault that you might allow that for once I am right."

"He was here just now."

"I know that."

"Oh, but," said Andrée, "I saw that he was suffering."

These words she spoke in such a manner that the queen recognized their hostility, and turned quickly round. The queen's look was an answer which Andrée met with resolute composure.

"What do you say?" said Marie Antoinette; "you saw that Monsieur de Charny was suffering, and did not speak of it!"

Andrée did not reply. Jeanne came to the assistance of the favorite, of whom it was necessary to make a friend. "I too," she said, "thought that Monsieur de Charny found it difficult to stand while your Majesty did him the honor to speak to him."

"Difficult, yes," said the proud Andrée, who did not thank the countess even with a look.

Monsieur de Crosne, having passed through his examination, was now leisurely observing these three women, not one of whom mistrusted that she was undergoing the lieutenant's scrutiny.

At last the queen continued, "Monsieur, with whom and why did Monsieur de Charny fight?"

Andrée, meanwhile, had recovered her self-possession.

"With a gentleman, who — but *mon Dieu!* Madame, it is useless; the two adversaries understand each other now, and a little while ago they were conversing together in your Majesty's presence."

"In my presence, — here?"

"Yes, here; the victor was the first to leave, about twenty minutes ago."

"Monsieur de Taverney!" cried the queen, with an angry flash in her eyes.

"My brother!" murmured Andrée, who reproached herself for having been so selfish as not to have understood everything.

"I think," said Monsieur de Crosne, "that it was, in fact, with Monsieur Philippe de Taverney that Monsieur de Charny fought."

The queen struck her hands violently together, which was always a sign of her most passionate rage.

"It is improper, improper!" she said. "What! American manners brought to Versailles! Oh, no, I will not permit them to gain a footing here."

Andrée bowed her head, Monsieur de Crosne also.

"So, then, because one has been associating with Monsieur Lafayette and Monsieur Washington," — the queen affected to pronounce this name as if it were French, — "my court is to be transformed into a battle-ground of the sixteenth century! No! once more, no! Andrée, you must have known that your brother had fought."

"I learn it now for the first time, Madame."

"Why did he fight?"

"We might have asked that of Monsieur de Charny, who fought with him," said Andrée, pale and with flashing eyes.

"I do not ask," replied the queen, arrogantly, "what Monsieur de Charmy has done; but what Monsieur Philippe de Taverney has done."

"If my brother has fought," said the young girl, letting her words fall one by one, "it must have been in your Majesty's service."

"Do you mean to say that Monsieur de Charny did not fight in my service, Mademoiselle?"

"I have the honor to remark to your Majesty," replied Andrée, in the same tone, "that I speak to the queen of my brother only, and of no other."

Marie Antoinette remained calm, but to do so she required all the self-control of which she was capable. She rose, took a turn around the room, pretended to look at herself in the mirror, took a volume from a book-case, ran over seven or eight lines, then threw it aside, "I thank you, Monsieur de Crosne," she said to the magistrate; "you have convinced me. My head was rather confused by all these stories, all these suppositions. Yes, the police is very efficient, Monsieur; but I beg you to think over this resemblance of which I have spoken to you. You will not forget, Monsieur? Adieu." She held out her hand with supreme grace, and he departed twice happier than when he came, and with ten times as much information. Andrée understood the tone in which this word "Adieu" was spoken; she made a slow and formal reverence. The queen bade her adieu in a careless manner, but without any apparent ill-feeling. Jeanne bowed as before a sacred altar, she prepared to take leave.

Madame de Misery entered. "Madame," she said to the queen, "has not your Majesty an appointment with Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange for this hour?"

"Ah, it is true, my good Misery; it is true. Let them come in. Remain a little longer, Madame de La Motte; I wish the king to make full peace with you." The queen while saying these words watched in a mirror the expression on the face of Andrée, who was slowly retiring toward

the door. She wished perhaps to rouse her jealousy by thus showing favor to the new-comer. Andrée disappeared beneath the folds of the tapestry; she had shown not the slightest emotion.

"Steel! steel!" cried the queen, sighing. "Yes, these Taverneys are all steel, but gold also. Ah, gentlemen, good-day. What do you bring me that is new? You know very well that I have no money."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE TEMPTRESS.

MADAME DE LA MOTTE had resumed her position; she kept herself somewhat apart like a modest woman, and stood attentively observant like one to whom had been accorded the privilege of remaining as a spectator.

Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange, in ceremonial costume, presented themselves to receive audience of their queen. They advanced toward the queen's chair, bowing repeatedly.

"Jewellers," said the queen, suddenly, "you have come here only to speak of jewels. You come at a bad time, gentlemen."

Monsieur Boehmer was the orator of the partnership. "Madame," he said, "we do not come to offer our goods to your Majesty, we should fear to be indiscreet."

"Oh!" said the queen, already repenting of having shown so much spirit, "to see jewels, is not to purchase them."

"Undoubtedly, Madame," continued Boehmer, trying to catch the thread of his discourse; "but we come to perform a duty, and that has emboldened us."

"A duty?" said the queen, in astonishment.

"Concerning that beautiful diamond necklace which your Majesty did not deign to take."

"Ah! well — the necklace. Then it has come back to us!" cried Marie Antoinette, laughing.

Boehmer remained serious.

"The fact is, it was very beautiful, Monsieur Boehmer," added the queen.

"So beautiful, Madame," said Bossange, timidly, "that your Majesty alone is worthy of wearing it."

"My consolation is," said Marie Antoinette, with a light sigh, which did not escape Madame de La Motte, "that it cost — a million and a half; was not that the price, Monsieur Boehmer?"

"Yes, your Majesty."

"And that in these agreeable times in which we live, when the hearts of the people are cold, there is no sovereign who can purchase a diamond necklace worth fifteen hundred thousand francs."

"Fifteen hundred thousand francs!" repeated Madame de La Motte, like a faithful echo.

"So that, gentlemen, no one can have that which I cannot, ought not, to purchase. You will answer me that each stone is valuable by itself. It is true; but I should not envy any one two or three diamonds; I might envy them sixty of them." The queen rubbed her hands with a degree of satisfaction which included a slight desire to tease Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange.

"That is just where your Majesty is in error," said Boehmer; "and that brings us to the duty which we now come to perform; the necklace is sold."

"Sold!" cried the queen, turning round.

"Sold!" said Madame de La Motte, whom the movement of her protectress inspired with anxiety as to her pretended self-denial.

"To whom, then?" asked the queen.

"Ah! Madame, that is a State secret."

"A State secret! Good, we can laugh about it, then," exclaimed Marie Antoinette, joyously. "These secrets

are very often kept, because there is really nothing to tell, — is it not so, Boehmer?"

"Madame!"

"Oh! State secrets; they are very common things with us. Take care, Boehmer; if you do not confide to me your secret, I will have one of Monsieur de Crosne's agents steal it from you," and she laughed heartily, manifesting clearly her opinion as to the pretended secret which would prevent Boehmer and Bossange from revealing the name of the purchasers of the necklace.

"We do not conduct ourselves toward your Majesty as toward other customers. We have come to inform your Majesty that the necklace is sold, because it really is sold; and we must not reveal the name of the purchaser, because the sale was made secretly by an ambassador sent incognito."

The queen at this word "ambassador" was seized with a new fit of hilarity. She turned toward Madame de La Motte, saying, "What is most admirable in Boehmer is, that he is capable of believing what he has just told me. Come, Boehmer, just tell me the country from which this ambassador comes? No, that is too much," said she laughing; "the first letter of his name, that will do," and once in a laughing mood, she could restrain herself no longer.

"It is the ambassador from Portugal," said Boehmer, in a low voice, as if to keep his secret at least from the ears of Madame de La Motte.

At this assertion, so positive, so clear, the queen suddenly stopped. "An ambassador from Portugal!" she said; "there is none here, Boehmer."

"He came expressly for this, Madame."

"To your house, incognito?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Who is it, then?"

"Monsieur de Souza."

The queen did not reply for some moments; then as if she had made up her mind: "Well!" she said, "her Majesty the queen of Portugal is fortunate; the diamonds are beautiful. Let us say no more about it."

"Madame, on the contrary, your Majesty will allow me to speak — will allow *us*," said Boehmer, looking at his partner. Bossange bowed.

"Have you ever seen those diamonds, Countess?" cried the queen, looking at Jeanne.

"No, Madame."

"Beautiful diamonds! It is a pity these gentlemen have not brought them."

"Here they are," said Bossange, eagerly. And he drew from his hat, which he carried under his arm, the little flat box containing the necklace.

"Look, look, Countess! you are a woman, this will please you," said the queen. And she drew back a little from the stand of Sèvres upon which Boehmer had displayed the necklace with so much art that the light in striking the stones brought jets of fire from almost every facet. Jeanne uttered a cry of admiration. And indeed, nothing could be more beautiful; it seemed to emit tongues of fire, sometimes green and red, sometimes white as light itself. When Boehmer moved the case backward and forward, the streams of wonderful liquid flame would gush forth.

"Wonderful! wonderful!" cried Jeanne, a prey to the delirium of an enthusiastic admiration.

"Fifteen hundred thousand francs, which might be held in the hollow of my hand," said the queen, with an affectation of the phlegmatic philosophy which Monsieur Rousseau of Geneva would have displayed under similar circumstances.

But Jeanne saw something in this disdain beside the disdain itself; for she did not despair of convincing the queen, and after a careful examination of the diamonds, "Monsieur Boehmer is right," she said; "there is in the world only one queen worthy of wearing this necklace, and that is your Majesty."

"My Majesty will not wear it, however."

"We could not allow it to leave France, Madame, without coming to lay at the feet of your Majesty all our regrets. It is a jewel known over all Europe, and whose possession is disputed. That any other sovereign should adorn herself with it, after it has been refused by the queen of France, our national pride will permit only when you, Madame, shall have once more, definitely, irrevocably, refused it."

"My refusal has been pronounced," replied the queen. "It has been made public, and has been too much applauded for me to repent of it."

"Oh, Madame," said Boehmer, "if the people found it admirable that your Majesty should prefer a ship-of-war to a necklace, the nobility, which is French also, would not think it surprising that the queen of France should purchase a necklace after having purchased a ship-of-war."

"Let us speak no more of it," said Marie Antoinette, casting a last look at the casket.

Jeanne sighed in sympathy with the queen.

"Ah! you sigh, you, Countess. If you were in my place, would you do differently?"

"I do not know," murmured Jeanne.

"Have you looked at them enough?"

"I could look at them forever, Madame."

"Let her look, gentlemen; she is admiring them. That takes nothing from the value of the diamonds;

they are still worth fifteen hundred thousand francs, unfortunately."

That word "unfortunately" seemed to offer a favorable opportunity to the countess. The queen regretted, therefore she had desired. She had desired, therefore she desired still, since that wish had not been satisfied. Such was Jeanne's logic, we must believe, since she added, "Fifteen hundred thousand francs, Madame, which on your neck would cause all women to die of jealousy." And snatching the royal necklace from the case, she clasped it so skilfully, so quickly, about the lovely neck of Marie Antoinette that the latter found herself, in the twinkling of an eye, inundated with phosphorescent and changing colors.

"Oh, your Majesty is sublime thus!" said Jeanne.

Marie Antoinette quickly went to a mirror. She was dazzling; her neck, white and flexible as that of Jane Grey, delicate as a lily-stalk, destined to fall like Virgil's flower beneath the iron, rose gracefully with its golden ringlets from the midst of this luminous flood. Jeanne had ventured to expose the queen's shoulders, so that the last row of diamonds fell on her pearly bosom. The queen was radiant, the woman was superb. Lovers or subjects, all would have prostrated themselves before her. Marie Antoinette was lost in admiration of herself. Then seized with fear, she wished to tear the necklace from her shoulders. "Enough," she said, "enough!"

"It has touched your Majesty," cried Boehmer; "it can belong to no one else."

"Impossible," replied the queen, firmly. "Gentlemen, I have amused myself with these diamonds, but to prolong the sport would be a fault."

"Your Majesty has ample time to become accustomed to this idea," Boehmer whispered to the queen; "we shall return to-morrow."

"To postpone payment is not to avoid it. And then, why postpone? You need the money. The other purchasers will doubtless pay you in a manner more to your advantage."

"Yes, your Majesty, in ready money," replied the merchant.

"Take them, take them! Put the diamonds in the case again. Quick! quick!"

"Your Majesty forgets, perhaps," said Madame de La Motte, "that such an ornament is always equivalent to money, and that a hundred years from now the necklace will still be worth what it is worth to-day."

"Give me fifteen hundred thousand francs, Countess," said the queen, with a forced smile, "and we will see."

"Oh, if only I had them!" cried Jeanne. She then remained silent. Long speeches sometimes are less forcible than an expressive reticence.

In vain did Boehmer and Bossange spend a quarter of an hour in replacing the diamonds in their case, and carefully securing the locks, — the queen gave no sign of yielding. It might be seen, however, in her gloomy manner and her silence, that she was passing through a painful struggle. As was her custom in moments of vexation, she reached out for a book, and turned over a few pages without reading them.

The jewellers took leave, saying, "Your Majesty has refused?"

"Yes; and again, yes," sighed the queen; and this time she sighed so that all might hear.

The jewellers departed. Jeanne perceived the agitation of Marie Antoinette in the nervous movement of her feet on the velvet cushion. "She suffers," said the countess to herself.

Suddenly the queen rose, took a turn around the room, and pausing before Jeanne, whose watchful look fascinated her, "Countess," she said, "it appears that the king will not return. Our little petition must be postponed till the next audience."

Jeanne bowed respectfully, and made a movement toward the door.

"But I shall keep you in mind," added the queen, kindly.

Jeanne pressed her lips to the queen's hand, as if she would there place her heart, and withdrew, leaving Marie Antoinette a prey to vexation and longing.

"The vexation of weakness, the longing of unsatisfied desire," said Jeanne to herself. "And she is the queen! Oh, no, — she is a woman."

The countess disappeared.

END OF VOL. I.

THE QUEEN'S NECKLACE.

CHAPTER I.

AMBITION IN THE GUISE OF LOVE.

JEANNE also was a woman, though she was not a queen. And therefore she was hardly seated in her carriage when she began to compare that splendid palace of Versailles with her fifth-story apartment, — those magnificent lackeys with her old servant Clotilde. But immediately the attic rooms and the old servant faded into the past, and Jeanne saw her little house in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, so elegant and comfortable, and her lackeys, less adorned with embroidery than those of Versailles, but as respectful and obedient. That house and those lackeys were her Versailles. There she was a queen no less than Marie Antoinette, and her wishes once formed, provided they were limited, not to what was necessary, but to what was reasonable, were as well and as speedily executed as if she had held a sceptre.

It was, then, with a cheerful face, and a smile on her lips, that Jeanne re-entered her house. It was still early. She took paper, pen, and ink, wrote a few lines, enclosed them in a fine, perfumed envelope, wrote the address, and rang the bell. Hardly had its last vibration ceased when the door opened, and a servant stood on the threshold.

"I was right," murmured Jeanne; "the queen is not better served." Then aloud, "Take this letter to Monseigneur le Cardinal de Rohan."

The lackey took the note and went out, in silent obedience. The countess fell into a revery, in continuance of her meditations on the road from Versailles. Five minutes later the lackey returned.

"Well?" said Madame de La Motte, with a slight accent of impatience, on seeing that her order had not been executed.

"As I was going out," said the lackey, "Monseigneur knocked at the door. I told him that I was starting out to go to his house. He took the letter, read it, and came in, saying, 'It is all right; announce me.'"

"Go on."

"Monseigneur is here, waiting Madame's permission to enter."

A light smile played on the lips of the countess. After a silence of two seconds, "Let him come in," she said, with an air of peculiar satisfaction.

Was that pause of two seconds made for the purpose of keeping waiting in her antechamber a prince of the Church, or did Madame de La Motte need them for the completion of her plan?

The prince appeared in the doorway.

In returning to her house, in sending for the cardinal, in experiencing so much satisfaction at his arrival, Jeanne had, then, a plan?

Yes; for this longing of the queen, like the night-fires which reveal the gloomy features of a landscape, had exposed to the eyes of the intriguing countess all the recesses of a soul too proud to take precautions against observation. The journey from Versailles to Paris is of some length, and when it is made side by side with the demon of cupidity,

he has time to whisper to the traveller the most daring counsels.

Jeanne was still intoxicated with the view of that immense amount of money — fifteen hundred thousand francs — spread out in diamonds on the white satin of the jewel-case. Fifteen hundred thousand francs! Was it not, indeed, a princely fortune, — especially to the poor mendicant who, only a month before, was holding out her hands for charity? Certainly there was a greater distance between the Jeanne de Valois of the Rue Saint Claude and the Jeanne de Valois of the Faubourg Saint Antoine than between the Jeanne de Valois of the Faubourg Saint Antoine and Jeanne de Valois, mistress of the necklace. She had, then, accomplished more than half the journey which led to fortune.

And this fortune, coveted by Jeanne, was no illusion, like the words of a contract, or like territorial possession, which require the exercise of imagination to give them value; no, the necklace was a fortune in sight, — there, always there, glowing and fascinating; and since the queen could desire it, Jeanne de Valois well might dream of it; since the queen could make up her mind to forego possession of it, Madame de La Motte well might place it as the limit of her ambition.

The cardinal, who was to realize these dreams, interrupted them in responding by his unexpected presence to her desire to see him. He also had his dreams; he also had his ambition, which he concealed under the mask of love.

"Ah, my dear Jeanne!" said the cardinal, "you have become so necessary to me that my entire day has been clouded by the thought that you were so far from me. You are well, after your visit to Versailles?"

"Why, as you see, Monseigneur."

"And contented?"

"Enchanted."

"The queen received you, then?"

"Immediately on my arrival I was introduced to her presence."

"You have good luck. One might infer from your triumphant manner that the queen spoke to you."

"I spent about three hours in her Majesty's cabinet."

The cardinal started, and was very near repeating after Jeanne, in a tone of astonishment, "Three hours!" but he restrained himself. "You are really an enchantress!" he said, "and no one can resist you."

"Oh, oh, you exaggerate, Prince!"

"No, really. And so you remained three hours with the queen?"

Jeanne nodded.

"Three hours!" repeated the cardinal, smiling. "What a number of things an intelligent woman like you can say in three hours!"

"Oh, I assure you, Monseigneur, I did not lose my time!"

"I will wager," ventured the cardinal, "that during those three hours you did not once think of me."

"Ungrateful man!"

"Really?" cried the cardinal.

"I did more than think of you."

"What did you, then?"

"I spoke of you."

"Spoke of me?—and to whom?" asked the prelate, in a tone in which it was impossible for him to conceal his emotion.

"To whom, if not to the queen?" But while saying these words, so precious to the cardinal, Jeanne was careful not to look at the prince that she might not seem to be at all anxious as to their effect.

Monsieur de Rohan was almost panting. "Ah!" said he, "dear Countess, tell me about it. Indeed I feel so much interest in everything that happens to you that I do not wish you to omit the slightest detail."

Jeanne smiled; she knew what interested the cardinal as well as he did himself. But as she had intended to relate punctiliously the whole story even without the cardinal's entreaty, she began deliberately, pronouncing distinctly each syllable. She gave a full account of the interview, related all the conversation, and demonstrated by every word how by one of those happy accidents which make the fortune of courtiers, she had happened at Versailles under one of those strange circumstances which in one day may transform a stranger into an almost indispensable friend. In fact, Jeanne de La Motte had in one day been admitted to the knowledge of the misfortunes of the queen, of the impotency of royalty.

In this narration Monsieur de Rohan appeared to observe that part only which related to what the queen had said about Jeanne, while Jeanne lay stress upon what the queen had said about Monsieur de Rohan.

The narration was scarcely finished when a servant entered announcing supper. Jeanne invited the cardinal by a glance, the cardinal accepted by a sign. He offered his arm to the mistress of the house, who had so quickly become accustomed to her position as hostess, and they went into the dining-room.

When supper was over, when the cardinal had drunk deep draughts of hope and love from the story of the enchantress, twenty times begun, and as many times interrupted, he felt obliged to come to some sort of conclusion with this woman who held the hearts of sovereigns in her hand. For he remarked, with a surprise which amounted to terror, that instead of assuming airs, like

other women who are much sought after and who can render valuable services, she anticipated his wishes with a grace very different from that fierce haughtiness she had shown at the former supper, in the same house.

Jeanne, on this occasion, did the honors of her house as if she were mistress not only of herself but of others also. There was no embarrassment in her expression, no hesitation in her tone. Had she not been taking, all day, these lessons in aristocratic deportment by association with the flower of French nobility? Had not a queen without rival called her "dear countess"? Therefore the cardinal, a man of superior rank himself, did not attempt to resist this assumption of superior rank on the part of Jeanne. "Countess," he said, taking her hand, "there are two women in you."

"How so?" asked the countess.

"The one of yesterday and the one of to-day."

"And which does your Eminence prefer?"

"I do not know. I feel only that the one of this evening is an Armida, a Circe, something irresistible."

"And whom you will not attempt to resist, I hope, Monseigneur, prince though you are."

The prince slid from his seat and fell upon his knees before Madame de La Motte.

"You ask alms?" she said.

"And I expect you to grant me them."

"It is a day for gifts," replied Jeanne. "The Countess de Valois has taken her place, — she is a woman of the court; before long she will rank among the proudest women of Versailles. She can then open her hand and extend it to whomsoever she pleases."

"Even to a prince?" said Monsieur de Rohan.

"Even to a cardinal," replied Jeanne.

The cardinal imprinted a long and burning kiss upon that

pretty, rebellious hand, and after a glance and a smile from the countess, he rose. He then went into the antechamber and spoke a few words to his servant. Two minutes after could be heard the noise of the carriage as it rolled away. The countess looked up.

"Upon my word, Countess," said the cardinal, "I have burned my ships."

"And there is no great merit in that," replied the countess, "since you have reached port."

CHAPTER II.

MASKS AND FACES.

LONG conversations are the blessed privilege of persons who have nothing further to tell each other. After the pleasure of being silent there is none greater than that of conversing carelessly. Two hours after the departure of the carriage, the cardinal and the countess had reached this point in their intercourse. The countess had yielded, the cardinal had conquered; and yet the cardinal was the slave, the countess was the victor.

Two men deceive each other while shaking hands; a man and a woman deceive each other with a kiss. But in this case each deceived the other only because the other wished to be deceived. Each had an end in view, for the attainment of which this intimacy was necessary. Each, then, had made a forward step.

The cardinal did not take the trouble to conceal his impatience. He very soon brought the conversation back to the subject of Versailles and the honors which there awaited the new favorite of the queen: "She is generous," he said, "and spares no pains to please those whom she likes. She has the rare gift of giving a little to a great many persons, and of giving much to a few friends."

"You think she is rich, then?" asked Madame de La Motte.

"She knows how to obtain resources with a word, a gesture, a smile. There has never been a minister except

Turgot, perhaps, who has had the courage to refuse the queen anything she asked."

"Well! *I* think she is not so rich as you imagine, poor queen, — or rather, poor woman!"

"Why do you think so?"

"Is a person rich who is obliged to endure privations?"

"Privations? Tell me about it, dear Jeanne."

"Oh! *mon Dieu!* I will tell you what I have seen, nothing more, nothing less."

"Go on, I will listen."

"Imagine to yourself two terrible torments which this unhappy queen has endured."

"Two torments! Tell me what they are."

"Do you know what the longing of a woman is, my dear Prince?"

"No; but I wish that you would tell me what it is."

"Well, the queen has a desire which she cannot satisfy."

"For whom?"

"No, for what!"

"For what, then?"

"For a diamond necklace."

"Stay, I remember! Do you not allude to the diamonds of Boehmer and Bossange?"

"Precisely."

"Oh, that is an old story, Countess!"

"Old or new, is it not a real sorrow for a queen that she cannot possess what a mere favorite was so near obtaining? If Louis XV. had lived fifteen days longer, Jeanne Vaubernier would have possessed that which Marie Antoinette cannot have."

"Well, dear Countess, you are mistaken about this; these diamonds have been offered to the queen five or six times, and she has always refused them."

"Oh!"

"The king has offered them to her, and she has always refused to accept them;" and the cardinal told the story of the ship-of-war.

Jeanne listened eagerly, and when the cardinal had finished, "Well," she said, "what then?"

"What then?"

"Yes; what does that prove?"

"Why, that she did not wish for them, it seems to me."

Jeanne shrugged her shoulders. "You know what women are, you know the court, you know kings, and yet you allow yourself to be misled by such an answer?"

"Well, I prove that she refused."

"My dear Prince, that proves one thing; the queen thought she must utter a brilliant saying, a popular saying, and she uttered it."

"Good!" said the cardinal; "is that your faith in royal virtues? Ah, sceptic! Why, Saint Thomas was a believer in comparison with you."

"Sceptic or believer, I will affirm one thing."

"What is it?"

"That the queen had no sooner refused the necklace than she was seized with an insane desire to possess it."

"You are inventing these ideas, my dear; and in the first place, you must consider that with all her faults the queen has one great quality."

"What is it?"

"She is disinterested. She loves neither gold, nor silver, nor precious stones. She takes these minerals at their true value; to her a flower on her bosom is as precious as a diamond in her ear."

"I will not deny it. But I do maintain that at this moment she has a strong desire to put several diamonds about her neck."

"Oh, Countess, prove what you say!"

"Nothing will be more easy. I have just seen the necklace."

"You?"

"I; I have not only seen it, but I touched it."

"And where?"

"At Versailles."

"At Versailles?"

"Yes; where the jewellers took it to tempt the queen for the last time."

"And it is beautiful?"

"It is marvellous."

"Then you, who are a true woman, can understand how this necklace could possess one's thoughts."

"I can see how, on account of it, a woman might lose appetite and sleep."

"Alas! why have I not a ship to give to the king?"

"A ship?"

"Yes; he would give me the necklace. And if I once had it, you could eat and sleep peacefully."

"You are jesting?"

"No; I swear I am not."

"Well, I am going to tell you something which will astonish you very much."

"Say on."

"I would not have that necklace!"

"So much the better, Countess, for I could not give it to you."

"Alas! neither you nor any one else; indeed, the queen understands that, therefore she desires it."

"But I repeat to you that the king offered it to her."

Jeanne made a quick gesture, an almost impatient one. "And I tell you," she said, "that women are most pleased

with such presents when they are not given by persons who oblige them to accept them."

The cardinal regarded Jeanne more attentively. "I do not understand exactly," he said.

"So much the better, let us say no more about it. What is the necklace to you, since we cannot have it?"

"Oh, if I were the king, and you were the queen, I would oblige you to accept it!"

"Well, without being king, oblige the queen to take it, and see if it makes her as angry as you imagine."

The cardinal again looked at Jeanne. "Really," he said, "you are sure you are not mistaken; the queen has this desire?"

"An overwhelming desire. Listen, dear Prince; have you not told me, or have I heard in some other way, that you would not be sorry to become prime minister?"

"It is very possible that I may have said that, Countess."

"Well, let us wager, my dear Prince —"

"What?"

"That the queen would make a minister of that man who should manage to have this necklace placed upon her toilet-table within eight days."

"Oh, Countess!"

"I say what I say. Would you rather have me keep it to myself?"

"Oh, never!"

"Besides, what I say does not concern you. It is very clear that you would not sacrifice a million and a half to a royal caprice. Upon my word, that would be paying too dear for a portfolio which you might have for nothing, and which is your due. Therefore, consider all that I have said as mere chatter. I am like the parrots; I have been dazzled by the sun, and keep saying to myself that

'it is hot.' Ah, Monseigneur, how severe a trial is a day of favor to a little country girl! These rays of light, — one must be an eagle like you to gaze at them serenely."

The cardinal became thoughtful.

"Come, come," said Jeanne, "you think so ill of me, you find me so vulgar and so wretched, that you do not deign even to speak to me."

"Ah, you are mistaken!"

"I have judged the queen by myself."

"Countess!"

"How could I help it? I thought she wished for the diamonds, because she sighed while looking at them; I believed it, because in her place I should have desired them. Excuse my weakness."

"You are an adorable woman, Countess. You have both tenderness of heart and strength of mind, — a rare combination; there is at times in you so little of the woman that I am afraid of you. You are at other times so adorable a woman that I bless Heaven for you, and I bless you also;" and the gallant cardinal emphasized this compliment by a kiss. "Come, let us talk no longer of these things," he said.

"So be it," murmured Jeanne to herself, "but I think the hook has caught in the flesh."

But although the cardinal said, "Let us talk no more about it," he continued, "And do you think it is Boehmer who has returned to the charge?"

"With Bossange, yes," answered Madame de La Motte, innocently.

"Bossange, — let me see," said the cardinal, as if he were trying to recall something; "is he not his partner?"

"Yes; a tall, thin man."

"That is he. And he lives —"

"He must live somewhere near the Quai de la Ferraille or that of l'École, I do not know exactly; but at all events, somewhere in the neighborhood of the Pont Neuf."

"The Pont Neuf, — you are right; I have read those names over some door, while driving in my carriage."

"The fish bites more and more," murmured Jeanne to herself. And she was right, for the prey had swallowed even the hook.

The next morning, on leaving the little house in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, the cardinal drove directly to the house of Boehmer. He intended to remain incognito, but Boehmer and Bossange were the jewellers to the court, and at the first words he spoke, they addressed him as "Monseigneur."

"Well, yes, 'Monseigneur,'" said the cardinal; "but since you recognize me, try, at least, to prevent others from recognizing me."

"Monseigneur may rest easy. We await Monsieur's orders."

"I have come to purchase the diamond necklace which you have shown to the queen."

"Indeed, we are very sorry, but Monseigneur is too late."

"Why so?"

"It is sold."

"It is impossible, since it was only yesterday that you offered it again to the queen."

"Who refused it again, Monseigneur, so that the old bargain stands."

"And with whom was that bargain made?" asked the cardinal.

"It is a secret, Monseigneur."

"Too many secrets, Monsieur Boehmer," and the cardinal rose.

"But, Monseigneur — "

"I thought, Monsieur," continued the cardinal, "that a jeweller to the crown of France should be glad to sell in France these beautiful stones; prefer Portugal, if you please, Monsieur Boehmer."

"Monseigneur knows everything!" cried the jeweller.

"Well, what is there surprising in that?"

"But if Monseigneur knows all, he can have learned it only from the queen."

"And what if it were so?" said Monsieur de Rohan, without denying the supposition, which flattered his self-love.

"Oh, that would change everything entirely, Monsieur."

"Explain yourself, I do not understand."

"Will Monseigneur allow me to speak with perfect freedom?"

"Speak."

"Well, then, the queen wants our necklace."

"Do you think so?"

"We know it."

"Ah! why, then, does she not buy it?"

"Why? because she has refused to accept it from the king, and to retract that refusal, which has won for her Majesty so much praise, would make her seem capricious."

"The queen is above considering what might be said about her."

"Yes, when the people speak, or even the courtiers; but when it is the king who speaks — "

"You know very well that the king wished to give this necklace to the queen."

"Yes, but he was very ready with his thanks when she declined it."

"What, then, does Monsieur Boehmer conclude?"

"That the queen would be glad to have the necklace without seeming to purchase it."

"Well, you are mistaken, Monsieur," said the cardinal; "there is no foundation for what you say."

"That is unfortunate, Monseigneur, for that would have afforded us our only ground for breaking our agreement with the Portuguese ambassador."

The cardinal reflected. Seeing that he was in the man's power, "Monsieur," said he, "you may suppose, if you please, that the queen desires to possess your necklace."

"That changes everything, Monseigneur. I can break any bargain when there is a question of giving preference to the queen."

"What is your price for the necklace?"

"Fifteen hundred thousand francs."

"On what terms?"

"Portugal was to pay me a sum on account, and I was to carry the necklace to Lisbon, where the balance was to be paid at once."

"That mode of payment is not practicable with us, Monsieur Boehmer; you shall have a sum on account if it is reasonable."

"A hundred thousand francs."

"They can be found. As to the rest?"

"Your Eminence would wish for time," said Boehmer. "With the guarantee of your Eminence everything is feasible. Only, delay involves a loss. For observe, Monsieur, in a matter of this importance the figures increase of themselves, and rapidly. The interest on fifteen hundred thousand francs, at five per cent, is seventy-five thousand francs, and five per cent is ruinous to tradesmen. Ten per cent is the least they ought to accept."

"That would be one hundred and fifty thousand francs by your calculation?"

"Why, yes, Monseigneur."

"Suppose you sell the necklace for sixteen hundred thousand francs, Monsieur Boehmer, and divide the payment of the fifteen hundred thousand francs which will remain to be paid into three installments, payment to be completed within a year. Is it agreed?"

"Monseigneur, we should lose fifty thousand francs by that bargain."

"I do not think so, Monsieur. If you should receive, to-morrow, fifteen hundred thousand francs, you would not know what to do with them; a jeweller does not buy an estate of that value."

"There are two of us, Monseigneur, — my partner and myself."

"That is true, but no matter; it will be more convenient for both to receive five hundred thousand francs every four months, — that is, two hundred and fifty thousand francs apiece."

"Monseigneur forgets that these diamonds do not belong to us; if they did, we should be rich enough to wait."

"To whom, then, do they belong?"

"Why, to perhaps ten different creditors. We procured some from Hamburg, some from Naples, one from Buenos Ayres, two from Moscow. Our creditors are waiting for the sale of the necklace to be paid. The profit we shall make is all that will be ours; but alas! Monseigneur, since we have had this unfortunate necklace on hand, which is about two years, we have already lost two hundred thousand francs in interest. You may judge what the profits will be."

Monsieur de Rohan interrupted Boehmer. "After all," he said, "I have not seen the necklace."

"True, Monseigneur, here it is," and Boehmer, with all the usual precautions, exhibited the precious jewels.

"Superb!" cried the cardinal, touching affectionately the clasp which must have pressed the queen's neck. When his fingers had sought, to his satisfaction, any sympathetic effluence which might still be clinging to the stones, "Is it a bargain?" he asked.

"Yes, Monsieur; and I must now go to the embassy to retract my promise."

"I did not know that there was an ambassador from Portugal in Paris, just now."

"Indeed, Monseigneur, Monsieur de Souza is here now; he came incognito."

"To negotiate this business," said the cardinal, laughing.

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Oh, poor Souza! I know him well. Poor Souza!" said the cardinal, laughing still more heartily. Monsieur Boehmer thought he ought to join in the hilarity of his customer. They amused themselves for some time over this jewel-casket, at the expense of Portugal.

Monsieur de Rohan was about to leave. Boehmer stopped him. "Will Monseigneur tell me how this matter is to be arranged?" he asked.

"Why, simply enough."

"With Monseigneur's intendant?"

"No; with myself only, — you will deal only with me."

"And when?"

"To-morrow."

"And the hundred thousand francs."

"I will bring them here — to-morrow."

"Very well, Monseigneur."

"And the notes?"

"I will sign them here, to-morrow."

"Nothing could be better, Monseigneur."

"And as you are a man used to secrets, Monsieur Boehmer, remember that you now possess an important one."

"Monseigneur, I feel it, and will merit your confidence as well as that of the queen," he added slyly.

Monsieur de Rohan blushed, and went away somewhat disturbed but happy, like every man who ruins himself in the ardor of passion.

The next day Monsieur Boehmer went to the hôtel of the Portuguese ambassador. Just at the moment he knocked at the gate, Monsieur Beausire was going through some accounts with Monsieur Ducorneau, while Don Manoel was discussing with the valet, his partner, a new scheme of adventure.

Since Monsieur Boehmer's last visit to the Rue de la Jussienne, the hôtel had undergone some transformations. The whole of the household, having arrived as we have said in two post-chaises, had been established according to the different positions they were to fill in the house of the new ambassador. It must be confessed that the partners, in distributing among themselves the several offices, — which they filled admirably, — had thus an opportunity to watch the progress of their own affairs; and this always imparts a certain degree of courage even in the performance of the most disagreeable tasks.

Monsieur Ducorneau was charmed to find an ambassador so free from national prejudice as to have formed his whole establishment of Frenchmen. Thus it was that while going over accounts with Monsieur de Beausire, he entered into conversation with that gentleman, full of praise of the head of the embassy.

"The Souzas, you see," said Beausire, "are not like those old Portuguese of the fourteenth century, many of whom you can see now in our provinces. No, they are gentlemen, travellers, very rich, who might be kings if the fancy took them."

"But it does not take them," said Monsieur Ducorneau.

"But why should it, Monsieur? With a certain number of millions and the name of a prince, is not one equal to a king?"

"Why, these are philosophical doctrines, Monsieur," said Ducorneau, surprised; "I should not expect such opinions concerning equality from a diplomatist."

"We are an exception," replied Beausire, rather annoyed at the anachronism he had committed; "without being a follower of Voltaire, or an Armenian after the manner of Rousseau, a man may know the natural theories of the inequality of conditions and forces."

"Do you know," cried the chancellor, enthusiastically, "that it is fortunate that Portugal is a small state?"

"Eh! why?"

"Because with such men at its head, it would soon become powerful, Monsieur."

"Oh, you flatter us, dear Chancellor. No, we are philosophical politicians. What you say is specious, but not pertinent. But enough of this. There are one hundred and eight thousand francs in the box, you said?"

"Yes, Monsieur, one hundred and eight thousand francs."

"And no debts?"

"Not a sou."

"That is exemplary. Give me the memorandum if you please."

"Here it is. But when is the presentation to take place? I must tell you that it is the subject of a general curiosity, of endless comments, — I might almost say of anxiety."

"Ah! ah!"

"Yes, from time to time people are seen prowling about the hôtel as if the gates were of glass through which they could see."

"People! do you mean the people in the neighborhood?"

"And others; the mission of the ambassador being a secret one, you may be sure that the police will soon interest themselves in ascertaining its object."

"I have thought as you do," said Beausire, somewhat uneasy.

"See, Monsieur," said Ducorneau, taking Beausire to the grating of a window which looked on the street, "look, do you see that man in an old brown coat?"

"Yes, I see him."

"How he watches, eh?"

"That is true! What do you think that man is?"

"How should I know? One of Monsieur de Crosne's spies, perhaps."

"Probably."

"Between ourselves, Monsieur, Monsieur de Crosne is not the equal of Monsieur de Sartines. Did you know Monsieur de Sartines?"

"No, Monsieur, no."

"Oh! he would have found out all about you long ago. It is true you take precautions —"

A bell rang.

"The ambassador calls me," said Beausire, hurriedly, for the conversation was becoming embarrassing; and opening the door quickly he knocked down two of the partners, who, one with a pen behind his ear, the other with a broom in his hand, — the one a servant of the fourth rank, the other a footman, — had thought the conversation protracted enough to have a serious meaning, and were trying to share in it by the sense of hearing.

Beausire concluded that he was under suspicion, and resolved to exercise greater vigilance. He continued on his way toward the ambassador's room, after giving a friendly grasp of the hand to his two associates.

CHAPTER III.

BEAUSIRE ACTS FOR HIMSELF.

DON MANOEL Y SOUZA was less yellow than usual, — that is to say, his face was red. He had just had a troublesome explanation with the valet; in fact, the explanation was still pending. When Beausire entered, the two gamecocks were plucking each other's last feathers.

"Come, Monsieur de Beausire," said the valet, "you shall decide between us."

"On what subject?" asked Beausire, who assumed the manner of an arbitrator, after exchanging a glance with the ambassador, his natural ally.

"You know," said the valet, "that Monsieur Boehmer is coming to-day to conclude the sale of the necklace?"

"Yes; I am aware of it."

"And that the one hundred thousand francs are to be paid over to him?"

"Yes; I know that also."

"These one hundred thousand francs are the property of the association, are they not?"

"Who doubts it?"

"Ah! Monsieur de Beausire is of my opinion," said the valet, turning toward Manoel.

"Wait, wait!" said the Portuguese.

"I agree with you only on that one point," said Beausire, — "that the one hundred thousand francs belong to the association."

"That is all that I claim. It follows that the safe in which they are kept should not be placed in the only office of the embassy which adjoins the chamber of the ambassador."

"Why not?" asked Beausire.

"And the ambassador," continued the valet, "ought to give each of us a key to that safe."

"By no means," said the Portuguese.

"Your reasons?"

"Ah, yes, your reasons?" said Beausire.

"I am distrusted," said the Portuguese, stroking his beard. "It seems to me that if I am to be accused of an intention to rob the association, I may suspect the association of a wish to rob me. We are all alike."

"Agreed," said the valet; "and precisely for that reason we all have equal rights."

"Then, my dear fellow, if you wish equality to be observed here, you should have decided that all of us in turn should assume the rôle of ambassador. It would have made our position less trustworthy in the eyes of the public; but the associates would have felt more secure."

"In the first place, Monsieur," interrupted Beausire, "you are not acting the part of a loyal associate. Has not Señor Don Manoel an incontestable privilege, as the inventor of the scheme?"

"Ah, yes!" said the ambassador; "and Monsieur de Beausire shares it with me."

"Oh," replied the valet, "the thing once started, there is no more attention paid to privileges."

"Agreed; but attention to proper conduct should still be continued."

"I am not alone in making this demand," murmured the valet, somewhat ashamed. "All our comrades think the same."

"And they are wrong," replied the Portuguese.

"They are wrong," said Beausire.

The valet looked up. "I was wrong myself," he said spitefully, "to ask Monsieur de Beausire's opinion. Of course the secretary would side with the ambassador."

"Monsieur," said Beausire, with astonishing coolness, "you are a knave, whose ears I would cut off if you had any left; but they have been clipped too many times."

"What do you say?" said the valet, drawing himself up.

"We are here by ourselves," said Beausire, "in the ambassador's cabinet, and can settle this business among ourselves. Now, you have just insulted me by saying that I have an understanding with Don Manoel."

"And you have insulted me," said the Portuguese, coldly, coming to the assistance of Beausire.

"And I demand satisfaction, Monsieur."

"Oh, I am no fighter!" cried the valet.

"So I see," replied Beausire; "consequently, you shall be beaten, Monsieur."

"Help!" cried the latter, already seized by Oliva's lover, and almost choked by the Portuguese.

But just as the two chiefs were about to take justice into their own hands, the bell from below announced a visitor.

"Let him alone," said Don Manoel.

"And let him attend to his duty," added Beausire.

"The comrades shall know this," replied the valet, readjusting his dress.

"Oh, tell them what you please! We shall know how to answer for ourselves."

"Monsieur Boehmer!" cried the guard, from below.

"Well, that will settle everything, my dear fellow," said Beausire, giving his adversary a tap on the nape of the neck. "We shall have no more contests about the one hundred thousand francs, since they will disappear with Monsieur Boehmer. Now put on your best behavior as our *valet-de-chambre.*"

The valet went out grumbling, and assumed his humble air, in order properly to introduce the crown-jeweller. After he had left the room, Beausire and the Portuguese exchanged a second glance as significant as the first.

Boehmer entered, followed by Bossange. The faces of both expressed humility and embarrassment, which the keen observers of the embassy saw with anxiety. While they were taking the seats offered by Beausire, the latter continued his scrutiny, watching at the same time the eye of Don Manoel, to keep up a correspondence between them. Manoel assumed his dignified and official demeanor; Boehmer took the initiative in this difficult situation, and explained that political reasons of great importance would prevent them from fulfilling their contract.

Manoel cried out angrily; Beausire gave a "hem!" Monsieur Boehmer became more and more embarrassed.

Don Manoel remarked to him that the bargain had been completed, and that the money on account was ready. Boehmer persisted.

The ambassador, still interpreted by Beausire, replied that his Government had been apprised of the conclusion of the bargain, and that to break it off was an insult to her Majesty.

Monsieur Boehmer said that he had weighed well the importance of these considerations; but to return to his former plan would be impossible.

Beausire refused to accept the retraction; he declared to Boehmer that his conduct was that of a dishonorable business man.

Bossange then took upon himself to defend the honor of trade, thus attacked in his own person and that of his partner; but he was not eloquent.

Beausire interrupted him with this single remark, "You have found a higher bidder."

The jewellers, who did not know much about politics, and who had a very high opinion of diplomacy in general, and Portuguese diplomatists in particular, colored, thinking their motives had been discovered.

Beausire saw that he had hit the nail on the head, and as he wished that this business should be carried through, — since there was a fortune in it, — he pretended to consult his ambassador in Portuguese. Then he said to the jewellers, "Gentlemen, you have had a more advantageous offer. Nothing could be more natural; it proves that the diamonds were offered us at a fair value. Well, her Portuguese Majesty would not wish to obtain a good bargain at the expense of worthy tradesmen. Will you take fifty thousand francs more?"

Boehmer shook his head.

"One hundred thousand, one hundred and fifty thousand francs," continued Beausire, determined to offer a million more rather than lose his share of the fifteen hundred thousand francs.

The jewellers, dazzled by this offer, were for a moment somewhat embarrassed; then, having consulted together, "No, Monsieur," they said to Beausire, "do not take the trouble to tempt us; a will more powerful than ours compels us to sell the necklace in this country. You understand, without doubt, that it is not we who refuse; therefore do not be angry with us. It is from some one

greater than ourselves, greater than you, that the opposition comes."

Beausire and Manoel had nothing to say to this. On the contrary, they affected politeness and tried to appear indifferent. They were so intent upon this that they did not observe the valet, who was listening at the door to discover, if possible, what this business was from which they wished to exclude him. This worthy associate was, however, unfortunate enough to slip and fall against the door, making a loud noise.

Beausire ran to the antechamber. "What are you doing here, you rascal?" he cried.

"Monsieur, I bring the morning despatches."

"Good," said Beausire, "now go."

These despatches were letters from Portugal, generally unimportant, but which, passing through their hands before going to Ducorneau, often gave them useful information about the affairs of the embassy.

On hearing the word "despatches" the jewellers rose from their seats much relieved, like persons who receive permission to withdraw after an embarrassing audience. They were allowed to depart, and the valet was ordered to accompany them to the court-yard.

He had scarcely left the staircase when Don Manoel and Beausire, exchanging glances of the kind which promise immediate action, approached each other.

"Well!" said Don Manoel, "the affair has failed."

"Completely," said Beausire.

"Out of one hundred thousand francs, paltry spoils, we shall each have eight thousand four hundred francs."

"Not worth the trouble," replied Beausire.

"It is not. But there in that safe," and he pointed toward the safe so eagerly coveted by the valet, — "there in that safe are one hundred and eight thousand francs."

"Fifty-four thousand each."

"Well! enough said," replied Don Manoel. "Let us share it."

"So be it, but the valet will not leave us a moment if he knows the affair has failed."

"I will think of some way," said Don Manoel, in a peculiar tone.

"And I have found one already," said Beausire.

"What is it?"

"This is it. The valet will soon return?"

"Yes."

"He will demand his share and that of his associates."

"Yes."

"We shall have the whole house on our hands."

"Yes."

"Let us call the valet as if to a secret conference; then leave me to act."

"I begin to understand," said Don Manoel; "go and meet him."

"I was just going to ask you to do so."

Neither would leave his *friend* alone with the box. Confidence is a rare jewel. Don Manoel replied that his dignity as ambassador prevented him from taking such a step.

"You are not an ambassador to him," said Beausire; "but no matter."

"You are going yourself?"

"No, I will call him from the window," and he hailed the valet from the window just as he was entering into conversation with the guard. The valet, hearing himself called, came up. He found the two leaders in the room next the one containing the safe. Beausire said to him with a smiling face, "I will wager that I know what you were saying to the guard."

"I?"

"Yes; you were telling him that the affair with Boehmer had failed."

"Upon my word, no."

"You lie."

"I swear to you that I was not."

"That is fortunate; for if you had spoken, you would have done a very foolish thing and lost a fine sum of money."

"How so?" cried the valet, in surprise; "what sum of money?"

"You must understand that we three alone possess the secret."

"That is true."

"And that consequently we three possess the one hundred and eight thousand francs, since the others believe that Boehmer and Bossange have carried away the money."

"*Morbleu!*" cried the valet, transported with joy, "that is true."

"Thirty-three thousand three hundred and thirty-three francs, six sous apiece," said Manoel.

"More! more!" cried the valet; "there is a fraction of eight thousand francs."

"That is true," said Beausire. "Do you agree?"

"Do I agree!" said the valet, rubbing his hands, "I should think so. That is as it should be; that is talking."

"That is talking like a knave," said Beausire, in a voice of thunder. "I said that you were only a rogue. Come, Don Manoel, you who are so strong, seize this fellow for me, and let us show him up to our associates."

"Mercy, mercy!" cried the wretched man, "I was only jesting."

"Come, come!" continued Beausire, "into the dark

room with him until we can devise some punishment for him."

"Mercy!" cried the valet, again.

"Take care," said Beausire, who had seized the perfidious valet, — "take care that Monsieur Ducorneau does not hear you!"

"If you do not let me go," said the valet, "I will denounce you all!"

"And I will strangle you!" said Don Manoel, in a voice full of anger, pushing the valet toward a closet near by. "Send away Monsieur Ducorneau," he whispered in Beausire's ear.

The latter did not wait for a repetition of the order; he went quickly into the next room while Don Manoel was shutting up the valet in the dark closet.

A minute passed, but Beausire had not returned.

An idea struck Don Manoel: he was alone and the safe was not ten paces away; to open it, to take from it the one hundred and eight thousand francs, to jump out of a window and run through the garden with his booty was but the work of two minutes to an experienced thief. Don Manoel calculated that Beausire would require five minutes at least to send away Ducorneau and return to the room. He ran toward the door of the room which contained the safe, and found it bolted. He was strong and skilful; he could have opened the door of a city with a watch-key.

"Beausire distrusted me," he thought, "because I alone have the key, and has bolted the door." He forced back the bolt with his sword. On reaching the safe he uttered a terrible cry. There stood the chest with gaping mouth and empty!

Beausire, who had a second key, had entered by another door, and had carried away the money. Don Manoel ran

like a madman to the porter's lodge, where he found the guard singing. He found that Beausire had been gone just five minutes.

When the Portuguese by his cries and groans had informed the whole household of what had happened; when to obtain a witness, he had released the valet, — it was only to find them all incredulous and furious. They accused him of being an accomplice of Beausire, who would deliver to Don Manoel his share of the spoils.

There was no longer any mystery; all had unmasked, and worthy Monsieur Ducorneau could not understand with what sort of people he had been associated. He almost fainted when he saw these diplomatists preparing to hang Don Manoel, who could do nothing to help himself.

"Hang Monsieur de Souza!" cried the chancellor, "but that is high treason; take care!"

They determined to throw him into the cellar, fearing his cries would be heard.

At that moment three loud knocks at the door made the associates tremble, and immediately silence was restored among them. The knocks were repeated. Then a shrill voice called out in Portuguese: "Open! in the name of the ambassador from Portugal!"

"The ambassador!" murmured all the rascals, scattering in every direction through the hôtel, running through the gardens, climbing over the roofs and neighboring walls in headlong terror.

The real ambassador, who had in fact arrived, could not enter his own hôtel without the help of the police, who broke open the gate in the presence of an immense crowd, attracted by this curious spectacle.

Then a thorough search was made, and Monsieur Ducorneau was arrested and sent to the Châtelet.

Thus ended the adventure of the sham embassy from Portugal.

CHAPTER IV.

ILLUSIONS AND REALITIES.

BEAUSIRE, when he had cleared the gate, had run at the top of his speed through the Rue Coquilliere to the Rue Saint Honoré. Imagining that he was pursued, he had taken intricate turnings through the streets bordering on our corn-market called Halle aux Blés. After a few moments he felt quite sure that no one could have followed him; he was also quite sure that he was exhausted, and that a good race-horse could not have made better speed than he had made. He sat down on a bag of corn in the Rue de Viarmes, which runs along one side of the market, and pretended to be examining attentively the column of Médicis, which Bachaumont had bought to save it from the hammer of the Demolishers, and had presented to the city.

The fact is that Monsieur de Beausire was looking neither at the column of Monsieur Philibert Delorme nor at the sundial with which it had been adorned by Monsieur de Pingré. He was simply trying to recover his breath. When, after some moments, he had succeeded in doing so he gave himself up to pleasing meditations. "Now, at last," he thought, "my dream is fulfilled; I am owner of a fortune. I shall now be able to become an entirely respectable man; it seems to me that I am already growing fat. I shall make Oliva as respectable as I shall be myself. She is handsome, and she is simple in her tastes. She will not dislike a life of retirement in the country, on a fine farm, which we will call our estate, near a small city where we shall easily pass as

of noble rank. Nicole is good; she has but two faults, — idleness and pride."

Only those! Poor Beausire! — two deadly sins!

"And with these infirmities, which I shall respect, — I, the Beausire of doubtful reputation, — I shall have gained an accomplished wife."

Beausire wiped his brow, assured himself that the stolen money was still safe in his pocket, and then, feeling more comfortable in body and in mind, he again reflected. They would not look for him in the Rue de Viarmes, but still they would look for him. The gentlemen of the embassy were not likely to lose, with cheerful resignation, their share of the spoils. They would probably divide themselves into several parties, and would begin by exploring the residence of the thief. There lay all the difficulty. In that house lived Oliva. They would inform her of what had happened, would maltreat her, perhaps, — nay, they might push their cruelty so far as to take her for a hostage. For why should they not speculate on his passion for her?

Beausire was near losing his wits as he contemplated these dangers. Love prevailed over all other considerations. He would not allow any one to touch the object of his love. He started off with the swiftness of an arrow toward the Rue Dauphine.

Beausire relied with great confidence on the rapidity of his movements; his enemies, however active they might be, could not be in advance of him. But for greater assurance he threw himself into a fiacre, to the driver of which he showed a six-franc piece, saying, "To the Pont Neuf;" and the horses flew over the ground.

The evening was closing in. When the carriage had reached the open space behind the statue of Henri IV. Beausire ventured to put his head out of the window and

searched with eager eyes the Rue Dauphine. He had had some experience with the police, and had for ten years been accustomed to know the police agents by sight, that he might the more easily avoid them when occasion required. He noticed two men on the end of the bridge toward the Rue Dauphine who, standing some distance apart, were gazing into that street with every appearance of interest. These men were spies.

It was by no means unusual to see spies on the Pont Neuf; for there was a proverb to the effect that in order to see at the same time a prelate, a woman of the town, and a white horse it was necessary only to go to the Pont Neuf. And as white horses, clerical habiliments, and women of the town are always objects of interest to the police, the presence of these two spies did not appear to Beausire to have any special significance. He alighted from the carriage, made himself appear humpbacked, and limping to disguise himself still further, pushed through the crowd and entered the Rue Dauphine. He saw there no sign of what he had apprehended. He could see already the house at whose windows his star, the beautiful Oliva, had so often appeared to him. The windows were closed. Doubtless she was lying on the sofa, or was reading a wicked book, or was enjoying some delicate article of food. Suddenly he thought he saw a soldier lurking in the alley opposite the house; nay, he saw a soldier at one of the windows!

Thoroughly alarmed, Beausire nevertheless had the courage to pass by the house and observe it carefully. What a spectacle! The passage-way was filled with soldiers of the Paris guard, and among them was a commissary from the Châtelet, dressed in black. They were — as Beausire's rapid glance discovered — perplexed and

disappointed. Evidently they had failed in their object, whatever it may have been.

Beausire said to himself that Monsieur de Crosne, having received information against him, had undertaken to have him arrested, and had found only Oliva. *Inde iræ!* hence the signs of disappointment he had noticed. Certainly, if Beausire had been in ordinary circumstances he would have thrown himself into the midst of those soldiers, crying like Nisus, "Here I am! here I am! it is I who have done all!" But the idea that they would get hold of the hundred thousand francs, and boast of their success for the remainder of their lives; the idea that his bold and adroit achievement should have been performed only for the advantage of the police, — this idea prevailed over all his scruples, and stifled even the anxiety of love. "Let me think," he said to himself, "I allow them to capture me; I allow them to take the money. I do no good to Oliva, and I ruin myself. I prove to her that I love her like a madman; but I give her the right to say, 'You are a fool; you should have loved me less, and saved me.' Decidedly the better way is to make good use of my legs and place this money where it will be safe; for money is the root of everything, — liberty, happiness, philosophy."

Thus meditating, Beausire pressed the bank-notes to his heart, and directed his course toward the Luxembourg; for during this last hour he was under the guidance of instinct, and since he had been a hundred times to the Luxembourg Gardens in search of Oliva, he instinctively at this moment went in that direction. For a man so proud of his logic, this was a poor reason.

In fact, the police, who knew the habits of thieves as well as Beausire knew the habits of the police, would naturally have gone to the Luxembourg in search of Beausire. But it was decided that Monsieur de

Crosne should have nothing to do with Beausire at this time.

Nicole's lover had hardly turned the corner of the Rue Saint Germain des Prés, when he was nearly run over by an elegant carriage moving rapidly toward the Rue Dauphine. Beausire had just time enough to dodge the pole, — thanks to an agility which is peculiar to the true Parisian. He did not indeed escape the oath of the coachman, or his whip; but the proprietor of a hundred thousand francs will not stop for trifles that concern his dignity, especially when he thinks the police are after him.

Beausire, then, leaped aside, and in doing so he saw in that carriage Oliva and a very handsome man in animated conversation. He uttered a slight cry, which, however, only quickened the speed of the horses. He would have followed the carriage, but it was going toward the Rue Dauphine, the only street in Paris which Beausire was at that moment anxious to avoid. And besides, he began to doubt if he had really seen her; it was a phantom, an hallucination. How could Oliva be riding in that carriage? And besides, had not the police arrested her in the Rue Dauphine?

Poor Beausire, at the end of his resources, mentally and physically, resumed his course toward the Luxembourg, crossed the already deserted garden, and made his way to a small inn outside the barrier, the hostess of which had been friendly to him. There he installed himself. He hid his money under a tile in the chamber-floor, placed the foot of his bedstead on the tile, and went to bed swearing and perspiring. He, however, intermingled with his oaths thanks to Mercury for favors already assured. He was sure that the police would not find him. He was sure that no one would rob him of his money. He was sure that Nicole, even if she were arrested, was guilty of

no crime, and that the time when innocent persons were perpetually imprisoned had gone by. He was sure, in short, that his one hundred and eight thousand francs would deliver Oliva, his inseparable companion, from whatever prison might be closed on her. There remained his companions in the embassy; with them his account would not be so easy to settle. He resolved to leave them all in France, as soon as Oliva should have regained her liberty, and set out for Switzerland, the land of liberty and good morals.

Nothing of all that Beausire meditated upon, as he drank his warm wine, took place according to his anticipations; it was so written. Men are almost always wrong in imagining they see what they do not see; they are even more in error when they imagine that they do not see what is really before their eyes.

We are about to explain this to the reader.

CHAPTER V.

OLIVA CHANGES HER RESIDENCE.

If Monsieur Beausire had made use of his eyes, which were excellent, instead of his imagination, which was always dull, he would have spared himself much regret and many mistakes. It was, in fact, Oliva who sat in the carriage, by the side of a man whom he would have recognized if he had looked at him more attentively. Oliva had gone that morning, as usual, to take a walk in the Luxembourg Gardens, and there she had met the strange friend whose acquaintance she had made the day of the Opera-ball.

She was just leaving a restaurant, bestowing a gracious smile on the proprietor, whose constant customer she was, when Cagliostro, emerging from one of the walks, ran up to her and caught her by the arm. She uttered a little cry.

"Where are you going?" he said.

"Why, home, of course, to the Rue Dauphine."

"Just what the people want who are there waiting for you," rejoined the unknown nobleman.

"People — who are waiting for me — how can that be? No one is waiting for me."

"Oh, yes; a dozen visitors at least."

"A dozen visitors!" cried Oliva, laughing; "you might as well say a whole regiment."

"Upon my word, if it had been possible to send a regiment to the Rue Dauphine, it would have been done."

"You astonish me."

"I should astonish you more, if I should allow you to go to the Rue Dauphine."

"Why?"

"Because you would be arrested, my dear."

"Arrested, I?"

"Assuredly; these twelve visitors who are waiting for you are archers sent by Monsieur de Crosne."

Oliva shuddered; certain persons are always afraid of certain things. Nevertheless, after a careful inspection of her conscience, "I have done nothing," she said; "why should I be arrested?"

"Why should any woman be arrested? For some intrigue, some foolishness."

"I have no intrigues."

"But you may have had them."

"Oh, perhaps!"

"They may be wrong in wishing to arrest you, but the fact remains that they do wish to arrest you. Will you go to the Rue Dauphine, notwithstanding?"

Oliva stopped, pale and agitated. "You play with me as a cat plays with a mouse," she said. "Come, if you know anything, tell it to me. Perhaps it is Beausire they want?" and she cast upon Cagliostro a supplicating look.

"Perhaps. I suspect his conscience is less clear than yours."

"Poor fellow!"

"Pity him, if you like; but if he is arrested, there is no need of your following his example."

"What interest have you in protecting me? Why should you concern yourself about me? Come, now," she said boldly, "it is not natural for a man like you —"

"Do not go on, you would say something foolish; and

time is precious, because the agents of Monsieur de Crosne, not finding you at home, are quite capable of coming here to look for you."

"Here! do they know that I am here?"

"Not a very difficult thing to know; I knew it! Let me finish what I was saying. As I do take an interest in your person and wish you well, the rest need not concern you. Come, let us go to the Rue d'Enfer. My carriage is waiting for you there. Ah! you doubt still?"

"Yes."

"Well! we will do a very imprudent thing, but which will convince you once for all, I hope. We will drive by your house in my carriage, and when you shall have seen these gentlemen of the police at a safe distance, yet near enough to judge of their intentions, then you will better appreciate my services." While saying this he had led Oliva to the Rue d'Enfer, where they entered the carriage. They were on their way to the Rue Dauphine, where Beausire had seen them. Certainly, if he had called out at that moment, if he had followed the carriage, Oliva would have done all in her power to reach him, in order to share his fate, whatever it might be. But Cagliostro saw the unfortunate man, and diverted Oliva's attention by pointing to the crowd which curiosity had already attracted to her door.

When Oliva perceived that her house was filled by the soldiers of the police, she threw herself into the arms of her protector in such despair that the heart of any other man but this man of iron would have been moved. He only pressed the hand of the young girl, and in order to conceal her lowered the blinds of the carriage.

"Save me! save me!" cried the poor girl, every little while.

"I promise to do so," he said.

"But if these police officers know everything, they will find me, after all."

"No, no; no one can discover you in the place to which you are going; for although they may come to your house to arrest you, they will not think of looking for you at my house."

"Oh," she said in terror, "at your house! we are going to your house?"

"You are mad," he replied; "I should think that you had forgotten our agreement. I am not your lover, my good girl, and do not wish to become so."

"Then it is a prison you are offering me?"

"If you prefer the hospital of Saint Lazare, you are free to go there."

"Well," she replied, almost overcome with fear, "I trust myself to you; do with me as you please."

He took her to the Rue Neuve Saint Gilles, to that house in which he had received Philippe de Taverney. When he had established her in a small room in the second story, where she would be free from the observations of the servants, he said to her: "I assure you that you are yet to be happier than you will be in this place."

"Happy! How can I be happy?" said she, with a heavy heart. "Happy, without liberty, — without a garden in which to take my walks. It is so gloomy here. I shall die here."

"You are right," he said; "I do not wish you to want for anything. You would be uncomfortable here; and besides my servants would see you here at last, and might annoy you."

"Or betray me, perhaps," she added.

"As to that, fear nothing; but that you may have

perfect peace of mind, I will try to find you another abode."

Oliva seemed to be somewhat appeased by these promises. Besides, she was pleased with her new apartment, which contained every comfort, and entertaining books with which she could occupy herself.

Her protector left her, saying, "I do not mean to starve you, dear child. If you wish to see me, ring, and I will come immediately if I am at home, or if I am out, as soon as I return." He kissed her hand and left her.

"Ah," cried she, "above all, bring me some news of Beausire!"

"I will give it my first attention," he replied, as he closed the door of her room. Then, as he was descending the stairs, "It will be," he thought, "a profanation to put her in that house in the Rue Saint Claude. But it is important that no one should see her, and in that house no one will see her. At all events, it is better to run the risk of her discovery in that house in the Rue Saint Claude than in any other. Yes, I must make this sacrifice. I will extinguish the last spark of the fire of other days."

The count put on a heavy coat, took some keys from his secretary, from which he selected several which he gazed upon tenderly, and left his hôtel alone and on foot, taking his way along the Rue Saint Louis du Marais.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

MONSIEUR DE CAGLIOSTRO went alone to the old house in the Rue Saint Claude which our readers cannot have quite forgotten. The night was coming on when he stopped opposite the gate, and but few persons could be seen on the boulevard. A dog was barking — or rather, howling — in the small enclosure of the convent, and a breath of warm wind bore to the Rue Saint Claude the melancholy tones of the clock of Saint Paul's striking the hour and three quarters. It was quarter of nine o'clock.

The count stopped, as we have said, opposite the carriage-gate, drew a great key from under his overcoat, and applied it to the lock. He had but to turn the key, and then push open the gate. But time had done its work; the wood was swollen at all the joints, and rust had eaten into the hinges. Grass had sprung up through the openings in the pavement, covering the lower part of the gate with its moist emanations. A sort of mastic, like that with which swallows build their nests, filled every space and covered the woodwork. Cagliostro pushed the gate with his hands, then with his shoulder, and finally overcame the resistance, and with a complaining creak the gate yielded before him.

When the gate was open the court-yard was seen, as desolate and moss-grown as an abandoned cemetery. Cagliostro closed the gate behind him. No one had seen him enter, and surrounded as he was by high walls, no one could see him. He could therefore pause a moment

to recall his past life, face to face with his former abode. His life was desolate and void; his house was a deserted ruin. Of the twelve steps at the entrance, three only were still whole. Cagliostro ascended the steps, trembling under his feet, and by the aid of a second key entered the large antechamber. There he lighted the lantern he had brought with him. In the dining-room the side-tables had almost lost, through decay, their original forms; the tiles of the floor were slippery with slime. All the doors were open, allowing the imagination freely to penetrate those gloomy depths already visited by death. The count shuddered; for at the end of the salon, where formerly the stairway was approached, he heard a mysterious noise. In other times that noise would have announced a beloved presence, and would have summoned the master of that house, through all his senses, to life, hope, and happiness. That noise, now representing nothing, recalled all the vanished past.

With a frowning brow, and holding his breath, Cagliostro moved forward toward the statue of Harpocrates, near which was the spring by which formerly he opened the door of communication between the concealed and the unconcealed portions of the house. The spring was worked without difficulty, though the worm-eaten woodwork trembled around it. But hardly had the count placed his foot on the secret staircase, when again the strange noise was heard. He reached forward his lantern to discover its cause; he saw nothing but a large snake slowly descending the stairs, and lashing with its tail the sounding steps. The reptile looked calmly at Cagliostro, and glided through a hole in the woodwork and disappeared. It was, no doubt, the Genius of Solitude.

The count continued the ascent, attended on his way by a recollection, or to speak more precisely, by a pres-

ence. When the light outlined his moving shadow on the walls, it seemed to him that another was there, revived from the dead to join him in this visit to the mysterious abode. Thus going forward, dreaming as he went, he reached the movable tile which served as an entrance from Balsamo's armory to the perfumed retreat of Lorenza Feliciani. The walls were bare, the rooms empty. On the hearth was a large mass of ashes, in which sparkled a few particles of gold and silver. Those fine ashes, white and perfumed, were the ashes of Lorenza's furniture, which Balsamo had burned even to the last item. Cagliostro stooped and took up a pinch of the ashes, which he slowly and passionately absorbed with his breath. "If only," he murmured, "I could thus absorb a portion of that soul which in other days communicated with this dust!"

Cagliostro abandoned himself to these dreams. The man descended from the heights of philosophy to indulge for a little while in sentiments of the heart, beyond the domain of reason. After evoking the pleasing phantoms of solitude, and resigning them again to Heaven, and when he thought that he had done with human weakness, his eyes rested on an object still shining amid that ruin. He stooped and saw, in a groove in the floor and half-buried under the dust, a small silver arrow, which seemed as if recently dropped from a woman's hair.

The philosopher, the man of science, the prophet, the scorner of humanity, he who would even call Heaven to account with him, this man who had repressed so many sorrows within himself, and had drawn so many drops of blood from the hearts of others, — Cagliostro, the atheist, the charlatan, the mocking sceptic, picked up the silver arrow, pressed it to his lips, and being certain that no one could see him, he suffered a tear to rise to his eyelids as he murmured, "Lorenza!"

And this was all. There was a demon in that man. He had sought the struggle, and for his own happiness had fought it out. After ardently kissing that sacred relic he opened the window, passed his hand between the bars, and threw the bit of metal into the enclosure of the convent. Thus he punished himself for having yielded to emotions of the heart.

"Adieu!" he said to the insensible object which perhaps was lost to him forever. "Adieu, thou souvenir, sent to me doubtless to soften me, to unman me. Henceforth I will think only of the earth. Yes, this house is about to be profaned. What do I say? — it is profaned already. I have reopened the doors; I have brought light within its walls; I have looked into the interior of the tomb; I have trampled on the ashes of the dead. The house is already profaned, then. Let it be so altogether, and for some good purpose.

"A woman yet again will cross this court-yard; a woman will press her feet upon the stairs; a woman will perhaps sing under this roof where lingers yet the last sigh of Lorenza. So be it. All these profanations will have one sole aim, — the advancement of my cause."

He put down his lantern on one of the steps of the staircase. "All this staircase must come down," he said. "All the inside structure must be taken down. Mystery will take its flight. The house will continue to be a hiding-place, though no longer a sanctuary."

The count wrote hastily upon his tablets the following lines: —

To Monsieur Lenoir, my architect:

Clear up court-yard and vestibules. Repair coach-house and stables. Pull down the interior pavilion. Reduce the hôtel to two stories. Eight days.

"Now," said he, "let us see if the windows of the little countess are visible from here."

He approached a window on the second story. He could see from there the houses on the farther side of the Rue Saint Claude. Opposite, and at a distance of not more than sixty feet was the lodging occupied by Jeanne de La Motte.

"It is infallible," said Cagliostro; "the two women cannot fail to see each other." He took up his lantern and descended the stairs. An hour later he had returned home, and had sent his plan to the architect.

It remains to be said that on the next day fifty workmen invaded the hôtel; that the sound of the hammer, the saw, and the pickaxe were heard in every quarter; that the grass, piled up in a corner, was beginning to smoke; and that in the evening the pedestrian returning home, faithful to his habit of daily observation, saw in the court-yard a large rat hanging by one leg from a hoop, surrounded by a number of workmen who were making fun of its grizzly mustache and venerable rotundity. That silent tenant of the hôtel had been buried in his hole by the fall of a large stone. Half-dead when the stone was raised by a crane, it had been seized by the tail, and sacrificed to the amusement of the young Auvergnese mixers of plaster. Either through mortification or through asphyxia the rat had died under that treatment. The pedestrian pronounced over it this funeral oration: "Here is one who was happy for ten years. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*"

In eight days the house had been restored, as Cagliostro had directed.

CHAPTER VII.

JEANNE MANAGES THE CARDINAL.

THE Cardinal de Rohan, two days after his visit to Boehmer, received the following note: —

"His Eminence Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan knows, doubtless, where he is to take supper to-night."

"From the little countess," he said, noting the perfume of the paper; "I will go."

Among the lackeys in Jeanne's service she had noticed one with black hair, brown eyes, and a complexion of the dark hue which indicates the bilious temperament. She inferred from these signs that he was active, intelligent, and self-reliant. She sent for him, and in a short time obtained from him the information she sought. The lackey reported to her that his Eminence had gone twice within two days to the house of Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange.

This was enough for Jeanne. Such a man as Monsieur de Rohan does not drive bargains. Shrewd tradesmen like Boehmer do not let a purchaser go away without buying. The necklace must be sold, — sold by Boehmer, bought by Monsieur de Rohan! And the latter had not said a word about it to his confidante, to his mistress! The indication was a serious one. Jeanne knitted her brows, bit her thin lips, and sent to the cardinal the note we have read.

Monsieur de Rohan came in the evening. He sent before him a basket of Tokay and other delicacies, just as he would have done if he had been going to take supper with La Guimard or Mademoiselle Dangeville.

Jeanne understood the significance of this attention, as of so many others. She allowed nothing the cardinal had sent to be served at the table; and when they were alone she opened the conversation in the following manner: "Indeed, Monseigneur," she said, "there is one thing which pains me very much."

"Oh, what is that, Countess?" said Monsieur de Rohan, with that affectation of anxiety which is not an expression of real alarm.

"Well, Monseigneur! the cause of my grief is the discovery not that you no longer love me, but that you never have loved me."

"Oh, Countess, what is that you say?"

"Do not excuse yourself, Monseigneur; that would be time lost."

"For me," said the cardinal, gallantly.

"No, for me," replied Madame de La Motte, quickly. "Besides —"

"Oh, Countess!" said the cardinal.

"Do not be uneasy, Monseigneur; I am quite indifferent about it."

"Whether I love you or not?"

"Yes."

"And why are you so indifferent?"

"Because I do not love you."

"Countess, do you know that what you have done me the honor to say to me is not at all kind?"

"Indeed, it is true that we are not beginning with pleasant sayings; but it is a fact which may as well be acknowledged between us."

"What fact?"

"That I have never loved you more, Monseigneur, than you have loved me."

"Oh, as for me, you must not say that!" cried the prince, in a tone which was almost truthful. "I have had for you much affection, Countess. Do not put me in the same position with yourself."

"Come, Monseigneur, let us esteem each sufficiently to speak the truth."

"And what is the truth?"

"There is between us a tie very different from that of love."

"What is it?"

"Interest."

"Interest? Fie, Countess!"

"Monseigneur, I will say to you as the Norman peasant said of the gibbet to his son: 'If you dislike it yourself, do not give others a distaste for it.' Fie on interest, Monsieur? how you do go on!"

"Well, then, Countess, let us suppose that we are guided by interest; in what way can I serve your interests and you mine?"

"In the first place, Monseigneur, and before everything else, I have a notion to pick a quarrel with you."

"Do so, Countess."

"You have shown a want of confidence in me, a want of esteem."

"I! — and in what, if you please?"

"In what? Do you deny that after having skilfully dragged from me details which I was dying to give you — "

"Of what, Countess?"

"Of the desire of a certain great lady for a certain thing, you immediately took measures to gratify that desire without informing me."

"'Drag details'? 'the desire of a certain great lady for a certain thing'? 'gratify that desire'! Countess, truly you are an enigma, a sphinx. Ah! I had seen the head and neck of a woman, but I had not yet seen the lion's claws. It appears that you are about to show them to me. Well, be it so."

"No; I will show you nothing at all, Monseigneur, since you have no longer the desire to see anything. I will give you simply and plainly the answer to the enigma: the 'details' are all that happened at Versailles; the 'desire of a certain lady,' that is the queen; and the 'gratification of this desire' of the queen is the purchase which you made yesterday from Messieurs Boehmer and Bossange of their famous necklace."

"Countess!" murmured the cardinal, pale and trembling.

"Come," she said, "why do you look at me with such an air of fear? Did you not yesterday make a bargain with the jewellers on the Quai de l'École?"

A Rohan does not lie, even to a woman. The cardinal was silent. And as he was about to blush, — a thing for which a man never forgives the woman who causes it, — Jeanne hastened to take his hand.

"Pardon, my Prince," she said; "I was anxious to show you how far you had been mistaken with regard to me. You have thought me foolish and wicked?"

"Oh! oh, Countess!"

"In short —"

"Not a word more; let me speak in my turn. I can persuade you perhaps, for now I see clearly with whom I have to deal. I expected to find in you a pretty woman, a woman of intelligence, a charming mistress; but you are better than all that. Listen."

Jeanne drew nearer to the cardinal, leaving her hand in his.

"You, indeed, were willing to be my mistress, my friend,

without loving me. You told me so yourself," continued Monsieur de Rohan.

"And I repeat it," said Madame de La Motte.

"You had an object, then?"

"Assuredly."

"The object, Countess?"

"Do you need to have me explain it to you?"

"No, I can guess it. You wish to make my fortune. Is it not certain that my fortune once made, my first care would be to secure yours? Am I mistaken?"

"You are not mistaken, Monseigneur; only, believe me, I have not pursued this object in the midst of antipathies and repugnance, — the road has been agreeable."

"You are an amiable woman, Countess, and it is a pleasure even to talk business with you. I was saying, then, that you had guessed aright. You know that I have in a certain direction a respectful attachment?"

"I saw it at the Opera-ball, Prince."

"That attachment will probably never be reciprocated. Oh, may God keep me from the certainty!"

"Eh!" said the countess, "a woman is not always queen, and you surely are the equal of Monsieur le Cardinal Mazarin."

"He was a very handsome man also," said Monsieur de Rohan, laughing.

"And an excellent prime minister," rejoined Jeanne, with the greatest coolness.

"Countess, in your presence it is needless to think; speaking is much more superfluous. You think and speak for your friends. Yes, I mean to be prime minister. Everything prompts me to it; birth, experience in affairs, a certain consideration which foreign courts manifest toward me, the great sympathy felt for me by the French people —"

"Everything, in short, with one exception."

"Except a repugnance, you mean?"

"Yes, on the part of the queen; and this repugnance is a real obstacle. What the queen likes, the king will also like in the end; what she hates, he detests in advance."

"And she hates me?"

"Oh!"

"Let us be frank. I think we must not stop half-way on this pleasant road."

"Well, Monseigneur, the queen does not like you."

"Then, I am lost! No necklace will help me."

"There is where you may be mistaken, Prince."

"The necklace is bought."

"At least, the queen will see that if she does not love you, you love her."

"Oh, Countess!"

"You know, Monseigneur, that we have agreed to call things by their right names."

"So be it. You say, then, that you do not despair of seeing me, some day, prime minister?"

"I am sure of it."

"I should be vexed with myself if I failed to ask what are your ambitions."

"I will tell you, Prince, when you shall be in a position to gratify them."

"That is to the point. I will wait until that day."

"Thank you; now let us take supper."

The cardinal took Jeanne's hand and pressed it as Jeanne had so much desired to have it pressed some days before. But that time had gone by. She drew away her hand.

"Well, Countess?"

"Let us take supper, I say, Monseigneur."

"But I am no longer hungry."

"Then let us talk."

"But I have nothing more to say."

"Then let us separate."

"Is that what you call our alliance? You dismiss me?"

"In order to belong more truly to one another, Monseigneur," she said, "it is necessary above all that we should belong to ourselves."

"You are right, Countess; pardon me for being again mistaken with regard to you. Oh, I swear that it is for the last time." He took her hand and kissed it so respectfully that he did not see the mocking, diabolical smile of the countess, at the words, "This will be the last time that I shall be mistaken with regard to you."

Jeanne rose, conducted the prince as far as the antechamber. There he stopped and whispered, "What comes next, Countess?"

"It is very plain."

"What shall I do?"

"Nothing. Wait for me.

"And you will go —"

"To Versailles."

"When?"

"To-morrow."

"When shall I hear from you?"

"Immediately."

"Well then, my patroness, I leave everything to you."

"Leave all to me," and she retired to her own apartment, went to bed, and looking vaguely at the beautiful marble Endymion waiting for Diana, "Decidedly, liberty is best, after all," she murmured.

CHAPTER VIII.

JEANNE MANAGES THE QUEEN.

MISTRESS of such a secret, rich in such a future, supported by so powerful friends, Jeanne felt strong enough to move the world.

To appear at court, no longer as a suppliant, no longer as the poor mendicant protected by Madame de Boulainvilliers, but as a descendant of the Valois, with an income of one hundred thousand francs, with a husband who would be a duke; to be called the favorite of the queen, and in this age of intrigue and agitation to govern the State by governing the king through Marie Antoinette, — this was the panorama which unrolled itself before the inexhaustible imagination of the Comtesse de La Motte.

Early in the day she hastened to Versailles. She had no audience appointed; but her faith in her good fortune had become so strong that she did not doubt that etiquette would yield to her desires. And she was right. All the officials of the court, so eager to discover the tastes of the sovereign, had already noticed how much pleasure Marie Antoinette seemed to take in the society of the pretty countess.

Therefore on her arrival, an intelligent usher placed himself in the way of the queen as she was returning from chapel, and said, as if by chance, to one of the gentlemen in waiting, "Monsieur, what can be done for Madame la Comtesse de La Motte-Valois, who has no letter of audience?"

The queen was talking with Madame de Lamballe. On hearing Jeanne's name adroitly spoken by this man, she stopped and turned round.

"Did not some one say that Madame de La Motte-Valois is here?"

"I believe so, your Majesty," replied the man.

"Who says so?"

"This usher, Madame." The usher bowed modestly.

"I will receive Madame de La Motte-Valois," said the queen, as she passed on. Then, as she reached her apartments, "You may conduct her to the bath-chamber," she said.

Jeanne, to whom the man related plainly what he had done, immediately took out her purse, but the usher stopped her by a smile.

"Madame la Comtesse, please let this debt accumulate; you will be able to pay me with better interest."

Jeanne returned the money to her pocket. "You are right, my friend; I thank you. Why," she said to herself, "should I not patronize an usher who has patronized me? I do as much for a cardinal."

Jeanne soon found herself in the presence of her sovereign. Marie Antoinette was grave and rather reserved, — perhaps for the very reason that she had granted the countess this unexpected reception.

"The queen imagines," thought the friend of Monsieur de Rohan, "that I have come again to beg. Before I have spoken twenty words she will have unbent, or will have driven me from her presence."

"Madame," said the queen, "I have not yet had an opportunity to speak to the king."

"Ah, Madame, your Majesty has already been but too good to me, and I expect nothing more. I have come —"

"Why do you come?" said the queen, quick to see

any change of manner. "You had not asked for an audience. There is something urgent, perhaps, — for yourself?"

"Something urgent, — yes, Madame; but not for myself."

"For me, then? Come, speak on, Countess!" and the queen led Jeanne into the bath-room, where her women were waiting.

The countess, seeing so many persons about the queen, did not begin the conversation. The queen sent away her women.

"Madame," said Jeanne, "your Majesty sees that I am very much embarrassed."

"Why so? I told you to speak."

"Your Majesty knows — I believe I have told you — the very great kindness which Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan has shown me?"

The queen frowned. "I do not remember," she said.

"I thought — "

"No matter; go on."

"Well, Madame, his Eminence has done me the honor to pay me a visit."

"Ah!"

"It was with regard to a very good work I have in charge."

"Very well, Countess, very well. I will contribute also — to your good work."

"Your Majesty misunderstands. I have had the honor of saying that I asked nothing. Monsieur le Cardinal, as usual, spoke to me of the kindness of the queen, of her unlimited generosity."

"And asked that I should patronize his protégés?"

"At first he did, your Majesty."

"I will do it, not for Monsieur le Cardinal, but for the

unfortunate, whom I always help. Only, tell his Eminence that I am very much straitened."

"Alas, Madame, that is just what I told him! and hence the embarrassment I mentioned just now to your Majesty."

"Ah! ah!"

"I expressed to Monsieur le Cardinal my sense of the generosity which constantly empties your purse, always too narrow for your desires."

"Well?"

"See, Monseigneur," I said, "her Majesty renders herself the slave of her own kindness. She sacrifices herself for the poor. The good which she does brings evil to herself; and therefore I accused myself."

"How so, Countess?" said the queen, who was listening attentively, either because Jeanne had attacked her at her weak point, or because the superior intelligence of Marie Antoinette perceived that this long preamble must be the introduction of something very interesting to herself.

"I told him that your Majesty had given me a large sum of money a few days before; that a thousand times, at least, during two years such instances of your generosity had occurred. I told him that if the queen had been less sensible, less generous, she would have two millions in her coffers, and there would have been no need of denying herself that beautiful diamond necklace, — so nobly, so courageously, but allow me to say, Madame, so wrongly refused."

The queen blushed and looked steadily at Jeanne. Evidently the conclusion had been reached in the last sentence. Was there any snare, or was it all flattery? Certainly, this point unsettled, there could not fail to be some danger for a queen. But Jeanne's face expressed so

much sweetness, such candid benevolence and truth, that no one could have accused her of perfidy or adulation. And as the queen herself possessed a soul full of true generosity, and as in generosity there is always strength, and in strength always truth, Marie Antoinette said, with a sigh, "Yes, the necklace is beautiful,—it was beautiful, I mean,—and I am very glad that a woman of taste praises me for having refused it."

"If you knew, Madame," cried Jeanne, "how we come at last to understand the feelings of those who love persons in whom we are interested!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, Madame, that on hearing of your heroic sacrifice of the necklace, I saw Monsieur de Rohan turn pale."

"Turn pale!"

"In an instant his eyes were filled with tears. I do not know, Madame, whether it is true that Monsieur de Rohan is a handsome man and an accomplished nobleman, as many pretend him to be; all that I know is that his features, at that moment illumined by the fire of his soul, and furrowed by tears excited by your generous disinterestedness —what am I saying? by your sublime self-denial — will live forever in my memory."

The queen stopped a moment to start a flow of water from the mouth of a gilded swan suspended over the marble bath. "Well, Countess," she said, "since Monsieur de Rohan has appeared to you as handsome and accomplished as you have just said, I advise you not to let him see it. He is a worldly prelate,—a shepherd who gathers the sheep as much for himself as for the Lord."

"Oh, Madame!"

"Well, do I calumniate him? Is it not his reputation? Does he not glory in it? Have you not seen him, on cere-

monial days, moving his beautiful hands in the air, — they are beautiful, it is true, — in order to make them whiter, while on those hands, sparkling with the pastoral ring, the devotees fasten their eyes, more brilliant than the diamond of the cardinal?"

Jeanne bowed.

"The cardinal's trophies," pursued the queen, passionately, "are numerous. Some of them have made scandal. The cardinal is a lover like those of the Fronde. Let those praise him who will; I decline to do so."

"Well, Madame," said Jeanne, completely set at ease by this familiarity, "I do not know whether Monsieur le Cardinal was thinking of those devotees when he spoke so fervently of your Majesty's virtues; but I do know this, that his beautiful hands were pressed to his heart."

The queen shook her head, with a forced laugh.

"Indeed!" thought Jeanne, "are things going even better than we could have thought possible? Is spite about to become our auxiliary? Oh, in that case we shall have too many facilities."

The queen quickly resumed her dignified and indifferent demeanor. "Go on," she said.

"Your Majesty freezes me; this modesty, which repels even the homage —"

"Of the cardinal! Oh, yes!"

"But why, Madame?"

"Because I do not believe in his homage, Countess."

"It ill becomes me," replied Jeanne, with the most profound respect, "to defend any one who has incurred your Majesty's displeasure; it is not to be doubted for a moment that he is guilty, since he has displeased the queen."

"Monsieur de Rohan has not displeased me; he has offended me. But I am a queen and a Christian; doubly

disposed, therefore, to forget offences," and the queen said this with the majestic kindliness which was peculiar to her.

Jeanne was silent.

"Have you nothing more to say?"

"Your Majesty would suspect me. I should incur your anger, your blame, by expressing an opinion which differed from yours."

"You do not agree with me in my opinion of the cardinal?"

"Not at all, Madame."

"You would not speak so if you knew what Prince Louis had done against me."

"I only know what I have seen him do in your Majesty's service."

"He has made polite speeches?"

Jeanne bowed.

"Courtesies, good wishes, compliments?" continued the queen.

Jeanne was silent.

"You have a lively friendship for Monsieur de Rohan, Countess; I will not attack him in your presence," and the queen began to laugh.

"Madame," replied Jeanne, "I prefer your anger to your raillery. The sentiment Monsieur de Rohan entertains for your Majesty is so respectful that I am sure it would kill him to see the queen laughing at him."

"Oh, oh, he has changed very much, then!"

"But your Majesty did me the honor to tell me, only the other day, that for the past ten years Monsieur de Rohan has been passionately —"

"I was jesting, Countess," said the queen, severely.

Jeanne, reduced to silence, appeared to the queen to have given up the contest; but Marie Antoinette was mis-

taken. With those women who combine the nature of the tiger and serpent, the moment when they coil themselves is always the moment when they plan a fresh attack; a concentrated repose precedes the spring.

"You speak of those diamonds," said the queen, imprudently. "Confess that you have thought of them."

"Day and night, Madame," said Jeanne, with the joy of a general who on the field of battle sees a decisive false move on the part of his enemy. "They are so beautiful! they will become your Majesty so well!"

"They will become me?"

"Yes, Madame, yes; they will become your Majesty."

"But they are sold."

"Yes, they are sold."

"To the ambassador of Portugal?"

Jeanne shook her head gently.

"No?" said the queen, joyfully.

"No, Madame."

"To whom, then?"

"Monsieur de Rohan has bought them."

The queen sprang up, and then suddenly resuming her cool manner, "Ah!" she said.

"See, Madame," said Jeanne, with an eloquence full of fervor and passion; "Monsieur de Rohan's conduct in this instance has been superb. It was a generous impulse, a noble action; a soul like your Majesty's cannot help sympathizing with all that is good and full of feeling. When Monsieur de Rohan learned — and I acknowledge having informed him of it — of your Majesty's temporary embarrassment, 'What!' he cried, 'the queen of France denies herself what the wife of a farmer-general would not think of denying herself? What! the queen liable to see some day Madame Necker adorned with these diamonds?' Monsieur de Rohan did not know, until I informed him of it, that

the ambassador of Portugal intended to buy them; then his indignation redoubled. 'It is no longer,' he said, 'a question of gratifying the queen; it is a question of royal dignity. I know the spirit which pervades foreign courts, —vanity, ostentation. They will laugh at the queen of France who has no money to gratify a legitimate desire; and shall I allow the queen of France to be laughed at? No, never!' And he left me abruptly. One hour later I knew that he had bought the diamonds."

"Fifteen hundred thousand francs?"

"Sixteen hundred thousand francs."

"And what was his intention in purchasing them?"

"That, since your Majesty could not have them, they should not at least belong to any other woman."

"And are you sure that Monsieur de Rohan did not buy this necklace as a present for some mistress?"

"I am sure that it is for the purpose of destroying it, rather than that it should adorn any neck but that of the queen."

Marie Antoinette reflected, and her noble countenance expressed clearly everything that was passing in her soul. "Monsieur de Rohan has done well," she said; "it was a noble action and a delicate expression of devotion."

Jeanne eagerly drank in these words. "Therefore, you will thank Monsieur de Rohan?" continued the queen.

"Oh, yes, Madame!"

"You will add that he has proved to me his friendship, and that I, as an honest man — as Catherine said — accept everything from friendship, on condition that I may return it. Therefore I accept, not the gift of Monsieur de Rohan —"

"What then?"

"But a loan from him. Monsieur de Rohan has been pleased to advance his money, or his credit, for my grati-

fication ; I will reimburse him. Boehmer wanted ready money, I believe ?"

"Yes, Madame."

"How much, — two hundred thousand francs ?"

"Two hundred and fifty thousand francs."

"That is just the amount of the quarterly allowance given me by the king. It has been sent to me this morning, — in advance, to be sure ; but in short, I have it." Then, returning with Jeanne to her chamber, she said to the countess, "Open this drawer, if you please."

"The first one ?"

"No, the second one. Do you see a pocket-book ?"

"Here it is, Madame."

"It contains two hundred and fifty thousand francs. Count them."

Jeanne obeyed.

"Take them to the cardinal and thank him. Tell him that every month I will arrange to pay him thus. The interest can be arranged later. In this way I shall have the necklace which pleased me so much ; and if it embarrasses me to pay it, I shall not at least inconvenience the king." She reflected a moment. "And I shall have gained the knowledge that I have a friend who has served me in a delicate manner — " She paused again. "And a friend who has divined my wishes," she said, offering Jeanne her hand, which the countess eagerly seized. Then, as she was about to leave the room, after another pause, "Countess," she said, in a low tone as if alarmed at what she was about to say, "you may tell Monsieur de Rohan that he will be welcome to Versailles, and that I wish to thank him."

Jeanne rushed out of the room, mad with joy and satisfied pride. She clutched the bank-notes as a vulture clutches its stolen prey.

CHAPTER IX.

THE QUEEN'S POCKET-BOOK.

If ever horses driven to gain a prize flew along the race-course, so flew the poor horses which carried Jeanne de Valois away from Versailles. The coachman, stimulated by the countess, drove them as if they were horses running in the Olympic games, who were to gain for their master two talents of gold, and for themselves a triple ration of hulled barley.

The cardinal was at home when Madame de La Motte came to his hôtel openly and before all the servants. She caused herself to be announced more ceremoniously than when she had gone to see the queen.

"Have you just come from Versailles?" he said.

"Yes, Monseigneur."

He regarded her attentively; she was impenetrable. She saw his agitation, his sadness and distress; but she had no pity.

"Well?" he said.

"Well, tell me, Monseigneur, what do you desire? Speak a little, so that I may not reproach myself too much."

"Ah, Countess, you say that with an air —"

"Sad, is it not?"

"Killing."

"You wished me to see the queen?"

"Yes."

"I have seen her. You hoped that she would allow me to speak of you, — she who several times had evinced her aversion to you, and her displeasure on hearing your name?"

"I see that if I had formed any such desire, I cannot expect to see it fulfilled."

"On the contrary, the queen spoke to me of you."

"Or rather, you have been so good as to speak of me to her?"

"It is true."

"And her Majesty listened?"

"That requires an explanation."

"Do not say another word, Countess. I see how great a repugnance her Majesty has had — "

"No, not very great — I ventured to speak of the necklace."

"You dared to say that I thought — "

"Of buying it for her, yes."

"Oh, Countess, that was sublime! and she listened?"

"Why, yes."

"You told her that I offered those diamonds to her?"

"She refused decidedly."

"I am lost!"

"Refused to accept a gift, yes; but the loan — "

"The loan! And you turned my offer so delicately?"

"So delicately that she accepted."

"I lend to the queen! Countess, is it possible?"

"It is much more than giving, is it not?"

"A thousand times."

"I thought so. All the same, her Majesty accepts."

The cardinal rose, then sat down again. Then coming over to Jeanne and taking her hands, "Do not deceive me," he said; "consider that with one word you can make me the most miserable of men."

"One does not play with passions, Monseigneur, unless they are ridiculous; but men of your rank and merit cannot be ridiculous."

"It is true. Then what you have said — "

"Is the exact truth."

"I have, then, a secret with the queen?"

"A secret — a momentous secret."

The cardinal ran to Jeanne and tenderly pressed her hand.

"I like that clasp of the hand," said the countess; "it is like that of a man to a man."

"It is that of a happy man to a protecting angel."

"Monseigneur, do not exaggerate."

"Oh, but I mean it. My joy, my gratitude — never — "

"But you are exaggerating both the one and the other. To lend a million and a half to the queen — was that all that you desired?"

The cardinal sighed.

"Buckingham would have asked more from Anne of Austria after strewing his pearls on the floor of the royal chamber."

"What Buckingham obtained, Countess, I am unwilling to wish for, even in a dream."

"You can come to an understanding as to that, Monseigneur, with the queen herself; for she desired me to inform you that she will receive you with pleasure at Versailles."

The imprudent woman had no sooner allowed these words to escape her lips than the cardinal turned pale, like a young man receiving the first kiss of love. He felt around him like a man intoxicated, and took hold of the nearest chair to support himself.

"Ah! ah!" thought Jeanne, "it is even more serious than I imagined. I was thinking of a duchy, a peerage,

an income of a hundred thousand francs; but I may now go in for a principality, and an income of half a million, for Monsieur de Rohan is not actuated by ambition nor by avarice, but by love!"

Monsieur de Rohan quickly recovered himself. Joy is not a malady of long duration; and as he was a man of steady purposes, he deemed it advisable to talk business with Jeanne that he might the more quickly forget that he had spoken of love; and Jeanne allowed him to do so.

"My friend," said the cardinal, pressing Jeanne in his arms, "what does the queen propose to do in regard to that loan which you suggested to her?"

"You ask that on the supposition that the queen has no money?"

"Precisely."

"Well, the queen proposes to pay you as she would pay Boehmer, with this difference: if she had bought of Boehmer all Paris would have known it, — a thing not to be thought of after her famous saying about the man-of-war. The queen therefore wishes to receive the diamonds by installments, and make payment for them in the same manner. You will afford her the opportunity; you are to her a discreet cashier, and solvent in case she should meet with any obstacle in making the payments, — that is all. She is happy, and she pays; do not ask for more."

"She pays? What do you mean?"

"The queen — a woman who knows everything — knows very well that you have debts, Monseigneur. And then she is proud; she is not a friend who will receive presents. When I told her that you had advanced two hundred and fifty thousand francs —"

"You told her that?"

"Why not?"

"It would make the affair impossible at once."

"It afforded her a reason for accepting your service. 'Nothing for nothing' is the queen's motto."

"*Mon Dieu!*"

Jeanne quietly felt in her pocket and took out the queen's pocket-book.

"What is that?" asked Monsieur de Rohan.

"A pocket-book containing bank-notes to the amount of two hundred and fifty thousand francs. The queen sends them to you with hearty thanks."

"Oh!"

"The full amount is there; I counted the notes."

"There is no question about that."

"What are you looking at so intently?"

"I am looking at this pocket-book, which I do not recognize as yours."

"It seems to please you, and yet it is neither rich nor handsome."

"It does please me, and I do not know why."

"You have good taste."

"Now you are making fun of me. In what way have I shown good taste?"

"Certainly, since your taste agrees with the queen's."

"This pocket-book —"

"Was the queen's, Monseigneur."

"Do you wish very much to keep it?"

"Oh, very much!"

Monsieur de Rohan sighed. "That is easily conceived," he said.

"Nevertheless, if it would please you," said the countess, with a smile which might have brought a saint to ruin.

"You cannot doubt it, Countess; but I would not deprive you of it."

"Take it."

"Countess!" cried the cardinal, transported with delight, "you are a friend the most precious, the most intelligent, the most —"

"Yes, yes."

"And between us it is —"

"'For life, for death,' — they always say that. No, I have only one merit."

"What is it, then?"

"That of having pushed your affairs with considerable success and with very much zeal."

"If that were your only merit, my friend, I might say that I am almost equal to you, inasmuch as I, while you, poor dear, went to Versailles, — I also was working for you."

Jeanne looked at the cardinal with surprise.

"Yes," he resumed, "a mere trifle. My banker came to propose my taking stock in some enterprise for draining and cultivating a marsh somewhere. He assured me the profit was sure, and I agreed."

"And you did well."

"Oh, you will see in a moment that you always occupy the first place in my thoughts."

"The second, you mean; and that is more than I deserve. But go on."

"My banker gave me two hundred shares, and I took a quarter of them for you."

"Oh, Monseigneur!"

"Let me finish. Two hours later he came again. The sole fact of my subscription for those shares had raised the value of the stock a hundred per cent. He handed me a hundred thousand francs."

"A fine speculation."

"Of which here is your share, dear Countess, — I should

say, dear friend," and from the package of two hundred and fifty thousand francs given by the queen he slipped twenty-five thousand francs into Jeanne's hands.

"That is very good of you, Monseigneur, — gift for gift. But what pleases me most is that you thought of me."

"I shall always do so," replied the cardinal, kissing her hand.

"And you may count on the same from me. *Au revoir*, Monseigneur, soon — at Versailles," and Jeanne took her departure, after giving the cardinal a memorandum of the payments appointed by the queen, the first of which would be five hundred thousand francs in one month from date.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH WE AGAIN MEET DOCTOR LOUIS.

PERHAPS our readers, remembering in what a difficult position we left Monsieur de Charny, will be grateful to us for leading them back to that antechamber in Versailles to which the brave sailor, never intimidated by men or elements, had fled in fear of fainting in the presence of three women, — the queen, Andrée, and Madame de La Motte.

When he reached the middle of the antechamber, Monsieur de Charny perceived that he could go no farther. He staggered and held out his arms. It was noticed that his strength had given way, and several persons ran to his relief. The young officer fainted. After some moments he came to himself, and had no suspicion that the queen had seen him, and perhaps, under the first impulse of her anxiety, would have hastened to him, had not Andrée, incited by jealousy rather than by regard for propriety, checked her movement.

It was fortunate, however, that the queen, warned by Andrée, had remained in her chamber; for hardly had the door closed when she heard an usher announcing, "The king!"

As the king passed through the antechamber, attended by several officers of his household, he paused on seeing a man lying on a bench in the recess of a window, and in a condition that seemed to alarm the two guards

who were attending to him, who were not accustomed to see officers faint away without reason. So, while supporting Monsieur de Charny, they called out to him: "Monsieur! Monsieur! what, then, is the matter?"

But Monsieur de Charny had no voice and could not reply. The king, understanding from that silence the gravity of the case, moved quickly toward the sufferer. "Why, yes," said he, "yes, it is some one who has lost consciousness."

On hearing the king's voice the two guards turned around, and by a mechanical movement relaxed their hold on Monsieur de Charny, who fell, or rather, sustaining himself with the remains of his strength, slid groaning to the floor.

"Oh! gentlemen," said the king, "what are you doing?"

They hastened to raise Monsieur de Charny, who had again fainted away, and gently placed him in an easy-chair.

"Oh!" cried the king, suddenly, on recognizing the young officer; "why, it is Monsieur de Charny!"

"Monsieur de Charny?" cried the attendants.

"Yes, Monsieur de Suffren's nephew."

These words had a magical effect. Charny was immediately inundated with perfumed waters, as if he were in the midst of women. A doctor arrived and hastily examined the patient. The king, curious in everything pertaining to science, and compassionate toward all suffering, remained through the examination.

The doctor's first care was to open the young man's vest and shirt, to give the air access to his chest; but in doing this he made an unexpected discovery.

"A wound!" said the king, becoming more interested, and coming nearer that he might see more clearly.

"Yes, yes," murmured Monsieur de Charny, trying to

raise himself, and looking weakly around; "an old wound which has reopened; it is nothing," and his hand slightly pressed the doctor's fingers.

A physician understands, and ought to understand, everything. This was not a physician of the court, but a surgeon from the city of Versailles. He wished to give himself importance. "Oh!" said he, "an old wound; it pleases you to say so, Monsieur, but its edges are too fresh, the blood is too red, — that wound is not twenty-four hours old."

Charny, to whom that contradiction brought a supply of strength, stood up and said: "I cannot suppose, Monsieur, that you intend to inform me at what time I received my wound. I have told you, and I tell you again, that it is an old wound."

At that moment Charny perceived and recognized the king. "The king!" he said, and immediately buttoned his vest as if ashamed that his weakness had been exposed to a spectator so illustrious.

"Yes, Monsieur de Charny," replied the king; "and I am very glad that I came this way, and may perhaps bring you some relief."

"A scratch, Sire," stammered Charny, — "an old wound, Sire, that is all."

"Old or new," said Louis XVI., "the wound has enabled me to see your blood, — the precious blood of a brave gentleman."

"Whom two hours on his bed will restore to health," added Charny, and he tried to rise again. But he had over-estimated his strength. He became dizzy, tottered on his legs, and fell back again into the armchair.

"Really," said the king, "he is very ill."

"Oh, yes," said the doctor, with a shrewd and diplomatic manner; "but we may save him yet."

The king was a man of honor; he had conjectured that Charny was concealing something. That secret was sacred to him. Many another man would have sought to elicit it from the doctor, who seemed not unwilling to disclose it; but Louis XVI. preferred to leave the secret with its owner. "I do not wish," he said, "that Monsieur de Charny should expose himself to danger by returning home. Let him be cared for here. Send immediately for his uncle, Monsieur de Suffren, and when this gentleman," designating the officious practitioner, "shall have been thanked for his services, let my own physician, Doctor Louis, be summoned."

An officer hastened to execute the king's orders. Two others raised Charny and carried him to the end of the gallery to the chamber of the commander of the guards. Monsieur de Suffren was sent for, and Doctor Louis arrived to take charge of the patient.

We are already acquainted with this man, honest, wise, and modest, of an intelligence less brilliant than useful, — a brave laborer in that immense field of science in which if he who gathers the harvest is more honored, he who opens the furrow is not less honorable.

Behind the doctor, bending over his patient, was Monsieur de Suffren, who, summoned by a messenger, had hastened thither. The illustrious sailor could not understand that sudden illness. When he had taken Charny's hand and looked at his dull eyes, "Strange!" he said, "it is very strange. Doctor, my nephew has never been ill before."

"That proves nothing, Monsieur," replied the doctor.

"The air of Versailles must be very oppressive; for, I repeat, I have seen Olivier at sea for the last ten years, and always vigorous, always erect as a mast."

"It is his wound," said one of the officers.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the admiral. "Olivier was never wounded in his life."

"Oh, I beg pardon," said the officer, pointing to the crimsoned cambric, "but I thought —"

Monsieur de Suffren saw the blood.

"Enough, enough!" said the doctor, abruptly, after feeling his patient's pulse. "Are we to discuss the origin of the malady? We have the malady itself; let us be content with it, and cure it if we can."

The admiral was pleased with this decided style of speech; it was like that used by surgeons on his vessels. "Is it very dangerous, Doctor?" he asked, with more emotion than he wished to show.

"About as dangerous as a cut of a razor on the chin."

"Good! Thank the king, gentlemen. Olivier, I shall come back to see you."

Olivier moved his eyes and his fingers, as if at the same time to express his thanks to his uncle who was going away, and to the doctor who had persuaded him to go. Then, happy because he was in bed, and in the care of a man full of intelligence and kindness, he pretended to fall asleep. The doctor sent every one away.

Olivier soon slept in fact, not without having given thanks to Heaven for what had happened to him, or rather that no misfortune had happened to him under circumstances so grave. Then he became feverish. He went through again and again, in feverish dreams, the scene with Philippe, the scene with the queen, and the scene with the king, and then fell into that terrible circle which the raging blood throws like a net around the mind. He became delirious. Three hours later they could hear him in the gallery where the guards were on duty. The doctor noticed this, and calling his servant, ordered him to take Olivier in his arms. Olivier uttered plaintive cries.

"Roll the counterpane round his head," said the doctor.

"And what shall I do with him?" asked the servant. "He is too heavy, and he resists. I must have one of the guards to help me."

"You are a poor chicken-heart if you are afraid of a sick man," said the doctor.

"Monsieur—"

"And if you find him too heavy you are not so strong as you thought. I shall have to send you back to Auvergne."

The threat produced its effect. Charny, crying out, howling, and gesticulating, was carried off like a feather by the Auvergnese, in full view of the guards. The latter clustered about the doctor questioning him.

"Gentlemen," said the doctor, shouting to drown Charny's cries, "you can understand that I am not going to walk a league every hour to visit this patient whom the king has confided to me. Your gallery is at the end of the world."

"Where are you taking him, then, Doctor?"

"To my own quarters. I have two rooms here, you know. I shall sleep in one of them, and by day after to-morrow, if no one meddles with him, I will give you a good account of him."

"But, Doctor," said the officer in command, "I assure you that the patient would be well lodged here; we all love Monsieur de Suffren, and—"

"Yes, yes; I know all about this care of comrades for one another. The wounded man is thirsty; they are kind to him, give him drink, and he dies. To the devil with such care as that! it has killed patients enough for me."

Before the doctor had finished speaking, Olivier's cries could no longer be heard.

"Indeed," pursued the worthy doctor, "that was very

well thought of! There is only one danger now, — the king will want to see the sick man. And if he sees him, he will hear him. The devil! there is no time to lose. I must speak to the queen; she will give me advice."

The good doctor, having formed this resolution with the promptitude of a man who counts the seconds, deluged the face of the wounded man with cold water, placed him in bed in such a position that he would not hurt himself by turning over or falling. He put a padlock on the window-shutter, double-locked the door of the room, and putting the key in his pocket repaired to the queen, after having assured himself, by listening outside, that Olivier's cries could not be understood, even should they be heard.

It need hardly be said that as a precaution the Auvergnese had been shut up in the room with the sick man.

Near the door the doctor met Madame de Misery, whom the queen had sent to obtain news of the wounded man. She insisted on entering.

"Come along, Madame," he said, "I am just going out."

"But, Doctor, the queen is waiting!"

"I am on my way to the queen, Madame."

"The queen desires —"

"The queen shall know as much as she desires to know, I promise you, Madame. Let us go;" and he did go, so quickly that he forced the first lady in waiting of Marie Antoinette to run in order to keep up with him.

CHAPTER XI.

ÆGRI SOMNIA.

THE queen was awaiting the return of Madame de Misery; she was not expecting the doctor. The latter entered with his accustomed familiarity.

"Madame," he said aloud, "the patient, in whom the king and your Majesty are interested, is doing as well as can be expected in a case of fever."

The queen knew the doctor; she was well aware of his aversion to those persons who, he said, "uttered whole cries for only half sufferings." She had an idea that Monsieur de Charny was exaggerating his condition. Brave women are inclined to underrate the courage of brave men.

"Is the wound a slight one?" she asked.

"Eh! eh!" said the doctor.

"A scratch —"

"Why, no, no, Madame; but whether scratch or wound, all I know is that he has fever."

"Poor fellow! A very violent fever?"

"A terrible fever."

"What!" said the queen, in terror; "I did not think that so suddenly — fever —"

The doctor looked at the queen for a moment. "There are fevers and fevers," he replied.

"My dear Louis, really you frighten me, — you, who are usually so reassuring. I do not know what can have come over you this evening."

"Nothing extraordinary."

"Ah! for instance, you keep turning round; you look from right to left; you appear as if you wanted to confide to me a great secret."

"Eh! perhaps I do."

"I thought so, — a secret about the fever?"

"Why, yes."

"About Monsieur de Charny's fever?"

"Why, yes."

"And you came to tell me this secret?"

"Why, yes."

"Be quick, then. You know how curious I am. Come, let us begin at the beginning."

"Like little Jean?"

"Yes, my dear Doctor."

"Well, Madame?"

"Well, I am waiting, Doctor."

"No; it is I who am waiting."

"What do you mean?"

"For you to question me, Madame. I cannot tell a story very well; but if you ask me questions, I can answer like a book."

"Well, I asked you to tell me how Monsieur de Charny's fever is getting on."

"No; you begin wrong. In the first place, ask me how it happens that Monsieur de Charny is in my apartment, in one of my two little rooms, instead of being in the gallery, or in the guard-room?"

"Well, then, I do ask. Indeed, it is astonishing."

"Well, Madame, I did not leave Monsieur de Charny in this gallery, or in this guard-room, because Monsieur de Charny is not suffering from an ordinary fever."

The queen made a gesture of surprise. "What do you mean?"

"Monsieur de Charny, when he has a fever, is immediately delirious."

"Oh!" said the queen, clasping her hands.

"And," continued Louis, approaching the queen, "when he is delirious — the poor young man! — he says a great many things it would be improper for the gentlemen of the guard, or any other person, to hear."

"Doctor!"

"Ah, Madame, you should not have questioned me if you did not wish me to answer."

"Say on, dear Doctor;" and the queen took his hand. "This young man is an atheist, perhaps, and blasphemes in his delirium."

"Not at all! On the contrary, he is a devotee."

"Perhaps there is something of exaltation in his ravings?"

"Exaltation is the very word."

The queen composed her features, and assuming that superb dignity of manner which always accompanies the actions of princes accustomed to the respect of others and their own self-esteem, — a faculty indispensable to the lords of the earth in retaining self-control, — "Monsieur de Charny," she said, "has been recommended to me. He is the nephew of Monsieur de Suffren, our hero. He has rendered me personal services, and I wish to be to him as a relation, a dear friend. Therefore, tell me the truth; I must and will hear it."

"But I cannot tell you, Madame," replied Louis; "and since your Majesty has such a desire to know about it, I know of no way but for your Majesty to hear it yourself. Then, if this young man should say anything improper, the queen will not be angry at the indiscretion which may have allowed the secret to be divined, nor at the imprudence which might have concealed it."

"I acknowledge your consideration," said the queen; "and since Monsieur de Charny says such strange things in his delirium —"

"Things which your Majesty ought to hear in order to appreciate them," said the good doctor; and he took the trembling hand of the queen.

"But above all, take care," cried the queen; "I can do nothing here without being followed up by some kindly spy."

"I shall be the only one to-night. We have only to go the length of my corridor, which has a door at either end. I will lock that by which we enter, and no one will be near us, Madame."

"I trust to my dear doctor," said the queen, and taking the doctor's arm she glided out of the apartment, palpitating with curiosity.

The doctor kept his promise. Never was king, marching to battle or setting out to make a reconnoissance, — never was queen, seeking an adventure, more carefully attended by a captain of the guards or an officer of the palace.

The doctor locked the first door, and approached the second, against which he placed his ear.

"Well," said the queen, "is your patient in there?"

"No, Madame; he is in the second room. Oh, if he had been in this room you would have heard him at the end of the corridor. Just listen at this door."

She heard, indeed, an inarticulate murmur of moanings. "He is groaning, he is suffering, Doctor."

"Not at all; he does not groan at all. He is speaking distinctly. Stay, I will open this door."

"But I do not wish to go in where he is," cried the queen, drawing back.

"I do not propose that you shall," said the doctor. "I

only wish you to listen in the adjoining room, where, without fear of seeing or being seen, you can hear all that the wounded man says."

"All these mysteries, all these preparations, frighten me," murmured the queen.

"How will it be, then, when you have heard him?" replied the doctor, and he went alone into Charny's room.

Dressed in his regimental small clothes, the buckles of which the good doctor had unfastened, his well-formed legs encased in silk stockings, his arms stretched out like those of a corpse, and rigid in the fine, crumpled cambric sleeves, Charny endeavored now and then to raise from the pillow his head, which was as heavy as lead. A hot perspiration was streaming from his forehead, and locks of his hair clung to his temples. Overwhelmed, crushed, inert, he was no more than a thought, a sentiment, a reflection; his body lived no longer but by the flame of thought, constantly springing up in his brain like that of a wick in its alabaster vase.

It is not an empty comparison we have chosen, for this flame, the sole existence of Charny, illuminated, fantastically and softly, certain details which memory alone could not have translated into long poems.

Charny was relating to himself his interview in the coach with the German lady he had met on the road from Paris to Versailles.

"German! German!" he was constantly repeating.

"Yes, a German lady, — we all know that," said the doctor; "on the road to Versailles."

"Queen of France," he exclaimed suddenly.

"Eh!" said the doctor, looking into the room where the queen was standing. "Nothing less than that. What do you say to that, Madame?"

"What a dreadful thing it is," murmured Charny, "to

love an angel, a woman, to love her madly, to give one's life for her, and then on approaching her to find nothing more than a queen of velvet and gold, metal and cloth, without a heart!"

"Oh!" said the doctor, with a constrained laugh.

Charny paid no attention to the interruption. "I would love," he said, "a married woman. I would love her with that passion which makes one forget everything else. Well, I will say to that woman: 'There remain to us some happy days on this earth; all those without love which await us in the future will not be equal to these few blessed ones! Come, my well-beloved, so long as you love me and I love you, we shall lead the life of the elect. Afterward, — well, after that will come death, like the life we are living now. Therefore let us enjoy the blessings of love.'"

"Not badly argued for a man in a fever," murmured the doctor, "though the morality of it might be improved."

"But her children!" cried Charny, suddenly, with rage; "she will not leave her two children."

"That is an obstacle, *hic nodus*," said the doctor, with a sublime mingling of raillery and gentleness, as he wiped Charny's brow.

"Oh!" continued the young man, insensible to everything, "the children could be carried off in the skirt of a travelling coat! Come, Charny, if you can carry off in your arms the mother, who is lighter than a linnet's wing, since you can take her up without feeling any burden but a thrill of love, can you not also carry off the children of Marie — Ah —"

He uttered a terrible cry.

"The children of a king would be a burden so heavy that the void they left would be felt through half the world."

The doctor left his patient and approached the queen. He found her standing, cold and trembling; he took her hand, which was shaking.

"You are right," she said. "This is more than delirium; this young man would incur a terrible danger if he were overheard."

"Listen! listen!" said the doctor.

"No, not another word."

"He is becoming more quiet. Hark! he is praying."

Indeed, Charny had raised himself up and joined his hands; he fixed his great, astonished eyes on vacancy.

"Marie," he said, in a gentle and thrilling tone, "Marie, I have felt that you loved me. Oh, I will say nothing about it. Your foot touched mine in the coach, Marie, and I felt like dying. Your hand fell upon mine — there — there — I will say nothing of it; it is the secret of my life. My blood may flow from my wound, Marie, but the secret shall not issue with it. My enemy has steeped his sword in my blood; but if he knows something of my secret, he knows nothing of yours. Therefore, fear nothing, Marie! do not even tell me that you love me; it is useless; since you blushed, I have nothing more to learn."

"Oh, oh!" said the doctor. "It is no longer fever alone; see how calm he is; it is — "

"It is — " said the queen, with anxiety.

"It is an ecstasy, Madame, and ecstasy resembles memory; it is indeed the memory of a soul recalling heaven."

"I have heard enough," murmured the queen, so agitated that she attempted to flee.

The doctor stopped her. "Madame, Madame," he said, "what do you wish me to do?"

"Nothing, Doctor; nothing."

"But if the king should wish to see his protégé?"

"Ah, yes. Oh, that would be a misfortune!"

"What shall I say?"

"Doctor, I have not an idea; I cannot find a word; this frightful spectacle has unnerved me."

"And you have caught the fever of this ecstatic," said the doctor, in a low voice; "your pulse is at a hundred at least."

The queen did not answer; she withdrew her hand and disappeared.

CHAPTER XII.

ANDRÉE.

THE doctor remained thoughtful, looking after the queen as she withdrew. Then shaking his head, he murmured to himself: "There are in this palace mysteries which are not within the reach of my science. Against some of them I arm myself with a lancet, and pierce the veins to cure them; against others I arm myself with reproach, and pierce the heart. Shall I cure them?"

Then, when the attack was over, he closed Charny's eyes, which had remained open and haggard, bathed his temples with water and vinegar, and bestowed upon him those attentions which change the burning atmosphere that surrounds the invalid into a paradise of delight. Then, seeing that the features of the patient were becoming calm, that the sobs were giving place to sighs, that some vague syllables escaped from his lips instead of furious words, "Yes, yes, there was not merely sympathy, but some powerful influence," he said; "it seemed as if this delirium started up to meet the visitor who has just retired. Yes; human atoms move, as in the vegetable world moves the fecundating dust. Yes; thought has its secret modes of communication; hearts have their hidden approaches."

Suddenly the doctor started, turned, and listened intently. "Well," he murmured, "who can it be now?" He had heard something like a murmur and the rustling

of a dress at the farther end of the corridor. "It cannot be the queen," he said to himself. "She would not so soon change her course of action. Let us see."

He went quietly and opened another door communicating with the corridor; and putting out his head without noise, he saw within ten feet of him a woman dressed in a long robe, standing motionless like a statue of despair. The feeble light placed in the corridor was insufficient to illumine it from one end to the other; but the figure was visible in the moonlight, which for a moment was unobscured by clouds.

The doctor noiselessly withdrew, and passing rapidly to the door near which the woman stood, he suddenly opened it. She cried out, reached forth her hands, and met those of Doctor Louis.

"Who is there?" asked the doctor, with more of kindness than of menace in his tone; for he had inferred from her immobility that she was listening with her heart rather than with her ears.

"It is I, Doctor, I," replied a voice, sweet and sad.

Although that voice was not unknown to the doctor, it awakened in his mind only a vague and indistinct remembrance.

"It is I, Andrée de Taverney, Doctor."

"Ah! what is the matter? Is she ill, then?"

"*She!*" cried Andrée. "Who, then, is *she?*"

The doctor saw that he had committed an imprudence. "I beg pardon!" he said; "but a little while ago I saw a woman going away. Perhaps it was you?"

"Ah, yes! a woman has been here before me, then?" and Andrée uttered these words with such an accent of curiosity that the doctor could have no doubt as to the sentiment that prompted them.

"My dear child," he replied, "it seems to me that we

are playing at cross-purposes. Of whom are you speaking? What do you wish? Explain yourself."

"Doctor," replied Andrée, in melancholy tones that went to the heart, "do not try to deceive me! You may admit to me that a woman has been here, for I saw her."

"Eh! who said that no one had been here?"

"Yes; but a woman, — a woman, Doctor!"

"Certainly, a woman, — unless you would maintain the theory that a woman is a woman only to the age of forty years."

"Then she who came here was forty years old?" cried Andrée, with a sigh of relief.

"When I say forty years, I do not give her whole age by five or six years; but then we must be polite to our friends, and Madame de Misery is one of mine."

"Madame de Misery?"

"Certainly."

"It is, indeed, she who came here?"

"And why the deuce should n't I tell you if it were any one else?"

"Oh, I was thinking — "

"Indeed, women are all alike, — incomprehensible! I thought I knew you; but no, you are as unintelligible as all the rest. It is enough to make one swear!"

"Good Doctor, dear Doctor — "

"Enough. Let us come to the point."

Andrée looked at him anxiously.

"Is she worse than she was?" he asked.

"Who?"

"The queen, of course."

"The queen?"

"Yes, the queen, at whose order Madame de Misery came to seek me a little while ago. She has one of her suffocating spells, with palpitations, — a sad disease, my

dear young lady, and incurable. Tell me about her, if you are sent by her, and let us return at once."

The doctor made a movement as if to go from that place; but Andrée gently checked him, and replied, "No, dear Doctor, I did not come on behalf of the queen. I did not even know that she was ill. Poor queen! had I known that — Ah, pardon me, Doctor! but I am no longer aware of what I am saying."

"I see that clearly."

"I know neither what I am saying, nor what I am doing."

"Oh, I know what you are doing! You are turning faint."

In fact, Andrée had withdrawn her hand from the doctor's arm, and it fell lifeless by her side; she leaned forward, white and cold. The doctor held her up, and spoke to her encouragingly.

Andrée then made a violent effort to recover herself. That strong soul which had never allowed itself to be prostrated either by pain or by grief, tightened now its springs of steel. "Doctor," she said, "you know that I am nervous, and that the darkness frightens me. I have lost my way in the dark, and that is why I am in such a state."

"And why in the world do you expose yourself to the risk of losing your way in the darkness? No one, you say, has sent you; nothing has brought you."

"I did not say *nothing*, Doctor; I said no one."

"Ah! subtleties, my dear patient. We are not very comfortably placed here for considering them. Let us go elsewhere, especially if they are likely to continue."

"Ten minutes, Doctor, is all that I ask of you."

"Ten minutes, so be it, — but not standing; my legs positively forbid that sort of a dialogue. We will go and sit down."

"Where, then?"

"On the bench in the corridor, if agreeable to you."

"And no one will hear us, you think, Doctor?" said Andrée, in alarm.

"No one."

"Not even the wounded man in there!" she continued in the same tone, pointing to the chamber of the invalid.

"No," said the doctor, "if any one could hear us, that poor fellow certainly could not."

Andrée clasped her hands. "My God! is he, then, so ill?" she asked.

"He certainly is not well. But let us speak of what brings you here. Quick, my child, quick; you know the queen expects me."

"Well, Doctor," said Andrée, sighing, "we are speaking of it, it seems to me."

"What! Monsieur de Charny!"

"It is about him, Doctor, — I came to get news of him."

The silence with which the doctor received these words, which he might have expected, was chilling. He was, in fact, comparing Andrée's demeanor with that of the queen. He saw these two women led by the same sentiment, and he judged by the symptoms that this sentiment was a violent love.

Andrée, who was ignorant of the queen's visit, and who could not look into the doctor's heart, full of kindliness and compassion, understood his silence as implying blame. She defended herself against that condemnation, silent though it was.

"It seems to me, Doctor, that you can pardon the step I have taken, since Monsieur de Charny is suffering from a wound received in a duel, and that wound was given by my brother."

"Your brother!" cried Doctor Louis; "it is Monsieur Philippe de Taverney who has wounded Monsieur de Charny?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, I was not acquainted with that fact."

"But now that you know it you find it natural, do you not, that I should make inquiries?"

"Of course, my child," said the good doctor, delighted to find a reason for indulgence. "I was uninformed, and could not conjecture the true explanation." These last words he emphasized in a way which showed Andrée that he adopted her explanation with some reserve.

"Come now, Doctor," said Andrée, leaning with both hands on his arm, and looking in his face; "come, tell me your whole thought."

"Why, I have done so. Why should I make any mental reservations?"

"A duel between two gentlemen is a common thing, it is an every day affair."

"The only thing which would give importance to this duel would be the fact that our two young men had fought about some woman."

"About a woman, Doctor?"

"Yes; about you, for example."

"About me!" Andrée sighed. "No, Doctor, it was not for me that Monsieur de Charny fought."

The doctor had the air of being satisfied with the answer, but he determined in some way or other to have an explanation of the sigh. "Then," he said, "I understand, — it was your brother who sent to obtain an exact account of the wounded man's condition."

"Yes, it is my brother; yes, Doctor," said Andrée.

The doctor looked her in the face. "Oh! I will soon find out the secret of your heart, inflexible soul," he mur-

mured. Then aloud, "Well, then, I will tell you the whole truth, which should be spoken to every one desirous of knowing it. Report it to your brother, and let him make his arrangements accordingly. You understand?"

"No, Doctor; for I do not know what you mean by these words, 'Let him make his arrangements accordingly.'"

"I mean this: up to the present time the king still condemns the fighting of duels. He no longer insists upon the observance of the edicts, it is true; but when a duel has caused scandal, his Majesty banishes or imprisons."

"That is true, Doctor."

"And when unfortunately a man dies, — oh! then, the king is pitiless. Well, advise your dear brother to keep himself in hiding for a little while."

"Doctor," cried Andrée, — "Doctor, Monsieur de Charny is, then, very ill?"

"Listen, dear young lady! I promised you the truth, and here it is: if by this time to-morrow the fever which has just begun, and which is consuming him, should not have subsided, Monsieur de Charny will be a dead man."

Andrée felt that she was going to shriek. She pressed her hand to her throat; she buried her nails in her flesh that she might allay in physical pain this anguish which was tearing her heart. The doctor could not see upon her features the signs of this inward struggle.

Andrée controlled herself like a woman of Sparta. "My brother," she said, "will not fly. He has fought Monsieur de Charny like a brave man; if he had the misfortune to wound him, it was in self-defence; if he has killed him, God will judge him."

"She did not come on her own account," said the doctor to himself; "therefore, it must be for the queen. Let us see if her Majesty has carried her thoughtlessness to

such an extreme." Then, speaking aloud to Andrée, "What effect has this duel had on the queen?" he asked.

"The queen? I do not know," replied Andrée. "How does it concern the queen?"

"She likes Monsieur de Taverney, I presume."

"Well, Monsieur de Taverney is safe; let us hope that her Majesty will defend my brother if he is accused."

The doctor, beaten on both sides of his double hypothesis, abandoned the attack. "I am not a physiologist," he said to himself, "I am only a surgeon. Why the devil when I know so much about the play of muscles and nerves, should I trouble myself about the play of womanly caprice and passion?—Mademoiselle, you have learned what you desire to know. Advise Monsieur de Taverney to fly, or not, as you please. My business is to try to save the wounded man—this night; if I do not succeed to-night in saving him, death, which quietly carries on its work, will take him from me within twenty-four hours. Adieu," and he gently, but firmly, closed the door upon her.

Andrée pressed her hand convulsively to her forehead when she found herself alone,—alone with that terrible reality. It seemed to her as if death, of which the doctor had spoken so calmly, had already descended into that chamber, and was stalking through the dark corridor in its white winding-sheet; it seemed as if the breath of this melancholy apparition froze her limbs. She fled to her room, locked the door, and throwing herself on her knees by the side of the bed, "My God!" she cried, with frenzy, while burning tears fell from her eyes,—"my God! thou art not unjust, thou art not unwise, thou art not cruel, my God! Thou who canst do everything, thou wilt not let this young man die, who has done no harm and who is so much loved. My God! we poor human beings be-

lieve in the power of thy kindness, although trembling always before the power of thy wrath. But I! — I who pray to thee — I have been sufficiently tried in this world; I have suffered without having committed crime. Well, I have never complained, even to thee; I have never doubted thee. If now when I pray to thee; if now when I entreat; if now when I ask for the life of a young man, — if now thou shouldst refuse me, O my God! I would say that thou hadst made use of all thy power against me, and that thou art a God of wrath, of insatiable vengeance; I would say — oh, I blaspheme; pardon me, I blaspheme! and thou dost not smite me! Pardon! pardon! thou art indeed the God of clemency and mercy!"

Andrée felt her sight failing, her strength giving way; she fell inanimate upon the floor. When she woke from this cold sleep and remembered everything, her fears and her griefs, "My God!" she murmured, in a bitter tone; "thou hast been unmerciful! I love him! Oh, yes, I love him! that is enough, is it not? Now, wilt thou kill him?"

CHAPTER XIII.

DELIRIUM.

God doubtless listened to Andrée's prayer. Monsieur de Charny did not succumb to his attack of fever. On the next day, while she was anxiously waiting for any intelligence which might be received from the sick man, the latter, thanks to the care of good Doctor Louis, was passing from death to life.

Charny once out of danger, Doctor Louis did not give him so much attention ; the subject ceased to be interesting. To the doctor, the living are of very little consequence, especially when they are convalescent or quite well. But at the end of a week, during which Andrée became entirely reassured, the doctor, who remembered the manifestations of his patient during his illness, thought best to remove Charny to a distant place. He wished to expatriate the delirium.

But Charny rebelled against the first attempts. He fastened upon the doctor his eyes sparkling with anger; told him that he was the guest of the king, and that no one had the right to drive away a man to whom the king had offered a shelter. The doctor, who was not patient with intractable convalescents, ordered four valets to come in and quietly remove the wounded man. But Charny caught hold of the frame of his bed, and struck violently one of the men, threatening the others like Charles XII. at Bender.

Doctor Louis tried reasoning. At first Charny was logical enough; but when the valets persisted, he made such an effort that the wound re-opened, and his reason seemed to leave him with the flowing of his blood. He was seized with an attack of delirium more violent than the first. Then he began to cry out that they wished to deprive him of his visions; but it was all in vain, his visions still smiled on him, and she who loved him would come to see him in spite of the doctor's opposition, for she was of too high rank to regard the opposition of any one.

On hearing these words, the doctor, trembling, hastened to dismiss the servants and to sew up the wound, and soon had his patient, physically, in a satisfactory state. But he could not arrest the delirium, which increased to an alarming degree. The situation had so changed in one day that Doctor Louis began to think of resorting to heroic remedies. The sick man would not only ruin himself, he would ruin the queen. From speaking, he passed to shrieking; he began with remembering, and ended with inventing; and the worst feature of the case was that in his lucid moments — and they were many — he was madder than in his fits of madness.

Deeply embarrassed, the doctor, being unable to appeal to the authority of the king, — since the invalid also appealed to that, — determined to go and speak to the queen; and he chose for this purpose a time when Charny was sleeping, fatigued with relating his dreams, and calling up his visions.

He found Marie Antoinette thoughtful, and at the same time radiant with pleasure; for she expected the doctor to give a good account of his patient. But she was much surprised; to her very first question the doctor replied sharply, that the patient was very ill.

"What!" cried the queen, "yesterday he was doing well."

"No, Madame, he was doing very badly."

"Yet I sent Misery, and you replied by a good bulletin."

"I allowed myself to be deceived, and wished to deceive you also."

"What does that mean?" replied the queen, turning very pale. "If he is ill why conceal it from me? What should I fear, Doctor, except a misfortune which is too common, alas!"

"Madame —"

"And if he is doing well, why increase my anxiety, very natural when it concerns a good servant of the king? Therefore, answer frankly, — yes, or no. Is the patient in danger?"

"There is less danger for him than for others, Madame."

"Now the enigmas begin, Doctor," said the queen, impatiently. "Explain yourself."

"It is difficult, Madame," replied the doctor. "It is enough for you to know that the malady of the Comte de Charny is wholly moral. The wound is only an accessory to the sufferings, an occasion for the delirium."

"A moral sickness! Monsieur de Charny!"

"Yes, Madame; and I designate as moral everything that cannot be analyzed by the scalpel. Spare me the pain of saying anything more about it to your Majesty."

"You mean to say that the count —" the queen insisted.

"Do you still wish me to tell you?"

"Of course I wish it."

"Well, I mean that the count is in love; that is what I mean to say. Your Majesty demands an explanation; there it is."

The queen gave a little shrug of the shoulders which signified, "A pretty piece of business!"

"And do you think that can be cured in the same way that a wound is cured, Madame?" continued the doctor. "No; the evil increases, and from temporary delirium Monsieur de Charny will sink into a fatal monomania. Then —"

"Then, Doctor?"

"You will have ruined that young man, Madame."

"Indeed, Doctor, you have most astonishing ways. I shall have ruined this young man! Am I, then, the cause of his madness?"

"Certainly."

"But you shock me, Doctor."

"If you are not the cause of it now," pursued the inflexible doctor, shrugging his shoulders, "you will be later."

"Give me your advice, then, since it is your profession," said the queen, somewhat pacified.

"That is to say, I must give a prescription."

"If you will."

"Here it is, then: 'The young man must be cured by balm or by iron; let the woman whose name he constantly invokes kill him or cure him.'"

"There you exaggerate again," interrupted the queen, becoming impatient. "Kill — cure — grand words! Can you kill a man with a harsh word? Can you cure a poor madman with a smile?"

"Ah! if you are incredulous, — you too," said the doctor; "there is nothing more for me to do but to present my very humble respects to your Majesty."

"But, in the first place, tell me, does it concern me?"

"I know nothing about it, and do not wish to know anything. I only repeat to you that Monsieur de Charny is a reasonable madman; that reason can at once render a man mad and kill him; that madness may render him rea-

sonable and cure him. So, when you wish to free this palace from shrieks, dreams, and scandal, you must act."

"What shall I do?"

"Ah, what? I only make prescriptions; I do not advise. Am I sure of having heard what I have heard, of having seen what I have seen?"

"Come, suppose I understood you, what would happen?"

"Two fortunate things: one, the best for you as for us all, that the sick man, pierced to the heart by that infallible stiletto called reason, would see the termination of his agony, which is just beginning; the other — well — the other — Ah, Madame, excuse me, I was wrong in seeing two issues from this labyrinth. There is only one for Marie Antoinette, for the queen of France."

"I understand you; you have spoken with frankness, Doctor. It is right that the woman on account of whom Monsieur de Charny has lost his reason should return it to him, either by kindness or by force."

"Very well! That is what I mean."

"She must have the courage to go to him and wrest his dreams from him, — that is, the gnawing serpent which is coiled up in the very depths of his soul."

"Yes, your Majesty."

"Then I will send for some one; Mademoiselle de Taverney, for example."

"Mademoiselle de Taverney?" said the doctor.

"Yes; you will have everything ready for the wounded man to receive us comfortably."

"It is done, Madame."

"Without any warning?"

"It must be so."

"But," murmured the queen, "this responsibility for

the life or death of a man is more dreadful than you think."

"It is what I assume every day, when I meet with an unknown disease. Shall I attack it by a remedy which kills the disease, or by a remedy which kills the patient?"

"You, — you are very sure of killing the patient, are you not?" said the queen, with a shudder.

"Eh!" said the doctor, with a gloomy air, "even if a man should die for the honor of a queen, how many die every day for the caprice of a king? Come, Madame, come."

The queen sighed and followed the doctor, without waiting for Andrée, who was not to be found.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning; Charny, completely dressed, was sleeping in an arm-chair after the agitation of a terrible night. The window blinds, carefully closed, allowed but a feeble glimmer of light to enter the room. Everything was arranged to soothe the nervous sensibility of the sick man. There was no sound, nothing to touch him, nothing to disturb his sight. Doctor Louis had arranged everything to prevent, if possible, a renewal of the delirious outbreaks. Nevertheless, determined on striking a decisive blow, he did not shrink from a crisis which might even kill his patient. It is true that it might also save him.

The queen, in a morning robe, with her hair elegantly dressed, abruptly entered the corridor which led to Charny's room. The doctor had recommended her not to hesitate, not to knock; but to appear before him suddenly and with resolution, in order to produce a violent effect. She therefore turned so suddenly the knob of the door of the antechamber that a person leaning against the door of Charny's room, — a woman enveloped in a mantle, — had not time to

straighten up and regain her self-possession. The agitated countenance and trembling hands of this woman certainly were not indicative of tranquillity.

"Andrée!" cried the queen, in surprise. "You here?"

"I!" replied Andrée, pale and agitated, "I! yes, your Majesty. I! but is not your Majesty here yourself?"

"Oh, oh! a complication," murmured the doctor.

"I looked for you everywhere," said the queen; "where were you?" There was something in these words of the queen which did not express her usual kindness. It was like the beginning of an examination; it was like the announcement of a suspicion.

Andrée was alarmed. She feared especially that her indiscreet step would furnish a clew to her sentiments, so terrible even to herself. Therefore, proud as she was, she determined to utter falsehood for the second time. "Here, as you see," she said.

"Doubtless; but why are you here?"

"Madame," she replied, "they told me that your Majesty had sent for me; therefore I came."

The queen mistrusted still; she persisted in her inquiry. "How did you discover where I had gone?"

"It was easy, Madame; you were with Monsieur le Docteur Louis, and you were seen passing through the small apartments; of course, you could have been coming only to this pavilion."

"Well guessed," continued the queen, still unsatisfied, but speaking not unkindly, — "well guessed."

Andrée made a last effort. "Madame," she said, smiling, "if your Majesty had intended secrecy, you would not have appeared in the open galleries as you did just now in coming here. When the queen crosses the terrace Mademoiselle de Taverney can see her from her apartment,

and it is not difficult to follow or precede a person whom we can see at a distance."

"She is right," said the queen; "a hundred times right. I have an unfortunate habit, that of never foreseeing anything; reflecting so little myself, I forget the possibility of reflection in others."

The queen felt, perhaps, that she ought to show indulgence, since she had need of a confidant. Her soul, moreover, not being a compound of coquetry and distrust, like the souls of common women, she had faith in her friendships, knowing that she was able to love. Women who distrust themselves are still more distrustful of others. A great misfortune which coquettes have to endure is that they never believe themselves loved by their lovers.

Marie Antoinette, therefore, quickly forgot the impression produced on her by finding Mademoiselle de Taverney before Charny's door. She took Andrée's hand, made her turn the key in the door, and quickly passing before her, she entered the sick man's chamber, while the doctor and Andrée remained without. When the latter saw the queen thus disappear, she raised toward Heaven a look full of wrath and suffering, — a look that resembled an imprecation. The doctor took her by the arm and led her into the corridor, saying, "Do you think she will succeed?"

"Succeed! Good God! in what?"

"In persuading that poor man to allow himself to be taken away before he dies here of his fever."

"He would, then, be cured should he go away?" cried Andrée.

The doctor looked at her with surprise and uneasiness.

"I think so," he said.

"Oh, may she, then, succeed!" said the poor girl.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONVALESCENCE.

THE queen had walked straight to the arm-chair in which Charny was reclining. The latter, roused by the creaking of her shoes on the floor, looked up. "The queen!" he murmured, trying to rise.

"The queen, yes, Monsieur," Marie Antoinette hastened to say, — "the queen, who knows how you are striving to lose both your reason and your life; the queen, whom you offend in your dreams; the queen, whom you offend when awake; the queen, who has regard for her own honor and your safety! That is her reason for coming to you, Monsieur; and it is not thus you should receive her."

Charny had risen, trembling, bewildered, and at her last words had fallen upon his knees, so overwhelmed by physical suffering and mental anguish that, bowed down like a guilty man, he had neither the strength nor the will to rise.

"Is it possible," continued the queen, touched by this respect and silence, — "is it possible that a gentleman, formerly renowned for his loyalty, can persist in endangering the reputation of a woman? For observe this, Monsieur de Charny, that from our first interview it is not the queen who has appeared to you, but a woman; and you should never have forgotten it."

Charny, much affected by these words, which seemed to come from the heart, endeavored to say a word in his

own defence; but Marie Antoinette did not give him time.

"What can I expect of my enemies," she said, "if you give an example of treason?"

"Treason —" stammered Charny.

"Monsieur, you must choose. Either you are mad, and I must prevent you from doing harm; or you are a traitor, and I must punish you."

"Madame, do not say that I am a traitor. From the lips of a king this accusation precedes a sentence of death; from the lips of a woman it means dishonor. As a queen, kill me; as a woman, spare me."

"Are you in your right mind, Monsieur de Charny?" said the queen, in an agitated voice.

"Yes, Madame."

"Are you conscious of the wrong committed against me, of your crime against — the king?"

"My God!" murmured the unfortunate man.

"For you gentlemen forget too easily that the king is the husband of that woman whom you insult by even looking upon her; the king is the father of your future sovereign, my dauphin. The king is a man greater and better than you all, — a man whom I venerate and whom I love."

"Oh!" murmured Charny, with a groan; and he was obliged to place one hand on the floor to support himself.

His cry pierced the queen's heart. She read in the young man's face that he would be stricken with death if she did not promptly draw from the wound the barb she had buried there. It was for this reason that, merciful and kind, and terrified at the paleness and weakness of the culprit, she for a moment thought of calling for aid. But she reflected that the doctor and Andrée might inter-

pret wrongly this fainting-fit of the sick man. She therefore raised him up herself.

"Let us speak," she said, "I as queen, you as a man. Doctor Louis has tried to cure you; this wound, which amounted to nothing, has been rendered dangerous by the extravagances of your brain. When shall this wound be healed? When will you cease to give the good doctor the scandalous spectacle of a madness which causes him anxiety?"

"Madame," stammered Charny, "your Majesty drives me away, I will go away;" and he made so violent an effort to leave the room that, losing his balance, he tottered and fell into the arms of the queen, who had placed herself between him and the door.

Scarcely had he felt the contact of that warm breast which supported him, — scarcely was he enfolded in the involuntary embrace of the arms which held him, when his reason abandoned him entirely; a light breath escaped his lips, which was not a word, and did not dare to be a kiss.

The queen, herself agitated by this close contact, moved by this weakness, had time only to push from her the inanimate body toward the easy-chair, on which it fell; she would then have fled. But Charny's head had fallen back and struck the frame of the chair; a light-red tinge colored the froth which rose to his lips, and a warm drop fell on the hand of Marie Antoinette.

"Oh, so much the better!" he murmured; "just as I would have wished. I shall die, killed by you."

The queen forgot everything. She came back, seized Charny in her arms, pressed his head upon her bosom, and placed her icy hand upon the young man's heart. Love performed a miracle; Charny revived. He opened his eyes, and the vision disappeared. The woman was

alarmed when she reflected that she had left a tender remembrance where she intended to leave only a last farewell. She started for the door in such haste that Charny had just time to seize the hem of her dress, exclaiming, "Madame, in the name of the reverence I have for God, less than that which I have for you — "

"Adieu, adieu!" said the queen.

"Madame, oh, pardon me!"

"I pardon you, Monsieur de Charny."

"Madame, one last look!"

"Monsieur de Charny," said the queen, trembling with tenderness and wrath, "if you are not the most miserable of men, you will this night, or to-morrow, either have died or left the palace."

A queen entreats when she commands in such terms as these. Charny, clasping his hands in frenzy, crept on his knees to the feet of Marie Antoinette. The latter had already opened the door to escape the danger more quickly.

Andrée, whose eyes were fixed on that door, saw the young man prostrate, and the queen almost fainting; she saw Charny's eyes shining with hope and pride, and those of the queen downcast, without expression. Struck to the heart, despairing, filled with hatred and scorn, she did not bow her head on seeing the queen return. It seemed to her that God had given too much to this woman in bestowing upon her a throne and beauty, — both superfluous since he had given her this half-hour with Monsieur de Charny.

The doctor, wholly occupied with the success of the negotiation undertaken by the queen, confined himself to saying, "Well, Madame?"

The queen paused a moment to collect herself, and recover her voice, stifled by the beating of her heart.

"What will he do?" said the doctor.

"He will go away," murmured the queen. And without paying any attention to Andrée, who knitted her brows, or to the doctor, who rubbed his hands, she crossed with a rapid step the corridor of the gallery, drawing about her mechanically her lace mantle, and withdrew to her apartment.

Andrée pressed the doctor's hand, who hastened to return to his patient; then, with a step solemn as that of a ghost, she returned to her own room, with her head bowed down, her eyes fixed, and her mind wandering. She had not thought of asking the queen's commands. To a nature like hers the queen was nothing, the rival everything.

Charny, once more under the care of the doctor, did not seem to be the same man that he had been the evening before. Making an extravagant show of strength and hardihood, he plied the doctor so vigorously with questions about his approaching convalescence, the regimen he was to follow, and the means of going away, that the doctor feared a more dangerous relapse, produced by a mania of another nature.

Charny soon undeceived him; he resembled those red-hot irons whose color fades as the intensity of the heat diminishes. The iron is black, and is not hot to the eye, but is yet sufficiently so to consume everything it touches.

The doctor saw that the young man was recovering his calmness and the reasoning power of his days of health. Charny was really so reasonable that he felt obliged to explain to the doctor this sudden change in his determination. "The queen," he said, "by making me ashamed, has cured me quicker than your science, dear Doctor, could have done with your excellent remedies; to attack my self-love, you see, is to master me as they master a horse with a bit."

"So much the better, so much the better," murmured the doctor.

"Yes; I remember that a Spaniard — they are very boastful — told me one day, in order to prove his power of will, that in a duel in which he had been wounded, by merely willing to retain his blood he had been able to prevent its flowing to rejoice the heart of his adversary. I laughed at this Spaniard, yet I am somewhat like him; if my fever, if this delirium with which you reproach me, should show any sign of returning, I would engage to drive them away by saying, 'Delirium and fever, you shall not return!'"

"We have examples of this will-power," said the doctor, gravely. "At any rate, allow me to congratulate you. You are now morally cured?"

"Oh! yes."

"Well, it will not be long before you see the relation between man's moral and physical organization. It is a beautiful theory on which I would publish a book if I had the time. Now that you are sound in mind, you will be sound in body in less than a week."

"Dear Doctor, I thank you."

"And you will begin, then, by going away?"

"Immediately, if you will."

"Let us wait until evening. Let us proceed moderately. To move hastily is always a risk."

"We will wait until this evening, Doctor."

"Are you going far?"

"To the end of the world if necessary."

"That is rather too far for a first journey," said the doctor, with his usual coolness. "We will be satisfied with Versailles to begin with, eh!"

"Versailles it shall be, since you wish it."

"It seems to me," said the doctor, "that there is no

need of expatriating yourself, just because you are cured of your wound."

This coolness put Charny on his guard.

"It is true, Doctor. I have a house at Versailles."

"Well, that is what we want; you shall be taken there this evening."

"You have not understood me, Doctor; I wished to make a journey to my estate!"

"Ah, why did you not say so, then? But your estates are not at the end of the world."

"They are on the frontiers of Picardy, fifteen or eighteen leagues from here."

"As I said, that is not far away."

Charny pressed the doctor's hand as if to thank him for his delicacy.

That evening the four valets who had been so rudely treated at their first appearance, carried Charny to his carriage, which awaited him at the gate.

The king, having hunted all day, had just taken supper and was sleeping. Charny, rather disturbed at going away without taking leave, was reassured by the doctor, who promised to excuse his departure on the pretext of the need of change.

Charny, before getting into his carriage, allowed himself the painful satisfaction of gazing, — even until the very last moment, — at the windows in the apartment of the queen. No one could see him. One of the lackeys, carrying a torch in his hand, lighted the way, without allowing the glare to fall upon his face. Charny met upon the steps only a few officers, his friends, who had been forewarned of his departure, so that it might not have the appearance of flight.

Escorted to the carriage by these pleasant companions, Charny could allow his eyes to wander over the windows;

those of the queen were brilliantly lighted. Her Majesty, not very well, had received her ladies in her bedchamber. Those of Andrée, dark and gloomy, concealed behind the folds of the curtains a very anxious woman, with palpitating heart, who followed unseen the movements of the sick man and his escort.

The carriage finally departed, but so slowly that every step of the horses resounded on the hard pavement.

"If he is not mine," murmured Andrée, "at least he belongs to no one else."

"If the desire to die should return to him," said the doctor, as he entered his own room, "at least he will not die on my hands. Confound these maladies of the soul! one is not the physician of Antiochus and Stratonice to cure such maladies."

Charny arrived safe and sound at his own house. The doctor went to see him the same night, and found him so well that he hastened to announce that this would be his last visit. The sick man had for his supper the wing of a chicken and a spoonful of Orléans preserves.

The next day he received a visit of his uncle Monsieur de Suffren, and of Monsieur de Lafayette; he received also a messenger from the king. It was very nearly the same on the following day, and after that he was left to himself.

At the end of a week he was able to ride an easy horse; his strength had returned. His house not being sufficiently secluded, he asked of his uncle's physician, and of Doctor Louis also, permission to depart for his estates.

Doctor Louis replied, with confidence, that locomotion was the final remedy in the curing of wounds; that Monsieur de Charny had a good travelling-carriage; and that the road to Picardy was smooth as a mirror; and that to remain at Versailles when one could travel so comfortably would be perfect folly.

Charny had a large baggage-wagon loaded; he went to take leave of the king, who overwhelmed him with kindness; begged Monsieur de Suffren to present his respects to the queen, who was ill that evening and did not receive. Then entering his carriage at the very gate of the royal palace, he set out for the little town of Villers-Cotterets, from which he would proceed to the Château de Boursonnes, situated at about a league distant from that little town which the first poems of Dumoustier had already rendered illustrious.

CHAPTER XV.

TWO BLEEDING HEARTS.

On the day following that on which the queen had been surprised by Andrée, as she fled from Charny on his knees before her, Mademoiselle de Taverney entered, according to her custom, the royal bedchamber at the hour of the morning toilet, before going to Mass.

The queen had not yet received any visitors. She had just read a note from Madame de La Motte, and was in a pleasant mood.

Andrée, paler still than she had been the evening before, displayed in her whole demeanor that serious and cold reserve which attracts attention and compels those of the highest rank to account to the most humble. Simple, severe one might say, in her toilet, Andrée had the appearance of a harbinger of misfortune, either for herself or for others.

It was one of the queen's days of absent-mindedness; therefore she paid no attention to this quiet and serious demeanor of Andrée, — her red eyes, the whiteness of her temples and hands. She turned her head just enough to allow her friendly greeting to be heard, "Good morning, little one."

Andrée waited until the queen should give her an opportunity to speak. She waited, very sure that her silence, her immobility, would finally attract the eyes of Marie Antoinette. And she was right. Receiving no response but that of a ceremonious reverence, the queen turned her

head and caught a side view of her face, which expressed such sorrow and severity.

"My God! what is the matter, Andrée?" she said, turning quite round; "has any misfortune happened to you?"

"A great misfortune, yes, Madame," replied the young woman.

"What is it, then?"

"I am going to leave your Majesty."

"Leave me! You are going away?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Where are you going, then? What is the cause of this hasty departure?"

"Madame, I am not happy in my affections —"

The queen looked up.

"My family affections," added Andrée, blushing.

The queen blushed in her turn, and their glances met with a flash like that made by the clashing of two swords.

The queen recovered herself first. "I do not understand," she said; "you were happy yesterday, I thought."

"No, Madame," replied Andrée, firmly; "yesterday was one of the unhappy days of my life."

"Ah!" said the queen, becoming thoughtful. "Explain yourself," she added.

"It would be necessary to fatigue your Majesty with details quite beneath your notice. I have no satisfaction in my family; I have nothing more to hope for in the world; and I come now to ask leave of your Majesty that I may retire to a convent."

The queen rose, and although this petition touched her pride, she approached Andrée and took her hand.

"What is the meaning of this foolish resolution?" she

said; "had you not yesterday, as you have to-day, a brother, a father? Were they less troublesome and less harmful than they are to-day? Do you think me capable of neglecting you when you are in trouble? Am I not a mother who receives into her family those who have no mother?"

Andrée trembled like a guilty person, and bowing before the queen she said, "Madame, your goodness penetrates my heart, but it cannot dissuade me. I have resolved to leave the court. I have need of solitude. Do not expose me to unfaithfulness in my duty toward you through the lack of capacity for them which I find in myself."

"Since yesterday?"

"I beg your Majesty not to ask me to speak on this subject."

"Be free," said the queen, bitterly; "only you might have returned the confidence I have so freely given you. But it is foolish to question one who will not speak. Keep your secrets, Mademoiselle, and I hope you will be happier away than you have been here. Only remember one thing, — that my friendship never deserts those I love, whatever may be their caprices, and that I shall never cease to regard you as a friend. Now, Andrée, go; you are free."

Andrée made a reverence and turned to leave the room. When she had reached the door, the queen called her back. "Where are you going, Andrée?"

"To the Abbey of Saint Denis, Madame," replied Mademoiselle de Taverney.

"To the convent! oh! very well, Mademoiselle. Perhaps you have nothing with which to reproach yourself; but had you only ingratitude and forgetfulness that would be too much! You are very culpable toward me. Go, Mademoiselle de Taverney; go."

The result was that without offering any explanations, which the queen in her goodness of heart had expected, without showing any humility, any emotion, Andrée availed herself of the permission of the queen and disappeared. Marie Antoinette could, and actually did, perceive that Mademoiselle de Taverney left the palace immediately.

In fact, Andrée repaired to her father's house, where, as she had expected, she found Philippe in the garden. The brother meditated, the sister acted.

At sight of Andreé, whom her service required to be at this hour at the palace, Philippe advanced, surprised and almost alarmed. Alarmed especially by that gloomy countenance, since his sister never met him but with a smile of tender affection, he began, as the queen had done, by questioning.

Andrée informed him that she had just left the service of the queen; that her resignation had been accepted, and that she was about to enter a convent. Philippe clapped his hands together violently, like a man who has received an unexpected blow.

"What!" he said; "you too, sister?"

"What! I too? What do you mean?"

"It is, then, an accursed contact for our family, that of the Bourbons?" he cried; "you feel compelled to take religious vows! you, religious by inclination, religious in soul; you, the least worldly of women, and at the same time the least capable of lasting obedience to the rules of asceticism. Come, tell me, what complaint have you against the queen?"

"I make no complaint against the queen," replied the young girl, coldly. "You, who had reckoned so confidently on favor at court, you who, more than any other, had a right to count upon it, — why have you not been

able to remain there? Why did you stay there only three days? I have been there three years!"

"The queen is sometimes capricious, Andrée."

"If that is so, Philippe, you ought to be able to endure it, — you, a man. I, a woman, ought not to endure it, and I will not. She has her caprices, — very well, her servants are there."

"All this, sister," said the young man, with some constraint, "does not acquaint me with the occasion of your misunderstanding with the queen."

"I have had no misunderstanding with her, I assure you. Had you, Philippe, when you left her? Oh, she is an ungrateful woman!"

"You must forgive her, Andrée. Flattery has injured her somewhat, but she is good at heart."

"As is proved, perhaps, by her conduct toward you, Philippe."

"To what do you refer?"

"You have forgotten already? Oh! I have a better memory. So, in one and the same day, with one and the same resolution, I pay your debt and mine, Philippe."

"Too dearly, it seems to me, Andrée; a woman should not renounce the world at your age, with your beauty. Take care, my dear; if you leave the world now you will regret it when you are old, and will return to it then only to find all your friends estranged from you."

"You did not reason thus, — you, a brave officer, the soul of honor and fine feeling, but caring so little for renown or riches, that where others have acquired titles and gold, you have only contracted debts and fallen in rank, — you did not reason thus, when you said: 'She is capricious, Andrée, she is a coquette, she is perfidious; I prefer not to remain in her service.' Therefore, practically, you have renounced the world, although you may not

have entered a monastery; and of us two, the one who comes nearest to taking irrevocable vows is not I who have yet to take them, but you who have already done so."

"You are right, sister, and but for our father — "

"Our father, — ah, Philippe, do not speak thus," replied Andrée, with bitterness. "Ought not a father to be the support of his children, or to accept support from them? It is on these conditions only that he is a father. And I ask, what is our father to us? Have you ever thought of such a thing as confiding a secret to Monsieur de Taverney? Do you believe him capable of confiding in you? No," continued Andrée, with an expression of sorrow, "no, Monsieur de Taverney is a man to live alone."

"I know it, Andrée, but he should not die alone."

These words, spoken with mild severity, reminded Andrée that she was allowing her angry feelings and her hatred of the world to occupy too large a place in her heart.

"I do not wish," she answered, "that you should consider me a daughter without affection; you know that I am a tender sister; but every one in this world has conspired to destroy in me every instinct of sympathy. God gave me at birth, as to every human creature, a soul and a body; with this soul and body every human creature can do as he pleases, for his own happiness in this world and in the world to come. One man whom I knew, took my soul, — Balsamo. A man whom I scarcely knew, and who was not a man in my opinion, took my body, — Gilbert. I tell you, Philippe, that in order to be a good and pious daughter, I needed but a father. But with regard to you, let us see what benefit the service of the great ones of the earth has conferred upon you who loved them."

Philippe hung his head. "Spare me," he said; "the great ones of the earth were in my eyes only creatures similar to myself. I loved them; God has commanded us to love one another."

"Oh, Philippe!" she said, "it never happens upon this earth that the loving heart responds directly to the one who loves it; those whom we have chosen, choose others."

Philippe raised his pale face and contemplated his sister for some time with no expression but that of astonishment. "Why do you say that? what are you driving at?" he asked.

"Nothing, nothing," replied Andrée, generously, who shrank from the idea of going into details and from an exchange of confidences. "I am stricken, brother, I think my mind is wandering; do not pay any attention to my words."

"And yet —"

Andrée came to Philippe, and took his hand. "Enough on this subject, my beloved brother. I have come to entreat you to take me to a convent; I have chosen Saint Denis. Do not be alarmed. I do not mean to take the vows, that will come later if necessary. Instead of seeking in an asylum what most women wish to find there, — forgetfulness, — I go there to remember. It seems to me that I have too long forgotten the Lord. He is the only king, the only sovereign, the one consolation, as he is the only real afflictor. By drawing near to him, now that I understand him, I shall have done more for my happiness than if all the power and love in the world had conspired to make my life happy. Oh for solitude, brother, — solitude, that vestibule of eternal blessedness! In solitude God speaks to the heart of man; in solitude man speaks to the heart of God."

Philippe interrupted Andrée, with a gesture. "Remem-

ber," he said, "that I oppose, morally, this desperate purpose; you have not allowed me to judge of the reasons for your despair."

"Despair!" she said, with an expression of supreme scorn; "you said despair! Ah, thank God, I do not leave the court in despair! I! regret it with despair! No, no, a thousand times, no!" and with a movement full of indignant pride she threw over her shoulders a silk mantle which lay near her on a chair.

"This excess of disdain shows a state of mind which cannot last," said Philippe. "You do not like the word 'despair,' Andrée; accept instead the word 'spite.'"

"Spite!" replied the young woman, with a smile full of pride. "You cannot believe, brother, that Mademoiselle de Taverney is so weak as to give up her position in the world from a feeling of spite. Spite is the weakness of coquettes or fools. The eye which is lighted by spite soon overflows with tears, and the fire is extinguished. I have no spite, Philippe. I wish that you would believe me; and in order to do so, you need only examine your own heart when you have some grievance to state. Answer me, Philippe, if to-morrow you should retire to La Trappe, if you should become a Carthusian, what would you call the cause which drove you to this resolution?"

"I should call it an incurable sorrow, sister," said Philippe, with the gentle dignity of an unhappy man.

"Well, Philippe, that is a word which suits me, and which I adopt. It is therefore an incurable sorrow which impels me to seek solitude."

"Well," said Philippe, "brother and sister will not have been unlike in their lives. Once equally happy, they will have still been unhappy in the same degree."

Andrée thought that Philippe, carried away by his emotion, would question her further, and perhaps his inflex-

ible heart would be broken under the pressure of fraternal affection. But Philippe knew from experience that great souls are sufficient unto themselves; therefore he did not disturb Andrée in the stronghold she had chosen.

"On what day, and at what hour, do you intend to set out?" he asked.

"To-morrow, — to-day, even, if there were time."

"Will you not take a last walk with me in the park?"

"No," she said.

He understood by the pressure of the hand which accompanied this refusal that the young woman did not wish to give him an opportunity to work upon her feelings.

"I will be ready whenever you require me," he replied; and he kissed her hand, without another word, which might have caused the bitterness in their hearts to overflow.

Andrée, after having made some preparations for her departure, retired to her room, where she received this note from Philippe, —

"You can see our father at five o'clock this evening. Your taking leave of him is indispensable. Monsieur de Taverney would complain of being deserted, of being treated unkindly."

She answered, —

"At five o'clock I will be with Monsieur de Taverney, and in my travelling-dress. At seven o'clock we can be at Saint Denis. Can you give me your evening?"

For answer, Philippe called out of his window, which was so near to Andrée's room that she could hear him, "At five o'clock let the horses be put to the travelling-carriage."

CHAPTER XVI.

A MINISTER OF FINANCE.

THE queen, before receiving Andrée, had read a note from Madame de La Motte, at which she had smiled. This note contained these words, with all the proper formularies of respect, —

"And your Majesty may rest assured that credit will be granted you, and that the goods will be delivered confidentially."

Therefore the queen had smiled and burned Jeanne's little note. While she was still somewhat gloomy from her interview with Mademoiselle de Taverney, Madame de Misery came to announce that Monsieur de Calonne was waiting for the honor of an audience.

Monsieur de Calonne was a man of infinite talent, who, belonging to the generation born in the latter half of the century, little accustomed to tears and very fond of reasoning, had taken his decision with regard to the misfortune which hung over France, joined his interest with the common interest, said, as Louis XV. had said, "After us the end of the world;" and sought in every direction for flowers wherewith to deck his last moments. He understood affairs, and he was an accomplished courtier. Every woman celebrated for her wit, her riches, or her beauty he had addressed with homage, like that which the bee renders to the plants loaded with aroma and with sweets.

The conversation of seven or eight men and ten to twelve women contained at that time a summary of all

knowledge. Monsieur de Calonne could calculate with D'Alembert, reason with Diderot, scoff with Voltaire, dream with Rousseau. Indeed, he was strong enough to laugh openly at the popularity of Monsieur Necker, — Monsieur Necker, the wise and profound, whose system of finance had illumined all France. Calonne, having observed him from every point of view, had finally rendered him ridiculous, even in the eyes of those who feared him most; both the king and the queen, who shuddered at that name, trembled when they heard him mocked in a good-natured way by an elegant statesman who satisfied himself with this reply to such an array of figures, "Of what use to prove that we can prove nothing?"

In fact, Necker had proved only one thing, — his inability to direct the finances. Monsieur de Calonne, however, accepted their management as a burden too light for his shoulders; and from the very first moment one might say that he bent beneath the load.

What did Monsieur Necker want? Reforms. These partial reforms alarmed all minds. Few people profited by them, and those who did profited little; on the contrary, many lost, and lost much. When Necker tried to establish a more just division of taxes, when he undertook to levy taxes on the estates of the nobility and the revenues of the clergy, he was abruptly attempting an impossible revolution. He was dividing the nation and weakening it, when he should have directed all his energy toward leading it on to a general reformation. He pointed out this goal, and by indicating it made its attainment impossible. To speak of reforming an abuse to those who do not wish the abuse reformed is to invite opposition. Is it well to warn the enemy of your intended assault?

This was fully comprehended by Calonne, more truly a

friend of the nation, as far as this was concerned, than the Genevese, Necker, — more a friend, we say, as to accomplished facts; for instead of seeking to prevent an inevitable evil, Calonne accelerated the invasion of the scourge. His plan was bold, gigantic, sure; it was to draw into bankruptcy in two years the king and nobility, who would have delayed it for ten years. Then, the bankruptcy being accomplished, he would say, "Now, you who are rich, pay for the poor; for they are hungry, and will devour those who will not feed them."

How it was that the king did not foresee the consequences of this plan, or even divine the plan itself; how it was that the bandage over his eyes seemed to become thicker; how it was that the queen, generally so clear-sighted, was as blind as her husband as to the conduct of this minister, — on these points our history, or rather our romance, and for this it will be welcome, will give some indispensable details.

Monsieur de Calonne entered the queen's apartment. He was tall, handsome, and of distinguished manners. He was a man to make queens laugh and mistresses weep. Well assured that Marie Antoinette had sent for him under the pressure of some urgent need, he entered with a smile on his lips. So many others would have entered with a frowning face, in order to increase the merit of their consent. The queen also was very gracious. She asked the minister to be seated, and said to him a thousand things about nothing. At length she said, "Have we any money, my dear Monsieur de Calonne?"

"Money?" cried Monsieur de Calonne. "Why, yes, we always have money."

"This is very wonderful," replied the queen. "I have known no one but you to give that answer to a demand for money. As a financier you are incomparable."

"How much does your Majesty want?" replied Calonne.

"Explain to me in the first place, I beg of you, how it is that you find money where Monsieur Necker said so often that there was none."

"Monsieur Necker was right, Madame; there was no money in the coffers. On the day of my accession to the ministry, November 5, 1783, — one does not forget such things, Madame, — on examining the public treasury I found only two bags, each containing twelve hundred francs. There was not a farthing less."

The queen laughed. "Very well?" said she.

"Well, Madame, if Monsieur Necker, instead of saying, 'There is no money,' had set himself to work borrowing money, as I have done, — one hundred millions the first year, and one hundred and twenty-five the second, — if he had been sure, as I am, of obtaining for the third year a new loan of eighty millions, Monsieur Necker would have been a true financier. Any one can say, 'There is no money in the treasury;' but it is not every one who can say, 'There shall be money there!'"

"That is what I was saying to you; it was for this reason that I congratulated you. But how are these loans to be repaid? There is the difficulty."

"Oh, Madame," replied Calonne, with a smile of which no human eye could measure the profound, the frightful significance, "I will answer for it, — they shall be paid."

"Have you any new ideas? If so, let me be the first to share them, I beg of you."

"I have an idea, Madame, which will put twenty millions into the pockets of the French, and seven or eight millions into your — I beg pardon — into his Majesty's coffers."

"Those millions will be welcome in both places; but how are they to be obtained?"

"Your Majesty is aware that gold coin is not of the same value in all the States of Europe?"

"I know it. In Spain gold is of more value than in France."

"Your Majesty is right; it is a pleasure to converse with you upon finance. Gold has been worth in Spain, for the last five or six years, something like eight per cent more than in France; so that there is a gain of about eight francs on every ounce of gold exported."

"That is considerable," remarked the queen.

"So much that in a year, if the capitalists knew what I know, there would not remain with us a solitary louis d'or."

"You propose to prevent that result?"

"Immediately, Madame. I am about to increase the price of gold six and two-thirds per cent. Your Majesty will see that not a louis will remain in private coffers when it is known that the Mint will pay that premium on gold. The gold will then be recoined, and every marc will comprise thirty-two louis, instead of thirty as at the present time."

"A present profit and a future profit!" cried the queen. "It is a charming idea, which will win you great applause."

"I hope so, Madame; and I am glad that it is so fully approved by you."

"If you continue to entertain projects like that, I am sure that you will pay all our debts."

"Permit me, Madame, to come back to the subject of your Majesty's wishes?"

"Is it possible, Monsieur, for me to have at this moment —"

"What amount?"

"Oh, a sum much too large, perhaps."

Calonne smiled in a way to encourage the queen.

"Five hundred thousand francs," she said.

"Ah, Madame, how your Majesty frightened me! I thought you were about to make a demand for a serious amount."

"You can let me have it, then?"

"Certainly."

"And without the king — "

"Ah, Madame, that would be impossible. All my accounts are submitted monthly to the king; but he has never been known to read them, — which I consider an honor to myself."

"When may I count on receiving it?"

"When would your Majesty like to have it!"

"Not until the fifth of next month."

"The accounts will be audited on the second; you will have your money on the third, Madame."

"Monsieur de Calonne, I thank you."

"My greatest happiness is to please your Majesty. Do not hesitate to have recourse to my strong-box. It will be a pleasure to your controller-general of finance to be of service to you." He had risen while speaking, and bowed in his most graceful manner.

The queen gave him her hand to kiss. "One word more," she said; "I have some remorse in asking for this money."

"Remorse!" he said.

"Yes; it is to gratify a caprice."

"So much the better, so much the better. Of that sum, then, at least one half will be disbursed to the advantage of our industry, our commerce, or our pleasures."

"That is true, certainly," murmured the queen, "and you have a charming way of consoling me, Monsieur."

"God be praised, Madame! may we never have other remorse than such as your Majesty speaks of, and we shall go straight to Paradise."

"You see, Monsieur de Calonne, it would be too cruel for me to make the poor people pay for my caprices."

"Oh, well," said the minister, with a sinister smile and emphasizing every word, "have no more scruples, Madame, for I declare to you, that it will never be the poor people who will have it to pay."

"How so?" said the queen, in surprise.

"Because the poor people have nothing left," replied the minister, coolly; "and where there is nothing to be had, the king loses his rights." He bowed and left the room.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

Scarcely had Monsieur de Calonne crossed the gallery to return to his own apartments, when a light knock was heard at the door of the queen's boudoir and Jeanne made her appearance. "Madame," she said, "he is there."

"The cardinal?" asked the queen, somewhat astonished at the word "he," which signifies so many things when uttered by a woman. She did not continue. Jeanne had already introduced Monsieur de Rohan, and had withdrawn after pressing stealthily the hand of the protected protector.

The prince found himself alone with the queen, standing a few steps from her. He respectfully offered the usual salutations.

The queen, seeing this reserve so full of tact, was touched; she held out her hand to the cardinal, who had not yet raised his eyes to her.

"Monsieur," she said, "I have been informed of an action of yours which effaces many offences."

"Allow me," said the prince, trembling with an emotion which was not affected, — "allow me, Madame, to declare to you that the offences of which your Majesty speaks would be much extenuated by a word of explanation."

"I do not forbid your justifying yourself," replied the queen, with dignity; "but what you would say would

cast a shadow upon the respect and love I feel for my country and my family. You cannot exculpate yourself without wounding me, Monsieur le Cardinal. Let us not play with a fire not yet wholly extinguished, — it might, perhaps, burn your fingers or mine; to see you in the new light, which has revealed you to me as obliging, respectful, devoted — "

"Devoted even to death," interrupted the cardinal.

"That may be. But," said Marie Antoinette, smiling, "at present it is a question only of ruin. You will be devoted even to your own ruin, Monsieur le Cardinal. That would be very brave, very noble. Fortunately, I can set things right. You shall live without being ruined; unless, as they say, you are ruining yourslf."

"Madame — "

"Oh, that is your own business. However, as a friend, since we are now good friends, let me give you some advice: Be economical, it is a pastoral virtue; the king will like you better than if you were extravagant."

"I will become even miserly to please your Majesty."

"The king," replied the queen, with a delicate shade of meaning, "does not like misers either."

"I will become whatever your Majesty may wish," interrupted the cardinal, with ill-disguised passion.

"I was saying to you," said the queen, cutting him short, "that you would not be ruined on my account. You have become surety for me, and I thank you for it; but I have enough to meet my liabilities; therefore do not trouble yourself about this business, which, beginning with the first payment, will concern only myself."

"In order to close the affair, Madame," the cardinal then said, bowing, "it remains for me to present the necklace to your Majesty." At the same time he drew from his pocket the case, which he presented to the queen. She

did not look at it, which was a proof of her strong desire to see it, and trembling with joy she placed it upon a small table, without withdrawing her hand from it.

The cardinal attempted some polite remarks, which were very well received, then returned to the subject of their reconciliation. But as she had determined not to look at the diamonds in his presence, and as she was burning with the desire to see them, she listened without giving him her attention. In her preoccupation she allowed the cardinal to take her hand, which he kissed with an air of rapture. Then he took leave, thinking that he might be in the queen's way, — a thought which overwhelmed him with delight. A mere friend is never in the way, and an indifferent person still less so.

He left the queen's presence full of enthusiasm, intoxicated with hope, and ready to prove to Madame de La Motte his unbounded gratitude for having brought the negotiation to so prosperous a conclusion.

Jeanne awaited him in the carriage about a hundred paces outside the gate; she received his ardent protestations of friendship. "Well," she said, after this first explosion of his gratitude, "are you to be Richelieu or Mazarin? Did the Austrian lips give you any encouragement in ambition or love? Are you fairly launched into politics or intrigue?"

"Do not laugh, dear Countess," said the prince; "I am mad with happiness."

"Already!"

"Give me your help, and in three weeks I can be a minister."

"*Peste!* in three weeks; what a long time! The first payment falls due in a fortnight."

"Oh, all turns out happily. The queen has money and will pay; I shall have had the merit of intention only. It

is too little, Countess! on my honor, it is too little! God is my witness that I would willingly have paid the five hundred thousand francs as the price of this reconciliation."

"Make yourself easy," interrupted the countess, smiling, "you will have that merit in addition to the others. Do you desire it much?"

"I confess that I should prefer it; if the queen were under obligation to me —"

"Monseigneur, something tells me that you will have that satisfaction. Are you prepared for it?"

"I have sold the last property I possess, and have mortgaged my income and my livings for the next year."

"You have the five hundred thousand francs, then?"

"I have them; but after this payment, I shall not know what to do."

"This payment," cried Jeanne, "will give us three months of tranquillity. Who knows what may happen in three months?"

"That is true; but the king has charged me to incur no more debts."

"Two months in the ministry will make you square."

"Oh, Countess —"

"Do not be so fastidious. If you will not do it, your cousins will."

"You are always right. Where are you going?"

"Back to the queen to see what an effect your presence has produced."

"Very well. I will return to Paris."

"Why? You should attend the card-party to-night. That would be good policy; do not abandon the field."

"Unfortunately, it is necessary for me to attend a rendezvous, notice of which I received this morning before leaving home."

"A rendezvous?"

"And of rather a serious nature, if I can judge by the contents of this note. See —"

"A man's handwriting!" said the countess; and she read:—

MONSEIGNEUR, — A person wishes to communicate with you in regard to the recovery of an important sum of money. This person will wait on you this evening at Paris, to solicit the honor of an interview.

"Anonymous, — some beggar."

"No, Countess; a man would not wantonly expose himself to being beaten by my servants for having tricked me. Besides, I imagine I have seen this handwriting before."

"Go, then, Monseigneur; there is never any risk to run with people who promise you money. The worst that could happen would be that they never would pay you. Adieu, Monseigneur."

"Countess, *au revoir*."

"By the way, Monseigneur, I have two things to say to you."

"What are they?"

"If you should unexpectedly receive a large sum of money?"

"Well, Countess?"

"Something you thought you had lost, — a discovered treasure —"

"I understand you, you sly creature; you mean to claim half."

"Upon my word, Monseigneur —"

"You bring me good fortune, Countess; why should I not share with you? It is agreed; and now for the other thing."

"It is this: Do not allow yourself to encroach on those five hundred thousand francs."

"Oh, have no fear on that score."

They then separated. The cardinal returned to Paris surrounded by an atmosphere of celestial happiness. Within two hours the whole aspect of his life was changed. To him as a lover the queen had accorded more than he had dared to hope from her, and as a man of ambition he built great hopes on her apparent favor. The king, skilfully guided by his wife, would be to him the instrument of a prosperous career which thereafter nothing could check.

Prince Louis found his mind teeming with grand ideas. He had more political genius than any of his rivals. He understood the question of reform. He would bring the clergy into harmony with the people, and form one of those solid majorities which hold lasting power by their strength and their justice. To place at the head of this reform movement the queen, whom he adored, and whose unpopularity, always increasing, he would change to an unprecedented popularity, — such was the prelate's dream; and a single tender word from Marie Antoinette might have made this dream a reality.

Had that word been spoken, the cardinal would have renounced his easy conquests; the man of the world would have turned philosopher; the idler would have become an indefatigable worker. It is an easy task for great characters to exchange the paleness of debauchery for the fatigues of study. Monsieur de Rohan would have gone far, urged by love and ambition. On reaching Paris he imagined himself already immersed in work. He burned a boxful of love-letters, called his intendant to give orders for reforms in his expenditures, and had several pens got ready by a secretary, with which to write a paper on England's policy, which he thoroughly understood. After an hour of work he began to recover his self-possession, when the

sound of a bell warned him that a visitor had arrived. An usher came to him.

"Who is there?" asked the prelate.

"The person whose letter Monseigneur received this morning."

"The letter without signature?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"But that person has a name. Ask him what it is."

The usher went away, and a moment later returned. "Monsieur le Comte de Cagliostro," said he.

The prince started. "Let him come in," he ordered.

The count entered, and the doors were closed behind him.

"Good God!" exclaimed the cardinal; "whom do I see?"

"Is it not true, Monseigneur," said Cagliostro, with a smile, "that I am not much changed?"

"Is it possible?" murmured Monsieur de Rohan, "Joseph Balsamo alive! — he who was believed to have lost his life in that fire. Joseph Balsamo —"

"Comte de Fenix, living, — yes, Monseigneur, and more alive than ever."

"But, Monsieur, under what name, then, do you present yourself? Why have you not kept your old name?"

"Precisely, Monseigneur, because it is old, and it recalls, to myself in the first place, and to others also, too many remembrances that are either melancholy or annoying. For example, to speak of yourself, Monseigneur, — tell me, would you not have refused admission to Joseph Balsamo?"

"I! why, no, Monsieur, no," and the cardinal, still stupefied, even neglected to offer a seat to Cagliostro.

"Then," replied the latter, "your Eminence has a better memory and greater honesty than all other men taken together."

"Monsieur, you formerly rendered me such a service —"

"Is it not true, Monseigneur," asked Balsamo, interrupting, "that I have not changed in respect to apparent age, and that I am a good illustration of the effects of my life-drops?"

"I confess it, Monsieur; but you are above the plane of humanity, — you who dispense liberally gold and health to all."

"As to health, I have nothing to say, Monseigneur; but gold, — no, oh, no."

"You make gold no longer?"

"No, Monseigneur."

"And why not?"

"Because I have lost the last particle of an indispensable ingredient, which my master, the sage Althotas, gave me after his departure from Egypt, — the only receipt of which I never had in my own possession."

"He has kept it?"

"No, — that is to say, yes; kept it and carried it with him to the tomb."

"He is dead?"

"I have lost him."

"How is it that you did not prolong the life of that man, — the indispensable custodian of an indispensable receipt, — you, who, as you say, have kept yourself alive and young through so many centuries?"

"Because, while I have power against disease and wounds, I can do nothing against accident, which destroys before my aid can be invoked."

"And it was an accident which ended the days of Althotas?"

"You should have known, since you were informed of my death."

"That fire in the Rue Saint Claude, in which you disappeared?"

"Killed Althotas, — or rather, the sage, weary of life, devoted himself to destruction."

"That is strange."

"No, it is natural. I have thought, myself, a hundred times, of ending my life."

"Yes, but you have continued to live, nevertheless."

"Because I had chosen for myself the condition of youth, in which vigorous health, passion, and physical enjoyment can still procure me some entertainment; Althotas, on the contrary, had chosen the condition of old age."

"Althotas should have done as you did."

"No, he was a man of profound intelligence and superior wisdom; of all things in the world, he desired only knowledge. Youth, with its imperious passions and pleasures, would have turned him aside from his lofty contemplations. Monseigneur, to think deeply, one must be free from fever, wrapped in impenetrable quiet. An old man meditates better than a young man; and so when sorrow takes hold of him there is no remedy. Althotas died a victim of his devotion to science. As for myself, I lead a worldly life; I waste my time, — I do absolutely nothing. I am a plant; I dare not call myself a flower. I do not live, I vegetate."

"Oh!" said the cardinal to himself, "with this man's resurrection all my surprises come back to me." Then, aloud, "You recall to me, Monsieur, the time when the magic of your words, and the marvels that you performed, doubled all my faculties, and increased, in my estimation, the value of a human being. You recall to me the two

dreams of my youth. Do you know that it is ten years since I saw you?"

"I know it, and we have both fallen off since then, Monseigneur. I am no longer a sage; I am now only a man of learning. And as for you, you are no longer a handsome young man; you are now a handsome prince. Do you remember, Monseigneur, that day when in my cabinet I promised you the love of a woman whose blond hair had been submitted to my assistant for inspection?"

The cardinal turned pale and then suddenly red. Terror and joy, in quick succession, arrested the pulsations of his heart. "I remember," he said, "but only confusedly."

"Let us see," said Cagliostro, smiling, "whether I might still pass for a magician. Wait a moment, while I direct my search." He seemed to reflect. "That fair-haired child of your amorous dreams," he resumed, after a silence, — "where is she? what is she doing? Ah! *parbleu!* I see her, — yes, and you yourself have seen her to-day; nay, you have just come from her presence."

The cardinal pressed an icy hand upon his palpitating heart. "Monsieur," he said, in a tone so low that Cagliostro could hardly hear the words, "for mercy's sake — "

"You would prefer that we should talk about something else?" said the magician, politely. "Oh, I am at your orders, Monseigneur; dispose of me as you please," and he stretched himself unceremoniously on a sofa, to which, during the whole of this interesting conversation the cardinal had not thought of inviting him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

THE cardinal observed his visitor with an almost stupefied air.

"Well," said the latter, "now that we have renewed our acquaintance, Monseigneur, let us converse, if you please."

"Yes," replied the prelate, gradually collecting himself, "Yes, let us talk about the recovery of that debt which — which —"

"About which I wrote you, you mean. Your Eminence is anxious to know —"

"Oh! it was a pretext, I imagine."

"No, Monseigneur, not the least in the world; it was a reality, and a most serious one, I assure you. This debt is well worth collecting, since it amounts to five hundred thousand francs; that is a considerable sum of money."

"And a sum which you were kind enough to lend me," cried the cardinal, turning pale.

"Yes, Monseigneur, which I lent you," said Balsamo; "I like to see in so great a prince as you so good a memory."

The cardinal had received the blow; he felt the cold perspiration streaming down his face. "I had thought," he said, trying to smile, "that Joseph Balsamo, the supernatural man, had carried my debt to the tomb, as he had thrown my receipt for it into the fire."

"Monseigneur," gravely replied the count, "the life of Joseph Balsamo is indestructible, as is this sheet of paper which you thought destroyed. Death can avail nothing against the elixir of life; fire is powerless against asbestos."

"I do not understand," said the cardinal, stupefied.

"You will understand, Monseigneur, I am sure," said Cagliostro.

"How so?"

"When you recognize your signature," and he offered a folded paper to the prince, who even before opening it, exclaimed, —

"My receipt!"

"Yes, Monseigneur, your receipt," replied Cagliostro, with a slight smile, accompanied by a formal bow.

"But I saw you burn it, Monsieur."

"I threw this paper in the fire, it is true," said the count, "but as I have told you, Monseigneur, by accident you had written on a piece of asbestos, instead of writing on ordinary paper, so that the receipt remained uninjured among the cinders."

"Monsieur," said the cardinal, haughtily, for he thought the presentation of this receipt a proof of distrust, — "Monsieur, believe me, I should not have denied my debt even without this paper; therefore you were wrong to deceive me."

"I deceive you, Monseigneur! I did not for a moment think of it, I assure you."

The cardinal nodded his head. "You made me think, Monsieur, that the debt was cancelled."

"To leave you in calm enjoyment and happy possession of five hundred thousand francs," replied Balsamo, with a slight shrug of the shoulders.

"But, in short, Monsieur," continued the cardinal, "why have you left such a sum for ten years unclaimed?"

"I knew, Monseigneur, that it was safe. Exigencies, play, robbers, have successively diminished my wealth. But knowing that I had this sum in reserve, I have waited patiently until the last moment."

"And the last moment has arrived?"

"Alas! yes, Monseigneur!"

"So that you can no longer wait patiently?"

"It is, indeed, impossible," replied Cagliostro.

"You want it at once?"

"If it please you to pay it,"

The cardinal was at first silent through despair. Then he said, in a hoarse voice, "Monsieur le Comte, we unhappy princes of the earth do not improvise fortunes as quickly as you enchanters, who can command the spirits of darkness and light."

"Oh, Monseigneur, believe me, I should not have asked you for this money if I had not known beforehand that you had it."

"I have five hundred thousand francs!" cried the cardinal.

"Thirty thousand in gold, eleven thousand in silver, and the rest in notes, which are in this Boule cabinet."

The cardinal turned white. "Oh, Monsieur, you knew that?"

"Yes, Monseigneur; and I know that you have made great sacrifices to procure this sum. I have heard that you bought this money at twice its value."

"Oh, that is very true."

"But —"

"But —" cried the unhappy prince.

"But, Monseigneur," continued Cagliostro, "during these ten years, I have often been in want and embarrassment; yet I have kept this paper back, — which represented half a million, — in order not to trouble

you. I think, therefore, that we are very nearly quits, Monseigneur."

"Quits, Monsieur!" cried the prince; "oh, do not say that we are quits, since you so generously lent me a sum of such importance; quits! oh, no, no! I shall forever be under obligations to you. Only, Monsieur le Comte, I ask why you, who could at any time during these ten years have demanded this money, have kept silence? During these ten years there have been twenty times when I might have paid you with ease."

"While to-day —"

"Oh, to-day, — I will not conceal it from you," cried the prince, — "this restitution which you exact, for you do exact it, do you not?"

"Alas, Monseigneur!"

"Well, it embarrasses me beyond measure."

Cagliostro made a movement with his head and shoulders which signified, "It cannot be helped, Monseigneur; it is so, and cannot be otherwise."

"But you who know everything," cried the prince, — "you who read hearts, and see through the doors of cabinets, — which is sometimes even worse, — doubtless know also the sacred and mysterious purpose for which this money was destined."

"You are mistaken, Monseigneur," said Cagliostro, in a freezing tone; "no, I do not even suspect it; and my own secrets have brought me so much sorrow, deception, and misery that I no longer seek to penetrate the secrets of others unless they are personally interesting to me. It concerned me to know whether you had this money, because I wished to claim it; but once having ascertained that you had it, I did not trouble myself to think for what purpose it was destined. Besides, if at this moment I knew the cause of your embarrassment, it might seem

so grave a matter as almost to force me to waive my claim, which really I cannot afford to do. Therefore I prefer to be ignorant."

"Oh, Monsieur," cried the cardinal, whose pride and sensibility were aroused by these last words of Cagliostro, "do not think that I wish to move you by an account of my personal embarrassments. You have your own interests to consider; they are guaranteed by this note, which bears my signature, that is enough. You shall have your five hundred thousand francs."

Cagliostro bowed.

"I know very well," continued the cardinal, overwhelmed with grief at the thought of losing so much money, so painfully acquired, —"I know, Monsieur, that this paper is merely an acknowledgement of the debt, and fixes no term of payment."

"Your Eminence will pardon me," replied the count; "but I refer to the receipt itself, on which I see written, —

"I acknowledge having received from Monsieur Joseph Balsamo the sum of five hundred thousand francs, which I will pay to him on demand.

"(Signed) LOUIS DE ROHAN."

The cardinal shuddered through his whole frame; he had forgotten not only the debt, but the terms in which it had been acknowledged.

"You see, Monseigneur," continued Balsamo, "that I do not ask the impossible. You cannot pay it; be it so. Only I regret that your Eminence appears to forget that this sum was given voluntarily by Joseph Balsamo, in an hour of great need, to Monsieur de Rohan, whom he did not know. That, it seems to me, was conduct worthy a great nobleman, which Monsieur de Rohan, so great a nobleman in every way, might have imitated by paying it

promptly on demand. But you have thought differently, so let us say no more about it; I withdraw my note. Adieu, Monseigneur," and Cagliostro coolly folded the paper and was about to put it in his pocket.

The cardinal stopped him. "Monsieur le Comte," he said, "a Rohan allows no one to give him lessons in generosity. Besides, this would simply be a lesson in honesty. Give me that note, Monsieur, that I may pay it."

It was Cagliostro then who in his turn seemed to hesitate. In fact, the pale face, dilated eyes, the trembling hand of the cardinal seemed to inspire him with a lively compassion.

The cardinal, proud as he was, comprehended this good feeling of Cagliostro, and for a moment hoped that it would be followed by good results. But suddenly the count's expression grew hard, a cloud came over his knitted brows, and he handed the note to the cardinal.

Monsieur de Rohan, struck to the heart, lost not a moment; he went to the cabinet which Cagliostro had spoken of, and drew out a bundle of notes drawn on the treasury of streams and forests; then he pointed with his finger to several bags of money, and opened a drawer which was full of gold. "Monsieur le Comte," he said, "here are your five hundred thousand francs; but I still owe you two hundred and fifty thousand francs, as interest, even supposing you to refuse compound interest, which would make the sum much larger. My intendant shall make up the account, and I will give you security for the payment of this amount, only asking that you will give me time."

"Monseigneur," replied Cagliostro, "I lent five hundred thousand francs to Monsieur de Rohan, who owes me five hundred thousand francs and nothing more. If I had wished to receive interest, I should have stipulated for

it in the receipt. As representative of Joseph Balsamo, or his heir, if you please, — for Joseph Balsamo is really dead, — I have no right to anything but the sum specified in the acknowledgment; you pay it, I receive it, and thank you, begging you to accept my respectful salutations. I will take the notes with me, Monseigneur; and as I have need of the whole amount this very day I will send for the gold and silver, which I beg you to have ready for me." And after uttering these words, to which the cardinal was not able to reply, Cagliostro put the bundle of notes in his pocket, bowed respectfully to the prince, in whose hands he left the receipt, and withdrew.

"The misfortune affects me alone," sighed Monsieur de Rohan, after the departure of Cagliostro, "since the queen has the money to pay, and no Joseph Balsamo can come and call upon her for an old debt of five hundred thousand francs."

CHAPTER XIX.

FAMILY ACCOUNTS.

It was the day before that appointed by the queen for the first payment to Boehmer and Bossange. Monsieur de Calonne had not yet fulfilled his promise. His accounts had not been signed by the king. The minister had had many things to occupy his time, and had somewhat forgotten the queen. She, on her side, thought it derogatory to her dignity to refresh the memory of the controller of finance. Having received his promise she waited. She, however, began to grow anxious, and to make inquiries; she was trying to devise some plan for speaking to Monsieur de Calonne, without compromising her queenly dignity, when she received a note from the minister. "This evening," he wrote, "the business with which your Majesty has done me the honor to charge me will be settled by the Council; and the money will be delivered to the queen to-morrow morning."

Marie Antoinette recovered all her gayety, and thought no more of the morrow. She was even seen, during her walks, to seek the most retired spots, as if wishing to withdraw her thoughts from every material and mundane subject. She was still walking with Madame de Lamballe and the Comte d'Artois, who had joined her, when the king withdrew to the Council after dinner.

The king was in an irritable humor. The news from Russia was bad. A vessel had been lost in the Gulf of Lyons. Certain provinces had refused to pay taxes. A fine

map of the world, polished and varnished by the king himself, had cracked by reason of the excessive heat; and Europe had split into two parts, at the junction of thirty degrees of latitude with fifty-five of longitude. His Majesty was out of humor with everybody, even Monsieur de Calonne.

In vain the latter produced his fine, scented portfolio, in his most pleasant manner. The king began, silent and morose, to draw on a piece of white paper irregular figures, which signified "Tempest," just as the figures of men and horses signified "Fine weather."

For it was the fancy of the king to make drawings during the meetings of the Council. Louis XVI. did not like to look people in the face, for he was timid. A pen in his hand gave him assurance and support. While he was thus occupied the orator might unfold his arguments; the king, casting a furtive glance, would catch now and then a little of the fire of the speaker's looks, — just enough to prevent his forgetting the man while considering the idea.

If he spoke himself, — and he could speak well, — his drawing took from his discourse every appearance of pretension, for there were no gestures to be made. He could be deliberate in what he said, or animated, as he pleased; the lines upon the paper took the place of oratorical flourishes.

On this occasion, then, the king took up a pen, according to his custom, and the ministers began the reading of their outlines, or of diplomatic notes. The king did not breathe a word; he allowed the foreign correspondence to be gone through with as if he did not understand a word about such matters.

But at last the details of the monthly accounts were reached; then the king raised his head. Monsieur de

Calonne had just unfolded his plan relative to the loan projected for the following year. The king began to draw furiously. "Always borrowing money," he said, "without knowing how it is to be paid! That is a problem for you, Monsieur de Calonne."

"Sire, a loan is only turning a stream from one direction to cause it to flow more abundantly in another. In deepening the channel you only increase the supply; therefore let us not think of paying, but only of obtaining present funds, for the problem of which your Majesty speaks is not, 'How can we pay?' but, 'Can we find creditors?'"

The king made his crossed lines in the very darkest shade, but he did not say a word; his lines spoke for themselves.

Monsieur de Calonne having explained his plan, which was approved by his colleagues, the king took the proposal and signed it, sighing meanwhile.

"Now that we have money," said Monsieur de Calonne, "let us spend it."

The king looked at his minister with a wry face, and his crossed lines became one enormous blot.

Monsieur de Calonne presented him a statement consisting of a list of pensions, gifts, and payments to be made. The statement was not long, and was very clear; the king looked over the pages, and ran over the sum total.

"One million one hundred thousand francs for so little! How can this be?" and he let his pen rest.

"Read, Sire, read, and be pleased to remark that of the eleven hundred thousand francs, one single item consists of five hundred thousands francs."

"What item, Monsieur?"

"An advance made to her Majesty the queen, Sire."

"To the queen!" cried Louis XVI. "Five hundred thousand francs to the queen! Eh, Monsieur, that is not possible!"

"Pardon, Sire! but the figures are correct."

"Five hundred thousand francs to the queen!" repeated the king. "There must be some error. Last week — no, a fortnight ago — I paid the queen her quarterly allowance."

"Sire, if the queen has need of money, — and it is well known what use she makes of it, — it is not extraordinary —"

"No, no!" cried the king, who wished his frugality to be publicly known, and felt the need of conciliating the people, so that they would applaud the queen when she went to the Opera. "The queen does not wish for this money, Monsieur de Calonne. The queen told me that a ship of the line was better than jewels. The queen thinks that if France is obliged to borrow money to feed its poor, we who are rich should lend to France. Therefore if the queen needs this money, her merit will be all the greater if she waits for it; and I guarantee that she will wait."

The ministers applauded this patriotic outburst of the king, whom the divine Horace would not have called *uxorius* at that moment. Monsieur de Calonne alone, who knew the queen's embarrassment, insisted on the allowance being granted.

"Truly," said the king, "you are more interested for us than we are for ourselves. Compose yourself, Monsieur de Calonne."

"The queen, Sire, will accuse me of having shown very little zeal in her service."

"I will plead your cause with her."

"The queen never asks for money but when compelled by necessity."

"If the queen has needs, they are less imperious, I hope, than those of the poor; and she will be the first to acknowledge it."

"Sire —"

"The matter is settled," said the king, resolutely, and he began to draw the crossed lines.

"You cancel this credit, Sire?" said Monsieur de Calonne, in consternation.

"I cancel it," replied Louis XVI., majestically, "and I fancy I hear the queen, in her generosity, thanking me for having so well understood her heart."

Monsieur de Calonne bit his lips. Louis, content with this personal sacrifice, accepted all the other items with blind confidence; and he drew a beautiful zebra, surrounded by zeros, saying, "I have this evening gained five hundred thousand francs, —a pretty good day's work for a king, Calonne. You must carry this good news to the queen; you will see, you will see."

"Ah, my God, Sire!" murmured the minister, "I should be grieved to deprive you of the pleasure of such an avowal. Every one according to his deserts."

"So be it," replied the king. "Let us break up. We have accomplished work enough when that which has been done is good. Ah, here comes the queen; let us go to meet her, Calonne."

"Sire, I beg your Majesty's pardon, but I have my signatures to attend to," and he slipped off as quickly as possible through the corridor.

The king went courageously, and beaming with delight, to meet Marie Antoinette, who was singing in the vestibule, leaning on the arm of the Comte d'Artois.

"Madame," he said, "you have had a pleasant walk, I hope."

"Yes, Sire; and have you had a successful meeting?"

"You may judge of that; I have gained for you five hundred thousand francs."

"Calonne has kept his word," thought the queen.

"Only imagine, Calonne had put you down in his statement for half a million."

"Oh!" said Marie Antoinette, smiling.

"And I — I struck it out. Five hundred thousand francs gained by the stroke of a pen!"

"How, struck out?" said the queen, growing pale.

"Completely. What I have done will be of great advantage to you. Good-evening, Madame, good-evening."

"Sire! Sire!"

"I am very hungry; I am going in. Do you not think my supper has been well earned?"

"But, Sire, listen."

But Louis XVI. skipped off, delighted with his joke, leaving the queen astounded, mute, and dismayed.

"Brother, find Monsieur de Calonne for me," she said finally, to the Comte d'Artois; "there is some trick under all this." Just then the following note was brought to the queen, —

"Your Majesty will have learned that the king refused your grant. It is incomprehensible, Madame, and I retired from the Council sick and full of grief."

"Read," she said, passing the note to the Comte d'Artois.

"And there are those who say that we squander the revenue, sister!" cried the prince. "It is a proceeding — "

"Quite husband-like," murmured the queen.

"I offer you my condolences, dear sister, and it is a lesson for me; I was going to ask for money to-morrow."

"Let Madame de La Motte be immediately sent for," said the queen to Madame de Misery, after long meditation.

CHAPTER XX.

QUEEN AND WOMAN.

THE courier who had been sent to Paris in search of Madame de La Motte, found the countess, or rather did not find her, at the house of the Cardinal de Rohan.

Jeanne had gone thither to pay a visit to his Eminence. She had dined there, had taken supper there, and was conversing with him about that disastrous restitution, when the courier came to inquire if the countess were there. The well-trained guard replied that his Eminence had gone out, and that Madame de La Motte was not there, but that nothing was easier than to give her the message from the queen, since she would probably come to the hôtel in the evening.

"She must repair to Versailles as soon as possible," said the courier, and he departed, having left the same message in all the supposed domiciles of the wandering countess.

But the messenger had hardly gone before the porter, executing his commission without going far, sent his wife to Madame de La Motte with the message as she sat at supper with the cardinal, philosophizing upon the instability of large sums of money.

The countess knew that she must depart immediately. The cardinal himself placed her in a light carriage without armorial bearings, and the countess was driven with such rapidity that in less than an hour she had arrived at the

palace. She was introduced without delay into the queen's bedchamber. The only attendant in the apartment was Madame de Misery, who was reading in the small boudoir, the queen's toilet for the night having been completed.

Marie Antoinette was embroidering, or pretending to embroider, listening eagerly for every noise from without, when Jeanne hurried into the room.

"Ah!" cried the queen, "you have come. So much the better. I have news, Countess."

"Good news, Madame."

"You shall judge of that. The king has refused the five hundred thousand francs."

"To Monsieur de Calonne?"

"To everybody. The king will not give me any more money. Such things happen only to me."

"My God!" murmured the countess.

"Incredible, is it not, Countess? To refuse, to cancel the order already drawn up! But it is useless to talk about it. You must return quickly to Paris."

"Yes, Madame."

"And tell the cardinal that since he is so kind, I will accept the five hundred thousand francs until I receive my next quarterly allowance. It is selfish on my part, I know, Countess, but it is necessary."

"Madame," murmured Jeanne, "we are lost! Monsieur le Cardinal has no more money."

The queen started, as if she had just been wounded or insulted. "No more money?" she stammered.

"Madame, an unexpected claim has been made upon Monsieur de Rohan. It was a debt of honor, and he has paid it."

"Five hundred thousand francs?"

"Yes, Madame."

"But —"

"The last money he had; he has no further resources."

The queen was silent, as if stunned by this misfortune. "Am I really awake?" she said. "It is only to me that such things happen. How do you know this, Countess, — that Monsieur de Rohan has no more money?"

"He told me of this disaster not an hour and a half ago, Madame. This disaster is the more irreparable, since the five hundred thousand francs were what they call 'the bottom of the drawer.'"

The queen leaned her head on her hands.

"Something must be done," she said.

"What is the queen going to do?" thought Jeanne.

"You see, Countess, it is a terrible lesson, which will punish me for having committed, without the knowledge of the king, an action of slight importance, of unworthy ambition, or pitiful vanity. I had no need of this necklace, now acknowledge it."

"True, Madame; but if a queen should consult only her needs and her tastes —"

"I wish above all to consult my peace of mind, the happiness of my family. It required nothing less than this first check to prove to me to how much annoyance I was about to expose myself, how fruitful in disgrace the road I had chosen. I renounce it. Let us always proceed frankly and straightforwardly."

"Madame!"

"And as a beginning, let us sacrifice our vanity on the altar of duty, as Monsieur Dorat would say." Then, with a sigh, "Ah, and yet that necklace was very beautiful!" she murmured.

"It is so still, Madame; and it is as good as money too, this necklace."

"From this time forth it is for me but a collection of

stones, — stones which, after one has played with them as children play with marbles, are thrown aside and forgotten."

"What does the queen mean?"

"The queen means, dear Countess, that you will take the necklace brought by Monsieur de Rohan, and carry it back to the jewellers, Boehmer and Bossange."

"To return it?"

"Precisely."

"But, Madame, your Majesty has given two hundred and fifty thousand francs as earnest money."

"And that will be a gain of two hundred and fifty thousand francs; my accounts will then agree with those of the king."

"Madame, Madame," cried the countess, "to lose thus a quarter of a million! For it may happen that the jewellers will make some difficulty about returning funds of which they may have disposed."

"I expect it, and intend giving up the earnest money on condition that the bargain shall be broken. Now that I see my way out of the affair I feel easier. This necklace brought with it cares, griefs, fears, suspicions. These diamonds would never have had fire enough to dry all the tears which I feel hanging like clouds over me. Countess, bring me that casket immediately. The jewellers make a good thing of it. Two hundred and fifty thousand francs bonus is a handsome profit; they would make no greater profit by selling it to me, and besides they have the necklace. I think they will not complain, and that no one will know anything about it. The cardinal aimed only to give me pleasure. You will tell him that it is my pleasure not to have this necklace; and if he is a man of sense, he will understand me; if he is a good priest, he will encourage and strengthen me in my sacrifice." The

queen held out to Jeanne the closed casket; the latter gently thrust it back. "Madame," said she, "why not try to obtain more time?"

"Ask for time? — no!"

"I said 'obtain,' Madame."

"To ask is to humiliate one's self, Countess; to obtain is to be humiliated. I can understand how one may humiliate himself in behalf of a person he loves, or to benefit a living creature, were it only a dog; but not for the sake of gaining the right to keep these stones, which scorch like burning coals, — no advice could ever persuade me to do that, never! Take away the casket, my dear, take it."

"But consider, Madame, the noise these jewellers may make, — through politeness, at least, and sympathy with you. Your rejection of the diamonds will compromise you as much as your acceptance of them might have done. Every one will know that you have had them in your possession."

"No one will know about it. I no longer owe anything to these jewellers; I will not receive them again. For my two hundred and fifty thousand francs they can at least be silent. And my enemies, instead of being able to say that I spend a million and a half for diamonds, can say only that I lose money in speculation, which is less disagreeable. Take them away, Countess, and cordially thank Monsieur de Rohan for his kindness and his good intentions." With a peremptory movement she placed the casket in Jeanne's hands, who took possession of them with a peculiar emotion.

"You have no time to lose," continued the queen. "The less anxiety the jewellers have to suffer, the more assured we shall be of their silence. Go at once; and let no one see the casket. Go home first; for an immediate

resort to the jewellers might arouse the suspicions of the police, who are much interested in what I do. Then, when you have thus eluded the spies, go to the jewellers, and afterward bring me their receipt."

"Yes, Madame; this shall be done, since you so determine."

Jeanne put the casket under her cloak, taking care that its shape should not be perceptible, and entered her carriage with all the zeal which her august accomplice in this act might have desired. In the first place, obeying orders, she went home; she then sent back the carriage to Monsieur de Rohan, so that the coachman should know nothing of her secret. She changed her costume for one less elegant and more appropriate for her nocturnal expedition. Her maid, while rapidly dressing her, noticed that she was thoughtful and preoccupied during that operation, to which usually she gave close attention.

In fact, Jeanne was not thinking of her toilet; her mind was fixed on a new and strange idea suggested by the occasion. She asked herself whether the cardinal would not make a grave mistake in allowing the queen to return the necklace, and whether that error would not imperil the career of which he dreamed, and which, as sharer in the queen's secrets, he might hope to enjoy. To act on the orders of Marie Antoinette without consulting him would be to fail in the most obvious duties of their partnership. Though he was at the end of his resources, might not the cardinal prefer to sell himself rather than see the queen deprived of an object she had so much desired?

"I cannot do otherwise," Jeanne said to herself, "than consult the cardinal. Fourteen hundred thousand francs!" she added; "he cannot obtain fourteen hundred thousand francs." Then turning suddenly to her maid, "Go, Rose," she said.

The maid went out, and Madame de La Motte resumed her meditations. "What a sum! what a fortune! what a brilliant life! How well is all the happiness and splendor to be procured by so much money represented by the little serpent of jewels which glitters in this casket."

Jeanne opened the jewel-case and scorched her eyes by contact with those streaming flames. She took up the necklace, wound it round her fingers, and clasped it in her little hands, saying: "I can thus grasp fourteen hundred thousand francs; for this necklace is worth fourteen hundred thousand francs, and the jewellers would pay that price for it even now. Strange destiny, which suffers the little Jeanne de Valois, an obscure mendicant, to touch the hand of a queen (the first queen in the world), and to hold in her hands, for a little while at least, fourteen hundred thousand francs, — a sum of money which is never allowed to travel alone, but goes attended by an armed escort, or assured by guarantees not less than those of a cardinal and a queen. All this within my ten fingers! How heavy it is, and yet how light! In order to transport the equivalent of this necklace in gold — that precious metal — I should need two horses. To carry it in notes — and are notes always paid? Is there not a signature to write, and an account to keep? And then a note is only paper; it may be destroyed by fire, air, or water. A bank-note is not current in all countries; and it betrays its origin, it reveals the name of its maker and of its bearer. A bank-note, after a certain lapse of time, loses a part of, or all, its value. Diamonds, on the contrary, are of a hard material which can resist everything, and which every one recognizes, appreciates, admires, and is ready to buy, whether in London, Berlin, Madrid, or even in Brazil. Every one knows the value of diamonds, especially of diamonds like these. How beautiful they

are! — wonderful, either together or taken singly! Each one by itself is probably worth more, in proportion, than all together are worth. But of what am I thinking?" she said, suddenly. "Come, quick! I must make up my mind either to go to the cardinal or to carry the necklace to the jewellers as the queen directed."

Jeanne rose, still holding the shining diamonds in her hands. "They will be returned to that cold jeweller," she said to herself, "who will weigh them, and polish them with a brush; and they might have shone on the bosom of Marie Antoinette. Boehmer will cry out at first, but will be quieted by the reflection that he has both the profit of the sale and the merchandise itself. Ah, I forgot, — in what form should that receipt be written? It is an important question; yes, the making of that receipt requires diplomacy. It must be conceived in such terms as not to compromise Boehmer, or the queen, or the cardinal, or myself. I can never write it alone; I must have advice. The cardinal — Oh, no; if the cardinal loved me more, or if he were richer and could give me the diamonds —"

She sat down on the sofa, turning the diamonds in her hand; her head was hot, and her mind full of confused thoughts which at times frightened her, and which she repelled with feverish energy. Suddenly her eye became more tranquil, more fixed on the image of a single persistent idea. She was not conscious of the flight of the moments; she was not aware that she was forming a conclusion that could not afterward be changed. Like swimmers who have placed their feet on a quicksand, every movement she made to extricate herself only buried her the more deeply. An hour passed while she thus abandoned herself to the silent, absorbing contemplation of a mysterious purpose. She then rose slowly, pale as an in-

spired priestess, and rang for her maid. It was two o'clock in the morning. "Find me a carriage, or a wheeled chair if no carriage can be had," said she.

The servant found a carriage in the old Rue du Temple. Madame de La Motte entered it alone. Ten minutes later the carriage stopped at the door of the journalist Reteau de Villette.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RECEIPT AND THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

THE result of that nocturnal visit to Reteau de Villette appeared on the next day. At seven o'clock in the morning Madame de La Motte sent the queen a letter containing the jeweller's receipt in the following words: —

We the undersigned acknowledge the receipt of a diamond necklace which had been sold to the queen for sixteen hundred thousand francs, the diamonds failing to suit her Majesty, who has recompensed us for our trouble and outlay by leaving in our hands the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand francs, previously paid.

BOEHMER AND BOSSANGE.

The queen, at length easy in mind concerning an affair which had given her so much trouble, put the receipt in a drawer, and dismissed the subject from her thoughts.

But, in singular incongruity with this receipt, the jewellers were visited two days later by Cardinal de Rohan, who was still anxious concerning the first payment agreed upon between the jewellers and the queen. He found Boehmer at home. Had there been any failure of payment, any delay or refusal, the camp of the jewellers should show signs of alarm. On the contrary everything indicated quiet and security; and Boehmer received his illustrious patron with effusive demonstrations of pleasure.

"Well," said the cardinal, "to-day is the day appointed for the first payment; the queen has paid you, then?"

"No, Monseigneur; the queen has not been able to give us any money. You know that Monsieur de Calonne was refused by the king. Every one is talking of it."

"Yes, every one is talking of it, Boehmer; and it is that refusal which brings me here to-day."

"But," continued the jeweller, "her Majesty is very kind; she has guaranteed the debt, and we have no more to ask."

"Ah, so much the better!" cried the cardinal; "guaranteed the debt, you say? Very good; but in what. manner?"

"In the most simple and delicate manner," replied the jeweller, — "a manner altogether royal."

"Through the mediation of that bright countess, perhaps?"

"No, Monseigneur, no. Madame de La Motte does not appear in the matter; and this has seemed to us very flattering."

"The countess does not appear? You may believe, however, that she has had to do with the affair, Monsieur Boehmer. Every wise suggestion must have come from her, — I do not intend disparagement of her Majesty, you understand."

"Monseigneur can judge whether her Majesty has been considerate toward us. When the rumor reached us that the king had rejected the order for five hundred thousand francs we wrote to Madame de La Motte."

"When was that?"

"Yesterday, Monseigneur."

"What did she reply?"

"Your Eminence knows nothing about it?" asked Boehmer, with a slight degree of respectful familiarity.

"No; it is three days since I had the honor of seeing the countess."

"Well, Monseigneur, Madame de La Motte responded with a single word, — 'Wait!'"

"In writing?"

"No, Monseigneur, orally. In our letter we begged Madame de La Motte to ask you for an audience, and to warn the queen that the payment was nearly due."

"The word 'wait' was very natural."

"We therefore waited, Monseigneur; and last evening we received by a mysterious courier a letter from the queen."

"A letter? — to you, Boehmer?"

"Or rather an acknowledgment in the proper form, Monseigneur."

"Let me see it," said the cardinal.

"Oh, I would show it to you if we had not sworn to let no one see it."

"And why?"

"Because this reserve is imposed on us by the queen herself, Monseigneur."

"Ah, that is another matter! You are very fortunate, you jewellers, to have letters from the queen."

"For thirteen hundred and fifty thousand francs, Monseigneur," said the jeweller, with a grin, "one may have —"

"Ten millions, a hundred millions, would not pay for some things, Monsieur," replied the prelate, in a severe tone. "In short, then, you have a good guarantee?"

"The best possible, Monseigneur."

"The queen acknowledges the debt?"

"In due form."

"And engages to pay —"

"In three months five hundred thousand francs; and the balance in six."

"And — the interest?"

"Oh, Monseigneur, a single word from her Majesty makes that secure. 'Let us settle this matter,' her Majesty graciously adds, 'between ourselves.' Your Excellency will understand the meaning of that request. 'You will have no reason for regret.' This is over her signature. Therefore, you see, Monseigneur, that from this moment the transaction is, to my partner and myself, an affair of honor."

"Then I am entirely out of your debt, Monsieur Boehmer," said the cardinal, much pleased. "May we soon have business together again."

"Whenever your Eminence may deign to honor us with your confidence."

"But you must notice still in this affair the hand of that amiable countess?"

"We are very grateful to Madame de La Motte, Monseigneur; and it has been agreed between my partner and myself that we will acknowledge her kindness when the full payment for the necklace shall have put us in possession of ready money."

"Hush, hush!" said the cardinal; "you misunderstand me." He returned to his carriage attended by manifestations of respect from all in the house.

We may now lift the mask. The statue is unveiled to all eyes. All our readers understood what plot Jeanne de La Motte was meditating against her benefactress, on seeing her borrow the pen of Reteau de Villette. There was no longer any anxiety in the minds of the jewellers; no more scruples troubled the queen; no uncertainty remained to the cardinal. Three months remained for the perpetration of the theft and the crime; in those three months the ill-omened fruitage would be so far matured that it might be plucked by the felonious hand.

Jeanne paid a visit to the cardinal, who asked her how

the queen had contrived to allay so completely the jewellers' eagerness for their money. She replied that the queen had treated with the jewellers confidentially, and had enjoined them to secrecy; that if the queen had paid ready money she would even then have had to exercise too much concealment. But still more was necessary to her since she had bought on credit.

The cardinal assented to this view of the matter, and asked whether the queen was mindful of his good intentions. Thereupon Jeanne drew such a picture of the queen's gratitude that Monsieur de Rohan was enthusiastic, — much more as a man of gallantry than as a subject, more exalted in his pride than in his devotion.

Jeanne, having brought the conversation to a satisfactory conclusion, returned home, and proceeded to execute the plan she had formed. She had resolved to negotiate with some dealer in precious stones the sale of diamonds to the amount of three hundred thousand francs, and then go to England or to Russia, where she could live sumptuously on that sum for five or six years; and at the end of that time she could with less danger begin to sell one by one the remainder of the diamonds. But the event was not in accordance with her wishes. On her first exhibition of diamonds to two experts she was alarmed by their surprise and reserve. One of them offered her a contemptible price; and the other went into ecstasies over the stones, saying he had never seen any equal to them except on Boehmer's necklace.

Jeanne halted. Had she gone a step farther she would have betrayed herself. She understood that imprudence in such a matter meant ruin, and that ruin meant the pillory and perpetual imprisonment. She put the diamonds under lock and key, in the most secret of her hiding-places, and resolved to provide herself with weapons of

defence so strong, and offensive arms so sharp, that in case of war they who should come to the encounter would be vanquished in advance.

To have to steer between the curiosity of the cardinal, who would want to know everything, and the indiscretion of the queen, who would be always ready to boast of having refused the necklace, was to be exposed to a terrible danger. A word exchanged between the queen and the cardinal, and all would be discovered. Jeanne comforted herself with the reflection that the cardinal, being in love with the queen, wore a bandage over his eyes, like all other lovers, and consequently would readily fall into any snare which cunning might lay for him, addressed to his love. But this snare must be contrived by a skilful hand, and in such a manner as to entrap both the interested parties. It must be so contrived that in case the queen should discover the theft she would not dare to complain, and that if the cardinal made the discovery he would see that a single word would destroy him. She had to play a masterstroke against two adversaries who would have all the spectators in their favor.

Jeanne did not draw back. Hers was one of those intrepid natures which push evil to heroism, and good to evil. From this time her mind was occupied by a single thought, — how to prevent an interview between the queen and the cardinal. So long as she, Jeanne, was between them all was safe; but if in her absence they should exchange a word, Jeanne's fortune would tumble into ruin.

"They must never meet," she said, — "never! But the cardinal will wish to see the queen; he will endeavor to do so. Let us not wait for him to make the attempt; let us inspire him with the idea. Let him wish to see her; let him demand to see her, — but in such a way

that he will be compromised. Yes, but if he only is compromised?" This thought threw her into a painful perplexity. "He alone being compromised, the queen has her remedy. The queen speaks loud; she knows so well how to tear the mask from the face of an impostor.

"What is to be done? That the queen may not be able to accuse, it is necessary that she shall be unable to speak; to close that noble and courageous mouth, its springs must be compressed by the initiative of an accusation. For that man dare not, before a tribunal, accuse his valet of theft, who could be convicted by his valet of a crime as dishonorable. Let Monsieur de Rohan be compromised in relation to the queen, and it is almost certain that the queen will be compromised too. But those two persons interested to discover the secret must not come together by chance."

Jeanne recoiled at first in view of the immensity of the rock suspended over her head. Could she live thus, agitated, terrified, always dreading its fall? How, then, could she escape from the danger? By flight; by exile; by carrying to a foreign land the diamonds of the queen's necklace? Flight would be easy enough. In ten hours, in a good carriage, she would be secure. But what scandal! what disgrace! She would be no longer a woman of rank, but a thief; in safety, but proscribed, — a fugitive whom justice cannot reach, but whom justice can point out; whom the executioner's red-hot iron cannot brand, but whom public opinion breaks in pieces and devours. No, she will not flee. She will be bold and remain. This resolution was confirmed in her mind when she had imagined the possibility of creating between the queen and the cardinal a bond of fear against the day when either of them should discover that a theft had been committed.

Jeanne had calculated how much money she would be likely to gain in two years from the queen's favor and the cardinal's love. She had estimated the revenue from these two sources at five or six hundred thousand francs; after which weariness, disgrace, abandonment, would come to off-set the favor, the confidence, and the influence she had possessed. "By my plan," she said to herself, "I shall gain seven or eight hundred thousand francs."

One may see how Jeanne, notwithstanding her profound intelligence, entered upon the tortuous road which would terminate in disgrace for her, in despair for the others.

"I will remain in Paris," the countess resumed. "I will witness calmly all the play of the two actors, and will permit them to play only in rôles favorable to my interests. I can then select the most favorable opportunity for flight, whether it be some commission on the part of the queen, or her actual displeasure, which I may make a pretext for my departure. But the cardinal must hold no communication with Marie Antoinette. And here lies the great difficulty, for Monsieur de Rohan is in love, he is a prince, he has the privilege of visiting her Majesty several times a year; and the queen, coquettish, eager for homage, and grateful toward the cardinal, will not avoid him if he tries to see her. As to the way in which these august personages may be kept apart, events will furnish it; it is for me to aid events.

"Nothing could be so much to the purpose as to arouse in the queen that pride which is the crown of chastity. There can be no doubt that her fine and sensitive spirit would resent an advance a little too eager on the part of the cardinal. Natures like hers are fond of homage, but they suspect and repel attacks. Yes, the method is infallible. If Monsieur de Rohan can be persuaded to

declare himself freely, he will awaken in the mind of the queen a feeling of disgust, of antipathy, which will separate finally, not the prince from the princess, but the man from the woman, the male from the female. In that way arms will be furnished against the cardinal, which in the great day of battle will paralyze all his activities.

"So far, good. But now, again, in making the cardinal offensive to the queen I shall have acted against the cardinal only. The queen's virtue will be more conspicuous, she will be freed from all suspicion, and she will have gained that freedom of speech which facilitates accusations and lends to them the weight of authority.

"What is necessary, then, is a proof against Monsieur de Rohan and against the queen, — a two-edged sword which shall cut in both directions; an accusation which will make the queen turn pale, and will make the cardinal blush, and which, being accredited, will free from all suspicion Jeanne, the confidant of the two guilty principals. What is necessary is a combination behind which, when the occasion requires, Jeanne can intrench herself and say, 'Do not accuse me, or I will accuse you; do not destroy me, or I will destroy you. Leave me my fortune, and I will leave you your honor.' That is worth seeking for, and I will try to discover it. My time is paid for from this time forth."

Madame de La Motte drew her arm-chair to the window, illumined by the sun, buried herself in its soft cushions, and began her search.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PRISONER.

During these meditations of the countess, a scene of a very different kind was taking place in the Rue Saint Claude, in a house opposite that inhabited by Jeanne.

It will be remembered that Cagliostro had established in Balsamo's old hôtel the fugitive Oliva, who was pursued by the police of Monsieur de Crosne. Mademoiselle Oliva, who had been in a state of great anxiety, had accepted with joy this opportunity to escape both the police and Beausire. She therefore lived retired, concealed, and trembling, in this mysterious dwelling which had been the scene of so many terrible dramas, — more terrible, alas, than the tragi-comic adventure of Mademoiselle Nicole Legay.

Cagliostro had provided most carefully for her comfort. It was very pleasant to her to be under the protection of that grand nobleman, who asked nothing of her, but who seemed to hope for much. "But what did he hope for?" she often asked herself in vain. To Mademoiselle Oliva, Monsieur de Cagliostro, the man who had overawed Beausire and triumphed over the agents of the police, was a benignant God. He was also very much in love, since he respected her. For Oliva's vanity led her to believe that Cagliostro intended some day to make her his mistress. It is a virtue, in the eyes of those women who no longer possess any, to be capable of inspiring a respectful love. That heart is indeed withered, arid, altogether dead, which

no longer hopes for love and the respect which goes with it. Therefore Oliva began to build castles in the air, in which, we must confess, poor Beausire very rarely had a place; and the two visits a week paid to her by Cagliostro were eagerly anticipated. At these visits Oliva, bedecked with the pretty things she found on her toilet-tables, assumed grand airs and played the fine lady.

In her fine salon, in the midst of real and refined luxury, the little creature, intoxicated with delight, acknowledged to herself that everything in her past life had been deception and error; that contrary to the assertion of the moralist, "Virtue makes happiness," it was happiness that invariably produced virtue. Unfortunately, there was lacking in the composition of this happiness one element indispensable to its continuance. Oliva was happy, but she was lonely. Books, pictures, musical instruments, were not sufficient to amuse her. The books were soon read through, — such as suited her taste, — and pictures and music afforded her no lasting satisfaction.

It must be admitted that very soon Oliva was heartily tired of her happiness, and began to regret her mornings passed at the windows of the Rue Dauphine, where she used to sit to attract the attention of the passers-by. And then those pleasant walks in the Saint Germain quarter, when, her coquettish shoe raised on heels two inches high, revealing a foot of voluptuous shape, each step of the lovely walker was a triumph, and drew from the admiring spectators little cries, either of fear when she slipped, or of pleasure when in addition to her foot she showed her ankle.

The imprisoned Nicole began to think of these things. It is true that the agents of the police were very formidable personages; that the Hospital, in which women pass their lives in a vile captivity, could not compare with the

ephemeral and splendid imprisonment of the Rue Saint Claude. But what availed it to be a woman, and to have the right to be capricious, if one could not sometimes rebel against the good and change it into evil, at least in imagination? Nicole, then, regretted her lost liberty, and in regretting her liberty began to long for Beausire.

We come now to a day of special grief and irritability, when Oliva, having been deprived of all society for two weeks, with nothing to engage her attention, entered upon a very gloomy season of ennui. Having exhausted all means of diversion, not daring to appear at the windows or to go out, she began to lose her appetite, — not, however, the appetite of the imagination, which, on the contrary, increased as the other diminished.

While she was in this state of moral agitation she received an unexpected visit from Cagliostro. He entered as usual by the lower door of the hôtel, and crossing the little garden recently laid out in the court-yard, knocked on the shutters of the apartment occupied by Oliva. Four knocks, at intervals agreed upon between them, were the signal for drawing the bolt which the young woman had thought necessary to demand as a safeguard against a visitor armed with keys.

On hearing Cagliostro's signal, she drew the bolt with a haste which showed her desire for a conference with him. Lively as a Parisian grisette, she rushed forward to meet her noble jailer, and in harsh, impatient tones cried out, "Monsieur, I wish you to know that I am homesick."

Cagliostro, turning his head slightly, looked at her. "You are homesick?" he said, closing the door; "that is a grievous malady."

"I am unhappy here. I shall die here."

"Really!"

"Yes; I have bad thoughts."

"There, there," said the count, quieting her as if she had been a pet spaniel; "if you are not comfortable in my house, do not blame me for it. Keep your anger for the lieutenant of police, who persecutes you."

"You exasperate me with your coolness, Monsieur," said Oliva. "I would rather you flew in a passion; you manage to pacify me, and that makes me mad with rage."

"Acknowledge, Mademoiselle, that you are unreasonable," replied Cagliostro, sitting down at some distance from her, with that affectation of respect, or indifference, which succeeded so well with Oliva.

"It is all very well for you to talk," she said; "you come and go as you like. You breathe the fresh air; you can choose your own pleasures. I vegetate in the space to which you have limited me; I do not breathe, I tremble. I tell you, Monsieur, that your assistance is useless to me if it does not prevent me from dying."

"Dying! you!" said the count, smiling. "Nonsense!"

"I tell you that you are behaving very badly to me; you forget that I love some one deeply, passionately."

"Monsieur Beausire?"

"Yes, Beausire. I love him, I tell you. I never concealed it from you, I believe. You did not imagine I should forget my Beausire?"

"So little did I think so, Mademoiselle, that I bring you news of him."

"Ah!" said Oliva.

"Monsieur de Beausire," continued Cagliostro, "is a charming fellow!"

"*Parbleu!*" said Oliva, who did not see what the count was driving at.

"Young and handsome."

"Yes; is he not?"

"Full of imagination."

"Full of fire — rather rough toward me; but he who loves well chastises well."

"Your words are golden. You have as much heart as mind, and as much mind as beauty; and I who know this, I who am interested in everything loving in the world, — it is a mania with me, — I have conceived the idea of bringing you and Monsieur Beausire together again."

"You did not have that idea a month ago," said Oliva, with a constrained smile.

"Listen, my dear child; every honest man who sees a pretty woman seeks to please her when he is free, as I am. However, you will acknowledge that if I did pay you some little attention it did not last long, eh?"

"It is true," said Oliva, in the same tone, "a quarter of an hour at the most."

"It was very natural that I should desist, seeing how much you loved Monsieur de Beausire."

"Ah, you are making fun of me!"

"No, upon my honor! You resisted me so vigorously."

"Yes, have I not?" cried Oliva, delighted at being accused of the flagrant crime of resistance. "Yes, you must acknowledge that I resisted."

"It was the consequence of your love," said Cagliostro, phlegmatically.

"But your love, yours," retorted Oliva, "was not very tenacious, then."

"No; I am neither old enough nor ugly enough, neither poor enough nor foolish enough, to run the risk of a refusal. I felt that you would always have preferred Monsieur de Beausire to me, so I made up my mind accordingly."

"Oh, not at all! by no means!" said the coquette. "That famous partnership you proposed to me, — you

know what I mean, — the right to give me your arm, to visit me, to pay court to me, with all respect and honor, was there not in that some little remains of hope?" and while saying these words the wily girl cast upon her visitor such ardent glances, from eyes too long idle, that he was hardly able to withstand them.

"I acknowledge it," replied Cagliostro. "Your penetration is so great that nothing can escape it;" and he feigned to turn away his eyes so as not to be dazzled by her glances.

"Let us return to Beausire," she said, piqued at the count's indifference; "what is he doing, and where is he, the dear fellow?"

Cagliostro, looking at her still with some timidity, replied, "I said that I intended to re-unite you."

"No, you did not say that," she murmured, with disdain; "but since you say it now I hold you to it. Go on. Why did you not bring him here? — it would have been kind. He is free — "

"Because," replied Cagliostro, without showing any surprise at this irony, "Monsieur de Beausire, who, like you, has too much imagination, has embroiled himself with the police."

"He too!" cried Oliva, turning pale; for now she felt that she was listening to the truth.

"He too," repeated Cagliostro, politely.

"What has he done?" stammered the young woman.

"A charming frolic, an ingenious piece of jugglery! I call it a farce; but morose persons, Monsieur de Crosne, for instance, — you know how stupid he is, — well, he calls it robbery."

"Robbery!" cried Oliva, terrified. "My God!"

"A very pretty robbery indeed; and one which proves what a taste this poor Beausire has for fine things."

"Monsieur, Monsieur, is he arrested?"

"No; but he is pursued."

"Will you swear to me that he is not arrested, — that he is in no danger?"

"I can assure you that he is not arrested; but as to the second point I will not give you my word. You know, my dear child, that Monsieur de Beausire, with his figure, his appearance, with all his well-known qualities, having been described to the police, would, if he should show himself, be seized by these bloodhounds. Only think what a lucky catch it would be for Monsieur de Crosne to take you both!"

"Oh, yes, yes; he must conceal himself! Poor fellow! I must hide too. Let me leave France, Monsieur. Please to do me this service; because, you see, shut up here, stifled, I could not resist committing some imprudence."

"What do you call an imprudence, my dear girl?"

"Why, showing myself, going out to get some fresh air."

"Do not be alarmed, my dear; you are already very pale, and you would soon lose your beauty, and then Monsieur de Beausire would not love you any longer. No; take as much air as you please, and amuse yourself with looking out of the windows."

"There, Monsieur," cried Oliva, "you are vexed with me, and you also are about to desert me. I offend you perhaps."

"Me! Are you mad? And how could you have offended me?" he said coldly.

"Because a man who takes a fancy to a woman, — a man of your consequence, a handsome nobleman like you, — has a right to be vexed, to be disgusted even, when she is so silly as to repulse him. Oh, do not leave me, do not abandon me, do not hate me, Monsieur!" and the young

woman, as frightened now as she had been coquettish, put her arm round Cagliostro's neck.

"Poor little one!" said the latter, imprinting a chaste kiss on Oliva's brow; "how frightened she is! Do not think so badly of me. You were in danger, and I rendered you a service. I had some plans with regard to you; I have given them up, that is all. I have no more hatred to manifest toward you than you have gratitude to offer me. I have acted for myself, you have acted for yourself; therefore we are quits."

"Oh, Monsieur, how good and generous you are!" and Oliva threw both arms, instead of one, round Cagliostro's neck.

But the latter looked at her with his accustomed tranquillity, "You see, Oliva, that if you should offer me your love, I —"

"Well?" said she, with a vivid blush.

"Were you to offer me your adorable person I should refuse, so much do I wish to inspire pure sentiments, free from all feeling of selfishness. You think yourself pledged to me. I should believe your feeling toward me one of gratitude rather than affection, of terror rather than love; let us remain as we are. I fulfil your wishes in this, I know, and anticipate your delicate reserve."

Oliva let fall her beautiful arms, and retired to a distance, ashamed, humiliated, the dupe of Cagliostro's apparent generosity, upon which she had not counted.

"So," said the count, "so, my dear Oliva, it is settled: you will still consider me as your friend; you will have every confidence in me; you will make use of my house, my purse, and my credit, and —"

"And I will say," said Oliva, "that there are men in the world superior to any I ever knew." She spoke these words with a charm and dignity which engraved a line

upon that soul of bronze whose body was formerly called Balsamo.

"Every woman is good when you touch the right chord," thought Cagliostro.

"From this evening you shall inhabit the upper story of the hôtel. It is an apartment which consists of three rooms, situated so as to overlook the boulevard and the Rue Saint Claude. The windows look upon Ménilmontant and Belleville. A few persons may see you there; but they are peaceable neighbors, whom you need not fear, — worthy persons who attend to their own affairs and who will never suspect you. Let them see you without exposing yourself unnecessarily; but never allow yourself to be seen by those passing in the street, for the Rue Saint Claude is sometimes explored by the agents of Monsieur de Crosne. At least you will have, up there, air and sunshine."

Oliva clapped her hands joyfully.

"Would you like me to take you there?" said Cagliostro.

"This evening?"

"Certainly, this evening. Does it inconvenience you?"

Oliva looked fixedly at Cagliostro. A vague hope entered her heart, or rather her vain and perverted head.

"Let us go," she said.

The count took a lantern from the antechamber, opened several doors, and ascending a staircase, followed by Oliva, reached on the third story the apartment of which he had spoken. She found her new lodging furnished, decked with flowers, and ready for occupancy.

"I should think I was expected here," she cried.

"Not for you but for myself," said the count. "I like the view from this pavilion, and often sleep here."

Oliva's eyes assumed the yellow tint and flashing ex-

pression one sometimes sees in the eyes of cats. She began to speak; Cagliostro stopped her, saying, "You shall want for nothing here; your maid will be with you in a quarter of an hour," and he disappeared, with a low bow accompanied by a gracious smile.

The poor prisoner sat down in perfect consternation, almost crushed, by the bed, which already awaited her in an elegant alcove.

"I comprehend absolutely nothing of what is happening to me," she murmured, following with her eyes the man who was really incomprehensible to her.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE OBSERVATORY.

OLIVA went to bed as soon as the maid whom Cagliostro had sent to her had withdrawn. She slept but little. The thoughts of every nature to which her conversation with the count had given rise, brought only waking dreams or disturbed sleep. We are not happy long when we are too rich or too quiet, after having been too poor or too anxious.

Oliva pitied Beausire; she admired the count, whom she did not in the least understand. She no longer thought him timid; she did not suspect him of insensibility.

She felt very much afraid that her sleep might be disturbed by some sylph, and the slightest noise caused her that agitation known by every heroine of romance who sleeps in the North Tower. At the approach of daylight all these terrors — which, however, were not without a certain charm — fled from her. It can hardly be said that Nicole attained this hour of perfect security without some feeling of coquettish spite, — a shade of feeling indescribable by any pencil but that of Watteau, or by any pen but that of Marivaux or Crébillon, junior.

In the morning she allowed herself to sleep, enjoying the pleasure of absorbing in her flower-decked room the purple rays of the morning sun, of seeing the little birds running along the terrace of her window, where their wings made a charming rustling sound among the rose-trees and the Spanish jasmines.

And it was late, very late, when she felt sufficiently invigorated to seek for motion, too much so to remain idle and recumbent. Then she rose and ran into every corner of this new apartment in which that incomprehensible sylph — how ignorant he must be! — had not been able to find a trap-door through which he might have glided to clap his wings near her bed; and yet sylphs in those days, thanks to the Comte de Gabalis, had lost nothing of their innocent reputation.

Oliva enjoyed the sumptuousness of her apartment the more because it was unexpected. This apartment had been furnished for a man. In it was everything that could make life pleasant; above all, an abundance of light, and fresh, pure air, which would change dungeons into gardens, if it were possible for light and air to penetrate a prison. With childish joy she ran out to the terrace, threw herself down on the tiles among the flowers and mosses, like a snake emerging from its nest. Lying down thus, that she might not be seen from without, she looked between the bars of the balcony at the tops of the trees on the boulevards, the houses in the Popincourt quarter and the chimneys, — a misty ocean, whose unequal waves rose one above the other on her sight. Basking in the sun, listening to catch the noise of rolling carriages, — rather infrequent, indeed, but there was some rolling along the boulevard, — she remained thus very happy for two hours. She even drank the chocolate which the maid brought her, and read a newspaper before she even thought of looking into the street.

It was a dangerous pleasure. The bloodhounds of Monsieur de Crosne, those human hounds who hunt with the nose in the air, might see her. What a frightful awakening after a sleep so sweet!

But this horizontal position could not be maintained for-

ever, pleasant as it might be. Nicole raised herself on her elbow, and then she saw the walnut-trees of Ménilmontant, the great trees of the cemetery, the myriads of houses of all colors which rose one above the other, from the hillside of Charonne to the heights of Chaumont, some surrounded by verdant groves, others upon the edges of the chalky cliffs which were covered with heaths and thistles. And here and there on the roads — narrow, ribbon-like paths, winding round these little mountains — in the vineyards, on the white high-roads, could be seen little living beings: peasants upon their asses, children leaning over the fields they were weeding, and vine-dressers trimming the vines.

This rusticity charmed Nicole, who had always sighed for the beautiful country of Taverney ever since she had left that country for this Paris which had been the great object of her desires. At last she was weary of this distant view, and as she had a comfortable and safe position among her flowers, as she could see without danger of being seen, she lowered her eyes from the mountain to the valley, from the horizon to the houses near her. Everywhere, — that is, in the space occupied by three houses, — Oliva found that the windows were closed, or offered but little to attract attention. Here was a house of three stories, inhabited by aged tenants hanging bird-cages on the outside or feeding cats within; there a four-story house, the garret of which, occupied by an Auvergnese porter, was the only one into which she could look, — the other tenants appearing to be absent, having gone into the country perhaps. Finally, a little to the left, in the third house, could be seen curtains of yellow silk, flowers, and — a suitable piece of furniture for this comfortable place — a soft arm-chair, which, placed near the window, seemed to await the dreamer who should occupy it. Oliva thought that

she could distinguish in the deep shadow of this room a figure moving to and fro with regular motion. She restrained her impatience, concealed herself more carefully even than before, and calling her maid, she sought, by entering into conversation with her, to vary the pleasures of solitude by intercourse with a thinking, and better still, a speaking creature.

But the maid, contrary to all tradition, was reserved. She was very glad to explain to her mistress all about Belleville, Charonne, and the Père-Lachaise. She told her the names of the churches of Saint Ambroise and Saint Laurent; she pointed out how the boulevard made a curve in the direction of the right bank of the Seine; but when it came to the neighbors she had not a word to say, — she knew no more about them than her mistress did. Oliva learned nothing about the shadowy apartment with its curtains of yellow silk, nothing about the moving figure, nothing about the arm-chair.

If Oliva had not the satisfaction of learning something about her neighbor beforehand, at least she could promise herself that of making her acquaintance without the aid of another. Therefore she sent away her too discreet servant, that she might apply herself to her exploration without a witness.

The opportunity soon presented itself. The neighbors soon began to open their doors, to take their after-dinner siesta, or dress themselves for their walk in the Place Royale or in the Chemin Vert.

Oliva passed them all in review, with the exception of that restless figure, which, without showing her face, had at last buried itself in the arm-chair, and seemed to be absorbed in silent revery.

It was a woman. She had previously been under the hands of her hairdresser, who had constructed upon her

head one of those Babylonian edifices into the composition of which entered minerals and vegetables, to which animals would have been added if Léonard had ever used them, and if a woman of that period would have consented to make a Noah's ark of her head. Then she had settled herself down in her easy-chair, her back supported by pillows so firm that the equilibrium of the body would be maintained and the monument on her head remain intact even though the house were shaken by an earthquake.

Oliva was at length able to remark that this lady with the magnificent head-dress was pretty; that her foot, which she had rested on the window-sill, and which was clad in a rose-colored satin slipper, was delicate and enticing. She admired especially her rounded arms and the contour of her bust; but that which impressed her more than anything was the absorbing nature of her thought, which seemed to render her whole body motionless, and to annihilate her by its power.

This woman, whom we have recognized and whom Oliva could not recognize, did not suspect that any one could see her. The windows opposite hers had never been opened. The hôtel of Monsieur de Cagliostro had never betrayed its secrets, and with the exception of the painters employed to restore it, no living being had been seen at its windows.

To explain this apparent contradiction of Cagliostro's assertion that he sometimes occupied the pavilion, a word will suffice. The count had given orders to have the apartment prepared for Oliva the evening previous, as if he were to occupy it himself. He had, so to speak, lied to himself, so well had his orders been executed.

The lady with the beautiful head-dress remained buried in thought; Oliva imagined that this beautiful dreamer was musing on some disappointment in love.

From the moment she had seen this pensive recluse

Oliva could not withdraw her eyes from her. She imagined that in her she had found her soul's sister. She constructed for her a romance similar to her own romance, thinking, ingenuous girl, that one could not be pretty and elegant and shut up in the Rue Saint Claude without having some serious anxiety in her heart.

When she had created her romantic story, Oliva, like all exceptional natures, allowed herself to be carried away by her fairy story; she took on wings to fly to meet her companion, whom in her impatience she wished to see impelled by wings like her own.

But the lady with the monument did not stir; she seemed to be sleeping in her chair. For two hours she had not moved. Oliva grew desperate. She would not have made to Adonis or poor Beausire one quarter the advances she had made to the unknown.

Weary of the struggle, her feelings changing from tenderness to hatred, she opened and shut her window repeatedly; as often she frightened the birds in the foliage, and made telegraphic signs so compromising that the most obtuse of the agents of Monsieur de Crosne, if he had been passing along the boulevard or the Rue Saint Claude, would not have failed to see them and try to find their meaning.

At length Nicole came to the conclusion that the lady with the beautiful hair must have seen her gestures, understood her signals, but that she scorned them, — that she was either vain or an idiot. Idiot! — with those fine intelligent eyes, such sensitive hands! Impossible.

Vain, yes; a woman of the nobility in those days was accustomed to look down on a mere citizen. Oliva, discerning in the countenance of the young woman all the characteristics of aristocracy, concluded that she was proud, and that it was impossible to move her; therefore she gave up the attempt.

Nicole was not aware that this supposed haughty lady was Jeanne de Valois, Comtesse de La Motte, who, since the evening before, had been in search of an idea; that her purpose was to prevent Marie Antoinette and the Cardinal de Rohan from meeting; that it was still more important that the cardinal, while he did not meet the queen in private life, should firmly believe that he did see her, and should be satisfied with this vision and cease to require the reality.

If Nicole had known all this, she would not have taken refuge, angrily, in the midst of her flowers; and she would not have thrown over the balcony, in so doing, a pot of fraxinella, which fell into the deserted street below with a frightful crash. Oliva, in alarm, looked quickly to see what damage she had caused.

The preoccupied lady was roused by the noise, saw the flower-pot upon the pavement, and ascended from the effect to the cause, — that is, she raised her eyes from the pavement of the street to the balcony of the hôtel, and she saw Oliva. On seeing her she uttered a loud cry, a cry of terror, a cry which was followed by a rapid movement of her whole body, lately so motionless and almost rigid.

Oliva's eyes and those of this lady met at last, questioned each other, penetrating each other.

Jeanne cried out in the first place, "The queen!" Then suddenly clasping her hands and knitting her brows without daring to move, lest she should cause the strange vision to flee, "Oh!" she murmured, "I sought for a way, and I have found it."

At this moment Oliva heard a noise behind her and turned quickly round. The count was in her room; he had noticed the exchange of glances.

"They have seen each other!" he said to himself.

Oliva left the balcony abruptly.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TWO NEIGHBORS.

From the very moment when the two women had seen each other, Oliva, already fascinated by the grace of her neighbor, no longer affected disdain for her; and moving cautiously among her flowers she returned the smiles which were sent her.

Cagliostro, when visiting her, had not failed to recommend to her the greatest caution, and especially to have nothing to do with her neighbors. This direction had fallen like a thunder-bolt upon Oliva's head, who was already looking forward to pleasant intercourse with her neighbor. She, however, promised to obey him. But he was no sooner gone than she arranged herself on the balcony in such a way as to attract her neighbor's attention. The latter, one may well believe, asked nothing better; and to Oliva's first advances she replied by salutations and by throwing kisses.

Oliva responded cordially to these amiable advances; she noticed that the unknown no longer left the window without bidding her farewell when she went out, or nodding to her when she returned; she seemed to have concentrated all her powers of pleasing upon Oliva's balcony. Such a state of things would naturally be followed by some attempt at a more intimate intercourse. And this is what happened: Cagliostro, coming to see Oliva two days after, complained of a visit which had been made at the hôtel by an unknown person.

"Indeed?" said Oliva, blushing a little.

"Yes," replied the count, "a lady, very pretty, young, elegant, presented herself, and spoke to a valet who had responded to her persistent ringing. She asked this man who the young person was who lived in the pavilion on the third story, your apartment, my dear. This woman certainly meant you; she wished to see you. She must know you; you are discovered then. Take care, the police has female spies as well as men in its service, and I warn you that I could not refuse to give you up, if Monsieur de Crosne should demand it."

Oliva, instead of being frightened, recognized immediately this description of her friend, and although determined to thank her by all the means in her power, she dissembled with the count.

"You do not tremble?" said Cagliostro.

"No one has seen me," replied Nicole.

"Then it was not you she wished to see?"

"I do not think so."

"Yet how could she divine that there was a woman in this pavilion? Ah! take care, take care!"

"Ah, Monsieur le Comte," said Oliva, "why should I fear? If I have been seen, which I do not believe, it will not happen again; and if any one should see me, it would only be at a distance, for the house is impenetrable, is it not?"

"Impenetrable, that is the word," replied the count; "for unless the walls are scaled, which is not easy, or the small entrance-door is opened with a key like mine, which is not very easy either, since I never leave it —" and he showed the key which he used to open the lower door. "Now," he continued, "as I have no desire to lose you, I will lend the key to no one; and as it would be of no advantage to you to fall into the hands of Monsieur de

Crosne, you will not allow your wall to be scaled. So, dear child, you are forewarned; manage your own affairs as you please."

Oliva made protestations of every sort, and tried to get rid of the count, who did not insist too much on staying.

The next morning at six o'clock Oliva was out on her balcony, breathing the pure air of the neighboring hills, and darting a curious glance at the closed windows of her courteous friend. The latter, scarcely ever awake before eleven o'clock, showed herself as soon as Oliva appeared. It would seem that she had been watching behind the curtains for an opportunity to see her.

The two women bowed, and Jeanne, putting her head out of the window looked around to see if any one could hear her. No one appeared. Not only the street but the windows of the houses were deserted. She then put both hands to her mouth, so as to form a sort of speaking-trumpet; and with that vibrating and sustained intonation which is not a cry, but which carries sound farther than the simple voice, she said to Oliva, "I wished to pay you a visit, Madame."

"Hush!" said Oliva, starting back with terror. And she put her finger to her lips.

Jeanne, in her turn, darted behind her curtains, thinking some indiscreet person might be in Oliva's room; but she almost immediately appeared again, reassured by Nicole's smile.

"You cannot, then, be seen?" she said.

"Alas!" said Oliva, with a gesture.

"Can you receive letters?"

"Oh, no!" cried Oliva, terrified.

Jeanne reflected some moments.

Oliva, to thank her for her attentions, sent her a kiss,

which Jeanne returned with interest; after which, closing her window, she went out.

Oliva felt sure that her friend had thought of some new resource. Jeanne returned in about two hours. The sun was at its height, and the pavement of the street was as hot as the sands of the desert.

Oliva saw her neighbor appear at the window with a cross-bow. Jeanne, laughing, made a sign to Oliva to move away. The latter obeyed, laughing also, and sheltered herself behind her window-blind. Jeanne, aiming with care, discharged a small leaden ball, which, unfortunately, instead of clearing the balcony, struck one of the bars of iron and fell into the street.

Oliva uttered a cry of disappointment; Jeanne, with an angry shrug of the shoulders, looked a moment down into the street to see if she could see her projectile, then disappeared for some minutes. Oliva, also leaning over her balcony, looked down into the street; a rag-picker came along hunting on the right and on the left; did he or did he not see that ball in the gutter? Oliva could not tell; she concealed herself so that she might not be seen.

Jeanne's second effort was more successful. Her bow sent faithfully beyond the balcony into the chamber of Nicole a second ball, around which was wound the following note: —

You interest me, most beautiful lady. I find you charming, and love you on merely seeing you. Are you indeed a prisoner? Do you know that I attempted in vain to visit you? Will the enchanter who thus watches over you ever let me approach you to let me tell you how I sympathize with a poor victim of man's tyranny?

I have, as you see, imagination in the service of my friends. Do you wish to be my friend? It appears that you cannot go

out; but you can write, doubtless, and as I go out when I please, throw your answer down to me when I pass under your balcony.

If the shooting of the cross-bow should be dangerous, or if it should be discovered, we will adopt some other means of correspondence. Suspend from the top of your balcony in the dusk a ball of cord and attach your note to it; I will fasten mine to it, and you can draw it up without being seen.

If your eyes tell the truth, I can rely on you for a return of that friendship with which you have inspired me, and together we can conquer the universe.

YOUR FRIEND.

P. S. Did you see any one pick up my first note?

Jeanne did not sign, she had even disguised her handwriting.

Oliva leaped with joy on receiving the note. She replied to it by the following lines: —

I love you as you love me. I am, indeed, a victim of man's wickedness. But he who keeps me here is a protector, and not a tyrant. He comes secretly to visit me once a day. I will explain all this to you later. I prefer to receive your letters drawn up by a thread rather than by means of the cross-bow.

Alas, no, I cannot go out! I am locked in; but it is for my good. Oh, I shall have so much to say to you, if ever I have the good fortune to speak with you! There are so many things that cannot be written.

Your first note was not picked up by any one, unless by a rag-picker who was passing by; but such persons cannot read, and to them lead is lead.

Your friend,

OLIVA LEGAY.

Oliva signed her name, without reserve. She made the countess a signal by pretending to unwind a thread, and when evening came on she dropped the ball into the

street. Jeanne was under the balcony, caught the thread and took off the note, — all her movements being communicated to her correspondent by the conducting thread, — and then went home to read what was written. Half an hour later she attached to the fortunate thread a letter containing these words : —

" One can do what he is resolved to do. You are not kept in sight, for I see you always alone. You are, therefore, able to receive visitors, and even to go out yourself. How is your house secured ? — with a key ? Who has that key ? It is he who visits you, is it not ? Does he keep that key so carefully that you cannot steal it from him, or take an impression from it ? There is no question of any wrong-doing ; we are considering only how to procure for you some hours of freedom, and pleasant walks arm-in-arm with a friend who will console you for all your misfortunes, and restore to you more than you have lost. We will plan even, if you wish it, for your entire freedom. We will discuss this subject in all its details at our first interview."

Oliva eagerly devoured the contents of this letter. She felt rising to her cheek the fever of independence, and to her heart the joy of eating forbidden fruit. She had noticed that the count, whenever he visited her to bring her a book or some article of jewelry, deposited his dark-lantern on a side-table, and laid his key on the lantern. She therefore got ready a bit of soft wax, and on the next visit of Cagliostro took an impression of the key. While she was performing this operation the count did not once turn his head ; he was looking at the newly opened flowers on the balcony. Oliva therefore could execute her little project without uneasiness ; and as soon as the count had taken his departure she lowered the impression of the key, enclosed in a box, which Jeanne received together with a note.

The next day, at about noon, the cross-bow — an instrument extraordinary and expeditious, an instrument of communication which, in comparison with the thread, was like the telegraph in comparison with a courier on horseback — discharged a note to Oliva, conceived as follows, —

MY DEAREST FRIEND, — This evening at eleven o'clock, when your jealous keeper shall have left you, you will descend, you will draw the bolts, and you will find yourself in the arms of her who calls herself

YOUR LOVING FRIEND.

Oliva trembled with joy, — even more than when she had received Gilbert's tender letters in the springtime of her early loves and secret meetings. At eleven o'clock she went downstairs without having noticed any sign of suspicion on the part of the count. She found Jeanne at the door, who embraced her tenderly, and took her into a carriage drawn up on the boulevard. Stunned, palpitating, intoxicated, Oliva rode with her friend about two hours, during which the two companions exchanged secrets, kisses, and plans for the future.

Jeanne was the first to suggest that Oliva should return home to prevent suspicion on the part of her protector; she had just learned that that protector was Cagliostro. She feared the genius of this man, and saw no safety for her plans but in the most profound mystery.

Oliva had confided in Jeanne without reserve; Beausire, the police, — she had told everything. Jeanne had represented herself as a girl of rank living with a lover without the knowledge of her family.

One knew all, the other was ignorant of all; such was the friendship declared between these two women. From this day forth they had no need of cross-bow, nor even of

the ball of thread, for Jeanne had her key. Oliva could come down to her whenever she pleased. A delicate supper, a secret promenade, were baits always sufficient to lure Oliva.

"Does not Monsieur de Cagliostro suspect anything?" Jeanne sometimes asked anxiously.

"He! indeed, if I should tell him everything he would not believe me," replied Oliva.

A week's enjoyment of these nocturnal escapades had made them necessary to Oliva's happiness. At the end of a week Jeanne's name was more frequently heard from Oliva's lips than had ever been either Gilbert's or Beausire's.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

MONSIEUR DE CHARNY had scarcely arrived at his country-seat, and received a few visits, when the doctor ordered him to receive no one, and to keep his room, — an order which was executed with such rigor that not an inhabitant of the canton could see the hero of that naval combat which had made so much noise through all France, and whom all the young girls wanted to see, because he was notoriously brave, and was said to be handsome.

Charny, however, was not so sick in body as was supposed. His malady was confined to his heart and head; but what a malady! — an acute pain, incessant and pitiless, the pain of a memory which consumed as if with fire; the pain of a regret which tore his heart.

Love, after all, is but a delusion. The absent one laments an ideal paradise, instead of regretting a material country; and yet one must admit — however poetical he may be — that the woman truly loved is a paradise rather more material than that of angels.

Monsieur de Charny did not endure this three days. Furious at finding all his dreams dispelled by impossibility, annihilated by space, he caused the order of the physician to be spread through the canton; then intrusting the care of his doors to a faithful servant, Olivier set out in the night from his manor-house, riding a gentle but swift horse. In eight hours he was in Versailles, hiring

through his valet a small house situated behind the royal park.

This house, which had been unoccupied since the tragic death of one of the gentlemen of the wolf-hunting train who had cut his throat there, suited Charny admirably; he could be even more completely hidden there than in his own manor-house. It was decently furnished, had two doors, — one opening on a deserted street, the other upon an avenue running round the park, — and from the windows on the south, Charny could easily gain the avenue of elms; for the windows, when the shutters covered with vines and ivy were open, were but doors, only slightly elevated above the ground, through which one could easily jump into the royal park.

This close vicinity to the royal park, although so rarely permitted in those days, was a privilege granted an inspector of the hunt so that he could be conveniently situated for watching over the deer and pheasants of his Majesty.

This solitude was more pleasant to Charny than any other would have been. Was it on account of the country view? We shall soon see.

When he was completely immured in his new abode, when his valet had quieted the respectful curiosity of the neighborhood, Charny, forgetting as he was forgot, began a life the very thought of which would make any one tremble who during his existence in this world has loved or has even heard of love.

In less than fifteen days he knew all the habits of every one connected with the palace, even those of the guards. He knew the hours when the birds came to drink in the marshes, when the frightened deer ran along by. He knew the hours when all was silent; those when the queen walked with her ladies, and when the officers were mak-

ing their rounds; in a word he lived, although apart from them, with those who inhabited that Trianon, the temple of his insane adorations.

As the weather was fine, as the mild and perfumed nights allowed his eyes to range at greater liberty, he passed a portion of them under the jasmines climbing above his window, listening to the distant noises which came from the palace, watching through the interstices of the foliage the lights which were continually moving, up to the hour of retiring. In a short time the window was not sufficient. He was too distant from that noise and those lights. He leaped from his window to the turf below, sure of meeting at that hour neither dogs nor guards; and he indulged in the delicious, perilous pleasure of going even to the edge of the thicket, to the point which separated the deep shadow from the bright moonlight, there to observe those outlines of light and shadow which were formed on the white curtains of the queen's apartment.

In this way he saw her frequently without her suspecting his presence. He could recognize her a quarter of a league away, when walking with her ladies or with gentlemen of her acquaintance, playing with her Chinese parasol which she held over her large flower-trimmed hat. He never mistook her step nor her attitude for that of another. He knew all the dresses of the queen, and could distinguish through the leaves the long, green frock with bands of black moiré which undulated with her chastely seductive movements.

And when the vision had disappeared, when the night had permitted him to go as far as the statues of the peristyle, to watch the last movements of that beloved shadow, Charny would return to his window, and through an opening in the foliage he had contrived to make, gaze at a

distance upon the light shining in the queen's windows, until it disappeared; then he subsisted through the night on memory and hope, as he had fed through the day on observation and admiration.

One night when Charny had returned home, and two hours had passed since he had bidden adieu to the absent shadow, just as he was leaving his window to retire to bed, he heard the noise of a key turning gently in the lock; he returned to his observatory and listened. It was late; it was striking midnight from all the clocks around Versailles. Charny was surprised at hearing this unaccustomed sound.

This refractory lock was that of a little door opening into the park, situated about twenty-five paces from Olivier's house. This gate was never opened, except during the days of the grand hunt when it was thrown open to admit the baskets of game. Charny noticed that those who opened this gate did not speak; they locked the door after them, and entered the avenue which ran along under his windows, concealed from any one walking in the avenue by the shrubbery and hanging vine-leaves. Besides, those who were walking held down their heads and moved with haste. Charny could hardly distinguish them in the darkness; but by the rustling of their garments against the bushes he perceived that they were two women.

These women, on turning into the wide avenue opposite Charny's window, came suddenly into the full moonlight, and Olivier could with difficulty restrain from uttering a cry of joyful surprise at recognizing the form and headdress of Marie Antoinette, and also the lower part of her face notwithstanding the shadow cast upon it by her hat. She held a rose in her hand.

With a palpitating heart, Charny glided from his win-

dow into the park. He ran along upon the grass to avoid being heard, hiding behind the largest trees, and keeping in sight the two women whose pace was gradually becoming slower.

What ought he to do? The queen had a companion; therefore she was in no danger. Oh! if she were only alone, he would have braved any torture to approach her and say to her on his knees, "I love you!" Oh, if she were only threatened with some great peril, he would have thrown away his life to save that precious life! As he was thinking all this, dreaming a thousand tender follies; the two women stopped suddenly; one of them — of less stature than the other — spoke a few words in a low voice to her companion and left her.

The queen remained alone; the other lady hastened toward some object which Charny could not yet discern. The queen, beating the ground with her little foot, was leaning against a tree, enveloped in a mantle in such a manner as to cover her head with the hood.

When Charny saw her alone and so pensive, he leaped forward as if to throw himself on his knees before her. But he reflected that he was at least thirty steps away from her, and that before he could run that distance she would see him and take fright; that she would cry out or flee; that her cries would in the first place attract her companion and later some of the guards; that they would search the park and perhaps discover his retreat, and there would be an end forever to secrecy, happiness, and love.

Scarcely had he restrained his almost irresistible impulse when the queen's companion returned, — and not alone. About two steps behind her walked a man of noble stature, enveloped in a large cloak, and wearing on his head a capacious hat.

This man, at sight of whom Monsieur de Charny trembled with hatred and jealousy, did not walk with the gait of a conqueror. Staggering, dragging his feet with hesitation, he seemed like a man feeling his way in the dark, although he had the queen's companion as a guide, and the queen herself was standing before him, white and erect, under the tree. When he saw Marie Antoinette, the trembling which Charny had noticed appeared to increase. The unknown took off his hat and swept the ground with it, so to speak. He came nearer. Charny saw him enter the deep shadow of the tree; he bowed profoundly many times.

The surprise of Charny meanwhile had changed to stupefaction. From stupefaction he was soon to pass to another emotion, painful in a very different way. Why should the queen come into the park at so late an hour? Why had that man come there? Why was he waiting in concealment? Why did the queen send her companion to him instead of going herself? Charny was almost beside himself. He remembered, however, that the queen was interested in mysterious politics; that she sometimes engaged in intrigues with the German courts, — relations of which the king was jealous, and which he severely forbade.

Perhaps this mysterious cavalier was a courier from Schoenbrun or Berlin, some bearer of a secret message, one of those German emissaries whom Louis XVI. had become so reluctant to receive at Versailles. This idea, like the bandage of ice which the doctor applies to a burning and feverish brow, refreshed this poor Olivier, restored to him his senses, and quieted the delirium of his first anger. Besides, the queen retained an attitude full of dignity.

The companion, standing about three paces away, anxious, attentive, watchful, as are the duennas in the

pictures of Watteau, disturbed somewhat by her cheerful anxiety Monsieur de Charny's opinion as to the chaste purpose of this meeting. But it is as dangerous to be surprised at a political rendezvous, as it is disgraceful to be surprised at a rendezvous of love; and a lover and a conspirator look very much alike: both have the same cloak, the same quickness of hearing, and the same unsteadiness of limb.

Charny had not much time to give to these reflections. The companion suddenly interrupted the conversation. The cavalier made a movement as if to prostrate himself at the queen's feet; he was receiving doubtless his dismissal after the audience.

Charny hid behind a great tree. Assuredly, the group in separating must pass one by one before him. To hold his breath, to pray the gnomes and sylphs to extinguish every echo, whether of earth or sky, was the only thing left for him to do.

At that moment he thought he saw a light-colored object slipping down from the royal mantle; the gentleman stooped quickly even to the ground, then he arose with a respectful bow and fled, — for it would be impossible to express in any other terms the rapidity of his departure. But he was arrested in his course by the queen's companion, who called him back with a little cry, and when he had stopped, said to him in a low voice, "Stay." He was a very obedient cavalier, for he stopped instantly and waited.

Charny then saw the two women pass, holding each other's arm, two steps from his hiding-place; the air displaced by the queen's gown stirred the blades of grass almost under Charny's hand. He even recognized the perfume he had been accustomed to admire when near the queen, vervain and mignonette mingled together,

intoxicating to his senses and awakening pleasing remembrances.

The women passed on and disappeared.

Then, some moments after, came the unknown, of whom the young man had no longer thought while he was watching the queen in her walk to the gate; he kissed passionately, madly, a fresh and perfumed rose, which certainly was that whose beauty Charny had remarked when the queen had entered the park, and which just now he had seen fall from her hand.

A rose, and a kiss upon that rose! What had this to do with an embassy and secrets of State?

Charny was almost beside himself. He was about to rush on this man and snatch the flower from his grasp, when the queen's companion reappeared and called out, "Come, Monseigneur."

Charny believed himself in the presence of some prince of the blood, and to keep himself from falling half-dead on the ground, he supported himself against the tree behind which he had been concealed.

The unknown hastened to the spot whence the voice had issued, and in company with the lady immediately disappeared.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE QUEEN'S HAND.

When Charny returned to his house, quite broken down by this terrible blow, he found that he no longer had the strength to contend against this new calamity by which he was stricken.

So Providence had brought him back to Versailles, and had granted him this precious hiding-place, only to put him on the track of a crime committed by the queen in contempt of conjugal fidelity, of royal dignity, and love's obligations.

Beyond any doubt, the man received in the park was a new lover. Charny, in the fever of the night, in the delirium of his despair, in vain sought to persuade himself that the man who had received the rose was an ambassador, and that the rose was simply the pledge of a secret agreement, and was designed to serve as a substitute for a letter, which might be too compromising. Nothing, however, was of any avail against his suspicions. It remained for him only to examine his own conduct, and to ask himself why, in the presence of such an evil, he had remained so inactive. The instinct which had enjoined that inactivity was, upon reflection, easily understood.

In the most violent crises of experience, action springs at the moment from the deep recesses of the heart and mind; and the instinct by which it is prompted is, in men well trained, a union of habit and reflection acting in the emergency with very great rapidity. If Charny

had not acted it was because the secret affairs of his sovereign did not concern him; because in showing interest he would reveal his love; because in compromising the queen he would have betrayed himself; and because it would have been a tactical error to afford to traitors, whom he wished to convict, an example of similar treason committed by himself. If he had not acted it was because in accosting a man honored by the royal confidence he would have incurred the risk of falling into an odious quarrel, through a sort of ambuscade, which the queen never would have forgiven. In fine, the word "Monseigneur," uttered at last by the complaisant companion, was a salutary warning, coming somewhat late, to be sure, which had saved Charny by opening his eyes when he was at the height of his fury. What would have become of him if, while assailing that man, sword in hand, he had suddenly heard him called "Monseigneur."

Such were the thoughts which occupied Charny's mind through all the night and the first part of the following day. After twelve o'clock the events of the night before were no longer of any moment to him. There remained to him only the feverish, consuming suspense in which he awaited the coming of another night, with its possible revelations.

At last the night came, bringing to our ardent watcher gloomy desires and wild thoughts. The noises and movements to which he had been accustomed had for him now new meanings. He saw in the distance the queen walking on the terrace, with lights borne before her. She appeared to him to be thoughtful, uncertain, still agitated by the incident of the previous night.

Gradually all the lights in and about the palace were extinguished, and silence brooded over the park. Charny remembered well the hour of the queen's rendezvous.

Midnight came at length, and his heart was swollen almost to bursting. "Now," he said, "I shall hear the grating of the bolts, and the gate will open." But nothing occurred to break the silence. Charny then reflected — with some surprise that he had not thought of it before — that the same events are not likely to occur on two days in succession; that there was nothing obligatory in this love beyond the love itself; and that these persons would be very imprudent were they to acquire the habit of meeting every day. No; it was very certain that the queen would not repeat so soon the imprudence he had witnessed.

Suddenly there was a grinding of bolts, and the gate was opened. A mortal paleness covered Charny's face when he saw again the two women. "How much she must love him!" he murmured.

The women proceeded precisely as they did in the first instance, and passed by Charny's window with hurried steps. He, as he had done before, leaped from his window, when they had gone so far that they could not hear him, and followed them cautiously. As he went he swore to himself that he would be prudent, firm, impassive. He determined to keep in mind that he was a subject, she a queen; that he was a man, and as such was bound to show respect; that she was a woman, and as such was entitled to consideration. As he could not trust much to his fiery and explosive temper, he flung his sword behind a tuft of mallows at the foot of a chestnut-tree.

Meantime the two ladies had reached the same place where they had paused on their former expedition. Charny again recognized the queen, and saw her again conceal her face under her hood, while her serviceable friend went to seek, in his hiding-place, the unknown person whom she had called "Monseigneur."

Where was that hiding-place? Charny asked himself. There was, indeed, in the direction taken by the queen's companion, the pavilion known as Apollo's Baths, surrounded by tall hedges; but how could the stranger hide himself there? How had he gained access to the place? Charny remembered, then, that on that side of the park there was a small gate like that by which the two ladies had entered. The unknown, doubtless, had a key to that gate. From there he could glide to shelter in Apollo's Baths, where he could lie in waiting until he should be summoned. Yes, that explained everything. By way of the same little gate "Monseigneur" took his departure after his interview with the queen.

A few moments later Charny perceived the cloak and hat which he had observed on the previous occasion. This time the unknown did not show the same respectful reserve in his approach to the queen. He came up with rapid steps and almost running.

The queen, leaning against a tree, seated herself upon the cloak which this new Raleigh spread for her; and while the vigilant friend kept watch, as on the night before, the amorous nobleman knelt on the moss and began talking with the fluency of passion. The queen, with her head drooping, seemed as if yielding to love's sweet melancholy. Charny could not hear what was said; but the manner of the cavalier bore the stamp of poesy and love. His every intonation was equivalent to an ardent protestation.

The queen made no response, and nevertheless the unknown seemed to be speaking with increasing tenderness. It appeared sometimes to the unfortunate Charny that the words spoken were about to become intelligible to him, and he thought that on hearing them he should die of rage and jealousy. But he heard nothing — noth-

ing. Whenever the voice of the speaker was slightly raised, a significant gesture from the watchful companion compelled the impassioned orator to lower the tone of his address.

The queen preserved an obstinate silence. The other, adding entreaty to entreaty, as Charny inferred from the vibrating melody of his tones, obtained from her only the sweet consent of silence, — an inadequate satisfaction for burning lips which had begun to taste of love.

Suddenly, however, the queen seemed to let fall a few murmured words which the unknown alone could hear; and as soon as he had heard them he cried out, so loud that the words reached Charny's ears: "Thank you! oh, I thank my gracious queen! Farewell, then, — till to-morrow."

The queen completely hid her face, already so well concealed.

Charny felt a cold sweat trickling down his temples in large drops.

The unknown saw both hands of the queen extended toward him. He seized them in his own and kissed them so fervently that Charny, looking on, experienced all the tortures which savage humanity has stolen from the infernal regions. The queen then rose suddenly, and seized the arm of her companion. The two then fled together, passing once more very near to Charny in his concealment. The unknown also fled, and Charny, who had not risen from the ground on which he was prostrated by indescribable suffering, thought that he heard the sound of the two gates closing at the same time.

We shall not attempt to depict the situation in which Charny found himself after that horrible discovery. He spent the night coursing furiously through the park, in the alleys, which he reproached, in his despair, for their

criminal complicity. Quite beside himself for several hours, he recovered his reason only when he stumbled over the sword which he had thrown aside lest he should be tempted to use it. This sword, which obstructed his course and threw him to the ground, recalled him at once to a consciousness of his power and of his dignity. He discontinued his mad running about, during which he had bruised himself against the trees, and walked directly and quietly along the avenue still impressed by the footsteps of the two ladies and of the unknown.

He went to the place where the queen had been sitting. The mosses still beaten down recalled to him his own misery and the happiness of another. But instead of lamenting, or indulging again in anger, Olivier set himself to reflecting on the nature of this love and the rank of the person by whom it was inspired. He examined the footsteps of that nobleman with the same cool attention which he would have given to those of a wild animal. He went to the gate behind Apollo's Baths. By climbing up and looking over the wall he could see the tracks of a horse, and the grass badly trodden down. "He comes from that direction! He comes not from Versailles, but from Paris;" Olivier said to himself. "He comes alone, — and to-morrow he intends coming again; for he said, 'Till to-morrow.' Till to-morrow, then, let me wait. To-morrow will be the last day of my life, or else I am a coward and have never loved. Come, come," he continued, striking gently on his breast, as a horseman strokes the neck of his horse, "be calm, be strong, for the trial is not yet over."

He then looked around him once more, turning his eyes away from the palace lest he should see the queen's window lighted; for that light would have been still another lie, another stain. The lighted window would mean that the queen's chamber was occupied. But why should one

lie in that manner after attaining to the rights of shamelessness and dishonor, when so little distance remains between hidden shame and public scandal?

At length, however, Charny could no longer refrain from looking at the window of the queen's chamber. It was lighted!

"To make a pretence of being in her chamber," said Charny, with bitter irony, "when she is running about the park with a lover! Truly that is chastity gone to waste! She is really too kind, this queen, in assuming this pretence toward us. It is true, however, that she may fear giving annoyance to her husband." And Charny, burying his nails in his flesh advanced with measured steps along the path leading to his lodge.

"They said, 'Till to-morrow,'" he added, after entering. "Yes, till to-morrow — for every one. For to-morrow, Madame, there will be four of us at the rendezvous."

CHAPTER XXVII.

WOMAN AND QUEEN.

THE next night the scene was repeated. The door opened just at midnight, and the two women appeared.

Charny had determined to discover this evening who was the happy personage whom the queen thus favored. He therefore followed the two women, concealing himself behind the shrubbery; but when he arrived at the place where for two nights the meeting of the lovers had taken place, he found no one there. The queen's companion was dragging her Majesty toward Apollo's Baths. A horrible anxiety, a suffering of a new nature overwhelmed him. In his innocent uprightness, he had not supposed that the crime could be carried so far as that.

The queen, smiling and whispering, walked toward the gloomy retreat at the gate of which the unknown gentleman awaited her with extended arms. She entered, also with outstretched arms, and the iron gate closed behind her. Her accomplice remained outside, leaning upon a broken column cushioned by a luxurious growth of foliage.

Charny was mistaken as to his power of endurance, which proved itself unable to resist such a shock. Just as he was about to rush upon the queen's companion to unmask her, to discover who she was, to reproach her, to strangle her perhaps, the blood rushed like a conquering torrent to his temples and his throat, and suffocated him. He fell upon the ground, breathing a feeble sigh, which for

a moment startled from her tranquillity that sentinel at the gate of Apollo's Baths. An internal hemorrhage, caused by the re-opening of his wound, had stifled him.

Charny was at length recalled to life by the coldness of the dew, by the dampness of the ground, and by a strong sense of his grief. He staggered as he arose, recognized the locality, became conscious of his own condition, and remembered what had happened. The sentinel had disappeared, not a sound could be heard. A clock in Versailles soon after striking two, he realized that his swoon had been one of long duration.

The frightful vision had disappeared; queen, lover, companion, had had time to flee. Charny was enabled to convince himself of this by observing on the other side of the wall the recent footprints of a horse. These tracks and some broken branches in the vicinity of the gate of Apollo's Baths confirmed his conviction.

The night was one long delirium, and the morning found him still agitated. Pale as death, looking ten years older than the day before, he called his valet to dress him in a black velvet suit, such as was worn by rich persons of the third estate. Gloomy, mute, absorbed in his griefs, he took his way to the Trianon, at the moment when the guard had just been relieved, — that is, at about ten o'clock. The queen was coming from the chapel where she had gone to attend Mass. As she passed by all heads were respectfully bowed, and the officers lowered their swords.

Charny saw some women red with vexation at seeing the queen look so beautiful. Beautiful indeed she was, with her fine hair carried back from her temples, with her delicate features, her smiling mouth, her eyes showing weariness, but sparkling with a soft light. Suddenly she

caught sight of Charny; she blushed, and uttered a cry of surprise.

Charny did not bow. He continued gazing at the queen, who perceived from his look that some new misfortune must have occurred. She approached him. "I thought you had gone to your country-seat, Monsieur de Charny," she said severely.

"I have come back, Madame," he said in a tone sharp and almost impolite.

She paused, stupefied, — she, who could always distinguish the least shade of expression.

After this exchange of looks and words which were almost hostile, she turned toward the ladies. "Good-morning, Countess," she said in a friendly way to Madame de La Motte, giving her a familiar glance.

Charny started, and watched more attentively. Jeanne, uneasy under this scrutiny, turned away her head. Charny looked after her as if he were a madman, until she once more turned her face to him. Then he walked round her studying her movements.

The queen, bowing to the right and to the left, was at the same time watching the conduct of those two mutual observers. "Can he have lost his mind?" she thought. "Poor fellow!" and she again approached him. "How is your health, Monsieur de Charny?" she said pleasantly.

"I am very well, Madame, but — thank God! — not so well as your Majesty," and he bowed in such a manner as to frighten the queen more than he had before surprised her.

"There is something in all this," said Jeanne, still watchful.

"Where are you living now?" continued the queen.

"At Versailles, Madame," said Olivier.

"How long have you been here?"

"For three nights," replied the young man, giving expression to his words by look and gesture.

The queen displayed no emotion; Jeanne gave a start.

"Have you not something to say to me?" the queen asked Charny, with angelic sweetness.

"Oh, Madame," replied the latter, "I could say too many things to your Majesty."

"Come, then," she said abruptly.

"I must be watchful," thought Jeanne.

The queen, with rapid steps, walked on to her apartment. What appeared providential to Madame de La Motte was that Marie Antoinette, to avoid the appearance of seeking a *tête-à-tête*, invited some persons to follow her. Jeanne slipped in among these persons. The queen, on reaching her apartment, dismissed Madame de Misery and all her attendants.

The weather was mild; the sun's heat and light, half-veiled by clouds, were subdued to a gentle softness. The queen opened the window looking on a little balcony; she sat down before her desk loaded with letters; she waited. By degrees the persons who had followed her perceived her desire to be alone, and retired. Charny, impatient, consumed with rage, was crushing his hat in his hand.

"Speak! speak!" said the queen; "you seem to be very much agitated, Monsieur."

"How shall I begin?" said Charny, thinking aloud; "how can I dare accuse at once honor, fidelity, and Majesty?"

"What do you say?" cried Marie Antoinette, turning quickly round with flaming eyes.

"And still, I shall speak only of what I have seen!" continued Charny.

The queen rose. "Monsieur," she said coldly, "it is early in the morning for me to believe that you can be intoxicated; and yet you assume an attitude which is not becoming to young gentlemen before breakfast." She expected to see him overwhelmed by this scornful reproach; but he, motionless as if he had not heard it, said, —

"After all, what is a queen? A woman. And I, what am I? A man, as well as a subject."

"Monsieur!"

"Madame, let us not confuse what I have to say to you by an anger which would end in madness. I think I have proved to you that I have respect for royal dignity; I fear that I have also proved that I have an insane passion for the person of the queen. So make your choice; at which of the two, the queen or the woman, do you prefer that this adorer should cast an accusation of opprobrium and disloyalty?"

"Monsieur de Charny," cried the queen, turning pale and walking up to the young man, "if you do not instantly leave this room, I will have you driven out by the guards."

"I will tell you, then, before being driven out, why you are an unworthy queen, and a woman without honor!" cried Charny, wild with rage. "For the last three nights I have followed you in your park!"

Instead of seeing her give a start of horror at this terrible blow, as he had hoped she would, Charny was surprised to see her raise her head and approach him.

"Monsieur de Charny," she said, taking his hand, "you are in a state which excites my pity. Take care, your eyes flash, your hand trembles, your cheeks are pale, the blood is all rushing to your heart. You are suffering; shall I call for assistance?"

"I saw you," he continued coldly, — "saw you with

that man when you gave him the rose, when he kissed your hands, — saw you when you entered Apollo's Baths with him."

The queen passed her hand over her brow as if to assure herself that she was not asleep.

"Come," she said, "sit down, for you will fall if I do not support you, — sit down, I tell you."

Charny fell, in fact, into an easy-chair, and the queen seated herself upon a stool by his side. Then, taking both his hands and looking at him as if she would search his very soul, "Be calm," she said; "quiet this agitation of heart and head, and repeat what you have just said."

"Oh, do you wish to kill me?" murmured the unhappy man.

"Be still, and let me question you. When did you return from your country-seat?"

"Fifteen days ago."

"Where are you lodging?"

"In the house of the huntsman, which I have hired."

"Ah, yes; the house of the suicide, at the edge of the park."

Charny nodded affirmatively.

"You speak of a person whom you saw with me?"

"I speak, in the first place, of you, whom I saw."

"Where did you see me?"

"In the park."

"At what hour? — on what day?"

"At midnight on Tuesday — the first time."

"You saw me?"

"As plainly as I see you now; and I also saw the lady who accompanied you."

"Some one accompanied me? Could you recognize this person."

"I thought I saw her just now; but I should not dare

to affirm it. The figure only was the same; as to the face, one always conceals that when one has crimes to commit."

"Very well," said the queen, calmly, "you did not recognize my companion; but me —"

"Oh, you, Madame, I saw you as surely as I see you now!"

The queen stamped her foot with anxiety.

"And — this companion," she said, — "the one to whom I gave a rose? Did you not say you saw me give a rose?"

"Yes; but I could not approach that cavalier."

"But you know him?"

"They called him 'Monseigneur;' that is all I know."

The queen struck her forehead in concentrated anger. "Continue," she said; "Tuesday I gave a rose, — and Wednesday?"

"On Wednesday you gave him your two hands to kiss."

"Oh!" she murmured, biting her hands. "And then on Thursday, — yesterday?"

"Yesterday you passed an hour and a half in Apollo's Baths with that man, where your companion left you alone."

The queen rose impetuously.

"And — you — saw me?" she said, jerking out every syllable.

Charny lifted his hand as if to swear.

"Oh," groaned the queen, in her turn transported with rage, "he swears it!"

Charny solemnly repeated his accusing gesture.

"Me, me?" said the queen, striking her bosom. "You saw me?"

"Yes, you. On Tuesday you wore your green dress

with watered stripes; on Wednesday, your frock printed with large blue and red flowers; yesterday, yesterday, the brown silk gown which you wore when I kissed your hand for the first time. It was you, it was really you! I die with grief and shame in saying to you: Upon my life! upon my honor! by my God! it was you, Madame, it was you!"

The queen walked back and forth in the balcony with hurried steps, caring but little whether or not her strange agitation were observed by the spectators in the court-yard below, who were devouring her with their eyes.

"If I should take an oath," she said, — "if I were to swear by my son, by my God, — I have a God, as you have! No, he does not believe me! He will not believe me!"

Charny held down his head.

"Madman!" added the queen, shaking him by the arm with energy; and she dragged him from the balcony into the room. "There must be rare pleasure in thus accusing an innocent, an irreproachable woman; it is a brilliant distinction thus to dishonor a queen. Do you believe me when I tell you that it was not I whom you saw? Do you believe me when I swear on this crucifix that during the past three days I have not left the palace after four o'clock in the evening? Do you wish me to prove by my women, by the king who saw me here, that I could not be elsewhere? No, no; he does not believe me! he does not believe me!"

"I saw you!" Charny coldly replied.

"Oh," cried the queen, suddenly, "I know, I know! Has not this atrocious calumny already been thrown in my face? Was I not seen at the Opera-ball, making scandal for the whole court? Did they not see me at Mesmer's, in a crisis, making scandal for the curious and

for the women of the town? You know it well, you who fought for me!"

"Madame, at that time I fought because I did not believe it. Now, I would fight because I do believe it."

The queen raised to heaven her arms, rigid with despair, two burning tears rolled from her cheeks. "My God!" she said, "send me an idea with which to save myself! I do not wish to be despised by this man, O my God!"

Charny was stirred to the very depths of his heart by this simple and earnest prayer. He hid his face in his hands.

The queen, after a moment's reflection, said, "Monsieur, you owe me reparation. This is the one I shall exact of you: Three successive nights you have seen me at night in my park in company with a man. You knew, however, that advantage had already been taken of my resemblance to a woman (I know not who she is) who has in her face and carriage something in common with me, — with me, unfortunate queen! But since you would rather believe that it is I who am running about thus at night; since you insist that it is I, — return to the park at the same hour. Go there with me. If it is I whom you saw yesterday you will, of course, not see me to-night, since I shall be with you; if it is another, why should we not see her together? And if we do see her — Ah, Monsieur, will you regret what you have made me suffer?"

Charny, placing both hands upon his heart, murmured, "You are doing too much for me, Madame. I deserve death; do not crush me with your goodness."

"Oh, I will crush you with proofs!" said the queen. "Not a word to any one. This evening at ten o'clock, wait alone at the door of the huntsman's lodge for that which I have determined to do in order to convince you. Go, Monsieur, and let nothing be suspected outside."

Charny knelt without a word and then withdrew. At the end of the second salon, he passed within view of Jeanne, who looked at him fixedly, and who, with all the others, was waiting to return to the queen's room whenever her Majesty should send for them.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WOMAN AND DEMON.

JEANNE had noticed Charny's agitation, the queen's anxiety, and the eager desire of both to engage in conversation. To a woman of Jeanne's insight this was more than enough to enable her to divine many things.

After the meeting contrived by Cagliostro between Madame de La Motte and Oliva, the comedy of the last three nights needs no comments.

Jeanne, having returned to the queen's room, listened attentively, and watched every movement of the queen to discover, if possible, any confirmation of her suspicions. But the queen had been for some time distrustful of everybody. She showed no emotion of any kind; Jeanne was therefore reduced to her own conjecture. Already she had ordered one of her lackeys to follow Monsieur de Charny. The lackey returned, and informed her that the count had disappeared in a house at the end of the park near the avenue of elms. "Doubtless," thought Jeanne, "this man is a lover who has seen all."

She heard the queen say to Madame de Misery, "I do not feel well, my dear Misery, and I shall retire to-night at eight o'clock."

As the lady of honor questioned her, "I shall not receive," said the queen.

"It is clear enough," said Jeanne to herself; "he would be stupid indeed who could not understand that."

The queen, still a prey to the emotions caused by her interview with Charny, soon dismissed all her suite. For the first time since her admission at court Jeanne congratulated herself on permission to withdraw.

"Matters are becoming embroiled here," she said; "I must go to Paris! It is time to undo what I have done." And she set out for Paris immediately.

When she reached her own house in the Rue Saint Claude, she found there a superb present of silver plate which the cardinal had sent that very morning. After glancing carelessly at this present, although it was valuable, she looked up from behind her curtains to Oliva's windows, which were not yet opened. Oliva was still asleep, being doubtless much fatigued.

Jeanne then drove to the hôtel of the cardinal, whom she found radiant and elated with joy and pride; seated before his desk, a master-piece of Boule, he was tearing up and re-writing unweariedly a letter which he was always beginning and could never finish.

As the valet announced Madame de La Motte, Monseigneur le Cardinal exclaimed, "Dear Countess!" and he advanced to meet her.

Jeanne received the kisses with which the prelate covered her hands and arms, and placed herself where she could most comfortably sustain her part in the conversation. Monseigneur began with protestations of gratitude which were not deficient in eloquent sincerity.

Jeanne interrupted him. "Do you know?" she said, "that you are a delicate lover, Monseigneur, and that I thank you?"

"For what?"

"It is not for the tasteful gift which you sent me this morning; it is for the precaution you took in not sending it to the pleasure-house. That was delicate

indeed. Your heart does not prostitute itself, it gives itself."

"With whom should one act with delicacy if not with you?" replied the cardinal.

"You are not a happy man only, but a triumphant god."

"I confess it, and the happiness frightens me; it troubles me; it renders the sight of other men insupportable to me. I recall that Pagan fable of Jupiter weary of his own light."

Jeanne smiled.

"Have you just come from Versailles?" the cardinal asked eagerly.

"Yes."

"You — have seen her?"

"I — have just left her."

"Did she — say — anything?"

"Eh, what would you have her say?"

"Pardon me; it is no longer curiosity, it is madness."

"Do not ask me anything."

"Oh, Countess."

"No, I tell you."

"How you say that! One would think to see you that you bring bad news."

"Monseigneur, do not compel me to speak."

"Countess! Countess!" and the cardinal turned pale.

"A too great happiness," he said, "is like the culminating point of Fortune's wheel; when you are at its summit, you are at the beginning of its decline. But do not spare me if there is any misfortune; there is none — is there?"

"I will call it on the contrary, Monseigneur, a great good fortune," replied Jeanne.

"It! what do you mean by 'it;' what do you call a good fortune?"

"Not to have been discovered," said Jeanne, dryly.

"Oh!" and he began to smile. "With the precautions of two hearts and one mind —"

"One mind and two hearts, Monseigneur, cannot prevent eyes from looking through the branches."

"Has any one seen?" cried Monsieur de Rohan, in terror.

"I have every reason to believe so."

"Then if we were seen, we were recognized?"

"Oh, as to that, Monseigneur, you cannot believe it; if we were recognized, if this secret were in any one's possession, Jeanne de Valois would already be at the world's end, and you, — you would be dead."

"That is true. All these reservations, Countess, burn me by slow fire. Suppose that we were seen. But persons are often seen walking in the park. Is it not allowed?"

"Ask the king."

"The king knows!"

"Once more I say, if the king knew, you would be in the Bastille, I in the Hospital. But as one misfortune avoided is better than two happy events, I have come to tell you not to tempt Providence a second time."

"What do you say?" cried the cardinal; "what is the meaning of your words, dear Countess?"

"Do you not understand?"

"I am afraid."

"I should be afraid, if you did not reassure me."

"And how can I do that?"

"By not going to Versailles."

The cardinal sprang up. "In the daytime?" he said, smiling.

"In the daytime certainly, but also in the night!"

Monsieur de Rohan shuddered, and dropped the countess's hand. "Impossible!" he said.

"It is my turn to be frank with you," she replied.

"You said, I think, 'impossible.' Why, impossible, if you please?"

"Because my heart is filled with a love which will end only with my life."

"I see that," she interrupted, speaking ironically; "and it is to reach the end more quickly that you persist in returning to the park. Yes; if you go there again, your love will end only with your life, and both would be cut down by the same blow."

"How many terrors, Countess! and you were so courageous yesterday!"

"I have the courage of animals. I am not afraid while there is no danger."

"I have the courage of my race; I am not happy except in the presence of danger."

"Very well; but you will then allow me to tell you —"

"Nothing, Countess, nothing," cried the amorous prelate; "the sacrifice is made, the die is cast; give me death if it must come, — but give me love! I shall go again to Versailles."

"Alone?" said the countess.

"Would you desert me?" said Monsieur de Rohan, in a reproachful tone.

"I, in the first place?"

"She certainly will come."

"You are mistaken, she will not come."

"Is it possible that you came from her to tell me that?" said the cardinal, trembling.

"It is the blow I have been trying to soften for the last half-hour."

"She will not see me?"

"Never, and it is I who advised her to make this decision."

"Madame," said the prelate, in a thrilling voice, "it is

wrong for you to plunge the knife into a heart which you know to be so tender."

"It would be much more so, Monseigneur, to allow two mad creatures to be ruined for want of good advice. I give it; let those who will, profit by it."

"Countess, Countess, I would rather die!"

"That is your concern, and it is easily accomplished."

"Death for death," said the cardinal, gloomily. "I prefer the end of a reprobate. Blessed be hell where I shall meet my accomplice!"

"Holy prelate, you are blaspheming!" said the countess; "as subject you are dethroning your queen! as man you are ruining a woman!"

The cardinal seized the countess by the hand and speaking wildly, "Acknowledge that she did not tell you that!" cried he, "and that she will not renounce me thus."

"I speak to you in her name."

"She merely asks for delay?"

"Take it as you please; but observe her order."

"The park is not the only place where we can see each other, — there are a thousand safer places. The queen has even come to your house!"

"Monseigneur, not a word more; I carry a heavy burden, that of your secret. I feel that I have not the strength to bear it a long time. What your indiscretions, chance, or an enemy's malevolence will not effect, remorse will accomplish. I believe her capable, you see, of confessing everything to the king in a moment of despair."

"Good God! is it possible?" cried Monsieur de Rohan, "would she do that?"

"If you should see her, you would pity her."

The cardinal rose precipitately. "What shall I do?" he said.

"Give her the consolation of silence."

"She would think that I had forgotten her."

Jeanne shrugged her shoulders.

"She would accuse me of being a coward."

"When your purpose is to save her? — never!"

"Does a woman pardon a man who deprives her of his presence?"

"Do not judge her as you would judge me."

"I believe her great and strong. I love her for her courage and her noble heart. Therefore she can rely on me as I rely on her. I will see her once more for the last time; she shall know all my thoughts, and what she shall determine upon after having heard me, I will fulfil as if it were a sacred vow."

Jeanne arose.

"As you please," she said. "Go, only you will go alone. I threw the key of the park gate into the Seine as I returned this morning. You will therefore go when you please to Versailles, while I shall set out for Switzerland or Holland. The farther I shall be from the bomb, the less I shall fear when it bursts."

"Countess! you would desert me; you would abandon me! Oh, my God! with whom can I talk about her?"

"Have you not the park and the echoes?" said Jeanne; "you can soon teach them the name of Amaryllis."

"Countess, have pity! I am in despair," said the prelate.

"Well," replied Jeanne, with the brutal energy of a surgeon who decides upon the amputation of a limb; "if you are in despair, Monsieur de Rohan, do not indulge in follies more dangerous than powder, than the plague, than death! If you care so much for this woman, preserve her instead of ruining her; and if you are not altogether deficient in heart and memory, do not risk engulfing in your

own ruin those friends who have been devoted to you. But I myself will not play with fire. Will you swear to me that you will not try to see the queen? Not even to see her, you hear, — I do not say speak to her, — for the next fifteen days? If you will swear this, I will remain and may still be of service to you. Are you determined to brave everything, to disregard my prohibition and hers? I shall know it, and ten minutes later I shall set out! You will have to extricate yourself without my aid."

"It is terrible," murmured the cardinal; "the fall from so high a degree of happiness is crushing. Oh, it will kill me!"

"Come, now," whispered Jeanne in his ear, "your love is only self-love."

"To-day it is true love," replied the cardinal.

"Then you must suffer to-day," said Jeanne; "it is one of the conditions of true love. Come, Monseigneur, decide, shall I stay here, or must I start for Lausanne?"

"Remain, Countess, but find me a soothing balm. The wound is too painful."

"Do you swear to obey me?"

"On the honor of a Rohan!"

"Good! your soothing balm is found. I forbid interviews, but I do not forbid letters."

"Really!" cried the madman, reanimated by this hope; "I may write?"

"Try it."

"And — she will answer me?"

"I will endeavor to prevail upon her."

The cardinal covered Jeanne's hand with kisses. He called her his tutelary angel. The demon inhabiting the heart of the countess must have laughed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE NIGHT.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day when a man on horse-back stopped on the outskirts of the park, behind Apollo's Baths. The cavalier was riding at a leisurely pace, as if for his own pleasure; he was thoughtful as Hippolytus, and as handsome, and allowed the reins to hang loosely over the neck of his horse.

He stopped at the very same place where for the last three days Monsieur de Rohan had fastened his horse. The ground in this place was trampled by horses' feet, and the bushes which grew around the oak-tree to which the bridle was tied, were broken.

The cavalier alighted. "This place seems to have been well-trampled," he said; and he approached the wall. "Somebody has been climbing the wall; here is a gate that has been recently opened. It is just as I thought.

"No man can have been engaged in wars with the Indians of the savannas without having learned how to distinguish the tracks of horses and men. Now it is fifteen days since Monsieur de Charny returned; for fifteen days Monsieur de Charny has not allowed himself to be seen. This is the gate which Monsieur de Charny has chosen, through which to make his entrance into Versailles." Saying these words the cavalier sighed as if his soul were being drawn from his body.

"Let us leave our neighbor his happiness," he murmured, looking at one of those eloquent tracks left upon

the grass and walls. "That which God gives to some, he refuses to others. It is not without some design that God makes some men happy, others miserable; blessed be his will!

"Yet I must have a proof. At what price, by what means can it be gained?

"Oh, nothing more simple. In the bushes, in the night, a man would not be discovered, and from his hiding-place he could see those who would come here. To-night I will be in the bushes."

The cavalier took up his horse's reins, slowly regained his saddle, and without hastening the pace of his horse disappeared around a corner of the wall.

As to Charny, obedient to the orders of the queen, he had shut himself up in his own house awaiting a message from her. Night came, but nothing appeared. Charny instead of watching at the window of the lodge which looked on the park, was watching in the same room, but at another window which looked on the narrow street. The queen had said, "at the door of the huntsman's lodge;" but on the ground-floor, window and door were the same thing. The main thing was to see all that might happen. He looked out into the dark night, hoping every minute to hear the galloping of a horse or the hurried step of a courier. He heard a clock striking half-past ten. Nothing happened. The queen, then, had deceived him. She had made a concession at the first moment of surprise. In her shame she had promised what it had been impossible to fulfil; and, horrible to think, she had promised knowing that she could not perform.

Charny, with that readiness to suspect which characterizes men who are violently in love, began to reproach himself with having been too credulous. "How could

I," he cried, — "I who had seen, — believe such falsehoods, and yield my conviction, my certainty, to a stupid hope?"

He was enlarging with rage upon this fatal idea when the noise made by a handful of sand thrown upon the panes of the other window attracted his attention, and made him rush to look out upon the side toward the park. He saw then in the avenue of elms, enveloped in a large black cloak, the figure of a woman who raised toward him a pale and agitated face. He could not restrain a cry of joy mingled with regret. The woman who was waiting for him, who called him, was the queen! With one bound he reached the place where the queen was standing, and fell at her feet.

"Ah, you are here, Monsieur? it is fortunate," said the queen, in a low and agitated tone; "what were you doing?"

"You! you, Madame! — you yourself! is it possible?" replied Charny, prostrating himself.

"Is this the way you were waiting for me?"

"I was looking for you on the street side, Madame."

"Was I likely to come by the street, when it is so easy to come by the park?"

"I hardly dared hope to see you, Madame," said Charny, with an accent of passionate gratitude.

She interrupted him. "Let us not stay here," she said; "it is too light. Have you your sword?"

"Yes, Madame."

"'T is well. Where did those persons enter whom you saw?"

"By this gate."

"And at what hour?"

"At midnight, on each occasion."

"There is no reason why they should not come again to-night. You have spoken to no one?"

"To no one."

"Let us go into the shrubbery and wait."

"Oh, your Majesty — "

The queen went first. "You must know," she said suddenly, as if anticipating Charny's thoughts, "that I have not amused myself with telling this story to the lieutenant of police. Since I have made a complaint, Monsieur de Crosne should have done me justice. If the creature who usurps my name after having usurped my likeness has not yet been arrested, if all this mystery is not cleared up, you will see that there may be two reasons: either the incapacity of Monsieur de Crosne, — which is of no importance, — or his collusion with my enemies. Now, it seems to me difficult to believe that here, in my own park, any persons should dare to play the ignoble comedy which you have described to me, unless they were sure of direct aid, or tacit complicity. That is my reason for thinking that those who are guilty are so dangerous that I ought myself to assume the task of unmasking them. What do you think about it?"

"I ask your Majesty's permission to say no more on this subject. I am in despair; I have still fears, but I have no longer any suspicions."

"At least you are an honest man," said the queen, eagerly; "you can speak frankly. It is a merit which may wound the innocent if one makes a mistake with regard to them; but the wound that it inflicts is one that can be healed."

"Oh, Madame, it is striking eleven; I tremble."

"Assure yourself that there is no one here," said the queen.

Charny obeyed. He went through all the shrubbery even as far as the walls. "There is no one," he said when he returned.

"Where did the scene take place which you described to me?"

"Madame, just now, as I returned from my exploration, my heart received a terrible blow. I perceived you in the same place where, for the last three nights, I saw — the false queen of France."

"Here!" cried the queen, moving away with disgust from the place where she was standing.

"Under this chestnut-tree, yes, Madame."

"Why, then, Monsieur," said Marie Antoinette, "let us not stay here; for if they came to this spot, they will probably return here."

Charny followed the queen into another avenue. His heart beat so violently that he was afraid he should not hear the noise of the gate in opening. She, silent and proud, waited until the living proof of her innocence should appear.

The clocks announced the hour of midnight. The gate did not open. A half-hour passed, during which Marie Antoinette asked Charny more than ten times if the impostors had been very punctual to their time of meeting.

Three-quarters past midnight struck from the belfry of Saint Louis at Versailles. The queen stamped her foot with impatience. "You see that they will not come to-night," she said. "Such misfortunes happen only to me!" and saying these words, she looked at Charny as if she would quarrel with him had she surprised in his eyes the slightest sign of triumph or irony. But he, growing pale in proportion as his suspicions returned, maintained an attitude so grave and so melancholy that certainly his face reflected at that moment a patience serene as that of martyrs and angels.

The queen took his arm and led him to the chestnut-

tree under which they had stood at first. "You said," she murmured, "that it was here that you saw them?"

"In this very place, Madame."

"It was here that the woman gave him a rose?"

"Yes, your Majesty."

The queen was so weak, so weary with her long stay in this damp park, that she leaned against the trunk of a tree, and let her head fall on her breast. Insensibly her limbs gave way; Charny did not offer her his arm, and to save herself from falling, she seated herself hastily upon the grassy turf. Charny stood, as before, motionless and gloomy.

The queen put both her hands to her face, and Charny could see a tear of this queen slipping down between her long, white fingers. Suddenly raising her head, "Monsieur," she said, "you are right; I am condemned. I had promised to prove to-night that you had calumniated me; God does not wish it, — I bow to his will."

"Madame — " murmured Charny.

"I have done what no other woman would have done. I do not speak of queens. Oh, Monsieur, what is a queen who cannot rule even one heart? What is a queen who cannot obtain even the esteem of an honest man? Come, Monsieur, help me to rise that I may go away; do not scorn me to the extent of refusing the assistance of your hand."

Charny threw himself like a madman on his knees. "Madame," he said, striking his head upon the ground, "if I were not a miserable man who loves you, you would pardon me, would you not?"

"You!" cried the queen, with a bitter smile, — "you! you love me, and yet you think me an infamous woman!"

"Oh, Madame!"

"You, you who ought to have a memory, you accuse me of giving a flower here, there a kiss, and yonder my love to another man! Monsieur, no falsehood; you do not love me!"

"Madame, that phantom was there, — that phantom of an amorous queen. Here where I am was the phantom of the lover. Tear out my heart, since those two infernal images live in my heart and devour it!"

She took his hand and drew him toward her with a gesture of excitement. "You saw! you heard! It was certainly I, was it not?" she said in a choking voice. "Oh, it was I! do not try to think otherwise. Well, then, if in this very place, under this very chestnut-tree, seated as I was, you at my feet as was that other, if I press your hands, if I draw you to me, if I take you in my arms, if I say to you, — I, who you say did all this to another; I, who said the same thing to another, did I not? — if I say to you, 'Monsieur de Charny, I have loved, I do love, I shall love but one being in the world, — and you are that one!' my God! my God! would not that be sufficient to convince you that a woman is not infamous who has within her heart, together with the blood of empresses, the divine fire of a love like that?"

Charny uttered a groan like that of a man about to expire. The queen's impassioned words had intoxicated him; he had felt her burning hand upon his shoulder, her warm breast upon his heart, her breath upon his lips. "Let me thank God!" he murmured. "Oh, if I did not think of God, I should think too much of you!"

She arose slowly; she fixed upon him her eyes swimming in tears.

"Will you have my life?" he said, beside himself.

She looked at him silently for a moment. "Give me your arm," she said, "and take me to every place where

the others went. In the first place, here, — here a rose was given — "

She drew from her dress a rose, still warm from the fire which had burned in her breast. "Take it!" she said.

He inhaled the sweet odor of the flower, and pressed it to his heart.

"Here that other one gave her hand to be kissed?"

"Both her hands!" said Charny. He shook with excitement on finding his face enclosed in the queen's burning hands.

"Thus is this place purified," said the queen, with an adorable smile. "Now, did they not go to Apollo's Baths?"

Charny paused, stupefied, half-dead, as if the heavens had fallen.

"It is a place," the queen said gayly, "which I enter only in the daytime. Let us go together to see the gate through which this lover fled from the queen."

Joyous, tripping, leaning on the arm of a man the happiest God had ever blessed, she crossed, almost running, the grass-plots which separated the shrubbery from the wall around the park. In this way they reached the gate behind which were tracks of horses' feet.

"It was here, on the other side."

"I have all the keys," replied the queen. "Open the gate, Monsieur de Charny, let us investigate."

They went outside and looked about them; the moon just then came out from a cloud as if to aid them in their investigations. Its white light seemed to cling tenderly to the beautiful face of the queen, who was leaning on Charny's arm while she listened and examined the bushes which surrounded them. When she had satisfied herself that no one was there, she withdrew within the gate, drawing Charny toward her with a gentle pressure. The

gate closed behind them just as the clocks were striking two. "Adieu," she said. "Return home. Till to-morrow." She pressed his hand, and without another word disappeared under the elms in the direction of the palace.

On the other side of that gate they had just closed, a man rose from among the bushes, and vanished in the wood on the side of the road. This man carried with him the secret of the queen.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FAREWELL.

THE queen, next morning, looking bright and beautiful, left her apartment to go to Mass. Her guards had received orders to admit every one.

It was Sunday, and her Majesty on waking had said, "What a beautiful day! living is a pleasure to-day." She seemed to enjoy more than usual the perfume of her favorite flowers; the gifts she bestowed were more magnificent than usual; she seemed more eager for her daily communion with God. She listened to the service with intense devotion; she had never bowed so humbly her majestic head.

While she was fervently praying, the crowd was gathering along the passage from the apartments to the chapel, — as was usual on Sunday, — and even the steps of the staircase were filled with gentlemen and ladies. Among these last shone Madame de La Motte, modestly, but elegantly dressed.

In the double line of gentlemen on the right, Monsieur de Charny was seen, who was receiving many congratulations on his restoration to health, on his return, and especially on his radiant looks.

Favor is a subtile perfume; it is diffused with such facility through the air that real connoisseurs can distinguish its aroma even before the bottle is opened. Olivier had been the queen's friend for only six hours, and every one already called himself the friend of Olivier.

While he was accepting all these felicitations with the gracious manner of a really happy man, and while, as a mark of respect and friendship, all those in the left line passed over to the right, Olivier, compelled to cast his eyes here and there over the group which hovered around him, observed in front of him a face whose gloomy paleness impressed him in the midst of his exaltation. He recognized Philippe de Taverney, in his uniform closed to his chin, and with his hand upon the hilt of his sword.

Since the visits of politeness paid by the latter in his adversary's antechamber after the duel, and since the seclusion of Charny by Doctor Louis, there had been no intercourse between the rivals.

Charny, on seeing Philippe, who was looking at him quietly, without any expression either of kindness or menace, was the first to bow, and his salutation was returned by Philippe in a distant manner. Then, clearing a way through the group around him, "Pardon, gentlemen," said Olivier, "but allow me to perform a polite obligation," and crossing the space between the right and left lines, he came straight to Philippe, who did not stir.

"Monsieur de Taverney," said Charny, bowing even more politely than before, "I should have thanked you for your kind interest in regard to my health, but I arrived only yesterday."

Philippe colored, and looked at him, then cast down his eyes.

"I shall have the honor, Monsieur," continued Charny, "of paying you a visit soon, and I hope that you bear me no ill-will."

"None, Monsieur," replied Philippe.

Charny was just about to extend his hand to Philippe, when the drum announced the queen's approach.

"The queen is coming, Monsieur," said Philippe, slowly,

without making any return to Charny's friendly gesture; and he accompanied his words with a reverence which expressed melancholy rather than coldness.

Charny, rather surprised, hastened to rejoin his friends in the line on the right. Philippe remained on the left as if he were a sentinel.

The queen drew near. She was seen to smile upon several persons, and to receive through her attendants the petitions which were presented to her; for she had perceived Charny in the distance, and fixing her eyes upon him, with that fearless courage which she always displayed in her friendships, and which her enemies called immodesty, she said quite loud, "Ask to-day, gentlemen; ask, I cannot refuse anything to-day."

Charny was moved in the very depths of his heart by both the tone and the meaning of these magic words. He trembled with pleasure, which was his only expression of thanks to the queen.

Suddenly the latter was aroused from her pleasant but dangerous contemplation by the sound of a step, by the tones of a strange voice. The step resounded on the pavement at her right, the voice, agitated but grave, said, "Madame!"

The queen perceived Philippe; she could not repress at first a movement of surprise at finding herself thus placed between these two men, of whom she reproached herself perhaps with loving one too little, and the other too much. "You, Monsieur de Taverney," she cried, recovering herself, — "you! you have something to ask of me? Oh, speak!"

"An audience of ten minutes at your Majesty's leisure," said Philippe, without relaxing the severity of his countenance.

"This very moment, Monsieur," replied the queen, cast-

ing a furtive glance at Charny, whom she involuntarily dreaded to see in so close proximity with his old adversary; "follow me," and she went on more rapidly when she heard Philippe's step closely following her own, and had left Charny standing with the rest. She continued, however, gathering in her harvest of letters and petitions, issued some orders, and entered her apartment. A quarter of an hour later, Philippe was admitted to the library, where her Majesty was accustomed to receive on Sunday.

"Ah, Monsieur de Taverney, come in," said the queen, playfully, — "come in and assume for me a more smiling countenance. I must confess I am anxious every time a Taverney desires to speak to me. Your family is one of ill-omen. Reassure me quickly, Monsieur de Taverney, by telling me that you have not come to announce some misfortune."

Philippe, more pallid after this introduction than he had been during the scene with Charny, seeing how little feeling the queen manifested in what she said, confined himself to replying, "Madame, I have the honor to declare to your Majesty that this time I bring only good news."

"Ah, you have news for me!" said the queen.

"Alas, yes, your Majesty."

"Ah!" she replied, resuming that gay demeanor which made Philippe so miserable, "there, you have said, 'alas!' 'Unhappy that I am!' a Spaniard would say. Monsieur de Taverney has said, 'Alas!'"

"Madame," replied Philippe, gravely, "a few words will fully assure your Majesty that your noble brow will not be clouded this day at the approach of a Taverney, and also that you will never again be troubled by the fault of a Taverney-Maison-Rouge. From this very day, Madame,

the last of this family, to whom your Majesty had deigned to accord some favor, is about to disappear, never again to return to the court of France."

The queen, casting aside the playful air which she had assumed as a resource against the emotions which would probably be excited during this interview, exclaimed, "You are going away!"

"Yes, your Majesty."

"You — too!"

Philippe bowed. "My sister, Madame, has already left your Majesty with regret," he said; "as for myself, I was always useless to the queen, therefore I am going."

The queen seated herself, much agitated by reflecting that Andrée had asked that final leave of absence on the day following the queen's interview with Charny in Louis's apartment, when he had received the first indication of her feeling toward him. "Strange!" she murmured thoughtfully, and did not add another word.

Philippe remained standing like a marble statue, awaiting his dismissal.

The queen, rousing all at once from her lethargy, said, "Where are you going?"

"I intend rejoining Monsieur de Lapeyrouse," said Philippe.

"Monsieur de Lapeyrouse is at Newfoundland," observed the queen.

"I have prepared everything to join him."

"You know that a frightful death has been predicted for him?"

"Frightful? I did not know that; but I was aware that it was to be sudden."

"And you will go?"

"It is for that reason that I wish to rejoin Lapeyrouse," he said, with a sweet and dignified smile.

The queen once more relapsed into her agitated silence.

Philippe still waited respectfully.

That brave and noble nature of Marie Antoinette was aroused, more fearless than ever. She arose, approached the young man, and said to him, folding her arms upon her breast, "Why do you go away?"

"Because I have a great desire to travel," he replied gently.

"But you have already made a tour of the world," replied the queen, deceived for a moment by his heroic calmness.

"Of the New World, yes, Madame," continued Philippe; "but not of the Old and New together."

The queen made a gesture of impatience, and repeated what she had said to Andrée. "These Taverneys are a race of iron, and have hearts of steel. Your sister and you, you are two terrible persons, — friends whom one must finally hate. You are going away, not for the sake of travelling, — you are really weary of that, — but to leave me. Your sister was, she said, summoned by religion; she hides a heart of fire beneath the ashes. But she wished to go, and she has gone. May God make her happy! You, you who might be happy, — you, you are going too! I told you just now that the Taverneys brought me misfortune!"

"Spare us, Madame! If your Majesty would deign to search our hearts, you would find there the most unbounded devotion."

"Listen!" cried the queen, angrily. "You are a Quaker, she a philosopher, — creatures whom it is impossible to move. She imagines the world a Paradise in which one enters only on the condition of being saints; you, you take this world for the infernal regions in which

there can be only demons; and both of you have fled from the world, — the one, because you do not find in it what you seek; the other, because you find in it what you do not seek. Am I right? Eh, my dear Monsieur de Taverney, allow human beings to be imperfect; ask of royal families to be only the least imperfect of the human race; be tolerant, or rather, do not be egotistical."

She spoke with too much passion. It gave Philippe an advantage. "Madame," said he, "egotism is a virtue when one makes use of it to increase his adoration."

The queen blushed. "I only know," she said, "that I loved Andrée, and that she left me; that I valued you, and you are going to leave me. It is humiliating to me to see two persons so perfect — I do not jest, Monsieur — abandon my house."

"Nothing can humiliate so august a personage as you," said Taverney, coldly; "shame cannot reach a head so exalted as your own."

"I am trying to think what can have wounded your feelings."

"Nothing has wounded my feelings, Madame," replied Philippe, eagerly.

"Your rank has been confirmed; you are on the high road to fortune. I have distinguished you — "

"I repeat to your Majesty that nothing at court displeases me."

"And if I should tell you to remain — if I should command you to do so?"

"I should have the sorrow of replying to your Majesty by a refusal."

The queen again had recourse to that pause of silent reserve which was to her like a break in the combat to the weary fencer. And as a home-thrust always followed this moment of repose, she suddenly exclaimed, "There is

perhaps some one here who displeases you? You are easily offended, you know."

"There is no one who displeases me."

"I thought you had quarrelled — with a gentleman — Monsieur de Charny — whom you wounded in a duel," said the queen, gradually becoming more animated; "and as it is very natural to avoid those we do not like, as soon as you saw that Monsieur de Charny had returned you immediately wished to leave the court."

Philippe made no reply.

The queen, mistaken in her opinion of this man, so loyal and so brave, thought that this was only a case of ordinary jealousy. She followed him up unsparingly. "You knew only to-day," she continued, "that Monsieur had returned. I say to-day! and it is to-day that you ask for permission to retire."

Philippe turned livid rather than pale. Thus attacked, thus trampled underfoot, he avenged himself cruelly. "Madame," he said, "it is true that it is only to-day that I became aware of Monsieur de Charny's return; only I have known it longer than your Majesty thinks, for I met Monsieur de Charny at about two o'clock in the morning at the gate of the park near Apollo's Baths."

The queen became pale in her turn; and after having observed, with admiration mingled with terror, the perfect courtesy of the gentleman, even in his anger, "Well," she murmured, in a faint voice, "go, Monsieur; I will not detain you longer."

Philippe bowed for the last time, and with slow steps retired.

The queen fell overwhelmed upon her chair, saying, "France, country of noble hearts!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE CARDINAL'S JEALOUSY.

THE cardinal had passed three successive nights very different from those which were constantly recurring to his imagination. No news from any one, no hope of a visit! This death-like silence, after the agitation of passion, was like the darkness of a cellar after the joyous light of the sun.

The cardinal had at first deluded himself with the hope that his lover — a woman as well as a queen — would wish to know the nature of the passion she had inspired, and whether she would still continue to please. This was a feeling quite masculine, — speaking materially, a two-edged weapon which wounded the cardinal grievously when it was turned against himself.

In fact, receiving nothing, and hearing only silence, as Monsieur Delille says, he feared — unhappy man — that that test had resulted unfavorably to himself. From this thought arose an anguish, a terror, an anxiety of which no one could form an idea who has not suffered from that pervasive neuralgia which turns every nerve connected with the brain into a serpent of fire writhing or distending itself at its own free will.

This anxiety became insupportable to the cardinal; he sent ten times in one half-day to Madame de La Motte's house, and as often to Versailles.

The tenth courier at last brought back Jeanne, who at Versailles was watching Charny and the queen, and secretly congratulating herself on this impatience of the

cardinal, to which she would soon owe the success of her enterprise.

The cardinal, on seeing her, shouted, "How can you live in such tranquillity? What! you know how I am tortured, and you, who call yourself my friend, allow this torture to kill me!"

"Eh, Monseigneur," replied Jeanne, "patience, if you please. What I have been doing at Versailles is much more useful than what you have been doing here wishing for me."

"It is impossible that any one should be so cruel!" said his Excellency, somewhat appeased by the hope of obtaining news. "Come, what are they saying, what are they doing down yonder?"

"Absence is a grievous evil, whether one suffers from it at Paris, or has to bear it at Versailles."

"What you say delights me, and I thank you for it; but —"

"But?"

"The proofs!"

"Ah, good God!" cried Jeanne, "what is that you are saying, Monseigneur, — proofs! What is that word? Proofs! Would you be in your right senses, Monseigneur, to go and ask a woman for proofs of her fault?"

"I do not ask a formal document, Countess; I ask a pledge of love."

"It seems to me," she said, looking at his Excellency in a very significant manner, "that you are becoming very exacting, if not very forgetful."

"Oh, I know what you are going to say; I know that I ought to be very well satisfied, — very much honored; but judge of my heart by your own, Countess. How would you like to be thus cast aside after having obtained some appearance of favor?"

"I think you said 'appearance,'" replied Jeanne, in the same mocking tone.

"Oh, you can certainly taunt me with impunity, Countess; it is certain that I have no reason to complain; but I do complain —"

"Then, Monseigneur, I cannot be responsible for your discontent, if you have only frivolous reasons for it, or no reason at all."

"Countess, you treat me badly."

"Monseigneur, I repeat your own words. I follow your own statements."

"Take some inspiration from yourself, instead of reproaching me with my foolishness; help me instead of tormenting me."

"I cannot help you where I see nothing to be done."

"You see nothing to be done?" said the cardinal, dwelling on each word.

"Nothing."

"Well, Madame," said Monsieur de Rohan, with vehemence, "every one, perhaps, does not think as you do."

"Alas, Monseigneur, we are getting angry and no longer understand each other. Your Excellency will pardon me for saying so."

"Angry! yes— Your unkindness drives me to it, Countess."

"And you do not consider whether or not this is injustice?"

"Oh, yes; I admit that if you do not serve me any longer, it is because you cannot; I see that clearly."

"You judge me rightly; why, then, do you accuse me?"

"Because you ought to tell me the whole truth, Madame."

"The truth! I have told you what I know."

"You do not tell me that the queen is perfidious, that she is a coquette, that she leads men on to adore her, and then drives them to despair."

Jeanne looked at him in surprise. "Explain yourself," she said, trembling not with fear, but with joy. In fact, she had just discovered in the jealousy of the cardinal a method of escape — which chance might not have given her — from a very difficult position.

"Acknowledge," continued the cardinal, who could no longer control his passion, "acknowledge, I beg, that the queen refuses to see me."

"I do not say that, Monseigneur."

"Acknowledge that if she does not repel me of her own free will, she thrusts me aside, to avoid giving annoyance to some other lover, in whom my attentions have aroused suspicion."

"Ah, Monseigneur!" cried Jeanne, in a tone so sympathetic that she allowed even more to be suspected than she seemed desirous to conceal.

"Listen," said Monsieur de Rohan; "the last time I was with her Majesty I thought I heard some one moving in the thicket."

"Nonsense!"

"I will tell you what I suspect."

"Do not say another word, Monseigneur; you are insulting the queen. Besides, even if she were so unhappy as to fear the vigilance of a lover, — which I do not believe, — would you be so unjust as to impute to her as a crime a past relation which she sacrifices to you?"

"'Past!' — that is a good word; but it means nothing, Countess, if that past is still present, and is to run on into the future."

"For shame, Monseigneur! You speak as if you would accuse me of having led you into an unfortunate enter-

prise. Your suspicions, Monseigneur, are injurious to the queen, and also to me."

"Then, Countess, prove to me — "

"Ah, Monseigneur, if you repeat that word I shall think you mean to insult me."

"In short, — do you think she loves me — even a little?"

"Why, Monseigneur, you can easily find out," Jeanne replied, pointing to the table, on which were writing materials. "Sit down there and ask her yourself."

The cardinal seized Jeanne's hand in a transport of joy. "You will take to her the letter?" he asked.

"If I did not give it to her, who would?"

"And — you undertake that I shall have an answer?"

"If you had no answer how would you know what course to take?"

"Oh, now you are as I like to see you, Countess."

"Am I not?" she replied, with her subtle smile.

The cardinal sat down and began to write. He had an eloquent pen, and was a ready writer; nevertheless, he destroyed ten sheets of paper before satisfying himself.

"If you go on in that way," said Jeanne, "you will never come to an end."

"You see, Countess, I am distrustful of my tenderness, — it overflows so freely; it may weary the queen."

"Ah," replied Jeanne, ironically, "write to her like a politician, and she will reply with a diplomatic note; but it is your own affair."

"You are right, — you are a true woman in heart and mind. Stay, Countess, why should we keep a secret from you, who are acquainted with the whole affair?"

She smiled. "You have, indeed," she said, "but little to conceal from me."

"Read over my shoulder; read as fast as I write, if you can, — for my heart is on fire, and my pen will devour the paper."

The cardinal proceeded to write a letter so ardent, so wild, so full of amorous reproaches and compromising protestations, that Jeanne, who followed his pen, said to herself, "He has written what I should not have dared to dictate to him."

The cardinal read over the letter, and said to Jeanne, "Will that do?"

"If she loves you," replied the traitress, "you will have proof of it to-morrow. Meanwhile, you can wait with a tranquil mind."

"Until to-morrow, yes."

Jeanne took the letter, sealed, allowed the cardinal to kiss her eyes, and toward evening returned home. There, after a refreshing change of costume, she sat down to think. The situation was precisely that which she had aimed to bring about. Two steps more and she would reach her goal. Who would be to her the better shield, — the queen, or the cardinal? That letter of the cardinal would render it impossible for him to accuse Madame de La Motte when the time should come for her to compel him to pay the money due for the necklace. Even if the cardinal and the queen should come to an understanding, how would they dare to destroy Madame de La Motte, the custodian of a secret so scandalous? The discussion would take place within closed doors, and Madame de La Motte, on being suspected, would make that fact a pretext for her departure, and would carry abroad the handsome fortune of a million and a half. The cardinal, indeed, would know that Jeanne had the diamonds, and the queen would suspect it; but they would not be eager to noise abroad a matter so closely connected with that of

the park, and of Apollo's Baths. A single letter, indeed, was not sufficient foundation for that entire system of defence. However, the cardinal had good pens; he would write seven or eight more. As to the queen, it was quite possible, that, in company with Monsieur de Charny, she was preparing weapons for the use of Jeanne de La Motte.

All this trouble, and all these turnings would lead, at the worst, to flight; and Jeanne, in her meditations, anticipated the probable course of the affair. First would come the default of payment, then the denunciations of the alarmed jewellers. The queen would have recourse immediately to Monsieur de Rohan. But how? Necessarily through Jeanne's intermediation. Jeanne would warn the cardinal and summon him to pay. If he refused, she would threaten to publish his letters. He would pay. The payment made, there would be no longer any danger. In the eyes of the public there would be an intrigue to be explained; but this gave her no anxiety. A million and a half, to save the honor of a queen and of a prince of the Church, was a sum far too small. Jeanne thought she might secure three millions if she should make the effort.

Why was Jeanne so sure of herself upon the question of intrigue? Because the cardinal was certain that on three successive nights he had been with the queen in the shadowy groves of Versailles, and nothing in the world could prove to him that he had been deceived. Only one proof of the deception was in existence, and that proof Jeanne must proceed to remove.

Having reached this point in her meditations, Jeanne approached the window and saw Oliva looking anxiously and inquiringly from her balcony. "Now for us two," she thought, saluting her accomplice affectionately. She

made to Oliva the signal agreed upon that in the evening she was to come down to the street.

Overjoyed at the receipt of this communication, Oliva returned to her chamber. Jeanne resumed her meditations.

To destroy the instrument when it has served its purpose is the custom of those who engage in intrigue. But most commonly they fail, either by destroying that instrument in such a manner as to elicit from it a groan which betrays the secret, or by destroying it so incompletely that it may still serve the purposes of others. Jeanne thought that Oliva, devoted as she was to the pleasure of living, would not allow herself to be destroyed without uttering some complaint. It was necessary to invent some story which would induce her to flee of her own free will.

Difficulties arose at every step; but there are minds which take delight in overcoming difficulties.

Oliva, delighted as she was with the society of her new friend, was delighted only relatively, — that is to say, in contemplating that companionship through the windows of her prison she found it charming. But the sincere Nicole did not conceal from her friend that she would much prefer the open day, walks in the sunlight, in short all the realities of life, to these nocturnal expeditions and this fictitious royalty. Jeanne, with her caresses, was an approach to life; the realities of life were — money and Beausire.

Jeanne thoroughly understood this attitude of Oliva, and determined to draw her advantage from it. In short, the object of her approaching interview with Nicole must be to effect the complete disappearance of the only proof of the criminal deception practised in the park of Versailles.

When night came Oliva descended to the street, and Jeanne was waiting for her at the door. They went up the Rue Saint Claude to the deserted boulevard, and there took a carriage.

Oliva began by covering Jeanne with kisses, which Jeanne returned with interest.

"Oh, how tired I am!" cried Oliva; "I have longed for you, watched for you."

"Impossible, my friend, for me to come to you; it would have been too hazardous for us both."

"How so?" asked Nicole, in astonishment.

"A terrible danger, my dear, at which I shudder still."

"Oh, tell me about it quickly!"

"You know that you were weary of your confinement?"

"Alas, yes!"

"And that, for the sake of diversion, you wished to go out?"

"Yes; and in this you kindly aided me."

"You know I told you about that fool of an officer in love with the queen, to whom you bear some resemblance."

"Yes, I know that."

"I was so foolish as to propose to you that we should play a trick on that poor fellow, by making him believe that the queen returned his love."

"Alas!" sighed Oliva.

"I will not recall to you the first two walks we took at night in the garden of Versailles, in company with that poor fellow."

Oliva sighed again.

"Those two nights in which you played your part so well that our poor lover took the matter seriously."

"It was wrong, perhaps," said Oliva, in a low voice;

"for we deceived him, and he did not deserve it; he is a charming man."

"He is, indeed; is he not?"

"Oh, yes."

"But wait; we come now to the danger. To have given him a rose; to have allowed him to say, 'your Majesty;' to have given him your hands to kiss, — these things might pass as jokes. But, my little Oliva, it seems there was something more."

Oliva blushed so deeply that but for the darkness Jeanne must have perceived it. It is true that, intelligent woman as she was, she looked out of the window.

"What do you mean?" stammered Nicole.

"There was a third interview," said Jeanne.

"Yes," said Oliva, hesitating; "you must know that, since you were there."

"Your pardon, dear friend; I was, as usual, at a distance, watching, or pretending to watch, to support the parts we were acting, so that I did not see or hear what took place in the pavilion. I know only what you told me. You told me, as we returned, that you had walked about, that you had conversed, that you had continued the play of the roses and the kissing of hands. I believe everything you told me, my dear."

"Well — but — " said Oliva, trembling.

"Well, my dear, it seems that our madman claims to have received more than the pretended queen has granted him."

"What do you mean?"

"It seems that, intoxicated with delight, he has boasted of obtaining from the queen an indisputable proof of reciprocal passion. The poor devil is mad, decidedly."

"My God! my God!" murmured Oliva.

"He is mad, in the first place, because he lies."

"Certainly," stammered Oliva.

"You would not have exposed yourself to so terrible a danger without telling me of it?"

Oliva shuddered from head to foot.

"How was it likely," continued the terrible friend, "that you, who love Monsieur Beausire, and have me for your friend; that you, solicited by Monsieur le Comte de Cagliostro, and rejecting his attentions, — that you have wantonly given that madman the right — to — say — Oh, no; he has lost his head; there can be no question about it."

"Tell me," cried Nicole; "what is the danger? Let us see."

"It is this. We have to do with a madman, — that is to say, a man who fears nothing and is uncontrollable. If it were a matter of giving a rose, or of kissing hands, there would be nothing to say. A queen has roses in her park, and hands to offer to any of her subjects; but if it were true that at that third interview — Ah, my dear child, I can no longer laugh since that idea has entered my head."

Oliva felt her teeth grinding with terror. "What would be the consequence, my dear friend?" she asked.

"In the first place you are not the queen, — to my knowledge, at least."

"No."

"And having usurped the rank of her Majesty, to commit an — indiscretion of that kind — "

"Well?"

"Well, that is called high treason; and that means a great deal."

Oliva hid her face in her hands.

"After all," continued Jeanne, "since you have not done that of which he boasts, you will be acquitted on the

trial. The preceding indiscretions will be punished by an imprisonment of from two to four years, and by banishment."

"Prison! banishment!" cried Oliva, terrified.

"It is not an irreparable evil; but for my own part, I shall take precautions and hide myself."

"You also are anxious?"

"Of course. Will not that madman accuse me at once? Oh, my poor Oliva! it is a joke that will prove very costly to us both."

Oliva burst into tears. "And I," she said, "who can never remain quiet for a moment! Oh, restless spirit! Oh, demon! I am possessed, you see. After this misfortune I shall still rush into another."

"Do not despair; try only to avoid all public scandal."

"Oh, I will shut myself up with my protector. What if I should confess everything to him?"

"A pretty idea! — a man who is keeping you for himself, though now he hides his love, — a man who, on a word from you, will adore you, — you will acknowledge to him that you have committed this imprudence with another! I say 'imprudence,' but there is no knowing what he will suspect."

"My God! you are right."

"Furthermore, the report of this matter will get abroad, and the researches of the magistrates will suggest scruples to your protector. Perhaps to make himself acceptable to the court he will deliver you to the officers."

"Oh!"

"Suppose that he should only drive you from his house, — what would become of you?"

"I see that I am lost."

"And Monsieur de Beausire, when he shall be informed

of the affair — " said Jeanne slowly, watching for the effect of this last blow.

Oliva jumped up, and striking with her head the roof of the carriage demolished her head-dress by the contact. "He will kill me! Oh, no," she murmured, "I will kill myself!" Then, turning toward Jeanne, "You cannot save me," she said despairingly, "since you also are in danger!"

"I have," Jeanne replied, "in the interior of Picardy a bit of land, — a farm. If one could gain that refuge secretly, before the matter comes to light, perhaps there would be a chance — "

"But that madman, — he knows you, and would manage somehow to find you."

"Oh, if you were once out of the way, hidden, undiscoverable, I should no longer fear the madman! I should say to him boldly, 'You are a fool to affirm such things! Prove them!' That would be impossible to him. Then I should say to him, quietly, 'You are a coward!'"

"I will set out when and whither you please," said Oliva.

"I think it would be prudent," replied Jeanne.

"Is it best to start immediately?"

"No; wait till I have arranged everything. Do not show yourself even to me. Disguise yourself even to your mirror."

"Yes, yes; you may depend on me, dear friend."

"And for a beginning, let us return; we have nothing more to say."

"Yes; let us return. How much time will you need for your preparations?"

"I do not know, — but listen: from now till the day of your departure I shall not show myself at the window.

When you see me there, understand that the day has arrived, and be ready."

"I will. Thank you, my dear friend!"

They returned slowly toward the Rue Saint Claude, — Oliva not daring to speak another word, and Jeanne meditating too deeply to speak to Oliva. On arriving they embraced each other, and Oliva asked her friend's pardon for all the trouble she had caused by her foolishness.

"I am a woman," replied Madame de La Motte, parodying the Latin poet, "and am familiar with all woman's weakness!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FLIGHT.

What Jeanne and Oliva had promised they respectively performed. From the next morning Nicole had completely concealed her existence from all the world; no one could suspect that she inhabited that house in the Rue Saint Claude. She remained hidden behind a curtain, or behind a screen, and kept her windows closed, notwithstanding the heat of the weather.

Jeanne, who was making her preparations, — knowing that on the next day the default of the first payment of five hundred thousand francs would occur, — arranged everything in such a manner as to leave no point exposed to danger from the explosion which would ensue. That terrible moment she held in view in all her observations. She had considered the alternative of flight; but flight would be strong evidence against her. She had determined to remain motionless as a duellist after receiving his adversary's blow, — to remain, with the chance of falling, but also with the chance of killing the enemy. With this purpose in view, on the day after her interview with Oliva, she showed herself at the window, at about two o'clock, to announce to the pretended queen that she must be ready to start that evening.

It would be impossible to describe Oliva's condition of mingled joy and terror. The necessity of flight signified danger; the possibility of flight signified safety. She threw an eloquent kiss to Jeanne, and then made her

final preparations, putting into her little bundle some of the costly things belonging to her protector.

Jeanne, after her signal, went out to procure a carriage to which she should commit the valuable destiny of Mademoiselle Nicole.

At eleven o'clock on the following night Jeanne entered the Rue Saint Louis in a post-chaise drawn by three strong horses. Upon the box was a man wrapped in a cloak, who showed the postilion which way to go. At the corner of the Rue du Roi-Doré, Jeanne pulled the man's cloak, and the carriage was stopped. The man got down to speak to the mistress.

"Let the carriage remain here, my dear Monsieur Reteau," said Jeanne. "A half-hour will be enough. I will bring here some one who will get into the carriage, and whom you will convey, paying double fees to the postilions, to my little house near Amiens."

"Yes, Madame la Comtesse."

"There you will commit this person to the care of my farmer, Fontaine, who will know what is to be done."

"Yes, Madame."

"I forgot — You are armed, my dear Reteau?"

"Yes, Madame."

"This lady is threatened by a madman. Perhaps an attempt will be made to stop her."

"What shall I do?"

"You will shoot down any one who may attempt to obstruct your course."

"Yes, Madame."

"You asked me for a payment of twenty louis for the affair you know about. I will give you a hundred, and will pay the expenses of your journey to London, where you may see me within three months."

"Yes, Madame."

"Here are the hundred louis. I probably shall not see you here again, for it will be prudent for you to gain Saint Valery, and embark immediately for England."

"You may rely on me."

"It is for your sake."

"It is for us," said Monsieur Reteau, kissing the countess's hand. "I am to wait here, then?"

"Yes; and I will go to bring the lady."

Reteau got into the chaise which Jeanne had vacated, while she with rapid steps hurried to the Rue Saint Claude, and entered her apartment. All was quiet in the neighborhood. Jeanne lighted the candle which, raised above the balcony, was to be the signal for Oliva to descend.

"She is a prudent girl," said the countess to herself, on seeing that Oliva's window remained darkened.

Jeanne raised and lowered her candle three times. There was no response. But she seemed to hear something like a sigh, or a "Yes," thrown almost inaudibly upon the air from under the foliage that surrounded the window.

"She will go down without showing a light," thought Jeanne, — "not a bad idea;" and she herself went down into the street.

The door did not open. Oliva had doubtless encumbered herself with some heavy and troublesome packages.

"The fool," said the countess, grumbling, "how much time she is wasting over her rubbish!"

No one came. Jeanne went over to the opposite door and listened, with her ear close to the large-headed iron nails which studded the door. Still no sound. A quarter of an hour passed in this way; the clocks chimed half-past eleven.

Jeanne walked to the boulevard to see from a distance if the windows were lighted. She thought that she could

perceive through the interstices in the foliage a glimmer of light which seemed to come from under the double curtains.

"What is she doing? My God, what can the wretched little thing be about! She did not see the signal, perhaps. Come, we must take courage; let us go up again," and in fact, she again ascended to her own apartment in order to try once more her telegraph of candles. But there was no answer to her signal.

"It must be," said Jeanne, crumpling her ruffles with rage, — "it must be that the hussy is ill and cannot move. Oh, but what does that matter? Living or dead, she must be off to-night."

She again descended her staircase with the swiftness of a hunted lioness. She held in her hand the key which had procured for Oliva so many times the liberty of taking her nocturnal ramble.

Just as she was slipping this key into the lock, she paused. "What if there should be any one up there with her?" thought the countess. "Impossible! I should hear voices, and there would be time to go back. What if I should meet any one upon the staircase — oh!" and she was upon the point of retreating at thought of this danger. The sound of her horses' feet pawing the pavement decided her. "Nothing great is accomplished without danger," she said; "with boldness, danger is avoided." She turned the key in the enormous lock, and the door opened.

Jeanne was acquainted with the localities; her intelligence would have revealed them to her, even if she had not already learned them while waiting for Oliva in the evenings. Jeanne rushed up the stairs which were on the left. There was no noise, no light, no person about.

When she reached the landing-place of Nicole's apart-

ment, she saw under the door a luminous ray; behind the door could be heard the sound of an agitated step.

Jeanne, holding her breath, listened. There was no conversation; Oliva was therefore alone, walking about, preparing for her departure probably. She was not ill certainly, and the only misfortune that had arisen was a slight delay.

Jeanne gently scratched on the door. "Oliva! Oliva!" she said, "my dear little friend!" The step was approaching. "Open! open!" said Jeanne, hurriedly.

The door was thrown open, a deluge of light inundated Jeanne, who found herself standing before a man carrying in his hand a three-branched candlestick. She uttered a fearful scream, and hid her face in her mantle.

"Oliva!" said this man, "is it not you?" and he gently removed the mantle of the countess. "Madame la Comtesse de La Motte!" he exclaimed, in a tone of surprise wonderfully natural.

"Monsieur de Cagliostro!" murmured Jeanne, staggering and almost fainting.

Among all the dangers Jeanne had imagined, she had not thought of this. And this did not seem at first to be very terrible; but on reflecting a moment, and observing the gloomy appearance of that strange man, and his air of profound dissimulation, the danger began to seem frightful to her. She was almost beside herself with fear. She recoiled, and felt an impulse to throw herself down the staircase. Cagliostro politely extended his hand, and invited her to a seat. "To what am I indebted for the honor of your visit, Madame?" he asked in a firm voice.

"Monsieur," stammered the intriguing woman, who could not withdraw her eyes from those of the count, "I came — I was seeking —"

"Allow me to ring, Madame, that I may have those of

my servants punished who had the awkwardness, the rudeness, to allow a woman of your rank to present herself thus alone."

Jeanne, trembling, arrested the count's movement.

"It must be," he continued calmly, "that you happened on that rogue of a German who is sometimes intoxicated. He probably did not know you, but opened the door in a stupor and immediately went to sleep again."

"Do not scold him, I beg of you, Monsieur," said Jeanne, speaking more freely, and without suspicion of the snare laid for her.

"It was he, in fact, who opened the door to you, was it not, Madame?"

"I think it was. But you promise me not to scold him?"

"Yes, and I will keep my word," said the count, with a smile. "Now, Madame, will you have the goodness to explain — "

Jeanne, now that she thought she was not suspected of opening the door herself, could lie with confidence concerning the object of her visit.

"I came," she said quickly, "to confer with you, Monsieur le Comte, in regard to certain rumors that are going about."

"What rumors, Madame?"

"Do not urge me, I entreat," she said, with affectation; "the course I am taking is delicate — "

"Search! search!" thought Cagliostro; "as for myself, I have already found."

"You are a friend of his Eminence Monseigneur le Cardinal de Rohan?" said Jeanne.

"Ah! ah!" thought Cagliostro, "go to the end of the thread I hold; but you shall go no farther." Then aloud, "I am in fact on quite good terms with his Eminence."

"And I came," said Jeanne, "to seek information from you about —"

"About?" said Cagliostro, with a slight tone of irony.

"I have told you that my position is delicate, Monsieur; do not take advantage of it. You must know that Monsieur de Rohan has shown me some affection, and I wished to know how far I may count — In short, Monsieur, it is said that you can read the most hidden thoughts and sentiments."

"I need a little more light, Countess, to read what is hidden in your mind."

"Monsieur, it is said that his Eminence loves another; that he is in love with a woman of exalted rank. It is even said —"

Here Cagliostro fixed his eyes, flashing with an angry light, on Jeanne, who almost sank beneath his gaze. "Madame, I do indeed read your mind; but to read more clearly I need some assistance. Will you please answer a few questions?

"How do you happen to come here to consult with me? I do not live here."

Jeanne shuddered.

"How did you get into the house? For there is neither drunken German nor servant of any kind in this part of the hôtel.

"And if it was not myself whom you came to see, whom, then, did you expect to find?

"You do not answer? Well, I will assist you. You entered the house by means of a key which you have now in your pocket. You came to seek a young woman whom I, out of sheer kindness, was sheltering in my house."

Jeanne was completely unbalanced, like a tree torn up by the roots. "And if that be so," she said, in a low

voice, "what crime have I committed? Is not a woman permitted to visit a woman? Call her; she will tell you whether our friendship is one that may not be acknowledged."

"Madame," interrupted Cagliostro, "you say that because you know she is not here."

"Not here!" cried Jeanne, alarmed. "Oliva no longer here?"

"Oh," said Cagliostro, "you are perhaps ignorant of her departure, — you, who aided in her abduction!"

"Her abduction! I! I!" cried Jeanne, with some renewal of confidence. "She has been carried away, and you accuse me?"

"I do more, — I convict you," said Cagliostro.

"What is your proof?" asked the countess, with assurance.

Cagliostro took a paper from the table and showed it to her. It was a note addressed to Cagliostro, and read as follows: —

"MONSIEUR AND GENEROUS PROTECTOR, — Forgive me for leaving you. But before all things I love Monsieur de Beausire. He has come for me, — he takes me away; I follow him. Adieu. Receive the expression of my gratitude."

"Beausire!" said Jeanne, petrified. "Beausire! — who did not know Oliva's address!"

"Oh, yes, Madame," replied Cagliostro, showing her a second paper, which he drew from his pocket. "See, I picked this up on the staircase when I came to make my daily visit. It must have fallen from Monsieur de Beausire's pocket."

The countess read, trembling, —

"Monsieur de Beausire will find Mademoiselle Oliva in the Rue Saint Claude, at the corner of the boulevard. He will

find her, and take her away immediately. It is a very sincere friend who gives him this advice. There is no time to be lost."

"Oh!" said the countess, crushing the paper in her hands.

"And he has carried her off," said Cagliostro, coldly.

"But who wrote him that letter?" asked Jeanne.

"You, apparently, — you, Oliva's sincere friend."

"But how could he enter here?" cried Jeanne, looking angrily at her impassive interlocutor.

"Cannot one enter by using your key?"

"But since I have it Monsieur de Beausire cannot have it."

"If a person has one key, he may perhaps have two," replied Cagliostro, looking at her intently.

"You have there convincing documents," answered the countess, speaking slowly, "while I have only suspicions."

"Oh, I have suspicions too," said Cagliostro, "as serious as yours." As he said these words he dismissed her by a gesture almost imperceptible.

The countess began to descend the stairs. The entire length of the stairway, which when she arrived was dark and deserted, was now illuminated by the light of twenty candles, held by twenty lackeys, before whom Cagliostro called aloud, and with many repetitions, the name of Madame la Comtesse de La Motte.

Jeanne departed breathing fury and vengeance, as the basilisk breathes fire and poison.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE LETTER AND THE RECEIPT.

THE next day was the day appointed in the queen's letter to the jewellers for the first payment on account of the necklace; and since in that letter her Majesty had enjoined circumspection, they waited in quiet expectation of their five hundred thousand francs, and had a receipt for it written out in the most elegant handwriting that the house could command.

The receipt was not called for. That night the jewellers spent in cruel anxiety and suspense. They reflected that the queen had extraordinary ideas, and she had need of secrecy, — so that perhaps her messenger would not arrive until after midnight.

The coming of the dawn destroyed their chimerical hopes. They took a carriage and drove to Versailles. While Bossange remained in the carriage Boehmer sought to gain admission to the queen. He was informed that, not having a letter of audience, he could not enter. Dismayed and anxious, he insisted, and since he had on several occasions prudently placed here and there among the officers of the antechambers several small articles of value, they contrived to place him where the queen would see him on returning from her walk.

Marie Antoinette, quivering yet with emotion as she recalled that interview with Charny in which she had confessed her love without becoming his mistress, was returning with her heart full of gladness, when she per-

ceived the anxious face of Boehmer, who stood respectfully awaiting her approach.

She gave him a smile, which he interpreted in the most favorable manner, and he ventured to ask for a moment's audience, which the queen promised to give him at two o'clock, — that is, after her dinner. He took the good news to Bossange, who was waiting in the carriage, and who, suffering from a swelled face, did not like to present himself before the queen.

"There is no doubt," they said, while commenting on every word and every gesture of Marie Antoinette, "that her Majesty has in her drawer the sum which she could not obtain yesterday; she has appointed two o'clock because at that hour she will be alone." And they asked each other, as do the companions in the fable, if they should take the amount in notes, in gold, or in silver.

At two o'clock the jeweller was at his post, and was admitted to her Majesty's boudoir.

"What is it now, Boehmer," said the queen, as soon as she perceived him, "do you want to talk of jewels? You are unfortunate in that way, you know."

Boehmer thought that there must be some one concealed in the room and that the queen was afraid of being heard. He assumed therefore an air of intelligence, and looking all around, he replied, "Yes, Madame."

"What are you looking about in that way for?" said the queen, in surprise. "You have some secret, have you?"

He did not answer, being rather shocked by this dissimulation.

"The same secret as before, — a jewel to sell," continued the queen; "something incomparable? Oh, do not be alarmed, — there is no one to hear us."

"Then —" murmured Boehmer.

"Well, what?"

"Then I may say to your Majesty —"

"Say it quickly, my good Boehmer."

The jeweller drew near with a propitiating smile. "I may say to your Majesty that the queen forgot us yesterday," he said.

"Forgot you! in what way?" said the queen, in surprise.

"Why, yesterday — was the date —"

"The date! what date?"

"Oh, I beg pardon, your Majesty, if I allow myself — I know very well that there is some indiscretion. Perhaps the queen is not prepared. That would be a great misfortune, but, in short —"

"Really, Boehmer," cried the queen, "I do not understand a word of what you say to me. Explain yourself, my good friend."

"Your Majesty has, then, lost all recollection of the matter; which is very natural in the midst of so many preoccupations."

"Recollections of what? — I ask once more."

"Yesterday was the day for the first payment on the necklace," said Boehmer, timidly.

"You have sold your necklace, then?" said the queen.

"Why," said Boehmer, looking at her in astonishment, "it seems to me we have."

"And those to whom you sold it have not paid you, my poor Boehmer? So much the worse. They must do as I have done; not being able to pay for the necklace, they must return it to you, leaving you the amount paid on account."

"What does your Majesty say?" stammered the jeweller, who staggered like an imprudent traveller who receives a sunstroke.

"I say, my poor Boehmer, that if ten successive purchasers should return your necklace as I returned it, each leaving you a bonus of two hundred thousand francs, that would give you two millions in addition to the necklace."

"Your Majesty," cried Boehmer, "says that you really returned the necklace?"

"Why, yes, I say so," replied the queen, calmly. "What is the trouble?"

"What!" continued the jeweller, "your Majesty never bought the necklace?"

"Now, what farce is this we are playing?" said the queen, severely. "Is this miserable necklace destined always to deprive people of their senses?"

"Why," said Boehmer, trembling from head to foot, "it seemed to me that I heard from your Majesty's own lips that you had *returned* — your Majesty said RETURNED — the diamond necklace."

The queen gazed at Boehmer with astonishment, and folded her arms. "Fortunately," she said, "I have something here with which to refresh your memory; for you are a very forgetful man, Monsieur Boehmer, not to say disagreeable," and she went straight to her desk, took from it a paper, which she opened and read over, and then slowly held it out to the unhappy Boehmer. "The style is sufficiently clear, I imagine," she said. And she sat down, the better to observe the jeweller while he read it. The face of the latter expressed at first complete incredulity, then by degrees the most terrible alarm.

"Well," said the queen, "you recognize that receipt, which attests in due form that you have taken back the necklace; and unless you have forgotten also that your name is Boehmer, —"

"But, Madame," cried Boehmer, trembling with

mingled rage and terror, "it is not I who signed this receipt."

The queen started back, almost annihilating this man with her flashing eyes. "You deny it?" she said.

"Absolutely! Even were I to leave here my liberty and my life, I would say that I never received the necklace; that I never signed that receipt. Were the block here, and the executioner by its side, I would still repeat, 'No, your Majesty, this receipt is not mine.'"

"Then, Monsieur," said the queen, turning pale, "I have robbed you? I, then, have your necklace?"

Boehmer searched his pocket-book, and drew from it a letter which he handed to the queen. "I do not think, Madame," he said in a tone respectful, but trembling with emotion, — "I do not think that if your Majesty had wished to return the necklace, you would have written this acknowledgment I now present to you."

"But," said the queen, "what is this scrap of paper? I never wrote that! Is that my hand-writing?"

"It is signed," said Boehmer, aghast.

"'Marie Antoinette de France' — you are mad! Am I of France, — I? Am I not Archduchess of Austria? Is it not absurd to say that I wrote that? Come, then, Monsieur Boehmer, the trap is too crude; go and tell your forgers so."

"My forgers —" stammered the jeweller, who came near fainting on hearing these words. "Your Majesty suspects me, Boehmer?"

"But you have suspected me, Marie Antoinette!" said the queen, haughtily.

"But this letter?" he objected, pointing to the paper which she still held.

"And that receipt?" she replied, pointing to the paper he had not given up.

Boehmer was obliged to lean upon a chair; the floor was whirling round beneath him. He breathed spasmodically, and the purple of apoplexy had replaced his livid paleness.

"Give me back my receipt," said the queen. "I hold it as good; and take back your letter signed 'Marie Antoinette de France.' The first lawyer you meet will tell you what it is worth;" and throwing down the note, after tearing from his hands the receipt, she turned her back and withdrew to a neighboring room, abandoning to himself the unhappy man, who was no longer able to form an idea, and who, in violation of all etiquette, allowed himself to sink into an easy-chair.

A few minutes, however, served to restore him; he rushed from the apartment, and went to join Bossange, to whom he related his adventure in such a manner as to excite his partner's suspicions with regard to himself. But he repeated his story so many times, and so clearly, that Bossange began to tear his wig, while Boehmer tore his hair, — a spectacle which, to the passers-by who happened to get a glimpse into the carriage, was painful and comical at the same time.

As it is not possible, however, to pass a whole day in a carriage; and as after having torn hair and wig one comes to the cranium; and as under the cranium there are or should be ideas, — the two jewellers conceived that of forcing, if possible, the queen's door, to obtain some sort of an explanation. They were making their way, therefore, toward the palace in a pitiable state, when they were met by one of the queen's officers, who requested that one of them should go to her Majesty. Their joy and their eagerness to obey may be readily imagined. They were admitted without delay.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CARDINAL IS SURPRISED.

THE queen seemed to be waiting impatiently; and as soon as she saw the jewellers she exclaimed, eagerly, "Ah, there is Monsieur Bossange; you have reinforced yourself, Boehmer. So much the better."

Boehmer had nothing to say; he was meditating. The best thing a man can do in such a case is to express himself by gesture; Boehmer threw himself at Marie Antoinette's feet. It was an expressive gesture which Bossange, as he was his partner, felt obliged to imitate.

"Gentlemen," said the queen, "I am calm at present, and I will not again become angry. Besides, an idea has presented itself to me which modifies my feelings with regard to you. Doubtless, we are all misled by some little mystery, which is no longer a mystery to me."

"Ah, Madame," cried Boehmer, delighted with these words of the queen, "you suspect me, then, no longer of having committed — oh, what an ugly word to speak — forgery!"

"I beg you to believe that it is as hard for me to hear, as for you to pronounce," said the queen. "No; I do not suspect you longer."

"Does your Majesty, then, suspect any one?"

"Answer my questions. You say that you are no longer in possession of the diamonds?"

"We have them no longer," answered both jewellers together.

"It is of little importance to you to know by whom I returned them, — that is my affair. Have you not seen Madame la Comtesse de La Motte?"

"Your pardon, Madame, we have seen her —"

"And she gave you nothing — from me?"

"No, Madame. Madame la Comtesse only said, 'Wait!'"

"But that letter which professes to be written by me, — who sent it?"

"That letter," replied Boehmer, — "that, which your Majesty had in your hand, was brought to us by an unknown messenger during the night;" and he showed the false letter.

"Ah, ah!" said the queen, "you see, then, that it did not come directly from me." She rang, and a footman appeared.

"Let Madame la Comtesse de La Motte be sent for," said the queen, quietly. "And," she continued, in the same calm manner, "you have seen no one; you have not seen Monsieur de Rohan?"

"Yes, Madame. Monsieur de Rohan came to pay us a visit and inquire —"

"Very well," replied the queen, "we will seek no farther. If the Cardinal de Rohan is still connected with this affair, you would be wrong in giving yourself up to despair. Let me see: Madame de La Motte, in saying that word, 'Wait,' may have wished — No, I understand nothing about it. But go to Monsieur le Cardinal, and relate to him what you have just told me; lose no time, and say to him that I know everything."

The jewellers, revived by this little ray of hope, looked at each other with somewhat less alarm expressed in their faces. Bossange alone, who wanted to put in a word, ventured to say in a low voice, "Nevertheless, the queen

has in her hand a forged receipt, and forgery is a crime."

Marie Antoinette knitted her brows. "It is true," she said, "that if you have not received the necklace, this writing is a forgery. But in order to prove the forgery it is indispensable that I should confront you with the person to whom I intrusted the diamonds."

"Whenever your Majesty may wish," cried Bossange. "We do not fear the light; we are honest tradesmen."

"Then, go seek the light from Monsieur le Cardinal; he alone can clear up this affair."

"And will your Majesty permit us to bring you his reply?" asked Boehmer.

"I shall obtain information before you do," said the queen; "I shall be the one to free you from embarrassment in this matter. Go." She dismissed them, and when they had gone, yielding to her anxiety, she sent courier after courier to Madame de La Motte.

The cardinal was at home reading with a rage impossible to describe a short letter which Madame de La Motte had just sent him, as she pretended from the queen. The letter was severe; it deprived the cardinal of all hope. It commanded him to think no more of what had taken place, and forbade him to appear familiarly at Versailles; it appealed to his loyalty not to attempt to renew relations that *had become impossible.*

In reading these words a second time, the prince jumped up with rage. He spelled out the letters one by one; he seemed to call the paper to account for the cruelties with which an unkind hand had burdened it. "Coquette, capricious, perfidious woman!" he cried out in his despair; "oh, I will have my revenge." He then tried to think of all the foolish pretexts which solace weak hearts in the sorrows of love, but which do not cure the love

itself. "Here are four letters," he said, "which she has written me, — all most unjust, one just as tyrannical as another. She received me, then, only through caprice! It is a humiliation I would hardly pardon, even if she did not sacrifice me to a new caprice." And the unhappy man read again with the fervor of hope all these letters, so pitiless in the rigor of their morality.

The last was a master-piece of cruelty; the poor cardinal's heart was pierced through and through by it; nevertheless he loved to such a degree that from a mere spirit of contradiction, he delighted in reading over and over again those harsh words sent from Versailles, according to Madame de La Motte.

It was at this moment that the jewellers presented themselves at the cardinal's hôtel. He was very much surprised at their persistence in asking to be admitted; three times he drove away his valet, who returned a fourth time to the charge, saying that Boehmer and Bossange had announced their determination to remain unless they were cast out by force.

"What does that mean?" said the cardinal. "Allow them to come in."

They entered; their agitated faces bore witness to the fierce struggle, moral and physical, through which they had passed. If they had been conquerors in one of these struggles, the unfortunate men had been vanquished in the other. Never had more distracted brains been summoned to perform their functions in the presence of a prince of the Church.

"In the first place," cried the cardinal, "what is the meaning of this outrage, gentlemen? Do we owe you anything?"

This tone chilled with terror the two partners.

"Are we to have a repetition of the scenes at Ver-

sailles?" said Boehmer, glancing at his partner out of the corner of his eye.

"Oh, no, no," replied the latter, adjusting his wig with a very warlike movement. "As for me, I am prepared for all kinds of assaults," and he took a step forward in an almost threatening attitude, while Boehmer, more prudent, remained behind.

The cardinal believed them mad, and told them so plainly.

"Monseigneur," said the desperate Boehmer, cutting short each syllable with a sigh, "give us justice, mercy! Spare this rage, and do not force us to fail in respect to the greatest, most illustrious of princes."

"Gentlemen, either you are not mad and will be thrown out of the windows," said the cardinal, "or you are mad and will be simply put out of the door. Take your choice."

"Monseigneur, we are not mad; we have been robbed!"

"What is that to me?" replied Monsieur de Rohan; "I am not lieutenant of police."

"But you have had the necklace in your possession, Monseigneur," said Boehmer, sobbing; "you will have to go before a magistrate, Monseigneur; you will go —"

"I have had the necklace?" said the prince. "It is the necklace, then, which has been stolen?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"Well, what does the queen say?" cried the cardinal, beginning to take an interest.

"The queen has sent us to you, Monseigneur."

"It is very kind in her Majesty. But what can I do about it, my poor men?"

"You can do everything, Monseigneur; you can tell us what has become of it."

"I?"

"Doubtless."

"My dear Monsieur Boehmer, you might address me in such language, if I belonged to a band of robbers who had taken the queen's necklace."

"It is not the queen from whom the necklace was taken."

"From whom, then, good God?"

"The queen denies having had it in her possession."

"What! she denies it!" said the cardinal, with hesitation; "have you not a receipt from her?"

"The queen says that the receipt is a forgery."

"Come," cried the cardinal, "you are losing your senses, gentlemen."

"Is it not true?" said Boehmer to Bossange, who replied by three nods of assent.

"The queen has denied it," said the cardinal, "because there was some one with her when you spoke to her."

"No one, Monseigneur; but that is not all."

"What else, then?"

"Not only has the queen denied it, not only has she maintained that the acknowledgment is a forgery; but she has shown us a receipt proving that we have taken back the necklace."

"A receipt from you!" said the cardinal. "And this receipt?"

"Is a forgery like the other, Monsieur le Cardinal, as you know very well."

"A forgery. Two forgeries. And you say that I know it?"

"Assuredly, since you came to us to confirm what Madame de La Motte had told us; for you yourself knew very well that we had sold the necklace, and that it was in the hands of the queen."

"Let us see," said the cardinal, passing his hand over

his brow, "these are very grave matters, it seems to me. Let us understand each other. First, my operations with you."

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"In the first place, a purchase on her Majesty's account of a necklace upon which I paid you two hundred and fifty thousand francs."

"That is true, Monseigneur."

"Then a sale to the queen, — you told me, — on terms fixed by herself over her signature."

"Over her signature."

"Show it to me."

The jewellers drew the letter from the portfolio and handed it to the cardinal.

"Eh! what!" he cried, on glancing at it; "you are children! 'Marie Antoinette de France'! Is not the queen a daughter of the house of Austria? You have been robbed! The writing and the signature are false."

"But then," cried the jewellers, exasperated, "Madame de La Motte must know the thief and the forger."

The truth of that assertion was obvious to the cardinal. "Let us send for Madame de La Motte," said he, with anxiety.

Servants were sent in pursuit of Jeanne, whose carriage could not yet be far off. Meantime the jewellers waited in a corner of the room, exclaiming from time to time, "The necklace, — where is the necklace?"

"You will make me deaf," said the cardinal, losing patience. "Do I know where your necklace is? I delivered it myself to the queen, and that is all I know about it."

"The necklace, or the money!" repeated the two tradesmen.

"Gentlemen, it is no affair of mine," said the cardinal,

angrily, and much inclined to have the two jewellers turned out of the house.

"Madame de la Motte! Madame la Comtesse!" they cried; "it is she who has ruined us."

"Madame de La Motte is a person of unimpeachable integrity. You will suspect her at your peril."

"Some one must be guilty," said Boehmer, dolefully. "These two forgeries have been committed by some one."

"By me?" asked Monsieur de Rohan, haughtily.

"Of course, Monseigneur, we would not say that."

"Well, then?"

"In short, Monseigneur, in Heaven's name give us some explanation."

"Wait till I have one myself."

"But, Monseigneur, what are we to answer to the queen? She too cries out against us."

"What does she say?"

"She says it is either you, or Madame de La Motte, who has the necklace."

"Well," said the cardinal, pale with shame and anger, "go and tell the queen — No, tell her nothing. Enough of scandal. But to-morrow I am to officiate in the chapel at Versailles. You may there see me approach the queen and ask her if she has not the necklace in her possession, and you may hear her answer. If then she should deny having it, — then, gentlemen, I am Rohan, I will pay."

On saying these words, with an indescribable loftiness of tone, the prince dismissed the partners, who, close together, backed out of the room.

"Till to-morrow, then," stammered Boehmer, "is it not, Monseigneur?"

"Till to-morrow, at eleven o'clock in the morning, at the chapel of Versailles," replied the cardinal.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FENCING AND DIPLOMACY.

On the following morning, at about ten o'clock, a carriage bearing the arms of Monsieur de Breteuil entered the court-yard at Versailles.

Those readers of this book who recall the history of Balsamo and of Gilbert will remember that Monsieur de Breteuil, the rival and personal enemy of Monsieur de Rohan, had long been watching for an opportunity to give his enemy a mortal blow..

Diplomacy has this advantage over fencing, that it may wait fifteen years, or longer, planning where to strike and how to make its blow effective.

Monsieur had previously sent to request an audience, and found his Majesty dressing to go to Mass.

"Magnificent weather!" said Louis XVI., gayly, on the entrance of his visitor. "See, there is not a cloud in the sky."

"I am much grieved, Sire, to bring with me a cloud to your tranquillity," replied the minister.

"Come, then," cried the king, losing his lively manner, "the day begins badly. What is the matter?"

"I am much embarrassed, Sire, in speaking to you of the matter; and the more so because it does not pertain to the duties of my office, but rather to those of the lieutenant of police. It is about a robbery."

"A robbery!" cried the king; "you are keeper of the

seals, and thieves come within the functions of your office. What is it?"

"Well, Sire, the affair is this. Your Majesty has heard of the diamond necklace?"

"Monsieur Boehmer's?"

"Yes, Sire."

"The one which the queen refused?"

"Precisely."

"A refusal through which I obtained a splendid man-of-war, the 'Suffren,'" said the king, rubbing his hands.

"Well, Sire," said the Baron de Breteuil, "that necklace has been stolen."

"Ah, that is bad," said the king. "It was very valuable. But the diamonds can be recognized. To have them cut again would reduce the profit of the theft. They will be left as they are, and the police will find them."

"Sire," interrupted the baron, "this is no common theft. There are certain rumors associated with it."

"Rumors! What do you mean?"

"Sire, it is asserted that the queen has kept the necklace."

"How could she have kept it? In my very presence she refused it, and was unwilling even to look at it. Nonsense, Baron, the queen has not kept the necklace."

"Sire, I have not used the right word. Calumny is always so blind toward sovereigns that it has used a more offensive term. The word 'kept'—"

"Why, Monsieur de Breteuil," said the king, smiling, "I suppose no one imagines that the queen has stolen the necklace?"

"Sire," replied the minister, eagerly, "it is said that the queen renewed in secret the bargain refused in your

presence. It is said that the jewellers have a receipt, signed by her Majesty, which shows that the necklace is in her possession."

The king turned pale. "They say that?" he exclaimed. "What, then, will they not say? But it astonishes me, after all. If the queen bought the necklace secretly I should by no means blame her. The queen is a woman, and the necklace is a rare ornament of marvellous beauty. Thank God, the queen can spend a million and a half on her toilet if she is so inclined. I shall approve it; she has been wrong in one respect only, — in concealing from me her wishes. But it is not for the king to deal with that, it concerns the husband. I recognize no right on the part of any one to interfere, even with an ill-natured remark."

The baron bowed before these words of the king, so noble and so strong. But the king had only the appearance of firmness. A moment later he became restless and uneasy. "But," said he, "you spoke of robbery. If there had been a robbery the necklace would not be in the queen's possession. Let us be logical."

"Your Majesty has chilled me by your anger," said the baron; "I cannot continue."

"Oh, my anger! I, angry! As to that, Baron —" and the good king broke out into hearty laughter. "Come, go on, and tell me everything. Tell me even that the queen has sold the necklace to the Jews. Poor woman, she often needs money, and I do not always give it to her."

"I was about to speak of that to your Majesty. The queen, two months ago, asked through Monsieur de Calonne for five hundred thousand francs, and your Majesty refused to sign."

"That is true."

"Well, Sire, that money, it is said, was to serve for the

first payment on account of the necklace. The queen, not having the money, refused to pay."

"Well?" said the king, becoming gradually more interested.

"Well, Sire, here begins the story which my zeal obliges me to relate to your Majesty."

"What! you say your story begins here. Good God! what have you then to tell?"

"Sire, it is said that the queen had recourse to a certain person to obtain money."

"To whom? To a Jew, was it not?"

"No, Sire, not to a Jew."

"My God! you say that with a singular expression, Breteuil. Come, then, I know what it is, — some foreign intrigue. The queen has asked for money from her brother — her family. Austria is at the bottom of this."

"Far better if it were so," replied Monsieur de Breteuil.

"What! Far better? Of whom, then, did the queen ask money?"

"Sire, I dare not — "

"You surprise me, Monsieur," said the king, raising his head and assuming the royal tone. "Speak out immediately, if you please, and give me the name of this money-lender."

"Monsieur de Rohan, Sire."

"Indeed! Are you not ashamed to speak to me of Monsieur de Rohan, the most ruined man in the kingdom?"

"Sire — " said Monsieur de Breteuil, lowering his eyes.

"Your manner displeases me. Explain yourself at once."

"No, Sire; nothing in the world can compel me to

utter a word derogatory to the honor of my king and that of my queen."

The king frowned. "We are descending very low, Monsieur de Breteuil," said he. "This police report is impregnated with the odors of the place from which it comes."

"All calumny, Sire, exhales a deadly miasma; and for that reason kings purify them by heroic remedies, unless they are willing to see those poisons destroy their honor and their throne."

"Monsieur de Rohan!" murmured the king. "Why, what likelihood — Does the cardinal allow it to be said —"

"It will be proved to your Majesty that Monsieur de Rohan had negotiations with the jewellers, that the sale was arranged by him, and that with him were fixed the terms of payment."

"Is that really true?" cried the king, disturbed by jealousy and anger.

"It is a fact that must come out on the most superficial examination. I pledge myself to its truth."

"You say you pledge yourself to that?"

"Without reservation, — on my responsibility, Sire."

The king began walking up and down his cabinet. "These are terrible things," he said; "but in all this I fail to see that theft of which you spoke."

"Sire, the jewellers have a receipt, signed, they say, by the queen, and the queen should have the necklace."

"Ah," cried the king, with a sudden renewal of hope, "she denies it! — you see that she denies it, Breteuil."

"Eh, Sire, have I permitted your Majesty to think that I was not aware of the queen's innocence?"

"Then you accuse Monsieur de Rohan only —"

"But, Sire, the appearances indicate —"

"A grave accusation, Baron."

"Which perhaps will fail on an examination. But an examination is indispensable. Consider, Sire, that the queen affirms that she has not the necklace; that the jewellers maintain that they sold it to the queen; that the necklace is not to be found; and that the word 'thief' is uttered by the people in connection with the name of Monsieur de Rohan and with the sacred name of the queen."

"It is true; it is true;" said the king, in great anxiety; "you are right, Breteuil; the whole affair must be brought to light."

"Absolutely necessary, Sire."

"Who is passing below there? Do I not see Monsieur de Rohan on his way to the chapel?"

"Not yet, Sire; Monsieur de Rohan cannot yet be going to the chapel. It is not yet eleven o'clock; your Majesty has still half an hour."

"What shall we do, then?—speak to him; summon him?"

"No, Sire; permit me to counsel your Majesty to make no noise over the matter before consulting the queen."

"Yes; she will tell me the truth."

"That is not for a moment to be doubted, Sire."

"Come, Baron, give me all the details of the matter in their order, without reserve."

"I have it all set forth in my portfolio, with the evidence."

"Let us to work then. Wait till I have the door closed. I was to give two audiences this morning, but shall put them off."

The king gave his orders, and resuming his seat threw a last look from the window. "This time," said he, "it is the cardinal. Look."

Breteuil drew near to the window, and from behind the curtain perceived Monsieur de Rohan, who, in the full dress of a cardinal and archbishop, was directing his steps toward the apartment appointed for his use on his official visits to Versailles.

"Here he is at last," said the king, rising.

"So much the better," said Monsieur de Breteuil, "the explanation will not be delayed." He then set himself to exposing the affair to the king with all the zeal of a man bent on the destruction of another. With an infernal art he had brought together everything that would injure the cardinal. The king saw proofs of Monsieur de Rohan's guilt accumulate, but was in despair at not seeing at the same time proofs of the queen's innocence. Thus he suffered for a quarter of an hour, when suddenly cries were heard in the neighboring corridor. The king listened. Breteuil discontinued his reading. An officer knocked at the door of the cabinet.

"What can it be?" asked the king, rendered nervous by the revelations of Monsieur de Breteuil.

An officer entered. "Sire," he said, "her Majesty the queen begs your Majesty to join her in her apartment."

"There is something new," said the king, turning pale.

"Possibly," replied Breteuil.

"I am going to the queen; wait for us here, Monsieur de Breteuil."

"Well, we are nearing the end," murmured the keeper of the seals.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

GENTLEMAN, CARDINAL, AND QUEEN.

At the time when Monsieur de Breteuil had entered the king's cabinet, Monsieur de Charny, pale and agitated, had sent to request an audience of the queen.

The latter was dressing. Through her window which opened on the terrace she saw Charny insisting on admission. She gave orders that he should be admitted. She yielded to the demand of her heart, saying to herself, with a noble pride, that a love like his, pure and spiritual, had the right to enter, at any hour, even the palaces of queens.

Charny entered, tremblingly touched the queen's hand, and said with a stifled voice, "Ah, Madame, what a misfortune!"

"What then is the matter?" cried the queen, turning pale.

"Madame, do you know what I have just learned? Do you know what is said? Do you know of what the king has been informed, or will learn to-morrow?"

The queen shuddered, thinking of that night of chaste delights when perhaps a hostile or a jealous eye had seen her with Charny in the park. "Tell me all; I am strong," she said, putting her hand to her heart.

"It is said, Madame, that you have purchased a necklace of Boehmer and Bossange."

"I returned it," she replied eagerly.

"Listen. It is said that you pretended to return it; that you expected to be able to pay for it; that the king

prevented that by withholding his signature from a draft by Monsieur de Calonne; that thereupon you had recourse to some one to obtain the money; and that this person is — your lover."

"You!" cried the queen, with an impulse of sublime confidence. "You, Monsieur? Well, let them say that who will. They cannot take so much pleasure in the word 'lover,' launched as an insult, as there is to us in the word 'friend,' sacred to us henceforth."

Charny for an instant did not reply. He was astonished at the strong and copious eloquence issuing from pure love, — the heart's perfume of every generous woman. But the pause made by him increased the queen's anxiety. She cried out, "Of what are you speaking, Monsieur de Charny? Calumny has a strange language which I do not comprehend. Is it a language that you understand?"

"Madame, please give me your attention; the situation is serious. Yesterday I went with my uncle, Monsieur de Suffren, who had business with the jewellers, Boehmer and Bossange. They related to him a frightful story, invented by your Majesty's enemies. Madame, I am in despair. If you have bought the necklace, tell me so; if you have not paid for it, tell me, — but do not suffer me to believe that Monsieur de Rohan paid for it in your stead."

"Monsieur de Rohan!" cried the queen.

"Yes, Monsieur de Rohan, — he who is regarded as the queen's lover; he from whom the queen borrows money; he whom an unhappy man called Charny saw in the park of Versailles smiling at the queen, kneeling to the queen, kissing the queen's hands; he —"

"Monsieur," cried Marie Antoinette, "if you believe such things it is because you do not love me."

"Oh!" replied the young man, "the danger is urgent.

I have come to ask of you neither frankness nor daring; I come to beg you to render me a service."

"In the first place, what is the danger?"

"The danger, Madame? The cardinal answering for the queen, paying for the queen, ruins the queen. I do not speak of the suffering caused to Monsieur de Charny by this confidential relation with Monsieur de Rohan. No. Of such sufferings one dies, but does not complain."

"You are mad!" said the queen, angrily.

"I am not mad, Madame; but you are unfortunate, — you are lost. I saw you in the park; I was not deceived, I tell you. To-day the horrible, the deadly truth breaks out; Monsieur de Rohan boasts perhaps —"

The queen seized Charny's arm. "Mad! mad!" she exclaimed, with indescribable grief. "In Heaven's name, after what I have told you do not believe me guilty. Oh, Monsieur de Charny, if you do not wish me to despair to-day and to be dead to-morrow, do not say that you suspect me; or rather, flee so far that you may not hear my fall at the moment of my death."

Olivier wrung his hands in an agony of grief. "Listen to me," he said, "if you wish me to render you effective service."

"A service from you!" cried the queen, — "from you, more cruel than my enemies! — a service from a man who despises me! Never, Monsieur, never!"

Olivier drew near the queen and took her hands in his. "You will see," he said, "that I am not a man who moans and weeps. The moments are precious; this evening it will be too late to do what remains to be done. Will you save me from despair by saving yourself from shame?"

"Monsieur!"

"Oh, I shall not be particular as to my words in the presence of death. If you do not listen to me, I tell you, this evening we shall both be dead, — you, from shame; I, from having to see you die. Let us go straight for the enemy, Madame, as in our battles! Let us face the danger! Let us meet death! Let us go together, — I as the obscure soldier in the ranks, but brave, as you shall see; you with Majesty, with strength, in the thickest of the fight. If you succumb, — well, you will not be alone. Look on me as a brother, Madame. You are in need of money — to pay for this necklace?"

"I?"

"Do not deny it."

"I tell you —"

"Do not tell me you have not the necklace."

"I swear to you —"

"Do not swear, if you wish me to love you still."

"Olivier!"

"There is one way left to save your honor and my love. The necklace is worth sixteen hundred thousand francs, of which you have already paid two hundred and fifty thousand. Here is a million and a half; take it."

"What is that for?"

"Do not stop to consider; take it and pay —"

"Your property sold! your lands taken by me and paid away! you despoil yourself for me! You are a good and noble man, and I will no longer palter with a love like that. Olivier, I love you!"

"Accept this money."

"No; but I love you!"

"Monsieur de Rohan, then, is to pay it? Think of it, Madame, it is no longer generosity on your part; it is an overwhelming cruelty. You accept from the cardinal —"

"Come now, Monsieur de Charny, I am the queen, and if I give my subjects either love or fortune, I accept neither from them."

"What then are you going to do?"

"It is you who shall tell me what to do. What do you say Monsieur de Rohan thinks?"

"He thinks that you are his mistress."

"You are cruel, Olivier."

"I speak as if face to face with death."

"What do you say the jewellers think?"

"That since the queen cannot pay, Monsieur de Rohan will pay for her."

"What do you say the public thinks on the subject of the necklace?"

"That you are in possession of it; that you have hidden it; that you will acknowledge it only when it shall have been paid for, either by the cardinal, through his love for you, or by the king through fear of scandal."

"Well, and you, Charny, in your turn, — I look you in the face, and ask, What do you think of the scenes you saw in the park of Versailles?"

"I think, Madame, that you need to prove to me your innocence."

"The Prince Louis, Cardinal de Rohan, grand Almoner of France!" called the voice of an usher from the corridor.

"He!" murmured Charny.

"The proof you require," said the queen.

"You will receive him?"

"I was about to send for him."

"But I —"

"Go into my boudoir and leave the door ajar that you may hear all that is said."

"Madame!"

"Go quickly; here comes the cardinal." She pushed Monsieur de Charny into the room which she had indicated, and ordered the cardinal to be admitted.

Monsieur de Rohan appeared on the threshold, resplendent in his official dress. At some distance behind him came a numerous following, whose costumes shone like their master's. Among these attendants were Boehmer and Bossange, somewhat embarrassed in their court dress.

The queen advanced to meet the cardinal, attempting a smile, which soon died out upon her lips. Louis de Rohan was grave, even sad. He had the calmness of the courageous man who is about to fight, the slightly threatening aspect of the priest who may have to pardon.

The queen pointed to a seat, but the cardinal remained standing. "Madame," he said, bowing, "I had many important things to communicate to your Majesty, who tries in every way to avoid my presence."

"I?" said the queen; "why, so far from avoiding you, I was just about to send for you."

The cardinal cast a glance toward the boudoir. "Am I alone with your Majesty?" he said in a low voice; "may I speak with perfect freedom?"

"With perfect freedom, Monsieur le Cardinal; be unconstrained, we are alone," and she spoke distinctly, as if desirous of being heard by the gentleman hidden in the next room. She enjoyed with pride her courage, and the assurance which Monsieur de Charny would feel at the very first words.

The cardinal had resolved on his course of action. He drew the stool up to the chair of the queen so as to be as far as possible from the folding doors.

"You have a great many preambles," said the queen, affecting gayety.

"The fact is — " said the cardinal.

"The fact is?" repeated the queen.

"The king will not come in?" asked Monsieur de Rohan.

"Have no fear of the king or anybody else," replied Marie Antoinette, quickly.

"Oh, it is you whom I fear," said the cardinal, in an agitated voice.

"Then there is still less reason to be alarmed, for I am not very formidable. Speak with few words, in a loud and distinct voice; I like frankness, and if you are reserved I shall think that you are not a man of honor. Oh, no more gestures; I have been told that you had a grievance against me. Speak, — I am fond of war; I am of a race which knows no fear! You, also; I know that well. With what do you reproach me?"

The cardinal sighed, and rose from his seat as if to breathe more freely. Finally, having mastered his emotion, he began to speak.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

EXPLANATIONS.

"MADAME," said the cardinal, bowing, "you know what is said of our necklace?"

"No, Monsieur; I do not know, and I shall be happy to learn it from you."

"Why has your Majesty compelled me for so long a time to communicate with you only through a third person? Why, if you have any reason for hating me, do you not explain to me what it is?"

"I do not know what you mean, Monsieur le Cardinal, and I have no reason for hating you; but that, I believe, is not the object of our interview. Please to give me some positive information about this miserable necklace; and in the first place, where is Madame de La Motte?"

"I was about to ask that of your Majesty."

"Pardon, but if any one can tell where Madame de La Motte is, you are the one, I think."

"I, Madame, upon what ground?"

"Oh, I am not here to receive your confessions, Monsieur le Cardinal. I had need to speak to Madame de La Motte; I sent for her, and she has been sought for at her house many times; but she has sent no reply. You will acknowledge that this disappearance is strange."

"And I, Madame, am also astonished at her disappearance, for I sent to Madame de La Motte, requesting her to

come to see me, and she has treated my request as she did that of your Majesty."

"Then let us leave the countess and speak of ourselves."

"Oh, no, Madame, let us speak of her; for certain words of your Majesty have excited in me a painful suspicion. It seems to me that your Majesty reproached me with being too attentive to the countess."

"I have as yet reproached you with nothing at all, Monsieur."

"Oh, Madame, the fact is that such a suspicion would explain to me all the susceptibilities of your soul, and then I should understand, even in my despair, the severity, otherwise inexplicable, with which you have treated me."

"I no longer understand what you are saying," said the queen. "You are impenetrably obscure; it is not to make the affair more intricate that I ask you for explanations. To the point! to the point!"

"Madame," cried the cardinal, clasping his hands and drawing nearer the queen, "do me the favor not to change the conversation. Two words more on the subject which we were considering just now, and we should understand each other."

"Really, Monsieur, you speak a language which I do not know; let us return to French, I beg. Where is that necklace which I returned to the jewellers?"

"The necklace you returned!" cried Monsieur de Rohan.

"Yes; what have you done with it?"

"I know nothing about it, Madame."

"Well, there is one thing perfectly clear. Madame de La Motte took the necklace, and returned it in my name; the jewellers pretend that they have not received it. I

have in my possession a receipt which proves the contrary; the jewellers say that the receipt is a forgery. Madame de La Motte could in one word explain everything; she cannot be found. Well, let us put suppositions in the place of hidden fact. Madame de La Motte wished to return the necklace. You, whose kindly desire it was that I should buy this necklace; you, who brought it to me and offered to pay for it, — an offer — "

"Which your Majesty very unkindly refused to accept," said the cardinal, with a sigh.

"Well, yes; you have persevered in this fixed idea that I should have the necklace, and therefore you did not return it to the jewellers, hoping still that I might be prevailed upon to take it. Madame de La Motte has shown weakness in this matter, — she who knew how impossible it was for me to pay for it, and my unchangeable resolution not to have it, since I had no money. Madame de La Motte, through zeal for me, has conspired with you; and now she fears my anger and will not present herself. Am I right? Tell me that I am. Allow me to reproach you with this inconsiderateness, this disobedience of my formal orders. You shall be absolved by a reprimand, and that will be an end of it. I will do more; I will promise you to pardon Madame de La Motte, so that she may be relieved of her penance. But for mercy's sake, Monsieur, let us have light, light! I do not wish at this moment that a shadow should be cast upon my life; I will not have it, — do you hear?"

The queen had uttered these words so vigorously that the cardinal had neither dared nor been able to interrupt her; but as soon as she had ceased speaking, "Madame," he said, stifling a sigh, "I will reply to all your suppositions. No; I did not persevere in the idea that you ought to possess the necklace, since I was sure that you pos-

sessed it already. No; I did not conspire with Madame de La Motte in connection with this necklace. No; it is no more in my possession than in that of the jewellers, or in your own."

"It is not possible!" cried the queen, in amazement. "You, then, have not the necklace?"

"No, Madame."

"You have not advised Madame de La Motte to stay away on account of all this?"

"No, Madame."

"You have not concealed her?"

"No, Madame."

"You do not know what has become of her?"

"No more than you, Madame."

"But then how do you explain all that has happened?"

"Madame, I am forced to confess that I cannot explain it. Moreover, it is not the first time that I have had to complain to the queen of not being understood by her."

"And when was that, Monsieur. I do not recall it."

"Be so kind, Madame," said the cardinal, "as to re-read in imagination my letters."

"Your letters!" said the queen, in surprise. "You wrote to me?"

"Too seldom, Madame, to say all that was in my heart."

The queen rose. "It seems to me," she said, "that we have both been deceived; let us end this little farce. What were you saying about letters? What letters, and what have you upon your heart, or in your heart? I don't remember just what you said."

"My God! Madame, perhaps I have uttered too loud the secret of my soul."

"What secret? Are you in your right mind, Monsieur le Cardinal?"

"Madame!"

"Oh, do not prevaricate! You speak like a man who wishes to lay a snare for me, or who wishes to embarrass me, before witnesses."

"I swear to you, Madame, that I have said nothing — Is there really any one listening?"

"No, Monsieur, a thousand times no! there is no one; so explain yourself fully, and if you are in full possession of your reason, prove it."

"Oh, Madame, why is Madame de La Motte not here? She would help me — she who is our friend — to awaken, if not the attachment, at least the memory, of your Majesty."

"*Our* friend; my attachment; my memory? I am falling from the clouds."

"Ah, Madame, I entreat you," said the cardinal, stung by the sharp tone of the queen, "spare me! You are at liberty to love no longer; but do not insult me."

"Ah, my God!" cried the queen, turning pale, "what is this man saying?"

"Very well," continued Monsieur de Rohan, boiling with rage, — "very well, Madame, I think I have been sufficiently discreet and reserved not to be so harshly treated; besides, I reproach you only with trivial grievances. I am wrong to repeat them. I should have known that when a queen has said, 'I am no longer willing,' it is a law as imperious as when a woman says, 'I am willing!'"

The queen uttered a wild cry, and seized the cardinal by his lace sleeve. "Tell me quickly, Monsieur," said she, in a trembling voice; "I said, 'I am no longer willing,' and I said, 'I am willing'? To whom did I say the one; to whom did I say the other?"

"Why, you said both to me."

"To you?"

"Forget that you said the one, I shall not forget that you said the other."

"You are a wretch, Monsieur de Rohan! You are a liar!"

"I?"

"You are a coward; you calumniate a woman."

"I?"

"You are a traitor; you insult the queen."

"And you, — you are a woman without heart, a queen without faith."

"Wretch!"

"You have led me by degrees to a mad love for you. You have filled me with hopes."

"Hopes! My God! am I mad? Is he a villain?"

"Would I have dared otherwise to ask audiences at night, which you granted me?"

The queen uttered a cry of rage which was answered by a sigh from the boudoir.

"Would I have dared to come alone into the park of Versailles if you had not sent Madame de La Motte to me?"

"My God!"

"Would I have dared to steal the key which opens that gate near the huntsman's lodge?"

"My God!"

"Would I have dared to ask you to bring the rose which I have here? Adored rose! accursed rose! dried, burned up by my ardent kisses!"

"My God!"

"Would I have compelled you to return the next night and give me both your hands, whose sweetness consumes continually my brain and makes me mad. You are right to call me mad."

"Oh, enough! enough!"

"Finally, would I, in my most furious pride, ever have dared to dream of that third night with its clear sky, its sweet silence, its perfidious loves?"

"Monsieur! Monsieur!" cried the queen, retreating from the cardinal, "you are blaspheming!"

"My God!" replied the cardinal, raising his eyes to heaven, "thou knowest that to keep the love of this woman, I would have given my wealth, my liberty, my life!"

"Monsieur de Rohan, if you wish to preserve all that, you will say right here that you are seeking to ruin me; that you have invented all these horrors; that you did not come to Versailles in the night—"

"I did come," replied the cardinal, nobly.

"You are a dead man if you maintain such language."

"A Rohan never lies. I did come."

"Monsieur de Rohan, Monsieur de Rohan, in the name of Heaven, tell me that you did not come into the park—"

"I would die, if necessary, as you threatened me just now; but I say that I saw you in the park of Versailles, whither Madame de La Motte conducted me."

"Once more," cried the queen, livid and trembling with emotion, "do you retract?"

"No."

"Still again, tell me that you have plotted against me this infamy?"

"No."

"For the last time, Monsieur de Rohan, acknowledge that you may have been deceived, that all this is a calumny, a dream, an impossibility, — I know not what; but confess that I am innocent, that I may be so—"

"No."

The queen drew herself up proudly and solemnly. "You will have, therefore, to deal with the justice of the king, since you defy the justice of God."

The cardinal bowed without speaking.

The queen rang so violently that several of her women entered at once. "Let his Majesty be informed," she said, "that I beg he will do me the honor to come to me."

An officer went to execute this order. The cardinal, determined to face everything boldly, remained in the corner of the room.

Marie Antoinette approached several times the door of the boudoir without entering, as if, having lost her reason, she had found it again on reaching that door.

Within a short time the king entered the room. As the door was thrown open, in the midst of the waiting throng could be seen the agitated faces of Boehmer and Bossange, who felt the storm in the air.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ARREST.

THE king had scarcely appeared at the door of the queen's cabinet when the queen addressed him vehemently. "Sire," she said, "here is Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan, who says incredible things; please ask him to repeat them to you."

At these unexpected words the cardinal turned pale. In fact, the position was so strange that he could not comprehend it. Could he repeat to his king, — he the respectful subject, — could he declare to the husband — he the pretended lover — all the rights he thought he had acquired over the queen and the wife?

But the king turned toward the cardinal, thus absorbed in his reflections, and said, "It is with regard to a certain necklace, Monsieur, that you have incredible things to say to me, and I incredible things to hear? Speak, then; I am listening."

Monsieur de Rohan immediately decided upon his course. Of the two difficulties he would choose the least; of the two attacks, he would undergo that which was least dishonorable to the king and queen; and if they should imprudently expose him to the second danger, well, he would meet it like a brave man.

"With regard to the necklace, yes, Sire," murmured his Eminence.

"Why, Monsieur," said the king, "you did then buy the necklace?"

"Sire — "

"Yes, or no?"

The cardinal looked at the queen and did not answer.

"Yes or no?" she repeated. "The truth, Monsieur, the truth; nothing else is asked of you."

Monsieur de Rohan turned away his head, and did not reply.

"Since Monsieur de Rohan will not answer, answer yourself, Madame," said the king; "you must know something of all this. Did you, yes or no, purchase that necklace?"

"No!" said the queen, emphatically.

Monsieur de Rohan shuddered.

"This is the word of a queen!" cried the king, solemnly; "take heed to it, Monsieur le Cardinal."

A smile of scorn rose to Monsieur de Rohan's lips.

"You say nothing?" said the king.

"Of what am I accused, Sire?"

"The jewellers say that they sold a necklace either to you or the queen. They show a receipt from her Majesty."

"The receipt is a forgery," said the queen.

"The jewellers," continued the king, "say that in case the queen fails to pay, they are guaranteed by pledges made by you, Monsieur le Cardinal."

"I do not refuse to pay, Sire," said Monsieur de Rohan. "This must of course be the truth, since the queen allows it to be said," and he smiled more scornfully than before.

"Monsieur le Cardinal," replied the king, "there is nevertheless in this affair a forgery which has compromised the signature of the queen of France."

"There is another forgery," cried the queen, "of which it is not easy to accuse a nobleman, — that by which it is pretended that the jewellers took back the necklace."

"The queen is at liberty," said Monsieur de Rohan in the same tone, "to attribute to me both forgeries; what matters it whether I committed one or two?"

"Be careful," said the king to the cardinal, "you render your position more serious, Monsieur. I tell you to justify yourself, and you have the appearance of accusing others."

The cardinal reflected a moment; then as if succumbing under the weight of this mysterious calumny which would affect his honor, "Justify myself?" he said; "impossible!"

"Monsieur, the jewellers say that a necklace has been stolen from them; by offering to pay for it, you confess that you are guilty."

"Who will believe it?" said the cardinal, with superb disdain.

"Then, Monsieur, if you do not suppose that it will be believed, it shall be believed," and an angry look came over the usually placid face of the king.

"Sire, I know nothing of what is said," replied the cardinal. "I know nothing of what has been done; I can only affirm that I have not had the necklace; I can only say that the diamonds are in the possession of some one who ought to declare himself, but will not, and who obliges me to repeat to him that passage of Scripture, 'Let the punishment fall on the head of the guilty.'"

At these words the queen made a movement to take the arm of the king, who said to her, "The question is between you and him, Madame. For the last time I ask, have you this necklace?"

"No, by the honor of my mother, by the life of my son."

The king, full of joy at this declaration, turned toward the cardinal. "Then the affair is between you and jus-

tice, Monsieur," he said; "unless you should prefer to trust to my clemency."

"The clemency of kings is for the guilty, Sire," replied the cardinal; "I prefer the justice of men."

"You will acknowledge nothing, then?"

"I have nothing to say."

"But, Monsieur," cried the queen, "your silence compromises my honor!"

The cardinal was silent.

"Well, then, I will not be silent," continued the queen. "This reserve is terrible to me,-and it pretends a generosity which I disclaim. You must know, Sire, that the crime of the cardinal does not wholly consist in the sale or robbery of the necklace."

Monsieur de Rohan raised his head, and turned pale.

"What is the meaning of this?" said the king, becoming uneasy.

"Madame!" murmured the cardinal, in alarm.

"Oh, no consideration, no fear, no weakness, shall prevent me from speaking; I have here in my heart motives which urge me to proclaim my innocence in the public place."

"Your innocence!" said the king. "Why, Madame, who would be bold enough, or cowardly enough, to force your Majesty to speak that word?"

"I entreat you, Madame," said the cardinal.

"Ah, you begin to tremble. I had guessed aright; your plots need the darkness! Give me the full light of day! Sire, ask Monsieur le Cardinal to tell you what he has just told me here, in this place."

"Madame! Madame!" said Monsieur de Rohan, "take care; you are passing all bounds!"

"What do you say?" said the king, haughtily. "Who speaks thus to the queen? It is not I, I suppose?"

"That is exactly the case, Sire," said Marie Antoinette. "Monsieur le Cardinal speaks thus to the queen because he pretends to have the right to do so."

"You, Monsieur!" murmured the king, becoming livid.

"He!" cried the queen, scornfully, — "he!"

"Monsieur le Cardinal has proofs?" said the king, taking a step toward the prince.

"Monsieur de Rohan has letters, so he says," said the queen.

"Let us see them, Monsieur!" insisted the king.

"Those letters!" cried the queen, angrily, — "those letters! Oh, that is not all," pursued the queen, who was growing more and more animated under the influence of the cardinal's generous silence, "Monsieur le Cardinal has obtained rendezvous."

"Madame, for pity's sake!" said the king.

"For modesty's sake!" said the cardinal.

"In short, Monsieur!" said the queen, "if you are not the basest of mankind, if you hold anything sacred in this world, — if you have proofs, produce them."

Monsieur de Rohan slowly raised his head and replied, "No, Madame, I have none."

"You will not add this crime to the others," continued the queen; "you will not cover me with disgrace. You have an accomplice, a witness in all this; name him, or name her."

"Who is it then?" cried the king.

"Madame de La Motte, Sire," said the queen.

"Ah," said the king, triumphant at seeing his suspicions justified; "well, let me see this woman, — let me question her."

"Ah, yes; but she has disappeared," said the queen. "Ask Monsieur what he has done with her."

"Others must have caused her disappearance," replied the cardinal, "who are more interested to keep her away than I can be. That is the reason why she can no longer be found."

"But, Monsieur, since you are innocent," said the queen, with rage, "help us to find the guilty ones."

But the Cardinal de Rohan, after having darted a last glance, turned his back and folded his arms.

"Monsieur," said the king, deeply offended, "you shall be taken to the Bastille."

The cardinal bowed, then, in a firm tone, said, "Thus attired in my pontifical robes; before the whole court? Consider, Sire, the scandal will be terrible, and will be most heavy for the head on which it shall fall."

"I wish it thus," said the king, very much agitated.

"It is an injustice to which you are prematurely subjecting a prelate, Sire; and torture before accusation is not legal."

"It must be so," replied the king, opening the door of the room to look for some one to whom to give his order.

Monsieur de Breteuil was there; his piercing eyes had divined in the excited appearance of the queen, in the agitation of the king, in the attitude of the cardinal, the ruin of an enemy. The king had hardly finished speaking to him in a low voice, when he cried out aloud, "Arrest Monsieur le Cardinal!"

Monsieur de Rohan trembled. The murmurs he heard throughout the gallery, the agitation of the courtiers, the sudden arrival of the body-guards, gave to this scene a character of ill-omen.

The cardinal passed before the queen without bowing, — an insult which made the blood of the proud princess boil. He bowed very humbly in passing before the king, and assumed when approaching Monsieur de

Breteuil an expression of pity so skilfully shaded that the baron must have thought himself insufficiently avenged.

A lieutenant of the guards approached timidly, and seemed to ask of the cardinal himself confirmation of the order he had just heard.

"Yes, Monsieur," said Monsieur de Rohan to him; "yes, it is I whom you are to arrest."

"You will conduct Monsieur to his apartment, while I decide during Mass what is to be done," said the king, in the midst of a death-like silence.

The king remained alone with the queen, the doors still open, while the cardinal slowly withdrew along the gallery, preceded by the lieutenant of the guards, hat in hand.

"Madame," said the king, "you know that this must lead to a public trial, — that is to say, a scandal beneath which will fall the honor of the guilty ones."

"I thank you!" cried the queen, pressing tenderly the hands of the king, "you have taken the only method of justifying me."

"You thank me?"

"With all my soul. You have acted as a king! I, as a queen! Be assured of it."

"It is well," replied the king, full of joy, "we shall at last get at the root of all this villany; and when the serpent shall have been once crushed beneath our feet, I hope we shall live in peace and happiness." He kissed the queen's brow and returned to his own apartments.

At the extremity of the gallery, Monsieur de Rohan had found Boehmer and Bossange half-fainting in each other's arms. Then, some paces farther on, the cardinal perceived his courier, who, frightened at this disaster, was watching for a look from his master.

"Monsieur," said the cardinal to the officer who conducted him, "can I send word home that I am arrested?"

"Oh, Monseigneur, if no one sees you."

The cardinal thanked him; then addressing his courier in German, he wrote a few words upon a page of his prayer-book which he tore off and let fall at the feet of his courier.

"I follow you," he said to the officer, and they disappeared together.

The courier pounced upon this paper like a vulture on his prey, rushed out of the palace, mounted his horse, and fled to Paris. The cardinal could see him galloping along the road, through one of the windows of the staircase as he was descending with his guide.

"She ruins me," he murmured; "I save her! It is for you, my king, that I do this; it is for you, my God, who commands the forgiveness of injuries, it is for you that I forgive others. Forgive me!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DOCUMENTS IN EVIDENCE.

THE king had scarcely got back to his room, and signed the order for the committal of Monsieur de Rohan to the Bastille, when Monsieur le Comte de Provence entered the cabinet, making signs to Monsieur de Breteuil which the latter could not comprehend. These signs, however, were not addressed to the keeper of seals, but were intended to attract the attention of the king, who every little while glanced into a looking-glass opposite which he was sitting while inditing his order. The count at last succeeded; the king perceived the signs, and dismissing Monsieur de Breteuil, "Why did you make those signs to Breteuil?" he said to his brother.

"Oh, Sire!"

"That vivacity of gesture, that preoccupied air means something."

"Doubtless, but —"

"You are at liberty to keep silent, brother," said the king, with an air of vexation.

"Sire, I have just learned of the arrest of Monsieur le Cardinal de Rohan."

"Well, why should this news cause you such agitation? Is it because Monsieur de Rohan did not appear to you to be guilty? Have I done wrong to strike at even the powerful?"

"Wrong? by no means, brother. You have not been wrong; I did not mean to say that."

"It would have surprised me very much, Monsieur le Comte de Provence, if you had taken the part, against the queen, of a man who sought to dishonor her. I have just seen the queen, brother; a word from her sufficed —"

"Oh, Sire, God forbid that I should accuse the queen! Her Majesty — my sister — has no more devoted friend than I. How many times has it happened that I have defended her, on the contrary, and it may be said without reproach, even against yourself?"

"Indeed, brother, has she been accused so often?"

"I am unfortunate, Sire; you attack me at every word. I would say that the queen herself would not believe me, if I appeared to doubt her innocence."

"Then you rejoice with me in the humiliation of the cardinal, in the prospect of the trial which will ensue, in the scandal which will terminate the calumnies which no one would utter against a simple woman of the court?"

"Yes, Sire, I approve entirely the conduct of your Majesty; and I say that all is as it should be with regard to the affair of the necklace."

"*Pardieu!* brother," said the king, "nothing could be more transparent. Has not Monsieur de Rohan been boasting of the familiar friendship of the queen, concluding in his own name a bargain for the diamonds she has refused, and allowing it to be said that these diamonds had been taken by the queen, or by some one for the queen? It is monstrous! It is as she said: 'What would people have believed if I had Monsieur de Rohan for an associate in this mysterious traffic?'"

"Sire."

"And then, you do not know, brother, that calumny never stops half-way; that the inconsiderateness of Monsieur de Rohan compromises the queen, but that the rehearsal of this inconsiderateness dishonors her."

"Oh, yes, brother; yes, I repeat it, you have been entirely right as far as the affair of the necklace is concerned."

"Well, what do you mean?" said the king, in surprise. "Is there anything else?"

"But, Sire — the queen must have told you — "

"Told me — what?"

"Sire, you wish to embarrass me. It is impossible that the queen should not have told you — "

"Told me what, Monsieur? What is it?"

"Sire — "

"Ah, the pranks of Monsieur de Rohan, his concealments, his pretended correspondence?"

"No, Sire, no."

"What then can you mean? — the interviews the queen granted to Monsieur de Rohan on this business of the necklace — "

"No, Sire; it is not that."

"All that I know is this, — that I have absolute confidence in the queen, which she merits by her nobility of character. It would have been very easy for her Majesty not to have said a word of all this. By at once cutting short all this mystery, which was becoming a scandal, she has shown that she appealed to me before appealing to the public. She has selected me as her confessor, her judge; the queen has therefore told me all."

"Well, then," replied the Comte de Provence, "once more you are questioning my friendship and my respect for the queen, my sister. If you proceed against me with this susceptibility I shall be afraid to say anything lest I who am her advocate pass for an accuser or an enemy. And yet see how illogical you are. The queen's confessions have already led to the discovery of a truth which justifies my sister. Why should you not wish to see more,

so that the queen's innocence may be more clearly revealed?"

"To the point, advocate, to the point! What do you know more than the queen has told me?"

"Nothing, Sire, and everything. Let me know first just what the queen has told you."

"The queen has told me that she has not the necklace."

"Good!"

"She says that she did not sign the receipt given to the jewellers."

"Very good!"

"She says that the report of an arrangement with Monsieur de Rohan is false, — an invention of her enemies."

"Very good, Sire."

"She says that she has never given Monsieur de Rohan the right to think that he was more to her than one of her subjects, — a person indifferent to her, unknown."

"Ah! — she has said that?"

"And in a tone that admitted no answer; the cardinal did not venture to reply."

"Then, Sire, if the cardinal did not reply, he confessed himself a liar; and by this disavowal he aids the currency of other rumors of preferences accorded to certain persons by the queen."

"Eh, great God! is there more to come?" cried the king, in a tone of deep discouragement.

"Nothing but what is very absurd, as you will see. Since it is established that Monsieur de Rohan did not walk with the queen — "

"What!" cried the king, "is it pretended that Monsieur de Rohan has taken walks with the queen?"

"Which has been denied by the queen herself, Sire, and by the disavowal of Monsieur de Rohan. But, in short,

when that is settled inquiry arises, — malignity is so persistent, — how it came about that the queen should walk in the night in the park of Versailles."

"In the night! — in the park! — the queen!"

"And with whom she walked," continued the count, quietly.

"With whom?" murmured the king.

"Certainly. All eyes are fixed upon the queen, — especially observant of what she does at night."

"But, brother, what you say is infamous! Be careful!"

"Sire, I repeat it, — and with so much indignation that I am sure your Majesty will feel impelled to discover the truth."

"What, Monsieur! It is said that the queen walks with company, in the night, in the park of Versailles?"

"Not with company, Sire, — in private. Oh, if rumor had said 'with company,' it would have been of no consequence."

The king broke forth angrily, "You will prove to me, Monsieur, what you have said."

"Oh, easily, very easily. There are four certificates. The first is by my captain of the hunt, who saw the queen, two nights in succession, leaving the park by the gate near the huntsman's lodge. Here it is; read it."

The king took the paper with trembling hands, read it, and returned it to his brother.

"Here is one, Sire, that is more interesting. It is that of the night-guard at Trianon. He declares that in the parks all was quiet, except on the night when her Majesty the queen was taking a walk, leaning on a gentleman's arm. See, the report is explicit."

The king read, shuddered, and dropped his arms by his sides.

"The third," continued the count, quietly, "is that of

the guard at the eastern gate. This man saw and recognized the queen as she was leaving the park. Look, Sire: he says that from the distance he was unable to recognize *the gentleman from whom her Majesty was parting*, but from his general appearance thought him to be an officer. He adds, curiously enough, that the presence of her Majesty could not be doubted, because she was accompanied by the queen's friend, Madame de La Motte."

"The queen's friend!" cried the king, furiously. "Yes, it is so written, — 'the queen's friend.'"

"The last," continued the count, "seems to be more definite than all the others. It is that of the master of the locks, charged with seeing that all the gates are locked at night. He certifies that he saw the queen going into Apollo's Baths with a gentleman."

The king snatched the paper from the hands of the count, and read it.

Meanwhile the Comte de Provence continued, "It is true that Madame de La Motte remained outside, at a distance of twenty paces, and that the queen remained only about an hour in that pavilion."

"But the name of the gentleman?" cried the king.

"Sire, he is not named in this report; but if your Majesty will glance at one other certificate — It is that of a gamekeeper who was watching for game near Apollo's Baths."

"Dated on the following day," said the king.

"Yes, Sire. He saw the queen go out of the park by the little gate, and look around her. She was leaning on the arm of Monsieur de Charny."

"Monsieur de Charny!" cried the king, beside himself with rage and shame. "Well, well — Wait for me here, Count; I am going at last to get at the truth of this matter," and he rushed out of his cabinet.

CHAPTER XL.

A LAST ACCUSATION.

When the king left the queen's room she ran to the boudoir, where Monsieur de Charny had heard everything. She pushed open the door, and then having closed that into the corridor, she fell exhausted into an armchair, and silently awaited the judgment of Monsieur de Charny. The count came out from the boudoir, pale and melancholy.

"Well?" said the queen.

"Madame," he replied, "you see that everything is opposed to our friendship. If my own conviction should not wound you, still there is public opinion. After the scandal that has now burst forth, there can be no peace for you, no rest for me."

"Then," said the queen, with much emotion, "all that I have just done, — this commotion, this perilous attack on one of the highest noblemen in the kingdom, my open hostility to the Church, my good name exposed to parliamentary discussion, — all this does not satisfy you? I say nothing of the confidence of the king, destroyed forever. What is the king? — only a husband;" and she smiled, with so bitter sadness that tears gushed from her eyes.

"Oh," cried Charny, "you are the most noble, the most generous of women! If I do not reply at once as my heart urges me, it is because I feel my inferiority, and

dare not profane that sublime heart by asking for a place in it."

"Monsieur de Charny, you think me guilty?"

"Madame!"

"Monsieur de Charny, you have believed the words of the cardinal?"

"Madame!"

"Monsieur de Charny, I demand that you tell me what impression the attitude of Monsieur de Rohan has left on your mind."

"I must say, Madame, that Monsieur de Rohan has not acted like the madman you said he was, nor like a weak man, as some might have thought him. He is acting on sincere convictions. He loves you, and at this moment is the victim of an error which must lead him to ruin, and you —"

"Me?"

"You, Madame, to inevitable dishonor."

"My God!"

"Before me rises a threatening spectre, — that odious woman, Madame de La Motte, who has disappeared when her evidence might restore to us tranquillity, honor, security. That woman is your evil genius, the scourge of royalty; that woman, whom you have imprudently admitted to a knowledge of your secrets, alas! perhaps of your intimacy —"

"My secrets! my intimacy! Ah, Monsieur, I beg of you —"

"Madame, the cardinal affirmed very clearly — and proved it — that you had arranged with him the purchase of the necklace."

"Ah, you come back to that, Monsieur de Charny!" said the queen, blushing.

"Pardon, pardon! You see that my heart is less gen-

erous than yours, — that I am unworthy to share your thoughts. I seek to assuage, and I only irritate."

"Monsieur," said the queen, assuming a haughty and angry manner, "what the king believes, all the world may believe. I shall not be more accommodating to my friends than to my husband. It seems to me that a man can no longer wish to see a woman when he has lost his respect for her. I am not speaking of you, Monsieur," she said, checking herself suddenly. "I am not a woman, I am a queen; you are not a man, but, for me, a subject."

Charny bowed so low that the queen had reason to think the humility of this *subject* quite sufficient.

"I advised you," she said suddenly, "to remain on your estates. That would have been more prudent. Remote from the life of the court, which is made so uncongenial to you by your habits, your rectitude, and — allow me to say — your inexperience, you might have judged more correctly those who play their part upon that stage. In order to preserve the optical illusion, Monsieur de Charny, we ought to keep on our rouge and our high heels in presence of the multitude. Too ready to condescend, I have neglected, as a queen, to maintain toward those who loved me the dazzling pomp of royalty. Ah, Monsieur de Charny, the crown on the head of a queen enables her to dispense with chastity, gentleness, intelligence, and especially affection. She is a queen, Monsieur; she rules, — to what purpose should she be beloved?"

"I cannot tell you, Madame," replied Charny, with agitation, "how much I am distressed by your Majesty's severity. I had forgotten that you were my queen; but — render me that justice — I have never forgotten that, above all other women, you are entitled to my respect and my — "

"Do not finish; I am not soliciting. Yes; as I said,

absence is necessary to you. Something tells me that your name will at length be involved in this matter."

"Madame, it is impossible!"

"You say, 'impossible.' Think then of the power of those who, for the last six months, have been playing with my reputation, — with my life. Have not you said that the cardinal is acting from sincere *conviction*, in consequence of an *error* into which he has fallen? Those who cause such *convictions*, Monsieur le Comte, — those who create such *errors* will be able to prove that you are disloyal to the king and a disgraceful friend to me. Those who can invent so readily what is false, will they not discover what is true? Lose no time then; the danger is serious. Withdraw to your estates; avoid the impending scandal. I do not wish that my fate should drag you down, and that your career should be destroyed. I who, thank God! am endowed with the strength of innocence; I who have no stain upon my life; I who am resolved to open my breast to my enemies that they may see the purity of my heart, — I shall resist. For you there will be ruin, disgrace, perhaps the prison. Take back your money, so nobly offered, and receive the assurance that not one of the generous impulses of your soul has escaped my knowledge, that your doubts have not wounded me, and that I have sympathized with your sufferings. Depart, I say, and seek elsewhere what the queen of France cannot give you, — faith, hope, happiness. Before the matter can come to trial before parliament, fifteen days must elapse. Go, then! Your uncle has two vessels ready, at Cherbourg and at Nantes; make your choice. But at all events, go away from me. I am the bearer of misfortune; avoid me. I valued but one thing in the world; that fails me, and I am lost."

On saying these words the queen rose abruptly, and

seemed to indicate the termination of the interview. Charny approached her respectfully, but eagerly. "Your Majesty," he said in an agitated voice, "has shown to me my duty. It is not on my estates, it is not outside of France, that the danger lies, but at Versailles, where you are suspected; at Paris, where you are to be judged. You cannot have a more loyal witness, a more resolute support, than I; I shall remain. Those who know so many things will say them; but at least we shall have the happiness — dear to courageous hearts — of meeting our enemies face to face. Let them tremble before the majesty of an innocent queen, and the courage of a man superior to them all. Yes; I shall remain, Madame, and be assured your Majesty need no longer hide your thoughts from me. Every one knows that I do not run away from danger. You know that I have no fear; you know too that in order to avoid me it is not necessary to send me into exile. Oh, Madame, hearts that are separated can understand each other; at a distance aspirations are even more ardent than in proximity. Fear nothing! I shall be near enough to help you, to defend you, but not near enough to disturb or injure you. You did not see me, did you, during the time that I lived near you, watching your movements, counting your steps, living your life? Well, it will be so again; for I cannot obey your wish, — I cannot go away. Besides, what difference would it make? Would you, in any case, have thoughts of me?"

The queen made a movement which separated her from the young man. "It shall be as you please," said she; "but — you have understood me — I am not a coquette, Monsieur de Charny. It is the privilege of a queen to think what she says, and to say what she thinks. I avail myself of that privilege. One day, Monsieur, I distinguished you among those who surrounded me. I do not

know what drew my heart toward you. I thirsted for a friendship strong and pure; and I allowed you to perceive this, did I not? It is so no longer; I no longer think as I thought then. Your soul is no longer kindred to my own. I avow it to you frankly. Let us spare each other."

"It is well, Madame; I never thought that you had chosen me; I never thought — Ah, Madame, I cannot bear the idea of losing you. Madame, I am mad with jealousy and fear. Madame, I will not suffer you to tear your heart from me; it is mine, you have given it to me, and no one shall take it from me but with my life. Be a woman, be kind to me; do not abuse my weakness, for just now you blamed me for my doubts, and now you crush me with your own."

"Heart of a child, — heart of a woman," said the queen, "you wish me to depend on you! Fine protectors we should be for each other! Weak, — oh, yes; indeed you are weak, and I, alas! am not stronger than you."

"I should not love you," murmured Charny, "were you other than you are."

"What!" exclaimed the queen, in tones of passionate eagerness, "this queen accursed; this queen who is ruined; this woman on whom parliament is to sit in judgment, whom public opinion will condemn, whom her husband, her king, will perhaps drive from him, — this woman still finds a heart that loves her?"

"A servant who worships her, and who offers her all the blood of his heart in exchange for the tear she has just now shed."

"That woman," cried the queen, "is blessed, is proud, is the first among women, the happiest of all! That woman is too happy, Monsieur de Charny; I know not

how that woman could have complained, — forgive her!"

Charny fell at the feet of Marie Antoinette, and kissed them in a transport of religious love.

At that moment the door was thrown open, and the king appeared, trembling, thunderstruck, on the threshold. He had surprised the man accused by Monsieur de Provence at the feet of Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER XLI.

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

THE queen and Charny exchanged glances so full of terror that their most cruel enemy would have pitied them both. Charny rose and saluted the king with profound respect.

"Ah," said the king, in a hollow voice, "Monsieur de Charny!"

The count replied only by another salutation. The queen felt that she was lost.

The king continued, "Monsieur de Charny, it is not honorable to a gentleman to be caught in the act of robbery."

"Robbery!" murmured Charny.

"Robbery!" repeated the queen, who seemed to hear again hissing in her ear those horrible accusations respecting the necklace, and imagined that the count was also about to be soiled by them.

"Yes," pursued the king; "kneeling before another's wife is robbery; and when that wife is a queen, Monsieur, we call it high treason."

The count was about to speak; he was about to protest his innocence, when the queen, eager in her generosity, not willing that the man she loved should be accused of an unworthy act, came to his aid. "Sire," she said eagerly, "it seems to me you are assuming a habit of evil suspicions and unfavorable suppositions which I warn you are unfounded. I see that respect enchains the count's tongue;

but I who know his goodness will not allow him to be accused without defending him." She paused, exhausted by her emotion, terrified at the falsehood which she would be obliged to invent, and in despair because she could think of none.

But this hesitation, which appeared so odious to the proud spirit of the queen, was really the salvation of the woman. In these horrible encounters, where the honor, even the life, of the woman surprised is often at stake, a minute gained is sufficient to save her, as a second lost is enough to ruin her. The queen by instinct had seized the favorable moment for delay; she had checked the suspicions of the king, and restored the confidence of the count.

"Do you mean to say," replied Louis XVI., leaving the rôle of king to assume that of the anxious husband, "that I did not see Monsieur de Charny there on his knees before you, Madame? Now, when a man is permitted to kneel thus, it must be — "

"It must be, Monsieur," said the queen, severely, "that a subject of the queen of France has a favor to ask of her — "

"A favor to ask of you!" cried the king.

"And a favor I cannot grant," pursued the queen. "Otherwise, Monsieur de Charny would not have needed to entreat upon his knees, I assure you; and I should have joyfully granted his wish to a gentleman for whom I have a particular esteem."

Charny breathed again. The eye of the king had become uncertain; his brow had gradually relaxed from its unusual threatening air which surprise had caused it to assume.

Meanwhile Marie Antoinette, angry at being compelled to utter a falsehood, and in despair at not finding one to

utter, was searching distractedly for some plausible fiction. She had expected, by acknowledging herself powerless to grant the count the favor he solicited, to restrain the curiosity of the king, and had hoped that the examination would stop there. She was mistaken. Any other woman would have been more prudent by showing less haughtiness; but for her it was torture to utter an untruth before the man she loved. To exhibit herself in this false light was to conclude all the falsehoods and stratagems of the park intrigue by a denouement as infamous; it was almost acknowledging herself guilty, — it was worse than death. She hesitated still. She would have given her life that it might be Charny who should invent the lie; but he, the loyal gentleman, did not even think of doing so. He was afraid, in his delicacy, of seeming even disposed to defend the honor of the queen.

Marie Antoinette awaited in fearful suspense the question of the king.

"Come, Madame, what is this favor which Monsieur de Charny has solicited in vain, and for which he kneels before you? I shall perhaps be more happy than you, Madame, and Monsieur de Charny will not be under the necessity of kneeling before me."

"Sire, I told you that Monsieur de Charny asked something impossible."

"But tell me, at least, what it is."

"What can a man ask on his knees?" the queen asked herself; "what can he beg of me that it is impossible to grant? Let me see! let me see!"

"I am waiting," said the king.

"Sire, it is — what Monsieur de Charny asks is a family secret."

"There are no secrets from the king, — the sovereign of his kingdom, and a father interested in the honor and

safety of his subjects, who are his children, — even," added Louis XVI, with great dignity, "when these unnatural children attack the honor and the safety of their father."

"Monsieur de Charny," cried she, her mind disturbed and her hands trembling, "wished to obtain from me — "

"What, Madame?"

"Permission to marry."

"Really!" cried the king, at first reassured, then relapsing again into his jealous anxiety. "Well, then," he said, without remarking the suffering of the poor woman in uttering these words, or how pale Charny had become on seeing this suffering; "well, why is it impossible for Monsieur de Charny to marry? Is he not a man of good family? Has he not a handsome fortune? Is this woman whom Monsieur de Charny desires to marry a princess of the blood, or is she already married? Tell me her name, and if she be in neither of these two positions, I will remove every difficulty to please you."

The queen, induced by the still increasing danger, urged on by the consequences even of the first falsehood, replied quickly, "No, Monsieur, no; there are difficulties which even you cannot overcome."

"All the more reason that I should know the thing which is impossible to the king," interrupted Louis XVI., with rising anger.

Charny looked at the queen, who seemed about to fall. He would have gone to her but the king's immobility prevented him. By what right could he who was nothing to this woman, offer his hand or his assistance to her whom her husband and her king abandoned.

"What power is that?" she asked herself, "against which the king cannot contend? Give me this idea, give me this aid, my God!" Suddenly a gleam of light shot

across her mind. "Ah, God himself sends me this aid," she murmured. "Those who belong to God cannot be taken from him even by the king." Then, raising her head, "Monsieur," she said to the king, "the person Monsieur de Charny wishes to marry is in a convent."

"Ah," cried the king, "that is an objection; in fact it is very difficult to take from God that which is his, to give it to man. But it is strange that Monsieur de Charny should have conceived so sudden a passion; no one has ever spoken to me about it, — not even his uncle, who can obtain anything he asks of me. What is the name of this woman whom you love, Monsieur de Charny?"

The queen was in agony. She was about to hear a name pronounced by Olivier; she was about to undergo the tortures consequent upon her falsehood. Charny might utter the name of one formerly loved, — a still fresh memory of the past; or the name of one whom he was beginning to love, — a vague hope of the future. To escape this terrible blow, Marie Antoinette cried out suddenly: "Why, Sire, you know the person whom Monsieur de Charny asks to marry; it is — Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney."

Charny uttered a cry, and hid his face in his hands. The queen placed her hand upon her heart, and fell almost fainting upon her chair.

"Mademoiselle de Taverney!" repeated the king, — "Mademoiselle de Taverney, who has retired to the convent at Saint Denis?"

"Yes, Sire," the queen said in a weak voice.

"But I do not know that she has yet taken her vows?"

"But she is to take them."

"We will make a condition to that," said the king. "And yet," he added, with a remnant of mistrust, "why should she take vows?"

"She is poor," said Marie Antoinette; "you have enriched only her father," she added severely.

"That is a wrong I will repair, Madame; Monsieur de Charny loves her —"

The queen shuddered, and darted at the young man an eager look as if imploring him to deny it. Charny looked steadily at Marie Antoinette, and did not reply.

"It is well," said the king, who took this silence for respectful assent; "and doubtless Mademoiselle de Taverney loves Monsieur de Charny? I will give Mademoiselle de Taverney as dowry the five hundred thousand francs which, the other day, I refused to Monsieur de Calonne, who wanted them for you. Thank the queen, Monsieur de Charny, for relating to me this affair and securing the happiness of your life."

Charny took a step forward and bowed, — looking like a white statue to which, for a moment, life had been miraculously imparted.

"Oh, that is worth the trouble of getting down on your knees again," said the king, with a touch of that vulgarity which, in him, qualified the traditional nobility of his race.

The queen shuddered, and impulsively extended her hands to the young man. He kneeled down and kissed them, praying to God that in that kiss upon the queen's cold hands he might give up his life.

"Now," said the king, "we will leave to Madame the charge of your affairs. Come, Monsieur, come." He went out first, and so quickly that Charny was able to look back for an instant and see in the eyes of the queen the ineffable grief of an eternal farewell. Then the door was closed between them, — a barrier henceforth impassible to innocent love.

CHAPTER XLII.

SAINT DENIS.

THE queen remained alone, and in despair. So many blows had assailed her at the same time that she did not know which one had given her the most pain. After having remained an hour in this state of doubt and dejection, she said to herself that it was time to seek a way out of her difficulties. The danger was increasing. The king, proud of a victory he had obtained over appearances, would hasten to spread the report of it. It might happen that this report would be so received outside that the advantage to be gained by the deception would all be lost. That deception, alas! how the queen reproached herself with it; how gladly she would have recalled what she had said; how much she wished to take away, even from Andrée, the chimerical happiness which she would perhaps refuse.

Here was another difficulty. Who could be sure that so proud a person as Mademoiselle de Taverney would consent to sacrifice her liberty, or her future, for the advantage of a queen whom only a few days before she had left in enmity. Then, if Andrée should refuse, — and that was probable, — all this scaffolding of falsehood would fall. The queen would appear to be an intriguing woman of small intellect, Charny a mere liar, and the calumny would be transformed into an accusation, perhaps, of adultery.

Marie Antoinette felt that her reason was giving way under these reflections; she sank her burning head between her hands and meditated. In whom could she confide? Who was her friend, — Madame de Lamballe? Oh, she was pure reason, — cold and inflexible reason! She could think of no one but Mademoiselle de Taverney herself, whose invincible steadfastness and perfect purity would enable her to sympathize with the heavy sorrows of a queen. She would go then to Andrée, relate to her her misfortunes, and entreat her to sacrifice herself. Of course Andrée would refuse, because she was not one of those who allow themselves to be imposed upon; but by degrees, softened by her entreaties, she would consent. Besides, a delay might be obtained. The king, appeased by the apparent consent of the affianced parties, might finally forget. Then a voyage would settle everything, and after a while Charny and Andrée might declare that they had annulled their engagement; thus no one would surmise that the projected marriage had been a feint.

In this way the liberty of Mademoiselle de Taverney would escape being compromised; and Charny would not lose his own. The queen would not suffer from the remorse of having sacrificed the happiness of two beings to save her own honor; and yet that honor, which was also that of her husband and her children, would be transmitted unsullied to the future queen of France.

When she had fortified herself by these arguments and reflections, Marie Antoinette determined on going to Saint Denis.

It was then three o'clock, the hour at which a grand ceremonious dinner had been ordered; then came presentations and the reception of visits. The queen received everybody with a serene countenance, and an affability which did not derogate from her well-known pride. She

affected, even with those whom she considered her enemies, a calmness which is not ordinarily shown by guilty persons.

Never had there been so great a crowd at court; never had curiosity more narrowly investigated the features of a queen in peril. Marie Antoinette faced it all, confounded her enemies, and enchanted her friends. Those who were indifferent became zealous, and the zealous enthusiastic. Indeed, she appeared so lovely and so noble that the king publicly offered her his congratulations.

Then, when all this was over, laying aside her smiles, and resuming her painful thoughts, — alone, all alone in the world, — she changed her costume, put on a gray silk dress, and a gray hat trimmed with ribbons and blue flowers, entered her carriage, and without guards, accompanied only by one lady, she was driven to Saint Denis. She asked to see Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney in the parlor.

The latter, on her knees, wrapped in her white woollen robe, was watching through her window the moon rising behind the linden-trees, and in the poetry of the early night she found the theme of all the prayers, fervent and passionate, which she addressed to God to relieve the anguish of her soul. She was drinking in long draughts of the bitter pain of voluntary absence. This torture is known only to brave souls; it is at once a torture and a pleasure. It resembles in its anguish all ordinary griefs; at the same time it almost amounts to a pleasure, — which they alone can feel who know how to sacrifice happiness to pride.

Andrée had left the court of her own free will. Proud as Cleopatra, she could not bear the idea that Monsieur de Charny had thought of another woman, even if that woman were the queen. She had no proof of his burning

passion for another; but had she not seen him pass by her indifferently? Had she not suspected the queen of possessing, innocently no doubt, his homage and preference? Of what use, after that, to remain at Versailles? To beg for compliments? To obtain from time to time the offer of an arm, or the help of a hand, when in their walks the queen would lend her the polite attentions of Charny, because she could not just at that moment accept them herself?

No; no cowardly weakness, no such compromise for this heroic soul. Life with love and preference; the cloister with love and wounded pride! "Never! never!" the proud Andrée said to herself; "he whom I love in secret; he who is for me but a cloud, a portrait, a remembrance, — he never offends me, he always smiles on me, he smiles only on me."

Her mute contemplations of pure love, the divine ecstasies of the solitary dreamer, constituted a life more suited to the untamable Andrée than the brilliant fêtes at Versailles, where she would be under the necessity of bowing down before rivals, and would be haunted by the fear of divulging the secret shut up in her heart.

While Andrée was in the midst of her meditations, one of the sisters came to tell her that the queen was in the large parlor and wished to see her.

Strange thing! Andrée, whose heart was softened by love, needed no more than this to make her spring forward to meet this perfume wafted to her from Versailles, — a perfume she had cursed the evening before, — the more precious in proportion as it was remote from her; precious as everything which evaporates, as everything which is forgotten; precious as love. "The queen," she murmured, — "the queen at Saint Denis! The queen calls for me!"

Andrée threw over her shoulders the long mantle worn by nuns, and without pausing for a glance at her mirror, followed the sister who had come for her. But almost immediately she began to be ashamed of the joy she felt. "Why does my heart bound?" she said to herself. "How does it concern me that the queen comes hither? Come, be calm, unworthy nun; thou belongest neither to God nor to the world, — try, at least, to belong to thyself."

Thus Andrée reprimanded herself as she descended the stairs. Controlling herself, she banished from her cheeks the fugitive flush of haste, and checked the rapidity of her movements. When she entered the reception-room she was cold and pale. On hearing her name announced, and seeing Marie Antoinette in the chair of the abbess, and around her the most noble heads of the chapter bowed in reverence, Andrée was seized with a sudden agitation, and paused in her approach.

"Ah!" said the queen, half smiling; "come nearer, Mademoiselle; I wish to speak with you."

Andrée approached, and bowed her head.

"You will permit me, Madame?" said the queen, turning toward the superior.

The superior replied with a reverence, and left the salon, followed by the nuns.

The queen remained alone with Andrée.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A DEAD HEART.

THE queen opened the conversation. "You are here then, Mademoiselle," she said, with an expressive smile. "You make a strange impression on me, dressed thus as a nun."

Andrée made no reply.

"To see a former companion," continued the queen, "already lost to the world, in which we others continue to live, is like receiving a warning from the grave. Are you not of my opinion, Mademoiselle?"

"Who then," replied Andrée, "would venture to give a warning to your Majesty? Even death cannot forewarn the queen."

"How is that?"

"Because, Madame, a queen is appointed, by virtue of her station, to endure in this world only the unavoidable hardships. All that can mitigate hardship, she possesses. All that another has which she can use for her own comfort, she takes from that other."

The queen made a movement of surprise.

"And that is her right," Andrée hastened to add. "Others are, to the queen, only so many subjects, whose property, honor, and life are hers."

"These are doctrines that astonish me," said the queen, speaking slowly. "You make of a sovereign, in this country, a sort of ogress who devours the fortunes and the happiness of the citizens. Am I a woman of

that kind, Andrée? Have you then really had occasion to complain of me?"

"Your Majesty had the goodness to ask me that question on the day I left you. I replied then, as I now reply, 'No, Madame.'"

"But sometimes," continued the queen, "one is wounded by an injury which is not personal to one's self. Have I, then, by offending any one in whom you are interested, deserved the harsh words that you have spoken? Andrée, the retreat which you have chosen is an asylum against all the evil passions of the world. God there teaches us gentleness, patience, forgetfulness of injuries. In coming hither to meet a sister in Jesus Christ, am I to find a forbidding face and bitter words? Must I, coming as a friend, encounter the reproaches, or the veiled hostility, of an irreconcilable enemy?"

Andrée raised her eyes, astounded by that gentleness of the queen, usually so haughty and severe toward her servants. "Her Majesty well knows," she said, "that the Taverneys cannot be enemies to the queen."

"I understand," replied the queen; "you cannot forgive me for my coldness to your brother; and he, perhaps, accuses me of fickleness, even of caprice."

"My brother is too respectful a subject to accuse the queen," said Andrée, maintaining the same unyielding formality.

The queen saw clearly that she would excite suspicion by increasing the dose of honey with which she had sought to pacify this Cerberus. She therefore made a pause. "At any rate," she resumed, "having occasion to come here to speak with Madame, I wished to see you and to assure you that I am always your friend."

Andrée perceived the change in the queen's tone. She feared that she had given offence; and she feared still

more that she had exposed her hidden wound to the clairvoyant eye of a woman. "Your Majesty covers me with honor and happiness," she said in a melancholy tone.

"Do not speak so, Andrée," replied the queen, pressing her hand; "you will break my heart. What! cannot a wretched queen have a friend in whom she can confide, and in whose eyes she may look without seeing there self-interest or resentment? Yes, yes, Andrée; direct your envy toward those queens, those mistresses of the fortunes, honor, and lives of all. Oh, yes, they are queens; they possess the gold and the blood of their subjects, — but their hearts? Never! never! Hearts cannot be taken; they must be given."

"I assure you, Madame," said Andrée, shaken by the warmth of these words, "that I have loved your Majesty as much as I shall ever love in this world." In saying these words she blushed and inclined her head.

"You — have — loved me!" said the queen; "You love me then no longer?"

"Oh, Madame!"

"I ask nothing of you, Andrée. Accursed be the cloister which so soon extinguishes memory in certain hearts."

"Do not blame my heart," said Andrée, quickly; "it is dead."

"Your heart is dead! You, Andrée, young and beautiful, — you say your heart is dead! Ah, do not trifle with those funereal words. The heart is not dead in one who still retains that smile, that beauty; do not say that, Andrée."

"I repeat to you, Madame, that nothing at the court, nothing in the world, has now any interest for me. I live here like the grass and the plants; and I have pleasure here which I alone can understand."

"What! you find pleasure in the convent?" exclaimed the queen.

"I adopt with happiness the life of retirement."

"There is nothing, then, which urges you toward the joys of the world?"

"Nothing."

"My God!" thought the queen, "am I not to succeed? I will tempt her; if that fails I will resort to entreaty. Oh, to entreat her to that! to entreat her to accept Monsieur de Charny, — great God, what wretchedness!"

The queen shuddered, but controlling her emotion, she said, "Andrée, you have expressed your contentment in such terms that you have robbed me of a hope which I had entertained."

"What hope, Madame?"

"We will not speak of it, since you are so decided."

"But, Madame, though it be only for your own satisfaction, explain to me —"

"To what purpose? You have retired from the world, have you not?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Willingly?"

"Oh, with all my heart!"

"And you are satisfied with the course you have taken?"

"More than ever."

"You see, then, it is superfluous for me to speak. God is my witness, I thought for a moment that I might make you happy."

"Me?"

"Yes, you, who were ungratefully upbraiding me. But now that you are cherishing other joys, — and you know better than I your own tastes, — I relinquish —"

"But, Madame, do me the honor to give me some idea."

"Oh, it is very simple; I wished to draw you back to the court."

"Oh!" cried Andrée, with a bitter smile, "I return to court! No, no! Never, Madame! — much as it may cost me to disregard your Majesty's wishes."

The queen was much agitated. Her heart was filled with an indescribable grief. She, the mighty ship, was wrecked upon an atom of granite. "You refuse?" she murmured, and to hide her distress, she covered her face with her hands.

Andrée, thinking her overcome with sorrow, knelt by her, and sought to mitigate the wound she had given to friendship, or to pride. "Come, now, tell me," she said, "what you would have done with me at court, — with me, a nobody, without fortune, under a ban, whom every one avoids because I am not even able — unfortunate that I am — to arouse in women the vulgar anxiety of rivalry, or in men the vulgar sympathy that springs from difference of sex. Ah, Madame, leave the poor nun to her retirement."

"Ah," said the queen, raising her eyes, "the position which I was about to offer you gives a direct contradiction to all the humiliations of which you complain. The marriage in question would have made you one of the first ladies in France."

"A — marriage!" stammered Andrée, stupefied.

"You refuse?" said the queen, more and more discouraged.

"Oh, yes; I refuse, I refuse!"

"Andrée —"

"I refuse, Madame; I refuse."

Marie Antoinette then prepared herself, with an oppressed heart, to begin her entreaties. She arose, and stood undecided, trembling, distracted; but before she

could utter the first word of her supplication, Andrée, seizing her robe, under the impression that she was going away, exclaimed, —

"At least, Madame, do me the kindness of naming to me the man who would accept me as his companion. I have suffered so many humiliations in my life that the name of that generous man —" she smiled with bitter irony — "will be," she continued, "a balm which I shall henceforth apply to all wounds of my pride."

The queen hesitated, but she was impelled to go on to the end. "Monsieur de Charny," she said in a dull, indifferent tone.

"Monsieur de Charny!" cried Andrée, with a sudden explosion, "Monsieur Olivier de Charny!"

"Monsieur Olivier, yes," said the queen, looking at the young girl in surprise.

"The nephew of Monsieur de Suffren?" continued Andrée, with glowing cheeks and eyes shining like stars.

"The nephew of Monsieur de Suffren," replied the queen, more and more amazed at the sudden change in Andrée.

"It is to Monsieur Olivier that you wish to marry me?"

"To him."

"And — he consents?"

"He asks for you in marriage."

"Oh, I accept, I accept," cried Andrée, wild with joy. "It is I whom he loves! — I whom he loves as I love him!"

The queen, with a suppressed groan, drew back, pale and trembling. She fell, crushed, into an arm-chair, while the overjoyed Andrée kissed her knees and her robe, covered her hands with tears of delight, and devoured them with burning kisses.

"When shall we set out?" she asked at length, when she was able to speak.

"Come," murmured the queen, who felt as if her life were departing, and who wished, before dying, to save her honor. She rose, leaning on Andrée, whose ardent kisses sought her icy cheeks.

When Andrée left her to make ready for the departure, the queen exclaimed, "My God! is not this enough of suffering for a single heart? And yet, I thank thee. Thou hast saved my children from disgrace; thou hast given me the right to die wearing the royal mantle."

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE BARON UNDERSTANDS.

WHILE the queen was deciding the destiny of Mademoiselle de Taverney at Saint Denis, Philippe, whose heart was torn by all that he had discovered, pushed on his preparations for departure. A soldier, accustomed to range over the world, needs no long time to pack his trunks and put on his travelling-cloak ; and Philippe had special reason to hasten his departure from Versailles, — he would avoid witnessing the threatened dishonor of the queen. When he had completed his preparations, he sent word to Monsieur de Taverney the elder that he wished to speak with him.

The baron had just returned from the palace in a very agreeable state of mind. He had laid in a new supply of scandals and small infamies, and was happy. Instead, therefore, of waiting for Philippe to come to him, he himself on receiving the message went immediately to Philippe's room. He entered without warning, and found the room in that state of disorder which signifies an intended departure.

Philippe expected no outbreak of affectionate regret when his father should be informed of his purpose, nor, on the other hand, did he anticipate complete indifference. But he was greatly astonished on hearing his father cry out joyously," Ah, very good ! he is going away ; he is going away ! "

Philippe looked at his father in surprise.

"I was sure of it," continued the baron; "I might have predicted it. Well played, Philippe, well played!"

"What do you mean, Monsieur? What is it that is well played?"

The old man winked at Philippe, as a sign to him to dismiss his valet. Philippe obeyed. The baron closed the door on the heels of the retiring valet, and then turning to Philippe, "Admirable!" he said in a low voice, — "admirable!"

"You bestow compliments on me, Monsieur," replied Philippe, "without my knowing how I have deserved them."

"Ah! ah! ah!" said the old man, dancing about.

"Unless all this hilarity, Monsieur, is occasioned by my departure, which rids you of my company."

"Oh! oh! oh!" laughed the old baron, on another note. "There, there, don't restrain yourself before me,— it is not worth while. You know I am not taken in — Ah! ah! ah!"

Philippe crossed his arms, and wondered if the old man was losing his mind. "Taken in by what?" he asked.

"By your departure of course. Do you imagine that I believe in your departure?"

"You do not believe in it?"

"Your servant is no longer here; there is no use in being so reserved. Well, I admit that you had no other course to take; you have taken this, — very good!"

"Monsieur, you surprise me."

"Yes; it is surprising enough that I should understand this matter. But Philippe, there is no man living more curious than I am; and when I am curious I investigate. There is no man more fortunate than I in making discoveries; and so I have found out that you are making a pretended departure, and I congratulate you."

"I am pretending?" said Philippe, in bewilderment.

The old man went up to him, touched his breast with his bony fingers, like those of a skeleton, and with a manner more and more confidential said, in a low tone, "On my word of honor, had you not resorted to this expedient I am sure all would have been discovered. You act in season; to-morrow would have been too late."

"Monsieur," said Philippe, in an icy tone, "I protest that I do not understand one word — one single word — of all that you have done me the honor to say to me."

"Where will you hide the horses?" continued the old man. "You have a mare that is easily recognized. Take care she is not seen when you are believed to be in — By the way, to what place do you pretend you are going?"

"I am going to Taverney-Maison-Rouge, Monsieur."

"Good, — very good. You pretend to go to Maison-Rouge. No one will go there to inquire. But be prudent; there are many eyes fixed on you both."

"On us both! Who, then?"

"She is impetuous, you know," continued the old man; "she has fits of passion that might ruin everything. Be careful; you must be more reasonable than she — "

"Why," said Philippe, with rising anger, "I really believe that you are seeking to amuse yourself at my expense. That is not kind; nor is it wise, for you expose me, sorrowful and irritated as I am, to a failure in my respect toward you."

"Ah, well, — respect; I dispense with it. You are old enough to manage your affairs, and you manage them so well that you inspire me with respect. Come, give me an address to which I may send you information, if anything should happen."

"To Taverney, Monsieur," said Philippe, thinking that the old man was coming to his senses.

"Eh! to Taverney, — eighty leagues. Do you imagine that when I may have urgent advice to give you, I shall amuse myself with killing couriers on the road to Taverney, for the sake of appearances? Come, now; I don't ask you to give your address at your house in the park, — my messengers might be followed, or my livery recognized; give me another address at a distance that may be covered in a quarter of an hour. What the devil! you have imagination. A man who does for his love affairs what you have done for yours is a man of resources."

"A 'house in the park,' 'love affairs,' 'imagination'! Monsieur, we are playing at enigmas, and you keep the key to yourself."

"Your reserve becomes offensive," said the father, angrily. "One would think you are afraid of being betrayed by me!"

"Monsieur!" said Philippe, exasperated.

"Very well; very well! Keep your secrets to yourself; keep the secret of the huntsman's lodge that you have hired."

"I — have hired the huntsman's lodge?"

"Keep the secret of your walks at night between two adorable friends."

"I — I have taken walks?" murmured Philippe, turning pale.

"Keep the secret of those kisses dropped like honey beneath the flowers and the dew."

"Monsieur!" roared Philippe, mad with jealousy, "will you be silent?"

"It is good, I say again; all that you have done, I have known. Had you any suspicion that I knew it? *Mordieu!* that should inspire you with confidence. Your intimacy with the queen, your prosperous adventures, your excursions to Apollo's Baths, — great God! these are life

and fortune to us all. Have no more fear of me, Philippe; confide in me."

"Monsieur, you fill me with horror!" cried Philippe, covering his face with his hands.

It was really horror which the unhappy Philippe felt toward the man who attributed to him all the happiness of another, and who, intending to congratulate him, scourged him with the successes of his rival.

All that the father had learned and guessed, all that common rumor had ascribed to Monsieur de Rohan or the Comte de Charny, he had placed to the account of his son. According to his understanding of the matter, it was Philippe whom the queen loved, and by degrees was secretly lifting to the heights of favoritism.

When Philippe had discovered this new slough of infamy he shuddered, as he saw himself plunged into it by the one person who should have made a stand with him for honor. But the blow had been so violent that he remained stunned and silent, while the baron went on chattering with more energy than ever.

"See," said he, "you have achieved a master-stroke of art; you have thrown every one off the scent. This afternoon fifty eyes have said to me, 'It is Rohan.' A hundred have said to me, 'It is Charny.' Two hundred have said to me, 'It is Rohan and Charny.' Not one, mark you, not one said, 'It is Taverney.' I repeat, you have achieved a masterpiece, and the least I can do is to offer you my congratulations. It is a connection that honors you both, my dear fellow, — her, because she has taken you; you, because you have a hold on her."

At the moment when Philippe, now rendered furious, flashed lightning glances at the pitiless old man — glances portending a storm — the noise of a carriage was heard in the court-yard, and presently the valet was heard exclaim-

ing, "Mademoiselle! it is Mademoiselle!" And several voices repeated, "Mademoiselle!"

"What! Mademoiselle?" said Taverney. "Who can it be?"

"It is my sister!" murmured Philippe, at the window, seized with astonishment on recognizing Andrée as she alighted from a carriage.

"Your sister!" repeated the old man. "Andrée? Is it possible?"

The valet came, and informed Philippe that Andrée was in the boudoir adjoining the grand salon, and wished to see him.

"Let us go to her," cried the baron.

"It is to me that she wishes to speak," said Philippe, bowing to the old man; "I will go first, if you please."

At that moment a second carriage rolled noisily into the court-yard.

"What the devil!" said the baron; "still another? This is an evening of adventures."

"Monsieur le Comte Olivier de Charny!" cried the guard to the footmen.

"Conduct Monsieur le Comte to the salon," said Philippe; "Monsieur le Baron will receive him. I am going to the boudoir to speak with my sister."

The two men slowly descended the stairs.

"For what does the count come here?" Philippe asked himself.

"For what has Andrée come here?" the baron asked himself.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE FATHER AND THE DAUGHTER.

THE salon of the hôtel was situated in the front part of the ground-floor. On its left was the boudoir, with a door opening upon the staircase leading to Andrée's apartment. To the right was another smaller salon, through which one must pass in order to enter the large salon.

Philippe went straight to the boudoir where his sister was waiting for him. As soon as he had opened the door Andrée rushed to meet him, throwing her arms about his neck with a joyful air, to which this sad lover, this unhappy brother, had been for a long time unaccustomed.

"Good Heavens! what can have happened?" asked the young man.

"Something happy! oh, yes, something very happy, brother!"

"And you have come here to tell me of it?"

"I shall never go back!" cried Andrée, in a transport of joy.

"Speak lower, little sister," said Philippe; "the wainscoting of this house is not accustomed to joyful sounds; and more than that, there is in the little room next us a person who will hear you."

"A person?" said Andrée, "who can it be?"

"Listen," replied Philippe.

"Monsieur le Comte de Charny!" said the valet, announcing Olivier as he passed from the small parlor into the salon.

"He! he!" cried Andrée, redoubling her caresses to her brother. "Oh, I know what he has come for!"

"You know it?"

"Yes, I know it, — so well that I perceive the disordered state of my dress; and as I foresee the moment when I shall myself enter that salon to hear with my own ears what Monsieur de Charny has to say —"

"Do you speak seriously, my dear Andrée?"

"Listen, listen, Philippe! and then let me go up to my own room. The queen has brought me back somewhat hastily; I am about to exchange my convent-robe for the attire — of a betrothed." And when she had spoken this word to Philippe in a very low tone, and accompanied it with a joyous kiss, Andrée, buoyant with happiness, ran up the stairs to her apartment.

Philippe remained alone, and putting his ear to the door communicating with the salon, listened. Monsieur de Charny was already there. The Baron de Taverney, in his turn, came into the room, and advanced to salute the count with studied politeness.

"To what," he said, "do I owe the honor of this unexpected visit, Monsieur le Comte? At all events, I beg you to believe that it overwhelms me with joy."

"I have come, Monsieur, ceremoniously, as you see, and I beg you will excuse me for not bringing with me my uncle, Monsieur de Suffren, as I ought to have done."

"What!" stammered the baron; "but I excuse you, my dear Monsieur de Charny."

"It would have been more consistent with propriety, I know, considering the request I am about to make."

"A request?" said the baron.

"I have the honor," said Charny, in a voice full of

emotion, "to ask of you the hand of Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney, your daughter."

"My daughter!" murmured the baron; "you ask of me Andrée in marriage?"

"Yes, Monsieur le Baron; unless Mademoiselle de Taverney should feel some repugnance to this union."

"How is this?" thought the old man. "Can the favor of Philippe have already become so marked that one of his rivals hopes, by marrying his sister, to profit by it? Upon my word, not so badly played, Monsieur de Charny!" Then aloud, with a smile, "This suit is so honorable for our house, Monsieur le Comte," he said, "that I accept it with much pleasure, as far as I am concerned; and as I desire that you should bear with you a full consent, I will go to call my daughter."

"Monsieur," interrupted the count, coldly, "that would be unnecessary trouble. The queen has been kind enough to consult Mademoiselle de Taverney on this subject, and your daughter's reply was favorable to me."

"Ah!" said the baron, more and more astounded, "it is the queen —"

"Who has taken the trouble to go to Saint Denis; yes, Monsieur."

The baron rose. "There only remains for me, then, to inform you as to the condition of Mademoiselle de Taverney's pecuniary affairs. I have upstairs the deeds of her mother's property. You do not marry a rich girl, Monsieur le Comte; and before deciding anything —"

"There is no need of it, Monsieur le Baron," said Charny, dryly. "I am rich enough for both; and Mademoiselle de Taverney is not the sort of woman to be bargained for. But it is indispensable that I should make some statement of my own affairs."

He had just finished these words when the door of the

boudoir opened, and Philippe appeared, pale and agitated, one hand in the breast of his coat, and the other convulsively clinched.

Charny bowed ceremoniously, and Philippe responded in the same manner.

"Monsieur," said Philippe, "my father was quite right to propose to inform you as to the pecuniary condition of the family; we both of us have explanations to make. While Monsieur le Baron goes to find the papers of which he speaks, I shall have the honor of considering the question with you more in detail;" and Philippe, with a look of authority not to be disregarded, dismissed the baron, who went out ill at ease, fearing that something was about to happen which would prevent this marriage.

Philippe accompanied the baron to the door of the little parlor, in order to be sure that this room was empty. Then returning, "Monsieur de Charny," he said, crossing his arms as he stood before the count, "how is it that you dare to ask my sister in marriage? Is it in order better to conceal your love for that woman whom you pursue, — with that woman whom you love? Is it because if you were married it perhaps would not be said so freely that you had a mistress?"

"Indeed, Monsieur," said Charny, staggering.

"Is it," added Philippe, "that having become the husband of a woman who would be always about your mistress, you would have greater facilities for seeing this adored mistress?"

"Monsieur, you are going beyond all bounds."

"It is, perhaps, — and I think this more apt to be the case," continued Philippe, drawing nearer to Charny, — "you think, doubtless, that having become your brother-in-law I should not disclose what I know of your past love."

"What you know?" cried Charny, terrified. "Take care! take care!"

"Yes," said Philippe, becoming excited; "your renting the wolf-hunter's lodge, your mysterious walks in the park of Versailles in the night, your pressing of hands, your sighs, and especially that tender interchange of glances at the small gate of the park —"

"Monsieur, in the name of Heaven! — Monsieur, say that you know nothing of all this!"

"I know nothing!" cried Philippe, with bitter irony. "How know nothing? — I who was concealed in the shrubbery behind Apollo's Baths when you came out with the queen on your arm!"

Charny started back two paces like a man who had received his death-blow. Philippe looked at him in stern silence. He let him suffer; he let him expiate by this momentary torture the hours of ineffable delight with which he had just reproached him.

Charny recovered his self-control. "Well, Monsieur," he said to Philippe, "even after what you have said, I ask of you the hand of Mademoiselle de Taverney. If I were only a mean calculator, as you accused me of being only a moment ago, — if I were about to marry for my own sake, I should be so miserable that I should be afraid of a man who possesses my secret and that of the queen. But the queen must be saved, Monsieur!"

"And in what manner is the queen lost? Because Monsieur de Taverney saw her press the arm of Monsieur de Charny and raise to heaven her eyes moist with happiness? Is the queen lost because I know that she loves you? Oh, that is no reason for sacrificing my sister, Monsieur; and I will not allow her to be sacrificed."

"Monsieur," replied Olivier, "shall I tell you why the queen is lost if this marriage does not take place? It is

because this very morning, while Monsieur de Rohan was being arrested, the king surprised me on my knees before the queen."

"My God!"

"And the queen, questioned by the jealous king, replied that I was kneeling to ask of her the hand of your sister. That is the reason, Monsieur, why the queen will be lost if I do not marry your sister. Do you understand now?"

A two-fold noise cut short Olivier's sentence, — a shriek and a sigh. The one came from the boudoir, and the other from the little parlor. Olivier ran to the room from which the sigh had come; he saw Andrée de Taverney dressed in white like a bride. She had heard all, and had fainted. Philippe ran to the little parlor from which the cry had issued. He there saw the body of the Baron de Taverney, whose hopes this revelation of the queen's love for Charny had completely crushed. The baron, struck with apoplexy, had breathed his last; and the prediction of Cagliostro was fulfilled.

Philippe, who comprehended everything, even the disgrace of this death, silently left the dead body, and returned to the salon where Charny was contemplating, trembling, and without daring to touch it, this beautiful girl, now cold and inanimate.

Philippe, with swelling heart, his eyes wet with tears, had the courage to resume the conversation by saying to Monsieur de Charny, "Monsieur le Baron de Taverney has just died. I am now the head of my family. If Mademoiselle de Taverney survives, I will give her to you in marriage."

Charny looked at the baron's dead body with horror, at the form of Andrée in despair. Philippe tore his hair with his hands, and uttered to Heaven a cry which might move the heart of God upon his eternal throne.

"Comte de Charny," he said, after having quieted the tempest within him, "I make this engagement for my sister, who does not hear me. She will sacrifice her happiness for the queen, and I may sometime be happy enough to give my life for her. Adieu, Monsieur de Charny; adieu, my brother-in-law," and bowing to Olivier, who could not leave the room without passing near one of the two victims, Philippe raised Andrée in his arms and gave free passage to the count, who went out through the boudoir.

CHAPTER XLVI.

AFTER THE DRAGON, THE VIPER.

It is now time to return to those personages of our history whom necessity and intrigue as well as historical truth have forced into the background.

Oliva was getting ready for flight according to Jeanne's advice, when Beausire, informed by an anonymous letter, — Beausire, panting with impatience to see Nicole once more, found himself conducted right into her arms. He carried her away from Cagliostro's house while Monsieur Reteau de Villette was waiting in vain at the end of the Rue du Roi-Doré.

In order to find the happy lovers whom Monsieur de Crosne had so much interest in discovering, Madame de La Motte, who felt sure that she had been duped, set every person on whom she could rely to search the country for them. It may be easily imagined that she would prefer watching over her secret herself to leaving it to the care of others, and for the success of the plan she had in hand it was indispensable that Nicole should not be forthcoming. It is impossible to depict her suffering as each of her emissaries returned with a report that their search was unavailing. At this time, also, she was receiving, in her hiding-place, order after order to appear before the queen to answer for her conduct with regard to the necklace. One night, closely veiled, she set out for Bar-sur-Aube, where she had a small house; and having

arrived there by cross-roads and without being recognized, she took time to examine her position in its true light. She thus gained two or three days in which to commune with herself. Two days of such solitude would be sufficient to this profound soul for the struggle through which she must pass before so mastering body and mind that her conscience, being discharged from service, would not return, and that her blood might not mount to her face to betray shame or surprise.

The king and queen, who had instituted a search for her, were not informed of her having established herself at Bar-sur-Aube until she had already prepared herself for war. They sent a messenger to bring her back to Versailles.

At about the same time Jeanne heard of the cardinal's imprisonment. "The queen has burned her ships," she coldly meditated. "It is impossible for her to revoke what she has done. In refusing to come to an understanding with the cardinal and pay the jewellers she is playing double or quits. That proves that she is acting without reference to me, and that she has no suspicion of the forces at my command."

While Jeanne was contemplating thus her defensive armor, a messenger suddenly presented himself before her and announced that he was charged *to return her to the court.*

The messenger proposed to take Jeanne directly to the king; but she, with her usual cunning, said to him, "Monsieur, you love the queen, do you not?"

"Can you doubt it, Madame la Comtesse?"

"Well, then, in the name of that loyal love, and of the respect you cherish for the queen, I adjure you to conduct me first to her."

The officer objected.

"You must know," said Jeanne, "even better than I, what is in question; and therefore you must know that it is necessary for the queen to have a secret interview with me."

The messenger, acquainted with the calumnious rumors that filled the air of Versailles, concluded that he would really render a service to the queen by taking Madame de La Motte to her at once.

Imagine the haughtiness and pride of the queen on seeing in her presence that demon whom as yet she did not know, but whose treacherous influence in her affairs she suspected. Imagine Marie Antoinette, inconsolably widowed in her love, blighted by the breath of scandal; Marie Antoinette, crushed by the insult of an accusation which she could not refute, — imagine her, after so many sufferings preparing to put her foot on the head of the serpent which had bitten her.

Supreme disdain, anger unrestrained, the hatred of woman for woman, the sense of an incomparable superiority in position, — such were the weapons of one of the adversaries. The queen began by calling in two of her women as witnesses.

Cast-down eyes, closed lips, a reverence slow and solemn, a heart full of mysteries, a mind full of ideas, despair her impelling power, — such was the second champion.

Madame de La Motte, on seeing the two witnesses, said to herself, "Good! here are two witnesses who will very soon be dismissed."

"Ah, here you are at last, Madame!" cried the queen. "You have been found at last!"

Jeanne bowed a second time.

"You were in hiding then?" said the queen, impatiently.

"I in hiding! No, Madame," in a soft and slightly tremulous voice, as if she were oppressed by the royal

presence; "had I been in hiding I should not have been found."

"You had fled, however, — call it as you please."

"That is to say, I left Paris, — yes, Madame."

"Without my permission?"

"I did not think my presence so necessary to your Majesty that I must give you notice of a week's absence."

"Eh! you are right, Madame. Do you, then, hold any office at court?"

There was too much contempt in these last words. "Madame," she replied, with humility, "I hold no office at court, it is true; but your Majesty honored me with a confidence so precious to me that I held myself more bound to you by gratitude than others are by official duty."

Jeanne had found that word "confidence" after a search for the fitting word, and laid much stress upon it.

"That 'confidence,'" said the queen, with a contempt more crushing than before, "we shall give its place in the account. Have you seen the king?"

"No, Madame."

"You will see him."

Jeanne bowed. "That will be a great honor for me," she said.

The queen for a moment sought to calm herself that she might enter properly upon the examination. Jeanne took advantage of the pause to exclaim, "But, *mon Dieu!* Madame, how harsh your Majesty is toward me! I tremble all over."

"You have not reached the end," said the queen, abruptly. "Do you know that Monsieur de Rohan is in the Bastille?"

"I have been told so, Madame."

"You of course know the cause of his imprisonment?"

Jeanne looked steadily at the queen, and turning toward

the two women, whose presence seemed to annoy her, replied, "I do not know, Madame."

"You know, however, that you have spoken to me of a necklace, do you not?"

"A diamond necklace, — yes, Madame."

"And that in the name of the cardinal you proposed an arrangement for the purchase of that necklace?"

"That is true, Madame."

"Did I accept or refuse that arrangement?"

"Your Majesty refused."

"Ah!" said the queen, with satisfaction, and also with surprise.

"Your Majesty even gave two hundred thousand francs on account," added Jeanne.

"Well, — afterward?"

"Your Majesty, not being able to pay, sent back the diamonds to the jewellers."

"By whom did I send them?"

"By me."

"And you, what did you do with them?"

"I," said Jeanne, deliberately, and conscious of the weight of the words she was about to speak, "I gave them to Monsieur le Cardinal."

"To Monsieur le Cardinal! And why, if you please, instead of returning them to the jewellers?"

"Because, Madame, Monsieur de Rohan being interested in the affair, — to give pleasure to your Majesty, — I should have wounded him had I not given him the opportunity to bring it to a proper conclusion."

"How then did you obtain from the jewellers a receipt for the necklace?"

"Monsieur de Rohan gave me that receipt."

"And that letter which it is said you gave the jewellers as coming from me?"

"Monsieur de Rohan begged me to deliver it."

"It is then Monsieur de Rohan who is at the bottom of this affair?"

"I do not understand your Majesty," said Jeanne, assuming a vacant air.

"That receipt from the jewellers is a forgery!"

"A forgery!" innocently exclaimed Jeanne. "Oh, Madame!"

"The pretended letter of acceptance, signed, it is said, by me, is a forgery!"

"Oh!" cried Jeanne, apparently more astonished than before.

"You will have to be confronted with the Cardinal de Rohan, that the affair may be cleared up."

"Confronted! Why, Madame, what need is there for my being confronted with the cardinal?"

"He himself demands it."

"He?"

"He has sought you everywhere."

"But, Madame, it is impossible."

"He wished to prove to you, he said, that you had deceived him."

"Oh, then, Madame, I demand to be confronted with him."

"You will be, Madame, you may rest assured. So then you deny knowing where the necklace is?"

"How should I know?"

"You deny having aided Monsieur le Cardinal in certain intrigues?"

"Your Majesty has every right to disgrace me, but none to insult me. I am a Valois, Madame."

"The cardinal has maintained, in the king's presence, calumnies which he expects to support by serious proof."

"I do not understand."

"The cardinal declares that he has written to me."

Jeanne looked steadily at the queen, and made no reply.

"Do you hear me?" asked the queen.

"I hear, yes, your Majesty."

"And what do you reply?"

"I will reply when I am confronted with Monsieur le Cardinal."

"Meanwhile, if you know the truth, give us your assistance?"

"The truth, Madame, is that your Majesty blames me without cause, and is severe toward me without reason."

"That is not an answer."

"I shall however make no other here, Madame," and Jeanne looked again toward the two women.

The queen understood, but did not yield. Her curiosity could not prevail over her self-respect. The whole attitude of Jeanne seemed to indicate that she was in possession of an important secret. Perhaps by gentleness the queen might win from her that secret; but she rejected that method as unworthy of her.

"Monsieur de Rohan has been sent to the Bastille," said Marie Antoinette, "for saying too much; beware, Madame, of incurring the same fate through saying too little."

Jeanne dug into her hands with her nails, but she smiled. "To a pure conscience," she said, "what matters persecution? Will the Bastille convict me of a crime that I have not committed?"

The queen looked at Jeanne angrily. "Will you speak?" she asked.

"I have nothing to say, Madame, except to you."

"To me? Very well, is it not to me that you are now speaking?"

"Not to you alone."

"Ah, that is it!" cried the queen. "You wish for secrecy, for closed doors. You fear the scandal of a public avowal, after inflicting on me the scandal of public suspicion."

Jeanne drew herself up. "Let us say no more about it," she said. "I was proposing to render you a service."

"What insolence!"

"I submit respectfully to the wrongs inflicted by my queen," said Jeanne, without changing color.

"You will sleep in the Bastille to-night, Madame de La Motte."

"Be it so, Madame. But before going to bed I shall, as usual, pray that God will preserve to your Majesty honor and happiness."

The queen, rising in great anger, went into the adjoining chamber, and violently slammed the door. "After overcoming the dragon," said she, "I shall certainly crush the viper."

"I know her game by heart," thought Jeanne. "I think that I have won."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PURSUER OVERTAKEN.

MADAME DE LA MOTTE was imprisoned, as the queen had wished. Nothing could be more agreeable to the king, who instinctively hated the woman.

Meantime the Cardinal de Rohan was living at the Bastille as a nobleman might have lived in a hired house. Everything was granted him on demand, except liberty.

The law-proceedings were at first of a trivial character, considering the rank of the persons accused. There was great astonishment that a Rohan should be charged with theft, and for that reason the governor of the Bastille and all the officers showed great deference and respect to the cardinal as to a person who was unfortunate. To them he was not a person accused, but a man who had fallen out of favor; and when it was rumored that he was a victim to the intrigues of the court, public sympathy rose to public enthusiasm. And Monsieur de Rohan, one of the chief nobles of the kingdom, did not understand that the love of the people was bestowed on him only for the reason that he was persecuted by those more noble than he. The last victim of despotism, he was in fact one of the earliest revolutionists in France.

Since the day of his incarceration the cardinal had persistently demanded to be confronted with Madame de La Motte, and at length he obtained that satisfaction. His interview with her was marked by a noticeable incident. The countess, who was permitted to speak low whenever

she spoke of the queen, at last succeeded in saying to the cardinal, "Send every one away, and I will give you the information you want."

Then Monsieur de Rohan expressed a desire to be left alone with the countess; but this was refused. His counsel, however, was permitted to have an interview with her. In this interview Jeanne denied all knowledge as to what had become of the necklace, and broadly intimated that it should have been given to her. And when the counsel cried out, astounded by this audacity, she asked him if the service she had rendered to the queen and the cardinal was not worth a million.

The advocate repeated this to the cardinal, who turned pale and bowed his head; he saw that he had fallen into a trap. But while he was thinking that he must stifle the affair before it should bring ruin to the queen, it was represented to him that his honor was at stake; accused as he was of theft he must push the matter to a verdict, that his innocence might be established. But to prove his innocence it would be necessary to prove his relations with the queen, — that is to say, her criminality.

When this consideration was presented to Jeanne she replied that she was not disposed to accuse either the queen or the cardinal, but if they persisted in making her responsible for the necklace she might be obliged to show that the queen and the cardinal had a secret reason for charging her with falsehood.

When these words were reported to the cardinal he expressed his scorn for her who could thus speak of sacrificing him. He added that up to a certain point he could understand Jeanne's conduct, but the queen's he could not understand at all.

The queen, in her turn, was informed of what the cardinal had said, and became very angry. She directed a pri-

vate examination to be made as to the mysterious phases of the affair. The great grievance of the nocturnal interviews then came out, and was enlarged upon by scandal-mongers. Then the queen found herself in danger. Jeanne, when in presence of those who represented the queen, declared that she understood nothing of what was said to her; but with those who represented the cardinal, she was less discreet, and frequently reiterated, "If they do not leave me in peace I will speak out."

This delicate reserve, this modesty, so complicated the situation that no examining judge dared to prosecute the inquiry.

Had the cardinal been less firm, — more ready to speak? Had he to some friend avowed his love-secret? We ought not so to think, for the prince was a noble-hearted and devoted man. But whether he had spoken or not, a rumor that he had been at Apollo's Baths with the queen, at midnight, was spread around. The question was not now, "Did the queen steal the diamonds?" — a question sufficiently dishonoring, — but, "Has the queen permitted the necklace to be stolen by some one who had penetrated the secret of her adulterous love?"

Thus Madame de La Motte had succeeded in averting the difficulty. Thus the queen found herself forced into a path which could lead only to dishonor. She was not cast down; she resolved to fight. The king supported her resolution; the ministry also sustained her with all their resources.

From this time all the enginery of the prosecution was directed against Jeanne, and a diligent search was made for the necklace. The queen, by accepting the issue as presented, threw back upon Jeanne the crushing charge of robbery.

Jeanne perceived that she had taken a false course and

that the queen, in submitting to the accusation of adultery and withstanding public opinion, engaged the cardinal to imitate her. She was sure that these two loyal souls would at last come to an understanding, and would fathom the mystery. Even if they should fall, they would in their fall crush beneath them the little Valois, princess of a stolen million, who had no money at hand to bribe the judges.

While affairs were in this state an incident occurred which changed their complexion.

Monsieur de Beausire and Mademoiselle Oliva were living prosperously and happily in the country, when one day Beausire, who had left Oliva at home while he went hunting, fell into company with two of the detectives whom Monsieur de Crosne had scattered over all France in search for the key to this intrigue.

The two lovers knew nothing of what was happening at Paris; they were thinking only of themselves. Beausire on that day had started out to chase the hare. He started a covey of partridges, which drew him out of his course. And thus in looking for that of which he was not in search, he found what he did not wish to find. The detectives too were searching for Oliva, and found Beausire. Such are the usual caprices of the chase.

One of these detectives was a person of intelligence. When he was sure of his man, instead of making the arrest then and there, he said to his companion, "Beausire hunts; he is therefore free and prosperous. He perhaps has five or six louis in his pocket, and two or three hundred at home. Let us therefore arrest him at home, and make him pay a ransom."

Thereupon they followed Beausire wherever he went, and joined in his sport with ostentatious eagerness.

Beausire, observing them, was at first astonished, then

angry. But being still reluctant to make new acquaintances, he sent his gamekeeper to question them. The strangers replied that they were shooting with their friend, the gentleman yonder, pointing to Beausire. The gamekeeper therefore conducted them to him.

"Monsieur de Linville," said the gamekeeper, "these gentlemen say that they are shooting with you."

"With me!" cried Beausire, angrily. "Ah, indeed!"

"So, then," said one of the detectives, in a low tone, "you are Monsieur de Linville, my dear Beausire?"

Beausire was startled; he had so carefully concealed his name. He looked at the men with a frightened air, and dismissed the gamekeeper.

"You know them, then?" said the latter.

"Yes; we have recognized one another," replied one of the detectives.

Beausire was then left alone with the strangers, very uncertain how he could speak to them without compromising himself.

"Ask us to breakfast, Beausire," said the more adroit detective, "at your house."

"At my house! but —" cried Beausire.

"You will not be so impolite to us, Beausire!"

Beausire lost his self-possession, and led them, or rather was led by them, to his house. The detectives, as soon as they saw the house, began to praise its beauty, its situation, and the fine view it commanded. "How well," said one of them, "a man might hide himself here!"

Beausire shuddered at this pleasantry, and led the way into his court-yard, welcomed by the barking of his dogs. The detectives followed him, with every observance of ceremony.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE TURTLE-DOVES ARE CAGED.

BEAUSIRE had his reasons for entering by the court-yard gate; he wished to make noise enough to put Oliva on her guard. Beausire, although knowing nothing of the affair of the necklace, knew enough about the Opera-ball and Mesmer's vat to dread Oliva's being seen by strangers. He acted wisely; for the young woman, hearing the dogs bark, looked down into the court, and saw that Beausire was accompanied by two men; therefore she did not go down to meet him as usual. Unfortunately, it being necessary to order breakfast, an awkward servant asked two or three times if he should get directions from Madame. This word attracted the attention of the two bloodhounds. They rallied Beausire very pleasantly upon this concealed lady. Beausire allowed them to jest, but did not allow them to see Oliva.

A substantial repast was served, to which the two agents of Monsieur de Crosne did honor. They drank a great deal, and frequently to the health of the absent lady. The police agents thinking it inhuman to prolong the suspense of their host, adroitly led the conversation to the subject of the pleasure of meeting old acquaintances. Beausire asked in what place and under what circumstances he could have met them before.

"We were," said one of them, "the friends of one of your associates in a little affair you entered into in com-

pany with several others, — the affair of the embassy of Portugal."

Beausire turned pale. "Ah, certainly," he said, trembling with embarrassment, "and you come in behalf of your friend?"

"That is a good idea," one of the men said to the other; "to demand restitution in the name of an absent friend is a moral action."

"My dear Monsieur Beausire, it would be agreeable to us if you would return to one of us that friend's share, — about ten thousand francs, I believe."

"At the very least; for we will say nothing of interest," said the positive companion.

"Gentlemen," replied Beausire, "a man does not keep ten thousand francs in his house in the country."

"We understand that, dear Monsieur; and we do not ask the impossible. How much could you give us at once?"

"I have fifty or sixty louis, — no more."

"We will take those to begin with, and thank you for your courtesy."

"Ah," thought Beausire, charmed at their easy way of arranging matters, "they are easily satisfied! Are they, perchance, as much afraid of me as I am of them? Let us try;" and he began to reflect that these gentlemen, were they to cry out very loudly, would only the more clearly acknowledge themselves his accomplices, which with the provincial authorities would be a bad recommendation. Beausire concluded that these men would declare themselves perfectly satisfied, and would preserve an absolute silence. He even went so far as to repent not having offered them thirty louis instead of sixty; he meant to get rid of them, however, as soon as he had paid them that amount.

But he reckoned without his guests; they were too comfortable under his roof, and were enjoying that blissful content arising from a good digestion.

"Beausire is a charming friend," said the positive to his friend. "The sixty louis he has given us are pleasant to take."

"I will give them to you immediately," cried the host, alarmed to see his guests breaking out into somewhat bacchanalian familiarity.

"There is no hurry," said the two friends.

"Yes, yes; I shall not have a free conscience until I have paid you. One either has delicate feelings, or he has not," and he was about to leave them to get the money.

A good sheriff's officer, having once caught his victim, never lets him escape from his grasp or his sight. Therefore both the men, with admirable accord, began to cry out, "Monsieur Beausire! my dear Beausire!" and they seized him by the skirt of his green shooting-jacket.

"What is the matter?" asked Beausire.

"Do not leave us, for mercy's sake!" they said, forcing him to sit down again.

"But how can I give you the money if you do not let me go upstairs for it?"

"We will go with you," replied the positive, with alarming tenderness.

"But it is — my wife's chamber," replied Beausire.

"Oh, indeed!" cried the first of the agents, "why do you conceal your wife from us?"

"Yes," said the second. "Are we not presentable?"

"If you knew what we are doing for you, you would be more polite," continued the first.

"And you would give us all that we ask," added the second, boldly.

"It seems to me that you are taking a very high tone, gentlemen," said Beausire.

"We want to see the wife," replied the positive.

"And I declare to you that I will put you both out of doors," cried Beausire, who thought that he was stronger than they, intoxicated as they were.

They replied by a burst of laughter which should have made him prudent. He paid no attention to it, and obstinately continued, "Now you shall not have even the money I promised you, and you shall get out of the way at once."

They laughed more obstreperously than before.

Beausire, trembling with rage, said, "I understand you. You will make a noise, and you will speak out; but if you speak of these things you will be ruined as well as I."

They continued to laugh; the joke seemed a pleasant one. It was their only answer.

Beausire thought he could terrify them with a vigorous measure, and rushed toward the staircase, not like a man who is going in search of louis, but like a furious man who goes in quest of a weapon. The officers rose from the table, and ran after Beausire, and caught hold of him with their large hands. The latter cried out; a door opened and a woman appeared, agitated, terrified, upon the threshold. When they saw her the two men let Beausire go, and uttered a cry, — a cry of joy, of triumph, of wild delight. They recognized the woman who resembled so strongly the queen of France.

Beausire, who thought that the men were disarmed by the appearance of a woman, was soon and cruelly undeceived. The positive approached Mademoiselle Oliva, and in a tone not very polite, "Ah, ah," he said, "I arrest you!"

"Arrest her!" cried Beausire; "and why?"

"Because Monsieur de Crosne has ordered us to do so," replied the other agent, "and because we are in the service of Monsieur de Crosne."

"You see what comes of not behaving prettily," said the positive to Beausire.

This agent was not logical, and his companion remarked to him, "You are wrong, for if Beausire had behaved more prettily, he would have introduced us to Madame, and so in any case we should have taken her."

Beausire had pressed both hands to his burning forehead. An idea presented itself to him; it at once revived him. "Did you come to arrest me?" he said to the agents.

"No, that was mere chance," they said innocently.

"No matter, you might have arrested me, and for sixty louis you would have set me at liberty."

"Oh, no; our intention was to demand sixty more."

"And we have really received only a promise; now for one hundred and twenty louis we will give you your liberty."

"But — Madame?" said Beausire, trembling.

"Oh, Madame, — that is different," replied the positive.

"Madame is worth two hundred louis, you mean?"

The detectives again broke out with that terrible laugh, which now, alas! Beausire understood.

"Three hundred," he said, "four hundred — a thousand louis if you will leave her at liberty." Beausire said this with flashing eyes. "You do not answer," he continued. "You know that I have money, and you mean to make me pay. Very well; I will give you two thousand louis, — forty-eight thousand francs, — a fortune for both of you, if you will leave her at liberty."

"You love her very much then," said the positive.

It was Beausire's turn to laugh; and his ironical laughter was so frightful, it declared so vividly his love and desperation, that the two detectives judged it prudent to take some precautions. They drew each a pair of pistols.

"Not for a hundred thousand crowns," said one of them, "would we give up this woman. The Cardinal de Rohan will pay us five hundred thousand francs for her, and the queen a million."

Beausire raised his eyes with an expression which would have softened the heart of any other savage beast than an agent of police.

"Come, let us be going," said the positive. "You must have here a carriage of some sort; have it made ready for Madame, — you owe her as much as that."

"And as we are good fellows," said the other, "we will take no advantage of you. We will arrest you for form's sake, but on the road will allow you to escape. Is n't that generous, eh?"

"Wherever she goes," replied Beausire, "I will go. I will never leave her while this life lasts."

"Oh, nor in the other!" added Oliva, frigid with terror.

"Well, so much the better," said the positive; "the more prisoners we bring to Monsieur de Crosne, the more he laughs."

A quarter of an hour later, Beausire's carriage set forth from his house, with the two captive lovers and their guards.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE QUEEN'S LIBRARY.

THE effect produced by this capture on Monsieur de Crosne may be imagined. He repaired to Versailles in a carriage, which was followed by another carefully closed. He ordered the two carriages to be driven to Trianon, and there he alighted, leaving the closed carriage in charge of his clerk. He had previously sent to the queen a request that she would meet him there.

When Monsieur de Crosne was admitted to the presence of the queen, she at once inferred from his radiant manner that he was the bearer of good news.

"Madame," said the magistrate, after he had kissed her hand, "is there here a room from which you can see all that happens in an adjoining room without being seen yourself?"

"There is my library," replied the queen, "into which I can look from the breakfast-room, through openings specially designed for that purpose."

"Very good, Madame. Be pleased, then, to go with me into the breakfast-room, and give orders that my clerk may be admitted to the library, with what he brings."

Ten minutes later, the queen with much agitation was looking into the library through the secret openings. She saw a veiled form enter the library. The clerk removed the veil, and the queen uttered a cry of fright. It was Oliva, dressed in one of the favorite costumes of Marie Antoinette. It was Marie Antoinette herself, less

the blood of the Cæsars. The queen thought she was looking at herself in a mirror; she gazed eagerly at the apparition.

"What says your Majesty to this resemblance?" said Monsieur de Crosne, triumphant at the effect he had produced.

"I say — I say — Monsieur —" stammered the queen, bewildered. "Ah, Olivier," she thought, "why are you not here?"

"What does your Majesty desire?"

"Nothing, Monsieur, nothing except that the king should be informed —"

"And that Monsieur de Provence should see this woman, — is not that your wish, Madame?"

"Oh, thanks, Monsieur de Crosne, thanks! But what will be done with this woman?"

"Is it really to this woman that everything which has been done is to be attributed?" asked Monsieur de Crosne.

"You have, doubtless, obtained a clew to the conspiracy?"

"Very nearly so, Madame."

"And Monsieur de Rohan?"

"Monsieur de Rohan knows nothing of this at present."

"Oh," said the queen, hiding her face in her hands, "that woman yonder, Monsieur, is — I see it now — the whole cause of the cardinal's error!"

"That may be, Madame; but if there was error on the cardinal's part, there was crime on the part of some other person!"

"Make a thorough investigation, Monsieur; you have in your hands the honor of the house of France."

"And be assured, Madame, that it is in good hands," replied Monsieur de Crosne.

"And the prosecution?"

"Is going on. Everything is denied; but I shall at

the proper time bring forward that piece of convincing testimony which you have in your library."

"And Madame de La Motte?"

"She does not know that I have found this girl. She accuses Monsieur de Cagliostro of having deceived the cardinal almost to the point of destroying his reason."

"And Monsieur de Cagliostro?"

"Monsieur de Cagliostro, who has been questioned, has promised to come to see me this morning."

"He is a dangerous man."

"He will be a useful man. Stung by a viper like Madame de La Motte, he will absorb the venom, and furnish us with a counter-poison."

"You hope for revelations from him?"

"I am sure to have them."

"Why do you think so, Monsieur? Oh, tell me all that can reassure me."

"These are my reasons, Madame: Madame de La Motte lived in the Rue Saint Claude —"

"I know that!" said the queen, blushing.

"Yes; your Majesty did that woman the honor of being charitable to her."

"Has she not repaid me well? Well, she lived in the Rue Saint Claude."

"And Monsieur de Cagliostro lived exactly opposite."

"And you suppose —"

"That the secret of either one of these two neighbors would be known to the other. But pardon, Madame, it is nearly time for me to meet Monsieur de Cagliostro in Paris; and I would not for the world delay receiving his explanations."

"Go, Monsieur, go; and let me again assure you of my gratitude."

"This," she cried, weeping bitterly, when Monsieur de

Crosne had left the room, "is the beginning of my justification. I shall read my triumph on every face, but that of the only friend to whom I wish to prove my innocence, that one I shall not see!"

In the mean time Monsieur de Crosne was hastening to Paris, to his own house where Monsieur de Cagliostro was waiting for him. The latter knew all that had happened. On the day before, he was on his way to Beausire's house to urge him to leave France, when on the road he saw him sitting in the carriage between the two officers. Oliva was hidden on the back seat.

Beausire saw the count, recognized him, and immediately the idea occurred to him that this mysterious and powerful nobleman might be of use to him. He reminded the agents of the proposal they had made to allow him to escape; they accepted the one hundred louis which he offered them, and let him go notwithstanding Oliva's tears. Beausire whispered in the ear of his mistress, "Hope; I am going to do something to save you." And he ran off in the direction that Cagliostro had taken. The latter had no need to seek further for Beausire, since Beausire was returning to Paris. It would be expedient, however, to wait for Beausire, if by chance the latter should send after him. Cagliostro therefore waited at a turn in the road for about half an hour, when he saw the unhappy lover of Oliva approaching, pale and out of breath. Beausire, on seeing that the count's carriage had stopped, uttered a cry of joy.

"What is the matter, my boy?" said the count, helping him to a seat beside him.

Beausire related his lamentable story, to which Cagliostro listened in silence.

"She is lost!" said the count.

"How can that be?" cried Beausire.

Cagliostro then related to him what he did not know before,— the intrigue of the Rue Saint Claude and that of Versailles.

Beausire almost fainted. "Save her! save her!" he said, falling upon his knees in the carriage, "and I will give her to you if you love her still."

"My friend," replied Cagliostro, "you are in error; I never loved Mademoiselle Oliva; my only object was to take her from that life of debauchery which you made her share."

"But —" said Beausire, surprised.

"That astonishes you? Know then that I am one of the directors of a moral reform society, whose aim is to snatch from vice all who offer any chance of cure. I took Oliva away from you to cure her. Ask her if she has ever heard from my lips a word of gallantry; ask her if my services in her behalf have not always been disinterested!"

"All the more reason, Monsieur; save her! save her!"

"I will try; but this will depend on you, Beausire."

"Ask of me my life."

"I will not ask so much as that. Return to Paris with me, and if you will follow my instructions to the letter, perhaps we can save your mistress; this on one condition only."

"What is that, Monsieur?"

"I will tell you on our way back to Paris."

"Oh, I consent to it in advance; oh, to see her again! to see her again!"

"That is just what I intend; in less than two hours you shall see her again."

"And I shall embrace her?"

"I think so; and you will also tell her what I am about to say to you."

Cagliostro went back to Paris with Beausire. In two hours, — it was evening, — he had overtaken the chaise; and in another hour Beausire was purchasing of the two police agents, for fifty louis, the privilege of embracing Nicole, and of whispering to her the instructions of the count. The officers were charmed with this passionate love. They calculated on receiving fifty louis at least at every second relay. But the chaise of Cagliostro was rapidly bearing Beausire to Paris, where the former was to keep his appointment with Monsieur de Crosne.

CHAPTER L.

CAGLIOSTRO'S REVELATIONS.

MONSIEUR DE CROSNE knew as much about Cagliostro as a skilful lieutenant of police can know of a man living in France; he looked upon him as a mountebank of noble rank.

This Monsieur de Crosne was a man of strong mind, acquainted with all the resources of his office, well received at court, indifferent to favor, never compounding with his pride, — a man not easily influenced. Cagliostro could not have offered to him, as to Monsieur de Rohan, louis still hot from his furnace; Cagliostro could not have presented to him, as Balsamo had done to Monsieur de Sartines, the muzzle of a pistol. From him Balsamo had not a Lorenza to demand, but to him Cagliostro must give an account of himself. This was the reason why, instead of waiting to be summoned, he had demanded an audience of the magistrate. Monsieur de Crosne felt the advantage of his position, and was prepared to use it. Cagliostro felt the awkwardness of his own, and was trying to get out of it.

Monsieur de Crosne expected from Cagliostro revelations with regard to the necklace and the practices of Madame de La Motte. In that he was at a disadvantage. He had, however, the right to question and imprison; in this lay his superiority. He received the count like a man who feels his importance, but who does not wish to be wanting in politeness, not even to a charlatan.

"Monsieur," said the lieutenant of police, "you have asked an audience of me; I have come from Versailles expressly to grant it."

"Monsieur, I thought you might have some interest in questioning me about matters that are taking place; and as a man who knows your merit and the importance of your functions, I have come to you."

"Question you?" said the magistrate, affecting surprise; "but about what, Monsieur; and in what capacity?"

"Monsieur," replied Cagliostro, frankly, "your attention has been much occupied with Madame de La Motte and the disappearance of the necklace."

"Can it be that you have found it?" asked Monsieur de Crosne, in an almost bantering tone.

"No," said the count, gravely. "But if I have not found the necklace, I at least know that Madame de La Motte lived in the Rue Saint Claude."

"In the house opposite yours, Monsieur; I know it also," said the magistrate.

"Then, Monsieur, you know what Madame de La Motte has been doing— Let us say no more about it."

"On the contrary," said Monsieur de Crosne, with an indifferent air, "let us talk about it."

"Oh, there was nothing of importance in that, except in regard to little Oliva," said Cagliostro; "but since you know all about Madame de La Motte, I have nothing new to tell you."

At the name of Oliva, Monsieur de Crosne started. "What did you say of Oliva?" he asked. "Who is this Oliva?"

"You do not know? Ah, Monsieur, that is a curious thing, about which I am surprised that I have to inform

you. Imagine to yourself a very pretty girl, blue eyes, and face of the most perfect oval, — you see, a sort of beauty which reminds one of her Majesty the queen."

"Ah, ah!" said Monsieur de Crosne. "Well?"

"Well, this girl was living a bad life which it gave me pain to see; she was formerly in the service of an old friend of mine, Monsieur de Taverney —"

"The baron who died the other day."

"Precisely, yes; the one who is dead. She had, besides, been in the service of a man of science, whom you do not know, Monsieur le Lieutenant of Police, and who — But I am repeating, and I see that I am wearying you."

"Monsieur, please go on, I beg. This Oliva, you were saying —"

"Was leading a bad life, as I have had the honor of telling you, with her lover, one of your most ordinary rascals, whom probably you do not know —"

"A certain Beausire, perhaps?" said the magistrate, happy to appear well-informed.

"Ah, you know him; that is surprising," said Cagliostro, with admiration. "Well, one day when this Beausire had beaten her, and robbed her of more than was usual, she came to me for protection, and I good-naturedly allowed her to occupy some corner in one of my hôtels —"

"She was living in your house?" cried the magistrate, surprised. "Oh, that was the reason my agents could not find her."

"What! was this little girl searched for? Has she committed some crime of which I am ignorant?"

"No, Monsieur, no; go on, I entreat you."

"Oh, I have finished. I lodged her at my house, — that is all."

"No, no, no! Monsieur le Comte, that is not all, since you seemed just now to associate Oliva's name with that of Madame de La Motte."

"Ah, on account of their being neighbors," said Cagliostro.

"You interest me very much, Monsieur, — more than you can imagine; for this Oliva whom you claim to have lodged in your house, I found in the country."

"You found her?"

"With Monsieur de Beausire — "

"Well, now, I suspected that," cried Cagliostro. "She was with Beausire? Ah, very well, very well! Amends must be made to Madame de La Motte."

"What! — what do you mean?" replied Monsieur de Crosne.

"I say, Monsieur, that having for a moment suspected Madame de La Motte, I will make her full and complete reparation."

"Suspected her? — of what?"

"Good God! can you listen patiently to all this gossip? Well, then, I will tell you that just when I believed this Oliva to be reclaimed, some one carried her away from me."

"Carried her away? — from your house?"

"From my house."

"That is strange!"

"And I could have sworn that it was Madame de La Motte."

Monsieur de Crosne drew near to Cagliostro, and said, "Come, tell me this exactly, if you please!"

"Oh, Monsieur, now that you have found Oliva with Beausire, nothing can induce me to think of Madame de La Motte, her attentions, or her correspondence."

"Were Madame de La Motte and Oliva acquainted?"

"Intimately; and Madame de La Motte found a way to take Oliva out with her every night."

"Every night! Are you sure of that?"

"As sure as a man can be of anything he has seen or heard."

"Oh, Monsieur, you are telling me things for which I would pay at the rate of a thousand francs a word! Are you the friend of Monsieur de Rohan?"

"I believe so."

"Then you must know how much that element of intrigue, called Madame de La Motte, enters into his scandalous affair. Or perhaps you know the consequences of those promenades of Oliva and Madame de La Motte?"

"Monsieur, there are things of which the prudent man should always be ignorant," replied Cagliostro, sententiously.

"Have you proofs that Madame de La Motte had corresponded with Oliva?"

"A hundred."

"What are they?"

"Notes from Madame de La Motte which she shot into Oliva's room with a cross-bow. Some of these notes, rolled round pieces of lead, fell into the street; my servants and myself picked up several."

"Monsieur, would you deliver them up to the officers of the law?"

"Oh, Monsieur, they are of so innocent a nature that I should have no scruples in doing so."

"And the proofs of their connivance, of their meetings?"

"A thousand."

"I ask for only one."

"The strongest. It appears that Madame de La Motte had obtained the means of entering my house to see Oliva;

for I saw her there myself the very day when the young woman disappeared."

"Ah! and why did she go, since Oliva had disappeared?"

"I could not understand that at first myself. I had seen Madame de La Motte alight from a post-chaise which was waiting in the Rue du Roi-Doré. My servants had seen the carriage standing there for a long time, and I supposed that Madame de La Motte wished to attach Oliva to herself."

"And you allowed her to do it?"

"Why not? Madame de La Motte is a charitable lady; she is received at court."

"Mademoiselle Oliva was living in your house?" said Monsieur de Crosne, meditating profoundly; "and Mademoiselle Oliva and Madame de La Motte were acquainted, visited each other, went out together?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Ah, Madame de La Motte was seen in your house the day that Oliva was carried off?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"And you thought that the countess wished to attach this girl to herself?"

"What else could I think?"

"What did Madame de La Motte say when she did not find Oliva at your house?"

"She seemed to be confused."

"Do you think Beausire carried her off?"

"I think so only because you told me that he did carry her off; otherwise, I should suspect nothing. Who could have told the man where Oliva was?"

"Oliva herself."

"I do not think so, for she might have gone to him without sending for him to take her away; and he could

not have got into the house if Madame de La Motte had not sent him a key."

"She had a key?"

"That cannot be doubted."

"On what day was she carried off?" said Monsieur de Crosne.

"Oh, Monsieur, in regard to that I cannot be mistaken; it was the night before Saint Louis' Day."

"That is it!" cried the lieutenant of police, — "that is it! Monsieur, you have just rendered a signal service to the State. Can I rely on your delivering up these proofs of which you speak?"

"I am ready, Monsieur, to submit to the demands of justice in all things."

"Well, Monsieur, I shall remind you of your promise. I hope to have the honor of seeing you again," and he dismissed Cagliostro, who said to himself as he was retiring, —

"Ah, Countess, viper! you wished to accuse me! I think that you have bitten on a file; look out for your teeth!"

CHAPTER LI.

EXAMINATIONS.

While Monsieur de Crosne was holding his interview with Cagliostro, Monsieur de Breteuil presented himself at the Bastille to interrogate Monsieur de Rohan, on behalf of the king. Monsieur de Rohan refused to reply; and when the baron insisted, he said that the matter now was in the hands of the parliament and the judges, and he would leave it there.

Monsieur de Breteuil, withdrawing from this attempt without having obtained any satisfaction, sought and obtained an interview with Madame de La Motte. He explained to her, briefly, the dangers of her situation. She replied that she had proofs of her innocence which she would furnish on the proper occasion; that she would answer nothing except in presence of the cardinal, and after she should be informed what charges he allowed to weigh against her.

Monsieur de Breteuil then told her that the cardinal held her responsible for everything.

"Everything?" said Jeanne, — "even the theft?"

"Even the theft."

"Please say to Monsieur le Cardinal," said Jeanne, coolly, "that I advise him not to persist in so bad a method of defence."

Monsieur de Breteuil was not satisfied. He promised everything to Madame de La Motte if she would clearly accuse some one. "Take care!" he said; "in saying

nothing, you accuse the queen. If you persist in that you will be found guilty of treason. That means disgrace, — perhaps the halter."

"I do not accuse the queen," Jeanne replied; "but why do they accuse me?"

"Accuse some one!" insisted Breteuil; "it is your only way to save yourself."

But Jeanne kept silent; and that first interview between her and the keeper of the seals was without result.

Meantime the rumor got abroad that proofs had come to light; that the diamonds had been sold in England; and that Monsieur de Villette had been arrested there.

The first assault which Jeanne had to sustain was of an alarming character. Confronted with Reteau, whom she believed to be her ally unto death, she with terror heard him humbly acknowledge that he was a forger; that he had forged both the jeweller's receipt and the queen's letter. Being asked with what motives he had committed these crimes, he replied that he had been instigated to them by Madame de La Motte.

Jeanne furiously denied Reteau's testimony. She declared that she had never seen him. Then she received two severe shocks; she was crushed by the evidence of two witnesses. One of these was the driver of the carriage in which she had made her nocturnal expedition on the night and at the hour stated by Reteau; and the other was one of Cagliostro's servants, who affirmed that on a certain evening he had seen Monsieur Reteau de Villette seated in a post-chaise, from which Madame de La Motte had just alighted.

Thereupon Jeanne violently attacked Cagliostro, who, she declared, had worked upon the Cardinal de Rohan's mind with his incantations and sorceries, and had thus

inspired him with *culpable ideas against the royal Majesty*.

That was the first link in the accusation of adultery.

Monsieur de Rohan defended himself and Cagliostro at the same time. He was so obstinate in his denial that Jeanne, in desperation, at length openly charged the cardinal with a mad passion for the queen.

Cagliostro demanded that he too should be imprisoned, that he might prove his innocence to all the world. His request was granted.

Accusers and judges became more interested, — as always happens on the first appearance of truth, — and public opinion immediately ranged itself with the cardinal and Cagliostro against the queen.

The unfortunate princess, to make clear her determination to prosecute the suit, secured the publication of the reports made to the king in regard to her nocturnal walks, and summoned Monsieur de Crosne to tell all he knew.

This blow, skilfully calculated, fell upon Jeanne with crushing force. She denied that there had been any nocturnal walks by her connivance, or to her knowledge. She declared false the certified reports that she had been seen in the park in company with the queen or with the cardinal.

At this stage in the proceedings, when Jeanne was loudly protesting that she had never been in the Versailles park at night, and that she had never been cognizant of any private relation between the queen and the cardinal, — at that moment Oliva appeared, a living witness who changed public opinion and destroyed the edifice of lies erected by the countess.

Oliva's appearance was a terrible blow to the cardinal. He perceived at last that he had been tricked in the most infamous manner. That man, full of delicacy and noble

passion, had been betrayed by an adventuress and a woman of the town into an attack on the queen, — a woman whom he loved, and who was altogether innocent! When he saw Oliva, that queen of the cross-roads, and recalled the rose, the clasped hands, the Baths of Apollo, he turned pale, and would have poured out his blood at the feet of Marie Antoinette had he seen her at that moment.

But the cardinal could not admit Oliva's identity without acknowledging that he was in love with the actual queen. The avowal of his error would be an accusation, a stain. He therefore remained silent, and allowed Jeanne to deny everything.

Efforts being renewed to induce Jeanne to give some explanation, she coolly replied, "The best way of proving that the queen did not walk by night in the park is to exhibit a woman who resembles the queen, and who pretends that she was in the park. You exhibit her; it is very fine."

This infamous insinuation met with success, and once more hid the truth. But when Oliva, with innocent anxiety, gave all the details and all the proofs, omitting nothing, she obtained a more ready belief than had the countess.

Jeanne then resorted to a desperate expedient, — she confessed that she had conducted the cardinal to Versailles; she declared that he had insisted on seeing the queen that he might give her assurance of his respectful devotion. She declared further that those walks in the park were taken with the knowledge of the queen, who, concealed in the shrubbery, listened with stifled laughter to the passionate words of the amorous Monsieur de Rohan.

The queen was helpless against this last accusation, for she could not prove it to be false; because Jeanne,

driven to extremities, declared that she would publish all the love-letters written to the queen by the cardinal, and because in fact she had those letters, burning with mad passion. And Mademoiselle Oliva could not prove that any one was, or was not, listening behind the shrubbery. In short there were too many persons interested in taking these lies for positive truths. The queen was helpless.

CHAPTER LII.

THE LAST HOPE LOST.

After examinations without number, in which the cardinal had maintained his calm and courteous demeanor even toward Jeanne, and Jeanne had conducted herself boisterously, the opinion of the public, and of the judges especially, became at last fixed.

No new incidents could be adduced; revelations were exhausted. Jeanne perceived that she had produced no favorable effect on the minds of her judges. She therefore, in the retirement of her prison-cell, once more examined her resources.

By all those who were in the train of Monsieur de Breteuil, Jeanne was urged to spare the queen, but to accuse the cardinal without mercy. From those who were connected with the cardinal — a powerful family, judges favoring the cause of the people, the clergy fruitful in resources — came the advice to tell all the truth, to unmask the intrigues of the court, and to stimulate the commotion to such a point that all crowned heads should take alarm.

This party seemed sure of victory. The popular enthusiasm was in favor of the cardinal. Men admired his patience, and women his discretion. Men were angry that he should have been so basely deceived; women were slow to believe that he had been deceived. To very many Oliva had no real existence, or if she

existed she had been invented by the queen for the occasion.

Jeanne thought it all over. Her lawyers abandoned her; the judges made no secret of their aversion; the Rohan party vigorously assailed her; in public opinion she was scorned. She resolved on a last blow, which should make the judges anxious, frighten the cardinal's friends, and arouse anew the popular feeling against the queen. Her plan was to make it appear that she had been anxious throughout to shield the queen, but that she must reveal everything if driven too hard; that as to the cardinal, she had only imitated his reserve, but that if he should speak out, she would follow his example, and they would prove their innocence.

In pursuance of this plan Jeanne wrote the following letter to the queen: —

MADAME, — Notwithstanding all that is painful in my position, I have not complained. All the expedients employed to extort a confession from me have only strengthened my resolution not to *compromise* my sovereign.

Nevertheless, though persuaded that my *constancy* and my *discretion* entitle me to relief from my present embarrassment, I confess that the efforts made by the cardinal's family make me fear that I shall become their victim.

A long imprisonment, endless examinations, disgrace, and despair at finding myself accused of a crime of which I am innocent have enfeebled my courage, and I fear that my constancy will yield to so many blows dealt at the same time.

By a single word Madame can put an end to this miserable affair, through the mediation of Monsieur de Breteuil, who can give to it, in the eyes of the *minister* (the king), the appearance which his intelligence will suggest to him, without *compromising Madame in any way*. It is the fear of being compelled *to reveal all* which necessitates the step I am now taking; and I am persuaded that Madame will consider the motives which

have urged me to it, and that she will give orders for delivering me from my painful situation.

I am, with profound respect, Madame's very humble and obedient servant, —

COMTESSE DE VALOIS DE LA MOTTE.

Either this letter would be delivered to the queen, and would alarm her to such a degree that she would conclude to end the struggle by setting Jeanne at liberty, or — which was more probable — it would be delivered to the governor of the prison, and by him to the judges. Jeanne had, in short, so expressed herself that the letter, fall where it might, would deposit a leaven of hatred, distrust, and irreverence toward the queen.

Jeanne wrote at the same time a letter to the cardinal, as follows : —

MONSEIGNEUR, — I cannot conceive why you so obstinately persist in silence. It seems to me that you should place unreserved confidence in our judges ; our condition would be the better for it. As to myself, I am resolved to remain silent until you will support my word. But why do you not speak? Explain all the circumstances of this mysterious affair, and I swear that I will confirm all that you say. Consider, Monsieur le Cardinal, that if I speak first, and you disavow what I say, I am lost. I shall not escape *her* vengeance who wishes to sacrifice us both.

But you have nothing like that to fear from me ; you know my devotion. If *she* proves to be implacable, your cause will always be my own ; I would sacrifice everything to shield you from *her* hatred.

P. S. I have written to *her* a letter which will, I hope, persuade her, if not to speak the truth, at least not to crush us, — who have no crime with which to reproach ourselves, except our error, or our silence.

This artful letter was delivered to the cardinal during their last examination in the great parlor of the Bastille. It was observed that the cardinal turned red, and then

pale, shuddering at such audacity. He went out to recover his breath.

At the same time the countess handed the letter which she had written to the queen to the Abbé Lekel almoner of the Bastille, who had accompanied the cardinal to the parlor and was devoted to his interests.

The almoner refused to take the letter.

"Well, then," said Jeanne, resorting to intimidation, "say to the cardinal that I have still one recourse left, — that of publishing the letters which he wrote to the queen. I shall be sorry to do so, but for our common advantage I will do it."

The almoner still refused.

"Take notice," said Jeanne, "that you reduce me to the necessity of making use of Monsieur de Rohan's letters."

"Very well," replied the abbé, "make use of them, Madame."

"But," replied Jeanne, trembling with anger, "these proofs of a secret correspondence with her Majesty will cause the cardinal's head to fall on the scaffold!"

At that moment the door was opened, and the cardinal, superb in his wrath, appeared on the threshold. "You may cause the head of a Rohan to fall on the scaffold, Madame," he said; "it will not be the first time the Bastille has witnessed that spectacle. But if that is to be, I declare to you that I shall not reproach the scaffold on which my head shall roll, provided I may see that on which you will be branded as a thief and a forger. Come, Abbé, come!"

The cardinal turned his back to Jeanne, and going out with the almoner, left to the companionship of rage and despair that miserable creature who could make no movement without sinking deeper into that deadly slough in which she was soon to be covered out of sight.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE BAPTISM OF LITTLE BEAUSIRE.

MADAME DE LA MOTTE had failed in all her calculations; Cagliostro had failed in none of his. On his imprisonment he perceived that he had at last a pretext for open war on that monarchy which for so many years he had sought to undermine. He then got ready the material for that famous letter from London which appeared about a month later, and was the first blow on the walls of the old Bastille, the first hostile act of the Revolution, the first shock preceding that of July 14, 1789.

In that letter Cagliostro said: "I am asked if I shall ever return to France. Assuredly I shall — *when the Bastille shall have become a public promenade.* God speed the day!"

Oliva meanwhile allowed not a word to escape her lips which might compromise her protector. What she said was injurious to Madame de La Motte alone; she openly and clearly set forth her innocent participation in a hoax intended, she said, for a gentleman whose name was Louis.

While the captives were in prison Oliva had not seen her dear Beausire; but she had not been altogether abandoned by him, as will be seen. She had the memorial of her lover for which Dido longed when she said, "Ah, if I might only have a little Ascanius playing on my knees!"

In the month of May, 1786, a man was waiting on the steps of the porch of Saint Paul's Church. He appeared to be agitated, and was looking steadily toward the Bastille. One of Cagliostro's German servants came and stood beside him. This man tried to check Beausire's wild impatience, saying to him, in a low tone, "Wait, wait; they will come."

"Ah," said Beausire, "it is you!"

As Beausire, still not satisfied with "They will come," continued to gesticulate beyond all reason, the German whispered to him, "You will attract the police. My master promised you news; I am here to give it to you."

"Give it! give it, my friend!"

"Lower. The mother and child are doing well."

"Oh! oh!" cried Beausire, in an indescribable transport of joy. "She is delivered! She is safe!"

"Yes, Monsieur; but I beg you, let us go aside."

"Is it a girl?"

"No, Monsieur, a boy."

"So much the better. Oh, my friend, how happy I am! how happy I am! My hearty thanks to your master. Tell him that my life, — all that I have is his. But why did you say, 'They will come'? Who will come?"

"The physician of the Bastille and the nurse."

"They are coming here? — and for what?"

"To have the child baptized."

"I am to see my child!" cried Beausire, jumping about. "Do you say that I shall see Oliva's son? — here, immediately?"

"Here, immediately; but be calm, I beg! Patience!"

Beausire drew nearer to the German. "Is she comfortable?" he asked, clasping his hands.

"Very comfortable," replied the other. "Oh, here is a carriage coming!"

"Yes, yes!"

"It stops —"

"There is something white — lace —"

"The child's mantle."

"My God!" and Beausire was obliged to support himself against one of the pillars as he saw alighting from the carriage the nurse, the physician, and one of the Bastille turnkeys. After they had entered, Beausire followed them. The priest, recognizing the nurse and the physician, who had come to him on several occasions like this, greeted them with a bow and a smile. Beausire bowed and smiled with the priest.

The door of the sacristy was then closed, and the priest began to write the words of registration. When he asked the name of the child, the physician said, "It is a boy, and that is all I know about it."

Four bursts of laughter accented these words, which seemed to Beausire not very respectful.

"He must have some kind of a name, if only the name of a saint," said the priest.

"Yes; the young lady wishes him to be called Toussaint."

"There they are then, all of them," replied the priest, with an hilarious burst of laughter at his pun.

Beausire began to lose patience, but the German restrained him.

"Well," said the priest, "with such a name as that, with all the saints for his patrons, we can get along without a father. Let us write: To-day is presented a male child, born yesterday at the Bastille, son of Nicole Oliva Legay and — father unknown."

Beausire darted to the priest's side, and seizing him by

the wrist, cried out, "Toussaint has a father as well as a mother; he has a tender father, who will not deny his own offspring. Write, I pray you, that Toussaint, born yesterday of Mademoiselle Nicole Oliva Legay, is the son of Jean Baptiste Toussaint de Beausire, here present!"

The astonishment caused by these words may readily be conceived. The pen fell from the hands of the priest, and the child almost fell from the arms of the nurse. Beausire received it in his own, covered it with eager kisses, and dropped on its brow the baptism of paternal tears.

The spectators, accustomed though they were to dramatic scenes, were much affected, — except the priest, who maintained his composure, and even expressed doubts as to the statements made by Beausire. Beausire placed on the font three louis d'or, which were more effective than his tears in establishing his good faith and the fact of his paternity. The priest bowed, and pocketed the money, and requested Beausire to write in the registry his declaration that he was the child's father.

"I!" cried Beausire, "why, I would write it with my blood!" and he seized the pen with joyous eagerness.

"Take care!" said the turnkey Guyon; "it is dangerous to write in public registers!"

"Thanks for your advice, friend!" said Beausire, proudly; "but to deny the son of my wife — "

"Your wife?" cried the physician.

"Legitimate?" cried the priest.

"May God restore her to liberty," said Beausire, trembling with joy, "and the next day Nicole Legay will take the name of De Beausire."

"Meantime you are running a risk!" said Guyon. "I think they are looking for you."

All agreed, however, not to betray him.

Beausire wrote his declaration in verbose and magniloquent terms, as if narrating an exploit of which he was proud. Then, having read anew the completed certificate, he embraced his son, slipped ten louis under his mantle, suspended from his neck a ring designed for the mother, and proud as Xenophon on his retreat, he opened the door of the sacristry, and marched forth without any precaution of concealment.

The witnesses of the baptism also withdrew and regained their carriage, still astonished by the adventure. Beausire stood looking after them, sent several kisses to his son, and when the carriage had disappeared, retreated to an asylum known only to himself, Cagliostro, and Monsieur de Crosne, — that is to say, Monsieur de Crosne fulfilled a promise he had made to Cagliostro, and left Beausire undisturbed.

When the child was taken back to the Bastille, and the nurse had informed Oliva of these surprising adventures, the latter, putting Beausire's ring on her thickest finger, began to weep, and said, "I will at least be a good mother!"

CHAPTER LIV.

THE STOOL OF INTERROGATION.

THE day at last arrived when the judgment of the court of parliament was to be invoked by the concluding speech of the *procureur-general.*

The bearing of the accused was as before: Oliva was frank and timid; Cagliostro, calm and superior; Villette, downcast and in tears; Jeanne, insolent, threatening, and venomous; the cardinal, unaffected, meditative, absent-minded.

In the public mind the question still was, which of the two accused persons had stolen the necklace? This question involved another: Had the queen just reason for her accusation of the cardinal? and this was, politically, a question of importance. Had Monsieur de Rohan believed that he had the right to speak to the queen as he had spoken to her; to act in her name as he had acted? Had he been, in fact, a secret agent of Marie Antoinette, — an agent repudiated as soon as the affair made a noise?

In a word, had the cardinal acted in good faith, as a confidant of the queen? If he had acted in good faith, the queen must have been implicated in those intimacies which she had denied, and which Madame de La Motte had insinuated to have existed.

The *procureur-general* began his speech. He was the organ of the court, and spoke in the name of outraged royal dignity. He demanded that Villette should be condemned to the galleys; that Jeanne de La Motte should

be branded, scourged, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment; that Cagliostro and Oliva should be dismissed from the case; and that the cardinal should be compelled to acknowledge himself guilty of language offensive to royal Majesty, and then should be banished from the presence of the king and queen, and deprived of his offices and dignities.

This demand divided the parliament, and terrified the accused. The royal will had been so strongly expressed that had the demand been uttered twenty-five years earlier, though then already parliament had begun to vindicate its prerogative, the idea of the infallibility of the throne would have prevailed. But fourteen counsellors, only, adopted in full the conclusions of the *procureur-general*, and there was a division in the assembly.

The last examination of the accused was then entered upon, — a formality almost useless under existing circumstances. The custom was that the accused should appear before the judges on a small wooden seat, dishonored by the contact of those who had passed from it to the scaffold. The forger Villette occupied it first, who begged for pardon with prayers and tears. No one took any interest in him; he was, and appeared to be, only a rascal of the common sort. Dismissed by the court, he went weeping to his prison-cell.

Then came Madame de La Motte, who made a strong impression on the assembly. She had been already exposed to the first of the insults to which she was to be subjected; she had been compelled to ascend by the small stairway, like a common criminal. The heat and noise and general movement troubled her at first, and her eyes were unsteady. Then the officer who had her in charge led her quickly to the stool placed at the centre of the half-circle, which bore some resemblance to the block on a

scaffold. On seeing that she was expected to occupy that degrading seat, Jeanne de La Motte, who proudly called herself Valois, and as she thought controlled the fortunes of a queen of France, turned pale, and cast angry glances about her, as if to intimidate the judges who would permit that outrage. Seeing however no indication of sympathy on the faces around her, she placed herself, almost fainting, on the stool of interrogation.

In the examination that followed, Jeanne still pursued her method of vague insinuation against the queen. Of her own innocence she spoke more decidedly; and she managed to draw from the examining judge an inquiry as to the letters which were said to have been interchanged between the queen and the cardinal.

Jeanne, in reply, declared that she was unwilling to say anything which might compromise the queen, and that no one could answer on that subject better than the cardinal himself. "Ask him," she said, "to produce those letters, or copies of them; read them, and satisfy your curiosity. As to myself, I cannot affirm whether those letters were written by the queen and by the cardinal. They seem to me, on the one hand, too free and familiar to have been written by a sovereign to a subject, and on the other hand too irreverent to have been written by a subject to a queen."

The deep, significant silence which followed this attack might have warned Jeanne that she had succeeded only in arousing horror in the minds of her enemies, terror in the minds of her partisans, and incredulity in the minds of her impartial judges. She left the stool of interrogation with the pleasing hope that the cardinal too must sit on it. That revenge would almost have satisfied her. But on turning back for a last look at the degrading seat which she was forcing a Rohan to occupy, she saw that it had

been removed and that an arm-chair stood in its place. She uttered a cry of rage, and hastened from the hall in frenzied excitement.

The cardinal arrived in his carriage, attended by the governor of the Bastille. On his entrance he was greeted by a murmur of respect and sympathy. He was pale, and somewhat agitated. He manifested in his demeanor that respect and condescension due to judges from an accused person who accepts and invokes their jurisdiction. When he began to speak, his trembling utterance, broken by sighs, and his humble bearing moved his audience to sympathy. He spoke slowly, offered excuses rather than proofs, supplications rather than arguments, and at length stopping short, — he the man of eloquent speech! — by that paralysis of mind and courage produced more effect than all the advocates with all their arguments had produced.

After the cardinal, came Oliva. The most ardent haters of the monarchy were shocked on seeing the living copy of Marie Antoinette queen of France sitting on the stool of thieves and forgers.

Then came Cagliostro, the least guilty of all. He was not asked to sit, though the arm-chair remained by the side of the stool. The court feared to question him, and he was speedily dismissed.

The court then announced that the trial was at an end, and their deliberations would begin immediately. The crowd slowly withdrew along the streets and the quays, intending to return soon to hear the judgment, which all agreed could not be long delayed.

CHAPTER LV.

A WAY OF ESCAPE.

WHILE the cardinal, on the terraces of the Bastille, discussed with Cagliostro the probable result of their defence; while Oliva, in her cell, caressed her child; and Reteau, in his, thought of the crowns promised by Monsieur de Crosne, — Jeanne, having retired to the room of the keeper's wife, Madame Hubert, endeavored to soothe her agitation by noise and action.

This room, high and large like a hall, was lighted by a large window looking toward the quay and covered by an iron grating. Here Madame de La Motte spent the days of her imprisonment in company with Madame Hubert, her son, and her husband. She had won their sympathy; she had managed to persuade them that the queen was very guilty. A day was to come when in that same hall another keeper, pitying the misfortunes of another prisoner, would believe her innocent because so gentle and so kind, — and that prisoner would be the queen.

Madame de La Motte, then, was proposing to forget, in the society of her friends, the troubles which assailed her, and repay them by her gay humor for the kindness they had shown her. But she found them anxious and embarrassed. Alarmed by this she sought to elicit an explanation from Madame Hubert; but she and those with her were noncommittal.

Jeanne perceived, in a corner by the fireplace, an abbé who was an occasional guest of the house. He had been secretary of the preceptor of Monsieur le Comte de Provence. He was a man of simple manners, though somewhat cynical. After a long-continued absence from Madame Hubert's house, he had become a frequent visitor there since the arrival of Madame de La Motte.

"I am sure," said Jeanne, "that they are talking more freely up yonder than we are talking here."

These words were greeted with a feeble murmur of assent.

"Up yonder?" said the abbé, feigning ignorance, "where, Madame la Comtesse?"

"In the hall where my judges are in consultation."

"Oh, yes, yes," said the abbé. And again there was silence.

"I think," Jeanne resumed, "that my course to-day produced a good effect. Do you not think it did?"

"Why, yes, Madame," timidly replied the keeper; and he rose as if to go out.

"What is your opinion?" asked Jeanne, turning to the abbé. "Does not the affair look well for me? They have brought forward no evidence."

"It is true, Madame," said the abbé, "you have much to hope; and yet suppose that the king —"

"Well, the king; what will he do?"

"Eh, Madame! the king cannot consent to be found in the wrong."

"He must then have Monsieur de Rohan condemned, and that is impossible."

"That indeed is improbable."

"But in this cause," Jeanne hastened to say, "the cardinal and I are in the same situation."

"Not at all," replied the abbé; "you are mistaken,

Madame. One of the accused will be absolved, — but only one. A culprit is necessary to the king; otherwise what will become of the queen?"

"It is true," said Jeanne, in a dull tone. "The king needs a culprit; well, Monsieur de Rohan will serve the purpose as well as I."

A silence ensued, alarming to the countess. The abbé was the first to speak. "Madame," he said, "the king does not bear malice, and when his first anger is satisfied he will forget all that has happened."

"But what do you call a satisfied anger?" asked Jeanne, ironically.

"A condemnation — any — would be a satisfaction."

"Any, Monsieur!" cried Jeanne, "that is a fearful word. Any! why that means every!"

"Oh, I speak only of seclusion in a convent," replied the abbé, coldly. "That is the idea, according to rumor, which the king is likely to adopt in reference to you."

Jeanne looked at him with terror, which soon gave place to furious excitement.

"Seclusion in a convent!" she exclaimed. "That is to say, a lingering death which shall appear to be an act of clemency! Tortures of hunger, of cold, of penances! No; enough of punishment, enough of shame, enough of suffering for the innocent, while the guilty one is powerful, free, honored! Death, rather, at once; but the death I choose to punish myself with for having been born into this infamous world!"

Uttering these words Jeanne rushed to the sideboard to seize a knife. The keeper, Madame Hubert, and the abbé threw themselves upon her, and prevented her reaching it. She then, with cries too violent to be natural, rushed into an adjoining cabinet, seized an enormous porcelain vase,

and struck her head with it repeatedly. The vase was shattered, and Jeanne's face was covered with blood. They got her into a chair, and bathed her with perfumed waters and vinegar. She had fainted, after frightful convulsions.

When she came to herself the abbé thought she was suffocating. "See," he said, "that grating intercepts light and air. Can we not give the poor woman a chance to breathe?"

Madame Hubert, forgetting everything, ran to a closet in the chimney, and took out a key with which she opened the grating.

"Ah!" said the abbé, "I was not aware that the grating could be thus opened with a key. Why in the world are such precautions needed?"

"It is the order," replied the keeper.

"Yes, I understand," said the abbé, significantly; "that window is only seven feet from the ground; it opens on the quay. Were prisoners to escape from your room they would find themselves at liberty without meeting either turnkey or sentinel."

"Precisely," said the keeper.

The abbé remarked that Madame de La Motte had heard and understood; that she had started even, and that she had raised her eyes to the closet, fastened only by a brass button, where the keeper deposited the key to the grating. That was all he wanted. His presence seemed no longer needed. He took leave; but coming back he said, "What a crowd there is in the square! All go with such eagerness in that direction that not a soul is left on the quay."

The keeper leaned out. "It is true," said he.

"Is it not thought," continued the abbé, speaking always as if Madame de La Motte could not hear him, — but she heard every word, — "is it not expected that the judg-

ment will be rendered during the night? That cannot be, — can it?"

"I do not imagine," said the keeper, "that it will be rendered before to-morrow morning."

"Well, then," continued the abbé, "try to let that poor Madame de La Motte have a little rest; she must need it."

"Let us withdraw to our chamber," said the worthy keeper to his wife, "and leave Madame here in the easy-chair, — unless she prefers going to bed."

Jeanne, on the point of rising, met the eye of the abbé, who was watching for her reply. She fell back, and feigned sleepiness. The abbé then retired, and the keeper and his wife also went out, after quietly locking the grating, and putting back the key in its place.

As soon as she was alone Jeanne opened her eyes. "The abbé advises me to flee," she thought. "Could any one more clearly point out the necessity of flight, and the means? To threaten me with condemnation before judgment is rendered, is the act of a friend who urges me to recover my liberty. I have only to open that closet, then that grating, and I shall be on the deserted quay. To escape! Oh, liberty! — the joy of recovering my riches, of repaying to my enemies all that I have suffered!" She darted to the closet, seized the key, and drew near to the lock of the grating. Suddenly she thought she saw on the bridge the dark form of a man. "Some one is there," she said to herself; "perhaps the abbé, awaiting my escape; he is ready to help me. Yes, but if it were a trap; if, descending to the quay, I should be surprised in the attempt to escape? Flight is confession of crime, — at least, of fear. Whence comes that man! He seems to be connected with Monsieur de Provence; but he may be an emissary of the queen, or of the Rohans. They would pay

heavily for a false move on my part — Yes, some one is there, watching! To make me escape some hours before the judgment! My God! may it not be that my enemies have information of my acquittal? Who knows but they wish to parry that terrible blow to the queen by a proof, or a confession of my guilt? That proof, that confession, would be afforded by my flight; I will remain."

Jeanne from that moment remained convinced that she had escaped a snare. She smiled, and with a firm step went to the closet, and placed in it the key of the grating. Then drawing her arm-chair nearer to the window, she watched that man who waited for her, and who at length disappeared as the first rays of daylight enabled her to distinguish the water of the river from the river-banks.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE JUDGMENT.

On the morning of the next day Jeanne awaited, with sanguine expectation, the news of her acquittal and release. She was not allowed to go out in search of information; but placing herself at the window she listened anxiously to the sounds from the neighboring square. Soon she heard a noisy outbreak of cries, bravos, and clapping of hands, — a noise which frightened her, for she could not imagine that it was for her that so much sympathy was declared.

"A fine day for the cardinal!" said a sort of attorney's clerk, as he passed by.

"For the cardinal!" Jeanne repeated. "There is news then that the cardinal is acquitted." She returned hastily to the hall. "Madame, Madame!" she said to the woman Hubert, "what is this I hear? — 'a fine day for the cardinal!' What is the meaning of that?"

"I do not know," replied Madame Hubert.

Jeanne looked at her steadily. "Ask your husband, I beg of you!" she said.

Madame Hubert did as requested, and her husband replied from without, "I do not know."

"What then," said Jeanne, impatiently, "could those passers-by mean? They of course were speaking with reference to the trial."

"Perhaps they meant," said the kind-hearted Hubert, "that if Monsieur de Rohan should be acquitted it would be a fine day for him."

"Do you think he will be acquitted?" cried Jeanne, clinching her hands.

"That may happen."

"I, also?"

"Oh, you, Madame, — you as well as he; why not?"

Jeanne returned to the window.

"I think you are wrong, Madame," said the keeper, "in thus exposing yourself to emotions arising from distorted information. Why not wait quietly till your counsel, or Monsieur Frémyn, arrives to read to you — "

"The judgment — No! no!" and she continued to listen.

A woman was passing with friends. "He shall have my bouquet," she cried, "and a hundred others, the dear man! Oh, if I can I will kiss him!"

"And I, too," said a companion.

"I would like to have him kiss me," said a third.

"Of whom can they be speaking?" thought Jeanne.

"He is a handsome man; you do not show bad taste," said another of the company, and they passed on.

"Still the cardinal!" murmured Jeanne. "He is acquitted! he is acquitted!"

"Eh, Madame!" said Hubert and his wife, speaking together, "why should you not wish a poor prisoner to be set free?"

Jeanne, unwilling to lose their sympathy, hastened to say, "You do not understand me. Can you believe me so wicked as to wish harm to my companions in misfortune? Oh, yes! may the cardinal be acquitted; but let me know at least what is decided in regard to me. Believe me, my friends, it is my impatience that makes me appear as I do."

Hubert and his wife looked at each other as if to measure the extent of the information they would impart. A flash of light from Jeanne's eyes stopped them as they were on the point of speaking.

"You tell me nothing?" she cried, perceiving her mistake.

"We know nothing," they replied, in a low tone.

At that moment Hubert was called out of the room. His wife, remaining alone with the captive, sought to divert her attention. But in vain. All Jeanne's intelligence was devoted to catching the sounds that came to her from without.

Suddenly there was a great noise in the square, accompanied by a tumultuous rush of the crowd. The shouts were continuous; they seemed to be directed toward a covered carriage drawn by two horses, which were so impeded by the crowd that they could move only slowly. The countess recognized the two men who were the objects of that enthusiasm. They were the Cardinal de Rohan and the Comte de Cagliostro.

That manifestation of public sympathy with the victims of the queen — for so they were called — inspired Jeanne with a transient joy. But then, "What!" said she, "they are already free, — and I, I know nothing! Why is it that I can learn nothing?" She shuddered.

Another noise of shouting drew her attention toward the Pont-au-Change. A carriage, surrounded by a multitude, was descending the hill toward the bridge. In the carriage Jeanne recognized Oliva, smiling and holding up her child, — Oliva, rejoicing in her freedom, and enjoying also the pleasantries addressed to her (a little free sometimes) and the kisses that were sent to the fresh-looking, attractive girl. On the bridge a post-chaise was waiting. In it Monsieur Beausire was hiding behind one of his friends,

who alone ventured to expose himself to the public admiration. The latter made a sign to Oliva, who descended from her carriage, and getting into the post-chaise fell into the arms of Beausire, who almost stifled her in his embrace, and covered her with tears and kisses. Nor did he breathe freely until at Saint Denis they changed horses, without having been disturbed by the police.

Meantime Jeanne, seeing all these persons at liberty, happy, honored, asked why she alone received no news. "By what refinement of cruelty do they withhold from me that part of the judgment which concerns me?"

"Calm yourself, Madame," said Hubert, entering the room, — "calm yourself."

"It is impossible that you do not know. You know! you know! Tell me!"

"Madame —"

"If you are not a savage, tell me! You see how I suffer!"

"We are forbidden, Madame, to reveal judgments, the reading of which is the duty of the clerk of the courts."

"Why, then, it is so frightful that you do not dare to tell it!" cried Jeanne, in a transport of rage which alarmed the keeper.

"No," said he; "calm yourself, — calm yourself."

"Speak, then!"

"Will you be patient, and will you do nothing to compromise me?"

"I promise, I swear it, — speak!"

"Very well; Monsieur le Cardinal is acquitted."

"I know it."

"Monsieur de Cagliostro is discharged."

"I know it! I know it!"

"Mademoiselle Oliva is dropped from the accusation."

"Go on! go on!"

"Monsieur Reteau de Villette is condemned to the galleys."

"And I? and I?" cried Jeanne, in great excitement.

"Patience, Madame, patience. Is this what you promised me?"

"I am patient; come, speak! what of me?"

"Banishment!" said the keeper, in a low voice, turning away his eyes.

A flash of joy shone in the eyes of the countess, which she immediately extinguished. Then, with a loud cry, she pretended to faint, and fell into the arms of her friends.

"What then would have been the consequence," whispered Hubert to his wife, "if I had told her the truth?"

"Banishment!" thought Jeanne, while pretending she was ill, — "it is liberty, wealth, vengeance; it is all that I have hoped. I have won!"

CHAPTER LVII.

THE PUNISHMENT.

JEANNE was still awaiting the arrival of the clerk who, according to the keeper, would read the sentence pronounced against her. Released from the agony of suspense, she was saying to herself, "What matters it to me that Monsieur de Rohan has been adjudged less guilty than I? Do they punish me for a fault? No. Had I been duly recognized as a Valois; had I been able, like the cardinal, to hedge myself about with princes and dukes, — they would have refused nothing to the poor Comtesse de La Motte, and certainly would have spared the descendant of the Valois the disgrace of the stool of interrogation.

"But why occupy myself with the past, which is dead? Here ends the great business of my life. Banished! I am banished; that is to say, I can carry my million whither I will, and nothing can hinder me — young, beautiful, celebrated — from living as I please, either with my husband, if he too is banished (and I know that he is free), or with the friends that youth and fortune always provide.

"Let any one say to me, then, — to me the condemned; to me the banished; to me the disgraced, — that I am not richer than the queen, more honored, more fully acquitted. For she was not concerned for my condemnation; the earth-worm is of no consequence to the lion. She was concerned to have Monsieur de Rohan condemned, and Monsieur de Rohan is acquitted.

"Now how will they proceed to communicate to me my sentence, and have me conducted out of the kingdom? Will they revenge themselves on a woman by subjecting her to a strict execution of the law? Will they put me in the keeping of archers to be taken to the frontier? Will some one say to me solemnly, 'Unworthy one, the king banishes you from his kingdom'? No, my masters are good-natured; they wish me no harm. Their anger is directed against the good people of Paris who shout under their windows, 'Long live Monsieur le Cardinal!' 'Long live Cagliostro!' 'Long live the parliament!' Oh, yes; that is their real enemy, — the people. I counted on the moral support of public opinion, — and I have succeeded!"

At this point in her meditations a recollection of Reteau de Villette crossed her mind. "Poor fellow!" she said, with a wicked smile. "It is he who pays for all. Always some paltry soul is needed for expiation, and the emergency which calls it up devours it. Poor Reteau! The wretched creature now pays for his diatribes against the queen, and for his forgeries. God, who allots to every one his part in the world, appointed to him beatings, intermittent louis d'or, ambuscades, concealments, and at last the galleys. This is the fate of trickery without intelligence, of cunning without boldness, of aggression without perseverance and strength."

Jeanne took dinner with her keepers in a very happy state of mind; but they had wholly lost their cheerfulness; they did not even affect to conceal their embarrassment. Jeanne attributed this coldness to the condemnation pronounced against her, and said so to them. They replied that nothing was sadder to them than the sight of those against whom sentence had been pronounced.

Jeanne was so happy that she wished to be alone; and

she intended, after dinner, to retire at once to her chamber. She was agreeably surprised when Hubert said to her, with solemn constraint, "Madame, we are under orders not to keep with us persons who have been condemned by parliament."

"Good!" said Jeanne to herself; "he anticipates my wishes." She rose from the table. "I should not wish," she said, "to involve you in disobedience; that would be a poor return for all your kindness. I will therefore retire to my chamber."

She watched for the effect of these words. Hubert rolled a key in his fingers. His wife turned her head away, as if to hide her emotion.

"But," added the countess, "where will they come to read me my sentence; and when?"

"They are waiting, perhaps, till Madame shall be in her own room," Hubert hastened to say.

"Decidedly," thought Jeanne, "he sends me away." A vague feeling of anxiety troubled her for a moment, but was immediately dismissed.

Seeing that Jeanne was leaving, Madame Hubert went up to her quickly, and seized her hands, with an impulse of pity which did not escape the countess's observation. This time she felt something like fright, but this feeling also she easily banished from a soul full of joy and hope. Nevertheless, she would have liked to ask Madame Hubert for an explanation of her pity. She opened her mouth for that purpose; but Hubert took her hand, with more decision than politeness, and led her to the door.

The countess found in the corridor eight archers waiting, — she wondered for whom, or for what. In advance of the archers was the turnkey who every evening conducted her to her chamber. He went on before Jeanne, as if to show her the way.

"I am to return to my room?" asked the countess.

"Yes, Madame," replied the turnkey.

Jeanne took hold of the iron railing and ascended the stairs, preceded by the man. Reassured, she suffered herself to be locked in her chamber, and even thanked the turnkey, who immediately withdrew.

As soon as she was alone, Jeanne began to give vent to the joy she had so long concealed. Suddenly she heard steps in the corridor, the jingling of keys, a key in the lock of her door.

"What now?" thought she, lifting her head and listening.

The turnkey entered.

"What is it, Jean?" asked Jeanne, in her gentle, careless tone.

"Will Madame please to follow me?" said he.

"Whither?"

"Downstairs, Madame."

"Downstairs, — what do you mean?"

"To the office."

"For what, if you please?"

"Madame —"

Jeanne took a step toward him, as he hesitated, and then she saw, in the corridor, the archers whom she had noticed before. "Come," she said, with some agitation, "tell me why they summon me to the office."

"Madame, Monsieur Doillot your counsel is there, and wishes to see you."

"At the office? Why not here?"

"Madame, Monsieur Doillot has received letters from Versailles, which he wishes to communicate to you."

Jeanne failed to notice that this reply was no answer. "Letters from Versailles!" she said to herself, — "from the court! Has the queen, then, interceded for me? Is

it possible that — But why waste time in guessing, when in two minutes I can know the truth?" Then, to the turnkey, "Wait for me a moment while I arrange my dress."

"I will wait, Madame; but I beg you to consider that Monsieur Doillot has but little time to spare."

Jeanne closed the door, and in five minutes had completed her preparations, in such eager haste was she to receive the expected order for her departure. She followed the turnkey downstairs in the excitement of joyous anticipation; but instead of turning to the left, toward the office, the turnkey turned toward a small door at the right.

"Where are you going, then?" Jeanne asked. "The office is not there."

"Come, come, Madame," said the turnkey, in a coaxing manner, "this is the way to the place where Monsieur Doillot is awaiting you." He passed through in advance, drawing after him the prisoner, who heard the door close, and bolts on the outside pushed noisily to their places. She was surprised, but seeing no one in the darkness, hazarded no questions. She took two or three steps forward, and stopped. By aid of a faint light, penetrating an iron grating covered with spiders' webs and dust, she discovered that she was in a dungeon, alone with her conductor

"Monsieur," she said, subduing her terror, "why are we here? Where is Monsieur Doillot, to whom you were to conduct me?"

The turnkey made no reply. He turned around as if to see whether the door by which they had entered was securely closed. Jeanne followed this movement with terror. The idea came to her that she had to do with one of those amorous jailers described in the romances of the period, who, when their prey is about to escape them, constitute

themselves tyrannic masters of the *fair captive*, and offer liberty in exchange for love.

Jeanne was strong, and had no fear of being taken by surprise; nor was she encumbered by modesty. She approached the turnkey, smiling, and said, "My friend, what do you want? Have you something to say to me? The time of a prisoner within reach of liberty is precious. It is an ugly sort of rendezvous you have selected for your conversation with me."

The turnkey did not understand her, and made no reply. He sat down and waited.

"But," said Jeanne, "I ask you again, why are we here?" She began to think the man was crazy.

"We are waiting for Monsieur Doillot," replied the turnkey.

Jeanne shook her head. "Monsieur has chosen badly his time and place for communicating to me the letters from Versailles. It is not possible that he should make me wait here. No; there is something else."

She had hardly spoken these words when a door, which she had not noticed, was opened in front of her. Beyond this door was an obscure passage, and beyond that Jeanne caught a momentary glimpse of an open place thronged with eager-looking men and women. Three men appeared at the door. Behind them Jeanne could see four bayonets. The three men entered the dungeon, and the door was closed.

Jeanne passed from surprise to surprise, — or rather, from anxiety to terror. Her name was called before she had recovered herself sufficiently to exclaim. He who called her name was the youngest of the three men. He was dressed in black, kept his hat on his head, and held in his hand a roll of papers. "You are, Madame," he said, "Jeanne de Saint-Rémy de Valois, married to Marie Antoine Nicolas, Comte de La Motte?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"You were born at Fontette, July 22, 1756?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"You reside at Paris, in the Rue Saint Claude?"

"Yes, Monsieur; but why these questions?"

"Madame, I am sorry that you do not recognize me; I have the honor to be the clerk of the court."

"I recognize you."

"Then, Madame, I may perform the duty of my office, recognized by you."

"To what, if you please, does your official duty call you?"

"To read to you, Madame, the sentence pronounced against you by the court."

Jeanne shuddered. "You are," she said, "Breton the clerk; but who are these two gentlemen with you?"

The clerk was about to answer, when the turnkey, moved by pity or by apprehension, rushed to him and whispered, "Don't tell her!"

Jeanne heard him, and looked at those two men more attentively. Their aspect frightened her, and she recoiled.

The clerk went nearer to her, and said, "On your knees, Madame, if you please."

"On my knees!" cried Jeanne, — "on my knees! — I, a Valois, on my knees!"

"It is the order, Madame," said the clerk, bowing.

"But, Monsieur, one is obliged to kneel only after being sentenced to a degrading punishment, and banishment is not so regarded in the law of France."

"I have not told you, Madame, that you were condemned to banishment," said the clerk, in a tone of sadness.

"To what, then, am I condemned?" cried Jeanne.

"You will learn that by listening to the sentence, Madame; and you will first, if you please, kneel down."

"Never! never!"

"Madame, it is ordered that if the condemned refuses to kneel, force must be employed —"

"Force! — to a woman?"

"A woman has no more right than a man to fail in respect to the king and the law."

"And to the queen!" cried Jeanne, furiously, "for I recognize in this the hand of an angry woman."

"You are wrong in accusing the queen, Madame. She has nothing to do with the judgments of the court. Come, Madame, I entreat; spare us the necessity of violence. On your knees!"

"Never! never! never!"

The clerk made a sign to the two men who had entered with him, who thereupon seized Jeanne, and dragged her to the middle of the dungeon in spite of her cries and shrieks.

"It is useless to cry out in this way," said the clerk; "no one outside can hear you, and you cannot hear me read the sentence."

"Allow me to hear it standing, and I will listen in silence," said Jeanne, panting.

"Whenever a culprit is to be whipped," said the clerk, "the punishment —"

"Whipped!" shrieked Jeanne, — "whipped! Ah, you scoundrel, whipped!"

Her cries became so appalling that all the men, bewildered, thought only of meeting force by force; they threw themselves upon Jeanne, and forced her down. But she resisted victoriously; when they would place her in a kneeling posture, she made her muscles as stiff as steel, meanwhile inflicting serious wounds with her feet and hands. One of the men took hold of her feet, and held them as in a vice. Two others held her by the wrists, and all called on the clerk to read the sentence.

"I will never allow a sentence to be read that condemns me to infamy," cried Jeanne, struggling with superhuman strength; and she uttered such cries and shrieks that she could not hear a word of what was read to her. When she thought he had finished, she became silent, and sought to recover strength for a renewal of the struggle.

"And," calmly continued the clerk, "the sentence is to be executed, as usual, in the court-yard of the Palace of Justice."

"Publicly!" howled the unhappy woman. "Oh—"

"Monsieur de Paris," said the clerk, to one of the men with him, "I place this woman in your hands."

"Who, then, is that man?" asked Jeanne, in a last paroxysm of rage and terror.

"The executioner," said the clerk, bowing and readjusting his ruffles.

The two men took hold of Jeanne, and lifted her up to carry her toward the passage-way which she had seen when the door was opened. It is impossible to describe the resistance she made. That woman, who ordinarily would have fainted on receiving the slightest wound, sustained for nearly an hour the harsh treatment and the blows of the executioner and his assistant. She was dragged to the outer door without ceasing for a moment to utter the most frightful cries.

Beyond this door was the court-yard, to which a crowd of two or three thousand spectators had been drawn by the erection of the scaffold. From every direction cries arose, "Here she is! here she is!" together with epithets not complimentary to the condemned, and here and there remarks not very considerate of the judges. For Jeanne had calculated correctly; since her condemnation, fixing her attitude of hostility to the queen, a party had been formed in her favor.

But Monsieur de Crosne had taken his precautions. The front rows were occupied by spectators who were devoted to those who paid the expenses of the spectacle. The anger against the queen had been utilized in her favor; the supporters of the cardinal hooted Jeanne, who had separated her cause from his. So that on her appearance there were loud cries of, "Down with La Motte! down with the forger!"

Jeanne was almost at the end of her strength, but not at the end of her rage. In her clear, vibrating, metallic voice she launched a few words which, as if by enchantment, stilled the noisy murmurs. "Do you know who I am?" she said. "Do you know that I am of the blood of your kings? Do you know that in me they strike at, not a culprit, but a rival? — not a rival only, but an accomplice?"

Here she was interrupted by the cries of persons in Monsieur de Crosne's employment. But she had awakened curiosity, if not interest; and the curiosity of a mob is a thirst that must be assuaged. The silence proved to Jeanne that they wished to hear more.

"Yes," she repeated, "an accomplice! In me they punish one who knows the secrets of —"

"Be careful!" whispered the clerk.

She turned around. The executioner held a whip in his hand. "Mercy! mercy!" she cried, in a heart-rending tone.

The hootings of the crowd drowned her voice. Jeanne clung to the executioner's knees, and succeeded in getting hold of his hand; but he raised the other hand, and let the whip fall gently on the countess's shoulders. Strange to say, when she found that the executioner was sparing her, she rushed upon his assistant, and sought to overcome him, and throw herself from the scaffold. But sud-

denly she sprang back. This man held in his hand a red-hot iron which he had that moment withdrawn from a brazier. He raised this iron, and Jeanne started back with a wild cry. "Branded!" she exclaimed, — "branded!"

The mob replied by a terrible cry. "Yes! yes!" roared three thousand mouths.

"Help! help!" cried Jeanne, beside herself, trying to break the cords with which they had bound her hands.

Meantime the executioner was tearing, being unable to open, the dress of the countess, and while with a trembling hand he parted the torn material he tried to seize the hot iron offered by his assistant. But Jeanne rushed upon the assistant, making him draw back, for he did not dare to touch her; so that the executioner, unable to grasp the sinister implement, expected from the crowd some denunciation of himself. The multitude, excited, and beginning to admire that vigorous defence, manifested their impatience; the confusion became threatening.

"Make an end of it," cried a voice from the front ranks, — an imperious voice, which doubtless the executioner recognized; for by a mighty effort he threw Jeanne down, bending her nearly double, and with his left hand, inclining her head. She sprang up again, more heated than the iron with which she was threatened, and in a voice that rose above the tumult, "Cowardly Frenchmen!" she cried, "you do not defend me! You suffer me to be tortured!"

"Be silent!" said the clerk.

"Be silent!" said the commissary.

"Silent! Ah, yes!" replied Jeanne. "To what does silence bring me? Yes, I submit to the disgrace; it is my own fault."

"Ah! ah! ah!" cried the crowd, not understanding her meaning.

"Be silent!" repeated the clerk.

"Yes, my fault," said Jeanne, still struggling; "for if I had been willing to speak out —"

"Be silent!" roared the clerk, the commissary, and the executioners.

"Had I been willing to tell all I know about the queen, — well, I might have been hanged, but I should not have been dishonored."

She could say no more; for the commissary leaped upon the scaffold, followed by agents of the police who gagged the unhappy woman, and delivered her, palpitating, bruised, her face swollen, livid, bleeding, to the two executioners. One of these again bent down his victim, at the same time seizing the iron, which his assistant succeeded in handing to him. But Jeanne, like a serpent, eluded his grasp, and springing up once more, she turned with frenzied excitement toward the executioner, and offered her breast to him, defying him with her eyes. The fatal instrument which was aimed at her shoulder struck her on the right breast, marking its smoking and consuming furrow in the living flesh, and wringing from the victim, gagged as she was, one of those moans which have no equivalent in sounds produced by the human voice.

Jeanne was vanquished by the pain and shame; she fainted. The executioner took her on his shoulder, and with uncertain steps bore her down the ignominious ladder.

The multitude, silent, either because they approved or because they were filled with consternation, did not withdraw until the doors of the prison were closed once more upon the victim. Then they slowly retired, and the place resumed its ordinary tranquillity.

At the end of the bridge two men, young and thoughtless, conversed as follows, —

"Do you really believe, Maximilien, that it is Madame de La Motte whom the executioner has branded?"

"They say so, but I do not believe it," replied the taller of the two.

"No," said the other, a small man of vulgar appearance; "it is not Madame de La Motte whom they have branded. As they have found a Mademoiselle Oliva as a way of escape for the queen, so they have found a pretended Madame de La Motte to confess the forgery. You will say that she was branded, — bah, a farce for which the executioner and the victim were paid."

"It is a great deal to consent to be branded on the breast," replied the taller speaker. "The farce of which you speak seems to me not proved. You are more of a doctor than I, and you must have smelt the burning flesh."

"A mere matter of money, I tell you. They have paid some one who was condemned to be branded — "

"There, there," said he who had been called Maximilien, "I will not follow you on that ground; it is not solid."

"But you yourself said just now that you did not believe it was Madame de La Motte who had been branded."

"No; I still do not believe it," said the young man, smiling.

"Who was it then?"

"It was the queen," said the young man, in a sharp tone, to his sinister-looking companion; and he accented the words with his indescribable smile.

The other drew back, laughing explosively at the jest; then, looking around him, "Adieu, Robespierre," he said.

"Adieu, Marat," replied the other; and they separated.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE MARRIAGE.

At noon of the same day the king came forth from his cabinet, and took his way to the square salon, in which already was the queen, surrounded by her little court. Marie Antoinette, pale beneath her rouge, listened with forced attention to the questions regarding her health addressed to her by Madame de Lamballe and Monsieur de Calonne. But she often glanced furtively at the door, — eagerly, as if desiring to see; and timorously, as if afraid to see.

"The king!" cried one of the ushers.

Louis XVI. stood on the threshold, and his eyes sought, first of all, Marie Antoinette. She rose and advanced to meet the king, who gracefully kissed her hand. "You are wonderfully beautiful to-day, Madame," said he.

She smiled sadly, and again searched vaguely among the throng.

"The bridal party have not yet arrived?" asked the king.

"Sire," replied the queen, with a violent effort at self-control, "Monsieur de Charny is here, and waits in the corridor till your Majesty shall order him to come in."

"Charny is there?" cried the king. "Let him come in at once."

Some of the gentlemen withdrew to carry the order to Monsieur de Charny. The queen nervously placed her

hand on her heart, and sat down with her back to the door.

"Why, it is noon," said the king; "the bride should be here."

Monsieur de Charny appeared at the door in time to hear the king's words, to which he immediately replied, "Your Majesty will pardon the involuntary delay of Mademoiselle de Taverney. Since her father's death she has not left her bed. To-day she rises for the first time, and she would have been here already but for a fainting-fit by which she has been attacked."

"That dear child loved her father so much! Well, since she has found a good husband, let us hope that she will be consoled."

The queen listened in a motionless attitude, but the blood left her face to fill her heart.

"Monsieur de Breteuil," said the king, suddenly, "have you sent the order for Cagliostro's banishment?"

"Yes, Sire," replied the minister, with humility.

"And that La Motte, who calls herself Valois, — is she not to be branded to-day?"

"At this moment, Sire, it is probably done."

The queen's eyes sparkled; a murmur of forced approbation was heard in the salon.

"It will annoy Monsieur le Cardinal to know that his accomplice has been branded," continued the king, with a persistence in severity which was unusual with him. Having uttered that word "accomplice," applied to an accused person acquitted by the parliament, — a word that scourged the idol of the Parisians, and stigmatized as a thief and a forger one of the princes of the Church, one of the first noblemen in France, — the king, as if in supporting the honor of his wife he would send a solemn defiance to the clergy, to the nobles, to the parliaments, to

the people, looked around with eyes in which flamed that anger and that majesty which no one had seen in France since the eyes of Louis XIV. had closed in eternal sleep.

Not a murmur, not a word of assent responded to that vengeance which the king was taking on all who had conspired to dishonor the monarchy. He approached the queen, who held out both her hands with an expression of profound gratitude.

At this moment Mademoiselle de Taverney appeared, looking more like a ghost than a bride. Philippe held her by the hand. She advanced with quick steps, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, depending on her brother's guidance. Thus she approached the king. Philippe pressed her hand; she opened her eyes and saw Louis XVI. smiling upon her. She made a reverence, and a murmur of the spectators applauded her beauty.

"Mademoiselle," said the king, taking her hand, "they tell me you are suffering, and that afflicts me. But I must do what I can for the happiness of those who serve me as does Monsieur de Charny. Should you not marry him to-day I could not be present at the ceremony, since I set out to-morrow with the queen on a journey through France. Come with me to the queen, Mademoiselle, and thank her; for her Majesty has a strong affection for you." Thus speaking, he led Andrée to Marie Antoinette.

The queen, much agitated, could hardly raise her eyes; she saw only Andrée's marriage-robe.

"To the chapel, gentlemen," said the king, and all followed the king and queen.

The Mass was begun immediately. The queen listened with her head buried in her hands, and praying with all the strength of her soul.

Monsieur de Charny, pale and handsome, was as cool

and brave as in the midst of battle, but was suffering much more.

Philippe gave all his attention to his sister, trembling and tottering, and was ready to support her by word and gesture.

Andrée uttered no prayer; she formed no wishes. She had nothing to hope, nothing to fear. Henceforth she was nothing in the eyes of men, nothing to God. "Am I a Christian?" she asked herself. "Am I like other persons? Hast thou appointed me to a righteous life, — thou, who art called the sovereign Arbiter? Thou hast always punished me, who have never sinned. Thou hast provided that I should have for a mortal enemy the only man whom I have loved! No; the things of this world and the laws of God do not concern me; doubtless I was cursed before my birth. It is very strange. Here is a man the sound of whose name alone would make me die of happiness. Had he come to ask me for myself, I should have been obliged to kneel at his feet, and beg his pardon for *my fault of other days*, — for thy fault, my God; and he perhaps would have repulsed me. And now this man marries me; and it is he who will beg for pardon on his knees. It is strange, strange indeed."

The ceremony concluded, the assembled party congratulated the newly married couple. The Admiral de Suffren, on the return from the chapel, took Andrée's hand, and in Olivier's name promised her the happiness she so much deserved. Andrée thanked the admiral, and begged him to conduct her to the king that she might thank him.

Charny followed at a distance, without daring to approach her.

The admiral crossed the grand salon, and conducted Andrée to the king, who kissed her on the forehead and

said, "Madame la Comtesse, go to the queen; she has a nuptial present for you."

Having spoken these words, which seemed to him very gracious, the king withdrew, followed by the court, leaving the young bride despairing in Philippe's arms.

"Oh," she murmured, "it is too much! It is too much, Philippe! I thought that I had already endured enough."

"Courage!" said Philippe, in a low tone. "Only this one trial more, sister."

"No, no," said Andrée; "I cannot. If *she* speaks to me, if *she* congratulates me, I shall die."

"You will die if you must, my dear sister; and in that you will be happier than I."

Philippe uttered these words so sadly that Andrée, as if stimulated by a goad, rushed forward and entered the library, where the queen, notwithstanding the season, — for it was the month of June, — was sitting by a fire.

Andrée remained standing, trembling with anger and with weakness too, and waited for the word which should strike her to the heart.

A minute — a century — elapsed before the queen made any motion. Then she rose, leaning on the chair, and with trembling fingers took a paper from the table. She advanced toward Andrée, and without speaking, placed the paper in her hands.

Between these two hearts speech was superfluous. Andrée took the paper, and read it. It was as follows: —

Andrée, you have saved me. My honor is preserved by you; my life is yours. In the name of that honor, which costs you so much, I declare to you that you may call me your sister. Try me; you will not see me blush. I intrust you with this paper, — it is the pledge of my gratitude; it is the dowry

which I give you. Your heart is noble ; it will be able to appreciate the present I bestow on you.

MARIE ANTOINETTE DE LORRAINE D'AUTRICHE.

Andrée looked at the queen. She saw her eyes moistened with tears, as with drooping head she awaited a response. She slowly crossed the room, placed in the fire the queen's note, and bowing profoundly, but still without speaking, she passed out of the library. Marie Antoinette made a movement to stop her, to follow her ; but the inflexible countess, leaving the door open, went to rejoin her brother in the salon.

Philippe called Charny, took his hand and placed it in that of Andrée, while on the threshold of the library behind the portière, which she held aside with her arm, the queen witnessed the painful scene.

Charny withdrew like the bridegroom of Death carried off by his livid bride, — looking back at the pale face of Marie Antoinette, who, as she thought, saw him disappearing forever.

At the gate of the palace two travelling-carriages were waiting. Andrée got into the first, and as Charny prepared to follow her, "Monsieur," she said, "you are, I believe, setting out for Picardy."

"Yes, Madame."

"And I am going to the place in the country where my mother died. Adieu." Charny bowed without replying. Andrée departed alone.

"Have you remained to tell me that you are my enemy?" said Olivier to Philippe.

"No, Monsieur ; you are not my enemy, since you are my brother-in-law."

Olivier offered his hand, got into the second carriage and departed.

Philippe, left alone, wrung his hands in the agony of

despair, and said in a voice choked by emotion, "My God, for those who do their duty on the earth, dost thou reserve some little joy in heaven? Joy!" he exclaimed, looking once more toward the palace, "I speak of joy! Those only can look with hope to the future life who there will meet with hearts who love them. No one here below loves me; I have not even the happiness of wishing to die."

THE END.

ANGE PITOU.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE READER IS MADE ACQUAINTED WITH THE HERO OF THIS HISTORY, AS WELL AS WITH THE COUNTRY IN WHICH HE FIRST SAW THE LIGHT.

On the borders of Picardy and the province of Soissons, and on that part of the national territory which, under the name of the Isle of France, formed a portion of the ancient patrimony of our kings, and in the centre of an immense crescent formed by a forest of fifty thousand acres which stretches its horns to the north and south, rises, almost buried amid the shades of a vast park planted by Francis I. and Henry II., the small city of Villers-Cotterets. This place is celebrated from having given birth to Charles Albert Demoustier, who, at the period when our present history commences, was there writing his "Letters to Émilie on Mythology," to the unbounded satisfaction of the pretty women of those days, who eagerly snatched his publications from each other as soon as printed.

Let us add, to complete the poetical reputation of this little city, whose detractors, notwithstanding its royal château and its two thousand four hundred inhabitants, obstinately persist in calling it a mere village, — let us

add, we say, to complete its poetical reputation, that it is situated at two leagues' distance from Laferté-Milan, where Racine was born, and eight leagues from Château-Thierry, the birthplace of La Fontaine.

Let us also state that the mother of the author of "Britannicus" and "Athalie" was from Villers-Cotterets.

But now we must return to its royal château and its two thousand four hundred inhabitants.

This royal château, begun by Francis I., whose salamanders still decorate it, and finished by Henry II., whose cipher it bears entwined with that of Catherine de Médicis and encircled by the three crescents of Diana of Poictiers, after having sheltered the loves of the knight-king with Madame d'Étampes, and those of Louis-Philippe of Orleans with the beautiful Madame de Montesson, had become almost uninhabited since the death of this last prince; his son, Philippe d'Orléans, afterwards called Égalité, having made it descend from the rank of a royal residence to that of a mere hunting rendezvous.

It is well known that the château and forest of Villers-Cotterets formed part of the appanage settled by Louis XIV. on his brother *Monsieur*, when the second son of Anne of Austria married the sister of Charles II., the Princess Henrietta of England.

As to the two thousand four hundred inhabitants of whom we have promised our readers to say a word, they were, as in all localities where two thousand four hundred people are united, a heterogeneous assemblage.

First, of a few nobles, who spent their summers in the neighboring châteaux and their winters in Paris, and who, mimicking the prince, had only a lodging-place in the city.

Secondly, of a goodly number of citizens, who could be seen, let the weather be what it might, leaving their

houses after dinner, umbrella in hand, to take their daily walk, — a walk which was regularly bounded by a wide ditch which separated the park from the forest, situated about a quarter of a league from the town, and which was called, doubtless on account of the exclamation which the sight of it drew from the asthmatic lungs of the promenaders, satisfied at finding themselves, after so long a walk, not too much out of breath, the "Ha! ha!"

Thirdly, of a considerably greater number of artisans, who worked the whole of the week, and only allowed themselves to take a walk on the Sunday; whereas their fellow-townsmen, more favored by fortune, could enjoy it every day.

Fourthly and finally, of some miserable proletarians, for whom the week had not even a Sabbath, and who, after having toiled six days in the pay of the nobles, the citizens, or even of the artisans, wandered on the seventh day through the forest to gather up dry wood or branches of the lofty trees, torn from them by the storm, — that mower of the forest, to whom oak-trees are but as ears of wheat, — and which it scattered over the humid soil beneath the lofty trees, the magnificent appanage of a prince.

If Villers-Cotterets (*Villerii ad Cotiam Retiæ*) had been, unfortunately, a town of sufficient importance in history to induce archæologists to ascertain and follow up its successive changes from a village to a burgh and from a burgh to a city, — the last, as we have said, being strongly contested, — they would certainly have proved this fact, that the village had begun by being a row of houses on either side of the road from Paris to Soissons; then they would have added that its situation on the borders of a beautiful forest having, though by slow degrees, brought to it a great increase of inhabitants; other

streets were added to the first, diverging like the rays of a star and leading towards other small villages with which it was important to keep up communication, and converging towards a point which naturally became the centre, — that is to say, what in the provinces is called The Square, — around which the handsomest buildings of the village, now become a burgh, were erected, and in the middle of which rises a fountain, now decorated with a quadruple dial; in short, they would have fixed the precise date when, near the modest village church — the first want of a people — arose the first turrets of the vast château, the last caprice of a king; a château which, after having been, as we have already said, by turns a royal and a princely residence, has in our days become a melancholy and hideous receptacle for mendicants under the direction of the Prefecture of the Seine.

But at the period at which this history commences, royal affairs, though already somewhat tottering, had not yet fallen to the low degree to which they have fallen in our days; the château was no longer inhabited by a prince, 't is true, but it had not yet become the abode of beggars; it was simply uninhabited, excepting the indispensable attendants required for its preservation; among whom were to be remarked the doorkeeper, the master of the tennis court, and the house steward; and therefore the windows of this immense edifice, some of which looked toward the park and others on a large court aristocratically called the square of the château, were all closed, which added not a little to the gloominess and solitary appearance of this square, at one of the extremities of which rose a small house, regarding which the reader, we hope, will permit us to say a few words.

It was a small house, of which, if we may be allowed to use the term, the back only was to be seen. But, as

is the case with many individuals, this back had the privilege of being the most presentable part. In fact, the front, which was towards the Rue de Soissons, one of the principal streets of the town, opened upon it by an awkwardly constructed gate, which was ill-naturedly kept closed eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, while the back was gay and smiling; that is to say, on the back was a garden, above the wall of which could be seen the tops of cherry, pear, and plum trees, while on each side of a small gate by which the garden was entered from the square was a centenary acacia-tree, which in the spring appeared to stretch out their branches above the wall to scatter their perfumed flowers over the surrounding grounds.

The abode was the residence of the chaplain of the château, who, notwithstanding the absence of the master, performed mass every Sunday in the seignorial church. He had a small pension, and besides this had the charge of two purses, — the one to send a scholar yearly to the college of Plessis, the other for one to the seminary at Soissons. It is needless to say that it was the Orleans family who supplied these purses, — founded, that of the seminary by the son of the Regent, that for the college by the father of the prince, — and that these two purses were the objects of ambition to all parents, at the same time that they were a cause of absolute despair to the pupils, being the source of extraordinary compositions, which compositions were to be presented for approval of the chaplain every Thursday.

Well, one Thursday in the month of July, 1789, a somewhat disagreeable day, being darkened by a storm, beneath which the two magnificent acacias we have spoken of, having already lost the virginal whiteness of their spring attire, shed a few leaves yellowed by the first

heats of summer, after a silence of some duration, broken only by the rustling of those leaves as they whirled against each other upon the beaten ground of the square, or by the shrill cry of the martin pursuing flies as it skimmed along the ground, eleven o'clock resounded from the pointed and slated belfry of the town hall.

Instantly a hurrah, loud as could have been uttered by a whole regiment of fusileers, accompanied by a rushing sound like that of the avalanche when bounding from crag to crag, was heard; the door between the two acacia-trees was opened, or rather burst open, and gave egress to a torrent of boys, who spread themselves over the square, when instantly some five or six joyous and noisy groups were formed, — one around a circle formed to keep peg-tops prisoners, another about a game of hop-scotch traced with chalk upon the ground, another before several holes scientifically hollowed out, where those who were fortunate enough to have sous might lose them at pitch and toss.

At the same time that these gambling and playful scholars — who were apostrophized by the few neighbors whose windows opened on this square as wicked do-no-goods, and who, in general, wore trousers the knees of which were torn, as were also the elbows of their jackets — assembled to play upon the square, those who were called good and reasonable boys, and who, in the opinion of the gossips, must be the pride and joy of their respective parents, were seen to detach themselves from the general mass, and by various paths, though with slow steps, indicative of their regret, to walk, basket in hand, towards their paternal roofs, where awaited them the slice of bread and butter, or of bread and preserved fruit, destined to be their compensation for the games they had thus abjured. The latter were, in general, dressed in

jackets in tolerably good condition, and in breeches which were almost irreproachable ; and this, together with their boasted propriety of demeanor, rendered them objects of derision and even of hatred to their worse-dressed and, above all, worse-disciplined companions.

Besides the two classes we have pointed out under the denomination of gambling and well-conducted scholars, there was still a third, which we shall designate by the name of idle scholars, who scarcely ever left school with the others, whether to play in the square or to return to their paternal homes ; seeing that this unfortunate class were almost constantly, what in school language is termed "kept," which means to say, that while their companions, after having said their lessons and written their themes, were playing at top or eating their bread and jam, they remained nailed to their school benches or before their desks, that they might learn their lessons or write their themes during the hours of recreation, which they had not been able to accomplish satisfactorily during the class, when, indeed, the gravity of their faults did not demand a punishment more severe than that of mere detention, such as the rod, the cane, or the cat-o'-nine-tails.

And had any one followed the path which led into the schoolroom, and which the pupils had just used, in the inverse sense, to get out of it, he would, — after going through a narrow alley, which prudently ran outside of the fruit garden and opened into a large yard which served as a private playground, — he would, as we have said, have heard, on entering this courtyard, a loud harsh voice resounding from the upper part of a staircase, while a scholar, whom our impartiality as historians compels us to acknowledge as belonging to the third class we have mentioned, that is to say, to

that of the idle boys, was precipitately descending the said staircase, making just such a movement with his shoulders as asses are wont to do when endeavoring to rid themselves of a cruel rider, or as scholars when they have received a sharp blow from the cat-o'-nine-tails, to alleviate the pain they are enduring.

"Ah! miscreant; ah! you little excommunicated villain," cried the voice, "ah! you young serpent, away with you, off with you; *vade, vade!* Remember that for three whole years have I been patient with you; but there are rascals who would tire the patience of even God himself. But now it is all over. I have done with you. Take your squirrels, take your frogs, take your lizards, take your silk-worms, take your cock-chafers, and go to your aunt, go to your uncle if you have one, or to the devil if you will, so that I never more set eyes upon you; *vade, vade!*"

"Oh, my good Monsieur Fortier, do pray forgive me," replied the other voice, still upon the staircase and in a supplicating tone; "is it worth your while to put yourself into such a towering passion for a poor little barbarism and a few solecisms, as you call them?"

"Three barbarisms and seven solecisms in a theme of only twenty-five lines!" replied the voice, in a rougher and still more angry tone.

"It has been so to-day, sir, I acknowledge; Thursday is always my unlucky day; but if by chance to-morrow my theme should be well written, would you not forgive me my misfortunes of to-day? Tell me, now, would you not, my good Abbé?"

"On every composition day for the last three years you have repeated that same thing to me, you idle fellow, and the examination is fixed for the first of November, and I, on the entreaty of your aunt Angelique, have had

the weakness to put your name down on the list of candidates for the Soissons purse; I shall have the shame of seeing my pupil rejected, and of hearing it everywhere declared that Pitou is an ass, — *Angelus Petovius asinus est.*"

Let us hasten to say — that the kind-hearted reader may from the first moment feel for him all the interest he deserves — that Ange Pitou, whose name the Abbé Fortier had so picturesquely Latinized, is the hero of this story.

"Oh, my good Monsieur Fortier! oh, my dear master!" replied the scholar, in despair.

"I, your master!" exclaimed the abbé, deeply humiliated by the appellation. "God be thanked, I am no more your master than you are my pupil. I disown you, — I do not know you. I would that I had never seen you. I forbid you to mention my name, or even to bow to me. *Retro*, miserable boy, *retro!*"

"Oh, Monsieur l'Abbé," insisted the unhappy Pitou, who appeared to have some weighty motive for not falling out with his master, "do not, I entreat you, withdraw your interest for me on account of a poor halting theme."

"Ah!" exclaimed the abbé, quite beside himself on hearing this last supplication, and running down the first four steps of the staircase, while Ange Pitou jumped down the four bottom ones and made his appearance in the courtyard, — "ah! you are chopping logic when you cannot even write a theme; you are calculating the extent of my patience, when you know not how to distinguish the nominative from the accusative."

"You have always been so kind to me, Monsieur l'Abbé," replied the committer of barbarisms, "and you will only have to say a word in my favor to my lord the bishop."

"Would you have me belie my conscience, wretched boy?"

"If it be to do a good action, Monsieur l'Abbé, the God of mercy will forgive you for it."

"Never! never!"

"And besides, who knows, the examiners perhaps will not be more severe towards me than they were towards my foster-brother, Sebastian Gilbert, when last year he was a candidate for the Paris purse; and he was a famous fellow for barbarisms, if ever there was one, although he was only thirteen years old, and I was seventeen."

"Ah! indeed; and this is another precious stupidity which you have uttered," cried the abbé, coming down the remaining steps, and in his turn appearing at the door with his cat-o'-nine-tails in his hand, while Pitou took care to keep at the prudent distance from his professor which he had all along maintained. "Yes, I say stupidity," continued the abbé, crossing his arms and looking indignantly at his scholar; "and this is the reward of my lessons in logic. Triple animal that you are! it is thus you remember the old axiom, — *Noli minora, loqui majora volens.* Why, it was precisely because Gilbert was so much younger, that they were more indulgent towards a child — a child of fourteen years old — than they would have been to a great simpleton of nearly eighteen."

"Yes, and because he is the son of Monsieur Honoré Gilbert, who has an income of eighteen thousand livres from good landed property, and this on the plain of Pillaleux," replied the logician, in a piteous tone.

The Abbé Fortier looked at Pitou, pouting his lips and knitting his brows.

"This is somewhat less stupid," grumbled he, after a moment's silence and scrutiny. "And yet it is but

specious, and without any basis: *Species, non autem corpus.*"

"Oh, if I were the son of a man possessing an income of eighteen thousand livres!" repeated Ange Pitou, who thought he perceived that his answer had made some impression on the professor.

"Yes, but you are not so, and to make up for it, you are as ignorant as the clown of whom Juvenal speaks, — a profane citation," the abbé crossed himself, "but no less just, — *Arcadius juvenis.* I would wager that you do not even know what *Arcadius* means?"

"Why, Arcadian, to be sure," replied Ange Pitou, drawing himself up with the majesty of pride.

"And what besides?"

"Besides what?"

"Arcadia was the country of donkeys, and with the ancients, as with us, *asinus* was synonymous with *stultus.*"

"I did not wish to understand your question in that sense," rejoined Pitou, "seeing that it was far from my imagination that the austere mind of my worthy preceptor could have descended to satire."

The Abbé Fortier looked at him a second time, and with as profound attention as the first.

"Upon my word!" cried he, somewhat mollified by the incense which his disciple had offered him; "there are really moments when one would swear that the fellow is less stupid than he appears to be."

"Come, Monsieur l'Abbé," said Pitou, who, if he had not heard the words the abbé had uttered, had caught the expression of a return to a more merciful consideration which had passed over his countenance, "forgive me this time, and you will see what a beautiful theme I will write by to-morrow."

"Well, then, I will consent," said the abbé, placing, in sign of truce, his cat-o'-nine-tails in his belt and approaching Pitou, who observing this pacific demonstration, made no further attempt to move.

"Oh, thanks, thanks!" cried the pupil.

"Wait a moment, and be not so hasty with your thanks. Yes, I forgive you, but on one condition."

Pitou hung down his head, and as he was now at the discretion of the abbé, he waited with resignation.

"It is that you shall correctly reply to a question I shall put to you."

"In Latin?" inquired Pitou with much anxiety.

"Latinè," replied the professor.

Pitou drew a deep sigh.

There was a momentary silence, during which the joyous cries of the schoolboys who were playing on the square reached the ears of Ange Pitou. He sighed a second time, more deeply than the first.

"Quid virtus, quid religio?" asked the abbé.

These words, pronounced with all the pomposity of a pedagogue, rang in the ears of poor Ange Pitou like the trumpet of the angel on the day of judgment; a cloud passed before his eyes, and such an effect was produced upon his intellect by it, that he thought for a moment he was on the point of becoming mad.

However, as this violent cerebral labor did not appear to produce any result, the required answer was indefinitely postponed. A prolonged noise was then heard, as the professor slowly inhaled a pinch of snuff.

Pitou clearly saw that it was necessary to say something.

"Nescio," he replied, hoping that his ignorance would be pardoned by his avowing that ignorance in Latin.

"You do not know what is virtue!" exclaimed the

abbé, choking with rage; "you do not know what is religion!"

"I know very well what it is in French," replied Ange, "but I do not know it in Latin."

"Well, then, get thee to Arcadia, *juvenis;* all is now ended between us, pitiful wretch!"

Pitou was so overwhelmed that he did not move a step, although the Abbé Fortier had drawn his cat-o'-nine-tails from his belt with as much dignity as the commander of an army would, at the commencement of a battle, have drawn his sword from the scabbard.

"But what is to become of me?" cried the poor youth, letting his arms fall listlessly by his side. "What will become of me if I lose the hope of being admitted into the seminary?"

"Become whatever you can. It is, by heaven! the same to me."

The good abbé was so angry that he almost swore.

"But you do not know, then, that my aunt believes I am already an abbé?"

"Well, then, she will know that you are not fit to be made even a sacristan!"

"But, Monsieur Fortier —"

"I tell you to depart — *limine linguæ.*"

"Well, then," cried Pitou, as a man who makes up his mind to a painful resolution, but who in fact does make it, "will you allow me to take my desk?" said he to the abbé, hoping that during the time he would be performing this operation a respite would be given him, and the abbé's heart would become impressed with more merciful feelings.

"Most assuredly," said the latter; "your desk, with all that it contains."

Pitou sorrowfully reascended the staircase, for the

schoolroom was on the first floor. On returning to the room — in which, assembled around a large table, and pretending to be hard at work, were seated some fourteen boys — and carefully raising the flap of his desk to ascertain whether all the animals and insects which belonged to him were safely stowed in it, and lifting it so gently that it proved the great care he took of his favorites, he walked with slow and measured steps along the corridor.

At the top of the stairs was the Abbé Fortier, with outstretched arm, pointing to the staircase with the end of his cat-o'-nine-tails.

It was necessary to run the gauntlet. Ange Pitou made himself as humble and as small as he possibly could, but this did not prevent him from receiving, as he passed by, a last thwack from the instrument to which Abbé Fortier owed his best pupils, and the employment of which, although more frequent and more prolonged on the back of Ange Pitou, had produced the sorrowful results just witnessed.

While Ange Pitou, wiping away a last tear, was bending his steps, his desk upon his head, towards Pleux, the quarter of the town in which his aunt resided, let us say a few words as to his physical appearance and his antecedents.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH IT IS PROVED THAT AN AUNT IS NOT ALWAYS A MOTHER.

Louis Ange Pitou, as he himself said in his dialogue with the Abbé Fortier, was, at the period when this history commences, seventeen and a half years old. He was a tall, slender youth, with yellow hair, red cheeks, and blue eyes. The bloom of youth, fresh and innocent, was expanded over his wide mouth, the thick lips of which discovered, when extended by a hearty laugh, two perfectly complete rows of formidable teeth, — particularly formidable to those of whose dinner he was about to partake. At the end of his long bony arms were solidly attached hands as large as beetles, legs rather inclined to be bowed, knees as big as a child's head, which regularly made their way through his tight black breeches, and immense feet, which, notwithstanding, were at their ease in calfskin shoes reddened by constant use; such, with a sort of cassock of brown serge, a garment something between a frock-coat and a blouse, is an exact and impartial description of the ex-disciple of the Abbé Fortier.

We must now sketch his moral character.

Ange Pitou had been left an orphan when only twelve years old, the time at which he had the misfortune to lose his mother, of whom he was the only child. That is to say, that since the death of his father, which event had occurred before he had attained the years of recollection, Ange Pitou, adored by his poor mother, had been

allowed to do whatever he thought fit, which had greatly developed his physical education, but had altogether retarded the advancement of his moral faculties. Born in a charming village called Haramont, situated at the distance of a league from the town, and in the centre of a wood, his first walks had been to explore the depths of his native forest, and the first application of his intelligence was that of making war upon the animals by which it was inhabited. The result of this application, thus directed towards one sole object, was, that at ten years old Pitou was a very distinguished poacher, and a bird-catcher of the first order; and that almost without any labor, and above all without receiving lessons from any one, but by the sole power of that instinct given by nature to man when born in the midst of woods, and which would seem to be a portion of that same instinct with which she has endowed the animal kingdom. And therefore every run of hare or rabbit within the circle of three leagues was known to him, and not a marshy pool, where birds were wont to drink, had escaped his investigation. In every direction were to be seen the marks made by his pruning-knife on trees that were adapted to catching birds by imitating their calls. From these different exercises it resulted that in some of them Pitou had attained the most extraordinary skill.

Thanks to his long arms and his prominent knees, which enabled him to climb the largest standard trees, he would ascend to their very summits, to take the highest nests, with an agility and a certainty which attracted the admiration of his companions, and which, in a latitude nearer to the Equator, would have excited the esteem even of monkeys. In that sport, so attractive even to grown people, in which the bird-catcher inveigles the birds to light upon a tree set with limed twigs, by imi-

tating the cry of the jay or the owlet, — birds which, among the plumed tribe, enjoy the bitter hatred of the whole species, and to such an extent that every sparrow, every finch or tomtit, hastens at the call in the hope of plucking out a single feather from the common enemy, and, for the most, leave all their own, — Pitou's companions either made use of a natural owlet or a natural jay, or with some particular plant formed a pipe, by aid of which they managed to imitate indifferently the cry of either the one or the other of these birds. But Pitou disdained all such preparations, despised such petty subterfuges. It was upon his own resources that he relied, it was with his own natural means that he drew them into the snare. It was, in short, his own lips that modulated the shrieking and discordant cries, which brought around him not only other birds, but birds of the same species, who allowed themselves to be enticed, we will not say by this note, but by this cry, so admirably did he imitate it. As to the sport in the marshy pools, it was to Pitou the easiest thing in the world, and he would certainly have despised it as a pursuit of art had it been less productive as an object of profit. But notwithstanding the contempt with which he regarded this sport, there was not one of the most expert in the art who could have vied with Pitou in covering with fern a pool that was too extensive to be completely "laid," — that is the technical term; none of them knew so well as he how to give the proper inclination to his limed twigs, so that the most cunning birds could not drink either over or under them; and finally, none of them had that steadiness of hand and that clear-sightedness which must insure the due mixture, though in scientifically unequal quantities, of the rosin, oil, and glue, in order that the glue should not become either too fluid or too brittle.

Now, as the estimation of the qualities of a man changes according to the theatre on which these qualities are produced, and according to the spectators before whom they are exhibited, Pitou, in his own native village, Haramont, amidst his country neighbors, — that is to say, men accustomed to demand of nature at least half their resources, and, like all peasants, possessing an instinctive hatred of civilization, — Pitou enjoyed such distinguished consideration that his poor mother could not for a moment entertain the idea that he was pursuing a wrong path, and that the most perfect education that can be given, and at great expense, to a man, was not precisely that which her son, a privileged person in this respect, had given, gratis, to himself.

But when the good woman fell sick, when she felt that death was approaching, when she understood that she was about to leave her child alone and isolated in the world, she began to entertain doubts, and looked around her for some one who would be the stay and the support of the future orphan. She then remembered that ten years before, a young man had knocked at her door in the middle of the night, bringing with him a newly born child, to take charge of which he had not only given her a tolerably good round sum, but had deposited a still larger sum for the benefit of the child with a notary at Villers-Cotterets. All that she had then known of this mysterious young man was that his name was Gilbert, but about three years previous to her falling ill he had reappeared. He was then a man about twenty-seven years of age, somewhat stiff in his demeanor, dogmatical in his conversation, and cold in his manner; but this first layer of ice melted at once when his child was brought to him, on finding that he was hale, hearty, and smiling, and brought up in the way in which he had

directed, — that is to say, as a child of nature. He then pressed the hand of the good woman and merely said to her, —

"In the hour of need calculate upon me."

Then he had taken the child, had inquired the way to Ermenonville, and with his son performed the pilgrimage to the tomb of Rousseau, after which he returned to Villers-Cotterets. Then, seduced, no doubt, by the wholesome air he breathed there, by the favorable manner in which the notary had spoken of the school under the charge of the Abbé Fortier, he had left little Gilbert with the worthy man, whose philosophic appearance had struck him at first sight; for at that period philosophy held such great sway that it had insinuated itself even among churchmen.

After this he had set out again for Paris, leaving his address with the Abbé Fortier.

Pitou's mother was aware of all these circumstances. When at the point of death, those words, 'In the hour of need calculate upon me,' returned to her recollection. This was at once a ray of light to her; doubtless Providence had regulated all this in such a manner that poor Pitou might find even more than he was about to lose. She sent for the curate of the parish; as she had never learned to write, the curate wrote, and the same day the letter was taken to the Abbé Fortier, who immediately added Gilbert's address, and took it to the post-office.

It was high time, for the poor woman died two days afterwards. Pitou was too young to feel the full extent of the loss he had suffered. He wept for his mother, not from comprehending the eternal separation of the grave, but because he saw his mother cold, pale, disfigured. Then the poor lad felt instinctively that the guardian angel of their hearth had fled; that the house,

deprived of his mother, had become deserted and uninhabitable. Not only could he not comprehend what was to be his future fate, but even how he was to exist the following day. Therefore, after following his mother's remains to the churchyard, when the earth, thrown into the grave, resounded upon her coffin, when the modest mound that covered it had been rounded off, he sat down upon it, and replied to every observation that was made to him as to his leaving it, by shaking his head and saying that he had never left his mother Madeleine, and that he would remain where she remained.

He stayed during the whole of that day and night, seated upon his mother's grave.

It was there that the worthy Doctor Gilbert, — but have we already informed the reader that the future protector of Pitou was a physician? — it was there that the worthy doctor found him, when, feeling the full extent of the duty imposed upon him by the promise he had made, he had hastened to fulfil it, and this within forty-eight hours after the letter had been despatched.

Ange was very young when he had first seen the doctor, but it is well known that the impressions received in youth are so strong that they leave eternal reminiscences. Then the passage of the mysterious young man had left its trace in the house. He had there left the young child of whom we have spoken, and with him comparative ease and comfort; every time that Ange had heard his mother pronounce the name of Gilbert, it had been with a feeling that approached to adoration; then again, when he had reappeared at the house a grown man, and with the title of doctor, when he had added to the benefits he had showered upon it the promise of future protection, Pitou had comprehended, from the fervent gratitude of his mother, that he himself ought also to be grateful, and

the poor youth, without precisely understanding what he was saying, had stammered out the words of eternal remembrance and profound gratitude which had before been uttered by his mother.

Therefore, as soon as he saw the doctor appear at the grated gate of the cemetery, and saw him advancing towards him amid the mossy graves and broken crosses, he recognized him, rose up and went to meet him, for he understood that to the person who had thus come on being called for by his mother he could not say no, as he had done to others; he therefore made no further resistance than that of turning back to give a last look at the grave, when Gilbert took him by the hand and gently drew him away from the gloomy enclosure. An elegant cabriolet was standing at the gate; he made the poor child get into it, and for the moment leaving the house of Pitou's mother under the guardianship of public faith and the interest which misfortune always inspires, he drove his young *protégé* to the town and alighted with him at the best inn, which at that time was called The Dauphin. He was scarcely installed there when he sent for a tailor, who, having been forewarned, brought with him a quantity of ready-made clothes. He with due precaution selected for Pitou garments which were too long for him by two or three inches, — a superfluity which, from the rate at which our hero was growing, promised not to be of long duration. After this he walked with him towards that quarter of the town which we have designated, and which was called Pleux.

The nearer Pitou approached this quarter, the slower did his steps become, for it was evident that he was about to be conducted to the house of his aunt Angélique; and notwithstanding that he had but seldom seen his god-

mother, — for it was Aunt Angélique who had bestowed on Pitou his poetical Christian name, — he had retained a very formidable remembrance of his respectable relative.

And in fact there was nothing about Aunt Angélique that could be in any way attractive to a child accustomed to all the tender care of maternal solicitude. Aunt Angélique was at that time an old maid between fifty-five and fifty-eight years of age, stultified by the most minute practices of religious bigotry, and in whom an ill-understood piety had inverted every charitable, merciful, and humane feeling, to cultivate in their stead a natural dose of avaricious intelligence, which was increased day by day from her constant intercourse with the bigoted old gossips of the town. She did not precisely live on charity; but besides the sale of the thread she spun upon her wheel, and the letting out of chairs in the church, which office had been granted to her by the chapter, she from time to time received from pious souls, who allowed themselves to be deceived by her pretensions to religion, small sums, which from their original copper she converted into silver, and then from silver into golden louis, which disappeared not only without any person seeing them disappear, but without any one ever suspecting their existence, and which were buried, one by one, in the cushion of the arm-chair upon which she sat to work; and when once in this hiding-place, they rejoined by degrees a certain number of their fellow-coins, which had been gathered one by one, and like them destined thenceforth to be sequestered from circulation until the unknown day of the death of the old maid should place them in the hands of her heir.

It was, then, towards the abode of this venerable relation that Doctor Gilbert was advancing, leading the great Pitou by the hand.

We say the great Pitou, because from three months after his birth Pitou had been too tall for his age.

Mademoiselle Rose Angélique Pitou, at the moment when her door opened to give ingress to her nephew and the doctor, was in a perfect transport of joyous humor. While they were singing mass for the dead over the dead body of her sister-in-law in the church at Haramont, there was a wedding and several baptisms in the church of Villers-Cotterets, so that her chair-letting had in a single day amounted to six livres. Mademoiselle Angélique had therefore converted her pence into a silver crown, which, in its turn, added to three others which had been put by at different periods, had given her a golden louis. This louis had at this precise moment been sent to rejoin the others in the chair-cushion, and these days of reunion were naturally days of high festivity to Mademoiselle Angélique.

It was at the moment, and after having opened her door, which had been closed during the important operation, and Aunt Angélique had taken a last walk round her arm-chair to assure herself that no external demonstration could reveal the existence of the treasure concealed within, that the doctor and Pitou entered.

The scene might have been particularly affecting, but in the eyes of a man who was so perspicacious an observer as Doctor Gilbert, it was merely grotesque. On perceiving her nephew, the old bigot uttered a few words about her poor dear sister, whom she had loved so much; and then she appeared to wipe away a tear. On his side the doctor, who wished to examine the deepest recesses of the old maid's heart before coming to any determination with respect to her, took upon himself to utter a sort of sermon on the duties of aunts toward their nephews. But by degrees, as the sermon was progressing and the

unctuous words fell from the doctor's lips, the arid eyes of the old maid drank up the imperceptible tear which had moistened them; all her features resumed the dryness of parchment, with which they appeared to be covered; she raised her left hand to the height of her pointed chin, and with the right hand she began to calculate on her skinny fingers the quantity of pence which her letting of chairs produced to her per annum. So that chance having so directed it that her calculation had terminated at the same time with the doctor's sermon, she could reply at the very moment, that whatever might have been the love she entertained for her poor sister, and the degree of interest she might feel for her dear nephew, the mediocrity of her receipts did not permit her, notwithstanding her double title of aunt and godmother, to incur any increased expense.

The doctor, however, was prepared for this refusal. It did not, therefore, in any way surprise him. He was a great advocate for new ideas; and as the first volume of Lavater had just then appeared, he had already applied the physiognomic doctrines of the Zurich philosopher to the yellow and skinny features of Mademoiselle Angélique.

The result of this examination was, that the doctor felt assured, from the small sharp eyes of the old maid, her long and pinched-up nose and thin lips, that she united in her single person the three sins of avarice, selfishness, and hypocrisy.

Her answer, as we have said, did not cause any species of astonishment. However, he wished to convince himself, in his quality of observer of human nature, how far the devotee would carry the development of these three defects.

"But, Mademoiselle," said he, "Ange Pitou is a poor

orphan child, the son of your own brother, and in the name of humanity you cannot abandon your brother's son to be dependent on public charity."

"Well, now, listen to me, Monsieur Gilbert," said the old maid; "it would be an increase of expense of at least six sous a day, and that at the lowest calculation; for that great fellow would eat at least a pound of bread a day."

Pitou made a wry face: he was in the habit of eating a pound and a half at his breakfast alone.

"And without calculating the soap for his washing," added Mademoiselle Angélique; "and I recollect that he is a sad one for dirtying clothes."

In fact, Pitou did sadly dirty his clothes, and that is very conceivable, when we remember the life he had led, climbing trees and lying down in marshes; but we must render him this justice, that he tore his clothes even more than he soiled them.

"Oh, fie, Mademoiselle," cried the doctor, "fie, Mademoiselle Angélique! Can you, who so well practise Christian charity, enter into such minute calculations with regard to your own nephew and godson?"

"And without calculating the cost of his clothes," cried the old devotee most energetically, who suddenly remembered having seen her sister Madeleine busily employed in sewing patches on her nephew's jacket and knee-caps on his small-clothes.

"Then," said the doctor, "am I to understand that you refuse to take charge of your nephew? The orphan who has been repulsed from his aunt's threshold will be compelled to beg for alms at the threshold of strangers."

Mademoiselle Angélique, notwithstanding her avarice, was alive to the odium which would naturally attach to

her if from her refusal to receive her nephew he should be compelled to have recourse to such an extremity.

"No," said she, "I will take charge of him."

"Ah!" exclaimed the doctor, happy to find a single good feeling in a heart which he had thought completely withered.

"Yes," continued the devotee, "I will recommend him to the Augustin Friars at Bourg Fontaine, and he shall enter their monastery as a lay-servant."

We have already said that the doctor was a philosopher. We know what was the meaning of the word philosopher in those days.

He therefore instantly resolved to snatch a neophyte from the Augustin brotherhood, and that with as much zealous fervor as the Augustins, on their side, could have displayed in carrying off an adept from the philosopher.

"Well, then," he rejoined, plunging his hand into his deep pocket, "since you are in such a position of pecuniary difficulty, my dear Mademoiselle Angélique, as to be compelled, from your deficiency in personal resources, to recommend your nephew to the charity of others, I will seek elsewhere for some one who can more efficaciously than yourself apply to the maintenance of your nephew the sum which I had designed for him. I am obliged to return to America. I will, before I set out, apprentice your nephew Pitou to some joiner, or a smith. He shall, however, himself choose the trade for which he feels a vocation. During my absence he will grow bigger, and on my return he will already have become acquainted with his business, and then — why, I shall see what can be made of him. Come, my child, kiss your aunt," continued the doctor, "and let us be off at once."

The doctor had not concluded the sentence when Pitou rushed towards the antiquated spinster; his long arms were extended, and he was in fact most eager to embrace his aunt, on the condition that this kiss was to be the signal, between him and her, of an eternal separation.

But at the words "the sum," the gesture with which the doctor had accompanied them, the thrusting his hand into his pocket, the silvery sound which that hand had incontinently given to a heap of crown-pieces, the amount of which might have been estimated by the tension of the pocket, the old maid had felt the fire of cupidity mount even to her heart.

"Oh," cried she, "my dear Monsieur Gilbert, you must be well aware of one thing!"

"And what is that?" asked the doctor.

"Why, good heaven! that no one in the world can love this poor child half so much as I do."

And entwining her scraggy arms round Pitou's neck, she imprinted a sour kiss on each of his cheeks, which made him shudder from the tips of his toes to the roots of his hair.

"Oh, certainly," replied the doctor; "I know that well, and I so little doubted your affection for him that I brought him at once to you as his natural support. But that which you have just said to me, dear mademoiselle, has convinced me at the same time of your good-will and of your inability, and I see clearly that you are too poor to aid those who are poorer than yourself."

"Why, my good Monsieur Gilbert," rejoined the old devotee, "there is a merciful God in heaven, and from heaven does he not feed all his creatures?"

"That is true," replied Gilbert; "but although he gives food to the ravens, he does not put out orphans

as apprentices. Now, this is what must be done for Ange Pitou, and this, with your small means, would doubtless cost you too much."

"But yet, if you were to give that sum, good Doctor."

"What sum?"

"The sum of which you spoke, the sum which is there in your pocket," added the devotee, stretching her crooked finger toward the doctor's coat.

"I will assuredly give it, dear Mademoiselle Angélique," said the doctor; "but I forewarn you it will be on one condition."

"And what is that?"

"That the boy shall have a profession."

"He shall have one, and that I promise you on the faith of Angélique Pitou, most worthy Doctor," cried the devotee, her eyes riveted on the pocket which was swaying to and fro.

"You promise it?"

"I promise you it shall be so."

"Seriously, is it not?"

"On the truth of the living God, my dear Monsieur Gilbert, I swear to do it."

And Mademoiselle Angélique horizontally extended her emaciated hand.

"Well, then, be it so," said the doctor, drawing from his pocket a well-rounded bag; "I am ready to give the money, as you see. On your side, are you ready to make yourself responsible to me for the child?"

"Upon the true cross, Monsieur Gilbert."

"Do not let us swear so much, dear Mademoiselle, but let us sign a little more."

"I will sign, Monsieur Gilbert, I will sign."

"Before a notary?"

"Before a notary."

"Well, then, let us go at once to Papa Niguet."

Papa Niguet, to whom, thanks to his long acquaintance with him, the doctor applied this friendly title, was, as those know who are familiar with our work entitled "Joseph Balsamo," the notary of greatest reputation in the town.

Mademoiselle Angélique, of whom Master Niguet was also the notary, had no objection to offer to the choice made by the doctor. She followed him therefore to the notary's office. There the scrivener registered the promise made by Mademoiselle Rose Angélique Pitou, to take charge of and to place in the exercise of an honorable profession Louis Ange Pitou, her nephew, and so doing should annually receive the sum of two hundred livres. The contract was made for five years. The doctor deposited eight hundred livres in the hands of the notary; the other two hundred were to be paid to Mademoiselle Angélique in advance.

The following day the doctor left Villers-Cotterêts after having settled some accounts with one of his farmers, with regard to whom we shall speak hereafter; and Mademoiselle Pitou, pouncing like a vulture upon the aforesaid two hundred livres payable in advance, deposited eight golden louis in the cushion of her arm-chair.

As to the eight livres which remained, they waited, in a small delf saucer which had, during the last thirty or forty years, been the receptacle of clouds of coins of every description, until the harvest of the following two or three Sundays had made up the sum of twenty-four livres, on attaining which, as we have already stated, the above-named sum underwent the golden metamorphosis, and passed from the saucer into the arm-chair.

CHAPTER III.

ANGE PITOU AT HIS AUNT'S.

We have observed the very slight degree of inclination which Ange Pitou felt towards a long-continued sojourn with his Aunt Angélique; the poor child, endowed with instinct equal to, and perhaps superior to, that of the animals against whom he continually made war, had divined at once, we will not say all the disappointments — we have seen that he did not for a single moment delude himself upon the subject — but all the vexations, tribulations, and annoyances to which he would be exposed.

In the first place — but we must admit that this was by no means the reason which most influenced Pitou to dislike his aunt — Doctor Gilbert having left Villers-Cotterêts, there never was a word said about placing the child as an apprentice. The good notary had indeed given her a hint or two with regard to her formal obligation; but Mademoiselle Angélique had replied that her nephew was very young, and above all, that his health was too delicate to be subjected to labor which would probably be beyond his strength. The notary, on hearing this observation, had in good faith admired the kindness of heart of Mademoiselle Pitou, and had deferred taking any steps as to the apprenticeship until the following year. There was no time lost, the child being then only in his twelfth year.

Once installed at his aunt's, and while the latter was ruminating as to the mode she should adopt whereby to

make the most of her dear nephew, Pitou, who once more found himself in his forest, or very near to it, had already made his topographical observations in order to lead the same life at Villers-Cotterêts as at Haramont.

In fact, he had made a circuit of the neighborhood, in which he had convinced himself that the best pools were those on the road to Dampleux, that to Compiègne and that to Vivières, and that the best district for game was that of the Wolf's Heath.

Pitou, having made this survey, took all the necessary measures for pursuing his juvenile sport.

The thing most easy to be procured, as it did not require any outlay of capital, was bird-lime; the bark of the holly, brayed in a mortar and steeped in water, gave the lime; and as to the twigs to be limed, they were to be found by thousands on every birch-tree in the neighborhood. Pitou therefore manufactured, without saying a word to any one on the subject, a thousand of limed twigs and a pot of glue of the first quality; and one fine morning, after having the previous evening taken on his aunt's account at the baker's a four-pound loaf, he set off at daybreak, remained out the whole day, and returned home when the evening had closed in.

Pitou had not formed such a resolution without duly calculating the effect it would produce. He had foreseen a tempest. Without possessing the wisdom of Socrates, he knew the temper of his Aunt Angélique as well as the illustrious tutor of Alcibiades knew that of his wife Xantippe.

Pitou had not deceived himself in his foresight, but he thought he would be able to brave the storm by presenting to the old devotee the produce of his day's sport; only he had not been able to foretell from what spot the thunder would be hurled at him.

The thunderbolt struck him immediately on entering the house.

Mademoiselle Angélique had ensconced herself behind the door, that she might not miss her nephew as he entered, so that at the very moment he ventured to put his foot into the room, he received a cuff upon the occiput, and in which, without further information, he at once recognized the withered hand of the old devotee.

Fortunately, Pitou's head was a tolerably hard one, and although the blow had scarcely staggered him, he pretended, in order to mollify his aunt, whose anger had increased, from having hurt her fingers in striking with such violence, to fall, stumbling as he went, at the opposite end of the room; there, seated on the floor, and seeing that his aunt was returning to the assault, her distaff in her hand, he hastened to draw from his pocket the talisman on which he had relied to allay the storm, and obtain pardon for his flight. And this was two dozen of birds, among which were a dozen redbreasts and half-a-dozen thrushes.

Mademoiselle Angélique, perfectly astounded, opened her eyes widely, continuing to scold for form's sake; but although still scolding, she took possession of her nephew's sport, retreating three paces towards the lamp.

"What is all this?" she asked.

"You must see clearly enough, my dear little Aunt Angélique," replied Pitou, "that they are birds."

"Good to eat?" eagerly inquired the old maid, who, in her quality of devotee, was naturally a great eater.

"Good to eat!" reiterated Pitou; "well, that is singular. Redbreasts and thrushes good to eat! I believe they are, indeed!"

"And where did you steal these birds, you little wretch?"

"I did not steal them; I caught them."

"Caught them! how?"

"By lime-twigging them."

"Lime-twigging, — what do you mean by that?"

Pitou looked at his aunt with an air of astonishment; he could not comprehend that the education of any person in existence could have been so neglected as not to know the meaning of lime-twigging.

"Lime-twigging?" said he; "why, zounds! 't is lime-twigging."

"Yes; but, saucy fellow, I do not understand what you mean by lime-twigging."

As Pitou was full of compassion for the uninitiated, "Well, you see, Aunt," said he, "in the forest here there are at least thirty small pools; you place the lime twigs around them, and when the birds go to drink there, as they do not — poor silly things! — know anything about them, they run their heads into them and are caught."

"By what?"

"By the birdlime."

"Ah! ah!" exclaimed Aunt Angélique, "I understand; but who gave you the money?"

"Money!" cried Pitou, astonished that any one could have believed that he had ever possessed a penny; "money, Aunt Angélique?"

"Yes."

"No one."

"But where did you buy the birdlime, then?"

"I made it myself."

"And the lime-twigs?"

"I made them also, to be sure."

"Therefore, these birds —"

"Well, Aunt?"

"Cost you nothing?"

"The trouble of stooping to pick them up."

"And can you go often to these pools?"

"One might go every day."

"Good!"

"Only, it would not do."

"What would not do?"

"To go there every day."

"And for what reason?"

"Why, because it would ruin it."

"Ruin what?"

"The lime-twigging. You understand, Aunt Angélique, that the birds which are caught —"

"Well?"

"Well, they can't return to the pool."

"That is true," said the aunt.

This was the first time, since Pitou had lived with her, that Aunt Angélique had allowed her nephew was in the right, and this unaccustomed approbation perfectly delighted him.

"But," said he, "the days that one does not go to the pools one goes somewhere else. The days we do not catch birds, we catch something else."

"And what do you catch?"

"Why, we catch rabbits."

"Rabbits?"

"Yes; we eat the rabbits and sell their skins. A rabbit-skin is worth two sous."

Aunt Angélique gazed at her nephew with astonished eyes; she had never considered him so great an economist. Pitou had suddenly revealed himself.

"But will it not be my business to sell the skins?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Pitou; "as Mamma Madeleine used to do."

It had never entered the mind of the boy that he could

claim any part of the produce of his sport excepting that which he consumed.

"And when will you go out to catch rabbits?"

"Ah! that 's another matter; when I can get the wires," replied Pitou.

"Well, then, make the wires."

Pitou shook his head.

"Why, you made the birdlime and the twigs."

"Oh, yes, I can make birdlime and I can set the twigs, but I cannot make brass wire; that is bought ready made at the grocer's."

"And how much does it cost?"

"Oh, for four sous," replied Pitou, calculating upon his fingers, "I could make at least two dozen."

"And with two dozen how many rabbits could you catch?"

"That is as it may happen, — four, five, six perhaps, — and they can be used over and over again if the gamekeeper does not find them."

"See, now, here are four sous," said Aunt Angélique; "go and buy some brass wire at Monsieur Dambrun's, and go to-morrow and catch rabbits."

"I will lay them to-morrow," said Pitou, "but it will only be the next morning that I shall know whether I have caught any."

"Well, be it so; but go and buy the wire."

Brass wire was cheaper at Villers-Cotterets than in the country, seeing that the grocers at Haramont purchased their supplies in the town; Pitou, therefore, bought wire enough for twenty-four snares for three sous. He took the remaining penny back to his aunt.

This unexpected probity in her nephew almost touched the heart of the old maid. For a moment she had the idea, the intention, of bestowing upon her nephew the

penny which he had not expended; unfortunately for Pitou, it was one that had been beaten out with a hammer, and which, in the dusk, might be passed for a two-sous piece. Mademoiselle Angélique thought it would never do to dispossess herself of a coin by which she could make cent per cent, and she let it drop again into her pocket.

Pitou had remarked this hesitation, but had not analyzed it; he never could have imagined that his aunt would give him a penny.

He at once set to work to make his wires. The next day he asked his aunt for a bag.

"What for?" inquired the old maid.

"Because I want it," replied Pitou. — Pitou was full of mystery.

Mademoiselle Angélique gave him the required bag, put into it the provision of bread and cheese which was to serve for breakfast and dinner to her nephew, who set out very early for Wolf's Heath.

As to Aunt Angélique, she set to work to pick the twelve redbreasts which she had destined for her own breakfast and dinner. She carried two thrushes to the Abbé Fortier, and sold the remaining four to the host of the Golden Ball, who paid her three sous apiece for them, promising her to take as many as she would bring him at the same price.

Aunt Angélique returned home transported with joy. The blessing of heaven had entered beneath her roof with Ange Pitou.

"Ah!" cried she, while eating her robin-redbreasts, which were as fat as ortolans and as delicate as beccaficos, "people are right in saying that a good deed never goes unrewarded."

In the evening Ange returned; his bag, which was

magnificently rounded, he carried on his shoulders. On this occasion Aunt Angélique did not waylay him behind the door, but waited for him on the threshold, and instead of giving him a box on the ear, she received the lad with a grimace which very much resembled a smile.

"Here I am!" cried Pitou, on entering the room with all that firmness which denotes a conviction of having well employed one's time.

"You and your bag," said Aunt Angélique.

"I and my bag," said Pitou

"And what have you in your bag?" inquired Aunt Angélique, stretching forth her hand with curiosity.

"Beech-mast," said Pitou.[1]

"Beech-mast!"

"Undoubtedly; you must understand, Aunt Angélique, that if old Father La Jeunesse, the gamekeeper at the Wolf's Heath, had seen me prowling over his grounds without my bag, he would have said to me, 'What do you come here after, you little vagabond?' And this without calculating that he might have suspected something; while having my bag, were he to ask me what I was doing there, I should say to him, 'why I am come to gather mast; is it forbidden to gather mast?' 'No.' 'Well, then, if it is not forbidden, you have nothing to say.' And indeed, should he say anything, Father La Jeunesse would be in the wrong."

[1] Beech-mast, we must inform our readers who are less acquainted with forest terms than we are, is the fruit of the beech-tree. This fruit, of which a very good sort of oil is made, is, to the poor, a species of manna, which during two months of the year falls for them from heaven.

[Dumas should also have told his readers that beech-mast is excellent for pigs, and that pheasants, and indeed most kinds of game, are very fond of it. — TRANSLATOR.]

"Then you have spent your whole day in gathering mast instead of laying your wires, you idle fellow!" exclaimed Aunt Angélique angrily, who, amidst all the cunning of her nephew, thought that the rabbits were escaping her.

"On the contrary, I laid my snares while he saw me at work gathering the mast."

"And did he say nothing to you?"

"Oh yes, he said to me, you will present my compliments to your aunt, Pitou. Hey! Is not Father La Jeunesse a kind, good man?"

"But the rabbits?" again repeated the old devotee, whom nothing could divert from her fixed idea.

"The rabbits? Why, the moon will rise at midnight, and at one o'clock I will go and see if there are any caught."

"Where?"

"In the woods."

"How! would you go into the woods at one o'clock in the morning?"

"To be sure."

"And without being afraid?"

"Afraid! of what?"

Angélique was as much astounded at Pitou's courage as she had been astonished at his calculations.

The fact is, that Pitou, as simple as a child of nature, knew nothing of those factitious dangers which terrify children born in cities.

Therefore at midnight he went his way, walking along the churchyard wall without once looking back. The innocent youth who had never offended, at least according to his ideas of independence, either God or man, feared not the dead more than he did the living.

There was only one person of whom he felt any sort of

apprehension, and this was Father La Jeunesse; and therefore did he take the precaution to go somewhat out of his way to pass by his house. As the doors and shutters were all closed, and there was no light to be perceived, Pitou, in order to assure himself that the keeper was really at home and not upon the watch, began to imitate the barking of a dog, and so perfectly that Ronflot, the keeper's terrier, was deceived by it, and answered it by giving tongue with all his might, and by sniffing the air under the door.

From that moment Pitou was perfectly reassured; as Ronflot was at home, Father La Jeunesse must be there also. Ronflot and Father La Jeunesse were inseparable; and at the moment the one was seen, it was certain that the other would soon make his appearance.

Pitou, being perfectly satisfied of this fact, went on towards the Wolf's Heath. The snares had done their work; two rabbits had been caught and strangled.

Pitou put them into the capacious pocket of that coat, which, then too long for him, was destined within a year to become too short, and then returned to his aunt's house.

The old maid had gone to bed, but her cupidity had kept her awake; like Perrette, she had been calculating what her rabbit-skins might produce, and this calculation had led her on so far, that she had not been able to close her eyes; and therefore was it with nervous tremulation that she asked the boy what success he had had.

"A couple," said he. "Ah! the deuce! Aunt Angélique, it is not my fault that I have not brought more, but it appears that Father Jeunesse's rabbits are of a cunning sort."

The hopes of Aunt Angélique were fulfilled, and even more. She seized, trembling with joy, the two unlucky

quadrupeds and examined their skins, which had remained intact, and locked them up in her meat-safe, which never had seen such provisions as those it had contained since Pitou had hit upon the idea of supplying it.

Then, in a very honeyed tone, she advised Pitou to go to bed, which the lad, who was much fatigued, did instantly, and that without even asking for his supper, which raised him greatly in the opinion of his aunt.

Two days after this Pitou renewed his attempts, and on this occasion was more fortunate than the first. He brought home three rabbits. Two of them took the road to the Golden Ball, and the third that of the presbytery. Aunt Angélique was very attentive to the Abbé Fortier, who on his side strongly recommended her to the pious souls of the parish.

Things went on in this manner during three or four months. Aunt Angélique was enchanted, and Pitou found his position somewhat supportable. In fact, with the exception of the tender cares of his mother, Pitou led nearly the same life at Villers-Cotterets which he had done at Haramont. But an unexpected circumstance, which, however, might have been foreseen, at once dashed to the ground the milk-pitcher of the aunt and put a stop to the excursions of the nephew.

A letter had been received from Doctor Gilbert, dated from New York. On placing his foot on the soil of the United States the philosophic traveller had not forgotten his protégé. He had written to Master Niguet, the notary, to inquire whether his instructions had been carried into effect, and to claim the execution of the agreement if they had not been, or to cancel it altogether if the old aunt would not abide by her engagements.

The case was a serious one; the responsibility of the public officer was at stake; he presented himself at the

house of Aunt Pitou, and with the doctor's letter in his hand called upon her to perform the promise she had made.

There was no backing out; all allegations as to ill-health were at once belied by the physical appearance of Pitou. Pitou was tall and thin. Every sapling of the forest was also thin and tall, but this did not prevent it from being in a perfectly healthy and thriving condition.

Mademoiselle Angélique asked for a delay of eight days, in order to make up her mind as to the trade or occupation in which she should place her nephew.

Pitou was quite as sorrowful as his aunt. The mode of life he led appeared to him a very excellent one, and he did not desire any other.

During these eight days there was no thought of going bird-catching or poaching; moreover, the winter had arrived, and in winter the birds find water everywhere; but some snow had fallen, and while that was on the ground Pitou did not dare go out to lay his snares. Snow retains the impression of footsteps, and Pitou possessed a pair of feet so huge that they gave Father La Jeunesse the greatest possible chance of ascertaining in four-and-twenty hours who was the skilful poacher who had depopulated his rabbit warren.

During these eight days the claws of the old maid again showed themselves. Pitou had once more found the aunt of former days, she who had caused him so much terror, and whom self-interest, the *primum mobile* of her whole life, had for a while rendered as smooth as velvet.

As the day for the important decision approached, the temper of the old maid became more and more crabbed, and to such a degree that, about the fifth day, Pitou sin-

cerely desired that his aunt would immediately decide upon some trade, be it what it might, provided it should no longer be that of the scolded drudge which he had been filling in the old maid's house.

Suddenly a sublime idea struck the mind of the old woman who had been so cruelly agitated. This idea restored her equanimity, which for six days had altogether abandoned her.

This idea consisted in entreating the Abbé Fortier to receive into his school, and this without any remuneration whatever, poor Pitou, and enable him to obtain the purse for entering the seminary, founded by his highness the Duke of Orleans. This was an apprenticeship which would cost nothing to Aunt Angélique; and Monsieur Fortier, without taking into calculation the thrushes, blackbirds, and rabbits with which the old devotee had so abundantly supplied him for the last month, was bound to do something, more than for any other, for the nephew of the chair-letter of his own church. Thus kept as under a glass frame, Ange would continue to be profitable to her at the present time, and promised to be much more so in the future.

Consequently Ange was received into the Abbé Fortier's school without any charge for his education. This abbé was a worthy man, and not in any way interested, giving his knowledge to the poor in mind, and his money to the poor in body. He was, however, intractable on one single point; solecisms rendered him altogether furious, barbarisms would send him almost out of his mind; on these occasions he considered neither friends nor foes, neither poor nor rich, nor paying pupils nor gratuitous scholars; he struck all with agrarian impartiality and with Lacedemonian stoicism, and as his arm was strong, he struck severely.

This was well known to the parents, and it was for them to decide whether they would or would not send their sons to the Abbé Fortier's school; or if they did send them there, they knew they must abandon them entirely to his mercy, for when any maternal complaint was made to him, the abbé always replied to it by this device, which he had engraved on the handle of his cane and on that of his cat-o'-nine-tails, "Who loves well chastises well."

Upon the recommendation of his aunt, Ange Pitou was therefore received by the Abbé Fortier. The old devotee, quite proud of this reception, — which was much less agreeable to Pitou, whose wandering and independent mode of life it altogether destroyed, — presented herself to Master Niguet, and told him that she had not only conformed to her agreement with Doctor Gilbert, but had even gone beyond it. In fact, Doctor Gilbert had demanded for Ange Pitou an honorable means of living, and she gave him much more than this, since she gave him an excellent education. And where was it that she gave him this education? Why, in the very academy in which Sebastian Gilbert received his, and for which he paid no less than fifty livres per month.

It was indeed true that Ange Pitou received his education *gratis;* but there was no necessity whatever for letting Doctor Gilbert into this secret. And if he should discover it, the impartiality and the disinterestedness of the Abbé Fortier were well known; as his sublime Master, he stretched out his arms, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me;" only the two hands affixed to these two paternal arms were armed, the one with a Latin grammar, and the other with a large birch rod; so that in the greater number of instances, instead of, like the Saviour, receiving the children weeping and sending

them away consoled, the Abbé Fortier saw the children approach him with terror in their countenances and sent them away weeping.

The new scholar made his entrance into the schoolroom with an old trunk under his arm, a horn inkstand in his hand, and two or three stumps of pens stuck behind his ears. The old trunk was intended to supply, as it best might, the absence of a regular desk. The inkstand was a gift from the grocer, and Mademoiselle Angélique had picked up the stumps of pens at Monsieur Niguet, the notary's, when she had paid him a visit the evening before.

Ange Pitou was welcomed with that fraternal gentleness which is born in children and perpetuated in grown men, — that is to say, with hootings. The whole time devoted to the morning class was passed in making game of him. Two of the scholars were kept for laughing at his yellow hair, and two others for ridiculing his marvellous knees, of which we have already slightly made mention. The two latter had said that each of Pitou's legs looked like a well-rope in which a knot had been tied. This jest was attended with great success, had gone round the room and excited general hilarity, and consequently the susceptibility of the Abbé Fortier.

Therefore, the account being made up at noon when about to leave the school, — that is to say, after having remained four hours in class, — Pitou, without having addressed a single word to any one, without having done anything but gape behind his trunk, Pitou had made six enemies in the school; six enemies, so much the more inveterate that he had not inflicted any wrong upon them, and therefore did they over the fire-stove, which in the schoolroom represented the altar of their country, swear a solemn oath, some to tear out his yellow hair, others to

punch out his earthenware blue eyes, and the remainder to straighten his crooked knees.

Pitou was altogether ignorant of these hostile intentions. As he was going out he asked a boy near him why six of their comrades remained in school, when all the rest were leaving it.

The boy looked askance at Pitou, called him a shabby tale-bearer, and went away, unwilling to enter into conversation with him.

Pitou asked himself how it could have happened that he, not having uttered a single word during the whole time, could be called a shabby tale-bearer. But while the class had lasted he had heard so many things said, either by the pupils or by the Abbé Fortier, which he could in no way comprehend, that he classed this accusation of his schoolfellow with those things which were too elevated for him to understand.

On seeing Pitou return at noon, Aunt Angélique, with great ardor for the success of an education for which it was generally understood she made great sacrifices, inquired of him what he had learned.

Pitou replied that he had learned to remain silent. The answer was worthy of a Pythagorean; only a Pythagorean would have made it by a sign.

The new scholar returned to school at one o'clock without too much repugnance. The hours of study in the morning had been passed by the pupils in examining the physical appearance of Pitou; those of the afternoon were employed by the professor in examining his moral capabilities. This examination being made, the Abbé Fortier remained convinced that Pitou had every possible disposition to become a Robinson Crusoe, but very little chance of ever becoming a Fontenelle or a Bossuet.

During the whole time that the class lasted, and which

was much more fatiguing to the future seminarist than that of the morning, the scholars who had been punished on account of him repeatedly held up their fists to him. In all countries, whether blessed with civilization or not, this demonstration is considered as a sign of threat. Pitou therefore determined to be on his guard.

Our hero was not mistaken. On leaving, or rather when he had left, and got clear away from all the dependencies of the collegiate house, it was notified to Pitou by the six scholars who had been kept in the morning, that he would have to pay for the two hours of arbitrary detention, with damages, interest and capital.

Pitou at once understood that he would have to fight a pugilistic duel. Although he was far from having studied the fifth book of the Æneid, in which young Dares and the old Entellus give proofs of their great skill in this manly exercise before the loudly applauding Trojan fugitives, he knew something of this species of recreation, to which the country people in his village were not altogether strangers. He therefore declared that he was ready to enter the lists with either of his adversaries who might wish to begin, and to combat successively with all his six enemies. This demonstration began to raise the last comer in the consideration of his schoolfellows.

The conditions were agreed on as Pitou had proposed. A circle was soon formed round the place of combat, and the champions, the one having thrown off his jacket, the other his coat, advanced towards each other.

We have already spoken of Pitou's hands. These hands, which were by no means agreeable to look at, were still less agreeable to feel. Pitou at the end of each arm whirled round a fist equal in size to a child's head, and although boxing had not at that time been introduced into France, and consequently Pitou had not

studied the elementary principles of the science, he managed to apply to one of the eyes of his adversary a blow so well directed that the eye he struck was instantly surrounded by a dark bistre-colored circle, so geometrically drawn that the most skilful mathematician could not have formed it more correctly with his compasses.

The second then presented himself. If Pitou had against him the fatigue occasioned by his first combat, on the other side, his adversary was visibly less powerful than his former antagonist. The battle did not last long. Pitou aimed a straightforward blow at his enemy's nose, and his formidable fist fell with such weight that instantly his opponent's two nostrils gave evidence of the validity of the blow by spouting forth a double stream of blood.

The third got off with merely a broken tooth; he received much less damage than the two former. The other three declared that they were satisfied.

Pitou then pressed through the crowd, which opened as he approached with the respect due to a conqueror, and he withdrew safe and sound to his own fireside, or rather to that of his aunt.

The next morning, when the three pupils reached the school, the one with his eye poached, the second with a fearfully lacerated nose, and the third with his lips swelled, the Abbé Fortier instituted an inquiry. But young collegians have their good points too. Not one of the wounded whispered a word against Pitou, and it was only through an indirect channel, that is to say, from a person who had been a witness of the fight, but who was altogether unconnected with the school, that the Abbe Fortier learned, the following day, that it was Pitou who had done the damage to the faces of his pupils, which had caused him so much uneasiness the day before.

And, in fact, the Abbé Fortier was responsible to the parents, not only for the morals, but for the physical state of his pupils. He had received complaints from the three families. A reparation was absolutely necessary. Pitou was kept in school three days: one day for the eye, one day for the bloody nose, and one day for the tooth.

This three days' detention suggested an ingenious idea to Mademoiselle Angélique. It was to deprive Pitou of his dinner every time that the Abbé Fortier kept him in school. This determination must necessarily have an advantageous effect on Pitou's education, since it would naturally induce him to think twice before committing a fault which would subject him to this double punishment.

Only, Pitou could never rightly comprehend why it was that he had been called a tale-bearer, when he had not opened his lips, and why it was he had been punished for beating those who had wished to beat him; but if people were to comprehend everything that happens in this world, they would lose one of the principal charms of life, — that of mystery and the unforeseen.

Pitou was therefore detained three days in school, and during those three days he contented himself with his breakfast and supper.

Contented himself is not the word, for Pitou was by no means content; but our language is so poor, and the Academy so severe, that we must *content* ourselves with what we have.

Only that this punishment submitted to by Pitou, without saying a word of the aggression to which he had been subjected, and to which he had only properly replied, won him the esteem of the whole school. It is true that the three majestic blows he had been seen to deliver

might also have had some little influence on his schoolfellows.

From that time forward the life of Pitou was pretty nearly that of most of the scholars, with this sole difference, that from his compositions being more defective than those of any of the rest, he was kept twice as often as any of his condisciples.

But it must be said there was one thing in Pitou's nature which arose from the primary education he had received, or rather from that which he had not received, — a thing which is necessary to consider as contributing at least a third to the numerous *keepings* he underwent; and this was his natural inclination for animals.

The famous trunk which his Aunt Angélique had dignified with the name of desk, had become, thanks to its vastness, and the numerous compartments with which Pitou had decorated its interior, a sort of Noah's ark, containing a couple of every species of climbing, crawling, or flying reptiles. There were lizards, adders, ant-eaters, beetles, and frogs, which reptiles became so much dearer to Pitou from their being the cause of his being subjected to punishment more or less severe.

It was in his walks during the week that Pitou made collections for his menagerie. He had wished for salamanders, which were very popular at Villers-Cotterets, being the crest of François I., who had them sculptured on every chimney-piece in the chateau. He had succeeded in obtaining them; only one thing had strongly preoccupied his mind, and he ended by placing this thing among the number of those which were beyond his intelligence; it was, that he had constantly found in the water these reptiles which poets have pretended exist only in fire. This circumstance had given to Pitou, who was a lad of precise mind, a profound contempt for poets.

Pitou, being the proprietor of two salamanders, set to work to find a chameleon; but this time his search was altogether vain, and success did not attend his labors. Pitou at last concluded, from these unfruitful researches, that the chameleon did not exist, or at all events that it existed in some other latitude.

This point being settled, Pitou did not obstinately continue his search for the chameleon.

The two other thirds of Pitou's *keepings-in* were occasioned by those accursed solecisms and those confounded barbarisms, which sprang up in the themes written by Pitou as tares do in a field of wheat.

As to Sundays and Thursdays, days when there was no attendance at school, he had continued to employ them in laying his lime-twigs or in poaching; only, as Pitou was still growing taller, as he was already five feet six, and sixteen years of age, a circumstance occurred which somewhat withdrew Pitou's attention from his favorite occupations.

Upon the road to the Wolf's Heath is situated the village of Pisseleu, the same perhaps which gave a name to the beautiful Anne d'Heilly, the mistress of François I.

Near this village stood the farm-house of Father Billot, as he was called throughout the neighborhood, and at the door of this farm-house was standing, no doubt by chance, but almost every time when Pitou passed and repassed, a pretty girl from seventeen to eighteen years of age, fresh-colored, lively, jovial, and who was called by her baptismal name, Catherine, but still more frequently after her father's name, La Billote.

Pitou began by bowing to La Billote; afterwards he by degrees became emboldened, and smiled while he was bowing; then at last one fine day, after having bowed,

after having smiled, he stopped, and although blushing deeply, ventured to stammer out the following words, which he considered as great audacity on his part:

"Good-day, Mademoiselle Catherine."

Catherine was a good, kind-hearted girl, and she welcomed Pitou as an old acquaintance. He was in point of fact an old acquaintance, for during two or three years she had seen him passing and repassing before the farm-gate at least once a week; only that Catherine saw Pitou, and Pitou did not see Catherine. The reason was, that at first when Pitou used to pass by the farm in this manner Catherine was sixteen years old and Pitou but fourteen. We have just seen what happened when Pitou in his turn had attained his sixteenth year.

By degrees Catherine had learned to appreciate the talents of Pitou, for Pitou had given her evidence of his talents by offering to her his finest birds and his fattest rabbits. The result of this was that Catherine complimented him upon these talents, and that Pitou, who was the more sensible to compliments from his being so little habituated to receive them, allowed the charm of novelty to influence him, and instead of going on straightforward, as heretofore, to the Wolf's Heath, he would stop half way, and instead of employing the whole of his day in picking up beech-mast and in laying his wires, he would lose his time in sauntering round Father Billot's farm, in the hope of seeing Catherine, were it only for a moment.

The result of this was a very sensible diminution in the produce of rabbit-skins, and a complete scarcity of robin-redbreasts and thrushes.

Aunt Angélique complained of this. Pitou represented to her that the rabbits had become mistrustful, and that the birds, who had found out the secret of his lime-twigs,

now drank out of hollows of trees, or out of leaves that retained the water.

There was one consideration which consoled Aunt Angélique for this increase in the intelligence of the rabbits and the cunning of the birds, which she attributed to the progress of philosophy, and this was that her nephew would obtain the purse, enter the seminary, pass three years there, and on leaving it would be an abbé. Now, being housekeeper to an abbé had been the constant aim of Mademoiselle Angélique's ambition.

This ambition could not fail of being gratified for Ange Pitou, having once become an abbé, could not do otherwise than take his aunt for housekeeper, and above all, after what his aunt had done for him.

The only thing which disturbed the golden dreams of the old maid was, when speaking of this hope to the Abbé Fortier, the latter replied, shaking his head :—

"My dear Demoiselle Pitou, in order to become an abbé, your nephew should give himself up less to the study of natural history, and much more to *De viris illustribus*, or to the *Selectæ è profanis scriptoribus.*"

"And which means?" said Mademoiselle Angélique, inquiringly.

"That he makes too many barbarisms and infinitely too many solecisms," replied the Abbé Fortier.

An answer which left Mademoiselle Angélique in the most afflicting state of vagueness and uncertainty.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE INFLUENCE WHICH A BARBARISM AND SEVEN SOLECISMS MAY HAVE UPON THE WHOLE LIFE OF A MAN.

THESE details were indispensable to the reader, whatever be the degree of intelligence we suppose him to possess, in order that he might comprehend the whole horror of the position in which Pitou found himself on being finally expelled from the school.

With one arm hanging down, the other maintaining the equilibrium of the trunk upon his head, his ears still ringing with the furious vituperations of the Abbé Fortier, he slowly directed his steps towards Pleux, in a state of meditation which was nothing more than stupor carried to the highest possible degree.

At last an idea presented itself to his imagination, and four words, which composed his whole thought, escaped his lips : —

"O Lord ! my aunt !"

And indeed what would Mademoiselle Angélique Pitou say to this complete overthrow of all her hopes ?

However, Ange Pitou knew nothing of the projects of the old maid, excepting as a faithful dog surmises the intentions of his master, that is to say, by an inspection of his physiognomy. Instinct is a most valuable guide, — it seldom deceives ; while reason, on the contrary, may be led astray by the imagination.

The result of these reflections on the part of Ange Pitou, and which had given birth to the doleful exclama-

tion we have given above, was the apprehension of the violent outbreak of discontent to which the old maid would give way on receiving the fatal news. Now, he knew from sad experience the result of discontent in Mademoiselle Angélique. Only upon this occasion the cause of discontent arising from an incalculably important event, the result would attain a degree altogether incalculable.

It was under these terrific impressions that Pitou entered Pleux. He had taken a quarter of an hour to traverse the distance between the great gate at the Abbé Fortier's and the entrance to this street, and yet it was scarcely three hundred yards.

At that moment the church clock struck one; he then perceived that his final conversation with the Abbé Fortier and the slowness with which he had walked had delayed him in all sixty minutes, and that consequently he was half an hour later than the time at which no more dinner was to be had in Aunt Angélique's abode.

We have already said that such was the salutary restraint which Aunt Angélique had added to his being kept in school, and on the wild ramblings of her nephew; it was thus that in the course of a year she managed to economize some sixty dinners at the expense of her poor nephew's stomach.

But this time, that which rendered more uneasy the retarded schoolboy was not the loss of his aunt's meagre dinner, although his breakfast had been meagre enough, for his heart was too full to allow him to perceive the emptiness of his stomach.

There is a frightful torment, well known to a student, however perverse he may be, and this is the illegitimate hiding in some retired corner, after being expelled from college; it is the definitive and compelled holiday which

he is constrained to take advantage of, while his fellow-students pass by him with their books and writings under their arm, proceeding to their daily task. That college, formerly so hated, then assumes a most desirable form; the scholar occupies his mind with the great affairs of themes and exercises, to which he before so little directed his attention, and which are being proceeded with in his absence. There is a great similarity between a pupil so expelled by his professor and a man who has been excommunicated for his impiety, and who no longer has a right to enter the church, although burning with desire to hear a mass.

And this was why, the nearer he approached his aunt's house, his residence in that house appeared the more frightful to poor Pitou. And this was why, for the first time in his life, his imagination pictured to him the school as a terrestrial paradise, from which the Abbé Fortier, as the exterminating angel, had driven him forth, with his cat-o'-nine-tails wielded as a flaming sword.

But yet, slowly as he walked, and although he halted at every ten steps, — halts which became still longer as he approached nearer, — he could not avoid at last reaching the threshold of that most formidable house. Pitou then reached the threshold with shuffling feet, and mechanically rubbing his hand on the seam of his nether garment.

"Ah, Aunt Angélique, I am really very sick," said he, in order to stop her raillery or her reproaches, and perhaps also to induce her to pity him, poor boy.

"Good!" said Angélique. "I well know what your sickness is; and it would be cured at once by putting back the hands of the clock an hour and a half."

"Oh, good heavens, no!" cried Pitou; "for I am not hungry."

Aunt Angélique was surprised and almost anxious. Sickness equally alarms affectionate mothers and crabbed stepmothers, — affectionate mothers from the dangers caused by sickness, and stepmothers from the heavy pulls it makes upon their purse.

"Well, what is the matter? Come, now, speak out at once," said the old maid.

On hearing these words, which were, however, pronounced without any very tender sympathy, Ange Pitou burst into tears; and it must be acknowledged that the wry faces he made when proceeding from complaints to tears were the most terrifically ugly wry faces that could be seen.

"Oh, my good Aunt," cried he, sobbing, "a great misfortune has happened to me!"

"And what is it?" asked the old maid.

"The Abbé Fortier has sent me away," replied Ange, sobbing so violently that he was scarcely intelligible.

"Sent you away?" repeated Mademoiselle Angélique, as if she had not perfectly comprehended what he said.

"Yes, Aunt."

"And from where has he sent you!"

"From the school."

And Pitou's sobs redoubled.

"From the school?"

"Yes, Aunt."

"What! altogether?"

"Yes, Aunt."

"So there is to be no examination, no competition, no purse, no seminary?"

Pitou's sobs were changed into perfect howlings.

Mademoiselle Angélique looked at him, as if she would read the very heart of her nephew to ascertain the cause of his dismissal.

"I will wager that you have again been among the bushes instead of going to school. I would wager that you have again been prowling about Father Billot's farm. Oh, fie! and a future abbé!"

Ange shook his head.

"You are lying," cried the old maid, whose anger augmented in proportion as she acquired the certainty that the state of matters was very serious. "You are lying. Only last Sunday you were seen in the Lane of Sighs with La Billote."

It was Mademoiselle Angélique who was lying. But devotees have, in all ages, considered themselves authorized to lie, in virtue of that Jesuitical axiom, "It is permitted to assert that which is false, in order to discover that which is true."

"No one could have seen me in the Lane of Sighs," replied Pitou; "that is impossible, for we were walking near the orangery."

"Ah, wretch! you see that you were with her."

"But, Aunt," rejoined Pitou, blushing, "Mademoiselle Billot has nothing to do with this affair."

"Yes, call her mademoiselle, in order to conceal your impure conduct. But I will let this minx's confessor know all about it."

"But, Aunt, I swear to you that Mademoiselle Billot is not a minx."

"Ah! you defend her, when it is you that stand in need of being excused. Oh, yes; you understand each other better and better. What are we coming to, good heaven! and children only sixteen years old."

"Aunt, so far from there being any understanding between me and Catherine, it is Catherine who always drives me away from her."

"Ah! you see you are cutting your own throat; for

now you call her Catherine, right out. Yes, she drives you away from her, hypocrite, when people are looking at you."

"Ho! ho!" said Pitou to himself, illuminated by this idea. "Well, that is true. I had never thought of that."

"Ah, there again!" said the old maid, taking advantage of the ingenuous exclamation of her nephew to prove his connivance with La Billote; "but let me manage it. I will soon put all this to rights again. Monsieur Fortier is her confessor. I will beg him to have you shut up in prison, and order you to live on bread and water for a fortnight; as to Mademoiselle Catherine, if she requires a convent to moderate her passion for you, well, she shall have a taste of it. We will send her to St. Remy."

The old maid uttered these last words with such authority, and with such conviction of her power, that they made Pitou tremble.

"My good aunt," cried he, clasping his hands, "you are mistaken, I swear to you, if you believe that Mademoiselle Billot has anything to do with the misfortune that has befallen me."

"Impurity is the mother of all vices," sententiously rejoined Mademoiselle Angélique.

"Aunt, I again tell you that the Abbé Fortier did not send me away because I was impure; but he has dismissed me because I make too many barbarisms, mingled with solecisms, which every now and then escape me, and which deprive me, as he says, of all chance of obtaining the purse for the seminary."

"All chance, say you? Then you will not have that purse; then you will not be an abbé; then I shall not be your housekeeper?"

"Ah, good heaven, no! dear Aunt."

"And what is to become of you, then?" cried the old maid, in a savage tone.

"I know not," cried Pitou, piteously, raising his eyes to heaven. "Whatever it may please Providence to order," he added.

"Ah! Providence, you say. I see how it is," exclaimed Mademoiselle Angélique. "Some one has been exciting his brain. Some one has been talking to him of these new ideas; some one has been endeavoring to fill him with these principles of philosophy."

"It cannot be that, Aunt; because no one gets into philosophy before having gone through his rhetoric, and I have never yet been able to get even so far as that."

"Oh, yes!—jest—jest! It is not of that philosophy that I am speaking. I speak of the philosophy of the philosophers, you wretch. I speak of the philosophy of Monsieur Arouet; I speak of the philosophy of Monsieur Jean Jacques; of the philosophy of Monsieur Diderot, who wrote 'La Religieuse.'"

Mademoiselle Angélique crossed herself.

"'La Religieuse!'" cried Pitou; "what is that, Aunt?"

"You have read it, wretch!"

"I swear to you, Aunt, that I have not."

"And this is the reason why you will not go into the church."

"Aunt, Aunt, you are mistaken. It is the church that will not admit me."

"Why, decidedly, this child is a perfect serpent. He even dares to retort."

"No, Aunt; I answer, and that is all."

"Oh, he is lost!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Angélique,

with all the signs of most profound discouragement, and falling into her favorite arm-chair.

In fact, "He is lost!" merely signified, "I am lost!"

The danger was imminent; Aunt Angélique formed an extreme resolve. She rose as if some secret spring had forced her to her feet, and ran off to the Abbé Fortier to ask him for an explanation, and above all to make a last effort to get him to change his determination.

Pitou followed his aunt with his eyes till she had reached the door, and when she had disappeared, he went to the threshold and watched her walking with extraordinary rapidity towards the Rue de Soissons. He was surprised at the quickness of her movements; but he had no longer any doubt as to the intentions of Mademoiselle Angélique, and was convinced that she was going to his professor's house.

He could therefore calculate on at least a quarter of an hour's tranquillity. Pitou thought of making a good use of this quarter of an hour which Providence had granted to him. He snatched up the remainder of his aunt's dinner to feed his lizards, caught two or three flies for his ants and frogs, then, opening successively a hutch and a cupboard, he set about feeding himself; for with solitude his appetite had returned to him.

Having arranged all these matters, he returned to watch at the door, that he might not be surprised by the return of his second mother.

Mademoiselle Angélique had given herself the title of Pitou's second mother.

While he was watching, a handsome young girl passed at the end of the Pleux, going along a narrow lane which led from the end of the Rue de Soissons to that of the Rue de Lormet. She was seated on a pillion on the back of a horse loaded with two panniers, the one full of fowls,

the other of pigeons. It was Catherine. On perceiving Pitou standing at his door, she stopped.

Pitou, according to custom, blushed, then remained with his mouth wide open, looking at, that is to say, admiring, — for Mademoiselle Billot was in his eyes the most heavenly sample of human beauty.

The young girl darted a glancé into the street, saluted Pitou with a little graceful nod, and continued on her way.

Pitou replied to it, trembling with satisfaction.

This little scene lasted just time enough to occupy the tall scholar's attention, who was quite lost in his contemplation, and continued eagerly gazing at the spot where Mademoiselle Catherine had appeared, so as to prevent him from perceiving his aunt when she returned from the Abbé Fortier, who suddenly seized his hand, turning pale with anger.

Ange being thus startlingly awakened from his sweet dream by that electrical shock which the touch of Mademoiselle Angélique always communicated to him, turned round, and seeing that the enraged looks of his aunt were fixed upon his hand, cast his own eyes down upon it, and saw with horror that it was holding the half of a large round of bread upon which he had apparently spread a too generous layer of butter, with a corresponding slice of cheese.

Mademoiselle Angélique uttered a cry of terror, and Pitou a groan of alarm; Angélique raised her bony hand, Pitou bobbed down his head; Angélique seized a broom-handle which unluckily was but too near her, Pitou let fall his slice of bread-and-butter, and took to his heels without further explanation.

These two hearts now understood each other, and felt that henceforth there could be no communion between them.

Mademoiselle Angélique went into her house and double-locked the door. Pitou, whom the grating noise alarmed as a continuation of the storm, ran on still faster.

From this scene resulted an effect which Mademoiselle Angélique was very far from foreseeing, and which certainly Pitou in no way expected.

CHAPTER V.

A PHILOSOPHICAL FARMER.

PITOU ran as if all the demons of the infernal regions were at his heels, and in a few seconds he was outside the town.

On turning round the corner of the cemetery, he very nearly ran his head against the hind part of a horse.

"Why, good Lord!" cried a sweet voice well known to Pitou, "where are you running to at this rate, Monsieur Ange? You have very nearly made Cadet run away with me, you frightened us both so much."

"Ah, Mademoiselle Catherine!" cried Pitou, replying rather to his own thoughts than to the question of the young girl. "Ah, Mademoiselle Catherine, what a misfortune! great God, what a misfortune!"

"Oh, you quite terrify me!" said the young girl, pulling up her horse in the middle of the road. "What, then, has happened, Monsieur Ange?"

"What has happened!" said Pitou; and then, lowering his voice as if about to reveal some mysterious iniquity, "why, it is, that I am not to be an abbé, Mademoiselle."

But instead of receiving the fatal intelligence with all those signs of commiseration which Pitou had expected, Mademoiselle Billot gave way to a long burst of laughter.

"You are not to be an abbé?" asked Catherine.

"No," replied Pitou, in perfect consternation; "it appears that it is impossible."

"Well, then, you can be a soldier," said Catherine.

"A soldier?"

"Undoubtedly. You should not be in despair for such a trifle. Good Lord! I at first thought that you had come to announce to me the sudden death of your aunt."

"Oh," said Pitou, feelingly, "it is precisely the same thing to me as if she were dead indeed, since she has driven me out of her house."

"I beg your pardon," said Catherine, laughing; "you have not now the satisfaction of weeping for her."

And Catherine began to laugh more heartily than before, which scandalized poor Pitou more than ever.

"But did you not hear that she has turned me out of doors?" rejoined the student, in despair.

"Well, so much the better," she replied.

"You are very happy in being able to laugh in that manner, Mademoiselle Billot; and it proves that you have a most agreeable disposition, since the sorrows of others make so little impression upon you."

"And who has told you, then, that, should a real misfortune happen to you, I would not pity you, Monsieur Ange?"

"You would pity me if a real misfortune should befall me! But do you not, then, know that I have no other resource?"

"So much the better again!" cried Catherine.

Pitou was perplexed.

"But one must eat!" said he; "one cannot live without eating! and I, above all, for I am always hungry."

"You do not wish to work, then, Monsieur Pitou?"

"Work, and at what? Monsieur Fortier and my Aunt Angélique have told me more than a hundred times that I was fit for nothing. Ah! if they had only ap-

prenticed me to a carpenter or a blacksmith, instead of wanting to make an abbé of me! Decidedly, now, Mademoiselle Catherine," said Pitou, with a gesture of despair, "decidedly there is a curse upon me."

"Alas!" said the young girl, compassionately, for she knew, as did all the neighborhood, Pitou's lamentable story. "There is some truth in what you have just now said, my dear Monsieur Ange; but why do you not do one thing?"

"What is it?" cried Pitou, eagerly clinging to the proposal which Mademoiselle Billot was about to make, as a drowning man clings to a willow branch. "What is it; tell me?"

"You had a protector; at least, I think I have heard so."

"Doctor Gilbert."

"You were the schoolfellow of his son, since he was educated, as you have been, by the Abbé Fortier."

"I believe I was indeed, and I have more than once saved him from being thrashed."

"Well, then, why do you not write to his father? He will not abandon you."

"Why, I would certainly do so, did I know what had become of him; but your father perhaps knows this, Mademoiselle Billot, since Doctor Gilbert is his landlord."

"I know that he sends part of the produce of the farm to him in America, and pays the remainder to a notary at Paris."

"Ah!" said Pitou, sighing, "in America; that is very far."

"You would go to America, — you?" cried the young girl, almost terrified at Pitou's resolution.

"Who, I, Mademoiselle Catherine! Never, never! If

I knew where to go, and how to procure food, I should be very happy in France."

"Very happy!" repeated Mademoiselle Billot.

Pitou cast down his eyes. The young girl remained silent. This silence lasted some time. Pitou was plunged in meditations which would have greatly surprised the Abbé Fortier, with all his logic.

These meditations, though rising from an obscure point, had become lucid; then they again became confused, though brilliant, like the lightning whose origin is concealed, whose source is lost.

During this time Cadet had again moved on, though at a walk, and Pitou walked at Cadet's side, with one hand leaning on one of the panniers. As to Mademoiselle Catherine, who had also become full of thought, she allowed her reins to fall upon her courser's neck, without fearing that he would run away with her. Moreover, there were no monsters on the road, and Cadet was of a race which had no sort of relation to the steeds of Hippolytus.

Pitou stopped mechanically when the horse stopped. They had arrived at the farm.

"Well, now, is it you, Pitou?" cried a broad-shouldered man, standing somewhat proudly by the side of a pond to which he had led his horse to drink.

"Eh! good Lord! Yes, Monsieur Billot, it is myself."

"Another misfortune has befallen this poor Pitou," said the young girl, jumping off her horse, without feeling at all uneasy as to whether her petticoat hitched or not, to show the color of her garters; "his aunt has turned him out of doors."

"And what has he done to the old bigot?" said the farmer.

"It appears that I am not strong enough in Greek."

He was boasting, the puppy. He ought to have said in Latin.

"Not strong enough in Greek!" exclaimed the broad-shouldered man. "And why should you wish to be strong in Greek?"

"To construe Theocritus and read the Iliad."

"And of what use would it be to you to construe Theocritus and read the Iliad?"

"It would be of use in making me an abbé."

"Bah!" ejaculated Monsieur Billot, "and do I know Greek? do I know Latin? do I know even French? do I know how to read? do I know how to write? That does not hinder me from sowing, from reaping, and getting my harvest into the granary."

"Yes, but you, Monsieur Billot, you are not an abbé; you are a cultivator of the earth, *agricola*, as Virgil says. *O fortunatos nimium* —"

"Well, and do you then believe that a cultivator is not equal to a black-cap; say, then, you shabby chorister you, is he not so, particularly when this cultivator has sixty acres of good land in the sunshine, and a thousand louis in the shade?"

"I had been always told that to be an abbé was the best thing in the world. It is true," added Pitou, smiling with his most agreeable smile, "that I did not always listen to what was told me."

"And I give you joy, my boy. You see that I can rhyme like any one else when I set to work. It appears to me that there is stuff in you to make something better than an abbé, and that it is a lucky thing for you not to take to that trade, particularly as times now go. Do you see now, as a farmer I know something of the weather, and the weather just now is bad for abbés."

"Bah!" exclaimed Pitou.

"Yes, we shall have a storm," rejoined the farmer, "and that ere long, believe me. You are honest, you are learned —"

Pitou bowed, much honored at being called learned, for the first time in his life.

"You can therefore gain a livelihood without that."

Mademoiselle Billot, while taking the fowls and pigeons out of the panniers, was listening with much interest to the dialogue between Pitou and her father.

"Gain a livelihood," rejoined Pitou; "that appears a difficult matter to me."

"What can you do?"

"Do! why, I can lay lime-twigs, and set wires for rabbits. I can imitate, and tolerably well, the notes of birds, can I not, Mademoiselle Catherine?"

"Oh, that is true enough!" she replied. "He can whistle like a blackbird."

"Yes, but all this is not a trade, a profession," observed Father Billot.

"And that is what I say, by heaven!"

"You swear, — that is already something."

"How, did I swear?" said Pitou. "I beg your pardon for having done so, Monsieur Billot."

"Oh, there is no occasion, none at all," said the farmer; "it happens also to me sometimes. Eh! thunder of heaven!" cried he, turning to his horse, "will you be quiet, hey? These devils of Perch horses, they must be always neighing and fidgeting about. But now, tell me," said he, again addressing Pitou, "are you lazy?"

"I do not know. I have never done anything but Latin and Greek, and —"

"And what?"

"And I must admit that I did not take to them very readily."

"So much the better," cried Billot; "that proves you are not so stupid as I thought you."

Pitou opened his eyes to an almost terrific width; it was the first time he had ever heard such an order of things advocated, and which was completely subversive of all the theories which up to that time he had been taught.

"I ask you," said Billot, "if you are so lazy as to be afraid of fatigue."

"Oh, with regard to fatigue, that is quite another thing," replied Pitou; "no, no, no; I could go ten leagues without being fatigued."

"Good! that's something, at all events," rejoined Billot; "by getting a few pounds of flesh more off your bones, you could set up for a runner."

"A few pounds more!" cried Pitou, looking at his own lanky form, his long arms and his legs, which had much the appearance of stilts; "it seems to me, Monsieur Billot, that I am thin enough as it is."

"Upon my word, my friend," cried Billot, laughing very heartily, "you are a perfect treasure."

It was also the first time that Pitou had been estimated at so high a price, and therefore was he advancing from surprise to surprise.

"Listen to me," said the farmer; "I ask you whether you are lazy in respect to work?"

"What sort of work?"

"Why, work in general."

"I do not know, not I; for I have never worked."

Catherine also began to laugh, but this time Père Billot took the matter in a serious point of view.

"Those rascally priests!" said he, holding his clenched fist towards the town; "and this is the way they bring up lads, in idleness and uselessness. In what way, I ask

you, can this great stripling here be of service to his brethren?"

"Ah! not of much use, certainly; that I know full well," replied Pitou; "fortunately I have no brothers."

"By brethren I mean men in general," observed Billot. "Would you, perchance, insist that all men are not brothers?"

"Oh, that I acknowledge; moreover, it is so said in the gospel."

"And equals," continued the farmer.

"Ah! as to that," said Pitou, "that is quite another affair. If I had been the equal of Monsieur Fortier, he would not so often have thrashed me with his cat-o'-nine-tails and his cane; and if I had been the equal of my aunt, she would not have turned me out of doors."

"I tell you that all men are equal," rejoined the farmer, "and we will very soon prove it to the tyrants."

"*Tyrannis*," added Pitou.

"And the proof of this is, that I will take you into my house."

"You will take me into your house, my dear Monsieur Billot?" cried Pitou, amazed. "Is it not to make game of me that you say this?"

"No; come now, tell me, what would you require to live?"

"Zounds! about three pounds of bread daily."

"And with your bread?"

"A little butter or cheese."

"Well, well," said the farmer; "I see it will not be very expensive to keep you in food. My lad, you shall be fed."

"Monsieur Pitou," said Catherine, "had you not something to ask my father?"

"Who? I, Mademoiselle! Oh, good Lord, no!"

"And why was it that you came here, then?"

"Because you were coming here."

"Ah!" cried Catherine, "that is really very gallant; but I accept compliments only at their true value. You came, Monsieur Pitou, to ask my father if he had any news of your protector."

"Ah, that is true!" replied Pitou. "Well, now, how very droll! I had forgotten that altogether."

"You are speaking of our worthy Monsieur Gilbert?" said the farmer, in a tone which evinced the very high consideration he felt for his landlord.

"Precisely," said Pitou. "But I have no longer any need of him; and since Monsieur Billot takes me into his house, I can tranquilly wait his return from America."

"In that case, my friend, you will not have to wait long, for he has returned."

"Really!" cried Pitou; "and when did he arrive?"

"I do not know exactly; but what I know is, that he was at Havre a week ago; for I have in my holsters a packet which comes from him, which he sent to me as soon as he arrived, and which was delivered to me this very morning at Villers-Cotterets; and in proof of that, here it is."

"Who was it told you that it was from him, Father?" said Catherine.

"Why, zounds! since there is a letter in the packet —"

"Excuse me, Father," said Catherine, smiling, "but I thought that you could not read. I only say this, Father, because you make a boast of not knowing how to read."

"Yes, I do boast of it. I wish that people should say, 'Father Billot owes nothing to any man, — not even a schoolmaster. Father Billot made his fortune himself.' That is what I wish people to say. It was not, there-

fore, I who read the letter. It was the quartermaster of the gendarmerie, whom I happened to meet."

"And what did this letter tell you, Father? He is always well satisfied with us, is he not?"

"Judge for yourself."

And the farmer drew from his leather wallet a letter, which he handed to his daughter. Catherine read as follows: —

My dear Monsieur Billot, — I have arrived from America, where I found a people richer, greater, and happier than the people of our country. This arises from their being free, which we are not. But we are also advanced toward a new era. Every one should labor to hasten the day when the light shall shine. I know your principles, Monsieur Billot. I know your influence over your brother farmers, and over the whole of that worthy population of workmen and laborers whom you order, not as a king, but as a father. Inculcate in them principles of self-devotedness and fraternity, which I have observed that you possess. Philosophy is universal: all men ought to read their duties by the light of its torch. I send you a small book, in which all these duties and all these rights are set forth. This little book was written by me, although my name does not appear upon the titlepage. Propagate the principles it contains, which are those of universal equality. Let it be read aloud in the long winter evenings. Reading is the pasture of the mind, as bread is the food of the body.

One of these days I shall go to see you, and propose to you a new system of farm-letting, which is much in use in America. It consists in dividing the produce of the land between the farmer and landlord. This appears to me more in conformity with the laws of primitive society, and above all more in accordance with the goodness of God. Health and fraternity.

Honoré Gilbert,
Citizen of Philadelphia.

"Oh! oh!" cried Pitou; "this is a well-written letter."

"Is it not?" said Billot, delighted.

"Yes, my dear father," observed Catherine; "but I doubt whether the quartermaster of the gendarmerie is of your opinion."

"And why do you think so?"

"Because it appears to me that this letter may not only bring the doctor into trouble, but you also, my dear father."

"Pshaw!" said Billot; "you are always afraid. But that matters not. Here is the pamphlet; and here is employment ready found for you, Pitou. In the evenings you shall read it."

"And in the daytime?"

"In the daytime you will take care of the sheep and cows. In the mean time, there is your pamphlet."

And the farmer took from one of his holsters one of those small pamphlets with a red cover of which so great a number were published in those days, either with or without permission of the authorities.

Only, in the latter case, the author ran the risk of of being sent to the galleys.

"Read me the title of that book, Pitou, that I may always speak of the title until I shall be able to speak of the work itself. You shall read the remainder to me another time."

Pitou read on the first page these words, which habit has since rendered very vague and very insignificant, but which at that period struck to the very fibres of all hearts:

"*Of the Independence of Man, and the Liberty of Nations.*"

"What do you say to that, Pitou?" inquired the farmer.

"I say that it appears to me, Monsieur Billot, that

independence and liberty are the same thing. My protector would be turned out of Monsieur Fortier's class for being guilty of a pleonasm."

"Pleonasm or not," cried the farmer, "that book is the book of a man."

"That matters not, Father," said Catherine, with woman's admirable instinct. "Hide it, I entreat you! It will bring you into trouble. As to myself, I know that I am trembling even at the sight of it."

"And why would you have it injure me, since it has not injured its author?"

"And how can you tell that, Father? It is eight days since that letter was written; and it could not have taken eight days for the parcel to have come from Havre. I also have received a letter this morning."

"And from whom?"

"From Sebastian Gilbert, who has written to make inquiries. He desires me, even, to remember him to his foster-brother, Pitou. I had forgotten to deliver his message."

"Well!"

"Well! he says that for three days he had been expecting his father's arrival in Paris, and that he had not arrived."

"Mademoiselle is right," said Pitou. "It seems to me that this non-arrival is disquieting."

"Hold your tongue, you timid fellow, and read the doctor's treatise," said the farmer; "then you will become not only learned, but a man."

It was thus people spoke in those days; for they were at the preface of that great Grecian and Roman history which the French nation imitated, during ten years, in all its phases, devotedness, proscriptions, victories, and slavery.

Pitou put the book under his arm with so solemn a gesture that he completely gained the farmer's heart.

"And now," said Billot, "have you dined?"

"No, sir," replied Pitou, maintaining the semi-religious, semi-heroic attitude he had assumed since the book had been intrusted to his care.

"He was just going to get his dinner, when he was driven out of doors," said the young girl.

"Well, then," said Billot, "go in and ask my wife for the usual farm fare, and to-morrow you shall enter on your functions."

Pitou, with an eloquent look, thanked Monsieur Billot, and, led by Catherine, entered the kitchen, — a domain placed under the absolute direction of Madame Billot.

CHAPTER VI.

PASTORAL SCENES.

MADAME BILLOT was a stout, buxom mamma, between thirty-five and thirty-six years old, round as a ball, fresh-colored, smooth-skinned, and cordial in her manners. She trotted continually from the fowl-house to the dove-cote, from the sheep-pens to the cow-stable. She inspected the simmering of her soup, the stoves on which her fricassees and ragouts were cooking, and the spit on which the joint was roasting, as does a general when surveying his cantonments, judging by a mere glance whether everything was in its right place, and by their very odor, whether the thyme and laurel-leaves were distributed in due proportions in the stewpans. She scolded from habit, but without the slightest intention that her scolding should be disagreeable; and her husband, whom she honored as she would the greatest potentate of the earth, did not escape. Her daughter also got her share, though she loved her more than Madame de Sevigné loved Madame de Grignan; and neither were her work-people overlooked, though she fed them better than any farmer in a circuit of ten leagues fed his. Therefore was it, that when a vacancy occurred in her household, there was great competition to obtain the place. But, as in heaven, unfortunately there were many applicants and comparatively but few chosen.

We have seen that Pitou, without having been an applicant, had been elected. This was a happiness that he appreciated at its just value, especially when he saw

the well-browned loaf which was placed at his left hand, the pot of cider which was on his right, and the piece of pickled pork on a plate before him. Since the moment that he lost his poor mother, and that was about five years since, Pitou had not, even on great festival days, partaken of such fare.

Therefore Pitou, full of gratitude, felt, as by degrees he bolted the bread which he devoured, and as he washed down the pork with large draughts of the cider, — therefore Pitou felt a vast augmentation of respect for the farmer, of admiration for his wife, and of love for his daughter. There was only one thing which disquieted him, and that was the humiliating function he would have to fulfil, during the day, of herding the sheep and cows, — a function so little in harmony with that which awaited him each evening, and the object of which was to instruct humanity in the most elevated principles of sociality and humanity.

It was on this subject that Pitou was meditating immediately after his dinner. But even in this reverie the influence of that excellent dinner was sensibly manifested. He began to consider things in a very different point of view from that which he had taken of them when fasting. The functions of a shepherd and a cow-driver, which he considered as so far beneath him, had been fulfilled by gods and demi-gods.

Apollo, in a situation very similar to his own, that is to say, driven from Olympus by Jupiter, as he, Pitou, had been driven from Pleux by his aunt, had become a shepherd, and tended the flocks of Admettus. It is true that Admettus was a shepherd-king; but then, Apollo was a god!

Hercules had been a cow-keeper, or something very like it, since — as we are told by mythology — he seized the

cows of Geryon by the tail; for whether a man leads a cow by the tail or by the head depends entirely on the difference of custom of those who take care of them, and that is all; and this would not in any way change the fact itself that he was a cow-leader, that is to say, a cow-keeper.

And moreover, Tityrus, reclining at the foot of a beech-tree, of whom Virgil speaks, and who congratulates himself, in such beautiful verses, on the repose which Augustus has granted to him, — he also was a shepherd. And, finally, Melibæus was a shepherd, who so poetically bewails his having left his domestic hearth.

Certainly, all these persons spoke Latin well enough to have been abbés, and yet they preferred seeing their goats browse on the bitter cytisus to saying mass or to chanting vespers. Therefore, taking everything into consideration, the calling of a shepherd had its charms. Moreover, what was to prevent Pitou from restoring to it the poetry and the dignity it had lost? who could prevent Pitou from proposing trials of skill in singing, to the Menalcas and the Palemons of the neighboring villages? No one, undoubtedly. Pitou had more than once sung in the choir; and but for his having once been caught drinking the wine out of the Abbé Fortier's cruet, who, with his usual rigor, had on the instant dismissed the singing boy, this talent might have become transcendent. He could not play upon the pipe, 't is true, but he could imitate the note of every bird, which is very nearly the same thing. He could not make himself a lute with pipes of unequal thickness, as did the lover of Syrinx; but from the linden-tree or the chestnut he could cut whistles whose perfection had more than once produced the enthusiastic applause of his companions. Pitou therefore, could become a shepherd without great derogation

of his dignity. He did not lower himself to this profession, so ill appreciated in modern days; he elevated the profession to his own standard.

Besides which, the sheepfolds were placed under the special direction of Mademoiselle Billot, and receiving orders from her lips was not receiving orders.

But, on her part, Catherine watched over the dignity of Pitou.

In the evening, when the young man approached her, and asked her at what hour he ought to go out to rejoin the shepherds, she said, smiling, —

"You will not go out at all."

"And why so?" said Pitou, with astonishment.

"I have made my father comprehend that the education you have received places you above the functions which he had allotted to you. You will remain at the farm."

"Ah! so much the better," said Pitou. "In this way, I shall not leave you."

The exclamation had escaped the ingenuous Pitou. But he had no sooner uttered it, than he blushed to his very ears; while Catherine, on her part, held down her head and smiled.

"Ah! forgive me, Mademoiselle. It came from my heart in spite of me. You must not be angry with me on that account," said Pitou.

"I am not angry with you, Monsieur Pitou," said Catherine; "and it is no fault of yours if you feel pleasure in remaining with me."

There was a silence of some moments. This was not at all astonishing, the poor children had said so much to each other in so few words.

"But," said Pitou, "I cannot remain at the farm doing nothing. What am I to do at the farm?"

"You will do what I used to do. You will keep the books, the accounts with the work-people, and of our receipts and expenses. You know how to reckon, do you not?"

"I know my four rules," proudly replied Pitou.

"That is one more than ever I knew," said Catherine. "I never was able to get farther than the third. You see, therefore, that my father will be a gainer by having you for his accountant; and as I also shall gain, and you yourself will gain by it, everybody will be a gainer."

"And in what way will you gain by it, Mademoiselle?" inquired Pitou.

"I shall gain time by it, and in that time I will make myself caps, that I may look prettier."

"Ah!" cried Pitou, "I think you quite pretty enough without caps."

"That is possible; but it is only your own individual taste," said the young girl, laughing. "Moreover, I cannot go and dance on a Sunday at Villers-Cotterets, without having some sort of a cap upon my head. That is all very well for your great ladies, who have the right of wearing powder and going bareheaded."

"I think your hair more beautiful as it is, than if it were powdered," said Pitou.

"Come, come, now; I see you are bent on paying me compliments."

"No, Mademoiselle, I do not know how to make them. We did not learn that at the Abbé Fortier's."

"And did you learn to dance there?"

"To dance?" inquired Pitou, greatly astonished.

"Yes — to dance?"

"To dance, and at the Abbé Fortier's? Good Lord, Mademoiselle! — oh! learn to dance, indeed!"

"Then, you do not know how to dance?"

"No," said Pitou.

"Well, then, you shall go with me to the ball on Sunday, and you will look at Monsieur de Charny while he is dancing. He is the best dancer of all the young men in the neighborhood."

"And who is this Monsieur de Charny?" demanded Pitou.

"He is the proprietor of the Château de Boursonne."

"And he will dance on Sunday?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And with whom?"

"With me."

Pitou's heart sank within him, without his being able to ascertain a reason for it.

"Then," said he, "it is in order to dance with him that you wish to dress yourself so finely."

"To dance with him — with others — with everybody."

"Excepting with me."

"And why not with you?"

"Because I do not know how to dance."

"You will learn."

"Ah! if you would but teach me, — you, Mademoiselle Catherine. I should learn much better than by seeing Monsieur de Charny, I can assure you."

"We shall see as to that," said Catherine. "In the mean time, it is bedtime. Good-night, Pitou."

"Good-night, Mademoiselle Catherine."

There was something both agreeable and disagreeable in what Mademoiselle Catherine had said to Pitou. The agreeable was, that he had been promoted from the rank of a cow-keeper and shepherd to that of book-keeper. The disagreeable was, that he did not know how to dance, and that Monsieur de Charny did know. According to

what Catherine had said, he was the best dancer in the whole neighborhood.

Pitou was dreaming all night that he saw Monsieur de Charny dancing, and that he danced very badly.

The next day Pitou entered upon his new office, under the direction of Catherine. Then one thing struck him, and it was that, under some masters, study is altogether delightful. In the space of about two hours he completely understood the duties he had to perform.

"Ah, Mademoiselle!" exclaimed he, "if you had but taught me Latin, instead of that Abbé Fortier, I believe I never should have committed any barbarisms."

"And you would have become an abbé?"

"And I should have been an abbé," replied Pitou.

"So, then, you would have shut yourself up in a seminary, in which no woman would have entered."

"Well, now," cried Pitou, "I really had never thought of that, Mademoiselle Catherine. I would much rather, then, not be an abbé."

The good man Billot returned home at nine o'clock. He had gone out before Pitou was up. Every morning the farmer rose at three o'clock, to see to the sending out of his horses and his wagoners. Then he went over his fields until nine o'clock, to see that every one was at his post, and that all his laborers were doing their duty. At nine o'clock he returned to the house to breakfast, and went out again at ten. One o'clock was the dinner-hour; and the afternoon was, like the morning, spent in looking after the workmen. Thus the affairs of worthy Billot were prospering marvellously. As he had said, he possessed sixty acres in the sunshine, and a thousand louis in the shade; and it was even probable that, had the calculation been correctly made — had Pitou made up the account, and had not been too much agitated by the

presence or remembrance of Mademoiselle Catherine, some few acres of land, and some few hundred louis more, would have been found than the worthy farmer had himself admitted.

At breakfast, Billot informed Pitou that the first reading of Dr. Gilbert's new book was to take place in the barn, two days after, at ten in the morning.

Pitou then timidly observed that ten o'clock was the hour for attending mass. But the farmer said that he had specially selected that hour to try his workmen.

We have already said that Father Billot was a philosopher.

He detested the priests, whom he considered as the apostles of tyranny; and finding an opportunity for raising an altar against an altar, he eagerly took advantage of it.

Madame Billot and Catherine ventured to offer some observations; but the farmer replied that the women might, if they chose, go to mass, seeing that religion had been made expressly for women; but as to the men, they should attend the reading of the doctor's work, or they should leave his service.

Billot, the philosopher, was very despotic in his own house. Catherine alone had the privilege of raising her voice against his decrees. But if these decrees were so tenaciously determined upon that he knitted his brows when replying to her, Catherine became as silent as the rest.

Catherine, however, thought of taking advantage of the circumstance to benefit Pitou. On rising from table she observed to her father that, in order to read all the magnificent phrases he would have to read on the Sunday morning, Pitou was but miserably clad; that he was about to play the part of a master, since he was to in-

struct others; and that the master ought not to be placed in a position to blush in the presence of his disciples.

Billot authorized his daughter to make an arrangement with Monsieur Dulauroy, the tailor at Villers-Cotterets, for a new suit of clothes for Pitou.

Catherine was right; for new garments were not merely a matter of taste with regard to Pitou. The breeches which he wore were the same which Dr. Gilbert had, five years before, ordered for him. At that time they were too long, but since then had become much too short. We are compelled to acknowledge, however, that, through the care of Mademoiselle Angélique, they had been elongated at least two inches every year. As to the coat and waistcoat, they had both disappeared for upwards of two years, and had been replaced by the serge gown in which our hero first presented himself to the observation of our readers.

Pitou had never paid any attention to his toilet. A looking-glass was an unknown piece of furniture in the abode of Mademoiselle Angélique; and not having, like the handsome Narcissus, any violent tendency to fall in love with himself, Pitou had never thought of looking at himself in the transparent rivulets near which he set his bird-snares.

But from the moment that Mademoiselle Catherine had spoken to him of accompanying her to the ball, from the moment the elegant cavalier, Monsieur de Charny's name had been mentioned, since the conversation about caps, on which the young girl calculated to increase her attractions, Pitou had looked at himself in a mirror, and, being rendered melancholy by the very dilapidated condition of his garments, had asked himself in what way he also could make any addition to his natural advantages.

Unfortunately, Pitou was not able to find any solution to this question. The dilapidation of his clothes was positive. Now, in order to have new clothes made, it was necessary to have ready cash ; and during the whole course of his existence Pitou had never possessed a single penny.

Pitou had undoubtedly read that, when shepherds were contending for the prize in music or in poetry, they decorated themselves with roses. But he thought, and with great reason, that although such a wreath might well assort with his expressive features, it would only place in stronger relief the miserable state of his habiliments.

Pitou was, therefore, most agreeably surprised when, on the Sunday morning, at eight o'clock, and at the moment he was racking his brains for some means of embellishing his person, Monsieur Dulauroy entered his room and placed upon a chair a coat and breeches of sky-blue cloth, and a large white waistcoat with red stripes.

At the same instant a sempstress came in, and laid upon another chair, opposite to the above-mentioned one, a new shirt and a cravat. If the shirt fitted well, she had orders to complete the half-dozen.

It was a moment teeming with surprise. Behind the sempstress appeared the hat-maker. He had brought with him a small cocked hat of the very latest fashion and of most elegant shape, and which had been fabricated by Monsieur Cornu, the first hat-maker in Villers-Cotterets.

A shoemaker had also been ordered to bring shoes for Pitou ; and he had with him a pair with handsome silver buckles made expressly for him.

Pitou could not recover his amazement ; he could not in any way comprehend that all these riches were for him.

In his most exaggerated dreams he could not even have dared to wish for so sumptuous a wardrobe. Tears of gratitude gushed from his eyelids, and he could only murmur out these words: —

"Oh! Mademoiselle Catherine! Mademoiselle Catherine! never will I forget what you have done for me."

Everything fitted remarkably well, and as if Pitou had been actually measured for them, with the sole exception of the shoes, which were too small by half. Monsieur Lauderau, the shoemaker, had taken measure by the foot of his son, who was four years Pitou's senior.

This superiority over young Lauderau gave a momentary feeling of pride to our hero; but this feeling of pride was soon checked by the reflection that he would either be obliged to go to the dance in his old shoes, or in no shoes at all, which would not be in accordance with the remainder of his costume. But this uneasiness was not of long duration. A pair of shoes which had been sent home at the same time to Farmer Billot fitted him exactly. It fortunately happened that Billot's feet and Pitou's were of the same dimensions, which was carefully concealed from Billot, for fear that so alarming a fact might annoy him.

While Pitou was busied in arraying himself in these sumptuous habiliments, the hairdresser came in and divided Pitou's hair into three compartments. One, and the most voluminous, was destined to fall over the collar of his coat, in the form of a tail; the two others were destined to ornament the temples, by the strange and unpoetical name of dog's-ears, — ridiculous enough, but that was the name given to them in those days.

And now there is one thing we must acknowledge, — and that is, that when Pitou, thus combed and frizzled,

dressed in his sky-blue coat and breeches, with his rose-striped waistcoat and his frilled shirt, with his tail and his dog's-ear curls, looked at himself in the glass, he found great difficulty in recognizing himself, and twisted himself about to see whether Adonis in person had not redescended on the earth.

He was alone. He smiled graciously at himself; and with head erect, his thumbs thrust into his waistcoat pockets, he said, raising himself upon his toes: —

"We shall see this Monsieur de Charny!"

It is true that Ange Pitou in his new costume resembled, as one pea does another, not one of Virgil's shepherds, but one of those so admirably painted by Watteau.

Consequently, the first step which Pitou made on entering the farm-kitchen was a perfect triumph.

"Oh, mamma, only see," cried Catherine, "how well Pitou looks now!"

"The fact is, that one would hardly know him again," replied Madame Billot.

Unfortunately, after the first general survey which had so much struck the young girl, she entered into a more minute examination of the details, and found Pitou less good-looking in the detailed than in the general view.

"Oh, how singular!" cried Catherine! "what great hands you have!"

"Yes," said Pitou, proudly, "I have famous hands, have I not?"

"And what thick knees!"

"That is a proof that I shall grow taller."

"Why, it appears to me that you are tall enough already, Monsieur Pitou," observed Catherine.

"That does not matter; I shall grow taller still," said Pitou. "I am only seventeen and a half years old."

"And no calves!"

"Ah, yes, that is true, — none at all; but they will grow soon."

"That is to be hoped," said Catherine, "but no matter, you are very well as you are."

Pitou made a bow.

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed Billot, coming in at that moment, and also struck with Pitou's appearance. "How fine you are, my lad! How I wish your Aunt Angélique could see you now."

"And so do I," said Pitou.

"I wonder what she would say?"

"She would not say a word, she would be in a perfect fury."

"But, Father," said Catherine, with a certain degree of uneasiness, "would she not have the right to take him back again?"

"Why, she turned him out of doors."

"And, besides," said Pitou, "the five years have gone by."

"What five years?" inquired Catherine.

"The five years for which Doctor Gilbert left a thousand francs."

"Had he then left a thousand francs with your aunt?"

"Yes, yes, yes: to get me into a good apprenticeship."

"That *is* a man!" exclaimed the farmer. "When one thinks that I hear something of the same kind related of him every day. Therefore — for him," he added, stretching out his hands with a gesture of admiration, "will I be devoted in life and death."

"He wished that I should learn some trade," said Pitou.

"And he was right. And this is the way in which good intentions are thwarted. A man leaves a thousand francs that a child may be taught a trade, and instead of having him taught a trade, he is placed under the tuition of a bigoted priest who destines him for the seminary! And how much did she pay to your Abbé Fortier?"

"Who?"

"Your aunt."

"She never paid him anything."

"What? Did she pocket the two hundred livres a year, which that good Monsieur Gilbert paid!"

"Probably."

"Listen to me, for I have a bit of advice to give you, Pitou; whenever your bigoted old aunt shall walk off, take care to examine minutely every cupboard, every mattress, every pickle-jar —"

"And for what?" asked Pitou.

"Because, do you see, you will find some hidden treasure, some good old louis, in some old stocking-foot. Why, it must undoubtedly be so, for she could never have found a purse large enough to contain all her savings."

"Do you think so?"

"Most assuredly. But we will speak of this at a more proper time and place. To-day we must take a little walk. Have you Doctor Gilbert's book?"

"I have it here, in my pocket."

"Father," said Catherine, "have you well reflected upon this?"

"There is no need for reflection," replied the farmer, "when one is about to do a good thing, my child. The doctor told me to have the book read, and to propagate the principles which it contains; the book shall therefore be read, and the principles shall be propagated."

"And," said Catherine, timidly, "may my mother and I, then, go to attend mass?"

"Go to mass, my child; go with your mother," replied Billot. "You are women; we, who are men, have other things to think of. Come, Pitou, we must be off, for we are waited for."

Pitou bowed majestically to Madame Billot and Mademoiselle Catherine; then with head erect he followed the worthy farmer, proud of having been thus, for the first time, called a man.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT ALTHOUGH LONG LEGS MAY BE SOMEWHAT UNGRACEFUL IN DANCING, THEY ARE VERY USEFUL IN RUNNING.

THERE was a numerous assemblage in the barn. Billot, as we have said, was much respected by his laborers, inasmuch as, though he scolded them unscrupulously, he fed and paid them well.

Consequently every one of them had hastened eagerly to accept his invitation.

Moreover, at this period the people had been seized with that extraordinary fever which pervades nations when nations are about to set themselves to work to produce some great change. Strange, new words, which until then had scarcely ever been uttered, issued from mouths which had never before pronounced them. They were the words, Liberty, Independence, Emancipation; and, strange to say, it was not only among the people that these words were heard; no, these words had been pronounced in the first place by the nobility, and the voice which responded to them was but an echo.

It was in the west that had first shone forth this light, which was destined to illuminate until it seared. It was in America that arose this sun, which, in accomplishing its course, was to make France one vast conflagration, by the light of which the affrighted nations were to read the word Republic traced in vivid characters of blood.

But notwithstanding this, meetings in which political affairs were discussed were less frequent than one would imagine. Men who had sprung up no one knew from where, apostles of an invisible deity, had traversed town and country, disseminating everywhere words in praise of liberty. The government, blinded heretofore, began at length to open its eyes. Those who were at the head of the immense machine denominated the "state," felt that some of its wheels were paralyzed, without being able to comprehend whence the obstacle proceeded. The opposition existed in all minds, if it had not yet instilled itself into all hands and arms; invisible, though present, though sensible, though threatening, and still more threatening from being like ghosts intangible, and from being divined although it could not be clutched.

Twenty or twenty-five husbandmen, all in the employment of Billot, had assembled in the barn.

Billot entered it, followed by Pitou. All heads were instantly uncovered, and they waved their hats to welcome their loved master. It was plainly visible that all these men were ready to meet death, should he but give the signal.

The farmer explained to the country-people that the pamphlet which Pitou was about to read to them was the work of Doctor Gilbert. The doctor was well known throughout the whole district, in which he was the proprietor of several farms, the one rented by Billot being the most considerable.

A cask had been prepared for the reader. Pitou ascended this extempore forum, and at once began.

It is to be remarked that people of the lower class, and I might almost venture to say, men in general, listen with most attention to that which they understand the least. It was evident that the general sense of the

pamphlet escaped the perceptions of the most enlightened among this rustic auditory, and even of Billot himself. But in the midst of that obscure phraseology from time to time flashed, like lightnings in a dark sky charged with electricity, the luminous words, Independence, Liberty, Equality. Nothing more was necessary; shouts of applause burst forth; cries of "Long live Doctor Gilbert!" resounded on every side. Not more than one third of the pamphlet had been read; it was decided that the remainder should be delivered on the two following Sundays.

The auditors were therefore invited for the next Sunday, and every one of them promised to attend.

Pitou had well performed his part; he had read energetically and well. Nothing succeeds so well as success. The reader had taken his share of the plaudits which had been addressed to the work, and, submitting to the influence of this relative science, Billot himself felt growing within him a certain degree of consideration for the pupil of the Abbé Fortier. Pitou, already a giant in his physical proportions, had morally grown ten inches in the opinion of Billot.

But there was one thing wanting to Pitou's happiness; Mademoiselle Catherine had not been present at his triumph.

But Father Billot, enchanted with the effect produced by the doctor's pamphlet, hastened to communicate its success to his wife and daughter. Madame Billot made no reply; she was a short-sighted woman.

Mademoiselle Catherine smiled sorrowfully.

"Well, what is the matter with you now?" said the farmer.

"Father! my dear father!" cried Catherine, "I fear that you are running into danger."

"There, now; are you going to play the bird of ill omen? You are well aware that I like the lark better than the owl."

"Father, I have already been told to warn you that eyes are watching you."

"And who was it that told you this, if you please?"

"A friend."

"A friend? All advice is deserving of thanks. You must tell me the name of this friend. Who is he? Come, now, let us hear."

"A man who ought to be well informed upon such matters."

"But who is it?"

"Monsieur Isidore de Charny."

"What business has that fop to meddle in such matters? Does he pretend to give me advice upon my way of thinking? Do I give him advice upon his mode of dressing? It appears to me that as much might be said on one subject as the other."

"My dear father, I do not tell you this to vex you. The advice he gave me was well intended."

"Well, then, in return, I will give him my counsel, which you can on my behalf transmit to him."

"And what is that?"

"It is that he and his fellows take good care what they are about. They shake these noble gentlemen about very nicely in the National Assembly, and more than once a great deal has been said of court favorites, male and female. Let him forewarn his brother, Monsieur Oliver de Charny, who is out yonder, to look to himself, for it is said he is not on bad terms with the Austrian woman."

"Father," said Catherine, "you have more experience than we have; act according to your pleasure."

"Yes, indeed," murmured Pitou, whose success had given him great confidence, "what business has your Monsieur Isidore to make and meddle?"

Catherine either did not hear him, or pretended not to hear him, and the conversation dropped.

The dinner was got through as usual. Never did dinner appear so long to Pitou. He was feverishly impatient to show himself abroad with Mademoiselle Catherine leaning on his arm. This Sunday was a momentous day to him, and he resolved that the date, the 12th of July, should ever remain engraved upon his memory.

They left the farm at last at about three o'clock. Catherine was positively charming. She was a pretty, fair-haired girl, with black eyes, slight and flexible as the willows that shaded the small spring from which the farm was supplied with water. She was, moreover, dressed with that natural coquetry which enhances the attractions of every woman, and her pretty little fantastic cap, made with her own hands, as she had told Pitou, became her admirably.

The ball did not in general commence till six o'clock. Four village minstrels, mounted upon a small stage formed of planks, did the honors of this ball-room in the open air, on receiving a contribution of six shillings for every country dance.

While waiting for the opening of the dance, the company walked in the celebrated Lane of Sighs, of which Aunt Angélique had spoken, to see the young gentlemen of the town and the neighborhood play at tennis, under the direction of Master Farollet, tennis-master-in-chief to his Highness the Duke of Orleans. Master Farollet was considered a perfect oracle, and his decision in matters of *chasse* and *passe*, and service, was as irrevocable as were the laws of the Medes and Persians.

Pitou, without knowing why, would have very much desired to remain in the Lane of Sighs; but it was not for the purpose of remaining concealed beneath the shade of this double row of beech-trees that Catherine had attired herself in the becoming dress which had so much astonished Pitou.

Women are like the flowers which chance has brought forth in the shade: their tendency is always towards the light; and one way or the other they must expand their fresh and perfumed petals in the sunshine, though it withers and destroys them.

The violet alone, as is asserted by the poets, has the modesty to remain concealed; but then she is arrayed in mourning, as if deploring her useless, because unnoticed, charms.

Catherine, therefore, dragged away at Pitou's arm, and so successfully, that they took the path to the tennis-court. We must, however, hasten to acknowledge that Pitou did not go very unwillingly. He also was as anxious to display his sky-blue suit and his cocked hat, as Catherine was to show her Galatea cap and her shining short silk bodice.

One thing above all flattered our hero, and gave him a momentary advantage over Catherine. As no one recognized him, Pitou never having been seen in such sumptuous habiliments, they took him for some young stranger arrived in the town, some nephew or cousin of the Billot family; some even asserted that he was Catherine's intended. But Pitou felt too great an interest in proving his own identity, to allow the error to be of long continuance.

He gave so many nods to his friends, he so frequently took off his hat to his acquaintance, that at last the unworthy pupil of the Abbé Fortier was recognized in the spruce young countryman.

A sort of buzzing murmur quickly ran through the throng, and many of his former companions exclaimed, "Why, really, it is Pitou!" "Only look at Pitou!" "Did you see Ange Pitou?"

This clamor at length reached the ears of Mademoiselle Angélique; but as this clamor informed her that the good-looking youth pointed out by it was her nephew, walking with his toes turned out and his elbows gracefully curved, the old maid, who had always seen Pitou walk with his toes turned in and his elbows stuck to his ribs, shook her head incredulously, and merely said, —

"You are mistaken; that is not my pitiful nephew."

The two young people reached the tennis-court. On that day there happened to be a match between the players of Soissons and those of Villers-Cotterets, so that the game was very animated. Catherine and Pitou placed themselves close to the rope stretched to prevent the crowd from interfering with the players; it was Catherine who had selected this place as being the best.

In about a minute the voice of Master Farollet was heard, calling out, —

"Two in — go over."

The players effectually changed places; that is to say, they each went to defend their quarters and attack those of their adversaries. One of the players, on passing by, bowed to Catherine with a smile; Catherine replied by a courtesy, and blushed. At the same moment Pitou felt a nervous trembling shoot through Catherine's arm, which was leaning on his.

An unknown anguish shot through Pitou's heart.

"That is Monsieur de Charny," said he, looking at his companion.

"Yes," replied Catherine. "Ah! you know him, then?"

"I do not know him," replied Pitou, "but I guessed that it was he."

And, in fact, Pitou had readily conceived this young man to be Monsieur de Charny, from what Catherine had said to him the previous evening.

The person who had bowed to the young girl was an elegant gentleman, who might be twenty-three or twenty-four years of age; he was handsome, of good stature, well formed, and graceful in his movements, as are all those who have had an aristocratic education from their very cradle. All those manly exercises in which perfection can only be attained on the condition of their being studied from childhood, Monsieur Isidore de Charny executed with remarkable perfection; besides, he was one of those whose costume always harmonizes with the pursuit in which they are engaged. His hunting-dresses were quoted for their perfect taste; his attire in the fencing-room might have served as a pattern to Saint-Georges himself; and his riding-coats were — or rather appeared to be, thanks to his manner of wearing them — of a particularly elegant shape.

On the present occasion Monsieur de Charny, a younger brother of our old acquaintance the Count de Charny, was attired in tight-fitting pantaloons of a light color, which set off to great advantage the shape of his finely formed and muscular limbs; his hair was negligently dressed, as for the morning; elegant tennis sandals for the moment were substituted for the red-heeled shoe or the top-boots; his waistcoat was of white marsella, fitting as closely to his waist as if he had worn stays; and to sum up all, his servant was waiting upon the slope with a green coat embroidered with gold lace, for his master to put on when the match was ended.

The animation of the game communicated to his fea-

tures all the charm and freshness of youth, notwithstanding his twenty-three years, the nightly excesses he had committed, and the gambling parties he had attended, which frequently the rising sun had illumined with its rays; all this had made sad havoc with his constitution.

None of these personal advantages, which doubtless the young girl had remarked, had escaped the jealous eyes of Pitou. On observing the small hands and feet of Monsieur de Charny, he began to feel less proud of that prodigality of nature which had given him the victory over the shoemaker's son, and he reflected that nature might have distributed in a more skilful manner over every part of his frame the elements of which it was composed.

In fact, with what there was too much in the hands, the feet, and the knees of Pitou, nature might have furnished him with a handsome, well-formed leg. Only, things were not in their right place: where a certain delicacy of proportion was required, there was an unnatural thickness; where a certain sleekness and rotundity would have been advantageous, there was an utter void.

Pitou looked at his legs with the same expression as the stag did of whom we have read in the fable.

"What is the matter with you, Monsieur Pitou?" said Catherine, who had observed his discontented looks.

Pitou did not reply: he could not explain his feelings; he therefore only sighed.

The game had terminated. The Viscount de Charny took advantage of the interval between the game just finished and the one about to commence, to come over to speak to Catherine. As he approached them, Pitou observed the color heightening in the young girl's cheeks, and felt her arm become more and more trembling.

The Viscount gave a nod to Pitou, and then, with that familiar politeness which the nobility of that period knew

how to adopt with the citizens' daughters and grisettes, he inquired of Catherine as to the state of her health, and asked her to be his partner in the first dance. Catherine accepted. A smile conveyed the thanks of the young nobleman. The game was about to begin, and he was called for. He bowed to Catherine, and then left her with the same elegant ease with which he had approached her.

Pitou felt all the superiority which the man possessed over him, who could speak, smile, approach, and take leave in such a manner.

A month's study, employed in endeavoring to imitate the simple though elegant movements of Monsieur de Charny, would only have produced a ridiculous parody, and this Pitou himself acknowledged.

If Pitou had been capable of entertaining a feeling of hatred, he would from that moment have detested the Viscount de Charny.

Catherine remained looking at the tennis-players until the moment when they called their servants to bring their coats to them. She then directed her steps towards the place set apart for dancing, to Pitou's great despair, who on that day appeared to be destined to go everywhere but where he wished.

Monsieur de Charny did not allow Catherine to wait long for him. A slight change in his dress had converted him from a tennis-player into an elegant dancer.

The violins gave the signal, and he at once presented his hand to Catherine, reminding her of the promise she had made to dance with him.

That which Pitou experienced when he felt Catherine withdrawing her arm from within his, and saw the young girl blushing deeply as she advanced with her cavalier into the circle, was one of the most disagreeable sensa-

tions of his whole life. A cold perspiration stood upon his brow; a cloud passed over his eyes; he stretched out his hand and caught hold of the balustrade for support, for he felt that his knees, strongly constituted as they were, were giving way.

As to Catherine, she did not appear to have, and very probably even had not, any idea of what was passing in poor Pitou's heart. She was at once happy and proud, — happy at being about to dance, and proud of dancing with the handsomest cavalier of the whole neighborhood.

If Pitou had been constrained to admire Monsieur de Charny as a tennis-player, he was no less compelled to do him justice as a dancer. In those days the fashion had not yet sprung up of walking instead of dancing. Dancing was an art which formed a necessary part of the education of every one. Without citing the case of Monsieur de Lauzun, who had owed his fortune to the manner in which he had danced his first steps in the king's quadrille, more than one nobleman owed the favor he had enjoyed at court to the manner in which he had extended his legs or pointed the extremity of his toe. In this respect the Viscount was a model of grace and perfection, and he might, like Louis XIV., have danced in a theatre with the chance of being applauded, although he was neither a king nor an actor.

For the second time Pitou looked at his own legs, and was obliged to acknowledge that unless some great metamorphosis should take place in that portion of his individuality, he must altogether renounce any attempt to succeed in vying with Monsieur de Charny in the particular art which he was displaying at that moment.

The country dance having ended, — for Catherine it had scarcely lasted a few seconds, but to Pitou it had appeared a century, — she returned to resume the arm

of her cavalier, and could not avoid observing the change which had taken place in his countenance. He was pale; the perspiration stood in beads upon his forehead, and a tear, half dried up by jealousy, shone in his humid eye.

"Ah! good heaven!" she exclaimed, "what is the matter with you, Pitou?"

"The matter is," replied the poor youth, "that I shall never dare to dance with you, after having seen you dance with Monsieur de Charny."

"Pshaw!" said Catherine, "you must not allow yourself to be cast down in this way; you will dance as well as you are able, and I shall not feel the less pleasure in dancing with you."

"Ah!" cried Pitou, "you say that, Mademoiselle, to console me; but I know myself, and I feel assured that you will always feel more pleasure in dancing with this young nobleman than with me."

Catherine made no reply, for she would not utter a falsehood, only, as she was an excellent creature, and had begun to perceive that something extraordinary was passing in the heart of the poor youth, she treated him very kindly; but this kindness could not restore to him his lost joy and peace of mind. Father Billot had spoken truly: Pitou was beginning to be a man, — he was suffering.

Catherine danced five or six country dances after this, one of which was with Monsieur de Charny. This time, without suffering less in reality than before, Pitou was, in appearance, much more calm. He followed with eager eyes each movement of Catherine and her cavalier. He endeavored from the motion of their lips to divine what they were saying to each other, and when, during the figures of the dance, their hands were joined, he tried to

discern whether their hands merely touched or pressed each other when thus they came in contact.

Doubtless it was the second dance with De Charny that Catherine had been awaiting, for it was scarcely ended when the young girl proposed to Pitou to return to the farm. Never was proposal acceded to with more alacrity; but the blow was struck, and Pitou, while taking long strides which Catherine from time to time was obliged to restrain, remained perfectly silent.

"What is the matter with you?" at length said Catherine to him, "and why is it that you do not speak to me?"

"I do not speak to you, Mademoiselle," said Pitou, "because I do not know how to speak as Monsieur de Charny does. What would you have me say to you, after all the fine things which he whispered to you while dancing with you?"

"Only see how unjust you are, Monsieur Ange; why, we were speaking of you."

"Of me, Mademoiselle, and how so?"

"Why, Monsieur Pitou, if your protector should not return, you must have another found to supply his place."

"I am then no longer capable of keeping the farm accounts?" inquired Pitou, with a sigh.

"On the contrary, Monsieur Ange, it is the farm accounts which are no longer worthy of being kept by you. With the education that you have received, you can find some more fitting occupation."

"I do not know what I may be fit for, but this I know, that I will not accept anything better if I am to obtain it through the Viscount de Charny."

"And why should you refuse his protection? His brother, the Count de Charny, is, it would appear, in high favor at court, and has married an intimate friend

of the Queen. He told me that if it would be agreeable to me he could obtain for you a place in the custom-house."

"Much obliged, Mademoiselle; but I have already told you that I am well satisfied to remain as I am, and unless, indeed, your father wishes to send me away, I will remain at the farm."

"And why in the Devil's name should I send you away?" cried a gruff voice, which Catherine tremblingly recognized to be that of her father.

"My dear Pitou," said Catherine in a whisper, "do not say a word of Monsieur Isidore, I beg of you."

"Well! why don't you answer?"

"Why, really, I don't know," said Pitou, much confused; "perhaps you do not think me sufficiently well informed to be useful to you?"

"Not sufficiently well informed, when you calculate as well as Barême, and when you read well enough to teach our schoolmaster, who notwithstanding thinks himself a great scholar? No, Pitou, it is God who brings to my house the people who enter it, and when once they are in it they shall remain there as long as God pleases."

Pitou returned to the farm on this assurance; but although this was something, it was not enough. A great change had taken place in his mind between the time of his going out and returning: he had lost a thing which, once lost, is never recovered; this was confidence in himself, and therefore Pitou, contrary to his usual custom, slept very badly. In his waking moments he recalled to mind Doctor Gilbert's book; this book was written principally against the nobility, against the abuses committed by the privileged classes, against the cowardice of those who submitted to them; it appeared to Pitou that he only then began to comprehend all the fine ideas which

he had read that morning, and he promised himself, as soon as it should be daylight, to read again for his own satisfaction, and to himself, the masterpiece which he had read aloud and to everybody,

But as Pitou had slept badly he awoke late. He did not, however, the less determine on carrying into effect his project of reading the book. It was seven o'clock; the farmer would not return until nine; besides, were he to return earlier, he could not but approve an occupation which he had himself recommended.

He descended by a small staircase, and seated himself on a low bench which happened to be under Catherine's window. Was it accident that had led Pitou to seat himself precisely in that spot, or did he know the relative positions of that window and that bench?

Be that as it may, Pitou was attired in his old every-day clothes, which there had not yet been time to get replaced, and which were composed of his black breeches, his green cassock, and his rusty-looking shoes. He drew the pamphlet from his pocket and began to read.

We would not venture to say that on beginning to read, the eyes of Pitou were not, from time to time, turned from his book to the window; but as the window did not exhibit the fair face of the young girl in its framework of nasturtiums and convolvuli, Pitou's eyes at length fixed themselves intently on his book.

It is true that as his hand neglected to turn over the leaves, and that the more fixed his attention appeared to be, the less did his hand move, it might be believed that his mind was fixed upon some other object, and that he was meditating instead of reading.

Suddenly it apppeared to Pitou that a shade was thrown over the pages of the pamphlet, until then illuminated by the morning sun. This shadow, too dense

to be that of a cloud, could therefore only be produced by some opaque body. Now, there are opaque bodies which are so delightful to look upon, that Pitou quickly turned round to ascertain what it was that thus intercepted his sunshine.

Pitou's hopes were, however, delusive. There was in fact an opaque body which robbed him of the daylight and heat which Diogenes desired Alexander not to deprive him of. But this opaque body, instead of being delightful, presented to his view a sufficiently disagreeable appearance.

It was that of a man about forty-five years old, who was taller and thinner than Pitou himself, dressed in a coat almost as threadbare as his own, and who was leaning his head over his shoulder, and appeared to be reading the pamphlet with a curiosity equal to Pitou's absence of mind.

Pitou was very much astonished; a gracious smile was playing round the lips of the dark-looking gentleman, exhibiting a mouth which had only retained four teeth, two in the upper and two in the lower jaw, crossing and sharpening themselves against each other, like the tusks of the wild boar.

"An American edition," said the man, with a strong nasal twang; "an octavo: 'On the Liberty of Man and the Independence of Nations, Boston, 1788.'"

While the black man was talking, Pitou opened his eyes with progressively increasing astonishment, so that when the man ceased speaking, Pitou's eyes had attained the greatest possible development of which they were capable.

"Boston, 1788. That is right, sir," replied Pitou.

"It is the treatise of Doctor Gilbert," said the gentleman in black.

"Yes, sir," politely replied Pitou, rising from his seat, for he had been told that it was uncivil to remain sitting when speaking to a superior; and in the still ingenuous mind of Pitou this man had the right to claim superiority over him.

But on getting up, Pitou observed something of a rosy color moving towards the window, and which gave him a significant glance. This rosy something was Mademoiselle Catherine. The young girl looked at him with an extraordinary expression, and made strange signs to him.

"Sir, if it is not being indiscreet," said the gentleman in black, who, having his back turned towards the window, was altogether ignorant of what was passing, "may I ask to whom this book belongs?"

And he pointed with his finger to the pamphlet which Pitou held in his hand.

Pitou was about to say that the book belonged to Monsieur Billot, when he heard the following words uttered in an almost supplicating tone: —

"Say that it is your own."

The gentleman in black, who was at that moment all eyes, did not hear these words.

"Sir," replied Pitou majestically, "this book belongs to me."

The gentleman in black raised his head, for he began to remark that the amazed looks of Pitou were from time to time diverted from him, to fix themselves on one particular spot. He saw the window, but Catherine had divined the movement of the gentleman in black, and, rapid as a bird, she had disappeared.

"What are you looking at, up yonder?" inquired the gentleman in black.

"Well, now," replied Pitou, smiling, "permit me to

observe to you that you are very inquisitive, — *curiosus*, or rather *avidus cognoscendi*, as the Abbé Fortier, my preceptor, used to say."

"You say, then," rejoined the interrogator, without appearing in the slightest degree intimidated by the proof of learning which Pitou had just given, with the intention of affording the gentleman in black a higher idea of his acquirements than he had before entertained, — "you say, then, that this book is yours?"

Pitou gave his eyes a furtive glance, so that the window came within the scope of his visual organs. Catherine's head again appeared at it, and made him an affirmative sign.

"Yes, sir," replied Pitou. "You are, perhaps, anxious to read it, — *Avidus legendi libri*, or *legendæ historiæ*."

"Sir," said the gentleman in black, "you appear to be much above the position which your attire would indicate. *Non dives vesitu sed ingenio.* Consequently, I arrest you."

"How! you arrest me?" cried Pitou, completely astounded.

"Yes, sir; follow me, I beg of you."

Pitou no longer looked up in the air, but around him, and perceived two police sergeants who were awaiting the orders of the gentleman in black. The two sergeants seemed to him to have sprung up from beneath the ground.

"Let us draw up our report, gentlemen," said the gentleman in black.

The sergeants tied Pitou's hands together with a rope, while they took care to secure Doctor Gilbert's book.

Then they fastened Pitou himself to a ring which was in the wall under the window.

Pitou was about to exclaim against this treatment, but he heard the low voice which had so much influence over him, saying, "Let them do what they please."

Pitou therefore allowed them to do as they pleased, with a docility which perfectly enchanted the sergeants, and above all the gentleman in black; so that without the slightest mistrust they entered the farm-house, the two sergeants to fetch a table, the gentleman in black to — but this we shall learn by-and-by.

The sergeants and the gentleman in black had scarcely entered the house when the soft voice was again heard.

"Hold up your hands," said the voice.

Pitou not only held up his hands but his head, and he perceived the pale and terrified face of Catherine; she had a knife in her hand.

"Higher! higher!" said she.

Pitou raised himself on tiptoe.

Catherine leaned out of the window, the knife touched the rope, and Pitou recovered the liberty of his hands.

"Take the knife," said Catherine, "and in your turn cut the rope which fastens you to the ring."

It was not necessary to repeat this to Pitou. He cut the cord, and was then completely free.

"And now," said Catherine, "here is a double louis. You have good legs; make your escape. Go to Paris and acquaint the doctor —"

She could not complete the sentence. The two sergeants reappeared, and the double louis fell at Pitou's feet.

Pitou quickly snatched it up. The sergeants were on the threshold of the door, where they remained for a moment or two, astonished at seeing the man at liberty, whom so short a time before they had so securely tied

up. On seeing them, Pitou's hair stood on end, and he confusedly remembered the *in crinibus angues* of the Eumenides.

The two sergeants and Pitou remained for a short time in the position of two pointer dogs and a hare, — motionless, and looking at each other. But as at the slightest movement of the dogs the hare springs off, at the first movement of the sergeants Pitou gave a prodigious bound, and leaped over a high hedge.

The sergeants uttered a cry which made the exempt rush out of the house, who had a small casket under his arm. The exempt did not lose any time in parleying, but instantly ran after Pitou ; the two sergeants imitated his example; but they were not active enough to jump, as he had done, over a hedge three feet and a half in height. They were therefore compelled to go round to a gate.

But when they reached the corner of the hedge, they perceived Pitou five hundred yards off in the plain, and hastening towards the forest, from which he was distant scarcely a quarter of a league, and which he would doubtless reach in some six or seven minutes.

At that moment Pitou turned round and on perceiving the sergeants, who were pursuing him rather from a desire to perform their duty than with the hope of catching him, he redoubled his speed, and soon disappeared in the skirts of the wood.

Pitou ran on at this rate for another quarter of an hour. He could have run two hours had it been necessary, for he had the wind of a stag, as well as its velocity.

But at the end of a quarter of an hour he felt instinctively that he must be out of danger. He stopped, drew breath, and listened ; and having assured himself that

he had completely distanced his pursuers, he said to himself, —

"It is incredible that so many events can have been crowded into three days;" and he looked alternately at his double louis and his knife.

"Oh," said he, "I wish I had only time to change my double louis, and give two sous to Mademoiselle Catherine, for I am much afraid that this knife will cut our friendship. No matter," added he, "since she has desired me to go to Paris, let us go there."

And Pitou, having looked about him to ascertain what part of the country he had reached, and finding that he was between Bouronne and Yvors, took a narrow path which would lead him straight to Gondreville Heaths, which path was crossed by the road which led direct to Paris.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHOWING WHY THE GENTLEMAN IN BLACK HAD GONE INTO THE FARM AT THE SAME TIME WITH THE TWO SERGEANTS.

But now let us return to the farm, and relate the catastrophe of which Pitou's episode was the winding up.

At about six o'clock in the morning an agent of the Paris police, accompanied by two sergeants, arrived at Villers-Cotterets, had presented themselves to the Commissary of Police, and had requested that the residence of Farmer Billot might be pointed out to them.

When they came within about five hundred yards of the farm, the exempt perceived a laborer working in a field. He went to him and asked him whether he should find Monsieur Billot at home. The laborer replied that Monsieur Billot never returned home till nine o'clock, — that is to say, before the breakfast hour. But at that very moment, as chance would have it, the laborer raised his eyes, and pointed to a man on horseback, who was talking with a shepherd at the distance of a quarter of a league from the farm.

"And yonder," said he, "is the person you are inquiring for."

"Monsieur Billot?"

"Yes."

"That horseman?"

"Yes; that is Monsieur Billot."

"Well, then, my friend," rejoined the exempt, "do you wish to afford great pleasure to your master?"

"I should like it vastly."

"Go and tell him that a gentleman from Paris is waiting for him at the farm."

"Oh," cried the laborer, "can it be Doctor Gilbert?"

"Tell him what I say; that is all."

The countryman did not wait to have the order repeated, but ran as hard as he could across the fields, while the police-officer and the two sergeants went and concealed themselves behind a half-ruined wall which stood facing the gate of the farm-yard.

In a very few minutes the galloping of a horse was heard. It was Billot, who had hastened back.

He went into the farm-yard, jumped from his horse, threw the bridle to one of the stable-boys, and rushed into the kitchen, being convinced that the first person he should see there would be Dr. Gilbert, standing beneath the immense mantel-piece; but he only saw Madame Billot seated in the middle of the room, plucking the feathers from a duck with all the minute care which this difficult operation demands.

Catherine was in her own room, employed in making a cap for the following Sunday. As it appears, Catherine was determined to be prepared in good time; but if the women have one pleasure almost equal to that of being well-dressed, it is that of preparing the articles with which they are to adorn themselves.

Billot paused on the threshold of the kitchen, and looked around inquiringly.

"Who, then, was it sent for me?" said he.

"It was I," replied a flute-like voice behind him.

Billot turned round, and perceived the gentleman in black and the two sergeants.

"Hey-day!" cried he, retreating three paces from them; "and what do you want with me?"

"Oh, good heavens! almost nothing, my dear Monsieur Billot," said the man with the flute-like voice; "only to make a perquisition in your farm, that is all."

"A perquisition?" exclaimed the astonished Billot.

"A perquisition," repeated the exempt.

Billot cast a glance at his fowling-piece, which was hanging over the chimney.

"Since we have a National Assembly," said he, "I thought that citizens were no longer exposed to such vexations, which belong to another age, and which appertain to a bygone state of things. What do you want with me? I am a peaceable and loyal man."

The agents of every police in the world have one habit which is common to them all, — that of never replying to the questions of their victims; but while they are searching their pockets, while they are arresting them, or tying their hands behind, some appear to be moved by pity. These tender-hearted ones are the most dangerous, inasmuch as they appear to be the most kind-hearted.

The one who was exercising his functions in the house of Farmer Billot was of the true Tapin and Desgrés school, made up of sweets, having always a tear for those whom they are persecuting, but who nevertheless do not use their hands to wipe their eyes.

The one in question, although heaving a deep sigh, made a sign with his hand to the two sergeants, who approached Billot. The worthy farmer sprang backward, and stretched out his hand to seize his gun; but it was diverted from the weapon, — a doubly-dangerous act at such a moment, as it might not only have killed the person about to use it, but the one against whom it was to be pointed. His hand was seized and imprisoned between two little hands, rendered strong by terror and powerful by supplication.

It was Catherine, who had run downstairs on hearing the noise, and had arrived in time to save her father from committing the crime of rebelling against the constituted authorities.

The first moment of anger having passed by, Billot no longer offered any resistance. The exempt ordered that he should be confined in a room on the ground floor, and Catherine in a room on the first story. As to Madame Billot, she was considered so inoffensive that no attention was paid to her, and she was allowed to remain in the kitchen. After this, finding himself master of the place, the exempt began to search the secretaries, wardrobes, and chests-of-drawers.

Billot, on finding himself alone, wished to make his escape. But, like most of the rooms on the ground floor of the farm-house, the windows of the one in which he was imprisoned were secured by iron bars. The gentleman in black had at a glance observed these bars, while Billot, who had had them placed there, had forgotten them.

Then, peeping through the key-hole, he perceived the exempt and his two acolytes, who were ransacking everything throughout the house.

"Hilloa!" cried he; "what is the meaning of all this? What are you doing there?"

"You can very plainly see that, my dear Monsieur Billot," said the exempt. "We are seeking for something which we have not yet found."

"But perhaps you are banditti, villains, regular thieves. Who knows?"

"Oh, sir!" replied the exempt, through the door, "you do us wrong. We are honest people, as you are; only that we are in the pay of his Majesty, and consequently compelled to obey his orders."

"His Majesty's orders!" exclaimed Billot. "The king, Louis XVI., has ordered you to search my secretary, to turn everything topsy-turvy in my closets and my wardrobes?"

"Yes."

"His Majesty," rejoined Billot, "who last year, when there was such a frightful famine that we were thinking of eating our horses, — his Majesty, who two years ago, when the hail-storm of the 13th of July destroyed our whole harvest, did not then deign to feel any anxiety about us, — what has he now to do with my farm, which he never saw, or with me, whom he does not know?"

"You will pardon me, sir," said the exempt, opening the door a little, but with great precaution, and exhibiting his order, signed by the lieutenant of police, which, according to the usual form, was headed with these words, "In the king's name," — "his Majesty has heard you spoken of, although he may not be personally acquainted with you; therefore, do not refuse the honor which he does you, and receive in a fitting manner those who present themselves to you in his name."

And the exempt, with a polite bow, and a friendly wink of the eye, closed the door again; after which the search was resumed.

Billot said not a word more, but crossed his arms and paced up and down the room, like a lion in a cage. He felt that he was caught, and in the power of these men.

The investigation was silently continued. These men appeared to have dropped from the clouds. No one had seen them, but the laborer who had been sent to fetch Billot. The dogs even in the yards had not barked on their approach. Assuredly the chief of this expedition must have been considered a skilful man, even by his

own fraternity. It was evidently not his first enterprise of this nature.

Billot heard the moanings of his daughter, shut up in the room above his own, and he remembered her prophetic words; for there could not be a doubt that the persecution to which the farmer had been subjected had for its cause the doctor's book.

At length the clock struck nine, and Billot through his grated window could count his laborers as they returned to the farm-house to get their breakfast. On seeing this, he reflected that, in case of any conflict, might, if not right, was not on his side. This conviction made the blood boil in his veins. He had no longer the fortitude to restrain his feelings; and seizing the door with both hands, he shook it so violently, that with two or three efforts of the same nature he would have burst the lock.

The police-agents immediately opened the door, and they saw the farmer standing close by it, with threatening looks. All was confusion in the house.

"But finally," cried Billot, "what is it you are seeking for in my house? Tell me, or, zounds! I will make you tell me."

The successive return of the laborers had not escaped the experienced eye of such a man as the exempt. He had counted the farm-servants, and had admitted to himself that in case of any combat he would not be able to retain possession of the field of battle. He therefore approached Billot with a demeanor more honeyed even than before, and bowing almost to the ground, said: —

"I will tell you what it is, dear Monsieur Billot, although it is against our custom. What we are seeking for in your house is a subversive book, an incendiary pamphlet, placed under ban by our royal censors."

"A book! — and in the house of a farmer who cannot read?"

"What is there astonishing in that, if you are a friend of the author, and he has sent it to you?"

"I am not the friend of Doctor Gilbert; I am merely his humble servant. The friend of the doctor, indeed! — that would be too great an honor for a poor farmer like me."

This inconsiderate outbreak, in which Billot betrayed himself by acknowledging that he not only knew the author, which was natural enough, he being his landlord, but that he knew the book, insured the agent's victory. The latter drew himself up, assumed his most amiable air, and touching Billot's arm, said, with a smile which appeared to distend transversely over his face: —

"'T is thou hast named him.' Do you know that verse, my dear Monsieur Billot?"

"I know no verses."

"It is by Racine, a very great poet."

"Well, what is the meaning of that line?" cried Billot.

"It means that you have betrayed yourself."

"Who — I?"

"Yourself."

"And how so?"

"By being the first to mention Monsieur Gilbert, whom we had the discretion not to name."

"That is true," said Billot.

"You acknowledge it, then?"

"I will do more than that."

"My dear Monsieur Billot, you overwhelm us with kindness: what is it you will do?"

"If it is that book you are hunting after, and I tell you where that book is," rejoined the farmer, with an uneasiness which he could not altogether control, "you will

leave off turning everything topsy-turvy here, will you not?"

The exempt made a sign to his two assistants.

"Most assuredly," replied the exempt, "since it is that book which is the object of our perquisition. Only," continued he, with his smiling grimace, "you may perhaps acknowledge one copy of it when you may have ten in your possession."

"I have only one, and that I swear to you."

"But it is this we are obliged to ascertain by a most careful search, dear Monsieur Billot," rejoined the exempt. "Have patience, therefore; in five minutes it will be concluded. We are only poor sergeants obeying the orders of the authorities, and you would not surely prevent men of honor, — there are men of honor in every station of life, dear Monsieur Billot, — you would not throw any impediment in the way of men of honor when they are doing their duty."

The gentleman in black had adopted the right mode: this was the proper course for persuading Billot.

"Well, do it then," replied the farmer, "but do it quickly."

And he turned his back upon them.

The exempt then very gently closed the door, and more gently still turned the key in the lock, at which Billot shrugged his shoulders in disdain, being certain of pulling open the door whenever he might please.

On his side the gentleman in black made a sign to the sergeants, who resumed their investigation, and they set to work much more actively than before. Books, papers, linen, were all opened, examined, unfolded.

Suddenly, at the bottom of a wardrobe which had been completely emptied, they perceived a small oaken casket bound with iron. The exempt darted upon it as a vul-

ture on his prey. At the mere sight, the scent, the handling of this object, he undoubtedly at once recognized that which he was in search of, for he quickly concealed the casket beneath his threadbare coat, and made a sign to the two sergeants that his mission was effected.

Billot was again becoming impatient; he stopped before the locked door.

"Why, I tell you again that you will not find it unless I tell you where it is," he cried; "it is not worth the while to tumble and destroy all my things for nothing. I am not a conspirator. In the Devil's name listen to me. Do you not hear what I am saying? Answer me, or I will set off for Paris, and will complain to the king, to the National Assembly, to everybody."

In those days the king was always mentioned before the people.

"Yes, my dear Monsieur Billot, we hear you, and we are quite ready to do justice to your excellent reasoning. Come, now, tell us where is this book? And as we are now convinced that you have only that single copy, we will take it, and then we will withdraw, and all will be over."

"Well," replied Billot, "the book is in the possession of an honest lad to whom I have given it with the charge of carrying it to a friend."

"And what is the name of this honest lad?" asked the gentleman in black, in an insinuating tone.

"Ange Pitou; he is a poor orphan whom I have taken into my house from charity, and who does not even know the subject of this book."

"Thanks, dear Monsieur Billot," said the exempt.

They threw the linen back into the wardrobe, and locked it up again, but the casket was not there.

"And where is this amiable youth to be found?"

"I think I saw him as I returned, somewhere near the bed of scarlet-runners, close to the arbor. Go, take the book from him; but take care not to do him any injury."

"Injury! Oh, my dear Monsieur Billot, how little you know us! We would not harm even a fly."

And they went towards the indicated spot. When they got near the scarlet-runners they perceived Pitou, whose tall stature made him appear more formidable than he was in reality. Thinking that the two sergeants would stand in need of his assistance to master the young giant, the exempt had taken off his cloak, had rolled the casket in it, and had hid the whole in a secret corner, but where he could easily regain possession of it.

But Catherine, who had been listening with her ear glued, as it were, to the door, had vaguely heard the words *Book*, *Doctor*, and *Pitou*. Therefore, finding the storm she had predicted had burst upon them, she had formed the idea of attenuating its effects. It was then that she prompted Pitou to say that he was the owner of the book.

We have related what then passed regarding it: how Pitou, bound and handcuffed by the exempt and his acolytes, had been restored to liberty by Catherine, who had taken advantage of the moment when the two sergeants went into the house to fetch a table to write upon, and the gentleman in black to take his cloak and casket.

We have stated how Pitou made his escape by jumping over a hedge; but that which we did not state is, that, like a man of talent, the exempt had taken advantage of this flight.

And, in fact, the twofold mission intrusted to the exempt having been accomplished, the flight of Pitou afforded an excellent opportunity to the exempt and his two men to make their escape also.

The gentleman in black, although he knew he had not the slightest chance of catching the fugitive, excited the two sergeants by his vociferations and his example to such a degree, that on seeing them racing through the clover, the wheat, and Spanish trefoil fields, one would have imagined that they were the most inveterate enemies of Pitou, whose long legs they were most cordially blessing in their hearts.

But Pitou had scarcely gained the covert of the wood, when the confederates, who had not even passed the skirts of it, halted behind a bush. During their race they had been joined by two other sergeants, who had kept themselves concealed in the neighborhood of the farm, and who had been instructed not to show themselves unless summoned by their chief.

"Upon my word," said the exempt, "it is very well that our gallant young fellow had not the casket instead of the book, for we should have been obliged to hire post-horses to catch him. By Jupiter! those legs of his are not men's legs, but those of a stag."

"Yes," replied one of the sergeants, "but he has not got it, has he, Monsieur Wolfsfoot? for, on the contrary, 't is you who have it."

"Undoubtedly, my friend, and here it is," replied the exempt, whose name we have now given for the first time, or we should rather say the nickname which had been given to him on account of the lightness of his step and the stealthiness of his walk.

"Then we are entitled to the reward which was promised us," observed one of the sergeants.

"Here it is," said the exempt, taking from his pocket four golden louis, which he divided among his four sergeants, without any distinction as to those who had been actively engaged in the perquisition or those who had merely remained concealed.

"Long live the lieutenant of police!" cried the sergeants.

"There is no harm in crying 'Long live the lieutenant!'" said Wolfsfoot; "but every time you utter such exclamations you should do it with discernment. It is not the lieutenant who pays."

"Who is it, then?"

"Some gentleman or lady friend of his, I know not which, but who desires that his or her name may not be mentioned in the business."

"I would wager that it is the person who wishes for the casket," said one of the sergeants.

"Hear now, Rigold, my friend," said the gentleman in black; "I have always affirmed that you are a lad replete with perspicacity, but until the day when this perspicacity shall produce its fruits by being amply recompensed, I advise you to be silent. What we have now to do is to make the best of our way on foot out of this neighborhood. That damned farmer has not the appearance of being conciliatory, and as soon as he discovers that the casket is missing, he will despatch all his farm laborers in pursuit of us, and they are fellows who can aim a gun as truly as any of his Majesty's Swiss guards."

This opinion was doubtless that of the majority of the party, for they all five set off at once, and, continuing to remain within the border of the forest, which concealed them from all eyes, they rapidly pursued their way, until, after walking three quarters of a league, they came out upon the public road.

This precaution was not a useless one, for Catherine had scarcely seen the gentleman in black and his two attendants disappear in pursuit of Pitou, than, full of confidence in the agility of him whom they pursued, who, unless some accident happened to him, would lead them a long dance, she called the husbandmen, who were well aware that something strange was going on, although they were ignorant of the positive facts, to tell them to open her door for her.

The laborers instantly obeyed her, and Catherine, again free, hastened to set her father at liberty.

Billot appeared to be in a dream. Instead of at once rushing out of the room, he seemed to walk mistrustfully, and returned from the door into the middle of the apartment. It might have been imagined that he did not dare to remain in the same spot, and yet that he was afraid of casting his eyes upon the articles of furniture which had been broken open and emptied by the sergeants.

"But," cried he on seeing his daughter, "tell me, did they take the book from him?"

"I believe so, Father," she replied, "but they did not take him."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Pitou; he has escaped from them, and they are still running after him. They must already have got to Cayolles or Vauciennes."

"So much the better! Poor fellow! It is I who have brought this upon him."

"Oh, Father, do not feel uneasy about him, but think only of what we have to do! Pitou, you may rest assured, will get out of this scrape. But what disorder! good heaven! only look, mother."

"Oh, my linen wardrobe!" cried Madame Billot;

"they have not even respected my linen wardrobe! What villains they must be!"

"They have searched the wardrobe where the linen was kept!" exclaimed Billot.

And he rushed towards the wardrobe, which the exempt, as we have before stated, had carefully closed again, and plunged his hands into piles of towels and table napkins, all confusedly huddled together.

"Oh," cried he, "it cannot be possible!"

"What are you looking for, Father?" inquired Catherine.

Billot gazed around him as if completely bewildered.

"Search, — search if you can see it anywhere! But no; not in that chest-of-drawers, — not in that secretary. Besides, it was there, — there; it was I myself who put it there. I saw it there only yesterday. It was not the book they were seeking for, — the wretches! — but the casket!"

"What casket?" asked Catherine.

"Why, you know well enough."

"What! Doctor Gilbert's casket?" inquired Madame Billot, who always, in matters of transcendent importance, allowed others to speak and act.

"Yes, Doctor Gilbert's casket!" cried Billot, plunging his fingers into his thick hair; "that casket which was so precious to him."

"You terrify me, my dear father," said Catherine.

"Unfortunate man that I am!" cried Billot, with furious anger; "and I, who had not in the slightest imagined such a thing, — I, who did not even for a moment think of that casket! Oh, what will the doctor say? What will he think of me? That I am a traitor, a coward, a miserable wretch!"

"But, good heaven! what did this casket contain, Father?"

"I do not know; but this I know, that I had engaged, even at the hazard of my life, to keep it safe; and I ought to have allowed myself to be killed in order to defend it."

And Billot made a gesture of such despair, that his wife and daughter started back with terror.

"Oh God! oh God! are you losing your reason, my poor father?" said Catherine.

And she burst into tears.

"Answer me, then," she cried; "for the love of Heaven, answer me!"

"Pierre, my friend," said Madame Billot, "answer your daughter; answer your wife."

"My horse! my horse!" cried the farmer; "bring out my horse!"

"Where are you going, Father?"

"To let the doctor know. The doctor must be informed of this."

"But where will you find him?"

"At Paris. Did you not read in the letter he wrote to us that he was going to Paris? He must be there by this time. I will go to Paris. My horse! my horse!"

"And you will leave us thus, my dear father? You will leave us in such a moment as this? You will leave us full of anxiety and anguish?"

"It must be so, my child; it must be so," said the farmer, taking his daughter's face between his hands and convulsively fixing his lips upon it. "'If ever you should lose this casket,' said the doctor to me, 'or rather, should it ever be surreptitiously taken from you, the instant you discover the robbery, set off at once, Billot, and inform me of it, wherever I may be. Let nothing stop you, not even the life of a man.'"

"Good Lord! what can this casket contain?"

"Of that I know nothing; all that I know is, that it was placed under my care, and that I have allowed it to be taken from me. Ah, here is my horse! From the son, who is at college, I shall learn where to find the father."

And kissing his wife and daughter for the last time, the farmer jumped into his saddle, and galloped across the country, in the direction of the high-road to Paris.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ROAD TO PARIS.

Let us return to Pitou.

Pitou was urged onwards by the two most powerful stimulants known in this great world, — Fear and Love.

Fear whispered to him in direct terms : —

"You may be either arrested or beaten ; take care of yourself, Pitou !"

And that sufficed to make him run as swiftly as a roebuck.

Love had said to him, in the voice of Catherine : —

"Escape quickly, my dear Pitou !"

And Pitou had escaped.

These two stimulants combined, as we have said, had such an effect upon him, that Pitou did not merely run : Pitou absolutely flew.

How useful did Pitou's long legs, which appeared to be knotted to him, and his enormous knees, which looked so ungainly in a ballroom, prove to him in the open country, when his heart, enlarged with terror, beat three pulsations in a second.

Monsieur de Charny, with his small feet, his elegantly formed knees, and his symmetrically shaped calves, could not have run at such a rate as that.

Pitou recalled to his mind that pretty fable, in which a stag is represented weeping over his slim shanks, reflected in a fountain ; and although he did not bear on his forehead the ornament which the quadruped deemed

some compensation for his slender legs, he reproached himself for having so much despised his *stilts*.

For such was the appellation which Madame Billot gave to Pitou's legs when Pitou looked at them standing before a looking-glass.

Pitou, therefore, continued making his way through the wood, leaving Cayolles on his right and Yvors on his left, turning round at every corner of a bush, to see, or rather to listen; for it was long since he had seen anything of his persecutors, who had been distanced at the outset by the brilliant proof of swiftness Pitou had given, in placing a space of at least a thousand yards between them and himself, — a distance which he was increasing every moment.

Why was Atalanta married? Pitou would have entered the lists with her; and to have excelled Hippomenes he would not assuredly have needed to employ, as he did, the subterfuge of the three golden apples.

It is true, as we have already said, that Monsieur Wolfsfoot's agents, delighted at having possession of their booty, cared not a fig as to what became of Pitou; but Pitou knew not this.

Ceasing to be pursued by the reality, he continued to be pursued by the shadows.

As to the black-clothed gentlemen, they had that confidence in themselves which renders human beings lazy.

"Run! run!" cried they, thrusting their hands into their pockets, and making the reward which Monsieur Wolfsfoot had given them jingle in them: "run, good fellow, run; we can always find you again, should we want you."

Which, we may say in passing, far from being a vain boast, was the precise truth.

And Pitou continued to run as if he had heard the *aside* of Monsieur Wolfsfoot's agents.

When he had, by scientifically altering his course, and turning and twisting as do the wild denizens of the forest to throw the hounds off scent, when he had doubled and turned so as to form such a maze that Nimrod himself would not have been able to unravel it, he at once made up his mind as to his route, and taking a sharp turn to the right, went in a direct line to the high road which leads from Villers-Cotterets to Paris, from the hill near Gondreville Heaths.

Having formed this resolution, he bounded through the copse, and after running for a little more than a quarter of an hour, he perceived the road enclosed by its yellow sand and bordered with its green trees.

An hour after his departure from the farm he was on the king's highway.

He had run about four leagues and a half during that hour; as much as any rider could expect from an active horse, going a good round trot.

He cast a glance behind him. There was nothing on the road.

He cast a glance before him. There were two women upon asses.

Pitou had got hold of a small work on mythology, with engravings, belonging to young Gilbert; mythology was much studied in those days.

The history of the gods and goddesses of the Grecian Olympus formed part of the education of young persons. By dint of looking at the engravings Pitou had become acquainted with mythology. He had seen Jupiter metamorphose himself into a bull, to carry off Europa; into a swan, that he might approach and make love to the daughter of King Tyndarus. He had, in short, seen

other gods transforming themselves into forms more or less picturesque; but that one of his Majesty's police-officers should have transformed himself into an ass had never come within the scope of his erudition. King Midas himself had never had anything of the animal but the ears, — and he was a king, — he made gold at will, — he had therefore money enough to purchase the whole skin of the quadruped.

Somewhat reassured by what he saw, or rather by what he did not see, Pitou threw himself down on the grassy bank of the roadside, wiped with his sleeve his broad red face, and thus luxuriously reclining on the fresh clover, he yielded himself up to the voluptuousness of perspiring in tranquillity.

But the sweet emanations from the clover and marjoram could not make Pitou forget the pickled pork made by Madame Billot, and the quarter of a six-pound loaf which Catherine allotted to him at every meal, — that is to say, three times a day.

This bread at that time cost four sous and a half a pound, a most exorbitant price, equivalent at least to nine sous in our days, and was so scarce throughout France that when it was eatable, it passed for the fabulous *brioche*,[1] which the Duchess of Polignac advised the Parisians to feed upon when flour should altogether fail them.

Pitou therefore said to himself philosophically that Mademoiselle Catherine was the most generous princess in the world, and that Father Billot's farm was the most sumptuous palace in the universe.

Then, as the Israelites on the banks of the Jordan, he turned a dying eye towards the east, that is to say,

[1] A sort of dry cake made of flour, eggs, and saffron, which the Parisians eat with their coffee and milk. — TRANSLATOR.

in the direction of that thrice happy farm, and sighed heavily.

But sighing is not so disagreeable an operation to a man who stands in need of taking breath after a violent race.

Pitou breathed more freely when sighing, and he felt his ideas, which for a time had been much confused and agitated, return to him gradually with his breath.

"Why is it," reasoned he with himself, "that so many extraordinary events have happened to me in so short a space of time? Why should I have met with more accidents within the last three days than during the whole course of my previous life?

"It is because I dreamed of a cat that wanted to fly at me," continued Pitou.

And he made a gesture signifying that the source of all his misfortunes had been thus already pointed out to him.

"Yes," added he, after a moment's reflection, "but this is not the logic of my venerable friend the Abbé Fortier. It is not because I dreamed of an irritated cat that all these adventures have happened to me. Dreams are only given to a man as a sort of warning, and this is why an author said, 'Thou hast been dreaming, beware! — *Cave, somniasti!*'

"*Somniasti*," said Pitou, doubtingly, and with somewhat of alarm; "am I then again committing a barbarism? Oh, no; I am only making an elision; it was *somniavisti* which I should have said, in grammatical language.

"It is astonishing," cried Pitou, considering himself admiringly, "how well I understand Latin since I no longer study it!"

And after this glorification of himself, Pitou resumed his journey.

Pitou walked on very quickly, though he was much tranquillized. His pace was somewhere about two leagues an hour.

The result of this was that two hours after he had recommenced his walk Pitou had got beyond Nanteuil, and was getting on towards Dammartin.

Suddenly the ears of Pitou, as acute as those of an Osage Indian, were struck with the distant sound of a horse's feet upon the paved road.

"Oh," cried Pitou, scanning the celebrated verse of Virgil, —

"'Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum.'"

And he looked behind him.

But he saw nothing.

Could it be the asses which he had passed at Levignon, and which had now come on at a gallop? No: for the iron hoof, as the poet calls it, rang upon the paved road; and Pitou, whether at Haramont or at Villers-Cotterets, had never known an ass, excepting that of Mother Sabot, that was shod, and even this was because Mother Sabot performed the duty of letter-carrier between Villers-Cotterets and Crespy.

He therefore momentarily forgot the noise he had heard, to return to his reflections.

Who could these men in black be who had questioned him about Doctor Gilbert, who had tied his hands, who had pursued him, and whom he had at length so completely distanced?

Where could these men have sprung from, for they were altogether unknown in the district?

What could they have in particular to do with Pitou, — he who had never seen them, and who, consequently, did not know them?

How then was it, as he did not know them, that they had known him? Why had Mademoiselle Catherine told him to set off for Paris; and why, in order to facilitate his journey, had she given him a louis of forty-eight francs, — that is to say, two hundred and forty pounds of bread, at four sous a pound. Why, it was enough to supply him with food for eighty days, or three months, if he would stint his rations somewhat.

Could Mademoiselle Catherine suppose that Pitou was to remain eighty days absent from the farm?

Pitou suddenly started.

"Oh! oh!" he exclaimed, "again that horse's hoofs."

"This time," said Pitou, all on the alert, "I am not mistaken. The noise I hear is positively that of a horse galloping. I shall see it when he gets to the top of yon hill."

Pitou had scarcely spoken when a horse appeared at the top of a hill he had just left behind him, that is to say, at the distance of about four hundred yards from the spot on which he stood.

Pitou, who would not allow that a police agent could have transmogrified himself into an ass, admitted at once that he might have got on horseback to regain the prey that had escaped him.

Terror, from which he had been for some time relieved, again seized on Pitou, and immediately his legs became even longer and more intrepid than when he had made such marvellous good use of them some two hours previously.

Therefore, without reflecting, without looking behind, without even endeavoring to conceal his flight, calculating on the excellence of his steel-like sinews, Pitou, with a tremendous leap, sprang across the ditch which ran by the roadside, and began a rapid course across the country

in the direction of Ermenonville. Pitou did not know anything of Ermenonville, he only saw upon the horizon the summits of some tall trees, and he said to himself, —

"If I reach those trees, which are undoubtedly on the border of some forest, I am saved."

And he ran toward Ermenonville.

On this occasion he had to outvie a horse in running. Pitou had no longer legs, but wings.

And his rapidity was increased after having run some hundred yards, for Pitou had cast a glance behind him, and had seen the horseman oblige his horse to take the same immense leap which he had taken over the ditch on the roadside.

From that moment there could be no longer a doubt in the mind of the fugitive that the horseman was, in reality, in pursuit of him, and consequently the fugitive had increased his speed, never again turning his head, for fear of losing time. What most urged him on at that moment was not the clattering on the paved road, — that noise was deadened by the clover and the fallow fields; what most urged him on was a sort of cry which pursued him, the last syllable of his name pronounced by the horseman, a sort of hou ! hou ! which appeared to be uttered angrily, and which reached him on the wings of the wind, which he was endeavoring to outstrip.

But after having maintained this sharp race during ten minutes, Pitou began to feel that his chest became oppressed, — the blood rushed to his head, — his eyes began to wander. It seemed to him that his knees became more and more developed, — that his loins were filling with small pebbles. From time to time he stumbled over the furrows, — he who usually raised his feet so high, when running, that every nail in the soles of his shoes were visible.

At last the horse, created superior to man in the art of running, gained on the biped Pitou, and at the same time he heard the voice of the horseman, who no longer cried "Hou! hou!" but clearly and distinctly, "Pitou! Pitou!"

All was over. All was lost.

However, Pitou endeavored to continue the race. It had become a sort of mechanical movement; he rushed on, impelled by the power of repulsion. Suddenly, his knees failed him; he staggered and fell at full length, with his face to the ground.

But at the same time that he thus fell, fully resolved not to get up again, — at all events, of his own free will, — he received a lash from a horsewhip which wound round his loins.

With a tremendous oath, which was not unfamiliar to his ears, a well-known voice cried out to him, —

"How now, you stupid fellow! how now, you simpleton! have you sworn to founder Cadet?"

The name of Cadet at once dispelled all Pitou's suspense.

"Ah!" cried he, turning himself round, so that instead of lying upon his face he lay upon his back, — "Ah! I hear the voice of Monsieur Billot!"

It was in fact Goodman Billot. When Pitou was well assured of his identity, he assumed a sitting posture.

The farmer, on his side, had pulled up Cadet, covered with flakes of foam.

"Ah! dear Monsieur Billot," exclaimed Pitou, "how kind it is of you to ride in this way after me! I swear to you I should have returned to the farm after having expended the double louis Mademoiselle Catherine gave me. But since you are here, take back your double louis, — for of course it must be yours, — and let us return to the farm."

"A thousand devils!" exclaimed Billot; "who was thinking of the farm? Where are the *mouchards?*"

"The *mouchards?*" inquired Pitou, who did not comprehend the meaning of this word, which had only just been admitted into the vocabulary of our language.

"Yes, the *mouchards,*"[1] rejoined Billot; "the men in black. Do you not understand me?"

"Ah! the men in black! You will readily understand, my dear Monsieur Billot, that I did not amuse myself by waiting for them."

"Bravo! You have left them behind, then?"

"Why, I flatter myself I have; after the race I have run, it was to be expected, as it appears to me."

"Then, if you were so sure of your affair, what the devil made you run at such a rate?"

"Because I thought it was their chief, who, not to be outwitted, was pursuing me on horseback."

"Well, well! You are not quite so simple as I thought you. Then, as the road is clear, up! up! and away for Dammartin!"

"What do you mean by 'up, up'?"

"Yes, get up and come with me."

"We are going, then, to Dammartin?"

"Yes. I will borrow a horse, there, of old Lefranc. I will leave Cadet with him, for he can go no farther; and to-night we will push on to Paris."

"Be it so, Monsieur Billot; be it so."

"Well, then, up! — up!"

Pitou made an effort to obey him.

"I should much wish to do as you desire," said he, "but, my dear Monsieur Billot, I cannot."

"How, — you cannot get up?"

[1] Spies, — common informers, — men who live by betraying others. — TRANSLATOR.

"No."

"But just now you could manage to turn round."

"Oh, just now! that was by no means astonishing. I heard your voice, and at the same moment I received a swingeing cut across the back. But such things can only succeed once. At present, I am accustomed to your voice; and as to your whip, I feel well assured that you can only apply it to managing our poor Cadet, who is almost as heated as I am."

Pitou's logic, which, after all, was nothing more than the Abbé Fortier's, persuaded, and even affected, the farmer.

"I have not time to sympathize in your fate," said he to Pitou; "but, come now, make an effort and get up behind me."

"Why," said Pitou, "that would be, indeed, the way to founder Cadet at once, poor beast!"

"Pooh! in half an hour we shall be at old Lefranc's."

"But it appears to me, dear Monsieur Billot," said Pitou, "that it would be altogether useless for me to go with you to old Lefranc's."

"And why so?"

"Because, although you have business at Dammartin, I have no business there, — not I."

"Yes; but I want you to come to Paris with me. In Paris you will be of use to me. You have good stout fists; and I am certain it will not be long before hard knocks will be given there."

"Ah! ah!" cried Pitou, not much delighted with this prospect; "do you believe that?"

And he managed to get on Cadet's back, Billot dragging him up as he would a sack of flour.

The good farmer soon got on the high-road again, and so well managed his bridle, whip, and spurs, that in

less than half an hour, as he had said, they reached Dammartin.

Billot had entered the town by a narrow lane, which was well known to him. He soon arrived at Father Lefranc's farm-house; and leaving Pitou and Cadet in the middle of the farm-yard, he ran straight to the kitchen, where Father Lefranc, who was setting out to take a turn round his fields, was buttoning on his gaiters.

"Quick! — quick! my friend," cried Billot, before Lefranc had recovered from the astonishment which his arrival had produced; "the strongest horse you have!"

"That is Margot," replied Lefranc; "and fortunately she is already saddled; I was going out."

"Well, Margot be it, then; only it is possible I may founder her, and of that I forewarn you."

"What, founder Margot! and why so, I ask?"

"Because it is necessary that I should be in Paris this very night."

And he made a masonic sign to Lefranc, which was most significant.

"Well, founder Margot if you will," said old Lefranc; "you shall give me Cadet, if you do."

"Agreed."

"A glass of wine?"

"Two."

"But it seemed to me that you were not alone?"

"No; I have a worthy lad there whom I am taking with me, and who is so fatigued that he had not the strength to come in here. Send out something to him."

"Immediately, immediately," said the farmer.

In ten minutes the two old comrades had each managed to soak in a bottle of good wine, and Pitou had bolted a two-pound loaf, with half a pound of bacon.

While he was eating, one of the farm-servants, a good fellow, rubbed him down with a handful of clean straw, to take the mud from his clothes, and with as much care as if he had been cleaning a favorite horse.

Thus freshened up and invigorated, Pitou had also some wine given to him, taken from a third bottle, which was the sooner emptied from Pitou's having his share of it; after which Billot mounted Margot, and Pitou, stiff as a pair of compasses, was lifted on behind him.

The poor beast, being thereunto urged by whip and spur, trotted off bravely, under this double load, on the road to Paris, and without ceasing whisked away the flies with its formidable tail, the thick hair of which threw the dust of the road on Pitou's back, and every now and then lashed his calfless legs, which were exposed to view, his stockings having fallen down to his ankles.

CHAPTER X.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING AT THE END OF THE ROAD WHICH PITOU WAS TRAVELLING UPON, — THAT IS TO SAY, AT PARIS.

It is eight leagues from Dammartin to Paris. The four first leagues were tolerably well got over; but after they reached Bourget, poor Margot's legs at length began to grow somewhat stiff. Night was closing in.

On arriving at La Villette, Billot thought he perceived a great light extending over Paris.

He made Pitou observe the red light, which rose above the horizon.

"You do not see, then," said Pitou to him, "that there are troops bivouacking, and that they have lighted their fires."

"What mean you by troops?" cried Billot.

"There are troops here," said Pitou; "why should there not be some farther on?"

And, in fact, on examining attentively, Father Billot saw, on looking to the right, that the plain of St. Denis was dotted over with black-looking detachments of infantry and cavalry, which were marching silently in the darkness.

Their arms glistened occasionally with the pale reflection of the stars.

Pitou, whose nocturnal excursions in the woods had accustomed him to see clearly in the dark, — Pitou pointed out to his master pieces of artillery, which had sunk up to the axles in the middle of the muddy plain.

"Oh! oh!" cried Billot, "there is something new up yonder, then! Let us make haste! Let us make haste!"

"Yes, yes; there is a fire out yonder," said Pitou, who had raised himself on Margot's back. "Look! — look! Do you not see the sparks?"

Margot stopped. Billot jumped off her back, and approaching a group of soldiers in blue and yellow uniform, who were bivouacking under the trees by the road-side, "Comrades," said he to them, "can you tell me what there is going on at Paris?"

But the soldiers merely replied to him by oaths, which they uttered in the German language.

"What the devil is it they say?" inquired Billot, addressing Pitou.

"It is not Latin, dear Monsieur Billot," replied Pitou, trembling; "and that is all I can affirm to you."

Billot reflected, and looked again.

"Simpleton that I was," said he, "to attempt to question these *Kaiserliks*."

And in his curiosity he remained motionless in the middle of the road.

An officer went up to him.

"Bass on your roat," said he; "bass on quickly."

"Your pardon, Captain," replied Billot; "but I am going to Paris."

"Vell, mein Gott; vot den?"

"And as I see that you are drawn up across the road, I fear that we cannot get through the barriers."

"You can get drough."

And Billot remounted his mare and went on.

But it was only to fall in the midst of the Bercheur Hussars, who encumbered the street of La Villette.

This time he had to deal with his own countrymen. He questioned them with more success.

"Sir," said he, "what has there happened at Paris, if you please?"

"That your headstrong Parisians," replied the hussar, "will have their Necker; and they are firing musket-shots at us, as if we had anything to do with the matter!"

"Have Necker!" exclaimed Billot. "They have lost him, then?"

"Assuredly, since the king has dismissed him."

"The king has dismissed Monsieur Necker!" exclaimed Billot, with the stupefaction of a devotee calling out against a sacrilege: "the king has dismissed that great man?"

"Oh, in faith he has, my worthy sir; and more than that, this great man is now on his road to Brussels."

"Well, then, in that case we shall see some fun," cried Billot, in a tremendous voice, without caring for the danger he was incurring by thus preaching insurrection in the midst of twelve or fifteen hundred royalist sabres.

And he again mounted Margot, spurring her on with cruel violence, until he reached the barrier.

As he advanced, he perceived that the fire was increasing and becoming redder. A long column of flame ascended from the barrier towards the sky.

It was the barrier itself that was burning.

A howling, furious mob, in which there were many women, who, as usual, threatened and vociferated more loudly than the men, were feeding the fire with pieces of wainscoting, and chairs and tables, and other articles of furniture belonging to the clerks employed to collect the city dues.[1]

[1] The city of Paris is encircled by a wall, and at every entrance to it is a custom-house, where people coming from the country are obliged to give an account of the produce, — poultry, meal, butter, eggs, etc., — and pay the city dues upon them. — TRANSLATOR.

Upon the road were Hungarian and German regiments, who, leaning upon their grounded arms, were looking on with vacant eyes at this scene of devastation.

Billot did not allow this rampart of flames to arrest his progress. He spurred on Margot through the fire. Margot rushed through the flaming ruins; but when she had reached the inner side of the barrier she was obliged to stop, being met by a crowd of people coming from the centre of the city, towards the suburbs. Some of them were singing, others shouting, "To arms!"

Billot had the appearance of being what he really was, a good farmer coming to Paris on his own affairs. Perhaps he cried out rather too loudly, "Make room! make room!" but Pitou repeated the words so politely, "Room if you please; let us pass!" that the one was a corrective of the other. No one had any interest in preventing Billot from going to his affairs, and he was allowed to pass.

Margot, during all this, had recovered her wind and strength; the fire had singed her coat. All these unaccustomed shouts appeared greatly to amaze her, and Billot was obliged to restrain the efforts she now made to advance, for fear of trampling under foot some of the numerous spectators whom curiosity had drawn together before their doors to see the gate on fire, and as many curious people who were running from their doors towards the burning toll-house.

Billot went on pushing through the crowd, pulling Margot first to the right and then to the left, twisting and turning in every direction, until they reached the Boulevard; but having got thus far he was obliged to stop.

A procession was then passing, coming from the Bastille, and going towards the place called the Garde

Meuble, those two masses of stone which in those days formed a girdle which attached the centre of the city to its outworks.

This procession, which obstructed the whole of the Boulevard, was following a bier; on this bier were borne two busts, — the one veiled with black crape, the other crowned with flowers.

The bust covered with black crape was that of Necker, a minister who had not been disgraced, but dismissed. The one crowned with flowers was that of the Duke of Orleans, who had openly espoused at court the party of the Genevese economists.

Billot immediately inquired what was the meaning of this procession. He was informed that it was a popular homage paid to M. Necker and to his defender, the Duke of Orleans.

Billot had been born in a part of the country where the name of the Duke of Orleans had been venerated for a century and a half. Billot belonged to the new sect of philosophers, and consequently considered Monsieur Necker not only as a great minister, but as an apostle of humanity.

This was more than sufficient to excite Billot. He jumped off his horse, without being exactly aware of what he was about to do, shouting, "Long live the Duke of Orleans! long live Necker!" and then mingled with the crowd. Having once got into the thick of the throng, all personal liberty was at an end at once; as every one knows, the use of our free will at once ceases. We wish what the crowd wishes, we do what it does. Billot, moreover, allowed himself the more easily to be drawn into this movement, from being near the head of the procession.

The mob kept on vociferating most strenuously, "Long

live Necker! no more foreign troops! Down with the foreign troops!"

Billot mingled his stentorian voice with all these voices.

A superiority, be it of whatsoever nature it may, is always appreciated by the people. The Parisian of the suburbs, with his faint hoarse voice, enfeebled by inanition or worn out by drinking, duly appreciated the full, rich, and sonorous voice of Billot, and readily made way for him, so that without being too much elbowed, too much pushed about, too much pressed by the crowd, Billot at length managed to get close up to the bier.

About ten minutes after this, one of the bearers, whose enthusiasm had been greater than his strength, yielded his place to Billot.

As has been seen, the honest farmer had rapidly obtained promotion.

The day before he had been merely the propagator of the principles contained in Doctor Gilbert's pamphlet, and now he had become one of the instruments of the great triumph of Necker and the Duke of Orleans.

But he had scarcely attained this post when an idea crossed his mind.

"What had become of Pitou, — what had become of Margot?"

Though carefully bearing his portion of the bier, he gave a glance behind him, and by the light of the torches which accompanied the procession, by the light of the lamps which illuminated every window, he perceived in the midst of the procession a sort of ambulating eminence, formed of five or six men, who were gesticulating and shouting.

Amidst these gesticulations and shouts it was easy to distinguish the voice and recognize the long arms of his follower, Pitou.

Pitou was doing all he could to protect Margot; but despite all his efforts Margot had been invaded. Margot no longer bore Billot and Pitou, a very honorable and sufficient burden for the poor animal.

Margot was bearing as many people as could manage to get upon her back, her croup, her neck; Margot looked in the obscurity of the night, which always magnifies the appearance of objects, like an elephant loaded with hunters going to attack a tiger.

Five or six furious fellows had taken possession of Margot's broad back, vociferating, "Long live Necker!" "Long live the Duke of Orleans!" "Down with the foreigners!" to which Pitou replied, —

"You will break Margot's back!"

The enthusiasm was general.

Billot for a moment entertained the idea of rushing to the aid of Pitou and poor Margot; but he reflected that if he should only for a moment resign the honor of carrying one of the corners of the bier, he would not be able to regain his triumphal post. Then, he reflected that by the barter he had agreed to with old Lefranc, that of giving him Cadet for Margot, Margot belonged to him, and that, should any accident happen to Margot, it was, after all, but an affair of some three or four hundred livres, and that he, Billot, was undoubtedly rich enough to make the sacrifice of three or four hundred livres to his country.

During this time the procession kept on advancing; it had moved obliquely to the left, and had gone down the Rue Montmartre to the Place des Victoires. When it reached the Palais Royal some great impediment prevented its passing on. A troop of men with green leaves in their hats were shouting "To arms!"

It was necessary to reconnoitre. Were these men who

blocked up the Rue Vivienne friends, or enemies? Green was the color of the Count d'Artois. Why, then, these green cockades?

After a minute's conference all was explained.

On learning the dismissal of Necker, a young man had issued from the Café Foy, had jumped upon a table in the garden of the Palais Royal, and taking a pistol from his breast, had cried, "To arms!"

On hearing this cry, all the persons who were walking there had assembled round him, and had shouted, "To arms!"

We have already said that all the foreign regiments had been collected around Paris. One might have imagined that it was an invasion by the Austrians. The names of these regiments alarmed the ears of all Frenchmen; they were Reynac, Salis Samade, Diesbach, Esterhazy, Rœmer; the very naming of them was sufficient to make the crowd understand that they were the names of enemies. The young man named them; he announced that the Swiss were encamped in the Champs Élysées, with four pieces of artillery, and that they were to enter Paris the same night, preceded by the dragoons commanded by Prince Lambesq. He proposed a new cockade which was not theirs, snatched a leaf from a chestnut-tree and placed it in the band of his hat. Upon the instant every one present followed his example. Three thousand persons had in ten minutes unleaved the trees of the Palais Royal.

That morning no one knew the name of that young man; in the evening it was in every mouth.

That young man's name was Camille Desmoulins.

The two crowds recognized each other as friends; they fraternized, they embraced each other, and then the procession continued on its way.

During the momentary halt we have just described, the curiosity of those who had not been able to discover, even by standing on tiptoe, what was going on, had overloaded Margot with an increasing burden. Every inch on which a foot could be placed had been invaded, so that when the crowd again moved on, the poor beast was literally crushed by the enormous weight which overwhelmed her.

At the corner of the Rue Richelieu Billot cast a look behind him; Margot had disappeared.

He heaved a deep sigh, addressed to the memory of the unfortunate animal; then, soon recovering from his grief, and calling up the whole power of his voice, he three times called Pitou, as did the Romans of ancient times when attending the funeral of a relative. He imagined that he heard, issuing from the centre of the crowd, a voice which replied to his own, but that voice was lost among the confused clamors which ascended towards the heavens, half threatening, half with applauding acclamations.

The procession still moved on.

All the shops were closed; but all the windows were open, and from every window issued cries of encouragement which fell like blessings on the heads of those who formed this great ovation.

In this way they reached the Place Vendôme.

But on arriving there the procession was obstructed by an unforeseen obstacle.

Like to those trunks of trees rooted up by a river that has overflown its banks, and which, on encountering the piers of a bridge, recoil upon the wreck of matter which is following them, the popular army found a detachment of the Royal Germans on the Place Vendôme.

These foreign soldiers were dragoons, who, seeing an

inundation streaming from the Rue St. Honoré, and which began to overflow the Place Vendôme, loosened their horses' reins, who, impatient at having been stationed there during five hours, at once galloped furiously forward, charging upon the people.

The bearers of the bier received the first shock, and were thrown down beneath their burden. A Savoyard, who was walking before Billot, was the first to spring to his feet again; he raised the effigy of the Duke of Orleans, and placing it on the top of a stick, held it above his head, crying, —

"Long live the Duke of Orleans!" whom he had never seen; and "Long live Necker!" whom he did not know.

Billot was about to do as much for the bust of Necker, but found himself forestalled. A young man, about twenty-four or twenty-five years old, and sufficiently well-dressed to deserve the title of a beau, had followed it with his eyes, which he could do more easily than Billot, who was carrying it; and as soon as the bust had fallen to the ground, he had rushed towards it and seized upon it.

The good farmer therefore vainly endeavored to find it on the ground; the bust of Necker was already on the point of a sort of pike, and, side by side with that of the Duke of Orleans, rallied around them a good portion of the procession.

Suddenly a great light illuminates the square; at the same moment a peal of musketry is heard; balls whiz through the air; something heavy strikes Billot on the forehead; he falls. At first, Billot imagined himself killed.

But as his senses had not abandoned him, as, excepting a violent pain in the head, he felt no other injury,

Billot comprehended that he was, even at the worst, but wounded. He pressed his hand to his forehead, to ascertain the extent of damage he had received, and perceived at one and the same time that he had only a contusion on the head, and that his hands were streaming with blood.

The elegantly dressed young man who had supplanted Billot had received a ball full in his breast. It was he who was shot. The blood on Billot's hands was his. The blow which Billot had experienced was from the bust of Necker, which, losing its supporter, had fallen upon his head.

Billot utters a cry, partly of anger, partly of terror.

He draws back from the young man, who was convulsed in the agonies of death. Those who surrounded him also draw back; and the shout he had uttered, repeated by the crowd, is prolonged like a funeral echo by the groups assembled in the Rue St. Honoré.

This shout was a second rebellion.

A second detonation was then heard, and immediately deep vacancies hollowed in the mass attested the passage of the murderous projectiles.

To pick up the bust, the whole face of which was stained with blood; to raise it above his head, and protest against this outrage with his sonorous voice, at the risk of being shot down, as had been the handsome young man whose body was then lying at his feet, was what Billot's indignation prompted him to effect, and which he did in the first moment of his enthusiasm.

But at the same instant a large and powerful hand was placed upon the farmer's shoulder, and with so much vigor that he was compelled to bend down beneath its weight. The farmer wishes to relieve himself from this pressure; another hand, no less heavy than the first, falls

on his other shoulder. He turned round, reddening with anger, to ascertain what sort of antagonist he had to contend with.

"Pitou!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, yes," replied Pitou. "Down! down! and you will soon see."

And redoubling his efforts, he managed to drag with him to the ground the opposing farmer.

No sooner had he forced Billot to lie down flat upon the pavement, than another discharge was heard. The Savoyard who was carrying the bust of the Duke of Orleans gave way in his turn, struck by a ball in the thigh.

Then was heard the crushing of the pavement beneath the horses' hoofs; then the dragoons charged a second time; a horse, with streaming mane, and furious as that of the Apocalypse, bounds over the unfortunate Savoyard, who feels the cold steel of a lance penetrate his breast. He falls on Billot and Pitou.

The tempest rushed onward towards the end of the street, spreading, as it passed, terror and death. Dead bodies alone remained on the pavement of the square. All those who had formed the procession fled through the adjacent streets. The windows are instantly closed, — a gloomy silence succeeds to the shouts of enthusiasm and the cries of anger.

Billot waited a moment, still restrained by the prudent Pitou; he felt that the danger was becoming more distant with the noise, while Pitou, like a hare in its bed, was beginning to raise, not his head, but his ears.

"Well, Monsieur Billot," said Pitou, "I think that you spoke truly, and that we have arrived here in the nick of time."

"Come, now, help me!"

"And what to do, — to run away?"

"No. The young dandy is dead as a door-nail, but the poor Savoyard, in my opinion, has only fainted. Help me to put him on my back. We cannot leave him here, to be finished by those damned Germans."

Billot spoke a language which went straight to Pitou's heart. He had no answer to make but to obey. He took up the fainting and bleeding body of the poor Savoyard, and threw him, as he would have done a sack, across the shoulders of the robust farmer; who, seeing that the Rue St. Honoré was free, and in all appearance deserted, advanced with Pitou towards the Palais Royal.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NIGHT BETWEEN THE 12TH AND 13TH OF JULY.

THE street had, in the first place, appeared empty and deserted to Billot and Pitou, because the dragoons, being engaged in the pursuit of the great body of the fugitives, had turned into the market of St. Honoré, and had followed them up the Rue Louis-le-Grand and the Rue Gaillon. But as Billot advanced towards the Palais Royal, roaring instinctively, but in a subdued voice, the word "Vengeance!" men made their appearance at the corners of the streets, at the end of alleys, and from under the carriage gateways, who, at first, mute and terrified, looked around them, but being at length assured of the absence of the dragoons, brought up the rear of this funereal march, repeating, first in hollow whispers, but soon aloud, and finally with shouts, the word "Vengeance! vengeance!"

Pitou walked behind the farmer, carrying the Savoyard's black cap in his hand.

They arrived thus, in gloomy and fearful procession, upon the square before the Palais Royal, where a whole people, drunk with rage, was holding council, and soliciting the support of French soldiers against the foreigners.

"Who are these men in uniform?" inquired Billot, on arriving in front of a company who were standing with grounded arms, stopping the passage across the square, from the gate of the palace to the Rue de Chartres.

"They are the French Guards!" cried several voices.

"Ah!" exclaimed Billot, approaching them, and showing them the body of the Savoyard, which was now a lifeless corpse, — "Ah! you are Frenchmen, and you allow us to be murdered by these Germans!"

The French Guards drew back with horror.

"Dead?" murmured a voice from within their ranks.

"Yes, dead! dead! assassinated! — he and many more besides!"

"And by whom?"

"By the Royal German Dragoons. Did you not hear the cries, the firing, the galloping of their horses?"

"Yes, yes, we did!" cried two or three hundred voices. "They were butchering the people on the Place Vendôme!"

"And you are part of the people, by Heaven, you are!" cried Billot, addressing the soldiers. "It is therefore cowardly in you to allow your brothers to be butchered."

"Cowardly!" exclaimed several threatening voices in the ranks.

"Yes, cowardly! I have said it, and I repeat the word. Come, now," continued Billot, advancing three steps towards the spot from whence these murmurs had proceeded; "well, now, will you not kill me, in order to prove that you are not cowards?"

"Good! that is all well, very well," said one of the soldiers. "You are a brave fellow, my friend. You are a citizen, and can do what you will; but a military man is a soldier, do you see, and he must obey orders."

"So that," replied Billot, "if you received orders to fire upon us, — that is to say, upon unarmed men, — you would fire, you who have succeeded the men of Fontenoy, who gave the advantage to the English by telling them to fire first!"

"As to me, I know that I would not fire, for one," said a voice from the ranks.

"Nor I! — Nor I!" repeated a hundred voices.

"Then see that others do not fire upon us," cried Billot. "To allow the Germans to butcher us is just the same thing as if you slaughtered us yourselves."

"The dragoons! the dragoons!" cried several voices at the same time that the crowd, driven backwards, began to throng the square, flying by the Rue de Richelieu.

And there was heard the distant sound of the galloping of heavy cavalry upon the pavement, but which became louder at every moment.

"To arms! to arms!" cried the fugitives.

"A thousand gods!" cried Billot, throwing the dead body of the Savoyard upon the ground, which he had till then held in his arms; "give us your muskets, at least, if you will not yourselves make use of them."

"Well, then, yes; by a thousand thunders, we will make use of them!" said the soldier to whom Billot had addressed himself, snatching out of his hand his musket, which the other had already seized. "Come, come! let us bite our cartridges, and if the Austrians have anything to say to these brave fellows, we shall see!"

"Yes, yes, we 'll see!" cried the soldiers, putting their hands into their cartouche-boxes and biting off the ends of their cartridges.

"Oh, thunder!" cried Billot, stamping his feet; "and to think that I have not brought my fowling-piece! But perhaps one of those rascally Austrians will be killed, and then I will take his carbine."

"In the mean time," said a voice, "take this carbine; it is ready loaded."

And at the same time an unknown man slipped a richly mounted carbine into Billot's hands.

At that instant the dragoons galloped into the square, riding down and sabring all that were in their way.

The officer who commanded the French Guards advanced four steps.

"Hilloa, there, gentlemen dragoons!" cried he; "halt there, if you please!"

Whether the dragoons did not hear, or whether they did not choose to hear, or whether they could not at once arrest the violent course of their horses, they rode across the square, making a half-wheel to the right, and ran over a woman and an old man, who disappeared beneath their horses' hoofs.

"Fire, then, fire!" cried Billot.

Billot was standing close to the officer. It might have been thought that it was the latter who had given the word.

The French Guards presented their guns, and fired a volley, which at once brought the dragoons to a stand.

"Why, gentlemen of the Guards," said a German officer, advancing in front of his disordered squadron, "do you know that you are firing upon us?"

"Do we not know it?" cried Billot; and he fired at the officer, who fell from his horse.

Then the French Guards fired a second volley, and the Germans, seeing that they had on this occasion to deal, not with plain citizens, who would fly at the first sabre-cut, but with soldiers, who firmly waited their attack, turned to the right-about, and galloped back to the Place Vendôme, amidst so formidable an explosion of bravoes and shouts of triumph, that several of their horses, terrified at the noise, ran off with their riders, and knocked their heads against the closed shutters of the shops.

"Long live the French Guards!" cried the people.

"Long live the soldiers of the country!" cried Billot.

"Thanks," replied the latter. "We have smelt gunpowder, and we are now baptized."

"And I, too," said Pitou, "I have smelt gunpowder."

"And what do you think of it?" inquired Billot.

"Why, really, I do not find it so disagreeable as I had expected," replied Pitou.

"But now," said Billot, who had had time to examine the carbine, and had ascertained that it was a weapon of some value, "but now, to whom belongs this gun?"

"To my master," said the voice which had already spoken behind him. "But my master thinks that you make too good use of it to take it back again."

Billot turned round, and perceived a huntsman in the livery of the Duke of Orleans.

"And where is your master?" said he.

The huntsman pointed to a half-open Venetian blind, behind which the prince had been watching all that had passed.

"Your master is then on our side?" asked Billot.

"With the people, heart and soul," replied the huntsman.

"In that case, once more, 'Long live the Duke of Orleans!'" cried Billot. "My friends, the Duke of Orleans is with us. Long live the Duke of Orleans!"

And he pointed to the blind behind which the prince stood.

Then the blind was thrown completely open, and the Duke of Orleans bowed three times.

After which the blind was again closed.

Although of such short duration, his appearance had wound up the enthusiasm of the people to its acme.

"Long live the Duke of Orleans!" vociferated two or three thousand voices.

"Let us break open the armorers' shops!" cried a voice in the crowd.

"Let us run to the Invalides!" cried some old soldiers. "Sombreuil has twenty thousand muskets."

"To the Invalides!"

"To the Hôtel de Ville!" exclaimed several voices. "Flesselles the provost of the merchants, has the key of the depôt in which the arms of the Guards are kept. He will give them to us."

"To the Hôtel de Ville!" cried a fraction of the crowd.

And the whole crowd dispersed, taking the three directions which had been pointed out.

During this time the dragoons had rallied round the Baron de Besenval and the Prince de Lambesq, on the Place Louis XV.

Of this Billot and Pitou were ignorant. They had not followed either of the three troops of citizens, and they found themselves almost alone in the square before the Palais Royal.

"Well, dear Monsieur Billot, where are we to go next, if you please?" said Pitou.

"Why," replied Billot, "I should have desired to follow those worthy people, — not to the gunmakers' shops, since I have such a beautiful carbine, but to the Hôtel de Ville or to the Invalides. However, not having come to Paris to fight, but to find out the address of Doctor Gilbert, it appears to me that I ought to go to the College of Louis-le-Grand, where his son now is; and then, after having seen the doctor, why, we can throw ourselves again into this seething whirlpool." And the eyes of the farmer flashed lightnings.

"To go in the first place to the College of Louis-le-Grand appears to me quite logical," sententiously

observed Pitou; "since it was for that purpose that we came to Paris."

"Go, get a musket, a sabre, a weapon of some kind or other from some one or other of those idle fellows who are lying on the pavement yonder," said Billot, pointing to one out of five or six dragoons who were stretched upon the ground; "and let us at once go to the college."

"But these arms," said Pitou, hesitating, "they are not mine."

"Who, then, do they belong to?" asked Billot.

"To the king."

"They belong to the people," rejoined Billot.

And Pitou, yielding implicitly to the opinion of the farmer, whom he knew to be a man who would not rob a neighbor of a grain of millet, approached with every necessary precaution the dragoon who happened to be the nearest to him, and after having assured himself that he was really dead, took from him his sabre, his musketoon, and his cartouche-box.

Pitou had a great desire to take his helmet also, only he was not quite certain that what Father Billot had said with regard to offensive weapons extended to defensive accoutrements.

But while thus arming himself, Pitou directed his ears towards the Place Vendôme.

"Ho, ho!" said he, "it appears to me that the Royal Germans are coming this way again."

And in fact the noise of a troop of horsemen returning at a foot-pace could be heard. Pitou peeped from behind the corner of the coffee-house called La Regence, and perceived, at about the distance of the market of St. Honoré, a patrol of dragoons advancing, with their musketoons in hand.

"Oh, quick, quick!" cried Pitou, "here they are, coming back again."

Billot cast his eyes around him to see if there was any means of offering resistance. There was scarcely a person in the square.

"Let us go, then," said he, "to the College Louis-le-Grand."

And he went up the Rue de Chartres, followed by Pitou, who, not knowing the use of the hook upon his belt, was dragging his long sabre after him.

"A thousand thunders!" exclaimed Billot; "why, you look like a dealer in old iron. Fasten me up that lath there."

"But how?" asked Pitou.

"Why, so, by Heaven! — there!" said Billot.

And he hooked Pitou's long sabre up to his belt, which enabled the latter to walk with more celerity than he could have done but for this expedient.

They pursued their way without meeting with any impediment, till they reached the Place Louis XV.; but there Billot and Pitou fell in with the column which had left them to proceed to the Invalides, and which had been stopped short in its progress.

"Well!" cried Billot, "what is the matter?"

"The matter is, that we cannot go across the Bridge Louis XV."

"But you can go along the quays."

"All passage is stopped that way, too."

"And across the Champs Élysées?"

"Also."

"Then let us retrace our steps, and go over the bridge at the Tuileries."

The proposal was a perfectly natural one, and the crowd, by following Billot, showed that they were eager

to accede to it. But they saw sabres gleaming half-way between them and the Tuileries Gardens. The quay was occupied by a squadron of dragoons.

"Why, these cursed dragoons are, then, everywhere," murmured the farmer.

"I say, my dear Monsieur Billot," said Pitou, "I believe that we are caught."

"Pshaw! they cannot catch five or six thousand men; and we are five or six thousand men, at least."

The dragoons on the quay were advancing slowly, it is true, at a very gentle walk; but they were visibly advancing.

"The Rue Royale still remains open to us. Come this way; come, Pitou."

Pitou followed the farmer as if he had been his shadow.

But a line of soldiers was drawn across the street, near the St. Honoré gate.

"Ah, ah!" muttered Billot; "you may be in the right, friend Pitou."

"Hum!" was Pitou's sole reply.

But this word expressed, by the tone in which it had been pronounced, all the regret which Pitou felt at not having been mistaken.

The crowd, by its agitation and its clamors, proved that it was not less sensible than Pitou of the position in which it was then placed.

And, in fact, by a skilful manœuvre, the Prince de Lambesq had surrounded not only the rebels, but also those who had been drawn there from mere curiosity, and by preventing all egress by the Bridge Louis XV., the quays, the Champs Élysées, the Rue Royale, and Les Feuillants, he had enclosed them in a bow of iron, the string of which was represented by the walls of the Tuileries Gardens, which it would be very difficult to

escalade, and the iron gate of the Pont Tournant, which it was almost impossible to force.

Billot reflected on their position; it certainly was not a favorable one; however, as he was a man of calm, cool mind, full of resources when in danger, he cast his eyes around him, and perceiving a pile of timber lying beside the river, —

"I have an idea," said he to Pitou: "come this way."

Pitou followed him, without asking him what the idea was.

Billot advanced towards the timber, and seizing the end of a large block, said to Pitou, "Help me to carry this."

Pitou, for his part, without questioning him as to his intentions, caught hold of the other end of the piece of timber. He had such implicit confidence in the farmer, that he would have gone down to the infernal regions with him, without even making any observation as to the length of the descent or the depth of the abyss.

They were soon upon the quay again, bearing a load which five or six men of ordinary strength would have found difficult to raise.

Strength is always a subject of admiration to the mob, and although so compactly huddle dtogether, they made way for Billot and Pitou.

Then, as they felt convinced that the manœuvre which was being accomplished was one of general interest, some men walked before Billot, crying, "Make way! make way!"

"Tell me now, Father Billot," inquired Pitou, after having carried the timber some thirty yards, "are we going far?"

"As far as the gate of the Tuileries."

"Ho! ho!" cried the crowd, who at once divined his intention.

And it made way for them more eagerly even than before.

Pitou looked about him, and saw that the gate was not more than thirty paces distant.

"I can reach it," said he, with the brevity of a Pythagorean.

The labor was so much the easier to Pitou from five or six of the strongest of the crowd taking their share in the burden.

The result of this was a very notable acceleration in their progress.

In five minutes they had reached the iron gate.

"Come, now," cried Billot, "clap your shoulders to it, and all push together."

"Good!" said Pitou. "I understand it now. We have just made a warlike engine; the Romans used to call it a ram."

"Now, my boys," cried Billot, "once, twice, thrice!" And the joist, directed with a furious impetus, struck the lock of the gate with resounding violence.

The soldiers who were on guard in the interior of the garden hastened to resist this invasion. But at the third stroke the gate gave way, turning violently on its hinges, and through that gaping and gloomy mouth the crowd rushed impetuously.

From the movement that was then made, the Prince de Lambesq perceived at once that an opening had been effected which allowed the escape of those whom he had considered as his prisoners. He was furious with disappointment. He urged his horse forward in order the better to judge of the position of affairs. The dragoons who were drawn up behind him imagined that the order

had been given to charge, and they followed him. The horses, going off at full speed, could not be suddenly pulled up. The men, who wished to be revenged for the check they had received on the square before the Palais Royal, scarcely endeavored to restrain them.

The prince saw that it would be impossible to moderate their advance, and allowed himself to be borne away by it. A sudden shriek uttered by the women and children ascended to heaven crying for vengeance against the brutal soldiers.

A frightful scene then occurred, rendered still more terrific by the darkness. Those who were charged upon became mad with pain; those who charged them were mad with anger.

Then a species of defence was organized from the top of a terrace. Chairs were hurled down on the dragoons. The Prince de Lambesq, who had been struck on the head, replied by giving a sabre-cut to the person nearest to him, without considering that he was punishing an innocent man instead of a guilty one, and an old man more than seventy years of age fell beneath his sword.

Billot saw this man fall, and uttered a loud cry. In a moment his carbine was at his shoulder. A furrow of light for a moment illuminated the darkness, and the prince had then died, had not this horse, by chance, reared at the same instant.

The horse received the ball in his neck, and fell.

It was thought that the prince was killed; the dragoons then rushed into the Tuileries, pursuing the fugitives, and firing their pistols at them.

But the fugitives, having now a greater space, dispersed among the trees.

Billot quietly reloaded his carbine.

"In good faith, Pitou," said he, "I think that you were right. We really have arrived in the nick of time."

"If I should become a bold daring fellow," said Pitou, discharging his musketoon at the thickest group of the dragoons. "It seems to me not so difficult as I had thought."

"Yes," replied Billot; "but useless courage is not real courage. Come this way, Pitou, and take care that your sword does not get between your legs."

"Wait a moment for me, dear Monsieur Billot; if I should lose you I should not know which way to go. I do not know Paris as you do: I was never here before."

"Come along, come along," said Billot; and he went by the terrace by the water-side, until he had got ahead of the line of troops, which were advancing along the quay; but this time as rapidly as they could, to give their aid to the Lambesq dragoons, should such aid be necessary.

When they reached the end of the terrace, Billot seated himself on the parapet and jumped on to the quay.

Pitou followed his example.

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT OCCURRED DURING THE NIGHT OF THE 12TH JULY, 1789.

ONCE upon the quay, the two countrymen saw glittering on the bridge near the Tuileries the arms of another body of men, which in all probability was not a body of friends; they silently glided to the end of the quay and descended the bank which leads along the Seine.

The clock of the Tuileries was just then striking eleven.

When they had got beneath the trees which line the banks of the river, fine aspen-trees and poplars, which bathe their feet in its current; when they were lost to the sight of their pursuers, hid by their friendly foliage, the farmer and Pitou threw themselves upon the grass and opened a council of war.

The question was to know, — and this was suggested by the farmer, — whether they should remain where they were, that is to say, in safety, or comparatively so, or whether they should again throw themselves into the tumult and take their share of the struggle which was going on, and which appeared likely to be continued the greater part of the night.

The question being mooted, Billot awaited the reply of Pitou.

Pitou had risen very greatly in the opinion of the farmer, — in the first place, by the knowledge which he had shown the day before, and afterwards by the courage of which he had given such proofs during the evening.

Pitou instinctively felt this, but instead of being prouder from it, he was only the more grateful towards the good farmer. Pitou was naturally very humble.

"Monsieur Billot," said he, "it is evident that you are more brave and I less a poltroon than I imagined. Horace, who, however, was a very different man to us, with regard to poetry, at least, threw away his arms and ran off at the very first blow. As to me, I have still my musketoon, my cartridge-box, and my sabre, which proves that I am braver than Horace."

"Well, what are you driving at?"

"What I mean is this, dear Monsieur Billot, — that the bravest man in the world may be killed by a ball."

"And what then?" inquired the farmer.

"And then, my dear sir, thus it is: as you stated, on leaving your farm, that you were going to Paris for an important object — "

"Oh, confound it, that is true, for the casket!"

"Well, then, did you come about this casket, — yes, or no?"

"I came about the casket, by a thousand thunders! and for nothing else."

"If you should allow yourself to be killed by a ball, the affair for which you came cannot be accomplished."

"In truth, you are ten times right, Pitou."

"Do you hear that crashing noise — those cries?" continued Pitou, encouraged by the farmer's approbation; "wood is being torn like paper, iron is twisted as if it were but hemp."

"It is because the people are angry, Pitou."

"But it appears to me," Pitou ventured to say, "that the king is tolerably angry too."

"How say you, — the king?"

"Undoubtedly; the Austrians, the Germans, the Kaiserliks, as you call them, are the king's soldiers. Well, if they charge the people, it is the king who orders them to charge, and for him to give such an order, he must be angry too."

"You are both right and wrong, Pitou."

"That does not appear possible to me, Monsieur Billot, and I dare not say to you that had you studied logic, you would not venture on such a paradox."

"You are right and you are wrong, Pitou, and I will presently make you comprehend how this can be."

"I do not ask anything better, but I doubt it."

"See you now, Pitou, there are two parties at court, — that of the king, who loves the people, and that of the queen, who loves the Austrians?"

"That is because the king is a Frenchman, and the queen an Austrian," philosophically replied Pitou.

"Wait a moment. On the king's side are Monsieur Turgot and Monsieur Necker, on the queen's, Monsieur de Breteuil and the Polignacs. The king is not the master, since he has been obliged to send away Monsieur Turgot and Monsieur Necker. It is therefore the queen who is the mistress, the Breteuils and the Polignacs: therefore all goes badly.

"Do you see, Pitou, the evil proceeds from Madame Deficit, and Madame Deficit is in a rage, and it is in her name that the troops charge; the Austrians defend the Austrian women, that is natural enough."

"Your pardon, Monsieur Billot," said Pitou, interrupting him, "but *deficit* is a Latin word, which means to say a want of something. What is it that is wanting?"

"Zounds! why, money, to be sure; and it is because money is wanting, it is because the queen's favorites have devoured this money which is wanting, that the queen is

called Madame Deficit. It is not therefore the king who is angry, but the queen. The king is only vexed, — vexed that everything goes so badly."

"I comprehend," said Pitou; but the casket?"

"That is true, that is true, Pitou; these devilish politics always drag me on farther than I would go — yes, the casket, before everything. You are right, Pitou; when I shall have seen Doctor Gilbert, why, then, we can return to politics — it is a sacred duty."

"There is nothing more sacred than sacred duties," said Pitou.

"Well, then, let us go to the College Louis-le-Grand, where Sebastien Gilbert now is," said Billot.

"Let us go," said Pitou, sighing; for he would be compelled to leave a bed of moss-like grass, to which he had accustomed himself. Besides which, notwithstanding the over-excitement of the evening, sleep, the assiduous host of pure consciences and tired limbs, had descended with all its poppies to welcome the virtuous and heartily tired Pitou.

Billot was already on his feet, and Pitou was about to rise, when the half-hour struck.

"But," said Billot, "at half-past eleven o'clock the college of Louis-le-Grand must, it would appear to me, be closed."

"Oh, most assuredly," said Pitou.

"And then, in the dark," continued Billot, "we might fall into some ambuscade; it seems to me that I see the fires of a bivouac in the direction of the Palace of Justice. I may be arrested, or I may be killed; you are right, Pitou, I must not be arrested, — I must not be killed."

It was the third time since morning that Pitou's ears had been saluted with those words so flattering to human pride, —

"You are right."

Pitou thought he could not do better than to repeat the words of Billot.

"You are right," he repeated, lying down again upon the grass; "you must not allow yourself to be killed, dear Monsieur Billot."

And the conclusion of this phrase died away in Pitou's throat. *Vox faucibus hæsit*, he might have added, had he been awake; but he was fast asleep.

Billot did not perceive it.

"An idea," said he.

"Ah!" snored Pitou.

"Listen to me; I have an idea. Notwithstanding all the precautions I am taking, I may be killed. I may be cut down by a sabre or killed from a distance by a ball, — killed suddenly upon the spot; if that should happen, you ought to know what you will have to say to Doctor Gilbert in my stead: but you must be mute, Pitou."

Pitou heard not a word of this, and consequently made no reply.

"Should I be wounded mortally, and not be able to fulfil my mission, you will, in my place, seek out Doctor Gilbert, and you will say to him — do you understand me, Pitou?" added the farmer, stooping towards his companion, "and you will say to him — why, confound him, he is positively snoring, the sad fellow!"

All the excitement of Billot was at once damped on ascertaining that Pitou was asleep.

"Well, let us sleep, then," said he; and he laid himself down by Pitou's side, without grumbling very seriously. For, however accustomed to fatigue, the ride of the previous day and the events of the evening did not fail to have a soporific effect on the good farmer.

And the day broke about three hours after they had

gone to sleep, or rather, we should say, after their senses were benumbed.

When they again opened their eyes, Pitou had lost nothing of that savage countenance which they had observed the night before. Only there were no soldiers to be seen; the people were everywhere.

The people armed themselves with pikes hastily manufactured, with muskets which the majority of them knew not how to handle, with magnificent weapons made centuries before, and of which the bearers admired the ornaments, some being inlaid with gold or ivory or mother-of-pearl, without comprehending the use or the mechanism of them.

Immediately after the retreat of the soldiers the populace had pillaged the palace called the Garde-Meuble.

And the people dragged towards the Hôtel de Ville two small pieces of artillery.

The alarm-bell was rung from the towers of Notre Dame, at the Hôtel de Ville, and in all the parish churches. There were seen issuing, — from where no one could tell, — but as from beneath the pavement, legions of men and women, squalid, emaciated, in filthy rags, half naked, who but the evening before cried, "Give us bread!" but now vociferated, "Give us arms!"

Nothing could be more terrifying than these bands of spectres, who, during the last three months had poured into the capital from the country, passing through the city gates silently, and installing themselves in Paris, where famine reigned, like Arabian ghouls in a cemetery.

On that day the whole of France, represented in Paris by the starving people from each province, cried to its king, "Give us liberty!" and to its God, "Give us food!"

Billot, who was first to awake, roused up Pitou, and they both set off to the College Louis-le-Grand, looking around them, shuddering and terrified at the miserable creatures they saw on every side.

By degrees, as they advanced towards that part of the town which we now call the Latin Quarter, as they ascended the Rue de la Harpe, as they approached their destination, the Rue Saint Jacques, they saw, as during the times of La Fronde, barricades being raised in every street. Women and children were carrying to the tops of the houses ponderous folio volumes, heavy pieces of furniture, and precious marble ornaments, destined to crush the foreign soldiers in case of their venturing into the narrow and tortuous streets of old Paris.

From time to time Billot observed one or two of the French Guards forming the centre of some meeting which they were organizing, and which, with marvellous rapidity, they were teaching the handling of a musket, — exercises which women and children were curiously observing, and almost with a desire of learning them themselves.

Billot and Pitou found the College of Louis-le-Grand in flagrant insurrection; the pupils had risen against their teachers, and had driven them from the building. At the moment when the farmer and his companion reached the grated gate, the scholars were attacking this gate, uttering loud threats, to which the affrighted principal replied with tears.

The farmer for a moment gazed on this intestine revolt, when suddenly, in a stentorian voice, he cried out: —

"Which of you here is called Sebastien Gilbert?"

"'T is I," replied a young lad, about fifteen years of age, of almost feminine beauty, and who, with the assist-

ance of four or five of his comrades, was carrying a ladder wherewith to escalade the walls, seeing that they could not force open the gate.

"Come nearer to me, my child."

"What is it that you want with me?" said young Sebastien to Billot.

"Do you wish to take him away?" cried the principal, terrified at the aspect of two armed men, one of whom — the one who had spoken to young Gilbert — was covered with blood.

The boy, on his side, looked with astonishment at these two men, and was endeavoring, but uselessly, to recognize his foster-brother, Pitou, who had grown so immeasurably tall since he last saw him, and who was altogether metamorphosed by the warlike accoutrements he had put on.

"Take him away!" exclaimed Billot, "take away Monsieur Gilbert's son, and lead him into all this turmoil, — expose him to receiving some unhappy blow! Oh! no, indeed!"

"Do you see, Sebastien," said the principal, "do you see, you furious fellow, that even your friends will have nothing to do with you? For, in short, these gentlemen appear to be your friends. Come, gentlemen, come, my young pupils, come, my children," cried the poor principal, "obey me — obey me, I command you — obey me, I entreat you."

"*Oro obtestorque*," said Pitou.

"Sir," said young Gilbert, with a firmness that was extraordinary in a youth of his age, "retain my comrades, if such be your pleasure; but as to me, do you understand me, I will go out."

He made a movement towards the gate; the professor caught him by the arm.

But he, shaking his fine auburn curls upon his pallid forehead, —

"Sir," said he, "beware what you are doing. I am not in the same position as your other pupils. My father has been arrested, imprisoned; my father is in the power of the tyrants."

"In the power of the tyrants!" exclaimed Billot; "speak, my child; what is it that you mean?"

"Yes, yes," cried several of the scholars, "Sebastien is right; his father has been arrested; and since the people have opened the prisons, he wishes they should open his father's prison too."

"Oh, oh!" said the farmer, shaking the bars of the gate with his herculean arms, "they have arrested Doctor Gilbert, have they? By Heaven! my little Catherine, then, was right!"

"Yes, sir," continued young Gilbert, "they have arrested my father, and that is why I wish to get out, why I wish to take a musket, why I wish to fight until I have liberated my dear father."

And these words were accompanied and encouraged by a hundred furious voices, crying in every key: —

"Arms! arms! let us have arms!"

On hearing these cries, the crowd which had collected in the street, animated in its turn by an heroic ardor, rushed towards the gate to give liberty to the collegians.

The principal threw himself upon his knees between his scholars and the invaders, and held out his arms with a supplicating gesture.

"Oh, my friends! my friends!" cried he, "respect my children!"

"Do we not respect them?" said a French Guard. "I believe we do, indeed. They are fine boys, and they will do their exercise admirably."

"My friends! my friends! These children are a sacred deposit which their parents have confided to me; I am responsible for them; their parents calculate upon me; for them I would sacrifice my life; but, in the name of Heaven! do not take away these children!"

Hootings, proceeding from the street, that is to say, from the hindmost ranks of the crowd, replied to these piteous supplications.

Billot rushed forward, opposing the French Guards, the crowd, the scholars themselves:—

"He is right, it is a sacred trust; let men fight, let men get themselves killed, but let children live; they are seed for the future."

A disapproving murmur followed these words.

"Who is it that murmurs?" cried Billot; "assuredly, it cannot be a father. I who am now speaking to you, had two men killed in my arms; their blood is upon my shirt. See this!"

And he showed his shirt and waistcoat all begrimed with blood, and with a dignified movement which electrified the crowd.

"Yesterday," continued Billot, "I fought at the Palais Royal; and at the Tuileries, and this lad also fought there, but this lad has neither father nor mother; moreover, he is almost a man."

And he pointed to Pitou, who looked proudly around him.

"To-day," continued Billot, "I shall fight again; but let no one say to me, 'The Parisians were not strong enough to contend against the foreign soldiers, and they called children to their aid.'"

"Yes, yes," resounded on every side, proceeding from women in the crowd, and several of the soldiers; "he is right, children: go into the college; go into the college."

"Oh, thanks, thanks, sir!" murmured the principal of the college, endeavoring to catch hold of Billot's hand through the bars of the gate.

"And, above all, take special care of Sebastien; keep him safe," said the latter.

"Keep me! I say, on the contrary, that I will not be kept here," cried the boy, livid with anger, and struggling with the college servants, who were dragging him away.

"Let me in," said Billot. "I will engage to quiet him."

The crowd made way for him to pass; the farmer dragged Pitou after him, and entered the courtyard of the college.

Already three or four of the French Guards, and about ten men, placed themselves as sentinels at the gate, and prevented the egress of the young insurgents.

Billot went straight up to young Sebastien, and taking between his huge and horny palms the small white hands of the child —

"Sebastien," he said, "do you not recognize me?"

"No."

"I am old Billot, your father's farmer."

"I know you now, sir."

"And this lad," rejoined Billot, pointing to his companion, "do you know him?"

"Ange Pitou," said the boy.

"Yes, Sebastien; it is I — it is I."

And Pitou, weeping with joy, threw his arms round the neck of his foster-brother and former schoolfellow.

"Well," said the boy, whose brow still remained scowling, "what is now to be done?"

"What?" cried Billot. "Why, if they have taken your father from you, I will restore him to you. Do you understand?"

"You?"

"Yes, I — I, and all those who are out yonder with me. What the devil! Yesterday, we had to deal with the Austrians, and we saw their cartridge-boxes."

"In proof of which, I have one of them," said Pitou.

"Shall we not release his father?" cried Billot, addressing the crowd.

"Yes! yes!" roared the crowd. "We will release him."

Sebastien shook his head.

"My father is in the Bastille," said he in a despairing tone.

"And what then?" cried Billot.

"The Bastille cannot be taken," replied the child.

"Then what was it you wished to do, if such is your conviction?"

"I wished to go to the open space before the castle. There will be fighting there, and my father might have seen me through the bars of his window."

"Impossible!"

"Impossible? And why should I not do so? One day, when I was walking out with all the boys here, I saw the head of a prisoner. If I could have seen my father as I saw that prisoner, I should have recognized him, and I would have called out to him, 'Do not be unhappy, Father, I love you!'"

"And if the soldiers of the Bastille should have killed you?"

"Well, then, they would have killed me under the eyes of my father."

"The death of all the devils!" exclaimed Billot. "You are a wicked lad to think of getting yourself killed in your father's sight, and make him die of grief, in a cage, — he who has only you in the world, he who loves

you so tenderly! Decidedly, you have a bad heart, Gilbert."

And the farmer pushed the boy from him.

"Yes, yes; a wicked heart!" howled Pitou, bursting into tears.

Sebastien did not reply.

And, while he was meditating in gloomy silence, Billot was admiring his beautifully pale face, his flashing eyes, his ironical expressive mouth, his well-shaped nose, and his strongly developed chin, all of which gave testimony at once of his nobility of soul and nobility of race.

"You say that your father is in the Bastille," said the farmer, at length breaking the silence.

"Yes."

"And for what?"

"Because my father is the friend of Lafayette and Washington; because my father has fought with his sword for the independence of America, and with his pen for the liberty of France; because my father is well known in both worlds as the detester of tyranny; because he has called down curses on the Bastille, in which so many have suffered; therefore have they sent him there!"

"And when was this?"

"Six days ago."

"And where did they arrest him?"

"At Havre, where he had just landed."

"How do you know all this?"

"I have received a letter from him."

"Dated from Havre?"

"Yes."

"And it was at Havre itself that he was arrested?"

"It was at Lillebonne."

"Come now, child, do not feel angry with me, but

give me all the particulars that you know. I swear to you that I will either leave my bones on the Place de la Bastille, or you shall see your father again."

Sebastien looked at the farmer, and seeing that he spoke from his heart, his angry feelings subsided.

"Well, then," said he, "at Lillebonne he had time to write in a book, with a pencil, these words: —

SEBASTIEN, — I have been arrested, and they are taking me to the Bastille. Be patient, hope, and study diligently.

LILLEBONNE, July 7, 1789.

P. S. — I am arrested in the cause of Liberty. I have a son in the College Louis-le-Grand, at Paris. The person who shall find this book is entreated, in the name of humanity, to get it conveyed to my son. His name is Sebastien Gilbert.

"And this book?" inquired Billot, palpitating with emotion.

"He put a piece of gold into this book, tied a cord round it, and threw it out of the window."

"And —"

"The curate of the place found it, and chose from among his parishioners a robust young man, to whom he said: —

"'Leave twelve francs with your family, who are without bread, and with the other twelve go to Paris; carry this book to a poor boy whose father has just been arrested because he has too great a love for the people.'

"The young man arrived here at noon yesterday, and delivered to me my father's book. And this is the way I learned how my father had been arrested."

"Come, come," cried Billot, "this reconciles me somewhat to the priests. Unfortunately they are not all like this one. And this worthy young man, — what has become of him?"

"He set off to return home last night. He hoped to carry back with him to his family five francs out of the twelve he had brought with him."

"Admirable! admirable!" exclaimed Pitou, weeping for joy. "Oh, the people have good feelings! Go on, Gilbert."

"Why, now you know all."

"Yes."

"You promised me, if I would tell you all, that you would bring back my father to me. I have told you all; now remember your promise."

"I told you that I would save him, or I should be killed in the attempt. That is true. And now, show me the book," said Billot.

"Here it is," said the boy, taking from his pocket a volume of the "Contrat Social."

"And where is your father's writing?"

"Here," replied the boy, pointing to what the doctor had written.

The farmer kissed the written characters.

"And now," said he, "tranquillize yourself. I am going to seek your father in the Bastille."

"Unhappy man!" cried the principal of the college, seizing Billot's hands; "how can you obtain access to a prisoner of State?"

"Zounds! by taking the Bastille!"

Some of the French Guards began to laugh. In a few moments the laugh had become general.

"Why," said Billot, casting around him a glance flashing with anger, "what then is in the Bastille, if you please?"

"Stone," said a soldier.

"Iron," said another.

"And fire," said a third. "Take care, my worthy man: you may burn your fingers."

"Yes, yes; you may burn yourself," reiterated the crowd, with horror.

"Ah! Parisians," shouted the farmer, "you have pickaxes, and you are afraid of stone! Ah! you have lead, and you fear iron! You have gunpowder, and you are afraid of fire! Parisians! — cowards! Parisians! — poltroons! Parisians! — machines for slavery! A thousand demons! — where is the man of heart who will go with me and Pitou to take the king's Bastille? My name is Billot, a farmer of the Isle de France. Forward!"

Billot had raised himself to the very climax of audacity.

The crowd, rendered enthusiastic by his address, and trembling with excitement, pressed around him, crying, "To the Bastille!"

Sebastien endeavored to cling to Billot, but the latter gently pushed him back.

"Child," said he, "what is the last word your father wrote to you?"

"Work," replied Sebastien.

"Well, then, *work* here. We are going to *work* down yonder; only our work is called destroying and killing."

The young man did not utter a word in reply. He hid his face with both hands, without even pressing the hand of Pitou, who embraced him; and he fell into such violent convulsions that he was immediately carried into the infirmary attached to the college.

"To the Bastille!" cried Billot.

"To the Bastille!" cried Pitou.

"To the Bastille!" shouted the crowd.

And they immediately commenced their march towards the Bastille.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE KING IS SO GOOD! THE QUEEN IS SO GOOD!

AND now we request our readers to allow us to give them an insight into the principal political events that have occurred since the period at which, on a previous publication, we abandoned the court of France.

Those who know the history of that period, or those whom dry, plain history may alarm, may skip this chapter, and pass on to the next one, which connects exactly with Chapter XII.; the one we are now writing being intended for those very precise and exacting spirits who are determined to be informed on every point.

During the last year or two something unheard of, unknown, something emanating from the past and looking towards the future, was threatening and growling in the air.

It was the Revolution.

Voltaire had raised himself for a moment, while in his last agony, and, leaning upon his elbow in his death-bed, he had seen shining, even amidst the darkness in which he was about to sleep forever, the brilliant lightnings of this dawn.

When Anne of Austria assumed the regency of France, says Cardinal de Retz, there was but one saying in every mouth, — "The queen is so good!"

One day Madame de Pompadour's physician, Quesnoy, who had an apartment in her house, saw Louis XV. com-

ing in. A feeling altogether unconnected with respect agitated him so much that he trembled and turned pale.

"What is the matter with you?" said Madame de Hausset to him.

"The matter is," replied Quesnoy, "that every time I see the king I say to myself, 'There is a man who, if he should feel so inclined, can have my head cut off.'"

"Oh, there 's no danger of that," rejoined Madame de Hausset. "The king is so good!"

It is with these two phrases — "The king is so good!" "The queen is so good!" — that the French Revolution was effected.

When Louis XV. died, France breathed again. The country was delivered at the same moment from the king, the Pompadours, the Dubarrys, and the *Parc aux Cerfs*.

The pleasures of Louis XV. had cost the nation very dear. In them alone were expended three millions of livres a year.

Fortunately, after him came a king who was young, moral, philanthropic, almost philosophical.

A king who, like the Émile of Jean Jacques Rousseau, had studied a trade, or rather, we should say, three trades.

He was a locksmith, a watchmaker, and a mechanician.

Being alarmed at the abyss over which he was suspended, the king began by refusing all favors that were asked of him. The courtiers trembled. Fortunately, there was one circumstance which reassured them, — it was not the king who refused, but Turgot, — it was, that the queen was not yet in reality a queen, and consequently could not have that influence to-day which she might acquire to-morrow.

At last, towards the year 1777, she acquired that in-

fluence which had been so long desired. The queen became a mother. The king, who was already so good a king, so good a husband, could now also prove himself a good father.

How could anything be now refused to her who had given an heir to the crown?

And, besides, that was not all; the king was also a good brother. The anecdote is well known of Beaumarchais being sacrificed to the Count de Provence; and yet the king did not like the Count de Provence, who was a pedant.

But, to make up for this, he was very fond of his younger brother, the Count d'Artois, the type of French wit, elegance, and nobleness.

He loved him so much that if he sometimes refused the queen any favor she might have asked of him, the Count d'Artois had only to add his solicitations to those of the queen, and the king had no longer the firmness to refuse.

It was, in fact, the reign of amiable men. Monsieur de Calonne, one of the most amiable men in the world, was comptroller-general. It was Calonne who said to the queen, —

"Madame, if it is possible, it is done; and if it is impossible, it shall be done."

From the very day on which this charming reply was circulated in all the drawing-rooms of Paris and Versailles, the Red Book, which every one had thought closed forever, was reopened.

The queen buys Saint Cloud.

The king buys Rambouillet.

It is no longer the king who has lady favorites, it is the queen. Mesdames Diana and Jules de Polignac cost as much to France as La Pompadour and La Dubarry.

The queen is so good!

A reduction is proposed in the salaries of the high officers of the court. Some of them make up their minds to it. But one of the most habitual frequenters of the palace obstinately refuses to submit to this reduction; it is Monsieur de Coigny. He meets the king in one of the corridors, a terrible scene occurs, the king runs away, and in the evening says laughingly, —

"Upon my word, I believe if I had not yielded, Coigny would have beaten me."

The king is so good!

And then the fate of a kingdom sometimes depends upon a very trivial circumstance; the spur of a page, for instance.

Louis XV. dies; who is to succeed Monsieur d'Aiguillon?

The king, Louis XVI., is for Machaut. Machaut is one of the ministers who had sustained the already tottering throne. Mesdames, that is to say, the king's aunts, are for Monsieur de Maurepas, who is so amusing, and who writes such pretty songs. He wrote three volumes of them at Pontchartrain, which he called his memoirs.

All this is a steeple-chase affair. The question was as to who should arrive first, — the king and queen at Arnouville, or mesdames at Pontchartrain.

The king has the power in his own hands; the chances are therefore in his favor.

He hastens to write: —

Set out, the very moment you receive this, for Paris; I am waiting for you.

He slips his despatch into an envelope, and on the envelope he writes, —

"Monsieur le Comte de Machaut, at Arnouville."

A page of the king's stables is sent for; the royal missive is put into his hands, and he is ordered to mount a horse, and to go to Arnouville full speed.

And now that the page is despatched, the king can receive mesdames.

Mesdames, — the same whom the king their father, as has been seen in "Balsamo," called Loque, Chiffe, and Graille, three names eminently aristocratic, — mesdames are waiting at a door opposite to that by which the page goes out, until he shall have left the room.

The page once gone out, mesdames may go in.

They go in, entreat the king in favor of Monsieur Maurepas; all this is a mere question of time; the king does not like to refuse mesdames anything, — *the king is so good!*

He will accede to their request when the page shall have got so far on his journey that no one can come up with him.

He contested the point with mesdames, his eyes fixed on the time-piece. Half an hour will be sufficient for him. The time-piece will not deceive him. It is the time-piece which he himself regulates.

Twenty minutes have elapsed, and he yields.

"Let the page be overtaken," said he, "and all shall be as you please."

Mesdames rush out of the room; they will despatch a man on horseback; he shall kill a horse, two horses, ten horses, but the page must be overtaken.

All these determinations are unnecessary; not a single horse will be killed.

In going down the staircase one of the page's spurs struck against one of the stone steps and broke short off. How could any one go at full speed with only one spur?

Besides, the Chevalier d'Abzac is the chief of the great

stable, and he would not allow a courier to mount his horse — he whose duty it was to inspect the couriers — if the courier was about to set out in a manner that would not do honor to the royal stables.

The page therefore could not set out without having both his spurs.

The result of all this was, that instead of overtaking the page on the road to Arnouville — galloping at full speed — he was overtaken before he had left the courtyard of the palace.

He was already in the saddle and was about to depart in the most irreproachable good order.

The despatch is taken from him, the text of the missive is left unchanged, for it was as good for the one as the other. Only instead of writing the address, "To Monsieur de Machaut, at Arnouville," mesdames wrote, "To Monsieur le Comte de Maurepas, at Pontchartrain."

The honor of the royal stable is saved, but the monarchy is lost.

With Maurepas and Calonne everything goes on marvellously: the one sings, the other plays; but besides the courtiers, there are the receivers-general, who also have their functions to perform.

Louis XIV. began his reign by ordering two receivers-general to be hanged, with the advice of Colbert; after which he took Lavallière for his mistress and built Versailles. Lavallière cost him nothing.

But Versailles, in which he wished to lodge her, cost him a round sum.

Then, in 1685, under the pretext that they were Protestants, he drove a million of industrious men from France.

And thus, in 1707, still under the *great* king, Boisguilbert said, speaking of 1698: —

"Things still went on well in those days, there was yet some oil in the lamp. But now all has come to an end, for want of aliment."

What could be said eighty years afterwards, when the Dubarrys, the Polignacs, had taken their fill? After having made the people sweat water, they would make them sweat blood. That was all.

And all this in so delightful and polite a manner.

In former days the contractors of the public revenue were harsh, brutal, and cold, as the prison gates into which they cast their victims.

But in these days they are philanthropists: with one hand they despoil the people, it is true; but with the other they build hospitals for them.

One of my friends, a great financier, has assured me that out of one hundred and twenty millions, which the town dues bring in, the contractors managed to keep seventy millions for themselves.

It happened that at a meeting where the state of expenses was demanded, a counsellor, playing upon the word, said: —

"It is not any particular state that we require; what we want are the States-General."

The spark fell upon gunpowder, the powder ignited and caused a general conflagration.

Every one repeated the saying of the counsellor, and the States-General were loudly called for.

The court fixed the opening of the States-General for the 1st of March, 1789.

On the 24th of August, 1788, Monsieur de Brienne withdrew from public affairs. He was another who had managed the financial affairs with tolerable recklessness.

But on withdrawing, he at least gave good counsel; he advised that Necker should be recalled.

Necker resumed the administration of affairs, and all again breathed confidently.

Notwithstanding this, the great question of the three orders was discussed throughout France.

Sieyès published his famous pamphlets upon the Tiers État.[1]

Dauphiny, the States of which province still met in spite of all the court could do, decided that the representation of the Tiers État should be on an equality with that of the nobility and clergy.

The assembly of the notables was reconstructed.

This assembly lasted thirty-six days, that is to say, from the 6th of November to the 8th of December, 1788.

On this occasion the elements performed their part. When the whip of kings does not suffice, the whip of Providence whistles in the air and compels the people to move onward.

Winter came, accompanied by famine. Hunger and cold opened the gates of 1789.

Paris was filled with troops, its streets with patrols.

Two or three times the muskets of the soldiers were loaded in the presence of the people, who were dying of hunger.

And then the muskets being loaded, and the moment having arrived for using them, they did not use them at all.

One morning, the 28th of April, five days before the opening of the States-General, a name was circulated among the crowd.

This name was accompanied by maledictions, and the more vituperative because this name was that of a workman who had become rich.

[1] The Third Order, or Third Estate.

Réveillon, as was then asserted, — Réveillon, the director of the celebrated paper manufactory of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, — Réveillon had said that the wages of workmen ought to be reduced to fifteen sous a day.

And this was true.

It was also said that the court was about to decorate him with the black ribbon, — that is to say, with the Order of Saint Michael.

But this was an absurdity.

There is always some absurd rumor in popular commotions; and it is remarkable that it is also by this rumor that they increase their numbers, that they recruit, and at last become a revolution.

The crowd makes an effigy, baptizes it with the name of Réveillon, decorates it with the black ribbon, sets fire to it before Réveillon's own door, and then proceeds to the square before the Hôtel de Ville, where it completes the burning of the effigy before the eyes of the municipal authorities, who see it burning.

Impunity emboldens the crowd, who give notice that, after having done justice on the effigy, they will the following day do justice on the real person of the offender.

This was a challenge in due form addressed to the public authorities.

The authorities sent thirty of the French Guards, and even then it was not the authorities who sent them, but their colonel, Monsieur de Biron.

These thirty French Guards were merely witnesses of this great duel, which they could not prevent. They looked on while the mob was pillaging the manufactory, throwing the furniture out of the windows, breaking everything, burning everything. Amid all this hubbub, five hundred louis in gold were stolen.

They drank the wine in the cellars, and when there was no more wine, they drank the colors of the manufactory, which they took for wine.

The whole of the day of the 27th was employed in effecting this villanous spoliation.

A reinforcement was sent to the thirty men. It consisted of several companies of the French Guards, who in the first place fired blank cartridges, then balls. Towards evening there came to the support of the Guards part of the Swiss regiment of Monsieur de Besenval.

The Swiss never make a jest of matters connected with revolution.

The Swiss forgot to take the balls out of their cartridges, and as the Swiss are naturally sportsmen, and good marksmen too, about twenty of the pillagers remained upon the pavement.

Some of them had about them a portion of the five hundred louis which we have mentioned, and which from the secretary of Réveillon had passed into the pockets of the pillagers, and from the pockets of the pillagers into those of the Swiss Guards.

Besenval had done all this; he had done it "out of his own head," as the vulgar saying has it.

The king did not thank him for what he had done, nor did he blame him for it.

Now, when the king does not thank, the king blames.

The parliament opened an inquiry.

The king closed it.

The king was so good!

Who it was that had stirred on the people to do this no one could tell.

Has it not been often seen, during the great heats of summer, that conflagrations have taken place without any apparent cause?

The Duke of Orleans was accused of having excited this disturbance.

The accusation was absurd, and it fell to the ground.

On the 29th Paris was perfectly tranquil, or at least appeared to be so.

The 4th of May arrived. The king and the queen went in procession with the whole Court to the Cathedral of Notre Dame to hear "Veni, Creator."

There were great shouts of "Long live the king!" and above all of, "Long live the queen!"

The queen was so good!

This was the last day of peace.

The next day the shouts of "Long live the queen!" were not so frequent, but the mob cried more frequently, "Long live the Duke of Orleans!"

These cries wounded her feelings much, poor woman! — she who detested the duke to such a degree that she said he was a coward.

As if there had ever been a coward in the Orleans family, — from Monsieur, who gained the battle of Cassal, down to the Duke of Chartres, who contributed to the gaining of those at Jemmapes and Valmy!

It went so far that the poor woman was near fainting, but was supported, her head drooping on her shoulder. Madame Campan relates this incident in her memoirs.

But this reclining head raised itself up haughty and disdainful. Those who saw the expression of those features were at once cured, and forever, of using the expression: —

The queen is so good!

There exist three portraits of the queen: one painted in 1776, another in 1784, and a third in 1788.

I have seen all three of them. See them in your turn! If ever these three portraits are placed in the same gal-

lery, the history of Marie Antoinette can be read in those three portraits.[1]

The meeting of the three orders, which was to have produced a general pacification, proved a declaration of war.

"Three orders," said Sieyès; "no, three nations."

On the 3d of May, the eve of the Mass of the Holy Ghost, the king received the deputies at Versailles.

Some persons counselled him to substitute cordiality for etiquette.

The king would not listen to anything.

He in the first place received the clergy.

After them the nobility.

At last the Tiers État.

The Third had been waiting a long time.

The Third murmured.

In the assemblies of former times the Tiers État pronounced their discourses on their knees.

There was no possibility of inducing the president of the Tiers État to go down on his knees.

It was decided that the Tiers État should not pronounce an oration.

In the sittings of the 5th the king put on his hat.

The nobility put on their hats.

The Tiers État were about to put on their hats also, but the king then took off his. He preferred holding it in his hand to seeing the Tiers État covered in his presence.

On Wednesday, the 10th of June, Sieyès entered the assembly. He found it almost entirely composed of the Tiers État.

The clergy and the nobility were assembled elsewhere.

"Let us cut the cable," said Sieyès. "It is now time."

[1] The three portraits are at Versailles.

And Sieyès proposed that the clergy and the nobility should be summoned to attend within an hour from that time at the latest.

In case of non-appearance, default should be pronounced against the absent.

A German and Swiss army surrounded Versailles. A battery of artillery was pointed against the assembly.

Sieyès saw nothing of all this; he saw the people, who were starving; but the Third, Sieyès was told, could not, of itself, form the States-General.

"So much the better," replied Sieyès, "it will form the National Assembly."

The absent did not present themselves; the proposal of Sieyès was adopted; the Tiers État calls itself the National Assembly by a majority of four hundred votes.

On the 19th of June the king orders the building in which the National Assembly held their meetings to be closed.

But the king, in order to accomplish such a *coup d'état*, needed some pretext.

The hall is closed for the purpose of making preparations for a royal sitting, which was to take place on the following Monday.

On the 20th of June, at seven in the morning, the President of the National Assembly is informed that there will be no meeting on that day.

At eight o'clock he presents himself at the door of the hall, with a great number of the deputies.

The doors are closed, and sentinels are guarding the doors.

The rain is falling.

They wish to break open the doors.

The sentinels had received their orders, and they present their bayonets.

One of the deputies proposes that they should meet at the Place d'Armes.

Another that it should be at Marly.

Guillotin proposes the Jeu de Paume.[1]

Guillotin !

What a strange thing that it should be Guillotin, whose name, by adding an *e* to it, should become so celebrated four years afterwards, — how strange that it should be Guillotin who proposed the Jeu de Paume, — the Jeu de Paume, unfurnished, dilapidated, open to the four winds of heaven !

To this great demonstration the king replies by the royal word, " Veto ! "

Monsieur de Brézé is sent to the rebels to order them to disperse.

" We are here by the will of the people," said Mirabeau, " and we will not leave this place but with bayonets pointed at our breasts."

And not, as it has been asserted, that he said " *by the force of bayonets.*" Why is it that there is always behind great men some paltry rhetorician who spoils his sayings under pretext of arranging them ?

Why was there such a rhetorician behind Mirabeau at the Jeu de Paume ?

And behind Cambronne at Waterloo ?

The reply was at once reported to the king.

He walked about for some time with the air of a man who was suffering from *ennui.*

" They will not go away ? " said he.

" No, Sire."

" Well, then, leave them where they are."

As is here shown, royalty was already bending beneath the hand of the people, and bending very low.

[1] The tennis-court.

From the 21st of June to the 12th of July all appeared tolerably calm; but it was that heavy and stifling calm which precedes the tempest.

It was like the uneasy dream of an uneasy slumber.

On the 11th the king formed a resolution, urged to it by the queen, the Count d'Artois, the Polignacs, — in fact, the whole of the *Camarilla* of Versailles; in short, he dismissed Necker.

On the 12th this intelligence reached Paris.

The effect which it produced has already been seen. On the evening of the 13th, Billot arrived just in time to see the barriers burning.

On the 13th, in the evening, Paris was defending itself.

On the 14th, in the morning, Paris was ready to attack.

On the morning of the 14th Billot cried, "To the Bastille!" and three thousand men, imitating Billot, reiterated the same cry, which was about to become that of the whole population of Paris.

The reason was, that there had existed during five centuries a monument weighing heavily upon the breast of France, like the infernal rock upon the shoulders of Sisyphus.

Only that, less confiding than the Titan in his strength, France had never attempted to throw it off.

This monument, the seal of feudality, imprinted on the forehead of Paris, was the Bastille.

The king was too good, as Madame de Hausset had said, to have a head cut off.

But the king sent people to the Bastille.

When once a man became acquainted with the Bastille, by order of the king, that man was forgotten, sequestrated, interred, annihilated.

He remained there until the king remembered him; and kings have so many new things occurring around them every day, of which they are obliged to think, that they often forget to think of old matters.

Moreover, in France there was not only one Bastille, there were twenty other Bastilles, which were called Fort l'Evêque, Saint-Lazare, the Châtelet, the Conciergerie, Vincennes, the Castle of La Roche, the Castle of If, the Isles of St. Marguerite, Pignerolles, etc.

Only the fortress at the gate St. Antoine was called *the Bastille*, as *Rome* was called *the* city.

It was the Bastille, *par excellence.* It was of more importance than all the others.

During nearly a whole century the governorship of the Bastille had continued in one and the same family.

The grandfather of this elect race was Monsieur de Châteauneuf. His son, Lavrillière, succeeded him, who, in turn, was succeeded by his grandson, Saint Florentin. The dynasty became extinct in 1777.

During this triple reign, the greater part of which passed during the reign of Louis XV., it would be impossible to state the number of *lettres de cachet.*[1] Saint Florentin alone received more than fifty thousand.

The *lettres de cachet* were a great source of revenue.

They were sold to fathers who wished to get rid of their sons.

They were sold to women who wished to get rid of their husbands.

The prettier the wives were, the less did the *lettre de cachet* cost them.

It then became, between them and the minister, an exchange of polite attentions, and that was all.

Since the end of the reign of Louis XIV., all the state

[1] Secret orders of imprisonment.

prisons, and particularly the Bastille, were in the hands of the Jesuits.

Among the prisoners, it will be recollected, the following were of the greatest note: —

The Iron Mask, Lauzun, Latude.

The Jesuits were father confessors; for greater security they confessed the prisoners.

For greater security still, the prisoners were buried under supposititious names.

The Iron Mask, it will be remembered, was buried under the name of Marchialy. He had remained forty-five years in prison.

Lauzun remained there fourteen years.

Latude, thirty years.

But, at all events, the Iron Mask and Lauzun had committed heinous crimes.

The Iron Mask, whether brother or not of Louis XIV., it is asserted, resembled King Louis XIV. so strongly that it was almost impossible to distinguish the one from the other.

It is exceedingly imprudent to dare to resemble a king.

Lauzun had been very near marrying, or did actually marry, the Grande Mademoiselle.

It is exceedingly imprudent to dare to marry the niece of King Louis XIII., the granddaughter of Henry IV.

But Latude, poor devil, what had he done?

He had dared to fall in love with Mademoiselle Poisson, Dame de Pompadour, the king's mistress.

He had written a note to her.

This note, which a respectable woman would have sent back to the man who wrote it, was handed by Madame de Pompadour to Monsieur de Sartines, the lieutenant-general of police.

And Latude, arrested, fugitive, taken and retaken, remained thirty years locked up in the Bastille, the Castle of Vincennes, and Bicêtre.

It was not, therefore, without reason that the Bastille was abhorred.

The people hated it as if it were a living thing. They had formed of it a gigantic chimera, one of those monsters like those of Gévauden, who pitilessly devour the human species.

The grief of poor Sebastien Gilbert will therefore be fully comprehended, when he was informed that his father was in the Bastille.

Billot's conviction will also be understood, that the doctor would never be released from his prison unless he was released by force.

The frenetic impulse of the people will be also understood, when Billot vociferated, "To the Bastille!"

Only that it was a senseless idea, as the soldiers had remarked, that the Bastille could be taken.

The Bastille had provisions, a garrison, artillery.

The Bastille had walls, which were fifteen feet thick at their summit and forty at their base.

The Bastille had a governor, whose name was De Launay, who had stored thirty thousand pounds of gunpowder in his cellars, and who had sworn, in case of being surprised by a *coup de main*, to blow up the Bastille, and with it half the Faubourg St. Antoine.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THREE POWERS OF FRANCE.

BILLOT still walked on, but it was no longer he who shouted. The crowd, delighted with his martial air, recognized in this man one of their own class. Commenting on his words and action, they followed him, still increasing like the waves of the incoming tide.

Behind Billot, when he issued from the narrow streets and came upon the Quay St. Michel, marched more than three thousand men, armed with cutlasses or pikes or guns.

They all cried, "To the Bastille! to the Bastille!"

Billot counselled with his own thoughts. The reflections which we made at the close of the last chapter presented themselves to his mind, and by degrees all the fumes of his feverish excitement evaporated.

Then he saw clearly into his own mind.

The enterprise was sublime, but insensate. This was easily to be understood from the affrighted and ironical countenances on which were reflected the impressions produced by the cry of "To the Bastille!" But nevertheless he was only the more strengthened in his resolution.

He could not, however, but comprehend that he was responsible to mothers, wives, and children for the lives of the men who were following him, and he felt bound to use every possible precaution.

Billot, therefore, began by leading his little army on to the square in front of the Hôtel de Ville.[1]

[1] Town House, or City Hall.

There ne appointed his lieutenant and other officers — watch-dogs — to restrain the flock.

"Let us see," thought Billot, "there is a power in France, — there are even two, — there are even three. Let us consult."

He entered the Hôtel de Ville, asking who was the chief of the municipality.

He was told it was the Provost of the Merchants, the mayor of Paris, Monsieur de Flesselles.

"Ah, ah!" cried he, with a dissatisfied air. "Monsieur *de* Flesselles, a noble, that is to say, an enemy of the people."

"Why no," they replied to him; "he is a man of talent."

Billot ascended the staircase of the Hôtel de Ville.

In the ante-chamber he met an usher.

"I wish to speak with Monsieur Flesselles," said he, perceiving that the usher was approaching him to ask him what he wanted.

"Impossible!" replied the usher; "he is now occupied in drawing up the lists of a militia force which the city is about to organize."

"That falls out marvellously well," observed Billot, "for I also am organizing a militia, and as I have already three thousand men enlisted, I am as good as Monsieur de Flesselles, who has not a single soldier yet afoot. Enable me, therefore, to speak with Monsieur de Flesselles, and that instantly. Oh, look out of the window, if you will!"

The usher had, in fact, cast a rapid glance upon the quays, and had perceived Billot's men. He therefore hastened to inform the mayor, to whom he showed the three thousand men in question, as a postscript to his message.

This inspired the provost with a sort of respect for the person who wished to see him: he left the council-room and went into the ante-chamber, looking about for his visitor.

He perceived Billot, guessed that he was the person, and smiled.

"It was you who were asking for me, was it not?" said he.

"You are Monsieur de Flesselles, Provost of the Merchants, I believe?" replied Billot.

"Yes, sir. In what way, may I ask, can I be of service to you? Only speak quickly, for my mind is much occupied."

"Good Monsieur Provost," continued Billot, "how many powers are there in France?"

"Why, that is as people may choose to understand it, my dear sir," replied Flesselles.

"Say it, then, as you yourself understand it."

"Were you to consult Monsieur Bailly, he would tell you there is but one, the National Assembly; if you consult Monsieur de Dreux Brézé, he would also tell you there is but one — the king."

"And you, Monsieur Provost, — of these two opinions, which is yours?"

"My own opinion, and above all at the present moment, is, that there is but one."

"The assembly, or the king?" demanded Billot

"Neither the one nor the other; it is the nation," replied Flesselles, playing with the frill of his shirt.

"Ah! ah! the nation!" cried the farmer.

"Yes; that is to say, those gentlemen who are waiting down yonder on the quay with knives and roasting-spits. The nation, — by that I mean everybody."

"You may perhaps be right, Monsieur de Flesselles,"

replied Billot, "and they were not wrong in telling me that you are a man of talent."

De Flesselles bowed.

"To which of these three powers do you think of appealing, sir?" asked Flesselles.

"Upon my faith," said Billot, "I believe that when one has anything very important to ask, a man had better address himself at once to God and not to his saints."

"Which means to say that you are about to address yourself to the king."

"I am inclined to do so."

"Would it be indiscreet to inquire what it is you think of asking of the king?"

"The liberation of Doctor Gilbert, who is in the Bastille."

"Doctor Gilbert?" solemnly asked Monsieur de Flesselles; "he is a writer of pamphlets, is he not?"

"Say a philosopher, sir."

"That is one and the same thing, my dear Monsieur Billot. I think you stand but a poor chance of obtaining what you desire from the king."

"And why so?"

"In the first place, because, if the king sent Doctor Gilbert to the Bastille he must have had reasons for so doing."

"'T is well," replied Billot; "he shall give me his reasons on the subject, and I will give him mine."

"My dear Monsieur Billot, the king is just now very busy, and he would not even receive you."

"Oh, if he does not receive me, I shall find some means of getting in without his permission!"

"Yes; and when you have once got in, you will find there Monsieur de Dreux Brézé, who will have you shoved out of doors."

"Who will have me shoved out of doors?"

"Yes; he wished to do that to the National Assembly altogether. It is true that he did not succeed; but that is a stronger reason for his being in a furious rage, and taking his revenge on you."

"Very well; then I will apply to the Assembly."

"The road to Versailles is intercepted."

"I will go there with my three thousand men."

"Take care, my dear sir. You would find on your road some four or five thousand Swiss soldiers and two or three thousand Austrians, who would make only a mouthful of you and your three thousand men. In the twinkling of an eye you would be swallowed."

"Ah! the devil! What ought I to do, then?"

"Do what you please; but do me the service to take away your three thousand men who are beating the pavement yonder with their pikes, and who are smoking. There are seven or eight thousand pounds of powder in our cellars here. A single spark might blow us all up."

"In that case, I think, I will neither address myself to the King nor to the National Assembly. I will address myself to the nation, and we will take the Bastille."

"And with what?"

"With the eight thousand pounds of powder that you are going to give me, Monsieur Provost."

"Ah, really!" said Flesselles, in a jeering tone.

"It is precisely as I say, sir. The keys of the cellars, if you please."

"Hey! you are jesting, sure!" cried the provost.

"No, sir, I am not jesting," said Billot.

And seizing Flesselles by the collar of his coat with both hands, — "The keys," cried he, "or I call up my men."

Flesselles turned as pale as death. His lips and his teeth were closed convulsively; but when he spoke, his voice was in no way agitated, and he did not even change the ironical tone he had assumed.

"In fact, sir," said he, "you are doing me a great service by relieving me from the charge of this powder. I will therefore order the keys to be delivered to you, as you desire. Only please not to forget that I am your first magistrate, and that if you have the misfortune to conduct yourself towards me before others in the way you have done when alone with me, an hour afterwards you would be hanged by the town guards. You insist on having this powder?"

"I insist," replied Billot.

"And you will distribute it yourself?"

"Myself."

"And when?"

"This very moment."

"Your pardon. Let us understand each other. I have business which will detain me here about a quarter of an hour, and should rather like, if it is the same to you, that the distribution should not be commenced until I have left the place. It has been predicted to me that I shall die a violent death; but I acknowledge that I have a very decided repugnance to being blown into the air."

"Be it so. In a quarter of an hour, then. But now, in my turn, I have a request to make."

"What is it?"

"Let us both go close up to that window."

"For what purpose?"

"I wish to make you popular."

"I am greatly obliged; but in what manner?"

"You shall see."

Billot took the provost to the window, which was open, and called out to his friends in the square below.

"My friends," said he, "you still wish to take the Bastille, do you not?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" shouted three or four thousand voices.

"But you want gunpowder, do you not?"

"Yes! gunpowder! gunpowder!"

"Well, then, here is his honor the provost, who is willing to give us all he has in the cellars of the Hôtel de Ville. Thank him for it, my friends."

"Long live the Provost of the Merchants! Long live Monsieur de Flesselles!" shouted the whole crowd.

"Thanks, my friends: thanks for myself, thanks for him," cried Billot.

Then, turning towards the provost: —

"And now, sir," said Billot, "it is no longer necessary that I should take you by the collar, while here alone with you, or before all the world; for if you do not give me the gunpowder, the nation, as you call it, the nation will tear you to pieces."

"Here are the keys, sir," said the provost. "You have so persuasive a mode of asking, that it does not even admit a refusal."

"What you say really encourages me," said Billot, who appeared to be meditating some other project.

"Ah, the deuce! Can you have anything else to ask of me?"

"Yes. Are you acquainted with the governor of the Bastille?"

"Monsieur de Launay?"

"I do not know what his name is."

"His name is De Launay."

"Be it so. Well, do you know Monsieur de Launay?"

"He is a friend of mine."

"In that case, you must desire that no misfortune should happen to him."

"In fact, I should desire it."

"Well, then, the way to prevent any misfortune happening to him is, that he should surrender the Bastille to me, or, at all events, liberate the doctor."

"You do not imagine, surely, that I should have influence enough with him to induce him to surrender to you either his prisoner or his fortress, do you?"

"That is my affair. All that I ask is, that you will give me an introduction to him."

"My dear Monsieur Billot, I forewarn you that if you go into the Bastille you will go into it alone."

"Very well."

"I forewarn you, moreover, that if you enter it alone you will perhaps not get out again."

"Marvellously well."

"Then I will give you your permission to go into the Bastille."

"I will wait for it."

"But it will be on still another condition."

"What is that?"

"It is that you will not come to me again to-morrow and ask for a passport to the moon. I forewarn you that I am not acquainted with any one in those regions."

"Flesselles! Flesselles!" said a hollow and threatening voice from behind the Provost of the Merchants, "if you continue to wear two faces, — the one which laughs with the aristocrats, the other which smiles upon the people, — you will perhaps receive between this and to-morrow morning a passport for a world from which no one returns."

The provost turned round, shuddering.

"Who is it that speaks thus?" said he.

"'T is I, Marat."

"Marat, the philosopher! Marat, the physician!" exclaimed Billot.

"Yes," replied the same voice.

"Yes, Marat, the philosopher; Marat, the physician," repeated Flesselles; "who in this last capacity ought to attend to curing lunatics, which would have been a sure means of now having a goodly number of patients."

"Monsieur de Flesselles," replied the lugubrious interlocutor, "this worthy citizen has asked you for a passport which will facilitate his seeing Monsieur de Launay. I would observe to you, that not only is he waiting for you, but that three thousand men are waiting for him."

"'T is well, sir; he shall soon have it."

Flesselles went to a table, passed one hand over his brow, and with the other seizing a pen, he rapidly wrote several lines.

"Here is your safe-conduct," said he, delivering the paper to Billot.

"Read it," said Marat.

"I cannot read," said Billot.

"Well, then, give it to me; I can read."

Billot handed the paper to Marat.

This passport was conceived in the following terms:

M. Governor, — We, Provost of the Merchants of the city of Paris, send to you M. Billot, in order to concert with you as to the interests of the said city.

De Flesselles.

July 14, 1789.

"Good!" said Billot, "give it to me."

"You find this passport good as it is?" said Marat.

"Undoubtedly."

"Stop a minute. The provost is going to add a postscript to it, which will make it better."

And he went up to Flesselles, who had remained standing, his hand on the table, and who looked with a disdainful air at the two men with whom he was so particularly engaged, and at a third one, half naked, who had just presented himself at the door, leaning upon a musketoon.

It was Pitou, who had followed Billot, and who held himself ready to obey the farmer's orders, be they what they might.

"Sir," said Marat to Flesselles, "the postscript which you are about to add, and which will render the passport so much better, is the following:"

"Say on, Monsieur Marat."

Marat placed the paper on the table, and, pointing with his finger to the place on which the provost was to write the required postscript:—

"The citizen Billot," said he, "having the character of bearer of a flag of truce, I confide his care to your honor."

Flesselles looked at Marat, as if he would rather have smashed his flat face with his fist than do that which he had requested.

"Would you resist, sir?" demanded Marat.

"No," replied Flesselles, "for, after all, you only ask me what is strictly right."

And he wrote the postscript demanded of him.

"However, gentlemen, you will be pleased to observe this well, that I do not answer for the safety of Monsieur Billot."

"And I — I will be answerable for it," said Marat, jerking the paper out of his hands; "for your liberty is the guarantee of his liberty, — your head for the safety of

his head. Here, worthy Billot," continued Marat, "here is your passport."

"Labrie!" cried M. de Flesselles, — "Labrie!"

A lackey in grand livery entered the room.

"My carriage," said the provost.

"It is waiting for you, sir, in the courtyard."

"Let us go, then," said the provost. "There is nothing else which you desire, gentlemen?"

"No," simultaneously replied Billot and Marat.

"Am I to let them pass?" inquired Pitou.

"My friend," said Flesselles to him, "I would observe to you that you are rather too indecently attired to mount guard at my door. If you insist upon remaining here, turn your cartouche-box round in front, and set your back against the wall."

"Am I to let them pass?" Pitou repeated, with an air which indicated that he did not greatly relish the jest of which he had been the subject.

"Yes," said Billot.

Pitou made way for the provost to pass by him.

"Perhaps you were wrong in allowing that man to go," said Marat. "He would have been a good hostage to have kept. But, in any case, let him go where he will, you may feel perfectly assured that I will find him again."

"Labrie," said the Provost of the Merchants, as he was getting into his carriage, "they are going to distribute powder here. Should the Hôtel de Ville perchance blow up, I should like to be out of the way of the splinters. Let us get out of gunshot, Labrie, — out of gunshot."

The carriage rattled through the gateway, and appeared upon the square, on which were growling some four or five thousand persons.

Flesselles was afraid that they might misinterpret his departure, which might be considered as a flight.

He leaned half-way out of the door.

"To the National Assembly," cried he, in a loud voice to the coachman.

This drew upon him from the crowd a loud and continued outburst of applause.

Marat and Billot were on the balcony, and had heard the last words of Flesselles.

"My head against his," said Marat, "that he is not going to the National Assembly, but to the king."

"Would it not be well to have him stopped?" said Billot.

"No," replied Marat, with his hideous smile; "make yourself easy; however quickly he may go, we shall go still quicker than he. But now for the gunpowder."

"Yes, to the gunpowder," said Billot.

And they both went down the great staircase, followed by Pitou.

CHAPTER XV.

MONSIEUR DE LAUNAY, GOVERNOR OF THE BASTILLE.

As Monsieur de Flesselles had said, there were eight thousand pounds of gunpowder in the cellars of the Hôtel de Ville.

Marat and Billot went into the first cellar with a lantern, which they suspended to a hook in the ceiling.

Pitou mounted guard at the door.

The powder was in small kegs, containing each about twenty pounds. Men were stationed upon the stairs, forming a chain which reached the square, and they at once began to send up the kegs.

There was at first a momentary confusion. It was not known whether there would be powder enough for everybody, and they all rushed forward to secure their share. But the chain formed by Billot at length succeeded in making the people wait patiently for their turn, and the distribution was effected with something like an approach to order.

Every citizen received half a pound of powder, — about thirty or forty shots.

But when every one had received the powder, it was perceived that muskets were sadly deficient. There were scarcely five hundred among the whole crowd.

While the distribution was going on, a portion of this furious population who were crying out for arms, went up to the rooms where the electors held their sittings. They were occupied in forming the National Guard, of which the usher had spoken to Billot.

They had just decreed that this civic militia should be composed of forty-eight thousand men. This militia but yet existed in the decree, and they were disputing as to the general who should command it.

It was in the midst of this discussion that the people invaded the Hôtel de Ville. They had organized themselves. They only asked to march ; all they required was arms.

At that moment the noise of a carriage coming into the courtyard was heard. It was the Provost of the Merchants, who had not been allowed to proceed upon his journey, although he had exhibited a mandate from the king, ordering him to proceed to Versailles, and he was brought back by force to the Hôtel de Ville.

"Give us arms ! give us arms !" cried the crowd, as soon as they perceived him at a distance.

"Arms !" cried he ; "I have no arms; but there must be some at the arsenal."

"To the arsenal ! to the arsenal !" cried the crowd.

And five or six thousand men rushed on to the Quay de la Grève.

The arsenal was empty.

They returned, with bitter lamentations, to the Hôtel de Ville.

The provost had no arms, or rather would not give them. Pressed by the people, he had the idea of sending them to the Chartreux.

The Chartreux opened its gates. They searched it in every direction, but did not find even a pocket-pistol.

During this time Flesselles, having been informed that Billot and Marat were still in the cellars of the Hôtel de Ville, completing the distribution of the gunpowder, proposed to send a deputation to De Launay, to propose to him that he should withdraw the cannon from his ramparts, so as to be out of sight.

That which the evening before had made the crowd hoot most obstreperously was these guns, which, stretching forth their long necks, were seen beyond the turreted parapets. Flesselles hoped that, by causing them to disappear, the people would be contented by the concession, and would withdraw satisfied.

The deputation had just set forth, when the people returned in great fury.

On hearing the cries they uttered, Billot and Marat ran upstairs into the courtyard.

Flesselles, from an interior balcony, endeavored to calm the people. He proposed a decree which should authorize the districts to manufacture fifty thousand pikes.

The people were about to accept this proposal.

"Decidedly this man is betraying us," said Marat.

Then, turning to Billot, —

"Go to the Bastille," said he, "and do what you proposed to do. In an hour I will send you there twenty thousand men, and each man with a musket on his shoulder."

Billot, at first sight, had felt great confidence in this man, whose name had become so popular that it had reached even him. He did not even ask him how he calculated on procuring them. An abbé was there, imbued with the general enthusiasm, and crying, like all the rest, "To the Bastille!" Billot did not like abbés, but this one pleased him. He gave him the charge of continuing the distribution, which the worthy abbé accepted.

Then Marat mounted upon a post. There was at that moment the most frightful noise and tumult.

"Silence!" cried he; "I am Marat, and I wish to speak."

They were at once quieted as if by magic, and every eye was directed towards the orator.

"You wish for arms?" he said.

"Yes, yes!" replied thousands of voices.

"To take the Bastille?"

"Yes! yes! yes!"

"Well then, come with me, and you shall have them."

"And where?"

"To the Invalides, where there are twenty-five thousand muskets. To the Invalides!"

"To the Invalides! to the Invalides!" cried every voice.

"And now," said Marat to Billot, who had just called Pitou; "you will go to the Bastille?"

"Yes."

"Stay. It might happen that before my men arrive you may stand in need of assistance."

"In fact," said Billot, "that is possible."

Marat tore out a leaf from a small memorandum book, and wrote four words upon it with a pencil:—

"This comes from Marat."

Then he drew a sign upon the paper.

"Well!" cried Billot, "what would you have me do with this note, since you do not tell me the name or the address of the person to whom I am to deliver it?"

"As to the address, the man to whom I recommend you has none; as to his name, it is well known. Ask the first workman you may meet for Gonchon, the Mirabeau of the people."

"Gonchon — you will remember that name, Pitou."

"Gonchon or *Gonchonius*," said Pitou. "I shall not forget it."

"To the Invalides! to the Invalides!" howled the mob, with increasing ferocity.

"Well, then, go!" said Marat to Billot; "and may the genius of Liberty march before thee!"

"To the Invalides!" he then cried in his turn.

And he went down the Quai de Gévres, followed by more than twenty thousand men.

Billot, on his side, took with him some five or six thousand. These were all armed in one way or another.

At the moment when they were about to proceed along the bank of the river, and the remainder were going towards the Boulevard, the Provost of the Merchants appeared at a window.

"My friends," said he, "why is it that I see a green cockade in your hats?"

They were the leaves of the linden-trees, of Camille Desmoulins, which many had adopted merely from seeing others wear them, but without even knowing their signification.

"Hope! hope!" cried several voices.

"Yes; but the color that denotes hope is, at the same time, that of the Count d'Artois. Would you have the air of wearing the livery of a prince?"

"No, no!" cried all the crowd in chorus, and Billot louder than the rest.

"Well! then you ought to change that cockade; and, if you will wear a livery, let it at least be that of the city of Paris, the mother of us all, — blue and red, my friends, blue and red."[1]

"Yes, yes," cried every tongue; "blue and red."

Upon these words, every one trampled under foot his green cockade, every one called for ribbons; as if by enchantment, the windows round the square were opened, and blue and red ribbons rained down in floods.

[1] Some time afterwards, Monsieur de Lafayette also made the observation that blue and red were likewise the colors of the House of Orleans, and added to them a third color, white, saying to those who received it from him, "I give you a cockade that will make the tour of the whole world."

But all the ribbons that fell scarcely sufficed for a thousand men.

Instantly aprons, silk gowns, scarfs, curtains, are torn, stripped, and cut in fragments; these fragments were formed into bows, rosettes, and scarfs. Every one took his share.

After which Billot's small army again moved forward.

It kept on recruiting as it advanced; all the arteries of the Faubourg St. Antoine sent to it as it passed the most ardent and the most active of their population.

They reached, in tolerably good order, the end of the Rue Lesdiguières, where already a mass of curious lookers-on — some timid, others calm, and others insolent — were gazing at the towers of the Bastille, exposed to an ardent sun.

The arrival of the popular drums by the Faubourg St. Antoine;

The arrival of about a hundred of the French Guards from the Boulevards;

The arrival of Billot and his troop, at once changed the character and the aspect of the assembled crowd; the timid became emboldened, the calm became excited, and the insolent began to threaten.

"Down with the cannon! down with the cannon!" cried twenty thousand voices, threatening with their clinched fists the heavy guns which stretched forth their brazen necks from the embrasures of the platforms.

Just at that moment, as if the governor of the Bastille was obeying the injunctions of the crowd, some artillerymen approached the guns, which they drew in, till at last they disappeared entirely.

The crowd clapped their hands; they had then become a power, since the governor had yielded to their threats.

Notwithstanding this, the sentinels continued pacing backwards and forwards on the platforms. At every post was an Invalide and a Swiss.

After having cried, "Down with the cannon!" the crowd shouted, "Down with the Swiss!" It was a continuation of the cry of the night before, "Down with the Germans!"

But the Swiss did not the less continue their guard, crossing the Invalides in their measured pacings up and down.

One of those who cried, "Down with the Swiss!" became impatient; he had a gun in his hand; he pointed the muzzle of his gun at the sentinel, and fired.

The ball struck the gray wall of the Bastille, one foot below the coping-stone of the tower, and immediately in front of the spot where the Swiss had passed. At the spot where the shot had struck, it left a white mark, but the sentinel did not stop, and did not even turn his head.

A loud murmur soon arose around the man who had fired, and thus was given the signal of attack, as unheard of as it was senseless, — a murmur more of terror than of anger. Many persons conceived that it was a crime punishable with death to fire a musket-shot at the Bastille.

Billot gazed upon the dark-green mass like to those fabulous monsters which in ancient legends are represented to us as covered with scales. He counted the embrasures at which the cannon might at any given moment be rolled back to their places. He counted the number of muskets the muzzles of which might be directed through the loop-holes at the assembled crowd.

And Billot shook his head, recalling to mind the words uttered by Flesselles.

"We shall never be able to get in there," said he.

"And why shall we never be able to get in?" said a voice close beside him.

Billot turned round and saw a man with a savage countenance, dressed in rags, and whose eyes sparkled like two stars.

"Because it appears to me impossible to take such a mass as that by force."

"The taking of the Bastille," said the man, "is not a deed of war, but an act of faith. Believe, and thou shalt succeed."

"Patience!" said Billot, feeling in his pocket for his passport.

The man was deceived as to his meaning.

"Patience!" cried he, "oh, yes, I understand you! you are fat — you — you look like a farmer."

"And I am one, in fact," said Billot.

"Then I can well understand why you say patience! You have been always well fed; but look behind you for a moment and see those spectres who are now surrounding us. See their dried-up veins, count their bones through the rents in their garments, and then ask them whether they understand the word patience."

"This is one who speaks well," said Pitou, "but he terrifies me."

"He does not terrify me," said Billot; and turning again towards the man: —

"Yes, patience," he said; "but only for another quarter of an hour, that 's all."

"Ah, ah!" cried the man, smiling; "a quarter of an hour; that indeed is not too much. And what will you do in a quarter of an hour?"

"During that time I shall have visited the Bastille, I shall know the number of its garrison, I shall know the

intentions of its governor! I shall know, in fine, the way into it."

"Yes! if after that you could only find the way out of it?"

"Well, supposing that I do not get out of it. There is a man who will come and show me the way."

"And who is this man?"

"Gonchon, the Mirabeau of the people."

The man gave a start. His eyes emitted flashes of fire.

"Do you know him?" inquired he.

"No."

"Well, what mean you, then?"

"Why, I am going to know him; for I was told that the first to whom I might speak on the square before the Bastille would lead me to him. You are on the square of the Bastille; take me to him."

"What do you want with him?"

"To deliver to him this paper."

"From whom is it?"

"From Marat, the physician."

"From Marat! you know Marat!" exclaimed the man.

"I have just left him."

"Where?"

"At the Hôtel de Ville."

"What is he doing?"

"He has gone to arm twenty thousand men at the Invalides."

"In that case, give me that paper. I am Gonchon."

Billot drew back a step.

"You are Gonchon?" cried he.

"My friends," said the man in rags, "here is one who does not know me, and who is asking whether it is true that I am Gonchon."

The crowd burst into a loud laugh. It appeared to all these men that it was impossible that any one could be so ignorant as not to know their favorite orator.

"Long live Gonchon!" cried two or three thousand voices.

"Take it," said Billot, handing the paper to him.

"Friends," cried Gonchon, after having read it, and laying his hand on Billot's shoulder, "this is a brother. Marat recommends him. We can therefore rely upon him. What is your name?" said he to the farmer.

"My name is Billot."

"And mine," rejoined Gonchon, "is Hache, and between us both I trust we shall be able to do something."[1]

The crowd smiled at this sanguinary jest.

"Yes, yes, we shall soon do something," cried they.

"Well! what are we going to do?" asked several voices.

"Why, zounds!" cried Gonchon, "we are going to take the Bastille."

"This is as it should be," cried Billot; "that is what I call speaking. Listen to me, brave Gonchon. How many men have you to back you?"

"Thirty thousand, or somewhere near that."

"Thirty thousand men you have at your disposal, twenty thousand will soon be here from the Invalides, and ten thousand are already here; why, 't is more than enough to insure our success, or we shall never succeed at all."

"We shall succeed," replied Gonchon.

"I believe so. Well, then, call together your thirty thousand men. I, in the mean time, will go to the governor, and summon him to surrender. If he surrenders,

[1] Billot, in French, means block, — the block on which criminals' heads are struck off. Hache means axe. — TRANSLATOR.

so much the better; we shall avoid much bloodshed. If he will not surrender, the blood that will be spilled will fall upon his head; and in these days, blood that is spilled in an unjust cause brings down misfortunes with it. Ask the Germans if it be not so."

"How long do you expect to remain with the governor?" asked Gonchon.

"As long as I possibly can, until the Bastille is completely invested. If it be possible, when I come out again, the attack will begin."

"'T is understood."

"You do not mistrust me?" said Billot to Gonchon, holding out his hand to him.

"Who, I?" replied Gonchon, with a smile of disdain, at the same time pressing the hand of the stout farmer, and with a strength that could not have been expected from his emaciated appearance; "I mistrust you! and for what reason, pray? If it were my will, upon a word, a sign given by me, I could have you pounded like glass, even were you sheltered by those formidable towers, which to-morrow will no longer exist, — were you protected by these soldiers, who this evening will have espoused our party or will have ceased to exist. Go, then, and rely on Gonchon as he relies on Billot."

Billot was convinced, and walked towards the entrance of the Bastille, while the strange person with whom he had been conversing darted down the faubourg, amid shouts, repeated a thousand times, of —

"Long live Gonchon! Long live the Mirabeau of the people!"

"I do not know what the Mirabeau of the nobles may be," said Pitou to Billot, "but I think our Mirabeau a hideously ugly personage."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BASTILLE AND ITS GOVERNOR.

We will not describe the Bastille; it would be useless.

It lives as an eternal image, both in the memory of the old and in the imagination of the young.

We shall content ourselves with merely stating that, seen from the Boulevard, it presented, in front of the square then called Place de la Bastille, two twin towers, while its two fronts ran parallel with the banks of the canal which now exists.

The entrance to the Bastille was defended, in the first place, by a guardhouse, then by two lines of sentinels, and besides these by two drawbridges.

After having passed through these several obstacles, you came to the courtyard of the government house, — that is to say, the residence of the governor.

From this courtyard a gallery led to the ditches of the Bastille.

At this other entrance, which opened upon the ditches, was a drawbridge, a guardhouse, and an iron gate.

At the first entrance they wished to stop Billot; but Billot shows the passport he received from Flesselles, and they allow him to pass on.

Billot then perceives that Pitou is following him. Pitou had no permission; but he would have followed the farmer's steps down to the infernal regions, or would have ascended to the moon.

"Remain outside," said Billot. "Should I not come

out again, it would be well there should be some one to remind the people that I have come in."

"That is perfectly right," said Pitou. "How long am I to wait before I remind them of it?"

"One hour."

"And the casket?" inquired Pitou.

"Ah, you remind me! Well, then, should I not get out again; should Gonchon not take the Bastille, or, in short, if, after having taken it, I should not be found, you must tell Doctor Gilbert, whom they will find perhaps, that men who came from Paris took from me the casket which he confided to my care five years ago; that I, on the instant, started off to inform him of what had happened; that, on arriving at Paris, I was informed that he was in the Bastille; that I attempted to take the Bastille, and that in the attempt I left my skin there, which was altogether at his service."

"'T is well, Father Billot," said Pitou; "only 't is rather a long story, and I am much afraid that I may forget it."

"Forget what I have said to you?"

"Yes."

"I will repeat it to you, then."

"No," said a voice close to Billot's ear; "it would be better to write it."

"I do not know how to write," said Billot.

"I do. I am an usher."

"Ah! you are an usher, are you?" inquired Billot.

"Stanislaus Maillard, usher in the Court of the Châtelet."

And he drew from his pocket a long ink-horn, in which there were pens, paper, and ink; in fine, all that was necessary for writing.

He was a man about forty-five years old, tall, thin, and

grave-looking, dressed entirely in black, as became his profession.

"Here is one who looks confoundedly like an undertaker," muttered Pitou.

"You say," inquired the usher, with great calmness, "that men who came from Paris carried off a casket which Dr. Gilbert confided to you?"

"Yes."

"That is a punishable crime."

"These men belonged to the police of Paris."

"Infamous robbers!" muttered Maillard.

Then, handing the paper to Pitou:—

"Here, take this, young man," said he; "it is the memorandum you require; and should he be killed,"—he pointed to Billot—"should you be killed, it is to be hoped that I shall not be killed too."

"And should you not be killed, what would you do?" asked Pitou.

"I would do that which you were to have done," replied Maillard.

"Thanks," said Billot.

And he held out his hand to the usher.

The usher grasped it with a vigor which could not have been anticipated from his lank meagre body.

"Then I may fully depend upon you?" said Billot.

"As on Marat—as on Gonchon."

"Good!" said Pitou; "they form a trinity which I am sure I shall not find in paradise."

Then, going up to Billot:—

"Tell me, Father Billot, you will be prudent, will you not?"

"Pitou," replied the farmer, with an eloquence which sometimes astonished people, when proceeding from one who had always led a country life, "forget not what I

say to you, — that the most prudent line of conduct now in France is to be courageous."

And he passed the first line of sentinels, while Pitou returned towards the square.

At the drawbridge he was again obliged to parley.

Billot showed his passport. The drawbridge was let down, the iron-grated gate was opened.

Close beside the gate stood the governor.

This interior court, in which the governor was waiting for Billot, was the courtyard which served as a promenade to the prisoners. It was guarded by eight towers, — that is to say, by eight giants. No window opened into it. Never did the sun shine on its pavement, which was damp and almost muddy. It might have been taken for the bottom of an immense well.

In this courtyard was a clock, supported by figures representing enchained captives, which measured the hours, and from which fell the regular and slow sounds of the minutes as they passed by, as in a dungeon the droppings from the ceiling eat into the pavement slabs on which they fall.

At the bottom of this well the prisoner, lost amid the abyss of stone, for a moment contemplated its cold nakedness, and soon asked to be allowed to return to his cell.

Close beside the grated gate which opened on this courtyard stood, as we have said, Monsieur de Launay.

Monsieur de Launay was a man from forty-five to fifty years of age. On that day he was dressed in a gray coat. He wore the red ribbon of the order of Saint Louis, and in his hand he carried a sword-cane.

This Monsieur de Launay was a man of wicked disposition. The memoirs of Linguet had just bestowed upon him a sorrowful celebrity; he was almost as much detested as the prison itself.

In fact, the De Launays, like the Châteauneufs, the Levrillières, and the Saint Florentins, who held the *lettres de cachet* from father to son, also from father to son transmitted the Bastille to one another.

For, as is well known, it was not the minister of war who appointed the officers of this jail. At the Bastille, all the places were sold to the highest bidder, from that of the governor himself, down to that of the scullion. The governor of the Bastille was a jailer on a grand scale, an eating-house keeper wearing epaulettes, who added to his salary of sixty thousand livres, sixty thousand more which he extorted and plundered.

It was highly necessary that he should recover the capital and interest of the money he had invested.

Monsieur de Launay, in point of avarice, far surpassed his predecessors. This might, perhaps, have arisen from his having paid more for the place, and having foreseen that he would not remain in it so long as they did.

He fed his whole house at the expense of his prisoners. He had reduced the quantity of firing, and doubled the hire of furniture in each room.

He had the right of bringing yearly into Paris a hundred pipes of wine, free of duty. He sold his right to a tavern-keeper, who brought in wines of excellent quality; then with a tenth part of this duty he purchased the vinegar with which he supplied his prisoners.

The unhappy prisoners in the Bastille had only one consolation; this was a small garden, which had been formed on one of the bastions. There they could walk; there for a few moments they could inhale pure air, the perfumes of the flowers, and enjoy the light.

He rented this little garden to a gardener, and for fifty livres a year which he received from him he had deprived the prisoners of this last enjoyment.

It is true that to rich prisoners his complaisance was extreme. He conducted one of them to the house of his own mistress, who had thus her apartments furnished, and was kept in luxury, without its costing a stiver to him, De Launay.

See the work entitled "The Bastille Unveiled," and you will find in it this fact, and many others besides.

And, notwithstanding, this man was courageous.

From the previous evening the storm had been threatening around him. Since the previous evening he perceived the waves of this great commotion, which was still ascending, beat against his walls.

And yet he was calm, though pale.

It is true that he had to support him four pieces of artillery, ready prepared to fire; around him, a garrison of Swiss and Invalides; before him, only an unarmed man.

For, on entering the Bastille, Billot had given Pitou his carbine to take care of.

He had understood that within that iron grating which he saw before him, a weapon would be more dangerous than useful to him.

Billot, at a single glance, observed all, — the calm and almost threatening attitude of the governor; the Swiss and Invalides in the several guard-houses and on the platforms; and the silent bustle of the artillerymen, who were stowing their cartridges into the magazines of their ammunition-wagons.

The sentinels held their muskets at the make-ready; the officers had their swords drawn.

The governor remained motionless; Billot was obliged to advance towards him; the iron-grated gate closed behind the bearer of the people's flag of truce with a sinister noise of grating iron, which, brave as he was, made the marrow of his bones chill within him.

"What want you with me again?" said De Launay to him.

"Again!" reiterated Billot; "it appears to me, however, that this is the first time I have seen you, and consequently that you have yet no right to be wearied of seeing me."

"It is because I have been told that you come from the Hôtel de Ville."

"That is true. I came from there."

"Well, then, only just now I received a deputation from the municipality."

"And for what purpose did it come?"

"It came to obtain a promise from me that I would not be the first to fire."

"And you promised that you would not?"

"Yes."

"And was this all?"

"It also came to request that I would draw in my guns."

"And you have them drawn in; I know that, for I was on the square of the Bastille when this manœuvre was executed."

"And you doubtless thought that I was yielding to the threats of the people?"

"Why, zounds! it did look very like it."

"Did I not tell you so, gentlemen?" exclaimed De Launay, turning towards his officers; "did I not tell you that we should be thought capable of such cowardice?"

Then, turning to Billot, —

"And you, — from whom do you come?"

"I come on behalf of the people," proudly replied Billot.

"'T is well," said De Launay, smiling; "but you have some other recommendation, I suppose; for with that

which you set forth, you would not have been allowed to pass the first line of my sentries."

"Yes; I have a safe-conduct from Monsieur de Flesselles, your friend."

"Flesselles! You say that he is my friend," rejoined De Launay, looking intently at Billot, as if he would have read the inmost recesses of his heart. "Whence know you that Monsieur de Flesselles is my friend?"

"Why, I supposed him to be so."

"Supposed! — oh, that is all! 'T is well. Let us see your safe-conduct."

Billot presented the paper to him.

De Launay read it once, then a second time, and turned and twisted it about to discover whether it did not contain some postscript between its pages; held it up to the light, to see whether there were not some lines written between the lines of the missive.

"And this is all he has to say to me?"

"All."

"You are sure?"

"Perfectly sure."

"Nothing verbal?"

"Nothing."

"'T is very strange!" exclaimed De Launay, darting through one of the loop-holes a glance at the crowd assembled in the square before the Bastille.

"But what would you have had him say to you?" said Billot.

De Launay made an impatient gesture.

"Oh nothing, nothing! Come, now, tell me what you want; but speak quickly, for I am pressed for time."

"Well, then, what I want is, that you should surrender the Bastille to us."

"What said you?" cried De Launay, quickly turning

round, as if he thought he had misunderstood the farmer's meaning. "You say — ?"

"I say that I have come in the name of the people, to demand that you surrender the Bastille."

De Launay shrugged his shoulders.

"The people are, in truth, very strange animals," said he.

"Hey!" cried Billot.

"And what do they want to do with the Bastille?"

"They want to demolish it."

"And what the devil has the Bastille to do with the people? Was ever a man of the people put into the Bastille? The people, on the contrary, ought to bless every stone of which the Bastille is formed. Who are they who are put into the Bastille? Philosophers, men of science, aristocrats, ministers, princes, — that is to say, the enemies of the people."

"Well, that proves that the people are not egotists," retorted Billot.

"My friend," said De Launay, with a shade of commiseration in his tone, "it is easy to perceive that you are not a soldier."

"You are quite right. I am a farmer."

"That you do not inhabit Paris."

"In fact, I am from the country."

"That you do not thoroughly know what the Bastille is."

"That is true. I only know what I have seen of it, — that is to say, the exterior walls."

"Well, then, come along with me, and I will show you what the Bastille is."

"Ho! ho!" muttered Billot to himself, "he is going to lead me over some villanous trap-door, which will suddenly open under my feet, and then, good-night, Father Billot."

But the intrepid farmer did not even blink, and showed himself ready to follow the governor of the Bastille.

"In the first place," said De Launay, "you must know that I have powder enough in my cellars to blow up, not only the Bastille itself, but with it at least half of the Faubourg St. Antoine."

"I know that," tranquilly replied Billot.

"Very well; but now look at those four pieces of artillery."

"I see them."

"They enfilade the whole of this gallery, as you can also see; and this gallery is defended, first, by a guard-house; secondly, by two ditches, which only can be crossed with the assistance of two drawbridges; and lastly, by a grated iron gate."

"Oh, I do not say that the Bastille is badly defended," calmly observed Billot; "all that I say is, that it will be well attacked."

"Let us go on," said De Launay.

Billot gave an assenting nod.

"Here is a postern which opens on the ditches," said the governor; "look at the thickness of the walls."

"Somewhere about forty feet."

"Yes; forty at the bottom, and fifteen at the top. You see that, although the people may have good nails, they would break them against these stones."

"I did not say," rejoined Billot, "that the people would demolish the Bastille before taking it. What I said was, that they would demolish it after having taken it."

"Let us go up the steps," said De Launay.

"Let us go up."

They went up some thirty steps.

The governor stopped.

"See," said he, "here is another embrasure, which opens on the passage by which you wish to enter; this is only defended by a rampart gun, but it has already acquired a certain reputation. You know the song —

'O my tender Musette, —
Musette, my only love.'"

"Certainly," said Billot; "I do know it; but I do not think that this is the time to sing it."

"Wait a moment. Well, Marshal Saxe called this small cannon his Musette, because it sung correctly the air he best liked. That is an historical detail."

"Oh!" ejaculated Billot.

"Let us go up higher;" and they continued to climb up the stairs.

They soon reached a platform on the tower called La Compté.

"Ah! ah!" ejaculated Billot.

"What is it?" inquired De Launay.

"You have not had the cannon dismounted."

"I have had them drawn in, that 's all."

"You know that I shall tell the people that cannon are still here."

"Tell them so."

"You will not have them dismounted, then?"

"No."

"Decidedly?"

"The king's cannon are here by the king's order, sir; they can only be dismounted by an order from the king."

"Monsieur de Launay," said Billot, feeling his thoughts rise within him according to the importance of the moment, "the real king, whom I counsel you to obey, is yonder."

And he showed to the governor the gray crowd, some

of whom were still covered with blood from the combat of the preceding evening, and whose undulating movements before the ditches made their arms gleam in the sunshine.

"Sir," said De Launay in his turn, throwing his head back with a haughty air, "you may perhaps acknowledge two kings; but I, the governor of the Bastille, know but one, and he is Louis, the Sixteenth of that name, who has affixed his name to a commission by virtue of which I command here, both men and things."

"You are not, then, a citizen!" cried Billot in anger.

"I am a French gentleman," said the governor.

"Ah! that is true; you are a soldier, and you speak as a soldier."

"You have said the word, sir," said De Launay, bowing. "I am a soldier, and I execute the orders I receive."

"And I, sir," said Billot, "am a citizen, and my duty as a citizen being in opposition with your orders as a soldier, one of us two will die, — whether it be the one who obeys his orders, or the one who fulfils his duty."

"It is probable, sir."

"Then you are determined to fire upon the people?"

"By no means — so long as they do not fire upon me. I have pledged my word to the envoys of Monsieur de Flesselles. You see that the guns have been drawn in, but at the first shot fired from the square upon my castle —"

"Well, at the first shot?"

"I will run to one of these guns, — this one, for instance, — I will myself wheel it to the embrasure, I will point it with my own hands, and I will fire it with the match you see standing here."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"Oh, if I believed that," said Billot, "before allowing you to commit such a crime —"

"I have told you that I am a soldier, sir, and that I know nothing but my orders."

"Well, then, look!" said Billot, drawing De Launay towards an embrasure, and pointing out to him alternately two different points, the Faubourg St. Antoine and the Boulevard, "yonder are those from whom in future you will receive your orders."

And he showed De Launay two dark, dense, and howling masses, who, compelled to take the form of the Boulevards, undulated like an immense serpent, of which the head and the body could be seen, but the last rings of which were lost to sight, from the unevenness of the ground on which it crawled; and all that could be seen of the gigantic reptile was refulgent with luminous scales.

It was the double troop, to which Billot had given rendezvous on the square of the Bastille, — the one led by Marat, and the other by Gonchon.

On both sides they advanced, brandishing their arms and uttering the most terrific cries.

De Launay turned pale at the sight, and raising his cane: —

"To your guns!" cried he.

Then, advancing towards Billot with a threatening gesture: —

"And you, wretch!" he exclaimed, "you who have come here under the pretext of parleying with me while the others are advancing to the attack, do you know that you deserve to die?"

And he half drew his sword from the cane which concealed it.

Billot saw the movement, and, rapid as the lightning, seized De Launay by the collar and the waistband.

"And you," said he, as he raised him from the ground, "you deserve that I should hurl you over the ramparts, to dash you in pieces against the sides of the ditch! But, God be thanked! I shall fight you in another manner!"

At that moment an immense and universal clamor, ascending from below, and rushing through the air like the wild howlings of the hurricane, reached their ears, and Monsieur de Losme, the major of the Bastille, appeared upon the platform.

"Sir," cried he, addressing himself to Billot, "sir, be pleased to show yourself; all those people yonder believe that some misfortune has befallen you, and they are calling for you."

And in fact the name of Billot, which had been spread among the crowd by Pitou, was heard amidst the clamor.

Billot had loosed his hold, and Monsieur de Launay sheathed his sword.

Then there was a momentary hesitation between these three men; while cries calling for vengeance, and threatening shouts were heard.

"Show yourself then, sir," said De Launay: "not that these clamors intimidate me, but that it may be known that I am a man who loyally keeps his word."

Then Billot put his head between the battlements, making a sign with his hand.

On seeing this, loud shouts of applause rose from the populace. It was, in a manner, the revolution rising from the forehead of the Bastille in the person of this man of the people, who was the first to trample on its platform as a conqueror.

"'T is well, sir," then said De Launay; "all is now terminated between us; you have nothing further to do here. You are called for yonder: go down."

Billot was sensible of this moderation in a man who had him completely in his power; he went down the same staircase by which he had ascended the ramparts, the governor following him.

As to the major, he had remained there; the governor had given him some orders in a whisper.

It was evident that Monsieur de Launay had but one desire, and this was that the bearer of the flag of truce should become his enemy, and that as quickly as possible.

Billot walked across the courtyard without uttering a word. He saw the artillerymen standing by their guns. The match was smoking at the end of a lance.

Billot stepped before them.

"My friends," said he, "remember that I came to request your chief to prevent the spilling of blood, and that he has refused."

"In the name of the king, sir," cried De Launay, stamping his foot, "leave this place!"

"Beware!" said Billot; "if you order me out in the name of the king, I shall come in again in the name of the people."

Then, turning towards the guard-house, before which the Swiss were standing: —

"Come, now," said he, "tell me for which side are you?"

The Swiss soldiers remained silent.

De Launay pointed with his finger to the iron gate.

Billot wished to make a last effort.

"Sir," said he to De Launay, "in the name of the nation! in the name of your brothers!"

"Of my brothers! You call my brothers those men who are howling, 'Down with the Bastille!' 'Death to its governor!' They may be your brothers, sir, but most assuredly they are not mine!"

"In the name of humanity, then!"

"In the name of humanity, which urges you on to come here, with a hundred thousand men, to cut the throats of a hundred unfortunate soldiers shut up in these walls."

"And by surrendering the Bastille you would be doing precisely that which would save their lives."

"And sacrifice my honor."

Billot said no more to him. This logic of the soldier completely overcame him; but turning to the Swiss and Invalides:—

"Surrender, my friends!" cried he; "it is still time. In ten minutes it will be too late."

"If you do not instantly withdraw, sir," in his turn cried De Launay, "on the word of a gentleman, I will order you to be shot!"

Billot paused a moment, crossed his arms over his chest in token of defiance, exchanged a last threatening glance with De Launay, and passed through the gate.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BASTILLE.

THE crowd was waiting; scorched by the burning July sun, they were trembling, mad with excitement. Gonchon's men had just joined those of Marat. The Faubourg St. Antoine had recognized and saluted its brother, the Faubourg St. Marceau.

Gonchon was at the head of his patriots. As to Marat, he had disappeared.

The aspect of the square was frightful.

On Billot's appearance the shouts redoubled.

"Well?" said Gonchon, going up to him.

"Well, the man is brave," said Billot.

"What mean you by saying 'The man is brave'?" inquired Gonchon.

"I mean to say that he is obstinate."

"He will not surrender the Bastille?"

"No."

"He will obstinately sustain the siege?"

"Yes."

"And you believe that he will sustain it long?"

"To the very death."

"Be it so! Death he shall have!"

"But what numbers of men we are about to expose to death!" exclaimed Billot, doubting assuredly that God had given him the right which generals arrogate to themselves, — as do kings and emperors, — men who have received commissions to shed blood.

"Pooh!" said Gonchon, "there are too many in this world, since there is not bread enough for half the population. Is it not so, friends?" he asked, turning towards the crowd.

"Yes, yes!" they responded, with sublime self-abnegation.

"But the ditch?" observed Billot, inquiringly.

"It is only necessary that it should be filled up at one particular spot," replied Gonchon, "and I have calculated that with the half of the bodies we have here we could fill it up completely; is it not so, friends?"

"Yes, yes!" repeated the crowd, with no less enthusiasm than before.

"Well, then, be it so!" said Billot, though completely overcome.

At that moment De Launay appeared upon the terrace, followed by Major De Losme and two or three officers.

"Begin!" cried Gonchon to the governor.

The latter turned his back without replying.

Gonchon, who would perhaps have endured a threat, could not endure disdain; he quickly raised his carbine to his shoulder, and a man in the governor's suite fell to the ground.

A hundred shots, a thousand musket-shots, were fired at the same moment, as if they had only waited for this signal, and marbled with white the gray towers of the Bastille.

A silence of some seconds succeeded this discharge, as if the crowd itself had been alarmed at that which it had done.

Then a flash of fire, lost in a cloud of smoke, crowned the summit of a tower; a detonation resounded; cries of pain were heard issuing from the closely pressed crowd;

the first cannon-shot had been fired from the Bastille; the first blood had been spilled. The battle had commenced.

What the crowd experienced, which just before had been so threatening, very much resembled terror. That Bastille, defending itself by this sole act, appeared in all its formidable impregnability. The people had doubtless hoped that in those days, when so many concessions had been made to them, the surrender of the Bastille would be accomplished without the effusion of blood.

The people were mistaken. The cannon-shot which had been fired upon them gave them the measure of the Titanic work which they had undertaken.

A volley of musketry, well directed, and coming from the platform of the Bastille, followed closely on the cannon shot.

Then all was again silent for a while, a silence which was interrupted only by a few cries, a few groans, a few wails uttered here and there.

A shuddering, anxious movement could then be perceived among the crowd; it was the people who were picking up their killed and wounded.

But the people thought not of flying, or if they did think of it, they were ashamed of the feeling when they considered their great numbers.

In fact, the Boulevards, the Rue St. Antoine, the Faubourg St. Antoine, formed but one vast human sea; every wave had a head, every head, two flashing eyes, a threatening mouth.

In an instant all the windows of the neighborhood were filled with sharpshooters, even those which were out of gunshot.

Whenever a Swiss soldier or an Invalide appeared upon the terraces or in one of the embrasures, a hundred

muskets were at once aimed at him, and a shower of balls splintered the corners of the stones behind which the soldier was sheltered.

But they soon got tired of firing at insensible walls. It was against human flesh that their balls were directed. It was blood that they wished to see spout forth wherever the balls struck, and not dust.

Numerous opinions were emitted from amid the crowd.

A circle would then be formed around the speaker, and when the people thought the proposal was devoid of sense, they at once left him.

A blacksmith proposed to form a catapult upon the model of the ancient Roman machines, and with it to make a breach in the walls of the Bastille.

The firemen proposed to damp with their engines the priming of the cannon and extinguish the matches of the artillerymen, without reflecting that the most powerful of their engines could not throw water even to two-thirds the height of the walls of the Bastille.

A brewer who commanded the Faubourg St. Antoine, and whose name has since acquired a fatal celebrity, proposed to set fire to the fortress, by throwing into it a quantity of oil which had been seized the night before, and which they were to ignite with phosphorus.

Billot listened to all these mad-brained proposals one after the other. On hearing the last, he seized a hatchet from the hands of a carpenter, and advancing amid a storm of bullets, which struck down all around him numbers of men, huddled together as thickly as the ears in a field of wheat, he reached a small guard-house, near to the first drawbridge, and although the grape-shot was whizzing and cracking against the roof, he ascended it, and by his powerful and well-directed blows succeeded

in breaking the chains, and the drawbridge fell with a tremendous crash.

During the quarter of an hour which this seemingly insensate enterprise had occupied, the crowd were breathless with excitement. At every report, they expected to see the daring workman fall from the roof. The people forgot the danger to which they were exposed, and thought only of the danger which this brave man was incurring. When the bridge fell, they uttered a loud, joyful cry, and rushed into the first courtyard.

The movement was so rapid, so impetuous, so irresistible, that the garrison did not even attempt to prevent it.

Shouts of frantic joy announced this first advantage to Monsieur de Launay.

No one even observed that a man had been crushed to atoms beneath the mass of wood-work. Then the four pieces of artillery which the governor had shown to Billot were simultaneously discharged with a frightful explosion, and swept the first courtyard of the fortress.

The iron hurricane traced through the crowd a long furrow of blood. Ten men shot dead, fifteen or twenty wounded, were the consequences of this discharge.

Billot slid down from the roof of the guard-house to the ground, on reaching which he found Pitou, who had come there he knew not how. Pitou's eyes were quick, as are those of all poachers. He had seen the artillerymen preparing to put their matches to the touch-holes of their guns, and, seizing Billot by the skirts of his jacket, jerked him violently towards him, and thus they were both protected by the angle of the wall from the effects of the first discharge.

From that moment the affair became serious. The tumult was frightful, the combat mortal. Ten thousand muskets were at once fired round the Bastille, more

dangerous in their effect to the besiegers than to the besieged.

At length a cannon served by the French Guards had mixed its thunder with the rattling of the musketry.

The noise was frightful, but the crowd appeared to be more and more intoxicated by it; and this noise began to terrify even the besieged, who, calculating their own small number, felt they could never equal the noise which was then deafening them.

The officers of the Bastille felt instinctively that their soldiers were becoming disheartened. They snatched their muskets from them, and themselves fired them at the crowd.

At this moment, and amid the noise of artillery and musketry, amid the howlings of the crowd, as some of them were rushing to pick up the dead bodies of their companions to form of them a new incitement, — for their gaping wounds would cry aloud for vengeance against the besieged, — there appeared at the entrance of the first courtyard a small group of unarmed, quiet citizens. They made their way through the crowd, and advanced, ready to sacrifice their lives, protected only by a white flag, which preceded them, and which intimated that they were the bearers of a message to the governor.

It was a deputation from the Hôtel de Ville. The electors knew that hostilities had commenced, and, anxious to prevent the effusion of blood, had compelled Flesselles to send new proposals to the governor.

The deputies came, therefore, in the name of the city, to summon Monsieur de Launay to cease firing; and, in order to guarantee at once the lives of the citizens, his own, and those of the garrison, to propose that he should receive one hundred men of the civic guard into the interior of the fortress.

This was the rumor which was spread as the deputies advanced. The people, terrified at the enterprise they had undertaken, the people, who saw the dead bodies of their companions carried out in litters, were quite ready to support this proposal. Let De Launay accept a half defeat, and satisfy himself with half a victory.

At their approach the fire of the second courtyard ceased. A sign was made to them that they might approach; and they accordingly advanced, slipping on the ensanguined pavement, striding over carcasses, and holding out their hands to the wounded.

Under this protection the people form themselves into groups. The dead bodies and the wounded are carried out of the fortress; the blood alone remains, marbling with large purple spots the pavement of the courtyard.

The fire from the fortress had ceased. Billot was leaving it, in order to stop that of the besiegers. At the door he meets Gonchon, — Gonchon, altogether unarmed, exposing himself like one inspired, calm, as if he were invulnerable.

"Well," inquired he of Billot, "what has become of the deputation?"

"It has gone into the fortress," replied Billot; "order our men to cease firing."

"It is useless," said Gonchon, "they will not consent."

"That matters not," rejoined Billot; "it is our duty to make the attempt. Let us respect the usages of war, since we have become soldiers."

"Be it so," said Gonchon.

Then, addressing himself to two men in the crowd, who appeared to command under him the whole of the assembled mass, —

"Go, Elie, — go, Hullin," said he, "and see that not a musket-shot be fired."

The two aides-de-camp rushed out, and, obeying the orders of their chief, pressed through the crowded masses, and soon the firing of the musketry diminished, and then ceased altogether.

A momentary quiet was established. Advantage was taken of it to attend to the wounded, the number of whom had already amounted to thirty-five or forty.

During this respite the prison clock struck two. The attack had begun at noon; the combat had already lasted two hours.

Billot had returned to his post, and it was Gonchon in his turn who followed him.

His eyes were turned anxiously towards the gate. His impatience was visible.

"What is the matter with you?" inquired Billot.

"The matter is," replied Gonchon, "that if the Bastille is not taken within two hours from this time all is lost."

"And why so?"

"Because the court will be informed of the work we are about, and will despatch the Swiss to us, under Besenval, and Lambesq's dragoons; so that we shall then be caught between three fires."

Billot was compelled to acknowledge that there was some truth in what Gonchon was saying.

At length the deputies reappeared. From their countenances it was evident they had obtained no concession.

"Well," cried Gonchon, whose eyes sparkled with delight, "what did I tell you? Things that are predicted must happen. The accursed fortress is condemned!"

Then, without waiting even to put a question to the deputation, he sprang out of the first courtyard, crying, —

"To arms, my children! — to arms! The commandant refuses."

And, in fact, the governor had scarcely read the letter from Flesselles, when his countenance brightened; and instead of acceding to the proposals which had been made to him, he exclaimed, —

"Gentlemen Parisians, you have insisted on a battle: and now it is too late to speak of treating."

The bearers of the flag of truce persisted in urging their suit. They represented to De Launay all the evils which his defending the castle might entail; but he would not listen to them, and he concluded by saying to the deputation what he had said two hours before to Billot, —

"Leave the fortress, or I will have you shot."

And the bearers of the flag of truce were compelled to depart.

On this occasion it was De Launay who resumed the offensive. He appeared burning with impatience.

Before the deputies had reached the gate of the court-yard, the Musette of Marshal Saxe played a tune, and three persons fell, — one of them dead, two others wounded.

One of the wounded was a French Guard; the other, one of the deputies.

On seeing a man whose office should have rendered him sacred, carried forth covered with blood, the crowd became more enraged than ever.

Gonchon's two aides-de-camp had returned to their places at his side; but each of them had had time to go home to change his dress.

It is true that one of them lived near the arsenal, the other in the Rue de Charonne.

Hullin, who had in the first place been a watchmaker at Geneva, then *chasseur* to the Marquis de Conflans, returned in his brilliant livery, which gave him the appearance of a Hungarian officer.

Elie, formerly an officer in the Queen's Regiment, had put on his uniform, which inspired the peoople with greater confidence, as it made them believe that the army was for them and with them.

The firing recommenced with greater fury than ever; and at that moment the major of the Bastille, Monsieur de Losme, approached the governor.

He was a brave and faithful soldier; but there were some remains of the citizen in him, and he saw with much regret what had taken place, and above all, what was likely to ensue.

"Sir," said he to De Launay, "we have no provisions, and of this you must be aware."

"I know it," replied the governor.

"You also know that we have no orders."

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur de Losme; my orders are to keep the gates of the Bastille closed, and it is for that purpose that the keys are intrusted to me."

"Sir, the keys are used as well to open the gates as to close them. Beware that you do not cause the massacre of the whole of the garrison, without saving the castle, — two triumphs on the same day. Look at those men whom we are killing; they appear to spring up from beneath the pavement. This morning there were at first only five hundred of them; three hours ago there were ten thousand. They are more than sixty thousand now; to-morrow they will be a hundred thousand. When our guns shall be silenced, and it must at last end in that, they will be strong enough to take the Bastille with their hands."

"You speak not like a soldier, Monsieur de Losme."

"I speak like a Frenchman, sir. I say that his Majesty, not having given us any order, — I say that the Provost of the Merchants, having made us a proposal

which was a very acceptable one, which was that of admitting a hundred men of the civil guard into the castle, you might, to avoid the evils which I foresee, accede to the proposal of Monsieur de Flesselles."

"In your opinion, then, Monsieur de Losme, the power which represents the city of Paris is a power which we ought to obey?"

"In the absence of the direct authority of his Majesty, yes, sir, it is my opinion."

"Well, then," said De Launay, leading the major into a corner of the courtyard, "read that, Monsieur de Losme."

And he handed him a small square piece of paper.

The major read it.

Hold firm! I amuse the Parisians with cockades and promises. Before the close of the day, Monsieur de Besenval will send you a reinforcement.

DE FLESSELLES.

"How, then, did this note reach you, sir?" inquired the major.

"In the letter which the gentlemen of the deputation brought me. They thought they were delivering to me a request to surrender the Bastille, while they were delivering to me an order to defend it."

The major bowed his head.

"Go to your post, Monsieur de Losme, and do not leave it until I send for you."

Monsieur de Losme obeyed.

De Launay very quietly refolded the letter, and put it into his pocket. He then returned to his artillerymen and recommended them to fire low, and to take good aim.

The artillerymen obeyed, as Monsieur de Losme had obeyed.

But the fate of the fortress was predestined. No human power could delay its fulfilment.

To every cannon-shot the people replied by shouting, — "We will have the Bastille!"

And while mouths were shouting, arms were vigorously acting.

Among the voices which shouted most energetically, among the arms which were acting the most efficaciously, were the voices and arms of Pitou and Billot.

Only each of them proceeded according to their different natures.

Billot, courageous and confident, had like a bull-dog, from the first rushed forward, defying balls and grape-shot.

Pitou, prudent and circumspect, like the fox, Pitou, endowed to a supreme degree with the instinct of self-preservation, made use of all his faculties to watch the danger and avoid it.

His eyes knew the embrasures which sent forth the most deadly fire; they distinguished the almost imperceptible movement of the brazen mouth which was about to be fired. He had learned to divine the precise moment when the battery gun was about to be fired across the drawbridge.

Then his eyes having performed their office, it was the turn of his limbs to work for their proprietor.

His shoulders were drawn in, his chest contracted, his whole body did not seem to offer a larger surface than a plank when seen edgeways.

In these movements of Pitou, of the chubby Pitou, — for Pitou was thin only in the legs, — there remained only a geometrical line, which had neither breadth nor thickness.

He had selected for his post a corner in the passage

from the first drawbridge to the second, a sort of vertical parapet formed by jutting stones. His head was protected by one of these stones, his body by another, his knees by a third, and Pitou congratulated himself that nature and the art of fortification were thus so agreeably combined that a stone was given to him to protect each of the parts where a wound might have proved mortal.

From his corner, in which he was covered like a hare in its form, he now and then fired a shot, but merely for form's sake, for he had before him only walls and pieces of timber; but this evidently pleased Billot, who from time to time called out, —

"Fire, you lazy fellow, fire!"

And he, in his turn, would cry to Billot, but in order to calm his exuberant ardor instead of exciting it, —

"Don't expose yourself so much, Father Billot."

Or else: —

"Take care of yourself, Monsieur Billot, there is a cannon pointed at you; there, I have just heard them cocking the Musette."

And scarcely had Pitou uttered these words, so full of foresight, than the cannon belched forth its grape-shot, sweeping the passage between the bridges.

Notwithstanding all these injunctions, Billot performed prodigies of strength and activity, but of perfect inutility. Not being able to shed his blood, — and assuredly it was not his fault, — he shed large and abundant drops of perspiration.

Ten times did Pitou seize him by the skirts of his jacket, and pulled him to the ground in spite of his great strength, at the moment when a discharge would have assuredly swept him off.

But each time Billot jumped up again, not only like Antæus with renewed strength, but with some new idea.

At one time this idea consisted in venturing upon the platform of the bridge to hack at the beams which the chains upheld, as he had before done.

Then Pitou uttered fearful howls to restrain the farmer, and finding that his howling was of no avail, he would rush from his place of safety to him, crying, —

"Monsieur Billot, my dear Monsieur Billot, why, Madame Billot will be a widow if you go on in this way."

And the Swiss soldiers could be seen, aiming their muskets obliquely through the embrasure of the Musette, to hit the audacious man who was endeavoring to reduce their bridge to chips.

At another time he called upon his men to bring up a cannon to destroy the head-work of the bridge; but then the Musette was fired, the gunners retreated, and Billot remained alone to load the gun and fire it, which again brought out Pitou from his retreat.

"Monsieur Billot," cried he, "Monsieur Billot, in the name of Mademoiselle Catherine I conjure you, reflect a moment. Should you get yourself killed, Mademoiselle Catherine will be an orphan."

And Billot yielded to this reason, which appeared to have much more influence on his mind than the first.

At length the fruitful imagination of the farmer gave birth to another idea.

He ran towards the square, crying, —

"A cart! Bring a cart here!"

Pitou considered that that which was good would be rendered excellent by being doubled. He followed Billot, vociferating, —

"Two carts! two carts!"

And immediately ten carts were brought.

"Some straw and some dry hay!" cried Billot.

"Some straw and some dry hay!" reiterated Pitou.

And almost instantly two hundred men came forward, each carrying a truss of straw or hay.

They were obliged to call out that they had ten times more than they wanted. In an hour there was a heap of forage which would have equalled the height of the Bastille.

Billot placed himself between the shafts of a cart loaded with straw, and instead of dragging it, he pushed it on before him.

Pitou did the same, without knowing what it could be for, but thinking that he could not do better than to imitate the farmer.

Elie and Hullin divined Billot's intention. They each seized a cart and pushed it before them into the court-yard.

They had scarcely entered, when they were assailed by a discharge of grape-shot. They heard the balls strike with a whizzing sound among the straw or hay, or against the wood-work of the carts; but none of the assailants received a wound.

As soon as this discharge was over, two or three hundred men with muskets rushed on behind those who were pushing forward the carts, and, sheltered by those moving ramparts, they lodged themselves beneath the apron of the bridge itself.

There Billot drew from his pocket a flint, a steel, and some tinder, formed a match by rubbing gunpowder on paper, and set fire to it.

The powder ignited the paper, and the paper ignited the straw and hay.

Each formed a torch for himself, and the four carts were simultaneously set fire to.

The flames reached the apron, caught the timbers with

their sharp teeth, and ran along the wood-work of the bridge.

A shout of joy then uttered from the courtyard was taken up by the crowd in the Square St. Antoine, and reiterated with deafening clamors. They saw the smoke rising above the walls, and they hence imagined that something fatal to the besieged was occurring.

In fact the red-hot chains detached themselves from the beams. The bridge fell half broken and half destroyed by fire, smoking and cracking. The firemen rushed forward with their engines, and soon extinguished the flames upon the bridge.

The governor ordered the Invalides to fire upon the people, but they refused.

The Swiss alone obeyed; but they were not artillerymen; they were therefore obliged to abandon the guns.

The French Guards, on the contrary, seeing that the artillery was silenced, brought up their gun and planted it before the gate; their third shot shivered it to pieces.

The governor had gone up to the platform of the castle to see whether the promised reinforcement was approaching, when he found himself suddenly enveloped in smoke. It was then that he precipitately descended and ordered the artillerymen to fire.

The refusal of the Invalides exasperated him. The breaking down of the gate made him at once comprehend that all was lost.

Monsieur de Launay knew that he was hated. He felt that there was no salvation for him. During the whole time that the combat had lasted, he had matured the idea of burying himself beneath the ruins of the Bastille.

At the moment he felt assured that all further defence was hopeless, he snatched a match from the hand of one

of the artillerymen, and sprang towards the cellar which served as a powder-magazine.

"The powder! the powder!" cried twenty terrified voices; "the powder! the powder!"

They saw the burning match in the governor's hand. They guessed his purpose. Two soldiers rush forward and cross their bayonets before his breast just at the moment when he had opened the door.

"You may kill me," said De Launay, "but you cannot kill me quick enough to prevent me letting this match fall among the powder-casks; and then besieged and besiegers will all be blown to atoms."

The two soldiers stopped. Their bayonets remained crossed before De Launay's breast, but De Launay was still their commander, for all felt that he had their lives in his power. His action had nailed every one to the spot on which he stood. The assailants perceived that something extraordinary was happening. They looked anxiously into the courtyard, and saw the governor threatened and threatening in his turn.

"Hear me," cried De Launay to the besiegers; "as surely as I hold this match in my hand, with which I could exterminate you all, should any one of you make a single step to enter this courtyard, so surely will I set fire to the powder."

Those who heard these words imagined that they already felt the ground tremble beneath their feet.

"What do you wish; what do you ask?" cried several voices with an accent of terror.

"I wish a capitulation," replied De Launay, "an honorable capitulation."

The assailants pay but little attention to what the governor said; they cannot credit such an act of despair; they wish to enter the courtyard. Billot is at

their head. Suddenly Billot trembles and turns pale; he just remembers Dr. Gilbert.

As long as Billot had thought only of himself, it was a matter of little importance to him whether the Bastille was blown up, and he blown up with it; but Gilbert's life must be saved at any cost.

"Stop!" exclaimed Billot, throwing himself before Elie and Hullin; "stop, in the name of the prisoners!"

And these men who feared not to encounter death themselves retreated, pale and trembling, in their turn.

"What do you demand?" they cried, renewing the question they had previously put to the governor by his own men.

"I demand that you should all withdraw," replied De Launay, fiercely. "I will not accept any proposal, so long as there remains a single stranger in the Bastille."

"But," said Billot, "will you not take advantage of our absence to place yourself again in a state of defence?"

"If the capitulation is refused, you shall find everything in the state it now is, — you at that gate, I where I am now standing."

"You pledge your word for that?"

"On the honor of a gentleman."

Some of them shook their heads.

"On the honor of a gentleman," reiterated De Launay. "Is there any one here who can still doubt, when a gentleman has pledged his honor?"

"No, no, no!" repeated five hundred voices.

"Let paper, pen, and ink be brought here to me."

The orders of the governor were instantly obeyed.

"'T is well," said De Launay.

Then, turning towards the assailants: —

"And now you must retire."

Billot, Hullin, and Elie set the example, and were the first to withdraw.

All the others followed them.

De Launay placed the match by his side, and began writing the capitulation on his knee.

The Invalides and the Swiss soldiers who felt that their existence depended on the result, gazed at him, while he was writing, with a sort of respectful terror.

De Launay looked round before allowing his pen to touch the paper. He saw that the courtyard was free of all intruders.

In an instant the people outside were informed of all that had happened within the fortress.

As Monsieur de Losme had said, the population seemed to spring up from beneath the pavement. One hundred thousand men surrounded the Bastille.

They were no longer merely laborers and artisans, but citizens of every class had joined them. They were not merely men in the prime of life, but children and old men had rushed forward to the fight.

And all of them had arms of some description, all of them shouted vehemently.

Here and there among the groups was to be seen a woman in despair, with hair dishevelled, wringing her hands, and uttering maledictions against the granite giant.

She is some mother whose son the Bastille has just annihilated, some daughter whose father the Bastille has just levelled with the ground, some wife whose husband the Bastille has just exterminated.

But during some moments no sounds had issued from the Bastille, no flames, no smoke. The Bastille had become as silent as the tomb.

It would have been useless to endeavor to count the

spots made by the balls which had marbled its surface. Every one had wished to fire a ball at the stone monster, the visible symbol of tyranny.

Therefore, when it was rumored in the crowd that the Bastille was about to capitulate, that its governor had promised to surrender, they could scarcely credit the report.

Amid this general doubt, as they did not yet dare to congratulate themselves, as they were silently awaiting the result, they saw a letter pushed forth through a loop-hole on the point of a sword. Only between this letter and the besiegers there was the ditch of the Bastille, wide, deep, and full of water.

Billot calls for a plank. Three are brought and are pushed across the ditch, but, being too short, did not reach the opposite side. A fourth is brought, which lodges on either side of the ditch.

Billot had them lashed together as he best could, and then ventured unhesitatingly upon the trembling bridge.

The whole crowd remained breathlessly silent; all eyes were fixed upon the man who appears suspended above the ditch, whose stagnant waters resemble those of the river Cocytus.

Pitou tremblingly seated himself on the edge of the slope, and hid his head between his knees.

His heart failed him, and he wept.

When Billot had got about two thirds of the way over the plank, it twisted beneath his feet. Billot extends his arms, falls, and disappears in the ditch.

Pitou utters a cry of horror and throws himself into the ditch, like a Newfoundland dog anxious to save his master.

A man then approached the plank from which Billot had just before been precipitated.

Without hesitation he walked across the temporary bridge. This man is Stanislaus Maillard, the usher of the Châtelet.

When he had reached the spot below which Pitou and Billot were struggling in the muddy ditch, he for a moment cast a glance upon them, and seeing that there was no doubt they would regain the shore in safety, he continued to walk on.

Half a minute afterwards he had reached the opposite side of the ditch, and had taken the letter which was held out to him on the point of a sword.

Then, with the same tranquillity, the same firmness of step, he recrossed the ditch.

But at the moment when the crowd were pressing round him to hear the letter read, a storm of musket-balls rained down upon them from the battlements, and a frightful detonation was heard.

One only cry, but one of those cries which announce the vengeance of a whole people, issues from every mouth.

"Trust, then, in tyrants!" exclaimed Gonchon.

And then, without thinking any more of the capitulation, without thinking any more of the powder-magazine, without thinking of themselves or of the prisoners, without desiring, without demanding anything but vengeance, the people rushed into the courtyard, no longer by hundreds of men, but by thousands.

That which prevents the crowd from entering is no longer the musketry, but the gates, which are too narrow to admit them.

On hearing the detonation we have spoken of, the two soldiers who were still watching Monsieur de Launay threw themselves upon him; a third seized the match and extinguished it under his foot.

De Launay drew the sword which was concealed in his cane, and would have turned it against his own breast, but the soldiers plucked it from him and snapped it in two.

He then felt that all he could do was to abide the result; he therefore tranquilly awaited it.

The people rush forward; the garrison open their arms to them, and the Bastille is taken by assault, — by main force, without a capitulation.

The reason for this was that for more than a hundred years the royal fortress had not merely imprisoned inert matter within its walls, it had imprisoned thought also. Thought had thrown down the walls of the Bastille, and the people entered by the breach.

As to the discharge of musketry, which had taken place amid the general silence, during the suspension of hostilities, — as to this unforeseen aggression, as impolitic as it was murderous, it was never known who had ordered it, who had excited it, how it was accomplished.

There are moments when the destiny of a whole nation is being weighed in the scales of Fate. One of them weighs down the other. Every one already thinks he has attained the proposed end. Suddenly some invisible hand lets fall into the other scale the blade of a poniard or a pistol ball.

Then all changes, and one only cry is heard: "Woe to the vanquished!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

DOCTOR GILBERT.

WHILE the people were thus rushing into the fortress, howling at once with joy and rage, two men were struggling in the muddy waters of the ditch.

These men were Pitou and Billot.

Pitou was supporting Billot. No shot had struck him. He had not been wounded in any way; but his fall had somewhat confused the worthy farmer.

Ropes were thrown to them; poles were held out to them.

Pitou caught hold of a pole, Billot a rope.

Five minutes afterwards they were carried in triumph by the people, and eagerly embraced, notwithstanding their muddy state.

One man gives Billot a glass of brandy, another stuffs Pitou's mouth full of sausages, and gives him wine to wash them down.

A third rubs them down with straw, and wishes to place them in the sun to dry their clothes.

Suddenly an idea, or rather a recollection, shot through the mind of Billot. He tears himself away from their kind cares and rushes into the Bastille.

"To the prisoners!" cried he, "to the prisoners!"

"Yes, to the prisoners!" cried Pitou, in his turn, bounding after the farmer.

The crowd, which until then had thought only of the executioners, shuddered when thinking of their victims.

They with one shout repeated: "Yes, yes, yes, — to the prisoners!"

And a new flood of assailants rush through the barriers, seeming to widen the sides of the fortress by their numbers, and bearing liberty with them to the captives.

A dreadful spectacle then offered itself to the eyes of Billot and Pitou. The excited, enraged, maddened throng had precipitated themselves into the courtyard. The first soldier they had met was at once hacked to pieces.

Gonchon had quietly looked on. Doubtless he had thought that the anger of the people, like the currents of great rivers, does more harm when any impediment is thrown in its way to arrest it than if allowed tranquilly to flow on.

Elie and Hullin, on the contrary, had thrown themselves before the infuriated sacrificers. They prayed, they supplicated, uttering the sublime lie that they had promised life and safety to the whole garrison.

The arrival of Billot and Pitou was a reinforcement to them.

Billot, whom they were avenging, Billot was living, Billot was not even wounded. The plank had turned under his feet, and that was all; he had taken a mud-bath, and nothing more.

It was, above all, against the Swiss that the people were particularly enraged; but the Swiss were nowhere to be found. They had had time to put on gray frocks, and they were taken for either servants or for prisoners.

The mob hurled large stones at the dial of the clock, and destroyed the figures of the two captives which supported it. They rushed to the ramparts to mutilate the cannon which had vomited forth death upon them. They

even wreaked their vengeance on the stone walls, tearing their hands in endeavoring to displace them. When the first of the conquerors were seen upon the platform, all those who had remained without the fortress, that is to say, a hundred thousand men, shouted with clamorous joy, —

"The Bastille is taken!"

This cry resounded through Paris, and spread itself over the whole of France, as if borne with the rapidity of eagle's wings.

On hearing this cry all hearts were softened, all eyes shed tears, all arms were extended. There were no longer any contending parties; there were no longer any inimical castes. All Parisians felt that they were brothers, all men felt that they were free.

A million of men pressed one another in a mutual embrace.

Billot and Pitou had entered the Bastille, following some and followed by others; what they wished for was, not to claim their share in the triumph; it was the liberty of the prisoners.

When crossing the courtyard of the government house, they passed near a man in a gray coat, who was standing calmly, his hand resting on a gold-headed cane.

This man was the governor. He was quietly waiting either that his friends should come to save him, or that his enemies should come to strike him down.

Billot, on perceiving him, recognized him, uttered a slight exclamation of surprise, and went straight to him.

De Launay also recognized Billot. He crossed his arms and waited, looking at the farmer with an expression that implied, —

"Let us see: is it you that will give me the first blow?"

Billot at once divined the meaning of his look, and stopped.

"If I speak to him," said he to himself, "I shall cause him to be recognized, and should he be recognized, his death is certain."

And yet, how was he to find Doctor Gilbert amid this chaotic confusion? How could he drag from the Bastille the secret which its walls enclosed?

All this hesitation, these heroic scruples, were understood by De Launay.

"What is it that you wish?" asked De Launay, in an undertone.

"Nothing," replied Billot, pointing with his finger to the gate, indicating to him that escape was yet possible; "nothing. I shall be able readily to find Doctor Gilbert."

"Third Bertaudière," replied De Launay, in a gentle and almost affectionate tone of voice.

But he stirred not from the place on which he stood.

Suddenly a voice from behind Billot pronounced these words: —

"Ah! there is the governor."

This voice was so calm, so hollow, that it appeared not to be of this world, and yet each word it had uttered was a sharp poniard turned against the breast of De Launay.

He who had spoken was Gonchon.

These words, like the first sounds of an alarm-bell, excited a fearful commotion; all these men, drunk with revengeful feelings, started on hearing them; they looked around with flaming eyes, perceived De Launay, and at once darted upon and seized him.

"Save him," said Billot, as he passed near Elie and Hullin, "or they will murder him."

"Assist us to do so," said the two men.

"I am obliged to remain here," replied Billot, "for I also have some one to save."

In an instant De Launay had been surrounded by a thousand men, who dragged him along, lifted him up, and were bearing him away.

Elie and Hullin bounded after him, crying, —

"Stop! stop! we promised him that his life should be saved."

This was not true; but the thought of uttering this magnanimous falsehood had risen to the mind of these two generous men at the same moment.

In a second, De Launay, followed by Elie and Hullin, disappeared under the vaulted passage which led from the Bastille, amidst loud voices of, "To the Hôtel de Ville! To the Hôtel de Ville!"

It was a singular spectacle to see this mournful and silent monument, which for four centuries had been tenanted only by prisoners, their jailers, their guards, and a gloomy governor, now become the prey of the people, who ran through the courtyards, ascended and descended the staircases, buzzing like a swarm of flies, and filling this granite hive with noise and movement.

De Launay, a living prey, was to some of the victors of as great value as the dead prey, the captured Bastille.

Billot for a moment or two followed De Launay with his eyes, who was carried rather than led, and appeared to soar above the crowd.

But, as we have said, he soon disappeared. Billot heaved a sigh, looked around him, perceived Pitou, and rushed towards a tower, crying, —

"Third Bertaudière."

A trembling jailer met him on his way.

"Third Bertaudière," said Billot.

"This way, sir," replied the jailer; "but I have not the keys."

"Where are they?"

"They took them from me."

"Citizen, lend me your hatchet," said Billot, to one of the men from the Faubourg.

"I give it to you," replied the latter; "I do not want it any more, since the Bastille is taken."

Billot snatched the hatchet, and ran up a staircase, conducted by the jailer.

The jailer stopped before a door.

"Third Bertaudière?" asked Billot.

"Yes, this is it."

"The prisoner confined in this room is Doctor Gilbert, is it not?"

"I do not know."

"He was brought here only five or six days ago?"

"I do not know."

"Well, then," said Billot, "I shall soon know it."

And he began chopping at the door with his hatchet.

The door was of oak, but it soon flew into splinters beneath the vigorous blows of the robust farmer.

In a few moments he had cut a hole through it and could look into the room.

Billot placed his eye at the opening. Through it he could see the interior of the cell.

In the line of sunshine which penetrated into the dungeon through its grated window a man was standing, his head thrown rather backwards, holding in his hand one of the posts of his bedstead, and in an attitude of defence.

This man had evidently prepared himself to knock down the first person who should enter his room.

Notwithstanding his long beard, notwithstanding his pallid countenance, notwithstanding his short-cut hair, Billot recognized him. It was Doctor Gilbert.

"Doctor! doctor!" cried Billot to him, "is it you?"

"Who is it that is calling me?" inquired the prisoner.

"It is I — I, Billot, your friend."

"You, Billot?"

"Yes! yes! — he! he! — we! we!" cried the voices of twenty men, who had run into the passage on hearing the vigorous blows struck by Billot.

"But who are you?"

"We? — why, the conquerors of the Bastille. The Bastille is taken; you are free."

"The Bastille is taken; I am free!" exclaimed the doctor.

And passing both his hands through the opening, he shook the door so violently that the hinges and the lock appeared nearly yielding to his powerful pressure, and part of a panel, already loosened by Billot, broke off, and remained in the prisoner's hands.

"Wait, wait!" said Billot, who was afraid that a second effort of so violent a nature would exhaust his strength, which had been overtaxed; "wait."

And he redoubled his blows.

And indeed, through the opening, which was every moment becoming wider, he could see the prisoner, who had seated himself upon his bench, pale as a spectre, and incapable of raising the bedpost which was lying near him, and who but a few moments before, another Samson, seemed strong enough to shake down the walls of the Bastille.

"Billot! Billot!" murmured he.

"Yes, yes! and I also, my good doctor — I, Pitou — you must remember poor Pitou, whom you placed at

board with his aunt Angélique, — Pitou has come to liberate you."

"But I can get through that hole," cried the doctor.

"No! no!" cried all the voices; "wait."

All those present uniting their strength in one simultaneous effort, some slipping a crowbar between the door and the framework, others using a lever between the lock and doorpost, and the remainder pushing with all the might of their shoulders or their hands, the oak gave a last cracking sound, the wall gave way, and they all of them stumbled, one over the other, into the room.

In a moment Gilbert found himself in the arms of Pitou and Billot.

Gilbert, the little country lad of the Château de Taverney, Gilbert, whom we left bathed in his blood in a cavern of the Azores, was now a man from thirty-four to thirty-five years old, of pale complexion, though he was not sickly, with black hair, eyes penetrating and fixed; never did his gaze lose itself in vacuity; never did it wander; when it was not fixed on some exterior object worthy to attract, it was fixed on his own thought, and became only more profound and more gloomy; his nose was straight, being attached to his forehead in a direct line; it rose above a lip of rather scornful expression, which, in the slight space between it and the nether lip, allowed one to perceive the dazzling enamel of his teeth. In ordinary times his dress was simple and grave, like that of a Quaker; but this simplicity was closely allied to elegance, from its extreme neatness. His height was somewhat above the medium stature, and he was well formed; as to his strength, we have just seen the feats it could perform when in a state of over-excitement, whether caused by anger or enthusiastic feeling.

Although in prison for five or six days, the doctor had

paid the same attention to his person; his beard, which had grown some few lines, caused the paleness of his complexion to contrast favorably with its darkness, and indicated only a negligence which certainly was not the prisoner's, but his jailer's, who had refused to give him a razor, or to allow him to be shaved.

When he had pressed Billot and Pitou in his arms, he turned towards the crowd who had filled his dungeon. Then, as if a moment had sufficed to restore all his self-possession: —

"The day which I had foreseen has then arrived," said he. "Thanks to you, my friends, — thanks to the eternal genius which watches over the liberty of nations!"

And he held out both his hands to the men who had assisted Billot to break down the door, and who, recognizing in him, from the dignity of his demeanor and his proud look, a man of superior genius, hardly dared to touch them.

On leaving the dungeon, he walked before all these men, leaning on Billot's shoulder, and followed by Pitou and his liberators.

The first moment had been devoted by Gilbert to friendship and to gratitude, the second had re-established the distance which existed between the learned doctor and the ignorant farmer, the warm-hearted Pitou, and the whole throng which had liberated him.

When he reached the door at the foot of the staircase Gilbert stopped, on perceiving the broad sunshine which beamed full upon him. He paused, crossing his arms over his breast and raising his eyes to heaven. "Hail to thee, lovely Liberty!" he exclaimed. "I saw thee spring to life in another world, and we are old friends. Hail to thee, lovely Liberty!"

And the smile of the doctor clearly said that the cries

he then heard of a whole people, inebriated with independence, were no new thing to him.

Then, meditating for a few seconds: —

"Billot," said he, "the people, then, have vanquished despotism?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you came here to fight?"

"I came to liberate you."

"You knew, then, of my arrest?"

"Your son informed me of it this morning."

"Poor Sebastien! Have you seen him?"

"I have seen him."

"And he remained quietly at his school?"

"I left him struggling with four of the attendants of the infirmary."

"Is he ill — has he been delirious?"

"He wanted to come with us to fight."

"Ah!" ejaculated the doctor, and a smile of triumph passed over his features. His son had proved himself to be what he had hoped.

"And what did you say to him?" inquired the doctor.

"I said, since Doctor Gilbert is in the Bastille, let us take the Bastille; and now the Bastille is taken. But that is not all."

"What is there, then, besides?" asked the doctor.

"The casket has been stolen."

"The casket which I had confided to your care?"

"Yes."

"Stolen! and by whom?"

"By some men dressed in black, who came into my house under the pretext of seizing your pamphlets: they arrested me, locked me up in a room; they searched the house all over, found the casket, and carried it off."

"When did this happen?"

"Yesterday."

"Ho! ho! there is an evident connection between my arrest and this robbery. The person who caused my arrest, at the same time had the casket stolen. Let me but know the persons who originated my arrest, and I shall know who it was contrived the robbery. Where are the archives of the fortress?" continued the doctor, turning to the jailer.

"In the courtyard of the government house, sir," replied the jailer.

"Then to the archives, my friends — to the archives!" cried the doctor.

"Sir," said the jailer, stopping him, "let me go with you, or speak a word in my favor to these worthy people, that no harm may happen to me."

"Be it so," said Gilbert.

Then, addressing the crowd who surrounded him, and gazed at him with curiosity mingled with respect: —

"My friends," said he, "I recommend this worthy man to you; he only fulfilled his office in opening and shutting the prison doors; but he was kind towards the prisoners. Let no injury happen to him."

"No, no!" cried the crowd with one accord, "no! — he need not fear; no harm shall be done to him. Let him come with us."

"I thank you, sir," said the jailer to the doctor; "but if you wish for anything in the archives, I advise you to move quickly, for I believe they are burning the papers."

"Oh, then there is not an instant to be lost," cried Gilbert; "to the archives!"

And he hastened towards the courtyard of the government house, followed by the crowd, at the head of which were still Billot and Pitou.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TRIANGLE.

On reaching the door of the office in which the archives were kept, Gilbert perceived that a large heap of old papers was being burnt.

Unhappily, it is a general consequence that after having obtained a victory, the first desire the people have to gratify is that of destruction.

The archives of the Bastille had been invaded.

This office was a vast hall, heaped up with registry books and plans; the documents relating to all the prisoners who had been confined in the Bastille during the last hundred years were confusedly enclosed in it.

The people tore these papers to pieces with senseless rage; it doubtless appeared to them that, by destroying these registrations of imprisonment, they were legally bestowing freedom on the prisoners.

Gilbert went into the hall seconded by Pitou; he began to examine the register books, which were still standing on the shelves; that of the running year was not to be found.

The doctor, a man who was always so cool and calm, turned pale, and stamped with impatience.

At that moment Pitou caught sight of one of those heroic urchins who are always to be found in popular triumphs, who was carrying off on his head, and running with it towards the fire, a volume similar in shape and binding to that which Dr. Gilbert had been examining.

He ran after him, and, with his long legs, speedily overtook him.

It was the register of the year 1789.

The negotiation did not occupy much time. Pitou was considered as one of the leaders of the conquerors, and explained to the boy that a prisoner had occasion to use that register, and the urchin yielded up his prey to him, consoling himself with the observation, —

"It is all the same to me; I can burn another."

Pitou opened the book, turned over the leaves, hunted through it, and on the last page found the words: —

"This day, the 9th July, 1789, came in the Sieur G., a philosopher and political writer, a very dangerous person; to be kept in close and secret confinement."

He carried the book to the doctor.

"Here, Monsieur Gilbert," said he to him, "is not this what you are seeking for?"

"Oh!" cried the doctor, joyfully, and seizing hold of the book, "yes, that is it."

And he read the words we have given above.

"And now," said he, "let us see from whom the order emanated."

And he examined the margin.

"Necker!" he exclaimed; "the order for my arrest signed by Necker, my friend Necker! Oh, most assuredly there must have been some foul plot!"

"Necker is your friend?" cried the crowd with respect; for it will be remembered that this name had great influence with the people.

"Yes, yes, my friends," said the doctor; "I am convinced that Monsieur Necker did not know that I was in prison. But I will at once go to him."

"Go to him, — and where?" inquired Billot.

"To Versailles, to be sure."

"Monsieur Necker is not at Versailles; Monsieur Necker is exiled."

"And where?"

"At Brussels."

"But his daughter?"

"Ah! I know nothing of her," replied Billot.

"His daughter is at his country-house, at St. Ouen," said a voice from the crowd.

"I am obliged to you," replied Gilbert, not knowing even to whom his thanks were addressed.

Then, turning towards those who were occupied in burning the papers: —

"My friends," he said, "in the name of history, which in these archives would find matter for the condemnation of tyrants, let me conjure you not to pursue this work of destruction; demolish the Bastille, stone by stone, that not a vestige, not a trace of it may remain, but respect the papers, respect the registers; the enlightenment of the future is contained in them."

The crowd had scarcely heard these words, than, with its usual admirable intelligence, it duly weighed this reasoning.

"The doctor is right," cried a hundred voices; "no more devastation of these papers. Let us remove all these papers to the Hôtel de Ville."

A fireman who, with a number of his companions, had dragged an engine into the courtyard, on hearing the report that the governor was about to blow up the fortress, directed the pipe of his hose upon the burning pile, which, like to that of Alexandria, was about to destroy the archives of a world; in a few minutes it was extinguished.

"And at whose request were you arrested?" said Billot to Gilbert.

"Ah! that is precisely what I am endeavoring to discover and cannot ascertain, — the name is left in blank."

Then, after a moment's reflection: —

"But I will find it out," said he.

And tearing out the leaf on which the entry was made regarding him, he folded it up, and put it into his pocket. Then, addressing himself to Billot and Pitou: —

"My friends," said he, "let us leave this place; we have nothing further to do here."

"Well, let us go," replied Billot; "only it is a thing more easily said than done."

And in fact the crowd, urged into the interior courtyards by curiosity, were so closely packed that egress was almost impossible. And, to add to the difficulty, the other liberated prisoners were standing close to the principal gate.

Eight prisoners, including Gilbert, had been liberated that morning.

Their names were: Jean Bechade, Bernard Laroche, Jean Lacaurège, Antoine Pujade, De White, Le Comte de Solage, and Tavernier.

The first four inspired but little interest. They were accused of having forged a bill of exchange, without any proof whatsoever being brought against them, and which led to the supposition that the charge against them was false; they had been only two years in the Bastille.

The Count de Solage was a man about thirty years of age, of joyous and expansive temperament; he embraced his liberators, congratulated them upon their victory, which he loudly extolled, and related to them the story of his captivity. He had been arrested in 1782, and imprisoned at Vincennes, his father having obtained a

lettre de cachet against him, and was removed from that castle to the Bastille, where he had remained five years, without ever having seen a judge, or having been examined even once; his father had been dead two years, and no one had ever thought of him. If the Bastille had not been taken, it is probable that no one would have ever remembered that he was there.

De White was a man advanced in years, somewhere about sixty; he uttered strangely incoherent words, and with a foreign accent. To the questions which poured in upon him from all sides, he replied that he did not know how long he had been incarcerated, or what had been the cause of his arrest. He remembered that he was the cousin of Monsieur de Sartines, and that was all. One of the turnkeys, whose name was Guyon, said that he had seen Monsieur de Sartines, on one occasion, go into De White's cell, where he made him sign a power of attorney. But the prisoner had completely forgotten the circumstance.

Tavernier was the oldest of them all. He had been shut up for ten years in the Iles Ste. Marguerite; thirty years had he been immured in the Bastille. He was upwards of ninety years old, with white hair and long white beard; his eyes had become dimmed by remaining so long in a dark cell, and he saw everything as through a cloud. When the crowd broke open his door, he could not comprehend what they wanted with him; when they spoke to him of liberty, he shook his head; then afterwards, when they told him that the Bastille was taken:

"Ho! ho!" cried he, "what will Louis XV., Madame de Pompadour, and the Duke de la Vrillière say to all this?"

Tavernier was not even mad; like De White, he had become an idiot.

The joy of these men was frightful to behold, for it cried aloud for vengeance, so much did it resemble terror. Two or three of them seemed almost expiring in the midst of the clamor raised by a hundred thousand voices. Poor men! they who, during the whole time of their confinement in the Bastille, had never heard two human voices speaking at the same moment, — they who were no longer accustomed to any noises but the low and mysterious one of wood, when warping with the damp, that of the spider, when, unperceived, he weaves his net with a ticking similar to that of an invisible pendulum, or of the affrighted rat, which gnaws and flies at the least stir.

At the moment that Gilbert made his appearance, the most enthusiastic among the crowd proposed that the prisoners should be carried in triumph, — a proposal which was unanimously adopted.

Gilbert would have much desired to avoid this species of ovation; but there were no means of escaping it; he had been at once recognized, as well as Billot and Pitou.

Cries of "To the Hôtel de Ville! to the Hôtel de Ville!" resounded on all sides, and Gilbert was raised in an instant on the shoulders of twenty persons.

In vain did the doctor resist, in vain did Billot and Pitou distribute among their victorious brethren the most vigorous fisticuffs; joy and enthusiasm had hardened the skins of the populace. These, and even blows given with pike-handles and the butt-ends of muskets, appeared only gentle caresses to the conquerors, and only served to redouble their delight.

Gilbert was therefore compelled to mount the triumphal car.

This car was formed of a square table, in the middle of

which was stuck a lance, to serve as a support to the victor, and enable him to preserve his balance.

The doctor, therefore, was raised above this sea of heads, which undulated from the Bastille to the Arcade St. Jean, a tempestuous sea, whose waves were bearing, in the midst of pikes and bayonets, and arms of every description, of every form, and of every age, the triumphant prisoners.

But at the same time this terrible and irresistible ocean was rolling on another group, so compact and closely formed that it appeared an island. This group was the one which was leading away De Launay as a prisoner.

Around this group arose cries not less tumultuous nor less enthusiastic than those which accompanied the prisoners; but they were not shouts of triumph, they were threats of death.

Gilbert, from his elevated position, did not lose a single detail of this frightful spectacle.

He was the only one among all the prisoners who had been restored to liberty, who was in the enjoyment of all his faculties. Five days of captivity were merely a dark spot in his life. His eyes had not been weakened or rendered dim by his short sojourn in the Bastille.

A combat, generally, does not have the effect of rendering the combatants pitiless excepting during the time that it continues. Men, generally, when issuing from a struggle in which they have risked their lives, without receiving injury, are full of kindly feelings towards their enemies.

But in great popular commotions, such as those of which France has seen so many from the times of the Jacquerie down to our own days, the masses whom fear has withheld from aiding in the fight, whom noise has

irritated, the masses, at once ferocious and cowardly, endeavor, after the victory has been gained, to claim their share of the triumph which they had not dared to accelerate. They take their share in the vengeance.

From the moment of his leaving the Bastille, the procession was the commencement of the governor's execution.

Elie, who had taken the governor's life under his own responsibility, marched at the head of the group, protected by his uniform and by the admiration of the people, who had seen him one of the first to advance amid the enemy's fire. He carried his sword above his head, on the point of which was the note which Monsieur de Launay had caused to be handed to the people through one of the loop-holes of the Bastille, and which had been brought by Maillard.

After him came the guard of the royal taxes, holding in his hand the keys of the fortress; then Maillard, bearing the standard; and after him a young man carrying the regulations of the Bastille on his bayonet, — an odious rescript by means of which so many bitter tears had flowed.

The governor walked next, protected by Hullin and two or three others, but disappeared amid the throng of threatening fists, of waving sabres, and of quivering lances.

By the side of this group, and rolling onward in an almost parallel line with it in the great artery of the Rue St. Antoine, which leads from the Boulevard to the river, another could be distinguished, not less threatening, not less terrible than the first. It was that which was dragging forward Major de Losme, whom we have seen for a moment combating the will of the governor, and who had at length been compelled to bow down his

head before the determination which De Launay had taken to defend himself.

Major de Losme was a worthy, brave, and excellent young man. Since he had been in the Bastille he had alleviated the sorrows of many of the prisoners by his kind treatment of them. But the people were ignorant of this. The people, from his brilliant uniform, imagined that he was the governor. Whereas the governor, thanks to his gray coat, on which there was no embroidery whatsoever, and from which he had torn the ribbon of the order of St. Louis, was surrounded as it were by a protecting doubt which could be dispelled by those only who were acquainted with his person.

Such was the spectacle which offered itself to the grieved eyes of Doctor Gilbert. His face, even in the midst of dangers, bore always a calm and observing expression, — a quality which was inherent in his powerful organization.

Hullin, on leaving the Bastille, had called around him his most trusty and devoted friends, the most valiant of the popular soldiers of that day, and four or five had responded to his call, and endeavored to second him in his generous design of protecting the governor. Among them are three men of whom impartial history has consecrated the memory; their names were Arné, Chollat, and De Lépine.

These men, preceded as we have said by Hullin and Maillard, were therefore endeavoring to defend the life of one for whose death a hundred thousand men were clamorously calling.

Around them had ranged themselves some grenadiers of the French Guard, whose uniform, having become popular during the last two days, was an object of veneration to the people.

Monsieur de Launay had escaped receiving any blow as long as the arms of his generous defenders were able to ward them off; but he had not escaped insulting language and threats.

At the corner of the Rue de Jouy, of the five grenadiers of the French Guards who had joined the procession on leaving the Bastille, not one remained. They had one after the other been carried off on the way, by the enthusiasm of the crowd, and perhaps also by the calculation of assassins, and Gilbert had seen them disappear one after the other, like beads from a rosary of which the cord had been broken.

From that moment he had foreseen that the victory which had been gained was about to be tarnished by a sanguinary sacrifice; he had attempted to jump from the table which served him as a triumphal car, but arms of iron had riveted him to it. In his powerless position, he had directed Billot and Pitou to rush forward to defend the governor, and both of them, obedient to his voice, had made every effort to cleave through the human waves and get near to Monsieur de Launay.

And in fact the little group of his defenders stood in great need of a reinforcement. Chollat, who had not tasted food since the previous evening, had felt his strength giving way, and at length had fainted; it was with great difficulty that he had been raised and saved from being trampled under foot.

But this was a breach made in the wall, a falling-in of the dyke.

A man rushed through this breach, and whirling the butt of his gun over his head, aimed a deadly blow at the uncovered head of the governor.

But De Lépine, who saw the terrific blow descending, had time enough to throw himself with outstretched arms

between the governor and his assailant, and received on his forehead the blow intended for the governor.

Stunned by the shock, blinded with his own blood, which streamed into his eyes, he staggered, and covered his face with his hands, and when he could again see, the governor was twenty paces from him.

It was at this moment that Billot, dragging Pitou after him through the crowd, came up to him.

He perceived that what exposed Monsieur de Launay, above all, to observation, was his being the only man in the crowd who was bareheaded.

Billot took his hat, stretched out his arm, and placed it on the governor's head.

De Launay turned round and recognized Billot.

"I thank you," he said; "but whatever you may do, you will not save me."

"Let us only reach the Hôtel de Ville," said Hullin, "and I will answer for your safety."

"Yes," replied De Launay, "but shall we reach it?"

"With the help of God, we will attempt it," rejoined Hullin.

And in fact there was some hope of succeeding, for they were just entering the square before the Hôtel de Ville; but this square was thronged with men with naked arms, brandishing pikes and sabres. The report, which had flown from street to street, had announced to them that the governor and the major of the Bastille were being brought to them; and like a pack of hungry hounds eager to be loosed upon their prey, they awaited, grinding their teeth and impatient for their approach.

As soon as they saw the procession approach they rushed towards the governor.

Hullin saw that this was the moment of extreme danger, of the last struggle; if he could only get the

governor to the front steps, and get him to rush up the staircase, De Launay was saved.

"To me, Elie! — to me, Maillard! — to me, all men with hearts," cried he: "our honor is at stake."

Elie and Maillard heard the appeal; they made a rush into the centre of the mob, and the people seconded them but too well; they made way for them to pass, but closed in behind them.

In this manner Elie and Maillard were separated from the principal group, and were prevented returning to it.

The crowd saw the advantage it had gained, and made a furious effort. Like an enormous boa, it entwined its gigantic folds around the group. Billot was lifted off his feet and dragged away; Pitou, who thought only of Billot, allowed himself to be forced away in the same throng. Hullin, being hurried on by the crowd, stumbled against the first step of the Hôtel de Ville, and fell. He got up, but it was to fall again almost immediately, and this time De Launay fell with him.

The governor was constant to the last; up to the final moment, he uttered not a single complaint; he did not ask for mercy, but he cried out in a loud, shrill tone, —

"Tigers that you are, at all events do not allow me to remain thus in suspense; kill me at once!"

Never was order more promptly executed than this reproachful request of the poor governor. In an instant around the fallen De Launay every head was bowed down towards him. For a moment nothing could be seen but upraised and threatening hands, grasping poniards which as suddenly disappeared; then was seen a head severed from the body, and which was raised, still streaming with blood, upon the end of a pike; the features had retained their livid and contemptuous smile.

This was the first.

Gilbert, from his elevated position, could see all that was passing; Gilbert had once more attempted to spring to the assistance of the governor, but two hundred arms prevented him.

He turned his head from the disgusting spectacle and sighed.

This head, with its staring eyes, was raised immediately in front, and as if to salute him with a last look, of the window in which De Flesselles was standing, surrounded and protected by the electors.

It would have been difficult to decide whether the face of the living or that of the dead man was the most pale and livid.

Suddenly an immense uproar arose from the spot on which was lying the mutilated body of De Launay. His pockets had been searched by his assassins, and in his breast-pocket had been found the note which the Provost of the Merchants had addressed to him, and which he had shown to De Losme.

This note, our readers may remember, was couched in the following terms: —

Hold firm! — I amuse the Parisians with cockades and promises. Before the close of the day Monsieur de Besenval will send you a reinforcement.

DE FLESSELLES.

The most blasphemous imprecations rose from the pavement of the square to the window of the Hôtel de Ville in which De Flesselles was standing.

Without guessing the cause of this new tumult, he fully comprehended the threat, and hastily drew back from the window; but he had been seen; every one knew that he was there; the crowd rushed up the staircase,

and this time the movement was so universal that the men who had been carrying Doctor Gilbert abandoned him to follow the living tide which in a tempest of passion was overflowing the great staircase.

Gilbert would also have gone into the Hotel de Ville, not to threaten but to protect Flesselles. He had already ascended three or four of the front steps, when he felt himself violently pulled back. He turned round to disengage himself from this new obstruction, but he recognized Billot and Pitou.

"Oh!" exclaimed Gilbert, who from his commanding position could glance over the whole square, "what can they be doing yonder?"

And he pointed with his convulsively clinched hand to the corner of the Rue de la Tixéranderie.

"Come with us, Doctor, come!" simultaneously cried Billot and Pitou.

"Oh, the assassins!" cried the doctor, "the assassins!"

And indeed at that moment Major de Losme fell, killed by a desperate blow from a hatchet, — the people confounding in their rage the egotistical and barbarous governor, who had been the persecutor of his prisoners, with the generous man who had been their friend and reliever.

"Oh, yes, yes," said he, "let us be gone, for I begin to be ashamed of having been liberated by such men."

"Doctor," said Billot, "be not uneasy on that score. The men who fought down yonder are not the same men who are committing these horrid massacres."

But at the moment when the doctor was about to descend the steps which he had gone up, to hasten to the assistance of Flesselles, the flood which had poured into the building was again vomited forth. Amid this torrent

of men was one who was struggling furiously as they dragged him forward.

"To the Palais Royal! to the Palais Royal!" cried the crowd.

"Yes, my friends — yes, my good friends — to the Palais Royal!" repeated the man.

And they went towards the river, as if this human inundation had wished, not to bear him towards the Palais Royal, but to drag him towards the Seine.

"Oh!" cried Gilbert, "here is another they are about to murder! — let us endeavor to save him at least." But scarcely had he pronounced these words when a pistol-shot was heard, and De Flesselles disappeared amid the smoke.

Gilbert covered his eyes with both his hands, with a gesture of excessive anger; he cursed the people who, after having shown themselves so great, had not the firmness to remain pure, and had sullied the victory they had gained by a triple assassination.

Then, when he removed his hands from his eyes, he saw three heads raised above the crowd, on three pikes.

The first was that of De Flesselles, the second that of De Losme, the third that of De Launay.

The one rose above the front steps of the Hôtel de Ville, the other from the middle of the Rue de la Tixéranderie, the third on the Quai Pelletier.

From their relative positions they assumed the form of a triangle.

"Oh, Balsamo! Balsamo!" murmured the doctor, with a sigh; "is it then such a triangle as this that is to be symbolical of liberty!"

And he ran along the Rue de la Vannerie, Billot and Pitou accompanying him.

CHAPTER XX.

SEBASTIEN GILBERT.

At the corner of the Rue Planche Mibray the doctor met a hackney coach, made a sign to the coachman to stop, and hastily got into it.

Billot and Pitou quickly followed him.

"To the College of Louis-le-Grand!" cried Gilbert, and threw himself into one corner of the vehicle, where he fell into a profound reverie, which was respected by Billot and Pitou.

They went over the Pont au Change by the Rue de la Cité, the Rue St. Jacques, and at length reached the College Louis-le-Grand.

All Paris was trembling with emotion. The news had spread rapidly throughout the city; rumors of the assassinations on the Place de la Grève were mingled with the glorious recital of the taking of the Bastille. On every face could be seen depicted the various emotions to which the news gave rise, according to the varied feelings they excited, — the lightnings of the soul which thus betrayed themselves.

Gilbert had not once looked out of the coach window; Gilbert had not uttered a single word. There is always a ridiculous side in popular ovations, and Gilbert contemplated his ovation in that point of view.

And besides, it also appeared to him that notwithstanding all he had done to prevent it, some drops of the blood which had been shed would fall upon his head.

The doctor alighted from the hackney coach at the college gate, and made a sign to Billot to follow him.

As to Pitou, he discreetly remained in the coach.

Sebastien was still in the infirmary; the principal in person, on Doctor Gilbert's being announced, conducted him thither.

Billot, who, although not a very acute observer, well knew the character of both father and son, — Billot attentively observed the scene which was passing before his eyes.

Weak, irritable, and nervous, as the boy had shown himself in the moment of despair, he evinced an equal degree of tranquillity and reserve in the moment of joy.

On perceiving his father he turned pale, and words failed him. His lips quivered, and then he ran and threw his arms round his father's neck, uttering a cry of joy, which resembled a cry of grief, and then held him silently clasped within his arms.

The doctor responded as silently to this mute pressure; only, after having embraced his son, he looked at him with an expression that was more sorrowful than joyous.

A more skilful observer than Billot would have said that some misfortune or some crime existed in the relations between that youth and that man.

The youth was less reserved in his conduct towards Billot. When he could observe any one excepting his father, who had in the first moment engrossed all his attention, he ran to the good farmer, and threw his arms round his neck, saying, —

"You are a worthy man, Monsieur Billot; you have kept your promise to me, and I thank you for it."

"Yes, yes," replied Billot, "and it was not without some trouble, I can assure you, Monsieur Sebastien. Your father was very nicely and safely locked up, and it

was necessary to do a tolerable deal of damage before we could get him out."

"Sebastien," inquired the doctor with some anxiety, "you are in good health?"

"Yes, Father," replied the young man, "although you find me here in the infirmary."

Gilbert smiled.

"I know why it was you were brought here," said he.

The boy smiled in his turn.

"Have you everything you require here?" continued the doctor.

"Everything — thanks to you."

"I shall then, my dear boy, still recommend to you the same, the only line of conduct, — study assiduously."

"Yes, Father."

"I know that to you the word 'study' is not a vain and monotonous word; if I believed it to be so, I would no longer say it."

"Father, it is not for me to reply to you on that head. It is the province of Monsieur Bérardier, our excellent principal."

The doctor turned towards Monsieur Bérardier, who made a sign that he had something to say to him.

"I will speak to you again in a moment, Sebastien," said the doctor.

And he went over to the principal.

"Sir," said Sebastien, with anxious feeling, to Billot, "can anything unfortunate have happened to Pitou? The poor lad is not with you."

"He is at the door in a hackney coach," replied Billot.

"Father," said Sebastien, "will you allow Monsieur Billot to fetch Pitou to me? I should be very glad to see him."

Gilbert gave an affirmative nod; Billot left the room.

"What is it you would say to me?" inquired Gilbert of the Abbé Bérardier.

"I wished to tell you, sir, that it is not study that you should recommend to the young lad, but, on the contrary, to amuse himself."

"And on what account, good abbé?"

"Yes, he is an excellent young man, whom everybody here loves as a son or as a brother, but —"

The abbé paused.

"But what?" cried Gilbert, with anxiety.

"But if great care be not taken, Monsieur Gilbert, there is something that will kill him."

"And what is that?" said Gilbert.

"The study which you so strongly recommend to him."

"Study?"

"Yes, sir, study. If you could but see him seated at his desk, his arms crossed, poring over his dictionary, with eyes fixed —"

"Studying, or dreaming?" asked Gilbert.

"Studying, sir; endeavoring to find a good expression — the antique style, the Greek or Latin form — seeking for it for hours together; and see! even at this very moment! — look at him!"

And indeed the young man, although it was not five minutes since his father had been speaking to him, although Billot had scarcely shut the door after him, Sebastien had fallen into a reverie which seemed closely allied to ecstasy.

"Is he often thus?" anxiously inquired Gilbert.

"Sir, I could almost say that this is his habitual state; only see how deeply he is meditating."

"You are right, sir; and when you observe him in this state, you should endeavor to divert his thoughts."

"And yet it would be a pity, for the results of these meditations are compositions which will one day do great honor to the College Louis-le-Grand. I predict that in three years from this time that youth yonder will bear off all the prizes at our examination."

"Take care!" replied the doctor; "this species of absorption of thought, in which you see Sebastien now plunged, is rather a proof of weakness than of strength, a symptom rather of malady than of health. You are right, Monsieur Principal; it will not do to recommend assiduous application to that child; or, at least, we must know how to distinguish study from such a state of reverie."

"Sir, I can assure you that he is studying."

"What, as we see him now?"

"Yes; and the proof is that his task is always finished before that of the other scholars. Do you see how his lips move? He is repeating his lessons."

"Well, then, whenever he is repeating his lessons in this manner, Monsieur Bérardier, divert his attention from them. He will not know his lessons the worse for it, and his health will be better for it."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"Well," cried the good abbé, "you ought to understand these matters, — you, whom Messieurs de Condorcet and Cabanis proclaim to be one of the most learned men now existing in the world."

"Only," rejoined Gilbert, "when you wish to draw him out of such reveries, you must do it with much precaution. Speak to him very softly in the first instance, and then louder."

"And why so?"

"To bring him gradually back to this world, which his mind has left."

The abbé looked at the doctor with astonishment. It would not have required much to make him believe that he was mad.

"Observe," continued the doctor; "you shall see the proof of what I am saying to you."

Billot and Pitou entered the room at this moment. In three strides Pitou was at the side of the dreaming youth.

"You asked for me, Sebastien," said Pitou to him; "that was very kind of you."

And he placed his large head close to the pale face of the young lad.

"Look!" said Gilbert, seizing the abbé's arm.

And indeed Sebastien, thus abruptly aroused from his reverie by the cordial affection of Pitou, staggered, his pale face became livid, his head fell on one side, as if his neck had not sufficient strength to support it, a painful sigh escaped his breast, and then the blood again rushed to his face.

He shook his head and smiled.

"Ah, it is you, Pitou. Yes; that is true: I asked for you."

And then, looking at him:—

"You have been fighting, then?"

"Yes, and like a brave lad, too," said Billot.

"Why did you not take me with you?" said the child, in a reproachful tone. "I would have fought also, and then I should at least have done something for my father."

"Sebastien," said Gilbert, going to his son, and pressing his head to his breast, "you can do much more for your father than to fight for him; you can listen to his advice, and follow it, — become a distinguished and celebrated man."

"As you are?" said the boy, with proud emotion. "Oh, it is that which I aspire to."

"Sebastien," said the doctor, "now that you have embraced both Billot and Pitou, our good friends, will you come into the garden with me for a few minutes, that we may have a little talk together?"

"With great delight, Father. Only two or three times in my whole life have I been alone with you, and those moments, with all their details, are always present in my memory."

"You will allow us, good Monsieur Principal?" said Gilbert.

"How can you doubt it?"

"Billot and Pitou, you must, my friends, stand in need of some refreshment?"

"Upon my word, I do," said Billot. "I have eaten nothing since the morning, and I believe that Pitou has fasted as long as I have."

"I beg your pardon," replied Pitou: "I ate a crumb of bread and two or three sausages, just the moment before I dragged you out of the water; but a bath always makes one hungry."

"Well, then, come to the refectory," said the Abbé Bérardier, "and you shall have some dinner."

"Ho, ho!" cried Pitou.

"You are afraid of our college fare!" cried the abbé; "but do not alarm yourselves; you shall be treated as invited guests. Moreover, it appears to me," continued the abbé, "that it is not alone your stomach that is in a dilapidated state, my dear Monsieur Pitou."

Pitou cast a look replete with modesty on his own person.

"And that if you were offered a pair of breeches as well as a dinner—"

"The fact is, I would accept them, good Monsieur Bérardier," replied Pitou.

"Well, then, come with me; both the breeches and the dinner are at your service."

And he led off Billot and Pitou by one door, while Gilbert and his son, waving their hands to them, went out at another.

The latter crossed a yard which served as a playground to the young collegians, and went into a small garden reserved for the professors, a cool and shady retreat, in which the venerable Abbé Bérardier was wont to read his Tacitus and his Juvenal.

Gilbert seated himself upon a bench, overshadowed by an alcove of clematis and virgin vines; then, drawing Sebastien close to him, and parting the long hair which fell upon his forehead: —

"Well, my child," said he, "we are, then, once more united."

Sebastien raised his eyes to heaven.

"Yes, Father, and by a miracle performed by God."

Gilbert smiled.

"If there be any miracle," said Gilbert, "it was the brave people of Paris who have accomplished it."

"My father," said the boy, "set not God aside in all that has just occurred; for I, when I saw you come in, instinctively offered my thanks to God for your deliverance."

"And Billot?"

"Billot I thanked after thanking God, as I thanked his carabine after Billot."

Gilbert reflected.

"You are right, child," said he; "God is in everything. But now let us talk of you, and let us have some little conversation before we again separate."

"Are we, then, to be again separated, Father?"

"Not for a long time, I presume. But a casket, containing some very precious documents, has disappeared from Billot's house, at the same time that I was arrested and sent to the Bastille. I must therefore endeavor to discover who it was that caused my imprisonment, — who has carried off the casket."

"It is well, Father. I will wait to see you again, — till your inquiries shall be completed."

And the boy sighed deeply.

"You are sorrowful, Sebastien?" said the doctor, inquiringly.

"Yes."

"And why are you sorrowful?"

"I do not know. It appears to me that life has not been shaped for me in the way it has been for other children."

"What are you saying there, Sebastien?"

"The truth."

"Explain yourself."

"They all have amusements, pleasures, while I have none."

"You have no amusements, no pleasures?"

"I mean to say, Father, that I take no pleasure in those games which form the amusement of boys of my own age."

"Take care, Sebastien; I should much regret that you should be of such a disposition. Sebastien, minds that give promise of a glorious future are like good fruits during their growth; they have their bitterness, their acidity, their greenness, before they can delight the palate by their matured full flavor. Believe me, my child, it is good to have been young."

"It is not my fault if I am not so," replied the young

man, with a melancholy smile. Gilbert pressed both his son's hands within his own, and fixing his eye intently upon Sebastien's, continued: —

"Your age, my son, is that of the seed when germinating; nothing should yet appear above the surface of all that study has sown in you. At the age of fourteen, Sebastien, gravity is either pride, or it proceeds from malady. I have asked you whether your health was good, and you replied affirmatively. I am going to ask you whether you are proud; try to reply to me that you are not."

"Father," said the boy, "on that head you need not be alarmed. That which renders me so gloomy is neither sickness nor pride; no, it is a settled grief."

"A settled grief, poor child! And what grief, good heaven, can you have at your age? Come, now, speak out."

"No, Father, no; some other time. You have told me that you were in a hurry. You have only a quarter of an hour to devote to me. Let us speak of other things than my follies."

"No, Sebastien; I should be uneasy were I to leave you so. Tell me whence proceeds your grief."

"In truth, Father, I do not dare."

"What do you fear?"

"I fear that in your eyes I shall appear a visionary, or perhaps that I may speak to you of things that will afflict you."

"You afflict me much more by withholding your secret from me."

"You well know that I have no secrets from you, Father."

"Speak out, then."

"Really, I dare not."

"Sebastien, you who have the pretension of being a man, to —"

"It is precisely for that reason."

"Come, now, take courage."

"Well, then, Father, it is a dream."

"A dream which terrifies you?"

"Yes, and no; for when I am dreaming, I am not terrified, but as if transported into another world."

"Explain yourself."

"When still quite a child I had these visions. You cannot but remember that two or three times I lost myself in those great woods which surround the village in which I was brought up?"

"Yes, I remember being told of it."

"Well, then, at those times I was following a species of phantom."

"What say you?" cried Gilbert, looking at his son with an astonishment that seemed closely allied to terror.

"Well, then, Father, I will tell you all. I used to play, as did the other children in the village. As long as there were children with me, or near me, I saw nothing; but if I separated from them, or went beyond the last village garden, I felt something near, like the rustling of a gown. I would stretch out my arms to catch it, and I embraced only the air; but as the rustling sound became lost in distance, the phantom itself became visible. It was at first a vapor as transparent as a cloud; then the vapor became more condensed, and assumed a human form. The form was that of a woman gliding along the ground rather than walking, and becoming more and more visible as it plunged into the shady parts of the forest. Then an unknown, extraordinary, and almost irresistible power impelled me to pursue this

form. I pursued her with outstretched arms, mute as herself, for often I attempted to call to her, and never could my tongue articulate a sound. I pursued her thus, although she never stopped, although I never could come up with her, until the same prodigy which announced her presence to me warned me of her departure. This woman vanished gradually from my sight, matter became once more vapor, the vapor became volatilized, and all was ended; and I, exhausted with fatigue, would fall down on the spot where she had disappeared. It was there that Pitou would find me, sometimes the same day, but sometimes only the next morning."

Gilbert continued gazing at his son with increasing anxiety. He had placed his fingers on his pulse. Sebastien at once comprehended the feeling which agitated the doctor.

"Oh, do not be uneasy, Father," said he. "I know that there was nothing real in all this. I know that it was a vision, and nothing more."

"And this woman," inquired the doctor, "what was her appearance?"

"Oh, as majestic as a queen."

"And her face; did you sometimes see it, child?"

"Yes."

"And how long ago?" asked Gilbert, shuddering.

"Only since I have been here," replied the youth.

"But here in Paris you have not the forest of Villers-Cotterets, the tall trees forming a dark and mysterious arch of verdure. In Paris you have no longer that silence, that solitude, the natural element of phantoms."

"Yes, Father, I have all these."

"Where, then?"

"Here, in this garden."

"What mean you by saying here? Is not this garden set apart for the professors?"

"It is so, my father; but two or three times it appeared to me that I saw this woman glide from the courtyard into the garden, and each time I would have followed her, but the closed door always prevented me. Then one day the Abbé Bérardier, being highly satisfied with my composition, asked me if there was anything I particularly desired; and I asked him to allow me sometimes to walk in the garden with him. He gave me the permission. I came; and here, Father, the vision reappeared to me."

Gilbert trembled.

"Strange hallucination," said he; "but, nevertheless, very possible in a temperament so highly nervous as his. And you have seen her face, then?"

"Yes, Father."

"Do you remember it?"

The youth smiled.

"Did you ever attempt to go near her?"

"Yes."

"To hold out your hand to her?"

"It was then that she would disappear."

"And in your own opinion, Sebastien, who is this woman?"

"It appears to me that she is my mother."

"Your mother!" exclaimed Gilbert, turning pale.

And he pressed his hand against his heart, as if to stop the bleeding of a painful wound.

"But this is all a dream," cried he; "and really I am almost as mad as you are."

The youth remained silent, and with pensive eye looked at his father.

"Well?" said the latter, in the accent of inquiry.

"Well," replied Sebastien, "it is possible that it may be all a dream; but the reality of my dream is no less existing."

"What say you?"

"I say that at the last Festival of Pentecost, when we were taken to walk in the wood of Satory, near Versailles, and that while there, as I was meditating under a tree, and separated from my companions —"

"The same vision again appeared to you?"

"Yes; but this time in a carriage, drawn by four magnificent horses. But this time real, absolutely living. I very nearly fainted."

"And why so?"

"I do not know."

"And what impression remained upon your mind from this new vision?"

"That it was not my mother whom I had seen appearing to me in a dream, since this woman was the same I always saw in my vision, and my mother is dead."

Gilbert rose and pressed his hand to his forehead. A strange swimming of the head had just seized him.

The young lad remarked his agitation, and was alarmed at his sudden paleness.

"Ah!" said he, "you see now, Father, how wrong I was to relate to you all my follies."

"No, my child, no. On the contrary," said the doctor, "speak of them often to me; speak of them to me every time you see me, and we will endeavor to cure you of them."

Sebastien shook his head.

"Cure me! and for what?" asked he. "I am accustomed to this dream. It has become a portion of my existence. I love that vision, although it flies from me, and sometimes seems to repel me. Do not, therefore, cure

me of it, Father. You may again leave me, travel once more, perhaps go again to America. Having this vision, I am not completely alone in the world."

"In fine," murmured the doctor, and pressing Sebastien to his breast, "till we meet again, my child," said he, "and then I hope we shall no more leave each other; for should I again leave France, I will at least endeavor to take you with me."

"Was my mother beautiful?" asked the child.

"Oh, yes, very beautiful!" replied the doctor, in a voice almost choked by emotion.

"And did she love you as much as I love you?"

"Sebastien! Sebastien! never speak to me of your mother!" cried the doctor.

And pressing his lips for the last time to the forehead of the youth, he rushed out of the garden.

Instead of following him, the child fell back, overcome by his feelings, on the bench.

In the courtyard Gilbert found Billot and Pitou, completely invigorated by the good cheer they had partaken of. They were relating to the Abbé Bérardier all the circumstances regarding the capture of the Bastille.

Gilbert again entered into conversation with the Abbé Bérardier, in which he pointed out to him the line of conduct he should observe with regard to Sebastien.

He then got into the hackney coach with his two companions.

CHAPTER XXI.

MADAME DE STAËL.

WHEN Gilbert resumed his place in the hackney coach by the side of Billot and opposite to Pitou, he was pale, and the perspiration was standing in large drops on his forehead.

But it was not in the nature of this man to remain for any time overwhelmed by any emotion whatsoever. He threw himself back into the corner of the carriage, pressed both his hands to his forehead as if he wished to repress the boiling thoughts which raged within it, and after remaining a few moments motionless, he withdrew his hands, and instead of an agitated countenance, he exhibited features which were particularly calm.

"You told me, I think, my dear Monsieur Billot, that the king had dismissed Monsieur de Necker?"

"Yes, indeed, Monsieur Gilbert."

"And that the commotions in Paris originated in some measure from the disgrace of the minister?"

"Very much."

"And you added that Monsieur de Necker had immediately left Versailles."

"He received the king's letter while at dinner. In an hour afterwards he was on the road to Brussels."

"Where he is now?"

"Or ought to be."

"Did you not hear it said that he had stopped somewhere on the road?"

"Oh, yes; he stopped at St. Ouen, in order to take leave of his daughter, the Baroness de Staël."

"Did Madame de Staël go with him?"

"I was told that he and his wife alone set out for Brussels."

"Coachman!" cried Gilbert, "stop at the first tailor's shop you see."

"You wish to change your coat?" said Billot.

"Yes. In good sooth, this one smells too much of its contact with the walls of the Bastille; and a man cannot in such a dress discreetly pay a visit to the daughter of an ex-minister in disgrace. Search your pockets, and see if you cannot find a few louis for me."

"Ho, ho!" cried the farmer, "it seems that you have left your purse in the Bastille."

"That is according to the regulations," said Gilbert, smiling. "All articles of value are deposited in the registry office."

"And they remain there," said the farmer.

And opening his huge fist, which contained about twenty louis:—

"Take these, Doctor," said he.

Gilbert took ten louis. Some minutes afterwards the hackney coach stopped at the door of a ready-made clothes shop.

It was still the usage in those days.

Gilbert changed his coat, soiled by the walls of the Bastille, for a very decent black one, such as was worn by the gentlemen of the Tiers État in the National Assembly.

A hair-dresser in his shop, a Savoyard shoe-cleaner in his cellar, completed the doctor's toilette.

The doctor then ordered the coachman to drive him to St. Ouen, by the exterior Boulevards, which they reached by going behind the walls of the park at Monceaux.

Gilbert alighted at the gate of Monsieur Necker's house, at the moment when the cathedral clock of Dagobert struck seven in the evening.

Around this house, which erewhile was so much sought, so much frequented, reigned the most profound silence, disturbed only by the arrival of Gilbert.

And yet there was none of that melancholy appearance which generally surrounds abandoned country-houses, — of that gloominess even generally visible in a mansion, the master of which has been disgraced.

The gates being closed, the garden-walks deserted, merely announced that the heads of the family were absent, but there was no trace of misfortune or of precipitation.

Besides this, one whole portion of the château, the east wing, had still its window-shutters open, and when Gilbert was advancing towards this side, a servant, wearing the livery of Monsieur de Necker, approached the visitor.

The following dialogue then took place through the iron gratings of the gate.

"Monsieur de Necker is not at home, my friend?" said Gilbert.

"No; the baron left St. Ouen last Saturday for Brussels."

"And her ladyship, the baroness?"

"Went with Monsieur."

"But Madame de Staël?"

"Madame de Staël has remained here; but I do not know whether madame will receive any one; it is her hour for walking."

"Please to find out where she is, and announce to her Doctor Gilbert."

"I will go and inquire whether madame is in the house or not. Doubtless she will receive you, sir; but should she be talking a walk, my orders are that she is not to be disturbed."

"Very well; go quickly, I beg of you."

The servant opened the gate, and Gilbert entered the grounds.

While relocking the gate, the servant cast an inquisitive glance on the vehicle which had brought the doctor, and on the extraordinary faces of his two travelling companions; then he went off, shaking his head, like a man who feels somewhat perplexed, but who defies any other intellect to see clearly into a matter where his own has been altogether puzzled.

Gilbert remained alone, waiting his return.

In about five minutes the servant reappeared.

"The Baroness de Staël is taking a walk," said he, and he bowed in order to dismiss Gilbert.

But the doctor was not so easily got rid of.

"My friend," said he, "be pleased to make a slight infraction in your orders, and tell the baroness, when you announce me to her, that I am a friend of the Marquis de Lafayette."

A louis, slipped into the lackey's hands, completely removed the scruples he had entertained, which the name of the marquis had nearly half dispelled.

"Come in, sir," said the servant.

Gilbert followed him; but instead of taking him into the house he led him into the park.

"This is the favorite side of the baroness," said the lackey to Gilbert, pointing out to him the entrance to a species of labyrinth; "will you remain here a moment?"

Ten minutes afterwards he heard a rustling among the leaves, and a woman between twenty-three and twenty-four years of age, and of a figure rather noble than graceful, appeared to the eyes of Gilbert.

She seemed surprised on finding a man who still appeared young, when she had doubtless expected to meet one advanced in years.

Gilbert was a man of sufficiently remarkable appearance to strike at first sight so able an observer as Madame de Staël.

The features of few men were formed with such pure lines, and these lines had assumed, by the exercise of an all-powerful will, a character of extraordinary inflexibility. His fine black eyes, which were always so expressive, had become somewhat veiled by his literary labors and the sufferings he had undergone, and had lost a portion of that mobility which is one of the charms of youth.

A wrinkle, which was at once deep and graceful, hollowed out at the corner of his thin lips, that mysterious cavity in which physiognomists place the seat of circumspection. It appeared that time alone, and a precocious old age, had given to Gilbert that quality with which nature had neglected to endow him.

A wide and well-rounded forehead, slightly receding towards the roots of his fine black hair, which for years powder had no longer whitened, gave evidence at once of knowledge and of thought, of study and imagination. With Gilbert, as with his master, Rousseau, his prominent eyebrows threw a deep shade over his eyes, and from this shade glanced forth the luminous point which revealed life.

Gilbert, notwithstanding his unassuming dress, presented himself before the future authoress of "Corinne," with a remarkably dignified and distinguished air, — an

air of which his well-shaped tapering white hands, his small feet, and his finely formed and muscular legs, completed the noble appearance.

Madame de Staël devoted some moments to examining Gilbert.

During this, Gilbert, on his side, had given a stiff sort of bow, which slightly recalled the modest civility of the American Quakers, who grant to women only the fraternity which protects instead of the respect which smiles.

Then, with a rapid glance, he, in his turn, analyzed the person of the already celebrated young woman, whose intelligent and expressive features were altogether devoid of beauty; it was the head of an insignificant and frivolous youth, rather than that of a woman, but which surmounted a form of voluptuous luxuriance.

She held in her hand a twig from a pomegranate-tree, from which, from absence of mind, she was biting off the blossoms.

"Is it you, sir," inquired the baroness, "who are Doctor Gilbert?"

"Yes, Madame, my name is Gilbert."

"You are very young, to have acquired so great a reputation, or rather, does not that reputation appertain to your father, or to some relative older than yourself?"

"I do not know any one of the name of Gilbert but myself, Madame. And if indeed there is, as you say, some slight degree of reputation attached to the name, I have a fair right to claim it."

"You made use of the name of the Marquis de Lafayette, in order to obtain this interview with me, sir; and, in fact, the marquis has spoken to us of you, of your inexhaustible knowledge —"

Gilbert bowed.

"A knowledge which is so much the more remarkable and so much the more replete with interest," continued the baroness, "since it appears that you are not a mere ordinary chemist, a practitioner, like so many others, but that you have sounded all the mysteries of the science of life."

"I clearly perceive, Madame, that the Marquis de Lafayette must have told you that I am somewhat of a sorcerer," replied Gilbert, smiling; "and if he has told you so, I know that he has talent enough to prove it to you, had he wished to do so."

"In fact, sir, he has spoken to us of the marvellous cures you often performed, whether on the field of battle, or in the American hospitals, upon patients whose lives were altogether despaired of; you plunged them, the general told us, into a factitious death, which so much resembled death itself, that it was difficult to believe it was not real."

"That factitious death, Madame, is the result of a science almost still unknown, now confided only to the hands of some few adepts, but which will soon become common."

"It is mesmerism you are speaking of, is it not?" asked Madame de Staël with a smile.

"Of mesmerism, yes, it is."

"Did you take lessons of the master himself?"

"Alas! Madame, Mesmer himself was only a scholar. Mesmerism, or rather magnetism, was an ancient science, known to the Egyptians and the Greeks. It was lost in the ocean of the middle ages. Shakespeare divined it in Macbeth. Urbain Grandier found it once more, and died for having found it. But the great master — my master — was the Count de Cagliostro."

"That mountebank!" cried Madame de Staël.

"Madame, Madame, beware of judging as do contemporaries, and not as posterity will judge. To that mountebank I owe my knowledge, and perhaps the world will be indebted to him for its liberty."

"Be it so," replied Madame de Staël, again smiling: "I speak without knowing, — you speak with full knowledge of the subject. It is probable that you are right and that I am wrong. But let us return to you. Why is it that you have so long kept yourself at so great a distance from France? Why have you not returned to take your place, your proper station, among the great men of the age, such as Lavoisier, Cabanis, Condorcet, Bailly, and Louis?"

At this last name Gilbert blushed, though almost imperceptibly.

"I have yet too much to study, Madame, to rank myself all at once among these great masters."

"But you have come at last, though at an unpropitious moment for us; my father, who would, I feel assured, have been happy to be of service to you, has been disgraced, and left here three days ago."

Gilbert smiled.

"Baroness," said he, bowing slightly, "only six days ago I was imprisoned in the Bastille, pursuant to an order from Baron Necker."

Madame de Staël blushed in her turn.

"Really, sir, you have just told me something that greatly surprises me. You in the Bastille!"

"Myself, Madame."

"What had you done to occasion your imprisonment?"

"Those alone who threw me into prison can tell that."

"But you are no longer in prison!"

"No, Madame, because the Bastille no longer exists."

"How can that be? — does the Bastille no longer exist?" cried Madame de Staël, feigning astonishment.

"Did you not hear the firing of cannon?"

"Yes; but cannons are only cannons, that is all."

"Oh, permit me to tell you, Madame, that it is impossible that Madame de Staël, the daughter of Monsieur de Necker, should not know, at this present time, that the Bastille has been taken by the people."

"I assure you, sir," replied the baroness, somewhat confused, "that being unacquainted with any of the events which have taken place since the departure of my father, I no longer occupy my time but in deploring his absence."

"Madame! Madame!" said Gilbert, shaking his head, "the State messengers are so familiar with the road that leads to the château of St. Ouen, that at least one bearer of despatches must have arrived during the four hours that have elapsed since the capitulation of the Bastille."

The baroness saw that it was impossible for her to deny it without positively lying. She abhorred a falsehood; she therefore changed the subject of the conversation.

"And to what lucky event do I owe your visit, sir?" asked she.

"I wished to have the honor of speaking to Monsieur de Necker, Madame."

"But do you know that he is no longer in France?"

"Madame, it appeared to me so extraordinary that Monsieur de Necker should be absent, so impolitic that he should not have watched the course of events — "

"That — "

"That I relied upon you, I must confess, Madame, to tell me where I could find him."

"You will find him at Brussels, sir."

Gilbert fixed his searching gaze upon the baroness.

"Thank you, Madame," said he, bowing; "I shall then set out for Brussels, as I have matters of the highest importance to communicate to him."

Madame de Staël appeared to hesitate, then she rejoined: —

"Fortunately I know you, sir," said she, "and I know you to be a man of serious character. 'T is true, important things might lose a great deal of their value by passing through other lips. But what can there be of importance to my father, after his disgrace — after what has taken place?"

"There is the future, Madame; and perhaps I shall not be altogether without influence over the future. But all these reflections are to no purpose. The most important thing for me, and for him, is, that I should see Monsieur de Necker. Thus, Madame, you say that he is at Brussels?"

"Yes, sir."

"It will take me twenty hours to go there. Do you know what twenty hours are during a revolution, and how many important events may take place during twenty hours? Oh! how imprudent it was for Monsieur de Necker, Madame, to place twenty hours between himself and any event which might take place, — between the hand and the object it desires to reach."

"In truth, sir, you frighten me," said Madame de Staël, "and I begin to think that my father has really been imprudent."

"But what would you have, Madame? Things are thus, are they not? I have, therefore, merely to make you a most humble apology for the trouble that I have given you. Adieu, Madame."

But the baroness stopped him.

"I tell you, sir, that you alarm me," she rejoined; "you owe me an explanation of all this; you must tell me something that will reassure me."

"Alas! Madame," replied Gilbert, "I have so many private interests to watch over at this moment, that it is impossible for me to think of those of others; my life and honor are at stake, as would be the life and honor of Monsieur de Necker if he could take advantage of the words which I shall tell him in the course of twenty hours."

"Sir, allow me to remember something that I have too long forgotten; it is that grave subjects ought not to be discussed in the open air, in a park, within the reach of every ear."

"Madame," said Gilbert, "I am now at your house, and permit me to observe that consequently it is you who have chosen the place where we now are. What do you wish? I am entirely at your command."

"I wish you to do me the favor to finish this conversation in my cabinet."

"Ah! ah!" said Gilbert to himself, "if I did not fear to confuse her, I would ask her whether her cabinet is at Brussels."

But without further question he contented himself with following the baroness, who began to walk quickly toward the château.

The same servant who had admitted Gilbert was found standing in front of the house. Madame de Staël made a sign to him, and opening the doors herself, she led Gilbert into her cabinet, a charming retreat, more masculine, it is true, than feminine, of which the second door and the two windows opened into a small garden, which was not only inaccessible to others, but also beyond the reach of all strange eyes.

When they had gone in, Madame de Staël closed the door, and turning towards Gilbert: —

"Sir, in the name of humanity, I call upon you to tell me the secret which is so important to my father, and which has brought you to St. Ouen."

"Madame," said Gilbert, "if your father could now hear me, if he could but know that I am the man who sent the king the secret memoirs entitled, 'Of the State of Ideas and of Progress,' I am sure the Baron de Necker would immediately appear, and say to me, 'Doctor Gilbert, what do you desire of me? Speak; I am listening.'"

Gilbert had hardly pronounced these words when a secret door which was concealed by a panel painted by Vanloo was noiselessly slid aside, and the Baron de Necker, with a smiling countenance, suddenly appeared, standing at the foot of a small, winding staircase, at the top of which could be perceived the dim rays of a lamp.

Then the Baroness de Staël courtesied to Gilbert, and kissing her father's forehead, left the room by the same staircase which her father had just descended, and having closed the panel, she disappeared.

Necker advanced towards Gilbert, and gave him his hand, saying, —

"Here I am, Monsieur Gilbert; what do you desire of me? Speak, I am listening."

They both seated themselves.

"Monsieur le Baron," said Gilbert, "you have just heard a secret which has revealed all my ideas to you. It was I who, four years ago, sent an essay to the king on the general state of Europe; it is I who, since then, have sent him from the United States the various works he has received on all the questions of conciliation and

internal administration which have been discussed in France."

"Works of which his Majesty," replied Monsieur de Necker, bowing, "has never spoken to me without expressing a deep admiration of them, though at the same time a profound terror at their contents."

"Yes, because they told the truth. Was it not because the truth was then terrible to hear, and, having now become a fact, it is still more terrible to witness?"

"That is unquestionably true, sir," said Necker.

"Did the king send these essays to you for perusal?" asked Gilbert.

"Not all of them, sir; only two: one on the subject of the finances, — and you were of my opinion with a very few exceptions; but I nevertheless felt myself much honored by it."

"But that is not all; there was one in which I predicted all the important events which have taken place."

"Ah!"

"Yes."

"And which of them, sir, I pray?"

"There were two in particular; one was that the king would find himself some day compelled to dismiss you, in consequence of some engagements he had previously entered into."

"Did you predict my disgrace to him?"

"Perfectly."

"That was the first event: what was the second?"

"The taking of the Bastille."

"Did you predict the taking of the Bastille?"

"Monsieur le Baron, the Bastille was more than a royal prison, it was the symbol of tyranny. Liberty has

commenced its career by destroying the symbol; the revolution will do the rest."

"Have you duly considered the serious nature of the words you have just uttered, sir?"

"Undoubtedly I have."

"And you are not afraid to express such a theory openly?"

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid lest some misfortune should befall you."

"Monsieur de Necker," said Gilbert, smiling, "after once having got out of the Bastille, a man has nothing more to fear."

"Have you, then, come out of the Bastille?"

"This very day."

"And why were you thrown into the Bastille?"

"I ought to ask you that question."

"Ask me?"

"You, undoubtedly."

"And why should you ask me?"

"Because it was you who caused my imprisonment there."

"I had you thrown into the Bastille?"

"Six days ago; the date, as you see, is not so very remote that you should not be able to recollect it."

"It is impossible."

"Do you recognize your own signature?"

And Gilbert showed the ex-minister the leaf of the jail-book of the Bastille, and the *lettre de cachet* which was annexed to it.

"Yes," said Necker, "that is doubtless the *lettre de cachet*. You know that I signed as few as possible, and that the smallest number possible was still four thousand annually; besides, at the moment of my departure, they made me sign several in blank. Your

warrant of imprisonment, sir, must have been one of the latter."

"Do you mean to imply by this that I must in no way attribute my imprisonment to you?"

"Most certainly, I do."

"But still, Monsieur le Baron," said Gilbert, smiling, "you understand my motives for being so curious; it is absolutely necessary that I should know to whom I am indebted for my captivity. Be good enough, therefore, to tell me."

"Oh! there is nothing easier. I have always taken the precaution never to leave my letters at the ministry, and every evening I brought them back here. Those of this month are in the drawer B of this chiffonnier; let us look for the letter G in the bundle."

Necker opened the drawer, and looked over an enormous file, which might have contained some five or six hundred letters.

"I only keep those letters," said the ex-minister, "which are of such a nature as to cover my responsibility. Every arrest that I order insures me another enemy. I had therefore to guard myself against such a contingency. An omission to do so would surprise me greatly. Let us see — G — G, that is the one. Yes, Gilbert — your arrest was brought about by some one in the queen's household, my dear sir. Ah — ah! — in the queen's household — yes, here is a request for a warrant against a man named Gilbert. Profession not mentioned; black eyes, black hair. The description of your person follows. Travelling from Havre to Paris. That is all. Then the Gilbert mentioned in the warrant must have been you."

"It was myself. Can you trust me with that letter?"

"No; but I can tell you by whom it is signed."

"Please to do so."

"By the Countess de Charny."

"The Countess de Charny," repeated Gilbert. "I do not know her. I have done nothing to displease her."

And he raised his head gently, as if endeavoring to recall to mind the name of the person in question.

"There is, moreover, a small postscript," continued Necker, "without any signature, but written in a hand I know."

Gilbert stooped down and read in the margin of the letter: —

"Do what the Countess de Charny demands immediately."

"It is strange," said Gilbert. "I can readily conceive why the queen should have signed it, for I mentioned both her and the Polignacs in my essays. But Madame de Charny — "

"Do you not know her?"

"It must be an assumed name. Besides, it is not at all to be wondered at that the notabilities of Versailles should be unknown to me. I have been absent from France for fifteen years, during which time I only came back twice; and I returned after my second visit to it, some four years ago. Who is this Countess de Charny?"

"The friend, the bosom companion of the queen; the much beloved wife of the Count de Charny; a woman who is both beautiful and virtuous, — a prodigy, in short."

"Well, then, I do not know this prodigy."

"If such be the case, doctor, be persuaded of this, that you are the victim of some political intrigue. Have you never spoken of Count Cagliostro?"

"Yes."

"Were you acquainted with him?"

"He was my friend. He was even more than my friend; he was my master, my saviour."

"Well, then, either Austria or the Holy See must have demanded your incarceration. You have published some pamphlets, have you not?"

"Alas! yes."

"That is it, precisely. All their petty revenges point towards the queen, like the magnetic needle which points towards the pole, — the iron towards the loadstone. They have been conspiring against you; they have had you followed. The queen has ordered Madame de Charny to sign the letter, in order to prevent any suspicion; and now all the mystery is cleared up."

Gilbert reflected for a moment. This moment of reflection reminded him of the box which had been stolen from Billot's house; and with which neither the queen, nor Austria, nor the Holy See had any connection. This recollection led his mind to consider the matter in its right point of view.

"No," said he, "it is not that; it cannot be that. But it matters not. Let us talk of something else."

"Of what?"

"Of you."

"Of me? What can you have to say of me?"

"Only what you know as well as any one else. It is that before three days have elapsed you will be reinstated in your ministerial capacity; and then you may govern France as despotically as you please."

"Do you think so?" said Necker, smiling.

"And you think so, too, since you are not at Brussels."

"Well then," exclaimed Necker, "what will be the result? For it is the result I wish to come to."

"Here it is. You are beloved by the French; you will soon be adored by them. The queen was already tired of seeing you beloved. The king will grow tired of seeing you adored. They will acquire popularity at your expense, and you will not suffer it. Then you will become unpopular in your turn. The people, my dear Monsieur de Necker, is like a starving lion, which licks only the hand that supplies it with food, be it whose hand it may."

"After that?"

"After that you will again be lost in oblivion."

"I — fall into oblivion?"

"Alas! yes."

"And what will cause me to be forgotten?"

"The events of the times."

"My word of honor for it, you speak like a prophet."

"It is my misfortune to be one to a certain extent."

"Let us hear now what will happen?"

"Oh, it is not difficult to predict what will happen, for that which is to happen is already in embryo in the Assembly. A party will arise that is slumbering at this moment. I am mistaken; it is not slumbering, but it hides itself. This party has for its chief a principle, and its weapon is an idea."

"I understand you; you mean the Orleanist party?"

"No. I should have said of that one that its chief was a man, and its weapon popularity. I speak to you of a party whose name has not even yet been pronounced. Of the republican party."

"Of the republican party? Ah! that is too ridiculous."

"Do you not believe in its existence?"

"A chimera."

"Yes, a chimera, with a mouth of fire that will devour you all."

"Well, then, I shall become a republican. I am one already."

"A republican from Geneva, certainly."

"But it seems to me that a republican is a republican."

"There is your mistake, my good baron. Our republicans do not resemble the republicans of other countries. Our republicans will first have to devour all privileges, then the nobility, and after that the monarchy. You may start with our republicans, but they will reach the goal without you, for you will not desire to follow them so far. No, Monsieur de Necker, you are mistaken; you are not a republican."

"Oh, if you understand it in that sense, no; I love the king."

"And I too," said Gilbert; "and everybody at this moment loves him as we do. If I were to say this to a mind of less calibre than yours, I should be hooted and laughed at; but believe what I tell you, Monsieur de Necker."

"I would readily do so, indeed, if there were any probability of such an event; but —"

"Do you know any of the secret societies?"

"I have heard them much spoken of."

"Do you believe in their existence?"

"I believe in their existence, but I do not believe they are very extensively disseminated."

"Are you affiliated to any one of them?"

"No."

"Do you belong even to a Masonic lodge?"

"No."

"Well, then, Monsieur de Necker, I do."

"Are you affiliated to any of these societies?"

"Yes, to all of them. Beware, Monsieur de Necker; they form an immense net that surrounds every throne.

It is an invisible dagger that threatens every monarchy. We form a brotherhood of about three millions of men, scattered abroad in every land, disseminated throughout all classes of society. We have friends among the people, among the citizens, among the nobility, among princes, among sovereigns themselves. Take care, Monsieur de Necker; the prince with whom you might be irritated is perhaps an affiliated member. The valet who humbles himself in your presence may be an affiliated member. Your life is not yours; your fortune is not your own; your honor even is not yours. All this is directed by an invisible power, which you cannot combat, for you do not know it, and which may crush you because it knows you. Well, these three millions of men, do you see, who have already made the American republic, these three millions of men will try to form a French republic; then they will try to make a European republic."

"But," said Necker, "their republic of the United States does not alarm me much, and I willingly accept such a form of government."

"Yes, but between America and ourselves there is a deep gulf. America is a new country, without prejudices, without aristocratic privileges, without monarchy. It has a fertile soil, productive land, and virgin forests; America, which is situated between a sea which serves as an outlet for its commerce, and an immense solitude which is a source of wealth to its population, while France, — just consider how much it would be necessary to destroy in France before France can resemble America!"

"But, in fine, what do you intend to prove by this?"

"I mean to point out to you the path into which we

are inevitably forced. But I would endeavor to advance into it without causing any shock, by placing the king at the head of the movement."

"As a standard?"

"No, but as a shield."

"A shield!" observed Necker, smiling. "You know but little of the king if you wish to make him play such a part."

"Pardon me, — I know him well. Oh, gracious heaven! I know full well he is a man similar to a thousand others whom I have seen at the head of small districts in America; he is a good man without majesty, incapable of resistance, without originality of mind. But what would you have? Were it only for his sacred title, he would still be a rampart against those men of whom I was speaking to you a short time ago; and however weak the rampart may be, we like it better than no defence at all.

"I remember in our wars with the savage tribes of North America," continued Gilbert, "I remember having passed whole nights behind a clump of bulrushes, while the enemy was on the opposite bank of the river, and firing upon us.

"A bulrush is certainly no great defence. Still, I must frankly acknowledge to you, Monsieur de Necker, that my heart beat more freely behind those large green tubes, which were cut through by the bullets as if they were thread papers, than it did in the open field. Well, then, the king is my rush. It allows me to see the enemy, and it prevents the enemy from seeing me. That is the reason why I am a republican at New York or at Philadelphia, but a royalist in France. There our dictator was named Washington. Here, God knows what he will be named: either dagger or scaffold."

"You seem to view things in colors of blood, Doctor."

"You would see them in the same light as myself, if you had been, as I was, on the Place de Grève to-day."

"Yes, that is true; I was told that a massacre had taken place there."

"There is something magnificent, do you see, in the people; but it is when well disposed. Oh, human tempests!" exclaimed Gilbert, "how much do you surpass in fury all the tempests of the skies!"

Necker became thoughtful.

"Why can I not have you near me, Doctor?" said he; "you would be a useful counsellor in time of need."

"Near you, Monsieur de Necker? I should not be so useful to you, and so useful to France, as where I wish to go."

"And where do you wish to go?"

"Listen to me, sir; near the throne itself there is a great enemy of the throne; near the king there is a great enemy of the king; it is the queen. Poor woman! who forgets that she is the daughter of Maria Theresa, or rather, who only remembers it in a vain-glorious point of view; she thinks to save the king, and ruins more than the king, for she destroys the monarchy. Well, it is necessary that we who love the king, we who love France, should unite together to neutralize her power, and to annihilate her influence."

"Well, then, do as I said, sir: remain with me, assist me."

"If I were to remain near you, we should have but one sphere of action; you would be I, and I should be you. We must separate our forces, sir, and then they will acquire a double weight."

"And, with all that, what can we accomplish?"

"We may retard the catastrophe, perhaps, but certainly we cannot prevent it, although I can answer for the assistance of a powerful auxiliary, the Marquis de Lafayette."

"Is not Lafayette a republican?"

"As far as a Lafayette can be a republican. If we are absolutely to submit to the level of equality, believe me, we had better choose the level of nobility. I like equality that elevates, and not that which lowers mankind."

"And you can answer for Lafayette?"

"Yes, so long as we shall require nothing of him but honor, courage, and devotedness."

"Well, then, speak; tell me what is it you desire?"

"A letter of introduction to his Majesty, Louis XVI."

"A man of your worth does not need a letter of introduction; he may present himself without it."

"No, it suits me that I should be your creature; it is part of my project to be presented by you."

"And what is your ambition?"

"To become one of the king's physicians in ordinary."

"Oh, there is nothing more easy. But the queen?"

"When I have once seen the king, that will be my own affair."

"But if she should persecute you?"

"Then I will make the king assert his will."

"The king assert his will? You will be more than a man if you accomplish that."

"He who can control the physical part of a man, must be a great simpleton indeed if he does not some day succeed in controlling the mind."

"But do you not think that having been imprisoned in the Bastille is but a sorry recommendation for you, who wish to become the king's physician."

"On the contrary, it is the very best. Have I not

been, according to you, persecuted for the crime of philosophy?"

"I fear such is the case."

"Then the king will vindicate his reputation; the king will become popular by taking as his physician a pupil of Rousseau, a partisan of the new doctrines, — a prisoner who has left the Bastille, in short. The first time you see him, make him duly weigh the advantage of such a course."

"You are always in the right; but when once you are employed by the king, can I rely upon you?"

"Entirely, so long as you shall follow the line of politics which we shall adopt."

"What will you promise me?"

"To warn you of the precise moment when you must retreat."

Necker looked at Gilbert for a moment; then in a more thoughtful tone: —

"Indeed; that is the greatest service which a devoted friend can render to a minister, for it is the last one."

And he seated himself at his table to write to the king.

While he was thus occupied, Gilbert was again examining the letter demanding his arrest; he several times repeated, —

"The Countess de Charny? Who can she be?"

"Here, sir," said Necker, a few moments after, while he presented Gilbert with the letter he had just written.

Gilbert took the letter and read it.

It contained the following lines: —

SIRE, — Your Majesty needs the services of a trustworthy person, with whom you may converse upon your affairs. My last gift, my last service in leaving the king, is the present I make him of Doctor Gilbert.

It will be sufficient for me to tell your Majesty that Doctor Gilbert is not only one of the most skilful physicians living, but also the author of the works entitled "Administrations and Politics," which made so lively an impression upon your mind.

At your Majesty's feet,

BARON DE NECKER.

Necker did not date the letter, and gave it to Doctor Gilbert, closed only with an ordinary seal.

"And now," added he, "I am again at Brussels, am I not?"

"Yes, certainly, and more so than ever. To-morrow morning, at all events, you shall hear from me."

The baron struck against the panel in a peculiar manner. Madame de Staël again appeared; only this time, in addition to her branch of pomegranate, she held one of Doctor Gilbert's pamphlets in her hands.

She showed him the title of it with a sort of flattering coquetry.

Gilbert took leave of Monsieur de Necker, and kissed the hand of the baroness, who accompanied him to the door of the cabinet.

And he returned to his coach, where he found Pitou and Billot sleeping upon the front seat, the coachman sleeping on his box, and the horses sleeping upon their exhausted limbs.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE KING LOUIS XVI.

THE interview between Gilbert, Madame de Staël, and Monsieur de Necker had lasted about an hour and a half. Gilbert re-entered Paris at a quarter-past nine o'clock, drove straight to the post-house, ordered horses and a post-chaise; and while Billot and Pitou were gone to rest themselves, after their fatigue, in a small hotel in the Rue Thiroux, where Billot generally put up when he came to Paris, Gilbert set off at a gallop on the road to Versailles.

It was late, but that mattered little to Gilbert. To men of his nature, activity is a necessity. Perhaps his journey might be a fruitless one. But he even preferred a useless journey to remaining motionless. For nervous temperaments, uncertainty is a greater torment than the most frightful reality.

He arrived at Versailles at half-past ten; in ordinary times, every one would have been in bed and wrapped in the profoundest slumber; but that night no eye was closed at Versailles. They had felt the counter-shock of the terrible concussion with which Paris was still trembling.

The French Guards, the body-guards, the Swiss drawn up in platoons, and grouped near the openings of all the principal streets, were conversing among themselves, or with those of the citizens whose fidelity to the monarchy inspired them with confidence.

For Versailles has, at all times, been a royalist city. Religious respect for the monarchy, if not for the monarch, is engrafted in the hearts of its inhabitants, as if it were a quality of its soil. Having always lived near kings, and fostered by their bounty, beneath the shade of their wonders, — having always inhaled the intoxicating perfume of the *fleurs-de-lys*, and seen the brilliant gold of their garments, and the smiles upon their august lips, the inhabitants of Versailles, for whom kings have built a city of marble and porphyry, feel almost kings themselves; and even at the present day, even now, when moss is growing round the marble, and grass is springing up between the slabs of the pavement, now that gold has almost disappeared from the wainscoting, and that the shady walks of the parks are more solitary than a graveyard, Versailles must either belie its origin, or must consider itself as a fragment of the fallen monarchy, and no longer feeling the pride of power and wealth, must at least retain the poetical associations of regret, and the sovereign charms of melancholy. Thus, as we have already stated, all Versailles, in the night between the 14th and 15th July, 1789, was confusedly agitated, anxious to ascertain how the King of France would reply to the insult offered to the throne, and the deadly wound inflicted on his power.

By his answer to Monsieur de Dreux Brézé, Mirabeau had struck royalty in the face.

By the taking of the Bastille, the people had struck royalty to the heart.

Still, to narrow-minded and short-sighted persons the question seemed easy of solution. In the eyes of military men in particular, who were accustomed to see nothing more than the triumph or defeat of brute-force in the result of events, it was merely necessary to march upon

Paris. . Thirty thousand men and twenty pieces of cannon would soon reduce to a nonentity the conceit and the victorious fury of the Parisians.

Never had monarchy so great a number of advisers, for everybody uttered his opinions loudly and publicly.

The most moderate said : —

" It is a very simple matter."

This form of language, it will be observed, is nearly always applied, with us, to the most difficult circumstances.

" It is a very simple matter," said they. " Let them begin by obtaining from the National Assembly a sanction which it will not refuse. Its attitude has, for some time, been reassuring to every one ; it will not countenance violence committed by the lower classes, any more than abuses perpetrated by the upper.

" The Assembly will plainly declare that insurrection is a crime; that citizens who have representatives to explain their griefs to the king, and a king to do them justice, are wrong in having recourse to arms and in shedding blood.

" Being once armed with this declaration, which could certainly be obtained from the Assembly, the king could not avoid chastising Paris, like a good parent, that is to say, severely.

" And then the tempest would be allayed, and the monarchy would regain the first of its rights. The people would return to their duty, which is obedience, and things would go on in the usual way."

It was thus that the people in general were settling this great question, upon the squares and the Boulevards.

But before the Place d'Armes, and in the vicinity of the barracks, they treated the subject very differently.

There could be seen men altogether unknown in the neighborhood, men with intelligent countenances and

sinister looks, disseminating mysterious advice to all around them, exaggerating the news which was already sufficiently serious, and propagating, almost publicly, the seditious ideas which during two months had agitated Paris and excited the suburbs. Round these men groups were forming, some gloomy and hostile, some excited, composed of people whom these orators were reminding of their misery, their sufferings, the brutal disdain of the monarchy for the privations of the people. An orator said to them: —

"During eight centuries that the people have struggled, what have they obtained? Nothing. No social rights; no political rights. What is their fate? That of the farmer's cow, from whom its calf is led to the shambles, its milk to be sold at the market, its meat to be taken to the slaughter-house, its skin to be dried at the tannery. In short, pressed by want, the monarchy has yielded, it has made an appeal to the States; but now that the States are assembled, what does the monarchy? Since the day of their convocation it weighs heavily upon them. If the National Assembly is formed, it is against the will of the monarchy. Well, then! since our brethren of Paris have just given us such vigorous assistance, let us urge the National Assembly onward. Each step which it takes in the political arena, where the battle has begun, is a victory for us: it is the extension of our field, it is the increase of our fortune, it is the consecration of our rights. Forward! forward, citizens! The Bastille is but the outwork of tyranny! The Bastille is taken; the citadel is before us!"

In remote corners other meetings were formed, and other words pronounced. Those who pronounced them were men evidently belonging to a superior class, who had sought in the costume of the vulgar a disguise with

which their white hands and distinguished accent contrasted strangely.

"People," exclaimed these men, "in truth, you are deceived on both sides! Some ask you to retrace your steps, while others urge you onward. Some speak to you of political rights, of social rights; but are you happier for having been permitted to vote through the medium of your delegates? Are you any the richer since you have been represented? Have you been less hungry, now that the National Assembly makes decrees? No. Leave politics, then, to those who can read. It is not a written phrase or maxim that you need. It is bread, and again bread; it is the well-being of your children, the tranquillity and security of your wives. Who will give you all that? A king, firm in character, young in mind, and of a generous heart. That king is not Louis XVI., — Louis XVI., who is ruled by his wife, the iron-hearted Austrian. It is — search carefully round the throne; search there for him who can render France happy, and whom the queen naturally detests, and that because he throws a shadow over the picture, because he loves the French, and is beloved by them."

Thus did public opinion manifest itself at Versailles; thus was civil war fomented everywhere.

Gilbert observed several of these groups, and then, having perceived the state of the public mind, he walked straight to the palace, which was guarded by numerous military posts, to protect it against whom no one knew.

Notwithstanding all these precautions, Gilbert, without the slightest difficulty, crossed the first courtyard, and reached the vestibule without having been asked by any one where he was going.

When he arrived at the Hall of the Œil-de-Bœuf, he

was stopped by one of the body-guards. Gilbert drew from his pocket the letter of Monsieur de Necker, whose signature he showed.

The guard cast his eyes over it. The instructions he had received were very strict; and as the strictest instructions are precisely those which most need to be interpreted, the guard said to Gilbert: —

"The order, sir, to allow no one to visit the king is positive; but as the case of a person sent by Monsieur de Necker was evidently not foreseen, and as, according to all probability, you are the bearer of important information to his Majesty, go in. I will take the responsibility upon myself."

Gilbert entered.

The king was not in his apartments, but in the council-room. He was just receiving a deputation from the National Guard of Paris, which had come to request the dismissal of the troops, the formation of a guard of citizens, and his presence in the capital.

Louis had listened coldly; then he had replied that the situation of affairs required investigation; and that, moreover, he was about to deliberate on the subject with his council.

And, accordingly, he deliberated.

During this time the deputies were waiting in the gallery; and through the ground-glass windows of the doors they could observe the shadows of the royal councillors and the threatening attitude which they assumed.

By the study of this species of phantasmagoria they could foresee that the answer would be unfavorable.

In fact, the king contented himself with saying that he would appoint some officers for the national militia, and would order the troops at the Champ-de-Mars to fall back.

As to his presence in Paris, he would only show this favor when the rebellious city had completely submitted.

The deputation begged, insisted, and conjured. The king replied that his heart was grieved, but that he could do nothing more.

And satisfied with this momentary triumph and this manifestation of a power which he no longer possessed, the king returned to his apartment.

He there found Gilbert. The guard was standing near him.

"What is wanted of me?" asked the king.

The body-guard approached him, and while he was apologizing to the king for having disobeyed his orders, Gilbert, who for many years had not seen the king, was silently examining the man whom God had given to France as her pilot during the most violent tempest the country had ever experienced.

That stout, short body, in which there was neither elasticity nor majesty; that inexpressive and low-formed brow; that pallid youthfulness contending against premature old age; the unequal struggle between a powerful physical organization, and a mediocre intelligence, to which the haughtiness of rank alone gave a fitful importance, — all these to the physiognomist who had studied with Lavater, to the magnetizer who had read the future with Balsamo, to the philosopher who had dreamed with Jean Jacques, to the traveller, in short, who had passed all the human races in review, — all these implied degeneracy, dwindling, impotence, and ruin.

Gilbert was therefore struck dumb, not from a feeling of respect, but from grief, while contemplating this mournful spectacle.

The king advanced towards him.

"It is you," said he, "who bring me a letter from Monsieur de Necker?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Ah!" cried he, as if he had doubted it; "give it to me quickly."

And he pronounced these words in the tone of a drowning man who cries, "A rope!"

Gilbert presented the letter to the king.

Louis immediately grasped it, read it hurriedly, then, with a gesture which was not altogether wanting in nobleness of manner: —

"Leave us, Monsieur de Varicourt," said he to the body-guard.

Gilbert remained alone with the king. The room was lighted but by a single lamp. It might have been thought that the king had diminished the quantity of light, in order that no one should perceive on his wearied rather than careworn brow the anxious thoughts which crowded there.

"Sir," said he, fixing upon Gilbert a clearer and more penetrating gaze than the latter would have thought him capable of, — "Sir, is it true that you are the author of the memoirs which have so much struck me?"

"Yes, Sire."

"What is your age?"

"Thirty-two years, Sire; but study and misfortune double age. Treat me as if I were an old man."

"Why did you omit so long to present yourself to me?"

"Because, Sire, I did not wish to tell your Majesty aloud what I could write to you more freely and more easily."

Louis XVI. reflected.

"Had you no other reason?" said he, suspiciously.

"No, Sire."

"But still, either I am mistaken, or there were some peculiar circumstances which ought to have convinced you of my kindly feeling towards you."

"Your Majesty intends to speak of that sort of rendezvous which I had the temerity to give the king, when, after my first memoir, I begged him, five years ago, to place a light near his window, at eight o'clock in the evening, to indicate that he had read my work."

"And — ?" said the king, with an air of satisfaction.

"And on the day and at the hour appointed, the light was, in fact, placed where I had asked you to place it."

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards I saw it lifted up and set down again three times."

"And then?"

"After that I read the following words in the 'Gazette:'—

"'He whom the light has called three times may present himself to him who has raised it three times, when he will be compensated.'"

"Those are, in fact, the very words of the advertisement," said the king.

"And there is the advertisement itself," said Gilbert, drawing from his pocket the number of the 'Gazette' in which the advertisement he had just alluded to had been published five years previously.

"Well — very well," said the king. "I have long expected you. You arrive at a moment I had quite ceased to expect you. You are welcome; for you come, like good soldiers, at the moment of battle."

Then, looking once more attentively at Gilbert:—

"Do you know, sir," said he to him, "that it is not an ordinary thing for a king to await the arrival of

a person to whom he has said, 'Come to receive your reward,' and that that person should abstain from coming."

Gilbert smiled.

"Come now, tell me," said Louis XVI., "why did you not come?"

"Because I deserved no reward, Sire."

"For what reason?"

"Born a Frenchman, loving my country, anxious for its prosperity, confounding my individuality with that of thirty millions of men, my fellow-citizens, I labored for myself while laboring for them. A man is not worthy of reward when he labors for his own interest."

"That is a paradox, sir; you had another reason."

Gilbert did not reply.

"Speak, sir; I desire it."

"Perhaps, Sire, you have guessed rightly."

"Is not this it?" asked the king in an anxious tone. "You found the position a very serious one, and you kept yourself in reserve."

"For one still more serious. Yes, Sire, your Majesty has divined the truth."

"I like frankness," said the king, who could not conceal his agitation; for he was of a timid nature, and blushed easily.

"Then," continued Louis XVI., "you predicted the king's fall to him, and you feared to be placed too near the ruins."

"No, Sire, since it is just at the moment that danger is most imminent that I come to face the danger."

"Yes, yes; you have just left Necker, and you speak like him. The danger! — the danger! Without doubt it is dangerous at this moment to approach me. And where is Necker?"

"Quite ready, I believe, to obey the orders of your Majesty."

"So much the better; I shall want him," said the king, with a sigh. "In politics we must not be headstrong. We think to do good, and we do wrong. We even do good, and some capricious event mars our projects; and though the plans laid were in reality good, we are accused of having been mistaken."

The king sighed again. Gilbert came to his assistance.

"Sire," said he, "your Majesty reasons admirably; but what is desirable at the present moment is, to see into the future more clearly than has been done hitherto."

The king raised his head, and his inexpressive eyebrows slightly frowned.

"Sire, forgive me," said Gilbert; "I am a physician. When the danger is imminent, I speak briefly."

"Do you, then, attach much importance to the riot of to-day?"

"Sire, it is not a riot — it is a revolution."

"And you wish me to make terms with rebels and assassins? For, in fine, they have taken the Bastille by force: it is an act of rebellion; they have killed Monsieur de Launay, Monsieur de Losme, and Monsieur de Flesselles: it is murder."

"I wish you to distinguish more correctly, Sire. Those who took the Bastille are heroes; those who assassinated Messieurs de Flesselles, de Losme, and de Launay are murderers."

The king colored slightly, and almost immediately this color disappeared, his lips became pale, and a few drops of perspiration trickled down his forehead.

"You are right, sir. You are a physician indeed, or a surgeon rather, for you cut to the quick. But let us

return to the object of our interview. You are Doctor Gilbert, are you not, — or at least it is with this name that your memoirs are signed?"

"Sire, it does me great honor that your Majesty has so good a memory, although, taking it all in all, I have no great reason to be proud of my name."

"How is that?"

"My name must, indeed, have been pronounced before your Majesty, and that not long ago."

"I do not understand you."

"Six days ago I was arrested and thrown into the Bastille. Now I have heard it said that no arrest of any importance was ever made without the king being aware of the fact."

"You in the Bastille!" said the king, opening his eyes widely.

"Here is the registration of my imprisonment, Sire. Put in prison, as I have the honor to tell your Majesty, six days ago, by order of the king, I came out of it at three o'clock to-day, by the grace of the people."

"To-day?"

"Yes, Sire. Did your Majesty hear the cannon?"

"Most undoubtedly."

"Well, then, the cannon opened the gates for me."

"Ah!" murmured the king, "I would willingly say that I am pleased at this event, had not the cannon of this morning been fired at the Bastille and the monarchy at the same time."

"Oh, Sire, do not make a prison the symbol of a principle: say, on the contrary, Sire, that you rejoice that the Bastille is taken: for henceforward injustice will not be committed in the king's name without his cognizance, — injustice similar to that of which I have just been the victim."

"But surely, sir, your arrest must have had a cause?"

"None that I know of, Sire; I was arrested on my return to France, and imprisoned, that is all."

"Really, sir," said Louis XVI., kindly, "is there not some egotism on your part, in speaking to me thus of yourself, when I so much need to have my own position spoken of?"

"Sire, all I require is, that your Majesty will answer me one single question."

"What is it?"

"Was or was not your Majesty concerned in my arrest?"

"I was not even aware of your return to France."

"I rejoice at this answer, Sire; I shall then be enabled to declare openly that when your Majesty is supposed to do wrong, you are nearly always calumniated; and to those who doubt it, I can cite myself as an example."

The king smiled.

"As a physician," said he, "you pour balm into the wound."

"Oh, Sire, I shall pour in the balm abundantly; and if you desire it I will cure the wound, that I will answer for."

"I most assuredly desire it."

"You must desire it very firmly, Sire."

"I do desire it firmly."

"Before going any farther, Sire," said Gilbert, "will you read that line written in the margin of my jail-book entry?"

"What line?" asked the king in an anxious tone.

Gilbert presented the page to the king. The king read: "'By request of the queen.'"

The king frowned.

"Of the queen!" said he; "can you have incurred her displeasure?"

"Sire, I am certain her Majesty knows me still less than did your Majesty."

"But still, you must have committed some fault; a man is not sent to the Bastille for nothing."

"It would seem that he may be, since I have just come out of it."

"But Monsieur Necker has sent you to me, and the warrant of imprisonment was signed by him."

"It was so undoubtedly."

"Then explain yourself more clearly. Review your past life. See if you do not find some circumstance in it which you had yourself forgotten."

"Review my past life! Yes, Sire; I shall do it, and aloud; do not fear, it will not occupy much time. I have labored without intermission since I attained the age of sixteen: the pupil of Jean Jacques, the companion of Balsamo, the friend of Lafayette and of Washington, I have never had cause to reproach myself, since the day that I left France, for a single fault, nor even an error. When acquired science permitted me to attend the wounded or the sick, I always thought myself responsible to God for every one of my thoughts, and every action. Since God has given me the care of human beings as a surgeon, I have shed blood for the sake of humanity, while ready to give my own to soothe or to save my patient; as a physician, I have always been a consoler, and sometimes a benefactor. Fifteen years have thus passed away. God has blessed my efforts: I have seen return to life the greater part of the afflicted, who have all kissed my hands. Those who have died, have been taken away by the will of God. No, I repeat, Sire, since the day when I left France, and that was fifteen

years ago, I have done nothing with which I can reproach myself."

"You have in America associated with innovators, and your writings have propagated their principles."

"Yes, Sire; and I forgot this claim to the gratitude of kings and men."

The king was silent.

"Sire," continued Gilbert, "now, my life is known to you; I have neither offended nor wounded any one, — neither a beggar nor a queen, — and I come to ask your Majesty why I have been punished."

"I shall speak to the queen, Monsieur Gilbert; but do you think the *lettre de cachet* comes directly from the queen?"

"I do not say that, Sire; I even think the queen merely recommended it."

"Ah! you see," cried Louis, quite joyfully.

"Yes; but you are aware, Sire, that what a queen recommends, she commands."

"At whose request was the *lettre de cachet* granted? May I see it?"

"Yes, Sire," said Gilbert. "Look at it."

And he presented him the entry in the jail-book.

"The Countess de Charny!" exclaimed the king. "How, it is she who caused your arrest? But what can you have done to this poor Charny?"

"I did not even know that lady by name this morning, Sire."

Louis passed his hand over his brow.

"Charny," murmured he, "Charny, — sweetness, virtue, chastity itself."

"You will see, Sire," said Gilbert, laughing, "that I was imprisoned in the Bastille at the request of the three theological virtues!"

"Oh, I will clear this up at once!" said the king.

And he pulled a bell.

An usher appeared.

"See if the Countess de Charny is with the queen," said Louis.

"Sire," said the usher, "the countess has this instant crossed the gallery; she is about stepping into her coach."

"Run after her," said Louis, eagerly, "and request her to come to my cabinet on an affair of importance."

Then, turning towards Gilbert:—

"Is that what you desire, sir?" said he.

"Yes, Sire," answered Gilbert, "and I return a thou-
said thanks to your Majesty."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE COUNTESS DE CHARNY.

GILBERT, on hearing the order to send for Madame de Charny, had retired into the recess of a window.

As to the king, he was walking up and down in the room called the Œil-de-Bœuf, preoccupied at times with public affairs, at others with the pertinacity of this Gilbert, by whom, in spite of himself, he felt strangely influenced, and at a moment when nothing ought to have interested him but the affairs of Paris.

Suddenly the door of the cabinet was thrown open, the usher announced the Countess de Charny, and Gilbert, through the closed curtains, could perceive a woman, whose flowing and silken robes grazed the half-opened door.

This lady was dressed, according to the fashion of the times, in a déshabille of gray silk, striped with a variety of colors, with a petticoat of the same stuff, and a sort of shawl, which, after being crossed over the chest, was fastened behind her waist, and showed to great advantage the beauties of a full and well-developed bosom. A small bonnet, coquettishly fixed on the summit of a high head-dress, high-heeled shoes, which showed the exquisite shape of a beautiful instep, a small cane twirled by the gloved fingers of a slender and delicate hand, with tapering and perfectly aristocratic fingers: such was the person so anxiously expected by Gilbert.

The king stepped forward to meet her.

"You were just going out, Countess, I was told."

"In truth, Sire," replied the countess, "I was on the point of stepping into my carriage when I received your Majesty's order."

On hearing this firm-toned voice, the ears of Gilbert were suddenly assailed as with a rushing sound. The blood instantly suffused his cheeks, and a thousand shudders appeared to thrill through his whole system.

Despite himself, he made a step from the curtain, behind which he had secreted himself.

"She!" stammered he; "she — Andrée —"

"Madame," continued the king, who, as well as the countess, had not observed the emotion of Gilbert, who was hidden in the shade, "I requested you to visit me, for the purpose of obtaining some information from you."

"I am ready to comply with your Majesty's wishes."

The king leaned in the direction of Gilbert as if to warn him.

The latter, perceiving that the moment to show himself had not yet arrived, gradually withdrew himself again behind the curtain.

"Madame," said the king, "it is now eight or ten days since a warrant of imprisonment was requested of Monsieur de Necker —"

Gilbert, through the almost imperceptible opening between the curtains, fastened his gaze upon Andrée. The young woman was pale, feverish, and anxious, and appeared borne down by the weight of a secret prepossession, for which even she herself could not account.

"You hear me, do you not, Countess?" asked Louis XVI., seeing that Madame de Charny hesitated before answering.

"Yes, Sire."

"Well, do you understand me, and can you answer my question?"

"I am endeavoring to remember," said Andrée.

"Permit me to assist your memory, Countess. The warrant of imprisonment was demanded by you, and the demand was countersigned by the queen."

The countess, instead of answering, appeared to abandon herself more and more to that feverish abstraction which seemed to lead her beyond the limits of real life.

"But answer me, then, Madame," said the king, who began to grow impatient.

"It is true," said she, trembling, "it is true. I wrote the letter, and her Majesty, the queen, countersigned it."

"Then," asked Louis, "tell me the crime which had been committed by the person against whom such a document was required."

"Sire," said Andrée, "I cannot tell you what crime he had committed; but what I can tell you is, that the crime was great."

"Oh, can you not confide that even to me?"

"No, Sire."

"Not to the king?"

"No. I hope your Majesty will forgive me; but I cannot."

"Then you shall tell it to him in person, Madame," said the king; "for what you have refused to King Louis XVI., you cannot refuse to Doctor Gilbert."

"To Doctor Gilbert!" exclaimed Andrée. "Great God! where is he then?"

The king stepped aside to allow Gilbert to advance; the curtains were thrown apart, and the doctor appeared, almost as pale as Andrée.

"Here he is, Madame," said he.

At the sight of Gilbert, the countess staggered. Her limbs shook beneath her. She fell backwards, as does a person who is about to faint, and only maintained a standing position with the assistance of an arm-chair, on which she leaned in the sorrowful, motionless, and almost unconscious attitude of Eurydice at the moment when the serpent's venom reaches her heart.

"Madame," said Gilbert, bowing to her with mock politeness, "allow me to repeat the question which has just been put to you by his Majesty."

The lips of Andrée could be seen to move, but no sound issued from them.

"What offence had I committed, Madame, that an order from you should have caused me to be thrown into a loathsome dungeon?"

On hearing this voice, Andrée bounded as if she had felt the tearing asunder of the fibres of her heart.

Then, on a sudden, casting upon Gilbert an icy look, like that of a serpent: —

"Me, sir?" said she. "I do not know you."

But while she pronounced these words, Gilbert, on his side, had looked at her with such intentness, he had loaded the brightness of his gaze with so much invincible audacity, that the countess cast down her eyes, completely overpowered.

"Countess," said the king, in a mild tone of reproach, "see where the abuse of a signature may lead you. Here is a gentleman whom you do not know, and you yourself confess it; a man who is a great practitioner, a profound physician, a man who can be reproached for nothing."

Andrée raised her head, and almost petrified Gilbert by her contemptuous look.

He, however, remained calm and proud.

"I say, then," continued the king, "that having no

cause for complaint against Monsieur Gilbert, by thus persecuting him instead of another, it is on the head of an innocent man that punishment has fallen. Countess, this is wrong."

"Sire," said Andrée.

"Ah!" interrupted the king, who already trembled for fear of disobliging the favorite of his wife, "I know that you are kind-hearted, and that if you have punished some one through hatred, that person must have deserved it; but you see that it will be necessary, in future, to avoid the recurrence of such mistakes."

Then, turning towards Gilbert: —

"You see, Doctor, it is the fault of the times, rather than that of men. We are born in corruption, and we die in it; but we will endeavor at least to ameliorate the condition of posterity, and you will, I trust, assist me in this work, Doctor Gilbert."

And Louis ceased speaking, thinking he had said enough to satisfy both parties.

Poor king! had he pronounced those words before the National Assembly, not only would he have been applauded, but, moreover, he would have seen them reproduced in all the court journals.

But the two unrelenting enemies present at this interview appreciated but little his conciliating philosophy.

"With your Majesty's permission," said Gilbert, "I will request the countess to repeat what she has already stated, namely, that she does not know me."

"Countess," said the king, "will you do what the doctor requests of you?"

"I do not know Doctor Gilbert," repeated Andrée in a firm voice.

"But you know another Gilbert, my namesake, — the Gilbert whose crime has been visited on me."

"Oh," said Andrée, "I know that person, and I consider him an infamous wretch."

"Sire, it would not become me to interrogate the countess," said Gilbert; "but deign to ask her of what that infamous man has been guilty."

"Countess, you cannot refuse acceding to so just a request."

"What he has done?" said Andrée. "Doubtless the queen knew of what crime he had been guilty, since with her own hand she authorized the letter by means of which I applied for his arrest."

"But," said the king, "it is not quite sufficient that the queen should be convinced; it is necessary that I too should be convinced. The queen is the queen, but I am the king."

"Well then, Sire, the Gilbert mentioned in the warrant is a man who, sixteen years ago, committed a most fearful crime."

"Will your Majesty ask the countess how old that man is at the present day?"

The king repeated the question.

"From thirty to thirty-two," said Andrée.

"Sire," rejoined Gilbert, "if the crime was committed sixteen years ago, it was not committed by a man, but by a child; and if, during these sixteen years, the man has deplored the crime committed by the child, does not that man deserve some little leniency?"

"But, sir," asked the king, "you then know the Gilbert in question?"

"I know him, Sire," said Gilbert.

"And has he committed no other fault except this one of his early youth?"

"I do not know that since the day on which he committed — I will not say that fault, Sire, for I am less

indulgent than you — but that crime, I do not know that any one in this world has aught to reproach him with."

"No, unless it is having dipped his pen in poison, and having composed the most odious libels," cried Andrée.

"Sire, please to ask the countess," said Gilbert, "if the real object of the arrest of this Gilbert was not to afford every facility to his enemies, or rather to his enemy, to obtain possession of a certain casket containing certain papers, which might have compromised a great lady, a lady of the court."

Andrée trembled from head to foot.

"Monsieur," faltered she.

"Countess, what is this casket?" asked the king, who had perceived the trembling and the pallor of the countess.

"Ah, Madame," cried Gilbert, feeling that he was gaining the mastery, "no tergiversation, — no subterfuge. There have been misstatements enough on both sides. I am the Gilbert who committed the crime; I am the Gilbert of the libels; I am the Gilbert of the casket. You — you are the great lady, — the lady of the court. I call upon the King to be our judge; accept him, and we will tell to this judge, — to the King — to God, — we will tell all that has occurred between us; and the King shall decide, while we await the judgment of God."

"Say what you will, sir," rejoined the Countess, "but I can say nothing; I do not know you."

"And you know nothing of this casket either?"

The countess convulsively closed her hands and bit her pale lips till they bled.

"No," said she, "I know no more of it than I do of you."

But the effort she made to pronounce these words was

such, that her body trembled as does a statue on its pedestal during an earthquake.

"Madame, beware," said Gilbert. "I am, as you can hardly have forgotten, the pupil of a man called Joseph Balsamo. The power which he possessed over you, he has transmitted to me. For the last time, will you answer the question I put to you: My casket?"

"No," cried the countess, a prey to the most indescribable agitation, and making a movement to rush out of the room; "no, no, no!"

"Well, then," said Gilbert, in his turn becoming pale, and raising his threatening arm; "well then! thou iron nature, thou heart of adamant, bend, burst, and break beneath the irresistible pressure of my will. Wilt thou not speak, Andrée?"

"No, no," cried the countess; "help me Sire, help me!"

"Thou shalt speak," cried Gilbert; "and no one, were he the King, or even God himself, can withdraw thee from my power. Thou shalt speak, then; thou shalt reveal thy whole soul to the witness of this solemn scene; and all that is contained in the recesses of thy conscience, — all that which God alone can read in the depths of the deepest souls, you shall know, Sire, from the lips of her who refuses to reveal them. Sleep, Countess de Charny, sleep and speak. I will it!"

Hardly were the words pronounced, when the Countess stopped short in the midst of a suppressed cry, stretched forth her arms, and seeking support for her trembling limbs, fell, as if imploring a refuge, into the arms of the king, who, trembling himself, seated her upon an arm-chair.

"Oh!" said Louis XVI., "I have heard of things of this nature, but I never before witnessed anything to

equal it. Is it not to a magnetic sleep that she has just succumbed, sir?"

"Yes, Sire; take the hand of the countess, and ask her why she caused me to be arrested," said Gilbert, as if the right to command belonged to him alone.

Louis XVI., quite thunderstruck by this marvellous scene, took two steps backwards to convince himself that he was not himself asleep, and that what was taking place before him was not a dream; then, like a mathematician who is interested in some new solution, he approached nearer to the countess, whose hand he took in his.

"Let us see, Countess," said he; "it was then you who caused the arrest of Doctor Gilbert?"

Still, although asleep, the countess made one last effort, snatched her hand from that of the king, and gathering up all her strength:—

"No," cried she, "I will not speak."

The king looked at Gilbert, as if to ask him which of the two would overcome the other, — his will or that of Andrée.

Gilbert smiled.

"You will not speak?" said he.

And, his eyes fixed upon the sleeping Andrée, he advanced a step towards the arm-chair.

Andrée shuddered.

"Will you not speak?" added he, taking a second step, which diminished the distance that separated him from the countess.

Every muscle of Andrée's frame became rigid in a supreme effort of reaction.

"Ah, you will not, speak, then?" said he, taking a third stride, which placed him at the side of Andrée, over whose head he placed his outstretched hand; "ah, you will not speak?"

Andrée was writhing in the most fearful convulsions.

"But take care! take care!" cried Louis XVI., "you will kill her!"

"Fear nothing, Sire; it is with the soul alone that I have to contend; the soul is struggling, but it will yield."

Then, lowering his hand: —

"Speak!" said he.

Andrée extended her arms, and made an effort to breathe, as if she had been under the pressure of a pneumatic machine.

"Speak!" repeated Gilbert, lowering his hand still more.

All the muscles of the young woman's body seemed about to burst. A fringe of froth appeared upon her lips, and a commencement of epilepsy convulsed her from head to foot.

"Doctor! Doctor!" said the king, "take care!"

But he, without noticing the king, lowered his hand a third time, and touching the top of the countess's head with the palm of that hand: —

"Speak!" said he; "it is my will."

Andrée, on feeling the touch of that hand, heaved a sigh, her arms fell motionless to her side, her head, which had been thrown backwards, fell forward upon her breast, and a copious flood of tears oozed through her closed eyelids.

"My God! my God! my God!" faltered she.

"Invoke the Lord, — be it so; he who operates in the name of God does not fear God."

"Oh!" said the countess, "how I hate you!"

"Abhor me, if you will, but speak!"

"Sire, Sire," exclaimed Andrée, "tell him that he consumes me, that he devours me, that he kills me!"

"Speak!" said Gilbert.

Then he made a sign to the king that he might interrogate her.

"So that, Countess," said the king, again taking her hand, "he whom you wished to arrest, and whom you caused to be arrested, was really the doctor himself?"

"Yes."

"And there was no mistake, no misunderstanding?"

"None."

"And the casket?" said the king.

"Well," articulated the countess slowly, "could I allow that casket to remain in his possession?"

Gilbert and the king exchanged glances.

"And did you take it from him?" said Louis XVI.

"I had it taken from him."

"Oh! oh! tell me how that was managed, Countess," said the king, forgetful of all ceremony, and kneeling down before Andrée. "You had it taken?"

"Yes."

"When, and by what means?"

"I ascertained that this Gilbert, who during sixteen years has already made two voyages to France, was about to make a third one, and this last time with the intention of remaining here."

"But the casket?" asked the king.

"I ascertained by means of the lieutenant of police, Monsieur de Crosne, that during one of his journeys he had bought some lands in the neighborhood of Villers-Cotterets, that the farmer who tenanted his lands enjoyed his whole confidence; I suspected that the casket might be left at his residence."

"What made you think so?"

"I went to see Mesmer. I made him put me to sleep, and I saw the casket while in that state."

"It was —"

"In a large linen wardrobe on the ground-floor, hidden under some linen."

"This is wonderful!" said the king. "After that tell me what took place."

"I returned to the house of Monsieur de Crosne, who having been recommended to do so by the queen, gave me one of his most skilful agents."

"What was the name of this agent?" asked Gilbert.

Andrée shuddered as if a hot iron had touched her.

"I ask you his name?" repeated Gilbert.

Andrée endeavored to resist.

"His name; I will know it!" said the doctor.

"Wolfsfoot," she replied.

"After that?" asked the king.

"Well, then, yesterday morning this man got possession of the casket. That is all."

"No, it is not all," said Gilbert. "You must now tell the king where the casket is at this moment."

"Oh," said Louis XVI., "you ask too much of her."

"No, Sire."

"But by this Wolfsfoot, by means of Monsieur de Crosne, one might ascertain —"

"Oh, we shall know everything quicker, and much better, through the Countess!"

Andrée, by a convulsive movement, the object of which was doubtless to prevent the words from escaping her lips, clinched her teeth with such violence as almost to break them.

The king pointed out this nervous convulsion to the doctor.

Gilbert smiled.

He touched with his thumb and forefinger the lower part of the face of Andrée, whose muscles were relaxed at the same moment.

"In the first place, Countess, tell the king clearly that this casket belonged to Doctor Gilbert."

"Yes, yes, it belongs to him," said the sleeping woman, angrily.

"And where is it at this moment?" asked Gilbert. "Make haste! the king has not time to wait."

Andrée hesitated for a moment.

"At Wolfsfoot's house," said she.

Gilbert observed the hesitation, although it was scarcely perceptible.

"You are telling a falsehood!" said he, "or rather, you are endeavoring to tell one. Where is the casket? I insist on knowing."

"At my house at Versailles," said Andrée, bursting into tears, with a nervous trembling which shook her whole frame, "at my house where Wolfsfoot is waiting for me, as we had previously agreed to meet at eleven o'clock to-night."

Midnight was heard to strike.

"Is he still waiting there?"

"Yes."

"In which room is he?"

"They have just shown him into the drawing-room."

"What place does he occupy in the drawing-room?"

"He is standing, and leaning against the chimney-piece."

"And the casket?"

"It is on the table before him. Oh!"

"What is the matter?"

"Let us hasten to get him out of the house. Monsieur de Charny, who was not to return till to-morrow, will come back to-night, on account of the events that have taken place. I see him; he is at Sèvres. Make him go away, so that the count may not find him in the house."

"Your Majesty hears that; in what part of Versailles does Madame de Charny reside?"

"Where do you reside, Countess?"

"On the Boulevard de la Reine, Sire."

"Very well."

"Sire, your Majesty has heard everything. That casket belongs to me. Does the king order it to be returned to me?"

"Immediately, sir."

And the king, having drawn a screen before Madame de Charny, which prevented her from being seen, called the officer on duty, and gave him an order in a low voice.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ROYAL PHILOSOPHY.

A STRANGE preoccupation for a king whose subjects were undermining his throne. The inquisitiveness of the erudite man applied to a physical phenomenon, while the most important political phenomenon was taking place that France had ever known, — that is to say, the transformation of a monarchy into a democracy. This sight, we say, of a king forgetting himself during the most terrible period of a tempest, would certainly have caused the great minds of the time to smile, bent, as they had been during three months, on the solution of their problem.

While riot was raging in all its fury without, Louis, forgetting the terrible events of the day, — the taking of the Bastille, the assassination of Flesselles, De Launay, and De Losme, the disposition of the National Assembly to revolt against the king, — Louis was concentrating his mind on this examination of a theory; and the revelations of this strange scene absorbed him no less than the most vital interests of his government.

And thus, as soon as he had given the order which we have mentioned to the captain of his guards, he returned to Gilbert, who was removing from the countess the excess of fluid with which he had charged her, in order that her slumber might be more tranquil than under the effects of this convulsive somnambulism.

For an instant the respiration of the countess became calm and easy as that of a sleeping child. Then Gilbert, with a single motion of his hand, reopened her eyes, and put her into a state of ecstasy.

It was then that one could see the extraordinary beauty of Andrée, in all its splendor. Being completely freed from all earthly agitations, the blood, which had for an instant rushed to her face, and which momentarily had colored her cheeks, redescended to her heart, whose pulsations had recovered their natural state. Her face had again become pale, but of that beautiful pallor of the women of the East; her eyes, opened rather more than usual, were raised towards heaven, and left the pupils floating, as it were, in the pearl-like whiteness of their eyeballs; the nose, slightly expanded, appeared to inhale a purer atmosphere; and her lips, which had preserved all their vermilion, although her cheeks had lost a little of theirs, were slightly separated, and discovered a row of pearls, of which the sweet moistness increased the brilliancy.

The head was gently thrown backwards with an inexpressible grace, almost angelic. It might have been said that this fixed look, increasing its scope of vision by its intensity, penetrated to the foot of the throne of God.

The king gazed at her as if dazzled. Gilbert turned away his head and sighed. He could not resist the desire to give Andrée this degree of superhuman beauty; and now, like Pygmalion — more unhappy even than Pygmalion, for he knew the insensibility of the beautiful statue — he trembled at the sight of his own production.

He made a sign without even turning his head towards Andrée, and her eyes closed instantly.

The king desired Gilbert to explain to him that mar-

vellous state, in which the soul separates itself from the body, and soars, free, happy, and divine, above all terrestrial miseries.

Gilbert, like all men of truly superior genius, could pronounce the words so much dreaded by mediocrity, "I do not know." He confessed his ignorance to the king. He had produced a phenomenon which he could not explain. The fact itself existed, but the explanation of the fact could not be given.

"Doctor," said the king, on hearing this avowal of Gilbert, "this is another of those secrets which Nature reserves for the learned men of another generation, and which will be studied thoroughly, like so many other mysteries which were thought insoluble. We call them mysteries; our fathers would have called them sorcery or witchcraft."

"Yes, Sire," answered Gilbert, smiling, "and I should have had the honor to be burned on the Place de Grève, for the greater glory of a religion which was not understood, by wise men without learning, and priests devoid of faith."

"And under whom did you study this science?" rejoined the king; "was it with Mesmer?"

"Oh, Sire!" said Gilbert, smiling, "I had seen the most astonishing phenomena of the science ten years before the name of Mesmer was pronounced in France."

"Tell me now; this Mesmer, who has revolutionized all France, was he, in your opinion, a charlatan? It seems to me that you operate much more simply than he. I have heard his experiments spoken of, and also those of Deslon and Puységur. You know all that has been said on the subject, whether idle stories or positive truths."

"I have carefully observed all these discussions, Sire."

"Well, then, what do you think of the famous vat or tub?"

"I hope your Majesty will excuse me if I answer doubtingly to all you ask me with regard to the magnetic art. Magnetism has not yet become an art."

"Ah!"

"But it assuredly is a power, a terrific power, since it annihilates the will, since it isolates the soul from the body, and places the body of the somnambulist in the power of the magnetizer, while the soul does not retain the power, nor even the desire, to defend itself. As for me, Sire, I have seen strange phenomena produced. I have produced many myself. Well, I nevertheless still doubt."

"How! you still doubt? You perform miracles, and yet you are in doubt?"

"No, I do not doubt — I do not doubt. At this moment even, I have a proof before my eyes of an extraordinary and incomprehensible power. But when that proof has disappeared, when I am at home alone in my library, face to face with all that human science has written during three thousand years; when science says no; when the mind says no; when reason says no, I doubt."

"And did your master also doubt, Doctor?"

"Perhaps he did, but he was less sincere than I. He did not express his doubt."

"Was it Deslon? Was it Puységur?"

"No, Sire, no. My master was a man far superior to all the men you have named. I have seen him perform the most marvellous things, especially with regard to wounds. No science was unknown to him. He had impregnated his mind with Egyptian theories. He had penetrated the arcana of ancient Assyrian civilization.

He was a profound scholar, a formidable philosopher, having a great knowledge of human life, combined with a persevering will."

"Have I ever known him?" asked the king.

Gilbert hesitated a moment.

"I ask you whether I ever knew him?"

"Yes, Sire."

"And you call him —"

"Sire," said Gilbert, "to pronounce that name before the king would perhaps render me liable to his displeasure. Now, especially at this moment, when the majority of Frenchmen are contemning all royal authority, I would not throw a shade on the respect we all owe your Majesty."

"Name that man boldly, Doctor Gilbert; and be persuaded that I too have my philosophy, — a philosophy of sufficiently good material to enable me to smile at all the insults of the present and all the threats of the future."

Gilbert still continued to hesitate.

The king approached him.

"Sir," said he to Gilbert, laughing, "call him Satan, if you will; I shall still find a shield to protect me from him, — the one which your dogmatizers do not possess, — one that they never will possess, one which I alone perhaps in this century possess, and bear without feeling shame, — religion."

"Your Majesty believes as Saint Louis did. It is true," said Gilbert.

"And in that lies all my strength, I confess, Doctor. I like science; I adore the results of materialism; I am a mathematician, as you well know; you know that the sum total of an addition or an algebraical formula fills my heart with joy; but when I meet people who carry algebra to atheism, I have in reserve my profound, inexhaustible,

and eternal faith — a faith which places me a degree above and a degree below them, — above them in good, and beneath them in evil. You see, then, Doctor, that I am a man to whom everything may be said, a king who can hear anything."

"Sire," said Gilbert, with a sort of admiration, "I thank your Majesty for what you have just said to me; for you have almost honored me with the confidence of a friend."

"Oh, I wish," the timid Louis hastened to exclaim, "I wish all Europe could hear me speak thus. If Frenchmen could read in my heart all the energy of feeling, the tenderness which it contains, I think they would oppose me less."

The last portion of the king's sentence, which showed that the king was irritated by the attack the royal prerogative had been subjected to, lowered Louis XVI. in the estimation of Gilbert.

He hastened to say, without attempting to spare the king's feelings, —

"Sire, since you insist upon it, my master was the Count de Cagliostro."

"Oh!" cried Louis, coloring, "that empiric!"

"That empiric! — yes, Sire! Your Majesty is doubtless aware that the word you have just pronounced is one of the noblest used in science. *Empiric* means *the man who experiments:* the practitioner, the profound thinker, — the man, in short, who is incessantly investigating, — does all that God permits men to do that is glorious and beautiful. Let but a man *experiment* during his whole life, and his life will be well occupied."

"Ah, sir, this Cagliostro whom you defend was a great enemy of kings."

Gilbert recollected the affair of the necklace.

"Is it not rather the enemy of queens your Majesty intended to say?"

Louis shuddered at this sharp home-thrust.

"Yes," said he, "he conducted himself, in all the affair of Prince Louis de Rohan, in a manner which was more than equivocal."

"Sire, in that, as in other circumstances, Cagliostro carried out the human mission: he made his own researches. In science, in morals, in politics, there is neither good nor evil; there are only stated phenomena or accomplished facts. Nevertheless, I will not defend him, Sire. I repeat, the man may often have merited blame; perhaps some day this very blame may be considered as praise: posterity reconsiders the judgments of men. But I did not study under the man, Sire, but under the philosopher, under the great physician."

"Well, well," said the king, who still felt the double wound his pride and heart had received, "well; but we are forgetting the Countess de Charny, and perhaps she is suffering."

"I will wake her up, Sire, if your Majesty desires it; but I had wished that the casket might arrive here during her sleep."

"Why?"

"To spare her a too harsh lesson."

"Here is somebody coming at this moment," said the king. "Wait."

In fact, the king's order had been punctually obeyed. The casket found at the hotel of the Countess de Charny, in the possession of the agent Wolfsfoot, was brought into the royal cabinet, under the very eyes of the Countess, who did not see it.

The king made a sign of satisfaction to the officer who brought the casket. The officer then left the room.

"Well!" said Louis XVI.

"Well, then, Sire, that is, in fact, the very casket which had been taken away from me."

"Open it," said the king.

"Sire, I am willing to do so, if your Majesty desires it; but I have only to forewarn your Majesty of one thing."

"What is that?"

"Sire, as I told your Majesty, this box contains only papers which are easily read, and might be taken, and on which depends the honor of a woman."

"And that woman is the countess?"

"Yes, Sire. That honor will not be endangered while this matter is confined to the knowledge of your Majesty. Open it, Sire," said Gilbert, approaching the casket, and presenting the key of it to the king.

"Sir," replied Louis XVI. coldly, "take away this box; it belongs to you."

"Thank you, Sire, but what are we to do with the countess?"

"Oh, do not, above all, wake her up here. I wish to avoid all recriminations and painful scenes."

"Sire," said Gilbert, "the countess will only awake in the place where you wish her to be carried."

"Well, let her be taken to the queen's apartment, then."

Louis rang the bell. An officer entered the room.

"Captain," said he, "the Countess de Charny has just fainted here, on hearing the news from Paris. Have her taken to the queen's room."

"How long will it take to carry her there?" asked Gilbert of the king.

"About ten minutes," replied the latter.

Gilbert laid his hand on the countess.

"You will awake in three quarters of an hour," said he.

Two soldiers entered, — the order having been given by the officer, — who carried her away in an arm-chair.

"Now, Monsieur Gilbert, what more do you desire?" asked the king.

"Sire, I desire a favor which would draw me nearer to your Majesty, and procure me at the same time an opportunity to be useful to you."

The king endeavored to divine what he could mean.

"Explain yourself," said he.

"I should like to be one of the physicians in ordinary to the king," replied Gilbert; "I should be in the way of no one; it is a post of honor, but rather a confidential than a brilliant one."

"Granted," said the king. "Adieu, Monsieur Gilbert. Ah! by the bye, a thousand compliments to Necker. Adieu."

Then, as he was leaving the room: —

"My supper!" cried Louis, whom no event, however important, could induce to forget his supper.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN THE QUEEN'S APARTMENTS.

WHILE the king was learning to oppose the revolution philosophically, by going through a course of occult sciences, the queen who was a much more substantial and profound philosopher, had gathered around her in her large cabinet all those who were called her faithful adherents, doubtless because there had been no opportunity afforded to any one of them either to prove or to try his fidelity.

In the queen's circle, also, the events of that terrible day had been related in all their details.

She had even been the first to be informed of them, for, knowing her to be undaunted, they had not feared to inform her of the danger.

Around the queen were assembled generals, courtiers, priests, and ladies. Near the doors and behind the tapestries which hung before them might be seen groups of young officers, full of courage and ardor, who saw in all revolts a long desired opportunity to evince their prowess in presence of the fair sex, as in a tournament.

All of these, whether intimately connected with the court, or devoted servants of the monarchy, had listened with attention to the news from Paris, which had been related by Monsieur de Lambesq, who, having been present during those events, had hastened to Versailles with his regiment, still covered with the sand of the

Tuileries, in order to state the real position of affairs to the affrighted courtiers, and thus afford them consolation; for many of them, although the misfortune was sufficiently serious, had greatly exaggerated it in their apprehension.

The queen was seated at a table. It was no longer the gentle and lovely bride, the guardian angel of France, whom we saw appear at the opening of this story, crossing the northern frontier, an olive-branch in her hand. It was no longer even that gracious and beautiful princess whom we saw one evening entering with the Princess de Lamballe into the mysterious dwelling of Mesmer, and seating herself, laughing and incredulous, near the symbolical vat, of which she had come to ask a revelation of the future.

No! it was the haughty and resolute queen, with frowning brow and scornful lip; it was a woman whose heart had allowed a portion of its love to escape from it, to harbor, instead of that sweet and vivifying element, the first drops of gall, which by constantly filtering into it was finally to reach her blood.

It was, in short, the woman represented by the third portrait in the gallery of Versailles, that is to say, no longer Marie Antoinette, no longer the Queen of France, but the woman who was now designated only by the name of the Austrian.

Behind her, in the shade, lay a motionless young woman, her head reclining on the cushion of a sofa, and her hand upon her forehead.

This was Madame de Polignac.

Perceiving Monsieur de Lambesq, the queen made one of those gestures indicative of unbounded joy, which mean, "At last we shall know all."

Monsieur de Lambesq bowed, with a sign that asked

pardon at the same time for his soiled boots, his dusty coat, and his sword, which, having been bent in his fall, could not be forced into its scabbard.

"Well, Monsieur de Lambesq," said the queen, "have you just arrived from Paris?"

"Yes, your Majesty."

"What are the people doing?"

"They are killing and burning."

"Through maddening rage or hatred?"

"No; from sheer ferocity."

The queen reflected, as if she had felt disposed to be of his opinion with regard to the people. Then, shaking her head:—

"No, prince," said she, "the people are not ferocious; at least, not without a reason. Do not conceal anything from me. Is it madness?—is it hatred?"

"Well, I think it is hatred carried to madness, Madame."

"Hatred of whom? Ah! I see you are hesitating again, Prince. Take care; if you relate events in that manner, instead of applying to you as I do, I shall send one of my outriders to Paris; he will require one hour to go there, one to acquire information, one to return; and in the course of three hours this man will tell me everything that has happened as accurately and as simply as one of Homer's heralds."

Monsieur de Dreux Brézé stepped forward, with a smile upon his lips.

"But, Madame," said he, "of what consequence to you is the hatred of the people? That can in no way concern you. The people may hate all, excepting you."

The queen did not even rebuke this piece of flattery.

"Come, come, Prince," said she to Monsieur de Lambesq, "speak out."

"Well, then, Madame, it is true the people are influenced by hatred."

"Hatred of me?"

"Of everything that rules."

"Well said! — that is the truth! I feel it," exclaimed the queen, resolutely.

"I am a soldier, your Majesty," said the prince.

"Well, well! speak to us then as a soldier. Let us see what must be done."

"Nothing, Madame."

"How — nothing?" cried the queen, taking advantage of the murmurs occasioned by these words among the wearers of embroidered coats and golden-sheathed swords of her company; "nothing! You, a Prince of Lorraine, — you can speak thus to the Queen of France at a moment when the people, according to your own confession, are killing and burning, and you can coolly say there is nothing to be done!"

A second murmur, but this time of approbation, followed the words of Marie Antoinette.

She turned round, fixed her gaze on all the circle which environed her, and among all those fiery eyes sought those which darted forth the brightest flames, as if she could read a greater proof of fidelity in them.

"Nothing!" continued the prince; "but allow the Parisian to become calm — and he will become so — for he is only warlike when he is exasperated. Why give him the honors of a struggle, and risk the chances of a battle? Let us keep quiet, and in three days there will no longer be a question of a commotion in Paris."

"But the Bastille, sir?"

"The Bastille! Its doors will be closed, and those who took it will be taken, that is all."

Some laughter was heard among the before silent group.

The queen continued, —

"Take care, Prince; you are now reassuring me too much." And thoughtfully, her chin resting on the palm of her hand, she advanced towards Madame de Polignac, who, pale and sad, seemed absorbed in thought.

The countess had listened to all the news with visible fear; she only smiled when the queen stopped opposite to her and smiled; although this smile was pale and colorless as a fading flower.

"Well, Countess," said the queen, "what do you say to all this?"

"Alas! nothing," she replied.

"How, nothing!"

"No."

And she shook her head with an indescribable expression of despair.

"Come, come," said the queen in a very low voice, and stooping to the ear of the countess, "our friend Diana is terrified."

Then she said aloud, —

"But where is Madame de Charny, the intrepid woman? We need her assistance to reassure us, I think."

"The countess was about to go out," said Madame de Misery, "when she was summoned to the king's apartments."

"Ah! the king's," absently answered Marie Antoinette.

And only then did the queen perceive the strange silence which pervaded all around her.

The truth was, these wonderful and incredible events, accounts of which had successively reached Versailles like repeated shocks, had prostrated the firmest hearts, perhaps more by astonishment than fear.

The queen understood that it was necessary to revive all these drooping spirits.

"Can no one advise me?" said she. "Be it so; I will advise myself."

They all drew nearer to Marie Antoinette.

"The people," said she, "are not bad at heart, they are only misled. They hate us because we are unknown to them; let us approach them more nearly."

"To punish them, then," said a voice, "for they have doubted their masters, and that is a crime."

The queen looked in the direction from which the voice proceeded, and recognized Monsieur de Besenval.

"Oh, it is you, Monsieur le Baron," said she; "do you come to give us your good counsel?"

"The advice is already given," said Besenval, bowing.

"Be it so," said the queen; "the king will punish only as a tender father."

"Who loves well chastises well," said the baron.

Then turning towards Monsieur de Lambesq:—

"Are you not of my opinion, Prince? The people have committed several murders—"

"Which they unfortunately call retaliation," said a sweet, low voice, at the sound of which the queen turned in her seat.

"You are right, princess; but it is precisely in that that their error consists, my dear Lamballe; we shall be indulgent."

"But," replied the Princess, in her mild manner, "before asking whether we must punish, I think we ought to ask whether we can conquer."

A general cry burst forth from those who were present, a cry of protestation against the truth which had just been spoken by those noble lips.

"Conquer! and where are the Swiss?" said one.

"And the Germans?" said another.

"And the body-guards?" said a third.

"Can doubts be entertained about the army and the nobility?" exclaimed a young man wearing the uniform of a lieutenant in the Hussars of Bercheny. "Have we then deserved such a reproach? Do but consider, Madame, that no later than to-morrow, if he chose, the king could assemble forty thousand men, throw these forty thousand men into Paris, and destroy the city. Remember that forty thousand faithful troops are worth half a million of revolted Parisians."

The young man who had just spoken these words had without doubt a good many other similar reasons to advance; but he stopped short on seeing the eyes of the queen fixed upon him. He had spoken from the centre of a group of officers, and his zeal had carried him further than was consistent with etiquette and his rank.

He checked himself, accordingly, as we have already said, feeling quite ashamed at the impression his words had made.

But it was too late; the queen had already been struck with his enthusiasm.

"You understand the present condition of affairs, sir?" said she, kindly.

"Yes, your Majesty," said the young man, blushing; "I was at the Champs Elysées."

"Then, do not fear to speak; come nearer, sir."

The young man stepped forward, blushing, from the group which opened to let him pass, and advanced towards the queen.

At the same moment the Prince de Lambesq and Monsieur de Besenval retired a step or two, as if they considered it beneath their dignity to attend this sort of council.

The queen did not pay, or did not appear to pay, any attention to this movement.

"You say, then, sir, that the king has forty thousand men?" asked she.

"Yes, your Majesty."

"In the environs of Paris?"

"At St. Denis, at St. Mandé, at Montmartre, and at Grenelle."

"Give me some details, sir, — some details," exclaimed the queen.

"Madame, the Prince de Lambesq and Monsieur de Besenval can give you them with infinitely more accuracy than myself."

"Go on, sir. It pleases me to hear these details from your lips. Under whose orders are these forty thousand men?"

"In the first place, under the orders of Monsieur de Besenval and Monsieur de Lambesq; then under those of the Prince de Condé, of Monsieur de Narbonne-Fritzlar, and Monsieur de Salkenaym."

"Is this true, Prince?" asked the queen, turning towards Monsieur de Lambesq.

"Yes, your Majesty," answered the prince, bowing.

"On the heights of Montmartre," said the young man, "there is a complete park of artillery; in six hours the whole quarter of the town within the range of Montmartre could be laid in ashes. Let Montmartre give the signal to open fire; let it be answered by Vincennes; let ten thousand men debouch by the Champs Elysées, ten thousand more by the Barrière d'Enfer, ten thousand more by the Rue St. Martin, ten thousand more by the Bastille; make Paris hear our cannonading from the four cardinal points, and she cannot hold her ground for twenty-four hours."

"Ah! here is a man who at all events explains his views frankly; here is at least a clear and regular plan. What do you think of it, Monsieur de Lambesq?"

"I think," answered the prince, disdainfully, "that the lieutenant of hussars is a perfect general."

"He is, at least," said the queen, who saw the young officer turn pale with anger, "he is, at least, a soldier who does not despair."

"I thank you, Madame," said the young man, bowing. "I do not know what your Majesty's decision will be, but I beg you to consider me among those who are ready to die for you; and in so doing, I should only do that, I beg your Majesty to believe, which forty thousand soldiers are ready to do, as well as all our chiefs."

And having said these words, the young man saluted courteously the prince, who had almost insulted him.

This act of courtesy struck the queen still more than the protestations of fidelity which had preceded it.

"What is your name, sir?" asked she of the young officer.

"I am the Baron de Charny, Madame," replied he, bowing.

"De Charny!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette, blushing in spite of herself; "are you then a relative of the Count de Charny?"

"I am his brother, Madame."

And the young man bowed gracefully, even lower than he had done before.

"I ought," said the queen, recovering from her confusion, and casting a firm look around her, "I ought to have recognized you, on hearing your first words, as one of my most faithful servants. Thank you, Baron. How is it that I now see you at court for the first time?"

"Madame, my elder brother, who is taking the place

of my father, has ordered me to remain with the regiment, and during the seven years that I have had the honor of serving in the army of the king, I have only twice been at Versailles."

The queen looked for a considerable time at the young man's face.

"You resemble your brother," said she. "I shall reprimand him for having so long omitted to present you, and left you to present yourself at court."

And the queen turned in the direction of her friend the countess, who during all this scene had remained motionless and mute upon the sofa.

But it was not thus with the remainder of those present. The officers, electrified by the reception the queen had given to the young man, were exaggerating to the utmost among themselves their enthusiasm for the royal cause, and from every group expressions burst forth, evincing a heroism capable of subjugating the whole of France.

Marie Antoinette made the most of these manifestations, which evidently flattered her secret wishes.

She preferred to struggle rather than to submit, to die rather than to yield. With this view, as soon as the first news had reached her from Paris, she had determined upon a stubborn resistance to the rebellious spirit which threatened to swallow up all the prerogatives of French society.

If there is a blind and senseless degree of strength, it is that stimulated by figures and vain hopes.

A figure, followed by an agglomeration of zeros, will soon exceed all the resources of the universe.

The same may be said of the plans of a conspirator or a despot. On enthusiasm, which itself is based on imperceptible hope, gigantic conceptions are built, which

are dissipated before the first breath of wind, in less time than was required to condense them into a mist.

After hearing these few words pronounced by the Baron de Charny, after the enthusiastic hurrahs of the by-standers, Marie Antoinette could almost imagine herself at the head of a powerful army; she could hear the rolling of her harmless artillery, and she rejoiced at the fear which they would doubtless occasion among the Parisians, and had already gained a victory which she thought decisive.

Around her, men and women, beaming with youth, with confidence and love, were reckoning the number of those brilliant hussars, those heavy dragoons, those terrible Swiss, those well-equipped artillerymen, and laughed at the vulgar pikes and their coarse wooden handles, little thinking that on the points of these vile weapons were to be borne the noblest heads of France.

"As for me," murmured the Princess de Lamballe, "I am more afraid of a pike than of a gun."

"Because it is much uglier, my dear Thérèse," replied the queen, smiling. "But, at all events, compose yourself. Our Parisian pikemen are not a match for the famous Swiss pikemen of Morat; and the Swiss of the present day have something more than pikes; they have good muskets, with which they take good aim, thank Heaven!"

"Oh, as to that, I will answer for it!" said Monsieur de Besenval.

The queen turned round once more towards Madame de Polignac to see if all these assurances had restored her wonted tranquillity; but the countess appeared still paler and more trembling than before.

The queen, whose extreme tenderness of feeling often caused her to sacrifice her royal dignity for the sake of

this friend, in vain seemed to solicit her to look more cheerful.

The young woman still continued gloomy, and appeared absorbed in the saddest thoughts. But this despondency only served to increase the queen's sorrow. The enthusiasm among the young officers maintained itself at the same pitch, and all of them, with the exception of the superior officers, were gathered round the Baron de Charny, and drawing up their plans for battle.

In the midst of this febrile excitement the king entered alone, unaccompanied by an usher, and with a smile upon his lips.

The queen, still greatly excited by the warlike emotions which she had aroused, rushed forward to meet him.

At the sight of the king all conversation had ceased, and was followed by the most perfect silence; every one expected a kingly word, — one of those words which electrify and subjugate.

When clouds are sufficiently loaded with electricity, the least disturbance, as is well known, is sufficient to produce a flash.

To the eyes of the courtiers, the king and queen, advancing to meet each other, appeared like two electric bodies, from which the thunder must proceed.

They listened, and trembled, and eagerly waited to catch the first words which were to proceed from the royal lips.

"Madame," said Louis XVI., "amid all these events, they have forgotten to serve up my supper in my own apartment; be so kind as to have it brought me here."

"Here?" exclaimed the queen, with an air of stupefaction.

"If you will permit it."

"But — Sire — "

"You were conversing, it is true; but while at supper I shall converse also."

The mere word "supper" had chilled the enthusiasm of every one present. But on hearing the king's last words, — "at supper I shall converse also," the young queen herself could hardly help thinking that so much calmness concealed some small heroism. The king doubtless thought by his tranquillity to overcome all the terror occasioned by the events that had taken place. This must certainly be his design.

The daughter of Marie Thérèse could not conceive that at so critical a moment the son of Saint Louis could still remain subject to the material wants of ordinary life.

Marie Antoinette was mistaken; the king was hungry, that was all.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HOW THE KING SUPPED ON THE 14TH OF JULY, 1789.

On a word from Marie Antoinette, the king's supper was served on a small table in the queen's own cabinet.

But the contrary of what the princess had hoped soon happened. Louis XVI. ordered every one to be silent, but it was only that he might not be disturbed while at supper.

While Marie Antoinette was endeavoring to revive enthusiasm, the king was devouring a Périgord pie.

The officers did not think this gastronomical performance worthy of a descendant of Saint Louis, and formed themselves into small groups, whose observations were not perhaps as respectful as circumstances ought to have demanded.

The queen blushed, and her impatience betrayed itself in all her movements. Her delicate, aristocratic, and nervous nature could not comprehend this domination of matter over mind.

She drew nearer to the king, with a view to bring those nearer to the table who had retired to a more distant part of the room.

"Sire," said she, "have you no orders to give?"

"Ah! ah!" said the king, his mouth full, "what orders, Madame? Let us see; will you be our Egeria in this difficult moment?"

And while saying these words he bravely attacked a partridge stuffed with truffles.

"Sire," said the queen, "Numa was a pacific king. Now it is generally thought that what we need at present is a warlike king; and if you are going to take antiquity for your model, as your Majesty cannot become a Tarquin, you must be a Romulus."

The king smiled with a tranquillity which almost seemed holy.

"Are these gentlemen warlike also?" asked he.

And he turned towards the group of officers, and his eyes being animated by the cheering influence of his meal, appeared to all present to sparkle with courage.

"Yes, Sire," they all cried with one voice, "war! we only ask for war!"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the king, "you do me in truth the greatest pleasure, by proving to me that when occasion may require it I may rely upon you. But I have for the moment not only a council, but also a stomach; the former will advise me what I ought to do, the second advises me to do what I am now doing."

And he laughed loudly, and handed his plate, full of fragments, to the officer in waiting, in exchange for a clean one.

A murmur of stupefaction and of rage passed like a shudder through the group of gentlemen, who only required a signal from the king to shed their last drop of blood.

The queen turned round and stamped her foot.

The Prince de Lambesq immediately came to her.

"You see, Madame," said he, "his Majesty no doubt thinks, as I do, that it is better to wait. It is prudence — and although it is not one of mine, unfortunately, prudence is a necessary virtue in the times we live in."

"Yes, sir, yes; it is a very necessary virtue," said the queen, biting her lips till they bled.

With a death-like sadness she reclined against the chimney-piece, her eye lost in darkness, and her soul overwhelmed by despair.

The singular contrast between the disposition of the king and that of the queen struck every one with astonishment. The queen could hardly restrain her tears, while the king continued his supper with the proverbial appetite of the Bourbon family.

The room gradually became empty; the various groups melted away as does the snow in a garden before the rays of the sun, — the snow, beneath which the black and desolate earth soon makes its appearance here and there.

The queen, seeing this warlike group, upon which she relied so much, gradually disappear, imagined that all her power was vanishing; as in former times, the breath of the Lord had melted those vast armies of Assyrians or Amalekites, which one single night sufficed to swallow up in its darkness.

She was aroused from this species of torpor by the sweet voice of the Countess Jules, who approached her with Madame Diana de Polignac, her sister-in-law.

At the sound of this voice, the sweet future, with its flowers and palm-leaves, returned to the mind of this haughty woman. A sincere and devoted friend was to her of more value than ten kingdoms.

"Oh, thou, thou!" murmured she, clasping the Countess Jules in her arms; "I have then one friend left."

And the tears, which for so long a time had been restrained, burst forth from her eyelids, trickled down her cheeks, and inundated her bosom; but instead of being bitter, these tears were sweet, — instead of oppressing her, they disburdened her heart.

They both remained silent for a few moments, during which the queen continued to hold the countess in her arms.

It was the duchess who first broke this silence, while still holding her sister-in-law by the hand.

"Madame," said she, with a voice so timid that she almost appeared ashamed, "I do not think your Majesty will disapprove the project which I am about to submit to your notice."

"What project?" asked the queen attentively; "speak, Duchess, speak?"

And while preparing to listen to the Duchess Diana, the queen leaned upon the shoulder of her favorite, the countess.

"Madame," continued the duchess, "the opinion which I am about to pronounce comes from a person whose authority will not be doubted by your Majesty; it comes from her Royal Highness, Madame Adelaide, the queen's aunt."

"What a singular preamble, dear Duchess," said the queen, gayly, "come, let us hear this opinion."

"Madame, circumstances are disheartening; the favors which our family enjoy from your Majesty have been much exaggerated; calumny stains the august friendship which you deign to grant us in exchange for our respectful devotion."

"Well, then, Duchess," said the queen, with a commencement of astonishment, "do you not think I have evinced sufficient courage? Have I not valiantly sustained my friends against public opinion, against the court, against the people, against the king himself?"

"Oh, Madame, certainly! and your Majesty has so nobly sustained your friends, that you have opposed your

breast to every blow, so that to-day that the danger has become great, terrible even, the friends so nobly defended by your Majesty would be cowardly and unfaithful servants, if they did not prove themselves grateful to their queen."

"Ah, this is well, this is beautiful!" said Marie Antoinette, with enthusiasm, embracing the countess, whom she still pressed against her bosom, while holding the hand of Madame de Polignac in hers.

But both of them turned pale, instead of proudly raising their heads, after they had been thus caressed by their sovereign.

Madame Jules de Polignac made a movement to disengage herself from the arms of the queen; but the latter still pressed her to her heart, despite her efforts to disengage herself.

"But," stammered Madame Diana de Polignac, "your Majesty does not perhaps well understand what we have the honor to make known to you, in order to enable you to ward off the blows which threaten your throne, your person, perhaps, on account of the very friendship with which you honor us. There is a painful means, a bitter sacrifice to our hearts, but we must endure it; necessity commands it."

At these words it was the queen's turn to become pale, for she no longer perceived courageous and faithful friendship, but fear, beneath this exordium, and under the veil of this reserve.

"Let us see," said she; "speak, speak, Duchess; what is this sacrifice?"

"Oh, the sacrifice is entirely on our side, Madame!" replied the latter. "We are, God knows for what reason, execrated in France; by disencumbering your throne, we shall restore to it all the splendor, all the warmth of the

popular love, a love either extinguished or intercepted by our presence."

"You would leave me!" cried the queen, vehemently. "Who has said that? who has asked for that?"

And she cast a despairing look on the Countess Jules de Polignac, gently pushing her from her; the latter held down her head in great confusion.

"Not I," said the Countess Jules; "I, on the contrary, ask but to remain."

But these words were uttered in such a tone that they implied, "Order me to leave you, Madame, and I will leave you."

O holy friendship, thou sacred chain which can link together the hearts of even a sovereign and her subject in indissoluble bonds! O holy friendship, thou engenderest more heroism than even love or ambition, those two noble maladies of the human heart! But thou canst not brook deceit. The queen at once shattered to atoms the adored altar she had raised to thee in her heart; she required but a look, one only look, to reveal to her that which during ten years she had not perceived, she had not even surmised, — coldness and interested calculation, excusable, justifiable, legitimate perhaps; but what can excuse, justify, or legitimize, in the eyes of one who still fondly loves, the abandonment of the one who has ceased to love?

Marie Antoinette's only revenge for the pain which was thus inflicted on her, was the icy coldness with which she gazed upon her friend.

"Ah, Duchess Diana! this, then, is your opinion?" cried she, compressing with her feverish hand the agitated pulsation of her heart.

"Alas! Madame," answered the latter, "it is not my

choice, it is not my will which dictates to me what I am to do: it is the law of destiny!"

"Yes, Duchess," said Marie Antoinette. And turning to the Countess Jules: "And you, Countess: what say you to this?"

The countess replied by a burning tear, as if from a pang of remorse; but she had exhausted all her strength in the effort she had made.

"Well," said the queen, "well, it is gratifying to my feelings to see how much I am beloved. Thank you, my dear Countess; yes, you incur great danger here; the anger of the people no longer knows any bounds; yes, you are all in the right, and I alone was foolish. You ask to remain,—that is pure devotedness; but I cannot accept such a sacrifice."

The Countess Jules raised her beautiful eyes and looked at the queen. But the queen, instead of reading the devotedness of a friend in them, could only perceive the weakness of the woman.

"Thus, Duchess," replied the queen, "*you* are resolved to leave me." And she emphasized the word "you."

"Yes, your Majesty."

"Doubtless for some one of your estates—a distant—a very distant one?"

"Madame, in going away, in leaving you, it would be as painful to travel fifty leagues as one hundred and fifty."

"But do you, then, intend to go abroad?"

"Alas, yes, Madame!"

A suppressed sigh tore the very depths of the queen's heart, but it did not escape her lips.

"And where are you going?"

"To reside on the banks of the Rhine, Madame."

"Well, you speak German, Duchess," said the queen,

with a look of indescribable sadness, "and it was I who taught it you. The friendship of your queen will at least have been useful to you to that extent, and I rejoice at it."

Then, turning to the Countess Jules: —

"I do not wish to dismiss you, my dear Countess," said she. "You desire to remain here, and I deeply appreciate that desire. But I — I, who fear for you — I insist on your departure; I order you to leave me."

And having said these words, she suddenly stopped, overcome by emotions which, in spite of her heroism, she would perhaps not have had the power to control, had not she heard at that moment the voice of the king who had taken no part whatever in what we have just been relating.

The king was at his dessert.

"Madame," said the king, "there is somebody in your apartment; they are seeking you."

"But, Sire," exclaimed the queen, throwing aside every other feeling but that of royal dignity, "in the first place, you have orders to give! Only three persons remain here; but they are those with whom you have to deal: Monsieur de Lambesq, Monsieur de Besenval, and Monsieur de Broglie. Give your orders, Sire; give your orders."

The king raised his heavy eyes and appeared to hesitate.

"What do you think of all this, Monsieur de Broglie?" said he.

"Sire," replied the old marshal, "if you withdraw your army from the sight of the Parisians, it will be said that it was beaten by them. If you leave it in their presence, your army must beat them."

"Well said!" exclaimed the queen, grasping the marshal's hand.

"Well said!" cried Monsieur de Besenval.

The Prince de Lambesq was the only person present who shook his head.

"Well! and after that?" said the king.

"Command: march!" cried the old marshal.

"Yes — march!" cried the queen.

"Well, then, since you all wish it, march!" said the king.

At that moment a note was handed to the queen; its contents were as follows: —

"In the name of Heaven, Madame, no rashness! I await an audience of your Majesty."

"His writing!" murmured the queen.

Then, turning round, she said in a low tone to the woman who had brought the note: —

"Is Monsieur de Charny in my room?"

"He has just arrived, completely covered with dust, and I even think with blood," answered the confidant.

"One moment, gentlemen!" exclaimed the queen, to Monsieur de Besenval and Monsieur de Broglie; "wait for me here; I shall return!"

And she passed into her own apartment in great haste.

The king did not even move his head.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OLIVIER DE CHARNY.

On entering her dressing-room, the queen found the person there who had written the note brought by her waiting-woman.

He was a man thirty-five years of age, of lofty stature, with a countenance which indicated strength and resolution; his grayish-blue eye, sharp and piercing as that of the eagle, his straight nose, his prominent chin, gave a martial character to his physiognomy, which was enhanced by the elegance with which he wore the uniform of a lieutenant in the body-guards.

His hands were still trembling under his torn and ruffled cambric cuffs.

His sword had been bent, and could hardly be replaced in the scabbard.

On the arrival of the queen, he was pacing hurriedly up and down the dressing-room, absorbed by a thousand feverish and agitated thoughts.

Marie Antoinette advanced straight towards him.

"Monsieur de Charny!" she exclaimed, "Monsieur de Charny, you here?"

And seeing that the person whom she thus addressed bowed respectfully according to etiquette, she made a sign to her waiting-woman, who withdrew and closed the doors.

The queen scarcely waited for the door to be closed, when, seizing the hand of Monsieur de Charny with vehemence, —

"Count," cried she, "why are you here?"

"Because I considered it my duty to come, Madame," said the count.

"No; your duty was to fly Versailles; it was to do what we had agreed, — to obey me; it is, in fact, to do as all my friends are doing who fear to share my fate. Your duty is to sacrifice nothing to my destiny; your duty is to flee far from me!"

"To flee from you?" said he.

"Yes; to flee from me."

"And who, then, flies from you, Madame?"

"Those who are prudent."

"I think myself very prudent, Madame, and that is why I now come to Versailles."

"And from where do you come?"

"From Paris."

"From revolted Paris?"

"From boiling, intoxicated, and ensanguined Paris."

The queen covered her face with her hands.

"Oh," said she, "no one, not even you, will then come to bring me good news."

"Madame, in the present circumstances, ask your messengers to tell you but one thing, — the truth."

"And is it the truth you have just told me?"

"I always tell you the truth, Madame."

"You have an honest soul, sir, and a stout heart."

"I am a faithful subject, Madame, that is all."

"Well, then, spare me for the moment, my friend; do not tell me a single word. You have arrived at a moment when my heart is breaking. My friends, to-day, for the first time overwhelm me with that truth which you have always told me. Oh, it is this truth, Count, it was impossible for them to withhold it from me any longer. It bursts forth everywhere: in the heavens which are red;

in the air, which is filled with sinister noises; in the faces of the courtiers, who are pale and serious. No, no, Count; for the first time in your life, tell me not the truth."

The count looked at the queen with amazement.

"Yes, yes," said she; "you who know me to be courageous, you are astonished, are you not? Oh, you are not yet at the end of your astonishment!"

Monsieur de Charny allowed an inquiring gesture to escape him.

"You will see by-and-by," said the queen, with a nervous laugh.

"Does your Majesty suffer?" asked the count.

"No, no, sir. Come and sit down near me, and not a word more about those dreadful politics. Try to make me forget them."

The count obeyed with a sad smile. Marie Antoinette placed her hand upon his forehead.

"Your forehead burns," said she.

"Yes, I have a volcano in my head."

"Your hand is icy cold."

And she pressed the count's hand between both hers.

"My heart is affected with a deathlike coldness," said he.

"Poor Olivier! I had told you so. Let us forget it. I am no longer queen; I am no longer threatened; I am no longer hated. No, I am no longer a queen. I am a woman, that is all. What is the whole universe to me? One heart that loves me would suffice me."

The count fell on his knees before the queen, and kissed her feet with the respect the Egyptians had for the goddess Isis.

"Oh, Count, my only friend!" said the queen, trying to raise him up, "do you know what the Duchess Diana is about to do?"

"She is going to emigrate," answered Charny, without hesitating.

"He has guessed the truth!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette. "He has guessed it. Alas! was it then possible to guess it?"

"Oh, certainly, Madame," answered the count; "one can imagine anything at such a moment as this."

"But you and your friends," exclaimed the queen, "why do you not emigrate, if you consider it so natural a step?"

"In the first place, Madame, I do not emigrate because I am profoundly devoted to your Majesty, and because I have promised, not to you, but to myself, that I will not quit you for a single instant during the impending storm. My brothers will not emigrate, because my conduct will be the model on which they will regulate theirs. In fine, Madame de Charny will not emigrate, because she loves your Majesty sincerely; at least, so I believe."

"Yes, Andrée has a very noble heart," said the queen, with perceptible coldness.

"That is the reason why she will not leave Versailles," answered De Charny.

"Then I shall always have you near me," said the queen, in the same icy tone, which she varied so as to express either her jealousy or her disdain.

"Your Majesty has done me the honor to make me lieutenant of the guards," said the Count de Charny; "my post is at Versailles. I should not have left my post if your Majesty had not intrusted me with the care of the Tuileries. 'It is a necessary exile,' said the queen to me, and I accepted that exile. Now, in all this, your Majesty well knows the Countess de Charny has neither reproved the step, nor was she consulted with regard to it."

"It is true," replied the queen, in the same freezing tone.

"To-day," continued the count, with intrepidity, "I think my post is no longer at the Tuileries, but at Versailles. Well, may it not displease the queen, I have violated my orders, thus selecting the service I prefer; and here I am. Whether Madame de Charny be alarmed or not at the complexion of events, whether it be her desire to emigrate or not, I will remain near the queen, unless, indeed, the queen breaks my sword; in which case, having no longer the right to fight and to die for her on the floor of Versailles, I shall still have that of sacrificing it on its threshold, on the pavement."

The young man pronounced these simple words so valiantly and so loyally, which emanated so evidently from the depths of his heart, that the queen appeared suddenly to lose her haughtiness, a retreat behind which she had just concealed feelings more human than royal.

"Count," said she, "never utter that word again. Do not say that you would die for me, for in truth I know that you would do as you say."

"Oh, on the contrary, I shall always say it!" exclaimed Monsieur de Charny. "I shall say it to every one, and in every place. I shall say it, and I shall do it, because the time has come, I fear, when all who have been attached to the kings of this earth must die."

"Count! Count! — what is it gives you this fatal forewarning?"

"Alas! Madame," replied De Charny, shaking his head, "and I too, during that fatal American war, I too was affected like the rest with that fever of independence which pervaded all society. I too wished to take an active part in the emancipation of the slaves, as it was customary to say in those days; and I was initiated into

the secrets of masonry. I became affiliated with a secret society, with the Lafayettes and the Lameths. Do you know what the object of this society was, Madame? The destruction of thrones. Do you know what it had for its motto? Three letters, — L. P. D."

"And what did these letters signify?"

"*Lilia pedibus destrue!* — Trample the lilies underfoot!"

"Then, what did you do?"

"I withdrew with honor. But for one who withdrew from the society, there were twenty who applied to be admitted into it. Well, then, what is happening to-day, Madame, is the prologue to the grand drama which has been preparing in silence and in darkness for twenty years. At the head of the men who are stimulating Paris to resistance, who govern the Hôtel de Ville, who occupy the Palais-Royal, and who took the Bastille, I recognized the countenances of my former affiliated brethren. Do not deceive yourself, Madame; all the events which have just taken place are not the results of chance; they are outbreaks which had been planned for years."

"Oh, you think so! — you think so, my friend!" exclaimed the queen, bursting into tears.

"Do not weep, Madame, but endeavor to comprehend the present crisis," said the count.

"You wish me to comprehend it!" continued Marie Antoinette. "I, the queen, — I, who was born the sovereign of twenty-five millions of men, — you wish me to understand how these twenty-five millions of subjects, born to obey me, should revolt and murder my friends! No, — that I shall never comprehend."

"And yet it is absolutely necessary for you to understand it, Madame; for the moment this obedience becomes a burden to these subjects, to these men born to

obey you, you become their enemy; and until they have the strength to devour you, to do which they are sharpening their famished teeth, they will devour your friends, still more detested than you are."

"And perhaps you will next tell me that they are right, most sage philosopher," exclaimed the queen, imperiously, her eyes dilated, and her nostrils quivering with anger.

"Alas! yes, Madame, they are right," said the count, in his gentle and affectionate voice; "for when I drive along the Boulevards, with my beautiful English horses, my coat glittering with gold, and my attendants bedecked with more silver than would be necessary to feed three families, your people, that is to say, those twenty-five millions of starving men, ask themselves of what use I am to them, — I, who am only a man like themselves."

"You serve them with this, Marquis," exclaimed the queen, seizing the hilt of the count's sword; "you serve them with the sword that your father wielded so heroically at Fontenoy, your grandfather at Steinkirk, your great-grandfather at Lens and at Rocroi, your ancestors at Ivry, at Marignan, and at Agincourt. The nobility serves the French nation by waging war. By war, the nobility has earned, at the price of its blood, the gold which decks its garments, the silver which covers its liveries. Do not, therefore, ask yourself, Olivier, how you serve the people, you who wield in your turn, and bravely too, the sword which has descended to you from your forefathers."

"Madame! — Madame!" said the count, shaking his head, "do not speak so much of the blood of the nobility: the people, too, have blood in their veins; go and see it running in streams on the Place de la Bastille; go and count their dead, stretched out on the crimsoned

pavement, and consider that their hearts, which now no longer beat, throbbed with a feeling as noble as that of a knight, on the day when your cannon were thundering against them; on the day when, seizing a new weapon in their unskilful hands, they sang in the midst of grape-shot, — a thing which even our bravest grenadiers do not always. Ah! Madame, my sovereign, look not on me, I entreat you, with that frowning eye. What is a grenadier? It is a gilt blue coat, covering the heart of which I was speaking to you a moment since. Of what importance is it to the bullet which pierces and kills, that the heart be covered with blue cloth or with a linen rag? Of what importance is it to the heart which is pierced through, whether the cuirass which protected it was cloth or canvas? The time is come to think of all that, Madame. You have no longer twenty-five millions of slaves in France; you have no longer twenty-five millions of subjects; you have no longer even twenty-five millions of men. You have twenty-five millions of soldiers."

"Who will fight against me, Count?"

"Yes, against you; for they are fighting for liberty, and you stand between them and liberty."

A long silence followed the words of the count. The queen was the first to break it.

"In fine," said she, "you have told me this truth, which I had begged you not to tell me."

"Alas! Madame," replied De Charny, "under whatever form my devotion may conceal it, under whatever veil my respect disguises it, in spite of me, in spite of yourself, examine it, listen to it, think of it. The truth is there, Madame, is there forever, and you can no longer banish it from your mind, whatever may be your efforts to the contrary. Sleep! — sleep, to forget it, and it will

haunt your pillow, will become the phantom of your dreams, a reality at your awakening."

"Oh, Count," said the queen, proudly, "I know a sleep which it cannot disturb!"

"As for that sleep, Madame, I fear it no more than does your Majesty, and perhaps I desire it quite as much."

"Oh," exclaimed the queen, in despair, "according to you, it is, then, our sole refuge?"

"Yes; but let us do nothing rashly, Madame. Let us go no faster than our enemies, and we shall go straight to that sleep by the fatigues which we shall have to endure during so many stormy days."

And a new silence, still more gloomy than the first, weighed down the spirits of the two speakers.

They were seated, he near her, and she near him. They touched each other, and yet between them there was an immense abyss, for their minds viewed the future in a different light.

The queen was the first to return to the subject of their conversation, but indirectly. She looked fixedly at the count. Then: —

"Let us see, sir," said she. "One word as to ourselves, and you will tell me all — all — all. You understand me?"

"I am ready to answer you, Madame."

"Can you swear to me that you came here only for my sake?"

"Oh, do you doubt it?"

"Will you swear to me that Madame de Charny had not written to you?"

"She?"

"Listen to me. I know that she was going out. I know that she had some plan in her mind. Swear to

me, Count, that it was not on her account that you returned!"

At this moment a knock, or rather a scratch, at the door was heard.

"Come in," said the queen.

The waiting-woman again appeared.

"Madame," said she, "the king has just finished his supper."

The count looked at Marie Antoinette with astonishment.

"Well," said she, shrugging her shoulders, "what is there astonishing in that? Must not the king take his supper?"

Olivier frowned.

"Tell the king," replied the queen, without at all disturbing herself, "that I am just receiving news from Paris, and that I shall communicate them to him when I have received them."

Then, turning towards Charny:—

"Go on," said she; "now that the king has supped, it is but natural that he should digest his food."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OLIVIER DE CHARNY.

THIS interruption had only caused a momentary suspension in the conversation, but had changed in nothing the two-fold sentiment of jealousy which animated the queen at this moment, — jealousy of love as a woman, jealousy of power as a queen.

Hence it resulted that the conversation, which seemed exhausted during its first period, had, on the contrary, only been entered upon, and was about to be revived more sharply than ever; as in a battle, where, after the cessation of the first fire, which had commenced the action on a few points, the fire which decides the victory soon becomes general all along the line.

The count, moreover, as things had arrived at this point, seemed as anxious as the queen to come to an explanation; for which reason, the door being closed again, he was the first to resume the conversation.

"You asked me if it was for Madame de Charny that I had come back," said he. "Has your Majesty then forgotten that engagements were entered into between us, and that I am a man of honor?"

"Yes," said the queen, holding down her head, "yes, we have made engagements; yes, you are a man of honor; yes, you have sworn to sacrifice yourself to my happiness, and it is that oath which most tortures me, for in sacrificing yourself to my happiness, you immolate at the same time a beautiful woman and a noble character, — another crime!"

"Oh, Madame, now you are exaggerating the accusation! I only wish you to confess that I have kept my word as a gentleman."

"It is true; I am insensate; forgive me — "

"Do not call a crime that which originated in chance and necessity. We have both deplored this marriage, which alone could shield the honor of the queen. As for this marriage, there only remains for me to endure it, as I have done for many years."

"Yes!" exclaimed the queen. "But do you think that I do not perceive your grief, that I do not understand your sorrow, which evince themselves in the shape of the highest respect? Do you think that I do not see all this?"

"Do me the favor, Madame," said the count, bowing, "to communicate to me what you see, in order that if I have not suffered enough myself, and made others suffer enough, I may double the amount of suffering for myself, and for all those who surround me, as I feel certain of ever falling short of what I owe you."

The queen held out her hand to the count. The words of the young man had an irresistible power, like everything that emanates from a sincere and impassioned heart.

"Command me, then, Madame," rejoined he; "I entreat you, do not fear to lay your commands upon me."

"Oh, yes, yes! I know it well. I am wrong; yes, forgive me; yes, it is true. But if you have anywhere some hidden idol, to whom you offer up mysterious incense, — if for you there is in some corner of the world an adored woman — oh! I no longer dare to pronounce that word, it strikes me with terror; and I fear lest the syllables which compose it should strike the air and vibrate in my ear, — well, then, if such a woman does

exist, concealed from every one, do not forget that you have publicly, in the eyes of others as in your own, a young and beautiful wife, whom you surround with care and attentions, — a wife who leans upon your arm, and who, while leaning on your arm, leans at the same time on your heart."

Olivier knit his brow, and the delicate lines of his face assumed for a moment a severe aspect.

"What do you ask, Madame?" said he; "do I separate myself from the Countess de Charny? You remain silent; is that the reason, then? Well, then, I am ready to obey this order, even; but you know that she is alone in the world — she is an orphan. Her father, the Baron de Taverney, died last year, like a worthy knight of the olden time, who wishes not to see that which is about to take place in ours. Her brother — you know that her brother, Maison-Rouge, makes his appearance once a year, at most — comes to embrace his sister, to pay his respects to your Majesty, and then goes away, without any one knowing what becomes of him."

"Yes, I know all that."

"Consider, Madame, that this Countess de Charny, were God to remove me from this world, could resume her maiden name, and the purest angel in heaven could not detect in her dreams, in her thoughts, a single unholy word or thought."

"Oh, yes, yes," said the queen. "I know that your Andrée is an angel upon earth; I know that she deserves to be loved. That is the reason why I think she has a brilliant future before her, while mine is hopeless! Oh, no, no! Come, Count, I beg of you, say not another word; I no longer speak to you as a queen — forgive me, I forget myself; but what would you have? there is in my soul a voice which always sings happiness, joy,

and love, although it is too often assailed by those sinister voices which speak of nothing but misfortune, war, and death. It is the voice of my youth, which I have survived. Charny, forgive me, I shall no longer be young, I shall no longer smile, I shall no longer love!"

And the unhappy woman covered her burning eyes with her thin and delicate hands, and the tear of a queen filtered, brilliant as a diamond, between each of her fingers.

The count once more fell on his knees before her.

"Madame, in the name of Heaven!" said he, "order me to leave you, to fly from you, to die for you, but do not let me see you weep!"

And the count himself could hardly refrain from sobbing as he spoke.

"It is all over," said Marie Antoinette, raising her head, and speaking gently, with a smile replete with grace.

And, with a beautiful movement, she threw back her thick powdered hair, which had fallen on her neck, white as the driven snow.

"Yes, yes, it is over!" continued the queen; "I shall not afflict you any more; let us throw aside all these follies. Great God! it is strange that the woman should be so weak, when the queen so much needs to be firm. You come from Paris, do you not? Let us converse about it. You told me some things that I have forgotten; and yet they were very serious, were they not, Monsieur de Charny?"

"Be it so, Madame; let us return to that fatal subject: for, as you observe, what I have to tell you is very serious. Yes, I have just arrived from Paris, and I was present at the downfall of the monarchy."

"I was right to request you to return to *serious* mat-

ters, and most assuredly, Count, you make them more than sufficiently gloomy. A successful riot, — do you call that the downfall of the monarchy? What! is it because the Bastille has been taken, Monsieur de Charny, that you say the monarchy is abolished? Oh, you do not reflect that the Bastille was founded in France only in the fourteenth century, while monarchy has been taking root in the world during the last six thousand years."

"I should be well pleased to deceive myself in this matter, Madame," replied the count; "and then, instead of afflicting your Majesty's mind, I should bring to you the most consoling news. Unfortunately, the instrument will not produce any other sounds but those for which it was intended."

"Let us see, let us see; I will sustain you, — I who am but a woman; I will put you on the right path."

"Alas! I ask for nothing better."

"The Parisians have revolted, have they not?"

"Yes."

"In what proportion?"

"In the proportion of twelve to fifteen."

"How do you arrive at this calculation?"

"Oh, very easily: the people form twelve fifteenths of the body of the nation; there remain two fifteenths for the nobility and one for the clergy."

"Your calculations are exact, Count, and you have them at your fingers' ends. Have you read the works of Monsieur and Madame de Necker?"

"Those of Monsieur de Necker? Yes, Madame."

"Well, the proverb holds good," said the queen, gayly: "we are never betrayed but by our own friends. Well, then, here is my own calculation; will you listen to it?"

"With all respect."

"Among these twelve fifteenths there are six of women, are there not?"

"Yes, your Majesty. But —"

"Do not interrupt me. We said there were six fifteenths of women, so let us say six; two of indifferent or incapable old men, — is that too much?"

"No."

"There still remain four fifteenths, of which you will allow that at least two are cowards or lukewarm individuals, — I flatter the French nation. But finally, there remain two fifteenths; I will grant you that they are furious, robust, brave, and warlike. These two fifteenths, let us consider them as belonging to Paris only, for it is needless to speak of the provinces, is it not? It is only Paris that requires to be retaken?"

"Yes, Madame. But —"

"Always but; wait a moment. You can reply when I have concluded."

Monsieur de Charny bowed.

"I therefore estimate," continued the queen, "the two fifteenths of Paris at one hundred thousand men; is that sufficient?"

This time the count did not answer. The queen rejoined: —

"Well, then! to these hundred thousand men, badly armed, badly disciplined, and but little accustomed to battle, hesitating because they know they are doing wrong, I can oppose fifty thousand men, known throughout Europe for their bravery, with officers like you, Monsieur de Charny; besides that sacred cause which is denominated divine right, and in addition to all this, my own firm soul, which it is easy to move, but difficult to break."

The count still remained silent.

"Do you think," continued the queen, "that in a battle fought in such a cause, two men of the people are worth more than one of my soldiers?"

Charny said nothing.

"Speak, — answer me! — Do you think so?" exclaimed the queen, growing impatient.

"Madame," answered the Count, at last, throwing aside, on this order from the Queen, the respectful reserve which he had so long maintained, "on a field of battle, where these hundred thousand men would be isolated, undisciplined and badly armed as they are, your fifty thousand soldiers would defeat them in half an hour."

"Ah!" said the queen, "I was then right."

"Wait a moment. But it is not as you imagine. And, in the first place, your hundred thousand insurgents in Paris are five hundred thousand."

"Five hundred thousand?"

"Quite as many. You had omitted the women and children in your calculation! Oh, Queen of France! Oh, proud and courageous woman! consider them as so many men, these women of Paris; the day will perhaps come when they will compel you to consider them as so many demons."

"What can you mean, Count?"

"Madame, do you know what part a woman plays in a civil war? No, you do not. Well, I will tell you; and you will see that two soldiers against each woman would not be too many."

"Count, have you lost your senses?"

Charny smiled sadly.

"Did you see them at the Bastille?" asked he, "in the midst of the fire, in the midst of the shot, crying, 'To arms!' threatening with their fists your redoubtable Swiss soldiers, fully armed and equipped, uttering maledictions

over the bodies of the slain, with that voice that excites the hearts of the living. Have we not seen them boiling the pitch, dragging cannon along the streets, giving cartridges to those who were eager for the combat, and to the timid combatants a cartridge and a kiss? Do you know that as many women as men trod the drawbridge of the Bastille, and that at this moment, if the stones of the Bastille are falling, it is by pickaxes wielded by women's hands? Ah! Madame, do not overlook the women of Paris; take them into consideration; think also of the children who cast bullets, who sharpen swords, who throw paving-stones from a sixth story; think of them, for the bullet which was cast by a child may kill your best general from afar off, for the sword which it has sharpened will cut the hamstrings of your war-horses, for the clouds of stones which fall as from the skies will crush your dragoons and your guards; consider the old men, Madame, for if they have no longer the strength to raise a sword, they have still enough to serve as shields. At the taking of the Bastille, Madame, there were old men; do you know what they did, — those aged men whom you affect to despise? They placed themselves before the young men, who steadied their muskets on their shoulders, that they might take sure aim, so that the balls of your Swiss killed the helpless aged man, whose body served as a rampart to the vigorous youth. Include the aged men, for it is they who for the last three hundred years have related to succeeding generations the insults suffered by their mothers, — the desolation of their fields, caused by the devouring of their crops by the noblemen's game; the odium attached to their caste, crushed down by feudal privileges; and then the sons seize a hatchet, a club, a gun, in short, any weapon within their reach, and sally out to kill, fully charged with the curses of the aged

against all this tyranny, as the cannon is loaded with powder and iron. At Paris, at this moment, men, women, old men, and children are all crying, 'Liberty, deliverance!' Count everything that has a voice, Madame, and you may estimate the number of combatants in Paris at eight hundred thousand souls."

"Three hundred Spartans defeated the army of Xerxes, Monsieur de Charny."

"Yes; but to-day your three hundred Spartans have increased to eight hundred thousand, and your fifty thousand soldiers compose the army of Xerxes."

The queen raised her head, her hands convulsively clinched, and her face burning with shame and anger.

"Oh, let me fall from my throne," said she, "let me be torn to pieces by your five hundred thousand Parisians, but do not suffer me to hear a Charny, a man devoted to me, speak to me thus."

"If he speaks to you thus, Madame, it is because it is necessary; for this Charny has not in his veins a single drop of blood that is unworthy of his ancestors, or that is not all your own."

"Then let him march upon Paris with me, and there we will die together."

"Ignominiously," said the count, "without the possibility of a struggle. We shall not even fight; we shall disappear like the Philistines or the Amalekites. March upon Paris! — but you seem to be ignorant of a very important thing, — it is at the moment we shall enter Paris, the houses will fall upon us as did the waves of the Red Sea upon Pharaoh; and you will leave in France a name which will be accursed, and your children will be killed like the cubs of a wolf."

"How then, should I fall, Count?" said the queen, with haughtiness; "teach me, I entreat you."

"As a victim, Madame," respectfully replied Monsieur de Charny; "as a queen, smiling and forgiving those who strike the fatal blow. Ah! if you had five hundred thousand men like me, I should say: "Let us set out on our march!—let us march to-night! let us march this very instant! And to-morrow you would reign at the Tuileries; to-morrow you would have reconquered your throne."

"Oh," exclaimed the queen, "even you have given way to despair,—you in whom I had founded all my hopes!"

"Yes, I despair, Madame; because all France thinks as Paris does; because your army, if it were victorious in Paris, would be swallowed up by Lyons, Rouen, Lille, Strasbourg, Nantes, and a hundred other devouring cities. Come, come, take courage, Madame; return your sword into its scabbard."

"Ah! was it for this," cried the queen, "that I have gathered around me so many brave men? Was it for this that I have inspired them with so much courage?"

"If that is not your opinion, Madame, give your orders, and we will march upon Paris this very night. Say what is your pleasure."

There was so much devotion in this offer of the count, that it intimidated the queen more than a refusal would have done. She threw herself in despair on a sofa, where she struggled for a considerable time with her haughty soul.

At length, raising her head:—

"Count," said she, "do you desire me to remain inactive?"

"I have the honor to advise your Majesty to remain so."

"It shall be so, — come back."

"Alas! Madame, have I offended you?" said the count, looking at the queen with a sorrowful expression. but in which beamed indescribable love.

"No — your hand."

The count bowed gracefully, and gave his hand to the queen.

"I must scold you," said Marie Antoinette, endeavoring to smile.

"For what reason, Madame?"

"How! you have a brother in the army, and I have only been accidentally informed of it."

"I do not comprehend — "

"This evening, a young officer of the Hussars of Bercheny — "

"Ah! my brother George!"

"Why have you never spoken to me of this young man? Why has he not a high rank in a regiment?"

"Because he is yet quite young and inexperienced; because he is not worthy of command as a chief officer; because, in fine, if your Majesty has condescended to look so low as upon me who am called Charny, to honor me with your friendship, it is not a reason that my relatives should be advanced, to the prejudice of a crowd of brave noblemen more deserving than my brothers."

"Have you then still another brother?"

"Yes, Madame; and one who is as ready to die for your Majesty as the two others."

"Does he not need anything?"

"Nothing, Madame. We have the happiness to have not only our lives, but also a fortune to lay at the feet of your Majesty."

While he was pronouncing these last words, — the queen being much moved by a trait of such delicate

probity, and he himself palpitating with affection caused by the gracious kindness of her Majesty, — they were suddenly disturbed in their conversation by a groan from the adjoining room.

The queen rose from her seat, went to the door, and screamed aloud. She had just perceived a woman who was writhing on the carpet, and suffering the most horrible convulsions.

"Oh, the countess," said she in a whisper to Monsieur de Charny; "she has overheard our conversation."

"No, Madame," answered he, "otherwise she would have warned your Majesty that we could be overheard."

And he sprang towards Andrée and raised her in his arms.

The queen remained standing at two steps from her, cold, pale, and trembling with anxiety.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A TRIO.

ANDRÉE was gradually recovering her senses, without knowing from whom assistance came, but she seemed instinctively to understand that some one had come to her assistance.

She raised her head, and her hands grasped the unhoped-for succor that was offered her.

But her mind did not recover as soon as her body; it still remained vacillating, stupefied, somnolent, during a few minutes.

After having succeeded in recalling her to physical life, Monsieur de Charny attempted to restore her moral senses; but he was struggling against a terrible and concentrated unconsciousness.

Finally she fastened her open but haggard eyes upon him, and with her still remaining delirium, without recognizing the person who was supporting her, she gave a loud shriek, and abruptly pushed him from her.

During all this time the queen turned her eyes in another direction; she, a woman; she, whose mission it was to console, to strengthen this afflicted friend, — she abandoned her.

Charny raised Andrée in his powerful arms, notwithstanding the resistance she attempted to make, and turning round to the queen, who was still standing, pale and motionless: —

"Pardon me, Madame," said he; "something extraordinary must doubtless have happened. Madame de Charny is not subject to fainting, and this is the first time I have ever seen her in this state."

"She must then be suffering greatly," said the queen, who still reverted to the idea that Andrée had overheard their conversation.

"Yes, without doubt she is suffering," answered the count, "and it is for that reason that I shall ask your Majesty the permission to have her carried to her own apartment. She needs the assistance of her attendants."

"Do so," said the queen, raising her hand to the bell.

But scarcely had Andrée heard the ringing of the bell, when she wrestled fearfully, and cried out in her delirium, —

"Oh, Gilbert, that Gilbert!"

The queen trembled at the sound of this name, and the astonished count placed his wife upon a sofa.

At this moment a servant appeared, to answer the bell.

"It is nothing," said the queen, making a sign to him with her hand to leave the room.

Then, being once more left to themselves, the count and the queen looked at each other. Andrée had again closed her eyes, and seemed to suffer from a second attack.

Monsieur de Charny, who was kneeling near the sofa, prevented her from falling off it.

"Gilbert," repeated the queen, "what name is that?"

"We must inquire."

"I think I know it," said Marie Antoinette; "I think it is not the first time I have heard the countess pronounce that name."

But as if she had been threatened by this recollection of the queen, and this threat had surprised her in the midst of her convulsions, Andrée opened her eyes, stretched out her arms to heaven, and making a great effort, stood upright.

Her first look, an intelligent look, was this time directed at Monsieur de Charny, whom she recognized, and greeted with caressing smiles.

Then, as if this involuntary manifestation of her thought had been unworthy of her Spartan soul, Andrée turned her eyes in another direction, and perceived the queen. She immediately made a profound inclination.

"Ah! good Heaven, what then is the matter with you, Madame?" said Monsieur de Charny; "you have alarmed me, — you, who are usually so strong and so courageous, to have suffered from a swoon!"

"Sir," said she, "such fearful events have taken place at Paris, that when men are trembling, it is by no means strange that women should faint. Have you then left Paris? — oh! you have done rightly."

"Good God! Countess," said Charny, in a doubting tone, "was it then on my account that you underwent all this suffering!"

Andrée again looked at her husband and the queen, but did not answer.

"Why, certainly that is the reason, Count, — why should you doubt it?" answered Marie Antoinette. "The Countess de Charny is not a queen; she has the right to be alarmed for her husband's safety."

Charny could detect jealousy in the queen's language.

"Oh, Madame," said he, "I am quite certain that the countess fears still more for her sovereign's safety than for mine."

"But, in fine," asked Marie Antoinette, "why and

how is it that we found you in a swoon in this room, Countess?"

"Oh, it would be impossible for me to tell you that, Madame; I cannot myself account for it; but in this life of fatigue, of terror, and painful emotions, which we have led for the last three days, nothing can be more natural, it seems to me, than the fainting of a woman."

"This is true," murmured the queen, who perceived that Andrée did not wish to be compelled to speak out.

"But," rejoined Andrée, in her turn, with that extraordinary degree of calmness which never abandoned her after she had once become the mistress of her will, and which was so much the more embarrassing in difficult circumstances that it could easily be discerned to be mere affectation, and concealed feelings altogether human; "but even your Majesty's eyes are at this moment in tears."

And the count thought he could perceive in the words of his wife that ironical accent he had remarked but a few moments previously in the language of the queen.

"Madame," said he to Andrée, with a degree of severity to which his voice was evidently not accustomed, "it is not astonishing that the queen's eyes should be suffused with tears, for the queen loves her people, and the blood of the people has been shed."

"Fortunately, God has spared yours, sir," said Andrée, who was still no less cold and impenetrable.

"Yes; but it is not of her Majesty that we are speaking, Madame, but of you; let us then return to our subject; the queen permits us to do so."

Marie Antoinette made an affirmative gesture with her head.

"You were alarmed, then, were you not?"

"Who, I?"

"You have been suffering; do not deny it; some accident has happened to you — what was it? — I know not what it can have been, but you will tell us."

"You are mistaken, sir."

"Have you had any reason to complain of any one — of a man?" Andrée turned pale.

"I have had no reason to complain of any one, sir; I have just come from the king's apartment."

"Did you come direct from there?"

"Yes, direct. Her Majesty can easily ascertain that fact."

"If such be the case," said Marie Antoinette, "the countess must be right. The king loves her too well, and knows that my own affection for her is too strong, for him to disoblige her in any way whatever."

"But you mentioned a name," said Charny, still persisting.

"A name?"

"Yes; when you were recovering your senses."

Andrée looked at the queen as if to ask her for assistance; but either because the queen did not understand her, or did not wish to do so: —

"Yes," said she, "you pronounced the name Gilbert."

"Gilbert! did I pronounce the name of Gilbert?" exclaimed Andrée, in a tone so full of terror that the count was more affected by this cry than he had been by her fainting.

"Yes!" exclaimed he, "you pronounced that name."

"Ah, indeed!" said Andrée, "that is singular."

And by degrees, as the clouds close again after having been rent asunder by the lightning, the countenance of the young woman, so violently agitated at the sound of that fatal name, recovered its serenity, and but a few muscles of her lovely face continued to tremble almost

imperceptibly, like the last flashes of the tempest which vanish in the horizon.

"Gilbert!" she repeated; "I do not know that name."

"Yes, Gilbert," repeated the queen; "come, try to recollect, my dear Andrée."

"But, Madame," said the count to Marie Antoinette, "perhaps it is mere chance, and this name may be unknown to the countess."

"No," said Andrée, "no; it is not unknown to me. It is that of a learned man, of a skilful physician who has just arrived from America, I believe, and who became intimate while there with Monsieur de Lafayette."

"Well, then?" asked the count.

"Well, then!" repeated Andrée, with the greatest presence of mind; "I do not know him personally, but he is said to be a very honorable man."

"Then why all this emotion, my dear countess?" observed the queen.

"This emotion! Have I then been excited?"

"Yes; one would have said that when you pronounced the name Gilbert, you felt as if undergoing torture."

"It is possible; I will tell you how it happened. I met a person in the king's cabinet, who was dressed in black, a man of austere countenance, who spoke of gloomy and horrible subjects; he related with the most frightful reality the assassination of Monsieur de Launay and Monsieur de Flesselles. I became terrified on hearing this intelligence, and I fell into the swoon in which you saw me. It may be that I spoke at that time; perhaps I then pronounced the name of Monsieur Gilbert."

"It is possible," repeated Monsieur de Charny, who was evidently not disposed to push the questioning any further. "But now you feel recovered, do you not, Madame?"

"Perfectly."

"I will then beg of you to do one thing, Monsieur de Charny," said the queen.

"I am at the disposal of your Majesty."

"Go and find out Messieurs de Besenval, de Broglie, and de Lambesq. Tell them to quarter their troops where they now are. The king will decide to-morrow in council what must be done."

The count bowed; but before leaving the room, he cast a last look at Andrée.

That look was full of affectionate anxiety.

It did not escape the queen.

"Countess," said she, "will you not return to the king's apartment with me?"

"No, Madame, no," replied Andrée, quickly.

"And why not?"

"I ask your Majesty's permission to withdraw to my own apartment. The emotions I have undergone make me feel the want of rest."

"Come now, Countess, speak frankly," said the queen. "Have you had any disagreement with his Majesty?"

"Oh, by no means, Madame! absolutely nothing."

"Oh, tell me, if anything has happened! The king does not always spare my friends."

"The king is, as usual, full of kindness to me, but —"

"But you have no great wish to see him. Is it not so? There must positively be something at the bottom of all this, Count," said the queen, with affected gayety.

At this moment Andrée directed so expressive, so supplicating a look at the queen, — a look so full of revelations, that the latter understood it was time to put an end to this minor war.

"In fact, Countess," said she, "we will leave Monsieur

de Charny to execute the commission I intrusted to him, and you can retire or remain here, according to your choice."

"Thank you, Madame," said Andrée.

"Go, then, Monsieur de Charny," continued Marie Antoinette, while she noticed the expression of gratitude which was visible on the features of Andrée.

Either the count did not perceive, or did not wish to perceive it. He took the hand of his wife, and complimented her on the return of her strength and color.

Then, making a most respectful bow to the queen, he left the room.

But while leaving the room he exchanged a last look with Marie Antoinette.

The queen's look meant to say, "Return quickly." That of the count replied, "As soon as possible."

As to Andrée, she followed with her eyes every one of her husband's movements, her bosom palpitating, and almost breathless.

She seemed to accelerate with her wishes the slow and noble step with which he approached the door. She, as it were, pushed him out of the room with the whole power of her will.

Therefore was it that, as soon as he had closed the door, as soon as he had disappeared, all the strength that Andrée had summoned to assist her in surmounting the difficulties of her position abandoned her; her face became pale, her limbs failed beneath her, and she fell into an arm-chair which was within her reach, while she endeavored to apologize to the queen for her involuntary breach of etiquette.

The queen ran to the chimney-piece, took a smelling-bottle of salts, and making Andrée inhale them, she was soon restored to her senses, but more by the power of her

own will than by the efficacy of the attentions she received at the royal hands.

In fact, there was something strange in the conduct of these two women. The queen seemed to love Andrée; Andrée respected the queen greatly, and nevertheless at certain moments they did not appear to be, the one an affectionate queen, the other a devoted subject, but two determined enemies.

As we have already said, the potent will of Andrée soon restored her strength. She rose up, respectfully removed the queen's hand, and, courtesying to her: —

"Your Majesty," said she, "has given me permission to retire to my own room."

"Yes, undoubtedly; and you are always free, dear Countess, and this you know full well. Etiquette is not intended for you. But before you retire, have you nothing to tell me?"

"I, Madame?" asked Andrée.

"Yes, you, without doubt."

"No: what should I have to tell you?"

"In regard to this Monsieur Gilbert, the sight of whom has made so strong an impression upon you."

Andrée trembled; but she merely made a sign of denial.

"In that case, I will not detain you any longer, dear Andrée; you may go."

And the queen took a step towards the door of the dressing-room, which communicated with her bedroom.

Andrée, on her side, having made her obeisance to the queen in the most irreproachable manner, was going towards the door.

But at the very moment she was about to open it, steps were heard in the corridor, and a hand was placed on the external handle of the door.

At the same time the voice of Louis XVI. was heard, giving orders for the night to his valet.

"The king, Madame!" said Andrée, retreating several steps; "the king!"

"And what of that? Yes, it is the king," said Marie Antoinette. "Does he terrify you to such a degree as this?"

"Madame, in the name of Heaven," cried Andrée, "let me not see the king! Let me not meet the king face to face, at all events this evening. I should die of shame."

"But finally you will tell me — "

"Everything — yes, everything — if your Majesty requires it. But hide me!"

"Go into my boudoir," said Marie Antoinette. "You can leave it as soon as the king himself retires. Rest assured your captivity will not be of long duration; the king never remains here long."

"Oh, thanks! — thanks!" exclaimed the countess.

And rushing into the boudoir, she disappeared at the very moment that the king, having opened the door, appeared upon the threshold of the chamber.

The king entered.

CHAPTER XXX.

A KING AND A QUEEN.

THE queen, after glancing round, exchanged friendly greetings with the king, who gave her his hand.

"To what good chance," asked Marie Antoinette, "do I owe this visit?"

"Really to chance; you have spoken correctly, Madame. I have just met De Charny, who said he was commissioned by you to go and tell all our warriors to keep themselves quiet. It affords me much pleasure that you have taken so wise a resolution, and I was unwilling to pass your apartment without thanking you."

"Yes," said the queen, "I have in fact reconsidered the matter, and have come to the conclusion that it is decidedly the best course to leave the troops at rest, and thus to afford no pretext for intestine war."

"Good! that is right!" said the king. "I am delighted to find you of that opinion. I knew very well that I should bring you over to it at last."

"Your Majesty sees that you have gained your object without much trouble; since, uninfluenced by you, I have formed my decision."

"Well done! that is a proof that you are almost reasonable, and when I have communicated to you some of my reflections, you will be so altogether."

"But if we are of the same opinion, Sire, to impart to me these reflections would be useless."

"Oh, calm yourself, Madame! I have no wish to enter upon discussion; you know well that I like it no more than you do. This will be a conversation. Come, now; are you not glad to talk with me occasionally about the affairs of France, as a good wife does with her spouse about domestic matters?"

These last words were uttered with that perfect good-nature which Louis XVI. invariably manifested towards his familiar friends.

"Oh, Sire," answered the queen, "I am always happy to do so; but is the time well chosen?"

"I believe that it is. You desire that there should be no hostile demonstration. Did you not this moment say so?"

"I did."

"But you have not explained to me your reason."

"You did not ask me."

"Well, I now ask you."

"Impotence!"

"Ah! that is the reason, is it? If you thought yourself the stronger, you would make war."

"If I thought that I was the stronger, I should burn Paris."

"Oh, I was certain that your motives for not wishing war were not the same as mine."

"Well, let us hear yours."

"Mine?" asked the king.

"Yes," answered Marie Antoinette, "yours."

"I have but one."

"Mention it."

"Oh, that is soon done! I do not wish to enter into war with the people, because I find that the people are right."

Marie Antoinette made a gesture of surprise.

"Right!" she exclaimed, "the people right in rebelling!"

"Certainly."

"Right in storming the Bastille, in killing the governor, in murdering the provost of the merchants, in exterminating your soldiers?"

"Yes, by Heaven, they were!"

"Oh," exclaimed the queen, "these are your reflections, and it was such reflections as these that you wished me to hear!"

"I have told you them as they occurred to me."

"At dinner?"

"Good!" said the king, "we are about to fall back on the subject of nourishment. You cannot pardon me for eating. You would have me poetic and ethereal. What do you wish! In my family we eat. Not only did Henry IV. eat, but he was also a hard drinker; the great and poetic Louis XIV. eat enough to make one blush; King Louis XV., to make sure of good eating and drinking, baked his biscuits with his own royal hands, and had his coffee made by Madame Dubarry. As for me, what would you have? When I am hungry, I cannot resist my appetite; I am compelled to follow the example of my ancestors, Louis XV., Louis XIV., and Henry IV. If this is a constitutional necessity, pray be lenient with me; if it is a fault, forgive me."

"But, Sire, you must confess —"

"That I ought not to eat when I am hungry; no," said the king, tranquilly shaking his head.

"I am not talking of that: I speak of the people."

"Ah!"

"You must confess that the people have been in the wrong."

"In rebelling? Not at all. Come, let us review all

our ministers. Since we began to reign, how many have really concerned themselves about the welfare of the people? Two, — Turgot and Monsieur de Necker. You and your coterie have banished them. For one of these gentlemen the people have raised a tumult; for the other they will perhaps raise a revolution. Let us speak a little of the others! Ah! they are charming fellows, are they not? Monsieur de Maurepas, that creature of my aunts, a song-writer! It is not the ministers who should sing, it is the people. Monsieur de Calonne? That epigrammatic answer he made you was admirable, I know well, — a sentence that will live. Once when you asked him for something, — I forget what, — he gallantly replied: 'If it is possible, it is done: if it is impossible, it shall be done.' That epigram cost the people to the tune of a hundred millions. You should not be astonished, therefore, if they find it a little less witty than you do. In truth, — pray understand me, Madame, — if I retain all those who fleece the people, and dismiss all those who love them, it will not be the best means of tranquillizing them and of making them more attached to our government."

"Good! Then insurrection is a right. Proclaim this principle from the house-tops. In truth I am glad that it is to me alone that you have communicated such ideas. If others heard you!"

"Oh, yes, yes!" replied the king; "you tell me nothing new. Yes, I know well that if Polignac, Dreux-Brézé, Clermont-Tonnerre, and Coigny heard me, they would shrug their shoulders behind me, — I know it well; but in reality they pity me after a very different fashion. That Polignac, to whom one fine morning you made over the county of Fénestrange, which cost you twelve hundred thousand livres; Sartine, to whom I have already given

a pension of eighty-nine thousand livres, and who has just received from you two hundred thousand livres ostensibly as a stipendiary fund; the prince of Deux-Ponts, to whom you compelled me to grant nine hundred and forty-five thousand livres to clear off his debts; Marie de Laval and Madame de Magneville, who each finger a pension of eighty thousand livres; Coigny, who is loaded with all sorts of pensions, and who once, when I thought of making some reduction in his appointments, hedged me in between two doors, and would have beaten me, I believe, if I had not consented to give him all that he wished, — all these people are your friends, are they not? Well, speak about them. But this much I will say, and I know you will not believe it, because it is the truth; if instead of being at court, these friends of yours had been in the Bastille, the people would have fortified the place instead of demolishing it."

"Oh!" exclaimed the queen, with a gesture of anger she was unable to suppress.

"You may say what you please, but that is the case," said Louis, tranquilly.

"Oh, your beloved people! Ah, well! they will not have occasion much longer to hate my friends, for they are going into exile."

"They are going away!" exclaimed the king.

"Yes, they are going away."

"Polignac? the women?"

"Yes."

"So much the better," exclaimed the king, "so much the better! God be praised!"

"How so much the better? How God be praised? Are you not sorry?"

"No, indeed; far from it. Do they need money to take them away? I will give it them. That money at least

will not be ill employed, I will warrant. I wish you a pleasant journey, gentlemen; and you also, ladies," said the king, all radiant.

"Yes," said the queen, "I can understand that you like cowardice."

"Well, let us understand each other; you are doing them justice at last."

"They are not dismissed; they are deserting."

"No matter, so that they take themselves off!"

"And to think that it is your family who have advised such despicable conduct!"

"My family advised your favorites to go away! I never gave my family credit for so much sense. And tell me which members of my family have done me this service, that I may thank them."

"Your aunt Adelaide; your brother D'Artois."

"My brother D'Artois! Do you believe he will follow the advice he gives? Do you think that he also will go away?"

"Why not?" exclaimed Marie Antoinette, trying to vex the king.

"Heaven grant it!" exclaimed Louis; "let Monsieur d'Artois take his departure; I should say to him what I have said to the others: A good journey to you, brother d'Artois! I wish you a very pleasant journey!"

"Ah! your brother!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette.

"True; but what quality has he to make his presence desirable? A good little fellow enough, who lacks neither wit nor courage, I grant you; but who has no brains; who acts the French prince like a fop of the time of Louis XIII., — a blundering blockhead, who has compromised even you, the wife of Cæsar."

"Cæsar!" muttered the queen, with cutting irony.

"Or Claudius, if you like it better," answered the

king; "for you know, Madame, that Claudius, as well as Nero, was a Cæsar."

The queen looked down. This historical coolness confused her not a little.

"Claudius," continued the king, — "since you prefer the name of Claudius to that of Cæsar, — Claudius was obliged one evening, as you are aware, to shut the gate of Versailles, in order to give you a lesson when you stayed out too late. It was Monsieur d'Artois who got you that lesson. I shall not miss, therefore, the Count d'Artois. As for my aunt, ah, well! we know what we know about her. She is another who deserves to be enrolled in the family of the Cæsars. But I say no more; she is my aunt. Let her go in peace; I shall not miss her a whit more than I shall the others. Then, there is Monsieur de Provence; do you think I should feel sorry at his leaving? A good journey to him!"

"Oh, he does not speak of going!"

"So much the worse! You see, my dear, Monsieur de Provence knows Latin too well for me. I am obliged to speak English to be even with him. It was Monsieur de Provence who put Beaumarchais on our shoulders, thrusting him in at Bicêtre, For-Lévêque and I know not where, on his own private authority, and a fine return has been made us for all this by this same Monsieur de Beaumarchais. Ah, Monsieur de Provence will remain, will he? So much the worse, so much the worse! There is one thing of which I should like you to be aware, Madame, and it is this, — in your whole household, I know but one honest man, Monsieur de Charny."

The queen blushed and turned away.

"We were talking about the Bastille," continued the king, after a short silence, "and you were lamenting that it was taken."

"Be seated at least, Sire," replied the queen, "since it would appear that you have still many things to tell me."

"No, thank you, I like better to walk while speaking; by thus walking, I attend to my health, about which nobody else seems to take the slightest concern; for though my appetite is good, my digestion is bad. Do you know what they are saying at this moment? They are saying: 'The king has supped; the king sleeps.' Now you see how I sleep, — bolt upright, trying to aid my digestion while I talk on politics with my wife. Ah, Madame, I am expiating, — expiating!"

"Expiating what, if you please?"

"The sins of a century whose scapegoat I am; I am expiating the sins of Madame de Pompadour, Madame Dubarry, the Parc-aux-Cerfs; the sins of poor Latude, who for thirty years rotted in dungeons, and was immortalized by suffering, — one more victim who caused the Bastille to be detested. Poor fellow! Ah, Madame! what blunders I have made in giving effect to the stupid measures of others! Philosophers, political economists, scientists, men of letters, I have taken part in persecuting them all. Good Heavens! these men asked for nothing better than to love me. If they had loved me they would have at once constituted the glory and the happiness of my reign. Monsieur Rousseau, for example, that bugbear of Sartines and others — ah well! I saw him one day myself, that day you made him come to Trianon, you recollect. His clothes, it is true, were ill brushed, and it is also true that his beard was long; but he was nevertheless a good man. If I had donned my rough gray coat and thick stockings, and had said to Monsieur Rousseau, 'Let us go and gather mosses in the woods of Ville d'Avray — '"

"Ah, well! what then?" interrupted the queen, with supreme contempt.

"Well, then Monsieur Rousseau would not have written the 'Vicar of Savoy' nor the 'Social Contract.'"

"Yes, yes, I am well aware of that; that is the way you reason," said Marie Antoinette. "You are a prudent man; you fear your people as the dog does his master."

"Not so, but as the master fears his dog; it is something to be sure that one's dog will not bite him. Madame, when I walk with Médor, that Pyrenean hound of which the king of Spain made me a present, I feel quite proud of his friendship. Laugh if you will, but it is nevertheless true that Médor, if he was not my friend, would chew me up with his great white teeth. You see I say to him: 'Pretty Médor, good Médor,' and he licks me. I prefer his tongue to his tusks."

"Be it so, then; flatter the revolutionists, caress them, throw titbits to them."

"Oh, the very thing I am going to do! I have no other project, believe me. Yes, my decision is taken. I will lay up a little money, and then I will deal with these gentlemen as if they were so many Cerberi. Ah, but stay! There is Monsieur de Mirabeau —"

"Oh, yes! tell me about that ferocious brute."

"With fifty thousand livres a month he will be a Médor, whereas if we wait, he will not perhaps be satisfied with less than half a million."

The queen laughed scornfully.

"Oh, the idea of flattering people like him!"

"Monsieur Bailly," continued the king, "having become minister of arts — an office which I am going to institute for my amusement — will be another Médor.

Pardon me, Madame, if I do not entertain the same views that you do, but I am of the same opinion as my ancestor Henry IV. He was a profound politician if there ever was one, and I remember well what he said."

"What did he say?"

"'Flies are not caught with vinegar.'"

"Sancho said that also, or something very like it."

"Well, Sancho would have made the people of Barataria very happy, had there been such a place as Barataria."

"Sire, your ancestor Henry IV., whom you bring forward, caught wolves as well as flies. Witness Marshal de Biron, whose throat he cut. He could say then what he pleased. By reasoning like Henry and acting as you do, you take all prestige from royalty, which can only exist by prestige. You degrade the principle, 'What will majesty become?' Majesty, I am aware, is but a word, but in this word centre all the royal virtues: 'He who respects, loves; he who loves, obeys —'"

"Ah! let us speak of majesty," interrupted the king, with a smile; "yes, let us speak of it. You, for example, are as majestic as one can be; and I know of none in Europe, not even your mother, Marie Thérèse, who has promoted as you have the science of majesty."

"I understand you; you mean that my majesty does not prevent my being abhorred by the French people."

"I do not say 'abhorred,' my dear Antoinette," said the king, gently; "but perhaps you are not so much loved as you deserve to be."

"Sir," said the queen, deeply wounded, "you only echo all that is said. I have, nevertheless, injured nobody; on the contrary, I have often benefited my sub-

jects. Why should they hate me as you say? Why should they not love me, were it not that there are people who make it their business to repeat daily, 'The queen is not loved!' Are you aware, sir, that one voice alone is needed to say that, in order that a hundred voices should repeat it; a hundred voices evoke ten thousand. Then, in unison with these ten thousand voices everybody repeats: 'The queen is not loved!' And the queen is not loved simply because one person said: 'The queen is not loved!'"

"Good heavens!" muttered the king.

"Thank goodness," interrupted the queen, "I have but little faith in popularity; but I also believe that my unpopularity is exaggerated. Praises are not showered down upon me, it is true; but I was once the popular idol, and because they loved me too much, they now run to the opposite extreme and hate me."

"Stay, Madame," said the king; "you know not the whole truth, and are still laboring under a delusion; were we not talking of the Bastille?"

"Yes."

"Well, there was a large room in the Bastille full of all sorts of books written against you. They will surely have burned all that."

"With what did these books accuse me?"

"Ah, you very well know, Madame, that I take not upon me to be your accuser, and have no wish to be your judge. When these pamphlets appeared, I had the whole edition seized and buried in the Bastille. But sometimes these books fall into my own hands. For instance, I have one here now," said the king, striking his coat pocket, "and it is simply abominable."

"Show it me," cried the queen.

"I cannot," said the king; "it contains engravings."

"And have you come to that? Have you reached that point of blindness and imbecility that you do not even attempt to trace all these base slanders to their source?"

"That is just what I have done. I have traced them to their source; there is not one of my lieutenants of police who has not grown gray in that service."

"Then you know the author of these indignities?"

"I know one of the authors, at least, — Monsieur Furth, the author of that one; there is his receipt for 22,500 livres. You see when the thing is worth the trouble, I do not regard the expense."

"But the others, — the others!"

"Ah, they are often poor hungry wretches who vegetate in England or Holland. We are bitten, stung, irritated; we ferret them out, expecting to find a serpent, a crocodile, to crush, to kill. Nothing of the sort; but we find an insect, so mean, so base, so despicable, that we dare not dirty our hands by touching it, even to punish it."

"That is all very fine! But if you care not to touch insects, why not accuse boldly the sun which calls them into existence. In truth, we may safely affirm that their sun is Philip of Orléans."

"Ha!" exclaimed the king, clapping his hands, "are you there? Monsieur d'Orléans! nay, nay, seek not to embroil me with him."

"Embroil you with your enemy, Sire! Oh, the idea is original!"

The king shrugged his shoulders.

"There now," said he, "there is your system of interpreting matters. Monsieur d'Orléans! You attack Monsieur d'Orleans, who has just placed himself under my orders to fight the rebels, — who leaves Paris and hastens to Versailles! Monsieur d'Orléans my enemy! Truly,

Madame, the hatred you bear to the house of Orléans surpasses all conception."

"Oh, he has come, has he? and do you know the reason? He fears that his absence might be remarked in the general demonstration of loyalty. He has come because he is a coward."

"Indeed! We are going to begin again. Whoever first imputed such motives to Orléans is a coward. You had it inserted in your gazette that he showed the white feather at Ushant, because you wished to dishonor him. Ah, well! it was a calumny, Madame. Philip was not afraid; Philip did not flee. Had he fled, he would not belong to the family. The Orléans are brave. The fact is indisputable. The chief of the family, who seemed rather to have descended from Henry III. than from Henry IV., was brave, in spite of D'Effiat and Chevalier de Lorraine. He braved death at the battle of Cassel. The regent had indeed some trifling things to say against him on the score of manners; but he exposed his life at Steinkerque, at Nerwinde, and at Almanza like the meanest soldier in his army. Tell only half the truth, Madame, if you will; but tell not the evil that has no existence."

"Your Majesty is in the vein of whitewashing all the revolutionists. You will see, you will see what that fellow is worth. Oh, if I regret the destruction of the Bastille, it is on his account; yes, I repent that criminals were thrown into it, while he was at large."

"Ah, well!" said the king, "if Monsieur d'Orléans had been in the Bastille, we should be in a fine predicament to-day."

"In that case what would have happened, I should like to know?"

"You are aware, Madame, that his bust was prome-

naded round, crowned with flowers, together with that of Monsieur de Necker."

"I am."

"Ah, well! once out of the Bastille, Monsieur d'Orléans would have been king of France."

"And perhaps you would have thought that just," said Marie Antoinette, in a tone of bitter irony.

"I' faith, yes; shrug your shoulders as much as you please. To judge others, I look at matters from their point of view. From the height of the throne we cannot well see the people; I descend to their level, and I ask myself if as a burgess or a clod-hopper I could suffer a noble to count me among his cows and poultry as a chattel! if, as a farmer, I could endure that my lord's ten thousand pigeons should daily eat ten grains each of wheat, oats, or buckwheat, that is to say, about two bushels, whilst his hares and rabbits browsed on my clover, whilst his wild boars rooted up my potatoes, whilst his tax-gatherers tithed my produce, whilst my lord himself kissed my wife and daughters, whilst the king pressed my sons into his army, and whilst the priest, in his moments of passion, condemned my soul to endless misery."

"Why, sir," interrupted the queen, whose eyes flashed thunderbolts, "you should take a pickaxe and go and aid in the demolition of the Bastille."

"You laugh," replied the king; "but, by my troth, I should go, were it not ridiculous for a king to handle a pickaxe, when he could have the same work done by a single dash of the pen. Yes, I should take the pickaxe, and they would applaud me, as I applauded those who accomplished the business. Nay, Madame, they did me a famous service in demolishing the Bastille, and to you they did a still greater; yes, to you, who can no longer

throw, according to the whims of your friends, honest people into dungeons."

"Honest people in the Bastille! I — I sent honest people there! Oh, perhaps Monsieur de Rohan is an honest man!"

"Oh, speak no more of him; I speak not of him myself. Our sending him there was not a success, seeing that the parliament set him at liberty. Besides, it was no place for a prince of the Church, since in our time forgers were sent to the Bastille; and, indeed, I ask what forgers and robbers were doing there. Have I not prisons in Paris which cost me dear enough for the entertainment of these gentry? But let the forgers and robbers pass; the evil is that honest men were sent there."

"Honest men?"

"Undoubtedly; I have seen this very day an honest man who was incarcerated there, and who only got out a very short time since."

"When was that?"

"This morning."

"You have this evening seen a man who got out of the Bastille this morning?"

"I have just parted with him."

"Who is it?"

"Faith, one of your acquaintance."

"Of my acquaintance!"

"Yes."

"Might I ask his name?"

"Doctor Gilbert."

"Gilbert! Gilbert!" exclaimed the queen. "What! he whom Andrée named on returning to her senses?"

"Precisely so; it must have been he; I could swear to it."

"Was that man in the Bastille?"

"Faith, Madame, one would suppose that you were ignorant of the fact."

"I am entirely ignorant of it."

And, perceiving that the king looked astonished: —

"Unless," continued the queen, "for some reason I may have forgotten it."

"Ah! there," exclaimed the king, "for these acts of injustice there is always a reason which one forgets. But though you may have forgotten both the reason and the doctor, Madame de Charny has forgotten neither, I will answer for it."

"Sire! Sire!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette.

"There must have been something between them," the king continued.

"Sire, please to refrain!" said the queen, looking anxiously towards the boudoir, where Andrée was concealed, and could hear all that was said.

"Oh, yes!" said the king, laughing; "you fear that De Charny may chance to learn. Poor De Charny!"

"Sire, I entreat you; Madame de Charny is one of the purest of women, and I should rather believe, I assure you, that this Doctor Gilbert — "

"Pshaw!" interrupted the king, "do you accuse that honest fellow? I know what I know; and the worst of it is that, knowing so much, I do not yet know all."

"Really, I am horrified that you should persist in entertaining such suspicions," said the queen, without removing her eyes from the cabinet.

"Oh," continued Louis, "I am in no hurry; I shall lose nothing by waiting a little. The beginning promises me an interesting conclusion, and I can learn the conclusion from Gilbert himself, he being now my doctor."

"Your doctor! that fellow your doctor! You can trust the life of the king to a stranger!"

"Oh," replied the king, coolly, "I have confidence in my first impressions, and I needed only a glance to read that man's inmost soul."

The queen uttered a groan, from mingled anger and disdain.

"You can sneer at me as you will," said the king, "but you can never shake my confidence in the learning and science of Doctor Gilbert."

"Infatuation!"

"I should like to see you in my place. I should like to know if Monsieur Mesmer was not able to make some impression on you and Madame de Lamballe."

"Monsieur Mesmer?" asked the queen, blushing.

"Yes; four years ago you went disguised to one of his meetings. Oh, my police are drilled thoroughly. You see I know all."

And the king, while uttering these words, smiled kindly on Marie Antoinette.

"You know all, Sire," answered the queen; "and you are a good dissembler, for you have never once spoken to me on the subject."

"Why should I have done so? I am sure the novelists and newspaper reporters abused you sufficiently on that score. But to return to Gilbert and at the same time to Mesmer. Monsieur Mesmer placed you round a vat, touched you with a steel rod, surrounded himself with a thousand phantasmagories, like the quack that he was. Gilbert uses no such illusions; he extends his hand over a woman; she sleeps, and sleeping, talks."

"Talks!" muttered the queen, terrified.

"Yes," replied the king, not unwilling to prolong somewhat his wife's little nervousness; "yes, put to sleep by

Gilbert, she talks, and, believe me, says very strange things."

The queen grew pale.

"Madame de Charny may have said very strange things!" she muttered.

"Most strange," said the king. "It was very fortunate for her —"

"Hush! hush!" interrupted Marie Antoinette.

"Why hush? I say that it was very fortunate for her that I alone heard what she said in her sleep."

"Oh, for pity's sake, Sire, say not a word more!"

"Indeed, I had much rather talk no more. I feel ready to drop with weariness; and as I eat when I am hungry, so do I go to bed when I am sleepy. So good-night, Madame, and may our conversation leave upon you a salutary impression."

"In what way, Sire?"

"The people were right in undoing what we and our friends had done, witness my poor Doctor Gilbert. Adieu, Madame; trust me that after signalling the danger, I shall have the courage to prevent it. Pleasant dreams, Antoinette."

And the king moved towards the door.

"*À propos*," said he, turning round, "warn Madame de Charny that she has to make her peace with the doctor if it is not now too late. Adieu."

He slowly retired, shutting the doors himself with all the satisfaction of the mechanic when his locks work well under the pressure of his fingers.

The king had not taken half a dozen steps in the corridor, when the countess issued from the boudoir, ran to the doors and bolted them, and to the windows and drew the curtains. She seemed to be excited with all the energy of rage and madness. Then, having assured her-

self that she could neither be seen nor heard, she returned to the queen with a heart-rending cry, fell on her knees, and exclaimed, —

"Save me, Madame; for Heaven's sake, save me!"

Then, after a pause followed by a long sigh, she added: "And I will tell you all."

END OF VOL. I.

ANGE PITOU.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT THE QUEEN'S THOUGHTS WERE, DURING THE NIGHT FROM JULY 14 TO JULY 15, 1789.

How long the interview between Andrée and the queen lasted, it would be impossible for us to say; but it was certainly of considerable duration, for at about eleven o'clock that night the door of the queen's boudoir was seen to open, and on the threshold Andrée, almost on her knees, kissing the hand of Marie Antoinette. After which, having raised herself up, the young woman dried her eyes, red with weeping, while the queen, on her side, re-entered her room.

Andrée, on the contrary, walked away rapidly, as if she desired to escape from her own thoughts.

After this, the queen was alone. When the lady of the bedchamber entered the room, to assist her in undressing, she found her pacing the room with rapid strides, and her eyes flashing with excitement. She made a quick movement with her hand, which meant to say, "Leave me."

The lady of the bedchamber left the room, without offering an observation.

The queen again found herself alone. She had given orders that no one should disturb her, unless it was to announce the arrival of important news from Paris.

Andrée did not appear again.

As for the king, after he had conversed with Monsieur de la Rochefoucault, who endeavored to make him comprehend the difference there was between a riot and a revolution, — he declared himself fatigued, went to bed, and slept as quietly as if he had returned from a hunt, and the stag (a well-trained courtier) had suffered himself to be taken in the grand basin of the fountain called the Swiss.

The queen, however, wrote several letters, went into an adjoining room, where her two children slept under the care of Madame de Tourzel, and then went to bed, not for the sake of sleeping, like the king, but merely to meditate more at ease.

But soon after, when silence reigned around Versailles, when the immense palace became plunged in darkness, when there could no longer be heard in the gardens aught but the tramp of the patrols upon the gravel-walks, and in the long passages nothing but the ringing of muskets on the marble pavement, Marie Antoinette, tired of repose, felt the want of air, got out of bed, and putting on her velvet slippers and a long white dressing-gown, went to the window to inhale the ascending freshness of the cascades, and to seize in their flight those counsels which the night winds murmur to heated minds and oppressed hearts.

Then she reviewed in her mind all the astounding events which this strange day had produced.

The fall of the Bastille, that visible emblem of royal power, the uncertainties of Charny, her devoted friend, that impassioned captive who for so many years had been

subjected to her yoke, and who during all those years had never breathed anything but love, now seemed for the first time to sigh from regret and feelings of remorse.

With that synthetic habit with which the knowledge of men and events endows great minds, Marie Antoinette immediately divided the agitation which oppressed her into two portions, the one being her political misfortunes, the other the sorrows of her heart.

The political misfortune was that great event, the news of which had left Paris at three o'clock in the afternoon, and was then spreading itself over the whole world, and weakening in every mind that sacred reverence which until then had always been accorded to kings, God's mandatories upon earth.

The sorrow of her heart was the gloomy resistance of Charny to the omnipotence of his well-beloved sovereign. It appeared to her like a presentiment, that without ceasing to be faithful and devoted, his love would cease to be blind, and might begin to argue with itself on its fidelity and its devotedness.

This thought grieved the queen's heart poignantly, and filled it with that bitter gall which is called jealousy, an acrid poison which ulcerates at the same instant a thousand little wounds in a wounded soul.

Nevertheless, grief in the presence of misfortune was logically an inferiority.

Thus, rather from reasoning than from conscientious motives, rather from necessity than from instinct, Marie Antoinette first allowed her mind to enter into the grave reflections connected with the dangerous state of political affairs.

In which direction could she turn? Before her lay hatred and ambition, — weakness and indifference at her side.

For enemies she had people who, having commenced with calumny, were now organizing a rebellion, — people whom, consequently, no consideration would induce to retreat.

For defenders — we speak of the greater portion at least of those men who, little by little, had accustomed themselves to endure everything, and who, in consequence, no longer felt the depth of their wounds, their degradation — people who would hesitate to defend themselves, for fear of attracting attention.

It was therefore necessary to bury everything in oblivion, — to appear to forget, and yet to remember; to feign to forgive, and yet not pardon.

This would be conduct unworthy of a queen of France; it was especially unworthy of the daughter of Marie Thérèse — that high-minded woman.

To resist! — to resist! — that was what offended royal pride most strenuously counselled. But was it prudent to resist? Could hatred be calmed down by shedding blood? Was it not terrible to be surnamed "The Austrian"? Was it necessary, in order to consecrate that name, as Isabeau and Catherine de Medici consecrated theirs, to give it the baptism of a universal massacre?

And then, if what Charny had said was true, success was doubtful.

To combat and to be defeated!

Such were the political sorrows of the queen, who during certain phases of her meditation felt a sensation like that which we experience on seeing a serpent glide from beneath the brambles, awakened by our advancing steps. She felt, on emerging from the depths of her sufferings as a queen, the despair of the woman who thinks herself but little loved, when in reality she had been loved too much.

Charny had said what we have already heard him say,

not from conviction, but from lassitude. He had, like many others, drunk calumny from the same cup that she had. Charny, for the first time, had spoken in such affectionate terms of his wife, Andrée being until then almost forgotten by her husband. Had Charny then perceived that his young wife was still beautiful? And at this single idea, which stung her like the envenomed bite of the asp, Marie Antoinette was astounded to find that misfortune was nothing in comparison with disappointed love.

For what misfortune had failed to do, unrequited love was gradually effecting within her soul. The woman sprang furiously from the chair in which the queen had calmly contemplated danger.

The whole destiny of this privileged child of suffering revealed itself in the condition of her mind during that night.

For how was it possible to escape misfortune and disappointment at the same time, she would ask herself, with constantly renewing anguish. Was it necessary to determine on abandoning a life of royalty, and could she live happily in a state of mediocrity? — was it necessary to return to her own Trianon, and to her Swiss cottage, to the quiet shores of the lake and the humble amusements of the dairy? — was it necessary to allow the people to divide among them the shreds of monarchy, excepting some few fragments which the woman could appropriate to herself from the contested revenues of a few faithful servants, who would still persist in considering themselves her vassals?

Alas! it was now that the serpent of jealousy began to sting still deeper.

Happy! Could she be happy with the humiliation of despised love?

Happy! Could she be happy by the side of the king, — that vulgar husband in whom everything was deficient to form the hero?

Happy! Could she be happy with Monsieur de Charny, who might be so with some woman whom he loved, — by the side of his own wife, perhaps?

And this thought kindled in the poor queen's breast all those flaming torches which consumed Dido even more than her funeral pile.

But in the midst of this feverish torture, she saw a ray of hope; in the midst of this shuddering anguish, she felt a sensation of joy. God, in his infinite mercy, has he not created evil to make us appreciate good?

Andrée had intrusted the queen with all her secrets; she had unveiled the one shame of her life to her rival. Andrée, her eyes full of tears, her head bowed down to the ground, had confessed to the queen that she was no longer worthy of the love and the respect of an honorable man: therefore Charny could never love Andrée.

But Charny is ignorant of this. Charny will ever be ignorant of that catastrophe at Trianon, and its consequences. Therefore, to Charny it is as if the catastrophe had never taken place.

And while making these reflections the queen examined her fading beauty in the mirror of her mind, and deplored the loss of her gayety, the freshness of her youth.

Then she thought of Andrée, of the strange and almost incredible adventures which she had just related to her.

She wondered at the magical working of blind fortune, which had brought to Trianon, from the shade of a hut and the muddy furrows of a farm, a little gardener's boy, to associate his destinies with those of a highly born

young lady, who was herself associated with the destinies of a queen.

"Thus," said she to herself, "the atom which was thus lost in the lowest regions, has come, by a freak of superior attraction, to unite itself, like a fragment of a diamond, with the heavenly light of the stars."

This gardener's boy, this Gilbert, was he not a living symbol of that which was occurring at that moment, — a man of the people, rising from the lowness of his birth to busy himself with the politics of a great kingdom; a strange comedian, in whom were personified, by a privilege granted to him by the evil spirit who was then hovering over France, not only the insult offered to the nobility, but also the attack made upon the monarchy by a plebeian mob?

This Gilbert, now become a learned man, — this Gilbert, dressed in the black coat of the Tiers État, the counsellor of Monsieur de Necker, the confidant of the king of France, would now find himself, thanks to the Revolution, on an equal footing with the woman whose honor, like a thief, he had stolen in the night.

The queen had again become a woman, and shuddering in spite of herself at the sad story related by Andrée, she was endeavoring to study the character of this Gilbert, and to learn by herself to read in human features what God had placed there to indicate so strange a character; and notwithstanding the pleasure she had experienced on seeing the humiliation of her rival, she still felt a lingering desire to attack the man who had caused a woman such intensity of suffering.

Moreover, notwithstanding the terror generally inspired by the sight of monsters, she felt a desire to look at, and perhaps even to admire, this extraordinary man, who by a crime had infused his vile blood into the most aristo-

cratic veins in France, — this man who appeared to have organized the Revolution, in order that it should open the gates of the Bastille for him, in which, but for that Revolution, he would have remained immured forever, to teach him that a plebeian must remember nothing.

In consequence of this connecting link in her ideas, the queen reverted to her political vexations, and saw the responsibility of all she had suffered accumulate upon one single head.

Thus the author of the popular rebellion that had just shaken the royal power by levelling the Bastille was Gilbert, — he whose principles had placed weapons in the hands of the Billots, the Maillards, the Elies, and the Hullins.

Gilbert was therefore both a venomous and a terrible being, — venomous, because he had caused the loss of Andrée as a lover; terrible, because he had just assisted in overthrowing the Bastille as an enemy.

It was therefore necessary to know, in order to avoid him; or rather, to know him, in order to make use of him.

It was necessary, at any cost, to converse with this man, to examine him closely, and to judge him personally.

Two thirds of the night had already flown away, three o'clock was striking, and the first rays of the rising sun gilded the high tops of the trees in the park, and the summits of the statues of Versailles.

The queen had passed the whole night without sleeping; her dimmed vision lost itself in the shaded streaks of the mild light.

A heavy and burning slumber gradually seized the unfortunate woman.

She fell back, with her neck overhanging the back of the arm-chair, near the open window.

She dreamed that she was walking in Trianon, and that

there appeared to her eyes, at the extremity of a flower-bed, a grinning gnome, similar to those we read of in German ballads; that this sardonic monster was Gilbert, who extended his hooked fingers towards her.

She screamed aloud.

Another cry answered hers.

That cry roused her from her slumber.

It was Madame de Tourzel who had uttered it. She had just entered the queen's apartment, and seeing her exhausted and gasping in an arm-chair, she could not avoid giving utterance to her grief and surprise.

"The queen is indisposed!" she exclaimed. "The queen is suffering. Shall I send for a physician?"

The queen opened her eyes. This question of Madame de Tourzel coincided with the demands of her own curiosity.

"Yes, a physician!" she replied; "Doctor Gilbert!—send for Doctor Gilbert!"

"Who is Doctor Gilbert?" asked Madame de Tourzel.

"A new physician, appointed by the king only yesterday, I believe, and just arrived from America."

"I know whom her Majesty means," said one of the queen's ladies-in-waiting.

"Well?" said the queen, inquiringly.

"Well, Madame, the doctor is in the king's antechamber."

"Do you know him, then?"

"Yes, your Majesty," stammered the woman.

"But how can you know him? He arrived here from America some eight or ten days ago, and only came out of the Bastille yesterday."

"I know him."

"Answer me distinctly. Where did you know him?" asked the queen, in an imperious tone.

The lady cast down her eyes.

"Come, will you make up your mind to tell me how it happens that you know this man?"

"Madame, I have read his works; and his works having given me a desire to see the author, I had him pointed out to me."

"Ah!" exclaimed the queen, with an indescribable look of haughtiness and reserve, — "ah! it is well. Since you know him, go and tell him that I am suffering, and that I wish to see him."

While waiting for the doctor's arrival, the queen made her ladies in attendance enter the room; after which she put on a dressing-gown and adjusted her hair.

CHAPTER II.

THE KING'S PHYSICIAN.

A FEW moments after the queen had expressed the above desire, — a desire which the person to whom it had been mentioned had complied with, — Gilbert, who felt astonished, slightly anxious, and profoundly agitated, but still without showing any external marks of it, presented himself to Marie Antoinette.

The firm and noble carriage, the delicate pallor of the man of science and of thought, to whom study had given a second nature, — a pallor still more enhanced by the black dress which was not only worn by all the deputies of the Tiers État, but also by those who had adopted the principles of the Revolution; the delicate white hand of the surgical operator, surrounded by a plain muslin wristband; his slender though well-formed limbs, which none of those at court could surpass in symmetry, even in the estimation of the connoisseurs of the Œil-de-Bœuf (combined with all these, there was a mixture of respectful timidity towards the woman, and of calm courage towards the patient, but no signs of servility towards her as a queen), — such were the plainly written signs that Marie Antoinette, with her aristocratic intelligence, could perceive in the countenance of Gilbert at the moment when the door opened to admit him into her bedchamber.

But the less Gilbert was provoking in his demeanor, the more did the queen feel her anger increase. She had figured him to herself as a type of an odious class of men;

she had considered him instinctively, though almost involuntarily, as one of those impudent heroes of which she had so many around her. The author of the sufferings of Andrée, the bastard pupil of Rousseau, that miserable abortion who had grown up to manhood, that pruner of trees who had become a philosopher and a subduer of souls, — Marie Antoinette, in spite of herself, depicted him in her mind as having the features of Mirabeau; that is to say, of the man she most hated, after the Cardinal de Rohan and Lafayette.

It had seemed to her, before she saw Gilbert, that it required a gigantic physical development to contain so colossal a mind.

But when she saw a young, upright, and slender man, of elegant and graceful form, of sweet and amiable countenance, he appeared to her as having committed the new crime of belying himself by his exterior. Gilbert, a man of the people, of obscure and unknown birth! — Gilbert, the peasant, the clown, and the serf! — Gilbert was guilty, in the eyes of the queen, of having usurped the external appearance of a gentleman and a man of honor. The proud Austrian, the sworn enemy of lying and deception in others, became indignant, and immediately conceived a violent hatred for the unfortunate atom whom so many different motives combined to induce her to abhor.

For those who were intimate with her nature, for those who were accustomed to read in her eyes either serenity of temper or indications of an approaching storm, it was easy to discern that a tempest, full of thunder-claps and flashes of lightning, was raging in the depths of her heart.

But how was it possible for a human being, even a woman, to follow, in the midst of this hurricane of pas-

sions and anger, the succession of strange and contrasting feelings which clashed together in the queen's brain, and filled her breast with all the mortal poisons described by Homer!

The queen with a single look dismissed all her attendants, even Madame de Misery.

They immediately left the room.

The queen waited till the door had been closed on the last person; then, casting her eyes upon Gilbert, she perceived that he had not ceased to gaze at her.

So much audacity offended her. The doctor's look was apparently inoffensive; but as it was continual, and was full of meaning, it weighed so heavily upon her that Marie Antoinette felt compelled to repress its importunity.

"Well, then, sir," said she, with the abruptness of a pistol-shot, "what are you doing there, standing before me and gazing at me, instead of telling me with what complaint I am suffering?"

This furious apostrophe, rendered more forcible by the flashing of her eyes, would have annihilated any of the queen's courtiers; it would even have compelled a marshal of France, a hero, or a demi-god, to fall on his knees before her.

But Gilbert tranquilly replied: —

"It is by means of the eyes, Madame, that the physician must first examine his patient. By looking at your Majesty, who sent for me, I do not satisfy an idle curiosity; I exercise my profession: I obey your orders."

"Then you must have studied me sufficiently."

"As much as lay in my power, Madame."

"Am I ill?"

"Not in the strict sense of the word. But your Majesty is suffering from great over-excitement."

"Ah! ah!" said Marie Antoinette, ironically, "why do you not say at once that I am in a passion?"

"Let your Majesty allow me, since you have ordered the attendance of a physician, to express myself in medical terms."

"Be it so. But what is the cause of my over-excitement?"

"Your Majesty has too much knowledge not to be aware that the physician discovers the sufferings of the body, thanks to his experience and the traditions of his studies; but he is not a sorcerer, who can discover at first sight the depths of the human soul."

"By this you mean to imply, that the second or third time you could tell me not only from what I am suffering, but also what are my thoughts?"

"Perhaps so, Madame," coldly replied Gilbert.

The queen appeared to tremble with anger: her words seemed to be hanging on her lips, ready to burst forth in burning torrents.

She, however, restrained herself.

"I must believe you," said she,—"you who are a learned man."

And she emphasized these last words with so much contempt, that the eye of Gilbert appeared to kindle, in its turn, with the fire of anger.

But a struggle of a few seconds' duration sufficed to this man to give him a complete victory.

Accordingly, with a calm brow and an unembarrassed expression he almost immediately rejoined:—

"It is too kind of your Majesty to give me the title of a learned man without having received any proofs of my knowledge."

The queen bit her lip.

"You must understand that I do not know if you are

a scientific man," she replied; "but I have heard it said, and I repeat what everybody says."

"Well, then," said Gilbert, respectfully, and bowing still lower than he had done hitherto, "a superior mind, like that of your Majesty, must not blindly repeat what is said by the vulgar."

"Do you mean the people?" said the queen, insolently.

"The vulgar, Madame," repeated Gilbert, with a firmness which made the blood thrill in the queen's veins, and gave rise to emotions which were as painful to her as they had hitherto been unknown.

"In fine," answered she, "let us not discuss that point. You are said to be learned; that is all that is essential. Where have you studied?"

"Everywhere, Madame."

"That is not an answer."

"Nowhere, then."

"I prefer that answer. Have you studied nowhere?"

"As it may please you, Madame," replied the doctor, bowing, "and yet it is less exact than to say everywhere."

"Come, answer me, then!" exclaimed the queen, becoming exasperated; "and above all, for Heaven's sake, Monsieur Gilbert, spare me such phrases."

Then, as if speaking to herself:—

"Everywhere! everywhere! what does that mean? It is the language of a charlatan, a quack, of a physician who practises in the public squares! Do you mean to overawe me by your sonorous syllables?"

She stepped forward with ardent eyes and quivering lips.

"Everywhere! Mention some place; come, explain your meaning, Monsieur Gilbert."

"I said everywhere," answered Gilbert, coldly, "be-

cause in fact I have studied everywhere, Madame, — in the hut and in the palace, in cities and in the desert, upon our own species and upon animals, upon myself and upon others, in a manner suitable to one who loves knowledge, and studies it where it is to be found, that is to say, everywhere."

The queen, overcome, cast a terrible glance at Gilbert, while he, on his part, was eying her with terrible perseverance. She became convulsively agitated, and turning round, upset a small stand, upon which her chocolate had been served up in a cup of Sèvres porcelain. Gilbert saw the table fall, saw the broken cup, but did not move a finger.

The color mounted to the cheeks of Marie Antoinette; she raised her cold, moist hand to her burning temples, but did not dare to raise her eyes again to look at Gilbert.

But her features assumed a more contemptuous, more insolent expression than before.

"Then, under what great master did you study?" continued the queen, again taking up the conversation at the point where she had left it off.

"I hardly know how to answer your Majesty, without running the risk of again wounding you."

The queen perceived the advantage that Gilbert had given her, and threw herself upon it like a lioness upon her prey.

"Wound me — you wound me — you!" exclaimed she. "Oh, sir, what are you saying there? You wound a queen! You are mistaken, sir, I can affirm to you. Ah, Doctor Gilbert, you have not studied the French language in as good schools as you have studied medicine. People of my station are not to be wounded, Doctor Gilbert. You may weary them, that is all."

Gilbert bowed, and made a step towards the door; but it was not possible for the queen to discover in his countenance the least show of anger, the least sign of impatience.

The queen, on the contrary, was stamping her feet with rage; she sprang towards Gilbert, as if to prevent him from leaving the room.

He understood her.

"Pardon me, Madame," said he. "It is true I committed the unpardonable error to forget that, as a physician, I was called to see a patient. Forgive me, Madame; hereafter I shall remember it."

He reflected for a moment.

"Your Majesty," continued he, "is rapidly approaching a nervous crisis. I will venture to ask you not to give way to it; for in a short time it would be beyond your power to control it. At this moment your pulse must be imperceptible, the blood is rushing to the heart; your Majesty is suffering, your Majesty is almost suffocating, and perhaps it would be prudent for you to summon one of your ladies-in-waiting."

The queen took a turn round the room, and seating herself: —

"Is your name Gilbert?" asked she.

"Yes, Gilbert, Madame."

"Strange! I remember an incident of my youth, the strange nature of which would doubtless *wound* you much, were I to relate it to you. But it matters not; for if hurt, you will soon cure yourself, — you, who are no less a philosopher than a learned physician."

And the queen smiled ironically.

"Precisely so, Madame," said Gilbert; "you may smile, and little by little subdue your nervousness by irony. It is one of the most beautiful prerogatives of the

intelligent will to be able thus to control itself. Subdue it, Madame, subdue it; but, however, without making a too violent effort."

This prescription of the physician was given with so much suavity and such natural good-humor, that the queen, while feeling the bitter irony contained in his words, could not take offence at what Gilbert had said to her.

She merely returned to the charge, recommencing her attack where she had discontinued it.

"This incident of which I spoke," continued she, "is the following."

Gilbert bowed, as a sign that he was listening.

The queen made an effort, and fixed her gaze upon him.

"I was the dauphiness at that time, and I inhabited Trianon. There was in the gardens a little dark-looking, dirty boy, covered with mud, a crabbed boy, a sort of sour Jean Jacques, who weeded, dug, and picked off the caterpillars with his little crooked fingers. His name was Gilbert."

"It was myself, Madame," said Gilbert, phlegmatically.

"You!" said Marie Antoinette, with an expression of hatred. "I was, then, right! but you are not, then, a learned man?"

"I think that, as your Majesty's memory is so good, you must also remember dates," rejoined Gilbert. "It was in 1772, if I am not mistaken, that the little gardener's boy, of whom your Majesty speaks, weeded the flower-beds of Trianon to earn his bread. We are now in 1789. It is therefore seventeen years, Madame, since the events to which you allude took place. It is more time than is necessary to metamorphose a savage into a learned man; the soul and the mind operate quickly in certain

positions, like plants and flowers, which grow rapidly in hothouses. Revolutions, Madame, are the hotbeds of the mind. Your Majesty looks at me, and, notwithstanding the perspicacity of your scrutiny, you do not perceive that the boy of sixteen has become a man of thirty-three; you are therefore wrong to wonder that the ignorant, the ingenuous little Gilbert, should, after having witnessed these revolutions, have become a learned man and a philosopher."

"Ignorant! be it so; but ingenuous, — ingenuous, did you say?" furiously cried the queen. "I think you called that little Gilbert ingenuous."

"If I am mistaken, Madame, or if I praised this little boy for a quality which he did not possess, I do not know how your Majesty can have ascertained more correctly than myself that he had the opposite defect."

"Oh, that is quite another matter!" said the queen, gloomily; "perhaps we shall speak of that some other time; but, in the mean time, let me speak of the learned man, of the man brought to perfection, of the perfect man I see before me."

Gilbert did not take up the word "perfect." He understood but too well that it was a new insult.

"Let us return to our subject, Madame," replied Gilbert. "Tell me for what purpose did your Majesty order me to come to your apartment?"

"You propose to become the king's physician," said she. "Now, you must understand, sir, that I attach too much importance to the health of my husband to trust it in the hands of a man whom I do not know perfectly."

"I offered myself to the king, Madame," said Gilbert, "and I was accepted without your Majesty having any just cause to conceive the least suspicion as to my capacity

or want of zeal. I am, above all, a political physician, Madame, recommended by Monsieur Necker. As for the rest, if the king is ever in want of my science, I shall prove myself a good physical doctor, so far as human science can be of use to the Creator's works. But what I shall be to the king more particularly, besides being a good adviser and a good physician, is a good friend."

"A good friend!" exclaimed the queen, with a fresh outburst of contempt. "You, sir, a friend of the king!"

"Certainly," replied Gilbert, quietly; "why not, Madame?"

"Oh yes! all in virtue of your secret power, by the assistance of your occult science," murmured she; "who can tell? We have already seen the Jacqueses and the Maillotins; perhaps we shall go back to the dark ages! You have resuscitated philters and charms. You will soon govern France by magic; you will be a Faust or a Nicholas Flamel!"

"I have no such pretensions, Madame."

"And why have you not, sir? How many monsters more cruel than those of the gardens of Armida, more cruel than Cerberus himself, would you not put to sleep on the threshold of our hell!"

When she had pronounced the words, "would you not put to sleep," the queen cast a scrutinizing look on the doctor.

This time Gilbert blushed in spite of himself.

It was a source of indescribable joy to Marie Antoinette; she felt that this time the blow she had struck had inflicted a real wound.

"For you have the power of causing sleep; you, who have studied everything and everywhere, you doubtless have studied magnetic science with the magnetizers

of our century, who make sleep a treacherous instrument, and who read their secrets in the sleep of others."

"In fact, Madame, I have often, and for a long time, studied under the learned Cagliostro."

"Yes; he who practised and made his followers practise that moral theft of which I was just speaking; the same who, by the aid of that magic sleep which I call infamous, robbed some of their souls, and others of their bodies!"

Gilbert again understood her meaning, but this time he turned pale, instead of reddening. The queen trembled with joy, to the very depths of her heart.

"Ah, wretch!" murmured she to herself: "I have wounded you, and I can see the blood."

But the profoundest emotions were never visible for any length of time on the countenance of Gilbert. Approaching the queen, therefore, who, quite joyful on account of her victory, was imprudently looking at him: —

"Madame," said he, "your Majesty would be wrong to deny the learned men of whom you have been speaking the most beautiful appendage to their science, which is the power of throwing, not victims, but *subjects*, into a magnetic sleep; you would be wrong, in particular, to contest the right they have to follow up, by all possible means, a discovery of which the laws, once recognized and regulated, are perhaps intended to revolutionize the world."

And while approaching the queen, Gilbert had looked at her, in his turn, with that power of will to which the nervous Andrée had succumbed.

The queen felt a chill run through her veins as he drew nearer to her.

"Infamy," said she, "be the reward of those men who

make an abuse of certain dark and mysterious arts to ruin both the soul and body. May infamy rest upon the head of Cagliostro!"

"Ah!" replied Gilbert, with the accent of conviction, "beware, Madame, of judging the faults committed by human beings with so much severity."

"Sir —"

"Every one is liable to err, Madame; all human beings commit injuries on their fellow-creatures, and were it not for individual egotism, which is the foundation of general safety, the world would become but one great battle-field. Those are the best who are good; that is all. Others will tell you that those are best who are the least faulty. Indulgence must be the greater, Madame, in proportion to the elevated rank of the judge. Seated as you are on so exalted a throne, you have less right than any other person to be severe towards the faults of others. On your worldly throne, you should be supremely indulgent, like God, who upon his heavenly throne is supremely merciful."

"Sir," said the queen, "I view my rights in a different light from you, and especially my duties. I am on the throne to punish or reward."

"I do not think so, Madame. In my opinion, on the contrary, you are seated on the throne, — you, a woman and a queen, to conciliate and to forgive."

"I suppose you are not moralizing, sir."

"You are right, Madame, and I was only replying to your Majesty. This Cagliostro, for instance, Madame, of whom you were speaking a few moments since, and whose science you were contesting I remember, — and this is a remembrance of something anterior to your recollections of Trianon, — I remember that in the gardens of the Château de Taverney he had occasion to give

the dauphiness of France a proof of his science; I know not what it was, Madame, but you must recollect it well, for that proof made a profound impression upon her, even so much as to cause her to faint."

Gilbert was now striking blows in his turn; it is true that he was dealing them at random, but he was favored by chance, and they hit the mark so truly, that the queen became pale.

"Yes," said she, in a hoarse voice, "yes, he made me see, as in a dream, a hideous machine; but I know not that, up to the present time, such a machine has ever really existed."

"I know not what he made you see, Madame," rejoined Gilbert, who felt satisfied with the effect he had produced; "but I do know that it is impossible to dispute the appellation of 'learned' to a man who wields such a power as that over his fellow-creatures."

"His fellow-creatures," murmured the queen, disdainfully.

"Be it so, — I am mistaken," replied Gilbert; "and his power is so much the more wonderful, that it reduces to a level with himself, under the yoke of fear, the heads of monarchs and princes of the earth."

"Infamy, infamy, I say again, upon those who take advantage of the weakness or the credulity of others!"

"Infamous! did you call infamous those who make use of science?"

"Their science is nothing but chimeras, lies, and cowardice."

"What mean you by that, Madame?" asked Gilbert, calmly.

"My meaning is, that this Cagliostro is a cowardly mountebank, and that his pretended magnetic sleep is a crime."

"A crime!"

"Yes, a crime," continued the queen; "for it is the result of some potion, some philter, some poison; and human justice, which I represent, will be able to discover the mystery, and punish the inventor."

"Madame, Madame," rejoined Gilbert, with the same patience as before, "a little indulgence, I beg, for those who have erred."

"Ah! you confess their guilt, then?"

The queen was mistaken, and thought from the mild tone of Gilbert's voice, that he was supplicating pardon for himself.

She was in error, and Gilbert did not allow the advantage she had thus given him to escape.

"What?" said he, dilating his flashing eyes, before the gaze of which Marie Antoinette was compelled to lower hers, as if suddenly dazzled by the rays of the sun.

The queen remained confounded for a moment, and then, making an effort to speak:—

"A queen can no more be questioned than she can be wounded," said she: "learn to know that also, you who have but so newly arrived at court. But you were speaking, it seems to me, of those who have erred, and you asked me to be indulgent towards them."

"Alas! Madame," said Gilbert, "where is the human creature who is not liable to reproach? Is it he who has ensconced himself so closely within the deep shell of his conscience that the look of others cannot penetrate it? It is this which is often denominated virtue. Be indulgent, Madame."

"But according to this opinion, then," replied the queen, imprudently, "there is no virtuous being in your estimation, sir,—you, who are the pupil of those men

whose prying eyes seek the truth, even in the deepest recesses of the human conscience."

"It is true, Madame."

She laughed, and without seeking to conceal the contempt which her laughter expressed.

"Oh, pray, sir," exclaimed she, "do remember that you are not now speaking on a public square, to idiots, to peasants, or to patriots."

"I am aware to whom I am speaking, Madame; of this you may be fully persuaded," replied Gilbert.

"Show more respect then, sir, or more adroitness; consider your past life; search the depths of that conscience which men who have studied everywhere must possess in common with the rest of mankind, notwithstanding their genius and their wisdom; recall to your mind all that you may have conceived that was vile, hurtful, and criminal, — all the cruelties, the deeds, the crimes even, you have committed. Do not interrupt me; and when you have summed up all your misdeeds, learned doctor, you will bow down your head, and become more humble. Do not approach the dwelling of kings with such insolent pride, who, until there is a new order of things, were established by Heaven to penetrate the souls of criminals, to examine the folds of the human conscience, and to inflict chastisement upon the guilty, without pity and without appeal.

"That, sir," continued the queen, "is what you ought to do. You will be thought the better of, on account of your repentance. Believe me, the best mode of healing a soul so diseased as yours, would be to live in solitude, far from the grandeurs which give men false ideas of their own worth. I would advise you, therefore, not to approach the court, and to abandon the idea of attending the king during sickness. You have a cure to accom-

plish, for which God will esteem you more than for any other, — the cure of yourself. Antiquity had a proverb, which expressed the following maxim, sir : *Medice, cura teipsum.*"

Gilbert, instead of being irritated at this proposal, which the queen considered as the most disagreeable of conclusions, replied with gentleness : —

" Madame, I have already done all that your Majesty advises."

" And what have you done, sir ? "

" I have meditated."

" Upon yourself ? "

" Yes, upon myself, Madame."

" And in regard to your conscience ? "

" Especially on the subject of my conscience, Madame."

" Do you think, then, I am sufficiently well informed of what you saw in it ? "

" I do not know what your Majesty means by those words, but I think I can discover their meaning, which is, ' how many times a man of my age must have offended God ! ' "

" Really — you speak of God ? "

" Yes."

" You ? "

" Why not ? "

" A philosopher, — do philosophers believe in the existence of a God ? "

" I speak of God, and I believe in him."

" And you are still determined not to withdraw from court ? "

" No, Madame, I remain."

" Monsieur Gilbert, take heed."

And the queen's countenance assumed a threatening expression, which it would be impossible to describe.

"Oh, I have reflected much upon the subject, Madame, and my reflections have led me to know that I am not less worthy than another; every one has his faults. I learned this axiom not by pondering over books, but by searching the consciences of others."

"You are universal and infallible, are you not?" said the queen, ironically.

"Alas, Madame, if I am not universal, if I am not infallible, I am nevertheless very learned in human misery, well versed in the greatest sorrows of the mind. And this is so true, that I could tell, by merely seeing the livid circle round your wearied eyes, by merely seeing the line which extends from one eyebrow to the other, by merely seeing at the corners of your mouth a contraction which is called by the prosaic name of wrinkle, — I can tell you, Madame, how many severe trials you have undergone, how many times your heart has palpitated with anguish, to how many secret dreams of joy your heart has abandoned itself, to discover its terror on awaking.

"I will tell you all that, Madame, when you shall desire it; I will tell it you, for I am sure of not being contradicted. I will tell it you, by merely fastening upon you a gaze which can read and wishes to read your mind; and when you have felt the power of that gaze, when you have felt the weight of this curiosity sounding to your inmost soul, like the sea that feels the weight of the lead that plunges into its depths, then you will understand that I am able to do much, Madame, and that if I pause awhile, you should be grateful to me for it, instead of provoking me on to war."

This language, supported by a terrible fixity of the will of provocation, exercised by the man upon the woman, this contempt for all etiquette in presence of

the queen, produced an unspeakable effect upon Marie Antoinette.

She felt as if a mist were overshadowing her brow, and sending an icy chill through her ideas: she felt her hatred turning into fear; and letting her hands fall heavily by her side, retreated a step to avoid the approach of the unknown danger.

"And now, Madame," said Gilbert, who clearly perceived all that was passing in her mind, "do you understand that it would be very easy for me to discover that which you conceal from everybody, and that which you conceal even from yourself; do you understand that it would be easy for me to stretch you on that chair, which your fingers are now instinctively seeking as a support?"

"Ah!" exclaimed the queen, who was terrified, for she felt an unknown chill invading even her heart.

"Were I but to utter to myself a word which I will not utter," continued Gilbert, "were I but to summon up my will, which I renounce, you would fall as if thunder-stricken into my power. You doubt what I am telling you, Madame. Oh, do not doubt it; you might perhaps tempt me once, — and if once you tempted me! But no, you do not doubt it, do you?"

The queen, almost on the point of falling, exhausted, oppressed, and completely lost, grasped the back of her arm-chair with all the energy of despair and the rage of useless resistance.

"Oh," continued Gilbert, "mark this well, Madame: it is that if I were not the most respectful, the most devoted, the most humble of your subjects, I should convince you by a terrible experiment. Oh, you need fear nothing. I prostrate myself humbly before the woman rather than before the queen. I tremble at the idea of

entertaining any project which might, even in the slightest way, inquire into your thoughts; I would rather kill myself than disturb your soul."

"Sir! sir!" exclaimed the queen, striking the air with her arms, as if to repel Gilbert, who was standing more than three paces from her.

"And still," continued Gilbert, "you caused me to be thrown into the Bastille. You only regret that it is taken, because the people, by taking it, reopened its gates for me. There is hatred visible in your eyes towards a man against whom personally you can have no cause of reproach. And see, now, I feel that since I have lessened the influence by means of which I have controlled you, you are perhaps resuming your doubts with your returning respiration."

In fact, since Gilbert had ceased to control her with his eyes and gestures, Marie Antoinette had reassumed her threatening attitude, like the bird which, being freed from the suffocating influence of the air-pump, endeavors to regain its song and its power of wing.

"Ah! you still doubt; you are ironical; you despise my warnings. Well, then, do you wish me to tell you, Madame, a terrible idea that has just crossed my mind? This is what I was on the point of doing. Madame, I was just about to compel you to reveal to me your most intimate troubles, your most hidden secrets. I thought of compelling you to write them down on the table which you touch at this moment, and afterwards, when you had awakened and come to your senses again, I should have convinced you by your own writing of the existence of that power which you seem to contest; and also how real is the forbearance, and shall I say it, — yes, I will say it, — the generosity of the man whom you have just insulted, whom you have insulted

for a whole hour, without his having for a single instant given you either a reason or a pretext for so doing."

"Compel me to sleep! — compel me to speak in my sleep! — me! — me!" exclaimed the queen, turning quite pale: "would you have dared to do it, sir? But do you know what that is? Do you know the grave nature of the threat you make? Why, it is the crime of high treason, sir. Consider it well. It is a crime which, after awakening from my sleep, I should have punished with death."

"Madame," said Gilbert, watching the feverish emotions of the queen, "be not so hasty in accusing, and especially in threatening. Certainly I should have possessed myself of all your secrets; but be convinced that it would not have been on an occasion like this; it would not have been during an interview between the queen and her subject, between a woman and a stranger. No: I should have put the queen to sleep, it is true, — and nothing would have been easier, — but I should not have ventured to put her to sleep, I should not have allowed myself to speak to her, without having a witness."

"A witness?"

"Yes, Madame, a witness who would faithfully note all your words, all your gestures, all the details, in short, of the scene which I should have brought about, in order that, after its termination, you could not doubt for a single moment longer."

"A witness, sir!" repeated the queen, terrified; "and who would that witness have been? But consider it maturely, sir, your crime would then have been doubled, for in that case you would have had an accomplice."

"And if this accomplice, Madame, had been none other than the king?" said Gilbert.

"The king!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette, with an expression of fear that betrayed the wife more energetically than the confession of the somnambulist could have done. "Oh, Monsieur Gilbert! —Monsieur Gilbert!"

"The king," continued Gilbert, calmly, — "the king is your husband, your supporter, your natural defender. The king would have related to you, when you were awakened from your slumber, how respectful and proud I was in being able to prove my science to the most revered of sovereigns."

And after having spoken these words, Gilbert allowed her Majesty sufficient time to meditate upon their importance.

The queen remained silent for several minutes, during which nothing was heard but the noise of her agitated breathing.

"Sir," replied she, after this pause, "from all that you have now told me, you must be a mortal enemy —"

"Or a devoted friend, Madame?"

"It is impossible, sir; friendship cannot exist in unison with fear or mistrust."

"The friendship, Madame, that exists between a subject and a queen cannot subsist except by the confidence which the subject may inspire her with. You will already have said to yourself that he is not an enemy whom, after the first word, we can deprive of the means of doing harm, especially when he is the first to denounce the use of his weapons."

"May I believe, sir, what you have been saying?" said the queen, looking thoughtfully at Gilbert.

"Why should you not believe me, Madame, when you have every proof of my sincerity?"

"Men change, sir, — men change."

"Madame, I have made the same vow that certain

illustrious warriors made, before starting on an expedition, as to the use of certain weapons in which they were skilled. I shall never make use of my advantages but to repel the wrong that others may attempt to do me. *Not for offence, but for defence.* That is my motto."

"Alas!" said the queen, feeling humbled.

"I understand you, Madame. You suffer because you see your soul in the hands of a physician, — you who rebelled at times against the idea of abandoning the care of your body to him. Take courage; be confident. He wishes to advise you well who has this day given you proof of such forbearance as that you have received from me. I desire to love you, Madame; I desire that you should be beloved by all. The ideas I have already submitted to the king I will discuss with you."

"Doctor, take care!" exclaimed the queen, gravely. "You caught me in your snare; after having terrified the woman, you think to control the queen."

"No, Madame," answered Gilbert, "I am not a contemptible speculator. I have ideas of my own, and I can conceive that you have yours. I must from this very moment repel this accusation — one that you would forever make against me — that I had intimidated you in order to subjugate your reason. I will say more, that you are the first woman in whom I have found united all the passions of a woman and all the commanding qualities of a man. You may be at the same time a woman and a friend. All humanity might be concentred in you, were it necessary. I admire you, and I will serve you. I will serve you without any remuneration from you, merely for the sake of studying you, Madame. I will do still more for your service. In case I should seem to be a too inconvenient piece of palace furniture, or if the impression made by the scene of to-day

should not be effaced from your memory, I shall ask you, I shall pray you, to dismiss me."

"Dismiss you!" exclaimed the queen, with a joyful air that did not escape Gilbert.

"Well, then, it is agreed, Madame," replied he, with admirable presence of mind. "I shall not even tell the king what I had intended, and I shall depart. Must I go to a great distance to reassure you, Madame?"

She looked at him, and appeared surprised at so much self-denial.

"I perceive," said he, "what your Majesty thinks. Your Majesty, who is better acquainted than is generally thought with the mysteries of the magnetic influence which so much alarmed you a few minutes since, — your Majesty says to herself that at a distance from her I shall be no less dangerous and troublesome."

"How is that?" exclaimed the queen.

"Yes, I repeat it, Madame. He who would be hurtful to any one by the means you have reproached my masters and myself for employing, could practise his hurtful power equally well were the distance a hundred leagues, as at three paces. Fear nothing, Madame. I shall not attempt it."

The queen remained thoughtful for a moment, not knowing how to answer this extraordinary man, who made her waver even after she had formed the firmest resolutions.

On a sudden, the noise of steps heard from the end of the gallery made Marie Antoinette raise her head.

"The king," said she, — "the king is coming."

"In that case, Madame, answer me, I pray you — shall I remain here, or shall I leave you?"

"But —"

"Make haste, Madame. I can avoid seeing the king,

if you desire it. Your Majesty may show me a door by which I can withdraw."

"Remain!" said the queen to him.

Gilbert bowed courteously, while Marie Antoinette endeavored to read in his features to what extent triumph would reveal more than either anger or anxiety.

Gilbert remained perfectly impassible.

"At least," said the queen to herself, "he ought to have manifested some slight satisfaction."

CHAPTER III.

THE COUNCIL.

THE king entered the room quickly and heavily, as was his custom. He had a busy, inquisitive air, that contrasted strangely with the icy rigidity of the queen's demeanor.

The fresh complexion of the king had not abandoned him. Having risen early, and feeling quite proud of the sound health he enjoyed by inhaling the morning air, he was breathing noisily, and stepped out vigorously on the floor.

"The doctor," said he, — "what has become of the doctor?"

"Good-morning, Sire. How do you do this morning? Do you feel much fatigued?"

"I have slept six hours: that is my allowance. I am very well. My mind is clear. You look rather pale, Madame. I was told that you had sent for the doctor."

"Here is Doctor Gilbert," said the queen, stepping from before the recess of a window, in which the doctor had concealed himself till that moment.

The king's brow at once cleared up. Then: —

"Ah! I forgot," said he. "You sent for the doctor. Have you been unwell?"

The queen blushed.

"You blush!" exclaimed Louis XVI.

She turned crimson.

"Another secret," said the king.

"What secret, Sire?" exclaimed the queen, haughtily.

"You do not understand me. I tell you that you, who have your own favorite physicians, — you would not have sent for Doctor Gilbert, unless you felt the desire, which I know —"

"What desire?"

"You always have to conceal your sufferings from me."

"Ah!" exclaimed the queen, regaining courage.

"Yes," continued Louis XVI., "but take good care. Monsieur Gilbert is one of my confidential friends; and if you tell him anything he will be sure to tell it me."

Gilbert smiled.

"As for that, no, Sire," said he.

"Well, then, the queen is corrupting my people!"

Marie Antoinette gave one of those little stifled laughs which imply merely a wish to interrupt a conversation, or that the conversation is very tedious.

Gilbert understood her; but the king did not.

"Let us see, doctor," said he; "as it seems to amuse the queen, tell me what she has been saying to you."

"I was asking the doctor," said Marie Antoinette, in her turn, "why you had sent for him so early. I must, indeed, confess that his presence at Versailles at so unusual an hour perplexes me and makes me uneasy."

"I was waiting for the doctor," replied the king, looking gloomy, "to speak on politics with him."

"Ah! very well," said the queen.

And she seated herself as if to listen.

"Come, Doctor," rejoined the king, taking a step towards the door.

Gilbert made a profound bow to the queen, and was about to follow Louis XVI.

"Where are you going?" exclaimed the queen. "What! are you going to leave me?"

"We are not going to talk on gay subjects, Madame. It would be as well for us to spare you so much care."

"Do you call my sorrow care?" exclaimed the queen, majestically.

"A still better reason for doing so, my dear."

"Remain here; I wish it," said she. "Monsieur Gilbert, I imagine you will not disobey me."

"Monsieur Gilbert! Monsieur Gilbert!" exclaimed the king, much vexed.

"Well, then, what is the matter?"

"Why, Monsieur Gilbert, who was to give me some advice, who was to talk freely to me according to his conscience, — Monsieur Gilbert will now no longer do so."

"And why not?" exclaimed the queen.

"Because you will be present, Madame."

Gilbert made a sort of gesture, to which the queen immediately attributed some important meaning.

"In what manner," said she, to second it, "will Monsieur Gilbert risk displeasing me, if he speaks according to his conscience?"

"It is easily understood, Madame," said the king. "You have a political system of your own. It is not always ours; so that —"

"So that Monsieur Gilbert, you clearly say, differs essentially from me in my line of politics."

"That must be the case, Madame," replied Gilbert, "judging from the ideas which your Majesty knows me to entertain. Only your Majesty may rest assured that I shall tell the truth as freely in your presence as to the king alone."

"Ah! that is already something," exclaimed Marie Antoinette.

"The truth is not always agreeable," hastily murmured Louis XVI.

"But if it is useful?" observed Gilbert.

"Or even uttered with good intention," added the queen.

"In that view of the case, I agree with you," interposed Louis XVI. "But if you were wise, Madame, you would leave the doctor entire freedom of speech, and which I need —"

"Sire," replied Gilbert, "since the queen herself calls for the truth, and as I know her Majesty's mind is sufficiently noble and powerful not to fear it, I prefer to speak in presence of both my sovereigns."

"Sire," said the queen, "I request it."

"I have full faith in your Majesty's good sense," said Gilbert, bowing to the queen. "The subject is the happiness and glory of his Majesty the king."

"You are right to put faith in me," said the queen. "Begin, sir."

"All this is very well," continued the king, who was growing obstinate, according to his custom; "but, in short, the question is a delicate one; and I know well that, as to myself, you will greatly embarrass me by being present."

The queen could not withhold a gesture of impatience. She rose, then seated herself again, and darted a penetrating and cold look at the doctor, as if to divine his thoughts.

Louis XVI., seeing that there was no longer any means of escaping the ordinary and extraordinary inquisitorial question, seated himself in his arm-chair, opposite Gilbert, and heaved a deep sigh.

"What is the point in question?" asked the queen, as soon as this singular species of council had been thus constituted and installed.

Gilbert looked at the king once more, as if to ask him for his authority to speak openly.

"Speak! Good Heavens, go on, sir, since the queen desires it."

"Well, then, Madame," said the doctor, "I will inform your Majesty in a few words of the object of my early visit to Versailles. I came to advise his Majesty to proceed to Paris."

Had a spark fallen among the eight thousand pounds of gunpowder at the Hôtel de Ville, it could not have produced the explosion which those words caused in the queen's heart.

"The king proceed to Paris! The king! — ah!" and she uttered a cry of horror that made Louis XVI. tremble.

"There!" exclaimed the king, looking at Gilbert; "what did I tell you, Doctor?"

"The king!" continued the queen; "the king in the midst of a revolted city! — the king amidst pitchforks and scythes! — the king among the men who massacred the Swiss, and who assassinated Monsieur de Launay and Monsieur de Flesselles! — the king crossing the square of the Hôtel de Ville, and treading in the blood of his defenders! You must be deprived of your senses, sir, to speak thus. Oh, I repeat it; you are mad!"

Gilbert lowered his eyes like a man who is restrained by feelings of respect; but he did not answer a single word.

The king, who felt agitated to the bottom of his soul, turned about in his seat like a man undergoing torture on the gridiron of the Inquisition.

"Is it possible," continued the queen, "that such an idea should have found a place in an intelligent mind, — in a French heart? What, sir? Do you not, then, know that you are speaking to the successor of St. Louis, — to the great-grandson of Louis XIV.?"

The king was beating the carpet with his feet.

"I do not suppose, however," continued the queen, "that you desire to deprive the king of the assistance of his guards and his army, or that you are seeking to draw him out of his palace, which is a fortress, to expose him alone and defenceless to the blows of his infuriated enemies; you do not wish to see the king assassinated, I suppose, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"If I thought that your Majesty for a single moment entertained an idea that I am capable of such treachery, I should not be merely a madman, but should look upon myself as a wretch. But Heaven be thanked, Madame! you do not believe it any more than I do. No; I came to give my king this counsel, because I think the counsel good, and even superior to any other."

The queen clinched her hand upon her breast with so much violence as to make the cambric crack beneath its pressure.

The king shrugged up his shoulders with a slight movement of impatience.

"But for Heaven's sake!" cried he, "listen to him, Madame; there will be time enough to say no when you have heard him."

"The king is right, Madame," said Gilbert, "for you do not know what I have to tell your Majesties. You think yourself surrounded by an army which is firm, devoted to your cause, and ready to die for you; it is an error. Of the French regiments, one half are conspiring with the regenerators to carry out their revolutionary ideas."

"Sir," exclaimed the queen, "beware! You are insulting the army!"

"On the contrary, Madame," said Gilbert, "I am its greatest eulogist. We may respect our queen and be

devoted to the king, and still love our country and devote ourselves to liberty."

The queen cast a flaming look, like a flash of lightning, at Gilbert. "Sir," said she to him, "this language —"

"Yes, this language offends you, Madame. I can readily understand that; for, according to all probability, your Majesty hears it now for the first time."

"We must, nevertheless, accustom ourselves to it," muttered Louis XVI., with the submissive good sense that constituted his chief strength.

"Never!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette, "never!"

"Let us see; listen! listen! I think what the doctor says is full of reason."

The queen sat down, trembling with rage.

Gilbert continued: —

"I was going to say, Madame, that I have seen Paris, ay, and that you have not even seen Versailles. Do you know what Paris wishes to do at this moment?"

"No," said the king, anxiously.

"Perhaps it does not wish to take the Bastille a second time," said the queen, contemptuously.

"Assuredly not, Madame," continued Gilbert; "but Paris knows that there is another fortress between the people and their sovereign. Paris proposes to assemble the deputies of the forty-eight districts of which it is composed, and send them to Versailles."

"Let them come! let them come!" exclaimed the queen, in a tone of ferocious joy. "Oh, they will be well received here!"

"Wait, Madame," replied Gilbert, "and beware; these deputies will not come alone."

"And with whom will they come?"

"They will come supported by twenty thousand National Guards."

"National Guards!" said the queen, "what are they?"

"Ah! Madame, do not speak lightly of that body; it will some day become a power; it will bind and loosen."

"Twenty thousand men!" exclaimed the king.

"Well, sir," replied the queen, in her turn, "you have here ten thousand men that are worth a hundred thousand rebels; call them, call them, I tell you; the twenty thousand wretches will here find their punishment, and the example needed by all this revolutionary slime which I would sweep away, ay, in a week, were I but listened to for an hour."

Gilbert shook his head sorrowfully.

"Oh, Madame," said he, "how you deceive yourself, or rather how you have been deceived! Alas! alas! Have you reflected on it? — a civil war, provoked by a queen. One only has done this, and she carried with her to the tomb a terrible epithet: she was called 'the foreigner.'"

"Provoked by me, sir! How do you understand that? Was it I who fired upon the Bastille without provocation?"

"Ah! Madame," cried the king, "instead of advocating violent measures, listen to reason."

"To weakness!"

"Come, now, Antoinette, listen to the doctor," said the king, austerely. "The arrival of twenty thousand men is not a trifling matter, particularly if we should have to fire grape-shot upon them."

Then, turning towards Gilbert: —

"Go on, sir," said he; "go on."

"All these hatreds, which become more inveterate from estrangement — all these boastings, which become courage when opportunity is afforded for their realization — all the confusion of a battle, of which the issue is un-

certain — oh! spare the king, spare yourself, Madame, the grief of witnessing them," said the doctor; "you can perhaps by gentleness disperse the crowd which is advancing. The crowd wishes to come to the king, — let us forestall it; let the king go to the crowd; let him, though now surrounded by his army, give proof to-morrow of audacity and political genius. Those twenty thousand men of whom we are speaking might, perhaps, conquer the king and his army. Let the king go alone and conquer these twenty thousand men, Madame; they are the people."

The king could not refrain from giving a gesture of assent, which Marie Antoinette at once observed.

"Wretched man!" cried she to Gilbert; "but you do not then perceive what the king's presence in Paris would betoken under the conditions you require?"

"Speak, Madame."

"It would be saying, 'I approve;' it would be saying, 'You did right to kill my Swiss;' it would be saying, 'You have acted rightly in murdering my officers, in setting fire to and making my capital stream with blood; you have done rightly in dethroning me. I thank you, gentlemen, I thank you!'"

And a disdainful smile rose to the lips of Marie Antoinette.

"No, Madame, your Majesty is mistaken."

"Sir!"

"It would be saying, 'There has been some justice in the grief of the people. I am come to pardon. It is I who am the chief of the nation, and the king. It is I who am at the head of the French Revolution, as in former days Henry III. placed himself at the head of the League. Your generals are my officers, your National Guards my soldiers, your magistrates are my men of business. In-

stead of urging me onward, follow me if you are able to do so. The greatness of my stride will prove to you once more that I am the king of France, the successor of Charlemagne.' "

"He is right," said the king, in a sorrowful tone.

"Oh!" exclaimed the queen, "for mercy's sake listen not to this man! — this man is your enemy."

"Madame," said Gilbert, "his Majesty himself is about to tell you what he thinks of the words I have spoken."

"I think, sir, that you are the first who up to this moment has dared to speak the truth to me."

"The truth!" cried the queen. "Gracious Heaven! what is it you are saying?"

"Yes, Madame," rejoined Gilbert, "and impress yourself fully with this fact, that truth is the only torch which can point out and save royalty from the dark abyss into which it is now being hurried."

And while uttering these words, Gilbert bowed humbly, as low as even to the knees of Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER IV.

DECISION.

For the first time the queen appeared deeply moved. Was it from the reasoning, or from the humility, of the doctor?

Moreover, the king had risen from his seat with a determined air; he was thinking of the execution of Gilbert's project.

However, from the habit which he had acquired of doing nothing without consulting the queen: —

"Madame," said he to her, "do you approve it?"

"It appears it must be so," replied the queen.

"I do not ask you for any abnegation," said the king.

"What is it, then, you ask?"

"I ask you for the expression of a conviction which will strengthen mine."

"You ask of me a conviction?"

"Yes."

"Oh, if it be only that, I am convinced, sir."

"Of what?"

"That the moment has arrived which will render monarchy the most deplorable and the most degrading position which exists in the whole world."

"Oh," said the king, "you exaggerate; deplorable, I will admit, but degrading, that is impossible."

"Sir, the kings, your forefathers, have bequeathed to you a very mournful inheritance," said the queen, sorrowfully.

"Yes," said Louis XVI., "an inheritance which I have the grief to make you share, Madame."

"Be pleased to allow me, Sire," said Gilbert, who truly compassionated the great misfortunes of his fallen sovereigns; "I do not believe that there is any reason for your Majesty to view the future in such terrific colors as you have depicted it. A despotic monarchy has ceased to exist; a constitutional empire commences."

"Ah, sir," said the king, "and am I a man capable of founding such an empire in France?"

"And why not, Sire?" cried the queen, somewhat comforted by the last words of Gilbert.

"Madame," replied the king, "I am a man of good sense and a learned man. I see clearly, instead of endeavoring to see confusedly, into things, and I know precisely all that is not necessary for me to know, to administer the government of this country. From the day on which I shall be precipitated from the height of the inviolability of an absolute prince — from the day on which it shall be allowed to be discovered that I am a mere plain man — I lose all the factitious strength which alone was necessary to govern France, since, to speak truly, Louis XIII., Louis XIV., and Louis XV. sustained themselves completely, thanks to this factitious strength. What do the French now require? A master. I feel that I am only capable of being a father. What do the revolutionists require? A sword. I do not feel that I have strength enough to strike."

"You do not feel that you have strength to strike!" exclaimed the queen, — "to strike people who are destroying the property of your children, and who would carry off, even from your own brow, one after the other, every gem that adorns the crown of France!"

"What answer can I make to this?" calmly said Louis

XVI.; "would you have me reply NO? By doing so I should raise up in your mind one of those storms which are the discomfort of my life. You know how to hate. Oh, so much the better for you! You know how to be unjust, and I do not reproach you with it. It is a great quality in those who have to govern."

"Do you, perchance, consider me unjust towards the Revolution? Now tell me that."

"In good faith, yes."

"You say yes, Sire, — you say yes?"

"If you were the wife of a plain citizen, my dear Antoinette, you would not speak as you do."

"I am not one."

"And that is the reason for my excusing you; but that does not mean that I approve your course. No, Madame, no, you must be resigned; we succeeded to the throne of France at a period of storm and tempest. We ought to have strength enough to push on before us that car armed with scythes, and which is called Revolution; but our strength is insufficient."

"So much the worse," said Marie Antoinette, "for it is over our children that it will be driven."

"Alas! that I know; but at all events we shall not urge it forward."

"We will make it retrograde, Sire!"

"Oh," cried Gilbert, with a prophetic accent, "beware, Madame; in retrograding, it will crush you."

"Sir," said the queen, impatiently, "I observe that you can carry the frankness of your counsels very far."

"I will be silent, Madame."

"Oh, good Heaven! let him speak on," said the king; "what he has now announced to you, if he has not read it in twenty newspapers during the last eight days, it is because he has not chosen to read them. You should, at

least, be thankful to him that he does not convey the truths he utters in a bitter spirit."

Marie Antoinette remained silent for a moment; then, with a deep-drawn sigh:—

"I will sum up," she said, "or rather, I will repeat my arguments. By going to Paris voluntarily, it will be sanctioning all that has been done there."

"Yes," replied the king, "I know that full well."

"Yes, it would be humiliating, — disowning your army which is preparing to defend you."

"It is to spare the effusion of French blood," said the doctor.

"It is to declare that henceforward tumultuous risings and violence may give such a direction to the will of the king as may best suit the views of insurgents and traitors."

"Madame, I believe," said Gilbert, "that you had just now the goodness to acknowledge that I had had the good fortune to convince you."

"Yes, I just now did acknowledge it; one corner of the veil had been raised up before me. But now, sir, — oh, now that I am again becoming blind, as you have termed it, and I prefer looking into my own mind, to see reflected there those splendors to which education, tradition, and history have accustomed me, I prefer considering myself still a queen, than to feel myself a bad mother to this people, who insult and hate me."

"Antoinette! Antoinette!" cried Louis XVI., terrified at the sudden paleness which pervaded the queen's face, and which was nothing more than the precursor of a terrible storm of anger.

"Oh, no, no, Sire, I will speak," replied the queen.

"Beware, Madame!" said he.

And with a glance the king directed the attention of Marie Antoinette to the presence of the doctor.

"Oh, this gentleman knows all that I was about to say; he knows even everything I think," said the queen, with a bitter smile at the recollection of the scene which had just before occurred between her and the doctor; "and therefore why should I restrain myself? This gentleman, moreover, has been taken by us for our confidant, and I know not why I should have any fear of speaking. I know that you are carried, dragged away, like the unhappy prince in my dear old German ballads. Whither are you going? Of that I know nothing; but you are going whence you will never return."

"Why, no, Madame; I am going simply and plainly to Paris," replied Louis XVI.

Marie Antoinette raised her shoulders.

"Do you believe me to be insane?" said she, in a voice of deep irritation. "You are going to Paris? 'T is well. Who tells you that Paris is not an abyss which I see not, but which I can divine? Who can say whether, in the tumultuous crowd by which you will necessarily be surrounded, you will not be killed? Who knows from whence a chance shot may proceed? Who knows, amid a hundred thousand upraised and threatening hands, which it is that has directed the murderous knife?"

"Oh, on that head you need not have the slightest apprehension. They love me!" exclaimed the king.

"Oh, say not that, Sire, or you will make me pity you. They love you, and they kill, they assassinate, they massacre those who represent you on the earth; you, a king, — you, the image of God! Well, the governor of the Bastille was your representative; he was the image of the king. Be well assured of this, and I shall not be accused of exaggeration when I say it. If they have

killed De Launay, that brave and faithful servant, they would have killed you, Sire, had you been in his place, and much more easily than they killed him; for they know you, and know that instead of defending yourself, you would have bared your breast to them."

"Conclude," said the king.

"But I had thought that I had concluded, Sire."

"They will kill me?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Well?"

"And my children!" exclaimed the queen.

Gilbert thought it time that he should interfere.

"Madame," said he, "the king will be so much respected at Paris, and his presence will cause such transports, that if I have a fear, it is not for the king, but for those fanatics who will throw themselves to be crushed beneath his horse's feet, like the Indian Fakirs beneath the car of their idol."

"Oh, sir, sir!" cried Marie Antoinette.

"This march to Paris will be a triumph, Madame."

"But, Sire, you do not reply."

"It is because I agree somewhat with the doctor, Madame."

"And you are impatient, are you not, to enjoy this great triumph?"

"And the king, in this case, would be right," said Gilbert, "for this impatience would be a further proof of the profoundly just discrimination with which his Majesty judges men and things. The more his Majesty shall hasten to accomplish this, the greater will his triumph be."

"Yes, you believe that, sir?"

"I am positive it will be so. For the king, by delaying it, would lose all the advantage to be derived from its

spontaneousness. But reflect, Madame, reflect, that the initiative of this measure may proceed from another quarter, and such a request would change, in the eyes of the Parisians, the position of his Majesty, and would give him, in some measure, the appearance of acceding to an order."

"There, hear you that?" exclaimed the queen. "The doctor acknowledges it — they would order you. Oh, Sire, think of that."

"The doctor does not say that they have ordered, Madame."

"Patience — patience! only delay a little, Sire, and the request, or rather the order, will arrive."

Gilbert slightly compressed his lips with a feeling of vexation, which the queen instantly caught, although it was almost as evanescent as the lightning.

"What have I said?" murmured she. "Poor simpleton! I have been arguing against myself."

"And in what, Madame?" inquired the king.

"In this, — that by a delay I should make you lose the advantage of your initiative; and, nevertheless, I have to ask for a delay."

"Ah, Madame, ask everything, exact anything, excepting that."

"Antoinette," said the king, taking her hand, "you have sworn to ruin me."

"Oh, Sire!" exclaimed the queen, in a tone of reproach, which revealed all the anguish of her heart. "And can you speak thus to me?"

"Why, then, do you attempt to delay this journey?" asked the king.

"Consider truly, Madame, that under such circumstances the fitting moment is everything; reflect on the importance of the hours which are flying past us at such

a period, when an enraged and furious people are counting them anxiously as they strike."

"Not to-day, Monsieur Gilbert; to-morrow, Sire, oh, to-morrow! Grant me till to-morrow, and I swear to you I will no longer oppose this journey."

"A day lost," murmured the king.

"Twenty-four long hours," said Gilbert; "reflect on that, Madame."

"Sire, it must be so," rejoined the queen, in a supplicating tone.

"A reason — a reason!" cried the king.

"None, but my despair, Sire; none, but my tears; none, but my entreaties."

"But between this and to-morrow what may happen? Who can tell this?" said the king, completely overcome by seeing the queen's despair.

"And what is there that could happen?" said the queen, at the same time looking at Gilbert with an air of entreaty.

"Oh," said Gilbert, "out yonder — nothing yet. A hope, were it even as vague as a cloud, would suffice to make them wait patiently till to-morrow; but —"

"But it is here, is it not?" said the king.

"Yes, Sire, it is here that we have to apprehend."

"It is the Assembly?"

Gilbert gave an affirmative nod.

"The Assembly," continued the king, "with such men as Monsieur Monnier, Monsieur Mirabeau, and Monsieur Siéyès, is capable of sending me some address which would deprive me of all the advantage of my good intentions."

"Well, then," exclaimed the queen, with gloomy fury, "so much the better, because you would then refuse —

because then you would maintain your dignity as a king — because then you would not go to Paris, and if we must here sustain a war, well, here will we sustain it — because, if we must die, we will die here, but as illustrious and unshrinking monarchs, which we are, as kings, as masters, as Christians who put their trust in God, from whom we hold the crown."

On perceiving this feverish excitement of the queen, Louis XVI. saw that there was nothing to be done but to yield to it.

He made a sign to Gilbert, and advancing to Marie Antoinette, whose hand he took : —

"Tranquillize yourself, Madame," said he to her ; "all shall be done as you desire. You know, my dear wife, that I would not do anything which would be displeasing to you, for I have the most unbounded affection for a woman of your merit, and above all, of your virtue."

And Louis XVI. accentuated these last words with inexpressible nobleness ; thus exalting with all his power the so-much calumniated queen, and that in the presence of a witness capable, should it be requisite, of properly reporting all he had heard and seen.

This delicacy profoundly moved Marie Antoinette, who, grasping with both hands the hand which the king held out to her, said : —

"Well, then, only till to-morrow, Sire, no later ; that shall be the last delay ; but I ask you that as a favor on my knees. To-morrow, at the hour which may please you, I swear to you, you shall set out for Paris."

"Take care, Madame, the doctor is a witness," said the king, smiling.

"Sire, you have never known me to forfeit my word," replied the queen.

"No ; but there is only one thing I acknowledge — "

"What is that?"

"It is, that I am anxious, resigned as you appear to be, to know why you have asked me for this delay of twenty-four hours. Do you expect some news from Paris, — some intelligence from Germany? Is there anything — "

"Do not question me, Sire."

The king was as inquisitive as Figaro was lazy; anything that excited his curiosity delighted him.

"Is there any question as to the arrival of troops, — of a reinforcement, — of any political combination?"

"Sire, Sire!" murmured the queen, in a reproachful tone.

"Is it a question of — "

"There is no question in the matter," replied the queen.

"Then it is a secret?"

"Well, then, yes! the secret of an anxious woman, that is all."

"A caprice, is it not?"

"Caprice, if you will."

"The supreme law."

"That is true. Why does it not exist in politics as in philosophy? Why are kings not permitted to make their political caprices supreme laws?"

"It will come to that, you may rest assured. As to myself, it is already done," said the king, in a jocose tone. "Therefore, till to-morrow."

"Till to-morrow!" sorrowfully rejoined the queen.

"Do you keep the doctor with you?" asked the king.

"Oh, no, no!" cried the queen, with a sort of eagerness which made Gilbert smile.

"I will take him with me, then."

Gilbert bowed a third time to the Queen Marie Antoinette, who this time returned his salutation more as a woman than a queen.

Then, as the king was going towards the door, he followed the king.

"It appears to me," said the king, as they proceeded along the gallery, "that you are on good terms with the queen, Monsieur Gilbert."

"Sire," replied the doctor, "it is a favor for which I am indebted to your Majesty."

"Long live the king!" cried the courtiers who already thronged the antechambers.

"Long live the king!" repeated a crowd of officers and foreign soldiers in the courtyard, who were eagerly hastening towards the palace doors.

These acclamations, which became louder as the crowd increased, gave greater delight to the heart of Louis XVI. than any he had before received, although he had so frequently been greeted in the same manner.

As to the queen, still seated where the king had left her, near the window, and where she had just passed such agonizing moments, when she heard the cries of devotedness and love which welcomed the king as he passed by, and which gradually died away in the distance under the porticos, or beneath the thickets of the park: —

"Long live the king!" cried she; "yes, long live the king! The king will live, and that in despite of thee, infamous Paris! Thou odious gulf, thou sanguinary abyss, thou shalt not swallow up this victim! I will drag him from thee, and that with this little, this weak arm. It threatens thee at this moment, — it devotes thee to the execration of the world and to the vengeance of God!"

And pronouncing these words with a violence of hatred which would have terrified the most furious friends of the Revolution, could they have seen and heard her, the queen stretched forth towards Paris her weak arm, which shone from beneath the lace which surrounded it, like a sword starting from its scabbard.

Then she called Madame Campan, the lady-in-waiting in whom she placed the most confidence, and shutting herself up with her in her cabinet, ordered that no one should be admitted to her presence.

CHAPTER V.

THE SHIRT OF MAIL.

THE following morning the sun rose brilliant and pure as on the preceding day. Its bright rays gilded the marble and the gravel walks of Versailles. The birds, grouped in thousands on the first trees of the park, saluted, with their deafening songs, the new and balmy day of joy thus promised to their love.

The queen had risen at five o'clock. She had given orders that the king should be requested to go to her apartment as soon as he should wake.

Louis XVI., somewhat fatigued from having received a deputation of the Assembly, which had come to the palace the preceding evening, and to which he had been obliged to reply, — this was the commencement of speech-making, — Louis XVI. had slept somewhat later than usual to recover from his fatigue, and that it might not be said that he was not as vigorous as ever.

Therefore, he was scarcely dressed when the queen's message was delivered to him; he was at that moment putting on his sword. He slightly knit his brow.

"What!" said he, "is the queen already up?"

"Oh, a long time ago, Sire."

"Is she again ill?"

"No, Sire."

"And what can the queen want at so early an hour in the morning?"

"Her Majesty did not say."

The king took his first breakfast, which consisted of a bowl of soup and a little wine, and then went to the queen's apartment.

He found the queen full dressed, as for a ceremonious reception, beautiful, pale, imposing. She welcomed her husband with that cold smile which shone like a winter's sun upon the cheeks of the queen, as when in the grand receptions at court it was necessary she should cast some rays upon the crowd.

The king could not comprehend the sorrow which pervaded that smile and look. He was already preparing himself for one thing; that is to say, the resistance of Marie Antoinette to the project which had been proposed the day before.

"Again some new caprice," thought he.

And this was the reason for his frowning. The queen did not fail, by the first words she uttered, to strengthen this opinion.

"Sire," said she, "since yesterday I have been reflecting much —"

"There now! now it is coming!" cried the king.

"Dismiss, if you please, all who are not our intimate friends," said the queen.

The king, though much annoyed, ordered his officers to leave the room. One only of the queen's women remained; it was Madame Campan.

Then the queen, laying both her beautiful hands on the king's arm, said to him: —

"Why, are you dressed already? That is wrong."

"How wrong? and why?"

"Did I not send word to you not to dress yourself until you had been here? I see you have already your coat on and your sword. I had hoped you would have come in your dressing-gown."

The king looked at her, much surprised. This fantasy of the queen awakened in his mind a crowd of strange ideas, the novelty of which only rendered the improbability still stronger. His first gesture was one of mistrust and uneasiness.

"What is it that you wish?" said he. "Do you pretend to retard or prevent that which we had yesterday agreed upon?"

"In no way, Sire."

"Let me entreat you not to jest on a matter of so serious a nature. I ought and I will go to Paris. I can no longer avoid it. My household troops are prepared. The persons who are to accompany me were summoned last night to be ready."

"Sire, I have no pretensions of that nature, but —"

"Reflect," said the king, working himself up by degrees to gain courage, — "reflect that the intelligence of my intended journey must have already reached the Parisians; that they have prepared themselves; that they are expecting me; that the very favorable feelings, as was predicted to us, that this journey has excited in the public mind, may be changed into dangerous hostility. Reflect, in fine —"

"But, Sire, I do not at all contest what you have done me the honor to say to me. I resigned myself to it yesterday; this morning I am still resigned."

"Then, Madame, why all this preamble?"

"I do not make any."

"Pardon me, pardon me! then why all these questions regarding my dress, my projects?"

"As to your dress, that I admit," answered the queen, endeavoring again to smile; but that smile, from so frequently fading away, became more and more funereal.

"What observation have you to make upon my dress?"

"I wish, Sire, that you would take off your coat."

"Do you not think it becoming? It is a silk coat, of a violet color. The Parisians are accustomed to see me dressed thus; they like to see me in this, with which moreover, the blue ribbon harmonizes well. You have often told me so yourself."

"I have, Sire, no objection to offer to the color of your coat."

"Well, then?"

"But to the lining."

"In truth, you puzzle me with that eternal smile. The lining — what jest — "

"Alas! I no longer jest."

"There! now you are feeling my waistcoat; does that displease you too? White taffeta and silver, the embroidery worked by your own hand, — it is one of my favorite waistcoats."

"I have nothing to say against the waistcoat, either."

"How singular you are! Is it, then, the frill or the embroidered cambric shirt that offends you? Why must I not appear in full dress when I am going to visit my good city of Paris?"

A bitter smile contracted the queen's lips, — the nether lip particularly, that which the "Austrian" was so much reproached for; it became thicker, and advanced as if it were swelled by all the venom of hatred and of anger.

"No," said she, "I do not reproach you for being so well dressed, Sire; but it is the lining, — the lining, I say again and again."

"The lining of my embroidered shirt! Ah, will you at least explain yourself?"

"Well, then, I will explain. The king, hated, considered an encumbrance, who is about to throw himself into the midst of seven hundred thousand Parisians, inebriated with their triumph and their revolutionary ideas, — the king is not a prince of the Middle Ages, and yet he ought to make his entry this day into Paris in a good iron cuirass, in a hemlet of good Milan steel; he should protect himself in such a way that no ball, no arrow, no stone, no knife, could reach his person."

"That is in fact true," said Louis XVI., pensively. "But, my good friend, as I do not call myself either Charles VIII., or Francis I., or even Henry IV.; as the monarchy of my day is one of velvet and of silk, — I shall go naked under my silken coat, or to speak more correctly, I shall go with a good mark at which they may aim their balls, for I wear the jewel of my orders just over my heart."

The queen uttered a stifled groan.

"Sire," said she, "we begin to understand each other. You shall see, — you shall see that your wife jests no longer."

She made a sign to Madame Campan, who had remained at the farther end of the room, and the latter took from a drawer of the queen's chiffonnier a wide oblong flat parcel, wrapped up in a silken cover.

"Sire," said the queen, "the heart of the king belongs, in the first place, to France, — that is true; but I fully believe that it belongs to his wife and children. For my part, I will not consent that this heart should be exposed to the balls of the enemy; I have adopted measures to save from every danger my husband, my king, the father of my children."

While saying this, she unfolded the silk which covered it, and displayed a waistcoat of fine steel mail, crossed

with such marvellous art that it might have been thought an Arabian watered stuff, so supple and elastic was its tissue, so admirable the play of its whole surface.

"What is that?" said the king.

"Look at it, Sire."

"A waistcoat, it appears to me."

"Why, yes, Sire."

"A waistcoat that closes up to the neck."

"With a small collar, intended, as you see, to line the collar of the waistcoat or the cravat."

The king took the waistcoat in his hands and examined it very minutely.

The queen, on observing this eagerness, was perfectly transported.

The king, on his part, appeared delighted, counting the rings of this fairy net which undulated beneath his fingers with all the malleability of knitted wool.

"Why," exclaimed he, "this is admirable steel!"

"Is it not, Sire?"

"It is a perfect miracle of art."

"Is it not?"

"I really cannot imagine where you can have procured this."

"I bought it last night, Sire, of a man who long since wished me to purchase it of him, in the event of your going out on a campaign."

"It is admirable! admirable!" repeated the king, examining it as an artist.

"And it will fit you as well as a waistcoat made by your tailor, Sire."

"Oh, do you believe that?"

"Try it on."

The king said not a word, but took off his violet-

colored coat. The queen trembled with joy; she assisted Louis XVI. in taking off his orders, and Madame Campan the rest. The king, however, unbuckled his sword and laid it on the table.

If any one at that moment had contemplated the face of the queen, they would have seen it lit up by one of those triumphant smiles which supreme felicity alone bestows.

The king allowed her to divest him of his cravat, and the delicate fingers of the queen placed the steel collar round his neck. Then Marie Antoinette herself fastened the hooks of his corselet, which adapted itself beautifully to the shape of the body, being lined throughout with a fine doe-skin, for the purpose of preventing any uncomfortable pressure from the steel.

This waistcoat was longer than an ordinary cuirass; it covered the whole body. With the waistcoat and shirt over it, it did not increase the volume of the body even half a line. It did not in the slightest degree inconvenience any movement of the wearer.

"Is it very heavy?" asked the queen.

"No."

"Only see, my king, it is a perfect wonder, is it not?" said the queen, clapping her hands, and turning to Madame Campan, who was just buttoning the king's ruffles.

Madame Campan manifested her joy in as artless a manner as did the queen.

"I have saved my king!" cried Marie Antoinette. "Test this invisible cuirass; prove it; place it upon a table; try if you can make any impression upon it with a knife; try if you can make a hole through it with a ball; try it! try it!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the king, with a doubting air.

"Only try it!" repeated she, with enthusiasm.

"I would willingly do so from curiosity," replied the king.

"You need not do so; it would be superfluous, Sire."

"How! it would be superfluous that I should prove to you the excellence of your wonder?"

"Ah! thus it is with all the men. Do you believe that I would have given faith to the judgment of another, — of an indifferent person, when the life of my husband, the welfare of France, was in question?"

"And yet, Antoinette, it seems to me that this is precisely what you have done, — you have put faith in another."

The queen shook her head with a delightfully playful obstinacy.

"Ask her!" said she, pointing to the woman who was present, — "ask our good Campan there what we have done this morning?"

"What was it, then? Good Heaven!" ejaculated the king, completely puzzled.

"This morning — what am I saying? — this night, after dismissing all the attendants, we went, like two mad-brained women, and shut ourselves up in her room, which is at the far end of the wing occupied by the pages. Now, the pages were sent off last night to prepare the apartments at Rambouillet; and we felt well assured that no one could interrupt us before we had executed our project."

"Good Heaven! you really alarm me! What were the designs, then, of these two Judiths?"

"Judith effected less, and certainly with less noise. But for that, the comparison would be marvellously appropriate. Campan carried the bag which contained this breast-plate; as for me, I carried a long hunting-

knife which belonged to my father, — that infallible blade which killed so many wild boars."

"Judith! still Judith!" cried the king, laughing.

"Oh, Judith had not the heavy pistol which I took from your armory, and which I made Weber load for me."

"A pistol?"

"Undoubtedly. You ought to have seen us running in the dark, startled, agitated at the slightest noise, avoiding everybody for fear of their being indiscreet, creeping like two little mice along the deserted corridors. Campan locked three doors and placed a mattress against the last, to prevent our being overheard; we put the cuirass on one of the figures which they use to stretch my gowns on, and placed it against a wall. And I — with a firm hand, too, I can assure you — struck the breast-plate with the knife; the blade bent, flew out of my hand, and bounding back, stuck into the floor, to our great terror."

"The deuce!" exclaimed the king.

"Wait a little."

"Did it not make a hole?" asked Louis XVI.

"Wait a little, I tell you. Campan pulled the knife out of the board. 'You are not strong enough, Madame,' she said, 'and perhaps your hand trembles. I am stronger, as you shall see.' She therefore raised the knife, and gave the figure so violent a blow, so well applied, that my poor German knife snapped off short against the steel mail."

"See, here are the two pieces, Sire. I will have a dagger made for you out of one of them."

"Oh, this is absolutely fabulous!" cried the king; "and the mail was not injured?"

"A slight scratch on the exterior ring, and there are three, one over the other."

"I should like to see it."

"You shall see it."

And the queen began to undress the king again with wonderful celerity, in order that he might the sooner admire her idea and her high feats in arms.

"Here is a place that is somewhat damaged, it would appear to me," said the king, pointing to a slight depression over a space of about an inch in circumference.

"That was done by the pistol-ball, Sire."

"How! you fired off a pistol loaded with ball? you?"

"Here is the ball completely flattened, and still black. Here, take it; and now do you believe that your life is in safety?"

"You are my tutelary angel," said the king, who began slowly to unhook the mailed waistcoat, in order to examine more minutely the traces left by the knife and the pistol-shot.

"Judge of my terror, dear king," said Marie Antoinette, "when on the point of firing the pistol at the breast-plate. Alas! the fear of the report — that horrible noise which you know has so frightful an effect upon me — was nothing; but it appeared to me that in firing at the waistcoat destined to protect you, I was firing at you yourself. I was afraid of wounding you; I feared to see a hole in the mail, and then my efforts, my trouble, my hopes, were forever lost."

"My dear wife," said Louis XVI., having completely unhooked the coat of mail and placed it on the table, "what gratitude do I not owe you!"

"Well, now, what is it you are doing?" asked the queen.

And she took the waistcoat and again presented it to the king. But with a smile replete with nobleness and kindness: —

"No," said he, "I thank you."

"You refuse it?" said the queen.

"I refuse it."

"Oh, but reflect a moment, Sire."

"Sire," cried Madame Campan, in a supplicating tone.

"But," said the queen, "'t is your salvation; 't is your life!"

"That is possible," said the king.

"You refuse the succor which God himself has sent us."

"Enough! enough!" said the king.

"Oh, you refuse! you refuse!"

"Yes, I refuse."

"But they will kill you."

"My dear Antoinette, when gentlemen in this eighteenth century are going out to battle, they wear a cloth coat, waistcoat, and shirt; this is all they have to defend them against musket-balls. When they go upon the field of honor to fight a duel, they throw off all but their shirt, — that is for the sword. As to myself, I am the first gentleman of my kingdom; I will do neither more nor less than my friends; and there is more than this, — while they wear cloth, I alone have the right to wear silk. Thanks, my good wife; thanks, my good queen; thanks."

"Ah!" exclaimed the queen, at once despairing and delighted, "why cannot his army hear him speak thus?"

As to the king, he quietly completed his toilette, without even appearing to understand the act of heroism he had just performed.

"Is the monarchy then lost," murmured the queen, "when we can feel so proudly at such a moment?"

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEPARTURE.

On leaving the queen's apartment, the king immediately found himself surrounded by all the officers and all the persons of his household, who had been appointed by him to attend him on his journey to Paris.

The principal personages were Messieurs de Beauvau, de Villeroy, de Nesle, and d'Estaing.

Gilbert was waiting in the middle of the crowd till Louis XVI. should perceive him, were it only to cast a look upon him in passing.

It could be easily perceived that the whole of the throng there present were still in doubt, and that they could not credit that the king would persist in following up the resolution he had come to.

"After breakfast, gentlemen," said the king, "we will set out."

Then, perceiving Gilbert: —

"Ah, you are there, Doctor," he continued, "you know that I take you with me."

"At your orders, Sire."

The king went into his cabinet, where he was engaged two hours. He afterwards attended Mass with all his household; then, at about nine o'clock, he sat down to breakfast.

The repast was taken with the usual ceremonies, excepting that the queen, who, after attending Mass, was observed to be out of spirits, her eyes red and swollen,

had insisted on being present at the king's repast, but without partaking of it in the slightest manner, that she might be with him to the last moment.

The queen had brought her two children with her, who, already much agitated, doubtless by what the queen had said to them, were looking anxiously from time to time at their father's face, and then at the crowd of officers of the guards, who were present.

The children, moreover, from time to time, by order of their mother, wiped away a tear, which every now and then would rise to their eyelids; and the sight of this excited the pity of some and the anger of others, and filled the whole assembly with profound grief.

The king ate on stoically. He spoke several times to Gilbert, without taking his eyes off his plate; he spoke frequently to the queen, and always with deep affection.

At last he gave instructions to the commanders of his troops.

He was just finishing his breakfast, when an officer came in to announce to him that a compact body of men on foot, coming from Paris, had just appeared at the end of the grand avenue leading to the Place d'Armes.

On hearing this, the officers and guards at once rushed out of the room. The king raised his head and looked at Gilbert; but seeing that Gilbert smiled, he tranquilly continued eating.

The queen turned pale, and leaned towards Monsieur de Beauvau, to request him to obtain information.

Monsieur de Beauvau ran out precipitately.

The queen then drew near to the window.

Five minutes afterwards Monsieur de Beauvau returned.

"Sire," said he, on entering the room, "they are National Guards, from Paris, who, hearing the rumor

spread yesterday in the capital, of your Majesty's intention to visit the Parisians, assembled to the number of some ten thousand, for the purpose of coming out to meet you on the road; and not meeting you so soon as they expected, they have pushed on to Versailles."

"What appear to be their intentions?" asked the king.

"The best in the world," replied Monsieur de Beauvau.

"That matters not," said the queen; "have the gates closed."

"Take good care not to do that," said the king; "it is quite enough that the palace-doors remain closed."

The queen frowned, and darted a look at Gilbert.

The latter was awaiting this look from the queen, for one half his prediction was already fulfilled. He had promised the arrival of twenty thousand men, and ten thousand had already come.

The king turned to Monsieur de Beauvau.

"See that refreshments be given to these worthy people," said he.

Monsieur de Beauvau went down a second time. He transmitted to the cellar-men the order he had received from the king.

After doing this, he went upstairs again.

"Well?" said the king, in a tone of inquiry.

"Well, Sire, your Parisians are in high discussion with the gentlemen of the Guards."

"How!" cried the king, "there is a discussion?"

"Oh! one of pure courteousness. As they have been informed that the king is to set out in two hours, they wish to await his departure, and march behind his Majesty's carriage."

"But," inquired the queen, in her turn, "they are on foot, I suppose?"

"Yes, Madame."

"But the king has horses to his carriage, and the king travels fast, very fast; you know, Monsieur de Beauvau, that the king is accustomed to travelling very rapidly."

These words, pronounced in the tone the queen pronounced them, implied: —

"Put wings to his Majesty's carriage."

The king made a sign with his hand to stop the colloquy.

"I will go at a walk."

The queen heaved a sigh which almost resembled a cry of anger.

"It would not be right," tranquilly added Louis XVI., "that I should make these worthy people run, who have taken the trouble to come so far to do me honor. My carriage shall be driven at a walk, and a slow walk too, so that everybody may be able to follow me."

The whole of the company testified their admiration by a murmur of approbation; but at the same time there was seen on the countenances of several persons the reflection of the disapproval which was expressed by the features of the queen, at so much goodness of soul, which she considered as mere weakness.

A window was opened.

The queen turned round, amazed. It was Gilbert, who, in his quality of physician, had only exercised the right which appertained to him of renewing the air of the dining-room, thickened by the odors of the viands and the breathing of two hundred persons.

The doctor stood behind the curtains of the open window, through which ascended the voices of the crowd assembled in the courtyard.

"What is that?" asked the king.

"Sire," replied Gilbert, "the National Guards are down there on the pavement, exposed to the heat of the sun, and they must feel it very oppressive."

"Why not invite them upstairs to breakfast with the king?" sarcastically said one of her favorite officers to the queen.

"They should be taken to some shady place; put them into the marble courtyard, into the vestibules, wherever it is cool," said the king.

"Ten thousand men in the vestibules!" exclaimed the queen.

"If they are scattered everywhere, there will be room enough for them," said the king.

"Scattered everywhere!" cried Marie Antoinette, "why, sir, you will teach them the way to your own bedchamber."

This was the prophecy of terror which was to be realized at Versailles before three months had elapsed.

"They have a great many children with them, Madame," said Gilbert, in a gentle tone.

"Children!" exclaimed the queen.

"Yes, Madame; a great many have brought their children with them, as if on a party of pleasure. The children are dressed as little National Guards, so great is the enthusiasm for this new institution."

The queen opened her lips as if about to speak; but almost instantly she held down her head.

She had felt a desire to utter a kind word; but pride and hatred had stopped it ere it escaped her lips.

Gilbert looked at her attentively.

"Ah!" cried the king, "those poor children! When people bring children with them, it is plain that they have no intention to do harm to the father of a family, —

another reason for putting them in a cooler place, poor little things! Let them in; let them in."

Gilbert then, gently shaking his head, appeared to say to the queen, who had remained silent: —

"There, Madame; that is what *you* ought to have said; I gave you the opportunity. Your kind words would have been repeated, and you would have gained two years of popularity."

The queen comprehended Gilbert's mute language, and a blush suffused her face.

She felt the error she had committed, and immediately excused herself by a feeling of pride and resistance, which she expressed by a glance, as a reply to Gilbert. During this time Monsieur de Beauvau was following the king's orders relating to the National Guards.

Then were heard shouts of joy and benediction from that armed crowd, admitted by the king's order to the interior of the palace.

The acclamations, the fervent wishes, the loud hurrahs, ascended as a whirlwind to the hall in which the king and queen were seated, whom they reassured with regard to the disposition of the so-much-dreaded inhabitants of Paris.

"Sire," said Monsieur de Beauvau, "in what order is it that your Majesty determines the procession shall be conducted?"

"And the discussion between the National Guards and my officers?"

"Oh, Sire, it has evaporated, vanished; those worthy people are so happy that they now say, 'We will go wherever you may please to place us. The king is our king as much as he is everybody else's king. Wherever he may be, he is ours.'"

The king looked at Marie Antoinette, who curled, with an ironical smile, her disdainful lip.

"Tell the National Guards," said Louis XVI., "that they may place themselves where they will."

"Your Majesty," said the queen, "will not forget that your body-guards have the right of surrounding your carriage."

The officers, who perceived that the king was somewhat undecided, advanced to support the arguments of the queen.

"That is the case, undoubtedly," replied the king. "Well, we shall see."

Monsieur de Beauvau and Monsieur de Villeroy left the room to take their stations and to give the necessary orders.

The clock of Versailles struck ten.

"Well, well," said the king, "I shall put off my usual labors till to-morrow; these worthy people ought not to be kept waiting."

The king rose from table.

Marie Antoinette went to the king, clasped him in her arms, and embraced him. The children clung weeping to their father's neck. Louis XVI., who was much moved, endeavored gently to release himself from them; he wished to conceal the emotions which would soon have become overpowering.

The queen stopped all the officers as they passed her, seizing one by his arm, another by his sword.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" said she. And this eloquent exclamation recommended to them to be watchful for the safety of the king, who had just descended the staircase.

All of them placed their hands upon their hearts and upon their swords.

The queen smiled to thank them.

Gilbert remained in the room till almost the last.

"Sir," said the queen to him, "it was you who advised the king to take this step. It was you who induced the king to come to this resolution, in spite of my entreaties. Reflect, sir, that you have assumed a fearful responsibility as regards the wife, as regards the children."

"I am sensible of that," coldly replied Gilbert.

"And you will bring the king back to me safe and unhurt?" she said with a solemn gesture.

"Yes, Madame."

"Reflect that you will answer for his safety with your head."

Gilbert bowed.

"Reflect that your head is answerable," cried Marie Antoinette, with the menacing and pitiless authority of an absolute monarch.

"Upon my head be the risk," said the doctor, again bowing. "Yes, Madame; and this pledge I should consider as a hostage of but little value, if I believed the king's safety to be at all threatened. But I have said, Madame, that it is to a triumph that I this day conduct his Majesty."

"I must have news of him every hour," added the queen.

"You shall, Madame; and this I swear to you."

"Go, sir; go at once. I hear the drums; the king is about to leave the palace."

Gilbert bowed, and descending the grand staircase, found himself face to face with one of the king's aides-de-camp, who was seeking him by order of his Majesty.

They made him get into a carriage which belonged to Monsieur de Beauvau; the grand master of the ceremonies not allowing, as he had not produced proofs of

his nobility, that he should travel in one of the king's carriages.

Gilbert smiled on finding himself alone in a carriage with arms upon its panels, Monsieur de Beauvau being on horseback, curvetting by the side of the royal carriage.

Then it struck him that it was ridiculous in him thus to be occupying a carriage on which was painted a princely coronet and armorial bearings.

This scruple was still annoying him when, from the midst of a crowd of National Guards, who were following the carriage, he heard the following conversation, though carried on in a half-whisper by men who were curiously stretching out their necks to look at him.

"Oh! that one, — that is the Prince de Beauvau."

"Why," cried a comrade, "you are mistaken."

"I tell you it must be so, since the carriage has the prince's arms upon it."

"The arms! the arms! I say that means nothing."

"Zounds!" said another, "what do the arms prove?"

"They prove that if the arms of Monsieur de Beauvau are upon the coach, it must be Monsieur de Beauvau who is inside of it."

"Monsieur de Beauveau, — is he a patriot?" asked a woman.

"Pooh!" exclaimed the National Guard.

Gilbert again smiled.

"But I tell you," said the first contradictor, "that it is not the prince. The prince is stout; that one is thin. The prince wears the uniform of a commandant of the guards; that one wears a black coat, — it is his intendant."

A murmur, which was by no means favorable to Gilbert, arose among the crowd, who had degraded him by giving him this title, which was not at all flattering.

"Why, no, by the devil's horns!" cried a loud voice, the sound of which made Gilbert start. It was the voice of a man who with his elbows and his fists was clearing his way to get near the carriage. "No," said he, "it is neither Monsieur de Beauvau nor his intendant. It is that brave and famous patriot, and even the most famous of all the patriots. Why, Monsieur Gilbert, what the devil are you doing in the carriage of a prince?"

"Ha! it is you, Father Billot!" exclaimed the doctor.

"By Heaven," replied the farmer, "I took good care not to lose the opportunity!"

"And Pitou?" asked Gilbert.

"Oh, he is not far off. Hilloa, Pitou! where are you? Come this way; come quickly!"

And Pitou, on hearing this invitation, managed by a dexterous use of his shoulders to slip through the crowd till he reached Billot's side, and then with admiration bowed to Gilbert.

"Good-day, Monsieur Gilbert," said he.

"Good-day, Pitou; good-day, my friend."

"Gilbert! Gilbert! who is he?" inquired the crowd of one another.

"Such is fame," thought the doctor, — "well known at Villers-Cotterets; yes; but at Paris popularity is everything."

He alighted from the carriage, which continued its onward progress at a walk, while Gilbert moved on with the crowd, on foot, leaning on Billot's arm.

He in a few words related to the farmer his visit to Versailles, the good disposition of the king and the royal family; he in a few minutes preached such a propaganda of royalism to the group by which he was surrounded that, simple and delighted, these worthy people, who were yet easily induced to receive good impressions, uttered

loud and continued shouts of "Long live the king!" which, taken up by those who preceded them, soon reached the head of the line, and deafened Louis XVI. in his carriage.

"I will see the king!" cried Billot, electrified. "I must get close to him, and see him well; I came all this way on purpose. I will judge him by his face; the eye of an honest man can always speak for itself. Let us get nearer to his carriage, Monsieur Gilbert, shall we not?"

"Wait a little, and it will be easy for us to do so," replied Gilbert; "for I see one of Monsieur de Beauvau's aides-de-camp, who is seeking for some one, coming this way."

And, in fact, a cavalier, who, managing his horse with every sort of precaution, amid the groups of fatigued but joyous pedestrians, was endeavoring to get near the carriage which Gilbert had just left.

Gilbert called to him.

"Are you not looking, sir, for Doctor Gilbert?" he inquired.

"Himself," replied the aide-de-camp.

"In that case, I am he."

"Monsieur de Beauvau sends for you, at the king's request."

These high-sounding words made Billot's eyes open widely; and on the crowd they had the effect of making them open their ranks to allow Gilbert to pass. Gilbert glided through them, followed by Billot and Pitou, the aide-de-camp going before them, who kept on repeating:

"Make room, gentlemen, make room; let us pass, in the king's name, let us pass!"

Gilbert soon reached the door of the royal carriage, which was moving onward as if drawn by Merovingian oxen.

CHAPTER VII.

THE JOURNEY.

Thus pushing and thus pushed, but still following Monsieur de Beauvau's aide-de-camp, Gilbert, Billot, and Pitou at length reached the carriage in which the king, accompanied by Messieurs d'Estaing and de Villequier, was slowly advancing amid the crowd, which continually increased.

Extraordinary, unknown, unheard-of spectacle! for it was the first time that such a one had been seen. All those National Guards from the surrounding villages — impromptu soldiers suddenly sprung up — hastened with cries of joy to greet the king in his progress, saluting him with their benedictions, endeavoring to gain a look from him, and then, instead of returning to their homes, taking place in the procession, and accompanying their monarch towards Paris.

And why? No one could have given a reason for it. Were they obeying an instinct? They had seen, but they wished again to see, this well-beloved king.

For it must be acknowledged that at this period Louis XVI. was an adored king, to whom the French would have raised altars, had it not been for the profound contempt with which Voltaire had inspired them for all altars.

Louis XVI. therefore had no altars raised to him, but solely because the thinkers of that day had too high an esteem for him to inflict upon him such a humiliation.

Louis XVI. perceived Gilbert leaning upon the arm of Billot; behind them marched Pitou, still dragging after him his long sabre.

"Ah, Doctor," cried the king, "what magnificent weather, and what a magnificent people!"

"You see, Sire," replied Gilbert. Then, turning towards the king: "What did I promise your Majesty?"

"Yes, sir, yes; and you have worthily fulfilled your promise."

The king raised his head, and with the intention of being heard:—

"We move but slowly," said he; "and yet it appears to me that we advance but too rapidly for all that we have to see."

"Sire," said Monsieur de Beauvau, "and yet, at the pace your Majesty is going, you are travelling about one league in three hours. It would be difficult to go more slowly."

In fact, the horses were stopped every moment; harangues and replies were interchanged; the National Guards *fraternized* — the word was only then invented — with the body-guards of his Majesty.

"Ah!" said Gilbert to himself, who contemplated this singular spectacle as a philosopher, "if they fraternize with the body-guards, it was because before being friends they had been enemies."

"I say, Monsieur Gilbert," said Billot, in a half-whisper, "I have had a good look at the king; I have listened to him with all my ears. Well, my opinion is that the king is an honest man!"

And the enthusiasm which animated Billot was so overpowering that he raised his voice in uttering these last words to such a pitch that the king and his staff heard him.

The officers laughed outright.

The king smiled, and then, nodding his head : —

"That is praise which pleases me," said he.

These words were spoken loud enough for Billot to hear them.

"Oh, you are right, Sire, for I do not give it to everybody," replied Billot, entering at once into conversation with his king, as Michaud, the miller, did with Henry IV.

"And that flatters me so much the more," rejoined the king, much embarrassed at not knowing how to maintain his dignity as a king, and speak graciously as a good patriot.

Alas ! the poor prince was not yet accustomed to call himself King of the French.

He thought that he was still called the King of France.

Billot, beside himself with joy, did not give himself the trouble to reflect whether Louis, in a philosophical point of view, had abdicated the title of king to adopt the title of a man. Billot, who felt how much this language resembled rustic plainness, — Billot applauded himself for having comprehended the king, and for having been comprehended by him.

Therefore from that moment Billot became more and more enthusiastic. He drank from the king's looks, according to the Virgilian expression, deep draughts of love for constitutional royalty, and communicated it to Pitou, who, too full of his own love and the superfluity of Billot's, overflowed at first in stentorian shouts, then in more squeaking, and finally in less articulate ones of: —

"Long live the king ! Long live the father of the people ! "

This modification in the voice of Pitou was produced by degrees in proportion as he became more and more hoarse.

Pitou was as hoarse as a bull-frog when the procession reached the Point du Jour, where the Marquis de Lafayette, on his celebrated white charger, was keeping in order the undisciplined and agitated cohorts of the National Guard, who had from five o'clock that morning lined the road to receive the royal procession.

At this time it was nearly two o'clock.

The interview between the king and this new chief of armed France passed off in a manner that was satisfactory to all present.

The king, however, began to feel fatigued. He no longer spoke; he contented himself with merely smiling.

The general-in-chief of the Parisian militia could no longer utter a command; he only gesticulated.

The king had the satisfaction to find that the crowd as frequently cried: "Long live the king!" as "Long live Lafayette!" Unfortunately, this was the last time he was destined to enjoy this gratification of his self-love.

During this, Gilbert remained constantly at the door of the king's carriage, Billot near Gilbert, Pitou near Billot.

Gilbert, faithful to his promise, had found means, since his departure from Versailles, to despatch four couriers to the queen.

These couriers had each been the bearer of good news, for at every step of his journey the king had seen caps thrown up in the air as he passed, only on each of these caps shone the colors of the nation, a species of reproach addressed to the white cockade which the king's guards and the king himself wore in their hats.

In the midst of his joy and enthusiasm, this discrepancy in the cockades was the only thing which annoyed Billot.

Billot had on his cocked hat an enormous tricolored cockade.

The king had a white cockade in his hat; the tastes of the subject and the king were not therefore absolutely similar.

This idea so much perplexed him that he could not refrain from unburdening his mind upon the subject to Gilbert, at a moment when the latter was not conversing with the king.

"Monsieur Gilbert," said he to him, "how is it that his Majesty does not wear the national cockade?"

"Because, my dear Billot, either the king does not know that there is a new cockade, or he considers that the cockade he wears ought to be the cockade of the nation."

"Oh, no! oh, no! since his cockade is a white one, and our cockade — ours — is a tricolored one."

"One moment," said Gilbert, stopping Billot just as he was about to launch with heart and soul into the arguments advanced by the newspapers of the day; "the king's cockade is white, as the flag of France is white. The king is in no way to blame for this. Cockade and flag were white long before he came into the world. Moreover, my dear Billot, that flag has performed great feats, and so has the white cockade. There was a white cockade in the hat of Admiral de Suffren, when he re-established our flag in the East Indies. There was a white cockade in the hat of Assas, and it was by that the Germans recognized him in the night, when he allowed himself to be killed rather than that they should take his soldiers by surprise. There was a white cockade in the hat of Marshal Saxe, when he defeated the English at

Fontenoy. There was, in fine, a white cockade in the hat of the Prince de Condé, when he beat the Imperialists at Rocroi, at Fribourg, and at Lens. The white cockade has done all this, and a great many other things, my dear Billot; while the national cockade, which will perhaps make a tour round the world, as Lafayette has predicted, has not yet had time to accomplish anything, seeing that it has existed only for the last three days. I do not say that it will rest idle, do you understand; but, in short, having as yet done nothing, it gives the king full right to wait till it has done something."

"How? the national cockade has as yet done nothing?" cried Billot. "Has it not taken the Bastille?"

"It has," said Gilbert, sorrowfully; "you are right, Billot."

"And that is why," triumphantly rejoined the farmer, — "that is why the king ought to adopt it."

Gilbert gave a furious nudge with his elbow into Billot's ribs, for he had perçeived the king was listening, and then, in a low tone: —

"Are you mad, Billot?" said he; "and against whom was the Bastille taken, then? Against royalty, it seems to me. And now you would make the king wear the trophies of your triumph and the insignia of his own defeat. Madman! the king is all heart, all goodness, all candor, and you would wish him to show himself a hypocrite!"

"But," said Billot, more humbly, without, however, giving up the argument altogether, "it was not precisely against the king that the Bastille was taken; it was against despotism."

Gilbert shrugged up his shoulders, but with the delicacy of the superior man, who will not place his foot on his inferior, for fear that he should crush him.

"No," said Billot, again becoming animated, "it is not against our good king that we have fought, but against his satellites."

Now, in those days they said, speaking politically, satellites instead of saying soldiers, as they said in the theatres, courser instead of horse.

"Moreover," continued Billot, and with some appearance of reason, "he disapproves them, since he comes thus in the midst of us; and if he disapproves them, he must approve us. It is for our happiness and his honor that we have worked, — we, the conquerors of the Bastille."

"Alas! alas!" murmured Gilbert, who did not know how to reconcile the appearance of the king's features with that which he knew must be passing in his heart.

As to the king, he began, amid the confused murmurs of the march, to understand some few words of the conversation entered into by his side.

Gilbert, who perceived the attention which the king was paying to the discussion, made every effort to lead Billot on to less slippery ground than that on which he had ventured.

Suddenly the procession stopped; it had arrived at the Cours la Reine, at the gate formerly called La Conférence, in the Champs Élysées.

There a deputation of electors and aldermen, presided over by the new mayor, Bailly, had drawn themselves up in fine array, with a guard of three hundred men, commanded by a colonel, besides at least three hundred members of the National Assembly, taken, as it will be readily imagined, from the ranks of the Tiers État.

Two of the electors united their strength and their address to hold in equilibrium a vast salver of gilt plate,

upon which were lying two enormous keys, — the keys of the city of Paris during the days of Henry IV.

This imposing spectacle at once put a stop to all individual conversations; and every one, whether in the crowd or in the ranks, immediately directed their attention to the speeches about to be pronounced on the occasion.

Bailly, the worthy man of science, the admirable astronomer, who had been made a deputy in defiance to his own will, a mayor in spite of his objections, an orator notwithstanding his unwillingness, had prepared a long speech. This speech had for its exordium, according to the strictest laws of rhetoric, a laudatory encomium on the king, from the coming into power of Monsieur Turgot down to the taking of the Bastille. Little was wanting, such privilege has eloquence, to attribute to the king the initiative in the measures which the people had been compelled unwillingly to adopt.

Bailly was delighted with the speech he had prepared, when an incident (it is Bailly himself who relates this incident in his Memoirs) furnished him with a new exordium, very much more picturesque than the one he had prepared, — the only one, moreover, which remained engraved on the minds of the people, always ready to seize upon good and, above all, fine-sounding phrases, when founded upon a material fact.

While walking towards the place of meeting, with the aldermen and the electors, Bailly was alarmed at the weight of the keys which he was about to present to the king.

"Do you believe," said he, laughingly, "that after having shown these to the king, I will undergo the fatigue of carrying them back to Paris?"

"What will you do with them, then?" asked one of the electors.

"What will I do with them?" said Bailly. "Why, I will give them to you, or I will throw them into some ditch at the foot of a tree."

"Take good care not to do that!" cried the elector, completely horrified. "Do you not know that these keys are the same which the city of Paris offered to Henry IV. after the siege? They are very precious; they are inestimable antiquities."

"You are right," rejoined Bailly; "the keys offered to Henry IV., the conqueror of Paris, and which are now to be offered to Louis XVI., heh? Why, I declare, now," said the worthy mayor to himself, "this would be a capital antithesis in my speech."

And instantly he took a pencil and wrote above the speech he had prepared the following exordium: —

"Sire, I present to your Majesty the keys of the good city of Paris. They are the same which were offered to Henry IV. He had re-conquered his people; to-day the people have re-conquered their king."

The phrase was well turned, and it was also true. It implanted itself in the memories of the Parisians; and of all the speeches, all the works of Bailly, this only survived.

As to Louis XVI., he approved it by an affirmative nod, but coloring deeply at the same time; for he felt the epigrammatic irony which it conveyed, although concealed beneath a semblance of respect and oratorical flourishes.

"Oh! Marie Antoinette," murmured Louis XVI. to himself, "would not allow herself to be deceived by this pretended veneration of Monsieur Bailly, and would reply in a very different manner from that which I am about to do to the untoward astronomer."

And these reflections were the cause why Louis XVI., who had paid too much attention to the commencement of the speech, did not listen at all to the conclusion of it, nor to that of the president of the electors, Monsieur Delavigne, of which he heard neither the beginning nor the end.

However, the addresses being concluded, the king, fearing not to appear sufficiently delighted with their efforts to say that which was agreeable to him, replied in a very noble tone, and without making any allusion to what the orators had said, that the *homage* of the city of Paris and of the electors was exceedingly gratifying to him.

After which he gave orders for the procession to move on towards the Hôtel de Ville.

But before it recommenced its march, he dismissed his body-guard, wishing to respond by a gracious confidence to the half-politeness which had been evinced to him by the municipality through their organs, the president of the electors and Monsieur Bailly.

Being thus alone, amid the enormous mass of National Guards and spectators, the carriage advanced more rapidly.

Gilbert and his companion Billot still retained their posts on the right of the carriage.

At the moment when they were crossing the Place Louis XV., the report of a gun was heard, fired from the opposite side of the Seine; and a white smoke arose, like a veil of incense, towards the blue sky, where it as suddenly vanished.

As if the report of this musket-shot had found an echo within his breast, Gilbert had felt himself struck, as by a violent blow. For a second his breath failed him, and he hastily pressed his hand to his heart, where he felt a sudden and severe pain.

At the same instant a cry of distress was heard around the royal carriage; a woman had fallen to the ground, shot through the right shoulder.

One of the buttons of Gilbert's coat, a large steel button, cut diamond-fashion, as they were worn at the period, had just been struck diagonally by that same ball.

It had performed the office of a breastplate, and the ball had glanced off from it; this had caused the painful shock which Gilbert had experienced.

Part of his waistcoat and his frill had been torn off by the ball.

This ball, on glancing from the button, had killed the unfortunate woman, who was instantly removed from the spot, bleeding profusely.

The king had heard the shot, but had seen nothing.

He leaned towards Gilbert, and smiling, said: —

"They are burning gunpowder yonder, to do me honor."

"Yes, Sire," replied Gilbert.

But he was careful not to mention to his Majesty the nature of the ovation which they were offering to him.

In his own mind, however, he acknowledged that the queen had some reason for the apprehensions she had expressed, since, but for him standing immediately before, and closing the carriage-door, as it were, hermetically, that ball, which had glanced off from his steel button, would have gone straight to the king's breast.

And now from what hand had proceeded this so well-aimed shot?

No one then wished to inquire, so that it will never now be known.

Billot, pale from what he had just seen, his eyes inces-

santly attracted to the rent made in Gilbert's coat, waistcoat, and frill, excited Pitou to shout as loudly as he could, "Long live the *Father of the French!*"

The event of the day was so great that this episode was quickly forgotten.

At last Louis XVI. arrived in front of the Hôtel de Ville, after having been saluted on the Pont Neuf by a discharge of cannon, which at all events, were not loaded with ball.

Upon the façade of the Hôtel de Ville was an inscription, in large letters, black in the daylight, but which, when it was dark, were to form a brilliant transparency. This inscription was the result of the ingenious lucubrations of the municipal authorities.

The inscription was as follows: —

TO LOUIS XVI., FATHER OF THE FRENCH, AND KING OF A FREE PEOPLE.

Another antithesis, much more important than the one contained in Monsieur Bailly's speech, and which elicited shouts of admiration from all the Parisians assembled in the square.

The inscription attracted the attention of Billot.

But as Billot could not read, he made Pitou read the inscription to him.

Billot made him read it a second time, as if he had not understood it perfectly at first.

Then, when Pitou had repeated the phrase, without varying in a single word: —

"Is it that?" cried he, — "is it that?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Pitou.

"The municipality has written that the king is a king of a free people?"

"Yes, Father Billot."

"Well, then," exclaimed Billot, "since the nation is free, it has the right to offer its cockade to the king."

And with one bound, rushing before the king, who was then alighting from his carriage at the front steps of the Hôtel de Ville: —

"Sire," said he, "you saw on the Pont Neuf that the Henry IV. in bronze wore the national cockade."

"Well?" cried the king.

"Well, Sire, if Henry IV. wears the national cockade, you can wear it too."

"Certainly," said Louis XVI., much embarrassed; "and if I had one — "

"Well," cried Billot, in a louder tone, and raising his hand, "in the name of the people I offer you this one in the place of yours; accept it."

Bailly intervened.

The king was pale. He began to see the progressive encroachment. He looked at Bailly as if to ask his opinion.

"Sire," said the latter, "it is the distinctive sign of every Frenchman."

"In that case I accept it," said the king, taking the cockade from Billot's hands.

And putting aside his own white cockade, he placed the tricolored one in his hat.

An immense triumphant hurrah was echoed from the great crowd upon the square.

Gilbert turned away his head, much grieved.

He considered that the people were encroaching too rapidly, and that the king did not resist sufficiently.

"Long live the king!" cried Billot, who thus gave the signal for a second round of applause.

"The king is dead," murmured Gilbert; "there is no longer a king in France."

An arch of steel had been formed, by a thousand swords held up, from the place at which the king had alighted from his carriage, to the door of the hall in which the municipal authorities were waiting to receive him.

He passed beneath this arch, and disappeared in the gloomy passages of the Hôtel de Ville.

"That is not a triumphal arch," said Gilbert, "but the Caudine Forks."

Then, with a sigh : —

"Ah ! what will the queen say to this ?"

CHAPTER VIII.

SHOWING WHAT WAS TAKING PLACE AT VERSAILLES WHILE THE KING WAS LISTENING TO THE SPEECHES OF THE MUNICIPALITY.

In the interior of the Hôtel de Ville the king received the most flattering welcome; he was styled the Restorer of Liberty.

Being invited to speak, — for the thirst for speeches became every day more intense, — and wishing, in short, to ascertain the feelings of all present, the king placed his hand upon his heart, and said: —

"Gentlemen, you may always calculate on my affection."

While he was thus listening in the Hôtel de Ville to the communications from the government, — for from that day a real government was constituted in France, besides that of the throne and the National Assembly, — the people outside the building were admiring the beautiful horses, the gilt carriage, the lackeys, and the coachman of his Majesty.

Pitou, since the entry of the king into the Hôtel de Ville, had, thanks to a louis given by Father Billot, amused himself in making a goodly quantity of cockades of red and blue ribbons, which he had purchased with the louis, and with these, which were of all sizes, he had decorated the horses' ears, the harness, and the whole equipage.

On seeing this, the imitative people had literally metamorphosed the king's carriage into a cockade-shop.

The coachman and the footmen were profusely ornamented with them.

They had, moreover, slipped some dozens of them into the carriage itself.

However, it must be said that Monsieur de Lafayette, who had remained on horseback, had endeavored to restrain these honest propagators of the national colors, but had not been able to succeed.

And therefore, when the king came out: —

"Oh, oh!" cried he, on seeing this strange bedizenment of his equipage.

Then, with his hand he made a sign to Monsieur de Lafayette to approach him.

Monsieur de Lafayette respectfully advanced, lowering his sword as he came near the king.

"Monsieur de Lafayette," said the king to him, "I was looking for you to say to you that I confirm your appointment to the command of the National Guards."

And Louis XVI. got into his carriage amid a universal acclamation.

As to Gilbert, tranquillized henceforward as to the personal safety of the king, he had remained in the hall with Bailly and the electors.

The speechifying had not yet terminated.

However, on hearing the loud hurrahs which saluted the departure of the king, he approached a window, to cast a last glance on the square, and to observe the conduct of his two country friends.

They were both, or at least they appeared to be, still on the best terms with the king.

Suddenly Gilbert perceived a horseman advancing rapidly along the Quay Pelletier, covered with dust, and

obliging the crowd, which was still docile and respectful, to open its ranks and let him pass.

The people, who were good and complaisant on this great day, smiled while repeating: —

"One of the king's officers! — one of the king's officers!"

And cries of "Long live the king!" saluted the officer as he passed on, and women patted his horse's neck, which was white with foam.

This officer at last managed to reach the king's carriage, and arrived there at the moment when a servant was closing the door of it.

"What! is it you, Charny?" cried Louis XVI.

And then, in a lower tone: —

"How are they all out yonder?" he inquired.

Then, in a whisper: —

"The queen?"

"Very anxious, Sire," replied the officer, who had thrust his head completely into the carriage-window.

"Do you return to Versailles?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Well, then, tell our friends they have no cause for uneasiness. All has gone off marvellously well."

Charny bowed, raised his head, and perceived Monsieur de Lafayette, who made a friendly sign to him.

Charny went to him, and Lafayette shook hands with him; and the crowd, seeing this, almost carried both officer and horse as far as the quay, where, thanks to the vigilant orders given to the National Guards, a line was formed to facilitate the king's departure.

The king ordered that the carriage should move out at a walking pace, till it reached the Place Louis XV. There he found his body-guards, who were awaiting the return of the king, and not without impatience; so

that this impatience, in which every one participated, kept on increasing every moment, and the horses were driven on at a pace which increased in rapidity as they advanced upon the road to Versailles.

Gilbert, from the balcony of the window, had fully comprehended the meaning of the arrival of this horseman, although he did not know his person. He readily imagined the anguish which the queen must have suffered, and especially for the last three hours; for during that time he had not been able to despatch a single courier to Versailles, amid the throng by which he was surrounded, without exciting suspicion, or betraying weakness.

He had but a faint idea of all that had been occurring at Versailles.

We shall now return there with our readers, for we do not wish to make them read too long a course of history.

The queen had received the last courier from the king at three o'clock.

Gilbert had found means to despatch a courier just at the moment the king entered the Hôtel de Ville, under the arch formed by the swords of the National Guards.

The Countess de Charny was with the queen. The countess had only just left her bed, which from severe indisposition she had kept since the previous day.

She was still very pale. She had hardly strength to raise her eyes, the heavy lids of which seemed to be constantly falling, weighed down either with grief or shame.

The queen, on perceiving her, smiled, but with that habitual smile which appears, to those familiar with the court, to be stereotyped upon the lips of princes and of kings.

Then, as if overjoyed that her husband was in safety:—

"Good news again!" exclaimed the queen to those who surrounded her; "may the whole day pass off as well!"

"Oh, Madame!" said a courtier, "your Majesty alarms yourself too much. The Parisians know too well the responsibility which weighs upon them."

"But, Madame," said another courtier, who was not so confiding, "is your Majesty well assured as to the authenticity of this intelligence?"

"Oh, yes," replied the queen. "The person who writes to me has engaged, at the hazard of his head, to be responsible for the safety of the king. Moreover, I believe him to be a friend."

"Oh! if he is a friend," rejoined the courtier, bowing, "that is quite another matter."

Madame de Lamballe, who was standing at a little distance, approached.

"It is," said she, "the lately appointed physician, is it not?"

"Yes, Gilbert," unthinkingly replied the queen, without reflecting that she was striking a fearful blow at one who stood close beside her.

"Gilbert!" exclaimed Andrée, starting as if a viper had bit her to the heart; "Gilbert, your Majesty's friend!"

Andrée had turned round with flashing eyes, her hands clinched with anger and shame, and seemed proudly to accuse the queen, both by her looks and attitude.

"But still," said the queen, hesitating.

"Oh, Madame, Madame!" murmured Andrée, in a tone of the bitterest reproach.

A mortal silence pervaded the whole room after this mysterious incident.

In the midst of this silence, a light step was heard upon the tesselated floor of the adjoining room.

"Monsieur de Charny!" said the queen, in a half-whisper, as if to warn Andrée to compose herself.

Charny had heard — he had seen all — only he could not comprehend it.

He remarked the pallid countenance of Andrée, and the embarrassed air of Marie Antoinette.

It would have been a breach of etiquette to question the queen, but Andrée was his wife; he had the right to question her.

He therefore went to her, and in the most friendly tone —

"What is the matter, Madame?" said he.

Andrée made an effort to recover her composure.

"Nothing, Count," she replied.

Charny then turned towards the queen, who, notwithstanding her profound experience in equivocal positions, had ten times essayed to muster up a smile, but could not succeed.

"You appear to doubt the devotedness of this Monsieur Gilbert," said he to Andrée. "Have you any motive for suspecting his fidelity?"

Andrée was silent.

"Speak, Madame; speak!" said Charny, insistingly.

Then, as Andrée still remained mute: —

"Oh, speak, Madame!" cried he. "This delicacy now becomes condemnable. Reflect that on it may depend the safety of our master."

"I do not know, sir, what can be your motive for saying that," replied Andrée.

"You said, and I heard you say it, Madame, — I appeal moreover to the princess," — and Charny bowed to the Princess de Lamballe, "you exclaimed with an ex-

pression of great surprise, 'Gilbert, your Majesty's friend!'"

"'T is true, you did say that, my dear," said the Princess de Lamballe, with her habitual ingenuousness.

Then, going closer to Andrée: —

"If you do know anything, Monsieur de Charny is right."

"For pity's sake, Madame! for pity's sake!" said Andrée, in an imploring tone, but so low that it could not be heard by any one but the princess.

The princess retired a few steps.

"Oh, good Heaven! it was but a trifling matter," said the queen, feeling that should she any longer delay to interfere, she would be betraying her trust. "The countess was expressing her apprehensions, which doubtless were but vague. She had said that it was difficult for a man who had taken part in the American Revolution, one who is the friend of Monsieur de Lafayette, to be our friend."

"Yes, vague," mechanically repeated Andrée, — "very vague."

"A fear of a similar nature to one which had been expressed by one of the gentlemen present before the countess had expressed hers," rejoined Marie Antoinette.

And with her eyes she pointed out the courtier whose doubts had given rise to this discussion.

But it required more than this to convince Charny. The great confusion which had appeared on his entering the room persuaded him that there was some mystery in the affair.

He therefore persisted.

"It matters not, Madame," said he. "It seems to me that it is your duty not to express vain fears, but on the contrary, to state precise facts."

"What, sir," said the queen, with some asperity, "you are returning to that subject!"

"Madame!"

"Your pardon, but I find that you are still questioning the Countess de Charny."

"Excuse me, Madame," said Charny; "it is from interest for —"

"For your self-love, is it not? Ah, Monsieur de Charny," added the queen, with an ironical expression of which the count felt the whole weight, "acknowledge the thing frankly. You are jealous."

"Jealous! jealous!" cried Charny, coloring, — "but of what? I ask this of your Majesty."

"Of your wife, apparently," replied the queen, harshly.

"Madame!" stammered Charny, perfectly astounded at this unlooked-for attack.

"It is perfectly natural," dryly rejoined Marie Antoinette; "and the countess assuredly is worth the trouble."

Charny darted a look at the queen, to warn her that she was going too far.

But this was useless trouble, superfluous precaution. When this lioness was wounded, and felt the burning pain galling her heart, she no longer knew restraint.

"Yes, I can comprehend your being jealous, Monsieur de Charny, — jealous and uneasy; it is the natural state of every soul that loves, and which consequently is on the watch."

"Madame!" repeated Charny.

"And therefore I," pursued the queen, — "I experience precisely the same feelings which you do at this moment. I am at once a prey to jealousy and anxiety." She emphasized the word "jealousy." "The king is at Paris, and I no longer live."

"But, Madame," observed Charny, who could not at all comprehend the meaning of this storm, the thunder of which appeared to growl more fiercely and the lightnings to flash more vividly every moment, "you have just now received news of the king; the news was good, and you must feel more tranquil."

"And did you feel tranquillized when the countess and myself, a moment ago, endeavored to reassure you?"

Charny bit his lip.

Andrée began to raise her head, at once surprised and alarmed, — surprised at what she heard, alarmed at what she thought she understood.

The silence which had ensued after the first question which Charny had addressed to Andrée was now renewed, and the company seemed anxiously awaiting Charny's answer to the queen. Charny remained silent.

"In fact," resumed the queen, with still increasing anger, "it is the destiny of people who love to think only of the object of their affection. It would be happiness to those poor hearts to sacrifice pitilessly everything — yes, everything — to the feeling by which they are agitated. Good Heaven! how anxious am I with regard to the king!"

One of the courtiers ventured to remark that other couriers would arrive.

"Oh, why am I not at Paris, instead of being here? why am I not with the king?" said Marie Antoinette, who had seen that Charny had become agitated since she had been endeavoring to instil that jealousy into his mind which she so violently experienced.

Charny bowed.

"If it be only that, Madame," said he, "I will go there; and if, as your Majesty apprehends, the king is in any danger, if that valuable life be exposed, you may

rely, Madame, that it shall not be from not having exposed mine in his defence."

Charny bowed and moved towards the door.

"Sir! sir!" cried Andrée, rushing between Charny and the door; "be careful of yourself!"

Nothing was wanting to the completion of this scene but this outburst of the fears of Andrée.

And therefore, as soon as Andrée had been thus impelled, in spite of herself, to cast aside her habitual coldness, no sooner had she uttered these imprudent words and evinced this unwonted solicitude, than the queen became frightfully pale.

"Why, Madame," she cried to Andrée, "how is this, that you here usurp the part of a queen?"

"Who, — I, Madame?" stammered Andrée, comprehending that she had, for the first time, allowed to burst forth from her lips the fire which for so long a period had consumed her soul.

"What!" continued Marie Antoinette, "your husband is in the king's service. He is about to set out to seek the king. If he is exposing his life, it is for the king; and when the question is the service of the king, you advise Monsieur de Charny to be careful of himself."

On hearing these appalling words, Andrée was near fainting. She staggered, and would have fallen to the floor had not Charny rushed forward and caught her in his arms.

An indignant look, which Charny could not restrain, completed the despair of Marie Antoinette, who had considered herself an offended rival, but who, in fact, had been an unjust queen.

"The queen is right," at length said Charny, with some effort, "and your emotion, Madame, was inconsid-

erate. You have no husband, Madame, when the interests of the king are in question; and I ought to be the first to request you to restrain your sensibility, if I presumed that you deigned to feel any alarm for me."

Then, turning towards Marie Antoinette: —

"I am at the queen's orders," said he, coldly, "and I set out at once. It is I who will bring you news of the king, — good news, Madame, or I will not bring any."

Then, having spoken these words, he bowed almost to the ground, and left the room before the queen, moved at once by terror and by anger, had thought of detaining him.

A moment afterwards the hoofs of a horse galloping at full speed rang over the pavement of the courtyard.

The queen remained motionless, but a prey to internal agitation, so much the more terrible from her making the most violent efforts to conceal it.

Some understood, while others could not comprehend the cause of this agitation; but they all showed that they respected their sovereign's tranquillity.

Marie Antoinette was left to her own thoughts.

Andrée withdrew with the rest from the apartment, abandoning Marie Antoinette to the caresses of her two children, whom she had sent for, and who had been brought to her.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RETURN.

NIGHT had returned, bringing with it its train of fears and gloomy visions, when suddenly shouts were heard from the front of the palace.

The queen started and rose. She was not far from a window, which she opened.

Almost at the same instant, servants, transported with joy, ran into the queen's room, crying : —

"A courier, Madame, a courier!"

Three minutes afterwards, a hussar rushed into the antechamber.

He was a lieutenant despatched by Monsieur de Charny. He had ridden at full speed from Sèvres.

"And the king?" said Marie Antoinette.

"His Majesty will be here in a quarter of an hour," replied the officer, who was so much out of breath that he could scarcely articulate.

"Safe and well?" asked the queen.

"Safe, well, and smiling, Madame," replied the officer.

"You have seen him, then?"

"No, Madame, but Monsieur de Charny told me so, when he sent me off."

The queen started once more at hearing this name, which chance had thus associated with that of the king.

"I thank you, sir; you had better rest yourself," said the queen to the young gentleman.

The young officer made his obeisance and withdrew.

Marie Antoinette, taking her children by the hand, went towards the grand entrance of the palace, where were already assembled all the courtiers and the servants.

The penetrating eye of the queen perceived, on the first step, a female form attired in white, her elbow leaning upon the stone balustrade, and looking eagerly into the darkness, that she might first discern the approach of the king's carriage.

It was Andrée, whom even the presence of the queen did not arouse from her fixed gaze.

She, who generally was so eager to fly to the side of her mistress, evidently had not seen her, or disdained to appear to have seen her.

Andrée, then, bore the queen ill-will for the levity which she had shown that afternoon, and from which cruel levity Andrée had so much suffered.

Or else, carried away by the deepest concern, she was with eager anxiety looking for the return of Charny, for whom she had manifested so much affectionate apprehension.

A twofold poniard-stab to the queen, which deepened a wound that was still bleeding.

She lent but an absent ear to the compliments and joyful congratulations of her other friends, and the courtiers generally.

She even felt for a moment her mind abstracted from the violent grief which had overwhelmed her all the evening. There was even a respite to the anxiety excited in her heart by the king's journey, threatened by so many enemies.

But with her strong mind she soon chased all that was not legitimate affection from her heart. At the feet of God she cast her jealousy. She immolated her anger

and her secret feelings to the holiness of her conjugal vow.

It was doubtless God who thus endowed her, for her quiet and support, with this faculty of loving the king, her husband, beyond every being in the world.

At that moment, at least, she so felt, or thought she felt it; the pride of loyalty raised the queen above all terrestrial passions, — love of the king was her egotism.

She had therefore driven from her breast all the petty vengeance of a woman, and the coquettish frivolity of the lover, when the flambeaux of the escort appeared at the end of the avenue.

These lights increased in volume every moment, from the rapidity with which the escort advanced.

They could hear the neighing and the hard breathing of the horses. The ground trembled, amid the silence of the night, beneath the weight of the squadrons which surrounded and followed the king's carriage.

The gates were thrown open; the guards rushed forth to receive the king with shouts of enthusiasm. The carriage rolled sonorously over the pavement of the great courtyard.

Dazzled, delighted, fascinated, strongly excited by the varied emotions she had experienced during the whole day, by those which she then felt, the queen flew down the stairs to receive the king.

Louis XVI., as soon as he had alighted from his carriage, ascended the staircase with all the rapidity which was possible, surrounded as he was by his officers, all agitated by the events of the day and their triumph; while in the courtyard, the guards, mixing unceremoniously with the grooms and equerries, tore from the carriages and the harness all the cockades which the enthusiasm of the Parisians had attached to them.

The king and the queen met upon a marble landing. The queen, with a cry of joy and love, several times pressed the king to her heart.

She sobbed as if, on thus meeting him, she had believed she was never again to see him.

Yielding thus to the emotions of an overflowing heart, she did not observe the silent pressure of their hands which Charny and Andrée had just exchanged.

This pressure of the hand was nothing; but Andrée was at the foot of the steps; she was the first Charny had seen and touched.

The queen, after having presented her children to the king, made him kiss them; and then the dauphin, seeing in his father's hat the new cockade, on which the torches cast an ensanguined light, exclaimed with childish astonishment: —

"Why, Papa, what have you on your cockade? Is it blood?"

It was the national red.

The queen uttered a cry, and examined it in her turn.

The king bent down his head, under the pretence of again kissing his little daughter, but in reality to conceal his shame.

Marie Antoinette, with profound disgust, tore the cockade from the hat, without seeing — the noble, furious woman — that she was wounding to the heart a nation that would one day know how to avenge itself.

"Throw it away, Sire," said she; "throw it away!"

And she threw this cockade down the stairs, upon which trampled the feet of the whole escort which accompanied the king to his apartments.

This strange transition had extinguished all conjugal enthusiasm in the queen's breast. She looked around,

but without apparent intention, for Monsieur de Charny, who was standing at his ordinary post near the king, with the stiff formality of a soldier.

"I thank you, sir," she said to him, when their eyes met, after several moments of hesitation on the part of the count, — "I thank you, sir. You have well fulfilled your promise."

"To whom are you speaking?" inquired the king.

"To Monsieur de Charny," said she, boldly.

"Yes, poor Charny! he had trouble enough to get near me. And Gilbert — what has become of him? I do not see him," added Louis.

The queen, who had become more cautious since the lesson of the afternoon, called out: —

"Come in to supper, Sire," in order to change the conversation. "Monsieur de Charny," pursued she, "find the Countess de Charny, and bring her with you. We will have a family supper."

In this she acted as a queen. But she sighed on observing that Charny, who till then had appeared gloomy, at once became smiling and joyful.

CHAPTER X.

FOULON.

BILLOT was in a state of perfect ecstasy.

He had taken the Bastille; he had restored Gilbert to liberty; he had been noticed by Lafayette, who called him by his name; and finally, he had seen the burial of Foulon.

Few men in those days were as much execrated as Foulon. One only could in this respect have competed with him, and this was his son-in-law, Monsieur Berthier de Savigny.

They had both of them been singularly lucky the day following the capture of the Bastille.

Foulon died on that day, and Berthier had managed to escape from Paris.

That which had raised to its climax the unpopularity of Foulon, was that on the retirement of Monsieur Necker he had accepted the place of the "virtuous Genevese," as he was then called, and had been comptroller-general during three days.

And therefore was there much singing and dancing at his burial.

The people had at one time thought of taking the body out of the coffin and hanging it; but Billot had jumped upon a post, and had made a speech on the respect due to the dead, and the hearse was allowed to continue on its way.

As to Pitou, he had become a perfect hero.

Pitou had become the friend of Monsieur Elie and Monsieur Hullin, who deigned to employ him to execute their commissions.

He was, besides, the confidant of Billot, — of Billot, who had been treated with distinction by Monsieur de Lafayette, as we have already said, who sometimes employed him as a police guard about his person, on account of his brawny shoulders, his herculean fists, and his indomitable courage.

Since the journey of the king to Paris, Gilbert, who had been, through Monsieur Necker, put in communication with the principal members of the National Assembly and the Municipality, was incessantly occupied with the education of the republic, still in its infancy.

He therefore neglected Billot and Pitou, who, neglected by him, threw themselves ardently into the meetings of the citizens, in the midst of which political discussions of transcendent interest were constantly agitated.

At length, one day, after Billot had employed three hours in giving his opinion to the electors as to the best mode of victualling Paris, and fatigued with his long speech, though proud of having played the orator, he was resting with delight, lulled by the monotonous voices of his successors, which he took good care not to listen to, Pitou came in, greatly agitated; and gliding like an eel through the Sessions Hall of the electors in the Hôtel de Ville, and in a palpitating tone, which contrasted greatly with the usual placidity of his enunciation: "Oh, Monsieur Billot!" said he, "dear Monsieur Billot!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Great news!"

"Good news?"

"Glorious news!"

"What is it, then?"

"You know that I had gone to the club of the Virtues, at the Fontainebleau barrier?"

"Yes, and what then?"

"Well, they spoke there of a most extraordinary event."

"What was it?"

"Do you know that that villain Foulon passed himself off for dead, and carried it so far as to allow himself to be buried?"

"How! passed himself for dead? How say you, — pretended to allow himself to be buried? Nonsense! He is dead enough; for was I not at his funeral?"

"Notwithstanding that, Monsieur Billot, he is still living."

"Living?"

"As much alive as you and I are."

"You are mad!"

"Dear Monsieur Billot, I am not mad. The traitor, Foulon, the enemy of the people, the leech of France, the peculator, is not dead."

"But since I tell you he was buried after an apoplectic fit, since I tell you that I saw the funeral go by, and even that I prevented the people from dragging him out of his coffin to hang him?"

"And I have just seen him alive. Ah, what do you say to that?"

"You?"

"As plainly as I now see you, Monsieur Billot. It appears that it was one of his servants who died, and the villain gave him an aristocratic funeral. Oh, all is discovered! It was from fear of the vengeance of the people that he acted thus."

"Tell me all about it, Pitou."

"Come into the vestibule for a moment, then, Monsieur Billot. We shall be more at our ease there."

They left the hall and went into the vestibule.

"First of all, we must know whether Monsieur Bailly is here."

"Go on with your story; he is here."

"Good! Well I was at the club of the Virtues, listening to the speech of a patriot. Did n't he make grammatical faults! It was easily seen that he had not been educated by the Abbé Fortier."

"Go on, I tell you. A man may be a good patriot, and yet not be able to read or write."

"That is true," replied Pitou. "Well, suddenly a man came in, completely out of breath. 'Victory!' cried he. 'Victory! Foulon was not dead! Foulon is still alive! I have found him! I have found him!'

"Everybody there was like you, Father Billot. No one would believe him. Some said, 'How! Foulon?' 'Yes.' Others said, 'Pshaw! impossible!' And others said, 'Well, while you were at it, you might as well have discovered his son-in-law, Berthier.'"

"Berthier!" cried Billot.

"Yes, Berthier de Savigny. Don't you recollect our intendant at Compiègne, the friend of Monsieur Isidore de Charny?"

"Undoubtedly! he who was always so proud with everybody, and so polite with Catherine?"

"Precisely," said Pitou; "one of those horrible contractors, — a second leech to the French people; the execration of all human nature; the shame of the civilized world, as said the virtuous Loustalot."

"Well, go on! go on!" cried Billot.

"That is true," said Pitou; "*ad eventum festina*, — which means to say, Monsieur Billot, 'Hasten to the winding up.' I shall proceed, then. A man, out of

breath, comes running to the club of the Virtues, and shouts: 'I have found Foulon. I have found him.'

"You should have heard the vociferations that followed."

"He was mistaken," said Billot, obstinately.

"He was not, for I have seen Foulon."

"You have seen him, Pitou?"

"With these two eyes. Wait a moment."

"I am waiting; but you make my blood boil."

"Ah, but listen. I am hot enough too. I tell you that he had given it out that he was dead, and had one of his servants buried in his place. Fortunately, Providence was watching."

"Providence, indeed!" disdainfully exclaimed the Voltairian Billot.

"I intended to say the nation," rejoined Pitou, with humility. "This good citizen, this patriot, out of breath, who announced the news to us, recognized him at Viry, where he had concealed himself."

"Ah! ah!"

"Having recognized him, he denounced him, and the syndic, whose name is Monsieur Rappe, instantly arrested him."

"And what is the name of the brave patriot who had the courage to do all this?"

"Of informing against Foulon?"

"Yes."

"Well, his name is Monsieur Saint-Jean."

"Saint-Jean! Why, that is a lackey's name."

"And he was precisely the lackey of the villain Foulon. Aristocrat, you are rightly served. Why had you lackeys?"

"Pitou, you interest me," said Billot, going close to the narrator.

"You are very kind, Monsieur Billot. Well, then,

here is Foulon denounced and arrested; they are bringing him to Paris. The informer had run on ahead to announce the news, and receive the reward for his denunciation; and sure enough, in a few moments afterwards Foulon arrived at the barrier."

"And it was there that you saw him?"

"Yes. He had a very queer look, I can tell you. They had twisted a bunch of stinging-nettles round his neck, by way of cravat."

"What say you? stinging-nettles? And what was that for?"

"Because it appears that he had said — rascal as he is! — that bread was for men, oats for horses, but that nettles were good enough for the people."

"Did he say that, the wretch?"

"Yes! by Heaven! he said so, Monsieur Billot."

"Good! there, now, you are swearing."

"Bah!" cried Pitou, with a swaggering air, "between military men! Well, they brought him along on foot, and the whole of the way they were giving him smashing blows on his back and head."

"Oh! oh!" cried Billot, somewhat less enthusiastic.

"It was very amusing," continued Pitou, "only that everybody could not get at him to give him a blow, seeing that there were ten thousand persons hooting after him."

"And after this?" asked Billot, who began to reflect.

"After that they took him to the president of the St. Marcel district, — a good patriot, you know."

"Yes, Monsieur Acloque."

"Cloque, — yes, that is it; who ordered him to be taken to the Hôtel de Ville, seeing that he did not know what to do with him; so that you will presently see him."

"But how happens it that it is you who have come to announce this, and not the famous Saint-Jean?"

"Why, because my legs are six inches longer than his. He had set off before me, but I soon came up with, and passed him. I wanted to inform you first, that you might inform Monsieur Bailly of it."

"What luck you have, Pitou!"

"I shall have much more than this to-morrow."

"And how can you tell that?"

"Because this same Saint-Jean, who denounced Monsieur Foulon, proposed a plan to catch Monsieur Berthier, who has run away."

"He knows, then, where he is?"

"Yes; it appears that he was their confidential man, — this good Monsieur Saint-Jean, — and that he received a great deal of money from Foulon and his son-in-law, who wished to bribe him."

"And he took the money?"

"Certainly, the money of an aristocrat is always good to take; but he said: 'A good patriot will not betray his nation for money.'"

"Yes," murmured Billot, "he betrays his masters, — that is all. Do you know, Pitou, that your Monsieur Saint-Jean appears to me to be a worthless vagabond?"

"That is possible, but it matters not; they will take Monsieur Berthier, as they have taken Master Foulon, and they will hang them nose to nose. What horrid wry faces they will make, looking at each other, — hey?"

"And why should they be hanged?"

"Why, because they are vile rascals, and I detest them."

"What! Monsieur Berthier, who has been at the farm, — Monsieur Berthier, who, during his tours into the

Isle-de-France, has drunk our milk, and eaten of our bread, and sent gold buckles to Catherine from Paris? Oh, no, no! they shall not hang him."

"Bah!" repeated Pitou, ferociously, "he is an aristocrat, — a wheedling rascal!"

Billot looked at Pitou with stupefaction. Beneath the gaze of the farmer, Pitou blushed to the very whites of his eyes.

Suddenly the worthy cultivator perceived Monsieur Bailly, who was going from the hall into his own cabinet; he rushed after him to inform him of the news.

But it was now for Billot in his turn to be treated with incredulity.

"Foulon! Foulon!" cried the mayor, "what folly!"

"Well, Monsieur Bailly, all I can say is, here is Pitou, who saw him."

"I saw him, Monsieur Mayor," said Pitou, placing his hand on his heart, and bowing.

And he related to Monsieur Bailly all he had before related to Billot.

They observed that poor Bailly turned very pale; he at once understood the extent of the catastrophe.

"And Monsieur Acloque sends him here?" murmured he.

"Yes, Monsieur Mayor."

"But how is he sending him?"

"Oh, there is no occasion to be uneasy," said Pitou, who misunderstood the anxiety of Bailly; "there are plenty of people to guard the prisoner. He will not be carried off."

"Would to God he might be carried off!" murmured Bailly.

Then turning to Pitou: —

"Plenty of people, — what mean you by that, my friend?"

"I mean plenty of people."

"People!"

"More than twenty thousand men, without counting the women," said Pitou, triumphantly.

"Unhappy man!" exclaimed Bailly. "Gentlemen, gentlemen assessors!"

And he related to the electors all he had just heard.

While he was speaking, exclamations and cries of anguish burst forth from all present.

The silence of terror pervaded the hall, during which a confused, distant, indescribable noise assailed the ears of those assembled, like that produced by the rushing of blood to the head in attacks upon the brain.

"What is that?" inquired an elector.

"Why, the noise of the crowd, to be sure," replied another.

Suddenly a carriage was heard rolling rapidly across the square; it contained two armed men, who helped a third to alight from it, who was pale and trembling.

Foulon had at length become so exhausted by the ill usage he had experienced that he could no longer walk; and he had been lifted into a coach.

Behind the carriage, led on by Saint-Jean, who was more out of breath than ever, ran about a hundred young men, from sixteen to eighteen years of age, with haggard countenances and flaming eyes.

They cried, "Foulon! Foulon!" running almost as fast as the horses.

The two armed men were, however, some few steps in advance of them, which gave them the time to push Foulon into the Hôtel de Ville; and its doors were closed against the hoarse barkers from without.

"At last we have him here," said his guards to the electors, who were waiting at the top of the stairs. "By Heaven! it was not without trouble!"

"Gentlemen! gentlemen!" cried Foulon, trembling, "will you save me?"

"Ah, sir," replied Bailly, with a sigh, "you have been very culpable."

"And yet, sir," said Foulon, entreatingly, his agitation increasing, "there will, I hope, be justice to defend me."

At this moment the exterior tumult was redoubled.

"Hide him quickly!" cried Bailly to those around him, "or—"

He turned to Foulon.

"Listen to me," said he; "the situation is serious enough for you to be consulted. Will you — perhaps it is not yet too late — will you endeavor to escape from the back part of the Hôtel de Ville?"

"Oh, no," exclaimed Foulon; "I should be recognized — massacred!"

"Do you prefer to remain here in the midst of us? I will do, and these gentlemen will do, all that is humanly possible to defend you; will you not, gentlemen?"

"We promise it," cried all the electors, with one voice.

"Oh, I prefer remaining with you, gentlemen. Gentlemen, do not abandon me!"

"I have told you, sir," replied Bailly, with dignity, "that we will do all that may be humanly possible to save you."

At that moment a frightful clamor arose from the square, ascended into the air, and invaded the Hôtel de Ville through the open windows.

"Do you hear? Do you hear?" murmured Foulon, perfectly livid with terror.

In fact, the mob had rushed, howling and frightful, to behold from all the streets leading to the Hôtel de Ville, and above all from the Quay Lepelletier, and the Rue de la Vannerie.

Bailly went to a window.

Knives, pikes, scythes, and muskets glistened in the sunshine. In less than ten minutes the vast square was filled with people. It was the whole of Foulon's train, of which Pitou had spoken, and which had been increased by curious idlers, who, hearing a great noise, had run to the Place de Grève as towards a common centre.

All these voices, and there were more than twenty thousand, cried incessantly: "Foulon! Foulon!"

Then it was seen that the hundred young men who had been the precursors of this furious mob, pointed out to this howling mass the gate by which Foulon had entered the building; this gate was instantly threatened, and they began to beat it down with the butt-ends of their muskets, and with crowbars.

Suddenly it flew open.

The guards of the Hôtel de Ville appeared, and advanced upon the assailants, who, in their first terror, retreated, and left a large open space in the front of the building.

This guard stationed itself upon the front steps, and presented a bold front to the crowd.

The officers, moreover, instead of threatening, harangued the crowd in friendly terms, and endeavored to calm it by their protestations.

Bailly had become quite confused. It was the first time that the poor astronomer had found himself in opposition to the popular tempest.

"What is to be done?" demanded he of the electors, —"what is to be done?"

"We must try him."

"No trial can take place when under the intimidation of the mob," said Bailly.

"Zounds!" exclaimed Billot, "have you not, then, men enough to defend you?"

"We have not two hundred men."

"You must have a reinforcement, then."

"Oh, if Monsieur de Lafayette were but informed of this!"

"Well, send and inform him of it."

"And who would venture to attempt it? Who could make his way through such a multitude?"

"I would," replied Billot.

And he was about to leave the hall.

Bailly stopped him.

"Madman!" cried he; "look at that ocean! You would be swallowed up even by one of its waves. If you wish to get to Monsieur de Lafayette, — and even then I would not answer for your safety, — go out by one of the back doors. Go!"

"'T is well!" tranquilly replied Billot.

And he darted out of the room with the swiftness of an arrow.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FATHER-IN-LAW.

THE clamor, which kept on constantly increasing from the square, clearly proved that the exasperation of the mob was becoming greater. It was no longer hatred that they felt; it was abhorrence. They no longer merely threatened; they foamed.

The cries of "Down with Foulon! Death to Foulon!" crossed each other in the air, like projectiles in a bombardment. The crowd, which was still augmenting, pressed nearer to the entrance of the Hôtel de Ville, till they, as it may be said, almost suffocated the civic guards at their posts.

And already there began to circulate among the crowd, and to increase in volume, those rumors which are the precursors of violence.

These rumors no longer threatened Foulon only, but the electors who protected him.

"They have let the prisoner escape!" said some.

"Let us go in! let us go in!" said others.

"Let us set fire to the Hôtel de Ville!"

"Forward! forward!"

Bailly felt that as Monsieur de Lafayette did not arrive, there was only one resource left to them.

And this was that the electors should themselves go down, mix in with the groups, and endeavor to pacify the most furious among them.

"Foulon! Foulon!"

Such was the incessant cry, the constant roaring of those furious waves.

A general assault was preparing; the walls could not have resisted it.

"Sir," said Bailly to Foulon, "if you do not show yourself to the crowd, they will naturally believe that we have allowed you to escape. Then they will force the door, and will come in here; and when once here, should they find you, I can no longer be responsible for anything."

"Oh, I did not know that I was so much execrated!" exclaimed Foulon.

And supported by Bailly, he dragged himself to the window.

A fearful cry resounded immediately on his presenting himself. The guards were driven back; the doors broken in; a torrent of men precipitated themselves up the staircase into the corridors, into the rooms, which were invaded in an instant.

Bailly threw around the prisoner all the guards who were within call, and then he began to harangue the crowd.

He wished to make these men understand that to assassinate might sometimes be doing justice, but that it was never an act of justice.

He succeeded, after having made the most strenuous efforts, after having twenty times perilled his own existence.

"Yes, yes," cried the assailants, "let him be tried! let him be tried! but let him be hanged!"

They were at this point in the argument when General de Lafayette reached the Hôtel de Ville, conducted there by Billot.

The sight of his tricolored plume — one of the first

which had been worn — at once assuaged their anger, and the tumult ceased.

The commander-in-chief of the National Guard had the way cleared for him, and addressing the crowd, repeated, though in more energetic terms, every argument that Bailly had endeavored to enforce.

His speech produced a great effect on all those who were near enough to hear it, and the cause of Foulon was completely gained in the electors' hall.

But on the square were twenty thousand furious people who had not heard Monsieur de Lafayette, and who remained implacable in their frenzy.

"Come, now," said Lafayette, at the conclusion of his oration, very naturally imagining that the effect he had produced on those who surrounded him had extended to all outside, — "come, now, this man must be tried."

"Yes," cried the mob.

"And consequently I order that he be taken to prison," added Lafayette.

"To prison! to prison!" howled the mob.

At the same time the general made a sign to the guards of the Hôtel de Ville, who led the prisoner forward.

The crowd outside understood nothing of all that was going on, excepting that their prey was about to appear. They had not even an idea that any one had the slightest hope of disputing it with them.

They scented, if we may be permitted the expression, the odor of the human flesh which was descending the staircase.

Billot had placed himself at the window with several electors, whom Bailly also joined in order to follow the prisoner with their eyes while he was crossing the square, escorted by the civic guards.

On the way, Foulon here and there addressed a few incoherent words to those around him, which, although they were protestations of confidence, clearly evinced the most profound and ill-disguised terror.

"Noble people," said he, while descending the staircase, "I fear nothing; I am in the midst of my fellow-citizens."

And already bantering laughs and insults were being uttered around him, when suddenly he found himself outside of the gloomy archway at the top of the stone steps which led into the square, and felt on his face the wind and sunshine.

Immediately one general cry — a cry of rage, a howling threat, a roar of hatred — burst from twenty thousand lungs. On this explosion of the public feeling, the guards conducting the prisoner are lifted from the ground, broken, dispersed; Foulon is seized by twenty powerful arms, raised above their shoulders, and carried into the fatal corner under the lamp-post, — ignoble and brutal executioner of the anger of the people, which they termed their justice.

Billot from his window saw all this, and cried out against it; the electors also did all they could to stimulate the guards, but they were powerless.

Lafayette, in despair, rushed out of the Hôtel de Ville, but he could not break through the first rank of that crowd, which spread out like an immense lake between him and the victim.

The mere spectators of this scene jumped upon posts, on window-sills, on every jutting part of a building, in order to gain a better view; and they encouraged by their savage shouts the frightful effervescence of the actors.

The latter were playing with their victim, as would a troop of tigers with an inoffensive prey.

They were disputing who should hang Foulon; at last they understood that if they wished to enjoy his agony, it was necessary that their several functions should be agreed upon.

But for that he would have been torn to pieces.

Some of them raised up Foulon, who had no longer strength enough to cry out.

Others, who had taken off his cravat and torn off his coat, placed a rope round his neck.

And others, who had climbed up the lamp-post, had handed to their companions below the rope which they put round the neck of the ex-minister.

For a moment they raised Foulon above their heads and showed him thus to the crowd, — a rope twined round his neck, and his hands tied behind him.

Then, when the crowd had had due time to contemplate the sufferer; when they had clapped their hands sufficiently, — the signal was given, and Foulon, pale and bleeding, was hoisted up to a level with the lantern, amid a hooting which was more terrible even than death.

All those who, up to that time, had not been able to see anything, then perceived the public enemy raised above the heads of the crowd.

New shouts were then heard; but these were against the executioners. Were they about to kill Foulon so expeditiously?

The executioners merely shrugged their shoulders, and pointed to the rope.

The rope was old; it could be seen to give way, strand by strand. The movements which Foulon made in his desperate agony at length broke the last strand; and Foulon, only half strangled, fell heavily upon the pavement.

He was only at the preface of his torments; he had only penetrated into the vestibule of death.

They all rushed towards the sufferer; they were perfectly secure with regard to him. There was no chance of his escaping them; in falling he had broken his leg a little below the knee.

And yet some imprecations arose, imprecations which were unintelligible and calumniatory. The executioners were accused; they were considered as clumsy and unskilful, — they, on the contrary, who had been so ingenious, they who had expressly chosen an old worn-out rope, in the hope that it would break.

A hope which the event, as has been related, had fully realized.

They made a knot in the rope, and again fixed it round the neck of the unhappy man, who, half dead, with haggard eyes looked around, endeavoring to discover whether in that city which is called the centre of the civilized universe, — whether one of the bayonets of that king whose minister he had been, and who had a hundred thousand, would not be raised in his defence amid that horde of cannibals.

But there was nothing there to meet his eyes but hatred, but insult, but death.

"At least, kill me at once, without making me endure these atrocious torments!" cried the despairing Foulon.

"Well, now," replied a jeering voice, "why should we abridge your torments? you have made ours last long enough."

"And besides," said another, "you have not yet had time enough to digest your nettles."

"Wait, wait a little!" cried a third; "his son-in-law, Berthier, will be brought to him; there is room enough for him on the opposite lamp-post."

"We shall see what wry faces the father-in-law and son-in-law will make at each other," added another.

"Finish me; finish me at once!" cried the wretched man.

During this time, Bailly and Lafayette were begging, supplicating, exclaiming, and endeavoring to get through the crowd; suddenly, Foulon was again hoisted by the rope, which again broke, and their prayers, their supplications, their agony, no less painful than that of the sufferer himself, were lost, confounded, and extinguished amid the universal laugh which accompanied this second fall.

Bailly and Lafayette, who three days before had been the sovereign arbiters of the will of six hundred thousand Parisians, — a child now would not listen to them; the people even murmured at them; they were in their way; they were interrupting this great spectacle.

Billot had vainly given them all the aid of his uncommon strength; the powerful athlete had knocked down twenty men, but in order to reach Foulon it would be necessary to knock down fifty, a hundred, two hundred; and his strength is exhausted, and when he pauses to wipe from his brow the perspiration and the blood which is streaming from it, Foulon is raised a third time to the pulley of the lamp-post.

This time they had taken compassion upon him; the rope was a new one.

At last the condemned is dead; the victim no longer suffers.

Half a minute had sufficed to the crowd to assure itself that the vital spark was extinguished. And now that the tiger has killed, he may devour his prey.

The body, thrown from the top of the lamp-post, did

not even fall to the ground. It was torn to pieces before it reached it.

The head was separated from the trunk in a second, and in another second raised on the end of a pike. It was very much in fashion in those days to carry the heads of one's enemies in that way.

At this sanguinary spectacle Bailly was horrified. That head appeared to him to be the head of the Medusa of ancient days.

Lafayette, pale, his drawn sword in his hand, with disgust repulsed the guards who had surrounded him, to excuse themselves for not having been the strongest.

Billot, stamping his feet with rage, and kicking right and left, like one of own fiery Perche horses, returned into the Hôtel de Ville, that he might see no more of what was passing on that ensanguined square.

As to Pitou, his fieriness of popular vengeance was changed into a convulsive movement; and he had fled to the river's bank, where he closed his eyes and stopped his ears, that he might neither see nor hear.

Consternation reigned in the Hôtel de Ville; the electors began to comprehend that they would never be able to direct the movements of the people, save in the manner which should suit the people.

All at once, while the furious mob were amusing themselves with dragging the mutilated remains of Foulon through the gutters, a new cry, a new shout, rolling like distant thunder, was heard, proceeding from the opposite side of the river.

A courier was seen galloping over the bridge. The news he was bringing was already known to the crowd. They had guessed it from the signs of their most skilful leaders, as a pack of hounds take up the scent from the inspiration of their finest-nosed and best-practised bloodhounds.

The crowd rush to meet this courier, whom they surround; they scent that he has touched their new prey; they feel that he is going to speak of Monsieur Berthier.

And it was true.

Interrogated by ten thousand voices, all howling at once, the courier is compelled to reply to them.

"Monsieur Berthier de Savigny has been arrested at Compiègne."

Then he proceeds into the Hôtel de Ville, where he announces the same tidings to Lafayette and to Bailly.

"Good; good! I knew it," said Lafayette.

"We knew it," said Bailly, "and orders have been given that he should be kept there."

"Kept there?" repeated the courier.

"Undoubtedly; I have sent two commissaries with an escort."

"An escort of two hundred and fifty men, was it not?" said an elector; "it is more than sufficient."

"Gentlemen," replied the courier, "this is precisely what I was sent to tell you. The escort has been dispersed and the prisoner carried off by the multitude."

"Carried off!" exclaimed Lafayette. "Has the escort allowed the prisoner to be carried off?"

"Do not blame them, General; all that it was possible to do, they did."

"But Monsieur Berthier?" anxiously inquired Bailly.

"They are bringing him to Paris; and he is at Bourget by this time."

"But should they bring him here," cried Billot, "he is lost."

"Quick! quick!" cried Lafayette, "five hundred men to Bourget. Let the commissioners and Monsieur Berthier stop there; let them sleep there! During the night we will consider what is to be done."

"But who would venture to undertake such a commission?" said the courier, who was looking with terror at that waving sea of heads, every wave of which sent forth its threatening roar.

"I will!" cried Billot; "at least, I will save *him*."

"But you would perish in the attempt," cried the courier; "the road is black with people."

"I will go, nevertheless," said the farmer.

"It is useless now," murmured Bailly, who had been listening to the noises from without. "Hush! Do you not hear that?"

They then heard, from the direction of the Porte St. Martin, a rushing noise like that of the sea when beating over the shingles on a beach.

This frenzied howl came to them over the roofs like steam over the sides of a boiling caldron.

"It is too late," said Lafayette.

"They are coming! they are coming!" murmured the courier. "Do you not hear them?"

"A regiment! a regiment!" cried Lafayette, with that generous ebullition of humanity which was the most brilliant feature of his character.

"What! By God's death!" exclaimed Bailly, who swore perhaps for the first time in his life, "you seem to forget that our army — ours! — is precisely that crowd whom you wish to fight."

And he hid his face in his hands.

The shouts which had been heard in the distance were re-echoed by the people in the streets, and thus communicated to the crowd upon the square with the rapidity of a train of gunpowder.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SON-IN-LAW.

THEN those who were insulting the remains of Foulon left their sanguinary game, to rush forward in pursuit of a new vengeance.

The adjacent streets immediately disgorged a large proportion of that howling mob, who hurried from the square with upraised knives and menacing gestures, towards the Rue St. Martin, to meet the new funeral procession.

The junction having been accomplished, both parties were equally eager to return to the square.

A strange scene then ensued.

Some of those ingenious persons whom we have seen upon the Place de Grève presented to the son-in-law the head of Foulon on the end of a pike.

Monsieur Berthier was coming along the Rue St. Martin with the commissary. They were then just crossing the Rue St. Merry.

He was in his own cabriolet, — a vehicle which at that period was considered as eminently aristocratic; a vehicle which more than any other excited popular animadversion; for the people had so often complained of the reckless rapidity with which they were driven, either by young fops or dancing-girls who drove themselves, and which, drawn by a fiery horse, sometimes ran over, but always splashed, the unfortunate pedestrian.

Berthier, in the midst of all the shouts, the hootings, and the threats of the infuriate mob, was talking tranquilly with the elector Rivière, — the commissary sent to Compiègne to save him, but who, being abandoned by his colleague, had with much difficulty saved himself.

The people had begun with the cabriolet; they had turned off the head of it, so that Berthier and his companion were completely exposed, not only to the view, but to the blows of the populace.

As they moved onwards, his misdeeds were related to him, commented upon, and exaggerated by the popular fury.

"He wished to starve Paris," cried one.

"He had the rye and wheat cut when it was green; and then, a rise in the price of corn having taken place, he realized enormous sums."

"Not only did he do that," said they, "which was enough in itself, but he was conspiring."

In searching him, they had found a pocket-book. In this pocket-book were incendiary letters, orders for massacre, proof that ten thousand cartridges had been distributed to his agents; so said the crowd.

These were all monstrous absurdities; but as is well known, the mob, when in a paroxysm of rage, gives out as positive facts the most absurd improbabilities.

The person whom they accused of all this was a man who was still young, not being more than from thirty to thirty-two years of age, elegantly dressed, almost smiling, though greeted every moment by injurious epithets and even blows. He looked with perfect indifference at the infamous placards which were held up to him, and without affectation continued his conversation with Rivière.

Two men, irritated at his assurance, had wished to terrify him, and to diminish this self-confidence. They

had mounted on the steps on each side of the cabriolet, and each of them placed the point of his bayonet on Berthier's breast.

But Berthier, brave even to temerity, was not to be moved by such a trifle. He had continued to converse with the elector as if those two muskets were but inoffensive accessories to the cabriolet.

The mob, profoundly exasperated by this disdain, which formed so complete a contrast to the terror of Foulon, — the mob roared around the vehicle, and waited with impatience for the moment when instead of a threat they might inflict a wound.

It was then that Berthier had fixed his eyes on a misshapen and bloody object, which was held up and danced before him, and which he suddenly recognized as the head of his father-in-law, and which the ruffians who bore it held down close to his lips.

They wished to make him kiss it.

Monsieur Rivière, indignant at this brutality, pushed the pike away with his hand.

Berthier thanked him by a gesture, and did not even deign to turn round to follow this hideous trophy with his eyes. The executioners carried it behind the cabriolet, holding it over Berthier's head.

They thus arrived on the Place de Grève; and the prisoner, after unheard-of efforts by the civic guards, who had been re-assembled in some order, was delivered into the hands of the electors of the Hôtel de Ville.

A dangerous charge, a fearful responsibility, which made Lafayette once more turn pale, and poor Bailly's heart swell almost to breaking.

The mob, after having hacked away for a while at the cabriolet, which had been left at the foot of the front

steps, again placed itself in the most advantageous positions, kept guard on all the issues from the building, made all its preparations, and placed new ropes in the pulleys of the lamp-posts.

Billot, at the sight of Berthier, who was tranquilly ascending the great staircase of the Hôtel de Ville, tore his hair, and could not restrain himself from weeping bitterly.

Pitou, who had left the river's bank, and had come on the quay again when he thought that Foulon's execution had been accomplished; Pitou, terrified, notwithstanding his hatred for Monsieur Berthier, guilty in his eyes not only of all the mob reproached him with, but also of having given gold buckles to Mademoiselle Catherine, — Pitou crouched down sobbing behind a bench.

During this time Berthier had entered the grand Hall of Council as coolly as if all the tumult had reference to some other person, and quietly conversed with the electors.

He knew the greater portion of them, and was even intimate with some of them.

The latter avoided him with the instinctive terror with which timid minds are inspired by the contact of an unpopular man.

Therefore Berthier soon found himself almost alone with Bailly and Lafayette.

He made them relate to him all the particulars of Foulon's death. Then, shrugging his shoulders: —

"Yes," said he, "I can understand it. They hate us, because we are the instruments with which royalty has tortured the people."

"Great crimes are laid at your door, sir," said Bailly, austerely.

"Sir," replied Berthier, "if I had committed all the

crimes with which I am reproached, I should be less or more than man, — a wild beast or a demon. But I shall be tried, I presume, and then the truth will be ascertained."

"Undoubtedly," said Bailly.

"Well, then," rejoined Berthier, "that is all I desire. They have my correspondence, and it will be seen whose orders I have obeyed; and the responsibility will fall on those to whom it rightly appertains."

The electors cast their eyes upon the square, from which arose the most frightful clamor.

Berthier understood this mute reply.

Then Billot, pushing through the throng which surrounded Bailly, went up to the intendant, and offering him his huge honest hand: —

"Good-day, Monsieur de Sauvigny," said he to him.

"How! is that you, Billot?" cried Berthier, laughing, and grasping firmly the hand which was held out to him. "What! you have come to Paris to join in these disturbances, — you, my worthy farmer, who used to sell your wheat so well in the market at Villers-Cotterets, Crépy, and Soissons?"

Billot, notwithstanding his democratic tendencies, could not but admire the tranquillity of this man, who could thus smile at a moment when his life was hanging by a thread.

"Install yourselves, gentlemen," said Bailly to the electors; "we must now proceed to the examination of the charges against the accused."

"Be it so," said Berthier; "but I must warn you of one thing, gentlemen, and that is, that I am perfectly exhausted. For the last two days I have not slept. To-day, from Compiègne to Paris, I have been pushed about, beaten, dragged along. When I asked for something to

eat, they offered me hay, which is not excessively refreshing. Therefore, give me some place where I can sleep, if it be only for an hour."

At that moment Lafayette left the room for a short time, to ascertain the state of matters outside. He returned more dispirited than ever.

"My dear Bailly," said he to the mayor, "exasperation is at its height; to keep Monsieur Berthier here would be exposing ourselves to a siege. To defend the Hôtel de Ville would be giving these furious madmen the pretext which they wish. Not to defend the Hôtel de Ville would be acquiring the habit of yielding every time we are attacked."

During this time, Berthier had sat down, and then stretched himself at full length upon a bench.

He was preparing himself to sleep.

The desperate howls from below were audible to him, for he was near an open window; but they did not disturb him. His countenance retained the serenity of a man who forgets all, to allow sleep to weigh down his eyelids.

Bailly was deliberating with the electors and Lafayette.

Billot had his eyes fixed upon Berthier.

Lafayette was rapidly taking the votes of the electors; after which, addressing the prisoner, who was beginning to slumber: —

"Sir," said he, "be pleased to get ready."

Berthier heaved a sigh; then, raising himself on his elbow: —

"Ready for what?" he inquired.

"These gentlemen have decided that you are to be transferred to the Abbaye."

"To the Abbaye? Well, be it so," said the intendant. "But," continued he, looking at the confused

electors, whose confusion he readily comprehended, — "but, *one way or the other*, let us finish this."

And an explosion of anger and furious impatience long restrained burst forth from the square.

"No, gentlemen, no," exclaimed Lafayette; "we cannot allow him to depart at this moment."

Bailly's kind heart and undaunted courage impelled him to come to a sudden resolution. He went down into the square with two of the electors, and ordered silence.

The people knew as well as he did what he was about to say; but as they were fully bent on committing another crime, they would not even listen to a reproach; and as Bailly was opening his lips to speak, a deafening clamor arose from the mob, drowning his voice before a single word could be heard.

Bailly, seeing that it would be impossible for him to proffer even a syllable, returned into the Hôtel de Ville pursued by cries of "Berthier! Berthier!"

But other cries resounded in the midst of those, — cries similar to those shrill notes which suddenly are heard in the choruses of demons by Weber or by Meyerbeer, — and these were, "To the lamp-post! to the lamp-post!"

On seeing Bailly come back pale and disheartened, Lafayette rushed out in his turn. He is young; he is ardent; he is beloved. That which the old man could not effect, his popularity being but of yesterday, he, Lafayette — he, the friend of Washington and of Necker, — would undoubtedly obtain at the first word.

But in vain was it that the people's general threw himself into the most furious groups. In vain did he speak in the name of justice and humanity. In vain was it that recognizing, or feigning to recognize, certain leaders of the people, did he supplicate them, grasping their hands, and endeavoring to allay their fury.

Not one of his words was listened to; not one of his gestures was understood; not one of the tears he shed was seen.

Repulsed step by step, he threw himself upon his knees on the front steps of the Hôtel de Ville, conjuring these tigers, whom he called his fellow-citizens, not to dishonor the nation, not to dishonor themselves, not to elevate to the rank of martyrs guilty men, to whom the law would award a degrading death, which degradation was a portion of their punishment.

As he persisted in his entreaties, he was at last personally threatened in his turn; but he defied all threats. Some of these furious wretches drew their knives, and raised them as if to strike.

He bared his breast to their blows, and their weapons were instantly lowered.

But if they thus threatened Lafayette, the threat was still more serious to Berthier.

Lafayette, thus overcome, re-entered the Hôtel de Ville as Bailly had done.

The electors had all seen Lafayette vainly contending against the tempest. Their last rampart was overthrown.

They decided that the guard of the Hôtel de Ville should at once conduct Berthier to the Abbaye.

It was sending Berthier to certain death.

"Come, then," said Berthier, when this decision was announced.

And eying all these men with withering contempt, he took his station in the centre of the guards, after having thanked Bailly and Lafayette for their exertions, and in his turn, held out his hand to Billot.

Bailly turned away his face to conceal his tears, Lafayette to conceal his indignation.

Berthier descended the staircase with the same firm step with which he had ascended it.

At the moment that he appeared on the front steps, a furious howl assailed him, making even the stone step on which he had placed his foot tremble beneath him.

But he, disdainful and impassible, looked at all those flashing eyes calmly and unflinchingly, and shrugging his shoulders, pronounced these words : —

"What a fantastic people? What is there to make them howl thus?"

He had scarcely uttered these words, when he was seized upon by the foremost of the mob. They had rushed on to the front steps and clutched him, though surrounded by his guards. Their iron hands dragged him along. He lost his footing, and fell into the arms of his enemies, who in a second dispersed his escort.

Then an irresistible tide impelled the prisoner over the same path, stained with blood, which Foulon had been dragged over only two hours before.

A man was already seated astride the fatal lamp, holding a rope in his hand.

But another man had clung to Berthier, and this man was dealing out with fury and delirium blows and imprecations on the brutal executioners.

He continually cried : —

"You shall not have him! You shall not kill him!"

This man was Billot, whom despair had driven mad, and as strong as twenty men.

To some he shrieked : —

"I am one of the conquerors of the Bastille!"

And some of those who recognized him became less furious in their attack.

To others he said : —

"Let him be fairly tried. I will be responsible for him. If he is allowed to escape, you shall hang me in his stead."

Poor Billot! poor worthy man! The whirlwind swept him away, — he and Berthier, — as the water-spout carries away a feather or a straw in its vast spirals.

He moved on without perceiving anything. He had reached the fatal spot.

The thunderbolt is less swift.

Berthier, who had been dragged along backwards, — Berthier, whom they had raised up, seeing that they stopped, raised his eyes and perceived the infamous, degrading halter swinging above his head.

By an effort as violent as it was unexpected, he tore himself from the grasp of those who held him, snatched a musket from the hands of a National Guard, and inflicted several wounds on his self-appointed executioners with his bayonet.

But in a second a thousand blows were aimed at him from behind. He fell, and a thousand other blows from the ruffians who encircled him rained down upon him.

Billot had disappeared beneath the feet of the assassins.

Berthier had not time to suffer. His life's blood and his soul rushed at once from his body through a thousand gaping wounds.

Then Billot was witness to a spectacle more hideous than he had yet seen. He saw a fiend plunge his hand into the open breast of the corpse, and tear out the still smoking heart.

Then, sticking this heart on the point of his sabre, he held it above the heads of the shouting mob, which opened before him as he advanced, carried it into the

Hôtel de Ville, and laid it on the table of the grand council, where the electors held their sessions.

Billot, that man of iron nerve, could not support this frightful sight ; he fell fainting against a post at about ten paces from the fatal lantern.

Lafayette, on seeing this infamous insult offered to his authority, — offered to the Revolution which he directed, or rather which he had believed he should direct, — Lafayette broke his sword, and threw it at the faces of the assassins.

Pitou ran to pick up the farmer, and carried him off in his arms, whispering into his ear : —

" Billot ! Father Billot ! take care ; if they see that you are fainting, they will take you for his accomplice, and will kill you too. That would be a pity — so good a patriot ! "

And thereupon he dragged him towards the river, concealing him as well as he was able from the inquisitive looks of some zealous patriots who were murmuring.

CHAPTER XIII.

BILLOT BEGINS TO PERCEIVE THAT ALL IS NOT ROSES IN REVOLUTIONS.

Billot, who, conjointly with Pitou, had been engaged in all the glorious libations, began to perceive that the cup was becoming bitter.

When he had completely recovered his senses, from the refreshing breezes on the river's banks : —

"Monsieur Billot," said Pitou to him, "I long for Villers-Cotterets, do not you ?"

These words, like the refreshing balm of calmness and virtue, aroused the farmer, whose vigor returned to him, and he pushed through the crowd, to get away at once from the scene of butchery.

"Come," said he to Pitou, "you are right."

And he at once determined on going to find Gilbert, who was residing at Versailles, but who, without having revisited the queen after the journey of the king to Paris, had become the right hand of Necker, who had been re-appointed minister, and was endeavoring to organize property by generalizing poverty.

Pitou had as usual followed Billot.

Both of them were admitted into the study in which the doctor was writing.

"Doctor," said Billot, "I am going to return to my farm."

"And why so ?" inquired Gilbert.

"Because I hate Paris."

"Ah, yes! I understand," coldly observed Gilbert; "you are tired."

"Worn out."

"You no longer like the Revolution?"

"I should like to see it ended."

Gilbert smiled sorrowfully.

"It is only now beginning," he rejoined.

"Oh!" exclaimed Billot.

"That astonishes you, Billot?" asked Gilbert.

"What astonishes me the most is your perfect coolness."

"My friend," said Gilbert to him, "do you know whence my coolness proceeds?"

"It can only proceed from a firm conviction."

"Precisely so."

"And what is that conviction?"

"Guess."

"That all will end well."

Gilbert smiled still more gloomily than the first time.

"No; on the contrary, from the conviction that all will end badly."

Billot cried out with astonishment.

As to Pitou, he opened his eyes to an enormous width; he thought the argument altogether illogical.

"Let us hear," said Billot, rubbing his ear with his big hand, — "let us hear; for it seems to me that I do not rightly understand you."

"Take a chair, Billot," said Gilbert, "and sit down close to me."

Billot did as he was ordered.

"Closer, closer still, that no one may hear but yourself."

"And I, Monsieur Gilbert?" said Pitou, timidly, making a move towards the door, as if he thought the doctor wished him to withdraw.

"Oh, no! stay here," replied the doctor. "You are young; listen."

Pitou opened his ears, as he had done his eyes, to their fullest extent, and seated himself on the ground at Father Billot's feet.

This council was a singular spectacle, which was thus held in Gilbert's study, near a table heaped up with letters, documents, new pamphlets, and newspapers, and within four steps of a door which was besieged by a swarm of petitioners, or people having some grievance to complain of. These people were all kept in order by an old clerk, who was almost blind, and had lost an arm.

"I am all attention," said Billot. "Now explain yourself, my master, and tell us how it is that all will finish badly."

"I will tell you, Billot. Do you see what I am doing at this moment, my friend?"

"You are writing lines."

"But the meaning of those lines, Billot?"

"How would you have me guess that, when you know that I cannot even read them?"

Pitou timidly raised his head a little above the table, and cast his eyes on the paper which was lying before the doctor.

"They are figures," said he.

"That is true," said Gilbert; "they are figures, which are at the same time the salvation and the ruin of France."

"Well, now!" exclaimed Billot.

"Well, now! well, now!" repeated Pitou.

"These figures, when they are presented to-morrow," continued the doctor, "will go to the king's palace, to the mansions of the nobility, and to the cottage of the

poor man, to demand of all of them one quarter of their income."

"Hey?" ejaculated Billot.

"Oh, my poor Aunt Angélique!" cried Pitou; "what a wry face she will make!"

"What say you to this, my worthy friend?" said Gilbert. "People make revolutions, do they not? Well, they must pay for them."

"Perfectly just!" heroically replied Billot. "Well, be it so; it will be paid."

"Oh, you are a man who is already convinced, and there is nothing to astonish me in your answers; but those who are not convinced?"

"Those who are not so?"

"Yes; what will they do?"

"They will resist!" replied Billot, and in a tone which signified that he would resist energetically if he were required to pay a quarter of his income to accomplish a work which was contrary to his convictions.

"Then there would be a conflict," said Gilbert.

"But the majority," said Billot.

"Conclude your sentence, my friend."

"The majority is there to make known its will."

"Then there would be aggression."

Billot looked at Gilbert, at first doubtingly, and then a ray of intelligence sparkled in his eye.

"Hold, Billot!" said the doctor, "I know what you are about to say to me. The nobility and the clergy possess everything, do they not?"

"That is undoubted," replied Billot; "and therefore the convents —"

"The convents?"

"The convents overflow with riches."

"*Notum certumque*," grumbled Pitou.

"The nobles do not pay in proportion to their income. Thus I, a farmer, pay more than twice the amount of taxes paid by my neighbors, the three brothers De Charny, who have between them an income of two hundred thousand livres."

"But, let us see," continued Gilbert. "Do you believe that the nobles and the priests are less Frenchmen than you are?"

Pitou pricked up his ears at this proposition, which sounded somewhat heretical at the time, when patriotism was calculated by the strength of elbows on the Place de Grève.

"You do not believe a word of it, do you, my friend? You cannot imagine that these nobles and priests, who absorb everything, and give back nothing, are as good patriots as you are?"

"That is true."

"An error, my dear friend, an error. They are even better, and I will prove it to you."

"Oh! that, for example, I deny."

"On account of their privileges, is it not?"

"Zounds! yes."

"Wait a moment."

"Oh, I can wait."

"Well, then, I certify to you, Billot, that in three days from this time the person who will have the most privileges in France will be the man who possesses nothing."

"Then I shall be that person," said Pitou, gravely.

"Well, yes, it will be you."

"But how can that be?"

"Listen to me, Billot. These nobles and these ecclesiastics, whom you accuse of egotism, are just beginning to be seized with that fever of patriotism which is about to

make the tour of France. At this moment they are assembled like so many sheep on the edge of the ditch; they are deliberating. The boldest of them will be the first to leap over it; and this will happen to-morrow, perhaps to-night; and after him, the rest will jump it."

"What is the meaning of that, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"It means to say that, voluntarily abandoning their prerogatives, feudal lords will liberate their peasants, proprietors of estates their farms and the rents due to them, the dovecot lords their pigeons."

"Oh, oh!" ejaculated Pitou, with amazement; "you think they will give up all that?"

"Oh," cried Billot, suddenly catching the idea, "that will be splendid liberty indeed!"

"Well, then; and after that, when we shall all be free, what shall we do next?"

"The deuce!" cried Billot, somewhat embarrassed; "what shall be done next? Why, we shall see!"

"Ah, there is the great word!" exclaimed Gilbert: "*we shall see!*"

He rose from his chair with a gloomy brow, and walked up and down the room for a few minutes; then, returning to the farmer, whose hand he seized with a violence which seemed almost a threat: —

"Yes," said he, "we shall see! We shall all see, — you, as I shall; he, as you and I shall. And that is precisely what I was reflecting on just now, when you observed that composure which so much surprised you."

"You terrify me. The people united, embracing each other, forming themselves into one mass to insure their general prosperity, — can that be a subject which renders you gloomy, Monsieur Gilbert?"

The latter shrugged his shoulders.

"Then," said Billot, questioning in his turn, "what

will you say of yourself if you now doubt, after having prepared everything in the Old World, by giving liberty to the New?"

"Billot," rejoined Gilbert, "you have just, without at all suspecting it, uttered a word which is the solution of the enigma, — a word which Lafayette has uttered, and which no one, beginning with himself perhaps, fully understands. Yes, we have given liberty to the New World."

"You! and Frenchmen, too! That is magnificent."

"It is magnificent; but it will cost us dear," said Gilbert, sorrowfully.

"Pooh! the money is spent; the bill is paid," said Billot, joyously. "A little gold, a great deal of blood, and the debt is liquidated."

"Blind enthusiast!" said Gilbert, "who sees not in this dawning in the west the germ of ruin to us all! Alas! why do I accuse them, when I did not see more clearly than they? The giving liberty to the New World, I fear, I fear greatly, is to prove the total ruin of the old one."

"*Rerum novus nascitur ordo!*" exclaimed Pitou, with great Revolutionary self-possession.

"Silence, child!" said Gilbert.

"Was it, then, more difficult to overcome the English than it is now to quiet the French?" asked Billot.

"A new world," repeated Gilbert; "that is to say, a vast open space, a clear table to work upon, — no laws, but no abuses; no ideas, but no prejudices. In France, thirty thousand square leagues of territory for thirty millions of people; that is to say, should the space be equally divided, scarcely room for a cradle or a grave for each. Out yonder, in America, two hundred thousand square leagues for three millions of persons; frontiers

which are ideal, for they border on the desert, which is to say, immensity. In those two hundred thousand leagues, navigable rivers, having a course of a thousand leagues; virgin forests, of which God alone knows the limits, — that is to say, all the elements of life, of civilization, and of a brilliant future. Oh, how easy it is, Billot, when a man is called Lafayette, and is accustomed to wield a sword; when a man is called Washington, and is accustomed to reflect deeply, — how easy is it to combat against walls of wood, of earth, of stone, of human flesh! But when, instead of founding, it is necessary to destroy; when we see in the old order of things that we are obliged to attack walls of bygone, crumbling ideas, and behind the ruins even of these walls, that crowds of people and of interests still take refuge; when, after having found the idea, we find that in order to make the people adopt it, it will be necessary, perhaps, to decimate that people, from the old who remember, down to the child who has still to learn; from the recollection which is the monument, down to the instinct which is the germ of it, — then, oh, then, Billot! it is a task which will make all those shudder who can see behind the horizon. I am far-sighted, Billot, and I shudder."

"Pardon me, sir," said Billot, with his sound good sense; "you accused me, a short time since, of hating the Revolution, and now you are making it execrable to me."

"But have I told you that I renounce it?"

"*Errare humanum est*," murmured Pitou; "*sed perseverare diabolicum.*"

And he drew his feet towards him with his hands.

"I shall, however, persevere," continued Gilbert, "for although I see the obstacles, I can perceive the end; and that end is splendid, Billot. It is not only the liberty of France that I am dreaming of; but it is the liberty of the

whole world. It is not physical equality; but it is equality before the laws, — equality of rights. It is not the fraternity of our own citizens, but fraternity between all nations. I may be losing my own soul; my body may perhaps perish in the struggle," continued Gilbert, in a melancholy tone; "but it matters not. The soldier who is sent to the assault of a fortress, sees the cannon on its ramparts, sees the balls with which they are loaded, sees the match placed near the touch-hole; he sees even more than this, — he sees the direction in which they are pointed, he feels that this piece of black iron may pass through his own breast, — but he still rushes onward; the fortress must be taken. Well, we are all soldiers, Father Billot. Forward, then! and over the heaps of our dead bodies may one day march the generations of which this boy now present is the advanced guard."

"I do not really know why you despair, Monsieur Gilbert. Is it because an unfortunate man was this day murdered on the Place de Grève?"

"And why were you, then, so much horrified? Go, then, Billot, and cut throats also."

"Oh, what are you now saying, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"Zounds! a man should be consistent. You came here, all pale, all trembling, — you, who are so brave, so strong, — and you said to me, 'I am tired out.' I laughed in your face, Billot; and now that I explain to you why you were pale, why you were worn out, it is you who laugh at me in turn."

"Speak! speak! but first of all give me the hope that I shall return cured, consoled, to my fields."

"Your fields! Listen to me, Billot; all our hope is there. The country — a sleeping revolution, which wakes up once in a thousand years, and gives royalty the vertigo every time it awakens — the country will

wake up in its turn, when the day shall come for purchasing or conquering those wrongly acquired territories of which you just now spoke, and with which the nobility and clergy are gorged, even to choking. But to urge on the country to a harvest of ideas, it will be necessary to urge on the countrymen to the conquest of the soil. Man, by becoming a proprietor, becomes free; and in becoming free, he becomes a better man. To us, then, privileged laborers, to whom God has consented that the veil of the future shall be raised; to us, then, the fearful work, which, after giving liberty to the people, shall give them the property of the soil! Here, Billot, will be a good work, and a sorry recompense perhaps; but an active, powerful work, full of joys and vexations, of glory and calumny. The country is still lulled in a dull, impotent slumber, but it awaits only to be awakened by our summons, and that new dawn shall be our work. When once the country is awakened, the sanguinary portion of our labors will be terminated, and its peaceable labors, the labors of the country, will commence."

"What, then, do you now advise that I should do, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"If you wish to be useful to your country, to the nation, to your brother men, to the world, remain here, Billot; take a hammer and work in this Vulcan's furnace, which is forging thunders for the whole world."

"Remain here to see men butchered, and perhaps at last learn to butcher them myself?"

"How so?" said Gilbert, with a faint smile. "You, Billot, become a murderer! What is it you are saying?"

"I say that should I remain here as you request me," cried Billot, trembling with agitation, — "I say that the first man whom I shall see attaching a rope to a lamp-post, I will hang that man with these my hands."

Gilbert's smile became more positive.

"Well, now," said he, "I find you understand me, and now you also are a murderer."

"Yes; a murderer of vile wretches."

"Tell me, Billot, you have seen De Losme, De Launay, De Flesselles, Foulon, and Berthier slaughtered?"

"Yes."

"What epithet did those who slaughtered them apply to them?"

"They called them wretches."

"Oh! that is true," said Pitou; "they did call them wretches."

"Yes; but it is I who am right, and not they," rejoined Billot.

"You will be in the right," said Gilbert, "if you hang them; but in the wrong, if they hang you."

Billot hung down his head under this heavy blow: then suddenly raising it again, with dignity: —

"Will you venture to maintain," said he, "that those who assassinate defenceless men, and who are under the safeguard of public honor, — will you maintain that they are as good Frenchmen as I am?"

"Ah!" said Gilbert, "that is quite another question. Yes, in France we have several sorts of Frenchmen. First of all, we have the people, to which Pitou belongs, to which you belong, to which I belong; then we have the French clergy, and then the French nobility, — three classes of Frenchmen in France, each French in his own point of view; that is to say, as regards their interests, and this without counting the King of France, who is also a Frenchman in his way. Ah, Billot, here you see, in these different modes of all these Frenchmen considering themselves French, the real secret of the Revolution. You will be a Frenchman in your own way;

the Abbé Maury will be a Frenchman in his way; Mirabeau will be a Frenchman in a mode that differs from that of the Abbé Maury; and the king will be a Frenchman in another way than that of Mirabeau. Well, Billot, my excellent friend, thou man of upright heart and sound judgment, you have just entered upon the second part of the question which I am now engaged upon. Do me the pleasure, Billot, to cast your eyes on this."

And Gilbert presented a printed paper to the farmer.

"What is this?" asked Billot, taking the paper.

"Read."

"Why, you know full well that I cannot read."

"Tell Pitou to read it, then."

Pitou rose, and standing on tiptoe, looked at the paper over the farmer's shoulder.

"That is not French," said he, "it is not Latin, neither is it Greek."

"It is English," replied Gilbert.

"I do not know English," said Pitou, proudly.

"I do," said Gilbert, "and I will translate that paper to you; but in the first place, read the signature."

"PITT," spelled Pitou; "what does PITT mean?"

"I will explain it to you," replied Gilbert.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PITTS.

"PITT," rejoined Gilbert, "is the son of Pitt."

"Well, now!" cried Pitou; "that is just as we have it in the Bible. There is then Pitt the First, and Pitt the Second?"

"Yes, and Pitt the First, my friends — listen attentively to what I am going to tell you —"

"We are listening," replied Billot and Pitou at the same moment.

"This Pitt the First was during thirty years the sworn enemy of France; he combated in the retirement of his cabinet, to which he was nailed by the gout, Montcalm and Vaudreuil in America, the Bailly de Suffren and D'Estaing on the seas, Noailles and Broglie on the Continent. This Pitt the First made it a principle with him that it was necessary to destroy the influence which France had gained over the whole of Europe: during thirty years he reconquered from us, one by one, all our colonies; one by one, all our factories, the whole of our possessions in the East Indies, a hundred leagues of territory in Canada; and then, when he saw that France was three fourths ruined, he brings forward his son to ruin her altogether."

"Ah! ah!" exclaimed Billot, evidently much interested, "so that the Pitt we have now —"

"Precisely," replied Gilbert, "he is the son of the Pitt whom we have had, and whom you already know, Father

Billot, whom Pitou knows, whom all the universe knows; and this Pitt Junior was thirty years old this last May."

"Thirty years old?"

"Yes; you see that he has well employed his time, my friends. Notwithstanding his youth he has now governed England for seven years; seven years has he put in practice the theory of his father."

"Well, then, we are likely to have him for a long time yet," said Billot.

"And it is the more probable because the vital qualities are very tenacious among the Pitts. Let me give you a proof of it."

Pitou and Billot indicated by a motion of their heads that they were listening with the greatest attention.

Gilbert continued: —

"In 1778, the father of our enemy was dying; his physicians announced to him that his life was merely hanging by a thread, and that the slightest effort would break that thread. The English Parliament was then debating on the question of abandoning the American colonies and yielding to their desire for independence, in order to put a stop to the war, which threatened, fomented as it was by the French, to swallow up the riches and all the soldiers of Great Britain. It was at the moment when Louis XVI., our good king, — he on whom the whole nation has just conferred the title of 'Father of French Liberty,' — had solemnly recognized the independence of America; and on the fields of battle in that country, and in their councils, the swords and genius of the French had obtained the mastery. England had offered to Washington — that is to say, to the chief of the insurgents — the recognition of American nationality, on condition that the new nation should ally itself with England against France."

"But," said Billot, "it appears to me this proposition was not a decent one, to be either offered or accepted."

"My dear Billot, this is what is called diplomacy; and in the political world these sorts of ideas are much admired. Well, Billot, however immoral you may consider the matter, in spite of Washington, the most faithful of men, Americans would have been found to accede to this degrading concession to England. But Lord Chatham, the father of Pitt, the man who had been given over by the physicians, this dying man, this phantom who was already standing knee-deep in the grave, this Chatham, who it might be thought could have desired naught more on this earth but repose, — before sleeping beneath his monument, this feeble old man determined on appearing in the Parliament, where the question was about to be discussed.

"On entering the House of Lords, he was leaning on the one side on the arm of his son, William Pitt, then only nineteen years of age, and on the other on that of his son-in-law, Lord Mahon. He was attired in his magnificent robes, which formed a derisive contrast to his own emaciated form. Pale as a spectre, his eyes half-extinguished beneath his languishing eyelids, he desired his friends to lead him to his usual seat on the bench appropriated to earls; while all the lords rose at his entrance, astounded at the unexpected apparition, and bowed to him in admiration, as the Roman Senate might have done had Tiberius, dead and forgotten, returned among them. He listened in silence and with profound attention to the speech of the Duke of Richmond, the mover of the proposition, and when he had concluded, Lord Chatham rose to reply.

"Then this dying man summoned up strength enough

to speak for three whole hours; he found fire enough within his heart to lend lightnings to his eyes; in his soul he found accents which stirred up the hearts of all who heard him.

"It is true that he was speaking against France; it is true that he was instilling into the minds of his countrymen the hatred which he felt; it is true that he had called up all his energies, all his fervent eloquence, to ruin and devour this country, — the hated rival of his own. He forbade that America should be recognized as independent; he forbade all sort of compromise; he cried, War! war! He spoke as Hannibal spoke against Rome, as Cato against Carthage! He declared that the duty of every loyal Englishman was to perish, ruined, rather than to suffer that a colony, even one single colony, should detach itself from the mother-country. Having concluded his peroration, having hurled his last threat, he fell to the ground as if thunder-stricken.

"He had nothing more to do in this world, — he was carried expiring from the house.

"Some few days afterwards he was dead."

"Oh! oh!" cried both Billot and Pitou, simultaneously, "what a man this Lord Chatham was!"

"He was the father of the young man of thirty who is now occupying our attention," pursued Gilbert. "Lord Chatham died at the age of seventy. If the son lives to the same age, we shall have to endure William Pitt for forty years longer. This is the man, Father Billot, with whom we have to contend; this is the man who now governs Great Britain; who well remembers the names of Lameth, of Rochambeau, and Lafayette; who at this moment knows the name of every man in the National Assembly; he who has sworn a deadly hatred to Louis XVI., the author of the treaty of 1778, — the man, in

short, who will not breathe freely as long as there shall be a loaded musket in France and a full pocket. Do you begin to understand?"

"I understand that he has a great detestation of France; yes, that is true, but I do not altogether see your meaning."

"Nor I," said Pitou.

"Well, then, read these four words." And he presented a paper to Pitou.

"English again," cried Pitou.

"Yes; these are the words, — *Don't mind the money.*"

"I hear the words, but I do not understand them," rejoined Pitou.

Gilbert translated the words, and then: —

"But more than this: he farther on reiterates the same advice, for he says: 'Tell them not to be sparing of money, and they need not send me any accounts.'"

"Then they are arming," said Billot.

"No; they are bribing."

"But to whom is this letter addressed?"

"To everybody and to nobody. The money which is thus given, thus strewn abroad, thus lavished, is given to peasants, to artisans, to wretches, — to men, in short, who will degrade our Revolution."

Father Billot held down his head. These words explained many things.

"Would you have knocked down De Launay with the butt-end of a musket, Billot?"

"No."

"Would you have killed Flesselles by firing a pistol at him?"

"No."

"Would you have hanged Foulon?"

"No."

"Would you have carried the still bleeding heart of Berthier and placed it on the table of the electors?"

"Infamy!" exclaimed Billot. "On the contrary, however guilty this man may have been, I would have allowed myself to be torn to pieces could I have saved him by it; and the proof of this is that I was wounded in defending him, and that but for Pitou, who dragged me to the river-side —"

"Oh! that is true," cried Pitou; "but for me, Father Billot would have had but a bad time of it."

"Well, then, see you now, Billot, there are many men who would act as you have done, when they feel that they have some one to assist them near them, and who, on the contrary, if abandoned to bad examples, become wicked, then ferocious, then frenzied, — then, when the evil is done, why, 't is done."

"But, in short," observed Billot, objectingly, "admitting that Mr. Pitt, or rather his money, had something to do with the death of Flesselles, of Foulon, and of Berthier, what would he gain by it?"

Gilbert began to laugh with that inaudible laugh which astonishes the simple, but which makes the thinking shudder.

"What would he gain by it!" he exclaimed, "can you ask that?"

"Yes, I do ask it."

"I will tell you. It is this; you were much pleased with the Revolution, were you not, — you who walked in blood to take the Bastille?"

"Yes, I was pleased with it."

"Well! you now like it less; well! now you long for Villers-Cotterets, your farm, the quietude of your plain, the shades of your great forests."

"*Frigida Tempe*," murmured Pitou.

"Oh, yes, you are right," sighed Billot.

"Well, then, you, Father Billot; you, a farmer; you, the proprietor of land; you, a child of the Isle-de-France, and consequently a Frenchman of the olden time, — you represent the third order; you belong to that which is called the majority. Well, then, you are disgusted."

"I acknowledge it."

"Then the majority will become disgusted as you are."

"And what then?"

"And you will one day open your arms to the soldiers of the Duke of Brunswick or of Mr. Pitt, who will come to you in the name of those two liberators of France to restore wholesome doctrine."

"Never!"

"Pshaw! wait a little."

"Flesselles, Berthier, and Foulon were at bottom villains," observed Pitou.

"Assuredly, as Monsieur de Sartines and Monsieur de Maurepas were villains; as Monsieur d'Argenson and Monsieur de Philippeaux were before them; as Monsieur Law was; as the Leblancs, the De Paris, the Duverneys were villains; as Fouquet was; as Mazarin was also; as Semblancey, as Enguerrand de Marigny were villains; as Monsieur de Brienne is towards Monsieur de Calonne; as Monsieur de Calonne is towards Monsieur de Necker; as Monsieur de Necker will be to the administration which we shall have in two years."

"Oh, oh, Doctor!" murmured Billot, "Monsieur de Necker a villain — never!"

"As you will be, my good Billot, a villain in the eyes of little Pitou here, in case one of Mr. Pitt's agents should teach him certain theories, backed by the influence of a pint of brandy and ten livres per day for get-

ting up disturbances. This word 'villain,' do you see, Billot, is the word by which in revolutions we designate the man who thinks differently from us; we are all destined to bear that name more or less. Some will bear it so far that their countrymen will inscribe it on their tombs, others so much farther that posterity will ratify the epithet. This, my dear Billot, is what I see, and which you do not see. Billot, Billot! people of real worth must therefore not withdraw."

"Bah!" cried Billot, "even were honest people to withdraw, the Revolution would still run its course; it is in full motion."

Another smile rose to the lips of Gilbert.

"Great child!" cried he, "who would abandon the handle of the plough, unyoke the horses from it, and then say: 'Good! the plough has no need of me; the plough will trace its furrow by itself.' But, my friends, who was it undertook the Revolution? honest people, were they not?"

"France flatters herself that it is so. It appears to me that Lafayette is an honest man; it appears to me that Bailly is an honest man; it appears to me that Monsieur de Necker is an honest man; it appears to me that Monsieur Elie, Monsieur Hullin, and Monsieur Maillard, who fought side by side with me, are honest people; it appears to me that you yourself —"

"Well, Billot, if honest people, if you, if I, if Maillard, if Hullin, if Elie, if Necker, if Bailly, if Lafayette should withdraw, who would carry on the work? Why, those wretches, those assassins, those villains whom I have pointed out to you, — the agents, the agents of Mr. Pitt!"

"Try to answer that, Father Billot," said Pitou, convinced of the justice of the doctor's argument.

"Well, then," replied Billot, "we will arm ourselves, and shoot these villains down as if they were dogs."

"Wait a moment; who will arm themselves?"

"Everybody."

"Billot, Billot! remember one thing, my good friend, and it is this, that what we are doing at this moment is called — what do you call what we are now doing, Billot?"

"Talking politics, Monsieur Gilbert."

"Well! in politics there is no longer any absolute crime; one is a villain or an honest man, as we favor or thwart the interests of the man who judges us. Those whom you call villains will always give some specious reasons for their crimes; and to many honest people, who may have had a direct or an indirect interest in the commission of these crimes, these very villains will appear honest men also. From the moment that we reach that point, Billot, we must beware. There will then be men to hold the plough-handle. It will move onward, Billot; it will move onward, and without us."

"It is frightful," said the farmer; "but if it moves onward without us, where will it stop?"

"God only knows!" exclaimed Gilbert; "as to myself, I know not."

"Well, then, if you do not know, — you who are a learned man, Monsieur Gilbert, — I, who am an ignoramus, cannot be expected to know anything of the matter. I augur from it — "

"Well, what do you augur from it? Let us hear."

"I augur from it that what we had better do — I mean Pitou and myself — is to return to the farm. We will again take to the plough, the real plough, — that of iron and wood, with which we turn up the earth, and not the one of flesh and blood, called the French people, and

which is as restive as a vicious horse. We will make our corn grow instead of shedding blood, and we shall live free, joyous, and happy as lords in our own domain. Come with us; come with us, Monsieur Gilbert! The deuce! I like to know where I am going!"

"One moment, my stout-hearted friend," cried Gilbert. "No, I know not whither I am going. I have told you so, and I repeat it to you; however, I still go on, and I will continue to do so. My duty is traced out to me; my life belongs to God; but my works are the debt which I shall pay to my country. If my conscience says to me, 'Go on, Gilbert, you are in the right road; go on,' that is all that I require. If I am mistaken, men will punish me; but God will absolve me."

"But sometimes men punish those who are not mistaken. You said so yourself just now."

"And I say it again. It matters not, I persist, Billot; be it an error or not, I shall go on. To guarantee that the events will not prove my inability, God forbid that I should pretend to do so! But before all, Billot, the Lord has said, 'Peace be to the man of good intentions!' Therefore, be one of those to whom God has promised peace. Look at Monsieur de Lafayette, in America as well as France; this is the third white charger he has worn out, without counting those he will wear out in future. Look at Monsieur de Bailly, who wears out his lungs. Look at the king, who wears out his popularity. Come, come, Billot, let us not be egotistical. Let us also wear ourselves out a little. Remain with me, Billot."

"But to do what, if we do not prevent evil being done?"

"Billot, remember never to repeat those words; for I should esteem you less. You have been trampled under foot, you have received hard fisticuffs, hard knocks from

the butt-ends of muskets, and even from bayonets, when you wished to save Foulon and Berthier."

"Yes, and even a great many," replied the farmer, passing his hand over his still painful body.

"And as to me," said Pitou, "I had one eye almost put out."

"And all that for nothing," added Billot.

"Well, my children, if instead of there being only ten, fifteen, twenty of your courage, there had been a hundred, two hundred, three hundred, you would have saved the unhappy man from the frightful death which was inflicted on him; you would have spared the nation the blot which has sullied it. And that is the reason why, instead of returning to the country, which is tolerably tranquil, — that is why, Billot, I exact as far as I can exact anything of you, my friend, that you should remain at Paris; that I may have always near me a vigorous arm, an upright heart; that I may test my mind and my works on the faithful touchstone of your good sense and your pure patriotism; and, in fine, that we may strew around us, not gold, for that we have not, but our love of country and of the public welfare, in which you will be my agent with a multitude of misled, unfortunate men, — my staff, should my feet slip; my staff, should I have occasion to strike a blow."

"A blind man's dog," said Billot, with sublime simplicity.

"Precisely," said Gilbert, in the same tone.

"Well," said Billot, "I accept your proposal. I will be whatever you may please to make me."

"I know that you are abandoning everything, — fortune, wife, child, and happiness, — Billot. But you may be tranquil; it will not be for long."

"And I," said Pitou, "what am I to do?"

"You?" said Gilbert, looking at the ingenuous and hardy youth who boasted not much of his intelligence, — "you will return to the farm, to console Billot's family, and explain to them the holy mission he has undertaken."

"Instantly!" cried Pitou, trembling with joy at the idea of returning to Catherine.

"Billot," said Gilbert, "give him your instructions."

"They are as follows," said Billot.

"I am all attention."

"Catherine is appointed by me as mistress of the house. Do you understand?"

"And Madame Billot?" exclaimed Pitou, somewhat surprised at this slight offered to the mother, to the advancement of the daughter.

"Pitou," said Gilbert, who had at once caught the idea of Billot, from seeing a slight blush suffuse the face of the honest farmer, "remember the Arabian proverb, 'to hear is to obey.'"

Pitou blushed in his turn. He had almost understood, and felt the indiscretion of which he had been guilty.

"Catherine has all the judgment of the family," added Billot, unaffectedly, in order to explain his idea.

Gilbert bowed in token of assent.

"Is that all?" inquired the youth.

"All that I have to say," replied Billot.

"But not as regards me," said Gilbert.

"I am listening," observed Pitou, well disposed to attend to the Arabian proverb cited by Gilbert.

"You will go with a letter I shall give you to the College Louis-le-Grand," added Gilbert. "You will deliver that letter to the Abbé Bérardier; he will intrust Sebastien to you, and you will bring him here. After I have

embraced him, you will take him to Villers-Cotterets, where you will place him in the hands of the Abbé Fortier, that he may not altogether lose his time. On Sundays and Thursdays he will go out with you. Make him walk frequently in the meadows and in the woods. It will be more conducible to my tranquillity and his health that he should be in the country yonder than here."

"I have understood you perfectly," said Pitou, delighted to be thus restored to the friend of his childhood, and to the vague aspirations of a sentiment somewhat more adult, which had been awakened within him by the magic name of Catherine.

He rose and took leave of Gilbert, who smiled, and of Billot, who was dreaming.

Then he set off, running at full speed, to fetch Sebastien Gilbert, his foster-brother, from the college.

"And now we," said Gilbert to Billot, — "we must set to work."

CHAPTER XV.

MEDEA.

A DEGREE of calmness had succeeded at Versailles to the terrible moral and political agitations which we have placed before the eyes of our readers.

The king breathed again, and although he could not help reflecting on the suffering his Bourbon pride had endured during his journey to Paris, he consoled himself with the idea of his reconquered popularity.

During this time Monsieur de Necker was organizing, and by degrees losing his.

As to the nobility, they were beginning to prepare their defection or their resistance.

The people were watching and waiting.

During this time the queen, thrown back as it were on the resources of her own mind, assured that she was the object of many hatreds, kept herself in the background, almost dissembled; for she also knew that although the object of hatred to many, she was at the same time the object of many hopes.

Since the journey of the king to Paris she had scarcely caught a glimpse of Gilbert.

Once, however, he had presented himself to her in the vestibule which led to the king's apartments.

And there, as he had bowed to her very humbly and respectfully, she was the first to begin a conversation with him.

"Good-day, sir," said she to him; "are you going to the king?"

And then she added, with a smile, in which there was a slight tinge of irony: —

"Is it as counsellor, or as physician?"

"It is as his physician, Madame," replied Gilbert. "I have to-day an appointed service."

She made a sign to Gilbert to follow her. The doctor obeyed.

They both of them went into a small sitting-room, which led to the king's bedroom.

"Well, sir," said she, "you see that you were deceiving me when you assured me the other day, with regard to the journey to Paris, that the king was incurring no danger."

"Who, — I, Madame?" cried Gilbert, astonished.

"Undoubtedly! was not the king fired at?"

"Who has said that, Madame?"

"Everybody, sir; and above all, those who saw the poor woman fall almost beneath the wheels of the king's carriage. Who says that? Why, Monsieur de Beauvau and Monsieur d'Estaing, who saw your coat torn and your frill perforated by the ball."

"Madame!"

"The ball which thus grazed you, sir, might have killed the king, as it killed that unfortunate woman; for, in short, it was neither you nor that poor woman that the murderers wished to kill."

"I do not believe in such a crime," replied the doctor, hesitating.

"Be it so; but I believe in it, sir," rejoined the queen, fixing her eyes on Gilbert.

"At all events, if there was intentional crime, it ought not to be imputed to the people."

The queen gave Gilbert a searching look.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "to whom, then, must it be attributed? Speak!"

"Madame," continued Gilbert, shaking his head, "for some time past I have been watching and studying the people. Well, then, the people, when they assassinate in Revolutionary times, — the people kill with their hands; they are then like the furious tiger, the irritated lion. The tiger and the lion use no intermediate agent between their fury and their victim; they kill for killing's sake: they spill blood to spill it; they like to dye their teeth, to steep their claws in it."

"Witness Foulon and Berthier, you would say. But was not Flesselles killed by a shot from a pistol? I was so told, at least; but after all," continued the queen, in a tone of irony, "perhaps it was not true; we crowned heads are so surrounded by flatterers."

Gilbert, in his turn, looked intently at the queen.

"Oh! as to him," said he, "you do not believe more than I do, Madame, that it was the people who killed him. There were people who were interested in bringing about his death."

The queen reflected.

"In fact," she replied, "that may be possible."

"Then?" said Gilbert, bowing, as if to ask the queen if she had anything more to say to him.

"I understand, sir," said the queen, gently, stopping the doctor with an almost friendly gesture; "however that may be, let me tell you that you will never save the king's life so effectually by your medical skill as you did three days ago with your own breast."

Gilbert bowed a second time.

But as he saw that the queen remained, he remained also.

"I ought to have seen you again, sir," said the queen, after a momentary repose.

"Your Majesty had no further need of me," said Gilbert.

"You are modest."

"I wish I were not so, Madame."

"And why?"

"Because, being less modest, I should be less timid, and consequently better able to serve my friends or to frustrate enemies."

"Why do you make that distinction? You say, *my* friends, but do not say *my* enemies."

"Because, Madame, I have no enemies; or rather, because I will not, for my part at least, admit that I have any."

The queen looked at him with surprise.

"I mean to say," continued Gilbert, "that those only are my enemies who hate me, but that I on my side hate no one."

"Because?"

"Because I no longer love any one, Madame."

"Are you ambitious, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"At one time I hoped to become so, Madame."

"And —"

"And that passion proved abortive, as did every other."

"There is one, however, that still remains in your heart," said the queen, with a slight shade of artful irony.

"In my heart? And what passion is that, good Heaven?"

"Your patriotism."

Gilbert bowed.

"Oh, that is true!" said he. "I adore my country, and for it I would make every sacrifice."

"Alas!" said the queen, with undefinable melancholy, "there was a time when a good Frenchman would not have expressed that thought in the terms you now have used."

"What does the queen mean to say?" respectfully inquired Gilbert.

"I mean to say, sir, that in the times of which I speak, it was impossible for a Frenchman to love his country, without at the same time loving his queen and king."

Gilbert blushed; he bowed, and felt within his heart one of those electric shocks, which, in her seducing intimacies, the queen produced on those who approached her.

"You do not answer, sir," she said.

"Madame!" cried Gilbert, "I may venture to boast that no one loves the monarchy more ardently than myself."

"Are we living in times, sir, when it is sufficient to say this; and would it not be better to prove it by our acts?"

"But, Madame," said Gilbert, with surprise, "I beg your Majesty to believe that all the king or queen might command —"

"You would do, — is it not so?"

"Assuredly, Madame."

"In doing which, sir," said the queen, resuming, in spite of herself, a slight degree of her accustomed haughtiness, "you would only be fulfilling a duty."

"Madame —"

"God, who has given omnipotence to kings," continued Marie Antoinette, "has released them from the obligation of being grateful to those who merely fulfil a duty."

"Alas, alas, Madame," rejoined Gilbert, "the time is approaching when your servants will deserve more than your gratitude, if they will only fulfil their duty."

"What is it you say, sir?"

"I mean to say, Madame, that in these days of disorder and demolition, you will in vain seek for friends where you have been accustomed to find servants. Pray, pray to God, Madame, to send you other servants, other supporters, other friends than those you have."

"Do you know any such?"

"Yes, Madame."

"Then point them out to me."

"See now, Madame; I who now speak to you, — I was your enemy but yesterday."

"My enemy! and why were you so?"

"Because you ordered that I should be imprisoned."

"And to-day?"

"To-day, Madame," replied Gilbert, bowing, "I am your servant."

"And your object?"

"Madame —"

"The object for which you have become my servant. It is not in your nature, sir, to change your opinion, your belief, your affections, so suddenly. You are a man, Monsieur Gilbert, whose remembrances are deeply planted; you know how to perpetuate your vengeance. Come, now, tell me what was the motive of this change?"

"Madame, you reproached me but now with loving my country too passionately."

"No one can ever love it too much, sir; the only question is to know how we love it. For, myself, I love my country." (Gilbert smiled.) "Oh, no false interpretations, sir! my country is France. A German by blood,

I am a Frenchwoman in my heart. I love France; but it is through the king. I love France from the respect due to God, who has given us the throne. And now to you, sir."

"To me, Madame?"

"Yes, it is now for you to speak. I understand you, do I not? To you it is quite another matter. You love France merely and simply for France herself."

"Madame," replied Gilbert, bowing, "I should fail in respect to your Majesty, should I fail in frankness."

"Oh," exclaimed the queen, "frightful, frightful period! when all people who pretend to be people of worth, isolate two things which have never been separated from each other; two principles which have always gone hand in hand, — France and her king. But have you not a tragedy of one of your poets, in which it is asked of a queen who has been abandoned by all, 'What now remains to you?' and to which she replies, 'Myself'? Well, then, like Medea, I also will say, 'Myself!' and we shall see."

And she angrily left the room, leaving Gilbert in amazement.

She had just raised to his view, by the breath of her anger, one corner of the veil behind which she was combining the whole work of the counter-revolution.

"Come, come!" said Gilbert to himself, as he went into the king's room, "the queen is meditating some project."

"Well," said the queen to herself, as she was returning to her apartment, "decidedly, there is nothing to be made of this man. He has energy, but he has no devotedness."

Poor princes! with whom the word "devotedness" is synonymous with civility.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT THE QUEEN WISHED.

GILBERT returned to Monsieur Necker after his professional visit to the king, whom he had found as tranquil as the queen was agitated.

The king was composing speeches; he was examining accounts; he was meditating reforms in the laws.

This well-intentioned man, whose look was so kind, whose soul was so upright, whose heart erred only from prejudices inherent to the royal condition, — this man was absolutely bent on producing trivial reforms in exchange for the serious inroads made on his prerogative. He was obstinately bent on examining the distant horizon with his short-sighted eyes, when an abyss was yawning beneath his feet. This man inspired Gilbert with a feeling of profound pity. As to the queen, it was not thus; and in spite of his impassibility, Gilbert felt that she was one of those women whom it was necessary to love passionately, or to hate even to the death.

When she had returned to her own apartment, Marie Antoinette felt as if an immense burden were weighing on her heart.

And in fact, whether as a woman or as a queen, she felt that there was nothing stable around her, — nothing which could aid her in supporting even a portion of the burden which was crushing her.

On whichever side she turned her eyes, she saw only hesitation and doubt.

The courtiers, anxious with regard to their fortunes, and realizing what they could.

Relatives and friends thinking of emigrating.

The proudest woman of them all, Andrée, gradually becoming estranged from her in heart and mind.

The noblest and the most beloved of all the men who surrounded her, De Charny, wounded by her caprice and a prey to doubt.

The position of affairs caused her great anxiety, — she, who was instinct and sagacity personified.

How could this man, who was purity itself, how could this heart without alloy have changed so suddenly?

"No, he has not yet changed," said the queen to herself, sighing deeply, "but he is about to change."

He is about to change! — frightful conviction to the woman who loves passionately, insupportable to the woman who loves with pride.

Now, the queen loved De Charny both passionately and proudly.

The queen was suffering therefore from two wounds.

And yet, at that very time, — at the time when she felt the consciousness of having acted wrongly, of the evil she had committed, — she had still time to remedy it.

But the mind of that crowned woman was not a flexible mind. She could not descend to waver, even though she knew she was acting unjustly; had it been towards an indifferent person, she might or would have wished to show some greatness of soul, and then she might perhaps have asked for forgiveness.

But to the man whom she had honored with an affection at once so tender and so pure, to him whom she had deigned to admit to a participation in her most secret thoughts, the queen considered it would be degrading to make the slightest concession.

The misfortune of queens who condescend to love a subject, is to love him always as queens, but never as women.

Marie Antoinette estimated herself at so high a price that she thought there was nothing human which could compensate her love, not even blood, not even tears.

From the moment she felt that she was jealous of Andrée, she had begun to dwindle morally.

The consequence of this inferiority was her caprice.

The consequence of her caprice was anger.

The consequence of her anger was evil thoughts, which always bring in their train evil actions.

De Charny did not enter into any of the considerations which we have just stated; but he was a man, and he had comprehended that Marie Antoinette was jealous of his wife.

Of his wife, towards whom he had never shown any affection.

There is nothing which so much revolts an upright heart, one altogether incapable of treachery, as to see that it is believed capable of treachery.

There is nothing which so much conduces to direct the attention towards a person as the jealousy with which that person is honored.

Above all, if that jealousy be really unjust.

Then the person who is suspected reflects.

He alternately considers the jealous heart and the person who has caused that jealousy.

The greater the soul of the jealous person, the greater is the danger into which it throws itself.

In fact, how is it possible to suppose that a person of expansive heart, of superior intelligence, of legitimate pride, could become agitated for a mere nothing, or for anything of trifling value? Why should a woman who

is beautiful be jealous? Why should a woman of the highest rank, power, and talent be jealous? How could it be supposed that, possessing all these advantages, a woman could be jealous for a mere nothing, or for anything of trifling value?

The jealous person is like the lime-hound, pointing out merits to the indifferent, which, left to himself, he would never have discovered.

De Charny knew that Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney had been long a friend of the queen, — that in former days she had been well treated, always preferred by her. How then was it that she no longer loved her? How was it that Marie Antoinette had all at once become jealous of her?

She must therefore have discerned some secret and mysterious beauty which Monsieur de Charny had not discovered, and undoubtedly because he had not sought for it.

She had therefore felt that De Charny might have perceived something in this woman, and that she, the queen, had lost in the comparison.

Or again, she might have believed that she perceived that De Charny loved her less, without there being any extraneous cause for this diminution of his passion.

There is nothing more fatal to the jealous than the knowledge which they thus give to others of the temperature of that heart which they wish to keep in the most fervid degree of heat.

How often does it happen that the loved object is informed by reproaches of a coldness which he had begun to experience without being able to account for it?

And when he discovers that; when he feels the truth of the reproach, — say, Madame, how many times have you found that he has allowed your chains to be again

thrown round him, that his languishing flame has been rekindled?

O unskilfulness of lovers! It is, however, true that where much art or adroitness is exercised, there scarcely ever exists a great degree of love.

Marie Antoinette had therefore herself taught De Charny to believe, by her own anger and injustice, that his heart was less full of love than formerly.

And as soon as he knew this, he endeavored to account for it, and looking around him, very naturally discovered the cause of the queen's jealousy.

Andrée, the poor, abandoned Andrée, who had been a bride, but had never been a wife.

He pitied Andrée.

The scene of the return from Paris had unveiled the secret of this deep-rooted jealousy, so carefully concealed from all eyes.

The queen also clearly saw that all was discovered; and as she would not bend before De Charny, she employed another method, which in her opinion would lead to the same end.

She began to treat Andrée with great kindness.

She admitted her to all her excursions, to all her evening parties; she overwhelmed her with caresses; she made her the envy of all the other ladies of the court.

And Andrée allowed her to do all this, with some astonishment, but without feeling grateful for it. She had for years said to herself that she belonged to the queen, that the queen could do as she pleased with her, and therefore was it that she submitted to it.

But, on the other side, as it was necessary that the irritation of the woman should be vented on some one, the queen began to treat De Charny severely. She no

longer spoke to him; she was absolutely harsh to him; she affected to pass evenings, days, weeks, without observing that he was present.

Only, when he was absent, the heart of the poor woman swelled with anxiety; her eyes wandered around eagerly, seeking him, from whom, the moment they perceived, they were instantly averted.

Did she need the support of an arm, had she an order to give, had she a smile to throw away, it was bestowed on the first comer.

But this first comer never failed to be a handsome and distinguished man. The queen imagined she was curing her own wound by wounding De Charny.

The latter suffered, but was silent. Not an angry or impatient gesture escaped him. He was a man possessing great self-command; and although suffering frightful torture, he remained, to appearance, perfectly impassible.

Then was seen a singular spectacle, — a spectacle which women alone can furnish and fully comprehend.

Andrée felt all the sufferings of her husband; and as she loved him with that angelic love which never had conceived a hope, she pitied him, and allowed him to perceive she did so.

The result of this compassion was a sweet and tacit reconciliation. She endeavored to console De Charny without allowing him to perceive that she comprehended the need he had of consolation.

And all this was done with that delicacy which may be called essentially feminine, seeing that women alone are capable of it.

Marie Antoinette, who had sought to divide in order to reign, perceived that she had made a false move, and that she was only drawing together two souls by the very means which she had adopted to keep them separate.

Then the poor woman, during the silence and the solitude of night, endured the most frightful paroxysms of despair, such as would make us wonder that God had created beings of sufficient strength to support them.

And the queen would assuredly have succumbed to so many ills, but for the constant occupation given to her mind by political events. No one complains of the hardness of a bed when his limbs are exhausted by fatigue.

Such were the circumstances under which the queen had been living since the return of the king to Versailles, up to the day when she thought seriously of resuming the absolute exercise of her power.

For in her pride, she attributed to her decadence the species of depreciation to which for some time her feminine nature had been subjected.

To her energetic mind, to think was to act. She therefore commenced her combinations without losing a moment.

Alas! these combinations which she was then meditating were those which wrought out her perdition.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FLANDERS REGIMENT.

UNFORTUNATELY, in the queen's opinion, all the facts which had occurred were merely accidents, which a firm and active hand might remedy. It was only necessary to concentrate her power.

The queen, seeing that the Parisians had so suddenly transformed themselves into soldiers, and appeared to wish for war, resolved on showing them what real war was actually.

"Up to this time, they have only had to deal with the Invalides, or with Swiss, but ill supported and wavering; we will show them what it is to have opposed to them two or three well-disciplined and royalist regiments.

"Perhaps there may be a regiment of this description which has already put to flight some of these rebellious rioters, and has shed blood in the convulsions of civil war. We will have the most celebrated of these regiments ordered here. The Parisians will then understand that their best policy will be to abstain from provocation."

This was after all the quarrel between the king and the National Assembly with regard to the veto. The king, during two months, had been struggling to recover some tattered shreds of sovereignty; he had, conjointly with the administration and Mirabeau, endeavored to neutralize the republican outburst which was endeavoring to efface royalty in France.

The queen had exhausted herself in this struggle, and was exhausted above all from having seen the king succumb.

The king in this contention had lost all his power and the remains of his popularity. The queen had gained an additional name, a nickname.

One of those words which were altogether foreign to the ears of the people, and from that reason more pleasing to the ears of the people, — a name which had not yet become an insult, but which was soon to become the most opprobrious of all ; a witty saying, which afterwards was changed into a sanguinary rallying cry.

In short, she was called " Madame Veto."

This name was destined to be borne in Revolutionary songs beyond the banks of the Rhine, to terrify in Germany the subjects and the friends of those who, having sent to France a German queen, had some right to be astonished that she was insulted by the name of the "Autrichienne" (the Austrian woman).

This name was destined in Paris to accompany, in the insensate dancing-rings, on days of massacre, the last cries, the hideous agonies of the victims.

Marie Antoinette was thenceforth called "Madame Veto," until the day when she was to be called the " Widow Capet."

She had already changed her name three times. After having been called the "Autrichienne," she was next called " Madame Deficit."

After the contests in which the queen had endeavored to interest her friends by the imminence of their own danger, she had remarked that sixty thousand passports had been applied for at the Hôtel de Ville.

Sixty thousand of the principal families of Paris and of France had gone off to rejoin in foreign countries the

friends and relatives of the queen, — a very striking example, and one which had forcibly struck the queen.

And therefore, from that moment she meditated a skilfully concerted flight, — a flight supported by armed force should it be necessary; a flight which had for its object safety, after which the faithful who remained in France might carry on the civil war; that is to say, chastise the Revolutionists.

The plan was not a bad one. It would assuredly have succeeded, but behind the queen the evil genius was also watching.

Strange destiny! that woman, who inspired so many with enthusiastic devotedness, yet could nowhere find discretion.

It was known at Paris that she wished to fly before she had even persuaded herself to adopt the measure.

Marie Antoinette did not perceive that from the moment her intention had become known, her plan had become impracticable.

However, a regiment, celebrated for its royalist sympathies, the Flanders regiment, arrived at Versailles by forced marches.

This regiment had been demanded by the municipal authorities of Versailles, who, tormented by the extraordinary guards, and by the strict watch it was necessary to keep around the palace, incessantly threatened by fresh demands for distributions of provisions, and successive disturbances, stood in need of some other military force than the National Guards and the Militia.

The palace had already quite enough to do to defend itself.

The Flanders regiment arrived, as we have said; and that it should at once assume all the importance with

which it was intended to be invested, it was necessary that a brilliant reception should be given to it, that it might at once attract the attention of the people.

The Count d'Estaing assembled all the officers of the National Guard and all those of the corps then present at Versailles and went out to meet it.

The regiment made a solemn entry into Versailles, with its park of artillery and its ammunition-wagons.

Around this group, which then became central, assembled a crowd of young gentlemen, who did not belong to any regular corps.

They adopted a sort of uniform by which they could recognize one another, and were joined by all the officers unattached, all the chevaliers of the Order of Saint Louis, whom danger or interest had brought to Versailles.

After this they made excursions to Paris, where were seen these new enemies, fresh, insolent, and puffed up with a secret which was sure to escape them as soon as an opportunity should present itself.

At that moment the king might have escaped. He would have been supported, protected on his journey, and Paris perhaps, still ignorant and ill prepared, would have allowed his departure.

But the evil genius of the Autrichienne was still watching.

Liége revolted against the emperor; and the occupation which this revolt gave to Austria prevented her from thinking of the queen of France.

The latter, on her side, thought that in delicacy she must abstain from asking any aid at such a moment.

Then events, to which impulsion had been given, continued to rush on with lightning-like rapidity.

After the ovation in honor of the Flanders regiment,

the body-guards decided on giving a dinner to the officers of that regiment.

This banquet, this festival, was fixed for the 1st of October. Every important personage in the town was invited to it.

And what, then, was the object of this banquet? To fraternize with the Flanders soldiers. And why should not soldiers fraternize with one another, since the districts and the provinces fraternize?

Was it forbidden by the Constitution that gentlemen should fraternize?

The king was still the master of his regiments, and he alone commanded them; the palace of Versailles was his own property; he alone had a right to receive into it whomsoever he might please.

And why should he not receive brave soldiers and worthy gentlemen within it, — men who had just come from Douai, where they had *behaved well.*

Nothing could be more natural. No one thought of being astonished, and still less of being alarmed at it.

This repast, to be taken thus in union, was about to cement the affection which ought always to subsist between all the corps of a French army, destined to defend both liberty and royalty.

Besides, did the king even know what had been agreed upon?

Since the events of Paris, the king, free, thanks to his concessions, no longer occupied himself with public matters; the burden of affairs had been taken from him. He desired to reign no longer, since others reigned for him; but he did not think that he ought to weary himself by doing nothing all day long.

The king, while the gentlemen of the National Assem-

bly were fraudulently cutting and contriving, — the king amused himself by hunting.

The king, while the nobility and the reverend bishops were abandoning, on the 4th of August, their dovecots and their feudal rights, their pigeons and their parchments, — the king, who was very willing, as all the world was doing it, to make some sacrifices, abolished all his hunting train; but he did not cease to hunt on that account.

Now, the king, while the officers of the Flanders regiment were to be dining with his body-guards, would be enjoying the pleasures of the chase, as he did every day; the tables would be cleared away before his return.

This would even inconvenience him so little, and he would so little inconvenience the banquet in question, that he was resolved to ask the queen to allow the festival to be given within the walls of the palace itself.

The queen saw no reason for refusing this hospitality to the Flanders soldiers.

She gave them the theatre for their banquet-room, in which she allowed them for that day to construct a flooring even with the stage, that there might be ample space for the guards and their guests.

When a queen wishes to be hospitable to French gentlemen, she is so to the full extent of her power. This was their dining-room, but they also required a drawing-room; the queen allowed them to use the salon of Hercules.

On a Thursday, the 1st of October, as we have already said, this feast was given, which was destined to fill so fatal a page in the history of the blindness and improvidence of royalty.

The king had gone out hunting.

The queen was shut up in her own apartments, sorrowful and pensive, and determined not to hear either the ringing of the glasses when the officers gave their toasts, or the sound of their enthusiastic cheers.

Her son was in her arms; Andrée was with her; two women were at work in one corner of the room; those were the only persons with her.

The brilliantly attired officers, with their waving plumes and bright gleaming arms, by degrees entered the palace. Their horses neighed before the grated gates of the royal stables; their clarions sounded as they approached; and the bands of the Flanders regiment and the guards filled the air with harmonious sounds.

Outside the gilded railings of the courtyard of the palace was a pale, inquisitive crowd, gloomily anxious, watching, analyzing, and commenting on the joyous festival within, and the airs played by the military bands.

In gusts, like the squalls of a distant tempest, there exhaled from the open portals of the palace the sounds of merriment with the odors of the savory viands.

It was very imprudent to allow this crowd of starving people to inhale the odors of the good cheer and wine, — to allow these morose people to hear these sounds of jovial festivity.

The festival was however continued, without anything disturbing its conviviality; for a time all was conducted with sobriety and order. The officers, full of respect for the uniform they wore, at first conversed in an undertone and drank moderately; during the first half hour, the programme which had been agreed upon was strictly adhered to.

The second course was put on the table.

Monsieur de Lusignan, the colonel of the Flanders

regiment, rose and proposed four toasts. They were to the health of the king, the queen, the dauphin, and the royal family.

Four shouts of applause re-echoed from the vaulted roofs, and struck the ears of the sorrowful spectators outside the palace.

An officer rose; perhaps he was a man of judgment and of courage, — a man of sound good sense, who foresaw the issue of all this; a man sincerely attached to that royal family whose health had just been drunk so noisily.

This man comprehended that among these toasts there was one which was omitted, which probably might present itself to their attention.

He therefore proposed this toast, "The Nation."

A long murmur preceded a long shout.

"No, no!" cried every person present except the proposer of the toast.

And then the toast to the nation was contemptuously rejected.

The festival had just assumed its real character; the torrent had found its real course.

It has been said, and it is still repeated, that the person who proposed this toast was but an instigator of an opposing manifestation.

However this might be, his words produced an untoward effect. To forget the nation might have been but a trifle, but to insult it was too much. It avenged itself.

As from this moment the ice was broken, as to the reserved silence succeeded boisterous cries and excited conversation, discipline became but a chimerical modesty; the dragoons, the grenadiers, the "hundred Swiss" were sent for, and even all the private soldiers in the palace.

The wine was pushed round quickly; ten times were the glasses filled; when the dessert was brought in, it was absolutely pillaged. Intoxication became general; the soldiers forgot that they were drinking with their officers; it was in reality a fraternal festival.

From all parts were heard shouts of "Long live the king! long live the queen!" So many flowers, so many lights, illuminating the brilliantly gilded arches, so many faces bright with happiness, so many loyal lightnings darting from the eyes of these brave men, — was a spectacle which would have been grateful to the eyes of the queen, and reassuring to those of the king.

This so unfortunate king, this so sorrowful queen, why were they not present at such a festival?

Some officious partisans withdrew from the dining-room, and ran to Marie Antoinette's apartments, and related, exaggerated to her what they had seen.

Then the sorrowing eyes of the queen become reanimated, and she rises from her chair. There is, then, some loyalty left, some affection in French hearts!

There is therefore something still to hope!

At the doors were soon assembled a crowd of courtiers; they entreat, they conjure the queen to pay a visit, merely to show herself for a moment in the festive hall, where two thousand enthusiastic subjects are consecrating, by their hurrahs, veneration for monarchical principles.

"The king is absent," she sorrowfully replied. "I cannot go there alone."

"But with Monseigneur the Dauphin," said some imprudent persons who still insisted on her going.

"Madame! Madame!" whispered a voice into her ear, "remain here; I conjure you to remain."

The queen turned round; it was the Count de Charny.

"What!" cried she; "are you not below with all those gentlemen?"

"I was there, Madame, but have returned. The excitement down yonder is so great that it may prejudice your Majesty's interests more than may be imagined."

Marie Antoinette was in one of her sullen, her capricious days, with regard to De Charny. It pleased her on that day to do precisely the contrary of everything that might have been agreeable to the count.

She darted at him a disdainful look, and was about to address some disagreeable words to him, when, preventing her by a respectful gesture: —

"For mercy's sake, Madame," added he, "at least await the king's advice!"

He thought by this to gain time.

"The king! the king!" exclaimed several voices; "the king has just returned from hunting."

And this was the fact.

Marie Antoinette rises and runs to meet the king, who, still booted and covered with dust, entered the room.

"Sire," cried she, "there is below a spectacle worthy of the King of France! Come with me! come with me!"

And she took the king's arm and dragged him away without looking at De Charny, who could not conceal his distress.

Leading her son with her left hand, she descended the staircase. A whole flood of courtiers preceded or urged her on. She reaches the door of the theatre at the moment when for the twentieth time the glasses were being emptied with shouts of "Long live the king! long live the queen!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BANQUET GIVEN BY THE GUARDS.

At the moment when the queen appeared with the king and their son on the stage of the theatre, an immense acclamation, as sudden and as loud as the explosion of a mine, was heard from the banqueting table and boxes.

The inebriated soldiers, the officers delirious with wine and enthusiasm, waving their hats and sabres above their heads, shouted, "Long live the king! long live the queen! long live the dauphin!"

The bands immediately played, "Oh, Richard! oh, my king!"

The allusion of this air had become so apparent, it so well expressed the thoughts of all present, it so faithfully translated the meaning of this banquet, that all, as soon as the air began, immediately sang the words.

The queen, in her enthusiasm, forgot that she was in the midst of inebriated men; and the king, though surprised, felt, with his accustomed sound sense, that it was no place for him, and that it was going beyond his conscientious feelings; but weak, and flattered at once more finding a popularity and zeal which he was no longer habituated to meet from his people, he, by degrees, allowed himself to be carried away by the general hilarity.

De Charny, who during the whole festival had drunk nothing but water, followed the king and queen. He had hoped that all would have terminated without their

being present, and then it would have been but of slight importance; they might have disavowed, have denied everything; but he turned pale at the thought that the presence of the king and queen would become an historical fact.

But his terror was increased greatly when he saw his brother George approach the queen, and encouraged by her smile, address some words to her.

Charny was not near enough to hear the words, but by his brother's gestures he could comprehend that he was making some request.

To this request the queen made a sign of assent, and suddenly taking from her cap the cockade she wore upon it, gave it to the young man.

De Charny shuddered, stretched forth his arms, and uttered a cry.

It was not even the white cockade — the French cockade — which the queen presented to her imprudent knight; it was the black cockade, — the Austrian cockade; the cockade which was so hateful to French eyes.

What the queen then did was no longer a mere imprudence; it was an act of absolute treason.

And yet all these poor fanatics, whom God had doomed to ruin, were so insensate that when George de Charny presented to them this black cockade, those who wore the white cockade threw it from them; those who had the tricolored one trampled it beneath their feet.

And then the excitement became so great that unless they had wished to be stifled with their kisses, or to trample under foot those who threw themselves on their knees before them, the august hosts of the Flanders regiment felt obliged to retreat towards their apartments.

All this might have been considered as a sample of

French folly, which the French are always ready enough to pardon, if these orgies had not gone beyond the point of enthusiasm; but they soon went much farther.

Good royalists, when eulogizing the king, must necessarily somewhat ill-treat the nation.

That nation, in whose name so much vexation had been offered to the king that the bands had undoubtedly the right to play.

"Peut on affliger ce qu'on aime?"

"Can we afflict those whom we love?"

It was while this air was being played that the king, the queen, and the dauphin withdrew.

They had scarcely left the theatre when, exciting each other, the boon companions metamorphosed the banqueting-room into a town taken by assault.

Upon a signal given by Monsieur de Perseval, aide-de-camp to the Count d'Estaing, the trumpets sounded a charge.

A charge, and against whom? Against the absent enemy.

Against the people!

A charge! music so enchanting to French ears that it had the effect of transforming the stage of the Opera-House at Versailles into a battle-field, and the lovely ladies who were gazing from the boxes at the brilliant spectacle were the enemy.

The cry "To the assault!" was uttered by a hundred voices, and the escalade of the boxes immediately commenced. It is true that the besiegers were in a humor which inspired so little terror that the besieged held out their hands to them.

The first who reached the balcony was a grenadier in the Flanders regiment. Monsieur de Perseval tore a cross from his own breast and decorated the grenadier with it.

It is true that it was a Limbourg cross, — one of those crosses which are scarcely considered crosses.

And all this was done under the Austrian colors, with loud vociferations against the national cockade.

Here and there some hollow and sinister sounds were uttered.

But, drowned by the howling of the singers, by the hurrahs of the besiegers, by the inspiring sounds of the trumpets, these noises were borne with threatening import to the ears of the people, who were, in the first place, astonished, and then became indignant.

It was soon known outside the palace, in the square, and afterwards in the streets, that the black cockade had been substituted for the white one, and that the tricolored cockade had been trampled under foot. It was also known that a brave officer of the National Guard, who had, in spite of threats, retained his tricolored cockade, had been seriously wounded even in the king's apartments.

Then it was vaguely rumored that one officer alone had remained motionless, sorrowful, and standing at the entrance of that immense banqueting-room converted into a circus, wherein all these madmen had been playing their insensate pranks, and had looked on, listened to, and had shown himself, loyal and intrepid soldier as he was, submissive to the all-powerful will of the majority, taking upon himself the faults of others, accepting the responsibility of all the excesses committed by the army, represented on that fatal day by the officers of the Flanders regiment; but the name of this man, wise and alone amid so many madmen, was not even pronounced; and had it been, it would never have been believed that the Count de Charny, the queen's favorite, was the man, who, although ready to die for her, had suffered more painfully than any other from the errors she had committed.

As to the queen, she had returned to her own apartments, completely giddy from the magic of the scene.

She was soon assailed by a throng of courtiers and flatterers.

"See," said they to her, "what is the real feeling of your troops; judge from this whether the popular fury for anarchical ideas, which has been so much spoken of, could withstand the ferocious ardor of French soldiers for monarchical ideas." And as all these words corresponded with the secret desires of the queen, she allowed herself to be led away by these chimeras, not perceiving that De Charny had remained at a distance from her.

By degrees, however, the noises ceased; the slumber of the mind extinguished all the ignes-fatui, the phantasmagoria of intoxication. The king, besides, paid a visit to the queen at the moment she was about to retire, and let fall these words, replete with profound wisdom: —

"We shall see to-morrow."

The imprudent man! by this saying, which to any other person but the one to whom it was addressed would have been a warning and sage counsel, he had revivified in the queen's mind feelings of provocation and resistance which had almost subsided.

"In fact," murmured she, when the king had left her, "this flame, which was confined to the palace this evening, will spread itself in Versailles during the night, and to-morrow will produce a general conflagration throughout France. All these soldiers, all these officers, who have this evening given me such fervent pledges of their devotedness, will be called traitors, rebels to the nation, murderers of their country. They will call the chiefs of these aristocrats the subalterns of the stipendiaries of Pitt and Coburg, of the satellites of power, of the barbarians, of the savages of the North.

"Each of these heads which has worn the black cockade will be doomed to be fixed to the lamp-post on the Place de Grève.

"Each of those breasts from which so loyally escaped those shouts of 'Long live the queen!' will, on the first popular commotion, be pierced with ignoble knives and infamous pikes.

"And it is I, again — I, always I, who have been the cause of all this! I shall have condemned to death all these brave and faithful servants, — I, the inviolable sovereign. They are hypocritically left unassailed when near me, but when away from me will be insulted from hatred.

"Oh, no, rather than be ungrateful to such a degree as that, towards my only, my last friends, — rather than be so cowardly and so heartless, I will take the fault upon myself. It is for me that all this has been done; upon me let all their anger fall. We shall then see how far their anger will be carried; we shall see up to which step of my throne the impure tide will dare to ascend."

And to the queen, animated by these thoughts, which drove sleep from her pillow, and on which she meditated during the greater part of the night, the result of the events of the next day was no longer doubtful.

The next day came, clouded over with gloomy regrets, and ushered in by threatening murmurs.

On that day the National Guards, to whom the queen had presented their colors, came to the palace with heads cast down and averted eyes, to thank her Majesty.

It was easy to divine from the attitude of these men that they did not approve what had occurred, but on the contrary, that they would have loudly disapproved it had they dared.

They had formed part of the procession, and had gone out to form part of the Flanders regiment; they had received invitations to the banquet, and had accepted them. Only, being more citizens than soldiers, it was they who during the debauch had uttered those disapproving words which had not been heeded.

These words on the following day had become a reproach, a blame.

When they came to the palace to thank the queen, they were escorted by a great crowd.

And taking into consideration the serious nature of the circumstances, the ceremony became an imposing one.

The parties on both sides were about to discover with whom they would have to deal.

On their side, all those soldiers and officers who had so compromised themselves the evening before, were anxious to ascertain how far they would be supported by the queen in their imprudent demonstrations, and had placed themselves before that people whom they had scandalized and insulted, that they might hear the first official words which should be uttered from the palace.

The weight of the whole counter-revolution was then hanging suspended over the head of the queen.

It was, however, still within her power to withdraw from this responsibility.

But she, proud as the proudest of her race, with great firmness cast her clear and penetrating gaze on all around her, whether friends or enemies, and addressing herself in a sonorous voice to the officers of the National Guards: —

"Gentlemen," said she, "I am much pleased at having presented you with your colors. The nation and the army ought to love the king as we love the nation and the army. *I was delighted with the events of yesterday.*"

Upon these words, which she emphasized in her firmest tone of voice, a murmur arose from the crowd, and loud applause re-echoed from the military ranks.

"We are supported," said the latter.

"We are betrayed," said the former.

Thus, poor queen, that fatal evening of the 1st of October was not an accidental matter; thus, unfortunate woman, you do not regret the occurrences of yesterday; you do not repent. And so far from repenting, you are delighted with them.

De Charny, who was in the centre of a group, heard with a sigh of extreme pain this justification, — nay, more than that, this glorification of the orgies of the king's guards.

The queen, on turning away her eyes from the crowd, met those of the count; and she fixed her looks on the countenance of her lover in order to ascertain the impression her words had produced upon him.

"Am I not courageous?" was the import of this look.

"Alas, Madame, you are far more mad than courageous." replied the gloomy countenance of the count.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE WOMEN BEGIN TO STIR.

At Versailles the court was talking heroically against the people.

At Paris, they were becoming knights-errant against the court; only the knights-errant were running about the streets.

These knights of the people were wandering about in rags, their hands upon the hilt of a sabre or the butt-end of a pistol, questioning their empty pockets or their hollow stomachs.

While at Versailles they drank too much, at Paris, alas! they did not eat enough.

There was too much wine on the table-cloths of Versailles.

Not sufficient flour in the bakers' shops at Paris.

Strange circumstances! a melancholy blindness, which now that we are accustomed to the fall of thrones, will excite a smile of pity from politicians.

To make a counter-revolution, and provoke to a combat people who are starving!

Alas! will say History, compelled to become a materialist philosopher, no people ever fight so desperately as those who have not dined.

It would however have been very easy to have given bread to the people, and then, most assuredly, the bread of Versailles would have appeared less bitter.

But the flour of Corbeil ceased to arrive. Corbeil is so far from Versailles; who, then, living with the king and queen, could have thought of Corbeil?

Unhappily, from this forgetfulness of the court, Famine, that spectre which sleeps with so much difficulty, but which so easily awakens, — Famine had descended, pale and agitated, into the streets of Paris. She listens at all the corners of the streets; she recruits her train of vagabonds and malefactors; she glues her livid face against the windows of the rich and of the public functionaries.

The men remember those commotions which had cost so much blood; they recall to mind the Bastille; they recollect Foulon, Berthier, and Flesselles; they fear to have the opprobrious name of assassins again attached to them, and they wait.

But the women, who have as yet done nothing but suffer! When women suffer, the suffering is triple, — for the child, who cries and who is unjust, because it has not a consciousness of the cause; for the child who says to its mother, "Why do you not give me bread?" for the husband, who, gloomy and taciturn, leaves the house in the morning to return to it in the evening still more gloomy and taciturn and finally, for herself, the painful echo of conjugal and maternal sufferings. The women burn to do something in their turn; they wish to serve their country in their own way.

Besides, was it not a woman who brought about the 1st of October at Versailles?

It was therefore for the women, in their turn, to bring about the 5th of October at Paris.

Gilbert and Billot were sitting in the Café de Foy,[1] in the Palais Royal. It was at the Café de Foy that

[1] A celebrated coffee-house.

motions were proposed. Suddenly the door of the coffee-house is thrown open; and a woman enters it much agitated. She denounces the black and white cockades which from Versailles have invaded Paris; she proclaims the public danger.

It will be remembered that Charny had said to the queen: —

"Madame, there will be really much to apprehend when the women begin to stir themselves."

This was also the opinion of Gilbert.

Therefore, on seeing that the women were actually bestirring themselves, he turned to Billot, uttering only these five words: —

"To the Hôtel de Ville!"

Since the conversation which had taken place between Billot, Gilbert, and Pitou, — and in consequence of which Pitou had returned to Villers-Cotterets with young Sebastien Gilbert, — Billot obeyed Gilbert upon a single word, a gesture, a sign; for he had fully comprehended that if he was strength, Gilbert was intelligence.

They both rushed out of the coffee-house, crossed the garden of the Palais Royal diagonally, and then through the Cour des Fontaines reached the Rue St. Honoré.

When they were near the corn-market, they met a young girl coming out of the Rue Bourdonnais, who was beating a drum.

Gilbert stopped astonished.

"What can this mean?" said he.

"Zounds! Doctor, don't you see," said Billot, "it is a pretty girl who is beating a drum, — and really, not badly, on my faith."

"She must have lost something," said a passer-by.

"She is very pale," rejoined Billot.

"Ask her what she wants," said Gilbert.

"Ho, my pretty girl!" cried Billot, "what are you beating that drum for?"

"I am hungry," she replied in a weak but shrill voice.

And she continued on her way beating the drum.

Gilbert had waited.

"Oh, oh!" cried he, "this is becoming terrible."

And he looked more attentively at the women who were following the young girl with the drum.

They were haggard, staggering, despairing.

Among these women there were some who had not tasted food for thirty hours.

From among these women, every now and then, would break forth a cry which was threatening even from its very feebleness, for it could be divined that it issued from famished mouths.

"To Versailles!" they cried, "to Versailles!"

And on their way they made signs to all the women whom they perceived in the houses, and they called to all the women who were at their windows.

A carriage drove by; two ladies were in that carriage. They put their heads out of the windows and began to laugh.

The escort of the drum-beater stopped. About twenty women seized the horses, and then, rushing to the coach-doors, made the two ladies alight and join their group, in spite of their recriminations and a resistance which two or three hard knocks on the head soon terminated.

Behind these women, who proceeded but slowly, on account of their stopping to recruit as they went along, walked a man with his hands in his pockets.

This man, whose face was thin and pale, of tall, lank stature, was dressed in an iron-gray coat, black waistcoat, and small-clothes; he wore a small shabby three-cornered hat, placed obliquely over his forehead.

A long sword beat against his thin but muscular legs.

He followed, looking, listening, devouring everything with his piercing eyes, which rolled beneath his black eyelids.

"Hey! why, yes," cried Billot, "I certainly know that face; I have seen it at every riot."

"It is Maillard, the usher," said Gilbert.

"Ah, yes! that 's he, — the man who walked over the plank after me at the Bastille; he was more skilful than I was, for he did not fall into the ditch."

Maillard disappeared with the women at the corner of a street.

Billot felt a great desire to do as Maillard had done; but Gilbert dragged him on to the Hôtel de Ville.

It was very certain that the gathering would go there, whether it was a gathering of men or of women. Instead of following the course of the river, he went straight to its mouth.

They knew at the Hôtel de Ville what was going on in Paris; but they scarcely noticed it. Of what importance was it, in fact, to the phlegmatic Bailly, or to the aristocrat Lafayette, that a woman had taken it into her head to beat a drum? It was anticipating the carnival, and that was all.

But when at the heels of this woman who was beating the drum, they saw two or three thousand women; when at the sides of this crowd which was increasing every minute, they saw advancing a no less considerable troop of men, smiling in a sinister manner, and carrying their hideous weapons; when they understood that these men were smiling at the anticipation of the evil which these women were about to commit, an evil the more irremediable from their knowing that the public

forces would not attempt to stop the evil before it was committed, and that the legal powers would not punish afterwards, — they began to comprehend the serious nature of the circumstances.

These men smiled, because the ill they had not dared to commit, they would gladly see committed by the most inoffensive half of the human kind.

In about half an hour there were ten thousand women assembled on the Place de Grève.

These ladies, seeing that their numbers were sufficient, began to deliberate with their arms akimbo.

The deliberation was by no means a calm one; those who deliberated were for the most part porteresses, market-women, and prostitutes. Many of these women were royalists, and far from thinking of doing any harm to the king and queen, would have allowed themselves to be killed to serve them. The noise which was made by this strange discussion might have been heard across the river, and by the silent towers of Notre-Dame, which, after seeing so many things, were preparing themselves to hear things still more curious.

The result of the deliberation was as follows: —

"Let us just go and burn the Hôtel de Ville, where so many musty papers are made out to prevent our eating our daily food."

And in the Hôtel de Ville they were at that moment trying a baker who had sold bread to the poor under weight.

It will be easily comprehended that the dearer bread is, the more profitable is every operation of this nature; only the more lucrative it is, the more dangerous.

In consequence, the admirers of lamp-justice were only waiting for the baker with a new rope.

The guards of the Hôtel de Ville wished to save the

unhappy culprit, and used all their strength to effect it. But for some time past it has been seen that the result but ill accorded with these philanthropic intentions.

The women rushed on these guards, dispersed them, made a forcible entry into the Hôtel de Ville; and the sack began.

They wished to throw into the Seine all they could find, and burn on the spot all that they could not carry away.

The men were therefore to be cast into the water, the building itself set fire to.

This was rather heavy work.

There was a little of everything in the Hôtel de Ville.

In the first place, there were three hundred electors.

There were also the assistants.

There were the mayors of the different districts.

"It would take a long time to throw all these men into the water," said a sensible woman, who was in a hurry to conclude the affair.

"They deserve it richly, notwithstanding," observed another.

"Yes; but we have no time to spare."

"Well, then," cried another, "the quickest way will be to burn them all, and everything with them."

They ran about looking for torches, and to get fagots to set fire to the municipality. While this was doing, in order not to lose time, they caught an abbé, the Abbé Lefèvre d'Ormesson, and strung him up.

Fortunately for the abbé, the man in the gray coat was there; he cut the rope, and the poor abbé fell from a height of seventeen feet, sprained one of his feet, and limped away amid shouts of laughter from these Megæras.

The reason for the abbé being allowed to get away was that the torches were lighted, and the incendiaries had already these torches in their hands, and they were about to set fire to the archives; in two minutes the whole place would have been in a blaze.

Suddenly the man in the gray coat rushed forward and snatched torches and fagots out of the women's hands; the women resisted. The man laid about him right and left with the lighted torches, setting fire to their petticoats; and while they were occupied in extinguishing them, he extinguished the papers which had already been ignited.

Who, then, is this man who thus opposes the frightful will of ten thousand furious creatures?

Why, then, do they allow themselves to be governed by this man? They had half hanged the Abbé Lefèvre; they could hang that man more effectually, seeing that he would be no longer there to prevent them from hanging whom they pleased.

Guided by this reasoning, a frantic chorus arose from them, threatening him with death; and to these threats deeds were added.

The women surrounded the man with the gray coat, and threw a rope round his neck.

But Billot hastened forward. Billot was determined to render the same service to Maillard which Maillard had rendered the abbé.

He grasped the rope, which he cut into three pieces with a well-tempered and sharp knife, which at that moment served its owner to cut a rope, but which in an extremity, wielded as it was by a powerful arm, might serve him for another purpose.

And while cutting the rope and getting piece by piece of it as he could, Billot cried:—

"Why, you unfortunate wretches, you do not then recognize one of the conquerors of the Bastille, he who passed over the plank to effect the capitulation, while I lay floundering in the moat? Do you not recognize Monsieur Maillard?"

At that well-known and redoubtable name all these women at once paused; they looked at one another, and wiped the perspiration from their brows.

The work had been a difficult one; and although they were in the month of October, they might well perspire in accomplishing it.

"A conqueror of the Bastille! and that conqueror Maillard! Maillard, the usher of the Châtelet! Long live Maillard!"

Threats are immediately turned into caresses; they embrace Maillard, and all cry, "Long live Maillard!"

Maillard exchanged a hearty shake of the hand and a look with Billot.

The shake of the hand implied, "We are friends!"

The look implied, "Should you ever stand in need of me, you may calculate upon me."

Maillard had resumed an influence over these women, which was so much the greater from their reflecting that they had committed some trifling wrong towards him, and which he had to pardon.

But Maillard was an old sailor on the sea of popular fury; he knew the ocean of the faubourgs, which is raised by a breath, and calmed again by a word.

He knew how to speak to these human waves, when they allow you time enough to speak.

Moreover, the moment was auspicious for being heard. They had all remained silent around Maillard.

Maillard would not allow that Parisian women should destroy the municipal authorities, — the only power to

protect them; he would not allow them to annihilate the civic registers, which proved that their children were not all bastards.

The harangue of Maillard was of so novel a nature, and delivered in so loud and sarcastic a tone, that it produced a great effect.

No one should be killed; nothing should be burned.

But they insist on going to Versailles. It is there that exists the evil. It is there that they pass their nights in orgies, while Paris is starving. It is Versailles that devours everything. Corn and flour are deficient in Paris, because, instead of coming to Paris, they are sent direct from Corbeil to Versailles.

It would not be thus if the "great baker," the "baker's wife," and the "baker's little boy" were at Paris.

It was under these nicknames that they designated the king, the queen, and the dauphin, — those natural distributors of the people's bread.

They would go to Versailles.

Since these women are organized into troops, since they have muskets, cannon, and gunpowder, — and those who have not muskets nor gunpowder, have pikes and pitchforks, — they ought to have a general.

"And why not? the National Guard has one."

Lafayette is the general of the men.

Maillard is the general of the women.

Monsieur de Lafayette commands his do-little grenadiers, which appear to be an army of reserve, for they do so little when there is so much to be done.

Maillard will command the active army. Without a smile, without a wink, he accepts his appointment.

Maillard is general commandant of the women of Paris.

The campaign will not be a long one; but it will be decisive.

CHAPTER XX.

MAILLARD A GENERAL.

It was really an army that Maillard commanded.

It had cannon, deprived of carriages and wheels, it is true; but they had been placed on carts. It had muskets, many of which were deficient in locks and triggers, it is true; but every one had a bayonet.

It had a quantity of other weapons, very awkward ones, it is true; but they were weapons.

It had gunpowder, which was carried in pocket-handkerchiefs, in caps, and in pockets; and in the midst of these living cartouche-boxes walked the artillery-men with their lighted matches.

That the whole army was not blown into the air during this extraordinary journey, was certainly a perfect miracle.

Maillard at one glance appreciated the feelings of his army. He saw that it would be of no use to keep it on the square where it had assembled, nor to confine it within the walls of Paris, but to lead it on to Versailles, and once arrived there, to prevent the harm which it might attempt to do.

This difficult, this heroic task, Maillard was determined to accomplish.

And in consequence, Maillard descends the steps and takes the drum which was hanging from the shoulders of the young girl.

Dying with hunger, the poor young girl has no longer strength to carry it. She gives up the drum, glides along a wall, and falls with her head against a post.

A gloomy pillow, — the pillow of hunger.

Maillard asks her name. She replies that it is Madeleine Chambry. Her occupation had been carving in wood for churches. But who now thinks of endowing churches with those beautiful ornaments in wood, those beautiful statues, those magnificent basso-relievos, the master-pieces of the fifteenth century?

Dying with hunger, she had become a flower-girl in the Palais Royal.

But who thinks of purchasing flowers when money is wanting to buy even bread? Flowers, those stars which shine in the heaven of peace and abundance, — flowers are withered by storms of wind and revolutions.

Being no longer able to sculpture her fruits in oak, being no longer able to sell her roses, her jessamines, and lilacs, Madeleine Chambry took a drum, and beat the terrible reveille of hunger.

She also must go to Versailles, — she who had assembled all this gloomy deputation; only, as she is too feeble to walk, she is to be carried there in a cart.

When they arrive at Versailles, they will ask that she may be admitted into the palace with twelve other women. She is to be the orator; famishing, she will there plead before the king the cause of all those that are starving.

This idea of Maillard was much applauded.

And thus by a word Maillard had at once changed every hostile feeling.

They did not before this know why they were going to Versailles; they did not know what they were going to do there.

But now they know; they know that a deputation of

twelve women, with Madeleine Chambry at their head, is going to supplicate the king, in the name of hunger, to take compassion on his people.

Somewhere about seven thousand women were there assembled. They commence their march, going along the quays.

But on arriving at the Tuileries, loud shouts were heard.

Maillard jumped upon a post in order to be seen by the whole of his army.

"What is it that you want?" he asked them.

"We wish to pass through the Tuileries."

"That is impossible," replied Maillard.

"And why is it impossible?" cried seven thousand voices.

"Because the Tuileries is the king's house and its gardens the king's; because to pass through them without the king's permission, would be to insult the king, — and more than that, it would be attacking, in the king's person, the liberty of all."

"Well, then, be it so," say the women; "ask permission of the Swiss." [1]

Maillard went to the Swiss, his cocked hat in his hand.

"My friend," said he, "will you allow these ladies to go through the Tuileries? They will only go through the archway, and will not do any injury to the plants or trees."

The only answer the Swiss gave was to draw his long rapier, and to rush upon Maillard.

Maillard drew his sword, which was full a foot shorter, and their weapons crossed.

While they were tilting at each other, a woman went behind the Swiss, and gave him a fearful blow upon the

[1] The porter, or gate-keeper.

head with a broom-handle, and laid him at Maillard's feet.

At the same time another woman was about to run the Swiss through the body with a thrust of her bayonet.

Maillard sheathes his sword, takes that of the Swiss under one arm, the musket of the woman under the other, picks up his hat, which had fallen to the ground during the struggle, puts it upon his head, and then leads his victorious troops through the Tuileries, where, in fulfilment of the promise he had made, no sort of damage was committed by them.

Let us, therefore, allow them to continue their way quietly through the Cours la Reine, and go on towards Sèvres, where they separated into two bands, and let us return to what was going on at Paris.

These seven thousand women had not very nearly drowned the electors, hanged the Abbé Lefèvre and Maillard, and burned the Hôtel de Ville, without making a certain degree of noise.

On hearing this noise, which had been re-echoed even in the most remote quarters of the capital, Lafayette had hastened towards the Hôtel de Ville.

He was passing a sort of review at the Champ de Mars. He had been on horseback from eight o'clock in the morning; he reached the square of the Hôtel de Ville just as the clock was striking twelve.

The caricatures of those days represented Lafayette as a centaur, the body of which was the famous white horse which had become proverbial. The head was that of the commandant of the National Guard.

From the commencement of the Revolution, Lafayette spoke on horseback, Lafayette eat on horseback, Lafayette gave all his orders on horseback.

It often even happened that he slept on horseback.

And therefore when by chance he could sleep on his bed, Lafayette slept soundly.

When Lafayette reached the Quay Pelletier, he was stopped by a man who had been riding at full gallop on a swift horse.

This man was Gilbert; he was going to Versailles; he was going to forewarn the king of the visit with which he was threatened, and to place himself at his orders.

In two words he related all that had happened to Lafayette.

After that he rode off again at full speed.

Lafayette went on towards the Hôtel de Ville.

Gilbert went towards Versailles; only as the women were going on the right bank of the Seine, he took the left side of the river.

The square before the Hôtel de Ville having been vacated by the women, was soon afterwards filled with men.

These men were National Guards, receiving pay or not receiving it; old French guards, above all, who, having gone over to the people, had lost their privileges of king's guards, — privileges which had been inherited by the Swiss and the body-guards.

To the noise made by the women had succeeded the noise of the alarm-bell and the drums, calling the people to arms.

Lafayette made his way through the crowd, alighted from his horse at the foot of the steps, and without paying any attention to the acclamations, mingled with threats, excited by his presence, he began to dictate a letter to the king upon the insurrection which had taken place that morning.

He had got to the sixth line of his letter, when the door of the secretary's office was violently thrown open.

Lafayette raised his eyes. A deputation of grenadiers demanded to be received by the general.

Lafayette made a sign to the deputation that they might come in.

They entered the room.

The grenadier who had been appointed spokesman of the deputation advanced to the table.

"General," said he, in a firm voice, "we are deputed by ten companies of grenadiers. We do not believe that you are a traitor; but we are betrayed by the Government. It is time that all this should come to an end. We cannot turn our bayonets against women who are asking us for bread. The Provisioning Committee is either peculating, or it is incompetent; in either case, it is necessary that it should be changed. The people are unhappy; the source of their unhappiness is at Versailles. It is necessary to go there to find the king and bring him to Paris. The Flanders regiment must be exterminated, as well as the body-guards, who have dared to trample under foot the national cockade. If the king be too weak to wear the crown, let him abdicate; we will crown his son. A council of regency will be nominated, and all will then go well."

Lafayette gazed at the speaker with astonishment. He had witnessed disturbances; he had wept over assassinations; but this was the first time that the breath of revolution had in reality been personally addressed to him.

This possibility that the people saw of being able to do without the king amazed him; it did more, it confounded him.

"How is this?" cried he. "Have you, then, formed the project of making war upon the king, and of thus compelling him to abandon us?"

"General," replied the spokesman, "we love and we respect the king; we should be much hurt should he leave us, for we owe him much. But, in short, should he leave us, we have the dauphin."

"Gentlemen! gentlemen!" cried Lafayette, "beware of what you are doing; you are attacking the crown, and it is my duty not to allow such a step!"

"General," replied the National Guard, bowing, "we would for you shed the last drop of our blood. But the people are unhappy; the source of the evil is at Versailles. We must go to Versailles and bring the king to Paris. It is the people's will."

Lafayette saw that it was necessary to sacrifice his own feelings; and this was a necessity from which he never shrank.

He descends into the centre of the square, and wishes to harangue the people; but cries of "To Versailles! To Versailles!" drown his voice.

Suddenly a great tumult was heard proceeding from the Rue de la Vannerie. It is Bailly, who in his turn is coming to the Hôtel de Ville.

At the sight of Bailly, cries of "Bread! Bread! To Versailles!" burst from every side.

Lafayette, on foot, lost amid the crowd, feels that the tide continues rising higher and higher, and will completely swallow him up.

He presses through the crowd, in order to reach his horse, with the same ardor that a shipwrecked mariner swims to reach a rock.

At last he grasps his bridle, vaults on his charger's back, and urges him on towards the entrance of the Hôtel de Ville; but the way is completely closed to him. Walls of men have grown up between him and it.

"Zounds, General!" cry these men, "you must remain with us."

At the same time tremendous shouts are heard of "To Versailles! To Versailles!"

Lafayette wavers, hesitates. Yes, undoubtedly, by going to Versailles he may be very useful to the king; but will he be able to master and restrain this crowd who are urging him to Versailles? Will he be able to command these billows which have swept him from his feet, and against which he feels that he will now have to combat for his own safety?

Suddenly a man descends the steps, pushes through the crowd, a letter in his hand, and makes such good use of his feet and elbows, particularly the latter, that he at length reaches Lafayette.

This man was the ever indefatigable Billot.

"Here, General," said he, "this comes from the Three Hundred."

It was thus the electors were called.

Lafayette broke the seal, and began to read it to himself; but twenty thousand voices at once cried out:

"The letter! the letter!"

Lafayette was therefore compelled to read the letter aloud. He makes a sign to request that they will be silent. Instantaneously, and as by a miracle, silence succeeds to the immense tumult; and Lafayette reads the following letter, not one word of which was lost by the people: —

"Seeing the state of circumstances and the desire of the people, and on the *representation* of the commandant-general that it was impossible to refuse, the electors assembled in council authorize the commandant-general, and even order him, to repair to Versailles.

"Four commissaries of the district will accompany him."

Poor Lafayette had absolutely represented nothing to the electors, who were by no means disinclined to leave some portion of the responsibility of the events which were about to happen on his shoulders. But the people, — they believed that he had really made representations, and this coincided so precisely with their views that they made the air ring with their shouts of "Long live Lafayette!"

Lafayette turned pale, but in his turn repeated, "To Versailles!"

Fifteen thousand men followed him, with a more silent enthusiasm, but which was at the same time more terrible than that of the women who had gone forward as the advanced guard.

All these people were to assemble again at Versailles, to ask the king for the crumbs which fell from the table of the body-guards during the orgies of the 1st of October.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSAILLES.

As usual, they were completely ignorant at Versailles of what was going on at Paris.

After the scenes which we have described, and at the occurrence of which the queen had openly congratulated herself, her Majesty was resting herself after her fatigue.

She had an army; she had her devotees; she had counted her enemies; she wished to begin the contest.

Had she not the defeat of the 14th of July to avenge? Had she not the king's journey to Paris — a journey from which he had returned with the tricolored cockade in his hat — to forget, and to make her court forget it also?

Poor woman! she but little expected the journey which she herself would be shortly compelled to take.

Since her altercation with Charny, she had scarcely spoken to him. She affected to treat Andrée with her former friendliness, which had for a time been deadened in her heart, but which was forever extinguished in that of her rival.

As to Charny, she never turned towards or looked at him, but when she was compelled to address herself to him upon matters regarding his service, or to give him an order.

It was not a family disgrace; for on the very morning on which the Parisians were to leave Paris to come to Versailles, the queen was seen talking affectionately with young George de Charny, the second of the three brothers, who, in contradiction to Olivier, had given such warlike counsels to the queen on the arrival of the news of the capture of the Bastille.

And in fact, at nine in the morning, as the young officer was crossing the gallery to announce to the huntsman that the king intended going out, Marie Antoinette, returning from Mass in the chapel, saw him, and called him to her.

"Where are you running thus, sir?" said she to him.

"As soon as I perceived your Majesty I ran no longer," replied George; "on the contrary, I instantly stopped, and I was waiting humbly for the honor you have done me in addressing me."

"That does not prevent you, sir, from replying to my question, and telling me whither you are going."

"Madame," replied George, "I am on duty to-day, and form part of the escort. His Majesty hunts to-day; and I am going to the huntsman to make arrangements for the meet."

"Ah! the king hunts again to-day," said the queen, looking at the big dark clouds which were rolling on from Paris towards Versailles. "He is wrong to do so. The weather appears to be threatening; does it not, Andrée?"

"Yes, Madame," absently replied the Countess de Charny.

"Are you not of that opinion, sir?"

"I am so, Madame; but such is the king's will."

"May the king's will be done, in the woods and on the highroads!" replied the queen, with that gayety of man-

ner which was habitual with her, and of which neither the sorrows of the heart nor political events could ever deprive her.

Then turning towards Andrée : —

" It is but just that he should have this amusement," said the queen to her in a whisper.

And then aloud to George : —

" Can you tell me, sir, where the king intends hunting ? "

" In the Meudon wood, Madame."

" Well, then, accompany him, and watch carefully over his safety."

At this moment the Count de Charny had entered the room. He smiled kindly at Andrée, and shaking his head, ventured to say to the queen : —

" That is a recommendation which my brother will not fail to remember, Madame, not in the midst of the king's pleasures, but in the midst of his dangers."

At the sound of the voice which had struck upon her ear, before her eyes had warned her of the presence of Charny, Marie Antoinette started, and turning round :

" I should have been much astonished," said she, with disdainful harshness, " if such a saying had not proceeded from the Count Olivier de Charny."

" And why so, Madame ? " respectfully inquired the count.

" Because it prophesies misfortune, sir."

Andrée turned pale on seeing that the color fled from her husband's cheeks.

He bowed without offering a reply.

Then, on a look from his wife, who appeared to be amazed at his being so patient : —

" I am really extremely unfortunate," he said, " since I no longer know how to speak to the queen without offending her."

The "no longer" was emphasized in the same manner as a skilful actor would emphasize the more important syllables.

The ear of the queen was too well exercised not to perceive at once the stress which Charny had laid upon his words.

"*No longer!*" she exclaimed sharply, "*no longer;* what mean you by *no longer?*"

"I have again spoken unfortunately, it would appear," said De Charny, unaffectedly.

And he exchanged a look with Andrée, which the queen this time perceived.

She in her turn became pale, and then her teeth firmly set together with rage.

"The saying is bad," she exclaimed, "when the intention is bad."

"The ear is hostile," said Charny, "when the thought is hostile."

And after this retort, which was more just than respectful, he remained silent.

"I shall wait to reply," said the queen, "until the Count de Charny is more happy in his attacks."

"And I," said De Charny, "shall wait to attack until the queen shall be more fortunate than she has lately been in servants."

Andrée eagerly seized her husband's hand, and was preparing to leave the room with him.

A glance from the queen restrained her. She had observed this gesture.

"But, in fine, what has *your husband* to say to me?" asked the queen.

"He had intended telling your Majesty that having been sent to Paris yesterday by the King, he had found the city in a most extraordinary state of ferment."

"Again!" cried the queen; "and on what account? The Parisians have taken the Bastille, and are now occupied in demolishing it; what can they require more? Answer me, Monsieur de Charny."

"That is true, Madame," replied the count; "but as they cannot eat the stones, they are calling out for bread, — they say that they are hungry."

"That they are hungry! that they are hungry!" exclaimed the queen; "and what would they have us do in that respect?"

"There was a time," observed De Charny, "when the queen was the first to compassionate and assuage the sufferings of the people; there was a time when she would ascend even to the garrets of the poor, and the prayers of the poor ascended from the garrets to God with blessings on her head."

"Yes," bitterly replied the queen; "and I was well rewarded, was I not, for the compassion which I felt for the misery of others? One of the greatest misfortunes which ever befell me was in consequence of having ascended to one of these garrets."

"Because your Majesty was once deceived," said De Charny, "because she bestowed her favors and her grace upon a miserable wretch, ought she to consider all human nature upon a level with that infamous woman? Ah, Madame! Madame! how at that time were you beloved!"

The queen darted a furious glance at De Charny.

"But, finally," she said, "what did actually take place in Paris yesterday? Tell me only things that you have yourself seen, sir; I wish to be sure of the truth of your words."

"What I saw, Madame! I saw a portion of the population crowded together on the quays, vainly awaiting the

arrival of flour. I saw others standing in long files at the bakers' doors, uselessly waiting for bread. What I saw was a starving people, — husbands looking sorrowfully at their wives, mothers looking sorrowfully at their children. What I saw! I saw clinched and threatening hands held up in the direction of Versailles. Ah, Madame! Madame! the dangers of which I just now spoke to you are approaching, — the opportunity of dying for your Majesty; a happiness which my brother and myself will be the first to claim. I fear the day is not far distant when it will be offered to us."

The queen turned her back to De Charny with an impatient gesture, and went to a window and placed her pale though burning face against a pane of glass. This window looked into the marble courtyard.

She had scarcely done this when she was seen to start.

"Andrée!" cried she, "come here and see who is this horseman coming towards us; he appears to be the bearer of very urgent news."

Andrée went to the window, but almost immediately recoiled a step from it, turning very pale.

"Ah, Madame!" cried she, in a tone of reproach.

De Charny hastened towards the window; he had minutely observed all that had passed.

"That horseman," said he, looking alternately at the queen and at Andrée, "is Doctor Gilbert."

"Ah, that is true," said the queen; and in a tone which rendered it impossible, even to Andrée, to judge whether the queen had drawn her to the window in one of those fits of feminine vengeance to which poor Marie Antoinette sometimes gave way, or whether her eyes, weakened by watching and the tears she had shed, could no longer recognize, at a certain distance, even those whom it was her interest to recognize.

An ice-like silence immediately ensued; and the three principal characters in this scene interrogated and replied to one another merely by looks.

It was in fact Gilbert who was coming, bringing with him the untoward news which De Charny had predicted.

Although he had hurriedly alighted from his horse, although he had rapidly ascended the staircase, although the three agitated faces of the queen, Andrée, and De Charny were turned towards the door which led to this staircase, and by which the doctor ought to have entered the room, this door did not open.

There was, then, on the part of these three persons an anxious suspense of some minutes.

Suddenly, a door on the opposite side of the room was opened, and an officer came in.

"Madame," said he, "Doctor Gilbert, who has come for the purpose of conversing with the king on important and urgent matters, demands to have the honor of being received by your Majesty, the king having set out for Meudon an hour ago."

"Let him come in!" said the queen, fixing on the door a look which was firm even to harshness; while Andrée, as if naturally she sought to find a supporter in her husband, drew back and supported herself on the count's arm.

Gilbert soon made his appearance on the threshold of the door.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FIFTH OCTOBER.

GILBERT cast a glance on the several personages whom we have placed on the stage, and advancing respectfully towards Marie Antoinette :—

"Will the queen permit me," said he, "in the absence of her august husband, to communicate to her the news of which I am the bearer?"

"Speak, sir!" said Marie Antoinette. "On seeing you coming at so rapid a pace, I summoned up all my fortitude, for I felt well assured that you were bringing me some fearful news."

"Would the queen have preferred that I should have allowed her to be surprised? Forewarned, the queen, with that sound judgment, that elevated mind by which she is characterized, would advance to meet the danger; and then perhaps the danger might retreat before her."

"Let us see, sir; what is this danger?"

"Madame, seven or eight thousand women have set out from Paris, and are coming armed to Versailles."

"Seven or eight thousand women?" cried the queen, with an air of contempt.

"Yes; but they will, most likely, have stopped on the way; and perhaps, on arriving here, their numbers will amount to fifteen or twenty thousand."

"And for what purpose are they coming?"

"They are hungry, Madame, and they are coming to ask the king for bread."

The queen turned towards De Charny.

"Alas, Madame," said the count, "that which I predicted has now happened."

"What is to be done?" asked Marie Antoinette.

"The king should, in the first place, be informed of it," said Gilbert.

The queen turned quickly towards him.

"The king! oh, no!" she cried, "what good purpose would it answer to expose him to such a meeting?"

This cry burst forth from the heart of Marie Antoinette almost involuntarily. It was a convincing manifestation of the intrepidity of the queen, of her consciousness of possessing a firmness which was altogether personal to her, and at the same time of her consciousness of her husband's weakness, which she cared not to admit even to herself, and, more particularly, to reveal to strangers.

But was De Charny a stranger? and Gilbert, was he a stranger?

No; did not those two men, on the contrary, appear to be elected by Providence, the one to be the safeguard of the queen, the other to protect the king?

De Charny replied at once to the queen and to Gilbert; he resumed all his empire, for he had made the sacrifice of his pride.

"Madame," said he, "Monsieur Gilbert is right; it is necessary that the king should be informed of this occurrence. The king is still beloved; the king will present himself to these women. He will harangue them; he will disarm them."

"But," observed the queen, "who will undertake to give this information to the king? The road between

this and Meudon is no doubt already intercepted, and it would be a dangerous enterprise."

"The king is in the forest of Meudon?"

"Yes; and it is probable the roads —"

"Your Majesty will deign to consider me as a military man," said De Charny, unostentatiously; "a soldier, and one whose duty it is to expose his life —"

And having said these words, he did not wait for a reply; he listened not to the sigh which escaped the queen, but ran rapidly down the staircase, jumped upon one of the guards' horses, and hastened towards Meudon, accompanied by two cavaliers.

He had scarcely disappeared, and had replied by a sign to a farewell gesture which Andrée addressed to him from the window, when a distant noise, which resembled the roaring of the waves in a storm, made the queen listen anxiously. This noise appeared to proceed from the farthest trees on the Paris road, which, from the apartment in which the queen was, could be seen towering above the fog at some distance from the last houses of Versailles.

The horizon soon became as threatening to the eye as it had been to the ear; a hail-shower began to checker the dark gray haze.

And yet notwithstanding the threatening state of the heavens, crowds of persons were entering Versailles.

Messengers arrived continually at the palace.

Every messenger brought intelligence of numerous columns being on their way from Paris; and every one thought of the joys and the easy triumphs of the preceding days, — some of them feeling at heart a regret that was akin to remorse, others an instinctive terror.

The soldiers were anxious, and, looking at one another, slowly took up their arms. Like drunken people, who

endeavor to shake off the effects of wine, the officers, demoralized by the visible uneasiness of their soldiers and the murmurs of the crowd, with difficulty breathed in this atmosphere, impregnated as it was with misfortunes which were about to be attributed to them.

On their side, the body-guards — somewhere about three hundred men — coldly mounted their horses, and with that hesitation which seizes men of the sword when they feel they have to deal with enemies whose mode of attack is unknown to them.

What could they do against women, who had set out threatening and with arms, but who had arrived disarmed, and who could no longer raise even their hands, so enervated were they with fatigue, so emaciated were they by hunger?

And yet, at all hazards, they formed themselves into line, drew their sabres, and waited.

At last the women made their appearance; they had come by two roads. Halfway between Paris and Versailles, they had separated, one party coming by St. Cloud, the other by Sèvres.

Before they separated, eight loaves had been divided among them; it was all that could be found at Sèvres.

Thirty-two pounds of bread for seven thousand persons!

On arriving at Versailles, they could scarcely drag themselves along. More than three fourths of them had scattered their weapons along the road. Maillard had induced the remaining fourth to leave their arms in the first houses they came to in Versailles.

Then, on entering into the town:—

"Come, now," said he, "that they may not doubt that we are friends to royalty, let us sing, 'Vive Henri Quatre!'"

And in a dying tone, and with voices that had not

strength enough to ask for bread, they chanted the royal national air.

The astonishment was therefore great at the palace when, instead of shouts and threats, they heard them singing the loyal air; when, above all, they saw the female choristers staggering (for hunger has somewhat the effect of drunkenness) and these wretched women leaning their haggard, pale, and livid faces, begrimed with dirt, down which the rain and perspiration were streaming, against the gilded railings, — faces which appeared to be more than doubled by the number of hands which grasped those railings for support.

After a time, would now and then escape from these horribly fantastic groups lugubrious howlings; in the midst of these agonized faces would appear eyes flashing lightnings.

Also, from time to time, all these hands, abandoning the railings which sustained them, were thrust through the space between them, and stretched forth towards the palace.

Some of them were open and trembling; these were soliciting.

Others were clinched and nervously agitated; these were threatening.

Oh, the picture was a gloomy one!

The rain and mud, — so much for the heavens and earth.

Hunger and threatening gestures, — so much for the besiegers.

Pity and doubt, — such were the feelings of the defenders.

While waiting the return of Louis XVI., agitated but firmly resolved, the queen gave orders for the defence of the palace. By degrees, the courtiers, the officers, and

the high dignitaries of the State grouped themselves around her.

In the midst of them she perceived Monsieur de Saint-Priest, the minister for Paris.

"Go and inquire, sir," said she to him, "what it is these people want."

Monsieur de Saint-Priest immediately went down the staircase, crossed the courtyard, and approached the railing.

"What is it that you demand?" said he to the women.

"Bread! bread! bread!" simultaneously cried a thousand voices.

"Bread!" replied Monsieur de Saint-Priest, impatiently; "when you had but one master, you never were in want of bread. Now that you have twelve hundred, you see to what they have reduced you."

And Monsieur de Saint-Priest withdrew amid the threatening shouts of these famished creatures, giving strict orders that the gates should be kept closed.

But a deputation advances, before which it is absolutely necessary that the gates should be thrown open.

Maillard had presented himself to the National Assembly in the name of the women; he had succeeded in persuading them that the president with a deputation of twelve women should proceed to the palace to make a statement to the king as to the position of affairs.

At the moment when the deputation, with Mounier at its head, left the Assembly, the king returned to the palace at full gallop, entering it by the stable-yard.

De Charny had found him in the forest of Meudon.

"Ah! it is you, sir," cried the king, on perceiving him. "Is it I whom you are seeking?"

"Yes, Sire."

"What, then, has happened? You seem to have ridden hard."

"Sire, there are at this moment ten thousand women at Versailles, who have come from Paris, and who are crying for bread."

The king shrugged his shoulders, but it was more from a feeling of compassion than of disdain.

"Alas!" said he, "if I had bread for them, I should not have waited their coming from Paris to ask it of me."

But without making any farther observation, he cast a mournful look towards the place where the hounds were continuing their chase of the stag which he was obliged to abandon.

"Well, then, sir, let us go to Versailles," said he.

And he rode off towards Versailles.

He had just arrived there, as we have said, when frightful cries were heard proceeding from the Place d'Armes.

"What is the meaning of that?" inquired the king.

"Sire," cried Gilbert, entering the room, pale as death, "they are your guards, who, led on by Monsieur George de Charny, are charging upon the president of the National Assembly, and a deputation which he is leading here."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the king.

"Listen to the cries of those whom they are assassinating! Look! look at the people who are flying in terror!"

"Let the gates be thrown open!" cried the king. "I will receive the deputation."

"But, Sire!" exclaimed the queen.

"Let the gates be opened," said Louis XVI.; "the palaces of kings ought to be considered as asylums."

"Alas! excepting perhaps for kings themselves," said the queen.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE EVENING OF THE FIFTH AND SIXTH OF OCTOBER.

De Charny and Gilbert rushed downstairs.

"In the name of the king!" cried the one.

"In the name of the queen!" cried the other.

And both of them added: —

"Open the gates!"

But this order was no sooner executed than the president of the National Assembly was thrown down in the courtyard and trampled under foot.

Two of the women forming the deputation were wounded close by his side.

Gilbert and De Charny threw themselves into the crowd. These two men — the one proceeding from the highest class of society, the other from the lowest — met, working in the same cause.

The one wishes to save the queen, from his ardent love for the queen; the other wishes to save the king, from his love for royalty.

On the gates being opened, the women rushed into the courtyard, and had thrown themselves into the ranks of the body-guards and those of the Flanders regiment. They threaten; they entreat; they caress. Who could resist women when they implore those whom they address in the name of their sisters, their mothers?

"Room, gentlemen, room for the deputation!" cried Gilbert.

And all the ranks were immediately opened to allow Mounier to pass with the unhappy women he was about to present to the king.

The king, having been informed by De Charny, who had hastened to him, waited for the deputation in the room contiguous to the chapel.

It was Mounier who was to speak in the name of the Assembly.

It was Madeleine Chambry, the flower-girl, who had beaten the drum, who was to speak in the name of the women.

Mounier said a few words to the king, and presented to him the young flower-girl.

The latter stepped forward a pace or two and wished to speak, but could only utter these words: —

"Sire — bread!"

And she fell fainting to the ground.

"Help! help!" cried the king.

Andrée hurried forward, and handed her smelling-bottle to the king.

"Ah, Madame!" said De Charny to the queen, in a reproachful tone.

The queen turned pale and withdrew to her own apartment.

"Prepare the equipages," said she; "the king and I are going to Rambouillet."

During this time poor Madeleine Chambry was recovering her senses, and finding herself in the king's arms, who was making her inhale the salts he held in his hand, she uttered a cry of shame, and wished to kiss his hand.

But the king prevented her.

"My lovely child," said he, "allow me to embrace you; you are well worth the trouble."

"Oh, Sire, Sire! since you are so kind," said the young girl, "give an order — "

"What order?" inquired the king.

"An order to have wheat sent to Paris, so that famine may cease."

"My dear child," said the king, "I will willingly sign the order you request, but in truth I am afraid it will not be of much service to you."

The king seated himself at a table and began to write, when suddenly a single musket-shot was heard, followed by a tolerably brisk fire of musketry.

"Ah, good God! good God!" exclaimed the king, "what can have happened? See what it is, Monsieur Gilbert."

A second charge upon another group of women had been made; and this charge had brought about the isolated musket-shot and the volley which had been heard.

The isolated musket-shot had been fired by a man in the crowd, and had broken the arm of Monsieur de Savonnière, a lieutenant in the guards, at the moment when that arm was raised to strike a young soldier, who was behind a sentry-box, and who, with uplifted and unarmed hands, was protecting a woman who was on her knees behind him.

This musket-shot was replied to on the part of the guards by five or six shots from their carbines.

Two of the shots told. A woman fell dead.

Another was carried off seriously wounded.

The people became irritated; and in their turn two of the body-guards fell from their horses.

At the same instant, cries of "Room! room!" are heard; they were the men from the Faubourg St. Antoine, who were arriving, dragging with them three

pieces of artillery, with which they formed a battery opposite to the principal gate of the palace.

Fortunately the rain was falling in torrents; the match is uselessly applied to the touch-holes of these guns; the priming, completely sodden by the rain, does not ignite.

At this moment a voice whispers into the ear of Gilbert: —

"Monsieur de Lafayette is coming; he cannot be more than half a league from Versailles."

Gilbert in vain attempts to discover who has given him this information; but from whomsoever it might come, it was valuable.

He looks around him, and sees a horse without a rider; it belonged to one of the two guards who had just been killed.

He leaps into the saddle, and sets off at a gallop on the road towards Paris.

The second horse without a rider follows him; but he had scarcely gone twenty paces over the square when he is stopped by the bridle. Gilbert believes his intention has been divined, and that some one wishes to pursue him; he casts a look behind him as he rides off.

They were not thinking of him at all; but they were hungry. They think of nothing but obtaining food, and the poor horse is instantly butchered by a hundred knives.

In a moment it is cut into a hundred pieces.

During this time the king had been informed, as Gilbert had been, that General de Lafayette was about to arrive.

He had signed, at the request of Mounier, his acceptance of the Rights of Man.

He had signed, at the request of Madeleine Chambry, the order for corn to be sent to Paris.

Furnished with this decree and this order, which it was thought would have tranquillized all minds, Maillard, Madeleine Chambry, and a thousand of the women had set out on their return to Paris.

Just beyond the first houses of Versailles they met Lafayette, who, pressed by Gilbert, was riding at full speed, having ordered the National Guards to follow him as quickly as possible.

"Long live the king!" cried Maillard and the women, waving the decrees above their heads.

"What was it, then, you were saying to me of the dangers to which his Majesty is exposed?" said Lafayette, with astonishment.

"Come on, General, come on!" cried Gilbert, continuing to urge him onwards; "you shall yourself judge of them."

And Lafayette spurred on his horse.

The National Guards entered Versailles with drums beating and colors flying.

At the first sounds of the drum which penetrated the palace, the king felt that some one was respectfully touching his arm.

He turned round; it was Andrée.

"Ah! is it you, Madame de Charny?" said he. "What is the queen doing?"

"Sire, the queen sends to entreat that you will leave Versailles, that you will not wait for the Parisians. At the head of your guards and the soldiers of the Flanders regiment, you can go anywhere."

"Are you of that opinion, Monsieur de Charny?" inquired the king.

"Yes, Sire, if you at once determine on passing the frontier; but if not —"

"If not?"

"It would be better to remain here."

The king shook his head.

His Majesty remains, not because he has the courage to remain, but because he has not firmness to decide on going.

He murmured in a low tone: —

"A fugitive king! a fugitive king!"

Then, turning to Andrée: —

"Go and tell the queen to set out alone."

Andrée left the room to execute her mission.

Ten minutes afterwards, the queen came in and seated herself by the king's side.

"For what purpose have you come here, Madame?" asked Louis XVI.

"To die with you, Sire," replied the queen.

"Ah!" murmured De Charny, "it is now that she is truly beautiful."

The queen shuddered; she had heard him.

"I believe, indeed, it would be better that I should die than live," said she, looking at him.

At that moment the march of the National Guards was heard under the windows of the palace.

Gilbert rapidly entered the room.

"Sire," said he to the king, "you have nothing further to apprehend; Monsieur de Lafayette is below."

The king did not like Monsieur de Lafayette; but he did not carry his feelings farther than dislike.

With regard to the queen, it was a very different matter. She frankly hated him, and took no pains to conceal her hatred.

The result of this was that Gilbert received no reply, although he had believed that the intelligence he had communicated was the most favorable he could have brought at such a moment.

But Gilbert was not a man to allow himself to be intimidated by royal silence.

"Your Majesty has heard?" cried he to the king, in a firm tone. "Monsieur de Lafayette is below, and places himself at your Majesty's orders."

The queen continued silent.

The king made an effort to restrain his feelings.

"Let some one go and tell him that I thank him, and invite him, in my name, to come upstairs."

An officer bowed and left the room.

The queen drew back a step or two.

But the king, with a gesture that was almost imperative, made her resume her position.

The courtiers formed themselves into two groups.

De Charny and Gilbert, with two or three others, remained near the king.

All the rest retreated behind the queen's chair, and arranged themselves in a half-circle round her.

The footsteps of a man, ascending the staircase alone, were heard, and Monsieur de Lafayette appeared in the doorway.

In the midst of the silence which his appearance produced, a voice, issuing from the group surrounding the queen, pronounced these words: —

"There is Cromwell!"

Lafayette smiled.

"Cromwell would not have presented himself alone to Charles I.," said he.

Louis XVI. turned frowningly towards these terrible friends who wished to make an enemy of a man who had hastened to his assistance.

Then, addressing De Charny: —

"Count," said he, "I shall remain. Monsieur de Lafayette being here, I have nothing more to fear.

Order the troops to withdraw to Rambouillet. The National Guards will be posted at the exterior ditches, the body-guards at those immediately near the palace."

Then, turning to Lafayette : —

"Come with me, General; I have to speak with you."

And as Gilbert was taking a step towards the door:

"No, Doctor," cried the king, "you will not be one too many; come with us."

And showing the way to Lafayette and Gilbert, he went into a cabinet, into which they both followed him.

The queen followed them with her eyes, and when the door had closed behind them : —

"Ah!" cried she, "it was to-day that we ought to have escaped from this. To-day there was still time. To-morrow, perhaps, it will be too late."

And she, in her turn, left the room, to withdraw to her own apartments.

A great light, similar to that of an extensive conflagration, illuminated the windows of the palace.

It was an immense bonfire, at which the Parisians were roasting the different joints of the horse they had killed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE NIGHT OF THE FIFTH AND SIXTH OF OCTOBER.

THE night was tolerably tranquil. The Assembly continued its sittings till three o'clock in the morning.

At three o'clock, and before the members separated, they sent two of their ushers, who took a round through Versailles, visited the environs of the palace, and then went round the park.

All was, or all appeared to be, quiet.

The queen had wished to leave the palace by the gate which communicated with Trianon; but the National Guards had refused to allow her to pass.

She had alleged her fears, and she had been answered that she was safer at Versailles than she could be elsewhere.

She had, in consequence, retired to her apartments; and she, in fact, felt reassured when she saw that she was protected by the most faithful of her guards.

At her door she had found George de Charny. He was armed, and leaning upon the small musketoon used by the guards as well as the dragoons. This was unusual; the guards in the interior of the palace stood sentry with their sabres only.

On perceiving him, the queen went up to him: —

"Ah! it is you, Baron," she said.

"Yes, Madame."

"Always faithful."

"Am I not at my post?"

"Who placed you here?"

"My brother, Madame."

"And where is your brother?"

"He is with the king."

"And why with the king?"

"Because he is the head of the family," he said; "and in that capacity has the right to die for the king, who is the head of the State."

"Yes," said Marie Antoinette, with a certain degree of bitterness, "while you have only the right of dying for the queen."

"That would be a great honor for me," said the young man, bowing, "should God ever permit me to fulfil that duty."

The queen made a step to withdraw, but a suspicion was gnawing at her heart.

She stopped, and half turning her head: —

"And — the countess," she inquired, "what has become of her?"

"The countess, Madame, came in about ten minutes since; and she has ordered a bed to be prepared for her in your Majesty's antechamber."

The queen bit her lips.

Whenever she had occasion to make inquiry with regard to any of the De Charny family, she was always sure to find that they were rigidly attending to their duties, be they what they might.

"Thanks, sir," said the queen, with a charming gesture of the head and hand at the same time, "thanks for your watching so carefully over the queen. You will, in my name, thank your brother for watching over the king so carefully."

And after saying this, she went to her own room. In the antechamber she found Andrée, not lying down, but still sitting up and respectfully awaiting her return.

She could not prevent herself from holding out her hand to her.

"I have just been thanking your brother-in-law, George, Countess," she said, "and I told him to thank your husband; and I now thank you, in turn."

Andrée made a low courtesy, and stood aside to allow the queen to pass, who then went into her bedroom.

The queen did not tell her to follow her. This devotedness, from which she felt affection was withdrawn, and which, however icy cold it might be, she knew would exist till death, weighed heavily upon her feelings.

As we have before said, at three in the morning everything was quiet in the palace at Versailles.

Gilbert had left it with Monsieur de Lafayette, who had been on horseback for twelve hours, and who was so much fatigued that he could scarcely stand. On leaving the palace, he met Billot, who had accompanied the National Guards. He had seen Gilbert set off; he had thought that Gilbert might have occasion for him at Versailles, and he had therefore followed him like the dog who runs to rejoin his master who had left the house without him.

At three o'clock all was tranquil at Versailles. The Assembly, reassured by the report of its officers, had retired. It was believed that this tranquillity would not be troubled. This belief was ill-founded.

In almost all popular movements which prepare the way for great revolutions, there is a period of stagnation, during which it seems as if everything was finished, and the world might sleep in peace. These appearances are deceptive.

Behind the men who make the first movements there

are others who wait till the first movements are over, when those who have taken the first steps rest themselves, either from fatigue or satisfaction, not wishing, either in one case or the other, to take a step farther.

Then it is that these unknown men take their turn, — these mysterious agents of fatal passions, — gliding through the populace, taking up the cause where it has been abandoned, pushing it to the utmost limits, and appalling, in the outburst, those who have opened the way, and who, believing the end attained, the task accomplished, have retreated to their couches in the very middle of the race.

During this terrible night, very different effects had been produced by the arrival of two troops who had arrived at Versailles, — the one in the evening, the other during the night.

The first had come because it was hungry, and it asked for bread.

The second had come from hatred, and asked for vengeance.

We know who it was led on the first, — Maillard and Lafayette.

But now who was it that led on the second? History mentions not their names; but as history has failed in this, tradition names —

MARAT.

We already know him; we have seen him at the fêtes given at the marriage of Marie Antoinette, cutting off legs and arms on the Place Louis XV.; we have seen him in the square before the Hôtel de Ville, urging on the citizens.

At length we see him gliding along in the night, like those wolves who prowl along the sheepfolds, waiting

until the shepherds shall be asleep, to venture on their sanguinary work.

VERRIÈRE.

As to this one, we have mentioned his name for the first time. He was a deformed dwarf, a hideous hunchback, whose legs appeared immeasurably long in proportion to his body, which was a visible representation of the distorted passions which raged within him. At every storm which disturbed the depths of society, this sanguinary monster was seen to rise with the scum and agitate himself upon its surface. Two or three times during the most terrible tumults he was seen passing through Paris, huddled upon a black charger, and similar to one of the figures in the Apocalypse, or to one of those inconceivable demons to which the pencil of Callot has given birth in his picture of the temptations of Saint Anthony.

One day at a club, and mounted on the table, he was attacking, threatening, and accusing Danton. It was at the period when the popularity of the man of the 2d of September was vacillating. Danton felt that this venomous attack of Verrière would altogether complete his ruin. He felt that he was lost, — lost like the lion who perceives the hideous head of a serpent at two inches from his lips.

He looked around him, seeking either a weapon or some one to back him. Fortunately, he caught sight of another little hunchback; he immediately caught him under the arms, raised him, and then placed him upon the table immediately opposite his humpbacked brother, Verrière.

"My friend," said he to him, "reply to that gentleman; I yield the floor to you."

The whole assembly roared with laughter, and Danton was saved, — for that time at least.

There were, then, according to tradition, Marat, Verrière, and besides them, —

THE DUKE D'AIGUILLON.

The Duke d'Aiguillon ; that is to say, one of the most inveterate enemies of the queen.

The Duke d'Aiguillon disguised as a woman.

And who was it said this? Everybody.

The Abbé Delille and the Abbé Maury, — these two abbés who so little resemble each other.

To the first was attributed the famous line, —

" As a man, he 's a coward, as a woman, an assassin."

As to the Abbé Maury, that is another affair.

A fortnight after the occurrence of the events we are relating, the Duke d'Aiguillon met him on the terrace of the Feuillans, and was about to accost him.

" Keep on your way, strumpet ! " said the Abbé Maury ; and he majestically left the duke perfectly astounded.

It was therefore said that these three men, Marat, Verrière, and the Duke d'Aiguillon arrived at Versailles at about four o'clock in the morning.

They were leading the second troop of which we have spoken.

It was composed of men who follow in the wake of those who combat to conquer.

These men, on the contrary, come to pillage and to assassinate.

They had undoubtedly assassinated a little at the Bastille, but they had not pillaged at all.

Versailles offered a delightful compensation.

About half-past five in the morning the palace was startled from its sleep.

A musket-shot had been fired in the marble courtyard.

Five or six hundred men had suddenly presented themselves at the gate ; and exciting, animating, pushing on

one another, some of them had climbed over the railings, while the others, by a united effort, at length forced open the gate.

It was then that a shot fired by the sentinel had given the alarm.

One of the assailants fell dead. His bleeding corpse was stretched upon the pavement.

This shot had divided this group of pillagers, whose aim was to obtain possession of the plate in the palace; and that of some of them, perhaps, to seize upon the king's crown.

Separated as by the blow of an immense hatchet, the crowd is divided into two groups.

One of the groups goes to attack the queen's apartments, the other ascends towards the chapel; that is to say, towards the apartments of the king.

Let us first follow the one proceeding towards the king's apartments.

You have seen the waves rising when a high tide is setting in, have you not? Well, then, the popular wave is similar to it, with this sole difference, that it keeps on advancing, without receding.

The whole of the king's guards at that moment consisted of a sentinel, who was guarding the door, and an officer, who rushed precipitately out of the antechamber, armed with a halberd which he had snatched from the hand of a terrified Swiss.

"Who goes there?" cried the sentinel. "Who goes there?"

And as no answer was given, and as the flood of men still ascended: —

"Who goes there?" he cried for the third time.

And he levelled his musket.

The officer feels at once what would be the result of

a shot fired in the apartments; he strikes up the sentinel's gun, and rushing towards the assailants, he places his halberd across the top of the staircase, thus completely preventing any one from passing.

"Gentlemen! gentlemen!" cried he, "what do you want? What do you require?"

"Nothing, nothing," said several voices, in mockery; "let us pass, we are good friends of his Majesty."

"You are good friends of his Majesty, and you make war on him?"

This time there was no answer, — a sardonic laugh and nothing else.

A man seized the stock of the halberd that the officer would not let go. To make him quit his hold, the man bit his hand.

The officer snatched the halberd from the hands of his adversary, grasped the oaken stock with both of his, and dealing his adversary a blow on the head with all his strength, broke his skull.

The violence of the blow broke the halberd into two pieces.

The officer, consequently, had two arms instead of one, — a stick and a poniard.

He whirled the stick round, struck with the poniard. During this time the sentry had opened the door of the antechamber and called for assistance.

Five or six guards came out.

"Gentlemen! gentlemen!" said the sentinel, "assist Monsieur de Charny."

The sabres sprang from the scabbard, glittered for an instant in the light of the lamp which burned above the staircase, and to the right and left of De Charny, furiously attacked the assailants.

Cries of pain were heard; blood flowed; the wave of

people retreated down the steps, leaving them red and slippery with blood.

The door of the antechamber opened again, and the sentinel cried: —

"Enter, gentlemen; the king orders it!"

The guards profited by this moment of confusion among the crowd. They rushed towards the door. De Charny entered last. The gate closes upon him; and the two large bolts shoot into their places.

A thousand blows are struck at once on the door, but benches, tables, and stools are piled up behind it. It would hold good at least for ten minutes.

Ten minutes! during these ten minutes some assistance might arrive.

Let us see what is going on at the queen's quarters.

The second group has darted towards the small apartments; but the staircase is narrow, — scarce two people can pass at once.

George de Charny watches there.

At the third "Who goes there?" no answer being given, he fires.

At the report the queen's door opens.

Andrée comes out, pale but calm.

"What is it?" asked she.

"Madame," cried George, "save her Majesty! it is her life they want! I am opposed to a thousand, but I will hold out as long as possible! Quick! quick!" Then, as the assailants precipitated themselves on him, he shut the door, crying, "Draw the bolt! draw the bolt! I shall live long enough to allow the queen to fly!" And turning, he pierced the first two he met in the corridor with his bayonet.

The queen had heard everything, and was up when Andrée entered the room.

Two of her women, Madame Hogué and Madame Thibault, were hastily dressing her. Then, half dressed, the two women conducted her through a corridor to the king; while, calm and indifferent to her danger, Andrée drew bolt after bolt, as she followed the footsteps of Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MORNING.

BETWIXT the two apartments a man waited for the queen.

This man was De Charny, covered with blood.

"The king!" cried Marie Antoinette, on seeing the blood on the dress of the young man; "the king! Mousieur, you promised to save the king!"

"The king is saved, Madame," replied De Charny.

And looking towards the doors which the queen had left open, in order to reach the Œil de Bœuf,[1] where at this time were assembled the queen, Madame Royale,[2] the dauphin, and a few guards, De Charny was about to ask what had become of Andrée, when his eyes met those of the queen.

[1] The Œil de Bœuf, which has so very frequently been mentioned in this book, had an historical interest. It was an oval room in the great palace of Versailles, and its history, compiled recently by one of the most distinguished writers of France, comprises more pages than the annals of many a European kingdom. In the coterie of the Regent-Duke of Orléans, of Louis XV., and of the early days of the reign of Louis XVI., it flourished, and not until the days of the Emperor Napoleon did it lose its prestige. The scandal of this room was one of the great causes which made the whole of the bourgeoisie and middle classes of France so cordially detest the old monarchy, and induced them to throw the whole weight of their influence into the cause of the Revolution. Such scenes as were enacted there made Lafayette, Beauharnais, De Romœub, and other nobles, use all their influence to destroy a throne built up by crime, and with courtiers and courtesans as its supporters.

[2] The title given to the eldest daughters of the kings of France.

This look stopped the question which was about to issue from his lips.

But the queen's look pierced into the recesses of Charny's heart.

There was no need for his speaking. Marie Antoinette had divined his thought.

"She is coming," said the queen; "you need not be uneasy."

And she ran to the dauphin, and clasped him in her arms.

Andrée immediately after this closed the last door, and in her turn entered the room called the Œil de Bœuf.

Andrée and De Charny did not exchange a word.

The smile of the one replied to the smile of the other, and that was all.

Strange to say, these two hearts, which had so long been severed, began to entertain feelings which responded to each other.

During this time the queen looked around her; and as if she felt delight in finding De Charny in fault: —

"The king," she inquired, "where is the king?"

"The king is seeking for you, Madame," tranquilly replied De Charny; "he went to your apartment by one corridor, while you were coming here by another."

At the same instant loud cries were heard in the adjoining room.

They were the assassins, who were vociferating, "Down with the Austrian woman! Down with the Messaline! Down with the Veto! She must be strangled! She must be hanged!"

At the same time two pistol-shots were heard, and two balls pierced through the door at different heights.

One of these balls passed only a quarter of an inch

above the head of the dauphin, and then buried itself in the opposite wainscoting.

"Oh, my God! my God!" cried the queen, falling upon her knees, "we shall all be killed!"

The five or six guards, upon a sign made to them by De Charny, then placed themselves before the queen and the two royal children, thus forming a rampart for them with their bodies.

At that moment the king appeared, his eyes full of tears, his face pale as death; he was calling for the queen as the queen had called for him.

He perceived her, and threw himself into her arms.

"Saved! saved!" exclaimed the queen.

"By him, Madame," cried the king, pointing to De Charny; "and you are saved by him also, are you not?"

"By his brother," replied the queen.

"Sir," said Louis XVI. to the count, "we owe much to your family, so much that we shall never be able to repay the debt."

The queen's eyes met those of Andrée, and she turned away her head, blushing deeply.

The blows of the assailants were heard endeavoring to destroy the door.

"Come, gentlemen," said De Charny, "we must defend our position here for another hour. There are seven of us, and it will take them full an hour to kill us if we defend ourselves resolutely. Before an hour elapses a reinforcement must have arrived to the assistance of their Majesties."

Saying these words, De Charny seized a large press which was standing in one of the corners of the royal room.

His example was instantly followed, and a heap of furniture was piled up against the door, between which the

guards took care to leave loopholes, through which they could fire on the assailants.

The queen took her two children in her arms, and raising her hands above their heads, she prayed.

The children restrained their cries and tears.

The king went into the cabinet contiguous to the Œil de Bœuf, in order to burn some valuable papers which he did not wish to fall into the hands of the assassins.

The latter were attacking the door more desperately than ever. At every instant, splinters were seen flying before the blows given by a sharp hatchet, or wrenched out by large pincers.

By the openings which had been thus made, pikes with reddened points, bayonets reeking with blood were forced through, attempting to hurl death on those within.

At the same time, the balls pierced the framework above the barricades, and left long traces on the gilded plaster of the ceiling.

At length a bench rolls from the top of the press; the press itself was partly damaged. One whole panel of the door, which formed the front of the press, gave way, and they could see, in the place of the bayonets and pikes, arms covered with blood pass through it and grasp the sides of the opening, which every moment became wider.

The guards had discharged their last cartridge, and this they had not done uselessly, for through this increasing opening could be seen the floor of the gallery covered with the wounded and dead bodies.

On hearing the shrieks of the women, who believed that through this opening death was advancing upon them, the king returned.

"Sire," said De Charny, "shut yourself up with the queen in the farthest room from this; close every door after you; place two of us behind the doors. I demand

to be the last, and to guard the last door. I will answer for it that we hold out two hours; they have been more than forty minutes in breaking through this one."

The king hesitated; it appeared to him to be humiliating to fly thus from room to room, to intrench himself thus behind every partition.

If the queen had not been there, he would not have retreated a single step.

If the queen had not her children with her, she would have remained as firmly as the king.

But alas! poor human beings, kings or subjects, we have always in our hearts some secret opening by which courage escapes and terror enters.

The king was about to give the order to fly to the remotest room, when suddenly the arms were withdrawn, the pikes and bayonets disappeared, the shouts and threats at once ceased.

A general silence ensued, every one remaining with distended lips, eagerly listening ears, and suppressed respiration.

They then heard the measured steps of regular troops advancing.

"They are the National Guards!" cried De Charny.

"Monsieur de Charny!" cried a voice, and at the same time the well-known face of Billot appeared at the opening.

"Billot!" cried De Charny, "is it you, my friend?"

"Yes, yes, 't is I," replied the honest farmer; "and the king and queen, where are they?"

"They are here."

"Safe and sound?"

"Safe and sound."

"May God be praised! This way, Monsieur Gilbert, this way!" cried he, in his stentorian voice.

At the name of Gilbert, the hearts of two women bounded with very different feelings.

The heart of the queen and the heart of Andrée.

De Charny turned round instinctively. He saw both Andrée and the queen turn pale at this name.

He shook his head and sighed.

"Open the door, gentlemen," said the king.

The guards hastened to obey his orders, throwing aside the remains of the barricade.

During this time the voice of Lafayette was heard crying: —

"Gentlemen of the National Guard of Paris, I last night pledged my word to the king that no injury should be done to any one belonging to his Majesty. If you allow his guards to be massacred, you will make me forfeit my word of honor, and I shall no longer be worthy to be your chief."

When the door was opened, the two persons first perceived were General de Lafayette and Gilbert; while a little to their left Billot was standing, perfectly delighted at the share which he had taken in his Majesty's deliverance.

It was Billot who had gone to awaken Lafayette.

Behind Lafayette, Gilbert, and Billot, was Captain Goudran, commanding the company of the centre St. Philippe de Roule.

Madame Adelaide was the first who rushed forward to greet Lafayette, and throwing her arms round his neck with all the gratitude of terror: —

"Ah, sir!" she exclaimed, "it is you who have saved us!"

Lafayette advanced respectfully, and was about crossing the threshold of the Œil de Bœuf, when an officer stopped his progress.

"Your pardon, sir," said he to him; "but have you the right of admission?"

"If he has not," said the king, holding out his hand to Lafayette, "I give it to him."

"Long live the king! long live the queen!" cried Billot.

The king turned towards him.

"That is a voice I know," said he, smiling.

"You are very kind, Sire," replied the worthy farmer. "Yes, yes; you heard that voice on the journey to Paris. Ah, had you but remained in Paris instead of returning here!"

The queen knit her brows.

"Yes," she said, "since you Parisians are so very amiable."

"Well, sir?" said the king to Monsieur de Lafayette, as if he had been asking him the question, "In your opinion, what ought now to be done?"

"Sire," respectfully replied Monsieur de Lafayette, "I think it would be well that your Majesty should show yourself on the balcony."

The king asked Gilbert for his opinion, but merely by a look.

Louis XVI. then went straight to the window, and without hesitation opened it himself and appeared upon the balcony.

A tremendous shout, a unanimous shout, burst from the people, of:—

"Long live the king!"

Then a second cry followed the first:—

"The king to Paris!"

Between these two cries, and sometimes overwhelming them, some formidable voices shouted:—

"The queen! the queen!"

At this cry everybody shuddered; the king turned pale, De Charny turned pale, even Gilbert himself turned pale.

The queen raised her head.

She was also pale, but with compressed lips and frowning brow, she was standing near the window. Madame Royale was leaning against her. Before her was the dauphin, and on the fair head of the child reclined her convulsively clinched hand, white as the purest marble.

"The queen! the queen!" reiterated the voices, becoming more and more formidable.

"The people desire to see you, Madame," said General de Lafayette.

"Oh, do not go, my mother!" said Madame Royale, in great agony, and throwing her arms round the queen's neck.

The queen looked at Lafayette.

"Fear nothing, Madame," said he to her.

"What!" she exclaimed, "and quite alone?"

Lafayette smiled; and respectfully, and with the delightful manner which he retained even to his latest days, he took the two children from their mother and made them first ascend the balcony.

Then offering his hand to the queen: —

"If your Majesty will deign to confide in me," said he, "I will be responsible for all."

And he conducted the queen on to the balcony.

It was a terrible spectacle, and one likely to cause the vertigo; for the marble courtyard was transformed into a human sea, full of roaring waves.

At the sight of the queen, an immense cry was uttered by the whole of this crowd; and no one could have been positive whether it was a cry of menace or of joy.

Lafayette kissed the queen's hand; then loud applause burst forth.

In the noble French nation there is, even in the veins of the lowest-born, chivalric blood.

The queen breathed more freely.

"What a strange people!" she exclaimed.

Then, suddenly shuddering: —

"And my guards, sir," said she, "my guards, who have saved my life? Can you do nothing for them?"

"Let me have one of them, Madame," said Lafayette.

"Monsieur de Charny! Monsieur de Charny!" cried the queen.

But De Charny withdrew a step or two; he had understood what was required of him.

He did not wish to make an apology for the evening of the 1st of October.

Not having been guilty, he required no amnesty.

Andrée, on her side, was impressed with the same feeling. She had stretched out her hand to De Charny for the purpose of preventing him. Her hand met the hand of the count, and these two hands were pressed within each other.

The queen had observed this, notwithstanding she had so much to observe at that moment.

Her eyes flashed fire, and with a palpitating heart and broken accents: —

"Sir," said she to another guard, — "sir, come here, I command you."

The guard obeyed.

He had not, moreover, the same motives for hesitating as De Charny had.

Monsieur de Lafayette drew the guard on to the balcony, and taking his own tricolored cockade from his hat, placed it in that of the guard, after which he embraced him.

"Long live Lafayette! long live the body-guard!" shouted fifty thousand voices.

Some few wished to utter some hollow growlings, the last threat of the disappearing tempest.

But these malcontents were overwhelmed by the universal acclamation.

"Come," said Lafayette, "all is ended, and fine weather has returned."

Then, stepping into the room: —

"But that it should not again be overcast, Sire, there still remains a sacrifice for you to make."

"Yes," said the king, pensively, "to leave Versailles, is it not?"

"And come to Paris, — yes, Sire."

"Sir," said the king, "you may announce to the people that at one o'clock I, the queen, and my children will set out for Paris."

Then, turning to the queen: —

"Madame," said he, "you had better retire to your own apartment, and prepare yourself."

This order of the king appeared to remind De Charny of an event of importance which he had forgotten.

He rushed from the room, preceding the queen.

"Why are you going to my apartment, sir?" said the queen, harshly, to him; "you have no need to go there."

"I earnestly trust it may be so, Madame," replied De Charny. "But be not uneasy; if really I am not needed there, I shall not remain long enough to cause my presence to be displeasing to your Majesty."

The queen followed him; traces of blood stained the floor, and the queen saw them. She closed her eyes, and seeking an arm to guide her, she took that of De Charny, and walked some steps in this way as a blind person.

Suddenly she felt that every nerve in De Charny's body shuddered.

"What is the matter, sir?" she said, opening her eyes.

Then suddenly: —

"A dead body! a dead body!" she exclaimed.

"Your Majesty will excuse my withdrawing my arm," said he. "I have found that which I came to seek in your apartment, — the dead body of my brother George."

It was in fact the dead body of the unfortunate young man, whom his brother had ordered to allow himself to be killed rather than that the queen should be approached!

He had punctually obeyed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

GEORGE DE CHARNY.

THE circumstances we have just related have been recounted in a hundred different ways; for they were certainly the most interesting which occurred in the great period between 1789 and 1795, and which is called the French Revolution.

They will be related in a hundred various ways still; but we can affirm beforehand that no one will relate them with more impartiality than we have done.

After all these narratives, our own not excepted, there will still remain so much to do; for history is never perfect. Each of a hundred thousand witnesses has his version; each of a hundred thousand details has its interest and its romance, and for the very reason that they are all different.

But of what service will all these narratives be, however true they are? Did ever a political lesson prove instructive to a political man?

The tears, the mournful stories, and the blood of kings, have they ever had the effect of the drop of water which hollows the rock?

No! queens have wept; no! kings have been murdered; and yet their successors have never profited by the cruel lesson which fate had given them.

Faithful subjects have been prodigal of their devotedness, without those whom fatality had destined to misfortune having derived any advantage from it.

Alas! we have seen the queen almost stumble over the body of one of those men whom kings, when they depart, leave bleeding upon the road which they have traversed in their fall.

A few hours after the cry of terror which the queen had uttered, and at the moment when, with the king and her children, she was about to leave Versailles, where she was never to return, the following scene took place in an interior courtyard, damp from the rain, and which a sharp autumnal wind had begun to dry.

A man dressed in black was leaning over a dead body.

A man dressed in the uniform of the royal guards was kneeling on the opposite side of this body.

At three paces from them a third person was standing, with clasped hands and fixed eyes, gazing intently at them.

The dead body was that of a young man of from twenty-two to twenty-three years of age, the whole of whose blood appeared to have escaped through large wounds in his head and chest.

His chest was scarred with frightful gashes; the skin surrounding them was of a livid white; it appeared still to heave with the disdainful breathings of a hopeless defence.

His half-opened mouth, his head thrown back with an expression of pain and anger, recalled to the mind the beautiful statue of the dying gladiator.

"And life with a long groan fled to the abode of shadows."

The man dressed in black was Gilbert.

The officer on his knees was the Count de Charny.

The man standing near them was Billot.

The corpse was that of the Baron George de Charny.

Gilbert, leaning over the body, gazed at it with that sublime intentness which with the dying retains life when about to escape, and with the dead almost recalls the soul which has taken flight.

"Cold, stiff; he is dead, — positively dead!" said he at length.

The Count de Charny uttered a hoarse groan, and pressing in his arms the insensible body, burst into sobs so heart-rending that the doctor shuddered, and Billot ran to hide his head in a corner of the small courtyard.

Then suddenly the count raised the body, placed it against the wall, and slowly withdrew, still looking at it as if he expected that his dead brother would become reanimated and follow him.

Gilbert remained still kneeling on one knee, his head reclining on his hand, pensive and motionless.

Billot then left his dark corner and went up to Gilbert; he no longer heard the count's sobs, which had torn his heart.

"Alas! alas! Monsieur Gilbert," said he, "this, then, is really what we have to expect in civil war, and that which you predicted to me is now happening; only it is happening sooner than I expected, and even sooner than you yourself expected. I saw these *villains* murdering unworthy people; and now I see these *villains* murdering honest people. I saw them massacre Flesselles; I saw them massacre Monsieur de Launay; I saw Foulon massacred; I saw Berthier massacred. I then shuddered in every limb, and I felt a horror for all men.

"And yet the men they were then killing were miserable wretches.

"It was then, Monsieur Gilbert, that you predicted the time would come when they would kill worthy people.

"They have killed the Baron de Charny. I no longer shudder, — I weep; I have no longer a horror of others, — I fear I may resemble them."

"Billot!" cried Gilbert.

But without listening, Billot continued: —

"Here is a young man whom they have assassinated, Monsieur Gilbert. He was a mere boy; he was fairly combating; he was not assassinating, but he has been assassinated."

Billot heaved a sigh, which seemed to issue from the bottom of his heart.

"Ah, the unhappy youth!" he cried. "I knew him when he was a child. I have seen him pass by when he was going from Boursonne to Villers-Cotterets on his little gray pony; he was carrying bread to the poor from his mother.

"He was a beautiful boy, with a fair, rosy complexion and large blue eyes; he was always smiling. Well! it is very extraordinary, since I saw him stretched out there, bloody and disfigured, it is not a corpse that I behold in him, but always the smiling child of former days, carrying a basket in his left hand and a purse in his right.

"Ah, Monsieur Gilbert, in truth I believe I have now had enough of it, and do not desire to see anything more; for you predicted this to me. The time will come when I shall also see you die, and then — "

Gilbert gently shook his head.

"Billot," said he, "be calm; my hour has not yet come."

"Be it so; but mine has come, Doctor. I have a harvest down yonder which has rotted, fields that are lying fallow, a family whom I love ten times more dearly on seeing this dead body, whose family are weeping for him."

"What do you mean to say, my dear Billot? Do you believe, perchance, that I am going to afflict myself about you?"

"Oh, no!" replied Billot, ingenuously; "but as I suffer, I complain; and as complaining leads to nothing, I calculate on alleviating my own sufferings in my own way."

"Which means to say that —"

"It means that I desire to return to my farm, Monsieur Gilbert."

"Again, Billot?"

"Ah, Monsieur Gilbert, there is a voice down yonder which is calling for me."

"Take care, Billot; that voice is advising you to desert."

"I am not a soldier, and therefore there is no desertion, Monsieur Gilbert."

"What you are wishing to do would be a desertion far more culpable than that of a soldier."

"Explain that to me, Doctor."

"How! you have come to Paris to demolish; and you would fly as soon as the building is falling."

"Yes, that I may not crush my friends."

"Or rather that you may not be crushed yourself."

"Why, why!" replied Billot, "it is not forbidden that a man should think a little of himself."

"Ah! that is a magnificent calculation, indeed; as if stones did not roll; as if in rolling they did not crush, and even at a distance, the timid men who would fly from them."

"Oh, you are well aware that I am not a timid man, Monsieur Gilbert."

"Then you will remain, Billot; I have occasion for you here."

"My family also stands in need of me down yonder."

"Billot! Billot! I thought that you had agreed with me that a man who loves his country has no family."

"I should like to know whether you would use the same language if Sebastien lay there, as that young man lies."

And he pointed to the dead body.

"Billot," replied Gilbert, in a hollow tone, "the day will arrive when my son shall see me as I now see that body."

"So much the worse for him, Doctor, if on that day he should be as calm as you are now."

"I hope that he will be a better man than I am, Billot, and that he will be firmer still, and precisely because I shall have given him an example of firmness."

"Then you would have the child accustom himself to see blood flowing around him, that he should in his youthful years become inured to great conflagrations, to gibbets and riots, attacks in the dark; that he should see kings threatened, queens insulted; and then, when he has become as hard as his sword-blade, and quite as cold, you would still expect that he should love, that he should respect you?"

"No, I would not have him see all that, Billot; and that is the reason for my sending him back to Villers-Cotterets, and I now almost regret having done so."

"How! you now regret it?"

"Yes."

"And why do you now regret?"

"Because he would this day have seen exemplified the axiom of the lion and the rat, which to him is but a fable."

"What do you mean to say, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"I say that he would have seen a poor farmer, whom

chance has brought to Paris, a brave and honest man, who can neither read nor write, who never could have believed that his life could influence, either for good or evil the high destinies which he scarcely dared to raise his eyes to; I say that he would have seen this man who had already at one time wished to leave Paris, as he again wishes it, — I say that he would have seen this man contribute efficaciously to save the life of a king, a queen, and two royal children."

Billot stared at Gilbert with astonished eyes.

"And how so, Monsieur Gilbert?" said he.

"How so! you sublimely ignorant fellow! I will tell you how. By waking at the first noise that was made; by guessing that this noise was a tempest ready to burst upon Versailles; by running to wake up Monsieur de Lafayette, — for Monsieur de Lafayette was asleep."

"Zounds! that was perfectly natural, for he had been twelve hours on horseback, and for twenty-four hours he had not been in bed."

"By leading him to the palace," continued Gilbert, "and by bringing him at once into the midst of the assassins, and crying: 'Stop, wretches, here is the avenger!'"

"Well, now, that is really true; I did all that."

"Well, then, Billot, you see that this is a great compensation. If you did not prevent this young man being assassinated, you have perhaps prevented the assassination of the king, the queen, and the two children. Ungrateful man! and you ask to leave the service of the country at the very moment when the country recompenses you."

"But who will ever know what I have done, since I myself even had no idea of it?"

"You and I, Billot; and is not that enough?"

Billot reflected for a moment, then, holding out his rough hand to the doctor: —

"I declare you are right, Monsieur Gilbert," said he; "but you know that a man is but a weak, egotistical, inconstant creature. There is but you, Monsieur Gilbert, who are firm, generous, and constant. What is it that has made you so?"

"Misfortune," said Gilbert, with a smile, in which there was more sorrow than in a sob.

"That is singular," said Billot; "I had thought that misfortune made men wicked."

"The weak, — yes."

"Then if I should be unfortunate, I should become wicked."

"You may perhaps be unfortunate; but you will never become wicked, Billot."

"Are you sure of that?"

"I will answer for you."

"In that case —" said Billot, sighing.

"In that case —" repeated Gilbert.

"Why, I will remain with you; but more than once I know I shall again be vacillating."

"And every time it happens, Billot, I shall be near you to sustain your firmness."

"Well, again I say, so be it," sighed the farmer.

Then, casting a last look on the body of the Baron George de Charny, which the servants were about to remove on a bier: —

"It matters not!" said Billot; "he was a handsome boy, that little George de Charny, on his little gray pony, with a basket on his left arm and his purse in his right hand."

CHAPTER XXVII.

DEPARTURE, JOURNEY, AND ARRIVAL OF PITOU AND SEBASTIEN GILBERT.

We have seen, under circumstances long anterior to those we have now related, the departure of Pitou and Sebastien Gilbert.

Our intention being, for the present, to abandon the principal personages of our history, to follow the two young travellers, we hope that our readers will allow us to enter into some details relating to their departure from Paris, their journey, and their arrival at Villers-Cotterets, where Pitou felt certain that they were both greatly missed.

Gilbert had commissioned Pitou to go to the College Louis-le-Grand and to bring Sebastien to him. For this purpose they put Pitou into a hackney-coach, and as they had confided Sebastien to Pitou, they confided Pitou to the care of the coachman.

In about an hour the coach brought back Pitou; Pitou brought back Sebastien.

Gilbert and Billot were waiting for them in an apartment which they had taken in the Rue St. Honoré, a little above the Church of the Assumption.

Gilbert explained to his son that he was to set out the same evening with Pitou, and asked him whether he would not be well pleased to return to the great woods he so much loved.

"Yes, Father," replied the boy, "provided that you will come to see me at Villers-Cotterets, or that you allow me to come to see you at Paris."

"You may be easy on that score, my child," replied Gilbert, kissing his son's forehead; "you know that now I shall never be happy when away from you."

As to Pitou, he colored with delight at the idea of setting out the same evening.

He turned pale with happiness when Gilbert placed both Sebastien's hands within one of Pitou's, and in the other ten double louis, of the value of forty-eight livres each.

A long series of instructions, almost all regarding the health of his companion, were given by the doctor to Pitou, to which he religiously listened.

Sebastien cast down his large eyes to conceal his tears.

Pitou was weighing and jingling his louis in his immense pocket.

Gilbert gave a letter to Pitou, who was thus installed in his functions, *pro tem.*, of tutor.

This letter was for the Abbé Fortier.

The doctor's harangue being terminated, Billot spoke in his turn.

"Monsieur Gilbert," said he, "has confided to you the health of Sebastien; I will confide to you his personal safety. You have a pair of stout fists; in case of need, make good use of them."

"Yes," said Pitou; "and besides them, I have a sabre."

"Do not make an abuse of that."

"I will be merciful," said Pitou; "*clemens ero.*"

"A hero, if you will," repeated Billot, but not intending to say it jeeringly.

"And now," said Gilbert, "I will point out to you the way in which you and Sebastien should travel."

"Oh!" cried Pitou, "it is only eighteen leagues from Paris to Villers-Cotterets; we will talk all the way, Sebastien and I."

Sebastien looked at his father, as if to ask him whether it would be very amusing to talk during the journey of eighteen leagues with Pitou.

Pitou caught this glance.

"We will speak Latin," said he, "and we shall be taken for learned men."

This was the dream of his ambition, the innocent creature.

How many others with ten double louis in their pocket, would have said: —

"We will buy gingerbread."

Gilbert appeared for a moment to be in doubt.

He looked at Pitou, then at Billot.

"I understand you," said the latter; "you are asking yourself whether Pitou is a proper guide, and you hesitate to confide your child to him."

"Oh!" said Gilbert, "it is not to him that I confide him."

"To whom, then?"

Gilbert looked up to heaven; he was still too much a Voltairian to dare to reply: —

"To God!"

And the affair was settled. They resolved, in consequence, not to make any change in Pitou's plan, which promised, without exposing him to too much fatigue, a journey replete with amusement to Sebastien; but it was decided they should not commence it until the following morning.

Gilbert might have sent his son to Villers-Cotterets by

one of the public conveyances which at that period were running between Paris and the frontiers, or even in his own carriage; but we know how much he feared the isolation of thought for young Sebastien, and nothing so much isolates dreaming people as the motion and rumbling noise of a carriage.

He therefore took the two young travellers as far as Bourget, and then, showing them the open road, on which a brilliant sun was shining, and bordered by a double row of trees, he embraced his son again, and said: —

"Now go!"

Pitou therefore set off, leading Sebastien, who several times turned round to blow kisses to his father, who was standing, his arms crossed, upon the spot where he had taken leave of his son, following him with his eyes as if he were following a dream.

Pitou raised himself to the full height of his extraordinary stature. Pitou was very proud of the confidence reposed in him by a person of Monsieur Gilbert's importance, — one of the king's physicians-in-ordinary.

Pitou prepared himself scrupulously to fulfil the task intrusted to him, which combined the functions of a tutor and almost those of a governess.

Moreover, it was with full confidence in himself that he was conducting little Sebastien; he travelled very quietly, passing through villages which were all in commotion and terror since the events at Paris, which had only just occurred, — for although we have brought up these events to the 5th and 6th of October, it must be remembered that it was towards the end of July or the beginning of August that Pitou and Sebastien left Paris.

Besides this, Pitou had retained his helmet for a headdress, and his long sabre as a defensive weapon.

These were all that he had gained by the events of the 13th and 14th of July; but this twofold trophy satisfied his ambition, and by giving him a formidable air, at the same time sufficed for his safety.

Moreover, this formidable air, to which indubitably the helmet and dragoon's sabre greatly contributed, Pitou had acquired independently of them. A man has not assisted in taking the Bastille, he has not even merely been present at it, without having retained something heroic in his deportment.

Pitou had, in addition to this, become somewhat of an advocate.

No one could have listened to the resolutions passed at the Hôtel de Ville, to the orations of Monsieur Bailly, the harangues of Monsieur de Lafayette, without becoming somewhat of an orator; above all, if he had already studied the Latin *Conciones*, of which French eloquence at the close of the eighteenth century was rather a pale, though a tolerably correct, imitation.

Furnished with these two powerful modes of argument, to which two vigorous fists were no mean adjuncts, and possessing a rare amenity of smile and a most interesting appetite, Pitou journeyed on agreeably towards Villers-Cotterets.

For the curious in politics he had news, besides which he could manufacture them in case of need, having resided in Paris, where, from that period, their fabrication has been always remarkable.

He related how Monsieur Berthier had left immense buried treasures, which the Government would some day manage to dig up; how Monsieur de Lafayette, the paragon of all glory, the pride of provincial France, was no longer considered in Paris but as a half-used-up doll, whose white horse was a fertile subject for the concoction

of jests and caricatures; how Monsieur Bailly, whom Monsieur de Lafayette honored with his most intimate friendship, as well as all the members of his family, was an aristocrat, and that people addicted to scandal said even worse things of him.

When he related all this, Pitou raised tempests of anger against him, but he possessed the *quos ego* of all these storms. He would then relate unpublished anecdotes of the "Austrian woman."

His inexhaustible fancy procured for him an uninterrupted succession of excellent repasts, until he arrived at Vauciennes, — the last village on the road before reaching Villers-Cotterets.

As Sebastien, on the contrary, eat little or nothing; as he did not speak at all; as he was a pale and sickly-looking youth, — every one who felt interested in Sebastien, admired the vigilant and paternal care of Pitou towards him, who caressed, cosseted, attended on the boy, and into the bargain, eat his part of the dinners, without seeming to have any other motive than that of being agreeable to him.

When they arrived at Vauciennes, Pitou appeared to hesitate. He looked at Sebastien; Sebastien looked at Pitou.

Pitou scratched his head. This was his mode of expressing his embarrassment.

Sebastien knew enough of Pitou to be aware of this peculiarity.

"Well, what is the matter, Pitou?" asked Sebastien.

"The matter is, that if it were the same thing to you, and if you were not too tired, instead of continuing our way straight on, we would return to Villers-Cotterets through Haramont."

And Pitou, honest lad, blushed while expressing this

wish, as Catherine would have blushed when expressing a less innocent desire.

Sebastien at once understood him.

"Ah, yes!" said he, "it was there our poor mother, Pitou, died."

"Come, my brother, come."

Pitou pressed Sebastien to his heart with an energy that almost suffocated him; and taking the boy's hand, he began running down the cross-road which leads along the valley of Wuala, and so rapidly that after going a hundred paces, poor Sebastien was completely out of breath, and was obliged to say:—

"Too fast, Pitou, too fast!"

Pitou stopped; he had not perceived that he was going too fast, it being his usual pace.

He saw that Sebastien was pale and out of breath.

He took him on his shoulders and carried him.

In this way Pitou might walk as fast as he pleased.

As it was not the first time that Pitou had carried Sebastien, Sebastien made no objection.

They thus reached Largny. There Sebastien, feeling that Pitou was panting, declared that he had rested long enough, and that he was ready to walk at any pace that might suit Pitou.

Pitou, being full of magnanimity, moderated his pace.

Half an hour after this, Pitou was at the entrance of Haramont, the pretty village where he first saw the light, as says the romance of a great poet, — a romance the music of which is of more value than the words.

When they reached it, the two boys cast a look around them to discover their old haunts.

The first thing which they perceived was the crucifix which popular piety habitually places at the entrance to all villages.

Alas! even at Haramont they felt the strange progression which Paris was making towards atheism. The nails which fastened the right arm and the feet of the figure of Christ had broken off, from rust having eaten through them. The figure was hanging, suspended only by the left arm; and no one had had the pious idea of replacing the symbol of that liberty, that equality, that fraternity which every one was in those days preaching.

Pitou was not devout, but he had the traditions of his childhood. That this holy symbol should have been thus neglected, wounded him to the heart. He searched the hedges for one of those creeping plants which are as thin and as tenacious as iron wire, laid his helmet and his sabre on the grass, climbed up the cross, refastened the right arm of the Divine Martyr to it, kissed the feet, and descended.

During this time Sebastien was praying on his knees at the foot of the cross. For whom was he praying? Who can tell?

Perhaps for that vision of his childhood which he fondly hoped once more to find beneath the great trees; for that unknown mother who is never unknown; for if she has not nourished us from her breast, yet is she still our mother.

His holy action being accomplished, Pitou replaced his helmet on his head, and replaced his sabre in his belt.

When Sebastien had concluded his prayer, he made the sign of the cross, and again took Pitou's hand.

Both of them then entered the village, and advanced towards the cottage in which Pitou had been born, in which Sebastien had been nursed.

Pitou knew every stone in Haramont, and yet he could not find the cottage. He was obliged to inquire what

had become of it, and the person he applied to showed him a small house built of stone, with a slated roof.

The garden of this house was surrounded by a wall.

Aunt Angélique had sold her sister's house, and the new proprietor, having full right to do so, had pulled down everything, — the old walls, which had again become dust; the old door, with a hole cut in it to allow ingress to the cat; the old windows, with their panes, half glass, half paper, upon which had appeared in strokes the elementary lessons Pitou had received in writing; the thatched roof with its green moss, and the plants which had grown and blossomed on its summit. The new proprietor had pulled down all this; all had disappeared.

The gate was closed, and lying on the threshold, was a big black dog, who showed his teeth to Pitou.

"Come," said Pitou, the tears starting from his eyes; "let us be gone, Sebastien. Let us go to a place where at least I am sure that nothing will have changed."

And Pitou dragged Sebastien to the cemetery where his mother had been buried.

He was right, the poor boy! There nothing had been changed, only the grass had grown; it grows so rapidly in cemeteries that there was some chance even that he would not be able to recognize his mother's grave. Fortunately, at the same time that the grass had grown, a branch of a weeping-willow which Pitou had planted had, in three years, become a tree. He went straight to the tree and kissed the earth which it overshadowed, with the same instinctive piety with which he had kissed the feet of the figure of Christ.

When he rose from the ground, he felt the branches of the willow, agitated by the wind, waving around his head.

He then stretched out his arms, and clasping the branches, pressed them to his heart.

It was as if he was holding the hair of his mother, which he was embracing for the last time.

The two youths remained a considerable time by the side of this grave, and evening was approaching.

It was necessary that they should leave it, — the only thing that appeared to have any remembrance of Pitou.

When about to leave it, Pitou for a moment had the idea of breaking off a slip of the willow and placing it in his helmet; but just when he was raising his hand to do so, he paused.

It appeared to him that it would be giving pain to his poor mother to tear off a branch from a tree, the roots of which perhaps were entwined round the decaying deal coffin in which her remains reposed.

He again kissed the ground, took Sebastien by the hand, and left the cemetery.

All the inhabitants of the village were either in the fields or in the woods. Few persons, therefore, had seen Pitou; and disguised as he was by his helmet and his long sabre, among those persons no one had recognized him.

He therefore took the road to Villers-Cotterets, — a delightful road which runs through the forest for nearly three quarters of a league, — without meeting any living or animated object to divert his grief.

Sebastien followed, mute and pensive as himself.

They arrived at Villers-Cotterets at about five in the afternoon.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HOW PITOU, AFTER HAVING BEEN CURSED AND TURNED OUT OF DOORS BY HIS AUNT ON ACCOUNT OF A BARBARISM AND THREE SOLECISMS, WAS AGAIN CURSED AND TURNED OUT BY HER ON ACCOUNT OF A FOWL COOKED WITH RICE.

PITOU arrived at Villers-Cotterets by that part of the park which is called the Pheasantry. He walked across the dancing place, always abandoned during the week, and to which he had three weeks previously conducted Catherine.

What a number of things had happened to Pitou and to France during those three weeks!

Then, having followed the long avenue of chestnut-trees, he reached the square before the château, and knocked at the back door of the college presided over by the Abbé Fortier.

It was full three years since Pitou had left Haramont, while it was only three weeks since he had left Villers-Cotterets. It was therefore very natural that he should not have been recognized at Haramont, and that he should have been recognized at Villers-Cotterets.

In a moment a rumor ran through the town that Pitou had returned there with young Sebastien Gilbert; that both of them had gone into the house of the Abbé Fortier; that Sebastien looked much the same as when he had left them, but that Pitou had a helmet and a long sword.

The result of this was that a great crowd had assembled at the principal gate; for they calculated that if

Pitou had gone into the château by the small private door, he would come out of it by the great gate in the Rue de Soissons.

This was his direct road for going to Pleux.

In fact, Pitou remained at the Abbé Fortier's only long enough to deliver into the hands of the abbé's sister the letter from the doctor, the young lad himself, and five double louis destined to pay his board.

The Abbé Fortier's sister was at first much terrified when she saw so formidable a soldier advancing through the garden ; but soon, beneath the dragoon's helmet, she recognized the placid and honest face of Pitou, which somewhat tranquillized her.

And finally, the sight of the five double louis reassured her altogether.

This terror of the poor old maid can be the more readily explained, by informing our readers that the Abbé Fortier had gone out with his pupils to give them a walk, and that she was quite alone in the house.

Pitou, after having delivered the letter and the five double louis, embraced Sebastien, and left the house, clapping his helmet on his head with due military bravado.

Sebastien had shed some tears on separating from Pitou, although the separation was not to be of long duration, and notwithstanding that his society was not exceedingly amusing ; but his hilarity, his mildness, his continued obligingness, had touched the heart of young Gilbert. Pitou had the disposition of those fine great Newfoundland dogs, who sometimes fatigue you very much, but who in the end disarm your anger by licking your hand.

There was one thing which diminished Sebastien's grief, which was that Pitou promised that he would often go to see him. One thing diminished Pitou's regret, and this was that Sebastien thanked him for his promise.

But now let us for a while follow our hero from the house of the Abbé Fortier to that of his Aunt Angélique, situated, as our readers already know, at the farther end of Pleux.

On leaving the Abbé Fortier's house, Pitou found some twenty persons who were waiting for him. His strange equipment, a description of which had been given throughout the town, was in part known to those assembled. On seeing him thus return from Paris, where so much fighting was going on, they presumed that Pitou had been fighting too, and they wished to hear the news.

This news Pitou communicated with his accustomed majesty. The taking of the Bastille, the exploits of Monsieur Billot and of Monsieur Maillard, of Messieurs Elie and Hullin; how Billot had fallen into the ditch of the fortress, and how he, Pitou, had dragged him out of it; finally, how they had saved Monsieur Gilbert, who during six or seven days had been one of the prisoners confined there.

The auditors already knew most of the details that Pitou had related to them. They had read all these details in the newspapers of the day; but however faithful the editor of a newspaper may be in his writings, he is always less interesting than an ocular witness who relates the incidents, — who may be interrupted, and who resumes; who may be questioned, and replies.

Now Pitou resumed, replied, gave all the details, showing, when interrupted, the greatest obligingness, in all his answers the greatest possible amenity.

The result of all this was that in about an hour's conversation at the door of the Abbé Fortier, in which he gave a succinct narrative, the Rue de Soissons was crowded with auditors, when one of the persons present,

observing some signs of anxiety in Pitou's countenance, took upon himself to say : —

" But he is fatigued, poor Pitou; and we are keeping him here upon his legs instead of allowing him to go to his Aunt Angélique's house, poor dear woman, who will be so delighted at seeing him again."

" It is not that I am fatigued," said Pitou, " but that I am hungry; I have never been fatigued, but I am hungry."

Then, and in consequence of this ingenuous declaration, the crowd, who highly respected the cravings of Pitou's stomach, respectfully made way for him to pass, and Pitou, followed by some persons more inveterately curious than the rest, was permitted to wend his way to Pleux; that is to say, to the house of his Aunt Angélique.

Aunt Angélique was not at home; she had gone doubtless to visit some neighbors, and the door was locked.

Several persons then invited Pitou to go to their houses and take the nourishment he stood in need of; but Pitou proudly refused.

" But," said they to him, " you see, dear Pitou, that your aunt's door is locked."

" The door of an aunt cannot remain locked before an obedient and hungry nephew," answered Pitou, majestically.

And drawing his long sabre, the sight of which made men and children start back with affright, he introduced the point of it between the bolt and the staple of the lock, gave a vigorous jerk, and the door flew open, to the great admiration of all present, who no longer doubted the great exploits of Pitou, since they saw him with so much audacity expose himself to the anger of the ill-tempered old maid.

The interior of the house was in precisely the same state as when Pitou had left it. The famous leathern armchair royally held its state in the centre of the room; two or three other mutilated chairs and stools formed the lame court of the great armchair; at the end of the room was the kneading-trough; on the right, the cupboard, and on the left, the chimney.

Pitou entered the house with a bland smile. He had no quarrel with all these poor articles of furniture; on the contrary, they were the friends of his youth. They were, it is true, almost as hard in their nature as Aunt Angélique; but when they were opened, there was something good to be found in them; while had Aunt Angélique been opened, her inside would certainly have been found dryer and worse than her exterior.

Pitou, upon the instant, gave a proof of what we have advanced to the persons who had followed him, and who, seeing what was going on, were waiting outside the house, curious to see what would be the result when Aunt Angélique should return home.

It was, moreover, very perceptible that all these persons felt great sympathy for Pitou. We have said that Pitou was hungry, so hungry that it had been perceived by the change in his countenance.

Therefore he lost no time; he went straight to the kneading-trough and cupboard.

In former times — we say former times, although scarcely three weeks had elapsed since Pitou's departure; for in our opinion, time is to be measured, not by its duration, but by the events which have occurred; in former times, Pitou, unless urged on by the Evil Spirit, or by irresistible hunger, both of them infernal powers, and which much resemble each other — in former times Pitou would have seated himself upon the threshold of the

closed door, and humbly waited the return of Aunt Angélique ; when she had returned, would have bowed to her with a soft smile ; then, standing aside, would have made room for her to pass, would have followed her into the house, would have gone for a loaf and a knife, that she might measure out his portion to him ; then, his share being cut off, he would have cast a longing eye, a single look, tearful and magnetic, — he thought it so at least, — magnetic to such a degree as to call forth the cheese or any other dainty from the shelf of the cupboard.

An electricity which rarely succeeded, but which, however, sometimes did succeed.

But now Pitou, having become a man, no longer acted thus; he tranquilly raised the lid of the bread-trough, drew from his pocket his long clasp-knife, took the loaf and angularly cut off a slice which might have weighed a good kilogram (two pounds), as is elegantly said since the adoption of the new-system weights.

Then he let fall the loaf into the trough again, and the cover on the loaf.

After which, without allowing his equanimity to be at all disturbed, he went to the cupboard.

It appeared to Pitou for an instant that he heard the growling voice of Aunt Angélique ; but the cupboard-door creaked upon its hinges, and this noise, which had all the power of reality, drowned the other, which had only the influence of imagination.

At the time when Pitou was one of the household, the avaricious aunt would provide only viands of a coarse description, such as Marolles cheese, or thin slices of highly salted bacon, surrounded by the verdant leaves of an enormous cabbage ; but since this fabulous devourer had left the country, the aunt, despite of her avarice, would

cook up for herself dishes that would last her for a whole week, and which were of a much more succulent description.

Sometimes it would be a good piece of beef *à la mode*, surrounded by carrots and onions, stewed in the gravy; sometimes a haricot of mutton with savory potatoes, big as a child's head, or long as cucumbers; sometimes a calf's foot, flavored with some shallots in vinegar, to give it more piquancy; sometimes it was a gigantic omelet made in the great frying-pan and variegated with a quantity of chives and parsley, or enamelled with slices of bacon, one of which sufficed for the dinner of the old woman, even on the days when she had the greatest appetite.

During the whole week Aunt Angélique would, with great discretion, enjoy the savory dish, making only such breaches in the precious morsel as the exigencies of the moment required.

Each day did she rejoice in being alone to consume such good things, and during the thrice happy week she thought of her nephew, Ange Pitou, as often as she placed her hand upon the dish or raised a mouthful to her lips.

Pitou was in great good luck.

He had fallen upon a day — it was Monday — when Aunt Angélique had cooked an old cock with rice, which had boiled so long, surrounded with its bland covering of paste, that the bones had left the flesh, and the flesh had become almost tender.

It was a formidable dish; it was served up in a deep wide porringer, which, though black externally, was resplendent and attractive to the eye.

The meat was placed above the rice, looking like small islands on the bosom of a vast lake; and the cock's comb,

rising above them all, looked like the crest of Ceuta in the Straits of Gibraltar.

Pitou had not even the courtesy to utter one word of admiration on seeing this great marvel.

Spoiled by good living, he forgot — the ungrateful fellow! — that such magnificence had never until then inhabited the cupboard of Aunt Angélique.

He held his great hunch of bread in his right hand.

He seized the vast dish in his left, and held it in equilibrium by the pressure of his immense square thumb, buried as far as the first joint in the unctuous mess, the odor of which was grateful to his olfactory organs. At this moment it appeared to Pitou that a shadow interposed between the light of the doorway and himself.

He turned round, smiling, for Pitou's was one of those artless dispositions whose faces always give evidence of the satisfaction of their hearts.

The shadow was the body of Aunt Angélique.

Of Aunt Angélique, more miserly, more crabbed, and more skin-and-bone than ever.

In former days — we are obliged incessantly to return to the same figure of speech; that is to say, to the comparative, as comparison alone can express our thought — in former times, at the sight of Aunt Angélique, Pitou would have let fall the dish, and while Aunt Angélique would have bent forward in despair to pick up the fragments of her fowl and the grains of rice, he would have bounded over her head, and would have taken to his heels, carrying off his bread under his arm.

But Pitou was no longer the same; his helmet and his sabre had less changed him, physically speaking, than his having associated with the great philosophers of the day had changed him morally.

Instead of flying terrified from his aunt, he approached her with a gracious smile, opened wide his arms, and although she endeavored to escape the pressure, embraced her with all his might, squeezing the old maid energetically to his breast, while his hands, the one loaded with the dish containing the fowl and rice, and the other with the bread and knife, were crossed behind her back.

When he had accomplished this most nephew-like act, which he considered as a duty imposed upon him, and which it was necessary to fulfil, he breathed with all the power of his vast lungs, and said: —

"Aunt Angélique, you may well be surprised; but it is indeed your poor Pitou."

When he had clasped her so fervently in his arms, the old maid imagined that, having been surprised in the very act by her, Pitou had wished to suffocate her, as Hercules, in former days, had strangled Antæus.

She, on her side, breathed more freely when she found herself relieved from this dangerous embrace.

Only Aunt Angélique had remarked that Pitou had not even manifested his admiration of the dish he was devouring.

Pitou was not only ungrateful, but he was also ill-bred.

But there was one thing which disgusted Aunt Angélique more than the rest; and this was that formerly, while she would be seated in state in her leathern armchair, Pitou would not even dare to sit down on one of the dilapidated chairs or one of the lame stools which surrounded it; but now instead of this, after having so cordially embraced her, Pitou had very coolly ensconced himself in her own armchair, had placed the dish between his knees, and was leisurely devouring its contents.

In his powerful right hand he held the knife already

mentioned, the blade of which was wide and long, — a perfect spatula, with which Polyphemus himself might have eaten his pottage.

In the other hand he held a bit of bread of three fingers wide and six inches long, — a perfect broom, with which he swept up the rice; while on its side, the knife, in seeming gratitude, pushed the meat upon the bread.

A learned, though pitiless manœuvre, the result of which, in a few minutes, was that it caused the blue and white of the interior of the dish to become visible, as during the ebbing tide we gradually perceive the rings and marks upon the quays of a seaport.

We must renounce attempting to describe the frightful perplexity and despair of Aunt Angélique.

At one moment she imagined that she could call out.

Pitou, however, smiled at her with such a fascinating air that the words expired before Aunt Angélique could give them utterance.

Then she attempted to smile in her turn, hoping to exorcise that ferocious animal called hunger, which had taken up its abode in the stomach of her nephew.

But the proverb is right; the famished stomach of Pitou remained both deaf and dumb.

His aunt, instead of smiling, wept.

This somewhat incommoded Pitou, but it did not prevent his eating.

"Oh, oh! Aunt, how good you are," said he, "to cry thus with joy on my arrival! Thanks, my good aunt, thanks."

And he went on devouring.

Evidently the French Revolution had completely denaturalized this man.

He bolted three fourths of the fowl, and left a small quantity of the rice at the bottom of the dish, saying:

"You like the rice best, do you not, my dear aunt? It is softer for your teeth. I leave you the rice."

This attention, which she no doubt imagined to be a sarcasm, almost suffocated Aunt Angélique. She resolutely advanced towards young Pitou, snatched the dish from his hands, uttering a blasphemous expression, which, twenty years subsequently, would have appeared admirably suitable to a grenadier of the old guard.

Pitou heaved a sigh.

"Oh, Aunt," cried he, "you regret your fowl, do you not?"

"The villain!" cried Aunt Angélique, "I believe that he is jeering at me."

Pitou rose from his chair.

"Aunt," said he, majestically, "it was not my intention to eat without paying for what I ate. I have money. I will, if you please, board regularly with you; only I shall reserve to myself the right of choosing my own dinner."

"Rascal!" exclaimed Aunt Angélique.

"Let us see; we will calculate each portion at four sous. I now owe you for one meal; four sous' worth of rice and two sous' of bread, — six sous."

"Six sous!" cried the aunt, "six sous! why there is eight sous' worth of rice and six sous' of bread, without counting anything else."

"Oh, I know I have not allowed anything for the fowl, my good aunt, knowing that it came from your poultry-yard; he was an old acquaintance, — I knew him at once by his comb."

"He was worth his price, however."

"He was five years old, at least; I stole him from under his mother's wing for you. He was then barely as big as my fist; and I recollect even that you beat me, because

when I brought him home to you I did not bring you corn enough to feed him the next day. Mademoiselle Catherine gave me some barley. He was my property, and I ate my property; I had good right to do so."

His aunt, mad with anger, pulverized the Revolutionary hero with a look; she had no voice.

"Get out of this!" murmured she.

"What, at once, so soon after having dined, without even giving me time to digest my dinner? Ah! Aunt, Aunt, that is by no means polite."

"Out with you!"

Pitou, who had again sat down, rose from the arm-chair. He found, and that with a most lively feeling of satisfaction, that his stomach could not have contained a single grain of rice more than he had swallowed.

"Aunt," said he, majestically, "you are an unfeeling relative. I will demonstrate to you that you are now acting as wrongly towards me as you have always done; that you are still as harsh, still as avaricious as ever. Well! I will not allow you to go about telling every one that I have devoured your property."

He placed himself on the threshold of the door, and in a stentorian voice which might be heard, not only by the inquisitive persons who had accompanied him, and had been present during the whole of this scene, but also by every one who was passing at a distance of five hundred paces: —

"I call these worthy people to witness that, having arrived from Paris, on foot, after having taken the Bastille, being tired and hungry, I seated myself in this house; that I ate my relative's provisions; that I was so harshly reproached for the food of which I partook, that I was so pitilessly driven from the house, that I feel myself compelled to go."

Pitou delivered this exordium in so pathetic a tone that the neighbors began to murmur against the old woman.

"A poor traveller," continued Pitou, "who has walked nine leagues; a worthy lad, honored with the confidence of Monsieur Gilbert and Monsieur Billot, and who was charged by them to bring back Sebastien Gilbert to the Abbé Fortier; one of the conquerors of the Bastille; a friend of Monsieur Bailly and of General de Lafayette, —I call upon you all to witness that I have been turned out."

The murmurs went on increasing.

"And," pursued he, "as I am not a mendicant, as, when I am reproached for the bread I eat, I pay for it, here is half a crown which I lay down as payment for that which I have eaten in my aunt's house!"

And saying this, Pitou proudly drew a half-crown from his pocket, and threw it on the table, from which in the sight of all it rebounded, hopped into the dish, and half buried itself in the remaining rice.

This last act completely confounded the old woman. She bent down, beneath the universal reprobation to which she had exposed herself, and which was testified by a long, loud murmur. Twenty hands were held out to Pitou, who left the hut, shaking the dust from his shoes on the threshold, and disappeared from his aunt's eyes, escorted by a crowd of persons offering him his meals and lodging, happy to be the hosts of a conqueror of the Bastille, a friend of Monsieur Bailly and of General de Lafayette.

Aunt Angélique picked the half-crown out of the rice, wiped it, and put it into the saucer, where it was to wait, with many others, its transmigration into an old louis.

But while putting by this half-crown of which she had become possessed in so singular a manner, she sighed, reflecting that perhaps Pitou had had full right to eat the whole of the contents of the dish, since he had so amply paid for it.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PITOU A REVOLUTIONIST.

Pitou wished, after having fulfilled the first duties of obedience, to satisfy the first feelings of his heart.

It is a very delightful feeling to obey, when the orders of the master are in perfect unison with the secret sympathies of the person who obeys.

He therefore made the best use of his legs; and going along the narrow alley which leads from Pleux to the Rue Lonnet, which forms a sort of green girdle to that portion of the town, he went straight across the fields that he might the sooner arrive at Billot's farm.

But his rapid course was soon slackened; every step he took brought back some recollection to his mind.

When any one returns to the town or to the village in which he was born, he walks upon his youth, — he walks on his past days, which spread themselves, as the English poet says, like a carpet beneath the feet, to do honor to the traveller who returns.

He finds, at each step, a recollection in the beatings of his heart.

Here he has suffered; there he has been happy. Here he has sobbed with grief; there he has wept with joy.

Pitou, who was no analyzer, was compelled to be a man. He discovered traces of the past as he proceeded

on his way; and he arrived with his soul replete with sensations at the farm of Dame Billot.

When he perceived at a hundred paces before him the long slated roofs; when he measured with his eyes the old elm-trees bending down over the moss-grown chimneys; when he heard the distant sound of the cattle, the barking of the dogs, the carts lumbering along the road, — he placed his helmet more proudly on his head, grasped his dragoon's sabre with more firmness, and endeavored to give himself a martial appearance, such as was fitting to a lover and a soldier.

At first, no one recognized him, — a proof that his effort was attended with tolerable success.

A stable-boy was standing by the pond watering his horses, and hearing a noise, turned round; and through the tufted head of a withy tree he perceived Pitou, or rather a helmet and a sabre.

The stable-boy seemed struck with stupefaction.

Pitou, on passing him, called out: —

"Hilloa, Barnaut! good-day, Barnaut!"

The boy, astounded that the helmet and sabre knew his name, took off his small hat, and let fall the halter by which he held the horses.

Pitou passed on, smiling.

But the boy was by no means reassured; Pitou's benevolent smile had remained concealed beneath his helmet.

At the same moment Dame Billot perceived the approach of this military man through the windows of the dining-room.

She immediately jumped up.

In country places, everybody was then on the alert; for alarming rumors were spread abroad, of brigands who were destroying the forest-trees, and cutting down fields of corn, though still unripe.

What did the arrival of this soldier portend? Was it an attack, or was it assistance?

Dame Billot had taken a general survey of Pitou as he approached. She asked herself what could be the meaning of such country-looking garments with so brilliant a helmet; and we must confess her suppositions tended as much towards suspicion as towards hope.

The soldier, whoever he might be, went straight to the kitchen.

Dame Billot advanced two steps towards the newcomer. Pitou, on his side, that he might not be behindhand in politeness, took off his helmet.

"Ange Pitou!" exclaimed Dame Billot; "you here, Ange?"

"Good-day, Ma'am Billot," replied Pitou.

"Ange! Oh, good Heaven, whoever would have guessed it! Why, you have enlisted, then?"

"Oh! enlisted!" cried Pitou.

And he smiled somewhat disdainfully.

Then he looked around, seeking for one he did not find there.

Dame Billot smiled; she guessed the meaning of Pitou's looks.

Then, with great simplicity: —

"You are looking for Catherine?" she said.

"To pay my respects to her," replied Pitou; "yes, Madame Billot."

"She is attending to the drying of the linen. Come, now, sit down; look at me; speak to me."

"Very willingly," said Pitou. "Good-day — good-day — good-day, Madame Billot."

And Pitou took a chair.

Around him were soon grouped, both at the doors and on the steps of the staircases, all the servant-maids and

the farm-laborers, to whom the stable-boy had quickly communicated the arrival of the soldier.

And as each of them came in, they might be heard whispering: —

"Why, it is Pitou!"

"Yes, 't is he indeed!"

"Really!"

Pitou cast a benign glance on all his former comrades. His smile to most of them was a caress.

"And you have come from Paris, Ange?" said the mistress of the house.

"Straight, Madame Billot."

"And how is your master?"

"Very well, Madame Billot."

"And how are things going on in Paris?"

"Very badly."

"Ah!"

And the circle of auditors drew nearer.

"The king?" inquired the farmer's wife.

Pitou shook his head, and gave a clacking sound with his tongue which was very humiliating for the monarchy.

"The queen?"

Pitou to this question made no reply at all.

"Oh!" exclaimed Madame Billot.

"Oh!" repeated all present.

"Come, now, speak on, Pitou," said Madame Billot.

"Well, ask me anything you please," replied Pitou, who did not wish to communicate all the interesting news he brought in the absence of Catherine.

"Why have you a helmet?" asked Madame Billot.

"It is a trophy," said Pitou.

"And what is a trophy, my friend?" inquired the good woman.

"Ah! that is true, Madame Billot," replied Pitou, with

a protecting smile; "you cannot know what a trophy is. A trophy is when one has vanquished an enemy, Madame Billot."

"You have then vanquished an enemy, Pitou?"

"One!" replied Pitou, disdainfully. "Ah! my good Madame Billot, you do not know, then, that we two, Monsieur Billot and I, have taken the Bastille?"

This magic sentence electrified the audience. Pitou felt the breath of the astonished auditors upon his hair as they bent forward to gaze at him, and their hands on the back of his chair.

"Tell us, — tell us a little of what our man has done," said Madame Billot, with pride, but trembling with apprehension at the same time.

Pitou looked around to see if Catherine were coming; but she came not.

It appeared to him absolutely insulting that to hear such recent news, and brought by such a courier, Mademoiselle Billot did not at once leave her linen.

Pitou shook his head; he was beginning to be out of humor.

"Why, you see it would take a long time to tell it all," said he.

"And you are hungry?" inquired Madame Billot.

"It may be so."

"Thirsty?"

"I will not say no."

Instantly farm-laborers and servants hastened to procure him refreshment, so that Pitou soon had within his reach a goblet, bread, meats, and fruit of every description, before he had even reflected on the bearing of his answer.

Pitou had a warm liver, as they say in the country, — that is to say, he digested quickly; but however quick

might be his digestion, it was still amply occupied with Aunt Angélique's fowl and rice, not more than half an hour having elapsed since he had absorbed the last mouthful.

What he had asked for, therefore, did not enable him to gain so much time as he had anticipated, so rapidly had he been served.

He saw that it was necessary for him to make a desperate effort, and he set himself to work to eat.

But whatever may have been his good-will, after a moment or two he was compelled to pause.

"What is the matter with you?" asked Madame Billot.

"Why, really, I must say —"

"Bring Pitou something to drink."

"I have cider here, Ma'am Billot."

"But perhaps you like brandy better?"

"Brandy!"

"Yes; perhaps you are accustomed to drink it in Paris?"

The worthy woman imagined that during twelve days' absence Pitou had had time enough to be corrupted.

Pitou indignantly repelled the supposition.

"Brandy!" cried he, again, "and for me — oh, never!"

"Well, then, speak."

"But if I now tell you the whole story," said Pitou, "I shall have to begin it again for Mademoiselle Catherine; and it is a very long one."

Two or three persons rushed out towards the laundry, to fetch Mademoiselle Catherine.

But while they were all running about in search of her, Pitou mechanically turned his head towards the staircase which led up to the first story of the house; and being seated precisely opposite this staircase, he saw Mademoi-

selle Catherine, through an open door, looking out of a window.

Catherine was looking in the direction of the forest; that is to say, towards Boursonne.

Catherine was so much absorbed in contemplation that the unusual movement in the house had not struck her; nothing within it had attracted her attention, which seemed to be wholly engrossed by what was happening without.

"Ah, ah!" cried he, sighing, "looking towards the forest, towards Boursonne, towards Monsieur Isidore de Charny. Yes, that is it."

And he heaved a second sigh, more melancholy than the first.

And at this moment the messengers returned, not only from the laundry, but from every place in which it was probable Mademoiselle Catherine might be found.

"Well?" inquired Madame Billot.

"We have not seen Mademoiselle."

"Catherine! Catherine!" cried Madame Billot.

The young girl did not hear her.

Pitou then ventured to speak.

"Madame Billot," said he, "I well know why they did not find Mademoiselle Catherine at the laundry."

"And why did they not find her?"

"Because she is not there."

"You know, then, where she is?"

"Yes."

"Where is she, then?"

"Yonder, — upstairs."

And taking Dame Billot by the hand, he made her go up the first three or four steps of the staircase, and showed her Catherine, who was sitting on the sill of the window, half-hidden by ivy and convolvulus.

"She is dressing her hair," said the good woman.

"Alas! no; her hair is already dressed," replied Pitou, in a melancholy tone.

The farmer's wife paid no attention to Pitou's melancholy, but in a loud voice she called: —

"Catherine! Catherine!"

The young girl started with surprise, quickly closed her window, and said: —

"What is the matter?"

"Come down, then, Catherine!" cried Dame Billot, little doubting the joyful effect her words would produce upon her. "Come down here; here is Ange just arrived from Paris."

Pitou, with great anxiety, listened for the answer which Catherine would make.

"Ah!" coldly replied Catherine.

So coldly that poor Pitou's heart sank within him.

And she descended the staircase with all the phlegmatic manner of the Flemish women we see in the paintings of Van Ostade and Brauer.

"Well," said she, when she reached the kitchen floor, "why, it is really Pitou!"

Pitou bowed, blushing deeply, and trembling in every nerve.

"He has a helmet," said a servant-maid, whispering into her mistress's ear.

Pitou overheard her, and watched the effect produced on Catherine's countenance.

A lovely countenance, perhaps somewhat paler, but still full and peach-like.

But Catherine did not evince any admiration for Pitou's helmet.

"Ah! he has a helmet," she said; "and for what purpose?"

This time indignation mastered every other feeling in the mind of the bold youth.

"I have a helmet and a sabre," said he, proudly, "because I have fought and killed German dragoons and Swiss soldiers; and if you doubt it, Mademoiselle Catherine, ask your father, and he will tell you."

Catherine's mind was so preoccupied that she heard only the last words uttered by Pitou.

"And how is my father?" inquired she. "How happens it that he did not return with you? Is there bad news from Paris?"

"Very bad," replied Pitou.

"I thought that everything had been arranged," observed Catherine.

"Yes, that is true; but everything is disarranged again," rejoined Pitou.

"Was there not a reconciliation between the king and the people, and was not Monsieur Necker recalled?"

"But little is thought of Monsieur Necker," said Pitou.

"And yet that satisfied the people, did it not?"

"It so well satisfied them that the people are now about to do themselves justice and to kill all their enemies."

"All their enemies!" exclaimed Catherine, with astonishment; "who, then, are the enemies of the people?"

"The aristocrats, to be sure," said Pitou.

Catherine turned pale.

"But whom do they call aristocrats?" she asked.

"Why, those who have large estates; those who have fine country-seats; those who starve the nation; those who have all while we have nothing."

"Go on! go on!" impatiently cried Catherine.

"Those who have beautiful horses and fine carriages, when we are obliged to go on foot."

"Great God!" exclaimed the young girl, becoming so pale as to be positively livid.

Pitou remarked this change in her countenance.

"I call aristocrats some persons of your acquaintance."

"Of my acquaintance!"

"Of our acquaintance!" said Dame Billot.

"But who is it, then?" said Catherine, persistingly.

"Monsieur Berthier de Sauvigny, for instance."

"Monsieur Berthier de Sauvigny?"

"Who gave you the gold buckles which you wore the day you danced with Monsieur Isidore!"

"Well?"

"Well; I saw people eating his heart, — I who am now speaking to you."

A cry of terror was uttered by all present. Catherine threw herself back in the chair which she had taken.

"You saw that?" cried Madame Billot, trembling with horror.

"And Monsieur Billot saw it too."

"Oh, good God!"

"Yes, and by this time they must have killed or burned all the aristocrats of Paris and Versailles."

"It is frightful!" murmured Catherine.

"Frightful! and why so? You are not an aristocrat, — you, Mademoiselle Billot?"

"Monsieur Pitou," said Catherine, with gloomy energy, "it appears to me that you were not so ferocious before you went to Paris."

"And I am not more so now, Mademoiselle," said Pitou, somewhat staggered; "but —"

"But, then, do not boast of the crimes committed by

the Parisians, since you are not a Parisian, and you did not commit these crimes."

"I was so far from committing them," said Pitou, "that Monsieur Billot and myself narrowly escaped being murdered while defending Monsieur Berthier."

"Oh, my good father! my brave father! I recognize him there!" enthusiastically exclaimed Catherine.

"My good, my worthy man!" cried Madame Billot, her eyes streaming with tears. "Tell me, what did he do?"

Pitou then related the whole of the dreadful scene which had occurred on the Place de Grève, the despair of Billot, and his desire to return to Villers-Cotterets.

"Why did he not return, then?" cried Catherine, in an accent that, like a presentiment of evil, deeply moved Pitou's heart.

Dame Billot clasped her hands.

"Monsieur Gilbert would not allow it," replied Pitou.

"Does Monsieur Gilbert wish, then, that my husband should be killed?" said Madame Billot, sobbing.

"Does he wish, then, that my father's house should be ruined?" added Catherine, in the same tone of gloomy melancholy.

"Oh, by no means!" cried Pitou; "Monsieur Billot and Monsieur Gilbert understand each other; Monsieur Billot will remain still some time at Paris, to finish the Revolution."

"What! by themselves, — all alone?" cried Dame Billot.

"No, with Monsieur Bailly and Monsieur de Lafayette," said Pitou.

"Ah!" cried the farmer's wife, with admiration, "if

he indeed is with Monsieur de Lafayette and Monsieur Bailly —"

"When does he think of returning?" inquired Catherine.

"Oh, as to that, Mademoiselle, I cannot tell."

"And you, Pitou, how happens it, then, that you have returned?"

"Who, — I? Why, I brought back Sebastien Gilbert to the Abbé Fortier, and I have come here to bring you Monsieur Billot's instructions."

Pitou, while saying these words, rose, not without a certain degree of diplomatic dignity, which was understood, if not by the servants, at all events by their mistresses.

Dame Billot rose, and at once dismissed all the laborers and servants.

Catherine, who had remained seated, studied the thoughts of Pitou, even in the depths of his soul, before they issued from his lips.

"What can he have told him to say to me?" she asked herself.

CHAPTER XXX.

MADAME BILLOT ABDICATES.

THE two women summoned up all their attention to listen to the desires of this honored husband and father. Pitou was well aware that the task was a difficult one. He had seen both Dame Billot and Catherine filling their several stations at the farm; he knew the habit of command of the one and the firm independence of the other.

Catherine, who was so gentle a daughter, so laborious, so good, had acquired, by virtue of these very qualities, a very great ascendency over every person connected with the farm; and what is the spirit of domination, if it is not a firm will not to obey?

Pitou knew, in explaining his mission, how much pleasure he was about to cause to the one, and how much grief he would inflict upon the other.

Reducing Madame Billot to play a secondary part, appeared to him unnatural, absurd. It gave Catherine more importance with regard to Pitou, and under actual circumstances Catherine by no means needed this.

But at the farm he represented one of Homer's heralds, — a mouth, a memory, but not an intellectual person; he expressed himself in the following terms: —

"Madame Billot, Monsieur Billot's intention is that you should have the slightest possible annoyance."

"And how so?" cried the good woman, much surprised.

"What is the meaning of the word 'annoyance'?" said Catherine.

"It means to say," replied Pitou, "that the management of a farm like yours is a species of government replete with cares and labor, that there are bargains to be made —"

"And what of that?" said the worthy woman.

"Payments —"

"Well?"

"Fields to plough —"

"Go on."

"Harvests —"

"Who says the contrary?"

"No one, assuredly, Madame Billot; but in order to make bargains, it is necessary to travel about."

"I have my horse."

"In paying it is often necessary to dispute."

"Oh, I have a good tongue."

"To cultivate the fields."

"Am I not accustomed to agriculture?"

"And to get in the harvest! Ah! that is quite another matter; meals have to be cooked for the laborers; the wagoners must be assisted."

"For the welfare of my good man, to do all these would not frighten me!" cried the worthy woman.

"But, Madame Billot — in short — so much work — and — getting rather aged —"

"Ah!" cried Dame Billot, looking askance at Pitou.

"Come to my assistance, Mademoiselle Catherine," said the poor lad, finding his energy diminishing by degrees as his position became more and more difficult.

"I do not know what I am to do to assist you," replied Catherine.

"Well, then, this is the plain fact," rejoined Pitou.

"Monsieur Billot does not desire that Madame Billot should be subjected to so much trouble—"

"And who, then?" cried Madame Billot, interrupting him, trembling at the same time with admiration and respect.

"He has chosen some one who is stronger, and who is both himself and yourself. He has appointed Mademoiselle Catherine."

"My daughter Catherine to govern the house!" exclaimed the wounded mother, with an accent of mistrust and inexpressible jealousy.

"Under your directions, my dear mother," the young girl hastened to say, blushing deeply.

"By no means! by no means!" cried Pitou, who, from the moment he had summoned up courage enough to speak out, was determined to go through with it; "it is not so! I must execute my commission to the letter. Monsieur Billot delegates and authorizes Mademoiselle Catherine in his stead and place to attend to all the work and all the affairs of the house."

Every one of these words, which bore the accent of truth, penetrated the heart of the housekeeper; and so excellent was her nature that instead of allowing the jealousy she had at first naturally felt to become more bitter, or her anger to become more violent, the certainty of her diminution in importance appeared to make her more resigned, more obedient, and more convinced of the infallibility of her husband's judgment.

Was it possible that Billot could be mistaken? Was it possible to disobey Billot?

These were the only two arguments which the worthy woman used to convince herself.

And her resistance at once ceased.

She looked at her daughter, in whose eyes she saw only

modesty, confidence, the desire to succeed, unalterable tenderness and respect. She yielded absolutely.

"Monsieur Billot is right," she said; "Catherine is young; she has a good head, — she is even headstrong."

"Oh, yes," said Pitou, certain that he had flattered the self-love of Catherine at the same time that he indulged in an epigram at her expense.

"Catherine," continued Dame Billot, "will be more at her ease than I should be upon the road. She will better look after the laborers for whole days than I could. She will sell better; she will make more advantageous purchases; she will know how to make herself obeyed."

Catherine smiled.

"Well, then," continued the good woman, without even being compelled to make an effort to restrain a sigh, "here is our Catherine who is going to have all her own way: she will run about as she pleases; she will now have the command of the purse; now she will always be seen upon the roads; my daughter, in short, transformed into a lad!"

"You need be under no apprehension for Mademoiselle Catherine," said Pitou, with a self-sufficient air; "I am here, and I will accompany her wherever she goes."

This gracious offer, on which Ange perhaps calculated to produce an effect, produced so strange a look on the part of Catherine that he was quite confused.

The young girl blushed, — not as women do when anything agreeable has been said to them, but with a sort of double feeling of anger and impatience, evincing at once a desire to speak and the necessity of remaining silent.

Pitou was not a man of the world, and therefore could not appreciate these shades of feeling.

But having comprehended that Catherine's blushing was not a perfect acquiescence: —

"What!" said he, with an agreeable smile, which displayed his powerful teeth under his thick lips, "what! you say not a word, Mademoiselle Catherine?"

"You are not aware, then, Monsieur Pitou, that you have uttered a stupidity?"

"A stupidity!" exclaimed the lover.

"Assuredly!" cried Dame Billot, "to think of my daughter Catherine going about with a body-guard."

"But, in short, in the woods," said Pitou, with an air so ingenuously conscientious that it would have been a crime to laugh at him.

"Is that also in the instructions of our good man?" continued Dame Billot, who thus evinced a certain disposition for epigram.

"Oh!" added Catherine, "that would be too indolent a profession, which neither my father would have advised Monsieur Pitou to adopt, nor would Monsieur Pitou have accepted it."

Pitou rolled his large and terrified eyes from Catherine to Dame Billot; the whole scaffolding of his building was giving way.

Catherine, as a true woman, at once comprehended the painful disappointment of Pitou.

"Monsieur Pitou," said she, "was it at Paris that you have seen young girls compromising their reputations in this way, by always dragging young men after them?"

"But you are not a young girl, you," stammered Pitou, "since you are the mistress of the house."

"Come, come! we have talked enough for to-night," abruptly said Dame Billot; "the mistress of the house has much to do. Come, Catherine, let me install you in the management, according to your father's orders."

Then was commenced, before the astounded eyes of

Pitou, a ceremony that was not deficient in grandeur nor in poetry, from its rustic simplicity.

Dame Billot drew her keys from off the bunch, one by one, and delivered them to Catherine, giving her a list of the linen, of the furniture, the provisions, and the contents of the cellars. She conducted her daughter to the old secretary, or bureau, made of mahogany inlaid with ivory and ebony, somewhere about the year 1738 or 1740, in the secret drawer of which Father Billot locked up his most valuable papers, his golden louis, and all the treasures and archives of the family.

Catherine gravely allowed herself to be invested with the supreme command over everything, and took due note of the secret drawers; she questioned her mother with much intelligence, reflected on each answer, and the information she required being obtained, appeared to store it up in the depths of her memory as a weapon in reserve in case of any contest.

After the furniture and household articles had been examined, Dame Billot went on to the cattle, the lists of which were carefully made out.

Horses, oxen, and cows; sheep, whether in good order or sick; lambs, goats, fowls, and pigeons, — all were counted and noted down.

But this was merely for the sake of regularity.

Of this branch of the farm business the young girl had for a long time past been the special administratrix.

There was scarcely a hen in the barnyard of which she did not know the cackle; the lambs were familiar with her in a month; the pigeons knew her so well that they would frequently completely surround her in their flight; often even they would perch upon her shoulders, after having cooed at her feet.

The horses neighed when Catherine approached. She

alone could make the most restive of them obey. One of them, a colt bred upon the farm, was so vicious as to allow no one to approach him; but he would break his halter and knock down his stall to get to Catherine, putting his nose into her hand, or into her pocket, to get at the crust of bread he was always sure of finding there.

Nothing was so beautiful or so smile-inspiring as this lovely fair-haired girl, with her large blue eyes, her white neck, her round arms, her small fat hands, when she came up with her apronful of corn to a spot near the pond, where the ground had been beaten and saltpetred to harden it for a feeding-place, and on which she would throw the grain she brought by handfuls.

Then would be seen all the young chickens, all the pigeons, all the young lambs, hurrying and scrambling towards the pond; the beaks of the birds soon made the flooring appear speckled; the red tongues of the young goats licked the ground, or picked up crisp buckwheat. This area, darkened by the layers of corn, in five minutes became as white and clean as the delft-plate of the laborer when he has finished his meal.

Certain human beings have in their eyes a fascination that subdues, or a fascination that terrifies, — two sensations so powerful over the brute creation that they never think of resisting them.

Which of us has not seen a savage bull looking for several minutes, with melancholy expression, at a child who smiles at him without comprehending the danger he is running? He pities him.

Which of us has not seen the same bull fix a sinister and affrighted look on a robust farmer, who masters him by the steadiness of his gaze, and by a mute threat? The animal lowers his head; he appears to be preparing

for the combat, but his feet seem rooted in the ground; he shudders; he is terrified.

Catherine exercised one of these two influences on all that surrounded her; she was at once so calm and so firm, there was so much gentleness and yet so much decided will, so little mistrust, so little fear, that the animal standing near her did not feel even the temptation of an evil thought.

And this extraordinary influence she, with greater reason, exercised over thinking beings. She possessed a charm that was irresistible; not a man in the whole district had ever smiled when speaking of Catherine. No young man entertained an evil thought towards her. Those who loved her, wished to have her for their wife; those who did not love her, would have desired that she were their sister.

Pitou, with head cast down, his hands hanging listless by his side, his ideas wandering, mechanically followed the young girl and her mother while they were taking a list of the farm stock.

They had not addressed a word to him. He was there like a guard in a tragedy; and his helmet did not a little contribute to give that singular appearance.

After this, they passed in review all the male and female servants of the farm.

Dame Billot made them form a half-circle, in the centre of which she placed herself.

"My children," said she, "our master is not yet coming back from Paris, but he has chosen a master for us in his place. It is my daughter Catherine, who is here; she is young and strong. As to myself, I am old, and my head is weak. Our master has done rightly. Catherine is now your mistress. She is to receive and give money. As to her orders, I shall be the first to receive

and execute them; any of you who may be disobedient will have to deal with her."

Catherine did not add a single word; she tenderly embraced her mother. The effect of this kiss was greater than that of any well-rounded phrase. Dame Billot wept; Pitou was much affected.

All the servants received the announcement of the new reign with acclamations.

Catherine immediately entered on her new functions, and allotted to all their several services. Each received her mandate, and set out immediately to execute it, with the good-will which every one manifests at the commencement of a reign.

Pitou was the only one remaining, and he at length, approaching Catherine, said to her: —

"And I?"

"Ah! you," replied Catherine; "I have no orders to give you."

"How! I am, then, to remain without having anything to do?"

"What do you wish to do?"

"Why, what I did before I went to Paris."

"Before going there, you were received into the house by my mother."

"But you are now the mistress; therefore, point out the work I am to do."

"I have no work for you, Monsieur Ange."

"And why?"

"Because you, — you are a learned man, a Parisian gentleman, to whom such rustic labors would not be suitable."

"Can it be possible?" exclaimed Pitou.

Catherine made a sign, which implied, "It is even so."

"I a learned man!" repeated Pitou.

"Undoubtedly."

"But look at my arms, Mademoiselle Catherine."

"That matters not."

"But, in short, Mademoiselle Catherine," said the poor lad, in despair, "why is it that under the pretext of my being a learned man, you would force me to die of hunger? You do not know, then, that the philosopher Epictetus became a menial servant that he might have bread to eat; that Æsop, the fable-writer, earned his bread by the sweat of his brow? They were, however, people much more learned than I am."

"What would you have? As I have said before, it is even so."

"But Monsieur Billot accepted me as forming part of his household, and he has sent me back from Paris that I may still be so."

"That may be the case; for my father might have compelled you to undertake things which I, his daughter, would not venture to impose upon you."

"Do not impose them upon me, Mademoiselle Catherine," said Pitou.

"But then you would remain in idleness, and that I could not at all allow. My father had the right to do so, he being the master, and which I could not do, being merely his agent. I have charge of his property, and I must take care that his property be productive."

"But since I am willing to work, I shall be productive; you must see clearly, Mademoiselle, that you keep swimming round in the same vicious circle."

"What say you?" cried Catherine, who did not comprehend the grandiloquent phrases of Pitou; "what mean you by a vicious circle?"

"We call a bad argument a vicious circle, Mademoiselle. No; let me remain at the farm, and send me on your

messages if you will. You will then see whether I am a learned man and an idle fellow. Besides which, you have books to keep, accounts to put in order. Arithmetic is my particular forte."

"It is not, in my opinion, sufficient occupation for a man," said Catherine.

"Why, then, it would seem I am fit for nothing," said Pitou.

"Continue to live here," said Catherine, in a gentler tone; "I will reflect upon it, and we will see."

"You require to reflect, in order that you may know whether you ought to keep me here! But what have I done to you, then, Mademoiselle Catherine? Ah! you were not thus formerly."

Catherine gave an almost imperceptible shrug of her shoulders.

She had no good reasons to give to Pitou, and nevertheless it was evident that his pertinacity fatigued her.

Therefore, breaking off the conversation: —

"Enough of this, Monsieur Pitou," said she; "I am going to La Ferté-Milon."

"Then I will run and saddle your horse, Mademoiselle Catherine."

"By no means; on the contrary, remain where you are."

"You refuse, then, to allow me to accompany you?"

"Remain here," said Catherine, imperatively.

Pitou remained as if nailed to the spot, holding down his head and restraining a tear, which seared his eyelids as if it had been molten lead.

Catherine left Pitou where he was, went out, and ordered one of the farm-servants to saddle her horse.

"Ah!" murmured Pitou, "you think me changed, Mademoiselle Catherine; but it is you who are so, and much more changed than I am."

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHAT DECIDED PITOU TO LEAVE THE FARM AND RETURN TO HARAMONT, HIS REAL AND ONLY COUNTRY.

Dame Billot, resigned without affectation to undertake the functions of an upper servant, had, without ill-humor, and with good-will, resumed her occupations. Movement, which had for an instant been suspended throughout the agricultural hierarchy, soon returned; and the farm once more resembled the interior of a humming and industrious hive.

While they were getting her horse ready, Catherine re-entered the house; she cast a glance at Pitou, whose body remained motionless, but whose head turned like a weather-cock, following each movement which the young girl made until she went upstairs to her own room.

"What is it Catherine has gone to her room for?" said Pitou to himself.

Poor Pitou! what had she gone there for? She went there to dress her hair, to put on a clean cap and a pair of finer stockings.

Then, when this supplementary toilet was completed, as she heard her horse pawing the ground beneath the window, she came down, kissed her mother, and set out.

Reduced to positive idleness, and feeling but ill-assured from a slight glance, half-indifferent, half-compassionate, which Catherine had addressed to him as she left the door, Pitou could not endure to remain in such a state of anxious perplexity.

Since Pitou had once more seen Catherine, it appeared to him that the life of Catherine was absolutely necessary to him.

And besides, in the depths of his heavy and dreaming mind, something like a suspicion came and went with the regularity of the pendulum of a clock.

It is the peculiar property of ingenuous minds to perceive everything in equal degree. These sluggish natures are not less sensible than others; they feel, but they do not analyze.

Analysis is the habit of enjoying and suffering; a man must have become, to a certain degree, habituated to sensations to see their ebullition in the depth of that abyss which is called the human heart.

There are no old men who are ingenuous.

When Pitou had heard the horse's footsteps at a certain distance from the house, he ran to the door. He then perceived Catherine, who was going along a narrow cross-road, which led from the farm to the high-road to La Ferté-Milon, and terminated at the foot of a hill, whose summit was covered by a forest.

From the threshold of the door, he breathed forth an adieu to the young girl, which was replete with regret and kindly feeling.

But this adieu had scarcely been expressed by his hand and heart when Pitou reflected on one circumstance.

Catherine might have forbidden him to accompany her, but she could not prevent him from following her.

Catherine could, if she pleased, say to Pitou, "I will not see you;" but she could not very well say to him, "I forbid your looking at me."

Pitou therefore reflected that as he had nothing to do, there was nothing in the world to prevent him from gaining the wood and keeping along the road which Catherine

was going; so that without being seen, he would see her from a distance through the trees.

It was only a league and a half from the farm to La Ferté-Milon. A league and a half to go there, and a league and a half to return. What was that to Pitou?

Moreover, Catherine would get to the high-road by a line which formed an angle with the forest. By taking a straight direction, Pitou would gain a quarter of a league, so that the whole distance for him would be only two leagues and a half for the whole journey.

Two leagues and a half was a mere nothing of a walk for a man who appeared to have robbed Tom Thumb or to have at least pilfered the seven-league-boots which Tom had taken from the ogre.

Pitou had scarcely imagined this project before he put it into execution.

While Catherine was going towards the high-road, he, Pitou, stooping down behind the high waving corn, stole across to the forest.

In an instant he had reached the border of the wood; and once there, he jumped across the wide ditch which bounded it, then rushed beneath the trees, less graceful, but as rapid as a terrified deer.

He ran for a quarter of an hour in this way, and at the end of that time he perceived the wood becoming lighter, for he had nearly reached the opposite edge near the road.

There he stopped, leaning against an enormous oak, which completely concealed him behind its knotted trunk. He felt perfectly sure that he had got ahead of Catherine.

He waited ten minutes, — even a quarter of an hour, — but saw no one.

Had she forgotten something that she should have taken with her, and returned to the farm for it? This was possible.

With the greatest possible precaution, Pitou crept near the road, stretched out his head from behind a great beech-tree, which grew upon the very edge of the ditch, belonging, as it were, half to the road, half to the forest. From this he had a good view of the plain, and could have perceived anything that was moving upon it; he, however, could discern nothing.

He felt assured, therefore, that Catherine must have returned to the farm.

Pitou retraced his steps. Either she had not yet reached the farm, and he would see her return to it, or she had reached it, and he would see her come out again.

Pitou extended the compass of his long legs, and began to remeasure the distance which separated him from the plain.

He ran along the sandy part of the road which was softer to his feet, when he suddenly paused.

Pitou had raised his eyes, and at the opposite end of the road he saw at a great distance, blending as it were with the blue horizon of the forest, the white horse and the red jacket of Catherine.

The pace of Catherine's horse was an amble.

The horse, ambling along, had left the high-road, having turned into a bridle-path, at the entrance of which was a direction-post, bearing the following inscription: —

"Path leading from the road of La Ferté-Milon to Boursonne."

It was, as we have said, from a great distance that Pitou perceived this, but we know that distance was of no consequence to Pitou.

"Ah!" cried he, again darting into the forest, "it is not then to La Ferté-Milon that she was going, but to Boursonne! And yet I am not mistaken; she said La Ferté-Milon more than ten times; she had a commission

given to her to make purchases at La Ferté-Milon. Dame Billot herself spoke of La Ferté-Milon."

And while saying these words, Pitou continued running. Pitou ran faster and faster still. Pitou ran like a madman.

For Pitou, urged on by doubt, the first symptom of jealousy, was no longer biped. Pitou appeared to be one of those winged machines, which Dædalus in particular, and the great mechanicians of antiquity in general, imagined so well, but, alas! executed so badly.

He greatly resembled at that moment those figures stuffed with straw, with long reed arms, placed over toy-shops, which the wind keeps turning in every direction.

Arms, legs, head, all are in motion; all are turning; all seem to be flying.

Pitou's immensely long legs measured paces of at least five feet, so widely could he distend them; his hands, like two broad bats at the end of two long sticks, struck upon the air like oars. His head — all mouth, all nostrils, and all eyes — absorbed the air, which it sent forth again in noisy breathings.

No horse could have been animated to so great a fury of speed.

No lion could have had a more ferocious desire of coming up with his prey.

Pitou had more than half a league to run when he perceived Catherine; he did not give her time enough to go a quarter of a league, while he was running twice that distance.

His speed was therefore double that of a horse that was trotting.

At length he came to a line with the object of his pursuit.

The extremity of the forest was then not more than

five hundred paces from him. He could see the light more clearly through the trees, and just beyond them was the estate of Boursonne.

It was no longer merely for the purpose of seeing Catherine that Pitou followed her; it was to watch her?

She had spoken that which was false. What could be her object?

That mattered not. In order to gain a certain degree of authority over her, it was necessary to surprise her, and prove that she had uttered a flagrant falsehood.

Pitou threw himself head foremost into the underwood and thorns, breaking through them with his helmet, and using his sabre to clear the way when it was necessary.

However, as Catherine was now only moving on at a walk, from time to time the crackling noise of a branch being broken reached her ear, which made both the horse and the mistress prick up their ears.

Then Pitou, whose eyes never for a moment lost sight of Catherine, stopped, which was of some advantage to him, as it enabled him to recover his breath, and it destroyed at the same time any suspicion that Catherine might entertain.

This, however, could not last long, nor did it.

Pitou suddenly heard Catherine's horse neigh, and this neighing was replied to by the neighing of another horse. The latter could not yet be seen.

But however this might be, Catherine gave hers a smart cut with her holly switch; and the animal, which had blown for a few moments, set off again in full trot.

In about five minutes, thanks to this increase of speed,

she had come up with a horseman, who had hastened towards her with as much eagerness as she had shown to reach him.

Catherine's movement had been so rapid and unexpected that poor Pitou had remained motionless, standing in the same place, only raising himself on his tiptoes that he might see as far as possible.

The distance was too great to enable him to see clearly.

But if he did not see, what Pitou felt, as if it had been an electric shock, was the delight and the blushing of the young girl. It was the sudden start which agitated her whole body. It was the sparkling of her eyes, usually so gentle, but which then became absolutely flashing.

Neither could he see who was the cavalier. He could not distinguish his features; but recognizing by his air, by his green velvet hunting-coat, by his hat with its broad loop, by the easy and graceful motion of his head, that he must belong to the very highest class of society, his memory at once reverted to the very handsome young man, the elegant dancer of Villers-Cotterets; his heart, his mouth, every fibre of his nerves, murmured the name of Isidore de Charny.

And it was so in fact.

Pitou heaved a sigh which was very much like a roar; and, rushing anew into the thicket, he advanced within twenty paces of the two young people, then too much occupied with each other to remark whether the noise they heard was caused by the rushing of a quadruped or of a biped through the underwood.

The young man, however, turned his head towards Pitou, raised himself up in his stirrups, and cast a vague look around him.

But at the same moment, and in order to escape this investigation, Pitou threw himself flat on his face.

Then, like a serpent, he glided along the ground about ten paces more, and having then got within hearing distance, he listened.

"Good-day, Monsieur Isidore," said Catherine.

"Monsieur Isidore!" murmured Pitou; "I was sure of that."

He then felt in all his limbs the immense fatigue of the race he had run, and which doubt, mistrust, and jealousy had urged him to during a whole hour.

The two young people had each let fall their bridle, and had grasped each other's hands and remained thus, mute and smiling at each other, while the two horses, no doubt accustomed to each other, were rubbing their noses together, and pawing the green turf by the roadside.

"You are behind your time *to-day*," said Catherine, who was the first to speak.

"*To-day!*" exclaimed Pitou to himself; "it seems that on other days he was not behind time."

"It is not my fault, dear Catherine," replied the young man, "for I was detained by a letter from my brother, which reached me only this morning, and to which I was obliged to reply by return of post. But fear nothing; to-morrow I will be more punctual."

Catherine smiled, and Isidore pressed still more tenderly the hand which had been left in his.

Alas! all these proofs of affection were so many thorns which made poor Pitou's heart bleed.

"You have then very late news from Paris?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Well, then," continued she, smiling, "so have I. Did you not tell me the other day when similar things

happened to two persons who loved each other, that it is called sympathy?"

"Precisely. And how did you receive your news, my lovely Catherine?"

"By Pitou."

"And whom do you mean by Pitou?" asked the young nobleman, with a free and joyous air, which changed to scarlet the color which had already overspread Pitou's cheeks.

"Why, you know full well," said she. "Pitou is the poor lad whom my father took at the farm, and who gave me his arm one Sunday."

"Ah, yes," said the young gentleman, "he whose knees are like knots tied in a table-napkin."

Catherine laughed. Pitou felt himself humiliated, and was in perfect despair. He looked at the knees, which were in fact like knots, raising himself on both hands and getting up; but he again fell flat on his face with a sigh.

"Come, now," said Catherine, "you must not so sadly ill-treat my poor Pitou. Do you know what he proposed to me just now?"

"No; but tell me what it was, my lovely one."

"Well, then, he proposed to accompany me to La Ferté-Milon."

"Where you are not going?"

"No, because I thought you were waiting for me here; while, on the contrary, it was I who almost had to wait for you."

"Ah! do you know you have uttered a royal sentence, Catherine?"

"Really! well, I am sure I did not imagine I was doing so."

"And why did you not accept the offer of this handsome cavalier? He would have amused us."

"Not always, perhaps," replied Catherine, laughing.

"You are right, Catherine," said Isidore, fixing his eyes which beamed with love, on the beautiful girl.

And he caught the blushing face of the young girl in his arms, which he clasped round her neck.

Pitou closed his eyes that he might not see, but he had forgotten to shut his ears that he might not hear, and the sound of a kiss reached them.

Pitou clutched his hair in despair, as does the man afflicted with the plague in the foreground of Gros' picture, representing Bonaparte visiting the soldiers attacked by the plague in the hospital at Jaffa.

When Pitou had somewhat recovered his equanimity, he found that the two young people had moved off to a little distance, and were proceeding on their way, walking their horses.

The last words which Pitou could catch were these:

"Yes, you are right, Monsieur Isidore; let us ride together for an hour; my horse's legs shall make up the lost time. And," added she, laughing, "it is a good animal, who will not mention it to any one."

And this was all; the vision faded away. Darkness reigned in the soul of Pitou, as it began to reign over all Nature; and rolling upon the heather, the poor lad abandoned himself to the overwhelming feelings which oppressed his heart.

He remained in this state for some time; but the coolness of the evening at length restored him to himself.

"I will not return to the farm," said he. "I should only be humiliated, scoffed at. I should eat the bread of a woman who loves another man, and a man, I cannot but acknowledge, who is handsomer, richer, and more elegant than I am. No, my place is no longer at the farm,

but at Haramont, — at Haramont, my own country, where I shall perhaps find people who will not think that my knees are like knots made in a table-napkin."

Having said this, Pitou trotted his good long legs towards Haramont, where, without his at all suspecting it, his reputation and that of his helmet and sabre had preceded him, and where awaited him, if not happiness, at least a glorious destiny.

But, it is well known, it is not an attribute of humanity to be perfectly happy.

CHAPTER XXXII.

PITOU AN ORATOR.

HOWEVER, on arriving at Villers-Cotterets, towards ten o'clock at night, after having had the long run we have endeavored to describe, Pitou felt that however melancholy he might be, it was much better to stop at the Dauphin Hotel and sleep in a good bed, than to sleep canopied by the stars, under some beech or oak in the forest.

For as to sleeping in a house at Haramont, arriving there at half-past ten at night, it was useless to think of it. For more than an hour and a half every light had been extinguished, and every door closed in that peaceful village.

Pitou therefore, put up at the Dauphin Hotel, where, for a thirty-sous piece, he had an excellent bed, a four-pound loaf, a piece of cheese, and a pot of cider.

Pitou was both fatigued and in love, tired out and in despair. The result of this was a struggle between his moral and physical feelings, in which the moral were in the first instance victorious, but at length succumbed.

That is to say, that from eleven o'clock to two in the morning, Pitou groaned, sighed, turned and twisted in his bed, without being able to sleep a wink; but at two o'clock, overcome by fatigue, he closed his eyes, not to open them again till seven.

As at Haramont every one was in bed at half-past ten at night, so at Villers-Cotterets everybody was stirring at seven in the morning.

Pitou, on leaving the Dauphin Hotel, again found that his helmet and sabre attracted public attention.

After going about a hundred paces, he consequently found himself the centre of a numerous crowd.

Pitou had decidedly acquired an enormous popularity.

There are few travellers who have such good luck. The sun, which, it is said, shines for the whole world, does not always shine with a favorable brilliancy for people who return to their own native place with the desire of being considered prophets.

But also it does not happen to every one to have an aunt crabbed and avaricious to so ferocious a degree as Aunt Angélique; it does not happen to every Gargantua capable of swallowing an old cock boiled with rice, to be able to offer a half-crown to the proprietor of the victim.

But that which happens still less often to returning persons, whose origin and traditions can be traced back to the Odyssey, is to return with a helmet on their heads and a sabre by their sides; above all, when the rest of their accoutrements are far from being military.

For we must avow that it was, above all, this helmet and this sabre which recommended Pitou to the attention of his fellow-citizens.

But for the vexations which Pitou's love encountered on his return, it has been seen that all sorts of good fortune awaited him. This was undoubtedly a compensation.

And immediately on seeing him, some of the inhabitants of Villers-Cotterets, who had accompanied Pitou from the Abbé Fortier's door in the Rue de Soissons to Dame Angélique's door at Pleux, resolved, in order to

continue the ovation, to accompany him from Villers-Cotterets to Haramont.

And they did as they had resolved; on seeing which, the above-mentioned inhabitants of Haramont began to appreciate their compatriot at his just value.

It is, however, only justice to them to say that the soil was already prepared to receive the seed. Pitou's first passage through Haramont, rapid as it had been, had left some traces in the minds of its inhabitants; his helmet and his sabre had remained impressed on the memories of those who had seen him appearing before them as a luminous apparition.

In consequence, the inhabitants of Haramont, seeing themselves favored by this second return of Pitou, which they no longer hoped for, received him with every manifestation of respect and consideration, entreating him to doff for a time his warlike accoutrements, and fix his tent under the four linden-trees which overshadowed the little village square, as the Thessalians used to entreat Mars on the anniversary of his great triumphs.

Pitou deigned the more readily to consent to this, from its being his intention to fix his domicile at Haramont. He therefore accepted the shelter of a bedroom which a warlike person of the village let to him ready furnished.

It was furnished with a deal bedstead, a *paillasse*, and a mattress, two chairs, a table, and a water-jug.

The rent of the whole of this was estimated by the proprietor himself at six livres per annum; that is to say, the value of two dishes of fowl and rice.

The rent being agreed upon, Pitou took possession of his domicile, and supplied those who had accompanied him with refreshments at his own charge; and as these events — without speaking of the cider he had imbibed —

had somewhat excited his brain, he pronounced an harangue to them, standing on the threshold of his new residence.

This harangue of Pitou was a great event, and consequently all Haramont was assembled round the house.

Pitou was somewhat of a clerk, and knew what fine language was; he knew the eight words by which at that period the haranguers of nations — it was thus Homer called them — stirred up the popular masses.

Between Monsieur de Lafayette and Pitou there was undoubtedly a great distance, but between Haramont and Paris the distance was greater still; morally speaking, it will be clearly understood.

Pitou commenced by an exordium with which the Abbé Fortier, critical as he was, would not have been dissatisfied.

"Citizens," said he, "citizens, — this word is sweet to pronounce, — I have already addressed other Frenchmen by it, for all Frenchmen are brothers; but on this spot I am using it, I believe, towards real brothers, and I find my whole family here in my compatriots of Haramont."

The women — there were some few among the auditory, and they were not the most favorably disposed towards the orator, for Pitou's knees were still too thick, and the calves of his legs too thin, to produce an impression in his favor on a feminine audience — the women, on hearing the word "family," thought of that poor Pitou, the orphan child, the poor abandoned lad, who, since the death of his mother, had never had a meal that satisfied his hunger. And this word "family," uttered by a youth who had none, moved in some among them that sensitive fibre which closes the reservoir of tears.

The exordium being finished, Pitou began the narrative, the second head of an oration.

He related his journey to Paris, the riots with regard to the busts, the taking of the Bastille, and the vengeance of the people; he passed lightly over the part he had taken in the combats on the Place Vendôme, the square before the Palais Royal, and in the Faubourg St. Antoine. But the less he boasted, the greater did he appear in the eyes of his compatriots; and at the end of Pitou's narrative, his helmet had become as large as the dome of the Invalides, and his sabre as long as the steeple of Haramont church.

The narrative being ended, Pitou then proceeded to the confirmation, that delicate operation by which Cicero recognized a real orator.

He proved that popular indignation had been justly excited against speculators; he said two words of Messieurs Pitt, father and son; he explained the Revolution by the privileges granted to the nobility and to the clergy; finally, he invited the people of Haramont to do that in particular which the people of France had done generally, — that is to say, to unite against the common enemy.

Then he went on from the confirmation to the peroration, by one of those sublime changes common to all great orators.

He let fall his sabre; and while picking it up, he accidentally drew it from its scabbard.

This accident furnished him with a text for an incendiary resolution, calling upon the inhabitants of Haramont to take up arms, and to follow the example of the revolted Parisians.

The people of Haramont were enthusiastic, and replied energetically.

The Revolution was proclaimed with loud acclamation throughout the village.

The men from Villers-Cotterets who had remained at the meeting, returned home, their hearts swelling with the patriotic leaven, singing in the most threatening tones towards the aristocrats, and with savage fury:

"Vive Henri Quatre,
Vive ce roi vaillant —"

Rouget de l'Isle had not then composed the "Marseillaise," and the Federalists of '90 had not yet re-awakened the old popular "Ca ira," seeing that they were then only in the year of grace 1789.

Pitou thought that he had merely made a speech. Pitou had made a revolution.

He re-entered his own house, regaled himself with a piece of brown bread and the remains of his cheese, from the Dauphin Hotel, which he had carefully stowed away in his helmet; then he went and bought some brass wire, made some snares, and when it was dark, went to lay them in the forest.

That same night Pitou caught a good-sized rabbit, and a young one about four months old.

Pitou would have much wished to have set his wires for hares, but he could not discern a single run, and this proved to him the correctness of the old sporting axiom, "Dogs and cats, hares and rabbits, live not together."

It would have been necessary to go three or four leagues before reaching a country well-stocked with hares, and Pitou was rather fatigued; his legs had done their utmost the day before, for besides the distance they had performed, they had carried for the last four or five leagues a man worn out with grief, and there is nothing so heavy as grief to long legs.

Towards one in the morning he returned with his first harvest; he hoped to gather another after the passage in the morning.

He went to bed, retaining within his breast remains of so bitter a nature of that grief which had so much fatigued his legs the day before that he could only sleep six hours consecutively upon the ferocious mattress, which the proprietor himself called a shingle.

Pitou therefore slept from one o'clock to seven. The sun was therefore shining upon him through his open shutter while he was sleeping.

Through this open shutter, thirty or forty inhabitants of Haramont were looking at him as he slept.

He awoke as Turenne did, on his gun-carriage, smiled at his compatriots, and asked them graciously why they had come to him in such numbers and so early.

One of them had been appointed spokesman. We shall faithfully relate this dialogue. This man was a wood-cutter, and his name Claude Tellier.

"Ange Pitou," said he, "we have been reflecting the whole night; citizens ought, in fact, as you said yesterday, to arm themselves in the cause of liberty."

"I said so," replied Pitou, in a firm tone, and which announced that he was ready to maintain what he had said.

"Only in order to arm ourselves the principal thing is wanting."

"And what is that?" asked Pitou, with much interest.

"Arms!"

"Ah! yes, that is true," said Pitou.

"We have, however, reflected enough not to allow our reflections to be lost; and we will arm ourselves, cost what it may."

"When I went away," said Pitou, "there were five guns in Haramont, — three muskets, a single-barrelled fowling-piece, and a double-barrelled one."

"There are now only four," rejoined the orator; "one of the fowling-pieces burst from old age a month ago."

"That must have been the fowling-piece which belonged to Désiré Maniquet," said Pitou.

"Yes, and, by token when it burst, it carried off two of my fingers," said Désiré Maniquet, holding above his head his mutilated hand; "and as this accident happened to me in the warren of that aristocrat who is called Monsieur de Longpré, the aristocrats shall pay me for it."

Pitou nodded his head to show that he approved this just revenge.

"We therefore have only four guns left," rejoined Claude Tellier.

"Well, then, with four guns you have already enough to arm five men," said Pitou.

"How do you make that out?"

"Oh, the fifth will carry a pike! That is the way they do at Paris; for every four men armed with guns, there is always one man armed with a pike. Those pikes are very convenient things; they serve to stick the heads upon which have been cut off."

"Oh, oh!" cried a loud, joyous voice, "it is to be hoped that we shall not cut off heads."

"No," gravely replied Pitou; "if we have only firmness enough to reject the gold of Messieurs Pitt, father and son. But we were talking of guns; let us not wander from the question, as Monsieur Bailly says. How many men have we in Haramont capable of bearing arms? Have you counted them?"

"Yes."

"And how many are you?"

"We are thirty-two."

"Then there are twenty-eight muskets deficient?"

"Which we shall never get," said the stout man with the good-humored face.

"Ah," said Pitou, "it is necessary to know that, my friend Boniface."

"And how is it necessary to know?"

"Yes, I say it is necessary to know, because I know."

"What do you know?"

"I know where they are to be procured."

"To be procured?"

"Yes; the people of Paris had no arms either. Well, Monsieur Marat, a very learned doctor, but very ugly, told the people of Paris where arms were to be found; the people of Paris went where Monsieur Marat told them, and there they found them."

"And where did Marat tell them to go?" inquired Désiré Maniquet.

"He told them to go to the Invalides."

"Yes; but we have no Invalides at Haramont."

"But I know a place in which there are more than a hundred guns," said Pitou.

"And where is that?"

"In one of the rooms of the Abbé Fortier's college."

"The Abbé Fortier has a hundred guns? He wishes, then, to arm his singing boys, the beggarly black cap!" cried Claude Tellier.

Pitou had not a deep-seated affection for the Abbé Fortier; however, this violent outburst against his former professor profoundly wounded him.

"Claude!" cried he, "Claude!"

"Well, what now?"

"I did not say that the guns belong to the Abbé Fortier."

"If they are in his house, they belong to him."

"That position is a false one. I am in the house of Bastien Godinet, and yet the house of Bastien Godinet does not belong to me."

"That is true," said Bastien, replying without giving Pitou occasion to appeal to him directly.

"The guns, therefore, do not belong to the Abbé Fortier," continued Pitou.

"Whose are they, then?"

"They belong to the township."

"If they belong to the township, how does it happen that they are in the Abbé Fortier's house?"

"They are in the Abbé Fortier's house, because the house in which the Abbé Fortier lives belongs to the township, who gives it to him rent free because he says Mass and teaches the children of poor citizens gratis. Now, since the Abbé Fortier's house belongs to the township, the township has a right to reserve a room in the house that belongs to it, in which to put its muskets, — ah!"

"That is true," said the auditors; "the township has the right."

"Well, then, let us see; how are we to get hold of these guns, — tell us that?"

The question somewhat embarrassed Pitou, who scratched his ear.

"Yes, tell us quickly," cried another voice, "for we must go to our work."

Pitou breathed again; the last speaker had opened to him a door for escape.

"Work!" exclaimed Pitou. "You speak of arming yourselves for the defence of the country, and you think of work!"

And Pitou accompanied his words with a laugh, so

ironical and so contemptuous that the Haramontese looked at one another, and felt humiliated.

"We would not mind sacrificing a few days more, should it be absolutely necessary," said the other, "to gain our liberty."

"To gain our liberty," cried Pitou, "it will be necessary to sacrifice more than a day; we must sacrifice all our days."

"Then," said Boniface, "when people are working for liberty they are resting."

"Boniface," replied Pitou, with the air of Lafayette when irritated, "those will never know how to be free who do not know how to trample their prejudices under foot."

"As to myself," said Boniface, "I ask nothing better than not to work; but what is to be done, then, with regard to eating?"

"Do people eat?" cried Pitou, disdainfully.

"At Haramont they do so yet. Do they no longer eat at Paris?"

"They eat when they have vanquished the tyrants," replied Pitou. "Did any one eat on the 14th of July? Did they even think of eating on that day? No; they had not time even to think of it."

"Ah! ah!" cried some of the most zealous, "the taking of the Bastille must have been a fine sight."

"But," continued Pitou, disdainfully, "as to drinking, I will not say no; it was so hot, and gunpowder has so acrid a taste."

"But what had they to drink?"

"What had the people to drink? Why, water, wine, and brandy. It was the women who had taken this in charge."

"The women?"

"Yes, and handsome women, too, who had made flags of the front part of their dresses."

"Can it be possible?" cried the auditors, with much astonishment.

"But at all events," observed the sceptic, "they must have eaten the next day."

"I do not say that they did not," replied Pitou.

"Then," rejoined Boniface, triumphantly, "if they eat, they must have worked."

"Monsieur Boniface," replied Pitou, "you are speaking of things without understanding them. Paris is not a hamlet. It is not composed of a heap of villagers accustomed to think only of their bellies, — *obedientia ventri*, as we say in Latin, we who are learned. No; Paris, as Monsieur de Mirabeau says, is the head of all nations; it is a brain which thinks for the whole world. The brain, sir, never eats."

"That is true," thought the auditors.

"And yet," said Pitou, "the brain, though it does not eat, still feeds itself."

"But then how does it feed itself?" answered Boniface.

"Invisibly, with the nutriment of the body."

Here the Haramontese were quite at a loss; the question was too profound for them to understand.

"Explain this to us, Pitou," said Boniface.

"That is easily done," replied Pitou: "Paris is the brain, as I have said; the provinces are the members. The provinces will work, drink, eat; and Paris will think."

"Then I will leave the provinces and go to Paris," rejoined the sceptical Boniface. "Will you come to Paris with me, my friends?"

A portion of the audience burst into a loud laugh, and appeared to side with Boniface.

Pitou perceived that he would be discredited by this sarcastic railer.

"Go, then, to Paris," cried he in his turn; "and if you find there a single face as ridiculous as yours, I will buy of you such young rabbits as this at a louis apiece."

And with one hand Pitou held up the young rabbit he had caught and with the other made the louis which remained of Doctor Gilbert's magnificence jingle in his pocket.

Pitou this time had the laugh in his favor.

Upon this, Boniface became positively purple with rage.

"Why, Master Pitou, you are playing the insolent to call us ridiculous."

"*Ridiculus tu es*," majestically replied Pitou.

"But look at yourself," retorted Boniface.

"It would be but to little purpose," replied Pitou. "I might see something as ugly as yourself, but never anything half so stupid."

Pitou had scarcely said these words, when Boniface — at Haramont they are almost as passionate as in Picardy — struck at him with his fist, which Pitou adroitly parried, but to which he replied by a kick in the true Parisian fashion.

This kick was followed by a second, which sent the sceptic flying some few feet, when he fell heavily to the ground.

Pitou bent down over his adversary so as to give the victory the most fatal consequences, and all were already rushing to save poor Boniface, when, raising himself up, —

"Learn," said Pitou, "that the conquerors of the Bastille do not fight with fists. I have a sabre; take another sabre, and let us end the matter at once."

Upon this, Pitou drew his sword, forgetting, or per-

haps not forgetting, that the only sabre in all Haramont was his own, with the exception of that of the rural guard, at least two feet shorter than his own.

It is true that to establish a more perfect equilibrium he put on his helmet.

This greatness of soul electrified the assembly. It was agreed by all that Boniface was a rascallion, a vile fellow, an ass unworthy of being admitted to share in any discussion on public affairs.

And consequently he was expelled.

"You see, then," said Pitou, "the image of the Revolution of Paris; as Monsieur Prudhomme or Loustalot has said — I think it was the virtuous Loustalot who said it — yes, 't was he, I am now certain of it: —

"'The great appear to us to be great, solely because we are upon our knees; let us stand up.'"

This epigram had not the slightest bearing on the question in dispute, but perhaps for that very reason it produced a prodigious effect.

The sceptic Boniface, who was standing at a distance of twenty paces, was struck by it, and he returned to Pitou, humbly saying to him: —

"You must not be angry with us, Pitou, if we do not understand liberty as well as you do."

"It is not liberty," said Pitou, "but the rights of man."

This was another blow with the sledge-hammer, with which Pitou a second time felled the whole auditory.

"Decidedly," said Boniface, "you are a learned man; and we pay homage to you."

Pitou bowed.

"Yes," said he, "education and experience have placed me above you; and if just now I spoke to you rather harshly, it was from my friendship for you."

Loud applause followed this; Pitou saw that he could now give vent to his eloquence.

"You have just talked of work," said he, "but do you know what work is? To you labor consists in splitting wood, in reaping the harvest, in picking up beech-mast, in tying up wheat-sheaves, in placing stones one above another, and consolidating them with cement. That is what you consider work. In your opinion I do not work at all. Well, then, you are mistaken, for I alone labor much more than you do all together, — for I am meditating your emancipation; for I am dreaming of your liberty, of your equality. A moment of my time is therefore of more value than a hundred of your days. The oxen who plough the ground do but one and the same thing; but the man who thinks surpasses all the strength of matter. I, by myself, am worth the whole of you. Look at Monsieur de Lafayette; he is a thin, fair man, not much taller than Claude Tellier. He has a pointed nose, thin legs, and arms as small as the back joints of this chair. As to his hands and feet, it is not worth while to mention them; a man might as well be without. Well! this man has carried two worlds on his shoulders, which is one more than Atlas did, and his little hands have broken the chains of America and France.

"Now, as his arms have done all this, arms not thicker than the back railing of a chair, only imagine to yourselves what arms like mine can do."

And Pitou bared his arms, which were as knotty as the trunk of a holly-tree.

And having drawn this parallel, he paused, well assured that he had produced, without coming to a regular conclusion, an immense effect.

And he had produced it.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PITOU A CONSPIRATOR.

THE greater portion of events which happen to man, and which confer on him great happiness or great honors, are almost always brought about from his having fervently desired or much disdained them.

If this maxim were duly applied to events and to men cited in history, it would be found that it possesses not only profundity, but also truth.

We shall, however, content ourselves, without having recourse to proofs, with applying it to Ange Pitou, our man and our history.

In fact, Pitou, if we are allowed to retrograde a few steps, and to return to the wound which he had received straight to the heart, — Pitou had, in fact, after the discovery he had made on the borders of the forest, been seized with a withering disdain for the things of this nether world.

He who had hoped to find blossom within his heart that rare and precious plant which mortals denominate Love; he who had returned to his own province with a helmet and a sabre, proud of thus associating Mars and Venus, as was said by his illustrious compatriot, Demoustier, in his "Letters to Emilie on Mythology," — found himself completely taken aback and very unhappy on perceiving that there existed at Villers-Cotterets and its neighborhood more lovers than were necessary.

He who had taken so active a part in the crusade of the Parisians against the nobility, found himself but very insignificant in opposition to the country nobility represented by Monsieur Isidore de Charny.

Alas! so handsome a youth, a man likely to please even at first sight, a cavalier who wore buckskin breeches and a velvet riding-coat.

How would it be possible to contend against such a man?

With a man who had long riding-boots, and spurs on the heels of those boots, — with a man whose brother many people still called Monseigneur.

How was it possible to contend against such a rival? How could he avoid at once feeling shame and admiration? — two feelings which, to the heart of a lover, inflict a double torture, — a torture so frightful that it has never yet been decided whether a jealous man prefers a rival of higher or lower condition than himself.

Pitou, therefore, but too well knew the pangs of jealousy, the wounds of which are incurable and fertile in agony, and of which up to this time the ingenuous heart of our hero had remained ignorant, — jealousy, a plant of marvellous and venomous growth, which sprang up without seed being sown, from a soil that had never seen germinate any noxious passion, not even self-love, that evil root which chokes up even the most sterile lands.

A heart thus tortured stands in need of much philosophy in order to regain its habitual calmness.

Was Pitou a philosopher, — he who the day following that on which he had experienced this sensation could think of waging war against the hares and rabbits of his Highness the Duke of Orléans, and the day after that, of making the long harangues we have reported?

Was his heart, then, as hard as flint, from which every

fresh blow draws a spark? Or did it possess only the soft resistance of a sponge, which has the quality of absorbing tears, and of mollifying, without receiving a wound, the shock of every misfortune?

This the future will indubitably testify; therefore let us not prejudge, but go on with our story.

After having received the visit we have related, and his harangues being terminated, Pitou, compelled by his appetite to attend to minor matters, set to work and cooked his young rabbit, regretting that it was not a hare.

But, in fact, had the rabbit been really a hare, Pitou would not have eaten, but would have sold it.

That would not have been a very trifling concern. A hare, according to its size, is worth from eighteen to twenty-four sous; and although he was still the possessor of a few louis given to him by Doctor Gilbert, Pitou, without being as avaricious as his Aunt Angélique, had a good dose of economy, which he had inherited from his mother. Pitou would therefore have added eighteen sous to his treasure, which would thus have been increased instead of diminished.

For Pitou had justly reflected that it was not necessary for a man to make repasts which would cost him one day half a crown, another eighteen sous. He was not a Lucullus; and Pitou said that with the eighteen sous his hare would have brought him, he could have lived during a whole week.

Now, during that week, supposing that he had caught a hare on the first day, he might very well have taken three during the six following days, or rather, the six following nights. In a week, therefore, he would have gained food for a month.

Following up this calculation, forty-eight hares would

have sufficed for a year's keep; all the rest would have been clear profit.

Pitou entered into this economical calculation while he was eating his rabbit, which, instead of bringing him anything, cost him a sous' worth of butter and a sous' worth of lard. As to the onions, he had gleaned them upon the common land.

"After a repast, the fireside or a walk," says the proverb. After his repast, Pitou went into the forest to seek a snug corner where he could take a nap.

It is scarcely necessary to say that as soon as the unfortunate youth had finished talking politics and found himself alone, he had incessantly before his eyes the spectacle of Monsieur Isidore making love to Mademoiselle Catherine.

The oaks and beech-trees trembled with his sighs; Nature, which always smiles on well-filled stomachs, made one exception in regard to Pitou, and appeared to him a vast dark desert, in which there remained only rabbits, hares, and deer.

Once hidden beneath the tall trees of his natal forest, Pitou, inspired by their cool and invigorating shade, became more firm in his heroic resolution, and this was to disappear from before the eyes of Catherine, — to leave her altogether free, and not to affect himself extravagantly as to her preference of another, that he might not be more humiliated than was necessary by invidious comparison.

It was a highly painful effort to abstain from seeing Mademoiselle Catherine; but a man ought to be a man.

Moreover, this was not precisely the case in question.

The question was not exactly that he should no more see Mademoiselle Catherine, but that he should not be seen by her.

Now, what was there to prevent the contemned lover from carefully concealing himself and catching a glance of the cruel fair one? Nothing.

From Haramont to the farm what was the distance? Scarcely a league and a half; that is to say, a few strides, — that was all!

Although it would have been base on the part of Pitou to have continued his attentions to Catherine after what he had seen, it would be so much the more adroit in him to continue to ascertain her acts and conduct, thanks to a little exercise, which could not but be favorable to Pitou's health.

Moreover, that portion of the forest which was behind the farm and extended towards Boursonne abounded in hares.

Pitou would go at night to lay his wires; and the next morning, from the top of some high hillock, he would cast his eyes over the plain and watch Mademoiselle Catherine's doings. This he had the right to do; this, to a certain point, was his duty, being the authorized agent, as he undoubtedly was, of Father Billot.

Thus, having consoled himself, and, as it were, in spite of himself, Pitou thought that he might cease sighing. He dined off an enormous slice of bread he had brought with him; and when the evening had closed in, he laid a dozen wires and threw himself down upon the heather, still warm from the sun's rays.

There he slept like a man in utter despair; that is to say, his sleep was almost as undisturbed as that of death.

The coolness of the night awoke him; he went to examine his wires. Nothing had been taken; but Pitou calculated always more upon the morning passage; only, as his head felt somewhat heavy, he determined on re-

turning to his lodgings and looking to his wires the following day.

But this day, which to him had passed by so devoid of events and intrigues, had been passed in a very different manner by the inhabitants of the hamlet, who had employed it in reflecting and in making combinations.

It might have been seen towards the middle of that day which Pitou had passed dreaming in the forest, — the wood-cutters, we say, might have been seen leaning contemplatively upon their hatchets; the threshers with their flails suspended in the air, meditating; the joiners stopping their planes upon a half-smoothed plank.

Pitou was the first great cause of all this loss of time; Pitou had been the breath of discord which had stirred these straws which began to whirl about confusedly.

And he, the occasion of all this agitation, had not even thought one moment on the subject.

But at the moment when he was going towards his own lodging, although the clock had struck ten, and usually at that hour not a single light was to be seen, not an eye was still open in the village, he perceived a very unaccustomed scene around the house in which he resided. He saw a number of men seated in groups, a number standing in groups, several groups walking up and down.

The aspect of these groups was altogether singular.

Pitou, without knowing why, imagined that all these people were talking of him.

And when he passed through the street, they all appeared as if struck by an electric shock, and pointed at him as he passed.

"What can the matter be with them all?" said Pitou to himself. "I have not my helmet on."

And he modestly retired to his own lodging, after hav-

ing exchanged salutations with a few of the villagers as he passed by them.

He had scarcely shut the door of his house when he thought he heard a slight knock upon the door-post.

Pitou was not in the habit of lighting a candle to undress by. A candle was too great a luxury for a man who paid only six livres a year for his lodgings, and who, having no books, could not read.

But it was certain that some one was knocking at his door.

He raised the latch.

Two of the young inhabitants of the village familiarly entered his abode.

"Why, Pitou, you have not a candle!" said one of them.

"No," replied Pitou; "of what use would it be?"

"Why, that one might see."

"Oh! I see well at night; I am a nyctalops."

And in proof of this, he added: —

"Good-evening, Claude! Good-evening, Désiré."

"Well!" they both cried, "here we are, Pitou!"

"This is a kind visit; what do you desire of me, my friends?"

"Come out into the light," said Claude.

"Into the light of what? There is no moon."

"Into the light of heaven."

"You have, then, something to say to me?"

"Yes, we would speak with you, Ange."

And Claude emphasized these words with a singular expression.

"Well, let us go, then," said Pitou.

And the three went out together.

They walked on until they reached the first open space

in the road, where they stopped, Ange Pitou still not knowing what they wanted of him.

"Well?" inquired Pitou, seeing that his two companions stopped.

"You see now, Ange," said Claude, "here we are, — Désiré Maniquet and myself. We manage to lead all our companions in the country. Will you be one of us?"

"To do what?"

"Ah! that is the question. It is to —"

"To do what?" said Pitou, drawing himself up to his full height.

"To conspire!" murmured Claude, in Pitou's ear.

"Ah, ah! as they do at Paris," said Pitou, jeeringly.

The fact is that Pitou was fearful of the word, and indeed of the echo of the word, even in the midst of the forest.

"Come, now, explain yourself," said Pitou to Claude, after a short pause.

"This is the case," said the latter. "Come nearer. Désiré, — you who are a poacher to your very soul, and who know all the noises of the day and night, of the plain and of the forest, — look around and see if we have been followed; listen whether there be any one attempting to overhear us."

Désiré gave an assenting nod, took a tolerably wide circuit round Pitou and Claude, and having peeped into every bush and listened to every murmur, returned to them.

"You may speak out," said he; "there is no one near us."

"My friends," rejoined Claude, "all the townships of France, as Pitou has told us, desire to be armed, and on the footing of National Guards!"

"That is true!" said Pitou.

"Well, then, why should Haramont not be armed like the other townships?"

"You said why, only yesterday, Claude," replied Pitou, "when I proposed my resolution that we should arm ourselves. Haramont is not armed because Haramont has no muskets!"

"Oh, as to muskets, we need not be uneasy about them, since you know where they are to be had."

"I know! I know!" said Pitou, who saw at what Claude was aiming, and who felt the danger of the proceeding.

"Well," continued Claude, "all the patriotic young fellows of the village have been consulting together to-day."

"Good!"

"And there are thirty-three of us!"

"That is the third of a hundred, less one," added Pitou.

"Do you know the manual exercise?" inquired Claude.

"Do I not?" exclaimed Pitou, who did not even know how to shoulder arms.

"Good! and do you know how to manœuvre a company?"

"I have seen General de Lafayette manœuvring forty thousand men at least ten times," disdainfully replied Pitou.

"That is all right," said Désiré, tired of remaining silent, and who, without intending to presume, wished to put in a word in his turn.

"Well, then, will you command us?" said Claude to Pitou.

"Who, — I?" exclaimed Pitou, starting with surprise.

"Yes, you, — yourself!"

And the two conspirators intently eyed Pitou.

"Oh, you hesitate!" cried Claude.

"Why —"

"You are not, then, a good patriot?" said Désiré.

"Oh! that, for example —"

"There is something, then, that you are afraid of?"

"What! I? I, a conqueror of the Bastille, — a man to whom a medal is awarded?"

"You have a medal awarded you?"

"I shall have one as soon as the medals have been struck. Monsieur Billot has promised to apply for mine in my name."

"He will have a medal! We shall have a chief who has a medal!" exclaimed Claude, in a transport of joy.

"Come now, speak out," said Désiré; "will you accept the appointment?"

"Do you accept?" asked Claude.

"Well, then, yes; I will accept it," said Pitou, carried away by his enthusiasm, and also, perhaps, by a feeling which was awakening within him, and which is called pride.

"It is agreed; from to-morrow morning you will be our commander."

"And what shall I command you to do?"

"Our exercise, to be sure."

"And the muskets?"

"Why, since you know where there are muskets —"

"Oh, yes! at the house of the Abbé Fortier."

"Undoubtedly."

"Only it is very likely the Abbé Fortier will refuse to let me have them."

"Well, then, you will do as the patriots did at the Invalides, — you will take them."

"What! I alone?"

"You will have our signatures, and should it be necessary, you shall have our hands too. We will cause a rising in Villers-Cotterets; but we will have them."

Pitou shook his head.

"The Abbé Fortier is a very obstinate man," said he.

"Pooh! you were his favorite pupil; he would not be able to refuse you anything."

"It is easy to perceive that you do not know him!" cried Pitou, with a sigh.

"How! do you believe the old man would refuse?"

"He would refuse them even to a squadron of the Royal Germans. He is dreadfully obstinate, *injustum et tenacem.* But I forgot, — you do not even understand Latin," added Pitou, with much compassion.

But the two Haramontese did not allow themselves to be dazzled either by the quotation or the apostrophe.

"Ah, in good truth," said Désiré, "we have chosen an excellent chief, Claude; he is alarmed at everything."

Claude shook his head.

Pitou perceived that he was compromising his high position; he remembered that fortune always favors the brave.

"Well, be it so," said he; "I will consider it."

"You, then, will manage the affair of the muskets?"

"I will promise to do all I can."

An expression of satisfaction was uttered by his two friends, replacing the slight discontent they had before manifested.

"Ho! ho!" said Pitou to himself, "these men want to dictate to me even before I am their chief; what will they do, then, when I shall be so in reality?"

"Do all you can," said Claude, shaking his head; "oh, oh! that is not enough."

"If that is not enough," replied Pitou, "try you to do

more. I give up my command to you. Go and see what you can make of the Abbé Fortier and his cat-o'-nine-tails."

"That would be well worth while," said Maniquet, disdainfully. "It is a pretty thing, indeed, for a man to return from Paris with a helmet and a sabre, and then to be afraid of a cat-o'-nine-tails."

"A helmet and a sabre are not a cuirass; and even if they were, the Abbé Fortier would still find a place on which to apply his cat-o'-nine-tails."

Claude and Désiré appeared to comprehend this last observation.

"Come, now, Pitou, my son," said Claude. ("My son" is a term of endearment much used in the country.)

"Well, then, it shall be so," said Pitou; "but zounds! you must be obedient."

"You will see how obedient we shall be," said he, giving a wink to Désiré.

"Only," added Désiré, "you must engage with regard to the muskets —"

"Oh! that is agreed upon," cried Pitou, interrupting him, who was in truth extremely uneasy at the task imposed upon him, but whom, however, ambition was counselling to venture on deeds which required great daring.

"You promise, then?" said Claude.

"I swear it."

Pitou stretched forth his hand. His two companions did the same.

And thus it was, by the light of the stars, and in an opening of the forest, that the insurrection was declared in the department of the Aisne, by the three Haramontese, unwitting plagiarists of William Tell and his three companions.

The fact is that Pitou dimly foresaw that after all the perils and troubles he would have to encounter, he would have the happiness of appearing gloriously invested with the insignia of a commander of the National Guard before the eyes of Catherine; and the insignia appeared to him to be of a nature to cause her to feel, if not remorse, at least some regret for the conduct she had pursued.

Thus consecrated by the will of his electors, Pitou returned to his house, meditating on the ways and means by which he could procure arms for his thirty-three National Guards.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN WHICH WILL BE SEEN OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER THE MONARCHICAL PRINCIPLE REPRESENTED BY THE ABBÉ FORTIER, AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLE REPRESENTED BY PITOU.

THE whole of that night Pitou was so absorbed in reflecting on the great honor which had befallen him that he forgot to visit his wires.

The next morning he donned his helmet, and buckled on his great sabre, and set out manfully towards Villers-Cotterets.

It was just striking six o'clock when Pitou reached the square before the château, and he modestly knocked at the small door which opened into the Abbé Fortier's garden.

Pitou had knocked loud enough to satisfy his conscience, but gently enough not to be heard from the house.

He had hoped thus to gain a quarter of an hour's respite, and during that time to summon up some flowers of oratory wherewith to adorn the speech he had prepared for the Abbé Fortier.

But his astonishment was great when, notwithstanding his having knocked so gently, he saw the gate at once opened; but his astonishment soon ceased, when in the person who had opened it he recognized Sebastien Gilbert.

The lad was walking in the garden studying his lesson by the sun's first rays, — or rather, we should say,

pretending to study; for the open book was hanging listlessly in his hand, and the thoughts of the youth were capriciously wandering after those whom he most loved in the world.

Sebastien uttered a joyous cry on perceiving Pitou.

They embraced each other. The boy's first words were these: —

"Have you received news from Paris?"

"No; have you any?" inquired Pitou.

"Oh! I have received some," said Sebastien. "My father has written me a delightful letter."

"Ah!" cried Pitou.

"And in which," continued the lad, "there is a word for you."

And taking the letter from his breast-pocket, he handed it to Pitou.

"P. S. — Billot recommends Pitou not to annoy or distract the attention of the people at the farm."

"Oh!" said Pitou, "that is a recommendation which, as it regards me, is altogether useless. There is no one at the farm whom I can either annoy or amuse."

Then he added to himself, sighing still more deeply:

"It was to Monsieur Isidore that these words ought to have been addressed."

He, however, soon recovered his self-possession, and returned the letter to Sebastien.

"Where is the abbé?" he inquired.

Sebastien bent his ear towards the house, and, although the width of the courtyard and the garden separated him from the staircase, which creaked beneath the footsteps of the worthy priest: —

"Why," said he, "he is just coming downstairs."

Pitou went from the garden into the courtyard; and it

was only then that he heard the heavy footsteps of the abbé.

The worthy professor was reading the newspaper as he came downstairs. His faithful cat-o'-nine tails was, as usual, hanging by his side.

With his nose close to the newspaper — for he knew by heart the number of steps and every inequality in the wall of his old house — the abbé almost ran against Ange Pitou, who had assumed the most majestic air he could put on, in order to contend with his political antagonist.

But we must first of all say a few words as to the position of the Abbé Fortier, which might have appeared tedious in any other page, but which here find their natural place.

They will explain how it was that the thirty or forty muskets which have been so much talked about happened to be in the Abbé Fortier's charge, — which muskets had become the object of the ambition of Pitou, and of his two accomplices, Claude and Désiré.

The Abbé Fortier, who had formerly been the almoner or sub-almoner of the château, as we have already had occasion to explain elsewhere, had, in course of time, and above all, with that patient fixity of ideas inherent in ecclesiastics, become sole intendant of what in theatrical language is called the *properties* of the château.

Besides the sacred vases, besides the library, he had received in charge all the hunting apparatus of the Duke of Orléans, Louis Philippe, the father of Philippe, who was afterwards called *Égalité*. Some of this apparatus had been in the family as far back as the reigns of Louis XIII. and Henri III. All these articles had been artistically arranged by him in one of the galleries of the château, which had been allotted to him for this express purpose. In order to give them a more picturesque

appearance, he had formed them into stars, the centre being shields, surrounded by boar-spears, hunting-knives, and short muskets, richly inlaid, and manufactured during the time of the League.

The door of this gallery was formidably defended by two small cannon of plated bronze, given by Louis XIV. to his brother, Monsieur.

Besides these, there were about fifty musketoons, brought as trophies by Joseph Philippe from the battle of Ushant, and presented by him to the municipality of Villers-Cotterets; and the municipality, as we have said, having furnished the Abbé Fortier with a house free of rent, had placed these muskets, not knowing what to do with them, in the collegiate house.

Such was the treasure guarded by the Dragon, named Fortier, and threatened by the Jason, named Ange Pitou.

The little arsenal of the château was sufficiently celebrated in the country to make people desire to obtain possession of it at little cost.

But, as we have said, the abbé, being a vigilant Dragon, did not appear disposed willingly to give up, to any Jason whatsoever, the golden apples which his Hesperides contained.

Having said this much, let us return to Pitou.

He very gracefully bowed to the Abbé Fortier, accompanying his bow with a slight cough, such as we use to attract the attention of persons who are naturally absent, or who are preoccupied.

The Abbé Fortier raised his nose from the newspaper.

"Well, I declare," said he, "'t is Pitou."

"To serve you, should I be capable of doing so," courteously replied Ange.

The abbé folded up his newspaper, or rather closed it

as he would have done a portfolio, for in those happy days the newspapers were still small pamphlets.

Then, having folded up his paper, he stuck it into his belt on the opposite side to his cat-o'-nine-tails.

"Ah, yes! but in that lies the misfortune," replied the abbé, jeeringly, "seeing that you are not capable."

"Oh, most worthy abbé."

"Do you hear me, Mr. Hypocrite?"

"Oh, good abbé!"

"Do you hear me, Mr. Revolutionist?"

"Come now, this is good; for before I have spoken even a single word, you get into a passion with me. This is but a bad beginning, Abbé."

Sebastien — who well knew what the Abbé Fortier had, for the last two days, been saying to every one who came near him about Pitou, and thinking it better not to be present during the quarrel which must necessarily ensue between his schoolmaster and his friend — stole away as quickly as he could.

Pitou observed Sebastien's escape with a certain degree of sorrow. He was not a very vigorous ally, but he was a youth of the same political communion with himself.

And therefore, when he perceived him stepping through the door, he could not avoid uttering a sigh; then turning to the abbé: —

"Come now, Monsieur Fortier," said he, "why do you call me a Revolutionist? Would you insinuate that I am the cause of the Revolution?"

"You have lived with those who are carrying it on."

"Good Monsieur Abbé," said Pitou, with supreme dignity, "the thoughts of every man are free."

"Ah! indeed."

"*Est penes hominem arbitrium et ratio.*"

"Why, really," cried the abbé, "you know Latin, then, you clown?"

"I know what you taught me of it," modestly replied Pitou.

"Yes, revised, corrected, augmented, and embellished with barbarisms."

"Good again, Monsieur Abbé, — barbarisms! and who is there who does not commit them?"

"Vile fellow!" cried the abbé, evidently wounded by this apparent tendency of Pitou to generalize. "What! do you believe that I am guilty of barbarisms?"

"You would commit them in the eyes of a man who was a better Latin scholar than yourself."

"Only hear that!" cried the abbé, turning pale with anger, and yet struck with the reasoning, which was not devoid of point.

Then, in a melancholy tone: —

"There, in two words, is the system of these vile wretches; they destroy and degrade, and who profits by it? They know not even themselves; it is to the profit of the unknown. Come now, Monsieur Dunce, speak out freely; do you know any one who is a better Latin scholar than I am?"

"No; but there may be many, although I do not know them, — I do not know everything."

"Zounds! I believe you."

Pitou made the sign of the cross.

"What are you doing there, libertine?"

"You swore, Monsieur Abbé, and I crossed myself."

"Why, rascal, have you come here to tympanize me?"

"To tympanize you!" repeated Pitou.

"Ah, good; now again you do not comprehend — "

"Oh, yes! I understand it well enough. Ah! thanks to you, I know the roots of words — tympanize — *tym-*

panum — drum; it comes from the Greek *tympanon*, drum or bell."

The abbé appeared perfectly astounded.

"Root, *typos*, mark, vestige; and as Lancelot says in his Garden of Greek Roots, *typos, the form which impresses itself*, which word evidently comes from *tupto, strike.* There you have it."

"Ah! ah! rascallion!" cried the abbé, more and more dumfounded. "It seems that you yet know something, even what you did not know."

"Pooh!" ejaculated Pitou, with affected modesty.

"How did it happen that during the whole time you were with me, you could not answer me as you have now done?"

"Because, during the time I was with you, Abbé Fortier, you brutalized me; because, by your despotism you repelled my intelligence, imprisoned within my memory all that liberty has since brought forth from it. Yes, liberty," continued Pitou, becoming more energetic as he proceeded; "do you hear me? — liberty!"

"Ah! rascal!"

"Monsieur Professor," said Pitou, with an air which was not exempt from threat, — "Monsieur Professor, do not insult me. *Contumelia non argumentum*, says an orator; insult is not reasoning."

"I think that the fellow," cried the abbé, in great fury, — "I think that the fellow imagines it necessary to translate his Latin to me."

"It is not my Latin, Monsieur Abbé; it is Cicero's, — that is to say, the Latin of a man who assuredly would have thought that you made as many barbarisms in comparison with him as I do in comparison with you."

"You do not expect, I hope," cried the Abbé Fortier,

somewhat shaken on his pedestal, — "you do not expect, I hope, that I should discuss with you?"

"And why not? If from the discussion light is to proceed, *abstrusa in venis silicis.*"

"How! how!" exclaimed the Abbé Fortier; "why, really, the fellow has been in the Revolutionary school."

"How can that be, since you yourself have said that the Revolutionists are fools and ignoramuses?"

"Yes, I do say so."

"Then you are making a false reasoning, my worthy abbé, and your syllogism is badly founded."

"Badly founded! What say you? I have badly founded a syllogism?"

"Undoubtedly, Monsieur l'Abbé. Pitou reasons and speaks well; Pitou has been to the Revolutionary school, — the Revolutionists consequently reason and speak well. There is no getting out of that."

"Animal! brute! simpleton!"

"Do not molest me by your words, Monsieur Abbé. *Objurgatio imbellem animum arguit,* weakness betrays itself by anger."

The abbé shrugged his shoulders.

"Answer me," said Pitou.

"You say that the Revolutionists speak well and reason well. But tell me the name of any one of those wretches who knows how to read and write."

"That is blinking the point in discussion; but I will answer you, nevertheless. I can read and write," cried Pitou, with assurance.

"Read; I will admit that, — and yet I know not, — but as to writing — "

"Writing!" cried Pitou.

"Yes, you can write; but without orthography."

"That is to be seen."

"Will you lay a wager that you will write a page under my dictation without making four blunders?"

"Will you lay a wager, you, that you will write half a page under my dictation without making two?"

"Oh! that, for example —"

"Well, let us to work. I will pick you out some participles and reflective verbs. I will season you up all these with a certain number of 'thats' which I know of; I accept the wager."

"If I had time," said the abbé.

"You would lose."

"Pitou! Pitou! remember the proverb, *Pitoueus Angelus asinus est.*"

"Pooh! proverbs! — there are proverbs made for everybody. Do you know the one which was sung into my ears by the reeds of the Wualu as I passed by them?"

"No; but I should be curious to know it, Master Midas."

"*Fortierus Abbas forte fortis.*"

"Sir!" exclaimed the abbé.

"A free translation; the Abbé Fortier is not in his forte every day."

"Fortunately," said the abbé, "accusing is of slight importance; it is the proof that condemns."

"Alas! good Monsieur Abbé, that would be perfectly easy; let us see, what do you teach your pupils?"

"Why —"

"Allow me to follow up the argument. What do you teach your pupils?"

"Why, what I know."

"Good! remember that your answer was, 'What I know.'"

"Well, yes, what I know," said the abbé, somewhat

shaken; for he felt that during his absence this singular combatant had learned some unknown thrusts. "Yes, I did say so; and what then?"

"Well, then, since you teach your pupils what you know, tell me what it is that you do know?"

"Latin, French, Greek, history, geography, arithmetic, algebra, astronomy, botany, and numismatics —"

"Anything more?" inquired Pitou.

"Why —"

"Try to find something else."

"Drawing."

"Go on."

"Architecture."

"Go on."

"Mechanics."

"A branch of mathematics — but that matters not; go on."

"But tell me, what are you aiming at?"

"Simply at this: you have stated pretty largely the account of what you do know; now state the account of what you do not know."

The abbé shuddered.

"Ah!" said Pitou, "I clearly see that to do this I must assist you; well, then, you do not know either German or Hebrew or Arabic or Sanscrit — four mother languages. I speak not of the sub-divisions, which are innumerable. You know nothing of natural history, of chemistry, of physics —"

"Monsieur Pitou —"

"Do not interrupt me: you know nothing of rectilinear trigonometry; you are ignorant of medicine; you know nothing of acoustics, of navigation; you are ignorant of everything that regards the gymnastic sciences."

"What say you?"

"I said gymnastics, from the Greek *exercitia gymnastica*, which comes from *gymnos*, naked, because the athletes were naked when they exercised."

"And yet it was I who taught you all this!" cried the abbé, almost consoled at the victory of his pupil.

"That is true."

"It is fortunate that you even acknowledge it."

"And with gratitude; we were saying, then, that you are ignorant of —"

"Enough. It is certain that I am ignorant of much more than I know."

"Therefore you acknowledge that many men know more than you do."

"That is possible."

"It is certain; and the more a man knows, the more does he perceive that he knows nothing. It was Cicero who said this."

"Conclude."

"I conclude —"

"Let us hear your conclusion; it will be a fine one."

"I conclude that in virtue of your relative ignorance, you ought to be more indulgent as to the relative knowledge of other men. This constitutes a double virtue, — *virtus duplex*, which we are assured was that of Fénelon, who assuredly knew quite as much as you do; and that is Christian charity and humility."

The abbé uttered a perfect roar of anger.

"Serpent!" he exclaimed; "you are a serpent!"

"You insult me, but do not answer me; this was the reply of one of the seven wise men of Greece. I would say it in Greek, but I have already said it, or something nearly to the same purpose, in Latin."

"Good!" said the abbé, "this is another effect of Revolutionary doctrines."

"And in what way?"

"They have persuaded you that you were my equal."

"And even should they have persuaded me of that, it would not give you the right of making a grammatical error."

"What say you?"

"I say that you have just made an enormous fault, master."

"Ah! that is very polite indeed; and what fault did I commit?"

"It is this. You said, 'Revolutionary principles have persuaded you that you *were* my equal.'"

"Well; and what then?"

"Well; *were* is in the imperfect tense."

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"It was the present you should have used."

"Ah!" cried the abbé, blushing.

"Only translate the phrase into Latin and you will see what an enormous solecism the verb will give you in the imperfect tense."

"Pitou! Pitou!" exclaimed the abbé, imagining that there was something supernatural in this astounding erudition, — "Pitou! which of the demons is it that inspires you with all these attacks against an old man and against the Church?"

"Why, my good master," replied Pitou, somewhat moved by the tone of real despair in which these words had been pronounced, "it is not a demon who inspires me, nor do I attack you. Only you treat me as if I were a perfect fool, and you forget that all men are equals."

The abbé was again irritated.

"It is that which I never will permit; I cannot allow such blasphemies to be uttered in my presence. You, —

you the equal of a man whom God and study have taken sixty years to form? never! never!"

"Well, then, ask Monsieur de Lafayette, who has proclaimed the rights of man."

"Yes, yes! cite as an authority an unfaithful subject of the king, — the firebrand of all this discord; the traitor!"

"Hey!" cried Pitou, horrified. "Monsieur de Lafayette an unfaithful subject! Monsieur de Lafayette a firebrand of discord! Monsieur de Lafayette a traitor! Why, it is you, Abbé, who are blaspheming. Why, you must have lived shut up in a box during the last three months. You do not know, then, that this unfaithful subject of the king is the only one who serves the king; that this firebrand of discord is the pledge of public peace; that this traitor is the best of Frenchmen?"

"Oh!" exclaimed the abbé, "could I ever have believed that royal authority would fall so low? A worthless fellow like that" — and he pointed to Pitou — "to invoke the name of Lafayette as in ancient times they invoked the names of Aristides and of Phocion."

"It is very fortunate for you, Monsieur l'Abbé, that the people do not hear you," said Pitou, imprudently.

"Ah!" exclaimed the abbé, with triumph, "you at length reveal yourself, — you threaten. The people — yes, the people who basely murdered the king's officers — the people, who even tore out the entrails of their victims! Yes, Monsieur de Lafayette's people — Monsieur Bailly's people — Monsieur Pitou's people! Well, then, why do you not instantly denounce me to the Revolutionists of Villers-Cotterets? Why do you not drag me to Pleux? Why do you not turn up your sleeves to hang me on the first post? Come now, Pitou; *macte animo*, Pitou. *Sursum! sursum*, Pitou! Come, come, where is

your rope? Where is your gallows? There is the executioner; *macte animo, generose Pitoue!*"

"*Sic itur ad astra!*" added Pitou, muttering, but solely with the intention of finishing the line, and not perceiving that he was making a pun worthy of a cannibal.

But he was compelled to perceive it by the increased exasperation of the abbé.

"Ah! ah!" vociferated the latter; "ah! that is the way you take it! Ah, it is thus that you would send me to the stars, is it? Ah, you intend me for the gallows, do you?"

"Why, I did not say that," cried Pitou, beginning to be alarmed at the turn the conversation was taking.

"Ah! you promise me the heaven of the unfortunate Foulon, of the unhappy Berthier?"

"Why so, Monsieur l'Abbé?"

"Ah, you have the running-noose prepared, sanguinary executioner! It was you, was it not, who on the square before the Hôtel de Ville ascended the lamp-iron, and with your long, hideous, spider-like arms drew the victims to you?"

Pitou uttered a perfect roar of horror and indignation.

"Yes, it was you; and I recognize you," continued the abbé, in a transport of divination, which made him resemble Joab, — "I recognize thee; thou art Catiline."

"But really," exclaimed Pitou, "do you know that you are saying abominable things to me, Monsieur l'Abbé? Do you know that, in point of fact, you are insulting me?"

"I insult you?"

"Do you know that if this continues I will complain to the National Assembly? Ah! but —"

The abbé laughed with a sinistrously ironical expression.

"Lay your information," said he.

"And that punishment is awarded to ill-disposed persons who insult the good?"

"The lamp-post!"

"You are a bad citizen."

"The rope! the rope!"

Then he exclaimed, as if suddenly enlightened and struck with a movement of generous indignation: —

"Ah, the helmet! the helmet! 't is he!"

"Well," said Pitou, "what is the matter with my helmet?"

"The man who tore out the still smoking heart of Berthier — the cannibal who carried it still bleeding, and laid it on the table of the electors — wore a helmet; that man with the helmet was you, Pitou! it was you, monster that you are! avaunt! avaunt! avaunt!"

And each time that the abbé pronounced the word "avaunt," which he did with much tragic emphasis, he advanced one step towards Pitou, who retreated in the same proportion.

But on hearing this accusation, of which the reader knows Pitou to be perfectly innocent, the poor lad threw far from him the helmet of which he was so proud, which rolled over upon the pavement of the court-yard, with the heavy, hollow sound of copper lined with pasteboard.

"You see, wretch!" cried the abbé, "you acknowledge it."

And he assumed the attitude of Lekain,[1] in Orosmanes, at the moment when, after finding the letter, he accuses Zaire.

"Come, now," said Pitou, completely taken aback by so horrible an accusation, "you are exaggerating, Monsieur l'Abbé."

[1] A great French tragedian.

"I exaggerate! that is to say, that you only hanged a little; that is to say, that you only ripped up a little; poor, weak child!"

"Monsieur Abbé, you know full well it was not I, you well know that it was Pitt."

"And who is Pitt?"

"Pitt the Second, the son of Pitt the First, of Lord Chatham. He who has distributed money, saying, 'Spend it; you need not give any account of it.' If you understood English, I would tell it you in English, but you do not know that language."

"You know it then, you?"

"Monsieur Gilbert taught it me."

"In three weeks? Monsieur Impostor!"

Pitou saw that he had made a false step.

"Hear me, Monsieur Abbé," said he, "I will not contend with you any farther. You have your own ideas—"

"Really!"

"That is but right."

"You acknowledge that: Monsieur Pitou allows me to have my own ideas! Thanks, Monsieur Pitou!"

"Good! There, you are getting angry again. You must comprehend that if this continues I shall not be able to tell you the object which brought me here."

"Wretch! You had an object in coming here, then? You were deputed, perhaps?"

And the abbé laughed ironically.

"Sir," said Pitou, placed by the abbé himself upon the footing in which he wished to find himself since the commencement of the discussion, "you know the great respect I have always had for your character."

"Ah, yes! let us talk of that."

"And the admiration I have always entertained for your knowledge," added Pitou.

"Serpent!" exclaimed the abbé.

"What! I?" cried Pitou; "that, for example!"

"Come, now, let us hear what you have to ask of me! That I should take you back here? No, no; I would not spoil my scholars. No; you would still retain the noxious venom; you would infect my young plants. *Infecit pabula labo.*"

"But, good Monsieur Abbé —"

"No, do not ask me that; if you must absolutely eat, — for I presume that the hangers of Paris eat as well as honest people. They eat — oh, God! In short, if you require that I should throw you your portion of raw meat, you shall have it, but at the door on the spatula, as at Rome the masters did to their dogs."

"Monsieur Abbé," cried Pitou, drawing himself up proudly, "I do not ask you for my food; I have wherewith to provide food, God be thanked; I will not be a burden to any one."

"Ah!" exclaimed the abbé, with surprise.

"I live as all living beings do, and that without begging, and by that industry which Nature has implanted in me; I live by my own labor; and more than that, I am so far from being chargeable on my fellow-citizens, that several among them have elected me their chief."

"Hey!" cried the abbé, with so much surprise, mingled with so much terror, that it might have been thought that he had trod upon a viper.

"Yes, yes; they have elected me their chief," repeated Pitou, complacently.

"Chief of what?" inquired the abbé.

"Chief of a troop of freemen," said Pitou.

"Ah! good Heaven!" cried the abbé, "the unfortunate boy has gone mad."

"Chief of the National Guard of Haramont," concluded Pitou, affecting modesty.

The abbé leaned towards Pitou in order to gain from his features a confirmation of his words.

"There is a National Guard at Haramont?" cried he.

"Yes, Monsieur Abbé."

"And you are the chief of it?"

"Yes, Monsieur Abbé."

"You, Pitou?"

"I, Pitou."

The abbé raised his outstretched arms towards heaven, like Phineas the high-priest.

"Abomination of desolation!" murmured he.

"You are not ignorant, Monsieur Abbé," said Pitou, with gentleness, "that the National Guard is an institution destined to protect the life, the liberty, and the property of the citizens."

"Oh! oh!" continued the abbé, overwhelmed by his despair.

"And that," continued Pitou, "too much vigor cannot be given to that institution, above all, in the country, on account of the very numerous bands —"

"Bands of which you are the chief!" cried the abbé, — "bands of plunderers, bands of incendiaries, bands of assassins!"

"Oh, do not confound things in this manner, dear Monsieur Abbé; you will see my soldiers, I hope, and never were there more honest citizens."

"Be silent! be silent!"

"You must consider, on the contrary, that we are your natural protectors; and the proof of this is that I have come straight to you."

"And for what purpose?" inquired the abbé.

"Ah! that is precisely it," said Pitou, scratching his

ear and looking anxiously at the spot where his helmet was lying, in order to ascertain whether in going to pick up this very necessary portion of his military equipment, he would not place himself at too great a distance from his line of retreat.

The helmet had rolled to within some few paces only of the great gate which opened on to the Rue de Soissons.

"I asked you for what purpose," repeated the abbé.

"Well," said Pitou, retreating backwards two steps towards his helmet, "this is the object of my mission, good Monsieur Abbé; permit me to develop it to your sagacity."

"Exordium!" muttered the abbé.

Pitou backed two steps more towards his helmet.

But by a singular manœuvre, which did not fail to give Pitou some uneasiness, whenever he made two steps nearer to his helmet, the abbé, in order to remain at the same distance from him, advanced two steps towards Pitou.

"Well," said Pitou, beginning to feel more courageous from his proximity to his defensive headpiece, "all soldiers require muskets, and we have not any."

"Ah! you have no muskets!" cried the abbé, dancing with joy; "ah! they have no muskets! Soldiers without muskets! Ah! by my faith! they must be very pretty soldiers."

"But, Monsieur Abbé," said Pitou, taking again two steps nearer to his helmet, "when men have not muskets, they seek for them."

"Yes," said the abbé; "and you are in search of some?"

Pitou was able to reach his helmet, and brought it near him with his foot. Being thus occupied, he did not at once reply to the abbé.

"You look, then, for some?" repeated the latter.

Pitou picked up his helmet.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In your house," said Pitou, placing the helmet on his head.

"Guns in my house?" asked the abbé.

"Yes. You have many."

"Ah! my museum; you come to rob my museum. Only fancy the cuirasses of old heroes on the backs of such creatures. Pitou, I told you just now that you were mad. The swords of the Spaniards of Almanza, the pikes of the Swiss of Marignan, were never made for such a troop as yours."

The abbé laughed so scornfully that a cold shudder ran through Pitou's veins.

"No, Abbé!" said Pitou, "the Spanish swords and Swiss pikes would be of no use."

"It is well you see it."

"Not those arms, Abbé, but those capital muskets I cleaned so often when I studied under you.

'Dum me Galatea tenebat,'"

added Pitou, with a most insinuating smile.

"Indeed," said the abbé; and he felt his few hairs stand erect as Pitou spoke; "you want my old marine muskets?"

"They are the only weapons you have without any historical interest, and really fit for service."

"Indeed," said the abbé, placing his hand on the handle of his lash, as the soldier would have seized his sword. "Back, now! the traitor unveils himself."

"Abbé," said Pitou, passing from menace to prayer, "give me thirty muskets —"

"Go back!" The abbé advanced towards Pitou.

"And you will have the glory of having contributed to rescue the country from its oppressors."

"Furnish arms to be used against me and mine! Never!" said the abbé.

He took up his whip.

He wheeled it above his head.

"Never, never!"

"Monsieur," said Pitou, "your name shall be placed in the journal of Monsieur Prudhomme."

"My name in his paper!"

"Honorably mentioned."

"I had rather be sent to the galleys."

"What! you refuse?" asked Pitou.

"Yes, and tell you to go —"

The abbé pointed to the door.

"That would be very wrong, for you would be accused of treason. Monsieur, I beg you not to expose yourself to that."

"Make me a martyr hero; Nero, I ask but that." And his eye glared so that he looked more like the executioner than the victim.

So Pitou thought, for he began to fall back.

"Abbé," said he, stepping back, "I 'm an ambassador of peace, a quiet deputy. I come —"

"You come to rob my armory, as your accomplices did that of the Invalides."

"Which was most laudable," said Pitou.

"And which will here expose you to a shower of lashes from my cat-o'-nine-tails."

"Monsieur," said Pitou, who recognized an old acquaintance in the tool, "you will not thus violate the law of nations."

"You will see. Wait."

"I am protected by my character of ambassador."

The abbé continued to advance.

"Abbé! Abbé! Abbé!" said Pitou.

He was at the street door, face to face with his dangerous enemy, and Pitou had either to fight or run.

To run he had to open the door, to open the door, turn.

If he turned, Pitou exposed to danger the part of his body the least protected by the cuirass.

"You want my guns? you want my guns, do you?" said the abbé, "and you say, 'I will have them or you die!'"

"On the contrary, Monsieur, I say nothing of the kind."

"Well, you know where they are; cut my throat and take them."

"I am incapable of such a deed."

Pitou stood at the door with his hand on the latch, and thought not of the abbé's muskets, but of his whip.

"Then you will not give me the muskets?"

"No!"

"I ask you again!"

"No! no!"

"Again!"

"No! no! no!"

"Then keep them!" and he dashed through the half-open door.

His movement was not quick enough to avoid the whip, which hissed through the air and fell on the small of the back of Pitou; and great as was the courage of the conqueror of the Bastille, he uttered a cry of pain.

On hearing the cry, many of the neighbors rushed out, and to their surprise saw Pitou running away with his sword and helmet, and the Abbé Fortier at the door brandishing his whip, as the angel of destruction wields his sword of flame.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PITOU A DIPLOMATIST.

We have seen how Pitou was disappointed.

The fall was immense. Not even Satan had fallen from such an eminence when from heaven he was thrown to hell. Satan fell, but remained a king; while the Abbé Fortier's victim was only Ange Pitou.

How could he appear before the persons who had sent him? How, after having testified such rash confidence, could he say that he was a boaster and a coward, who, armed with a sword and a helmet, had suffered an old abbé to whip him and put him to flight.

Pitou was wrong in having boasted that he would triumph over the Abbé Fortier, and in failing.

The first time he found himself out of view, he put his hand on his head and thought.

He had expected to conciliate Fortier with his Latin and Greek. He thought that by the honeyed cake of classical expressions he would corrupt the old Cerberus; but he had been bitten, and all had been spoiled.

The abbé had great self-esteem, and Pitou had not regarded it. What most offended the abbé was Pitou's finding fault with his French, — a thing he cared far more about than he did about the muskets which Pitou had sought to take from him.

Young people when good always think others as good as they are themselves.

The abbé was not only an extreme royalist, but also a devoted philologist.

Pitou was especially sorry that he had excited him, both on account of Louis XVI. and the verb "to be." He knew and should have managed his old master. That was his error, and he regretted it, though too late.

What should he have done?

By eloquence have flattered the abbé of his own royalism, and not have noticed his mistakes in grammar.

He should have convinced him that the National Guard of Haramont was opposed to the Revolution.

He should have said that it would sustain the king.

Above all, he never should have said a word about the confusion of tenses of the verb "to be."

There was no earthly doubt but that the abbé would have opened his arsenal for the purpose of securing to the cause of the king such a leader and such a company.

This falsehood is diplomacy. Pitou thought over all the stories of old times.

He thought of Philip of Macedon, who swore falsely so often, but who was called a great man.

Of Brutus, who to overcome his enemies pretended to be a fool, but who is thought a great man.

Of Themistocles, who served his fellow-citizens by deceiving them, but who is called a great man.

On the other hand, he remembered that Aristides would admit of no injustice, and that he too was esteemed a great man.

This contrast annoyed him.

He thought, though, that Aristides fortunately lived at a time when the Persians were so stupid that one could act honestly and yet conquer them.

He then remembered that Aristides had been exiled, and this circumstance decided him in favor of Philip of Macedon, Brutus, and Themistocles.

Descending to modern times, Pitou remembered how

Gilbert, Bailly, Lameth, Barnave, and Mirabeau would have acted, had Louis XVI. been the abbé and they been Pitou.

What would they have done to have the king arm the five hundred thousand National Guards of France?

Exactly the contrary of what Pitou had done.

They would have persuaded Louis XVI. that they desired nothing more than to preserve the Father of the French; that to save him, from three to five hundred thousand guns were needed.

Mirabeau would here succeed.

Pitou then remembered the two flowing lines: —

"When you to the Devil pray
Call him giver of all good."

He came to the conclusion that Ange Pitou was a perfect brute, and that to return to his electors with any sort of glory he ought to have done exactly what he had not.

Pitou determined, then, either by force or by stratagem to get possession of the arms.

The first resource was stratagem.

He could enter the abbé's museum and steal the arms.

If he did it alone, the act would be theft. If with companions, it would be simply a removal.

The very word "theft" made Pitou uneasy.

As to the removal, there were yet many people in France who, used to the old laws, would call it burglarious robbery.

Pitou hesitated.

But Pitou's self-love was excited, and to get out of the difficulty with honor he was forced to act alone.

He set to work most diligently to seek some mode of extricating himself.

At last, like Archimedes, he shouted "Eureka!" which in plain English means, "I have discovered!"

The following was his plan: —

Lafayette was Commander-in-Chief of the National Guards of France.

Haramont was in France.

Haramont had a National Guard.

Lafayette then was Commander of the National Guard of Haramont.

He could not, therefore, consent that they should be destitute of arms while the rest of the militia of France was armed or about to be so.

To reach Lafayette he had to appeal to Gilbert, and Gilbert he would reach through Billot.

Pitou had then to write to Billot.

As Billot could not read, Gilbert would have to read the letter for him, and in this way Gilbert would learn the facts, thus saving the necessity of at least one letter.

His resolution being taken, Pitou waited till night, when he returned secretly to Haramont and took up the pen.

But notwithstanding the precautions he had taken that his return should be unobserved, he was seen by Claude Tellier and Désiré Maniquet.

They withdrew in silence, and each with a finger on his lips, as a token of silence.

Pitou now had entered upon the rôle of a practical politician.

The following is a copy of the letter which produced such an effect on Tellier and Maniquet: —

DEAR AND HONORABLE MONSIEUR BILLOT, — The Revolutionary cause in our part of the country every day gains.

The people of Haramont has enrolled itself in the active National Guard.

It is, however, unarmed.

Arms may be procured. Certain persons have large quantities, the possession of which would prevent the expenditure of public money.

If General de Lafayette be pleased to order these to be seized and distributed, I will myself guarantee that thirty muskets will be placed in the arsenals of Haramont.

It is the only way to oppose the anti-Revolutionary action of the aristocrats and of the enemies of the nation.

Your fellow-citizen and servant,

ANGE PITOU.

When this was done, he remembered that he had forgotten to write to the farmer of his wife and family.

He had treated him too much as a Brutus; but if he were to give Billot the details about Catherine, he would have either to lie or to rend the father's heart; it would be also to reopen his own love-wounds.

Stifling a sigh, he added the following postscript: —

"P.S. — Madame Billot, Mademoiselle Catherine, and all are well, and send their love to Monsieur Billot."

He thus compromised neither himself nor any one.

He sent the letter, and the answer soon came.

Two days afterwards, a mounted express reached Haramont and asked for Monsieur Ange Pitou.

All the members of the militia were on the *qui vive*.

The horse was white with foam, and the rider wore the uniform of the Parisian National Guard.

From the excitement he produced all may fancy how great was Pitou's agitation.

He approached, and not without trembling received the package which the officer gave him.

It was the reply of Billot, written by Gilbert.

He advised Pitou to be both moderate and patriotic.

He enclosed an order of Lafayette, countersigned by the Minister of War, for the National Guard of Haramont to arm itself.

The order was thus written : —

"The possessors of muskets and sabres, in a greater number than one, will be required to place them in the hands of the commanders of the National Guards of the commune.

"The present order extends to all the province."

Pitou thanked the officer and saw him at once set out.

Pitou had reached the acme of glory, having received a message directly from Lafayette and the ministry.

This message suited his ideas exactly.

To describe the effect of the messenger and official document on Pitou's followers would be impossible, and we will not therefore attempt to do so. The sight, however, of the excited countenances of all the people, the great respect exhibited to him, would have made the most sceptical believe that henceforward our hero was going to be a most important personage.

All the electors requested to see and touch the ministerial seal, — a favor Pitou kindly granted.

When none but the initiated remained, Pitou said :

"Citizens, my plans have succeeded as I had foreseen. I wrote to General de Lafayette that you wished to form a National Guard and had selected me as commander.

"Read the directions of this letter."

The despatch had been directed : —

Citizen Ange Pitou :
Commander of the National Guard of Haramont.

"I am then recognized in my rank, by Lafayette, as commander.

"You are recognized as guards."

A loud shout of joy and admiration shook the roof of Pitou's garret.

"I know where we can get arms," said Pitou.

"You will at once appoint a lieutenant and a sergeant. Those two functionaries will accompany me in the execution of my project."

All present seemed to hesitate.

"What is your opinion, Pitou?" said Maniquet.

"The matter does not concern me. Meet alone and appoint the two functionaries. But appoint capable ones."

Pitou bade adieu to his soldiers, and remained, like Agamemnon, in a state of solemn grandeur.

He thus remained in his glory while the soldiers discussed the details of the military power which was to rule Haramont.

The election lasted an hour. The lieutenant and sergeant chosen were Tellier and Maniquet, the latter of whom was the subaltern. They returned and announced the fact to Pitou.

He then said: "Now there is no time to lose."

"Yes," said an enthusiast, "let us begin the manual."

"Wait a moment; let us get guns first."

"True."

"But can we not practise with sticks?"

"Let us be military," said Pitou, who watched the military order with anxiety, but who did not feel himself qualified to teach an art of which he was utterly ignorant.

"It is a difficult matter to teach a raw recruit how to shoot with a stick. Let us not be ridiculous."

"True. We must have muskets."

"Come with me, then, Lieutenant and Sergeant. The rest of you wait here."

All acquiesced respectfully.

"We have six hours' daylight yet left. That is more time than is needed to go to Villers-Cotterets."

"Forward!" said Pitou.

The staff of the army of Haramont set off.

When Pitou, however, read again the letter he had received, to assure himself that so much honor was not a dream, he discovered that he had overlooked one phrase: —

"Why did Pitou forget to give Doctor Gilbert some information about Sebastien?

"Why does not Sebastien write to his father?"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PITOU TRIUMPHS.

THE Abbé Fortier was far from suspecting what danger he was in, prepared carefully for him by deep diplomacy. He had no idea of Pitou's influence.

He was seeking to prove to Sebastien that bad company is the ruin of innocence; that Paris is a pit of perdition; that even angels would be corrupted there, — like those who went astray at Gomorrah, — and seriously impressed by Pitou's visit, besought Sebastien always to remember to be a good and true loyalist.

By those words the abbé meant a very different thing from what Doctor Gilbert meant.

He forgot that as long as this difference existed, he was committing a very bad action; for he sought to excite the son's opinions against the father.

He soon found, however, that his labor was lost.

Strange to say, at a period when the minds of most children are, so to say, mere potter's clay, on which every pressure leaves a mark, Sebastien, in fixity of purpose was a man.

Was that to be attributed to that aristocratic nature which disdains everything plebeian?

Or was it plebeianism pushed to stoicism?

The mystery was too deep for the Abbé Fortier. He knew the doctor was an enthusiastic patriot, and with the simplicity of mind peculiar to ecclesiastics, sought, for the glory of God, to reform the son.

Though Sebastien appeared to listen, he did not, but was musing on those strange visions which previously had taken possession of him under the tall trees of the park of Villers-Cotterets when the abbé took his pupils thither, and which had become, so to say, a kind of second life, running parallel with his natural life, — a life of fiction and poetic pleasure in comparison with the dull prosaic days of study and college routine.

All at once a loud knock was heard at the door in the Rue de Soissons, and it immediately opened and admitted several persons.

They were the maire, adjunct, and town clerk.

Behind them were the gendarmes, after whom came several curious persons.

The abbé went at once to the maire, and said: —

"Monsieur Lonpré, what is the matter?"

"Abbé, are you aware of the new order of the Minister of War?"

"I am not."

"Be pleased to read this."

As he read it, he grew pale.

"Well?" said he.

"Well, the gendarmes of Haramont expect you to surrender your arms."

The abbé sprang forward as if he would devour the National Guard.

Pitou, thinking it time to show himself, followed by his lieutenant and his sergeant, approached the abbé.

"Here are the gentlemen," said the maire.

The abbé's face was flushed.

"What! these vagabonds!"

The maire was a good-natured man, and as yet had no decided political opinions. He had no disposition to quarrel either with the Church or the National Guard.

The words of the abbé excited a loud laugh, and the maire said to Pitou: —

"Do you hear how he speaks of your command?"

"Because the abbé knew us when children, he fancies we can never grow old."

"The children, however, have now grown men," said Maniquet, reaching forth his mutilated hand towards the abbé.

"And these men are serpents," cried the enraged abbé.

"Who will bite if they be trampled on," said Sergeant Claude.

In these threats the maire saw all the future Revolution, and the abbé martyrdom.

"Some of your arms are needed," said the maire, who sought to effect a reconciliation.

"They are not mine," said the abbé.

"Whose are they?"

"The Duke of Orléans'."

"Well, that matters not," said Pitou.

"How so?" said the abbé.

"We desire you to deliver them up to us, all the same."

"I will write to the duke," said the abbé, majestically.

"The abbé forgets," said the maire, in a low tone, "that if the duke were written to, he would reply that not only the muskets of his English enemies, but the artillery of his grandfather, Louis XIV. must be surrendered to patriots."

The abbé knew that this was true.

"*Circumdedisti me hostibus meis.*"

"True, Abbé! but by your political enemies only. We hate in you only the bad patriot."

"Fool!" said Fortier, with an excitement which inspired him with a certain kind of eloquence, — "fool, and

dangerous fool! which is the patriot, — I, who would keep these arms for the peace of the country, or you, who would use them in rapine and civil war? Which is the better son, — I, who cultivate the olive of peace, or you, who would lacerate the bosom of France, our common mother, with war?"

The maire sought to conceal his emotion, and nodded to the abbé, as if to say: —

"Good!"

The adjunct, like Tarquin, cut down flowers with his cane.

Pitou was silenced.

The two subalterns saw it, and were surprised.

Sebastien, the young Spartan, alone was cool.

He approached Pitou and said: —

"What is the matter, Pitou?"

Pitou told him in a few words.

"Is the order signed?" asked Sebastien.

"The order is signed," answered Pitou, and he showed the minister's, his father's, and Lafayette's signatures.

"Why, then, do you hesitate?"

Sebastien's flashing eye, his erect form, showed clearly the two indomitable races from which he sprang.

The abbé heard his words, shuddered, and said: —

"Three generations oppose me!"

"Abbé," said the maire, "the order must be obeyed."

The abbé put his hand on the keys which were in the girdle that from monastic habit he yet wore, and said:

"Never! they are not mine, and I will not surrender them till my master orders me."

"Abbé, Abbé!" said the maire, who felt compelled to disapprove.

"This is rebellion," said Sebastien to the abbé. "Master, be careful!"

"*Tu quoque,*" said the abbé, like Cæsar folding his robe over his bosom.

"Be at ease, Abbé," said Pitou; "these arms will be in good hands for France."

"Hush, Judas, you have betrayed your old master! Why will you not betray your country?"

Pitou felt his conscience prick him. What he had done was not at the instinct of a noble heart, though he had acted bravely.

He looked around, and saw his two subalterns apparently ashamed of his weakness.

Pitou felt that he was in danger of losing his influence.

Pride came to the assistance of this champion of the Revolution.

He looked up and said: —

"Abbé, submissive as I am to my old master, not unreplied to shall such comments be made."

"Ah, you are going to reply," said the Abbé Fortier, trusting to annihilate Pitou by raillery.

"Yes; and tell me if I am not right. You call me traitor, and refuse me the arms I asked you for peaceably, but which I now take in the name, and by the strong hand, of the law. Well, Abbé, I had rather be called traitor to my master than, like you, have opposed the liberty of my country. Our country forever!"

The maire nodded to Pitou as he previously had to the abbé.

The effect of this address ruined the abbé.

The maire disappeared.

So too would the adjunct, but the absence of the two chiefs would certainly have been remarked.

He then, with the gendarmes and Pitou, who was perfectly familiar with the locale in which he had grown up, proceeded to the museum.

Sebastien rushed after the patriots; the other children appeared amazed.

After the door was opened, the abbé sank, half-dead with mortification and rage, on the first chair.

When once in the museum, Pitou's assistants wished to pillage everything, but the honesty of the commandant restrained them.

He took only thirty-three muskets, for he commanded thirty-three National Guards.

As it might be necessary for him some day to fire a shot, he took, as a thirty-fourth, an officer's gun, lighter and shorter than the others, which was adapted for shooting hares and rabbits as well as for killing either a false Frenchman or a true Prussian.

He then selected a straight sword like Lafayette's, which had perhaps been borne by some hero at Fontenoy or Philipsbourg. He buckled it on.

Each of his colleagues then placed twelve muskets on his shoulder, and both were so delighted that they scarcely felt the enormous weight.

Pitou took the rest.

They passed through the park, to avoid observation in going through the city.

It was also the shortest route.

Another advantage of this road was that they had no chance of meeting any of the partisans of the opposite faction. Pitou was not afraid of a battle, and the musket he had chosen inspired him with still greater courage; but Pitou had become a man of reflection, and he reflected that though one musket was a powerful weapon of defence for a man, a load of muskets could hardly be said to be so.

Our three heroes, loaded with their spoils, passed rapidly through the park, and reached the rendezvous. Exhausted and heated, they took their precious prize that

night to Pitou's house. It may be the country had been too hasty in confiding it to them.

There was a meeting of the guard that night, and Pitou gave them the muskets, saying, in the words of the Spartan mother: —

"With them or on them."

Thus was the little commune, by the genius of Pitou, made to seem as busy as an ant-hill during an earthquake.

Delight at possessing a gun among a people poachers by nature, whom the long oppression of gamekeepers had incensed, could not but be great. Pitou consequently became a god on earth. His long legs and arms were forgotten. So too were his clumsy knees and his grotesque antecedents. He could not but be the tutelary god of the country.

The next day was passed by the enthusiasts in cleaning and repairing their arms. Some rejoiced that the cock worked well, and others repaired the springs of the lock or replaced the screws.

In the mean time, Pitou had retired to his room, as Agamemnon did to his tent, brightening his brains as others did their guns.

What was Pitou thinking of?

Pitou, become a leader of the people, was thinking of the hollowness of earthly grandeur.

The time had come when the whole edifice he had erected was about to crumble.

The guns had been issued on the evening before, and the day passed in putting them in order. On the next day he would have to drill his men, and Pitou did not know a single command of, "Load, in twelve times."

What is the use of a commandant ignorant of the drill? The writer of these lines never knew but one so ignorant. He was, however, a countryman of Pitou.

Pitou thought with his head in his hands and his body prostrate.

Cæsar amid the thickets of Gaul, Hannibal wandering on the Alps, and Columbus drifting over the ocean, never thought more deeply, and never more fully confessed themselves *diis ignotis*, the fearful powers who hold the secrets of life and death, than did Pitou.

"Come," said Pitou, "time speeds, and to-morrow I must appear in all my insignificance.

"To-morrow the captor of the Bastille, the god of war, will be called by all Haramont an idiot, as — I do not know who was by the Greeks.

"To-day I triumph, but to-morrow I shall be hooted.

"This cannot be. Catherine will know it, and will think me disgraced."

Pitou paused.

"What will extricate me from this dilemma?

"Audacity.

"Not so. Audacity lasts a second. To load in the Prussian times requires half a minute.

"Strange idea, to teach the Prussian drill to Frenchmen! I am too much of a patriot to teach Frenchmen any of their inventions. I will make a national drill.

"But I may go astray.

"I saw a monkey once go through the manual at a fair. He probably though, being a monkey, had never served.

"Ah! I have an idea."

He began to stride as fast as his long legs would permit, but was suddenly brought to a stand by the idea.

"My disappearance will astonish my men. I must inform them."

He then sent for his subalterns and said : —

"Tell the men that the first drill will take place on the day after to-morrow."

"Why not to-morrow ?"

"You are fatigued, and before drilling the men I must instruct the officers. Be careful, too, to obey your superior officers, without asking questions."

They saluted him *à la militaire.*

"Very well ; the drill will be at half-past four on the day after to-morrow."

The subalterns left, and as it was half after nine, went to bed.

Pitou let them go, and when they had turned the corner, went in an opposite direction, and soon was hidden in the thickest of the park.

Now let us see what Pitou was thinking of.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HOW PITOU LEARNED TACTICS, AND ACQUIRED A NOBLE BEARING.

Pitou hurried on for half an hour into the very depth of the wood.

There was in the undergrowth, beneath a huge rock, a hut built some thirty-five or forty years before, which was inhabited by a person who in his day had excited no little mystery.

This hut, half buried in the ground and surrounded by foliage, received light only by an oblique opening. Not unlike a gypsy hut, it was often to be detected only by the smoke which rose from it.

Otherwise none but gamekeepers, poachers, and sportsmen would ever have suspected its existence, or that it was inhabited.

For forty years, though, it had been the abode of a retired keeper whom the Duke of Orléans, father of Louis Philippe, had permitted to remain, with the privilege of killing a rabbit or a hare a day.

Fowl and large game were excepted.

At the time we speak of the old man was sixty-nine years old. His name was Clovis originally, to which, as he grew old, the title Father was annexed.

From his residence the rock took the name of Clovis's Stone.

He had been wounded at Fontenoy, and consequently had lost a leg, and had therefore been treated kindly by the duke.

He never went into great cities, and visited Villers-Cotterets but once a year, for the purpose of buying three hundred and sixty-five loads of powder and ball. On leap years he bought three hundred and sixty-six.

On that day he took to the hatter, Monsieur Cornu, three hundred and sixty-five or three hundred and sixty-six rabbit and hare skins, for which he received seventy-five Tours livres. He never missed a shot, and we are therefore able to be so exact.

He lived on the flesh of the animals, though sometimes he sold it.

With the skins of the animals he bought powder and lead.

Once a year Father Clovis entered into a kind of speculation.

The rock which served as a support to his hut was in the form of an inclined plane, like the roof of a house, and at its widest part measured eighteen feet.

An object placed at the top slid gently down to the bottom.

He spread the report quietly through the neighboring villages, through the intervention of the old women who came to buy his hares and rabbits, that all the young women who on Saint Louis's Day should let themselves slide from the top to the bottom of his rock would certainly be married within the year.

The first year many young women came, but none dared the attempt.

On the next year three tried to do so. Two were married during the course of the year, and Father Clovis said the third would have been married had she had as much faith as the others.

The next year all the young women of the neighborhood came and dared the attempt.

Father Clovis declared that enough men could not be

found for so many young women, but that those who had most faith would be married. He had brilliant success. His matrimonial reputation was established.

Then, as people cannot slide all day without something to eat and drink, Father Clovis secured the monopoly of selling all kinds of viands to the male and female sliders; for the young men had persuaded the young ladies that in order that the efficacy of the rock should be infallible, both sexes should slide together and at the same time.

For thirty-five years Clovis lived in this manner. The country treated him as the Arabs do their marabouts. He had become a legend.

One thing, however, excited the jealousy of the guards on duty. It was said that Father Clovis fired but three hundred and sixty-five times yearly, and that at every shot, without fail, he killed either a hare or a rabbit.

More than once the nobles of Paris, invited by the Duke of Orléans, who had heard of Father Clovis, placed a louis or a crown in his broad hand, and sought to ascertain how any one could never miss.

Old Clovis, however, told them nothing more than that with the same gun, in the army, he had never missed a man at a hundred yards. If he could kill a man with ball, it was far easier to kill a hare with shot.

If any smiled when Clovis spoke thus, he used to say: "Why do you fire when you are not sure of the mark?"

A saying which might have been worthy to have ranked among the boasts of Monsieur de Palisse, had it not been for the established reputation of the old marksman.

"But," they would ask, "why did Monsieur d' Orléans's father, who was not at all mean, grant you permission to fire but once a day?"

"Because he knew that one shot would be enough."

The curiosity of this spectacle, and the oddness of this theory, brought at least ten louis a day to the old anchorite.

Now, as he gained much money by the sale of his hare-skins and the holiday he had established, and he purchased only a pair of gaiters in every five years, and a coat every ten, he was not at all unhappy.

On the contrary, it was said that he had a concealed treasure, and that his heir would get a good thing.

Such was the singular person whom Pitou went to at midnight when the brilliant idea of which we have spoken entered his mind.

To fall in with Father Clovis, however, required much address.

Like Neptune's old herdsman, he was not easily overtaken. He knew easily how to distinguish the useless man from one from whom he could make money.

Clovis was lying down on his aromatic bed of heath, which the woods afford in September, and which would not require to be changed until the same month of the next year.

It was eleven o'clock, and the night was calm and bright.

To reach the hut of Clovis, Pitou had to pass through thickets of oak and underbrush so dense that his arrival could not be unheard.

Pitou made four times as much noise as an ordinary person would have done, and old Clovis lifted up his head. He was not asleep, but was on that day in a terribly bad humor. An accident had happened which made him almost unapproachable. The accident was terrible.

His gun, which he had used for five years with balls, and for thirty-five years with shot, had burst when he was firing at a rabbit.

It was the first time he had missed for thirty-five years.

The fact of the rabbit being safe and sound was not the greatest misfortune which had befallen Clovis. Two fingers of his left hand had been carried away. Clovis had bound up his fingers with bruised herbs and leaves, but he could not mend his gun.

Now to procure another gun Father Clovis would be under the necessity of appealing to his treasury, and even though he expended as much as two louis, who knew if with the new gun he would kill at every shot, as he had done with the one which had so unfortunately burst?

Pitou came, therefore, at an evil hour.

At the very moment Pitou placed his hand on the door, old Clovis uttered a grunt which amazed the commander of the National Guard of Haramont.

Was it a wolf or some one substituted for Father Clovis?

Pitou, who had read "Little Red Riding-Hood," hesitated whether he should go in or not.

"Hey! Father Clovis!" cried he.

"What?" said the misanthropist.

Pitou was reassured. He recognized the voice of the worthy anchorite.

"I am glad you are in," said he.

He then entered the hut and bowed to the occupant.

"Good-day, Father Clovis," said Pitou, graciously.

"Who goes there?" asked the veteran.

"I."

"Who are you?"

"I, Pitou."

"Who is Pitou?"

"Ange Pitou of Haramont."

"Well, what is it to me who you are?"

"Ah!" said Pitou, coaxingly, "Father Clovis is now in a bad humor. I was wrong to awake him."

"Certainly you were."

"What, then, must I do?"

"Begone as quickly as you can."

"But let us talk a little."

"About what?"

"Of a favor you can do me."

"I want pay for all I do."

"Well, I will pay for all I get."

"Possibly; but I am no longer of use to any one."

"How so?"

"I shall kill no more game."

"How so? You never miss a shot, Clovis. It is impossible."

"Begone, I tell you."

"But, Father Clovis —"

"You annoy me."

"Listen to me, and you will not be sorry."

"Well, then, what do you wish? Be brief!"

"You are an old soldier?"

"Well?".

"Well! I wish —"

"To the point, blockhead!"

"Teach me the manual."

"Are you a fool?"

"No; teach me the manual, and I will pay you."

"The creature is certainly mad," growled the old soldier, raising himself on his elbow.

"Father Clovis, will you teach me the manual or not? Do so, and I will pay you what you please."

The old man arose, and looking fiercely at Pitou, said:

"What I please. Well, give me a gun."

"The very thing! I have thirty-four guns."

"Thirty-four!"

"Yes; and the thirty-fourth, which I had meant for myself, will just suit you. It is a sergeant's musket with the king's cipher in gold on the breech."

"How came you by it? You did not steal it, I hope."

Pitou told him the whole truth frankly and honestly.

"Good!" said the veteran; "I will teach you, but my fingers are hurt."

He then told Pitou what accident had befallen him.

"Well," said Pitou, "give yourself no concern about the gun; that is replaced. I cannot give you other fingers, for all I have I need myself."

"Oh, as for the fingers, that 's nothing. If you will only promise that the gun will be here to-morrow, come on."

He got up immediately.

The moon shed a torrent of white light on the little clearing in front of the hut.

Pitou and Father Clovis went to the clearing.

Any one who had seen these two dark forms gesticulating at midnight could not have repressed some mysterious terror.

Clovis took up the stump of his gun with a sigh. He then placed himself in a military position.

It was strange to see the old man again become erect, bent as he was from the habit of passing the bushes; but the recollection of his regiment and the excitement of the drill revived him, and he brushed back his long gray locks on his broad shoulders.

"Look at me!" said he; "look at me! That is the way to learn. Do as I do, and I will correct you."

Pitou made the attempt.

"Draw back your knees! Shoulders back! Hold up

your head! Turn out your toes! Give yourself a good foundation; your feet are large enough."

Pitou did as well as he could.

"Very well!" said the old man. "You look noble enough."

Pitou felt much flattered. He had not expected so much.

If he looked noble after an hour's drill, what would he not be in a month? He would be majestic.

He wished to continue.

But this was enough for one lesson.

Besides, Father Clovis wished to make sure of the gun before giving any more instruction.

"No," said he, "this is enough for once. Teach this at your first drill, and they will not learn it in four days; and in that time you will have had two lessons."

"Four lessons!" cried Pitou.

"Ah!" replied Clovis, dryly, "I see you have zeal and legs enough. Well, four times be it. I must, however, tell you that there will be no moon."

"We will go through the manual in your hut, then."

"You will have to bring a candle."

"Two pounds of candles, if you please."

"Good! and the gun?"

"You shall have it to-morrow."

"All right. Now let me see if you recollect what I told you."

Pitou behaved so well that Clovis complimented him. He would have promised Clovis a six-pounder if he had asked for one.

When they had finished, it lacked but an hour of daylight, and he took leave of his teacher, going at a brisk pace towards Haramont, the whole population of which slept soundly.

Pitou sank to sleep, and dreamed that he commanded an army of many millions of men, and waged war on the whole world, his army obeying, in one rank, the word of command, " Carry arms ! "

On the next day he drilled his soldiers with an insolence which they esteemed proof positive of his capacity.

Pitou became popular, and was admired by men, women, and children.

The women even became serious, when, in stentorian tones he cried out : —

" Be a soldier ! look at me."

He was a soldier.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

CATHERINE BECOMES A DIPLOMATIST.

Old Clovis had his gun; for what Pitou promised he did.

In ten visits Pitou became a perfect grenadier. But, unfortunately, when Clovis had taught him the manual, he had taught all he knew.

Pitou bought a copy of the "French Tactician," and of the "Manual of the National Guard," in which he expended a crown.

The Haramont battalion made, thanks to Pitou, very rapid progress. When he had reached the more complicated manœuvres, he went to Soissons, where in one hour, from observing real soldiers drilled by real officers, he learned in one day more than his books would have taught him in a month.

He thus toiled for two months.

Pitou was ambitious and in love. Pitou was unfortunate in his love. Often after his drill, which always followed midnight study, had Pitou crossed the plains of Largny, and now and then the whole forest, to watch Catherine, who always kept her appointment at Boursonne.

Catherine used every day to steal away from her household duty to a little cot near the warren of Boursonne, next her beloved Isidore, who seemed always happy and joyous even though everything around seemed dark.

How great was Pitou's unhappiness when he remembered how unequal a share of happiness was vouchsafed to different men!

He on whom the girls of Haramont, Taillefontaine, and Vivières looked with favor, who also might have had his rendezvous, was yet forced to weep, like a child, before a door open to Isidore.

Pitou loved Catherine the more devotedly because he saw that she was his superior. He also knew that she loved another; and though he ceased to be jealous of Isidore, who was noble, handsome, and worthy of love, Catherine, at least, sprung from the people, should not disgrace her family nor make him unhappy.

When he thought, therefore, he suffered very deeply.

"It was heartless," said he, "to suffer me to go. When I did so, she never asked if I was dead or alive. What would Billot say if he knew his friends were treated thus, and his business thus neglected? What would he say if he knew that the housekeeper, instead of attending to his business, was making love with the aristocratic Monsieur de Charny? He would say nothing, but would kill Catherine.

"It is something, however, to have such a revenge in my grasp."

It was better, though, not to make use of it.

Pitou had observed that good actions, not understood, never benefit the actors.

Would it not be well to let Catherine know what he was about? Nothing was easier; he had only to speak to her some day at the dance, and let fall something to inform her that three persons knew her secret. Was it not worth while to make her suffer a little, to quell her pride?

If, though, he went to the dance, he must appear as

the equal of the nobleman, — a thing difficult to do when the object of comparison was one so well dressed.

The pavilion in which Catherine used to meet De Charny was in a kind of grove which was an appendant to the forest of Villers-Cotterets.

A simple ditch divided the property of the count from that of his neighbors.

Catherine, who was every day called for one reason or another to visit the neighbors, found no difficulty in leaping over this ditch. The rendezvous was certainly well selected.

The pavilion was so placed that through the loopholes, set with painted glass, she could overlook the whole grove, while it was itself so secluded that no one could see it, and three springs of a horse would put any one who sought to leave in the forest or in neutral ground.

Pitou had watched Catherine so carefully that he knew whither she went, and whence she came, as well as the poacher knows the track of the hare.

Catherine did not return to the forest with Isidore, who used always to remain some time in the pavilion, in order to see that she was not annoyed, and used then to go in a contrary direction.

Pitou hid himself on Catherine's pathway, and ascended an immense tree which completely overlooked the pavilion.

Before an hour had passed he saw Catherine come by. She tied her horse in the wood, sprang over the ditch, and went to the pavilion.

She dismounted just below the tree where Pitou was.

He had only to descend and lean against the trunk. He then took from his pocket the "Manual of the National Guard," and began to read.

An hour after, Pitou heard a door shut. He heard the rustling of a dress, and saw Catherine look anxiously around, as if to see if she was watched.

She stood within ten paces of Pitou.

Pitou did not move, and kept his book on his knees. He no longer, however, pretended to read, and looked at Catherine so that she could not misunderstand him.

She uttered a half-stifled cry, and then became pale as death. After another brief moment of indecision, she rushed into the forest and became invisible.

Pitou had arranged matters well, and Catherine was caught in the snare.

Pitou returned half happy and half afraid to Haramont.

As soon as he thought of what he had done, he saw that it might have many consequences which previously had not suggested themselves to him.

The next day was appointed for a military parade.

Being sufficiently instructed, in their own opinion, the National Guards had requested to be assembled in the presence of the public.

Some neighboring villagers, excited by rivalry, who had also paid attention to tactics, were to come to Haramont for a kind of contest.

A deputation from these villagers was present under the command of an old sergeant.

The announcement of such a spectacle brought many persons together, and the parade-ground of Haramont early in the day was occupied by crowds of young children, and at a later hour by the fathers and mothers of the champions.

Four drums beat in four different directions, — those of Largny, Ver, Taillefontaine, and Vivières.

Haramont was a centre, and had its four cardinal points.

A fifth replied; it preceded the thirty-three National Guards of Haramont.

Among the spectators was a portion of the aristocracy and of the bourgeoisie of Villers-Cotterets come to be amused.

There were also many farmers who had come to see.

Soon Catherine and Madame Billot came. Just at this moment the National Guard of Haramont came from the village, headed by Pitou, a drum, and a fife. Pitou was on a great white horse, which Maniquet had lent him for the purpose of making a representation of Marquis de Lafayette *ad vivum* at Haramont.

Pitou grasped his sword and bestrode the huge horse. If he did not represent the aristocracy, he at least represented the bone and sinew of the land.

The entrance of Pitou, and of those who had conferred so much honor on the province, was saluted by loud acclamations.

All had hats alike, with the national cockade, and marched in two ranks in the most perfect order.

When they reached the parade all approved of them.

Pitou caught a glance of Catherine and blushed. She trembled.

This was the most exciting portion of the review.

He put his men through the manual, and every command excited much attention and applause.

The other villagers appeared excited and irregular. Some were half armed, others half instructed, and they were completely demoralized by the comparison. Pitou's men became vain of their excellence.

Both were uncertain, however, as to cause and effect.

From the manual they passed to the drill.

Here the sergeant expected to rival Pitou.

In consideration of his age, the sergeant had received

the command, and marched his men back and forth by files.

He could do nothing more.

Pitou, with his sword under his arm, and his helmet on his brow, looked on with infinite superiority.

When the sergeant saw his heads of column become lost amid the trees, while the rear took the back track to Haramont; when he saw his squares disperse, and squads and platoons lose their commandants, — he was greeted by a disapproving sound from his own soldiers.

A cry was heard from Haramont: —

"Pitou! Pitou! Pitou!"

"Yes, Pitou!" echoed the men of the other villages, offended at an inferiority which they attributed to their instructors.

Pitou, on his white horse, placed himself at the head of his men, to whom he gave the right, and gave the command in such a tone that the very oaks trembled.

As if by miracle, the broken files united, the manœuvres were well executed, Pitou made such good use of his books and of Father Clovis's instructions.

The *army*, with one voice, saluted him *Imperator* on the field of battle.

Pitou dismounted, and covered with sweat, received the salutations of the crowd.

He did not, however, see Catherine.

All at once Pitou heard her voice. It was not necessary for him to seek her. She had sought him.

His triumph was immense.

"What!" said she, with an air in strange contrast with her pale face. "Have you become proud because you are a great general?"

"Oh, no!" replied Pitou. "Good-morning, Mademoiselle Billot."

Then to Madame Billot: —

"I am happy to salute you, Madame Billot."

Turning to Catherine, he said: —

"Mademoiselle, you are wrong. I am not a great general, but only a young man anxious to serve my country."

What he had said was borne through the crowd, and treated as a sublime sentiment.

"Ange," said Catherine, "I must speak to you."

"Ah! at last! at last!" thought he, and said: —

"When you please."

"Return to the farm with us."

"Very well."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HONEY AND ABSINTHE.

CATHERINE contrived to be alone with Pitou in spite of her mother's presence.

Old Mother Billot had some gossips, who walked by her and maintained conversation.

Catherine, who had left her horse, returned on foot with Pitou.

Such arrangements surprise no one in the country, where people are more indulgent than they are in great cities.

It seemed natural enough for Monsieur Pitou to talk to Mademoiselle Billot. It may be none ever noticed it.

On that day all enjoyed the silence and thickness of the woods. All glory and happiness seems to reside amid the primeval grandeur of the forests.

"Here I am, Mademoiselle Catherine," said Pitou, when they were alone.

"Why have you for so long a time not visited our farm? That is wrong, Pitou."

"But, Mademoiselle, you know the reason!"

"I do not. You are wrong."

Pitou bit his lips. It annoyed him to hear Catherine tell a falsehood.

She saw and understood his expression.

"But, Pitou, I have something to tell you."

"Ah!" said he.

"The other day you saw me in the hut?"

"Yes, I did."

"You saw me?"

"Yes."

She blushed.

"What were you doing there?"

"You knew me?"

"At first I did not. I did afterwards."

"What do you mean?"

"Sometimes one does not pay attention."

"Certainly."

Both were silent, for each had too much to think of.

Catherine said at last: "Then it was you? What were you doing there? Why did you hide yourself?"

"Hide myself? Why?"

"Curiosity might have made you."

"I have no curiosity."

She stamped the ground most impatiently with her little foot.

"You were," said she, "in a place you do not visit often."

"You saw I was reading."

"I do not know."

"If you saw me, you do."

"I did see you very distinctly; but what were you reading?"

"My *tactics*."

"What is that?"

"A book in which I learned what I have since taught my men. To study, Madame, one must be alone."

"True; in the forest nothing disturbs you."

"Nothing."

They were again silent; the rest of the party rode before them.

"When you study thus," said Catherine, "do you study long?"

"Whole days sometimes."

"Then you had been long there?"

"Very long."

"It is surprising that I did not see you when I came."

Here she told an untruth, and Pitou felt disposed to expose her. But he was in love, and sorry for her. In his view her faults amounted to a virtue, — circumspection.

"I may have slept; I sometimes do when I study too much."

"Well, while you slept I must have passed you. I went to the old pavilion."

"Ah!" said Pitou, "what pavilion?"

Catherine blushed again. This time her manner was so affected that he could not believe her.

"Charny's pavilion. There is the best balm in the country. I had hurt myself, and needed some leaves. I hurt my hand."

As if he wished to believe her, Ange looked at her hands.

"Ah!" said she, "not my hands, but my foot."

"Did you get what you wanted?"

"Ah, yes! You see I do not limp."

Catherine fancied that she had succeeded; she fancied Pitou had seen and knew nothing. She said, and it was a great mistake: —

"Then Monsieur Pitou would have *cut* us. He is proud of his position, and disdains peasants since he has become an officer."

Pitou was wounded. So great a sacrifice, even though feigned, demands another recompense; and as Catherine seemed to seek to mystify Pitou, and as she doubtless

laughed at him when she was with Isidore de Charny, all Pitou's good-humor passed away. Self-love is a viper asleep, on which it is never prudent to tread unless you crush it at once.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "it seems rather that you cut me."

"How so?"

"First, you refused me work, and drove me from the farm. I said nothing to Monsieur Billot, for, thank God! I yet have a heart and hands."

"I assure you, Monsieur Pitou —"

"It matters not; of course you can manage your own affairs. If, then, you saw me at the pavilion, you should have spoken to me, instead of running away, as if you were robbing an orchard."

The viper had stung. Catherine was uneasy.

"I run away!" said she.

"As if your barn had been on fire. Mademoiselle, I had not the time to shut my book before you sprang on the pony and rode away. He had been tied long enough, though, to eat up all the bark of an oak."

"Then a tree was destroyed; but why, Monsieur Pitou, do you tell me this?"

Catherine felt that all presence of mind was leaving her.

"Ah, you were gathering balm!" said Pitou. "A *horse* does much in an hour."

Catherine said, "In an hour?"

"No horse, Mademoiselle, could strip a tree of that size in less time. You must have been collecting more balm than would suffice to cure all the wounds received at the Bastille."

Catherine could not say a word.

Pitou was silent; he knew he had said enough.

Mother Billot paused at the cross-road to bid adieu to her friends.

Pitou was in agony, for he felt the pain of the wounds he had inflicted, and was like a bird just ready to fly away.

"Well! what says the officer?" said Madame Billot.

"That he wishes you good-day."

"Then good-day. Come, Catherine."

"Ah! tell me the truth," murmured Catherine.

"What?"

"Are you not yet my friend?"

"Alas!" said the poor fellow, who, as yet without experience, began to make love, through confessions which only the skilful know how to manage.

Pitou felt that his secret was rushing to his lips; he felt that the first word Catherine said would place him in her power.

He was aware, though, if he spoke he would die when Catherine confessed to him what as yet he only suspected.

He was silent as an old Roman, and bowed to Catherine with a respect which touched the young girl's heart, bowed to Madame Billot, and disappeared.

Catherine made a bound as if she would follow him.

Madame Billot said to her daughter: —

"He is a good lad, and has much feeling."

When alone, Pitou began a long monologue on the following theme: —

"This is what is called love; at certain times it is very sweet, but at others very bitter."

The poor lad did not know that in love there is both honey and absinthe, and that Monsieur Isidore had all the honey.

From this hour, during which she had suffered horribly, Catherine conceived a kind of respectful fear for

Pitou, which a few days before she was far from feeling towards him.

When one cannot inspire love, it is not bad to inspire fear; and Pitou, who had great ideas of personal dignity, would have been not a little flattered had he discovered the existence even of such a sentiment.

As he was not, however, physiologist enough to see what the ideas of a woman a league and a half from him are, he went and sang a countless number of songs, the theme of which was unfortunate love.

Pitou at last reached his own room, where he found his chivalric guard had placed a sentinel. The man, dead drunk, lay on a bench with his gun across his legs.

Pitou awoke him.

He then learned that his thirty men, good and true, had ordered an entertainment at old Father Tellier's — the old man was the Vatel of Haramont — and that twelve ladies were to crown the Turenne who had overcome the Condé of the next canton.

Pitou was too much fatigued for his stomach not to have suffered.

Pitou, being led by his sentinel to the banquet-hall, was received with acclamations which made the very walls tremble.

He bowed, sat down in silence, and with his natural coolness attacked the veal and salad.

This state of feeling lasted until his stomach was filled and his heart relieved.

CHAPTER XL.

AN UNEXPECTED DÉNOUEMENT.

FEASTING after sorrow is either an increase of grief or an absolute consolation.

Pitou saw, after the lapse of two hours, that his grief was not increased.

He arose when his companions could not.

He made even an oration on Spartan sobriety to them, when they were all dead drunk.

He bade them go away when they were asleep under the table.

We must say that the ladies disappeared during the dessert.

Pitou thought; amid all his glory and honor, the prominent subject was his last interview with Catherine.

Amid the half hints of his memory, he recalled the fact that her hand had often touched his, and that sometimes her shoulder had pressed his own, and that he on certain occasions had known all her beauties.

He then looked around him like a man awaking from a drunken dream.

He asked the shadows why so much severity towards a young woman, perfect in grace, could have been in his heart.

Pitou wished to reinstate himself with Catherine.

But how?

A Lovelace would have said, "That girl laughs at and deceives me. I will follow her example."

Such a character would have said: "I will despise her, and make her ashamed of her love as of so much disgrace.

"I will terrify and dishonor her, and make the path to her rendezvous painful."

Pitou, like a good fellow, though heated with wine and love, said to himself, "Sometime I will make Catherine ashamed that she did not love me."

Pitou's chaste ideas would not permit him to fancy that Catherine did aught but coquet with Monsieur de Charny, and that she laughed at his laced boots and golden spurs.

How delighted Pitou was to think that Catherine was not in love with either a boot or a spur!

Some day Monsieur Isidore would go to the city and marry a countess. Catherine then would seem to him an old romance.

All these ideas occupied the mind of the commander of the National Guard of Haramont.

To prove to Catherine that he was a good fellow, he began to recall all the bad things he had heard during the day.

But Catherine had said some of them. He thought he would tell them to her.

A drunken man without a watch has no idea of time.

Pitou had no watch, and had not gone ten paces before he was as drunk as Bacchus or his son Thespis.

He did not remember that he had left Catherine three hours before, and that, half an hour later, she must have reached the farm.

To that place he hurried.

Let us leave him among the trees, bushes, and briers, threshing with his stick the great forest of Orléans, which returned blows with usury.

Let us return to Catherine, who went home with her mother.

There was a swamp behind the farm, and when there, they had to ride in single file.

The old lady went first.

Catherine was about to go when she heard a whistle.

She turned and saw in the distance the cap of Isidore's valet.

She let her mother ride on, and the latter, being but a few paces from home, was not wary.

The servant came.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "my master wishes to see you to-night, and begs you to meet him somewhere at eleven, if you please."

"Has he met with any accident?" inquired Catherine, with much alarm.

"I do not know. He received to-night a letter with a black seal from Paris. I have already been here an hour."

The clock of Villers-Cotterets struck ten.

Catherine looked around.

"Well, the place is dark; tell your master I will wait for him here."

The man rode away.

Catherine followed her mother home.

What could Isidore have to tell her at such an hour?

Love-meetings assume more smiling forms.

That was not the question. Isidore wished to see her, and the hour was of no importance. She would have met him in the graveyard of Villers-Cotterets at midnight.

She would not then even think, but kissed her mother and went to her room.

Her mother went to bed.

She suspected nothing, and if she had, it mattered not, for Catherine was mistress there.

Catherine neither undressed nor went to bed.

She heard the chime of half after ten. At a quarter before eleven she put out the lamp and went into the dining-room. The windows opened into the yard. She sprang out.

She hurried to the appointed place with a beating heart, placing one hand on her bosom and the other on her head. She was not forced to wait long.

She heard the feet of a horse.

She stepped forward.

Isidore was before her.

Without dismounting, he took her hand, lifted her on to his stirrup, embraced her, and said : —

"Catherine, yesterday my brother George was killed at Versailles. My brother Olivier has sent for me; I must go."

Catherine uttered an exclamation of grief, and clasped De Charny in her arms.

"If," said she, "they killed one brother, they will kill another."

"Be that as it may, my eldest brother has sent for me; Catherine, you know I love you."

"Stay, stay!" said the poor girl, who was only aware of the fact that Isidore was going.

"Honor and vengeance appeal to me."

"Alas! alas!"

And she threw herself pale and trembling into his arms.

A tear fell from De Charny's eyes on the young girl's brow.

"You weep; thank God, you love me!"

"Yes; but my eldest brother has written to me, and you see I must obey."

"Go, then; I will keep you no longer."

"One last kiss."

"Adieu!"

The young girl consented, knowing that nothing could keep Isidore from obeying this order of his brother. She slid from his arms to the ground.

The young man looked away, sighed, hesitated, but under the influence of the order he had received, galloped away, casting one long last look on Catherine.

A servant followed him.

Catherine lay alone where she fell, completely closing the narrow way.

Just then a man appeared on the top of the hill, coming from Villers-Cotterets, and rapidly advancing towards the farm; he was very near treading on the inanimate body that lay in the pathway.

He lost his balance, stumbled and fell, and was not aware of the body until he touched it.

"Catherine!" said he; "Catherine dead?"

He uttered a cry of such agony that he aroused the very dogs of the farm.

"Who,—who has killed her?" He sat pale, trembling, and inert, with the body on his knees.

THE END.

LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

CHAPTER I.

THE TAVERN AT SEVRES BRIDGE.

If the reader will refer for one instant to our romance called "Ange Pitou," and cast his eyes for an instant on the chapter entitled The Night of the Fifth and Sixth of October, he will recall certain facts which it is important he should have in mind when commencing the present book, which opens with the morning of the sixth of the same month.

By quoting a few important lines from that chapter we shall give, in as few words as possible, a summary of the facts which necessarily precede the resumption of our recital.

These lines are as follows:

At three o'clock all was tranquil at Versailles. The Assembly, reassured by the report of its officers, had retired. It was believed that this tranquillity would not be troubled. This belief was ill-founded.

In almost all popular movements which prepare the way for great revolutions, there is a period of stagnation, during which it seems as if everything was finished, and the world might sleep in peace. These appearances are deceptive.

Behind the men who make the first movements there are others who wait till the first movements are over, when those who have taken the first steps rest themselves, either from fatigue or satisfaction, not wishing, either in one case or the other, to take a step farther.

Then it is that these unknown men take their turn, — these mysterious agents of fatal passions, — gliding through the populace, taking up the cause where it has been abandoned, pushing it to the utmost limits, and appalling, in the outburst, those who have opened the way, and who, believing the end attained, the task accomplished, have retreated to their couches in the very middle of the race.

In the book from which we borrow the few lines above cited we have named three of these men.

May we now be permitted to introduce into our scene, — that is to say, at the entrance of the tavern at Sevres Bridge — a personage who, though not so named in these narratives, none the less played an important rôle on that terrible night.

This was a man from forty-five to forty-eight years of age, dressed like a workman; that is to say, he wore velvet breeches, guarded with leathern patches about the pockets, like the aprons worn by iron-workers and locksmiths. He wore gray hose, and shoes with copper buckles; and on his head was a woollen cap, resembling a lancer's bonnet cut in halves. A forest of gray hair escaped from beneath this cap, mingled with his enormous eyebrows, and shaded his large eyes, lively and intelligent, whose glances were so rapid, and whose tints so changeable, that it was difficult to determine whether the eyes were green or gray, blue or black. The rest of his face included a nose rather beyond the medium size, large lips, white teeth, and a complexion browned by the sun.

Without being large this man was admirably formed. He had lithe limbs and a small foot; and one might have seen that he had a hand small and delicate, if that hand had lacked the bronze tint common to workers in iron. Looking from the hand to the elbow, and from the elbow, up the arm, to the point where the roll of the shirt permitted a view of his vigorously outlined muscle, one could not help noting, despite the strength of muscle, that the skin which covered it was fine, soft, almost aristocratic.

This man, standing at the door of the inn of Sevres Bridge, had in his hand a gun with two barrels, and richly ornamented with gold, on the barrel whereof might be read the name of Leclère, an armorer then beginning to be fashionable among the aristocracy of Parisian hunters.

Perchance somebody might ask how so beautiful a weapon found itself in the hands of a simple workman. To this we should respond, that in days of riot — and we have seen a few such days — it is not always in the whitest hands that the finest weapons are found.

This man had come from Versailles hardly an hour before; and he knew perfectly well what had happened there, for to the questions put to him by the landlord, in serving a bottle of wine, before the stranger had even touched it, the Unknown responded that the Queen was coming with the King and the Dauphin; that they started at midday, — hardly later; that they had finally decided to reside at the Palace of the Tuileries; that in future Paris would probably not want for bread, inasmuch as it would have the Baker, the Bakeress, and the Baker's Boy, as Louis the Sixteenth, Marie Antoinette, and their son were commonly called; and that he, the Unknown, was waiting to see the procession.

This last assertion might be true; yet it was easy to see that his attention was turned more anxiously upon the route towards Paris than upon the route towards Versailles; which made it reasonable to believe that he did not feel himself obliged to render a strict account of his intentions to the worthy innkeeper, who had permitted himself to ask so many questions.

At the end of some moments the stranger's attention appeared to be rewarded. A man, clad almost exactly like himself, and seemingly engaged in a similar vocation, was outlined on the hill which bounded the horizon in that direction.

This man walked with a weary step, like a traveller who has already taken a long journey. As he approached, his characteristics and his age were distinguishable. His age seemed to be about that of the Unknown; that is, one might boldly affirm, as people say, that he was on the shady side of forty. As to his traits, they were those of a man with base inclinations and vulgar instincts.

The eye of the Unknown fixed itself curiously and with a strange expression upon the new-comer, as if at a glance he would measure all that was impure and bad in the man's heart.

When the mechanic, coming by the Paris road, was not more than fifty steps from the personage who waited at the door, the latter re-entered the tavern, and poured the first wine from the bottle into one of the two glasses on the table. Returning to the door he said, with the glass lifted in his hand: "Ah, comrade, the weather is cold, the way is long. Shall we not take a glass of wine to sustain and warm us?"

The mechanic from Paris looked about him, to see if it was indeed to him the invitation was addressed.

"Is it to me you speak?" he demanded.

"To whom then, so please you, seeing that you are alone?"

"And you offer me a glass of wine?"

"Why not?"

"Ah!"

"Are we not of the same trade, or nearly so?"

For a second time the workman looked at the Unknown. "All the world," said he, "may be of the same trade; but it is important to know if one is a comrade in that trade, or a master."

"Oh well, that we can determine while having a glass of wine and a chat."

"Be it so!" said the workman, making his way towards the doorway of the tavern.

The Unknown pointed to the table and offered him a glass. The workman took the glass, and regarded the wine with a certain air of suspicion; but this disappeared when the Unknown poured a second glass of the liquid alongside of the first.

"Well," asked the workman, "is somebody too stuck-up to drink with one whom he invites?"

"No, by my faith. To the Nation!"

The gray eyes of the mechanic sought for a moment those of him from whom the toast emanated. Then he repeated: "Parbleu, you say well: To the Nation!" and he swallowed the contents of the glass at a gulp. After that he wiped his lips with his sleeve. "Ah ha," he added, "it is burgundy."

"And of good age, hey? This brand has been recommended to me. On my way I tried it, and am not sorry for it. But sit down, comrade. There is still some left in the bottle; and when there is no more in that bottle, there are more bottles in the cellar."

"Well," said the workman, "what are you doing here?"

"Well, you see I come from Versailles, and I await the procession, to accompany it to Paris."

"What procession?"

"Why, that of the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin, who return to Paris, in company with the market-women and two hundred members of the Assembly, and under the protection of the National Guard and of our Lafayette."

"He has then decided to go to Paris, this Citizen?"

"It was necessary."

"I had no doubt of it at three o'clock this morning, when I started for Paris."

"Ah! You started in the night, at three o'clock! and you quitted Versailles like that, without any curiosity to know what was happening?"

"In truth I had some desire to know what would become of the Citizen, — the more so because, without boasting, I have some acquaintance with him; but, you know, business before everything else! When a man has a wife and children he must care for them, especially if there is no longer the Royal Forge."

The Unknown allowed these two allusions to pass unnoticed; but presently he said: "It was then some pressing job which took you to Paris?"

"Faith, yes, so it seemed, — and likely to pay well," added the workman, jingling some crowns in his pocket as he spoke; "although they had me paid by a servant, which was not polite, and even by a German servant, who could not converse the least little bit."

"And *you* do not dislike to gossip?"

"Dame! When we do not speak ill of others it is harmless."

"And also when we *do*, — is it not so?"

The two men began to laugh, the Unknown showing his white teeth, the other displaying his broken teeth.

"Well then," replied the Unknown, — like a man who indeed advances step by step, but whom nothing will prevent from advancing, "you have been employed in pressing business, and well paid?"

"Yes."

"Because the work was difficult, no doubt?"

"Difficult, yes!"

"A secret lock, hey?"

"An invisible door! Imagine a house within a house. Some one must be anxious to hide himself, — is it not so? Well, it *is* so and it is *not* so. You ring. The servant opens the door. 'Monsieur?' — 'He is not in.' — 'Oh yes, he is!' — 'Very well! Search!' You search. Good evening! I defy you to find Monsieur. A door of iron, do you understand, boxed nicely into a moulding. You might mistake it all for old oak, since it is impossible to distinguish the wood from the iron."

"Yes, but if you rap on it?"

"Bah! A layer of wood on the iron, thin as a thread, but thick enough to make the sound the same. *Tac-tac-tac-tac!* You see, the thing is done, if I am not mistaken."

"And where the devil did you do all this?"

"Ah, that 's it!"

"That 's what you don't wish to tell?"

"That is what I *can't* tell, for the good reason that I do not know."

"Your eyes were bandaged?"

"Certainly! I was met by a carriage at the barrier. Somebody said to me: 'Are you so and so?' I said, 'Yes.' — 'Good, it is you for whom we wait! Enter!' — 'It is necessary for me to ride?' — 'Yes.' I entered, and

they bandaged my eyes. The carriage rolled along for about half an hour, and then a door was opened, a wide door. I blundered over the first stone of a stairway. I mounted ten steps. I entered a vestibule. There I found a German servant, who said to the others: 'Dat is vell. Now go you avay. Ve have no more need of you.' The others went away. My bandage was taken off, and I was shown what I had to do. I put myself to the task in earnest. In an hour it was done. They paid me in beautiful gold louis. Then my eyes were again bandaged. I was replaced in the same carriage, and reconducted to the very place where I had entered the carriage. They wished me a happy journey, — and here I am!"

"Without having seen anything, even out of the corner of your eye? The devil! A bandage is not so well secured that one may not peep to the right or left."

"Aye, aye!"

"Well then, well then, tell what you saw!" said the stranger briskly.

"Here you are then! When I made that false step against the lower step of the vestibule, I profited by the accident to make a gesture. In making this gesture I disarranged the bandage a little."

"And in disarranging the bandage?" said the Unknown, with responsive vivacity.

"I saw a row of trees at my left, which led me to believe the mansion was on the Boulevards; but that 's all."

"That 's all?"

"On my word of honor!"

"That does n't reveal much."

"Seeing that the Boulevards are long, and that there is more than one house, with a big door and an archway, between the Café Saint-Honoré and the Bastille!"

"Perchance you would recognize the house again?"

The locksmith reflected an instant. "No, on my faith, no," said he. "I am not capable of it."

The Unknown, although his astute countenance did not habitually betray what he wished to conceal, looked well satisfied with this assurance.

"Ah yes; but," said he, suddenly taking up a new order of ideas, "are there not enough locksmiths in Paris, that these gentry, who wish for secret doors, should send to Versailles for a locksmith?"

At the same time he poured out a full glass for his companion, striking the table with the empty bottle, in order that the master of the establishment should bring a fresh flask.

CHAPTER II.

MASTER GAMAIN.

THE locksmith raised his glass to a level with his eye, and regarded the wine complacently. Then, tasting it with satisfaction, he said: "There are certainly locksmiths in Paris."

He sipped a few drops more. "There are even masters in the art there."

He drank again.

"That is what I said!"

"Yes, but there are masters *and* masters."

"Ah ha!" laughed the Unknown; "I see! You are like Saint Eloi, not only a master, but a master over masters."

"And master over all. You are in the same condition?"

"Nearly so."

"What are you?"

"I am a gunsmith."

"Have you a sample of your work?"

"You see this gun."

The locksmith took the gun from the hands of the Unknown, examined it with attention, played with the springs, with a motion of his head approved the click of the hammers. Then, reading the name on the barrel and on the plate, he said: "Leclère? Impossible, my friend. Leclère is not over twenty-eight years, and we two are both marching towards the fifties, — if this may be spoken without being disagreeable to you."

"That is true," said the other. "I am not Leclère; but it 's all the same."

"How all the same?"

"Without a doubt, because I am his master."

"That 's good!" cried the locksmith laughing. "It is as if I should say: 'I am not the King, but it 's all the same.'"

"How is that the same thing?" asked the Unknown.

"Easily so, because I am *his* master," said the locksmith.

"Oh ho!" laughed the Unknown, rising, and caricaturing the military salute; "then it is to M. Gamain I have the honor of speaking?"

"To himself in person, and ready to serve you if I can," said the locksmith, enchanted with the effect his name had produced.

"The devil!" said the Unknown; "I did not know that I had the honor of speaking to a man of so much consequence."

"Eh!"

"To a man of such consequence," repeated the Unknown.

"So *consequential*, you mean."

"Well, yes," replied the Unknown, laughing; "but, you know, a poor gunsmith does not talk French like a master, — and *such* a master, master of the King of France."

Then, resuming the conversation in a different tone, he said: "Say, it can not be very amusing to be the King's master?"

"Why not?"

"Why indeed; when it must take an eternity of bother to say Good-day or Good-evening properly."

"Oh no!"

"When it is necessary to say 'Your Majesty, take the key in the left hand. — Sire, take this file in the right hand.'"

"Really that is the charm about *him*, — because he is a good fellow at bottom, you see. Any day at the forge, when he had his apron on, and the sleeves of his shirt were turned up, one would never have taken him for the Eldest Son of Saint Louis, as they call him, — the King of a great country like this."

"Indeed you are right. It is extraordinary that a king should resemble any other man."

"Yes, is n't it? Long ago those who came near him found that out."

"Oh, that was nothing, if he had near him only those whom he knew," said the Unknown, laughing with a strange laugh; "but now there are those outside who begin to perceive the same thing."

Gamain regarded his interlocutor with some astonishment; but the latter, who had almost forgotten his rôle, as one word followed another, did not give him time to weigh the value of the sentence just uttered. Turning the conversation he said: "Yes, you are right; I think it humiliating for one man to address another man, like himself, as your Majesty and Sire."

"But it was not needful to call him Sire and Majesty. Once at the forge he required no more of that. I called him Bourgeois, and he called me Gamain. Only I did not *thee-and-thou* him, as he did me."

"Yes! but when the hour came for breakfast or dinner, Gamain was sent to dine with the attendants, with lackeys!"

"Not so, oh no! *He* never did that. On the contrary, he had a table, already spread, brought into the shop; and often, especially at breakfast, he sat at the

table with me, and said: 'Bah, I will not go to breakfast with the Queen, for then I shall have to wash my hands.'"

"I don't understand!"

"You don't understand that when the King came to work with me, to handle iron, pardieu, he had hands like the rest of us. What then? That does not prevent us from being honest folks; although the Queen would say to him, with her stuck-up air: 'Fie, Sire, you have soiled hands!' as if one could have clean hands when he was working at the forge."

"Don't talk to me any more about it," said the Unknown, "it makes me weep!"

"You see, in a word, he only enjoyed himself at the forge, that man, or in his Geographical Cabinet, with me or with his librarian; but I believe it was myself whom he most loved."

"Nevertheless, it is not amusing to be the teacher of a bad pupil."

"Of a bad pupil?" cried Gamain. "Oh no! That is not so. He is indeed unhappy at having come into the world a king, and at being obliged to occupy himself with such foolish things as now claim him, instead of making progress in his art. He will never make but a poor king; he is too honest; but he would make an excellent locksmith. There is one man there whom I hate, for the time he made *him* waste. That was Necker. How much time he made him lose! Oh Lord, how much time he made him lose."

"With his accounts, is it not so?"

"Yes, with his accounts in paper, — his accounts in the air, as one might say."

"Well, my friend, tell us —"

"What?"

"That must have been a famous job for you, with a pupil of such calibre."

"Indeed, no! Truly, there's where you're mistaken; for here I vow to you, — although people believe me rich as Crœsus, on account of what I've done for your Louis Sixteenth, your Father of his Country, your Restorer of the French Nation, — in good truth I'm as poor as Job."

"You are poor? But his money, what did he do with it, then?"

"Good! He gave half of it to the poor, and the other half to the rich, of the sort who never have a sou. The Coignys, the Vaudreuils, the Polignacs nibbled at him, poor dear fellow! One day he wished to reduce the salary of Monsieur de Coigny. Coigny came to see him at the door of the forge. After five minutes' absence the King returned very pale, saying: 'My faith, I thought he would beat me!' — 'And his salary, Sire?' I demanded. 'I have let that alone,' he responded, — 'impossible to do otherwise.' Another day he wished to speak to the Queen about the lay-out of Madame de Polignac, a lay-out of three hundred thousand francs, you know."

"Very pretty!"

"Very well! but that was not enough. The Queen made him give *five* hundred thousand! So you see, these Polignacs, who only ten years ago had not a sou, when they come to quit France will have millions. If they only had talent; but give all those blades an anvil and a hammer, and they are not capable of forging a horse-shoe. Give them vise and file, and they are not capable of making the screw of a lock; but on the other hand, being fine talkers and chevaliers, as people say, they have pushed the King ahead, and to-day leave him to get on as he can, with Messieurs Bailly, Lafayette,

and Mirabeau; while for me, — *me*, who have always given him such good counsel, if he had only listened to it, — he has only allowed fifteen hundred livres salary, — me his master, me his friend, — *me*, who first put the file into his hand."

"Yes, but when you labor with him, there is always a bonus."

"You think that I still work with him? In the first place that would compromise me. Since the taking of the Bastille I have not set foot inside the palace. Once or twice I have encountered him. The first time all the world was in the street, and he contented himself with a bow. The second time was on the road to Satory. We were alone, and he stopped his carriage. 'Ah, my poor Gamain, good-morning,' he said, with a sigh. — 'Well, things do not go as you wish? but this will teach you,' I began. — 'And thy wife, thy children,' he interrupted, 'they are all well?' — 'Perfectly! Infernal appetites, that 's all.' — 'Hold,' said the King. 'Carry them this gift from me;' and he ransacked his pockets and scraped together nine louis. 'It is all I have about me, my poor Gamain,' he said, 'and I am ashamed to make such a sorry present.' And indeed, as you can understand, there *was* something shameful about it! A king who has only nine louis in his pocket, a king who makes his comrade, his friend, a gift of nine louis! So —"

"So you refused?"

"No! I said: 'It is right to take what comes, for he may meet another less particular, who will accept.' But it 's all the same. He may rest in peace! I shall not take another step towards the palace, though he sends for me again and again."

"What a grateful heart!" murmured the Unknown.

"You say — ?"

"I say, Master Gamain, that it is touching to see devotion like yours survive such ill fortune. A final glass of wine, to the health of your scholar."

"Ah, my faith! He isn't worth it. No matter, here's to his health, all the same."

He drank and then continued: "And when I think that he had in his cellars more than ten thousand bottles, of which the very poorest is worth ten times more than this, and that he never said to his footman: 'Here you, get a basket of wine, and carry it to the house of my friend Gamain!' Oh yes! He preferred having it drunk by his bodyguards, by his Swiss soldiers, and by the regiment from Flanders. There is success for you!"

"What would you have?" said the Unknown, emptying his glass of the small drops. "Kings are always so, — ingrates! But hush! We are not alone."

In truth three persons entered the tavern, two men of the people, and one fishwoman, and seated themselves at the table opposite the one where the Unknown had just finished his second bottle with Master Gamain.

The locksmith cast his eyes towards them, and examined them with a solicitude which made the Unknown smile.

Indeed these three new personages seemed worthy of some attention.

Of the two men, one was all body, the other all legs. As for the woman, it was difficult to know what she was.

The man who was all body resembled a dwarf, and hardly attained a height of five feet. Perhaps he lost an inch or two of height on account of the bend of his knees, which touched each other inside when he was standing, despite his straddling feet. His face, instead

of relieving this deformity, seemed to make it more noticeable. His hair, gray and dirty, was plastered over a low forehead. His eyebrows, badly shaped, seemed to have grown by chance. His eyes were habitually glassy, stagnant, and without light, like those of a toad ; yet in moments of irritation they gave forth a sparkle like that which radiates from the contracted eyeball of a furious viper. His nose was flat, deviating from the straight line, and therefore made more self-assertive the prominent knobs of his cheeks. Finally, to complete this hideous combination, his twisted mouth revealed, through his jaundiced lips, only a few tusks, shaky and black.

This man, even at the first glance, seemed to have veins filled with gall instead of blood.

The second, the opposite of the first, whose legs were short and crooked, seemed like a heron perched on a pair of stilts. His resemblance to the bird with which we have compared him was even greater, because, being humpbacked, his head was completely lost between his shoulders, and could only be distinguished by two eyes, which seemed like spots of blood, and by a nose long and pointed, like a beak. He was still more like the heron in this, that you might fancy, at first glance, that he had the power of stretching his neck like a spring, and of pecking out the eyes, even at a distance, of any individual to whom he might wish to render this malicious service. Moreover, his arms seemed endowed with the elasticity really denied to his neck. Seated as he was, he had only to elongate his finger, without inclining his body in the least, in order to pick up a handkerchief he had let fall, after wiping his forehead, moist with sweat and rain.

The third man or woman, whichever you please, was a being amphibious, of which one could recognize the

species, though it was difficult to distinguish the sex. It was a man or a woman of thirty or thirty-four years old, wearing an elegant fishwife's costume, with chains of gold and buckles of silver, with lace headdress and kerchief. The features, so far as they were distinguishable through the layer of rouge and powder which covered them, and through the patches, of all shapes, which starred this surface of red and white, were partly obliterated, as one sees them in debased races. Sometimes when you looked that way, and the aspect conveyed the doubt we have already expressed, you waited with impatience for the mouth to open and pronounce a few words, in the hope that the sound of the voice would give to the doubtful physique a character which would render it possible to identify its sex. But it was not so. The voice, which seemed a treble, left the inquisitive observer plunged more profoundly in the doubt awakened by the body. The ear did not help the eye, the hearing did not complement the sight.

The socks and shoes of the two men, as well as the shoes of the woman, indicated that the wearers had been tramping a long time in the streets.

"It is astonishing," said Gamain, "but it seems to me that I know that woman."

"May-be; but the moment when those three people are together, my dear Monsieur Gamain," said the Unknown, taking his gun and drawing his cap over his ear, "that is the moment when they have something to do; and when they have something to do, it is well to leave them alone."

"You know them, then?" demanded Gamain.

"Yes, by sight," responded the Unknown. "And you?"

"Me? I repeat, that I believe I have seen the *woman* somewhere."

"At Court, mayhap?" queried the Unknown.

"Oh yes, surely! A fishwoman!"

"They have been there often of late."

"If you recognize them, name the two men to me. That will aid me to recognize the woman more positively."

"The two men?"

"Yes."

"Which shall I name first?"

"Him of the bandy-legs."

"Jean Paul Marat."

"Ah ha!"

"Next?"

"The hunchback."

"Prosper Verrières."

"Oh ho!"

"Well, does that help to put you on the track of the fishwife?"

"Faith, no!"

"Think!"

"I give my memory to the dogs!"

"Well, well, — the fishwife?"

"Hold on! No, no, no — "

"Have you thought?"

"It is — impossible!"

"Yes, it does seem impossible, at first thought."

"It is — ?"

"I see very well that you will never name him, and so I must do so. The fishwife is the Duc d'Aiguillon."

At the utterance of this name the fishwife started and turned herself about, and so did the two men.

All three then made a movement to arise, as we do before a chief for whom we wish to show marked deference; but the Unknown placed his finger on his lips and passed out.

Gamain followed him, believing himself in a dream.

At the entrance they were hustled by an individual apparently in flight, pursued by people who cried out: "The Queen's hairdresser, the Queen's hairdresser!"

Among the people running and screaming there were two who each bore a bloody head at the end of a spear.

These were the heads of two unfortunate guardsmen, Varicourt and Deschuttes.

These heads, as we have said, formed part of the mob running after the unlucky fellow who jostled Gamain.

"Hold on, Monsieur Leonard!" he said to him.

"Silence! Don't call me by name!" cried the hairdresser, rushing into the tavern.

"What will they do with him?" demanded the locksmith of the Unknown.

"Who knows?" responded the latter. "Perhaps they wish him to frizz the hair of those poor devils. People have singular ideas in revolutionary times;" and then he lost himself in the crowd, leaving Gamain, from whom he had doubtless extracted all that he needed, to regain, as he intended, the workshop at Versailles.

CHAPTER III.

CAGLIOSTRO.

It was the easier for the Unknown to lose himself in that crowd, because the crowd was numerous. This was the advance guard of the escort of the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin. They had left Versailles, as the King had appointed, at about an hour after noon.

The Queen, the Dauphin, the Princess Royal, the Comte de Provence, Madame Elizabeth, and Andrée [1] were in the King's coach.

A hundred carriages had received the members of the National Assembly, who had declared themselves inseparable from the King.

The Comte de Charny and Billot remained at Versailles, to render the last services to the Baron George de Charny, — killed, as we have before related, in that terrible night of the Fifth and Sixth of October, — and also to see that the corpse was not mutilated, as the bodies of the guardsmen Varicourt and Deshuttes had been.

This advance guard, whereof we have spoken, — and which set out from Versailles two hours before the King, and was now in advance of him by about a quarter-hour, — rallied as it were about the two heads of the guards-

[1] Speaking always with the conviction, or at least the hope, that our readers of to-day were our readers of yesterday, and are consequently familiar with these personages, we believe it necessary to remind them only of one fact, that Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney is no other than the Comtesse de Charny, the sister of Philippe, and daughter of the Baron de Taverney-Maison-Rouge.

men, which served them for an ensign. When the heads came to a standstill at the Sevres Bridge Tavern the advance guard stopped also, and at the same time.

This advance guard was composed of miserable ragamuffins, half drunk, the scum which floats to the surface in every flood, whether a flood of water or of lava.

Suddenly there was a great tumult in the crowd. They had caught sight of the bayonets of the National Guard and the white horse of Lafayette, who preceded the King's carriage.

Lafayette liked popular assemblies very much, — that is, among the people of Paris, of whom he was the idol, among whom he literally reigned; but he did not love the populace. Paris, like Rome, had its *plebs* and its *plebecula*, the commonalty and the rabble.

Above all he disliked this sort of execution, which the populace administered of their own accord. We have seen that he did all he could to save Flesselles, Foulon, and Berthier de Sauvigny.

It was to hide their trophies, and at the same time to preserve the bloody ensigns which confirmed their victory, that this advance guard had marched so far ahead; and now, re-enforced by the triumvirate, whom they had the luck to encounter in the tavern, these standard-bearers found a means of eluding Lafayette. They refused to part with their companions; and decided, his Majesty having declared he would not be separated from his faithful guards, that they should attend his Majesty as his escort. Consequently the advance guard, having gathered its forces, again took up its march.

The mob rushed along the great road from Versailles to Paris, like a demoralized stream, which, after a storm, carries away, in its black and foul torrent, the inmates of a palace, which it has encountered and overturned in its

violence — this mob, we say, had on each side of the route a sort of eddy, formed by the residents of the surrounding villages, who ran to see what was going on. Among those who ran thither some, and this was the smallest number, mingled with the crowd as part of the King's escort, adding their clamors and shouts to all the other shouts and cries; but the greater number remained by the roadside, silent and unmoved.

Are we to suppose from this that they were in sympathy with the King and Queen? No; for apart from those who belonged to the upper crust of society, everybody, even the middle classes, suffered more or less from that frightful famine which was spreading itself over France. Though they did not insult the King, Queen, and Dauphin, they held their peace; and the silence of a crowd is perhaps worse than insult.

On the other hand, as a compensation, this crowd shouted with all their lungs: "Long live Lafayette!" who from time to time doffed his hat with his left hand, and saluted with the sword in his right, — and "Long live Mirabeau!" — as now and then he thrust his head through the door of the coach, into which he was crowded as the sixth inmate, in order to inhale from the outside the full amount of fresh air needful for his large lungs.

Thus the unhappy Louis the Sixteenth, towards whom all were mute, heard them applaud, in his very presence, the very thing he had lost, Popularity, and what he had always lacked, Genius.

Gilbert, as if making the trip alone with the King, marched along with the rest of the crowd, at the right hand door of the royal coach, — that is, at the side of the Queen.

Marie Antoinette, who had never been able to compre-

hend this species of stoicism in Gilbert, in whom American coolness was united with a novel gruffness, regarded with astonishment this man, who — without love and without devotion towards the royal family, fulfilling towards them simply what he considered his duty — was yet ready to do for them all that could have been done by devotion and love. Moreover he was ready to die for them, and the greatest love and loyalty could go no farther.

On both sides of the carriage of the King and Queen, beyond this line of footmen, as it were, — who had taken possession of this location, part of them from curiosity, others that they might be able to succor the august travellers in case of need, and a very few with evil intentions, — on the sides of the road, floundering in mire six inches deep, walked the dames and porters of the market-place; and amidst this motley stream of bouquets and ribbons, which seemed to increase from time to time, rolled one wave more compact than the rest.

This wave was a gun-carriage, or a powder-cart, filled with women singing and yelling at the tops of their voices. When they sang, it was the familiar old verse:

> The Baker's wife, she hath some crowns,
> Which did not cost her dear.

When they spoke, it was a new formula of hope: "We shall no longer lack bread, since we bring back the Baker, the Baker's Wife, and the Baker's Boy."

The Queen seemed to hear all this, without understanding it. She held, seated in her lap, the little Dauphin, who regarded the crowd with that scared expression with which royal children must look upon a mob in revolutionary times, as we have seen the King of Rome, the Duc de Bordeaux, and the Comte de Paris look upon it;

only the rabble in our day is more disdainful and more magnanimous, because it is stronger, and knows that it can afford to be gracious.

The King, on his part, beheld all this with a dull and weary look. He had scarcely slept during the night before. He had eaten little breakfast. There had been no time to have his hair dressed and powdered. His beard was long. His linen was rumpled. All these things were infinitely to his disadvantage. Alas! The poor King was not the man for difficult emergencies. Indeed, before all such emergencies he bowed his head. On one day only he raised it, — on the scaffold, at the very moment when it fell.

Madame Elizabeth was the angel of sweetness and resignation whom God had placed near these two condemned creatures, to console the King, in the Temple, in the absence of the Queen, to console the Queen, in the Conciergerie, for the death of the King.

The Comte de Provence, then as always, had a sidelong and false expression. He well knew that, for a time at least, he ran no danger. At that particular moment he was the popular one of the family. Why? Nobody knows. Perhaps because he remained in France when his brother, the Comte d'Artois, went away. But if the King had been able to read the bottom of the Count's heart, it remains very doubtful if what he read there would have left undisturbed his avowed gratitude for what he interpreted as devotion.

Andrée seemed like marble. She had slept no better than the Queen, eaten no better than the King; but these exigencies of life seemed scarcely to belong to her exceptional nature. She had no time to care for her hair or change her clothes; and yet not a hair of her head was disarranged, and not a fold of her robe indicated any

unaccustomed disturbance. Like a statue the waves rolled about her, without apparently attracting even her attention, and seemed to make her more smooth and white. It was evident that this woman had, in the depths of head or heart, a thought unique and luminous, known to herself alone, to which her soul gravitated, as the magnetic needle points to the polar star. A sort of shadow among the living, only one thing showed that she was alive, — the involuntary light which flashed in her glance every time her eye encountered the eye of Gilbert.

A hundred paces or so before they arrived at the little tavern of which we have spoken, the procession made a halt. The cries redoubled all along the line.

The Queen leaned slightly out of the window, and this movement, which resembled a salutation, occasioned a prolonged murmur in the crowd.

"Monsieur Gilbert," she said.

This one word, by the precise intonation with which it was pronounced, indicated that Gilbert was always at the orders of the Queen.

"Monsieur Gilbert," she repeated, "what do my people sing, what do they say?"

One could see, by the very form of this phrase, that the Queen had premeditated it, and that she had chewed it between her teeth, doubtless for a long time, before ejaculating it through the window, into the face of that rabble.

Gilbert uttered a sigh which signified, "Always the same!"

Then he said, with a profound expression of melancholy: "Alas, Madame, the people, whom you call *my people*, have been so heretofore, and it is hardly twenty years since Monsieur de Brissac — a charming courtier, for whom I now look in vain — showed you, from the

balcony of the Hôtel de Ville, to these same people, crying: 'Long live the Princess!' and said to you: 'Madame, you have there two hundred thousand lovers.'"

The Queen bit her lips, for it was impossible to charge this man with rudeness in reply or with want of respect.

"Yes, that is true," said the Queen, "and that proves how changeable the people are."

This time Gilbert bowed, but did not answer.

"I asked you a question, Monsieur Gilbert," said the Queen, with that persistence which she always evinced, even about things which must of necessity prove disagreeable to her.

"Yes, Madame," said Gilbert, "and I will answer it, since your Majesty insists. The people are singing:

The Baker's Wife, she hath some crowns,
Which did not cost her dear.

You know whom people call the Baker's Wife?"

"Yes, Monsieur, I know they do me that honor. I am already accustomed to such nicknames. They used to call me Madame Deficiency. Is there any analogy between the first surname and the last?"

"Yes, Madame, and to assure yourself of it you have only to ponder the two verses which I have given you:

The Baker's Wife, she hath some crowns,
Which did not cost her dear."

The Queen repeated: "*Some crowns which did not cost her dear.* I do not understand, Monsieur.'

Gilbert held his tongue.

"Well," resumed the Queen with impatience, "can you not see that I do not understand?"

"And your Majesty continues to insist upon an explanation?"

"Undoubtedly!"

"The song means, Madame, that your Majesty has had very complaisant ministers, especially Ministers of Finance, — Monsieur de Calonne, for example. The people know that your Majesty had only to ask, in order for him to give; and as it costs no great pains to ask, if one is Queen, when to ask is to command, the people sing:

The Baker's Wife, she hath some crowns,
Which did not cost her dear;

that is to say, which cost you only the trouble of asking."

The Queen clenched her white hand, resting on the red velvet of the door-ledge.

"Well said!" she added. "So that is what they sing! Next, if you please, Monsieur Gilbert, since you explicate their meaning so well, let us pass on to what they shout."

"They say, Madame: *We shall no longer lack bread, since we bring back the Baker, the Baker's Wife, and the Baker's Boy.*"

"You can explain this second insult as clearly as the first, can you not? I depend upon it!"

"Madame," said Gilbert, with the same amiable stoicism, "if you will ponder well, not the words so much as the intention of the people, you will see that you have not so much to complain of as you fancy."

"Let us see," said the Queen with a nervous smile. "You know, Monsieur Doctor, that I ask nothing better than to be enlightened. Go on! I listen! I am impatient!"

"Rightly or wrongly, Madame, the people are told that a big trade in flour has been carried on at Versailles, and that this is why flour no longer comes to Paris. Who feeds the poor? The baker and bakeress of

the neighborhood. Towards whom do the husband, the father, the son turn their suppliant hands when, for want of money, the child, the wife, or the father is perishing with hunger? Towards the baker, towards the baker's wife. To whom do men pray, next to God who produces the harvest? To those who distribute the bread. Are not you, Madame, is not the King, is not this royal child himself, are you not all three really distributors of God's bread? Do not be astonished, then, at the pleasant name which these people give you, and be thankful for the hope it affords, that when once the King, the Queen, and Monsieur the Dauphin dwell in the midst of twelve hundred thousand famished souls, those twelve hundred thousand sufferers will want for nothing."

The Queen closed her eyes an instant, and one could note a motion of her mouth and throat, as if she tried to swallow her chagrin, along with the acrid saliva which burned her throat.

"Is that what they cry, these people, what they cry yonder, before and behind us? Ought we to thank them for the nicknames they give us, for the songs they sing?"

"Oh yes, Madame, and most sincerely; because the song they sing is but an expression of good humor, because the nicknames which they give you are only manifestations of their hopes; but their shouts are the expression of their desires."

"Ah, the people wish prosperity to Messieurs Lafayette and Mirabeau!"

As may be inferred from this, the Queen had heard perfectly well the songs, the shouts, and the cries.

"Yes, Madame," said Gilbert, "because, by living, Lafayette and Monsieur Mirabeau, who are separated, as you can see at present, separated by an abyss over which

you are suspended, — because, by living prosperously, Lafayette and Mirabeau may be reunited, and by this reunion save the monarchy."

"That is to say, Monsieur," cried the Queen, "that the monarchy is so low that it can only be saved by those two men?"

Gilbert was preparing to answer, when cries of terror, mingled with atrocious bursts of laughter, made themselves heard, and there was a great movement in the crowd, which instead of drawing Gilbert away, brought him close to the window, against which he clung, conjecturing that something might happen which would necessitate the employment of his voice or his strength in defence of the Queen.

The two head-carriers, having compelled the unlucky Leonard to powder and curl the two heads, desired the horrible pleasure of exhibiting them to the Queen, as other head-bearers — or possibly these very men — had exhibited to Berthier the head of his son-in-law, Foulon.

The cries came from the crowd, scattering at the very sight of the two heads, as the rabble recoiled upon itself, opening the way to let them pass.

"In the name of Heaven, Madame," said Gilbert, "do not look to the right."

The Queen was not the woman to obey such an injunction, without assuring herself of the reason why the request was made. Consequently, her first movement was to turn her eyes towards the point forbidden by Gilbert, and she uttered a terrible cry.

Suddenly she removed her eyes from this horrible spectacle, as if they had encountered a sight yet more horrible, as if, fascinated by a Medusa's head, her eyes could not detach themselves from it.

This head of Medusa was that of the Unknown, whom we have seen chatting and drinking with Master Gamain in the tavern at Sevres Bridge, and who now stood with folded arms, leaning against a tree.

The Queen's hand detached itself from the velvet doorway, and leaning on Gilbert's shoulder she grasped him an instant, as if to bury her nails in his flesh.

Gilbert turned. He saw that the Queen was pale, her lips bloodless and trembling, her eyes fixed.

Perhaps he would have attributed this nervous overexcitement to the presence of the two heads, if the vision of Marie Antoinette had been arrested by either of them; but she gazed horizontally before her, at about the height of a man.

Gilbert followed the direction of her glance, and as the Queen uttered a cry of terror, he uttered one of astonishment.

Then they both murmured, at the same instant of time, "Cagliostro!"

On his side, the man leaning against the tree saw the Queen perfectly well. He made with his hand a sign to Gilbert, as much as to say, "Come here!"

At that moment the vehicles made a movement to resume their journey. By a motion mechanical, instinctive, natural, the Queen pushed Gilbert, lest he should be bruised by the wheel.

He supposed that she pushed him towards that man. Even if the Queen had not given Gilbert a push, as soon as he recognized who it was, in a certain way he was no longer master of himself.

Consequently, standing immovable, he let the escort pass by him.

Then, following the disguised workman, who occasionally turned to see if he was obeyed, Gilbert went after

him into a narrow lane, ascending towards Bellevue by a rapid declivity, and disappeared behind a wall, at the very moment when the carriage and escort disappeared on the side towards Paris, completely concealed by the declivity of the hill, which lost itself in an abyss.

CHAPTER IV.

FATALITY.

GILBERT followed his guide, who preceded him by some twenty paces, half-way up the hill. There they found themselves in the presence of a large and beautiful house. He who walked ahead drew a key from his pocket, and opened a little door, designed to enable the master of the house to go and come without confiding to servants his outgoings and incomings.

The door was left ajar, which signified, as clearly as possible, that the first comer invited his companion to follow.

Gilbert entered and softly shut the door, which swung silently on its hinges, and so fastened itself that one could not hear the click of the bolt.

Such a lock would have roused the admiration of Master Gamain.

Once inside, Gilbert found himself in an apartment whose walls were overlaid, to the height of a man, — in such a way, that is, that the eye need not lose one of their marvellous details, — with bronze panels, modelled from those with which Ghiberti enriched the Baptistery at Florence.

The feet sank into soft Turkish carpeting.

At the left was an open door. Gilbert thought that this door was purposely left open, and entered another apartment, hung with India satin, with furniture of the same stuff as the tapestry. One of those fantastic birds,

such as the Chinese paint or embroider, covered the ceiling with his wings of gold and azure, and held in his talons the chandelier, which, with splendidly wrought candelabra, representing lily-tufts, served to illuminate the room.

A single painting adorned the place, and was hung by the glass over the fireplace. It represented one of Raphael's Madonnas.

Gilbert was gazing with admiration at this masterpiece when he heard, or rather divined, that a door opened behind him. He turned, and recognized Cagliostro, coming from a sort of toilet closet.

A moment had sufficed him to remove the stains from his arms and face, to give his hair, still black, a more aristocratic brush, and completely change his clothes.

He was no longer the mechanic, with black hands, with plastered hair, with mud-soiled shoes, with corduroy breeches, and a shirt of unbleached linen. He was the elegant nobleman, whom we have already twice presented to our readers, first in Joseph Balsamo, and afterwards in The Queen's Necklace.

His garments covered with embroidery, his hands sparkling with diamonds, contrasted strongly with Gilbert's black suit, and the plain gold ring, a gift from Washington, which he wore on his finger.

With a genial and smiling face Cagliostro came forward and opened his arms to Gilbert.

Gilbert threw himself into them. "Dear master!" he exclaimed.

"Wait a bit!" said Cagliostro laughing. "You have made such progress since we parted, above all in philosophy, that to-day it is you who are the master, while I am hardly worthy to be a pupil."

"Thanks for the compliment," said Gilbert; "but

suppose I have made such progress, how do you know it? It is eight years since we met."

"Do you fancy, my dear Doctor, that you are one of those men whom people forget because they do not see them? I have not seen you for eight years, it is true; but I can tell you, almost day by day, what you have been about during these eight years."

"Really now?"

"Will you always be sceptical as to my second sight?"

"You know I am a mathematician!"

"And therefore incredulous? Let us see now! You came to France the first time summoned by family matters. These family matters do not concern me, and consequently —"

"Oh no," said Gilbert, thinking to embarrass Cagliostro; "speak on, dear master."

"Well, at that time you were anxious about the education of your son Sebastien, wishing to place him in a small city, some eighteen or twenty leagues from Paris, and to regulate your affairs with your agent, — a good man, whom you kept in Paris in spite of himself, and who, for a thousand reasons, should have been near his wife."

"Truly, master mine, you are a marvel."

"Hold on! The second time you returned to Paris because political affairs drove you to it, as they have driven so many others. You had prepared certain pamphlets, and sent them to King Louis the Sixteenth; and as there is still something of the old Adam within, you were more proud of the approbation of a king than mayhap you would be of that of my predecessor in your education, Jean Jacques Rousseau, who now, if he were living, would be reckoned greater than a king. You were anxious to know what the descendant of Louis the

Fourteenth, of Henry the Fourth, and of Saint Louis thought of Doctor Gilbert. Unhappily there was a little affair whereof you had not dreamed, but which nevertheless led me, one fine day, to find you all bleeding, your breast plowed by a ball, in a grotto in the Azore Islands, where my vessel happened accidentally to touch. This little affair concerned Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney, now become the Comtesse de Charny, in all prosperity and honor, ready to render any service to the Queen. Now as the Queen could refuse nothing to the woman who married the Comte de Charny, the Queen demanded and obtained for your benefit a secret warrant of imprisonment. You were arrested on the way from Havre to Paris, and taken to the Bastille; where you would yet be, dear Doctor, if the rabble had not one day overturned the Bastille with a wave of the hand. Soon, like the good Royalist you are, my dear Gilbert, you sided with the King, who has made you one of his attendant physicians. Yesterday, or rather this morning, you powerfully contributed to the welfare of the royal family by hastening to rouse Lafayette, who was sleeping the sleep of the just; and an hour ago, when I saw you, believing the Queen (who, between ourselves, my dear Gilbert, detests you) to be menaced, you were ready to raise a rampart before your sovereign with your own body. Is it not so? Let me not forget one particular, of no small importance, a magnetic séance in the King's presence, — the recovery of a certain casket from certain hands, a casket which had been seized through the agency of one Pasdeloup? See now, tell me if I have made one mistake or important omission, and I am ready to make my apology."

Gilbert remained stupefied before this extraordinary man, who so well knew how to adapt means to ends, that those whom he influenced were tempted to believe

that, like the Almighty, he had power to comprehend at once the totality and the details of the world, and to read the very hearts of men.

"Yes, it is even so," said he, "and you are still Cagliostro, the magician, the sorcerer, the enchanter."

Cagliostro smiled with satisfaction. Evidently he was proud of having produced on Gilbert the impression which, in spite of himself, Gilbert allowed to mantle his face.

Gilbert continued: "As I love you at least as much as you love me, my dear master, and as my desire to know what has happened to you, during our separation, is at least as great as that which has led you to inform yourself so faithfully about me, will you tell me, if the request is not indiscreet, in what part of the world you have displayed your genius and exercised your power?"

Cagliostro smiled. "I too," he said, "like yourself, have seen kings, many of them even, but for another purpose. You approach in order to uphold them; but as for me, I approach in order to dethrone them. You seek to establish a Constitutional King, and you do not attain your end; but I try to make philosophers of emperors, kings, and princes, and I achieve my purpose."

"Verily?" interrupted Gilbert, with a skeptical air.

"Certainly! It is true that they were admirably prepared for it by Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Diderot, those new Mozentiuses, those sublime contemners of the gods, and by the example of that dear King Frederick, of whom we have so unfortunately been bereaved; but then, you know we are all mortal, — with the exception of those who never die, like myself and Count Saint Germain. We have the Emperor Joseph the Second, brother of our beloved Queen, who suppressed three-quarters of the convents, confiscated the ecclesiastical benefices, who

even drove the Carmelites from their cells, and sent to his sister, Marie Antoinette, engravings representing the uncapped nuns trying on modern fashions, and unfrocked monks having their hair frizzled. We have the King of Denmark, who commenced by being the headsman for his physician Struensée, — a precocious philosopher, who said, at seventeen: 'It is Voltaire who has made me a man and has taught me to think.' There is the Empress Catherine, who took such long strides in philosophy, even while she was dismembering Poland, that Voltaire wrote: 'Diderot, D'Alembert, and myself are decorating altars to you.' There is the King of Sweden; and there are, finally, plenty of Princes of the Empire, and of all Germany."

"It remains only for you to convert the Pope, my dear master; and as I believe nothing to be impossible to you, I hope you will attain that result."

"Ah, as to that, it would be difficult. I just escaped from his clutches. For six months I was in the Castle of Saint Angelo, as you were three months in the Bastille."

"Bah! and did the people beyond the Tiber destroy the Castle of Saint Angelo, as the populace of the Faubourg Saint Antoine pulled down the Bastille?"

"No, my dear Doctor. The Roman people have not yet reached that point. — Oh, be tranquil; it will come some day! The Papacy also will have its Fifth and Sixth of October, and in that harmony Versailles and the Vatican will shake hands."

"But I thought that once inside the Castle of Saint Angelo one could not get out."

"Bah! Benvenuto Cellini!"

"Did you, like him, get a pair of wings like a modern Icarus, and soar across the Tiber?"

"That would have been impossible, inasmuch as I was lodged, with apostolic precaution, in a dungeon very deep and very dark."

"Yet you did get out?"

"As you see, here I am."

"You corrupted your jailer with the power of gold?"

"I was unlucky; I stumbled on a jailer incorruptible."

"Incorruptible? The devil!"

"Yes, but happily he was not immortal. Luck, or one believing more than I do might say Providence, planned it so that he died the day after his third refusal to open my prison-doors."

"He died suddenly?"

"Yes."

"Ah!"

"It was necessary to replace him, and they did replace him."

"And this one was not incorruptible?"

"This one said to me, on the very day when he entered upon his duties, as he brought me my supper: 'Eat well, get strength, for we have a journey to make to-night.' Pardieu, the brave fellow did not lie. That same night we each ruined three horses and we covered a hundred miles."

"And what said the rulers when your escape was discovered?"

"They said nothing! They clothed the other jailer, who was not yet buried, with some garments which I had left behind. Then they fired a pistol at the middle of his face, let the pistol fall by his side, and declared that having procured a weapon, they knew not how, I had blown out my brains. Then they declared me dead, and interred the jailer under my name. You see, my dear Gilbert, that I am fairly a corpse, — that if I should

claim to be alive, they might respond with my record of decease, and so prove that I am dead; but there is no need of that, for it suits me very well at this juncture to disappear from the world. I made a plunge as far as the sombre borders, as once said the most illustrious Abbé Delille, and I have reappeared here in Paris, under another name."

"And what do you call yourself, if I do not commit an indiscretion by asking?"

"I call myself the Baron Zannone. I am a Genoese banker. I discount the notes of princes. Good paper, is it not, especially the sort issued by Cardinal Rohan? By the way, are you in need of money, my dear Gilbert? You know that my heart and my purse are at your disposal, to-day as always."

"I thank you!"

"Ah, you think perhaps you will be in my way, because you met me to-day attired as a mechanic? Don't worry yourself about that. That is one of my disguises. You know my notions about life, that it is a long Carnival, wherein everybody is more or less masked. Anyhow, remember this, my dear Gilbert, — if ever you have need of money, here in my secretary is my special deposit, you understand. The large safe is in Paris, Rue Saint Claude. If at any time you should need money, whether I am here or not here, you may come in. I will show you how to open my little door. You will press the spring — see, this is how I press it! — and you will always find there nearly a million."

Cagliostro pressed the spring. The front of the secretary lowered itself, and brought to light a mass of gold and several bundles of banknotes.

"You are indeed a wonderful man," said Gilbert laughing; "but you know that with my twenty thousand

livres of income I am richer than the King. Meanwhile do you not fear being disturbed in Paris?"

"On account of the affair of the necklace? Go along! They dare not bother me. In a country where there are such spirits, I have only to say a word to raise a riot. You forget that I am somewhat the friend of everybody who is popular, — of Lafayette, of Monsieur Necker, of Mirabeau, of yourself."

"And what have you to do in Paris?"

"Who knows? What you have been doing in the United States, perhaps, — establishing a republic."

Gilbert shook his head. "France has not the republican spirit," he said.

"We will make her another republic, nevertheless."

"The King will resist."

"That is possible!"

"The nobility will take up arms."

"That is probable."

"Then what will you do?"

"Well, if we don't make a republic we shall make a revolution."

Gilbert let his head fall upon his breast. "If we come to that point, Joseph, it will be dreadful," he said.

"Terrible indeed, if we encounter on the road many men of your ability, Gilbert."

"I am not strong, my friend," said Gilbert. "I am honest, that is all."

"Alas, so much the worse, and that is why I must convince you, Gilbert."

"I am convinced."

"That you should prevent us from doing our work?"

"At least that we should detain you on the road."

"You are foolish, Gilbert! You do not comprehend the mission of France. France is the brain of the world.

It is essential that France should think, and think liberally, in order that the world may act as France thinks, liberally also. Do you know what upset the Bastille, Gilbert?"

"The people."

"You do not understand! You mistake the effect for the cause. For five hundred years, my friend, there have been confined in the Bastille counts, lords, princes, and still it remained steadfast. One day an angry king conceived the awful idea of imprisoning Thought, which requires space, breadth, infinity. Thought burst its way out of the Bastille, and the populace entered by the breach."

"That is true," murmured Gilbert.

"You recall what Voltaire wrote to Chauvelin, on the second of March, 1764, nearly twenty-six years ago?"

"Repeat it!"

"Voltaire wrote as follows: 'Everything that I see is putting forth the seedlings of a revolution which will infallibly come, and of which I shall not have the pleasure of being a witness. The French are tardy, but they always arrive. The light is coming nearer and nearer, at such a pace that, on the first occasion, the outbreak will be heard, and there will be a grand uproar. The young are indeed happy; they will see great things.' What do you say as to the uproar of yesterday and to-day, hey?"

"Terrible!"

"What do you say of the things you saw?"

"Frightful!"

"Indeed! Well, you are only at the beginning, Gilbert."

"Prophet of Evil!"

"Listen! Three days since I was with a physician of

much merit, — a philanthropist. Do you know what he was busying himself about at that moment?"

"He was searching for a remedy for some great disease, reputed to be incurable."

"Oh no! He was seeking to remedy life, not death."

"What do you say?"

"Epigram apart, I tell you that he found — having before him the pestilence, the cholera, the yellow fever, the smallpox, the apoplexy, and five hundred other maladies considered incurable, besides ten or twelve hundred which may become so if not treated in season, — to say nothing of the cannon, the gun, the sword, the poniard, water, fire, the fall from a roof, the gibbet, and the rack — he found that there were not methods enough of getting out of life, although there is but one way of getting into it, and at that moment he was inventing a machine, — very ingenious, on my word, — which he expects to offer the nation, in order to put to death fifty, sixty, or eighty persons in less than an hour. Well, my dear Gilbert, do you believe that so distinguished a physician, so humane a philanthropist as Doctor Guillotin, would busy himself with such a machine, unless the need of such a machine makes itself felt? So far as my knowledge goes, this machine is no novelty; and a proof of this is that one day, when I was at the Baron Taverney's, — and by-the-by, you must remember the occurrence, for *you* were there likewise; but you had eyes only for a young girl called Nicole, — the proof is, that the Queen, having come thither by chance, — she was then only the Dauphiness, and hardly that; well, the proof lies in this, that I made her see this machine in a decanter, and the thing inspired her with so much fear that she screamed and lost her consciousness. Well, my dear fellow, this machine, at that epoch, existed only

in outline; but some day you will see it perform its functions, for it will be tried. I tell you this beforehand, that if you are not blind you may recognize the finger of Providence, which, foreseeing a time to come when the headsman would have too large a task, if he simply held on to the old methods, indicated a new method by which he might fulfil his duty."

"Count, Count, you were more consoling than this in America."

"I believe you! I was then amidst a nation rising, and I am now amidst a social order which nears its end. Nobility and royalty march together towards the tomb in our old world, and that tomb is an abyss."

"I give up the nobility, my dear Count; or rather the nobility abandoned itself, on the famous night of the Fourth of August; but let us preserve royalty, for it is the palladium of the nation."

"Ah, what fine words, my dear Gilbert; but did the palladium save Troy? Preserve royalty? Do you believe it an easy thing to save royalty, with such a King?"

"But he is the descendant of a grand race."

"Yes, a race of eagles ending in paroquets! In order that you, and all such Utopians, may be able to save royalty, royalty must first make an effort to save itself. Let us see! You have seen Louis the Sixteenth, you often see him, and you are not the man to see anything without studying it. Well now, frankly tell me: Can royalty survive, represented by such a king? Is he your ideal of the sceptre-bearer? Do you imagine that Charlemagne, Saint Louis, Philip Augustus, Francis the First, Henry the Fourth, and Louis the Fourteenth had such flabby flesh, such hanging lips, such inanity in the eyes, such indecision in the gait. No, those old fellows

were men. There was nerve, blood, and life under their royal cloaks, and they were not yet bastardized by the transmission of only one strain. There is a good medical idea which those short-sighted men have forgotten. To preserve some species of animals, and even vegetables, in continual freshness and constant vigor, Nature prescribes the intermixture of species and the union of families. As grafting in the vegetable kingdom is the chief cause of the goodness and beauty of the species, so is it with man. Marriage between parents too near akin is a cause of decay in individuals. Nature suffers, languishes, and degenerates, after several generations have been produced from the same blood. On the other hand, Nature is revived, regenerated, and re-enforced, when a new and prolific principle is introduced into the line. Note the heroes who found great families, and the feeble men who ruin them. Consider Henry the Third, the last of the Valois. Observe Gaston, the last of the Medicis. Think of Cardinal York, the last of the Stuarts; and of Charles the Sixth, last of the Hapsburgs. Well, the chief cause of degeneracy in these races is the intermarriage among their families, which has made itself felt in all the dynasties whereof we have spoken, and more sensibly in the house of Bourbon than in any other. Going back from Louis Fifteenth to Henry Fourth and Marie de Medicis, we find Henry Fourth to be five times the great-great-grandfather of Louis Fifteenth, and Marie de Medicis his great-great-grandmother through five different channels. If we go back to Philip Third of Spain and Margaret of Austria, Philip Third is three times the great-great-grandfather, and Margaret of Austria is three times the great-great-grandmother of Louis Fifteenth; and I have reckoned as follows, as I have nothing to do but reckon: of the thirty-two great-great-

grandmothers and great-great-grandfathers of Louis Fifteenth there are six members of the house of Bourbon, five of the house of Medicis, eleven of the Austrian house of Hapsburg, three of the house of Savoy, three of the house of Stuart, and one Danish princess. Subject a dog or horse of the best blood to such a test, and by the fourth generation you will have a jade and a mongrel. How the devil can we resist these influences, we who are but men? What say you to my calculation, Doctor, you who are a mathematician?"

"I say, dear sorcerer," said Gilbert, rising and taking his hat, "I say that your calculation frightens me, and makes me think all the more that my place is by the King's side."

Gilbert took a few steps towards the entrance, when Cagliostro checked him.

"Listen, Gilbert!" he said. "You know whether I love you; you know whether, to spare you pain, I am capable of exposing myself to a thousand sorrows. Well, believe me — a piece of advice —"

"What?"

"If the King would save himself the King should quit France while there is yet time. In three months, in a year, in six months perhaps, it will be too late."

"Count," said Gilbert, "would you counsel a soldier to abandon his post because there is danger if he remains?"

"If that soldier was already captured, surrounded, confined, disarmed, so that he could not defend himself, above all if the exposure of his life would endanger the life of a half-million of men, — yes, I *would* counsel him to flee. And you yourself, Gilbert, will say this to the King. The King will listen to you when it is too late. Do not wait till to-morrow; tell him to-day. Do not wait till evening; tell him this within an hour."

"Count, you know that I am of the fatalistic school. Come what will, as long as I have any power whatever over the King, the King will remain in France, and I shall remain with him. Adieu, Count, we shall meet again in the combat, and perhaps sleep side by side on the field of battle."

"Go!" murmured Cagliostro. "No man, however intelligent he may be, can escape his evil fate. I sought you, in order to say this to you, and I have said it. You have heard it! My warning is useless, like Cassandra's. Adieu!"

"Tell me frankly, Count," said Gilbert, pausing on the threshold of the room, and looking fixedly at Cagliostro, "do you here claim, as you did in America, to be able to read men's future in their faces?"

"Gilbert," replied Cagliostro, "as surely as in the sky you trace the pathway of the stars, although the generality of men believe them immovable or erratic."

"Well, then — Stop, somebody is rapping at the door."

"That is true."

"Tell me the fate of him who raps at the door, whoever he may be. Tell me by what sort of death he will die, and when he will die."

"Be it so," said Cagliostro. "Let us admit him ourselves."

Gilbert advanced towards the door at the end of the corridor, of which we have before spoken, with a beating heart which he could not repress, although he said to himself that it was absurd to take such charlatanism seriously.

The door was opened. A man of distinguished bearing, tall in stature, in whose face was printed a strong expression of good-will, appeared on the threshold, and threw upon Gilbert a rapid glance, not free from disquiet.

"Good-day, Marquis," said Cagliostro.

"Good-day, Baron," responded the Marquis.

Then, as Cagliostro perceived that the look of the newcomer reverted to Gilbert, he said: "Marquis, Doctor Gilbert, one of my friends. My dear Gilbert, the Marquis de Favras, one of my customers."

The two men saluted each other.

Then addressing the stranger he continued: "Marquis, if you will enter the salon and wait for me an instant, in five seconds I will be at your service."

The Marquis bowed a second time, as he passed before the two men, and withdrew.

"Well?" asked Gilbert.

"You wish to know by what death the Marquis will die?"

"Have you not promised to tell me?"

Cagliostro gave a peculiar smile. Then, after looking about to see that nobody could overhear, he said: "Have you ever seen a nobleman hanged?"

"No!"

"Well, it is a curious spectacle; and you will be in the Place de Grève on the day when they hang the Marquis de Favras."

Then conducting Gilbert to the street door he added: "Hold! When you wish to come and see me without noise, without being seen and without seeing anybody but myself, push this button from right to left and from up to down, — so. — Adieu. Excuse me, but it is not fair to keep those waiting who have not long to live."

Then he went away, leaving Gilbert amazed at the prognostication, which excited his astonishment, but did not conquer his incredulity.

CHAPTER V.

THE TUILERIES.

MEANWHILE the King, the Queen, and the royal family continued their way to Paris.

Progress was so slow, — retarded, as it was, by the body-guard marching on foot, by the armed fishwives mounted on their horses, by the men and women of the market-place, riding on the decorated cannons, by the one hundred carriages of the Deputies, by two or three hundred wagon-loads of wheat and flour, taken at Versailles and covered with the yellow leaves of autumn, — that it was not till six o'clock that the royal coach, containing so much sorrow, so much hatred, so much passion, and so much innocence, arrived at the barrier.

During the journey the young Prince was hungry, and asked for something to eat. The Queen looked about her. It seemed very easy to procure a little bread for the Dauphin, as every man in the crowd bore a loaf on the point of his bayonet.

She looked for Gilbert. Gilbert, as we know, had followed Cagliostro.

If Gilbert had been there, the Queen would not have hesitated about asking him for a morsel of bread; but the Queen was unwilling to make such a request to one of these men of the populace, whom she regarded with horror; so she pressed the Dauphin to her breast, and said to him as he cried: "My child, we have no food;

but wait till this evening, for perhaps we shall have some this evening."

The Dauphin extended his little hand towards the men who carried the loaves on their bayonets, and said: "Those people there have some!"

"Yes, my child, but that bread is theirs, not ours, and they went to hunt for it in Versailles, because — so they say — they have had none in Paris for three days."

"For three days?" said the child; "they have not eaten for three days, mamma?"

Ordinarily etiquette required that the Dauphin should call his mother *Madame*, but the poor child was as hungry as if he were simply the child of a commoner; and being hungry, he called his mother *mamma*.

"No, my child," responded the Queen.

"In that case they must be very hungry," said the child with a sigh; and ceasing to complain he tried to sleep.

Poor child of royalty! More than once before death came to him, as come it did, he begged ineffectually for bread.

At the city gates the procession again came to a halt, — this time not for rest, but for a celebration of their arrival. That arrival must be celebrated by songs and dances.

It was a strange pause, almost as portentous in its joy, as the others had been in their fear.

The fishwives dismounted from their horses, — that is, from the horses of the guardsmen, — and fastened the sabres and guns to the saddlebows. The women and porters from the market-place descended from their gun-carriages, which were thus left frightfully bare.

Then they formed a ring which surrounded the King's carriage, separating it from the National Guard and from

the Deputies, — an alarming harbinger of what was to happen later.

This ring, with the good intention of showing its joy to the royal family, sang, screamed, howled, the women embracing the men, and the men making the women leap like those in the wanton orgies of a Teniers picture.

This took place when night had almost fallen on a day gloomy and rainy, so that the ring, illuminated only by torches on the cannon and other warlike implements, took on tints fantastic and almost infernal, in the changes of shadow and light.

After some half-an-hour of cries, clamor, singing, and dancing in the mud, the escort gave an immense *hurra*. Everybody who had a loaded gun, man, woman, or child, discharged it into the air, without any special concern about the bullets, which presently came down again, cleaving the puddles of water like heavy hailstones.

The Dauphin and his sister wept. They were so frightened as to be no longer hungry.

The procession followed the line of the river piers, and arrived at the square by the Hôtel de Ville. There the troops were formed into a hollow square, to keep back all carriages except the King's, and to prevent all persons, except those belonging to the royal household or the National Assembly, from entering the building.

The Queen presently perceived Weber, her confidential attendant and foster-brother, — an Austrian, who had accompanied her from Vienna, — making every effort to pass through the line, and to enter the Hôtel de Ville with her.

She called to him, and he ran to her side.

Noticing at Versailles that the National Guard had the place of honor for the day, Weber had dressed him-

self as a National Guardsman, in order to give himself a position, thanks to which he might become useful to the Queen; and to the simple uniform of a volunteer he had even added the decorations of a staff-officer. The equerry of the Queen's cavalcade had lent him a horse.

In order not to awake suspicion he had held himself aloof throughout the journey, with the intention, be it well understood, of coming nearer if the Queen needed him. Being now recognized and summoned by the Queen he hastened to her at once.

"Why dost thou try to force the lines, Weber?" demanded the Queen, who had preserved the old habit of thee-and-thouing him.

"To be near your Majesty, Madame."

"Thou wilt be very useless to me in the Hôtel de Ville, Weber," said the Queen, "although thou mayest be very helpful to me elsewhere."

"Where, Madame?"

"At the Tuileries, my dear Weber, at the Tuileries, where no one expects us; and where, if thou dost not precede us, we shall find neither a bed, a chamber, nor a morsel of food."

"Ah!" said the King, "that is an excellent idea of yours, Madame."

The Queen had spoken in German, and the King, who understood German but did not speak it, spoke in English.

The bystanders heard, but did not understand. This foreign language, for which they had an instinctive dislike, roused a murmur around the carriage, a murmur which threatened to become a roar, when the hollow square suddenly opened in front of the carriage and closed in behind it.

Bailly, one of the most popular men of that epoch, Bailly, whom we saw during the first journey of the King,

— on that occasion when bayonets, guns, and cannon were concealed under flowers, forgotten in the second journey, — Bailly awaited the King and Queen at the foot of a throne improvised to receive them, — a throne badly placed, badly constructed, creaking beneath the velvet which covered it, — veritably a throne suitable to such an occasion.

The Mayor of Paris addressed the King on this second trip almost exactly as he addressed him on the first trip.

The King responded: "It is always with pleasure *and confidence* that I come into the midst of the people of my good city of Paris."

The King spoke low, in a voice weakened by fatigue and hunger. Bailly repeated the sentence louder, so that everybody might hear it; only, intentionally or unintentionally, he omitted the two words *and confidence.*

The Queen noticed this, and her bitterness rejoiced at thus finding a passage into the open day.

"Pardon, Monsieur Mayor," she said, sufficiently loud for those around her not to lose a word or phrase, "either you did not hear correctly, or your memory is short."

"So please you, Madame?" stammered Bailly, turning towards the Queen his astronomical eye, which could see so well in the sky and so badly on the earth.

The Queen responded: "The King said, Monsieur, it was always with pleasure *and confidence* that he came into the midst of the inhabitants of his good city of Paris. As some may doubt if he now comes hither with pleasure, it is better to have it known that at least he comes with *confidence.*"

Then she mounted the three steps of the throne and seated herself near the King, in order to hear the discourse of the electors.

Meanwhile Weber, on a horse before which the crowd gave way, thanks to his uniform of staff-officer, found his way to the palace of the Tuileries.

For a long time this royal Lodge of the Tuileries, as it was formerly called, — this residence built by Catherine de Medicis, and occupied by her for a time, then abandoned by Charles Ninth, Henry Third, Henry Fourth, and Louis Thirteenth for the Louvre, and by Louis Fourteenth, Louis Fifteenth, and Louis Sixteenth for Versailles, — had been little more than an appendage to the other royal palaces, and was occupied by certain persons connected with the Court; but therein neither King nor Queen had perhaps ever set foot.

Weber went through the apartments; and, knowing the customs of the King and Queen, he selected the one occupied by Madame de la Marck, and that belonging to the Marshals Noailles and Mouchy.

Her apartment, which the Countess at once abandoned, had this advantage, that, it was ready to receive the Queen, with its furniture, linen, curtains, and carpets, which Weber bought.

Towards ten o'clock was heard the noise of their Majesties' coach, as it drove up.

Everything was prepared; and, hastening into the presence of his august employers, Weber exclaimed: "Attend the King!"

The King, the Queen, Madame Royale, the Dauphin, Madame Elizabeth, and Andrée entered. Monsieur de Provence had already returned to the chateau at Luxembourg.

The King turned his eyes anxiously on all sides; and in entering the salon he saw through a half-open door, leading into a side room, a supper-table spread at the end of that room.

At the same time the door opened, and an usher appeared, saying: "The King is served!"

"Oh, what a man of resources is that Weber," said the King with an exclamation of joy. "Madame, you will say to him, in my behalf, that I am much pleased with him."

"I will not fail to do so, Sire," replied the Queen, as with a sigh, which responded to this exclamation of the King, she entered the dining-room.

Plates were laid for the King, the Queen, for Madame Royale, for the Dauphin, and for Madame Elizabeth; but there was no place provided for Andrée.

Pressed by hunger the King did not remark this omission, which was not a slight, but happened in accordance with the laws of strictest etiquette; but the Queen, whom nothing escaped, perceived it at the first glance, and said: "The King will permit the Comtesse de Charny to sup with him, — is it not so, Sire?"

"Why not?" cried the King. "To-day we dine as a family, and the Countess belongs to the family."

"Sire," said the Countess, "is this a command from the King?"

The King looked at the Countess with astonishment.

"No, Madame," said he, "it is a petition which the King makes to you."

"In that case," replied the Countess, "I beg the King to excuse me, as I am not hungry."

"How? You are not hungry?" cried the King, who could not comprehend how one should not be famished at ten o'clock in the evening, after such a wearisome journey, especially when one had eaten nothing since ten o'clock in the forenoon, at which hour they had breakfasted so poorly.

"No, Sire," said Andrée.

"Nor I," said the Queen.

"Nor I," said Madame Elizabeth.

"Oh, you 're wrong, Madame," said the King, "for upon the good condition of the stomach depends the good condition of the rest of the body, and even of the spirit; and thereanent is a story by Livy, imitated by Shakespeare and by Lafontaine, which I beg you to consider."

"We know it, Monsieur," said the Queen. "It is a fable which was related to the Roman people by old Menenius, one day during a revolution. On that day the Romans were in revolt, as the French people are to-day. You are right, Sire; certainly that fable is appropriate to the present occasion."

"Well," said the King, passing his plate to be served with soup a second time, "does n't this historic similitude help you to decide, Countess?"

"No, Sire; and I am truly sorry to tell your Majesty that though I wish to obey I cannot do so."

"You are wrong, Countess, for this soup is really perfect. Why is this the first time I have been served with such a soup?"

"Perhaps because you have a new cook, Sire, that of the Comtesse de la Marck, whose apartments we are occupying."

"I will retain him for my service, and desire that he will attach himself to my household. This Weber is truly a miraculous man, Madame."

"Yes," murmured the Queen sadly; "what a pity he cannot be made a cabinet minister!"

The King did not hear, or did not wish to hear; but as he saw Andrée standing there very pale, while the Queen and Madame Elizabeth, though they ate no more than Andrée, remained seated at the table, he turned towards the Comtesse de Charny and said: "Though you

are not hungry, Madame, you cannot say you are not fatigued. If you refuse to eat you will not refuse to sleep? Then he added to the Queen: "Madame, I beseech you to give the Comtesse de Charny permission to retire. In default of nourishment, — sleep!"

Turning then to the servants at his side he said: "I hope it is not with the bed of Madame la Comtesse de Charny as it is with her dinner, and that they have not forgotten to prepare a chamber for her?"

"Oh Sire," said Andrée, "how can you trouble yourself about me, in such a time of distress? An armchair will suffice."

"Not by any means," said the King. "You slept very little last night, or not at all; and it is necessary to-night that you should sleep well. The Queen needs not only her own strength but that of her friends."

Presently a footman returned, who had gone to inquire, and said: "Monsieur Weber, knowing the great favor with which Madame la Comtesse is honored by the Queen, believes that he has anticipated the wishes of her Majesty by reserving for the Countess a chamber adjoining that of the Queen."

The Queen trembled, for she bethought herself that if there was only one chamber for Madame la Comtesse, there was consequently only one chamber for both the Countess and the Count.

Andrée noted the shiver which ran through the veins of the Queen. Not a sensation which agitated either of these two women escaped the other.

"For to-night, and to-night only," said she, "I will accept, Madame. The apartments of her Majesty are too contracted for me to have a chamber there at the expense of her comfort. There must be, somewhere in this big chateau, a little corner for me."

The Queen stammered some unintelligible words.

"Countess," said the King, "you are right. They shall see to all this to-morrow, and you shall be lodged as well as possible."

The Countess bowed respectfully to the King, the Queen, and Madame Elizabeth, and left the room, preceded by a lackey.

The King followed her an instant with his eyes, holding his fork suspended at the height of his mouth. "She is truly a charming creature, that woman," he said. "How happy must be the Count at finding such a phœnix in the Court."

The Queen twisted herself in her armchair, to conceal her pallor, not from the King, who would not have observed it, but from Madame Elizabeth, who would have been alarmed by it; and indeed she was almost ill.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOUR CANDLES.

As soon as the children had eaten, the Queen craved of the King permission to retire to her own chamber.

"Most willingly, Madame," said the King, "for you must be fatigued; only, as it is impossible for you not to be hungry before to-morrow, have some food already prepared."

Without answering him the Queen withdrew with her two children.

The King remained at table to finish his supper. Madame Elizabeth, whose devotion could not be altered, even by the occasional coarseness of Louis the Sixteenth, stayed near the King in order to render him those trifling services which escape the notice of even the best servants.

Once in her own room the Queen breathed again. Not one of her women had followed her to Paris, the Queen having commanded them not to quit Versailles until they were so notified.

She busied herself in looking for a large sofa or a capacious armchair for herself, intending to put the children into the bed.

The little Dauphin was already asleep. Hardly had the poor child appeased his hunger than slumber overtook him.

Madame Royale was not asleep; and, had it been needful, she would not have slept the whole night long. There was much of the Queen in Madame Royale.

As soon as the little Prince was quietly deposited in his armchair, Madame Royale and the Queen looked about in quest of such conveniences as they might find.

The Queen approached a door. As she was about to open it she heard a slight noise on the other side of the door. She listened and heard a second sigh. She bent herself to the level of the lock, and through the keyhole she perceived Andrée, kneeling on a low chair and praying. The Queen resumed her upright position, but looked at the door with an expression of sorrow.

Opposite this door was another. The Queen opened it, and found herself in a chamber pleasantly warmed, and lighted with a shaded lamp, by whose glimmer she saw, with a thrill of joy, two beds, fresh and white as two altars. Then her heart melted, and a tear moistened her dry and burning eyelids.

"Oh Weber, Weber," she murmured, "the Queen told the King it was unfortunate they could not make thee a cabinet minister, but the mother tells thee that thou meritest more than that."

Then, as the little Dauphin was still asleep, she wished to begin by putting Madame Royale to bed; but the latter, with the respect she always showed to her mother, requested permission to aid *her* first, to the end that she might, in her turn, go promptly to bed afterwards.

The Queen smiled sadly, because her daughter supposed she could sleep after such a night of agony, such a day of humiliation; but she wished the girl to remain in this sweet belief.

They commenced by putting the Dauphin to bed. Then Madame Royale, according to custom, knelt at the foot of her bed and said her prayer.

The Queen waited. "It seems to me that thy prayer lasts longer than usual, Therese," she said to the young Princess.

"That is because my brother fell asleep without dreaming of saying his prayers, poor child," said Madame Royale; "and as he is accustomed each evening to pray for you and for the King, I said his little prayer after my own, that nothing may be wanting in our petitions to God."

The Queen grasped Madame Royale, and pressed the child to her heart. The fountain of weeping, already opened by the thoughtfulness of the good Weber, and rekindled by the piety of Madame Royale, gushed abundantly and quickly from her eyes, and tears profoundly sad but not bitter rolled down her cheeks.

She stood by the bed of Madame Royale, as immovable as the Angel of Maternity, till she saw the eyes of the young Princess close, till she felt the muscles of her hands — which pressed her own with such tender and deep filial love — detach themselves under the relaxation of sleep.

Then she gently laid her child's hands in bed, and covered them with the quilt, that she might not suffer from cold, if the chamber should grow chilly during the night. Then, placing on the sleeping forehead of the future martyr a kiss, light as a breath and sweet as a revery, she re-entered her own chamber.

This chamber was illuminated by a candelabra bearing four candles. The candelabra was placed on a table. This table was covered with a red cloth.

The Queen seated herself in front of the table, and with staring eyes let her head fall between her closed hands, so that she could see nothing except the red cloth spread before her. Twice or thrice she shook her head

mechanically at this bloody reflection. It seemed as if her eyes were distended with blood, her temples beating with fever, and her ears almost bursting. Then, with a stormy movement, all her life passed again before her.

She remembered that she was born on November Second, 1755, the day of the Lisbon earthquake, which killed more than fifty thousand people and overthrew two hundred churches.

She remembered that in the first French chamber where she lay, at Strasburg, the tapestry represented the Massacre of the Innocents ; and that on the same evening, by the uncertain light of the night-lamp, it seemed to her that she saw blood oozing from the wounds of the poor babes, and that the faces of the murderers took on an expression so hateful that she called for succor in her alarm, and ordered that at dawn they should depart from a city which left her with so fearful a reminiscence of the first night she passed in France.

She remembered that, in continuing her journey towards Paris, she had to stop at the mansion of the Baron de Taverney ; that there she met, for the first time, that miserable Cagliostro, who had since obtained, through the affair of the necklace, such a terrible influence over her destiny ; and who during that meeting — so vivid in her memory that it seemed as if it was an event of the evening before, although twenty years had rolled away — had made her see, imaged in a decanter of water, something monstrous, a death-machine awful and unknown, and at the base of the machine a rolling head, detached from the body, which was none other than her own.

She recollected that when Madame Lebrun painted a charming portrait of her as a young wife, beautiful and

even happy, she gave to her — inadvertently, no doubt, but the presentiment was terrible — the attitude of Madame Henrietta of England, wife of Charles the First.

She recalled the day when for the first time she entered Versailles, — how, as she descended from her carriage, and set her foot on the funereal pavement of the Marble Court, — which now, on the evening previous, she had seen red with blood, — a tremendous thunderclap was heard, preceded by a flash of lightning, which furrowed the sky in such a frightful fashion that Marshal Richelieu, who was not easily frightened, shook his head and said: "A bad precedent!"

As she remembered all these things there seemed to rise before her eyes a reddish vapor, which grew thicker and thicker.

The darkness became so apparent that the Queen raised her eyes as far as the candelabra, and perceived that one of the candles had gone out, without any apparent reason.

She shuddered. The candle yet smoked, and nothing indicated the cause of its extinction.

As she looked with astonishment at the candelabra, it seemed to her that the neighboring candle grew slowly paler, and that little by little the white flame turned red and the red became blue. Then the flame grew thinner and elongated itself. Then it seemed to quit the wick and fly away. Finally it wavered an instant, as if agitated by an invisible breath, and then died.

The Queen watched with haggard looks the struggles of that candle. Her bosom heaved more and more. With outstretched hands she drew nearer to the candelabra, in proportion as the light grew fainter. Finally, when it was entirely extinguished, she shut her eyes,

sank back into her armchair, and passed her hands over her forehead, which she found raining perspiration.

She remained thus ten minutes or more, with closed eyes; and when she opened them again, she saw with affright that the third candle was beginning to change, like the first two.

Marie Antoinette at first believed that this was a dream, and that she was under the weight of some fatal hallucination. She tried to rise, but it seemed to her that she was chained to her armchair. She tried to summon Madame Royale, whom ten minutes ago she would not have aroused for a second crown; but her voice was suffocated in her throat. She tried to turn away her head, but her gaze remained steadfast and immovable, as if that third dying candle absorbed her sight and her breath. At last, even as the second had changed color, the third also took on different tints, paled, lengthened itself, waved from left to right and then from right to left, and then was extinguished. Fright drove the Queen to such an effort that her voice returned to her, and with its aid she tried to regain the courage which failed her.

"I am not worried," she exclaimed aloud, "at what has happened to the three candles; but if the fourth should go out like the other three, woe, woe is me!"

Suddenly, without the warnings which the others had given, without the flame's changing color, without its appearing to grow longer, without its wavering, but as if touched by the wing of a passing bird, the fourth candle expired.

The Queen sent forth an awful cry, arose, turned twice around, beating the air and the obscurity with her arms, and then fell senseless.

Almost simultaneously with the noise of her body

striking the floor, the door opened, and Andrée, clad in a cambric dressing-gown, appeared on the threshold, white and silent as a ghost.

As she paused an instant amidst the darkness, she fancied she could see a kind of vapor. She listened, as if she heard the air agitated with the sweep of a shroud.

Lowering her eyes she perceived the prostrate Queen, collapsed and unconscious.

She took a step backward, as if her first impulse was to withdraw; but immediately controlling herself, without speaking a word, without asking the Queen (and, as for that, any question would have been absolutely useless) what was the matter, she lifted her in her arms, and, with a force of which one would have believed her incapable, carried her to the bed, — guided solely by the two candles burning in her own chamber, whose rays strayed through the door into the Queen's chamber.

Then taking from her pouch a vial of salts, she held it to the nostrils of Marie Antoinette.

Despite the efficacy of the salts, the swoon of Marie Antoinette was so deep that it was only at the end of ten minutes that she heaved a sigh.

At this sigh, which announced the return of her sovereign to life, Andrée was again tempted to withdraw; but this time, as before, she was detained by the sentiment of duty, so powerful in her.

She only withdrew her arm from beneath the head of Marie Antoinette, which she had lifted, lest a drop of the corrosive vinegar, in which the salts were dissolved, should fall on the face or breast of the Queen. At the same time she withdrew the hand which held the vial. The head fell back on the pillow; and, the vial being withdrawn, the Queen was plunged into a stupor more

profound than that from which she had seemed about to emerge.

Always cool, almost immovable, Andrée lifted her again, and for the second time applied the vial of salts, which produced its effect.

A slight shiver ran through the Queen's body. She sighed, and her eyes opened. She recalled her thoughts, remembering the horrible omen. Then, realizing that a woman was near, she threw both arms about her neck, crying, "Oh defend me, save me!"

"Your Majesty has no need of defence, being in the midst of friends," responded Andrée, "and appears to be already saved from the swoon into which she had fallen."

"The Comtesse de Charny!" cried the Queen, releasing Andrée, whom she had embraced, and whom, in the first movement, she almost repulsed.

Neither this motion, nor the sentiment which inspired it, could escape Andrée's notice.

But the next moment she remained calm, almost to frigidity. Then she asked, taking a backward step: "Does the Queen bid me assist her in undressing?"

"No, Countess, I thank you," replied the Queen in an altered voice; "I can undress alone. Return to your own room, for you must need sleep."

"I will return to my chamber, but not to sleep, Madame," responded Andrée, "but to watch over the sleep of your Majesty."

Having saluted the Queen she retired to her room, with a step as slow and solemn as that of a statue, if statues could walk.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROAD TO PARIS.

On the same evening when the events took place which we have just related, an occurrence no less grave disturbed the college of Abbé Fortier.

Sebastien Gilbert had disappeared about six o'clock; and at midnight, despite careful researches throughout the mansion, both by the Abbé Fortier and his sister, Mademoiselle Alexandrine Fortier, he had not been found.

All the domestic world was asked what had become of him, but all that world was ignorant; only Aunt Angelica, as she was going out of the church, where she had been arranging the chairs, at about eight o'clock in the evening, thought she had seen him pass through the little street running between the church and the prison, and take the path leading to that portion of the park called the Parterre.

This report, instead of reassuring the Abbé Fortier, increased his anxiety. He was not ignorant of the strange hallucinations which occasionally possessed Sebastien, especially when that woman appeared whom he called his mother; and more than once in their walks, when the Abbé anticipated this sort of dizziness, he had watched the child as he saw him venture too far into the woods; and when he feared to see the boy disappear altogether, had sent after him one of the best runners in the college.

The runners always found the boy panting, almost exhausted, leaning against a tree, or lying at length on the moss, the green carpet of this magnificent forest; but these dizzy turns had never seized Sebastien in the evening, and never during the night had they been obliged to run after him.

Something extraordinary must have happened; but the Abbé Fortier, however much he might scratch his head, could not imagine what.

In order to reach a happier result than the Abbé Fortier, suppose we follow Sebastien Gilbert, — we, who know his whereabouts.

Aunt Angelica was not mistaken. It was certainly Sebastien Gilbert whom she saw slipping by in the twilight, and making, with all his legs, for the Parterre. From the Parterre he went to the Pheasant Park. Passing through the Pheasant Park he shot away through the little lane which leads straight to Haramont. In three-quarters of an hour he reached that village.

Knowing the end of Sebastien's course to be the village of Haramont, it is not difficult for us to guess whom he sought in that village. He came to find Pitou.

Unfortunately Pitou left by one side of the village just as Sebastien Gilbert entered it by the other; for Pitou, it may be remembered, after the festival given by the Haramont National Guard, — having, like an ancient wrestler, managed to stand upright when all the others were floored, — started to search for Catherine, whom, it may also be remembered, he found fainting on the road from Villers Cotterets to Pisseleu, and destitute of all warmth, except that of the last kiss given her by Isidore.

Gilbert was ignorant of all this, and went straight to Pitou's cottage, the door of which he found unfastened.

In the simplicity of his life Pitou did not fancy there was any necessity for fastening a door, whether the house was occupied or not. Moreover, if it had been his habit scrupulously to secure his door, on this particular evening he was so occupied with weighty matters, that he would certainly have forgotten to take this precaution.

Sebastien was as well acquainted with Pitou's lodgings as with his own. He searched for flintstone and punk, found the knife which served Pitou for a steel, lighted the punk, with it lighted a candle, and then waited; but Sebastien was too excited to wait patiently, especially if he had to wait a long time.

He walked repeatedly from the fireplace to the door, from the door to the corner of the street. Then, like Sister Anne, in the Bluebeard story, seeing nobody coming, he returned to the house, to assure himself that Pitou had not returned in his absence.

Finally, seeing how time was slipping away, he went to the rickety table, where there were ink, quills, and some paper. On the first page of the paper were inscribed the full names and ages of thirty-three men, forming the effective force of the National Guard of Haramont, acting under the orders of Pitou.

Sebastien lifted carefully this top sheet, a model of the commander's chirography, who did not blush, when the task would be better done, to descend sometimes to the subaltern grade of quarter-master.

Then the boy began to write on the next sheet:

My dear Pitou: I have come to tell thee that I overheard, a week ago, a conversation between the Abbé Fortier and the Vicar of Villers Cotterets. It appears that the Abbé Fortier has some understanding with the Parisian aristocrats, and

told the Vicar that a counter revolution was under way at Versailles.

It is the one of which we have since heard, in behalf of the Queen, who put on the black cockade and trod underfoot the tricolored badge.

This menace of a counter-revolution, together with what we have learned of the events which followed the banquet, have already made me very anxious about my father, who, as thou knowest, is the enemy of the nobility ; but this evening, my dear Pitou, there is something much worse.

The Vicar came back to see the Curate ; and as I had fears for my father, I thought it not amiss to listen, especially, after what I had accidentally overheard the other day.

It seems, my dear Pitou, that the populace went out to Versailles, and massacred many persons, and that among those persons was George de Charny.

The Abbé Fortier said : " Let us speak low, so as not to disquiet little Gilbert, whose father went to Versailles, and may possibly have been killed with the others."

Thou understandest well, my dear Pitou, that I did not listen any longer. I glided softly out of my hiding-place, so that nobody heard me. I went through the garden, and found myself on the Place du Château ; and, running all the way, I have come to thee, to ask thee to reconduct me to Paris, — which thou wouldst not fail to do, and with all the heart, if thou wast here.

But as thou art not here, as thou mayest be very late in returning, being probably at work with thy snares in the forest of Villers Cotterets, — in which case thou wilt not come back before daylight, — my anxiety is so great that I cannot wait till then.

I depart, therefore, all alone. Be easy, for I know the road. Besides, of the money my father gave me, I still have left two louis, and I will take a place in the first coach which I run across on the journey.

P. S. I have made my letter rather long, in order to explain the cause of my departure, — and also because of a constant hope that thou wouldst return before it was finished.

It is finished; thou hast not returned, and I go. Adieu, or rather, *Au revoir*. If nothing has happened to my father, and if he runs into no danger, I shall return.

Anyhow, I have fully decided to insist that he should keep me close to himself.

Make the Abbé Fortier easy about my departure; but, above all, do not set his mind at rest before to-morrow, in order that it may be too late to send anybody after me.

Decidedly thou art not coming, and I depart. Adieu, or rather, *Au revoir*.

Thereupon Sebastien Gilbert, who knew the economy of his friend Pitou, extinguished the candle, shut the door, and went his way.

To say that Sebastien Gilbert was not excited, in beginning so long a journey at night, would be untrue; but his emotion was not what it would have been in another child, — fear. It was solely and simply the natural sentiment of the deed he undertook, which was in disobedience to his father's orders, but was at the same time a great proof of his filial affection; and such disobedience has a right to forgiveness from any father.

Besides, Sebastien had grown apace since we last took note of him. A little pale, a little frail, a little nervous for his age, Sebastien was nearly fifteen years old. At that age, with the temperament of Sebastien, especially as the son of Gilbert and Andrée, a boy should be almost a man.

The young fellow, with no other sentiment than the emotion inseparable from the task which he had undertaken, set out for Largny, which he soon discovered by the "pale light which falleth from the stars," as old Corneille puts it. He passed along the village, reached the great ravine which extends thence to Vauciennes, encompassing the ponds of Walue. At Vauciennes he

took the broad road, and walked along more tranquilly, knowing that he was in the King's highway.

Sebastien was a boy full of sense. He had once talked Latin all the way from Paris to Villers Cotterets, and it had taken three days to make the trip; and he understood therefore that one could not return to Paris in a night, and did not waste his breath by talking in any language. He descended the first and mounted the second hill of Vauciennes at a moderate pace, but having reached the plain below he marched along more rapidly.

Perhaps this liveliness in Sebastien's gait was incited by his approaching a disagreeable place which intervened along this road, a place which, at that day, had a reputation it has now completely lost. This place was called Clear Water Spring, because the limpid stream trickled twenty feet from quarries like two gates of hell, opening their sombre jaws towards the highway.

Whether Sebastien was timid about passing this point or not no one will ever know, for he did not quicken his footsteps, nor did he swerve from the middle of the road, although he might have gone round by the opposite side of the way. To be sure he slackened his pace further on, but that was doubtless because he came to a slight elevation, and was near the spot where the road divided into two, branching towards Paris and Crespy.

There he suddenly stopped. In coming from Paris he had not noted which route he took at this point, and so, in returning to Paris, he did not know which road he ought to follow.

Was it the left, or was it the right? Both roads were bordered with similar trees, both were paved in the same way. Nobody was there to answer Sebastien's questions.

These two roads, starting from the same point, diverged from each other visibly and rapidly, so that if Sebastien

took the wrong direction, instead of the right, the result would be, that by next morning he would be very much out of his way.

Sebastien stood undecided. He looked for some indication by which he might recognize the route by which he had formerly travelled; but this indication, which would have failed him even in the daytime, failed him still more in the obscurity.

He sat down discouraged at the fork of the roads, partly for rest, and partly for reflection, when suddenly he thought he heard in the distance, coming from the direction of Villers Cotterets, the gallop of one or two horses.

He bent his ear to listen. He was not in error. The noise of the horses' hoofs resounded above the roadbed, and became more and more distinct. Sebastien was about to receive the help which he needed.

He determined to stop the riders midway and ask for directions. Soon he saw their shadows loom up in the darkness, while sparks of fire spurted from beneath the iron feet of the horses. He raised himself, crossed the trench, and waited.

The cavalcade was composed of two men, one of whom galloped three or four paces in front of the other.

Sebastien reasonably concluded that the first of the two men must be the master, the second the servant. He advanced three steps, in order to address the first rider. The latter, seeing a man leap as it were from the ditch, believed there was an ambuscade, and put his hand to his belt.

Sebastien noticed the movement, and called out: "I am no thief, Monsieur. I am a boy whom the last news from Versailles summons to Paris, to search for his father. I don't know which of these two roads I ought to take.

Tell me which leads to Paris, and you will do me a great favor."

The clearness of Sebastien's words and the juvenile ring of his voice (which sounded not unfamiliar to the horseman) were such that, hurried as he was, he drew rein.

"My boy," he asked kindly, "who are you, and why do you venture on the highroad at such an hour, alone and unprotected?"

"I do not ask who *you* are, Monsieur; I only ask my way, the road at the end of which I may learn if my father is dead or living."

There was in that voice, though still childish, a firmness of accent which struck the cavalier.

"My friend," he said, "the road to Paris is the one which we pursue. I know it but badly myself, having travelled this road to Paris but twice; but I am not the less sure the one we follow is the best one."

Sebastien took a backward step in expressing his thanks. The horses needing to breathe, the horseman who seemed to be the master resumed his course, but at a less rapid pace. His lackey followed him. "Monsieur Isidore," he said, "did you not recognize that youngster?"

"No, but it seemed to me somehow —"

"What, Monsieur Isidore did not recognize young Sebastien Gilbert, who belongs at the boarding-school of the Abbé Fortier?"

"Sebastien Gilbert?"

"To be sure, — who came from time to time, with that big Pitou, to Mademoiselle Catherine's farm."

"Thou art indeed right!"

Stopping his horse and turning around he asked: "Is it indeed you, Sebastien?"

"Yes, Monsieur Isidore," answered the lad, who had already recognized the cavalier.

"Come then, my young friend," said the horseman, "let me know how it happens that I find you alone on such a road, at such an hour."

"I *have* told you, Monsieur Isidore. I go to Paris, to ascertain if my father has been killed, or if he still lives."

"Alas, poor boy," said Isidore, with a deep feeling of sadness, "I go to Paris for a similar cause; only I am not in doubt."

"Yes, I know, — your brother —?"

"One of my brothers, George, was killed yesterday morning at Versailles."

"Ah, Monsieur George de Charny!"

Sebastien made a forward movement and offered both his hands to Isidore, who caught and pressed them.

"Well, my dear boy," he added, "as our situations are almost identical, it is useless for us to separate. Like myself you must be in haste to reach Paris."

"Yes, yes, Monsieur!"

"You can't go afoot!"

"I could go on foot very well, but it would take too long; so I expect to-morrow to pay for a place in the first vehicle I find on the road, going in the same direction as myself, and to travel in it as far as I can towards Paris."

"And if you do not find one —?"

"I shall proceed on foot."

"Do better than that, my dear boy; mount on the crupper behind my lackey."

Sebastien withdrew his hands from those of Isidore, and said: "I thank you, Monsieur le Vicomte."

These words were accentuated by a tone so expressive

that Isidore saw how he had wounded the lad by offering him a lift behind a servant; so he added: "On the whole, come to think of it, take Baptiste's horse, and he can rejoin us at Paris. He can inquire for me at the Tuileries, where they will always know of my whereabouts."

"I thank you still more, Monsieur," said Sebastien in a softer voice, for he appreciated the delicacy of this new proposition, "but I will not deprive you of Baptiste's services."

Only a little more persuasion was needed, the preliminaries of peace being already arranged.

"Well, you may do still better, Sebastien. Mount behind me. Day is already breaking. At ten in the forenoon we shall be at Dammartin, — that is, half way. There we will leave the two horses in Baptiste's care, and take a postchaise, which will land us in Paris. That is what I intended to do, and you do not alter my plans."

"Is that really true, Monsieur Isidore?"

"On my word of honor."

"Well then —," said the lad hesitating, but dying to accept.

"Get down, Baptiste, and help Monsieur to mount!"

"Thanks, but that is needless, Monsieur Isidore," said Sebastien, who, agile as any schoolboy, climbed, or rather bounded, to the crupper.

Then the three men and the two horses started at a gallop, and soon disappeared behind the hill of Gondreville.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE APPARITION.

As had been planned, the three riders continued their journey as far as Dammartin. They arrived at Dammartin about ten o'clock. They all needed something to eat; and besides, it was necessary to inquire for a chaise and posthorses.

While breakfast was served to Isidore and Sebastien, who did not exchange a word, being a prey, Sebastien to anxiety and Isidore to melancholy, Baptiste cleaned his master's horses, and tried to find a chaise and posthorses.

At midday, breakfast being over, the horses and chaise were ready at the door.

As Isidore had heretofore used his own vehicle when he travelled by post, he was not aware that those who travel with carriages belonging to the company were compelled to change conveyances at each stopping-place. The result of this was that the relay-masters — who kept others strictly to the rules, though they refrained carefully from observing those rules themselves — never had vehicles under their control or horses in their stables. Consequently, leaving Dammartin at noon, the travellers did not reach the barrier till half-past four, and were not at the gates of the Tuileries till five o'clock in the evening.

There it was still further necessary to make themselves known to Lafayette, who controlled the guards, and who, in these troublous times, having made himself

responsible to the Assembly for the person of the King, guarded that King conscientiously. However when Charny gave his name, when he invoked the name of his brother, the obstacles vanished, and Isidore and Sebastien were introduced into the Courtyard of the Swiss Guards, whence they passed into the Middle Courtyard.

Sebastien wished to be instantly conducted as far as the Rue Saint Honoré, to the lodging which his father inhabited; but Isidore bade him remember that as Doctor Gilbert was a physician to the King for that quarter, those about the King would best know when he was expected. Sebastien, whose disposition was thoroughly reasonable, yielded to this argument, and consequently followed Isidore.

A certain kind of etiquette was already established in the Palace of the Tuileries, although the Court had arrived only the night before. Isidore was conducted by the Staircase of Honor, and the usher made him wait in the great salon hung with green, feebly lighted by two candelabras.

The rest of the palace was plunged in semi-darkness; for the building having been generally occupied by private persons, the great lamps, which constituted part of the royal luxury, had been neglected.

The usher at once went to inquire for the Comte de Charny and Doctor Gilbert. The boy seated himself on a sofa. Isidore walked up and down with long strides.

At the end of ten minutes the usher reappeared. The Comte de Charny was with the Queen. As to Doctor Gilbert, he was not yet visible. It was supposed, though no one had power to speak positively, that he was with the King, — the King being closeted, as the valet de chambre on duty said, with his physician; only as the King had four physicians for each term, besides his regu-

lar physician, no one knew precisely if the gentleman closeted with his Majesty was Monsieur Gilbert. If it was he, they would notify him, when he came forth, that somebody waited for him in the Queen's antechamber.

Sebastien breathed freely. He had no longer any reason to fear. His father lived, and was unhurt and safe. He ran to thank Isidore for having brought him hither. Isidore embraced him tearfully. The thought that Sebastien had found his father rendered more dear to himself the brother he had lost, and should never see again.

At that moment the door opened. An usher cried: "Monsieur le Vicomte de Charny."

"That is I," responded Isidore, coming forward.

"Monsieur le Vicomte is summoned to the Queen," said the deferential usher.

"You will wait for me, will you not," said Isidore to Sebastien, "at least, unless Monsieur Gilbert sends for you? Bear in mind that I must account for you to your father."

"Yes, Monsieur," said Sebastien, "and meanwhile receive my fresh acknowledgments."

Isidore followed the usher, and the door closed.

Then, tranquil about his father, tranquil about himself, certain that he should be pardoned by the Doctor, on account of his intentions, his thoughts reverted to the Abbé Fortier and to Pitou, and to the worriment he had caused them, to the one by his flight, to the other by his letter.

He could not comprehend now, with all the hindrances he had encountered on the road, how it was that Pitou — who need only stretch his long legs to travel as fast as a posthorse — had not overtaken them.

Naturally, by a simple connection of ideas, in thinking

about Pitou he thought about his usual surroundings, — that is, the big trees, the beautiful shaded paths, the bluish distances which marked the horizon of the forest. Then, by a gradual process, he recalled the strange visions which sometimes had appeared to him beneath the great trees, in the depth of their immense arches.

He thought of the woman whom he had several times seen in his dreams, and once — at least, so he believed — in reality, on the day when he was walking in the woods at Satory, and this woman passed and vanished like mist, drawn in a magnificent calèche, by two superb horses at full gallop.

He recalled the emotion which the sight of her always roused in him, and, half dreaming, he murmured in a low voice: "My mother, my mother, my mother!"

Suddenly the door, which had been closed behind Isidore de Charny, was again opened. This time it was a woman who appeared. By chance the boy's eyes were fixed on that door at the moment of this apparition.

This vision was so much in harmony with what was passing in his thoughts, that, on seeing his dream become animate in a veritable form, the boy trembled; but it was quite a different matter when the woman entered, and he saw, both at once, the shadow and the reality, — the shadow of his dreams, the reality of Satory.

He suddenly stood upright, as if a spring had placed him on his feet. His lips opened, his eyes grew larger, his pupils dilated. His palpitating breast tried vainly to form a sound.

The woman moved along, proud, majestic, disdainful, without noticing him in the least. Calm as this woman seemed outwardly, her contracted eyebrows, pale color, and stifled respiration showed her to be laboring under the pressure of great nervous irritation.

She crossed the hall diagonally, opened a door opposite to that by which she entered, and withdrew into the corridor.

Sebastien realized that she would escape him if he did not hasten. As if to be sure of the reality of her appearance, he stared wildly at the door by which she had entered and the door by which she had disappeared, and then hurried after her, before the skirt of her silken robe had vanished around the angle of the corridor; but hearing some one behind she walked more quickly, as if she dreaded pursuit.

Sebastien hastened his steps more than she was able to do. The corridor was dark, and he feared lest the dear vision should again fly from him.

Hearing footsteps fast overtaking her, she quickened her pace, but turned her head. Sebastien uttered a feeble cry of joy. It was *she*, always *she*.

The woman, on her side, seeing herself pursued by a lad with extended arms, but understanding nothing of the reason for it, and having reached the top of a staircase, began to descend; but hardly had she taken a single step when Sebastien appeared in his turn at the end of the corridor, crying, "Madame, Madame!"

This voice roused a strange sensation throughout the whole being of that young woman. It seemed to her as if a blow, half mournful half charming, was smiting her heart; and that from her heart there radiated a chill throughout her body, running through all her veins; but understanding as yet nothing, either of the appeal or the emotion which it aroused, she redoubled her pace, till her walk became almost a flight; but she was not far enough in advance of the lad to elude him. They reached the bottom of the stairway almost at the same time.

The young woman darted into the courtyard. A car-

riage was in waiting, and a servant held open the door of that carriage. She entered rapidly, and seated herself; but before the door was shut Sebastien glided between the servant and the carriage, and having seized the bottom of the fugitive's robe, kissed it passionately, again exclaiming, "Oh Madame, Madame!"

The young woman then looked at the charming boy, who had previously so frightened her, and said in a softer voice than was habitual with her, although that voice still betrayed a mixture of emotion and fear: "Well, my friend, why do you run after me? Why do you call me? Who are you?"

"I want," said the boy, all of a tremble, "I want to see you, I want to embrace you;" and then he added, so low that only the young woman could hear him: "I want to call you *my mother!*"

The young woman uttered a cry, took the head of the boy between her hands, and, as if moved by a sudden revelation, drew him quickly to herself, and pressed her lips ardently upon his forehead.

Then, as if fearing that she might be robbed of the child she had found, she drew him entirely into the carriage, placed him on the other side, shut the door, and pulled down the window, which she immediately raised again to say: "Home, to the Rue Coq Heron, number nine, at the first coachway opening from the Rue Plâtrière."

Then, turning towards the child, "Thy name?" she demanded.

"Sebastien!"

"Ah, come here, Sebastien, — here to my heart."

Then sinking back, as if almost fainting, she murmured: "Oh, what is this unknown sensation? Is it what they call *happiness?*"

CHAPTER IX.

ANDRÉE'S PAVILION.

THE drive was far enough for only one long mutual kiss between mother and son.

Behold this child, for her heart never for an instant doubted that he belonged to her, this child, who had been snatched away from her one terrible night, a night of anguish and dishonor; this child, who had disappeared without any trace of his abductor, except a footstep imprinted on the snow; this child, whom she had so detested and even cursed, that his first cry she had not heard, his first wail she had not enjoyed; this child, for whom she had appealed, searched, whom she had repeatedly demanded, whom her brother had pursued across the ocean, in the person of Gilbert; this child, whom she had mourned for fifteen years, whom she had despaired of ever seeing again, of whom she had dreamed only as a vision of the beloved dead, as a cherished spirit, — behold this child, suddenly, at a moment when she least expected it, recovered by a miracle. By a miracle he recognized her, ran after her in his turn, — pursued her, called her his mother; this child, here he was, held to her heart, pressed to her breast. Here was one who, never having seen her, yet loved her with filial affection, as she loved him with affection maternal. Here, from his lips, pure from other kisses, she regained the joys of a lost life in the first embrace which she gave her child.

Above the heads of men there was, then, something more than the empty void wherein circled the worlds, there was something besides chance and fatality.

"Rue Coq Heron, number nine, at the first coach-way after leaving the Rue Plâtrière," the Countess had said.

Strange coincidence, which brought this child, after a lapse of fourteen years, to the very house where he was born, where he had inhaled the first breath of life, whence he had been stolen by his father.

This little mansion, bought formerly by the senior Taverney, when some wealth had come into the bosom of his family, through the favor with which the Queen honored him, had been preserved by Philippe de Taverney, and was cared for by an old concierge, whom the ancient proprietors had apparently sold with the house. It served as a resting-place for the young man, when he returned from his travels, or for the young woman, when she wished to sleep in Paris.

After the last scene between Andrée and the Queen, after the night spent near her, Andrée was resolved to withdraw from her rival, who recalled all her sorrows, — from one in whose presence the misfortunes of the Queen, great though they were, seemed always less than the anguish of the woman.

Therefore in the morning Andrée had sent a servant to the little mansion in the Rue Coq Heron, with orders to put the summer-house in order, — the pavilion, — which consisted, as she remembered, of an antechamber, a small eating-room, a parlor, and a bedroom.

Formerly Andrée had used the parlor as a second bedroom, in order to have Nicole near her; but since that was no longer necessary, each room had been restored to its original purpose, and the chambermaid, leaving the

lower story entirely to her mistress, — who came there rarely, and always alone, — had to accommodate herself with a small attic, under the eaves.

Andrée excused herself to the Queen for not keeping the adjacent chamber, on the ground that the Queen was lodged in such narrow quarters that she needed to have near her one of the Ladies of her Chamber, rather than one who was not particularly detailed for her royal service.

The Queen did not insist upon retaining Andrée, or rather she urged it no more than strict conventionality required; and towards four o'clock in the afternoon, when Andrée's woman came to say that the pavilion was in readiness, she gave orders for the chambermaid to go at once to Versailles, collect the belongings which, in their precipitate departure, had been left in the apartment of the chateau which Andrée occupied, and bring them on the morrow to the Rue Coq Heron.

At five o'clock, consequently, the Comtesse de Charny quitted the Tuileries, regarding as a sufficient farewell the few words she had spoken to the Queen in the morning, when Andrée placed at her disposal the chamber she had occupied over night.

It was on leaving the Queen, or rather the chamber adjoining the Queen's, that she crossed the Green Salon, where Sebastien was waiting, — when, followed by him, she fled through the corridors, till Sebastien threw himself into the cab, which, ordered in advance by the chambermaid, was in waiting at the door of the Tuileries, in the Courtyard of Princes.

Thus everything combined to make that evening a happy one for Andrée. Instead of her chamber at the Tuileries, or her suite at Versailles, wherein she could have received her child so miraculously restored, but where she could hardly have opened the floodgates of her

maternal affection, she was in a mansion by herself, in an isolated summer-house, without a lackey, without even a chambermaid, without a single onlooker or eavesdropper.

It was therefore with a well-felt expression of joy that she gave the address written above, and which has furnished material for this digression.

Six o'clock sounded as the coachway was opened, at the summons of the driver, and the cab stopped in front of the pavilion.

Andrée did not wait for the driver to leave his seat. She opened the door, and alighted at one step, drawing Sebastien with her.

Then, giving the coachman a piece of money nearly double his due, she hurried, still holding the boy by the hand, into the interior of the pavilion, after carefully closing the door of the antechamber.

In the parlor she paused. This parlor was illuminated solely by the fire burning in the grate, and two lighted candles on the mantelpiece.

Andrée placed her son on a small lounge, where were concentrated the united light of both fire and candles.

Then, with an expression of joy in which a little doubt still trembled, she exclaimed: "Oh my child, my child, is it indeed thou?"

"My mother!" responded Sebastien, with an expansion of his heart, which unfolded like a dewy rose, against the beating heart and feverish breast of Andrée.

"And here, here!" cried Andrée, gazing about her, — finding herself in the same parlor where she had given the day to Sebastien, and turning her eyes with terror towards the very chamber from which he had been abducted.

"Here?" repeated Sebastien; "what does that mean, my mother?"

"That means, my child, that here, fifteen years ago, thou wast born, in this very room where we now are; and I bless the mercy of the all-powerful Lord, which, at the end of fifteen years, has miraculously brought thee back again."

"Oh yes, miraculously," said Sebastien; "for if I had not feared for the life of my father, I should not have started alone and at night for Paris; if I had not come alone and at night, I should not have been puzzled to know which of two roads to take, I should not have paused on the great highway, I should not have questioned Monsieur Isidore de Charny as he rode by, — he would not have recognized me, nor offered to bring me to Paris with him, nor have taken me to the Palace of the Tuileries. Moreover I should not have seen you, when you crossed the Green Salon; I should not have recognized you; I should not have run after you; I should not have overtaken you; I should not have been able to call you *mother*, — that word which is so sweet and tender to pronounce."

At those words of Sebastien, "If I had not feared for the life of my father," Andrée felt a sharp pain in her heart, closed her eyes, and threw back her head.

At those other words, "Monsieur Isidore de Charny would not have recognized me, nor offered to bring me to Paris with him, nor taken me to the Palace of the Tuileries," her eyes reopened, her heart was relieved, her glance rose thankfully to Heaven; for it was indeed a miracle which led to the restoration of Sebastien through a brother of her husband.

Finally, the words "I should not have called you *mother*, a word so sweet and tender to pronounce," recalled her to emotions of happiness, and she pressed Sebastien renewedly to her breast.

"Yes, yes, thou art right, my child," said she, "very sweet! There is indeed only one word sweeter or tenderer, — that which I speak in pressing thee to my heart, *my son, my son.*"

There was an instant of silence, during which could only be heard the soft contact of the maternal lips on the face of her child.

At last Andrée suddenly exclaimed: "It is not fair that everything about me and around me should remain so mysterious. Thou hast well explained thy presence there, but thou hast not explained thy recognition of me, thy race after me, why thou didst call me thy mother."

"Can I tell you?" asked Sebastien, regarding Andrée with an indescribable expression of love. "I scarcely know myself. You talk of mysteries. All is as mysterious to me as to you."

"But somebody said to thee, as I passed by, *Child, behold thy mother — ?*"

"Yes, my heart!"

"Thy heart?"

"Listen, my mother! I wish to tell you something strange."

Andrée drew near the child, at the same time looking up to Heaven, as if to thank God that, in restoring her child to her, He had restored him in such a way.

"It is ten years since I first knew you, my mother."

Andrée trembled.

"You do not understand?"

Andrée shook her head.

"Let me tell you. I often used to have strange dreams, which my father called hallucinations."

At the allusion to Gilbert from the lips of her child, piercing her heart like a steel shaft, Andrée shivered.

"Twenty times since then have I seen you, my mother."

"How so?"

"In the dreams of which I spoke just now."

Andrée thought of the awful dreams which had agitated her own life, and of one to which this child owed its birth.

"You see, my mother," continued Sebastien, "that when I was a child, when I played with the village children, and while I remained in the village, my impressions were like those of other children, and I saw nothing except real and palpable things; but as soon as I quitted the village, as soon as I left its last garden behind me, as soon as I crossed the fringe of the forest, I felt the rustle of a gown pass by me. I stretched out my hands to grasp it, but I grasped only the air. Then the phantom moved away. Invisible though it was at first, it became visible little by little. At the beginning it was only vapor, transparent as a cloud, resembling that wherein Virgil enwraps the mother of Æneas, when she appears to her son on the shore at Carthage. Soon this vapor intensified, and took on the human form. This human form, which was that of a woman, glided along the surface instead of walking on the earth. Then an unknown power, strange and irresistible, drew me after her. She beckoned me into the darkest recesses of the forest, and I followed with extended arms, but mute as herself; for when I tried to speak, my voice would not articulate a sound; and thus I pursued her, without her pausing, without being able to overtake her, till the power which had announced her presence to me gave the signal for her disappearance. Then the phantom vanished little by little; but she seemed to suffer like myself, because Heaven's will separated us from each other; for she vanished gazing at me, while I, overcome by fatigue, when no longer sustained by her presence, fell headlong where I last saw her."

This double existence of Sebastien's, this lively dream, too much resembled those which had come to Andrée, for her not to recognize herself in her child.

"Poor boy," she said, pressing him to her heart, "it was indeed in vain that hate separated thee from me. God was bringing us together, without my suspecting it. Only, less happy than thyself, my dear child, I saw thee neither in dream nor in reality; although, when I passed by thee in the Green Salon, a shudder seized me. When I heard thy steps behind me, something like vertigo shot through my heart and soul; when thou calledst me *madame*, that somewhat arrested my attention; but when thou saidst *mother*, I almost fainted; at thy touch, I knew thee."

"My mother, my mother, my mother!" thrice repeated Sebastien, as if he would console Andrée for not having heard this sweet name pronounced for so long a time.

"Yes, yes, thy mother," replied the young woman, with a transport of affection impossible to describe.

"And now that we are at last together," said the lad, "since thou art glad and happy to know me, we will not leave each other again, shall we?"

Andrée trembled. She had seized the present in its flight, closing her eyes halfway to the past, and entirely to the future.

"My poor child," she murmured with a sigh, "how I should bless thee if thou couldst work such a miracle."

"Leave it to me," replied Sebastien, "I will arrange it all."

"How?" asked Andrée.

"I do not know the causes which have separated thee from my father?"

Andrée grew pale.

"But," resumed Sebastien, "however grave the causes, they will disappear before my prayers and even my tears."

Andrée shook her head. "Never, never," she said.

"Listen!" said Sebastien, — who after the words which Gilbert had once spoken to him, *Child, never speak to me of thy mother*, had always believed that the blame of the separation lay with her, — "Listen, my father adores me."

Andrée's hands, which held those of her son, loosened. The boy appeared not to notice this, and probably did not. He continued: "I will prepare him to see thee. I will tell him how happy thou hast made me. Then some day I will take thee by the hand, I will lead thee to him, and I will say: *She is here. See, my father, how beautiful she is.*"

Andrée repulsed Sebastien and raised herself.

The lad looked at her in astonishment. She was so pale that he feared her.

"Never," she repeated, "never!" and this time her voice expressed more than tremor; it expressed a threat.

In his turn the boy recoiled on the sofa. He began to discover in the face of this woman those dreadful lines which Raphael assigns to angels in anger.

"And why," demanded he in a disappointed tone, "why dost thou refuse to see my father?"

At these words, as with the shock of two clouds meeting in a tempest, the thunder burst forth. "Why?" said Andrée, "thou askest, *why?* Indeed, my poor child, thou knowest nothing."

"Yes," replied Sebastien firmly, "I ask *why*."

"Well," responded Andrée, quite incapable of longer

suppressing the fangs of the hateful serpent raging in her heart, "because thy father is a wretch, because he is infamous."

Sebastien bounded from the seat on which he was crouching, and stood in front of Andrée.

"Is it my father of whom you are speaking, Madame, of my father," he cried, "of Doctor Gilbert, of the man who has reared me, to whom I owe everything, with whom alone I am acquainted? I was mistaken, Madame, you are *not* my mother."

The boy made a motion as if to leave the room. Andrée stopped him.

"Listen!" said she. "Thou dost not know, thou canst not understand, thou must not judge!"

"No, but I can feel; and I feel that I do not love you any longer."

Andrée uttered a cry of distress; but at the same time a noise outside diverted the emotion which convulsed her, although that emotion had threatened to completely overwhelm her.

This noise was the opening of the outer gate, and of a carriage which stopped at the entrance. At this sound a chill ran through Andrée's limbs, a chill which passed from her body into that of her child. "Listen!" she said, "listen, and hold thy tongue!"

The conquered boy obeyed.

The door of the antechamber was heard to open and steps were heard approaching the parlor.

Andrée remained immovable and mute, pale as the statue of Expectancy, her eyes fixed on the door.

"Whom shall I announce to Madame?" asked the voice of the old porter.

"Announce the Comte de Charny, and ask if she will do me the honor to receive me."

"Oh!" exclaimed Andrée, "into that bedroom, child, into that bedroom! It will not do for him to see thee. It is not necessary for him to know of thine existence;" and she hurried the scared boy into the inner room.

Closing the door on him she said: "Remain there! When he is gone I will tell thee, I will relate to thee. — No, no! No more of that! I will *embrace* thee, and so thou wilt understand that I am really thy mother."

Sebastien replied only by a sort of moan.

At that moment the door from the antechamber opened. Cap in hand the old concierge delivered the commission with which he was charged. Behind him, in the shadow, Andrée's piercing eye discerned a human form.

"Let the Count enter," she said, in a voice as firm as if nothing had happened.

The old porter stepped aside and the Count, hat in hand, appeared on the threshold.

CHAPTER X.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

As he was in mourning for his dear brother, killed hardly two days before, the Count was clad in complete black.

Moreover, as this mourning, like Hamlet's, was not alone in his "inky cloak," but in the depths of his heart, his pale face attested the tears he had shed and the grief he had suffered.

The Countess saw all this at one rapid glance. Handsome faces are never so handsome as after a shower of tears. Never had Charny seemed so handsome before.

She closed her eyes for an instant, threw her head slightly backward, as if to give her lungs a chance to breathe better, and held her hand to her heart, which felt as if it would break.

When she reopened her eyes, — and this was but a second after she closed them, — she saw Charny standing in the same place.

The gesture and glance of Andrée asked at the same time, and so visibly, why he did not come in, that he most naturally responded, to both gesture and glance: "Madame, I was waiting."

He took a step forward.

"Do you wish your carriage sent away, Monsieur?" asked the porter, urged to the query by the Count's servant.

An indescribable expression played about the Count's eyes, and conveyed itself to Andrée, who, as if dazzled, closed her eyes again, and remained immovable, with bated breath, as if she had not heard the question, as if she had not seen the look. Both, however, had gone straight to her heart.

Charny vainly sought, from this living statue, for any sign which would indicate to him what he ought to respond. Then, as the tremor which ran over Andrée might as well arise from fear that he would not go away, as from desire for him to remain, he replied: "Tell the coachman to wait."

The door closed; and, for the first time perhaps since their marriage, the Count and Countess found themselves alone together.

It was the Count who first broke the silence. "Pardon me, Madame," said he, "but is my unexpected presence indiscreet? I am all ready, my carriage is at the door, and I can go away as I came."

"No, Monsieur," said Andrée quickly. "On the contrary, though I knew you to be well and safe, I am not the less happy to see you again, after the events which have recently taken place."

"You have then had the goodness to inquire after me, Madame?" asked the Count.

"Undoubtedly! Yesterday and this morning I learned that you were at Versailles. This evening they told me that you were with the Queen."

Were these last words innocently spoken, or did they contain a reproach? It was evident that the Count himself, not knowing how to take them, was puzzled for an instant; but presently he said: "Madame, a sorrowful and pious duty kept me yesterday and to-day at Versailles. A duty which I also regard as sacred, considering

the situation in which the Queen is placed, led me, as soon as I returned to Paris, to seek her Majesty."

In her turn Andrée obviously tried to grasp, in all its fulness, the meaning of the Count's last words. Then, thinking that at least she ought to make some response to his earlier words, she said : "Yes, Monsieur, yes. I also know the awful loss which " — she hesitated an instant, " which *you* have sustained."

Andrée had been on the point of saying " which *we* have sustained."

She dared not, but continued : "You have had the misfortune to lose *your* brother, Baron George."

One might have supposed that Charny listened for the utterance of the two words we have italicized, for he trembled when each of them was pronounced.

"Yes, Madame," he replied, "it is as you say, a terrible loss to me, the loss of this young man, — a loss which fortunately *you* can not appreciate, having known my poor George so little."

There was a mild and melancholy reproach in his word *fortunately.*

Andrée understood him ; but no outward sign showed that she gave his words a thought.

"For the rest, one thing will console me for this loss, — if I can be consoled," resumed Charny, — "that poor George died — as Isidore will die, as I shall probably die — doing his duty."

These words, *as I shall probably die,* touched Andrée profoundly.

"Alas, Monsieur," she asked, "do you then believe affairs to be so desperate, that there will be need of more blood-stained sacrifices to disarm the celestial wrath ?"

"I believe, Madame, that the knell of kings has already sounded, or at least is about to strike. I believe that its

evil genius drives the monarchy towards an abyss. If it falls therein, I think it should be accompanied, in the rush, by all those who have shared its splendor."

"That is true," said Andrée, "and when that day comes, believe me, Monsieur, like yourself, you will find me ready for all sacrifices."

"Ah Madame," said Charny, "you have given too many proofs of such devotion in the past for any one, whoever he may be, — and myself least of all, — to doubt that devotion in the future; and perhaps I have less reason to question your loyalty than mine, which, mayhap for the first time, recoils from a command of the Queen."

"I do not understand," replied Andrée.

"On arriving at Versailles, Madame, I found an order to present myself at once before her Majesty."

"Oh," said Andrée, smiling sadly. Presently, after an instant of silence, she added: "It is all very simple! Like yourself, the Queen sees that the future is perplexing and troublous, and wishes to reunite about herself men upon whom she can rely."

"You deceive yourself, Madame," responded Charny. "It was not to attach me to herself that the Queen sent for me, but to send me away."

"To send you away?" asked Andrée quickly, taking a step nearer the Count. After a moment, perceiving that the Count was still standing near the doorway, as he had been since the commencement of the conversation, she added: "Pardon, I have kept you standing, Count," and pointed to an armchair.

As she uttered these words, incapable of longer sustaining an upright attitude, she sank upon the sofa, where, only an instant before, she had been seated with Sebastien.

"You are sent away?" she repeated, with an emotion which was not devoid of delight, for she supposed that Charny and the Queen were to be henceforth separated; "and to what end?"

"To fulfil a mission at Turin, to the Comte d'Artois and the Duc de Bourbon, the King's kinsmen, who have quitted France."

"And you have accepted?"

Charny looked fixedly at Andrée, and then said, "No, Madame!"

Andrée grew so pale that Charny took a step towards her, as if to help her; but at this movement of the Count she rallied her strength and was herself again, and stammered: "No? You have said *no* to an order from the Queen, — *you*, Monsieur?" and the last two words were pronounced with an accent of incredulity impossible to set down on paper.

"I responded, Madame, that I believed my presence to be more needful in Paris than at Turin, especially at present; that anybody could fulfil the mission to Turin with which she honored me; that a second brother of mine had but just come from our province, to put himself at the orders of her Majesty, and that he was ready to go in my place."

"And beyond a peradventure, Monsieur, the Queen was happy to accept the substitute?" cried Andrée, with an expression of bitterness she could not withhold, and which did not elude Charny.

"No, Madame, quite the contrary; for my refusal appeared to wound her deeply. I should have been forced to go, but happily the King came in at that moment, and I made him the judge."

"And the King said you were right, Monsieur?" rejoined Andrée, with an ironic smile. "He was of one

mind with yourself, and thought you ought to remain at the Tuileries? Oh how good his Majesty is!"

Charny did not frown at this thrust, but resumed: "The King said, in substance, that he thought my brother Isidore well adapted to that mission, the more so because, coming for the first time to Court, and being for the first time in Paris, his absence would not be remarked; and the King added that it would be cruel for the Queen to insist that I should leave *you* at such a moment."

"*Me*," cried Andrée, "the King spoke of *me?*"

"I but repeat his words, Madame. Then, looking beyond the Queen, and addressing himself to me directly, he asked: 'But really, where is the dear Countess? I have not seen her since yesterday evening.' As the question was addressed especially to myself, it was fitting that I should reply; so I said: 'Sire, I so seldom have the pleasure of seeing Madame de Charny, that it is impossible for me to tell you where the Countess may be at this moment; but if your Majesty wishes to be informed on this subject, and will address himself to the Queen, the Queen doubtless knows, and will answer.' And I insisted the more, because, seeing the frown on the Queen's brow, I fancied that something had taken place between you and herself, of which I was ignorant."

Andrée was so anxious to hear that she did not dream of replying.

Charny continued: "The Queen responded: 'Sire, Madame de Charny left the Tuileries an hour ago.'— 'How?' demanded the King, 'the Countess has left the Tuileries?'—'Yes, Sire.'—'But when to return?'—'I cannot guess!'—'You cannot guess, Madame?' replied the King. 'Why, what possible motive had the Countess, your best friend, Madame—?' The Queen made a

gesture. 'Yes,' repeated he, 'I say your best friend, Madame, — for leaving the Tuileries at such a time?' — 'I believe,' said the Queen, 'she found herself badly accommodated.' — 'Badly accommodated, beyond a doubt, if it had been our intention to let her remain in that chamber next to yours; but we would have provided her with a lodging, pardieu, — a lodging for her and also for the Count, should we not, Monsieur? This would not have seemed too difficult a task to you, I hope?' — 'Sire,' I answered, 'the King knows that I hold myself ready to do my duty in any post to which he assigns me, provided the position calls for my service.' — 'Indeed I know it well,' resumed the King. 'So the Countess has gone away! But whither, Madame? Don't you know?' — 'No, Sire, I do not know.' — 'How? Your friend leaves you, and you do not ask whither she is going?' — 'When my friends quit me I leave them free to go where they will, and am not so indiscreet as to ask whither they are bound.' — 'Good! A woman's sulkiness,' said the King to me. 'Count, I have somewhat to say to the Queen. Go and wait in my rooms, and present your brother to me. This evening he shall depart for Turin. I am of your opinion, Charny, I need you, and I shall keep you.' — I went to find my brother, who had just arrived, and who, they told me, was waiting in the Green Salon."

At these words, *in the Green Salon*, Andrée, who had almost forgotten Sebastien, — so much was she interested in the recital of her husband, — bethought herself of all which had taken place between herself and her son, and cast her eyes in agony towards the door of her bedroom, which was closed.

"But pardon me, Madame," said Charny. "I fear I have entertained you with things of little interest to your-

self, and doubtless you are asking how it chances that I am here, and what brings me here."

"No, Monsieur," said Andrée. "On the contrary, what you do me the honor to recount excites my liveliest interest. As to your presence near myself, you know that after the alarms which I have experienced on your account, your presence, which proves that personally no misfortune has happened to you, — your presence cannot be otherwise than agreeable. Continue your story, I beg. The King bade you wait in his apartment, and you had been notified about your brother — "

"We reported ourselves at the King's rooms, Madame. Ten minutes later he returned. As the errand to the Princes was urgent, it was about that the King first spoke. The object was to instruct their Highnesses about the events which are taking place. A quarter-hour after his Majesty's return my brother left for Turin. We remained alone. The King paced the room a moment pensively. Suddenly pausing before me he said: 'My dear Count, do you know what has taken place between the Queen and the Countess?' — 'No, Sire,' I answered. — 'Something must have happened between them,' he added, 'for I found the Queen in an execrable temper, and unjust to the Countess, as it seemed to me, which is not her Majesty's customary attitude towards her friends, whom she defends even when they are in the wrong.' — 'I can only repeat to your Majesty what I have had the honor to say before,' was my reply. 'I am completely ignorant as to what has occurred between the Countess and the Queen, even if anything has taken place between them. In any case, Sire, I dare affirm, in advance, that there is nothing wrong either on one side or the other; and if the Queen has been in any way wronged, the misdeeds are not on the Countess's part.'"

"I thank you, Monsieur," said Andrée, "for judging me so kindly."

Charny bowed and resumed: "The King continued: 'At any rate, if the Queen does not know the whereabouts of the Countess, *you* ought to know.' — I was hardly better informed than the Queen. However, I replied: 'Sire, I know that my Countess has a stopping-place in the Rue Coq Heron, and doubtless it is there she has gone.' — 'Yes, probably she is there,' said the King. 'Go after her, Count. I grant you leave of absence until to-morrow, provided you then bring the Countess back to us.' "

Charny's glance, as he pronounced these words, was directed so pointedly towards Andrée, that feeling ill at ease, and unable to evade his look, she shut her eyes.

Charny continued: "The King went on: 'You will say to her, always speaking in the King's name, that we will find a suitable lodgment for her here somewhere, even if I have to hunt it up myself, — accommodations certainly less spacious than at Versailles, but large enough for a husband and wife. Go, Count, go. She must be very anxious about you, and you ought to be anxious about her. Go!' Then recalling me, when I had taken several steps towards the door, he said, extending his hand, which I kissed: 'By the way, seeing you dressed in mourning, — that is where I ought to have commenced, — you have had the misfortune to lose your brother. One is powerless to console such afflictions, even a King; but even a King may ask if your brother was married, if he had a wife or children, if this wife and children can be cared for by the King? In any case, Monsieur, if such a wife and children exist, bring them here, present them to me; the Queen shall take charge of the mother, and I of the children.' "

As he repeated these words tears coursed down Charny's cheeks.

"Doubtless the King only repeated what the Queen had already said to you?" queried Andrée.

"The Queen, Madame," replied Charny with hesitating voice, "did not do me the honor to speak a single word to me on the subject, and that is why this remembrance of the King's touched me so profoundly. Seeing me burst into tears, he said to me: 'Come, come, Monsieur, I was wrong to speak of this, but I act always under the inspiration of my heart, and my heart told me to do as I have done. Return now to our dear Andrée, Count, for if the people whom we love cannot comfort us, they can weep with us, and we can weep with them, which is always an alleviation.'

"And so," continued Charny, "here am I, by order of the King, Madame, — which will perhaps be my excuse."

"Ah Monsieur," cried Andrée rising quickly, and offering both hands to Charny, "can you doubt it?"

Charny swiftly took her two hands between his own, and touched them with his lips.

Andrée uttered a cry, as if his lips had been red-hot iron, and fell back on the sofa; but her clenched hands were so interlocked with Charny's, that in falling back upon the sofa she drew the Count after her; and without her so willing it, and without his so wishing it, he found himself seated by her side.

At the same instant, believing she heard a noise in her bedroom, she swiftly withdrew herself from Charny. On his part, not knowing to what sentiment he should attribute the Countess's outcry, and the brusque motion she had made, Charny at once arose, and stood in front of her.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BEDROOM.

CHARNY leaned on the end of the sofa and heaved a sigh. Andrée let her head fall on her hand.

That sigh of Charny's drew one like it from the depths of her own bosom. What took place just then in the heart of that young woman is simply impossible to describe.

Married four years to a man whom she adored, that man himself was constantly occupied with another woman, with never an idea of the fearful sacrifice Andrée made in espousing him.

Keeping everything to herself, she had seen all and borne all, with the abnegation demanded by her double duty as a wife and a subject.

Lately it seemed as if some of her husband's glances were kinder, and some of the Queen's words harder, — as if her devotion were therefore not wholly fruitless.

During the days just passed, — terrible days, full of incessant agony for them all, — Andrée, alone perhaps amidst the courtiers and frightened attendants, had felt some exultant sensations and pleasant throbs. This was when, in some happy moment, by motion, look, or word, Charny appeared to think of her, — looking about for her with anxiety, meeting her with delight.

It might be the light touch of the ungloved hand, communicating a tremor unperceived by the surrounding crowd, but vivifying for themselves a common thought;

but these unwonted and delicious sensations were unknown to her, with her form of snow and her diamond heart, which had never known anything of love except its sorrows.

Now, all at a blow, when this poor solitary creature had recovered her child, and so once more became a mother, behold something like the rosy Aurora of love showed itself on her sad and sombre horizon. Only — by a strange coincidence, which proved that happiness was not for her — these two events combined themselves in such a strange fashion that each neutralized the other, — that the return of the husband banished the love of the child, as the presence of the child extinguished the dawning love of the husband.

This is what Charny could not perceive in the cry which escaped from Andrée's lips, in the motion that repelled him, — in the sorrow-laden silence which succeeded her cry, so resembling a groan, — which was nevertheless a cry of love, — and in that action, which might have been inspired by repulsion, but was really only prompted by fear.

Charny contemplated Andrée an instant, with an expression which the young wife could not have misunderstood, if she had but raised her eyes to those of her husband.

He uttered a sigh, and renewing the conversation, at the point where they had abandoned it, he asked: "What shall I report to the King, Madame?"

Andrée trembled at the sound of his voice. Then, lifting to the Count her clear and limpid eyes, she said: "Monsieur, I have suffered so much since I have lived at Court, that, as the Queen has the goodness to give me permission to withdraw, I accept that permission with gratitude. I was not born to live in that world, and

have always found my repose in solitude, if not my happiness. The happiest days of my life were those which I passed as a young girl in the Chateau Taverney, — and later, those which I spent in retreat, at the Convent Saint Denis, with that noble daughter of France whom they called Madame Louise. So with your permission, Monsieur, I will live in this pavilion, which is full of remembrances for me, which, however sad, are not without their pleasant side."

As Andrée demanded this permission of him Charny inclined his head, as a man ready not only to grant a prayer, but to obey an order.

"This then is your resolution, Madame?"

"Yes, Monsieur," responded Andrée, softly but firmly.

Charny bowed again, and said: "There remains then only one thing for me to ask of you, — that is, if I may be permitted to visit you here."

Andrée fixed on Charny her large liquid eyes, usually so calm and cold, but now full of surprise and delight. "Undoubtedly, Monsieur," she said; "and as I see no one, whenever your duties at the Tuileries permit you to throw away a few hours here, I shall always welcome their consecration to me, however short they may be."

Charny had never before seen such a charm in Andrée's look, never noticed such tenderness in her voice. A feeling ran through his veins, like the velvet thrill which comes with a first kiss.

He looked at the place which he had occupied by her side, and which had been vacant since he rose from it. He would have given a year to sit there again, even if Andrée repulsed him as she had before; but, timid as a babe, he dared not permit himself in such boldness, without being encouraged thereto.

On her part, Andrée would have sacrificed not merely

one year, but ten years of life, to feel, then and there, the bliss whereof she had so long been deprived.

Unhappily neither understood the other, and each remained statuesque, in an attitude almost dolorous.

Charny first broke the silence, to which He alone who is permitted to read the heart could give the true interpretation.

"You say you have suffered much since you came to live at Court?" he asked. "Has not the King always shown towards you a respect amounting to veneration, and the Queen a tenderness which nearly reaches idolatry?"

"Indeed," said Andrée, "the King has been kindness itself towards me."

"You will permit me to observe, Madame, that you only respond to part of my question. Has not the Queen been at least as perfect towards you as the King?"

Andrée's teeth closed tightly, as if her rebellious nature refused to answer. At last she said, with an effort: "I have nothing wherewith to reproach the Queen, and I should be unfair if I did not render that justice to her Majesty."

"I say this to you, Madame," persisted Charny, "because it has seemed to me for some time, — very likely I have deceived myself, — that her friendship for you has received a chill."

"It is possible, Monsieur," said Andrée, "and this may be the reason why, as I have just had the honor to tell you, I desire to quit the Court."

"But then, Madame, you will be so very solitary, so isolated."

"Have I not always been so, Monsieur," she rejoined with a sigh, "as a child, as a maiden, and as ——"

Andrée paused, feeling that she was going too far.

"Complete your sentence, Madame," said Charny.

"You have already understood me, Monsieur. I was about to say, *and as a wife.*"

"Have I that happiness, that you deign to reproach me?"

"Reproach?" replied Andrée quickly. "What right have I, great God, to reproach you. Do you suppose I have forgotten the circumstances under which we were united? The very opposite of those who at the foot of the altar swear reciprocal love and mutual protection, we swore — yes, *we* — eternal indifference, complete separation. We should have nothing wherewith to reproach ourselves, even if one of us had forgotten the bridal oath."

A sigh, roused by Andrée's words, fell from Charny's heart.

"I see that your resolution is taken, Madame," he said; "but at least you will permit me to concern myself as to the way in which you expect to live here. Shall you not be somewhat uncomfortable?"

Andrée smiled plaintively. "The household of my father was so poor," she said, "that this pavilion, bare as it appears to you, is furnished with a luxury to which I have not been accustomed."

"But that charming retreat at Trianon, — the Versailles Palace —"

"Oh, I knew very well, Monsieur, that I should only be a sojourner there."

"At least you should have here all that is needful for yourself?"

"I shall find all that I formerly enjoyed."

"Let us see!" said Charny, who wished to form some idea of the apartments which Andrée was to inhabit, and began to look about him.

"What do you wish, Monsieur?" she asked rising

hastily, and throwing a rapid and anxious glance towards the bedroom.

"Unless you are very humble in your desires, this pavilion is surely a very modest dwelling-place, Madame. I have passed through an antechamber, and here I am in the parlor. This door" — and he opened a side entrance — "opens into the dining-room, and that ——"

Andrée glided between the Count and the door towards which he was advancing, and behind which, in her mind's eye, she could see Sebastien.

"Monsieur!" she exclaimed, "I beg you, — not a step farther, Monsieur!" and her extended arm resolutely barred his ingress.

"Yes, I understand," said Charny with a sigh, "this is the door of your sleeping-room."

"Yes, Monsieur," stammered Andrée, in a stifled voice.

Charny looked at his Countess. She was pale and trembling. Fright was never manifested more plainly than in the expression which now spread itself over her countenance.

"Ah, Madame," he murmured, with a tearful voice, "I knew very well you did not love me, but I did not suppose you hated me so much."

Incapable of longer remaining near Andrée without breaking down, he reeled an instant like a drunken man. Then, rallying all his nerve, he threw himself out of the apartment, with a moan of despair which went to the bottom of Andrée's heart.

The young wife followed him with her eyes as far as he could be seen. She bent her head, so that she could distinguish the noise of his carriage, which sounded farther and farther away. Then, as if she felt that her heart was like to break, and comprehended that she had none too much maternal affection with which to combat the

other love, she threw herself into the bedroom, exclaiming, "Sebastien, Sebastien!"

No voice responded to hers. She listened in vain for any echo to her dolorous wail.

By the dim reflection of the night-lamp she looked about her anxiously, and saw that the chamber was vacant.

She could hardly believe her eyes, and called a second time, "Sebastien, Sebastien!"

The same silence!

Then only did she notice that the window was open, and that the outside breeze, penetrating the room, made the flame of the night-lamp quiver.

This was the same window which had stood open fifteen years before, when her child vanished the first time.

"It is just!" she cried. "Did he not tell me I was not his mother?"

Comprehending that she had lost both husband and child, at the very moment when she thought she had regained them, Andrée threw herself on her bed, her arms extended and her hands clasped. She was at the end of her strength, the end of her resignation, the end of her prayers. She had only sobs, tears, sighs, and an overpowering feeling of grief.

An hour or so passed in absolute prostration, in forgetfulness of the entire world, in that desire for universal destruction which is felt by the unhappy, the hope that they may enter annihilation, and drag mankind along with them.

Suddenly it seemed to Andrée that something yet more terrible than her grief glided between her heart and her tears. A feeling slowly invaded all that remained to her of life, — a sensation she had only experienced two

or three times before, but which had always foreshadowed some great crisis of her existence.

By a movement almost involuntary she slowly straightened herself. Her trembling voice was stifled in her throat. Her whole body seemed awhirl. Through the blinding mist of her tears she believed that she could see she was not alone. As her eyes dried she saw more clearly. A man stood before her, who had evidently leaped through the casement to reach her side.

She wanted to call, to scream, to extend her hand towards the bell-rope, but this was impossible. She began to feel that invincible torpor which had formerly been the signal of Balsamo's presence. At last, in that man standing before her, in the fascination of his look and gesture, she recognized Gilbert.

How could Gilbert, the execrated father, be *there*, in the very place of the beloved child whom she sought?

This is what we shall try to explicate to the reader.

CHAPTER XII.

A FAMILIAR ROAD.

It was indeed Doctor Gilbert who was closeted with the King, when, according to Isidore's order and Sebastien's request, the usher brought them this information.

At the end of half-an-hour Gilbert came out. The King placed more and more confidence in him; for the straightforward heart of the King appreciated the loyalty in the heart of Gilbert.

As he came out the usher notified him that he was waited for in the antechamber of the Queen.

He was about to take the corridor which led that way, when a swinging door opened and shut, only a few paces from him, giving egress to a young man, evidently ignorant of the locality, who hesitated whether to go to the right or left.

This young man saw Gilbert coming towards him, and paused to ask the way. Suddenly Gilbert also paused, as the flame of a lantern shone full in the face of the young man.

"The Vicomte Isidore!" exclaimed Gilbert.

"Doctor Gilbert!" responded Isidore.

"Is it you who have done me the great honor of asking for me?"

"Precisely — yes, Doctor, — I and some one else."

"Who then?"

"Some one," continued Isidore, "whom you will be very glad to see again."

"Would it be indiscreet to ask who?"

"No, but it would be cruel to keep you waiting longer. — Come with me, or, rather, lead me, into one of the Queen's antechambers they call the Green Salon."

"On my faith," said Gilbert, smiling, "I am not much at home in the topography of palaces, and specially the Palace of the Tuileries; nevertheless, I will try to be your guide."

Gilbert walked on before. After several ineffectual efforts he pushed open a door which led into the Green Salon; only the Green Salon was empty.

Isidore looked all about him and called for an usher; but the confusion was as yet so great throughout the palace that, contrary to all the rules of etiquette, there was no usher in the antechamber.

"Let us wait a moment," said Gilbert. "The man cannot be far away; and while waiting, Monsieur, — at least, if such a disclosure is not a breach of confidence, — I pray you tell me who was waiting for me."

Isidore looked about anxiously. "Can you not guess?" he said.

"No."

"Some one whom I encountered on my day's journey, coming on foot to Paris, uneasy as to what might have happened to you, — somebody whom I mounted on my crupper, and whom I brought here."

"You are not speaking of Pitou?"

"No, Doctor, I speak of your son Sebastien."

"Of Sebastien?" exclaimed Gilbert. "Well, where is he?" and his eye rapidly ran over the recesses of the vast salon.

"He was here. He promised to wait for me. Probably the usher, to whose care I commended him, not wishing to leave him here alone, has taken him somewhere with him."

At that moment the usher re-entered. He was alone.

"What has become of the youngster whom I left here?" asked Isidore.

"What young man?" asked the usher.

Gilbert had enormous self-control. He felt alarmed, but contained himself, and drew near in his turn.

Isidore could not prevent himself from murmuring, "Oh my God!" a prey to dire misgivings.

"Look here, Monsieur!" said Gilbert with a firm voice. "Collect all your senses! This child is my son. He is not acquainted in Paris; and if perchance he has gone outside the palace, as he is a stranger, he runs the risk of being lost."

"A child?" said a second usher, who now came in.

"Yes, a boy, almost a young man."

"Of about fifteen?"

"Even so!"

"I saw him in the corridors, following a lady who had just come from her Majesty's presence."

"And the lady, do you know who she was?"

"No. She drew her mantle close about her eyes."

"But what did she do?"

"She ran away, almost, and the boy pursued her, exclaiming *Madame!*"

"Let us go down," said Gilbert, "and the concierge will tell us who has gone out."

Isidore and Gilbert took the same corridor through which Andrée had passed an hour before, followed by Sebastien. They came to the door of the Princes' Court-yard, and questioned the porter.

"Yes indeed," he replied, "I saw a woman, walking so fast that she seemed almost running. A boy came after her. She entered a cab. The boy rushed forward, and so overtook her."

"And what next?" demanded Gilbert.

"Well, the lady drew the boy after her into the carriage, embraced him ardently, gave her directions, closed the door, and the cab drove away."

"Do you remember the address?" asked Gilbert anxiously.

"Yes, perfectly! Rue Coq Heron, number nine, the first coachway as you leave the Rue Plâtrière."

Gilbert trembled.

"Why," said Isidore, "that is the address of my sister-in-law, the Comtesse de Charny."

"Fatality!" murmured Gilbert.

In that age the world was too philosophical to say *Providence.*

Then he added to himself: "He recognized her!"

"Well," said Isidore, "let us go to the Countess's."

Gilbert saw in what a situation it would place Andrée, if he presented himself to her with the brother of her husband.

"Monsieur," said he, "so long as my son is with the Countess he is in security; and as I have already the honor of her acquaintance, instead of accompanying me, I think it will be better for you to set out at once on your journey, — for after what I heard in the King's apartments, I presume you are to go to Turin?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Well, then, receive my thanks for what you have done for Sebastien, and depart without losing a minute."

"Nevertheless, Doctor — "

"Monsieur, the moment a father tells you *he* is without anxiety, you can safely leave him. Wherever Sebastien may be, with the Countess or elsewhere, fear nothing; my son will be found."

"Then you so desire, Doctor?"

"I so *pray*."

Isidore extended his hand to Gilbert, who pressed it with more cordiality than he was accustomed to show to men of such rank, and as soon as Isidore re-entered the palace, the Doctor went into the Place du Carrousel, emerged on the Rue Chartres, crossed diagonally the Place of the Palace Royal, passed along the Rue Saint Honoré, was lost an instant in the labyrinth of small streets which empty into the market-place, and then found himself at the corner of two streets. These were the Rue Plâtrière and the Rue Coq Heron.

These streets had both painful reminders for Gilbert. There, very often, in the very place where he now stood, his heart had beaten even more violently than it was beating at this hour. An instant he hesitated between the two streets; but he then decided sharply, and took the Rue Coq Heron.

Andrée's porch, the coachway at number nine, was well known to him, and it was not because he feared himself mistaken that he did not stop there. No, he had evidently sought a pretext for entering the mansion; and, finding no such pretext, he was trying now to find some means of access.

He pushed the door to see if, by one of those miracles which chance gives to the perplexed, it had been left open; but it resisted.

He ran along the wall. The wall was ten feet high. This he knew very well; but he looked to see if there was not some wagon, left alongside the wall by some teamster, wherewith he might gain his end. With such an aid, active and vigorous as he was, he could easily reach the inside; but there was no such wagon near the wall.

Consequently he must find other means of entrance.

He approached the door, laid his hand on the knocker, lifted the knocker; but changing his mind he replaced it softly, without making the slightest noise under his gloved hand.

Evidently a new idea, springing from a hope almost lost, enlightened his spirit.

"Indeed," he murmured, "it is possible."

He went back towards the Rue Plâtrière, which he followed only for an instant.

In passing he threw a glance and a sigh on that fountain whither he came more than once, sixteen years before, to wet the hard black bread, received through the generosity of the good Thérèse and the hospitality of the famous Rousseau.

Rousseau was dead. Thérèse was dead. He had risen. He had attained respect, reputation, fortune. Alas! Was he now happier, less troubled, less full of anxieties present and future, than in those days, when burning with a foolish passion, he came to moisten his bread at this fountain?

He kept on his way. At last he stopped unhesitatingly before a small side gateway, of which the upper part was grated. Apparently this was his destination.

An instant he leaned against the wall, perhaps because the sum of remembrances which that little gate recalled nearly crushed him, — perhaps because he feared the hope which brought him hither was doomed to defeat.

At last he ran his hand over the door, and with a feeling of inexpressible joy he found, in the orifice of a little round hole, the tag of a string, by whose aid, in the daytime, the gate could be opened.

Gilbert bethought himself that oftentimes at night they forgot to pull the string inside, and that one evening, when he was belated, in returning to the attic which

he occupied at Rousseau's, he profited by this forgetfulness to re-enter the house and regain his bed.

As was the case formerly, this house, where he now paused, was occupied by people poor enough to feel no fear of thieves. There was the same carelessness, the same forgetfulness.

Gilbert pulled the little cord. The door opened, and he found himself in an alley damp and black, at the end of which, like a snake turning a pirouette on his own tail, rose the stairway, slippery and clammy.

Gilbert closed the door with care, and feeling his way along, gained the first steps of the staircase.

When he had mounted ten steps he stopped. A feeble light, straggling through dirty glass, showed that there was a window at this point, and he could see that the night, however dark, was less sombre without than within. Through this glass, defaced as it was, one could see the stars in the clear sky.

Gilbert sought for the little bolt which fastened the window, opened it, and, by the same pathway he had followed twice before, descended into the garden.

Although fifteen years had glided away, this garden was so vivid to the memory of Gilbert that he recognized everything, — trees, flowerbeds, and even the little angle, covered with a vine, where the gardener used to place his ladder.

He did not know whether, at that hour of the night, the doors were fastened; he did not know whether Charny was with his wife, — or, in default of the Count, some lackey or chambermaid.

Resolved at all events to regain Sebastien, he still felt, in his heart, that he ought not to compromise Andrée, except as a last extremity; and he felt, above all, that he must see her alone.

He first went to the door of the low stairway. He pressed the latch of the door, and the door yielded. He argued that if this door was not fastened Andrée was not alone. Unless tremendously preoccupied, a woman living alone, in a ground pavilion, does not neglect to fasten the door.

He closed it gently, and without noise, glad to know that this entrance remained as a last resource.

Then he went along the staircase platform, and hastily applied his eye to the Persian blind, which fifteen years before, when opened so suddenly under Andrée's hand, had bruised his forehead, on that night when, with Balsamo's one hundred thousand francs in hand, he came to proffer marriage to this haughty girl.

This blind belonged to the parlor. The parlor was lighted; but as the curtains were drawn before the windows it was impossible to see anything inside.

Gilbert continued his investigations. Suddenly he seemed to see, trembling on the earth and on the trees, a feeble light, coming from an open window. This open window belonged to the bedroom. This window he also recognized, for it was through it he had once stolen the child whom to-day he again sought for.

He turned aside in order to be beyond the rays projected from the window, and in order to see without being seen, hidden in the obscurity.

Stationed at a point where he could look far into the chamber, he could see the open parlor door; and in the circle which was within reach of his glance, he could also see a bed.

On the bed was a rigid, dishevelled, prostrate woman. Hoarse guttural sounds escaped from her throat, like those of the death-rattle, interrupted from time to time by moans and sobs.

Gilbert came slowly forward, avoiding the line of light, which he hesitated to enter for fear of being seen. He finally pressed his pale face against an angle of the window.

In Gilbert's mind there was no longer any doubt. This woman was Andrée, and Andrée was alone.

But why was Andrée alone? Why did Andrée weep? That was what Gilbert could only learn by asking.

Then it was that noiselessly he climbed through the window and stood beside her, — the moment when she was forced to turn, by that magnetic attraction to which Andrée was always so accessible.

The two enemies found themselves once more face to face.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO SEBASTIEN.

ANDRÉE'S first feeling in thus beholding Gilbert was one not merely of extreme fear, but also of invincible repugnance.

For her he was always the same wretched little Gilbert, — the terrible demon ambushed among the groves of the Trianon, — rather than Gilbert the American, the friend of Washington and Lafayette, however elevated by science, by study, and by his genius.

As for Gilbert, on the contrary, — despite her misunderstandings, despite her abuse, despite even her persecution, — though he no longer cherished for Andrée that ardent love which, as a young man, made him commit a crime for her sake, he yet regarded her with a tender and deep interest, which would compel his manhood to render her a service, even at the risk of his life.

This was because — in the intelligent insight wherewith Nature had endowed him, in that absolute justice which he had imbibed with his education — Gilbert judged himself. He understood all the misfortunes which had befallen Andrée, and that he should not stand guiltless towards her until he recompensed her with an amount of felicity equal to the misfortunes which she had experienced through himself.

Now wherein and how could Gilbert beneficently influence Andrée's future? That is what he could not see.

In finding this woman, whom he had already seen a victim to such despair, the prey of new afflictions, all the pitiful fibres of his heart were moved by her great misery.

Therefore, instead of making use immediately of his mesmeric power, which he had once so successfully employed with her, he determined to talk with Andrée kindly, but to give that up if he found her rebellious, and return to his disciplinary method, which she could not evade.

The result was that Andrée, already encompassed by the magnetic fluid, regained her free-will little by little. Partly with Gilbert's permission the influence was dissipated, — like a cloud which evaporates, and permits the eyes once more to behold the distant horizon.

It was she who took the initiative word. "What do you wish, Monsieur?" she said. "Why do you come here? By what means have you come?"

"By what means have I come, Madame?" responded Gilbert. "Precisely as I have come before. Be tranquil, therefore; no one will suspect my presence here. Why have I come? I come because I have to reclaim a treasure, indifferent to you, but precious to me, — my son. What do I want? I want you to tell me where my son is, whom you have enticed away, taken into your carriage, and brought here."

"What has become of him?" replied Andrée. "Do I know? He has fled from me. You have thoroughly taught him to hate his mother."

"His mother, Madame! Are you really his mother?"

"Oh!" cried Andrée. "He sees my sorrow, he has heard my lamentations, he has looked upon my despair, and then asks if I am a mother."

"Then you are ignorant of his whereabouts?"

"I tell you that he has fled, — that he was in this chamber; but when I came into it, believing I should rejoin him, I found the window open and the chamber empty."

"My God," exclaimed Gilbert, "where can he have gone? The unfortunate boy is unacquainted with Paris, and it is past midnight."

"Oh!" cried Andrée in her turn, taking a step towards Gilbert, "do you think that some accident has befallen him?"

"That is what we must find out," said Gilbert, "that is what you must tell me;" and he extended his hand towards Andrée.

"Monsieur, Monsieur," she pleaded, reluctant to submit herself to the magnetic control.

"Madame, have no fear," said Gilbert. "It is the mother through whom I am going to ask what has become of her son. You are sacred to me!"

Andrée uttered a sigh, and sank into an armchair, murmuring the name of Sebastien.

"Sleep!" said Gilbert; "but sound asleep though you are, see with your heart."

"I am asleep," replied Andrée.

"Must I exert all my will-power," demanded Gilbert, "or are you disposed to answer me voluntarily?"

"Will you again tell my child that I am not his mother?"

"That depends! Do you love him?"

"He asks if I love him, the child of my inward life! Oh yes, yes! I love him ardently."

"Then you are his mother, as I am his father, Madame, since you love him as I love him."

"Ah!" said Andrée, breathing again.

"Then you will answer willingly?" said Gilbert.

"Will you allow me to see him again when you have found him?"

"Have I not said that you are his mother, as I am his father? You love your child, Madame; you shall again see your child!"

"I thank you," said Andrée, with an unspeakable expression of joy, clapping her hands together. "Now then, question me. — I see — only — !"

"What?"

"Let me trace him from the moment of his departure, so that I may be sure not to lose sight of him."

"Be it so. Where did you first see him?"

"In the Green Salon!"

"Whither did he follow you?"

"Along the corridors."

"Where did he overtake you?"

"When I entered the cab."

"Whither did you bring him?"

"Into the parlor, — the room on that side."

"Where did he sit?"

"Near me, on the sofa."

"Did he remain there long?"

"A half-hour, perhaps."

"Why did he leave you?"

"Because we heard the noise of a carriage?"

"Who was in that carriage?"

Andrée hesitated.

"Who was in that carriage?" repeated Gilbert, in a firmer tone and with a stronger will.

"Charny."

"Where did you conceal the boy?"

"I thrust him into this bedroom."

"What did he say as he entered?"

"That I was not his mother."

"And why did he say that?"

Andrée was silent.

"And why did he say that? Speak, I so will it!"

"Because I had said to him —"

"What had you said to him?"

"Because I had said to him" — Andrée made an effort — "that you were an infamous wretch."

"Consider the heart of the poor boy, Madame, and reckon up the unhappiness you caused him."

"Oh my God, my God," murmured Andrée. "Pardon, my child, pardon!"

"Did Charny suspect that the boy was here?"

"No."

"You are sure of it?"

"Yes."

"Why did he not remain?"

"Because the Count never stays with me."

"What did he come for, then?"

Andrée remained an instant in thought, with staring eyes, as if trying to see into the darkness.

"Oh my God!" she exclaimed, "my God. — Oliver, dear Oliver —"

Gilbert looked at her with amazement.

"Oh unhappy woman that I am!" murmured Andrée. "He came back to me. It was in order to remain near me that he refused that mission. He loves me, he loves me!"

Gilbert began confusedly to read this terrible drama, which his mind was the first to penetrate.

"And you," he asked, "do you love him?"

Andrée sighed.

"Do you love him?" repeated Gilbert.

"Why do you ask that question?" demanded Andrée.

"Read my thoughts!"

"Ah yes, I see! Your intention is good. You would make me so happy as to compel forgetfulness of the evil you have done me; but I should refuse the happiness if I owed it to you. I hate you, and shall continue to hate you."

"Poor humanity!" murmured Gilbert. "Are there allotted to thee such great stores of felicity that thou canst choose which ought to be accepted? — So you love him?" he added.

"Yes."

"Since when?"

"Since the time when I saw him, — since the day he went from Paris to Versailles, in the same carriage as the Queen and myself."

"And you know what love is, Andrée?" murmured Gilbert sadly.

"I know," responded the young woman, "that love has been given to humanity in proportion to its ability to suffer."

"That is well. There speaks the wife, there speaks the mother. A rough diamond, you are being fashioned in the hands of that awful lapidary whom men call Sorrow. — Let us return to Sebastien."

"Yes, yes, let us return to him. Don't let me think of Charny. It troubles me; and instead of following my child, I shall perhaps follow the Count."

"That is right. Wife, forget thy husband; mother, think only of thy child."

This expression, half joyous, which overspread not only her countenance but Andrée's whole body, now disappeared, to give place to her usual expression.

"Where was he while you talked with the Count?"

"He was there listening, — there, — there at the door."

"How much of that conversation did he overhear?"

"All the first part."

"At what moment did he decide to quit the chamber?"

"At the moment when Charny —"

Andrée stopped.

"At the moment when Charny —?" repeated Gilbert pitilessly.

"At the moment when Charny kissed my hand, and I cried out."

"You can see him then?"

"Yes, I can see him, with his forehead wrinkled, his lips compressed, and his fists closed against his breast."

"Follow him with your eyes, and from this moment do not leave him, do not lose sight of him."

"I see him, I see him!" said Andrée.

"What is he doing?"

"He looks about him, to see if there is not some door opening into the garden. As he does not find one, he goes to the window, opens it, throws a last glance towards the parlor, leaps over the window-sill, and disappears."

"Follow him in the darkness."

"I cannot."

Gilbert came nearer, and passed his hand before her eyes.

"You know there is no night to you," he said. "Look!"

"Ah, there he is! — running by the alley along the wall. He is at the big doorway. He opens it without being seen, and darts away towards the Rue Plâtrière. Ah, he pauses. He speaks to a woman who is passing by."

"Listen well," said Gilbert, "and you will hear what he asks."

"I am listening."

"And what does he ask?"

"He asks for the Rue Saint Honoré."

"Yes, that is where I live. He has returned to me. He is waiting for me, poor boy!"

Andrée shook her head.

"No," she said, with an evident expression of disquietude, "no, he has not returned to you — no, he is not waiting — "

"Where is he, then?"

"Let me follow him, or I shall lose him."

"Oh follow him, follow him!" exclaimed Gilbert, thinking that Andrée foresaw some evil.

"Ah, I see him, I see him," she exclaimed.

"Well?"

"There he is, entering the Rue Grenelle. Now he enters the Rue Saint Honoré. He crosses, always running, the Square of the Palace Royal. Again he inquires his way, again he rushes on. He is at the Rue Richelieu. He is at the Rue Frondeurs, — at the Rue Neuve Saint Roch. Stop, child, stop, thou unhappy — Sebastien. Sebastien, canst thou not see that carriage, coming up the Rue Sourdière? I see it, I see it! The horses.— Ah!"

Andrée sent forth a fearful shriek, sprang upright, with motherly anguish depicted on her face, down which were coursing great drops of perspiration, mingled with tears.

"Remember," cried Gilbert, "if any mischief happens to him, it will recoil on thine own head."

Andrée went on speaking, without hearing, without understanding what Gilbert said. "The God of Heaven be praised, the breastplate of the horse strikes him and throws him aside, beyond the reach of the wheels. —

There, he falls, he lies senseless, but he is not dead. Oh no, no, he is not dead, — fainted, fainted, only. Help, help! It is my child, my child!" and with a distracting cry Andrée fell back almost fainting into her chair.

Notwithstanding Gilbert's desire to know more he accorded to the exhausted Andrée an instant's repose, whereof she stood sorely in need.

He feared lest a fibre of her heart should break, or a vein burst in her brain, if strained too far; but as soon as he believed she could be interrogated without danger, he said, "Well?"

"Wait, wait," responded Andrée. "They are making a great circle about him. Oh Heaven, let me pass, let me see him. It is my son, it is my Sebastien. Oh my God, is there not a surgeon or a physician among you all?"

"Yes, I am coming!" exclaimed Gilbert.

"Wait!" again said Andrée, grasping his arm. "See, the crowd opens. Surely it is somebody whom they have called, somebody who is coming. — Hurry, hurry, Monsieur. You see very well that he is not dead, you see very well that you can save him. Oh!" she cried, sending forth an exclamation which resembled a cry of terror.

"My God, what is it?" asked Gilbert.

"I will not let that man touch my child," cried Andrée. "It is not a man; it is a dwarf, it is a demon, a vampire! oh, hideous, hideous!"

"Madame, Madame," murmured Gilbert, shuddering, "for Heaven's sake don't lose sight of Sebastien."

Andrée replied, with set eye, quivering lip, and extended finger: "Oh be calm — I am so — I am so!"

"What does he do, this man?"

"He takes him away. He goes up the Rue Sourdière. He turns to the left, into the Lane Saint Hyacinth. He

goes to a low door which stands half open. He pushes it wide open, he bends himself, he descends some steps. He lays him on a table, where there are quills and ink, and papers both written and printed. He takes off the boy's coat and rolls up his sleeve. He secures his arm with bandages, brought to him by a woman dirty and hideous as himself. He opens his case and takes out a lancet. He is going to bleed him. — Oh I will not see it, I will not see it, — the blood of my son."

"Well, then," said Gilbert, "go back, and count the steps of the stairway."

"I have counted. There are eleven."

"Examine the door carefully, and tell if there is about it anything remarkable."

"Yes, a little square aperture, protected by a cross-bar."

"Very well, that is all I need."

"Run, run, and you will find him where I tell you."

"Do you wish to awaken at once, and remember what you have seen; or will you wake to-morrow morning, forgetting it all?"

"Awake me now, and let me come to myself."

Gilbert, following her bent, pressed his thumbs on Andrée's brows, breathed on her forehead, and pronounced the one word, Awake!

Immediately the young woman's eyes became animated and her limbs became more supple. She looked at Gilbert almost in terror, and continued, awake, the exhortation she had given in her slumber. "Oh run, run," she said, "and take him out of the hands of that man; he makes me afraid."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MAN OF PLACE LOUIS FIFTEENTH.

No need to urge Gilbert in his search. He hurried out of the room; and as it would cause too much delay to retrace the steps by which he had come, he ran straight to the gateway on the Rue Coq Heron, opened it without the help of the porter, pulled it to behind him, and found himself on the King's highway.

He remembered perfectly well the route described by Andrée, and followed up the traces of Sebastien.

Like the boy he crossed the Square of the Palace Royal, went along the Rue Saint Honoré, — now deserted, for it was hard on one o'clock in the morning. At the corner of the Rue Sourdière he turned to the right, then to the left, till he found himself in Saint Hyacinth Lane.

Then he began a minute inspection of the locality.

In the third door on the right he recognized, by its small square aperture, protected by an iron crossbar, the door which Andrée had described. Her description was so positive that it was impossible to be mistaken. He knocked. Nobody responded, and he knocked a second time.

Then he fancied he heard somebody creeping along the staircase, and coming towards him with a timid and suspicious step. He knocked a third time.

"Who knocks?" asked a feminine voice.

"Open," responded Gilbert, "and fear nothing. I am the father of the wounded boy whom you have rescued."

"Open the door, Albertine," said another voice, "it is Doctor Gilbert."

"My father, my father," cried a third voice, which Gilbert recognized as that of Sebastien, and then drew a long breath.

The door opened. Stammering his thanks he sprang down the steps. At the bottom he found himself in a sort of cellar, lighted by a lamp, standing on a table covered with printed and written papers, as Andrée had disclosed.

In the shadow, lying on a kind of pallet, Gilbert beheld his son, who called to him with extended arms. Although Gilbert's self-control was strong, paternal love bore away philosophic decorum, and he threw himself towards his child, whom he clasped to his heart, taking care, however, not to hurt the bleeding arm or sore breast.

After a long embrace, wherein, by the soft murmur of two mouths seeking each other, all was told without the articulation of a word, Gilbert turned towards his host, whom he had hardly noticed.

The man stood upright, with his legs wide apart, one hand resting on the table, the other on his hip, and there fell upon him the light of the lamp, from which he had removed the shade, the better to enjoy the scene which was taking place before his eyes.

"Look, Albertine," he said, "and be thankful, with me, that chance has allowed me to render a service to one of my brothers."

As the surgeon pronounced these words with some emphasis, Gilbert turned around, as we have said, and threw a glance at the deformed being before him.

There was something yellow and green about his gray eyes, which projected from his head like those of the

fabled peasants pursued by the anger of Latona, — who, in the process of their metamorphosis, were no longer men, but were not yet toads.

In spite of himself Gilbert shuddered. It seemed to him as if in some hideous dream he had already beheld this man, — through a veil of blood, as it were.

Again Gilbert turned to Sebastien, and leaned over him still more tenderly. At last he overcame his first feeling of repulsion, and went up to the strange man, whom Andrée had seen in her magnetic sleep, and who had greatly distressed her.

"Monsieur," said he, "accept all the acknowledgments of a father to whom you have restored his son. They are sincere, and come from the bottom of my heart."

"I have only done my duty, Monsieur," replied the surgeon, — "the duty inspired by my heart, and recommended by science. I know mankind; and, as Terence says, Nothing human is a stranger to me. Besides I have a tender heart. I cannot bear to see an insect suffer, — certainly not, and with stronger reason, my equal, a being like myself."

"Have I the honor of knowing the eminent philanthropist to whom I have the pleasure of speaking?"

"You do not know me, my confrère?" said the surgeon, laughing with mirth which he intended to be benevolent, but which was simply hideous. "Well, never mind, I know you. You are Doctor Gilbert, the friend of Washington and Lafayette," — he dwelt in a curious fashion on the last name, — "a man of both America and France, the honest Utopian, who wrote the magnificent essays on Constitutional Monarchism, which you addressed from America to his Majesty Louis the Sixteenth, essays which his Majesty Louis the Sixteenth recompensed by sending you to the Bastille the moment

you touched the soil of France. You wished to save him, by showing him, in advance, the drift of the future, and he opened for you the way to prison, — a royal acknowledgment."

Here the surgeon laughed anew, but it was a discordant and menacing laugh.

"If you know me, Monsieur, that is another reason why I insist upon my request, that I may have the honor of acquaintance with you, in my turn."

"Oh, we were acquainted a long time ago, Monsieur," said the surgeon, — "twenty years ago, on a terrible night, the night of the Thirtieth of May, 1770. You were about the age of that lad. You were brought to me as he was, wounded, senseless, injured. You were brought to me by my master, Rousseau, and I laid you on a table, surrounded with corpses and severed limbs. It is a grateful remembrance to me, of that dreadful night, that I was able to save some lives, — thanks to the steel which knew how to reach just far enough to heal, and knew when to cut and how to cicatrize."

"Then, Monsieur," exclaimed Gilbert, "you are Jean Paul Marat!" and in spite of himself he recoiled a step.

"Thou seest, Albertine," said Marat, with a sinister laugh, "that my name has some effect."

"But why are you here?" said Gilbert quickly. "Why are you in this cellar, lighted only with this smoky lamp? I supposed you were the physician of the Comte d'Artois."

"Veterinary surgeon for his stables, you mean," responded Marat. "The Prince has emigrated. No more Prince, no more stables. No more stables, no more surgeon. Besides, I had sent in my resignation. I don't wish to serve tyrants!" and the dwarf drew himself up to the full height of his short stature.

"But why in this hole, in this cellar?" persisted Gilbert.

"Why, Monsieur Philosopher? Because I am a Patriot, because I write to denounce the ambitious, because Bailly fears me, because Necker execrates me, because Lafayette tracks me, — because he would have me tracked by the National Guard, because he has set a price on my head, — the ambitious fellow, the dictator! But I defy him. From the depths of my cavern I follow him up, I denounce him, — the dictator! You know what he is doing?"

"No," said Gilbert innocently.

"He is having made, in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, fifteen thousand snuff-boxes, each with his portrait. There is something behind that I believe, — *hein!* I beseech all good citizens to smash them whenever they are able to get hold of them. They will find them somehow the password of a Royalist plot; for you are not ignorant how Lafayette conspires with the Queen, while poor Louis Sixteenth sheds scalding tears over the follies the Austrian makes him commit."

"With the Queen?" said Gilbert, thoughtfully.

"Yes, with the Queen. You cannot pretend to say that she is not conspiring? Why, in these latter days she has distributed so many white cockades that white ribbon has risen three sous an ell. This is sure, for I have it from one of the workgirls of Madame Bertin, — the Queen's milliner, her prime minister, who said, *I have been at work this morning with her Majesty.*"

"And where do you denounce all this?" asked Gilbert.

"In my journal, in the journal which I have just founded, and of which I have already published twenty numbers, — in 'The Friend of the People, or the Parisian

Publicist,' — a journal political and impartial. In order to pay for the paper and the presswork of the first numbers, — hold! look behind you, — I have sold everything except the sheets and coverlids of the bed where your son is lying."

Gilbert did turn, and saw that little Sebastien indeed lay on the frayed ticking of a mattress, absolutely bare, where he was falling asleep, overcome by grief and fatigue.

The Doctor drew near the youth, to see if his slumber was not a fainting fit; but reassured by his respiration, easy and regular, he returned to this man, who inspired him with something of the same interest that would have been roused by the exhibition of some savage beast, a tiger or a hyena.

"And who are your colaborers in this gigantic work?"

"My colaborers?" said Marat. "Ha, ha! Turkeys march in groups; the eagle soars alone. My colaborers? Here they are!" And he showed his head and hands.

"You see that table?" he continued. "It is the workshop of Vulcan, — the comparison is well founded, is it not? — where he forges the thunder. Every night I write eight pages octavo, which they sell in the morning; eight pages, and frequently that is not enough, and I double the size. Sixteen pages are not enough; and though I begin in large type, I almost always finish with small. Other journalists write at intervals, have assistance and relief, but I, never. 'The Friend of the People,' — you can see a copy, there it lies, — 'The Friend of the People' comes entirely from my own hand. It is not simply a journal, — no, it is a man! It is a personality, it is myself!"

"But how can you get through such an enormous amount of work?" asked Gilbert.

"Ah, there is one of nature's secrets. That is a compact between Death and myself. I give Death ten years of my life, and he accords me certain days when I have no need of rest, certain nights when I have no need of sleep. My life is a unity, it is simple, — I write. I write by night, I write by day. Lafayette's police compel me to live concealed, shut up. This frees me, body and soul, for work. This doubles my activity. This life provoked me at first, but now I am at home in it. It pleases me to contemplate the miserable world through the contracted and crooked opening of my cellar, through its damp and dark vent-hole. Out of the depths of my obscurity I rule the world of the living. I judge science and politics, without asking permission. With one hand I demolish Newton, Franklin, Laplace, Lavoisier. With the other I shake up Bailly, Necker, Lafayette. I upset them all, — yes, as Samson overthrew the temple; and beneath the fragments, which will perhaps overwhelm myself, I may entomb royalty also."

Gilbert shivered in spite of himself. This man repeated to him, in a cavern, under rags of misery, almost precisely what Cagliostro, in a broidered suit, had said to him in a palace.

"But why, popular as you are," said he, "have you not tried to have yourself nominated to the National Assembly?"

"Because the time has not yet come!" replied Marat. Then he added almost immediately, with an expression of regret: "Oh, if I could be Tribune of the people, if I could be sustained by thousands of determined men, I would answer for it, that in six weeks the Constitution would be perfect, that the political machine would work

better, that no rascal would dare to interfere with it, that the nation would be free and happy, that in less than a year she would become flourishing and strong, and remain so as long as I live."

In Gilbert's presence this vainglorious creature was transfigured. His eyes were filled with blood. His tawny skin was bathed in sweat. The monster was grand in his ugliness, as another might be grand in his beauty.

He went on, taking up the thought where it had been interrupted by his enthusiasm: "Yes, but I am not Tribune, and I have not the thousands of backers whom I need; no, but I am a journalist! I have my desk, my paper, my quills, — I have my subscribers, my readers, for whom, I am an oracle, a prophet, a seer. I have my people whose friend I am; and whom I lead, all of a tremble, from treason to treason, from discovery to discovery, from fright to fright. In the first number of 'The Friend of the People,' I denounced the aristocrats. I said there were six hundred criminals in France, for whom six hundred rope's-ends would suffice. Ah ha! I was somewhat mistaken a month ago. The Fifth and Sixth of October have come since then, and have cleared my vision. It is no longer six hundred culprits who should be judged; it is ten thousand, twenty thousand aristocrats who ought to be hanged."

Gilbert smiled. Fury, when it reaches such a point, appears like foolery.

"Be careful," said he, "or there will not be hemp enough in France for your requirements, and rope will advance in price."

"Then I hope we shall find new expedients," said Marat. "Do you know whom I expect to-night, — who will rap at the door in about ten minutes?"

"No, Monsieur."

"Well, I expect one of my confrères, — a member of the National Assembly whom you know by name, — the Citizen Guillotin."

"Yes," replied Gilbert, "he who proposed to the Deputies to reunite in the Tennis Court, when they were driven from the Hall of Assembly, — a very learned man."

"Well, do you know what he has discovered, this Citizen Guillotin? He has invented a marvellous machine, a machine which kills without causing pain, — for it is necessary that death should be punishment, not torture. He has invented such a machine, and some morning we will try it."

Gilbert shuddered. This was the second time that this man, in his cellar, had reminded him of Cagliostro. This machine was, without a doubt, the same whereof Cagliostro had spoken.

"Now then!" said Marat, as some one knocked. "It is he. — Go and open the door, Albertine, — open it!"

The wife, or rather the female Marat, rose from the stool whereon she was crouched, half-asleep, and advanced mechanically and totteringly towards the door.

As to Gilbert, stupefied, terrified, a prey to astonishment which resembled vertigo, he ran instinctively to the side of Sebastien, whom he prepared to lift in his arms, in order to carry him home.

"You will see," continued Marat, enthusiastically, "a machine whose function is unique, which needs nobody to wield it, which can, by thrice changing the knife, sever three hundred heads a day."

"And add," said a mild and flute-like voice behind Marat, "which can cut off three hundred heads without pain, with no other sensation than a slight coolness around the neck."

"Ah, it is you, Doctor," cried Marat, turning towards a small man, forty or forty-five years old, whose neat attire and mild air were in strange contrast with Marat's, and who carried in his hand a box of the shape and dimensions of those used for children's playthings. "What have you there?"

"A model of my famous machine, my dear Marat. But if I do not err," added the little man, trying to distinguish him in the obscurity, "it is Doctor Gilbert whom I see there."

"Himself, Monsieur," said Gilbert bowing.

"Enchanted to meet you, Monsieur. You are not one too many, thank God, and I should be glad to have the advice of a man so distinguished as yourself, as to the invention I have brought to light; for I must tell you, my dear Marat, that I have found a very skilful carpenter, one Master Guidon, who is to make me a large-sized machine. It is expensive, — he wants five thousand five hundred francs, — but no sacrifice is too costly for the good of humanity. In two months it will be finished, my friend, and we shall be able to try it. Then I will offer it to the National Assembly. I hope you will indorse the proposition in your excellent journal. Although indeed my machine recommends itself, Monsieur Gilbert, as you shall judge with your own eyes, yet a few lines in 'The Friend of the People' will do it no harm."

"Be easy about that. It is not a few lines which I shall consecrate to this subject, but a whole number."

"You are too good, my dear Marat; but, as they say, you can't sell a cat in a bag."

From his pocket he drew a second box, one fourth smaller than the first, from which proceeded a little noise, as if it were inhabited by some animal, or rather by several animals, impatient of their prison.

This sound did not escape the subtile ear of Marat. "What have we inside?" he asked.

"You shall see," said the Doctor.

Marat took the box in his hand.

"Be careful," said the Doctor, quickly, "be careful! Don't let them escape, for we can't trap them again. They are mice, whose heads we are to amputate. What are you doing, Doctor Gilbert? You will not leave us?"

"Alas, yes, Monsieur," responded Gilbert, "and to my great regret; but my son, who was wounded this evening, by a horse which knocked him down in the street, has been relieved, bled, and tended by Doctor Marat, to whom I already owed my own life, under similar circumstances, and to whom I renewedly present my acknowledgments. The lad has need of a fresh bed, of repose, of various attentions. I shall not be able to assist in your interesting experiments."

"But you will assist in our greater experiment, two months hence? You will promise me that, Doctor?"

"I promise you that, Monsieur."

"I shall hold you to your word, you understand?"

"It is given."

"Doctor," said Marat, "there is no need to ask you to keep secret the place of my retreat?"

"Oh Monsieur!"

"If your friend Lafayette should discover it, he would have me shot like a dog or hanged like a thief."

"*Shoot! hang!*" cried Guillotin. "We shall make an end of all such cannibalistic deaths. We are going to have a death pleasant, easy, instantaneous, — such a death as old men, disgusted with life, who would end it like philosophers and sages, would prefer to a natural death. Come and see, my dear Marat, come and see!"

Without concerning himself further with Gilbert,

Guillotin opened the larger box, and began to arrange the machine on the table of Marat, who inspected it with a curiosity equal to his enthusiasm.

Gilbert profited by their preoccupation to lift the sleeping Sebastien, and carry him out in his arms. Albertine accompanied them as far as the door, which she fastened carefully behind them.

Once in the street, Gilbert felt, by the coolness of his face, that he was covered with perspiration, and that the night wind was already congealing the moisture on his forehead.

"Oh my God," he muttered, "what will come into this city from its caverns, which perhaps conceal five hundred philanthropists at this very hour, each busy with devices similar to the one I have just seen, and which some day will flaunt themselves under the light of heaven."

CHAPTER XV.

CATHERINE.

It was but a few steps from the Rue Sourdière to the house where Gilbert lived in the Rue Saint Honoré.

This house was situated not very far from the Church of the Assumption, and opposite the establishment of a joiner named Duplay.

The cold and motion awakened Sebastien. He wished to walk, but his father was opposed to this, and continued to carry him in his arms.

Arrived at the door the Doctor set Sebastien for an instant on his feet, and rapped loudly, that he might not be obliged long to wait, even if the porter was asleep.

Presently a heavy but rapid step was heard on the other side of the door.

"Is it you, Monsieur Gilbert?" demanded a voice.

"Hist!" said Sebastien, "that is Pitou's voice."

"Ah, God be praised!" cried Pitou, opening the door. "Sebastien is found!"

Then turning towards the stairway, in whose shadows might be perceived the light of a candle, he shouted, "Monsieur Billot, Monsieur Billot, Sebastien is found again, — and without accident, I hope, — is it not so, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"Without serious accident, at least," said the Doctor. "Come, Sebastien, come!"

Leaving to Pitou the care of fastening the door, he lifted the boy anew, — in the face and eyes of the abashed

concierge, who appeared on the threshold of the lodge, in a cotton nightcap and nightshirt, and began to mount the staircase.

Billot walked ahead, lighting the Doctor. Pitou filled up the passage behind them.

The Doctor lodged on the second floor, where the doors, thrown open at their full width, showed that he was expected. He laid Sebastien on his own bed.

Pitou followed, anxious and shy. By the mud which covered his shoes, stockings, and breeches, and speckled the rest of his clothing, it was easy to see that he had newly arrived from a long journey.

In fact, after conducting to her home the weeping Catherine, after learning from the young girl's own mouth — for she was too deeply prostrated to conceal her grief — that this grief was caused by the departure of Isidore de Charny for Paris, Pitou felt his heart doubly bruised, both as a friend and a lover, by her sorrowful expression. Taking leave of Catherine in her chamber, and of Mother Billot crying at the bedside, he set out for Haramont with a much tardier step than that which had brought him thence.

He did not reach Haramont till daybreak, thanks to the slowness of his gait, to the many times he turned to look regretfully at the farmhouse he was leaving behind him, to his great sympathy with Catherine, and to his own sorrow.

Such was his preoccupation, like that of Sextus on finding his dead wife, that Pitou sat a long while on his bed, with listless eyes, and his hands clasped over his knees.

At last he roused himself, like a man who awakens, not from slumber, but from thought. Looking about him he presently saw near a sheet of paper, covered with his own

writing, another leaf, scribbled over with a different hand. He went to the table and found the letter Sebastien had left behind him.

To Pitou's credit be it said, that he forthwith forgot his personal troubles, and could only think of the dangers his friend might encounter in the trip he had undertaken. Regardless of the advantage the lad must have over him, having started the evening before, Pitou nevertheless put himself in pursuit, — confiding in his long legs, — with the hope of overtaking him, if Sebastien, not finding other means of conveyance, was obliged to make the whole journey afoot. Besides, Sebastien would need rest, whereas Pitou could walk steadily on.

Pitou encumbered himself with no baggage whatsoever. He girded his loins about with a leathern belt, which he was wont to use when he had a long tramp before him. Under his arm he carried a four-pound loaf of bread, into which he thrust a sausage. Then, staff in hand, he set forth.

At his ordinary pace Pitou could make a league and a half every hour. By accelerating his steps he could walk two leagues an hour.

Therefore, as he only stopped here and there to drink, to tie up his shoes, and to inquire for tidings of Sebastien, he was only ten hours in reaching the end of the Rue Largny, at the barrier of Villette; though it took another hour, on account of the blockade of carriages, to go from the Villette barrier to Doctor Gilbert's house. This made eleven hours; and as he started at nine in the morning, he arrived at eight in the evening.

This, it may be remembered, was exactly the time when Andrée carried Sebastien away from the Tuileries, and Doctor Gilbert was closeted with the King. Pitou

therefore found neither Doctor Gilbert nor Sebastien at the house, but he found Billot.

Billot, however, had heard nothing said about Sebastien, nor did he know at what hour Gilbert would come home.

The unhappy fellow was so disturbed that he never thought of talking to Billot about Catherine. His conversation was one long groan over his ill-luck, in not having been in his lodging-place when Sebastien came there the night before.

As he had brought along Sebastien's letter, in order to justify himself, if need be, with the Doctor, he read it over again, — a useless process, for he had already perused and reperused that letter, till he knew it by heart.

Time, therefore, dragged slowly and sadly with Pitou and Billot, from eight o'clock in the evening till two in the morning. It was a tedious six hours; and it had not taken Pitou twice as long to come all the way from Villers Cotterets to Paris.

At two o'clock in the morning the *rat-tat* of the knocker was heard for the tenth time since the arrival of Pitou. At each knock Pitou had precipitated himself down the stairs; and though it was forty steps, Pitou always managed to be down by the time the porter pulled the cord to open the gate; but each time his hope was disappointed, for neither Gilbert nor Sebastien appeared, and he returned to Billot's room slowly and dejectedly.

We have told you how, having descended the last time more precipitately than before, his patience was fully rewarded by seeing the father and son, Gilbert and Sebastien, present themselves together.

Gilbert thanked Pitou, as a brave fellow ought to be

thanked, by a pressure of the hand. Then, as he felt sure that after a trot of eighteen leagues, and a watch of six hours, the traveller needed repose, he wished Pitou good-night, and sent him to bed.

Though his mind was easy about Sebastien, Pitou had nevertheless his confidences for Billot. He therefore made a sign for Billot to follow him upstairs, and Billot did so.

As for Gilbert, he would not confide to anybody else the care of putting Sebastien to bed and watching over him. He examined for himself the bruise on the lad's breast, and applied his ear several times to the lungs. Assured that respiration was perfectly free, he finally lay down on a lounge near the boy, who was not long in falling asleep, although still very feverish.

Very soon, however, thinking of the anxiety which must beset the Comtesse de Charny, knowing the distress he had experienced himself, Doctor Gilbert summoned his valet, and ordered him to carry a letter to the nearest messenger, so that it would reach its address by the earliest delivery, — a letter in which were only these words: "Reassure yourself. The boy is found and is not injured."

Next morning Billot sought permission to enter Gilbert's room, and the permission was of course granted. The goodly face of Pitou appeared smiling behind Billot, whose own expression, as Gilbert noticed, was grave and sad.

"What is it then, my friend, what has happened?" asked the Doctor.

"It is this, Monsieur Gilbert, — that you have done well to keep me here, so long as I could be useful to you and to our country; but while I stay in your Paris, all goes wrong away down there."

One might suppose, from these words, that Pitou had revealed to Billot Catherine's secret, and talked of the affair of the young girl with Isidore. No! The honest heart of the brave commander of the Haramont National Guards reluctant at such a disclosure. He had only told Billot that the crops were bad, that the rye had failed, that part of the wheat had been damaged by hail, that the granaries were only half filled, and that he had found Catherine ill, on the road between Villers Cotterets and Pisseleu.

Billot was somewhat troubled by the failure of the rye and the destruction of the wheat, but it made him almost sick to hear of Catherine's swoon; for he knew, this sensible Father Billot, that a girl of Catherine's temperament and strength does not faint on the highway, without good reason.

Moreover he had questioned Pitou closely; and though Pitou was reserved in his answers, Billot more than once shook his head, saying: "Well, well, I believe it is time for me to go away down there again."

Gilbert, who by this time had learned for himself how the heart of a father may suffer, understood at once what was passing in Billot's mind, when the latter related to him the news brought by Pitou.

"Go then, my dear Billot," he said to him. "Your farm and your family claim you; but do not forget, in the name of your country, that I shall depend upon you in any case of pressing need."

"Give the word, Monsieur Gilbert, and in a dozen hours I will be in Paris," responded the brave farmer.

Having embraced Sebastien, who, after a restful night, found himself completely out of danger, and having squeezed Gilbert's thin and delicate hand in his own brawny grasp, Billot took the road to his farm, — his

farm which he had quitted for only eight days, but from which he had been absent three months.

Pitou went also, — carrying, as an offering from Doctor Gilbert, twenty-five louis, to aid in clothing and equipping the National Guards of Haramont.

Sebastien remained with his father.

CHAPTER XVI.

A TRUCE.

A WEEK intervened, between the events just recounted and the day when we again take the reader by the hand, and conduct him to the Tuileries, henceforth the principal theatre of the great catastrophes about to take place.

Oh Tuileries, fatal heritage, bequeathed to her descendants, and their successors, by a queen of Saint Bartholomew fame, by the stranger, Catherine de Medicis! Intoxicating palace of Circe, attracting only to devour, what fascination lies in thy yawning porch, whereinto have entered all the crowned fools who wished to be called kings, who believed themselves truly sacred when they slept beneath thy regicidal walls, and whom thou didst vomit forth, one after the other, — corpses without a head, or fugitives without a crown.

In thy stones, chiselled like a jewel of Benvenuto Cellini, abides some fatal malediction; some mortal talisman is buried beneath thy threshold. Count the last kings whom thou hast received, and say what thou hast done with them!

Of those five kings, one only didst thou peacefully surrender to the grave which awaited him in the tombs of his ancestors. Of the other four, whom history reclaims at thy hands, one was delivered to the scaffold, and three were sent into exile.

Once upon a time a whole Assembly wished to brave the peril, and establish themselves in the kingly place,

there to sit as proxies of the nation, where the elect of the monarchy had been enthroned. From that moment they were seized with the vertigo. From that moment they destroyed themselves. The scaffold devoured some; exile absorbed others; and one strange fraternity reunited Louis Sixteenth and Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois and Napoleon, Billaud Varennes and Charles Tenth, Vadier and Louis Philippe.

Oh Tuileries, Tuileries! mad indeed must he be who dares to cross thy threshold, and enter where Louis Sixteenth, Napoleon, Charles Tenth, and Louis Philippe entered; for a little sooner or a little later he will go out by the same door.

Oh funereal palace, each of these rulers entered thy precincts amidst the acclamations of the populace; and thy double balcony saw them, one after the other, smilingly respond to those acclamations, believing in the cheers, and the vows of the crowd who uttered them. Hardly were they seated on the royal daïs than each one of them set himself to work for his own ends, instead of doing the work of the public; and as soon as the public perceived this, these rulers were put out of doors like unfaithful stewards, or punished like ungrateful agents.

Thus, after that terrible march on the Sixth of October, in the midst of the mire of blood and turmoil, the next day's pale sun saw, at its rising, the courtyard of the Tuileries filled with people, stirred by the King's return, and famished for a sight of him.

Louis the Sixteenth received the regular corporations throughout the day. While this was going on, the crowd waited outside, looking for him, and peering through the window-panes. If one fancied he caught sight of the King he uttered cries of joy, and pointed him out to his neighbor, saying: "See him? See him? There he is!"

At noon it was thought best for the King to show himself on the balcony, and the bravos and plaudits were unanimous.

In the evening he came down into the garden, and there was no end to the cheers and applause; and there were even tears and sentiment.

Madame Elizabeth, with her young heart, — affectionate and ingenuous, — pointed to the crowd, saying to her brother: "It seems to me that it cannot be difficult to reign over such men."

Her rooms were on the ground floor. In the evening she had the windows thrown open, and ate in public.

Men and women looked on, and applauded and saluted through the openings, — especially the women, who made their children climb to the window-ledges, bidding the little innocents throw kisses to the grand lady, and tell her how beautiful she was; and the children threw kisses, without number and without end, from their plump hands, and repeated: "You are very beautiful, Madame!"

Everybody said: "The Revolution is finished. The King is freed from his Versailles, his courtiers, and his counsellors. The spell is broken, which held royalty captive so far from his capital, in that world of automatons, statues, and artificially shapen yew-trees, which is called Versailles. Thanks to God, the King is replaced amidst life and truth, — that is to say, amidst genuine human nature. Come, Sire, come among us. Until to-day, surrounded as you were, your only liberty was the liberty to act wrongly. To-day, amidst ourselves, in the midst of your people, you will have all liberty for doing good."

Often the masses, as well as individuals, deceive themselves as to what they are, or rather as to what they will be. The fear roused by the events of the Fifth and Sixth

of October not only restored to the King a multitude of hearts, but also united to him many minds and many interests. The imagination of honest people was strongly impressed with these shouts in the evening, the watch at midnight, the bonfires burning in the Marble Court, illuminating with their weird reflections the grand walls of Versailles.

The Assembly was in greater fear when the King was threatened, than when itself menaced. It seemed then to be dependent upon the King; but six months had not rolled away before the Assembly felt, on the contrary, that the King was dependent on itself. One hundred and fifty members took out passports; and Mounier and Lally — the son of that Lally who died in the Place de Grève — saved themselves.

The two most popular men in France returned to Paris as Royalists, — Lafayette and Mirabeau.

Mirabeau said to Lafayette: "Let us unite, and save the King."

Unfortunately Lafayette — a pre-eminently honest man, but possessing a limited intellect — mistook Mirabeau's character, and did not understand his genius, while he disliked the Duc d'Orléans.

Many things were said about his Royal Highness. It was said that during that dreadful night the Duke was seen, with his hat pulled down over his eyes and a cane in his hand, stirring up the groups in the Marble Court, and urging them to pillage the palace, in the hope that this pillage would be at the same time an assassination.

To Orleans, Mirabeau was everything.

Lafayette, instead of attending to Mirabeau, went to find Orleans, and invited him to quit France. He debated, quarrelled, was obstinate; but Lafayette was virtually King, and the Duke had to obey.

"And when shall I return?" he demanded of Lafayette.

"When I tell you it is time to return, my Prince," responded Lafayette.

"And what if I am bored, and return without your permission?" inquired the Duke, superciliously.

"Then," responded Lafayette, "I hope that your Highness will do me the honor to fight with me the day after your return."

The Duke departed, and did not return till he was sent for.

Lafayette was hardly a Royalist before the Sixth of October, but after the Sixth of October he became one really and sincerely. He had saved the Queen and protected the King.

The services we confer, rather than the favors we receive, attach us strongly to our friends, because there is more pride than gratitude in the human heart.

The King and Madame Elizabeth were really touched, though they felt that there was hidden below the mass of the people, and perhaps above them also, a fatal element, — something hateful and vindictive, like the wrath of a tiger, which snarls while it caresses.

It was not so with Marie Antoinette. The wrong disposition of her woman's heart misled her intelligence as the Queen. Her tears were tears of spite, disappointment, jealousy. The tears she shed were more for Charny, whom she felt slipping from her arms, than for the sceptre she felt slipping from her hand.

She therefore saw the people and heard their cries with a tearless heart and an irritable spirit. She was in reality younger than Madame Elizabeth, or rather about the same age; but a pure soul and body had woven for Madame Elizabeth a robe of innocence and bloom she never lost; while the fiery passions of the Queen, her

hatred and her love, made her hands yellow like ivory, pinched her wan lips over her teeth, and spread beneath her eyes those dark violet lines which reveal a malady deep, incurable, constant.

The Queen was really ill, seriously ill, sick with a disease one cannot conquer, because the sole remedy is happiness and peace; and poor Marie Antoinette felt that for her there was no happiness, no peace.

In the midst of all these outbursts, all these shouts, and all these *vivas*, when the King offered his hands to the men, when Madame Elizabeth laughed and wept at the same time, with the women and their little ones, the Queen's eyes were bedewed with her own selfish grief while by herself, but remained dry in the presence of the public rejoicings.

The destroyers of the Bastille were presented to her, and she refused to receive them.

The Dames of the Market-place came in their turn, and she received them, but at a distance, separated from them by an array of skirts, — her women being arranged round about her like an advance guard, to defend her from vulgar contact.

This was a great mistake on her part. The Dames of the Market-place were Royalists, and many of them utterly repudiated the Sixth of October. These women also spoke to her, for in such groups there are always orators.

One woman, bolder than the rest, constituted herself a counsellor. "Madame Queen," said this woman, "will you allow me to give you one piece of advice, a warning which is perhaps very impudent, but which comes from the heart?"

The Queen made an imperceptible sign with her head, which the woman did not see.

"You do not answer?" she resumed. "Never mind! I will give it, all the same. You are here among us, in the midst of your people, — that is, in the bosom of your true family. It is therefore proper that you should send away from you all these courtiers, who ruin kings, and be somewhat amiable to us poor Parisians, who have seen you only perhaps four times, though you have been twenty years in France."

"Madame," responded the Queen, dryly, "you speak thus because you know not my heart. I have loved you at Versailles, and I shall love you the same in Paris."

This was not promising much!

Another spokeswoman said: "Yes, yes, you loved us at Versailles! It was perhaps out of love that, on the Fourteenth of July, you wished to besiege our city, and have it bombarded. It was love that made you wish, on the Sixth of October, to flee to the frontiers, under the pretext of going at midnight to the Trianon?"

"That is to say," replied the Queen, "it was so reported, and you believed it. That is what often makes mischief for both people and King."

Presently there came to her — poor woman! or rather poor Queen! — a happy inspiration, in the very midst of the struggles of her pride and the distractions of her heart.

One of these dames, an Alsatian by birth, addressed her in German.

The Queen responded: "Madame, I have become so thoroughly French that I have forgotten my maternal tongue."

This was a charming thing to say, but unhappily it was not true.

The Dames of the Market-place went away crying "God save the Queen!" but they went away crying thus with their lips, but growling between their teeth.

That night the royal family being together, — doubtless for mutual consolation, and to strengthen each other, — the King and Madame Elizabeth recalled everything they had found pleasant and comforting in the people. The Queen had but one fact to add to all the rest, and that was a jest of the Dauphin, which she repeated several times, both that day and the day following.

Hearing the disturbance made by the Dames of the Market-place, as they came into the apartments, the poor little fellow ran to his mother and pressed against her crying: "Good Heaven, mamma, is to-day another yesterday?"

The little Dauphin was there. He heard what his mother said about him. Proud, like all children who see that others specially notice them, he went up to the King and looked at him pensively.

"What is it, Louis?" asked the King.

"I wish to ask something very serious, my father," replied the Dauphin.

"Well," said the King, taking him between his knees, "what wilt thou ask? Come, speak out!"

"I want to know," continued the child, "why your people, who used to love you so much, are all at once so displeased with you, and what you have done to make them so very angry."

"Louis!" remonstrated the Queen, with an accent of reproach.

"Let me answer him," said the King.

Madame Elizabeth smiled at the child.

Louis Sixteenth took his son on his knees, and said, putting the politics of the day on a level with the child's apprehension: "My boy, I wished to make the people happier than they were. I needed money to pay the expenses occasioned by our wars. I demanded

it of the Parliament, as all other kings, my predecessors, had done. The magistrates who make up my Parliament were opposed to this, and said that the whole people only had the right to vote me money. I called together at Versailles the chief citizens of each city, prominent by birth, fortune, and talent. This is what is called the States General. When they had assembled, they demanded some things which I could not do, either for my own sake, or for yours, who will be my successor. Well, there were certain wicked fellows who excited the people; and the excesses to which the populace have gone, in these last few days, is the work of those mischief-makers. My son, it will not do to be angry with the people too much!"

At this closing recommendation Marie Antoinette compressed her lips. It was evident, if entrusted with the training of the Dauphin, it would not be towards forgetfulness of injuries that she would direct his education.

The next day the city magnates and the National Guard sent to beg the Queen to appear at a theatrical spectacle, and to show by her presence, and the King's, that they resided in their capital with pleasure.

The Queen responded that she should take great pleasure in accepting the invitation of the City, but that she must have time to lose her recollections of the days recently past. The people had already forgotten those days, and were astonished that she remembered them.

When the Queen learned that her enemy, the notorious Orleans, had left Paris, she had a moment of joy; but she did not know how much she was indebted to Lafayette for that withdrawal, and believed it was a purely personal affair between the Prince and the General; or else she pretended to believe it, not wishing to owe anything to Lafayette.

A veritable Princess of the House of Lorraine in rancor and haughtiness, she wished either for conquest or revenge.

"Queens cannot be drowned!" said Madame Henrietta of England, in the midst of a tempest; and Marie Antoinette was of Madame Henrietta's opinion.

Besides, was not Maria Theresa nearer to death than herself, when she took her infant in her arms, and showed the babe to her faithful Hungarians? This heroic memory of the mother influenced her daughter. This was a blunder, however, — a terrible blunder on the part of those who compared the situations of the two women, without using good judgment. Maria Theresa had the people with her. Marie Antoinette had them against her.

Then the latter was, before everything else, a woman. Alas! Perhaps she would have better understood the situation, if her heart had been more at peace. Perhaps she would not have hated the people so much, if Charny had loved her better.

Thus we see what was taking place at the Tuileries during those days when the Revolution came to a standstill, when heated passions cooled away; when as during a truce, friends and enemies shake hands, only to begin a new and more furious combat, a more deadly battle, at the first proclamation of war.

This combat was the more probable, this battle more certain, not only because of what was to be seen on the surface of society, but more because of all that was plotting in its depths.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PORTRAIT OF CHARLES THE FIRST.

For a few days, while the new hosts at the Tuileries were getting themselves well established and resuming their customary habits, Gilbert did not judge it proper to present himself at the King's apartments, not being summoned thereto; but at last his regular visiting-day came round, and he believed duty might furnish an excuse he should not dare to claim for his devotion.

As the same household attendants had followed the King from Versailles to Paris, Gilbert was as well known in the antechambers of the Tuileries as in those of Versailles. Besides, though the King had not needed to send for the Doctor, he had not forgotten him.

Louis the Sixteenth had too discriminating a spirit not to easily distinguish his friends from his enemies. Despite the Queen's prejudice against Gilbert, the King felt, at the bottom of his heart, that even if Gilbert was not specially the friend of the King, he was the friend of royalty, which was worth quite as much.

He therefore remembered that this was Gilbert's visitation-day, and gave orders that the Doctor should be at once admitted to the royal presence on his arrival. Consequently, hardly had he crossed the threshold when the lackey in attendance arose and went before him, to introduce him into the King's bed-chamber.

The King was walking up and down, so preoccupied that he took no heed of the Doctor's entrance, as he had

not noticed the announcement which heralded him. Gilbert therefore stood in the doorway, quiet and silent, waiting for the King to mark his presence and speak to him.

It was easy to see what object filled the King's mind, for he more than once paused pensively before that object. This was the full-length portrait of Charles the First, painted by Vandyck, — the portrait now in the Louvre Palace, which some Englishman offered to cover over with gold pieces, if it was to be sold.

Everybody knows this portrait, if not on canvas, at least in engravings.

Charles the First is on foot, beneath some slender and sparse trees, like those which grow on the seashore. A page is holding his horse, all caparisoned. The sea forms the horizon.

The King's face is stamped with melancholy. Of what was this Stuart thinking, — that he had for a predecessor the beautiful and unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, or that he should have James the Second for a successor? Or rather, of what was the painter thinking, that man of genius, when he thus depicted, on the physiognomy of the King, the overflow of his thought? Of what did he think when he prophetically painted Charles as he was in the last days of his life, — as a simple Cavalier, ready to take the campaign against the Roundheads? Why did he thus paint him as driven to the stormy shore of the North Sea, with his horse at his side, ready for the attack, but ready likewise for flight? If the picture was turned about, into which Vandyck conveyed so deep a tinge of sorrow, would there be found on the reverse of the canvas the outlines of the scaffold at Whitehall?

The voice from the canvas must have spoken very distinctly, to be heard by the material nature of Louis

Sixteenth, — whose countenance it darkened, as a passing cloud casts its shadow on green fields and golden harvests.

Three times he interrupted his promenade to stand in front of the picture; and three times with a sigh he resumed his walk, which seemed always, and fatally, to bring him face to face with the picture.

At last Gilbert realized that there are circumstances under which it is less indiscreet to announce one's presence than to remain mute.

He made a movement. Louis Sixteenth started and turned. "Ah, it is you, Doctor?" he said. "Come in, come in; I am glad to see you."

Gilbert came towards him, bowing.

"How long have you been here, Doctor?"

"Some ten minutes, Sire."

"Ah!" said the King, meditating again. Then, after a pause, leading Gilbert in front of Vandyck's masterpiece, he asked: "Doctor, do you know that portrait?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Where have you seen it?"

"When a lad, at Madame Dubarry's; but boy as I was at the time, it impressed me strangely."

"Yes, at Madame Dubarry's, — even so!" murmured the King.

After another pause of several seconds he asked: "Do you know the history of that portrait, Doctor?"

"Does your Majesty mean the history of the King it represents, or the history of the portrait itself?"

"I referred to the history of the portrait."

"No, Sire. I know that it was painted in London, about 1645 or 1646. That is all I can say. I do not know how it came to France, and how it happens just now to be in the chamber of your Majesty."

"How it came into France, I can tell you. How it happens to be here, at this time, I do not myself know."

Gilbert looked at Louis Sixteenth in surprise.

"It came into France in this wise," repeated the King. "I can tell you nothing very new about that matter, but I know many of the details. You understand why I paused in front of that portrait, and of what I was thinking as I stood there?"

Gilbert bowed his head, as a sign that he was listening attentively.

"There was in France, about thirty years ago," began Louis, "an administration fatal to France, — and above all to myself," he added, sighing over the memory of his father, whom he had always believed poisoned by the Austrians. "That minister was Choiseul. It was decided to supersede him by Aiguillon and Maupeou, and at the same time to suppress the Parliament. This destruction of Parliament was a measure strongly repugnant to my grandfather, King Louis Fifteenth. For the dissolution of Parliament he needed a will-power which he had lost. Out of the remains of his old manhood, it was necessary to construct a new manhood; and in order to make a new man of an old one, there was only one way. This was to close up the shameful seraglio which, under the name of the Deer Park, had cost France so much money and the monarch so much popularity. Instead of a flock of young girls, among whom he wasted his virility, it was necessary to give Louis Fifteenth a single mistress, who would take the place of all the others, — one who would not have enough influence to make him follow a certain political course, but would have enough memory to continually repeat to him a lesson she had well learned. The old Marshal Richelieu knew where to search for such women. He looked where they were to be found, and

found one. You knew her, Doctor, for just now you said you saw this portrait at her house."

Gilbert assented.

"We did not like this woman, either the Queen or myself, — the Queen less than myself; for the Queen, an Austrian, — instructed by Maria Theresa in the great European scheme of politics of which Austria is the centre, — saw in the advent of Aiguillon the downfall of her friend Choiseul. We did not like her, as I say. However, I must do her the justice to add, that in destroying the existing state of things she acted in accordance with my personal wishes, and also — I can conscientiously say it — for the general good. She was a born actress. She played her part marvellously well. She surprised Louis Fifteenth by a familiar audacity heretofore unknown to royalty. She amused him with her raillery; and made a man of him, by making him believe himself a man."

The King here suddenly paused, as if he reproached himself for the imprudence of talking thus about his grandfather in the presence of a stranger; but glancing at the free and open face of Gilbert, he saw that he could speak plainly to this man, who so well knew how to take everything.

Gilbert surmised what was passing in the King's mind, and he waited without impatience, without a question, exposing his face fearlessly to the King's most scrutinizing glance.

"Perhaps I ought not to tell you what I have, Monsieur," said Louis Sixteenth, with a certain nobleness of gesture not habitual with him, "because this is my private thought, and a king ought not to exhibit the bottom of his heart, except to those whose inmost mind he also can read; but give me your word, Monsieur Gilbert, that if

the King of France tells you all his thoughts, you, on your part, will say all that you think."

"Sire, I swear to you," said Gilbert, "if your Majesty does me such an honor, I will render him a like service. The physician has charge of the body, as the priest has charge of the soul; but however voiceless and impenetrable to others, I should deem it a crime not to speak the truth to my King, when he honors me by requesting it."

"And never a lapse, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"Sire, if you should tell me that within a quarter hour I should be put to death, and by your orders, I should not believe it right to escape, unless you said *Flee!*"

"You do well to tell me this, Monsieur Gilbert. With my best friends, even with the Queen, I only talk in whispers; but with you I think aloud."

Then he resumed: "Well, this woman, who knew very well that with Louis Fifteenth one could hardly count on anything except his royal feebleness of will, seldom quitted him, in order to profit by the least appearance of vigor. She even went with him to the Council, and bent over his armchair. In the presence of the Chancellor, and other important personages, before even the old magistrates, she couched at the King's feet, gambolling like a monkey, chattering like a parrot, breathing out Royalty night and day. But this was not all; and this strange Egeria would have wasted her time if, to her evanescent words, Marshal Richelieu had not conceived the idea of adding a body, which would materialize the lesson she so persistently repeated. Under the pretext that the name of the page whom we see in this picture was Barry, the picture was bought for her, as if it had been a family portrait. This melancholy face, which foretells the Thirtieth of January, 1649, was placed in the boudoir of this

woman, and heard their shameless bursts of laughter, and beheld their wanton frolics; and this is the end which it served. In the midst of their sport she took Louis Fifteenth by the head, and pointing to Charles the First she said: 'See there, oh France, — there is a King whose head they cut off, because he was too feeble for his Parliament. Look out for thine own head!' Louis Fifteenth at once dissolved his Parliament, and died tranquilly on his throne. Then we exiled that woman, towards whom we had perhaps been too indulgent. The painting remained in the gallery at Versailles, and I did not dream of ordering it sent hither. How then does it happen to be here? Who told them to bring it? Why does it follow me — or rather, why does it so singularly pursue me — hither?"

Shaking his head sadly Louis added: "Doctor, is there not some fatality beneath all this?"

"Fatality, if the portrait tells you nothing, Sire, but Providence, if it speaks plainly to you."

"How can you think that such a portrait would not speak to one in my situation, Doctor?"

"After the permission to speak to you truthfully, will your Majesty allow me to question him?"

The King seemed to hesitate. "Speak, Doctor!" he presently said.

"Sire, what says the portrait to your Majesty?"

"It tells me that Charles the First lost his head for making war against his people, and that James the Second lost his throne by forsaking it."

"In that case, Sire, the portrait is like myself, — it speaks the truth."

"How so?" demanded the King, looking solicitously at Gilbert.

"Well, since the King permits me to question him, I

would like to ask what he responds to the portrait which speaks to him so faithfully."

"Monsieur Gilbert," replied the King, "I pledge you my faith as a gentleman that I have not yet decided. I shall take counsel with circumstances."

"The people are afraid the King will only think of contest."

Louis nodded, and said: "No, Monsieur, no! I could not fight with my subjects, except with the help of foreigners; and I know the condition of Europe too well to confide in their swords. The King of Prussia offers to enter France with one hundred thousand men; but I understand the ambitious and intriguing spirit of that little kingdom, which tends to become a great monarchy, — which fosters trouble everywhere, hoping, in the midst of the turmoil, that she may absorb a new Silesia. On the other side Austria also puts a hundred thousand men at my disposal; but I do not like my brother-in-law Leopold overmuch, — a Janus with two faces, — a devout philosopher, whose mother, Maria Theresa, had my father poisoned. My brother proposes help from Sardinia and Spain; but I have no confidence in those two powers, led by Artois. He has with him Calonne, the Queen's most cruel enemy, — he who annotated — I have seen the manuscript! — the pamphlet by Madame Lamotte, written against us, on account of that villainous affair of the necklace. I know all that takes place down there in Turin. In the last Council the question was raised of deposing me and appointing a Regent, who would probably be my other dear brother, Provence. Finally, my Cousin Condé proposes to enter France and march on Lyons, although *he might aspire to the throne.* As for Catherine the Great, that is another affair. She confines herself to advice. You understand very well that she is

at dinner, devouring Poland, and that she cannot arise from table before she has finished her repast. She gives me counsel about all that has recently happened, — advice which sounds sublime, but is really ridiculous. 'Kings,' she says, 'ought to pursue their own course, without bothering themselves about the complaints of the people; as the moon travels in its orbit, without paying attention to the baying of dogs.' It appears that Russian dogs are content to bark; but she had better ask Deshuttes and Varicourt if ours do not bite."

"The people also fear that the King dreams of flight, of quitting France."

The King hesitated about answering.

"Sire," continued Gilbert, smiling, "it is always a mistake to take literally any permission given by a King. I see that I am indiscreet; though in my interrogation I but purely and simply give expression to a fear."

The King laid his hand on Gilbert's shoulder.

"Monsieur," he said, "I promised you the truth, and you shall have it completely. Yes, there has been some question about that; yes, it has been proposed to me; yes, it is the opinion of many of the most loyal advisers about me that I ought to flee; but on the night of the Sixth of October, as she wept in my arms, pressing our two children in her own, while the Queen awaited death with me, she made me swear that I would not flee alone, that we would go together, that we might be saved or die together. I took the oath, Monsieur, and I will keep my word. Therefore we shall not flee; for I know it would be impossible for us to escape together, without being ten times arrested before reaching the frontier."

"Sire," said Gilbert, "you see me full of admiration for your Majesty's equity of mind. Oh, why can France

not understand you as I understand you at this moment? How the hatred which pursues your Majesty would be allayed, how the dangers which beset you would be lessened!"

"Hatred?" said the King. "Do you believe that my people hate me? Dangers? Not taking too seriously the gloomy thoughts inspired by this portrait, I tell you that I believe the most serious dangers are passed."

Gilbert regarded the King with a profound feeling of pity.

"Is this not your own opinion, Monsieur Gilbert?" demanded Louis.

"My opinion, Sire, is that your Majesty has not yet fairly entered the battle, and that the Fourteenth of July and Sixth of October were only the first acts of a terrible drama, which France is yet to perform in the sight of the nations."

Louis Sixteenth grew somewhat pale.

"I hope you deceive yourself, Monsieur," said he.

"I do not deceive myself, Sire."

"How can you be better informed on this point than myself, when I have both my police and my detectives at command?"

"Sire, I have neither police nor detectives; but in my position I am naturally an intermediary between that which touches heaven and that which hides in the bowels of the earth. Sire, Sire, what we have felt is only the trembling of the earth. It remains for us to fight the fire, the eruption, and the lava from the volcano."

"You say *fight*, Monsieur. Would not *flight* be the better word?"

"I said *fight*, Sire."

"You know my opinion in regard to foreigners. I will never summon them into France, at least unless my life,

— though my own life matters nothing, I am ready to sacrifice that, — at least unless the lives of my wife and my children are in real danger."

"I would gladly prostrate myself at your feet, Sire, to thank you for such sentiments. No, Sire, foreigners are not needed. Of what good is an outsider, if you cannot depend on your own legitimate resources? You fear being destroyed in the Revolution, do you not Sire?"

"I acknowledge it!"

"Well, there are two methods of saving France and her King at the same time."

"Speak out, Monsieur, and you will deserve much from both."

"The first, Sire, is to put yourself at the head of the Revolution, and so guide it."

"They would drag me along with it, and I do not wish to go whither they lead."

"The second is to put a bit into the mouth of the Revolution, — a curb solid enough to tame it."

"What do you call a *bit*, Monsieur?"

"Popularity united with Genius."

"And who will forge me such a bit?"

"Mirabeau!"

Louis Sixteenth gazed into Gilbert's face as if he had not heard him correctly.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MIRABEAU.

GILBERT saw that he had a struggle to sustain, but he was prepared.

"Mirabeau," he repeated. "Yes, Sire, Mirabeau!"

The King again looked at the portrait of Charles First, and apostrophized the poetic canvas of Vandyck: "What would have been thy response at such a time, Charles Stuart, if thou hadst felt the earth shaking beneath thy feet, and it had been proposed to thee to lean on Cromwell?"

"Charles Stuart would have refused, and wisely," replied Gilbert, "for there is no resemblance between Cromwell and Mirabeau."

"I know not how things look to you, Doctor," said the King, "but to me there are no degrees in treason. A traitor is a traitor, and I know no difference between one who is faithless in little and one who is faithless in much."

Gilbert replied with the greatest respect, but at the same time with invincible firmness: "Sire, *traitor* is not the name for either Cromwell or Mirabeau."

"What then?" cried the King.

"Cromwell was a rebellious subject, and Mirabeau is a discontented gentleman."

"Discontented with what?"

"With everything, — with his father, who confined him in Château d'If and the dungeon at Vincennes;

with tribunals, which once condemned him to death; with the King, who has misprised his genius, and still misunderstands him."

"The genius of the politician should be *honesty*," said the King quickly.

"The response is excellent, Sire, — worthy of Titus, Trajan, or Marcus Aurelius; but, unfortunately, experience gives it the lie."

"How so?"

"Was Augustus Cæsar an honest man, when he first divided the empire with Lepidus and Antony, and then banished Lepidus and killed Antony, in order to have everything for himself? Was it honest in Charlemagne to send his brother Carloman to die in a cloister; and in order to get rid of his enemy, Wittikind, — almost as great a man as himself, — ordered the decapitation of all Saxons taller than his sword. Louis the Eleventh, who rebelled against his father, for the purpose of dethroning him, and filled Charles the Seventh with such a dread of poison that he starved to death, — was Louis Eleventh honest? Was Richelieu honest in engineering conspiracies in the alcoves of the Louvre and the galleries of the Palace Cardinal, which he afterwards denounced in the Place de Grève? Was Mazarin an honest man, when he signed a treaty with the Protector, Cromwell, and not only refused a half-million of francs and five hundred men to Charles the Second, but even drove him out of France? Was Colbert an honest man, when he betrayed, accused, and overthrew Fouquet, his benefactor; and having thrown him into a living dungeon, from which he never emerged but as a corpse, seated himself, with superb impudence, in his predecessor's armchair, while it was yet warm? And yet neither of these, thank God, did any wrong to King or kingdom."

"But you know, Monsieur Gilbert, that Mirabeau can be nothing to me, while he is so much to Orleans."

"Ah, Sire, now that Orleans is in exile, Mirabeau belongs to nobody."

"Would you have me trust myself to a man who is for sale?"

"Buy him! Can't you afford to pay more than anybody else in the world?"

"An insatiable fellow, who would ask a million!"

"When Mirabeau sells himself for a million, Sire, he *gives* himself away. Do you fancy him worth less, by two millions, than one of those Polignacs, masculine or feminine?"

"Monsieur Gilbert!"

"The King withdraws his word," said Gilbert bowing, "and I am dumb."

"No, on the contrary, — speak on!"

"I have done, Sire."

"Then let us discuss the matter."

"I ask nothing better, Sire, for I know my Mirabeau by heart."

"You are his friend?"

"Unhappily I have not that honor. Besides, Mirabeau has only one friend who is at the same time a friend of the Queen."

"Yes, La Marck, — I know that. We reproach ourselves for it every day."

"Your Majesty ought rather to forbid him from ever quarrelling with Mirabeau, under penalty of death."

"And what importance would be derived, think you, from having a lordling like Riquetti Mirabeau in the weight of public affairs?"

"First, Sire, permit me to say that Mirabeau is a nobleman, not a lordling. There are few noblemen in

France who date back to the Eleventh Century; and to have more noblemen about them, our kings have only insisted that the titles of these gentlemen should be proved as far back as 1399, in order to concede them the honor of riding in their carriages. No, Sire, he is no parvenu. He descends from the Arrighetti of Florence, one of whom came to France, after a defeat by the Ghibelline party, and established himself in Provence. A man is not a commoner because he has had a commercial ancestor in Marseilles; for you know, Sire, that the nobility of Marseilles, like those of Venice, lost nothing of their distinction by their condescension to trade."

"A debauchee," interrupted the King, "a headsman of reputations, a spendthrift!"

"Ah, Sire, we must take men as nature made them. The Mirabeaus have been always dissipated and disorderly in their youth, but they improve as they grow older. In their youth they are unhappily what your Majesty has said; but as heads of families they become imperious, haughty, austere. A king who dislikes them would be ungrateful, for they have furnished the army with intrepid soldiers, the navy with brave mariners. In their provincial hatred of all centralization, in their half-feudal and half-republican opposition, I am aware how, entrenched in their strongholds, they brave the authority of ministers, and even kings. I know they have often locked up the treasury officials who came to appraise their estates. I know very well how they confounded with the same disdain, and covered with the same derision, both courtiers and clerks, land-superintendents and literary fellows, and valued only two things in the world, the iron of the sword and the iron of the plow. I know what one of them wrote: 'Toadyism is as natural to Court gentry,

with their putty faces and hearts, as puddles to ducks.' But all that does not affect their rank the least in the world. On the contrary, all this, though it may not be the purest morality, none the less arises from high nobility."

"Well, well, Monsieur Gilbert," said the King with a spice of dissatisfaction; for he fancied that he knew, better than anybody else, the prominent men of his kingdom, — "well, you say you know your Mirabeau by heart. For my sake, who know him not, keep on. Before engaging men in our service, we like to understand them."

"Yes, Sire," replied Gilbert, spurred by a touch of irony which he discovered in the King's intonation, "and I will tell your Majesty. It was a Mirabeau, Bruno de Riquetti, who — on the day when Feuillade inaugurated, in the square named after it, the statue of Victory, with four nations enchained — was crossing with his regiment (a regiment of the Guards, Sire) the New Bridge; and who paused, and made his regiment halt in front of the statue of Henry Fourth, and said, doffing his hat: 'My friends, let us salute *this*, for this statue is worth as much as the other.' It was a Mirabeau, François de Riquetti, who, at the age of seventeen, returned from Malta, and found his mother, Anne de Pontèves, in mourning. As his father had been ten years dead, he demanded the cause of her mourning. — 'I have been insulted,' replied the mother. — 'By whom, Madame?' — 'By the Chevalier de Griasque.' — 'And you have not yet avenged yourself?' asked François, who understood his mother. — 'I greatly desired revenge. One day found him alone. I placed a loaded pistol against his temple, and told him that if I were a lone woman I would blow out his brains, as he could see I was able to do, but that I had a son who

would avenge me more honorably.' — 'You did right, my mother,' responded the youth. Without taking off his boots he replaced his hat, once more girded on his sword, and went after the chevalier, a bravo and bully. He provoked him, locked himself up with him in a garden, threw the keys over the wall, and slew him. A Mirabeau it was, Jean Antoine, six feet tall, possessing the beauty of Antinous and the strength of Milo, to whom his grandmother said, in the dialect of Provence: 'You are not of the men; you belong to the *diminutives.*' Educated by this virago, this Mirabeau had, as his grandson has since stated, an elasticity and vigor almost impossible. A musketeer at eighteen, always under fire, loving danger as others love pleasure, he commanded a legion of terrible fellows, fierce, indomitable like himself, of whom other soldiers said, as they passed by: 'Seest thou those Redcuffs? They are the *Mirabeauans*, a legion of devils commanded by Satan.' Yet they were wrong in calling the commander Satan, for he was a very pious man, — so pious that one day, a fire having caught in one of his forests, instead of giving orders for an attempt to extinguish it by ordinary means, he had the Holy Eucharist carried thither, and therewith put out the flames. It is true his piety was that of a feudal baron, and that this captain sometimes found his devotion dragged into great embarrassment; because it chanced one day that some deserters, whom he intended to shoot, had taken refuge in the chapel of an Italian convent. He ordered his men to break down the doors. They were going to obey, when the abbot appeared on the threshold in full pontificals, with the Holy Eucharist in his hands."

"Well, what then?" asked Louis Sixteenth, evidently captivated by a recital so full of verve and color.

"Well, he stood an instant dumbfounded, for the

position was very embarrassing. Then, brightened by a sudden idea, he ordered his ensign to summon the chaplain of the regiment, to rescue the good God, — that is, the Host of the Sacrament, — 'out of the hands of that droll fellow there;' and this was piously done by the chaplain of the regiment, Sire, relying upon the firelocks of those devils in red trimmings."

"Indeed, I recollect something of that Marquis Antoine," said the King. "Is not he the fellow who said to Lieutenant-General Chamillard, — when the General had promised to speak to his brother, the minister Chamillard, on Marquis Antoine's behalf, after some affair in which this Mirabeau had distinguished himself, — said to the General: 'Monsieur, your brother is very fortunate in having you, for without you he would be the greatest fool in the kingdom'?"

"Yes, Sire; and when there was a nomination of field-marshals, Secretary Chamillard was very careful not to put in the Marquis's name."

"And what became of this hero, who appears to me to have been the Condé of the Riquetti race?" asked the King, laughing.

"Sire, he who has a splendid life has a splendid death," responded Gilbert, gravely. "Charged with defending a bridge attacked by the Imperialists, at the battle of Cassano, he made his soldiers lie flat on the ground, as was his custom, while he alone stood erect, offering a point of attraction for the fire of the enemy. The balls began to whistle about him like hail, but he did not budge, any more than a guidepost which indicates the road. One of the balls broke his right arm, — but that was nothing, you understand, Sire. He took his handkerchief, put his right arm into a sling, grasped with the left hand his axe, his ordinary weapon, — mis-

trusting the sabre and the sword as inflicting cuts too small; but hardly had he accomplished this manœuvre than a second shot struck his neck, and severed the jugular vein and the nerves of his throat. This time the difficulty was more serious. However, in spite of this horrible wound, our Colossus still stood upright, till, stifled with blood, he fell on the bridge like an uprooted tree. At sight of this the regiment was discouraged and fled, for with their chief they lost their hearts. An old sergeant, who hoped that he was not quite dead, threw a covering over his face as they passed by; and the whole army of Prince Eugene, cavalry and infantry, crowded over his body, in the wake of the flying regiment. When the battle was over they began to bury the dead. The magnificent uniform of the Marquis attracted attention. One of the captured soldiers recognized him. Seeing that he still breathed, or rather that he gasped with the death-rattle, the Prince ordered him to be taken to the camp of the Duc de Vendôme. This order was fulfilled. They placed the body of the Marquis in the Vendôme's tent, where the famous surgeon Dumoulin happened to be. He was a man full of notions, and undertook to restore this corpse to life, — a feat which appeared impossible. The wound had nearly severed the head from the shoulders, leaving them united only by the spinal column and a few shreds of flesh. Besides this, his whole body, over which three thousand horsemen and six thousand footmen had marched, was full of wounds. For three days it was doubtful if he would ever recover consciousness; but at the end of that time he opened his eyes. Two days later he moved one arm. Finally he seconded the obstinacy of Dumoulin with an equal obstinacy, and at the end of three months he reappeared, with his broken arm supported in a black scarf,

with twenty-seven wounds scattered all over his body, — five more than Cæsar's, — and his head sustained by a silver collar. His first visit was to Versailles, where he was conducted to the Duke, and by him presented to the King, who asked why it was, having given such proof of courage, that he had never been made a field-marshal. 'Sire,' responded Marquis Antoine, 'if I had come to Court and bribed some jade, instead of staying to defend the bridge at Cassano, I should have received greater advancement and fewer wounds.' It was not in such a fashion that Louis Fourteenth liked to be answered, and so he turned his heel on the Marquis. 'Jean Antoine, my friend,' said Vendôme, on the way out, 'henceforth I shall present thee to the enemy, but never to the King. Several months afterwards the Marquis, with his twenty-seven wounds, broken arm, and silver collar, espoused Mademoiselle Castellane-Norante, by whom he had seven children, in the midst of seven new campaigns. Sometimes, though rarely, like all brave men, he spoke of that famous affair at Cassano, and when he did so he used to say: 'That 's the battle where I was killed!'"

Louis Sixteenth was visibly amused with this account of Mirabeau's ancestors, and replied: "You have indeed told me how the Marquis Jean Antoine was *killed*, but you have not told me how he *died*."

"He died in the Mirabeau stronghold, a rugged and uncouth retreat, situated on a steep rock, fortifying a double gorge, beaten incessantly by the north wind. He died with that despotic and rude exterior which belongs to the Riquetti family as they grow older, bringing up his children to submission and respect, and keeping them at such a distance that the eldest son said of him: 'I never had the honor of touching the hand, lips, or flesh of that excellent man.' This eldest son was the father of *our*

Mirabeau, — a wild sort of bird, whose nest was made between four turrets, who never would *Versaillesize* himself, to quote his own word, and to whom your Majesty does not render justice, because you do not know him."

"Because I know him better, on the other hand, Monsieur," said the King. "He is one of the chiefs of the Economist School. He took part in the Revolution just accomplished, giving the signal for certain social reforms, popularizing many errors and a few truths; which is the more culpable on his part, because he foresaw the situation, — he who said: 'This is an era when every woman should bear an Artevelde or a Masaniello.' He was not mistaken, and the womb of his own mother bore something worse."

"Sire, there is in Mirabeau something repugnant to your Majesty, or that offends you. Let me say that this is the result of paternal despotism and royal despotism."

"Royal despotism?" echoed the King.

"Undoubtedly, Sire! Without the King, the father could have done nothing. What great crime had been committed by this descendant of a grand race, that at the age of fourteen his father should send him to a School of Correction, where he was registered, in order to humiliate him, not as Riquetti Mirabeau, but under the name of Buffières? What had he done at eighteen, that his father should obtain a secret warrant of arrest, and lock him up in the Island of Ré? What had he done at twenty, that he should be placed in the ranks of a Disciplinary Battalion, and sent to fight in Corsica, with this prediction by his father: 'He will embark, the Sixteenth of April next, on the watery plain which only furrows itself. God grant that he may not some day plow it as a galley-slave!' What did he do, at the

end of a year after his marriage, that his father should banish him to Manosque? Why, at the end of six months' exile at Manosque, was he transferred by his father to the fortress at Joux? Finally, what had he done, after his escape from Joux, that he should be arrested at Amsterdam, and imprisoned in the stronghold at Vincennes, where all the space assigned to him, by paternal clemency and royal clemency, — to *him*, who could hardly find breath in the wide open world, — was a cell ten feet square, where for five years his young manhood fretted and his passion increased, but where at the same time his mind broadened and his heart grew stronger. I will tell you what he did to deserve all this. He captivated his professor, Poisson, by the ease with which he learned everything and comprehended everything. He wound his way through the science of Political Economy. Having chosen a military career, he desired to continue it. Reduced to six thousand francs income, and having a wife and child, he contracted a debt of thirty thousand francs. He left his banishment at Manosque, to chastise an insolent nobleman who had insulted his sister. Finally, — and this was his greatest crime, — yielding to the seductions of a young and pretty woman, he carried her off from a debilitated old husband, morose and jealous."

"Yes, Monsieur," said the King, "to abandon her soon after, in such a way that the unhappy Madame Monnier, left alone with her conscience, committed suicide."

Gilbert raised his eyes to Heaven and sighed.

"Well, let us see what you have to say to that, Monsieur, and how you will defend Mirabeau?"

"With the truth, Sire, with the truth, — which reaches kings with so much difficulty, that you, who seek it, who demand it, who call for it, are almost always ignorant of

it. No, Sire, Madame Monnier did not die because she was abandoned by Mirabeau; for when he left Vincennes, his first visit was to her. Disguised as a pedler he obtained access to the convent at Gien, where she had sought an asylum. He found Sophie cool and constrained. An explanation followed. Mirabeau not only discovered that Madame Monnier loved him no longer, but that she loved somebody else, the Chevalier de Raucourt, whom she was to marry, being set free by the death of her husband. Mirabeau had left his prison too soon. As they had counted on his captivity, they had now to be content with wounding his honor. Mirabeau conceded his place to his happy rival, and withdrew, while Madame hastened to wed Raucourt, who soon after died very suddenly. The poor woman had staked her whole heart and life on this last affection. A month ago, on the Ninth of September, she locked herself in her closet and suffocated herself. Then Mirabeau's enemies declared that she died because of her abandonment by her first lover, when she really died for love of a second. Oh History, History, thus art thou written!"

"Ah," said the King, "that is why he received the news with such strange indifference."

"I can tell your Majesty how he received it, because I know the man who announced it to him, — a member of the Assembly. Ask the man himself! He dare not lie, for he is a priest, the Abbé Vallet. He sits on the benches opposite those where Mirabeau sits. He crossed the hall and took a seat by Mirabeau's side. 'What the devil are you doing here?' asked Mirabeau. Without other response the Abbé Vallet gave him the letter which contained the fatal news. He opened it, and was a long time reading it, for he could hardly believe it. Then he read it again, and during the second perusal his face

paled and he became discomposed as he went on. He passed his hands over his forehead, wiping his eyes at the same time, coughing, spitting, and trying to gain the mastery over himself. At last he had to give it up. He rose precipitately and went away, and for three days did not appear in the Assembly. Oh Sire, Sire, pardon me for entering into these details; but one need only be a man of ordinary genius to be calumniated at every point and about everything; and it is all the more so when the man of genius is a giant."

"Even if it is so, Doctor, what motive could anybody near me have for calumniating Mirabeau?"

"What interest, Sire? The interest which mediocrity always has to keep its place near the throne. Mirabeau is not one of those men who can enter the Temple without driving away the money-changers. The nearness of Mirabeau to your Majesty would be the death-knell of petty intrigues. His presence would be the banishment of petty intriguers, — his genius tracing the pathway to probity. What matters it to you, Sire, if Mirabeau lived unpleasantly with his wife? What matters it if he eloped with Madame Monnier? What matters it to you if he has a half-million of debts? Pay the half-million of debts, Sire. Add thereto five hundred thousand francs, — a million, two millions, ten millions, if necessary. Mirabeau is now free. Do not let him escape you. Take him. Make him your counsellor. Make him a cabinet minister. Hearken to what his potent voice says to you; and what you hear, repeat to your people, to Europe, to the world!"

"Monsieur Mirabeau became a cloth-merchant at Aix, in order to secure a popular nomination to the Assembly. He could not betray his constituents, by forsaking the popular side for that of the Court."

"Sire, Sire! I repeat to you, you do not know Mirabeau. He is, before all, an aristocrat, a nobleman, a Royalist. He procured an election by the people, because the nobility disdained him, — because there is in Mirabeau that sublime desire to achieve his object by some means, which is the torment of men of genius. He would not have been chosen, either by the nobility or the people, if he had proposed to enter Parliament like Louis Fourteenth, booted and spurred, as if he possessed a divine right there. He would not quit the popular party for the Court party, you say? Oh Sire, why is there a popular party and a Court party? Why are not these parties one? Well, that is what Mirabeau would accomplish. Take Mirabeau, Sire. To-morrow, rebuffed by your indifference, Mirabeau will turn against you; and then, Sire, then, — I tell you this, and the picture of Charles the First will tell you the same thing hereafter, as it has told you before — then all will be lost."

"Mirabeau will turn against me, you say? Has he not already done so, Monsieur?"

"In appearance, perhaps; but at bottom Mirabeau is really on your side. Ask La Marck what he said to him, after that famous session of the Twenty-first July, when Mirabeau alone read the future, with appalling sagacity."

"Well, what said he?"

"He twisted his hands in affliction, Sire, and cried: 'It is thus they lead kings to the scaffold!' Three days after he added: 'These fellows do not see what an abyss they are digging under the steps of the monarchy. The King and the Queen will perish, and the people will clap their hands over their dead bodies.'"

The King shivered, grew pale, looked at the portrait of Charles the First, and appeared almost ready to decide; but suddenly he said: "I will talk with the Queen about

this, and perhaps she may decide to talk with Mirabeau; but I cannot talk with him myself. I like to shake the hand of the man with whom I talk, Monsieur Gilbert, and I would not press the hand of Mirabeau for the price of my throne, of my liberty, of my life."

Gilbert was about to reply, perhaps to insist further; but at that instant an usher entered and said: "Sire, the person is here whom your Majesty wished to receive this morning, and is waiting in the antechambers."

Louis made a quick movement, and looked at Gilbert.

"Sire," said the latter, "if it is best for me not to see the person who waits upon your Majesty, I will pass out by another door."

"No, Monsieur," said the King, "go this way. You know I hold you as my friend, and that I have no secrets from you. Besides, the person who waits is a plain gentleman, formerly attached to the household of my brother, who has recommended him to me. He is a faithful servant, and I am going to see if it is possible to do something, if not for him, at least for his wife and children. Go, Monsieur Gilbert, you know you will be always welcome when you come, — even when you come to talk to me about Mirabeau."

"Sire," asked Gilbert, "must I regard myself as completely baffled?"

"I have already told you, Monsieur, that I will talk with the Queen, that I will reflect. Later we will see."

"Later, Sire! Here, this very instant! I pray God it may not be too late."

"Ah, do you believe the peril so imminent?"

"Sire," said Gilbert, "do not let that portrait of Charles First be taken from your apartment, for it is your best counsellor."

He withdrew, bowing, just at the moment when the

person expected by the King presented himself at the door, ready to come in.

Gilbert could not repress a start of surprise. This gentleman was the Marquis de Favras, whom he had met eight or ten days before at the house of Cagliostro, and whose speedy and violent death had then been prophesied.

CHAPTER XIX.

FAVRAS.

As soon as Gilbert had withdrawn, — a prey to forebodings, not inspired by the realities of life, but by invisible and mysterious possibilities, — the Marquis de Favras was introduced to the presence of Louis Sixteenth, as related in the preceding chapter.

He paused at the door, as Doctor Gilbert had done, but the King, having seen him enter, made a sign for him to draw nearer.

Favras advanced bowing, but waited respectfully for the King to address him.

Louis fixed on him that investigating look which seems part of the education of kings, and is more or less superficial, more or less profound, according to the genius of him who employs it and applies it.

Thomas Mahi, Marquis de Favras, was a gentleman forty-five years of age, with a tall figure, a bearing elegant and at the same time strong, a frank physiognomy, and an open face.

The examination was favorable, and something like a smile touched the King's lips, already opening to interrogate the newcomer.

"You are the Marquis de Favras, Monsieur?" he asked.

"Yes, Sire," replied the Marquis.

"You have wished to be presented to me?"

"I have expressed to his Royal Highness, Monsieur de Provence, my lively desire to place my services at the feet of his brother, my King."

"My brother has great confidence in you?"

"So I believe, Sire, and I avow that my ardent ambition is to have that confidence shared by your Majesty."

"My brother has known you a long time, Monsieur."

"But your Majesty knows me not! I understand; but if your Majesty deigns to question me, in ten minutes he will know me as well as his august brother knows me."

"Speak, Marquis," said Louis Sixteenth, throwing a side glance at the portrait of Charles Stuart, which would not entirely leave his thoughts, nor at once remove itself from the sweep of his eye, "speak! I am listening."

"Your Majesty wishes to know —?"

"Who you are and what you have done."

"Who I am, Sire? The simple announcement of my name tells you that. I am Thomas Mahi, Marquis de Favras. I was born at Blois in 1745. I joined the Musketeers at the age of fifteen, and fought the campaign of 1761 in that corps. I was afterwards captain and adjutant in the regiment of Belzunce, then lieutenant of the Swiss Guard of Monsieur de Provence."

"And it was in this capacity that you knew my brother?"

"Sire, I had the honor to be presented to him a year before, so that he already knew me."

"And you left that service —?"

"In 1775, Sire, in order to go to Vienna, where I had made the acquaintance of my wife, the legitimate and only daughter of the Prince of Anhalt Schauenbourg."

"Your wife has never been presented at Court, Monsieur?"

"No, Sire; but at this very moment she has the honor of being with the Queen, together with my eldest son."

The King made a dissatisfied motion, which seemed to say: "Ah, the Queen has a hand in this!"

After a period of silence, which he employed in walking to and fro, and glancing once more, but furtively, at the portrait of Charles the First, the King asked: "And what next?"

"Next, Sire, for three years, during the insurrection against the Stadtholder of Holland, I commanded a company, and contributed my part towards the re-establishment of legitimate authority. Then turning my attention towards France, and seeing bad blood begin its work of disorganization, I returned to Paris, to place my sword and life at the service of my King."

"Well, Monsieur, you have indeed beheld some pitiable things, have you not?"

"Sire, I witnessed those two days, the Fifth and Sixth of October."

The King seemed desirous of changing the topic. "Is it not told me, Marquis," he continued, "that my brother of Provence has so much confidence in you that he has charged you with an important loan?"

At this unexpected question, a third person, had there been a third person present, might have noticed a peculiar motion of the curtain which half enclosed the King's private alcove, as if some one stood concealed behind the tapestry; and Favras was confused, like a man who is prepared to answer a certain question, but finds himself suddenly confronted by one far different.

"Yes, Sire," he said. "It is a mark of confidence to entrust a gentleman with financial interests; and that mark of confidence his Royal Highness has done me the honor to give."

The King paused in his promenade, and looked at Favras as if the trend of the interview now offered greater attractions than heretofore.

The Marquis continued, in a disappointed tone: "His Royal Highness has been deprived of his revenues, as a result of different Acts of the Assembly. Thinking the time has come when princes should have a large sum at their disposal, even for their own security, his Royal Highness sent me the contracts, as I said."

"On which you have negotiated a loan, Monsieur?"

"Yes, Sire."

"A large amount, you say?"

"Two millions."

"And with whom?"

Favras almost hesitated to answer the King, inasmuch as the conversation seemed to lose its pith, and pass from great and general interests into the lesser inquiry after particular and personal interests, — to descend from politics to police.

"I ask you who makes this loan," persisted the King.

"Sire, I at first called upon the bankers Schaumel and Sartorius; but this negotiation having failed, I had recourse to a foreign banker, — one who, knowing the wishes of his Royal Highness, made me voluntary proffers of service, out of love for our Princes and respect for our King."

"Ah! And you call this banker —?"

"Sire!" said Favras, hesitating.

"You will understand, Monsieur," insisted the King, "that such a man it is well to know; and that I desire to learn his name, in order to thank him for his devotion, should an occasion ever present itself."

"Sire, he is called the Baron Zanonne."

"He is an Italian?"

"A Genoese, Sire."

"And he lives —?"

"At Sevres, Sire, immediately opposite the place," — rejoined Favras, who hoped by this touch of the spur to give more vigor to his foundering cause, — "immediately opposite the place where your Majesty's coach halted on the Sixth of October, on the return from Versailles, when a set of cutthroats, led by Marat, Verrière, and the Duc d'Aiguillon, in a little pothouse at the Sevres Bridge, compelled the Queen's barber to curl and dress the two severed heads of Varicourt and Deshuttes."

The King grew pale; and if at that instant he had turned his eyes towards the alcove, he would have seen the trembling curtain agitate itself a second time, more nervously than before.

It was evident that this conversation annoyed him, and that he wished he had never been led into it.

Resolved to end the subject at once, he said: "It is well, Monsieur! I see that you are a faithful servitor of royalty, and I promise not to forget it, at the proper time;" and he made that movement of the head which signifies, with princes: "I have done you the honor to hear you and talk to you long enough, and you are authorized to take your departure!"

Favras comprehended perfectly, but he said: "Pardon me, Sire, I believe your Majesty had something else to ask me."

"No," said the King, shaking his head slowly, as if he searched his memory for some new questions to ask, "no, Marquis; this is all I wish to know."

"You are mistaken, Monsieur," said a voice which made both King and Marquis turn towards the alcove; "you want to know how the forefather of the Marquis

managed to rescue King Stanislaus from Dantzig, and conduct him safe and sound to the Prussian frontier."

Both men uttered a cry of surprise. This third person, who came so unexpectedly into their conversation, was the Queen, — the Queen pale and trembling, with compressed lips, and not content with the statements furnished by Favras. Doubting if the King, left to himself, would dare to go so far, she had come by the private staircase and the secret corridor, to take up the interview when the King was weak enough, as she firmly believed, to let it drop.

The Queen's intervention, and the fashion in which she turned the conversation, by a reference to the flight of Stanislaus, was to enable the King to hear, under a transparent veil of allegory, certain projects of flight, which Favras had come to propose.

On his part Favras understood in an instant the method she offered him for developing his plan; and although none of his ancestors or kinsmen had ever aided the King of Poland in his flight, he bowed, and hastened to reply.

"Your Majesty doubtless refers to my cousin, General Steinflicht, who owes this illustrative name to the immense service which he rendered his King, — a service which had a fortunate effect over the fate of Stanislaus, first snatching him from the hands of his enemies, and then, by a conjunction of providential circumstances, making him a forefather of your Majesty."

"That 's the one, that 's the one," said the Queen, quickly; while Louis, with a sigh, inspected anew the portrait of Charles Stuart.

"Well," said Favras, "your Majesty knows — pardon me, Sire, your *Majesties* know — that King Stanislaus, although at liberty in Dantzig, was surrounded on all

sides by the Muscovite army, and almost lost, when he decided upon instant flight."

"Entirely lost," interrupted the Queen, "you may well say *entirely* lost, Monsieur!"

"Madame," said Louis Sixteenth, with some severity, "the Providence which watches over kings, never allows them to be *entirely* ruined!"

"Ah, Monsieur," said the Queen, "I believe as religiously and trustfully as yourself in Providence; but, to my mind, it is a good thing to help Providence a little."

"This was also the mind of the King of Poland, Sire," added Favras, "for he declared positively to his friends, that not believing his position tenable, and believing his life in danger, he wished them to submit several schemes for a flight. In spite of the difficulty, three plans were brought forward. I say *despite the difficulty*, because, as your Majesty may notice, it was far more difficult for King Stanislaus to get away from Dantzig, than it would be for you, for instance, to get out of Paris, if the notion should take you. With a postchaise, — if your Majesty wished to leave without noise and gossip, — with a postchaise, your Majesty would be able in one day to gain the frontier; or, if your Majesty wished to quit Paris in state, you could give orders to some gentleman, honored with your confidence, to raise thirty thousand men, and summon them to the palace, — yes, to the Tuileries. In either case success would be sure, the enterprise certain."

"Sire," added the Queen, "you know that what Monsieur Favras says is the exact truth."

"Yes," said the King; "but my situation, Madame, is far from being as desperate as that of King Stanislaus. Dantzig was surrounded with Russians, as the Marquis said. The fort of Wechselmund, their last defence, was ready to capitulate; but as for me —"

"As for you," interrupted the Queen with impatience, "you are in the midst of Parisians, — of Parisians who captured the Bastille on July the Fourteenth, who wanted to assassinate you on the night of October Fifth, and who on the next day haled you and your family to Paris by force, insulting them all the time the trip lasted. Ah! The situation is so delightful, that it deserves preference above that of King Stanislaus!"

"But, Madame —"

"King Stanislaus did not risk a prison, and perhaps death; whereas you —"

She was checked by a glance of the King.

"Of course, you are the master," continued the Queen, "and it is for you to decide!" and she sat down impatiently, face to face with the portrait of Charles the First.

"Monsieur de Favras," she presently said, "I have just come from a conversation with your wife and your oldest son. I find them full of courage and resolution, as becomes the wife and son of a gallant gentleman. Whatever happens to them, — supposing anything should happen, — they may count on the Queen of France. The Queen of France will never abandon them. She is the daughter of Maria Theresa, and knows how to appreciate and recompense courage."

The King resumed, stimulated by this sally of the Queen: "You say, Monsieur, that three methods of escape were proposed to King Stanislaus?"

"Yes, Sire!"

"And those methods were —?"

"The first, Sire, was to disguise himself as a peasant. The Comtesse de Chapska, Palatine of Pomerania, who spoke German as if it were her maternal tongue, — confiding in a man who had proved that he knew the country

perfectly well, — offered to disguise herself as a peasant-woman, and let the King pass as her foreign husband. This is the method I referred to just now for the King of France, in telling him what facilities he would have, in case it should be necessary for him to flee incognito and by night."

"The second?" said Louis, as if he resented with some impatience any attempt to apply to his own situation a comparison with that of King Stanislaus.

"The second, Sire, was to take a thousand men, and risk drilling a hole through the Muscovite ranks. This also I just now suggested to the King of France, in calling his attention to the fact that not one but thirty thousand men might be at his disposal."

"You saw how I was served by thirty thousand men on the Fourteenth of July, Monsieur!" replied the King. "Pass on to the third method!"

"The third method, which Stanislaus accepted, was to disguise himself as a peasant, and leave Dantzig, — not with a woman, who might be an embarrassment on the journey, not with a thousand men, who might one and all be slain without finding an exit, but with only two or three reliable men, who were acquainted anywhere. This third method was proposed by Monsieur Monti, the French ambassador, and approved by my kinsman, General Steinflicht."

"This plan was adopted?"

"Yes, Sire; and if any king, finding himself, or believing himself to be, in the situation of the King of Poland, should graciously deign to accord me the confidence your august ancestor accorded to General Steinflicht, I believe I could answer for him with my head, — above all, if the roads were as free as the roads of France, and the King as good a rider as your Majesty."

"Certainly!" said the Queen. "But, Monsieur, on the night of the Fifth and Sixth of October the King took his oath never to go away without me, and not even to suggest a plan of departure of which I was not part and parcel. The King's word is pledged, Monsieur, and the King never fails."

"Madame," said Favras, "that makes the journey more difficult, but does not render it impossible; and if I had the honor to conduct such an expedition, I would agree to carry the Queen, King, and whole royal family safe and sound to Montmédy or Brussels, as General Steinflicht led King Stanislaus safe and sound to Marienwerder."

"You hear, Sire!" cried the Queen. "I believe there is nothing to fear, and everything to hope, with a man like Monsieur Favras."

"Yes, Madame," replied the King, "and that is my opinion also; only the hour has not yet struck."

"Very well, Monsieur," said the Queen, "consider what happened to him whose portrait is looking out upon us, the sight of which — at least, so I believed — would give you better counsel. What if you were forced into war? What if the battle were lost? Suppose you were a prisoner! What if a scaffold were erected under your window? Then you, who to-day say *Too early*, will be forced to say, *Too late*."

"In any event, Sire, whatever be the hour, at his first word the King will find me ready," said Favras, bowing. He feared lest his presence should tire the King, as it had already led to a species of conflict between the Queen and Louis the Sixteenth. "I have only my existence to offer my sovereign, and I do not say that I offer that; but I say he always has had, and will have, the right to dispose of my existence, for it belongs to him."

"That is well, Monsieur," said the King, "and if it so falls out, I ratify the promise which the Queen has already made you, in regard to the Marquise and your children."

This time it was a veritable dismissal. The Marquis was obliged to withdraw, however desirous of pressing his ideas, because he saw no encouragement except in the looks of the Queen, who followed him with her eyes till the tapestry closed behind him.

"Ah, Monsieur," said she, extending her hand towards Vandyck's canvas, "when I had that picture brought to your chamber, I believed it would inspire you better."

Superciliously, as if she disdained to pursue the conversation further, she walked towards the door of the alcove; but suddenly stopping she said: "Sire, acknowledge that the Marquis de Favras is not the first person whom you have received this morning."

"No, Madame, you are right. Before the Marquis I received Doctor Gilbert."

The Queen trembled. "Ah," said she, "I suspected as much. And Doctor Gilbert seems to be —?"

"Of my mind, Madame, that we ought not to quit France."

"But being of the opinion that we ought not to leave, he doubtless gave you some counsel which will render our stay here possible?"

"Yes, Madame, he gave us a piece of advice. Unhappily I found it, if not bad, impracticable."

"Indeed! What was his counsel?"

"He wishes us to buy Mirabeau for a year."

"And at what price?" asked the Queen.

"Six millions, and one of your smiles."

The Queen's face at once assumed a deeply meditative character.

"Indeed," she said, "perhaps that may be a means —"

"Yes, but a means you will refuse, on your part, — is it not so, Madame?"

"I say neither Yes nor No," said the Queen, with that sinister expression which the Angel of Evil wears in his triumph. "This is something to be dreamed about!" And as she retired she added in a lower voice, "And I *will* dream about it!"

CHAPTER XX.

THE KING BUSIES HIMSELF WITH FAMILY AFFAIRS.

LEFT alone the King stood still for an instant. Then, as if he feared the Queen's retirement was only feigned, he went to the door through which she had passed out, opened it, and peered into the antechambers and corridors.

Perceiving only the attendants, he called, in a low voice: "François!"

An attendant who had risen when the door into the royal apartments opened, and stood waiting for orders, stepped forward, and when the King returned to his rooms, went in behind him.

"François, do you know where are the apartments of the Comte de Charny?"

This attendant was no other than the one engaged by the King after the Twentieth of August, who afterwards left some Memoirs on the close of his Majesty's reign. "Sire," he responded, "the Count has no apartment; he has only an upper room in the Floral Pavilion."

"And why an attic for an officer of his importance?"

"We wished to do better by the Count; but he would not allow it, saying that an attic was good enough for him."

"Well, do you know where his attic is?"

"Yes, Sire."

"Go and inquire for the Count; I wish to speak with him."

The attendant went away, closing the door behind him, and ascended to the mansarde of the Count, whom he found leaning on the bar of his window, his eyes fixed on the ocean of roofs, which loses itself on the horizon, in waves of tiles and slates.

Twice the attendant rapped, but Charny did not hear, so deep was he plunged in meditation. Then the attendant, seeing the key in the door, determined to enter unbidden, since he came at the King's order.

At this noise the Count turned.

"Ah, it is you, Monsieur Hue?" he said. "Do you come for me on the Queen's account?"

"No, Monsieur Count, but on the King's," replied the attendant.

"On the King's?" replied Charny with open and unfeigned surprise.

"Yes, from the King," persisted the attendant.

"It is well, Monsieur Hue! Tell his Majesty that I am at his orders."

The attendant withdrew from the chamber, with the stiffness required by etiquette, while Charny conducted him to the door, with that courtesy which the ancient and genuine nobility showed to any messenger from the King, whether he wore a gold chain about his neck or livery on his back.

Left alone the Count remained a moment with his head pressed between his hands, as if to compel his confused and agitated thoughts to resume their proper place. Order being re-established in his brain, he buckled on his sword, which lay on an armchair, took his hat under his arm, and went downstairs.

He found Louis Sixteenth in the royal chamber, breakfasting, his back turned upon Vandyck's picture.

"Ah, it is you, Count?" he said, raising his head and

perceiving Charny. "Very well, will you breakfast with me?"

"Sire, I am obliged to refuse the honor, having breakfasted already," said the Count, bowing.

"In that case," said Louis, "will you wait awhile; for I have begged you to come to me for a discussion of serious affairs, and I do not like to talk business when I am eating."

"I am at the King's disposal."

"Then instead of talking business, let us discuss something else, — yourself, for example."

"Me, Sire? How do I deserve the notice of my King?"

"When I asked François just now where you were lodged in the Tuileries, do you know what François answered, my dear Count?"

"No, Sire."

"He answered that you had refused a suite of rooms offered you, and would only accept an attic."

"That is true, Sire!"

"Why so, Count?"

"Because, being alone, and having no other importance than that conferred by the kind favor of your Majesties, I did not judge it needful to deprive the Palace Governor of his rooms, when a simple mansarde was all I required."

"Your pardon, my dear Count, but you talk from your standpoint, as if you were a simple officer and bachelor; but you have— and, thank God, in the hour of peril you did not forget it — an important station near ourselves; and moreover you are married. What would the Countess do in your mansarde?"

Charny responded with a melancholy accent, which did not escape the King, — accessible to sentiment as he

always was: "Sire, I do not think that Madame would do me the honor to share my apartment, be it little or great."

"But your Countess, though having an appointment near the Queen, is her friend. The Queen, as you know, cannot get along without Madame de Charny, — although, for some time, I have remarked a coolness between them. When the Countess comes to the palace where will she lodge?"

"Without an express order from your Majesty, I do not think she will ever return to the palace."

"Ah? Bah!"

Charny bowed.

"Impossible!" said the King.

"If your Majesty will pardon me," said Charny, "I feel sure of it in advance."

"Well, that astonishes me less than you might suppose, my dear Count; for, as I just stated, I thought I perceived a coolness between the Queen and her friend."

"And so your Majesty has observed it?"

"Women's quarrels! We must try to arrange all that! Meanwhile, it seems, without knowing it, that I have been conducting myself in a very tyrannical fashion towards you, my dear Count."

"How so, Sire?"

"Why, by forcing you to live at the Tuileries, while the Countess lives — well, where?"

"Rue Coq Héron, Sire."

"I ask from a habit of interrogation, which kings are apt to acquire; but partly from a wish to learn the Countess's whereabouts; although, not knowing Paris as well as if I were a Russian from Moscow or an Austrian from Vienna, I am ignorant whether the Rue Coq Héron is near the Tuileries or far away."

"It is near, Sire."

"So much the better. That explains why you have only a temporary lodging at the Tuileries."

"My chamber at the Tuileries is not merely a temporary lodging," replied Charny, with the same accent of melancholy the King had already noticed in his voice. "On the contrary, it is a permanent lodging, where I may be found at any hour, day or night, when your Majesty does me the honor to send for me."

"Oh, ho, what does that mean, Monsieur?" said the King, turning himself about in his armchair as he finished his breakfast.

"The King will excuse me, but I do not quite understand the question with which he honors me."

"Bah! You do not know that I am a good citizen, eh? — a husband and father before everything else, and that I am almost as anxious about the interior life of my palace as about my kingdom outside? What does it mean, Count, after hardly three years of marriage, that Charny has his regular home at the Tuileries, while Madame has her regular home in the Rue Coq Héron?"

"I can only say to your Majesty, that Madame wishes to live alone."

"But you go there every day? — No? — Well, twice a week —?"

"Sire, I have not had the pleasure of seeing the Countess since the day when the King ordered me to go and tell her some news."

"Why, but that's more than eight days ago!"

"Ten days, Sire," rejoined Charny, in a voice slightly moved.

The King now better understood his sadness and melancholy, and detected in the Count's tone a shade of emotion which he allowed to show itself.

"Count," said Louis, with that good-nature which so well suited *a family man*, as he called himself, "this must be chiefly your fault!"

"My fault?" said Charny vivaciously, and slightly blushing.

"Yes, yes, your fault," insisted the King. "Absence from a wife, and above all from such a perfect woman as your Countess, is always somewhat the fault of the man."

"Sire!"

"You will say this does not concern me, my dear Count; but I reply that it does concern me, that a king can do many things by a single word. Now be frank! You have been irresponsive towards this poor Mademoiselle de Taverney, who loves you so much."

"Who loves me so much? Sire, pardon me; but does your Majesty say that Mademoiselle de Taverney *loves me — so much —*?" replied Charny, with a slight tone of bitterness.

"Mademoiselle de Taverney, or Madame de Charny, — it 's all one, I presume!"

"Yes and no, Sire."

"Well, I say that Madame loves you, and I am not deceived."

"Sire, you know it is not allowable to contradict the King."

"Oh, contradict as much as you please! I know what I am talking about."

"And your Majesty has perceived by certain signs, — visible to himself alone, undoubtedly, — that Madame Charny loves me very much?"

"I do not know anything about signs visible to myself alone, my dear Count; but this I know, that on that terrible night of the Sixth October, from the moment

when you joined us, she did not lose sight of you for an instant, and that her eyes expressed all the agony of her heart, — so much so, that when the Bull's Eye Portal was nearly broken in, I saw the poor woman make a movement to throw herself between you and danger."

The Count's heart was beating rapidly. He believed that he had detected in the Countess something similar to what the King alluded to; but each detail of his last interview with Andrée was too distinct in his soul for him not to let these memories overpower the vague affirmation of his heart, and even the more positive affirmation of the King.

"And I also remember," continued the King, "that on the way to Paris, you were sent away by the Queen to the Hôtel de Ville; and the Queen afterwards positively told me that the Countess almost died from grief over your absence, and delight at your return."

"Sire," said Charny, smiling sorrowfully, "God permits those who are born above us to receive at birth, doubtless as a privilege of their race, a faculty of probing heart-secrets, unknown to other men. If the King and Queen have both observed this, it must be so; but the weakness. of my sight has made me see otherwise. That is why I pray the King not to disquiet himself about Madame Andrée's great love for me, should he wish to employ me in some mission dangerous or distant. Absence or danger will be equally welcome, on my part at least."

"Yet a week ago, when the Queen wished to send you on a mission to Turin, you apparently desired to remain in Paris."

"I believed my brother equal to the mission, Sire, and reserved myself for one more difficult or more perilous."

"And wisely, my dear Count; because the moment

has come to entrust you with a mission, difficult even now, and perhaps not without danger in the future. This is why I spoke of the isolation of the Countess, and wished to see her nearer some friend when I send away her husband."

"I will write to the Countess, Sire, and impart to her your Majesty's good intentions."

"How? *Write* to her? Do you not expect to *see* the Countess before you go?"

"I never intruded upon my Countess but once without permission, Sire; and after the manner in which she then received me, it will be still more necessary to crave that permission in future, unless I go by your Majesty's express commands."

"Well, well. Let us say no more about it. I will talk to the Queen of all this during your absence," said the King, rising from the table.

Then *ahemming* two or three times, with the satisfaction of a man who has eaten heartily and is sure of his digestion, he observed: "My faith, the doctors are right in saying that everything has two faces, — that sullen face presented to an empty stomach, and that radiant face presented to a full stomach. Enter my cabinet, my dear Count! I feel like talking to you with an open heart."

The Count followed Louis the Sixteenth, wondering at that material and coarse side of his nature which robbed the crowned head of its dignity, and on account of which the proud Marie Antoinette could not restrain herself from reproaching her spouse.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE KING BUSIES HIMSELF WITH STATE AFFAIRS.

ALTHOUGH the King had been nearly a fortnight installed in the Tuileries, only two rooms in his suite had been put in complete order, with none of their necessary furnishings omitted. These two rooms were his workshop and his office.

Later, and on an occasion which had an effect not less injurious than the present upon the destiny of the unhappy Prince, the reader shall be introduced to the Royal Forge; but for the present our business is with the King's study, which we enter after the Count, who stands in front of the desk where the King has seated himself.

This desk was covered with maps, geographical works, English newspapers, and manuscripts, — among which might be distinguished those bearing the chirography of Louis Sixteenth, by the multiplicity of lines, which so covered every sheet as to leave no blanks at the top or bottom, or even on the margin.

His disposition revelled in the smallest details. The parsimony of Louis not only would not allow the waste of the smallest morsel of blank paper, but under his hand these blank pages were very soon covered with as many words as they could possibly contain.

As Charny had been living familiarly with the royal couple for two or three years, he was too well acquainted with all these details to specially notice the points here

chronicled; therefore his glance did not rest particularly on any one object while waiting for the King to speak.

Despite the confidence expressed beforehand by the King, at this point he seemed a little embarrassed as to how he should open the subject.

To begin with, as if to give himself courage, he opened a drawer in his desk, and in that drawer a secret compartment, whence he took several papers, enclosed in envelops, which he laid on the table, placing his hand upon them.

At last he said: "Monsieur, I have remarked one thing—"

There he paused, scrutinizing Charny closely, as the latter waited respectfully till it should please the King to speak further.

"—That is, that on the night of the Fifth and Sixth of October, having to choose between the guardianship of the Queen or myself, you placed your brother near the Queen, and yourself remained with me."

"Sire, I am the head of my house, as you are the head of the State, and had the personal right to perish near my sovereign."

"That has made me think, that if at any time I had a commission, — secret, difficult, and dangerous, — I could entrust it both to your loyalty as a Frenchman, and to your affection as a friend."

"Oh Sire," said Charny, "however high the King may raise me, I have not the presumption to believe that he would rate me as more than a faithful and devoted subject."

"Count, you are a grave man, though you are hardly thirty-six years old; and you have not lived through the events which have recently disclosed themselves about us, without drawing some conclusion therefrom. What

do you think of my situation; and if you were my Prime-Minister, what means of amelioration would you suggest?"

"Sire," replied Charny, with more hesitation than embarrassment, "I am a soldier, a sailor. These high social questions are beyond the reach of my intelligence."

"Monsieur," said the King, extending his hand to Charny, with a dignity which seemed to grow out of the situation in which he was placed, "you are a man; and another man, who believes you his friend, asks solely and simply what you would do in his place, — you, with your upright heart and sound mind, as a loyal subject."

"Sire," replied Charny, "in a situation not less grave than this, the Queen did me the honor, like the King at this moment, to ask my advice. It was the day when the Bastille was taken. She wished to send eight or ten thousand foreign soldiers against the hundred thousand armed Parisians, winding along over the boulevards and through the streets of the Faubourg Saint Antoine, like a Hydra-headed serpent of iron and steel. If I had been less known to the Queen, if she had seen less of the devotion and respect in my heart, my answer would no doubt have made her angry with me. Alas, Sire, must I not fear to-day, when interrogated by the King, lest my unduly frank response should wound the King?"

"What did you say to the Queen, Monsieur?"

"That your Majesty must enter Paris as a father, if not strong enough to enter as a conqueror."

"Well, was not that the advice which I adopted?"

"It was indeed, Sire."

"Now then, it remains to be seen if I did well to follow it; for — answer me yourself! — am I here as King or as prisoner?"

"Will the King permit me to speak with all freedom?"

"Do so, Monsieur. When I ask your advice, I ask at the same time your judgment."

"Sire, I disapproved the festival at Versailles. I begged the Queen not to go to the theatre in your absence. Sire, when the Queen trod the national cockade under her feet, in order to display the black cockade, — the Austrian symbol, — I was in despair."

"Charny, do you believe that therein lay the real cause of the events of the Fifth and Sixth of October?"

"No, Sire; but this certainly furnished a pretext. Sire, you are not unjust towards the people, I trust? The people are good; they love you, they are Royalists; but the people suffer, — they are cold and hungry. There are bad advisers, above them, below them, and on all sides of them, who push the people forward. The people march, they crowd, they upset things, but they know not their own force. Once set them loose, belched forth in full motion, and there follows an inundation or a conflagration; they burn and they engulf."

"But suppose, Count, as is very natural, that I prefer to be neither drowned nor burned, then what ought I to do?"

"Sire, on no account give any pretext for the flood to spread itself, or for the fire to be kindled. But pardon me," added Charny, pausing, "I forgot that even under the King's order — "

"You are speaking at my request! Continue, Monsieur de Charny, the King prays you to continue."

"Well, Sire, you have seen the Parisian people, so long bereaved of their sovereigns, rejoice like starving men over your return. You saw them at Versailles, threatening, burning, assassinating, — or rather you thought you saw them, for at Versailles it was not the people! As yourself, the Queen, and the royal family

stood on the double balcony here at the Tuileries, you heard the people saluting. They have even penetrated into your apartments, by means of deputations, — a deputation of Dames of the Market-place, a deputation of the Civil Guard, deputations of the municipal corporations, — of those who had not even the honor of being appointed deputies. They came into your rooms, to exchange words with you. You saw how they pressed up to the windows of your dining-room, — how the mothers wafted to the illustrious eaters — sweet offering! — the kisses of their children."

"Yes," said the King, "I saw all that, and thence arises my hesitation. I ask myself, who are the real people, those who kill and burn, or those who caress and welcome?"

"Oh, the last, Sire, the last! Confide in them, and they will defend you against the others."

"Count, you repeat to me, after two hours' interval, exactly what Doctor Gilbert told me this forenoon."

"Having received advice from a man so wise, so profound, so sensible as the Doctor, why do you deign to ask advice from me, a poor officer?"

"I 'll tell you, Monsieur," responded Louis. "It is because there is this great difference between you two. You are devoted to your King, but Doctor Gilbert is devoted only to the Kingdom."

"I do not understand, Sire."

"I mean that he would willingly abandon the King, — that is, the man, — if the Kingdom — that is, the principle — were safe."

"Then your Majesty speaks truly. There *is* this difference between us, — that you are to me both King and Kingdom. It is with this understanding that I beg you to employ me."

"Above all, I wish to learn from you, Monsieur, to whom you would appeal, in this moment of calm, — when we are perhaps between two storms, — to dissipate the traces of the gale which is past, and conjure away the hurricane about to burst upon us."

"If I had the honor and the misfortune to be King, I should recall the cries which surrounded the royal carriage on the return from Versailles, and I should offer my right hand to Lafayette and my left to Mirabeau."

"Count, how can you say this to me," said the King, briskly, "when you detest the one and despise the other?"

"Sire, this is not a question of my likes and dislikes, but of the welfare of the King and the future of the Kingdom."

"Just what Doctor Gilbert said," muttered the King, as if talking to himself.

"I am glad," said Charny, "to agree in opinion with a man so eminent as Doctor Gilbert."

"So you think, Count, that the union of these two men would restore peace to the nation and security to the King?"

"With the help of God, I should hope everything from the union of these two men."

"But after all, if I lend myself to this union, and consent to this compact, what if I fail, in spite of my desires, perhaps in spite of these two men? What do you think ought to be done, if this ministerial combination should come to naught?"

"Then, having used all the means placed in your hands by Providence, having fulfilled the duties laid upon you by your position, I believe it would be right for the King to consider the safety of himself and family."

"You would then advise me to run away?"

"I should then counsel your Majesty to retire to some well-fortified place, like Metz, Nancy, or Strasburg, with such regiments and gentlemen as you think you can rely upon."

The King's face beamed. "Ah," he said, "among all the generals who have given me proofs of their devotion, let us see, — speak freely, Charny, you who are acquainted with them all, — whom would you entrust with the dangerous task of relieving or receiving his King?"

"Oh Sire, Sire, it is a grave responsibility to guide the King in such a choice. Sire, I know my own ignorance, my own feebleness, my impotence. Sire, I beg you to hold me excused!"

"Well, I will put you at your ease, Monsieur," said the King. "My choice is made. It falls upon a man to whom I wish to send you. Here is the letter, all prepared, which you are commissioned to deliver to him. A name which you mentioned was not without its influence on my determination. He will designate another faithful servitor, who will undoubtedly, in his turn, have occasion to show his fidelity. Let us see, Charny, if you had to intrust your King to the courage, the loyalty, the intelligence of one man, what man would you choose?"

After reflecting an instant Charny replied: "I swear to your Majesty that it is not because ties of friendship, almost of family, bind me to him; but there is one man in the army, noted for his great devotion to the King, — a man who, during the American war, as governor of our islands, efficiently protected our possessions in the Antilles, and even snatched several islands from the English. He has since been intrusted with divers im-

portant commands, and is now, I believe, Governor-General of the City of Metz. This man is the Marquis de Bouillé. As a father, I would confide to him my son; as a son, I would confide to him my father; as a subject, I would confide to him my King."

Though Louis Sixteenth was undemonstrative he followed the Count's words with evident anxiety, and his face lighted up as he gradually recognized the person whom Charny referred to. When the Count at last pronounced the name the King could not repress a cry of joy.

"Stop, stop," he said. "Read the address on this letter, and see if I was not inspired to summon you by Providence itself."

Charny took the letter from the hands of the King, and read the superscription:

To M. François Claude Amour,
Marquis de Bouillé,
Commanding General in the
City of Metz.

Tears of joy and pride rose to Charny's eyelids. "Sire," he cried, "after such a coincidence I can only say one thing, — that I am ready to die for your Majesty."

"And after what has passed I do not think it right for me to have any secrets from you. In the time to come it is to you — and to you alone, you will understand — that I confide my own person and that of the Queen and my children. Listen to me. Hear what has been proposed to me, and I have refused."

Charny bowed, giving all his attention to what the King was about to say.

"This is not the first time, as you may well believe, Monsieur, that the idea has occurred to me, or has come to me from those around me, to carry out a project analogous to the one we are considering at this moment. During the night of the Fifth and Sixth of October I thought of having the Queen escape. A carriage was to take her to Rambouillet. I was to meet her there on horseback; and thence we could easily have gained the frontier, inasmuch as the espionage which surrounds us now was not yet so close. The project failed, because the Queen would not part from me, and made me swear never to part from her."

"I was present, Sire, when this pious oath was exchanged between King and Queen, or rather between husband and wife."

"Since then Monsieur de Breteuil has opened negotiations with me, through the mediation of the Comte d'Innisdal, and a week ago I received a letter from Soleure."

The King paused, seeing that the Count remained mute and immovable. "You do not respond," he said.

"Sire," replied Charny, bowing, "I know that Breteuil is under Austrian influence, and I fear lest I should disturb the natural sympathy of the King with the Queen his wife, and with his brother-in-law, the Emperor of Austria, Joseph the Second."

The King seized Charny's hand, and leaning towards him said, in a low tone: "Fear nothing, Count, for I love Austria no better than you do."

Charny's hand trembled with surprise between the King's hands.

"Count, Count, when a man of your valor is to give himself — that is, to make the sacrifice of his life — for another man, who has only the sorrowful advantage over

him of being King, it is but fair that the hero should have some knowledge of him to whom he devotes himself. Count, I have already said, and I repeat it, — I do not love Austria. I do not love Maria Theresa, who kept us seven years in a war wherein we lost two hundred thousand men, two hundred millions of money, and seventeen hundred leagues of territory in America, — who called Madame Pompadour (a harlot) her cousin, and who had my father (a saint) poisoned by Choiseul, — who used her daughters as diplomatic agents, governing Naples through the Archduchess Caroline, as, through the Archduchess Marie Antoinette, she wanted to govern France."

"Sire, Sire, you forget that I am an outsider, a simple subject of the King and *Queen* of France!" said Charny, underlining the word *Queen* with his voice, as we have underlined it with the pen.

"I have already told you," replied the King, "that you are a friend; and I may talk to you the more frankly, because the prejudice which I hitherto entertained towards the Queen has been completely effaced from my mind. Against my judgment I took a wife who was doubly the enemy of France, because she is of the house of Lorraine as well as the house of Austria. Against my will I allowed at Court the Abbé Vermond, professedly the preceptor of my wife (then the Dauphiness) but really a spy of Maria Theresa's, and one whom I elbowed twice or thrice a day, as if he had been commissioned to thrust himself between my elbows, and to whom I did not speak a word for nineteen years. It was against my will, after ten years of struggle, that I intrusted Breteuil with a department of my household and in the government of Paris. I took the Archbishop of Toulouse, an atheist, for my Prime-Minister; but this also was against my inclination. Finally, in spite of myself, I paid Austria the mil-

lions she wished to extort from Holland. To-day, at this very hour, while I am speaking, although Maria Theresa is dead, who counsels and directs the Queen? Her brother, Joseph Second, is happily near his death. By whom is she counselled? You know, as well as I, — by the agency of that same Abbé Vermond, the Baron de Breteuil, and Mercy d'Argenteau, the Austrian ambassador. Behind one old man is hidden another old man, Kaunitz, the Septuagenarian, and minister of centenarian Austria. These two old fools, or rather these two old dowagers, influence the Queen of France, through her milliner, Mademoiselle Bertin, and through her hairdresser, Leonard, to whom they give pensions. And whither would they lead her? Into an alliance with Austria, — Austria, always the bane of France, whether as friend or as foe, — Austria, who put the dagger into the hands of Jacques Clement, a poniard into the hands of Ravaillac, a penknife into the hands of Damiens, — Austria, formerly devout and Catholic, but to-day abjuring her faith, and half adopting the infidel philosophy of Joseph Second, — imprudent Austria, who turns against herself her own sword, Hungary, — improvident Austria, who allows the brightest jewel of her crown, the Low Countries, to be stolen by Belgian priests, — Austria, the vassal, who turns her back on Europe, of which she never ought to lose sight, and uses against the Turks, our allies, her best troops, all for the benefit of Russia. No, no, no, Monsieur de Charny, I hate Austria; yes, I hate her, and will not trust her."

"Sire, Sire, such confidences are honorable, but at the same time dangerous to him who makes them. Sire, if some day you should repent telling me — "

"Oh, I have no fear of that, and the proof is that I will finish my statements."

"If your Majesty commands me to listen, why, I will listen."

"This overture is not the only one made to me about flight. Do you know the Marquis de Favras?"

"The former captain in the regiment of Belzunce, and once lieutenant in the Guards of *Monsieur*" (as the King's brother, Provence, was commonly called). "Yes, Sire."

"The same," said the King, dwelling on the last qualification, "*once lieutenant in the Guards of Monsieur!* What think you of him?"

"That he is a brave soldier, a loyal gentleman, ruined by misfortune, which makes him restless, and drives him into a host of hazardous experiments and brainless projects; but a man of honor, who would die without recoiling a step, without uttering a complaint, if he had given his word. He is a man whom your Majesty might reasonably trust for a bold, swift action, but one who, I fear, would not do so well as the chief of an enterprise."

"But the chief of the enterprise is not he," replied the King with some bitterness, "it is *Monsieur*, my brother of Provence, who finds the money, — *Monsieur*, who prepares everything. It is Provence who, devoted to this end, will remain here when I go away with Favras."

Charny made a gesture.

"Well, what is it, Count?" pursued the King. "This is not an Austrian scheme, but a scheme of the Princes, of the nobility, of French fugitives."

"Excuse me, Sire! As I told you, I doubt neither the loyalty nor courage of Favras. Whithersoever he promises to conduct your Majesty, he will do it, or die in your defence on the road; but why should *Monsieur* not go with your Majesty? Why should he remain here?"

"Out of devotion, I tell you; and perhaps also, in case it should be advisable to depose the King, and nominate a regent, that the people, weary of running in vain after their King, may not have too far to go to *find* their regent."

"Sire," cried Charny, "your Majesty alludes to terrible things."

"I tell you what all the world knows, my dear Count, what your brother wrote me yesterday, — that in the last Council of the Princes, at Turin, the question of my deposition and a regency was discussed; and that in the same Council my cousin of Condé proposed to march on Lyons. You see, therefore, that even in my extremity I cannot rely upon either Favras or Breteuil, Austria or the Princes. This, my dear Count, I have said to nobody except yourself; and when I assure you that no other person, *not even the Queen*," — perhaps it was not by design, but by accident, that he emphasized these words, *not even the Queen*, — "has reposed such trust in you as I do now, it follows that you should be devoted to no one else as you are to me."

"Sire," asked Charny, bowing, "ought the secret of my journey to be guarded from all the world?"

"It matters little, my dear Count, who knows that you go, if your errand is not known."

"And the purpose should be revealed to Bouillé alone?"

"To him alone, and only when you are sure of his sentiments. The letter which I send him by you is a simple letter of introduction. You know my position, my fears, my hopes, better than my wife, better than Necker my minister, better than Gilbert my counsellor. Act correspondingly! I put the thread and scissors into your hands. Unwind the thread, or cut it."

Then presenting the open letter he added: "Read it!" Charny took the letter and read:

PALACE OF THE TUILERIES, 29 October.

MONSIEUR: I hope that you continue to be contented with your situation as Governor of Metz. The Comte de Charny, a lieutenant of my Guards, who is to pass through your city, will ask if it is your wish that I should do anything further for you. If so, I shall seize the opportunity to oblige you, as I seize this opportunity to renew the assurance of all my sentiments of esteem. LOUIS.

"Go then, Monsieur; and you have full power as to the promises to be made to the Governor, if you think there is any need of promises; only do not pledge me beyond my ability;" and he offered his hand a second time.

Charny kissed that hand with a devotion which rendered new protestations needless, and then went out of the cabinet, leaving the King convinced — and rightly so — that he had won the Count's heart better by this confidence, than he had been able to do by all the riches and favor he had bestowed upon Charny in the days of the utmost royal prosperity.

CHAPTER XXII.

WITH THE QUEEN.

With a heart full of contradictory sentiments Charny left the King; but the first of these sentiments, which came to the surface of the thought-waves surging tumultuously in his brain, was the deep gratitude he felt for the boundless confidence which the King had bestowed upon him.

This confidence indeed imposed upon him duties the more sacred, because his conscience was far from quiet, in view of his former indignity towards this worthy King, who, in the hour of danger, placed his hand upon Charny's shoulder, as upon that of a faithful and loyal supporter.

The more deeply Charny recalled his injuries towards his master, the more ready was he to devote himself to that master now. The more this sentiment of respectful devotion increased in the Count's heart, the more the impure sentiment decreased, which for days, months, and years he had vowed to the Queen.

He had been detained in Court by a vague hope, born in the midst of dangers, — like flowers which bloom on precipices and perfume ravines, — a hope which led him near Andrée. This hope being lost, Charny earnestly accepted a mission which would take him far from Court, where he experienced the double torment of being loved by a woman whose affection he could no longer return, and of not being loved — at least, as he believed — by the wife whom he had at last learned to love.

Profiting by the coolness which for several days had affected his relations with the Queen, he returned to his chamber, determined to announce his departure by a simple letter, when he found Weber waiting at the door. The Queen wished to speak with him, and desired his immediate attendance. There was no way of resisting the Queen's desire, for the wishes of crowned heads are commands.

Charny gave orders to his valet that horses should be put to his carriage, and then followed in the steps of the Queen's foster-brother.

Marie Antoinette was in a state of mind wholly opposed to Charny's. She recalled her harshness towards the Count, and the devotion he had shown her at Versailles. She felt something like remorse at the remembrance — for the sight was ever present to her mind's eye — of Charny's brother, as he lay bleeding in the corridor which led to her chamber; and she acknowledged to herself that even if the Count had shown her nothing but dutiful devotion, she had poorly recompensed that devotion; but had she not the right to demand of him something more than devotion? Yet, on reflection, was Charny guilty of any of the offences against her which she imagined?

Must she not attribute to fraternal grief, the indifference which he allowed her to see since her return from Versailles? Besides, this indifference existed only on the surface perhaps, and her restless love had been over hasty in condemning Charny for refusing the mission to Turin, which she had offered him in the hope of taking him away from Andrée. Her first idea, jealous and malicious, had been that this refusal was caused by the growing love of the Count for Andrée, and his desire to remain near his wife; and in fact, when the latter left

one night at seven o'clock, she was followed two hours later, by her husband, into her retreat in the Rue Coq Heron; but Charny's absence had not been long. When nine o'clock sounded he returned to the palace. Moreover, in returning to the palace, he declined the suite of three rooms which had been prepared for him by the King's order, and contented himself with one of the mansardes intended for the domestics.

It had seemed to the poor Queen that this combination of events was one in which her self-respect and her passion must both suffer; but the closest inquiry had never succeeded in finding Charny outside the palace, except when engaged in his official duties; and it was abundantly evident to the eyes of the Queen, as to the eyes of the other denizens of the palace, that since his return to Paris, and their entrance into the Tuileries, Charny had hardly quitted his chamber.

It was equally evident, on the other side, that Andrée had not reappeared in the palace since the night she left it. If Andrée and Charny had seen each other it was for an hour only, on the day when the Count declined the mission to Turin.

It is true that during this period he had not tried to see the Queen; but instead of detecting in this absence a mark of indifference, ought not her clear sight to find therein, on the contrary, a proof of his passion? Wounded by the Queen's unjust suspicions, had he not remained apart, not from excess of indifference, but from excess of love?

The Queen acknowledged to herself that she was unjust, — unjust for reproaching Charny, on that terrible night of the Fifth and Sixth of October, because he remained with the King rather than the Queen, and had one look for Andrée between every two looks for herself. She had

been hard in not sharing, with a heart more tender, the deep sorrow which had moved Charny at the sight of his dead brother.

It is thus with all deep and true love. In the presence of the complaining one, the beloved object seems full of asperities. At a short distance all these reproaches seem well-founded. Defects of character, oddities of mind, forgetfulness of heart, all appear under a magnifying glass, and it is hard for one to understand how these defects have been so long unnoticed and endured. But if the object of this fatal investigation withdraws from sight, either voluntarily or by force, these asperities disappear, which had before wounded us like thorns. The disagreeable outlines are effaced. A too vigorous realism vanishes before the poetic breath of distance and the caressing touch of memory. We no longer judge; we compare. We condemn ourselves with a rigor measured by the indulgence felt for the other, who we see has been ill appreciated; and the result of this heart-travail is, that after an absence of eight or ten days, the absentee seems more dear and indispensable than ever.

It is to be understood that we are not supposing a case where another passion profits by this absence to take the place of the first.

Such were the feelings of the Queen towards Charny, when the door opened, and the Count, who had, as we know, just left the King's study, appeared, in the irreproachable garb of an officer on duty; but there was, at the same time, in his demeanor, though always profoundly respectful, something icy, which seemed to chill the magnetic outflow, ready to gush from the Queen's heart, on its search into Charny's heart, for all the mutual remembrances, pleasant, tender, or doleful, which they had experienced during the four years past.

Charny bowed and remained on the threshold. The Queen glanced about her, as if asking what caused the young man to remain at the end of the apartment. Being assured that Charny's free-will was the only cause of his standing thus aloof, she said: "Approach, Monsieur de Charny, we are alone."

Charny drew near, and said, with a mild but firm voice, in which it was impossible to detect the least emotion: "I am here at the orders of your Majesty."

"Count," replied the Queen, in her most sentimental tones, "did you not hear me say that we were alone?"

"Yes, Madame, but I do not see how solitude can change the mode in which a subject should bear himself towards his sovereign."

"When I sent for you, Count, and learned from Weber that you were following him, I supposed one friend was coming to converse with another friend."

A bitter smile outlined itself lightly on Charny's lips.

"Yes, Count," said the Queen, "I understand that smile, and I know what you are saying to yourself inside. You think I was unjust to you at Versailles, and that in Paris I have been capricious."

"Injustice and caprice are allowable in any woman, Madame, — and, by higher right, in a Queen."

"Heavens, my friend," said Marie Antoinette, with all the charm she could infuse into her eyes and voice, "you know one thing, — that is, whether caprice comes to the Queen or the woman, the Queen cannot get along without a counsellor, nor the woman without a friend."

She tendered him her white tapering hand, a little wasted, but still worthy to serve as a sculptor's model. Charny took this royal hand, and after kissing it respectfully, was ready to let it drop, when he felt that she wished to retain his own.

"Well," said the poor woman, replying in words to a movement which he made, "well, yes, I have been unjust, — more than unjust, — cruel. You have lost a dear brother in my service, Count, a brother whom you loved with an affection almost paternal. That brother died for me. I ought to weep with you. In that moment terror, love, jealousy, — whatever you will, Charny! I am a woman! — stayed the tears in my eyes; but left alone, during the ten days since I last saw you, I have paid you my debt of tears; and the proof of it is, my friend, that I still weep."

Marie Antoinette threw her head slightly backward, so that Charny might see two tears, limpid as two diamonds, roll down the furrows which sorrow had begun to trace in her cheeks.

Ah, if Charny could have known what a quantity of tears would follow the two before him, without doubt he would have fallen at the feet of the Queen, moved by an immense pity for her, and demanded pardon for all the wrongs he had done her; but, by permission of a merciful God, the future is covered with a veil which no hand may lift, which no look may pierce, before its proper hour; and the black tapestry which concealed the destiny of Marie Antoinette seemed enriched with golden embroidery, in order that no one should perceive it to be funereal drapery.

As it was, too little time had elapsed since Charny kissed the hand of the King, to allow the kiss he placed on the Queen's hand to be other than a simple mark of respect.

"Believe me, Madame," said he, "that I am not ungrateful for this remembrance of me, for this grief on account of my brother; but unfortunately I have barely time to express my acknowledgments."

"How so? What do you say?" she asked, in the utmost astonishment.

"I wish to say that I leave Paris in an hour."

"Leave Paris in an hour?"

"Yes, Madame!"

"My God! You abandon us, like all the rest," cried the Queen. "Will you flee your country, Monsieur?"

"Alas! Your Majesty would prove to me, through that cruel question, that I have been guilty of some wrong in my ignorance —"

"Pardon, my friend, but you said you were going away. Why do you go?"

"To accomplish a mission with which the King has done me the honor to charge me."

"And you quit Paris?" asked she, anxiously.

"I quit Paris, — yes, Madame!"

"For some time?"

"I do not know."

"But a week ago it seems to me that you refused a mission abroad?"

"That is true, Madame."

"Why then, having refused that mission only eight days ago, do you accept another to-day?"

"Because in eight days many changes may come over a man's life, and consequently over his resolutions."

The Queen appeared to make an effort to control her will, and the different organs subordinate to that will-power, and charged with obedience thereto.

"And you go — alone?" she asked presently.

"Yes, Madame, alone."

Marie Antoinette breathed again. Then she drooped an instant, as if overwhelmed by the effort she had made, and asked, wiping her brow with her cambric handkerchief: "Where do you go?"

Charny replied respectfully: "I know the King has no secrets from your Majesty; and that if the Queen will ask her royal spouse the point of my destination, and the object of my mission, he will undoubtedly inform her."

Marie Antoinette reopened her eyes, and looked at him with amazement.

"But why should I address myself to him, when I can ask you?"

"Because the secret I bear is the King's, not mine."

"It appears to me," she replied with some haughtiness, "that if the secret belongs to the King, it belongs also to the Queen."

"I do not doubt it, Madame," responded Charny, bowing. "That is why I venture to assure your Majesty that the King will not hesitate about informing you."

"But is this mission somewhere in France, or is it to a foreign land."

"The King alone can furnish her Majesty with the enlightenment she seeks."

"Then," said the Queen, with a deep expression of disappointment, which revealed the irritation caused by Charny's reticence, "as you go away, far from me, you will undoubtedly run into some perils; and yet I shall not know where you are, nor what dangers you incur."

"I can swear to you, as a faithful subject with a devoted heart, that wherever I may be, your Majesty will be there also; and all dangers which I may encounter will be dear to me, because I expose myself in the service of two heads which I venerate above all the world."

Bowing again, the Count evidently awaited the Queen's signal to retire.

She breathed a sigh which resembled a suppressed sob, and pressed her throat with her hand, as if to choke back the tears. "It is well, Monsieur!" was all she said.

Charny bowed anew, and walked towards the door with a firm step; but at the moment when his hand touched the knob, she extended her arms towards him and called his name.

He trembled, and turned around with a pale face.

"Charny, come here!" she continued.

He approached unsteadily.

"Come nearer," added the Queen. "Look me in the face! You no longer love me! Am I not right? You cannot deny it!"

Charny felt a shiver course through his veins. For an instant he believed he should faint. It was the first time this haughty woman, this sovereign, had really humbled herself before him.

Under other circumstances, at any other time, he would have fallen on his knees before her, and craved her pardon; but he was now sustained by the remembrance of what had passed between the King and himself, and, rallying all his strength, thus replied: "Madame, after the marks of confidence and good-will wherewith the King has honored me, I should indeed be a wretch if I exhibited towards your Majesty, at such a time, anything but devotion and respect."

"You are right, Count, and you are free to go."

For an instant Charny was seized with an irresistible desire to throw himself at the feet of the Queen; but the invincible loyalty which burned within him covered, if it did not smother, the embers of that passion which he had believed extinguished, but which had been on the point of rekindling itself more fiercely and brightly than ever.

He hastened from the room, with one hand on his forehead and the other on his breast, murmuring disconnected words; but incoherent as they were, if Marie Antoinette

had overheard those words, they would have changed her despairing tears into a smile of triumph.

She followed him with her eyes, hoping that he would turn and come back to her; but she saw the door open before him and shut behind him, and heard his steps as he passed through the antechambers and corridors. She continued to look and listen, five minutes after the sound of his footsteps had ceased.

Suddenly her attention was attracted by a new noise, which came from the courtyard. It was the noise of a vehicle.

She ran to the window, and recognized Charny's travelling-carriage, which crossed the Courtyard of the Swiss Guards, and passed out into the Rue Carrousel.

She rang for Weber. Weber entered.

"If I were not a prisoner in the palace," she said, "and wished to go to the Rue Coq Heron, what street would it be necessary to take?"

"It would be necessary, Madame, to go out by the door into the Swiss Courtyard, turn into the Rue Carrousel, then follow the Rue Saint Honoré as far as — "

"Enough, that will do. — He has gone to bid *her* adieu!" she murmured to herself.

After leaning her forehead a moment on the cool glass she continued in a low voice, bruising each word between her clenched teeth: "Better that I should know what is coming to me."

Then she said aloud: "Weber, go to Rue Coq Heron, number nine, and tell Madame Charny that I desire to talk with her this evening."

"Pardon, Madame, but I believe your Majesty has already disposed of this evening in favor of Doctor Gilbert?"

"True," said she, hesitatingly.

"What does your Majesty wish?"

"Countermand the order to Doctor Gilbert, and give him an appointment for to-morrow forenoon."

Then she added in a lower tone: "Yes, that will do. To-morrow, politics. At any rate the conversation I shall have with the Countess will have no influence over the determination I have taken;" and she dismissed Weber with a sign of her hand.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOMBRE OUTLOOKS.

THE Queen was mistaken. Charny did not go near his Countess. He went to the Royal Post to get posthorses for his carriage.

While they were being harnessed, however, he went into the office of the superintendent, asked for quill, ink, and paper, and wrote a letter to the Countess, which he sent by the servant who took the Count's own horses back to their stables.

The Countess, half reclining on a sofa in a corner of the parlor, with a small table near her, was reading this letter, when Weber was ushered in, without previous announcement, in accordance with the privilege of messengers who came from the King or Queen.

"Monsieur Weber!" said the chambermaid, opening the door. At the same instant Weber appeared.

The Countess quickly folded the letter which she held in her hand, and placed it in her bosom, as if perchance the Queen's attendant had come to rend it from her.

Weber discharged his errand in German. It was always a pleasure for the good fellow to speak the language of his own country, and Andrée, who had learned it in her youth, had come to speak German like her maternal tongue, during her ten years of familiarity with it in the Queen's service.

One cause which made Weber regret the departure of Andrée, and her alienation from the Queen, was that this worthy man thereby lost many an occasion for speaking his native tongue.

Undoubtedly with the hope that an interview would end in reconciliation, he earnestly insisted that Andrée should on no account fail to meet the appointment, recurring several times to the fact that the Queen had countermanded an interview appointed for Doctor Gilbert, the same evening, so that she might be mistress of the hour.

Andrée responded simply that she was at the orders of her Majesty.

After Weber's departure the Countess remained quiet with closed eyes for an instant, like one who would banish from her spirit every outside thought that occupies it; and only when she felt that she was fully herself again, did she take out the letter and resume its perusal.

The reading finished, she kissed the letter tenderly, and laid it on her heart. Then, with a smile full of sorrow, she said: "God keep you, dear soul of my life. I know not where you are, but God knows, and my prayers know where God is to be found."

Then she patiently and fearlessly awaited the hour when she was to report herself at the Tuileries, although she found it impossible to conjecture why the Queen had summoned her.

Not so with the Queen. In a certain way she was a prisoner in the palace, but she wandered about the Floral Pavilion and the Marsan Pavilion, to subdue her impatience.

Monsieur helped her to pass an hour, for Provence had come to the Tuileries to ascertain how Favras had been received by the King.

Ignorant of the purpose of Charny's journey, and wishing to keep open the way of safety proposed by Favras, the Queen agreed to more in behalf of the King than he had pledged for himself.

She told *Monsieur* that he must persevere, and that at the proper time she would be responsible for everything.

On his side, *Monsieur* was joyous and full of confidence. The loan which he had successfully negotiated, through Favras, with the Genoese banker, whom we saw for an instant in his country-house at Bellevue, placed two millions in *Monsieur's* hands, of which he could persuade Favras to accept only two hundred louis, which were absolutely needed, in order to pacify two sharp fellows, on whom he had sworn that he could depend, and who were to second him in the royal abduction.

Favras wanted to give *Monsieur* information about these two fellows; but Provence, always prudent, not only refused to see them, but even to learn their names.

Monsieur was to be ignorant of all that happened. He supplied Favras with money, because Favras had formerly been attached to the suite of his Highness; but what Favras did with this money, *Monsieur* neither knew nor wished to know.

In case the King should go away, as we have already stated, *Monsieur* would remain.

He had the appearance of being entirely outside of the plot. *Monsieur* cried out against the flight of his brothers and cousins, because he found this a method of making himself more popular; and as loyalty to their sovereigns was deeply rooted in the hearts of the great majority of the French people, it was probable, as Louis the Sixteenth had told Charny, that *Monsieur* would be chosen Regent, if the King took flight.

In case the removal was a failure, *Monsieur* would know nothing about it. He would deny everything. Perhaps, with the fifteen or eighteen hundred thousand francs which remained to his account, he would flee as far as Turin, and rejoin his brother Artois and the Princes Condé.

After Provence's departure the Queen consumed another hour with the Princess Lamballe. This poor lady, devoted to the Queen even unto death, — and the occasion was eventually found for this devotion, — had never been more than a convenience for Marie Antoinette, who had transferred her inconstant favor successively to Andrée and the Polignac ladies; but the Queen knew her, — knew that it was only needful to take a single step towards this true friend, to have that friend come all the rest of the way to meet her, with open heart and arms.

At the Tuileries, since the return from Versailles, the Princess Lamballe had occupied the Floral Pavilion, where she held receptions for Marie Antoinette, as Madame Polignac had done at the Trianon. Whenever the Queen was in great sorrow or anxiety, it was to Madame Lamballe she went, — a proof that there she felt herself truly beloved. Without saying a word, without even making this amiable young woman the confidant of her grief or her worriment, the Queen would lay her head on the shoulder of this living statue of Friendship, and the tears which poured from the royal eyes, mingled with their companions from the eyes of the Princess.

Poor martyr! Who dare search the gloom of the historic alcoves to learn whether the source of thy friendship was pure or criminal, when History, inexorable and terrible, comes with her feet in thy blood, to tell what a price that friendship cost thee!

Then dinner occupied another hour. That day they dined *en famille*, with Madame Elizabeth, the Princess Lamballe, and the children.

During the dinner the two most illustrious eaters were preoccupied. Each kept a secret from the other: the Queen, the affair with Favras; the King, his affair with Bouillé.

Unlike the King, who would have preferred owing his safety to anything, even to the Revolution, rather than to strangers, the Queen liked foreigners best; but it should be recollected that those whom Frenchmen called foreigners, really belonged to the Queen's own family. How could she place the people who killed her soldiers, the women who insulted her in the courtyards at Versailles, the men who tried to assassinate her in her apartments, the crowd who taunted her as *that Austrian woman*, — how could she weigh them in the same scales with the kings of whom she demanded succor, with her brother Joseph the Second, with her brother-in-law Ferdinand the First, with her cousin Charles the Fourth?

The Queen therefore could not see any crime in the proposed flight, though it was afterwards so denominated. She saw in it only a means of maintaining the royal dignity; and when they should return, with an armed hand, she hoped for a full expiation of all the insults received.

We have seen the inmost heart of Louis, so distrustful of kings and princes. He did not belong in the least to the Queen's party, as has been so generally believed, although he was German on his mother's side; for the Germans hardly regard the Austrians as being really Germans.

No, the King belonged to the priests. He ratified all decrees against kings, against princes, against fugitives;

but he would set his veto to any decree against the priests. For them he risked the Twentieth of June, endured the Tenth of August, submitted to the Twenty-first of January; and so the Pope, who could not make Louis Sixteenth a Saint, did declare him a Martyr.

Contrary to her custom the Queen to-day remained only a little while with her children. She felt somewhat as if she had no right to their caresses at that moment, her heart not being entirely their father's.

The heart of woman alone fathoms its own strange contradictions, for it is a mysterious labyrinth, hiding passion and breeding repentance.

At an early hour the Queen retired to her apartments, and shut herself in. She said she wished to write, and placed Weber on guard at the door.

The King scarcely noticed her withdrawal, preoccupied, as he was, with events — less important it is true, but still very grave — which menaced the peace of the city, whereof the Lieutenant of Police had come to inform him.

In two words these were the events.

The Assembly, as we know, had declared itself inseparable from the King; and the King being in Paris, the Assembly followed him there. While waiting for the Riding School to be made ready, — the place intended for them, — the members selected for their sessions a hall in the Archbishop's Palace.

There they voted to exchange the title, King of France and Navarre, for the title, King of the French.

They also prescribed the following royal formula, "Louis, King by the Grace of God and by the Constitutional Law of the State," to be used instead of the old formula, "We, by our sovereign knowledge and full power."

This proves that the National Assembly, like all other parliamentary assemblies, of which this was either the offspring or the progenitor, busied itself too much with things futile, when it should have been paying attention to matters more serious.

For instance, it should have considered that Paris needed to be fed, for Paris was perishing with hunger.

The return from Versailles, and the installation of the Baker, the Bakeress, and the Baker's Boy in the Tuileries, had not brought about the expected relief. Flour and bread continued very scarce. Every day there were crowds at the bakery doors, and these crowds led to great disorders.

How could they be remedied, since the privilege of public meetings was guaranteed by the Declaration of Human Rights?

Of all this the Assembly practically knew nothing. Its members were not compelled to stand in the long line of bread-buyers at the bakeries; and if perchance one of the members was hungry during the session, he was always sure of finding small fresh rolls a hundred steps off, at the shop of a baker named François, who lived in the Rue Marché Palu, in the neighborhood of Notre Dame Cathedral, and who, baking six or eight batches of bread a day, always kept a reserve for Gentlemen of the Assembly.

The Lieutenant of Police was engaged in making the King aware of his anxiety about these disorders, which might develop into an outbreak some fine morning, when Weber opened the door of the Queen's little cabinet, and announced, in a low voice: "Madame la Comtesse de Charny."

CHAPTER XXIV.

WIFE WITHOUT HUSBAND, SWEETHEART WITHOUT LOVER.

ALTHOUGH the Queen had sent for Andrée, although she expected her, yet when the announcement was made, she trembled from top to toe at the five words spoken by Weber.

This was because the Queen could not conceal from herself, that in the compact (for it amounted to that) made between herself and Andrée, — in the early days, when they were both young girls, and met at the Château Taverney, — there was an agreement for the interchange of friendship and assistance, in which Marie Antoinette had always been the benefited party.

Now nothing is so annoying to kings as obligations incurred, above all when the obligations grasp the very roots of the heart.

The Queen sent for Andrée, believing she had many things to blame her for; but not one of them could she remember when she stood face to face with that young wife. She could only think of obligations which lay on the other side.

As for Andrée, she was always the same, — cool and calm, — pure as a diamond, but equally cutting and invulnerable.

The Queen hesitated an instant as to what name she should choose in addressing the white apparition, which glided from the shadow of the doorway into the half-lighted room, and came slowly within the circle of light

projected from the three candles in the candelabra on the table, whereon the Queen was resting her elbow.

At last, stretching out her hand to her former friend, she said: "You are welcome to-day, as always, Andrée."

Strong and resolute as Andrée was when she came to the Tuileries, this salutation made her tremble in her turn. She detected, in the words spoken to her by the Queen, some traces of the tone formerly used by her Majesty when she was only the Dauphin's bride.

"Need I say," responded Andrée, meeting the occasion with her customary candor and perspicacity, "that if her Majesty had always spoken to me like that, there would have been no need to send for me beyond the confines of the palace, when her Majesty wished to talk with me?"

Nothing could have better aided the Queen than the way in which Andrée entered at once into the matter, and she hastened to avail herself of this overture.

"Alas, Andrée," said the Queen, "one so beautiful, so pure, so chaste as yourself, one whose soul has never been troubled by hatred, one whose heart has never been upset by love, one who is covered only by thunder-clouds which disappear, — and who then shines forth like a star, which reappears the more brilliantly in the firmament, when the wind has swept the storm away, — a woman like yourself must learn that all women, even those in high places, have not your incomparable serenity, — myself especially, who demand the help which you have so often generously accorded."

"The Queen," responded Andrée, "speaks of a time which I had forgotten, and which I believed she no longer remembered."

"That answer is severe, Andrée, and perhaps I merit

it; and you have the right to so answer me. — It is true! So long as I was happy, I did not recompense your devotion, perhaps because no human power, not even the royal power, afforded the means of discharging such a debt as mine to you. You have believed me ungrateful; but perhaps what you mistook for ingratitude, was only inability."

"I might have the right to accuse you, Madame," said Andrée, "if ever I had wished or asked anything of the Queen, and she had opposed my wishes and repulsed my request; but why should your Majesty think me fault-finding, when I have neither asked nor desired anything at your hands."

"Do you wish me to tell you, my dear Andrée? It is just this indifference of yours, to everything in the world, that bothers us about you. Yes, you seem to me superhuman, a creature from another sphere, brought hither by a whirlwind, and hurled into our midst, like those meteoric stones, purified by fire, which come tumbling upon us from nobody knows what distant sun. Consequently we are terrified at our own weakness, when brought face to face with one who is never weak; but it is said that supreme indulgence must reside in such supreme goodness, that one should bathe one's soul in the purest spring; and in this moment of deep misery, what could I do, Andrée, but send for consolation to that lofty being whose blame I fear?"

"Alas, Madame," said Andrée, "if this is really why you want me, I sadly fear you will be disappointed in your expectations."

"Andrée, Andrée! You forget under what terrible circumstances you have already sustained me and consoled me."

Andrée's color changed noticeably. The Queen saw

her totter and close her eyes, as if her strength was almost exhausted, and made a motion with her hand and arm, to draw Andrée down upon the same sofa with herself; but Andrée resisted, and remained standing.

"Madame," she said, "if your Majesty pities her faithful servant, you will spare her these reminiscences, which she almost believed were forgotten. She is but a poor comforter, who asks consolation of no one, not even of God, because she doubts if God himself is not powerless to assuage some sorrows."

The Queen fixed on Andrée her acute and penetrating gaze. "Sorrows?" she said. "Have you then other sorrows than those which you have confided to me?"

Andrée did not answer.

"Listen to me! The hour has come when we must have some understanding, and I want to question you on that account. — You love Charny!"

Andrée turned pale as death, and remained speechless.

"Do you not love the Count?" repeated the Queen.

"Yes," answered Andrée.

Like a wounded lioness the Queen uttered a groan, and said: "I suspected as much? How long have you loved him?"

"Since the first hour I saw him."

The Queen recoiled in fear before the marble statue who thus unveiled her soul.

"And you were silent?" asked the Queen.

"You know that better than anybody else, Madame."

"And why were you so?"

"Because I perceived that *you* loved him," said Andrée.

"Do you mean to say that you then loved him more than I, forasmuch as I saw nothing of *your* feelings?"

"Ah," said Andrée, bitterly, "you saw nothing else, because you had his love."

"Yes! and now I see the truth, because he no longer loves me. That is what you mean, is it not?"

Andrée was silent.

"Speak!" said the Queen, grasping her not only by the hand, but by the arm. "Acknowledge that he loves me no longer."

Andrée responded neither by word, gesture, nor sign.

"This is death," cried the Queen. "Kill me then, at once, by letting me know that he loves me no longer. — Come, speak! He loves me no longer, — is it not so?"

"The passion and indifference of the Count are his own secrets. It is not for me to unveil them."

"His secrets? They are no longer his alone, for I presume he has made you his confidant," said the Queen bitterly.

"Charny has never spoken a word to me about his love for you, or his indifference."

"Not even this morning?"

"I did not see him this morning."

The Queen looked at Andrée searchingly, as if she would fathom the depths of her heart.

"Will you affirm also your ignorance of the Count's departure?"

"I will not say that."

"How did you know of his departure, if you did not see him?"

"He wrote and told me about it."

"Ah, he wrote you," said the Queen. As Richard Third exclaimed, in a supreme moment, "My kingdom for a horse!" so Marie Antoinette was ready to cry out, "My crown for that letter!"

Andrée understood the Queen's wish; but she could not forego the pleasure of leaving her rival in trepidation for a while.

"And that letter, which the Count wrote you on the verge of his departure, I am sure you have it not with you."

"You err, Madame," said Andrée; "it is here."

Taking the letter from her bosom, warm with her glow and embalmed with her perfume, she extended it towards the Queen.

The latter took it, shivering, pressed it between her fingers, not knowing whether she ought to keep it or return it, — regarding Andrée meanwhile with a frowning brow. Then, casting aside her scruples, she said: "The temptation is too strong!"

She opened the letter, leaned towards the light of the candelabra, and read as follows:

MADAME: I leave Paris in an hour, under an official order from the King. I can tell you neither whither I go, why I go, nor how long I shall remain away from Paris, — things which probably matter very little to you, but which I should nevertheless be glad to communicate, if authorized so to do.

For an instant I intended calling upon you, to announce my departure by the living voice; but I did not dare do so without your permission.

The Queen had ascertained what she wished to know, and would have returned the letter to Andrée; but the latter said to her, as if it was now for her to command, not to obey: "Read to the end, Madame!" and so the Queen read on:

I declined the last mission offered me, because I then believed, poor fool! that some mutual sympathy would detain me in Paris; but since then, alas! I have acquired proof to the contrary, and I accept with joy an opportunity for going far away from hearts to which I am indifferent.

If during my journey anything should happen to me, as to my brother George, all my plans are made; so that you will

be the *first* to be informed of it, if any misfortune overtakes me, and restores you once more to your liberty. You must know, however, Madame, what deep admiration has been roused in my heart by your sublime devotion, so ill recompensed by one for whom you — young, beautiful, and born to be happy — have sacrificed youth, beauty, and happiness.

Finally, Madame, all I ask of God and yourself is, that you sometimes accord a thought to the unhappy one, who has so tardily perceived the value of the treasure he possesses.

With heartfelt respect,

OLIVER DE CHARNY.

The Queen handed Andrée the letter, who this time accepted it; but her nerveless, almost inanimate hand fell by her side, and she murmured with a sigh: "Well, Madame, have you been betrayed? Have I been faithless — I do not say to the promise made you, for I never made you such a promise, but to the trust you reposed in me?"

"Forgive me, Andrée,' said the Queen, "but I have suffered so much!"

"*You* have suffered! You dare tell me, to my very face, that you have suffered? What then shall I say of myself? I will not say what I have suffered, for not a single word could I use that has not already served other women to blazon the same idea, and with less cause. No, I should need a new word, unknown and unheard of, to sum up all my sorrows, and give expression to all my tortures. *You* have suffered? And yet you have never seen the man whom you loved, Madame, indifferent to your love, kneeling, heart in hand, to another woman! You have not seen your brother, jealous of that other woman, — whom he adored in silence, as a pagan adores his deity, — quarrel with the man whom she loved! You have never heard the man whom you loved — when

smitten by your brother, with a wound believed to be mortal — appeal, in his delirium, only to that *other* woman, whose confidant you were! You have not seen that other woman glide like a ghost through the corridors, where you yourself wandered, in order to hear those delirious accents, which proved that if an insane passion does not outlive this life, it at least accompanies a lover to the very threshold of the tomb! You have not seen this man return to life, by a miracle of nature and science, and then rise from his bed, only to fall at the feet of your rival, — your *rival*, — yes, Madame; for in love it is the grandeur of passion which levels all ranks! You have not, in your despair, retired to a convent at the age of twenty-five, wishing to extinguish, at the frozen feet of the crucifix, the love which consumed you! Once more, after a year of prayer, sleeplessness, fasting, fruitless desires, pitiful moans, — when you hoped, if not to extinguish, at least to be able to put to sleep the flame which consumed your life, — you have not seen your former rival, who had comprehended nothing, guessed nothing, summon you from your solitude, to ask of you — what? to demand, in the name of the old friendship, which suffering could not alter, in the name of her safety as a wife, in the name of compromised royalty, — to demand that you should become the wife, — of whom? Of the man whom you had worshipped for years, — to become a wife without a husband, conveniently used as a screen, to stand between the watchfulness of the world and the unlawful happiness of another, as a shroud conceals the corpse from the public eye. You have never, — governed, I will not say by pity, — for jealous passion has no mercy, as well you know, Madame, — you who have made me your scapegoat, — I say *you* have never undertaken such an enormous sacrifice, even through a sense of

duty! You have not heard the priest ask you to take for your husband a man who would never be your real spouse! You have not felt this man place upon your finger a gold ring, pledge of eternal union, which for you was but a worthless and empty token! You have not seen your husband quit your side an hour after the ceremony, never to return, except as the lover of your rival! Ah, Madame, these few years, now rolled away, have been cruel years."

The Queen stretched forth her faltering hand, seeking Andrée's; but Andrée withdrew her own.

"As for me," continued the young woman, becoming the accuser, "I promised nothing, but you see what I have done; but as for you, Madame, you promised me two things — "

"Andrée, Andrée!" begged the Queen.

"You promised me never to see Charny again, — a promise the more sacred, because I did not exact it."

"Andrée!"

"Then again, you promised — oh, this time, in writing — to treat me as a sister, — another pledge the more sacred, because unsolicited."

"Andrée!"

"Must I recall to you the terms of that promise, made at such a solemn time, at the moment when I was about to sacrifice for you my life, — more than my life, my love, — my happiness in this world and my salvation in the next? Yes, my salvation in another world, for our sins are not alone in our deeds, Madame, and who can assure me that the Lord will pardon my mad desires, my impious vows? Well, in that hour of sacrifice you gave me a letter. I can see that letter yet, each word flaming before my eyes." Then Andrée repeated the letter, which was couched in the following terms:

ANDRÉE : You have saved me! My honor owes itself only to you; my life is yours. In the name of that honor which costs you so dearly, I swear that you may call me your sister. Do so, and you will not see me blush. I place this writing in your own hands. It is the pledge of my gratitude, — it is my wedding-gift.

Yours is the most noble of hearts, and will appreciate the worth of what I freely offer.

MARIE ANTOINETTE.

The Queen gave a dejected sigh.

"Oh, I understand," resumed Andrée, "because I burned this note, you supposed I had forgotten its contents! No, Madame, no! You see that I recollect every word of it, from beginning to end, though *you* appear to remember not one line. Ah me, how well I remember it, and more —"

"Oh forgive me, forgive me, Andrée. I have believed of late that he loved thee!"

"Perhaps you believed it the law of the heart, that because he loved you less, he must love another more?"

Andrée had suffered so much, that now she became cruel.

"You also, — you have perceived that he loved me less?" said the Queen, with an exclamation of grief.

Andrée answered not; but she looked at the distracted Queen, and something like a smile curled her lip.

"But what must I do, — my God, what must I do to keep his love? My life is wrapt up in it. Oh, if thou knowest, Andrée, my friend, my sister, — tell me, I beg thee, I adjure thee!" and the Queen extended both hands to Andrée, who recoiled a step.

"How can I know, Madame, — I, whom he has never loved?"

"Oh, but he may love thee! Some day he may come to thy feet, make honorable amends for the past, and ask pardon for all he has made thee suffer; and suffering is so swiftly forgotten in the arms of one whom we love; pardon is so speedily accorded to those who have made us suffer."

"In case that misery should come, — yes, Madame, it would probably be unfortunate for us both! — do you forget that before being truly the wife of the Count, there is a great secret which he should learn, a disclosure to be made to him, — a terrible secret, a fatal disclosure, which would instantly paralyze the love which you fear? Do you forget that it would remain for me to recount to him what I long ago related to you?"

"You would tell him that your chastity had been violated by Gilbert? You would tell him that you have a child?"

"For what do you take me, Madame," said Andrée, "that you should manifest such a doubt?"

The Queen breathed again, and said: "Then you will do nothing to bring Charny back to you?"

"Nothing, Madame, — no more in the future than I have in the past."

"You will not tell him, you will not let him even suspect that you love him?"

"Unless he comes to tell me he loves me, — no, Madame!"

"And if he should come and tell you so; if you tell him that you love him, you swear to me — "

"Oh Madame!" said Andrée, interrupting the Queen.

"Yes," said the Queen, "you are right, Andrée, — my sister, my friend; and I am unjust, cruel, unreasonable. Oh, but when all forsake me, friends, power, reputation,

I would at least keep that love for which I have sacrificed reputation, power, and friends."

"Then, Madame," said Andrée, with that icy coolness which she had not thrown off for an instant, even when she spoke of her own tortures, "you have some new agreements to demand of me, some fresh orders to transmit?"

"No, nothing, I thank you. I wished to offer you my friendship, and you refuse it. — Andrée, Andrée, at least bear my gratitude away with you!"

Andrée made a motion of the hand which seemed to repel this second sentiment of the Queen, as she had rejected the first. With a chilling and profound reverence she went out slowly and silently, like a spectre.

"Thou art right, — body of ice, heart of diamond, soul of fire, — to accept neither my gratitude nor my friendship; for I feel, and I ask the pardon of the Lord Christ for it, that I hate thee as I never hated before. If he loves thee not already, — oh, I am sure of it, — he will love thee hereafter."

Calling Weber she said: "Weber, hast thou seen Monsieur Gilbert?"

"Yes, your Majesty," replied the attendant.

"At what time to-morrow will he come?"

"At ten, Madame."

"Very well, Weber. Tell my ladies I will go to bed to-night without their assistance, and that as I am tired and nearly ill, I wish them to let me sleep till ten o'clock. The first and only person I shall receive will be Doctor Gilbert."

CHAPTER XXV.

FRANÇOIS THE BAKER.

We will not undertake to tell how these two women passed the night.

Not till nine o'clock in the morning do we again see the Queen, her eyes red with weeping, her cheeks pale with want of sleep. At eight o'clock, — that is, near the dawning, for this was the sad period of the year, when the days are brief and dull, — at eight o'clock she forsook her bed, whereon she had unsuccessfully sought repose during the earlier hours of the night; though during the later hours she had fallen into feverish and agitated slumber.

Although no one dared enter her chamber, after the orders she had given, she soon began to hear those comings and goings, outside of her apartments, those sudden noises and prolonged murmurs, which indicate that something extraordinary is occurring outside.

Just as the Queen completed her toilet the clock sounded nine.

Among the confused sounds, which vibrated through the corridors, she heard Weber's voice, enjoining silence.

She summoned her faithful attendant. In an instant the tumult ceased and the door opened.

"What is going on in the palace, Weber?" she asked. "What does all this uproar mean?"

"It appears, Madame, that there is some disturbance in the Cité, the ancient part of Paris," replied Weber.

"A disturbance? What about?"

"Nobody yet knows, Madame; only it is said there is a bread riot."

Formerly the idea would not have entered the Queen's mind that there are people who die of hunger; but since the ride from Versailles, when she heard the Dauphin ask for bread, without being able to give it to him, she understood better the distress occasioned by famine and hunger.

"Poor souls!" she said, recalling the shouts she had heard on her journey, and Gilbert's explication of them. "Well, now they can see that it is not the fault of the Baker or the Bakeress, if they have no bread."

Then she asked aloud: "Is it feared that this disturbance will become serious?"

"I do not know what to tell you, Madame, for no two reports agree."

"Well then, run as far as the Cité, Weber, — it is n't far from here, — and ascertain with thine own eyes what is going on. Then come and tell me."

"And Monsieur Gilbert?" asked Weber.

"Tell Campan or Misery that I expect him, and one or the other can introduce him."

As Weber disappeared she threw this last injunction after him: "Tell them not to keep him waiting; for he is posted about all that 's going on, and can explain matters."

Weber went out of the palace, passed through the wicket on the side of the Louvre, hastened over the bridge; and, guided by the clamor, and following the living wave which rolled towards the Archepiscopal Palace, he soon reached the Purview of Notre Dame.

As he neared this old part of Paris, the crowd increased from far and near, and the outcries became louder.

In the midst of these outcries, or rather of these howls, might be heard voices, such voices as are only to be heard in the sky in hours of tempest, or on earth in days of Revolution; and these voices shouted: "He is a famine-breeder! Kill him, kill him! To the lamp-post, to the lamp-post!"

The voices of thousands, who did not even know what the noise was all about, among which could be distinguished the voices of women, repeated the denunciation, in the expectation of one of those spectacles which make the heart of a crowd leap for joy: "A famine-breeder! To death with him! To the lamp-post!"

All at once Weber was struck by one of those concussions sometimes felt where a great mass of people is compacted together, and he saw, coming up the Rue Chanoinesse, a human tide, a living cataract, in the midst whereof was struggling a pallid victim with torn clothes.

After him the populace surged, for against him were raised all these cries, these howls, these menaces.

One man only defended him against the mob; only one man tried to be a dyke to stem this human torrent. The one man who felt this one touch of pity, in the face of the animosity of ten, twenty, or a hundred men, was Gilbert. Some amongst the crowd recognized him, and began to call out: "It's Doctor Gilbert, — a patriot, the friend of Lafayette and of Bailly. Listen to the Doctor!"

At these outcries there was a halt, like the lull between two storm-waves. Weber profited by this calm to push his way towards the Doctor, whom he could hardly reach.

"Monsieur Gilbert!" he called out.

Gilbert turned himself towards the side whence came the voice.

"Ah, is it you, Weber?" he said. Then he beckoned him nearer, and whispered: "Go and tell the Queen that I shall be late at my appointment, for I am busy saving a man's life."

"Oh yes, yes!" exclaimed the unfortunate victim, overhearing these last words, "you will save me, won't you, Doctor? Tell them I am innocent. Tell them my young wife is on the eve of motherhood. — I swear that I did n't conceal any bread, Doctor!"

The poor fellow's prayers and excuses only added to the smouldering hatred and wrath of the crowd. Their shouts redoubled, and menaces threatened to resolve themselves into deeds.

"My friends," cried Gilbert, throwing himself with superhuman force against the foremost furious pursuers, "this man is a Frenchman, a citizen like yourselves. You should not, you will not choke a fellow without a hearing. Take him to the district court, and then we will see."

"Yes, that's right!" was called out by those who had recognized the Doctor.

"Monsieur Gilbert," said Weber, "hold on, and I will notify the officers at the station, which is only two steps off. In five minutes they will be here." Then he slipped away among the crowd, without even tarrying for Gilbert's approval.

Meanwhile four or five men had come to the Doctor's support, and made with their bodies a sort of barricade around the unfortunate man, menaced by the anger of the crowd. This rampart, slight as it was, restrained for a moment the assailants, who continued, however, to drown with their clamor the voices of Gilbert and the loyal citizens who had rallied about him.

At the end of five minutes there was a movement in

the crowd, succeeded by a murmur, and this murmur soon took the form of words: "The officers, the officers of the district!"

In the presence of these officers the curses ceased, and the crowd fell apart. Perhaps the assassins had not yet received their final orders.

The victim was conducted to the Hôtel de Ville. He stuck close to the Doctor, and held him by the arm, which he would not release.

Meanwhile, who was this man? We will tell you.

He was a poor baker, named Denis François, whom you have already heard of as furnishing bread to the members of the Assembly.

That morning an old woman went into his shop on the Rue Marché Palu, just as he had distributed his sixth batch of bread, and was beginning to bake the seventh. This old woman demanded a loaf.

"There's not one left," said François; "but wait for the seventh baking, and you shall be then attended to first."

"I want a roll right off," said the woman, "here's your money!"

"But I tell you there are no more," said the baker.

"Let me see!"

"Oh yes," replied the baker, "go in, look for yourself, search! I ask nothing better."

The old woman entered, searched, sniffed, rummaged, opened a cupboard, and in that cupboard she found three four-pound loaves of stale bread, which the apprentices had put aside for themselves.

She took one of them, and went out without paying for it; and when the baker protested, she stirred up the passers-by, declaring that François was a famine-breeder, and kept back half the supply of his ovens.

This cry of *famine-breeder* doomed François to a most certain death.

An old recruiting officer of dragoons, named Fleur d'Épine, who was drinking in a cabaret across the street, ran out of the cabaret, and repeated, in a tipsy voice, the old woman's outcry.

Hearing this double clamor people came bustling along, made inquiries, learned what was the matter, took up the same cry, rushed to the baker's shop, forced their way by the four men stationed at the door by the police, — as at the doors of all the bakeries, — and ransacked the shop. Besides the two loaves of dry bread, left and denounced by the old woman, they found ten dozen small fresh rolls reserved for the Deputies, who held their sessions in the Archbishop's Palace, only a hundred paces distant.

From that moment the victim was condemned. It was no longer one voice, but a hundred, two hundred, a thousand voices, which cried "Famine-breeder!" It was the whole crowd which shouted, "To the lamp-post!"

At this time the Doctor was returning from a visit to his son, whom he had replaced with the Abbé Bérardier at the College Louis le Grand. His attention was attracted by the noise. He saw a whole crowd demanding the death of one man, and ran to the help of that man.

In a few words he learned from François what the trouble was all about. Convinced of the baker's innocence he endeavored to defend him. Then the crowd hustled along their victim and his friend together, including them both in the same anathema, and ready to kill both at one blow.

It was at this crisis that Weber, sent by the Queen, arrived in Notre Dame Square, and recognized Gilbert.

Soon after the departure of Weber, as we know, the

district officers arrived, and the unlucky baker was forthwith conducted to the Hôtel de Ville, under their escort.

The prisoner, the district officials, the excited populace, all crowded helter-skelter towards the Hôtel de Ville, so that in an instant the square was encumbered with unemployed laborers and poor devils dying of hunger, always ready to mix themselves up in a riot, and ascribe to whomsoever was suspected of being the cause of any public misery, the ills they personally endured.

No sooner had the ill-fated François disappeared under the yawning gateway of the Hôtel de Ville, than the cries redoubled. It seemed to these men as if the prey which rightfully belonged to them had been snatched away.

Several individuals of sinister mien squirmed through the crowd, whispering: "He 's a famine-breeder, hired by the Court. That 's why they try to save him!"

These words, "He 's a famine-breeder," meandering amidst the famished populace like some cunning flame, excited their malice and ignited their anger.

Unhappily it was still early, and not one of the men who had most influence with the populace was on hand, — Bailly or Lafayette; and this was well known to those who circulated the accusation: "He 's a famine-breeder, a famine-breeder!"

At last, when the accused did not reappear, the cries changed into one immense clamor, the threats into a universal howl.

The men of whom we have spoken glided through the porch, and crept along the galleries, penetrating to the hall where they found the unhappy baker, whom Gilbert was trying to exculpate as best he could.

On the other side the neighbors of François, who had followed him in the tumult, testified to what he had

done since the beginning of the Revolution, as proof of his zeal. They said that he had heated his ovens as many as ten times a day; that when his fellow-bakers were out of flour, he had supplied them with his own; that in order to serve his customers more promptly, he had hired, in addition to his own furnaces, one belonging to a neighboring pastry-cook, where he could dry his wood.

In these depositions it was shown that this man merited reward instead of punishment; but in the square, through the lobbies, and up into the trial-hall the cry was continued, "A famine-breeder!" and the death of the culprit was demanded.

Suddenly an unexpected irruption is made into the hall, cleaving asunder the line of National Guardsmen surrounding François, and separating him from his protectors. Gilbert, crowded back to the side of the improvised tribunal, sees twenty arms extended. Seized, dragged down, pinioned, the prisoner cries for help, for succor, and vainly lifts his supplicating hands. Gilbert makes a frantic but useless effort to rejoin François. The living avenue, through which the victim disappears, closes gradually behind him. Like a swimmer absorbed by a whirlpool he struggles an instant, his hands clasped, despair in his eyes, his voice stifled in his throat. Then the human wave overwhelms him again, and the gulf swallows him up.

From that moment he is lost. Rolled from top to bottom of the stairway, he receives a wound at each step. When he reaches the entrance his body is one vast bruise. He no longer begs for life, but for death.

Where did Death hide himself at that epoch, that he was so ready to come when he was called.

In a second the head of the wretched man is separated from his body and elevated on the end of a pike.

Hearing the outcry in the street, those rioters who are in the galleries and in the halls precipitate themselves downstairs. They must see the spectacle to the end! It is a curiosity, — a man's head on a pike. They have not seen one since the Sixth of October, and now it is the Twenty-first!

"Oh Billot, Billot," muttered Gilbert, hastening out of the hall, "thou art fortunate in being away from Paris!"

He crossed the Place de Grève, and walked along the banks of the River Seine, — the bleeding head, with its howling escort, rapidly getting farther and farther away, over the Bridge of Notre Dame. About midway along the Quay Pelletier he felt some one touch his arm.

He raised his head, made an exclamation, and was about to stop and speak; but the man who had recognized him slipped a billet into his hand, laid his finger on his mouth, and hastened along by the side of the Archepiscopal Palace.

Evidently this personage wished to preserve his incognito, but a market-woman noticed him, clapped her hands, and cried out: "Ah ha! It's our little mother Mirabeau."

"Long live Mirabeau!" cried five hundred voices. "Long live the Defender of the People! Long live the patriot, the orator!"

The tail-end of the procession which was following the head of the ill-starred baker heard this cry, and came back to form an escort for Mirabeau, who was thus accompanied by a tremendous crowd to the doors of the Archbishop's Palace.

It was indeed Mirabeau, on his way to a session of the Assembly. Having encountered Gilbert, he gave him a billet, which he had just written on a wine-seller's counter, and intended sending to the Doctor's house.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED FROM A SEVERED HEAD.

THE billet slipped into his hand by Mirabeau was hastily read by Gilbert, who then read it a second time slowly, put it into his vest pocket, called a cab, which he ordered driven to the Tuileries.

On his arrival there he found all the gratings closed. The sentinels at the gates had been doubled, by order of Lafayette, who, hearing there was trouble in the city, first took measures for the security of the King and Queen, and then betook himself to the locality where he had been told the disturbance arose.

By making himself known to the porter at the gate opening on the Rue d'Échelle, Gilbert gained admittance to the royal apartments.

As soon as she saw him, Madame Campan, according to the Queen's orders, at once received and introduced him; as Weber, in obedience to the Queen, had gone back for further news.

At the sight of Gilbert the Queen uttered a cry. Part of the Doctor's coat and frill had been torn in his struggle to rescue the unlucky François, and there were several spots of blood on his shirt.

"I ask pardon of her Majesty," he said, "for presenting myself before her in this condition; but I have already made her wait a long time, in spite of myself, and I did not wish to keep her in suspense any longer."

"And that unfortunate man, Monsieur?"

"He is dead, Madame! He was indeed assassinated piecemeal."

"Was he at all blameworthy?"

"He was innocent, Madame."

"Oh Monsieur, these are the fruits of your Revolution! After having gorged themselves with great lords, public functionaries, guardsmen, they now devour each other! But is there no means of meting out justice to those assassins?"

"We shall strive for it, Madame; but it is more important now to prevent murders than to punish the murderers."

"My God, how can that be done? The King and myself would ask nothing better."

"Madame, all these misdeeds arise from the distrust felt by the people towards the official agents. Place at the head of the government men who have popular confidence, and nothing of the sort will happen again."

"Ah yes, always the same democratic cry, — Mirabeau and Lafayette!"

"I hoped the Queen had sent for me to say that she had prevailed upon the King to cease his hostility to this combination which I proposed."

"To begin with, Doctor," she replied, "you fall into a grave error, — one into which many others fall besides yourself. You fancy that I influence the King? You imagine that the King follows my ideas? You deceive yourself. If anybody can influence the King, it is Madame Elizabeth, and not myself; and in proof of this, let me tell you that no longer ago than yesterday he sent one of my personal attendants on a mission, Monsieur de Charny, without my knowing either whither he goes, or for what purpose."

"Nevertheless, if the Queen can ever overcome her

repugnance to Mirabeau, I will be responsible for bringing the King to my wishes."

"Let us see!" said the Queen, quickly. "Will Monsieur tell me that he thinks my repugnance groundless?"

"In politics, Madame, there should be neither personal sympathies nor antipathies. In politics we must have either agreement in principles, or a combination of interests; and I must acknowledge to your Majesty — to the shame of humanity, be it spoken! — that union of interests is far more reliable than agreement of ideas."

"Doctor, would you seriously advise me to trust a man who brought about the Fifth and Sixth of October, and bargain with one who has publicly insulted me on the rostrum?"

"Madame, believe me, Mirabeau was not responsible for those days. It was famine, poverty, misery, which then began their work in the daylight; but there is a powerful arm, mysterious and terrible, which tries to accomplish its work in the night. Perhaps some day I may even have to defend you in that direction, and wrestle with this hellish power which pursues you, — and not only you, but all other crowned heads, — not only the throne of France, but all thrones on earth. As truly as I have the honor of putting my life at your feet, — and at the King's, Madame, — I assure you that Mirabeau was not responsible for those dreadful days; and he was first informed of the rioting at the Assembly, as others were, — only perhaps a trifle sooner than the others, — by a note which was sent to him, stating that the populace were marching on Versailles."

"Do you also deny, what is notoriously public, the insults which he bestowed upon me from the tribune?"

"Madame, Mirabeau is one of those men who know their own value. Such a man feels exasperated — seeing

what he is fitted for, of what use he might be — when he finds that his rulers abstain from employing him. Yes, to turn all eyes towards himself, Madame, Mirabeau would even be guilty of slander; for he would rather have the illustrious daughter of Maria Theresa, either the Queen or the woman, look upon him angrily, than not to notice him at all."

"And you believe he would consent to be on our side, Doctor?"

"He is entirely yours, Madame. When Mirabeau avoids royalty, he is like a skittish horse, who only needs to feel the bridle and spur of his rider, to return to his proper gait."

"But, belonging already to Orleans, he can surely not attach himself to us, to the King, to the people, — to every party in the world?"

"There is your mistake, Madame."

"Mirabeau is not committed to Orleans?" said the Queen.

"He is so little bound to Orleans, that when he heard the Prince had retired to England, because of Lafayette's decisive hints, Mirabeau said, as he crumpled in his hand the note from Monsieur de Lauzun, announcing this departure: 'They pretend I belong to that man's party! I would n't have him for one of my lackeys!'"

"Well, that reconciles me to him a little," said the Queen, trying to smile, "and if I thought we could really rely upon him —"

"Well?"

"Well, perhaps I should be less averse to the King's reconciliation with him."

"Madame, the day after the rabble brought your Majesty from Versailles, as well as the King and the royal family, I met Monsieur de Mirabeau —"

"Intoxicated with his great triumph of the evening previous?"

"Disturbed by the perils you had encountered, and those into which you might hereafter run."

"Indeed! Are you sure of this?" asked the Queen, with a mistrustful air.

"Do you wish me to report his very words?"

"Yes, if you will do me that pleasure."

"Well, here they are, word for word; for I carved them on my memory, hoping I might one day have an opportunity of repeating them to your Majesty: 'If you have any means of making the King and Queen listen to you,' said Mirabeau, 'persuade them that both France and themselves will be ruined, if the royal family does not leave Paris. I have a plan for helping them to do so. You may add the assurance that they may reckon on my help.'"

The Queen became thoughtful and said: "Then Mirabeau's advice, too, is that we quit Paris?"

"That was his opinion at that time."

"Which he has since changed?"

"Yes, if I can credit a note which I received half an hour ago."

"From whom?"

"From himself."

"Might one see that billet?"

"It was designed for your Majesty," said Gilbert, drawing the paper from his pocket.

"Your Majesty must excuse everything," he added, "for it was written on cheap copying paper, in some shop."

"Oh, don't worry yourself about that. Paper and place were quite in harmony with the politics of the hour!"

The Queen took the letter, and read as follows:

The occurrence of to-day alters the aspect of things.

Great advantage may be derived from that severed head.

The Assembly will be frightened and demand martial law.

Mirabeau may advocate and carry the vote for martial law.

Mirabeau may argue that there is no security except in giving more power to the Executive arm of the government.

Mirabeau may attack Necker, on account of his subsidies, and upset them.

In place of the Necker Cabinet, a new ministry should be formed, with Mirabeau and Lafayette; and Mirabeau will be responsible.

"Well," said the Queen, "this memorandum is not signed."

"Have I not had the honor of informing your Majesty that Mirabeau himself handed it to me?"

"What do you think of it?"

"My opinion is, Madame, that Mirabeau is perfectly right, and that the alliance he proposes alone can save France."

"If Mirabeau should send me, through yourself, a Memorial about the situation, and also the prospectus for a new ministry, I will place them under the King's eyes."

"And your Majesty will approve them?"

"I will approve them."

"Meanwhile," said Gilbert inquiringly, "as the first pledge, Mirabeau must support the resolution for martial law, and demand that greater power shall be given to the Executive Department?"

"Let him do so."

"In exchange, in case the removal of Necker becomes urgent, the ministry of Lafayette and Mirabeau will not be unfavorably received?"

"By myself? No!" said the Queen. "I wish to

prove that I am ready to sacrifice all my personal resentments for the good of the State. Only you must remember, I do not answer for the King."

"Will *Monsieur* abet you in this matter?"

"I conjecture that Provence has affairs of his own, which will prevent him from endorsing others."

"And the Queen has no idea what *Monsieur's* projects may be?" queried Gilbert.

"I believe he is of Mirabeau's former opinion, that the King had better leave Paris."

"Your Majesty authorizes me to tell Mirabeau that his Memorial, and his scheme for a new cabinet, are asked for by your Majesty?"

"I will let Monsieur Gilbert judge for himself how far it is necessary to be on one's guard in dealing with such a man, — one who is our friend to-day, but may become our enemy to-morrow."

"As to that point, Madame, rely upon me; but as the situation is grave, there is no time to be lost. Permit me to go to the Assembly, and I will try to see Mirabeau to-day. If I see him, your Majesty shall hear from me in two hours."

The Queen made a gesture of assent and dismissal, and Gilbert withdrew.

A quarter of an hour later he was at the Assembly hall. The members were in commotion on account of the crime committed at their doors, and against a man who had been, in a certain way, their servant. They came and went from the tribune to their benches, and from their benches into the lobby.

Mirabeau alone remained in his place, unmoved. He waited, with his gaze fixed on the place reserved for visitors. When he saw Gilbert, his leonine face lighted up.

Gilbert made him a sign, to which he responded by

an affirmative nod; so Gilbert tore a page from his memorandum-book, and wrote as follows:

Your propositions were welcomed, at least by one of the two parties, — the one whom you believe, and I also, to be the most influential of the two.

A Memorial is requested for to-morrow, and a cabinet plan for to-day.

Get more power for the Executive Administration, and the Executive will rely on you.

He folded this paper in the form of a letter, and wrote the address:

To M. le Comte de Mirabeau.

Calling a messenger he bade him take this billet to its destination.

From his standpoint Gilbert could see the messenger enter the aisles, direct his steps towards the Deputy from Aix, and deliver to him the billet.

Mirabeau read it with such an expression of utter indifference, that it would have been impossible for his nearest neighbor to guess that the paper he had received corresponded with his inmost desires. With the same indifference he traced a few lines on the sheet of paper which happened to lie in front of him, folded the paper carelessly, and gave it to the usher, saying: "For the person who handed you the billet you just brought me."

Gilbert opened the paper with avidity. It contained these few lines, which might have assured to France a different future, if the plan proposed therein had been put into execution:

I will speak.

To-morrow I will send the Memorial.

Here is the list requested, — which might be modified in respect to two or three names.

NECKER: Prime Minister.

This name almost made Gilbert doubt if the billet he was reading could be from Mirabeau's hand; but as a parenthetical note followed this name, as was the case with names, Gilbert read on:

NECKER: Prime Minister. (It will be necessary to render him as powerless as he is incapable; but he must be kept on the King's side, for popularity's sake.)

ARCHBISHOP OF BORDEAUX: Chancellor. (He should be advised to choose his assistants with great care.)

LIANCOURT: Minister of War. (He has honor, firmness, and personal affection for the King, which will give the King a sense of security.)

ROCHEFOUCAULT: Master of the Royal Household. (Thouret with him.)

LA MARCK: for the Navy. (He cannot have the War Department, which must be given to Liancourt. La Marck has fidelity, character, and executive ability.)

BISHOP OF AUTUN: Secretary of the Treasury. (His proposition in regard to the clergy entitles him to that place. Laborde with him.)

MIRABEAU: in the Royal Council, without any special department. (Petty scruples about worldly speech are out of season. Government must loudly affirm that its chief representatives are henceforth right principles, character, and talent.)

TARGET: Mayor of Paris. (The *Basoche*, or jurisdiction of the Parliamentary officials, should belong to him.)

LAFAYETTE: in the Council — Marshal of France — Generalissimo for a period, to reorganize the army.

MONTMORIN: Governor, Duke, and Peer. (His debts to be paid.)

SÉGUR: Minister of Foreign Affairs.

MOUNIER: Royal Librarian.

CHAPELIER: Public Works.

At the bottom of this memorandum was written a second.

Lafayette's Preferences.

Minister of Justice : ROCHEFOUCAULT.
Minister of Foreign Affairs : BISHOP OF AUTUN.
Minister of Finance : LAMBERT, HALLER, or CLAVIÈRES.
Minister of the Navy : . . . . . .

The Queen's Preferences.

Minister of War or Navy : LA MARCK.
Chief of the Council of Instruction and Public Education: ABBÉ SIEYÈS.
Keeper of the Privy Seal : . . . . . .

This second memorandum indicates the changes and modifications which might be made in the combination proposed by Mirabeau, without opposing any obstacle to his views or interfering with his projects.[1]

These notes were all written in a slightly tremulous hand, which shows that Mirabeau felt great emotion, though so calm on the surface.

Gilbert read hastily, tore out a fresh leaf from his tablet, and wrote the three or four lines following, which he handed to the same usher, whom he had requested not to be far away :

I will return to the mistress of the apartments we wish to hire, and report the conditions under which you consent to take and repair the house.

Let me know — at my home in the Rue Saint Honoré, near the Church of the Assumption, and opposite the shop of a joiner named Duplay — the result of the Session, as soon as it is over.

Always thirsty for excitement and for public affairs, hoping to beat down her heart's passion with political

[1] These notes, found among Mirabeau's papers after his death, have been since collected in the work published by Bacourt; and they throw much light on the last two years of Mirabeau's life.

intrigue, the Queen awaited Gilbert's return with impatience, meanwhile listening to Weber's recital of his last intelligence, — a description of the terrible end of an awful scene, of which Weber had now witnessed both the commencement and termination.

Sent back for further information by the Queen, Weber arrived at one end of Notre Dame Bridge, just as there appeared, at the other end of the bridge, a bloodthirsty escort, bearing aloft the head of the baker François, like a murderous banner. In accordance with the same popular and ghastly humor which had led the mob to barber the heads of the Guardsmen at Sevres Bridge, one of these assassins, more facetious than the others, had decorated the head of François with a cotton cap, taken from one of his fellow-bakers.

About a third of the way across the bridge a young woman, pale and frightened, was running (despite her evidently maternal condition) as rapidly as possible towards the Hôtel de Ville.

Suddenly she stopped. That head, whose features she could not yet distinguish, looked in the distance like some antique carving; but as the head drew nearer and nearer, it was easy to see, by the distortion of the features of the poor fellow, that his head was by no means transformed into stone.

When this horrible trophy was only twenty paces off, the young woman uttered a cry, extended her arms desperately, and then, as if her feet were detached from the earth, she fell fainting on the bridge.

It was the wife of François, five months advanced towards motherhood; and they carried her away in an insensible condition.

"Oh my God," whispered the Queen, "this is a terrible warning which thou hast sent thy servant, to teach

her that there is far greater misery than her own, however great that may be."

At this moment Gilbert entered, introduced by Madame Campan, who replaced Weber as guardian at the royal door.

Gilbert found there no longer the Queen alone, but the *woman*, — that is, the wife and mother, — crushed by the recital which knocked doubly at her heart.

Her disposition could not be more favorable, — in Gilbert's mind, at least, — since he came to propose a method of putting an end to just such crimes.

Drying her eyes, whence tears were rolling, and her forehead, pearly with perspiration, the Queen took from Gilbert's hands the list he brought; but before casting her eyes on the paper, important as it was, she said: "Weber, if that poor woman is not dead, I will receive her to-morrow; and if she is really in such a sad condition, I will be godmother to her babe."

"Oh Madame, Madame," cried Gilbert, "why cannot every Frenchman see, as I see, the tears which well from your eyes, and hear the words which drop from your lips?"

The Queen trembled. These were almost the very words Charny had addressed to her, under circumstances not less critical.

Then she cast her eye over Mirabeau's note; but she was too much disturbed to make a proper response at that moment.

"This is all right, Doctor," she said. "Leave me that list! I will reflect upon it, and give you an answer to-morrow."

Scarcely knowing what she was doing, she extended her hand to Gilbert, which he, greatly surprised, brushed with his lips and finger-tips.

It must occur to any one that a great change had already come over proud Marie Antoinette, when she was willing to offer her hand for Doctor Gilbert's salute, and discuss the formation of a new cabinet, with Lafayette and Mirabeau as its prime factors.

At seven in the evening a servant, without livery, brought Gilbert the following letter.

The session has been hot.

Martial law is decided upon.

Buzot and Robespierre advocated the creation of a higher court of law.

I persuaded the house to decree that crimes against the Nation (*lèse-nation*, — it is a new word which we have invented) shall be tried by the Royal Tribunal at the Châtelet.

I unmistakably based the welfare of France on the stability of the royal authority, and three-quarters of the Assembly applauded my words.

We are now at the Twenty-first of October. I hope Royalty has made some progress since the Sixth.

Vale et me ama.

This billet was not signed; but it was in the same writing as the ministerial memorandum and the morning's note. This rendered it absolutely certain that the writer was Mirabeau.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE COURT OF THE CHÂTELET.

In order that they may comprehend the import of Mirabeau's triumph, — which involved in its rebound the triumph of royalty, of which he constituted himself the representative, — it is necessary to tell our readers what the Court of the Châtelet was.

Moreover, one of its decisions furnished material for one of the most dreadful scenes which ever stained the Place de Grève during the year 1790, — a scene which will necessarily find its place in the course of this narrative, as it is by no means foreign to our subject.

Since the Thirteenth Century the Châtelet had been of great historic importance, both as a courthouse and a prison, having received from good King Louis the Ninth the universal jurisdiction which it exercised during five centuries.

Another King, who was nothing unless a builder, Philip Augustus, erected a considerable part of the Church of Notre Dame. He also founded three hospitals, Trinity, Saint Catherine, and Saint Nicholas du Louvre. He paved the streets of Paris, which were so buried in mud and filth, — so say the chronicles of the time, — that the odors made it impossible for the inhabitants to sit in their windows.

Philip Augustus had one great resource for all his expenses, — a resource which his successors unfortunately lost, — the Jews.

In 1189 he was inoculated with the chief folly of his age, — the desire to recapture Jerusalem from the Sultans of Asia; so he accompanied Richard the Lion-Hearted, of England, to the Holy Land.

Before he went away, not wishing that his loyal citizens of Paris should lose their time, and possibly, in their leisure moments, dream of rebellion against himself, — as, at Philip's own instigation, the subjects, and even the son of Henry Second of England had rebelled, — Philip left a plan which he ordered to be put into execution immediately after his departure.

This plan was to build a new wall about the city, an enclosure of which he himself drew the plan, and which was to be composed of solid masonry, a genuine wall of the Twelfth Century, garnished with towers and gates. This was the third wall surrounding Paris.

As one may easily understand, the engineers in charge of the undertaking did not know precisely how to gauge the size of their capital, which had grown very rapidly since the days of Hugh Capet, and was in a fair way to break through a third wall, as it had overrun the two predecessors.

The encircling wall was therefore built with a large margin; and within its circumference, as a precaution against the future, was a crowd of little hamlets, destined some day to become portions of the grand whole. These villages, poor as they were, had each its Seigneurial (or Lord) Justice. These noble judges, or seigneurs, contradicted each other on most points. Being included within one precinct, this opposition was the more noticeable; and they ended off by jostling against each other so emphatically, that their decisions led to dire confusion in this mixed capital.

There was a certain Seigneur de Vincennes. Having,

as it seemed to him, greater grievances on the score of this confusion than anybody else, he resolved to make an end of it. This Seigneur was Louis the Ninth, also King of France.

It may be well to inform little children, and even grown folks, that when Louis Ninth administered justice, under the famous oak-tree which has since become proverbial, he did so as a Seigneur, or Lord, and not as King. He therefore ordained, as King, that all the cases tried before the petty Lords Judiciary of the hamlets might be appealed to his own court, the Châtelet, in Paris. The jurisdiction of the Châtelet (or *Little Castle*) therefore became all powerful, being made a Court of Final Appeal, or Last Resort.

The Court of Châtelet therefore remained the supreme court, up to the very time when the Parliaments (encroaching, in their turn, on the royal prerogatives) declared that they would themselves consider any appeals from the decisions of the Judges of the Châtelet Court.

Now the Assembly had just suspended the Parliaments. "We buried them very speedily," said Lameth, as he left the hall after the session. In place of Parliaments, the Assembly, under the insistence of Mirabeau, restored to the Châtelet Court its ancient authority, augmented by new powers.

It was a great victory for royalty, that crimes against the nation, appealable under martial law, should come before a Crown Tribunal.

The first crime whereof the Châtelet had to take cognizance, after this change, was one which we are about to describe.

On the very day when this new law was promulgated, two of the murderers of the unfortunate François were hanged in the Place de Grève with no process of trial

except a public accusation and the general notoriety of the offence.

A third, who was none other than that blockhead Fleur d'Épine, to whom we before referred, was regularly tried. Degraded from his military office, and condemned by the Châtelet Court, he travelled by the same route as themselves, to rejoin his companions in eternity.

Two cases remained to be heard: that of the Farmer General Augeard, and that of the Inspector General of the Swiss Guards, Pierre Victor de Besenval. These two men were devoted to the Crown, and so their friends hastened to carry their cause before the higher Châtelet Judges.

Augeard was accused of having furnished the funds paid by the Queen's agent to the troops assembled on the parade-ground Champ de Mars, in July. Being little known, his arrest made little noise, and the populace cared nothing about it. The Châtelet acquitted him, without occasioning much talk.

The last case was Besenval's. This was quite another affair, for his name was notorious, in the worst sense of that term.

It was he who commanded the Swiss mercenaries at Reveillon, at the Bastille, and on the Champ de Mars. The populace remembered that he had led the assault against them on these three occasions, and were not slow to seek their revenge.

The orders of the Crown to the Châtelet Judges were most precise. Under no pretext would the King or Queen allow Besenval to be condemned; and it required no less than this double protection to save him.

Knowing himself to be culpable, he fled after the fall of the Bastille. Arrested on his way to the frontier, he was brought back to Paris. When he entered the Court-

room, death-shouts greeted him on all sides. "Besenval to the lamp-post! Besenval to the gibbet!" were cries heard from every quarter.

"Silence!" bawled the officials. With great effort silence was obtained. One of the onlookers profited by this stillness to call out, in a magnificent bass voice: "I demand that he be cut into thirteen pieces, and that one be sent to each section."

In spite of the charges against him, in spite of the animosity of the audience, Besenval was acquitted.

Indignant at this double acquittal, of both Augeard and Besenval, one of the auditors scribbled these four lines on a scrap of paper, which he rolled up like a ball, and sent to the Presiding Judge.

Sham judges, you — who Augeard cleared,
And Besenval whitewash — would fain cleanse a pest;
Like cheap waste-paper, soft, besmeared,
You soak up foul blots, but on you the blots rest.

The quatrain was signed. This was not all. The Presiding Judge looked about for the author. The author was standing on a bench, soliciting, by his gestures, the Judge's attention; but the countenance of the Judge fell, and he did not dare order the man's arrest; for that author was Camille Desmoulins, the agitator from the Palace Royal, the hero of platform and pistol, the disseminator of savage pamphlets, the Lamp-post Advocate, as he was called.

One of the spectators who passed out in the crowd, and whose costume would cause him to be taken for a simple tradesman, spoke to one of his neighbors, at the same time laying his hand on the man's shoulder, although the latter apparently belonged to the superior class of

society. "Well, Doctor Gilbert, what do you think of those two acquittals?"

The man thus addressed started, looked at his interlocutor, recognizing the face as he had the voice, and answered: "It is *to* you and not *from* you this question should come, my master, — you who know all things, past, present, and future."

"I? Why, I think that when two such scamps are acquitted, it is time to say, 'Woe to the innocent man who will come next!'"

"And why do you think an innocent man will succeed them, and be punished?" asked Gilbert.

"For the simple reason," replied his interlocutor, with the irony natural to him, "that it is the way of the world to let the good suffer for the bad."

"Adieu, master!" said Gilbert, offering a hand to Cagliostro; for after such words he no longer doubted in the least the identity of the terrible skeptic.

"And why Adieu?"

"Because I have business," replied Gilbert, smiling.

"A rendezvous?"

"Yes!"

"With whom, — Mirabeau, Lafayette, or the Queen?"

Gilbert paused and looked at Cagliostro uneasily.

"Do you know you terrify me?" said Gilbert.

"On the contrary, I ought to reassure you," said Cagliostro.

"How so?"

"Am I not one of your friends?"

"I hope so."

"You may be sure of it, and if you want a proof — "

"What then?"

"Come with me, and I will give you, in regard to the negotiation which you believe so secret, certain other

details, kept so very private, that you, who fancy yourself to be managing this special affair, are really kept in ignorance of half its ins and outs."

"Hear!" said Gilbert. "Perhaps you think to make game of me, with the aid of some of those old enchantments which are your familiars; but never mind! The circumstances of the time are so grave that I would accept any light, though offered by Satan in person. I will go wherever you may wish to take me."

"Oh, be easy! It will not be far away, and is moreover in a place not unknown to you. Only you must let me call the first empty cab that passes. The dress in which I came out did not make it advisable to take my own team."

He made a sign to a cab which was going by on the other side of the quay. The cab drove up and the two entered it.

"Where shall we go, my friend?" asked the coachman of Cagliostro, as if he comprehended that the passenger he questioned, though more simply clad, really led the other wherever he pleased.

"Oh, thou knowest," said Balsamo, making a sort of Masonic sign to the driver, who looked at him in great astonishment.

"Pardon, Monseigneur!" he said, answering with another sign, "but I did not know you."

"It is not so with me," said Cagliostro, in a firm and haughty voice. "However numerous they may be, I know every one of my subjects, from the least to the greatest."

The coachman shut the door, mounted his seat, put his horses into a grand gallop, and drove through the labyrinth of streets which led from the Châtelet to the Boulevard called Daughters of Calvary, whence he

continued his course towards the Bastille, and drew up at the corner of the Rue Saint Claude

When the cab stopped the door was opened with a celerity which testified the driver's respectful zeal.

Cagliostro made a sign for Gilbert to step out first, and then came out himself, saying as he did so: "Hast thou nothing to say to me?"

"Yes, Monseigneur, and I should have made my report this evening, but for the good luck of meeting you now."

"Speak out!"

"What I have to say to Monseigneur must not be heard by ears profane."

"Oh," said Cagliostro, laughing, "he who listens is hardly one of the profane."

This referred to Gilbert, who discreetly moved farther away, though not so far that he could not still see with one eye and hear with one ear.

He could see a smile play over Balsamo's face at the driver's report. He could hear the two names of Provence and Favras.

When the report was finished Cagliostro drew a double louis from his pocket, and wished to give it to the coachman; but the latter shook his head. "Monseigneur knows very well," he said, "that we are forbidden, by the supreme edict, to take pay for our reports."

"Oh well, it is not for thy report I pay, but for our drive."

"With that understanding, I accept," said coachy, taking the goldpiece. "Thanks to you, Monseigneur, my day's work is over." Mounting to his seat he drove away on the trot, cracking his whip, and leaving Gilbert dumfounded by what he had just seen and heard.

"Well!" said Cagliostro, who held his door open for

several seconds before Gilbert thought of going inside, "won't you come in, my dear Doctor?"

"Certainly!" said Gilbert. "Pray excuse me;" and then he crossed the threshold, though so stunned that he almost reeled like a man intoxicated.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AGAIN THE HOUSE IN THE RUE SAINT CLAUDE.

We know what self-control Gilbert possessed. By the time he had crossed the large and solitary courtyard he was himself again; so that he ascended the outer staircase with a stride as firm as his step across the threshold had been vacillating.

The mansion he had already recognized as being the same he had once visited, at that epoch in his career which had left ineffaceable traces in his heart.

In the antechamber he encountered the same German servant he had seen there sixteen years before. He stood on the same spot and was clad in the same livery; only, like Gilbert, like the Count, like the antechamber itself, this lackey was older by sixteen years.

Fritz — he remembered this as the name of this worthy domestic — Fritz knew at a glance whither his master wished to conduct Gilbert. Opening rapidly two intervening doors he paused on the threshold of the third, till he was assured that Cagliostro had no other commands.

This third door opened into the salon. Cagliostro, with his hand, made a sign for Gilbert to enter, and with his head, a sign that Fritz might retire, adding in German: "I am at home to nobody, until further orders."

Then turning to Gilbert he said: "It was not to prevent you from understanding that I spoke to my servant in German, for I know you speak that language, but because Fritz, who is a Tyrolean, understands German much

better than French. — But sit down, Doctor; I am at your service."

Gilbert could not help glancing inquisitively about him, and for a few seconds his eyes rested successively on the pictures and different pieces of furniture ornamenting the room, every one of which he recalled to memory.

The salon was the same as aforetime. On the walls hung eight pictures by the Old Masters. The armchairs were still upholstered in cherry brocade, broidered with gold, whose flowers shone out in relief amid the shadows cast by the thick curtains. The great inlaid table was in its old place; and the smaller tables, weighted with Sevres porcelain, stood between the windows.

Gilbert sighed, and let his head fall on his hand. Memories of the past superseded the feeling of curiosity which at first possessed him.

Cagliostro looked at Gilbert, as Mephistopheles might have looked at Faust, when that German philosopher had the imprudence to allow himself to indulge in such dreams in the diabolical presence. Suddenly he exclaimed, in a strident voice: "It appears that you recognize this room, Doctor?"

"Yes; and it recalls my obligations to you."

"Ah, bah! Chimeras!"

"You are indeed an odd man," said Gilbert, speaking to himself rather than to Cagliostro; "and if overruling Reason encouraged human faith in the magical prodigies reported to us by the poets and chroniclers of the Middle Ages, I should be tempted to believe you a necromancer, like Merlin, or an alchemist, like Nicholas Flamel."

"Yes, Gilbert, I am such a man to the world, but not to you. I have never sought to dazzle you with mira-

cles; and if perchance you have seen, at my summons, Truth emerge from her well, a little more ornamented and a little less naked than is her custom, it is because I have a taste for frippery, true Sicilian as I am."

"It was here, Count, as you will remember, that you gave a hundred thousand crowns to a very unhappy fellow in rags, as readily as I should give a sou to a pauper."

"You forget something still more extraordinary, Gilbert," said Cagliostro gravely, — "that the ragged boy brought back the whole of the one hundred thousand crowns, less only two louis, which he had used to buy clothing with."

"The fellow was only honest, whereas you had been magnificent!"

"And who says, Gilbert, that it is not easier to be generous than honest, — and to give away a hundred thousand ready crowns to somebody, when one has millions, than to carry back the one hundred thousand crowns to the lender, especially when the borrower has n't a sou."

"Perhaps so!"

"Besides, all depends upon one's mental disposition at the moment. I had just then experienced the greatest unhappiness of my lifetime, Gilbert. I no longer held to anything; and if you had asked for my life, I believe I should have given it to you — God pardon me! — as readily as I gave you that hundred thousand crowns."

"Then you have been submitted to torture, like other men?" said Gilbert, regarding Cagliostro with some astonishment.

Cagliostro sighed. "You talk of the memories recalled to your mind by this salon. If I should talk of what the room recalls to me, — but no! Before the recital was

ended, the rest of my hair would be white. — Let us chat about something else. Let us leave former events to sleep quietly in their shroud of oblivion, in their tomb of the past. Let us talk of the present. Let us talk of the future, if you will."

"You bring me back to present realities. Just now you said that, so far as I was concerned, you had broken with charlatanism; and behold now you pronounce that sounding word *future*, as if the future were in your hands, — as if your eyes could decipher its unknown hieroglyphics."

"Ah, you forget! Having at my disposal more means than other men, it is not surprising that I see the way better and farther than others do."

"Always words, Count!"

"You are oblivious to the facts, Doctor!"

"What do you expect, when my reason refuses to believe?"

"You remember that philosopher who denied all motion?"

"Yes."

"What did his adversary do?"

"He walked about in his opponent's presence," said Gilbert. — "Very well! I see your point. March, and I will look on; or rather, Speak, for thy servant heareth."

"Certainly, that is why we are here; and we have already wasted too much time on other matters. Let us see, Doctor, how far have we got along with our *fusion cabinet?*"

"What, — our *fusion cabinet?*"

"Certainly, our Lafayette-Mirabeau ministry."

"There are some groundless rumors which you have heard from others, and you seek to ascertain their reality by interrogating me," replied Gilbert.

"Doctor, you are scepticism incarnate; and what is worse, you doubt, not because you *can't* believe, but because you *won't* believe. Well, must I first tell you some things which you know as well as I? So be it! Afterwards I will tell you some things which I know better than yourself."

"I am listening!"

"A fortnight ago you talked with the King about Mirabeau, as the one man who could save the monarchy. Perhaps you remember, as you went away from the King, that Monsieur de Favras was admitted?"

"Which proves that he was not hanged at that date," said Gilbert, smiling.

"Oh, you're in too much of a hurry, Doctor. I did n't know you were so cruel. Do give the poor devil a few days longer. I made that prediction on the Sixth of October. It is now the Seventh of November, only a month. You hardly vouchsafe his soul as long a time to flit from the body, as is always accorded to a tenant who is to vacate his lodgings, — the quarter's notice. — But I warn you, Doctor, that you are leading me off the track."

"Resume it, Count. I ask nothing better than to follow your lead."

"Very well, — you spoke to the King about Mirabeau, as the only man to rescue the monarchy."

"That is my opinion, and that is why I suggested this combination to the King."

"It is also my opinion, Doctor. That's why your combination will be wrecked."

"Wrecked?"

"Undoubtedly. You know well enough that I don't wish to see monarchies saved."

"Go on!"

"The King, somewhat unsettled by what you said to him — Excuse me, but I am obliged to take up the thread from the outset, to convince you that I am not ignorant of a single phase of your negotiation! — Very well, the King, moved by what you said to him, talked over your combination with the Queen. It will be a great amazement to superficial minds, — when that great gossip, History, shouts on the housetops what we now whisper in the ear, — to know that the Queen was less averse to your project than the King. She sent for you to inquire about it. She discussed with you the *pros* and *cons*, and finally authorized you to talk with Mirabeau. Is n't this correct, Doctor?" said Cagliostro, looking Gilbert squarely in the face.

"So far I acknowledge that you have not deviated from the correct road."

"Upon this success you came away enchanted, Monsieur Proudfellow, with the profound conviction that this royal conversion was due to your irrefragable logic and irresistible arguments."

At this ironical speech Gilbert could not avoid biting his lips.

"And to what was this conversion due, if not to my logical arguments? Tell me, Count! for the study of the human heart is more precious to me than the study of the human body. You have discovered an instrument wherewith you may read the bosoms of kings. Lend me that marvellous telescope! Only an enemy of humanity would keep it solely to himself."

"I have already told you, that from yourself I have no secrets, Doctor. According to your wish I will place the telescope in your own hands. You may look through it as you will, by the small end, which makes things look larger, or by the large end, which makes them

look smaller. The Queen yielded for two reasons. Firstly, she had been subjected to a great sorrow the evening before; and to give her an intrigue, to tie and untie, was to furnish her with a distraction. Secondly, the Queen has always heard Mirabeau referred to as a lion, as a tiger, a bear; and what woman is able to resist such a flattering tribute to her self-love, as to tame a bear, tiger, or lion? 'It will be curious,' so she said to herself, 'if I can bend to my feet this man who hates me, — if I can lead him to make me public apologies, in the very tribune where he insulted me. I shall see him at my knees. That will be my revenge! If this genuflexion results in some good to France and royalty, so much the better.' But this last consideration was entirely secondary with the Queen, you understand."

"You pelt me with hypotheses, Count, when you promised to convince me by facts."

"You refuse my telescope? Well, let's talk no more about that, but return to material things, — to such facts as may be seen with the naked eye, — Mirabeau's debts, for example. Ah, there you have something which needs no telescope!"

"Very well, Count; then here 's another chance for you to display your generosity."

"By paying Mirabeau's debts?"

"Why not? You once paid the debts of Cardinal Rohan."

"Don't guy me on account of that speculation, for it was one which best succeeded."

"And how did it repay you?"

"In that affair of the necklace, — a very pretty affair, it seemed to me. For such a price I would even pay Mirabeau's debts; but just at present, as you know very well, it is not I on whom he must rely. He must

count upon the future Generalissimo, Lafayette, who will make him leap for fifty thousand miserable francs, like a dog after macaroons, and will end by not giving them to him."

"Oh Count!"

"Poor Mirabeau, indeed, when all the fools and coxcombs with whom thou art connected make thy genius pay for the follies of youth. True, all this is providential, for God must use human means. *The immoral Mirabeau!* says Provence, who is himself impotent. *Mirabeau the prodigal!* says Artois, whose brother has thrice paid his debts. Poor man of genius! Yes, thou wilt perhaps save the monarchy, but the monarchy ought not to be saved. Mirabeau is *a monstrous babbler*, says Rivarol; *a beggar*, says Mably; *a spendthrift*, says La Poule; *a scallawag*, says Guillermy; *an assassin*, says the Abbé Maury; *a dead man*, says Target; *dead and buried*, says Duport; *an orator more hissed than applauded*, says Pelletier; *small-pox in his very bones*, says Champcenetz; *fit for the galleys*, says Lambesc; *deserves hanging*, says Marat. If Mirabeau should die to-morrow the people would give him an apotheosis, glorify him after death. All the dwarfs whom he surpassed in stature, and on whom he trod so heavily while he lived, would follow his hearse, crying: 'Woe to France, who hath lost her Tribune! Woe to royalty, which has lost its staff.'"

"Do you mean to predict the death of Mirabeau?" cried Gilbert, almost frightened.

"Frankly, Doctor, can you expect long life for a man whose blood scorches him, whose heart stifles him, whose genius devours him? Do you not see that power so gigantic as his cannot contend eternally against the current of mediocrity? The labor essential to such an undertaking is like the uphill journey of Sisyphus with his

rock. For two years past has Mirabeau been beaten backward by this word *Immorality*. Each time, after unparalleled efforts, when he believed he had pushed his stone to the very summit of the mountain, this word tumbled on him again, harder than ever. When the King had almost adopted the advice of the Queen, as to the advisability of creating Mirabeau Prime Minister, somebody came to the King to say: 'Sire, Paris is shocked at Mirabeau's immorality; France is shocked at his immorality; Europe is shocked at his immorality;' as if God casts great men in the same mould as common mortals; as if, in its enlargement, the circle which embraces the great virtues must not include great vices also. Gilbert, you, and two or three other intelligent men, are exerting yourselves to make Mirabeau Prime Minister, — to make him what that ninny Turgot has been, and that pedant Necker, that fop Calonne, and that atheist Brienne; but Mirabeau will not be minister, because he has one hundred thousand francs' worth of debt, — which would be readily paid, if he were only the son of a plain Farmer General, — and because he was once condemned to death for having carried off the wife of an old imbecile, who finally killed herself with charcoal for the sake of a handsome captain. What a tragedy, what a comedy, is human life! How I should weep over it, if I had not chosen the rôle of laughter."

"What prediction do you make for him?" asked Gilbert, who fully approved the flight of Cagliostro's wit into the region of the imagination, but was somewhat disconcerted by the conclusion finally reached.

"I tell you," repeated Cagliostro, in the tone of a prophet, who is not his own master and will permit no reply, "I tell you that Mirabeau the Genius, Mirabeau the Statesman, Mirabeau the Grand Orator, will exhaust

his life and conquer the tomb, without becoming what, of all the world, he should be, Minister. Ah, my dear Gilbert, mediocrity is, after all, a fine shelter."

"Then the King opposes him?"

"Peste! The King is careful. He must discuss the matter with the Queen, to whom he *almost* gave his word. You know the King's political science lies in that word *almost*. He is *almost* persuaded (like a certain king in the Scriptures) to be a Constitutionalist, a philosopher. He is *almost popular;* and he is *almost done for*, when he counsels with Monsieur de Provence. Go to the Assembly to-morrow, Doctor, and you shall see what you shall see."

"Can't you tell me in advance?"

"That would deprive you of the pleasure of a surprise."

"To-morrow is rather far off!"

"Then do better! It is five o'clock. In an hour the Jacobin Club will be open. These Jacobin gentlemen are night-birds, you know! Do you belong to the society?"

"No. Camille Desmoulins and Danton have persuaded me to join the Cordeliers."

"No matter! As I say, the Jacobin Club will be open in an hour. Be tranquil; it is a society so well made up that you will not be out of place. — We will dine together. After dinner we will take a cab and drive to the Rue Saint Honoré; and when you come out of the old convent you will have been edified. Besides, having a dozen hours' notice, you may be able to parry the catastrophe, perhaps."

"How! You dine at five?"

"At five precisely. I keep ahead in all things. In ten years from now France will have only two daily

meals, — breakfast at ten in the forenoon, and dinner at six in the evening."

"And what will lead to this change of custom?"

"Famine, my dear!"

"You are indeed a prophet of evil!"

"Not always, for I now predict a good dinner."

"Have you guests?"

"I am absolutely alone; but you know the saying of the ancient epicure, *Lucullus* dines with Lucullus."

"Monseigneur is served," said a lackey, opening the two leaves of a door into a dining-room, splendidly lighted and sumptuously garnished.

"Come, Monsieur Pythagorean," said Cagliostro, taking Gilbert's arm. "Bah, once does not establish a custom."

Gilbert followed the enchanter, subjugated by his magic words, and perhaps also with the hope of starting some lightning in the conversation, which would guide him in the political night wherein he was walking.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE JACOBIN CLUB.

Two hours after the conversation just recorded, a carriage, without footmen or armorial bearings, stopped in front of the steps of the Church of Saint-Roch, whose façade had not then been mutilated by the long-barrelled Biscayen muskets, used on the Thirteenth Vendémiaire, in the Revolution.

From this carriage emerged two men dressed in black, like members of the commonalty at that time. Guided by the yellow glimmer of the street lamps, which here and there pierced the fog in the Rue Saint Honoré, and following the drift of the crowd, they walked along the right side of the street, as far as the small door of the Convent of the Jacobins.

If our readers have guessed, as is probable, that these two men were Doctor Gilbert and Cagliostro, or the Banker Zannone, as the latter at this time called himself, it is needless to explain why they stopped in front of this little doorway, inasmuch as that little doorway was the end of their excursion.

Moreover, as we have said, the two new-comers had only to follow the crowd, for the crowd was great.

"Will you go into the nave, the main part of the chapel, or will you content yourself with a seat in the gallery?" asked Cagliostro of Gilbert.

"I believe," replied Gilbert, "that the nave is reserved for members of the society."

"Undoubtedly; but I belong to all sorts of societies," said Cagliostro, laughing, "and where I am, there my friends may be also. Here is a card for you, if you want it. As for me, I have only to give the word."

"We shall be recognized as outsiders," observed Gilbert, "and told to get out."

"It is necessary to tell you one thing, which it seems you do not know, — that the Jacobin Society, founded only three months ago, numbers already nearly sixty thousand members in France, and will count four hundred thousand before the year is over. Besides, my very dear fellow," he added, smiling, "this is the genuine Grand Orient of Free Masonry, — the centre of all kinds of secret societies, — rather than at that imbecile Fauchet's, as the world fancies; so if you have no right to enter here as a Jacobin, you have your place here in your capacity as a Mason of the Rosy Cross degree."

"Never mind," said Gilbert, "I like the gallery best. From that height we can overlook the whole assembly; and if there are any present or future notabilities, with whom I am not acquainted, you can make them known to me."

"To the galleries then!" said Cagliostro, and he led the way up a wooden staircase at the right, which led to the gallery devoted to public use.

These benches were full; but no sooner had Cagliostro made a sign, and pronounced a word in a low tone, than two men vacated their front places, as if they had anticipated the arrival of Gilbert and the banker, and were only there to keep for them these seats, which the new-comers instantly accepted.

The meeting was not yet opened. The members were scattered over the half-lighted body of the house, some chatting in groups, others promenading in the narrow

space left open to them by the great number of their colleagues; while others, feeling isolated, were seated in the shadows or leaning against some massive pillar.

In semi-luminous strips, light from a few lamps fell upon the crowd; but individuals could not be distinguished, unless their faces or their bodies happened accidentally to come within range of one of these feeble fountains of flame; yet it was easy to perceive, even in the darkness, that this was an aristocratic reunion. Laced coats abounded, and the uniforms of officers, both naval and military, dotting the crowd with scintillations of gold and silver.

Indeed at this period there was not a workman, not a man of the people, — we had almost said, not a tradesman, — to republicanize this illustrious association.

For fellows of the inferior class there was another hall, below this one, which was opened at another hour, so that the aristocracy and common folks need not jostle each other.

For the instruction of the people they had established a Fraternal Society, whose members undertook to explicate the Constitution and post themselves as to the Rights of Humanity.

As for the Jacobin Society, as has been said, it was at this time a military, aristocratic, intellectual, and — above all — a literary and artistic organization; for, indeed, artists and men of letters were in its majority.

Among literary men there were La Harpe, author of "Mélanie;" Chenier, author of "Charles the Ninth;" Andrieux, author of "Giddy Heads," who already, at the age of thirty, gave the same promise as at sixty-six, and who "died without the sight," always promising great things, but never achieving them. There was also Sedaine, the old gem-cutter, protected by the Queen, and therefore a Royalist at heart, as were most of those present. There

was Chamfort, the poet laureate, ex-secretary to the Prince de Condé, and reader to Madame Elizabeth. There was Laclos, a man attached to the interests of Orleans, the author of "Dangerous Liaisons," — a man who stood in his patron's place, and whose mission was either to call the Duke to the remembrance of his friends, or to let him be forgotten by his enemies, according to circumstances.

Among artists, there was Talma, who had just inaugurated a theatric revolution, in the Roman part of Titus. Thanks to him, the actors and people were cutting their hair, while waiting for his colleague, Collot d'Herbois, to cut off their heads. There was David, who dreamed of painting Leonidas and The Sabines, who was outlining his great canvas of The Oath in the Tennis Court, and who, perchance, had already bought the pencils with which he drew his grandest and most hideous picture, Marat Assassinated in his Bath.

There was Vernet, who had been admitted to the Academy two years before, on account of a great picture, and amused himself by painting horses and dogs. He did not suspect that four paces away from him, in that gathering, on the arm of Talma, was a young Corsican lieutenant, with smooth hair and no powder, for whom, unknown to himself, Vernet was one day to prepare five out of his six finest pictures: Napoleon Crossing the Alps, and the battles of Rivoli, Marengo, Austerlitz, and Wagram. There was Larive, the surviving representative of the declamatory school of the drama, who did not deign to recognize a rival in young Talma, but preferred Voltaire to Corneille, and Belloy to Racine. There was Laïs the singer, who was the pearl of the opera in such rôles as the Merchant, in "The Caravan," the Consul, in "Trajan," and Cinna, in "The Vestal." There were Lafayette, Lameth, Duport, Sieyès, Thouret, Chapellier,

Rabaut Saint Étienne, Lanjuinis, Montlosier. In the midst of everything, with his aggravating mien and nose in the air, was the cheeky face of Barnave, the Deputy from Grenoble, whom shallow adherents put forward as a rival of Mirabeau, but whom Mirabeau flattened out whenever he condescended to put his foot on him.

Gilbert took a long look over the brilliant gathering, recognizing almost everybody, and mentally appreciating their diverse capabilities, which did little to inspire him with hope, although the Royalist character of the assemblage comforted him somewhat.

"To sum it all up," said he suddenly to Cagliostro, "what man do you see among all these, who is really hostile to the monarchy?"

"Must I look with the eyes of the world in general, with those of Necker or Abbé Maury, with yours or with my own?"

"With yours, of course," replied Gilbert. "Is it not understood that yours are the eyes of a magician?"

"Well, there are two."

"Well, that's not many, out of four hundred."

"It is enough; for one of these men is to be the murderer and the other the kingly successor of Louis Sixteenth."

Gilbert started and murmured: "So we have here our future Brutus and our future Cæsar."

"Neither more nor less, my dear Doctor."

"You will let me see them, will you not?" said Gilbert, with a sceptical smile on his lips.

"Oh, thou apostle of the scale-covered eyes!" murmured Cagliostro. "I can do better, if thou wilt. I will let thee clasp their hands. With which shall I begin?"

"With the subverter, I think. I have respect for chronological order, so let us first see Brutus."

"Thou knowest," said Cagliostro, as if suddenly animated by a breeze of inspiration, "thou knowest that different men never proceed by the same methods, even to accomplish a kindred purpose. Our Brutus does not in any way resemble the ancient Brutus."

"All the more reason why I am curious to see him."

"Well, look there!" said Cagliostro, extending his hand in the direction of a man leaning against the old pulpit. His head was just then in the light, though the rest of his body was lost in the shadow.

His pale and livid face resembled a severed head, such as in ancient times of proscription they used to nail upon the rostrum during a speech. The eyes alone seemed to be alive, with an expression of hatred almost contemptuous, — like the expression of a viper, who knows that his tooth contains mortal venom, — as they followed the blatant and verbose Barnave in his various evolutions about the place.

Gilbert felt a shudder run throughout his body as he looked at this viperous face. "It is true, as you said beforehand, that is neither the head of a Brutus nor a Cromwell."

"No," said Cagliostro, "but perhaps it is the head of a Cassius. You know, my dear fellow, what Julius Cæsar said: 'I have no fear of gross men, who pass their days at table and their nights in dissipation; no, but I fear the dreamers, with meagre bodies and pale faces.'"

Gilbert recalled Shakespeare's lines:

> Let me have men about me that are fat,
> Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights.
> Yond Cassius hath a lean and hungry look!
> He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.
> He loves no plays; he hears no music;
> Seldom he smiles.

"The man whom you designate certainly fulfils the conditions prescribed by Cæsar."

"Don't you know him?" asked Cagliostro.

"Well, yes," said Gilbert, gazing at the man attentively, "I do know him, or rather I recognize him as a member of the National Assembly."

"Even so!"

"One of the most tedious orators on the left."

"Just so!"

"Whom nobody listens to when he speaks."

"Exactly."

"A petty lawyer from Arras, is he not, whom they call Maximilian de Robespierre."

"Precisely! Now look attentively at that head!"

"I am looking at it."

"What do you see?"

"I am no Lavater, Count."

"No, but you are one of his disciples."

"I see an expression of the spite felt by mediocrity towards genius."

"That is to say, you judge like all the rest of the world. It is true his voice is feeble, a little sharp perhaps. His face is sunken and sad. The skin on his forehead seems to be bound tight about his cranium, like stiff and yellow parchment. His glassy eye only emits a greenish flame, which he quickly extinguishes. His careworn physiognomy is tiresome by its very immobility; his invariable olive-green coat is odd, threadbare, and too well brushed. Yes, I understand how all these peculiarities make but small impression in our Assembly, rich in orators, which has a right to be critical, accustomed as it is to the lionlike face of Mirabeau, the self-sufficient impudence of Barnave, the cutting repartee of Abbé Maury, the fervor of Cazalès, the logic of Sieyès;

but as for this man, they cannot reproach him with immorality, as they do Mirabeau, for he is an upright man. He never forgets his principles; and if he sometimes oversteps the bounds of legality, it is that he may kill the old text with the new law, and put the letter below the spirit."

"But after all," asked Gilbert, "who is this man Robespierre?"

"Ah, art thou here, thou aristocrat of the century? It was the Earl of Strafford, who asked a similar question concerning the man who was afterwards to decapitate his Lordship, 'Who is this Cromwell? A beer-seller, is n't he?'"

"Do you mean to say that my head runs the same risk as Sir Thomas Wentworth's?" asked Gilbert, trying to emit a smile, which froze on his lips.

"Who knows?" replied Cagliostro.

"All the more reason for me to be well posted about him," said the Doctor.

"Who is Robespierre? Well, nobody in France knows him, except myself; but I always mean to know whence come the elect ones of Fate, and all about them, for this knowledge helps me to divine whither they will go. — The Robespierres are Irish by descent. Perhaps their ancestors formed part of the Irish colonists who, in the Sixteenth Century, came over to fill up the monasteries and seminaries of our northern coasts, where they received from the Jesuits that thorough education in scholastic quibbling which those Reverend Fathers always gave their pupils. The Robespierres were notaries, from father to son. One branch of the family, from which this man descends, established itself at Arras, a great centre, as you know, for both nobles and churchmen. In this old city were two lords, or rather two kings. One was the Abbé of Saint

Wast; the other was the Bishop of Arras, whose palace shadows half the city. It was in that city that our man was born, in 1758. What he did as a boy, what he did as a youth, what he is doing to-day, I will tell you in two words. What he will do hereafter I have already told you, in one word. There were four children in the house. The head of the family lost his wife. He was an attorney at the bar of the Department of Artois; but he fell into a melancholy mood, ceased to plead in court, and finally went on a recuperative voyage, from which he never returned. At the age of eleven the eldest child, this one, found himself the head of the family, the guardian of his brother and two sisters, — a singular duty at such an age! The boy understood his task, and it at once made a man of him. In twenty-four hours he became what he still remains, — with a face which seldom smiles, a heart which never laughs. He was the best scholar in the school. They obtained for him, through the Abbé of Saint Wast, one of those scholarships which the Abbé had at his disposal in the College Louis le Grand. He came to Paris, recommended to a canon of Notre Dame Cathedral; but during that year this good priest died, and, almost at the same time, the boy's youngest and best-loved sister died at Arras. The shadow of the Jesuits, who have since been expelled from France, at that period threw its gloom over the walls of Louis le Grand. You know this edifice, where your young Sebastien is now growing up. Its corridors, deep and dark as those of the Bastille, would draw the color from the freshest cheeks. Young Robespierre's cheek was already pale, and now it became livid. Other boys went out sometimes. For them the year had Sundays and holidays; but for this orphan bursar, without a protector, all days were alike. When the others breathed the air of their families and homes, he breathed only the

atmosphere of solitude, sorrow, and weariness, — three pernicious blasts, which kindle envy and malice in the heart, and rob the soul of its bloom. This simoon withered the child, and made of him a faded young man. Some day nobody will believe that there was ever a portrait of him, at the age of twenty-four, holding a rose in one hand, and pressing the other to his breast, with this motto: *All for my sweetheart!*"

Gilbert smiled sadly, as he continued to gaze upon Robespierre.

"It is true," resumed Cagliostro, "that when he adopted this device, and had himself painted in this attitude, a certain young girl swore that nothing should part their destinies. He swore likewise, and was a man to keep his oath. He went away for three months, and on his return, found her married. Meanwhile the Abbé of Saint Wast remained his protector, having found for the younger brother a scholarship in College Louis le Grand, and having procured for our hero a position as Judge in the Criminal Tribunal. There came a case to be tried, an assassin to punish. Full of remorse over this discharge of duty, he let the third culprit escape with his life, although the man was proved guilty. He then resigned his office, and became an advocate, but could not earn enough for himself and the support of his little sister; but fortunately their brother, though poorly fed at the College Louis le Grand, still had a home there. Hardly had our man put his name on the list of advocates in Artois, when the peasantry begged him to plead their cause in some suit against the Bishop of Arras. They were in the right, as Robespierre was convinced by an examination of the evidence, and so he pleaded their cause, and won the case for the peasantry; and in the flush of his success he was elected to the National Assem-

bly. In this Assembly he found himself between the two fires of malice and contempt: malice, on the part of the clergy, towards a fellow who had dared to argue against them, — contempt, on the part of the nobility of Artois, for a pettifogger reared by charity."

"But," interrupted Gilbert, "what has he done up to the present time?"

"Oh my God, — almost nothing in other people's opinions, but plenty in mine. If it did not suit my views to have him poor, I would give him a million to-morrow."

"But, once more I ask, what has he done?"

"You remember the day when the clergy came hypocritically to the Assembly, to beg the Third Estate, kept in suspense by the royal veto, to begin their labors?"

"Yes!"

"Well, read over again the speech which he made that day, and see if there is not a career for such acrid vehemence, which was almost eloquence."

"But since then?"

"Since then? Well, we are obliged to jump from May to October. On the fifth of that month, when Maillard, delegated by the women of Paris, came to harangue the Assembly, in behalf of his constituents, all the members sat mute and motionless in their places; but this little lawyer not only proved himself sharper but more audacious than anybody else. All the professed defenders of the people held their tongues, but he took the floor. The time before, he had spoken in the midst of a tumult; but the second time, amidst profound silence. He supported Maillard, who pleaded on account of the famine, and demanded bread."

"Yes indeed," said Gilbert, thoughtfully, "this becomes graver; but perhaps he will change."

"Oh my dear Doctor, you do not understand this Incorruptible, as they now call him. Besides, who would try to bribe a little pettifogger, whom everybody laughs at? Hereafter that man — mark what I tell you! — will be the terror of the Assembly, as he is now its laughing-stock. It is understood among the noble Jacobins that Robespierre is the clown of the Assembly, who amuses them, and ought to amuse the public, — a man whom everybody can and should make game of. When the members get aweary in their long meetings, they need some gawk to cheer them up. In the eyes of Lameth, Cazalès, Maury, Barnave, Duport, this Robespierre is such a jester. His associates betray him by laughing in their sleeves; his enemies hoot and laugh aloud. When he speaks, everybody chatters. When he raises his voice, everybody shouts. When he makes a speech, — always on the right side, and in defence of some principle, — a speech to which nobody listens, some insignificant member, on whom the Speaker fixes his eye, ironically demands that the address be printed. Only one of his fellow-members at all understands him, — one only! Can you guess who? Mirabeau, who yesterday said to me: 'That man will go far, because he believes what he says;' — a singular thing for Mirabeau to say, as you can well understand."

"But," said Gilbert, "I have read this man's speeches, and I have found them insipid and commonplace."

"Good gracious, I did n't tell you he was a Cicero or a Demosthenes, a Mirabeau or a Barnave! No! He is the simpleton Monsieur de Robespierre, as they affect to call him. Besides, his speeches are treated in the same style by the printers as by the Assembly. On the tribune they interrupt him. At the printing-house they mutilate him. The journalists do not even call him

Monsieur de Robespierre. The reporters do not even know his name. They call him Monsieur B., Monsieur N., or Monsieur ——. God alone, and perhaps myself, know what an amount of gall is massed in that thin breast, what tempests lodged in that narrow brain; because he has neither the distractions of society, nor the solace of family life, to make the hissed orator forget all these insults and injuries, this treachery, — against a man, moreover, who is conscious of his own ability, and feels the sting. In his gloomy apartment in the gloomy district of Marais, in a poor, cold, unfurnished lodging on the Rue Saintonge, — where he lives parsimoniously on his salary as Deputy, — he is as much alone as he was in the damp corridors of College Louis le Grand. Even up to last year his face was young and mild; but you can see that within a year his face has withered, dried up, like the heads of those Caribbean chiefs, which such men as Captain Cook and La Perouse brought from Oceanica. He never leaves the Jacobin Club; and apart from the emotions with which he suffers, unseen by others, he has suffered two or three times with hemorrhages, which left him insensible. You are a great mathematician, Gilbert, but I defy you, even with the most extended multiplications, to calculate the amount of blood which it will cost the aristocrats who insult this man, the priests who persecute him, and even the King who never heard of him, — blood which Robespierre will shed."

"But why does he come to the Jacobin meetings?"

"Ah, that 's it! Hooted in the Assembly, he is heard at the Club. This Society, my dear Doctor, is an infant Minotaur. It begins with a cow, but later it may devour a nation. Well, Robespierre is a type of the Jacobins. The association is summed up in him, and he is the expression of the association, — nothing more, nothing less.

He will keep equal step with the Jacobins, going neither behind them nor ahead of them. I promised, did I not, to let you see an instrument, with which its inventor is just now busy, which has for its object the removal of one or two heads a minute? Well, of all the personages here present, the one who will give the most employment to that instrument of death is Robespierre."

"Truly, you are funereal, Count," said Gilbert; "and if your Cæsar gives me no more comfort than your Brutus, I shall be quite capable of forgetting the occasion which brought me here. Pardon me, but what has become of our Cæsar?"

"Hold, you may see him down there. He is chatting with a man with whom he is not yet acquainted, but who later will have a great influence over his destiny. That man's name is Barras. Remember the name, for you will hear it again in due time."

"I do not know if you are correct, Count," said Gilbert, "but in this case you have chosen your illustration well. Your Cæsar has the veritable forehead for a crown; and his eyes, whose expression I do not quite catch —"

"Yes, because he is looking inward. Those are eyes which read the future, Doctor."

"What is he saying to Barras?"

"He tells him that if he himself had defended the Bastille, it would not have been taken."

"Then he is not a Patriot?"

"Men like him never care to be anything, unless they can be first and foremost."

"Then you are jesting at the expense of that little sub-lieutenant?"

"Gilbert," said Cagliostro, pointing again towards Robespierre, "as sure as that man there will rebuild the scaffold of Charles the First, so surely will that other

man there," pointing to the Corsican with the smooth hair, "reconstruct the throne of Charlemagne."

"Then our struggle for liberty will be futile," said Gilbert, discouraged.

"And who says that the one will not do as much for liberty with his throne, as the other with his scaffold?"

"The lieutenant will then be a Titus, a Marcus Aurelius, a god of peace, coming to console the world in an age of bronze?"

"He will be at the same time an Alexander and a Hannibal. Born in the midst of war, he will wax great by war, and by war he will wane. I defied you to calculate the blood which it will cost the clergy and nobility of France, which Robespierre will demand. Take all the blood which is shed by these priests and nobles, enlarge it by multiplication upon multiplication, and you will not then reach the river, the lake, the sea of blood which that man will pour out, with his armies of five hundred thousand soldiers, and his battles three days long, which will demand fifty thousand cannon-shots."

"And what will come of all this noise, this smoke, this chaos?"

"The result of every Genesis! We are intrusted with the duty of burying the old world. Our children will see the birth of a brave new world. This lieutenant is the giant who will guard the door. Like Louis Fourteenth, like Leo Tenth, like Augustus, he will give his name to the century now opening."

"And what is his name?" asked Gilbert, fairly conquered by Cagliostro's positive conviction.

"He still calls himself Bonaparte," replied the prophet, "but some day he will call himself Napoleon."

Gilbert bowed his head, and fell into a revery so profound that he did not perceive, being absorbed by the

tenor of his thoughts, that the meeting was opened, and that an orator had ascended the rostrum.

An hour passed away, but neither the noise of the assemblage nor of its officers, for the meeting was a stormy one, could draw Gilbert away from his meditations, till he felt a powerful hand clasp and rest upon his shoulder.

He turned. Cagliostro had disappeared, but in his place he found Mirabeau, his face thunderous with anger. Gilbert looked at him questioningly.

"Well!" said Mirabeau.

"What is it?" asked Gilbert.

"It means that we are cajoled, mocked, betrayed. It means that the Crown will have none of me, and takes you for a dupe and me for a fool."

"I do not understand you!"

"You have not been listening, then?"

"To what?"

"The resolution which was just passed."

"Where?"

"Here!"

"What resolution?"

"You must have been asleep!"

"No," said Gilbert, "but I have been dreaming."

"Well, to-morrow, in response to my motion of to-day, which proposes that the cabinet ministers be invited to assist in the deliberations of the National Assembly, three friends of the King are going to demand that no member of the Assembly shall be a minister during its term. Therefore the ministerial combination, so carefully arranged, is broken up by the capricious whistle of his Majesty Louis the Sixteenth; but," continued Mirabeau, standing like Ajax, with his finger pointed towards the sky, "but, as surely as my name is Mirabeau, I 'll pay

him back; and if his whistle can overturn a ministry, he 'll find out that mine will upset a throne!"

"But," said Gilbert, "you will not stay away from the Assembly on this account? You will still fight it out to the end?"

"I go to the Assembly? I fight it out? I am one of those men who are only to be buried under the ruins."

Half-distracted, Mirabeau went away, more grand and more terrible, for the deific frown imprinted on his face.

The next day indeed, on the motion of Lanjuinais, and in spite of the superhuman genius displayed by Mirabeau, the National Assembly adopted the obnoxious resolution by an immense majority, that no member of the Assembly should be appointed cabinet-minister during the term of the Assembly.

"And I," cried Mirabeau, when the decree was voted, "I propose an amendment which will not alter your law. Here it is! — that all the members of the present Assembly may be cabinet-ministers, except Monsieur le Comte de Mirabeau."

Every one looked stunned by this audacity. In the midst of a universal silence Mirabeau descended from the platform, with the same proud step with which he had once marched up to Dreux Brézé, and said to him: "We are here by the will of the people; we will only go out with bayonets in our bellies."

Then he left the hall. Mirabeau's defeat was like another man's triumph.

Gilbert did not even come to the Assembly. He remained at home, and reviewed the strange predictions of Cagliostro. Without believing them, he could not drive them out of his mind. The present seemed to him very small, when compared with the future.

Perhaps some one may ask how, as simply the historian

of a time already past, *temporis acti*, I can explain Cagliostro's predictions about Robespierre and Napoleon.

I ask of those who so question me, to explain the prediction of Mademoiselle Lenormand about the Empress Josephine.

At every step in the world we meet something inexplicable. It is for those who cannot explain these marvels, and yet do not wish to believe them, that scepticism has been invented.

CHAPTER XXX.

METZ AND PARIS.

As Cagliostro had declared, and as Mirabeau had surmised, it was the King who had overturned all Gilbert's projects.

In the overtures to Mirabeau, Marie Antoinette had acted with passionate spite and womanly curiosity, rather than queenly policy, and therefore she saw without regret the downfall of the scaffolding of a Constitutional Government, which had always keenly wounded her pride.

As to the King, his policy was always limited to procrastination, gaining time, and profiting by circumstances. Moreover, two negotiations were pending in opposite directions, each offering the opportunity of flight from Paris, and one looking to his residence in some well-fortified place, — his favorite plan.

Of these two negotiations, as we know, one was engineered by Favras, a gentleman in the interest of *Monsieur* de Provence. The other was in the hands of Charny, the special messenger of King Louis.

Charny made the journey from Paris to Metz in two days. He waited upon Commander Bouillé at Metz, and delivered the King's missive. This letter, it will be remembered, was only to be the means of putting Charny into communication with Bouillé; so the Commander, although not concealing his dissatisfaction with current affairs, began by maintaining great reserve towards his visitor.

In fact, the suggestions made by Charny to Bouillé interfered seriously with the plans of the Commander. The Empress Catherine had offered him a command; and he was on the point of writing to the King, asking leave to accept a Russian commission, when this letter from Louis Sixteenth made its appearance.

Bouillé's first impulse, therefore, was one of hesitation; but the name of Charny brought to remembrance the Count's relationship with Monsieur de Suffren, and the common rumor that the Queen honored Charny with her entire confidence; and as Bouillé was a faithful Royalist, he felt himself permeated with a desire to snatch the King from that factitious freedom which many regarded as real captivity.

Before coming to any understanding with Charny, however, Bouillé suggested that his authority was not sufficiently extended, and determined upon sending his son Louis de Bouillé to Paris, for a personal interview with his Majesty on this important subject.

Charny remained in Metz during their negotiations, partly because nothing personal recalled him to Paris, and partly from a somewhat exaggerated sense of honor, which made him feel it his duty to stay in Metz as a sort of hostage.

Count Louis arrived in Paris in the middle of November. At this period the King was carefully guarded from sight by Lafayette, and young Bouillé was a cousin to Lafayette.

The young man stayed at the residence of one of his friends, whose patriotic opinions were well known, but who was then travelling in England.

For Count Louis to visit the palace without the knowledge of Lafayette, was dangerous and difficult, if not impossible.

From one point of view, although Lafayette was to be kept in complete ignorance of the entanglements between Charny, Commander Bouillé, and the King, nothing seemed simpler than for the young man to procure his presentation to the King by Lafayette himself; and circumstances seemed of their own accord to favor the desires of the young officer.

He had been three days in Paris, having as yet decided upon nothing definite, but pondering by what means he could come near the King, and asking himself, as we have just said, if the surest way would not be to speak to Lafayette himself; when there came a letter from the General, informing Louis that his arrival in Paris was known, and inviting him to come to the headquarters of the National Guard, at the Noailles Mansion.

This was in a certain way the answer of Providence, from on high, to the prayer which the young man had silently sent upward. Here was a good fairy, such as we read of in the charming stories of Perrault, taking our knight by the hand, and leading him towards his destination.

He therefore at once reported himself at the staff-office. The General had gone to the Hôtel de Ville, where he was to receive a communication from Bailly; but in the absence of the General, Louis encountered his aide-de-camp, Monsieur Romeuf.

Romeuf had served in the same regiment with the young Count, and there were pleasant relations between them, albeit one belonged to the democratic and the other to the aristocratic party. Since then Romeuf had been transferred to another regiment, one of those which were mustered out of service after the Fourteenth of July; and he then resumed service in the National Guard, where he held the position of favorite aide to Lafayette.

These two young men, although wholly differing in opinion on certain subjects, agreed in this, that both loved and respected the King; although one loved him in Patriotic fashion, — on condition that he would swear to and abide by the Constitution; while the other loved him after the Aristocratic fashion, — on condition that he should refuse the Constitutional oath, and, if necessary, call in foreign arms, to bring the rebels to terms.

By *rebels* young Bouillé meant three-quarters of the Assembly, the National Guard, the electors, and so on, — five-sixths of all France.

Romeuf being twenty-six years old, and Count Louis twenty-two, it was rather difficult for the young fellows to long confine their conversation to politics, — especially as Louis did not wish his comrade to suspect him of being engaged in any serious scheme.

He confided to his friend Romeuf, as a great secret, that he had left Metz without formal permission, in order to visit Paris and see a woman whom he adored.

While he was imparting this confidence to the aide, Lafayette appeared on the threshold of the door, which remained open; but although Louis could see the unexpected arrival reflected in the mirror facing them both, he nevertheless continued his narrative; only, in spite of various signs from Romeuf, which he pretended not to understand, he raised his voice in such a way that the General could not miss a solitary word. In fact the General heard everything, which was precisely what young Louis intended.

Lafayette walked slowly towards the speaker's back; and when the story was finished, he laid his hand on the narrator's shoulder, and said to him: "Ah ha, Monsieur Lover, that is why you keep out of the way of your respectable kinsfolk!"

He was no severe judge, this gay General of thirty-two years, this mild-frowning mentor, — himself quite the rage among women of fashion, — and Count Louis was not greatly disturbed by the homily which awaited him.

"I have concealed myself a little, my dear cousin, until to-day, when I should have done myself the honor to call upon the most illustrious of my kindred, even if he had not forestalled my intention by this message;" and he showed the General the letter just received.

"Do you country gentlemen suppose the Parisian police are so blind and so badly managed?" said the General, with an air of satisfaction which proved that a certain amount of self-esteem entered into his reliance upon the police.

"We know that nothing is concealed from the brave General who watches over the liberties of the people and the safety of the King."

Lafayette looked sidewise at his young cousin, with that air of good-nature, humorous and somewhat jocose, which we have before seen in him. He knew that the safety of the King was very important to that branch of the family, but that they did not concern themselves much about the liberties of the people.

He therefore responded to only half of the compliment. "And my cousin, the Marquis de Bouillé," he said, emphasizing a title which he had renounced for himself since the Fourth of August, "has he not charged his son with some commission for the King whose welfare I guard?"

"He charged me to place at his feet his homage and sentiments of respect, if General Lafayette should not judge me unworthy of a presentation to my sovereign."

"Present you, — and when?"

"As soon as possible, General. I believe I have had

the honor of telling you, or Romeuf, that being here without furlough —"

"You told Romeuf, but it comes to the same thing, as I heard it all. Very well, let us see, —good things ought not to be retarded. It is eleven o'clock in the forenoon. Every day, at noon, I have the honor of seeing the King and Queen. Eat a morsel with me, if you have not already breakfasted, and I will take you to the Tuileries."

"But am I properly dressed, my dear cousin?" asked the young fellow, glancing over his uniform and his boots.

"First of all I must tell you, dear boy, that the great business of etiquette, which you imbibed with your mother's milk, has been sick unto death since your departure from town. Besides, as I look you over, your coat is irreproachable, your boots are all right; and what costume is more appropriate than a military uniform, for a gentleman who is ready to die for his King? Romeuf, go and see if breakfast is ready. I will take my cousin to the Tuileries immediately afterwards."

This plan corresponded so directly with the young man's wishes that he could make no serious objection; so he bowed in token of his assent and obligation.

A half-hour afterwards the sentinels at the gates presented arms to General Lafayette and the young Count, with no suspicion that they were paying military honors at the same time to the Revolution and the Counter-Revolution.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE QUEEN.

LAFAYETTE and Louis de Bouillé ascended the smaller staircase in the Marsan Pavilion, and betook themselves to the main (or second) floor, which their Majesties occupied.

All doors opened before Lafayette. Sentinels presented arms and footmen bowed low, easily recognizing him as master of the palace, and as the King's king.

Lafayette was first admitted into the Queen's apartments. As for the King, he was at his forge, and some one was sent to inform his Majesty.

It was three years since young Bouillé had seen Marie Antoinette.

During these three years the States General had been convened, the Bastille had been captured, and the sad occurrences of the Fifth and Sixth October had intervened.

The Queen had reached the age of thirty-four, the touching and attractive age, as Michelet expresses it, which Vandyck so liked to paint, — the age of wifehood and motherhood, — and, in the case of Marie Antoinette, the queenly age.

Within those three years the Queen had suffered in mind and heart, in love and self-esteem. Her thirty-four years were written on the poor lady's cheeks in lines of purple and violet, which told their story of tear-filled eyes and sleepless nights, which testified the deep malady of the womanly heart, which is never entirely

healed, be she queen or commoner, till it is utterly extinguished.

This was the age at which Mary Stuart, even as a prisoner, inspired Douglas, Mortimer, Norfolk, and Babington with a passion so strong that they devoted themselves to death for her sake.

The sight of this Queen, imprisoned, hated, calumniated, threatened, — and the events of the Fifth October proved these menaces to be no idle threats, — made a profound impression on the heart of the chivalrous young Louis de Bouillé.

Women never err as to the effect they produce, and as kings and queens have a peculiar memory for faces, — which in a certain sense is part of their education, — Marie Antoinette hardly perceived the young man before she recognized him, and had scarcely looked into his eyes before she felt positive that this was the face of a loving friend.

The consequence was that before the General had time to make the presentation, before they even reached the foot of the lounge whereon the Queen was reclining, she raised herself, as one naturally does for an old acquaintance, whom it is pleasant to meet again, or a follower, on whose fidelity one may depend, and cried: "Ah, Monsieur de Bouillé!"

Without paying any attention to Lafayette's words, she extended her hand to the young man. Louis hesitated an instant, for he had not anticipated she would grant him such a favor; but as the royal hand remained extended, he threw himself on his knees, and touched that hand with tremulous lips.

This was one of the Queen's blunders, and she made many like unto it. Without this favor young Bouillé would have been equally won to her side; and by such a

favor, accorded to his cousin in presence of Lafayette himself, — to whom she had never extended such a courtesy, — she set up a line of demarcation between them, and offended the man whom she most needed to make her friend.

With that courtesy which he was incapable of forgetting for an instant, but not without a perceptible alteration in his voice, he said: "On my faith, dear Cousin Louis, I was expected to present you to her Majesty, but it seems to me as if *you* should the rather present *me*."

The Queen was so rejoiced to find herself face to face with an adherent whom she could trust, — the woman was so proud of the effect she had evidently wrought upon the Count, — that she was conscious, in her heart, of the renewed glory of a youth she had believed forever vanished, and felt the spring breezes of a love which she had supposed forever dead. In this mood she turned to the General, with such a smile as she used to wear at Versailles and the Trianon, and said: "Dear General, the Count is no such stern Republican as yourself. He comes from Metz, not from America. He does not seek Paris in order to labor over the Constitution; he comes but to offer me his homage. Be not surprised when I accord to him — I, a poor queen, half dethroned — a courtesy which, to a simple provincial like himself, may seem worth being called a favor; but which to *you*, inasmuch — " and the Queen supplied the missing words with a coy expression of charming raillery, like the coquetry of a young girl, as if she would say: "Inasmuch as you, Monsieur Scipio, you, Monsieur Cincinnatus, look down upon such frivolities — "

"Madame," replied Lafayette, "I have ever adhered respectfully and devotedly to my Queen, without her comprehending my respect or appreciating my devotion. This

may be a great misfortune for me, and perhaps also for her!" and he bowed as he spoke.

The Queen regarded him with her deep and clear eye. More than once Lafayette had spoken similar words to her. More than once she had meditated over such words, after they were spoken. Unhappily for her, when he thus uttered himself, she always felt an instinctive repulsion towards him.

"Indeed, General," she said, "you must be generous, and forgive me."

"I, Madame, forgive you? And for what?"

"My enthusiastic welcome to this good family of Bouillés, who love me with all their hearts, and between whom and myself this young man may well be the connecting thread, the electric chain. When he entered, it was his father, his uncles, all his family, who rose to my view, and kissed my hand with loyal lips."

Lafayette bowed again.

"Monsieur," continued the Queen, "after the pardon, the peace, — with a good shake of the hand, in English or American fashion."

She gave him her hand, but with the palm upwards. Lafayette clasped it slowly and coldly, saying: "I regret that you will never recollect that I am a Frenchman, Madame. It is not so very far from the Sixth of October to the Sixteenth of November."

"You are right, General," she said, making an effort to control herself, and pressing his hand; "it is I who am ungrateful!" and she sank back on her lounge as if overcome with emotion. "But this ought not to surprise you, — you, who know how often I am upbraided for ingratitude."

Presently, shaking her head, she added: "Now, General, what is there new in Paris?"

Lafayette had a chance to retaliate, and he seized his opportunity.

"Ah, Madame, how much I regret that you were not at the Assembly yesterday. You would have witnessed a touching scene, one that would have moved your heart. An old man came to thank the Assembly for the happiness he owed to it, — and to the King, inasmuch as the Assembly could not have conferred that happiness without the royal sanction."

"An old man?" repeated the Queen, inattentively.

"Yes, Madame, and such an old man, — the Dean, the Nestor, of the human race! — an emancipated peasant from Jura, one hundred and twenty years old, led to the bar by five generations of his descendants, that he might thank the Assembly for the Fourth of August decrees. Do you understand, Madame? — a man who had been a feudal appendage for a half-century under Louis Fourteenth, and eighty years afterward."

"And what did the Assembly do for this old man?"

"They rose, to a man, and he was compelled to sit down, and put on his hat in their presence."

"Ah," rejoined the Queen, in a tone peculiar to herself, "this must indeed have been very touching. I regret I was not there; but you know better than anybody else," added she, smiling, "that I am not always where I want to be."

The General made a motion which signified that he had something to say in reply; but the Queen went on, without giving him time to speak: "No, I was here, receiving the poor wife of that unfortunate baker, — the Assembly's baker, — whom the Assembly allowed to be assassinated almost at its doors. What was the Assembly doing that day, Monsieur?"

"You talk, Madame," responded the General, "of one

of those evils which have harassed the Representatives of France; but if the Assembly could not prevent the murder, the murderers have at least been punished."

"Oh yes, but their punishment has not comforted this poor woman. She was almost crazy, and it is thought she will be brought to bed with a stillborn child. If her babe is living, I have promised to be its godmother; and in order that the public may know that I am not insensible to such of their misfortunes as come to my knowledge, I ask you, dear General, if it will be too great an inconvenience if the baptism takes place at Notre Dame."

Lafayette lifted his hand, like one who was about to ask permission to speak, and is glad to have it granted, and said: "Madame, this is the second allusion you have made, within a few moments, to the pretended captivity in which some would have it believed that you are held by your faithful servants. I must hasten to say, before my cousin here, — and I will repeat it before Paris, before Europe, before the world, — as I wrote yesterday to Monsieur Mounier, who, from the interior of Dauphiny, laments the royal captivity, — that you are free; and I have but one desire, I address to you but one petition, — that your Majesties will put this to the proof, the King by resuming his sports and his drives, and you by accompanying him."

The Queen smiled, as if hardly convinced.

"As to being godmother to this poor little orphan, born into so much mourning, in making this agreement with the widow, the Queen has obeyed her kind heart, which makes her loved and respected by all who are close about her. If the Queen will select the church where she wishes the ceremony to take place, and will give her

orders, when the day arrives for the ceremony, all shall be made ready according to those orders. Meanwhile," he continued, bowing, "I await any other orders wherewith the Queen may deign to honor me to-day."

"For to-day, my dear General, I have only one other request, — that you invite your young cousin, if he remains a few days longer in Paris, to accompany you to one of Madame de Lamballe's receptions; for you know she receives for me as well as for herself."

"And I, Madame, will avail myself of the invitation, for both his sake and my own; and if her Majesty has not seen me there before, I pray her to be persuaded that it was because she has heretofore forgotten to manifest a wish to meet me there."

The Queen responded with an inclination of the head and a smile, which amounted to dismissal. Each of the two cousins accepted that which was meant for him, — Lafayette the salutation, Count Louis the smile; and then withdrew backwards, the one bearing away more bitterness in his heart, and the other more devotion.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE KING.

At the entrance of the Queen's apartments the two visitors found the King's valet, François Hue, awaiting them.

The King had sent word, that having begun, for his recreation, a very important piece of lock-work, he begged General Lafayette to come upstairs to the shop.

A forge was the first thing the King inquired about on his arrival at the Tuileries. Learning that this indispensable appendage had been forgotten in the building plans of Catherine de Medicis and Philibert de Lorme, he selected a large attic, — just above his own bedchamber, — with a staircase both from the inside and outside, and there established his workshop for lockmaking. Louis Sixteenth had not for an instant forgotten this workshop, even amidst the grave questions which had assailed him during the five weeks he had been at the Tuileries. With him the forge was a fixed idea. He had presided over its arrangements, and had himself designated the proper places for the bellows, the fire, the anvil, the bench, and the vises. At last the forge had been completed, the evening before. All sorts of implements were provided. Round files, bastard files, toothed files, fish-tongue and donkey files, were all in their places. One-sided hammers, cross hammers, pointed hammers, hung from their rightful nails. Tongs, pincers, rabbets, and holding irons were within reach of the workman's hands.

Louis Sixteenth could wait no longer, and ever since morning he had been hard at this work, which was such a relief to his mind, a work in which he might have been a past master, as we have already learned from Master Gamain, if, to that worthy man's great regret, such idle fellows as Turgot, Calonne, and Necker had not distracted him from that learned occupation, by talking, not only about the affairs of France, — which Gamain's rigor might have allowed, — but also about other matters, which appeared to him very useless, relating to Brabant, Austria, England, America, and Spain.

All this explains why the King, in the renewed ardor of his work, had begged Lafayette to come upstairs to the shop, instead of himself coming down to greet the General.

Moreover, having allowed the Commander of the National Guard to see his feebleness as a king, he was not unwilling to let him see his majesty as a locksmith.

In order to conduct the visitors to the Royal Forge, the valet did not think proper to take them through the King's suite of rooms, and up by the private staircase, so they circumnavigated the royal apartments by way of the corridors, and ascended the public staircase, which made the distance somewhat longer.

The result of this deviation from the direct line was, that young Count Louis had more time for reflection; and he reflected accordingly.

Though his heart was filled with the Queen's gracious reception of him, he could not misconceive the fact that she had not expected him. Not an ambiguous word, not a covert gesture had given him to understand that the august prisoner, as she styled herself, had any conception of the mission with which he was charged, or counted the least in the world on him, to free her from her thraldom;

and this agreed with what he had gleaned from Charny, as to the King's concealment of their scheme from everybody, even from the Queen.

Whatever satisfaction it gave Count Louis to see the Queen once more, it was evident that he could not look to her for the solution of his problem.

He must therefore observe carefully if, in the King's reception of him, in even a word or motion, he could detect any hint, meant solely for himself, that the King was better informed than Lafayette, as to the cause of young Louis's trip to Paris.

Not being acquainted with Count Louis, the valet turned when they reached the door of the shop, and inquired: "Whom shall I announce?"

"Announce the General in Chief of the National Guard. I will myself have the honor of presenting the other gentlemen to his Majesty."

So the valet announced: "Monsieur the Commander of the National Guard!"

The King turned towards them, and said: "Ah, is it you, Monsieur Lafayette? I ask pardon for making you come all the way up here, but the locksmith assures you of a hearty welcome to his shop. A fellow once said to Henry Fourth, that even a charcoal-burner was master in his own house; so I say to you, you are as much the master here, in the blacksmith's shop, as in the King's regular apartments."

King Louis, as we may readily see, attacked the conversation very much in the same fashion as Marie Antoinette.

"Sire," responded Lafayette, "under whatsoever circumstances I may have the honor of presenting myself before the King, and on whatever floor or in whatever dress he may receive me, the King will be always King,

and the man who now offers his respectful homage will always be the King's faithful subject and devoted servant."

"I do not doubt it, Marquis! But you are not alone. Have you changed your aide-de-camp? Does this young officer take the place of either Gouvion or Romeuf?"

"This young officer, Sire, — and I ask the privilege of presenting him to your Majesty, — is my cousin, Louis de Bouillé, a captain in *Monsieur's* Dragoons."

"Oh yes!" said the King, with a slight start, which the young gentleman remarked, "oh yes, a son of the Marquis de Bouillé, Commander at Metz."

"The same, Sire," said the young Count with alacrity.

"Ah Monsieur, excuse me for failing to recognize you, but I am very near-sighted. — You have been some time away from Metz?"

"Only five days, Sire; but being in Paris without a regular furlough, though by the special permission of my father, I have solicited of my kinsman, the General, the honor of a presentation to your Majesty."

"You have done well to ask it of Lafayette, my dear young Count, for nobody is better able to present you, at all times, and through no one could the presentation be more agreeable."

The three words, *at all times*, indicated that Lafayette had kept up the privilege accorded to him at Versailles, of attending both general and special, both private and public receptions, — in fact, of seeing the King whenever it seemed best.

Moreover, the few words spoken by the King were sufficient to indicate to the young Count that he must be strictly on his guard. In particular the question, "Is it long since you left Metz?" meant, "Did you come away from Metz after Charny's arrival?"

The response of the young messenger sufficed for the King to understand his meaning. The statement, "I left Metz five days ago, and I am in Paris without military leave, though by my father's permission," signified: "Yes, Sire, I saw Monsieur de Charny; and my father has sent me to Paris to hear more from your Majesty, and learn certainly if Charny was acting in behalf of the King."

Lafayette glanced curiously about. Many were admitted into the King's business office, his council-chamber, his library, — even into his oratory, or private chapel; but few received the special favor of admission into his workshop, where the King was the apprentice, and where the true king, the veritable master, was Monsieur Gamain.

The General noticed the perfect order in which everything was arranged; but this was not really remarkable, as only on that morning had the King been able to begin work, Hue having acted as his apprentice, to pull the bellows.

Lafayette was embarrassed as to what subject he should take up, with a monarch who received him in such an off-hand fashion, with sleeves tucked up, a file in his hand, and a leathern apron in front of him; but at last he said: "Your Majesty is busy with an important piece of work?"

"Yes, General, I have undertaken the locksmith's greatest mechanism, a lock! I tell you what I am doing, so that if Marat should find out that I have again set up my workshop, and should pretend that I am forging fetters for France, you can assure him, if you clap your hands on him, that such a report is untrue. — You are neither a journeyman nor a master workman, I suppose, Monsieur de Bouillé?"

"No, Sire; but I am an apprentice, and if I could be of any use to your Majesty —"

"That's true, my dear cousin," said Lafayette; "the husband of your nurse was a locksmith, was n't he? I remember that your father once told me, although he had no great admiration for the author of 'Émile,' that he should have trained you as a locksmith, had he followed the advice of Jean Jacques Rousseau in your behalf."

"Precisely, Monsieur, and that is why I said to his Majesty, that if he needed an apprentice —"

"An apprentice would not be unserviceable to me, Monsieur," said the King; "but what I most need is a master."

"What sort of a lock is your Majesty making," asked the young man, with that half-familiarity authorized by the situation and attire of the King. "Is it a night-latch, a clover-leaf, a spring-lock, a bolt-lock, or a catch-lock?"

"Oh my cousin," said Lafayette, "I don't know what you can do about locks practically; but as a theorist you seem thoroughly posted about the — I will not call it a *trade*, since my sovereign has ennobled it — about the *art*."

The King had listened with evident pleasure to the nomenclature of locks given by the young fellow, and now replied: "No, it is only a concealed or mortised lock, opening on both sides; but I fear I have presumed too much on my own ability. Ah, if my poor Gamain were only here, — he who calls himself Master *of* masters, Master over all!"

"Is the good man dead, Sire?" asked young Louis.

"No," replied the King, — with a passing wink at the young man, as much as to say, *Read between the lines!* — "no, he lives at Versailles, Rue Reservoir. The dear fellow has n't dared to come and see me at the Tuileries."

"Why not, Sire?" asked Lafayette.

"For fear of compromising himself. A king of France is a very compromising sort of chap just now, my dear General, and the proof of it is, that all my friends are gone, some to London, others to Coblentz and Turin. However, my dear General, if you see nothing improper in Gamain's coming here some day, with one of his prentice-boys, to give me a little start, I will send for him."

"Sire," quickly answered Lafayette, "his Majesty knows very well that he is at perfect liberty to summon whom he will and see whomsoever he pleases."

"Yes, on condition that your sentinels cross-question visitors, as if they were smugglers on the frontier. My poor Gamain would think himself ruined entirely, if they should mistake his files for poniards, and his kit for a cartridge-box."

"Sire, I know not how to excuse myself to your Majesty; but I am responsible to Paris, to France, to Europe, for my sovereign's precious life, and I cannot take too many precautions for his safety. As to the smart fellow of whom we were talking, the King may give what orders seem to him best."

"That 's all right! Thanks, Monsieur Lafayette; but there is no hurry. In six or eight days I may want him," he added, with a side glance at Bouillé; "both him and his apprentice. I will send him word by my valet Durey, who is one of Gamain's friends."

"And he will only need to present himself, Sire, to be admitted. His name will be a sufficient passport. God shield me, Sire, from this reputation of being a jailer, a turnkey, a gatekeeper. Never was the King of France freer than at this moment. Indeed, I came with the idea of begging his Majesty to resume his outdoor sports, his hunting parties, his long rambles."

"As to the chase, — no, I thank you! Besides, just now I have other things to do. As to driving, wandering, that's another matter. My last trip from Versailles to Paris has rather cured me of any passion for travel, — at least, with such a great company of believers."

Here the King again glanced at the young nobleman, who, by a slight elevation of the eyelids, showed that he understood what the King had in mind.

"Meanwhile, Monsieur," added Louis Sixteenth, addressing himself directly to the young man, "shall you soon leave Paris, and return to your father?"

"Sire," he answered, "I shall leave Paris in two or three days, but not for Metz. I have an aged kinswoman, who lives at Versailles, on the Rue Reservoir, to whom I ought to pay my respects. Then I am intrusted by my father with the conclusion of an important family affair, and in eight or ten days I expect to see the party from whom I am to receive further directions about it. I shall not probably go back to my father before the early part of December, — that is, unless the King wishes, for any reason, that I should hasten my return to Metz."

"No, Monsieur! Take your own time. Go to Versailles. Attend to these family affairs, as your father has advised. Only, when they are done, go back to your father, and say that I have not forgotten him, that I know him to be among the *faithless, faithful found*, and that I shall some day recommend him to General Lafayette, in order that the General may recommend him to Monsieur du Portail for honorable advancement."

Lafayette smiled to himself at this new allusion to his own omnipotence. "Sire," he said, "I should long ago have commended the gentlemen of the Bouillé family to your Majesty's favor, if I had not the honor of being related to them. I am sometimes deterred from doing

justice to brave men, by the fear that I shall be accused of turning the favors of the King towards my own kinsfolk."

"Your forbearance is indeed unusual, and approaches the marvellous. We will talk of this hereafter!"

"The King will allow me to say," said the young Count at this juncture, "that my father would regard it as unkind, almost as a disgrace, if any military advancement should deprive him in whole or in part of the means of serving your Majesty."

"Oh, that's well understood, Count," said the King. "I shall not allow his position to be interfered with, unless to confer upon him one more in accordance with his desires and my own. Leave us to manage that, General Lafayette and myself, and betake yourself to your pleasures, — though without forgetting your business affairs. Adieu, gentlemen, adieu!"

The King dismissed them with a dignified air, in strong contrast to the coarse costume with which he was clothed.

When the door closed after them he said to himself: "Well, I think that young man understood me, and that in six or eight days I shall have Master Gamain and his apprentice to aid me in finishing my lock."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

BETWEEN five and six o'clock, on the evening of the same day when Louis de Bouillé had the honor of being received, first by the Queen and then by the King, a scene — which we wish to assist our readers in observing — was taking place in the fourth and upper story of a small, old, dirty, gloomy house, on the Rue Juiverie.

We therefore convoy our readers to the entrance of Exchange Bridge, — whether they dismount from their chariots or from cabs, whether they pay six thousand francs a year for coachman, two horses, and the carriage, or give thirty sous a day for a simple hired vehicle, with a public number.

We cross the bridge with them. We enter the Rue Pelleterie, which we follow as far as the Rue Juiverie, where we stop in front of the third door on the left.

We know very well that the appearance of that door — which the tenants of the house do not take the trouble to fasten, because they fancy their dwellings present no nocturnal temptations to the noble thieves from the Cité — is not attractive; but, as has been said, we have business with the people who inhabit the attics of this house; and as they will not come to us, why, we must go bravely to them, — dear gentleman, or well-beloved lady-reader.

Walk carefully as possible, in order not to slip in the sticky mud, which forms the soil of the narrow and dark passage-way which we enter. Let us gather our skirts

about us, in order not to let them brush the walls of the damp and greasy stairway, which crawls up from the end of that alley, like the fragments of a disjointed serpent. Let us place vials of vinegar under our nostrils, or press perfumed handkerchiefs to our faces, in order that this most subtle and aristocratic of our senses, the sense of smell, may escape, so far as possible, any contact with the ammoniated and tainted air, which penetrates mouth, nose, and eyes, all at once.

We will pause at the top of the third staircase, in front of a door on which the innocent hand of some youthful designer has traced certain outlines in chalk, which at first might be mistaken for cabalistic figures, but are only unfortunate essays in the sublime art of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michael Angelo.

If you please, we will look through the keyhole, in order, dear gentleman or lady, that you may recognize, if you have a good memory, the personages whom you are to encounter. If you do not recognize them at sight, you can apply your ear to the door, and listen It will be strange indeed, if hearing does not then come to the aid of sight, inasmuch as there are few of our dear readers who have not perused our story called "The Queen's Necklace." Thus it is, that our senses complement each other.

First let us ascertain what can be seen through the keyhole.

We see the interior of a miserable chamber, occupied by three persons. These three persons are a man, a woman, and a child.

The man is forty-five years old, and appears fifty-five; the woman is thirty-four, and appears forty; the child is five, and appears to be that age, for he has not yet had time to grow old too fast.

The man is clothed in an old uniform of a sergeant of the French Guards, a uniform venerated since the Fourteenth of July, the day when the French Guards united themselves with the populace, and exchanged gunshots with Lambesc's Germans and Besenval's Swiss.

This man holds in his hand a whole pack of cards, from the ace, through the deuce, and the three and four of each color, up to the king. He is trying, for the hundredth time, — for the thousandth, for the ten thousandth time, — an infallible double and progressive cubic reckoning, a scheme by which he may always break the gaming bank. By his side reposes a card pricked as full of holes as there are stars in the sky. We have said *reposes*, but we hasten to take that word back. *Repose* is not the right word to employ in reference to a card which the gamester — incontestably he is a gamester — torments incessantly, and consults every five minutes.

The woman is clad in an old silk gown. With her the misery seems more terrible, because it figures in conjunction with the remains of luxury. Her hair is done up in a pug, and held by a copper comb, which was once upon a time gilded. Her hands are scrupulously kept; and by dint of cleanliness, they have preserved, or rather have acquired, a certain aristocratic pose. Her nails, which Baron de Taverney, in his brutal realism, used to call claws, are always rounded into the chestnut shape. Finally some old-style slippers, worn out in spots, and formerly embroidered in gold and silk, give her feet free play, which are also partly covered with the remains of some clocked stockings.

As to her face, as we have before said, it belongs to a woman of thirty-four or thirty-five, and if artistically decorated, according to the mode of the day, would enable her to appear no older than she really is, or even to count

five years below her true age; for, as said the Abbé of Celle, till five or even ten years after, women cling desperately to twenty-nine. Deprived of rouge and powder, and thereby stripped of all means for concealing the effect of her sighs and unhappiness, this woman's third or fourth decade, this third or fourth flight of time, convicts her of several years beyond her proper portion.

Haggard as is this face, one dreams of having seen it before; and without the ability to answer the question, — inasmuch as the mind, however strong on the wing, hesitates to overleap such a distance, — one asks in what gilded palace, in what six-horse carriage, in the midst of what royal dust, he has before seen a resplendent face, of which this is only the faded reflection.

The child is five years old, as we have said. He has hair outspread like a cherub's, in one of Carlo Dolci's pictures. His cheeks are round as pippins. He has the demoniacal eyes of his mother, the greedy mouth of his father, and the laziness and vacillation of both.

He wears a coat of threadbare velvet; and while munching a slice of jam-covered bread, from the corner grocery, he shreds the end of an old tricolored belt, fringed with copper, into the crown of an old felt hat.

All this is lighted by a candle with a gigantic snuff, for which a bottle serves as a candlestick. This places the man with the cards in the light, and leaves the rest of the apartment in semi-darkness.

This is the situation. Now if ocular inspection has taught us nothing, let us try the aural method, as formerly proposed.

Listen! It is the child who first breaks the silence, as he tosses over his head his bread tart, which falls at the bottom of the bed, now reduced to a single mattress.

"Mamma," he says, "I 'm tired of sweetened bwead! Pouah!"

"Well, what dost want, Toussaint?"

"I want a stick of wed barley canny."

"Hearest thou, Beausire?" says the woman.

Then, noting that he is absorbed in his calculations, she asks, louder than before: "Dost thou hear what this poor child says?"

The same silence!

Then, raising her foot as high as her hand, she takes off a slipper, and throws it at the calculator's nose. "Hey, Beausire!" she cries.

"Oh well, what is it?" he asks, with a decided expression of ill-humor.

"Toussaint, here, wants a red stick of sugar candy, because he is tired of jam, poor child."

"He shall have it to-morrow."

"I want it to-day! I want it this evening! I want it wight off, now!" cries the child in a yelping tone, which threatens to breed a tempest.

"Toussaint, my dear," says the father, "I counsel thee to silence, or thou wilt have trouble with papa!"

The child yells, but the yell is drawn from him by fractiousness rather than fear.

"Touch that child a bit, drunkard, and thou 'lt have trouble with me!" says the mother, shaking at Beausire her white hand, which, thanks to the care wherewith its owner sharpens her finger-nails, looks as if it might belong to a griffin.

"Hey? Who the devil 's going to touch the young one? Thou knowest that 's only my way of talking, Madame Olivia. Even if a fellow sometimes bangs the mother's gown, he always respects the child's frock. Come, — come and embrace this poor Beausire, who in a

week will be as rich as a king. Come, come, my little Nicole!"

"When you *are* as rich as a king, my jewel, it will be quite time enough to embrace you, but till then, — not for me!"

"But when I tell thee it 's all the same as if I had a million, do give me an advance kiss, to bring us good luck. The baker will soon give us credit!"

"A man who counts upon millions, and yet asks to be trusted for a four-pound loaf!"

"Me wants some wed barley canny!" cries the younket, in a tone which is the harbinger of worse outcries to come.

"See here, millionnaire, give this baby a morsel of sugar candy!"

Beausire makes a motion of his hand towards his pouch, but it accomplishes only half the journey. "Thou well knowest that yesterday I gave thee my last twenty-four sou piece."

"Then thou hast some money, ma!" says the child, turning towards her whom the respectable Monsieur Beausire sometimes calls Olivia and sometimes Nicole. "Give me a sou to buy a stick of wed barley canny!"

"Here are two sous, thou naughty child; but take care and don't fall, going downstairs!"

"Tanks, little mother," says the child, jumping up and down for joy, and holding out his hand.

"Stop! come here, till I put on thy belt again, and thy hat, thou droll chicken; for it must not be said that Monsieur de Beausire lets his child run about the streets half rigged. It may be all one to him, for he 's a *no-heart*, but such things make *me* die of shame."

The child greatly desires, even at the risk of what the neighbors may say about the heir presumptive of the

house of Beausire, to rid himself of that hat and belt, whereof he has never been able to see the utility; although, in their freshness and glow, these articles excited the admiration of the other children; but as belt and hat are among the conditions attached to the two-sou piece, it is necessary for him to put them on, which the young tease reluctantly does. However, he consoles himself, before he goes out, by thrusting his ten-centime (or two-sou) piece under his father's nose, who, absorbed in his calculations, only smiles at this charming playfulness.

Presently they can hear his step, hastened by appetite, but still timorous, receding down the stairway.

The woman shuts the door, after following the urchin out with her eyes, and turns her attention from son to father. After a brief silence she says: "Ah ha, Monsieur de Beausire, your intelligence had better do something forthwith to get us out of this miserable hole; or else I must see what *I* can do;" and she pronounces these words in a mincing way, as a woman might, whose mirror declares to her of a morning: "Be calm! With such a face as yours, no woman need die of hunger."

"Presently, my little Nicole! Thou seest that I 'm busy."

"Yes, in changing those cards about, and in pricking holes in a piece of cardboard."

"But when I tell thee what I 've discovered —"

"What?"

"My combination."

"Good! So we begin all over again. Beausire, I give you fair warning, that I shall send my memory rummaging among my old acquaintances, and see if I can't think of one of them who 's able to send such a looney as you to the Charenton Asylum."

"But don't I tell thee this combination is infallible?"

"Ah, if Marshal Richelieu was n't dead!" mutters the young woman to herself.

"What sayest thou?"

"Or if Cardinal Rohan wa'n't ruined!"

"Hey?"

"Or if Madame de la Motte had n't run away!"

"What art thou saying, please?"

"If I could only recover some of my old friends, and not be obliged to share the misery of an old cavalry man like this!" and with a gesture fit for a queen, Mademoiselle Nicole Legay — now called Madame Olivia — contemptuously indicates Beausire.

"But I tell thee," he repeats, with an air of conviction, "that to-morrow we shall be rich!"

"With millions?"

"Yes, millions!"

"Show me the first ten golden louis out of your millions, and I 'll take the rest for granted."

"Very well, thou shalt see them this very night, — ten golden louis. That 's just the sum promised me!"

"And thou 'lt give them to me, my little Beausire?" says Nicole, quickly.

"Well, I 'll give thee five, to buy a silk gown for thyself, and velvet frock for the little one. Then, with the other five —"

"Well, well, with the other five —?"

"I will bring thee a million!"

"Wretch, — again gambling!"

"But I tell thee I 've found the infallible combination at last!"

"Oh yes, twin sister to that other combination, which ate up the sixty thousand francs coming to thee after that Portuguese affair."

"Ill-gotten wealth never does any good!" says Beausire, sententiously; "and I always had a notion, that the way in which that money came to us was sure to bring bad luck."

"I suppose the ten louis talked about come by inheritance? Perhaps some uncle has died in America or India, and bequeathed ten louis —"

"These ten louis," rejoins Beausire, with an air of superiority, "these ten louis, Mademoiselle Nicole Legay, — yes, these ten louis, understand, — were earned, not only honestly, but honorably, and in a cause wherein I find myself much interested, like all the nobility of France."

"You are then a *nobleman*, Monsieur Beausire?" says Nicole, maliciously.

"Mademoiselle Legay, say De Beausire, — *De Beausire*," he reiterates, "as it is recorded in the certificate of the birth of your child, registered in the sacristy of Saint Paul's Church, and signed by your servant, — Jean Baptiste Toussaint de Beausire, on the very day when I gave him my name —"

"A great gift, that!" mutters Nicole.

"— And my fortune!" adds Beausire, emphatically.

"If the good God never sends him anything else," she says, shaking her head, "the poor little chap is likely to live on charity and die in an almshouse."

"Well now," he says, with an air of vexation, "one can't stand this! Thou art never contented!"

"Then don't stand it!" cries Nicole, opening the floodgates of her long-restrained wrath. "Good God, who wants you to stand it? Thank God, I 'm not worried on my own account, nor on my child's. Beginning to-night, I also will look for fortune, — but elsewhere."

Nicole arose and took three steps towards the door.

Beausire placed himself before the door, barring the way with outstretched arms, and saying: "But when I tell thee, naughty girl, that this fortune — "

"Well, well?"

"It will come this evening. Even if the combination is wrong, — which it cannot be, after all my calculations, there will only be five louis lost!"

"There are times when five louis are a fortune, — a fortune, do you hear, Monsieur Spendthrift? You don't know that, oh no! — you who 've eaten your gold by the houseful!"

"That proves my merit, Nicole. If I used up that gold, it was I who earned it; and if I won that money, I can win more elsewhere. There 's a benevolent Providence for such fellows as I, — if they 're only *adroit.*"

"Oh yes, count on that!"

"Mademoiselle Nicole," said Beausire, "art thou an atheist?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Dost thou belong to the school of Voltaire, who denies Providence?"

"Beausire, you 're a fool!"

"Coming from among the common people, as thou dost, it would not be astonishing, thy holding such notions. I warn thee, they are not the sort belonging to my social caste, or in harmony with my political opinions."

"You 're insolent, Monsieur!" said Nicole.

"As for me, — dost hear, — as for me, I have *faith;* and if anybody should say to me: 'Thy son, Jean Baptiste Toussaint de Beausire, who has gone out for a stick of red barley candy, with a two-sou piece, will come up again with a purse full of gold in his hand; I should reply: 'Very likely, if it is God's will!'" and Beausire lifted his eyes beatifically to Heaven.

"Beausire, you 're an idiot!"

She had hardly uttered these words when they heard the voice of young Toussaint, calling up the stairway: "Papa! Mamma!"

Both Beausire and Nicole hearkened to the voice of their pet.

"Papa! Mamma!" repeated that voice, coming nearer and nearer.

"What has happened?" cried Nicole, opening the door with maternal solicitude. "Come, my child, come!"

"Papa! Mamma!" continued the approaching voice, like that of a ventriloquist, when he pretends to imitate the sound of speech, heard through an opening cellar door.

"I should not be surprised," said Beausire, noting an element of joy in that voice, "if the miracle had come to pass, and the little chap had found the purse of which I spoke just now."

At that moment the urchin appeared on the last turn of the stairway, and ran into the chamber, holding in his mouth his stick of barley candy, squeezing a bag of sweetmeats against his breast with his left arm, and displaying in his outstretched right hand a golden louis, which, by the light of the lone candle, shone like the star Aldebaran.

"My God, my God!" cried Nicole, leaving the door to shut of its own accord. "What has happened to the poor dear!" and she covered the sticky mouth with maternal kisses, which nothing can disgust, because they purify everything they touch.

"Here it is," said the father, adroitly scooping in the louis, and examining it by the candle, "here it is, a genuine gold louis, worth twenty-four francs."

"Where hast thou found it, little monkey? I must go there, and search for others like it."

"I did n't fine it, papa! Somebody give it to me!"

"How? Somebody gave it to thee?" cried the mother.

"Yes, mamma, — a gentleman."

Nicole was on the point of asking, as Beausire had asked about the louis, where the gentleman was; but, rendered prudent by experience, and knowing Beausire's jealous susceptibility, she contented herself with repeating: "A gentleman?"

"Yes, little mother," said the child, cracking his red candy between his teeth, "a gentleman."

"A gentleman?" repeated Beausire, in his turn.

"Yes, little papa, a gentleman, who came into the gwocery while I was there, and says: 'Mousieur Gwocer, is n't this young gentleman named *De Beausire*, whom you have the honor of serving?'"

Beausire drew himself up, and Nicole shrugged her shoulders.

"What did the grocer say, my son?" asked Beausire.

"He says: 'I don't know about no gentleman, but his name is Beausire, certainly.' — 'And don't he live nearby?' asks the gentleman. — 'There, in the house at the left, up thwee flights.' — 'Give all sorts of goodies to this child, and I 'll pay,' says the gentleman. Then he says to me: 'Here, pet, there 's a louis;' and he also says: 'That 's to buy other bonbons, when these are all eaten up.' Then he puts this louis into my hand, the gwocer puts the package on my arm, and I come away happy. — Hold on! Where 's my louis?" and the child, who had not observed his father's legerdemain, began to hunt about for the goldpiece.

"Thou hast lost it, careless child!" said Beausire.

"No! I hain't! I hain't! I hain't!"

The discussion might have become serious, but for what followed, which necessarily put an end to it.

While the child, doubtful about the matter, was hunting around the floor after the goldpiece, which reposed quietly in the deep pocket of papa's waistcoat; while papa was admiring the intelligence of young Toussaint, as shown in the story he had brought home, — though that story has perhaps been a trifle clarified under our pen; while Nicole, though sharing the enthusiasm of her lover for this precocious eloquence, was asking herself seriously who this giver of sweetmeats, this louis-lender, could be, — the door opened slowly, and a pleasant voice uttered these words: "Good-evening, Mademoiselle Nicole! Good-evening, Monsieur de Beausire! Good-evening, little Toussaint!"

Each of the three turned towards the side whence came the voice.

On the threshold stood a man elegantly dressed, and gazing with a smiling face at the family group.

"Ah!" cried the youngster, "the bonbon gentleman!"

"Cagliostro!" exclaimed Nicole and Beausire in a breath.

"You have a charming child, Monsieur," said the Count, "and you ought to be very proud of being his father."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN WHICH THE READER WILL HAVE THE PLEASURE OF FINDING M. DE BEAUSIRE THE SAME MAN HE WAS WHEN THEY LEFT HIM.

THERE was a moment's pause after Cagliostro's gracious words. He came into the middle of the chamber, and glanced inquiringly about, doubtless wishing to inform himself as to the moral, and especially the pecuniary situation, of his old acquaintances, into whose midst he had unexpectedly come, led by the terrible underground intrigues of which he was the centre.

The result of this glance left no doubt in such a perspicacious mind as the Count's. Even a superficial observer might have guessed the truth, that the poverty-stricken household had reached its last twenty-four sous.

Of the three persons into whose midst the apparition of the Count had brought such consternation, the first to break silence was little Toussaint, whose memory only recalled the events of that evening, and whose conscience therefore did not reproach him. "Ah Monsieur," he said, "ain't it too bad? I've lost my goldpiece."

Nicole opened her mouth to state the facts as they were, but she reflected that possibly her silence might procure her child a second louis, and that this second *she* should inherit; and she was not mistaken.

"Thou hast lost thy goldpiece, poor child?" said Cagliostro. "Never mind! Here are two. Take care not to lose them this time!"

Taking two golden louis from a purse, whose plumpness attracted the covetous attention of Beausire, he let them fall into the tight little hand of the child, who said, running to Nicole, "Here, mamma, here 's one for thee and one for me," as he divided his treasure with his mother.

Cagliostro noted the tenacity with which the spurious sergeant's glance followed his purse in its various evolutions, from the time when he took it out, and it was opened in giving passage to forty-eight francs, till it was returned to his pocket again. Seeing it disappear in the depths of the Count's vest, Nicole's sweetheart sighed.

"What, Monsieur, always melancholy?" said Cagliostro.

"And you, Monsieur, always the millionnaire!"

"My God! — You, who are one of the greatest philosophers I ever heard of, either in these degenerate later ages, or in the cycles of classic antiquity, — you ought to be acquainted with the time-honored maxim, *Money makes not happiness.* I have known you when you were comparatively rich."

"Yes, that 's true. I had nearly one hundred thousand francs," said Beausire.

"That 's possible; but at the time when I knew you, you had already eaten up some forty thousand francs; though if you had only sixty thousand left, that would be a good round sum for an old soldier."

Beausire sighed again. "What is sixty thousand francs, compared with the money at *your* disposal?"

"In my capacity as trustee, you are perhaps correct; but if we reckon more carefully, I fancy you would be Saint Martin, and I the pauper; and to keep me from freezing with the cold, my dear Beausire, you would have to give me half of your cloak. Do you remember the circumstances under which I first met you? You had then,

as I just said, about sixty thousand francs in your pocket; but were you any happier?"

Beausire emitted a sad retrospective sigh, which was almost a groan.

"You see!" insisted Cagliostro. "Now would you give up your present condition, even if you possessed nothing but the unlucky louis which you confiscated from young Toussaint — ?"

"Monsieur!" interrupted the old soldier.

"We won't quarrel now, Beausire! We quarrelled once, and you will remember that you were compelled to go into the street to find your sword, which had jumped out of the window? You recollect it, don't you?" he continued, as Beausire made no response. "It is something worth remembering. Well, now I ask again, even though you possessed only the one unlucky louis which you confiscated from young Toussaint," — and this time the insinuation passed unnoticed, — "would you exchange your actual position for the much more precarious situation from which I once helped to extricate you?"

"No, Monsieur," said Beausire, "you are right indeed! I would not make the exchange. Alas, I was separated from my dear Nicole!"

"Yes, and somewhat sought after by the police, on account of a certain affair in Portugal. What the Devil ever came of that affair? A most villainous affair, as I remember!"

"Oh well, it is drowned in oblivion."

"So much the better, for it must have annoyed you very much. But don't reckon too surely on this falling into oblivion. They are great divers, these police, and if the net goes as deep as the water, a scandalous crime is easier to fish up than a beautiful pearl."

"But for the misery to which we are reduced, Monsieur, —"

"You would be happy. Indeed, you would only need a thousand louis to make that happiness complete."

Nicole's eyes lighted up, and Beausire's were flaming.

"That is to say," cried Beausire, "if we had a thousand louis, — that is, twenty-four thousand francs, we should buy some country-place with half the amount, get a little income from the other half, and I should become a cultivator."

"Like Cincinnatus!"

"This would leave Nicole free to conduct the education of our child."

"Like Cornelia! — Well, not only would your conduct be exemplary, but touching. You hope then to get this amount out of the business which you are engaged in just now?"

Beausire started. "What business?"

"That in which you figure as a sergeant of the Guards, — that for which you have a rendezvous to-night, under the arcades of Royal Square."

Beausire became pale as death. "Oh Monsieur?" he said, clasping his hands beseechingly.

"What is it?"

"Don't give me away!"

"Bah! How you wander! Am I a lieutenant of police?"

"There, I told thee so," said Nicole, — "that this was some wretched affair."

"Ah, you knew about it, this affair, Mademoiselle Legay?" asked Cagliostro.

"No, Monsieur," said she, "and for that very reason I suspected him. When he hides an affair from me, that 's because it 's bad, — I make sure of that."

"But as to this affair, which now concerns him, you

may be mistaken. It may be an excellent affair, on the contrary."

"Is it not?" cried Beausire. "The Count is a gentleman, and understands that all the nobility are interested —"

"In its success!" replied Cagliostro. "It is however true that the common people, on their side, are interested to have it fail. Meantime, if you will believe me, my dear Beausire, — and you understand, it is the counsel of a friend which I give, of a true friend! — well, if you will believe me, you will take part neither with the nobility nor with the people."

"But whose part shall I take?"

"Your own!"

"Mine?"

"To be sure!" said Nicole. "Pardieu! Thou hast done enough for other folks. It 's time to think of thyself!"

"You hear? She speaks like Saint Chrysostom, — John of the Golden Mouth. Remember this, Beausire, that everything has a good side and a bad side, — good for some, bad for others. No affair, whatever it may be, is bad for everybody or good for everybody. Well, the one thing needful is to get on the right side."

"Ah ha! and it appears that I am not on that side, hey?"

"Not at all, dear Beausire! No, that does n't follow. I will only add, — you know I meddle with matters to play the prophet, — I will only add, that if you are mixed up in this affair, it will not be at the risk of your honor, or even of your fortune, but you will run the risk of your life. Yes, you will probably be hanged."

"But, Monsieur," said Beausire, trying to keep his countenance, but wiping away the sweat which rolled down his forehead, "they do not hang a gentleman."

"That 's true; but in order to obtain the privilege of decapitation, it would be necessary to produce your proofs of nobility, which would perhaps take so long as to weary the judges, who would therefore ordain that you should be provisionally hanged. You will tell me that in a good cause the punishment matters nothing, that

Crime makes the shame, and not the scaffold,

as a great poet has said."

"Well then!" stammered Beausire, more and more frightened.

"Oh well, you are not so much attached to your opinions that you wish to sacrifice your life, — I understand that. The Devil! 'One can live but once!' as another poet says, — not so great as the first, perhaps, but one who at least has reason on his side."

"I have always noticed," said Beausire at last, "in all the relations in which I have had the honor to be associated with you, that you have a way of talking which would make the hair of even a moderately timid man stand on end."

"Oh, the Devil, such was not my intention," said Cagliostro. "Besides, you are not a timid man!"

"No," responded Beausire, "not generally! However, there are certain circumstances — "

"Oh yes, I understand! — for instance, when one has behind him the galleys, for theft, and before him the gallows, for the crime of treason against the people, — *lèse-nation*, — as the offence would now he called, I suppose, which has for its aim the abduction of the King."

"Monsieur!" cried Beausire, utterly confounded.

"You unlucky dog!" said Olivia. "Then it was on this kidnapping business that you based your dreams of gold?"

"And he was not entirely in the wrong, my dear Demoiselle; only, as I said just now, there is a bad and good side to everything, a bright face and a cloudy face. Beausire has had the misfortune to caress the shady face, to adopt the bad side; but if he will turn about —"

"Is n't it too late?" asked Nicole.

"Certainly not!"

"What shall I do?" asked Beausire.

"Suppose one thing," said Cagliostro, thoughtfully.

"Well, what?"

"Suppose your plot should fail. Suppose those two accomplices, the man in the brown cloak and the man with a mask, should be arrested. Suppose — it is necessary to suppose all sorts of things nowadays — suppose they should be condemned to death. Augeard and Besenval were acquitted, to be sure; but suppose that these accomplices should be condemned to death. Suppose, — don't be in a hurry, for by supposition after supposition we get at the facts, — suppose you should be regarded as one of their accomplices. Suppose the cord was around your neck, and somebody should say to you, in answer to your complaints, — for in such a situation, however courageous he may be, — great Heavens! — a man must lament more or less —"

"Go on, go on, Count, I beg of you. It seems as if I were already strangling."

"Pardieu, that 's not surprising, seeing that I was theorizing about the cord at your throat! Well, suppose somebody, a Voice, should come to you and say: 'Poor Beausire, dear Monsieur, this is all your own fault!'"

"How so?" cried Beausire.

"There, you see! By theories upon theories we get at the facts; and you answer me as if we had already touched bottom."

"I own up!"

"Very well. 'How so?' you would say to the Voice; and the Voice would reply: 'Because you might not only escape this malefactor's doom, which already holds you in its talons, but gain a thousand louis, wherewith to buy that little house in the country, with green hedges, whither you wish to retire with Mademoiselle Olivia and little Toussaint, and five hundred francs a year income, coming to you from the twelve thousand francs which had not been used in buying the place, — to live, as you said, as a gardener, going about in slippers in summer time and brogans in winter. Now, instead of this charming prospect, we have — *you* particularly — before our eyes the Place de Grève, planted with two or three villainous gallows-posts, of which the highest offers you its arm. Ugh! An ugly outlook, my poor Monsieur de Beausire!'"

"But after all, Count, how can I manage to escape, — how gain the thousand louis necessary to assure my tranquillity, and also that of Nicole and Toussaint?"

"You are always asking something! Well, the Voice might reply: 'Nothing easier. You have there, very near you, only two steps away, the Count Cagliostro.' — 'I know him,' you would reply, — 'a foreign nobleman, who lives in Paris for his pleasure, and who is bored almost to death unless he has plenty of news.' — 'That 's the man,' the Voice would say. 'Well, you have only to hunt him up, and say to him —'"

"But I don't know where he lives!" cried Beausire. "I don't know if he is still in Paris. I don't even know if he 's still alive."

"To which, dear Beausire, the Voice would respond, that this was precisely why the Count had come to find you; and the moment he found you, there would remain

to you no convenient excuse. Well, you would then say to him: 'Monsieur, I know you for an epicure in the matter of news. Now I have the very latest. *Monsieur*, the King's brother, is engaged in a conspiracy.' — 'Bah!' would be his reply. — 'Yes, with the Marquis de Favras.' — 'Impossible!' — 'Yes indeed! I speak wittingly, because I am one of the agents of Favras.' — 'Truly? Well, what is the aim of this plot?' — 'The abduction of the King and his removal to Péronne. Well, Count, for your recreation, if you so desire, I will bring you, hour by hour, — minute by minute, if necessary, — intelligence as to how the affair goes on.' Then the Count, who is a generous seigneur, would reply: 'Will you really do this, Beausire?' — 'Yes indeed!' — 'Well, as every effort deserves its reward, if you keep your word, why, I have there, in a corner, twenty-four thousand francs, which I mean to use in some good way. My faith, why not spend them on my caprice? Now on the day when the King is abducted, or Favras taken, if you come and tell me so, on the honor of a gentleman, the twenty-four thousand livres shall be yours, as shall be these ten louis, — not as an advance, not even as a loan, but simply as a gift.'"

At these words, like an actor who rehearses with all the accessories, Cagliostro drew from his pouch his heavy purse, introduced into it his thumb and finger, and with a dexterity which testified to his familiarity with that species of exercise, he pinched up just ten louis, no more and no less; while it is but fair to say, on his side, that Beausire put forth his hand to receive them.

Cagliostro pushed this hand gently aside, saying: "Excuse me, but we were only dealing in *suppositions*, I believe!"

"Yes, but," said Beausire whose eyes gleamed like live

coals, "as you said, by the way of theories and suppositions we reach facts."

"Have we reached that point?"

Beausire hesitated. We hasten to say that the cause of this hesitation was not honesty, was not fidelity to his pledges, was not an elevated conscience. We affirm, what our readers know Beausire too well to contradict, that the cause of his hesitation was merely the fear lest the Count should not keep his promise.

"My dear Beausire," said Cagliostro, "I well know what is passing through your mind."

"Yes, you are right! I hesitate about betraying the trust reposed in me by a gallant man;" and he lifted his eyes to Heaven, and shook his head, as much as to say, "How hard this is!"

"No, that is not so," replied Cagliostro; "and you are a new illustration of the truth of that wise saw, *No man knows himself.*"

"What then?" demanded Beausire, flurried by the Count's facility in reading the bottom of his heart.

"You fear that I will not keep my promise about giving you the thousand louis."

"Oh Monsieur! —"

"That is but natural. Well, I offer you a guaranty."

"A guaranty! Monsieur has no need —"

"A guaranty which will personally answer for me."

"And what is this security?" asked Beausire, timidly.

"Mademoiselle Nicole Olivia Legay."

"Oh, if the Count promises, the thing is as good as done!" cried Nicole.

"You see, Monsieur, here is the evidence that I scrupulously fulfil my agreements. Once upon a time Mademoiselle was in the same situation that you are now, minus the conspiracy; that is, she was sought by the

police. I made her an offer, — to make her retreat at my house. She feared for her honor. I gave her my word; and in spite of all the temptations which beset me, — and which you, Beausire, understand better than anybody else, — I kept my word. — Is n't this so, my dear Mademoiselle?"

"Oh yes! By our little Toussaint, I swear it!"

"You believe, then, Mademoiselle Nicole, that I will keep my word, if to-day I engage to give him twenty-four thousand livres on the day when the King takes his flight, or Favras is arrested? And this does n't take into the account, be it understood, that I also loosen the knot which threatens to strangle you at any moment, — so that there will be no further question of rope or gallows, — at any rate, as connected with this affair. Of course I cannot be responsible beyond that. — One moment! Let us understand each other. There are some vocations — "

"As for me," said Nicole, "it is all the same as if a notary had passed the contracts."

"Well, my dear Mademoiselle," said Cagliostro, placing in a row on the table the ten louis, which he had heretofore kept in his hand, "inspire the heart of Monsieur de Beausire with this conviction, and the affair is concluded;" and he made a sign with his hand for Beausire to go and talk with Nicole alone.

The conversation only lasted five minutes; but it must be said that during those five minutes it was very animated.

Meanwhile Cagliostro looked at the card full of holes, which he held up before the candle, nodding to it as if he was saluting an old acquaintance.

"Ah ha!" he said. "This is the famous combination of Monsieur Law, which you have picked up. I lost a

million on that very combination;" and he carelessly dropped the card on the table.

This observation imparted new activity to the conversation of Nicole and Beausire. At last Beausire appeared to have made up his mind. He came to Cagliostro with outstretched hand, like a jockey who wishes to conclude a good trade; but the Count drew back and frowned.

"Monsieur, between gentlemen, the word is sufficient. You have mine; give me yours!"

"On the faith of a Beausire, it is agreed."

"That is enough," said Cagliostro. Then he added, drawing from his fob a watch, on which was a picture of King Frederic of Prussia, enriched with diamonds: "It is nine o'clock, less a quarter-hour. At nine o'clock precisely you will be waited for under the arcades on Royal Square, on the side of the Sully Mansion. Take these ten louis and put them in your waistcoat pocket, buckle on your coat, gird on your sword, cross Notre Dame Bridge, follow the Rue Saint Antoine. No need for anybody to go with you."

Beausire did not need speaking to a second time. He took the ten louis, put them into his pocket, buckled on his coat, and belted on his sword.

"Where shall I see you again, Count?"

"In Saint John Cemetery, if you please. When one wishes not to be overheard, and to talk over such affairs as this, better be among the dead than among the living."

"At what hour?"

"As soon as you are at liberty. The first comer will wait for the other."

"Monsieur has something more to do?" asked Beausire anxiously, seeing that the Count did not get ready to follow him out.

"Yes, I wish to chat with Mademoiselle Nicole."

Beausire made a sharp gesture.

"Oh, be easy, my friend. I respected her honor when she was a young girl; all the more reason why I should respect her as the mother of a family. Go along, Beausire, go along!"

Beausire glanced at his Nicole, as much as to say: "Madame de Beausire, be worthy of the confidence I repose in you!" Tenderly he embraced the young Toussaint, saluted the Count with respect mingled with some distrust, and went out precisely as the clock on Notre Dame rang out the three-quarters past eight.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ŒDIPUS AND LOT.

It lacked but a few minutes of midnight when a man, emerging from the Rue Royale into the Rue Saint Antoine, followed the latter street as far as Saint Catherine's Fountain, and paused a moment within its projecting shadow, to assure himself that he was not shadowed by some spy. Thence he took the lane which leads to the Mansion Saint Paul, whence he entered the very dark and completely empty street named after the King of Sicily. Then, somewhat relaxing his gait, he advanced towards the extremity of this street, and hesitatingly turned into that called White Cross, and finally stopped, but still more hesitatingly, before the grated gate of Saint John Cemetery.

There he waited, as if he feared he should see some spectre rise out of the earth, and wiped the sweat from his face with the sleeve of his sergeant's coat.

At the very moment when midnight sounded, something like a ghost appeared, gliding among the yews and cypresses. This ghost approached the gate; and soon, by the noise of the key in the lock, one could see that the spectre, if spectre it was, not only possessed the faculty of coming out of his tomb, but, when he was once outside the grave, of going also outside the cemetery.

At this clanking sound our military friend recoiled.

"Well, well, Beausire," said the hectoring voice of Cagliostro, "don't you know me, or have you forgotten our appointment?"

"Ah, is it you?" said Beausire, breathing like a man from whose heart a great weight has been lifted. "So much the better. These devilish streets are so dark and lonesome that one does n't know whether he would rather find his way alone, or meet somebody."

"Ah, bah!" said Cagliostro. "What, you afraid of anything, at any hour of day or night? You would n't have me credit that, — a brave man like you, who wears a sword at his side! Come this side of the gate, dear Beausire, and you 'll feel easier, for you 'll only encounter myself."

Beausire accepted the bidding, and the lock, which had grated in opening the gate for him, grated again as it was fastened behind him.

"There now," said Cagliostro, "follow this little pathway, dear Monsieur, and, at the end of twenty paces, we shall find a sort of ruined altar, the steps whereof will be marvellously convenient for a chat over our affairs."

Beausire started to obey his leader; but presently he said, after a moment's hesitation: "Where the devil are you going? I can see only briers which scratch me like nails, and grass which comes up to my knees."

"The truth is, that this cemetery is one of the worst kept that I know of; but that is not astonishing. You know hardly anybody is buried here except condemned sinners, who have been executed in the Place de Grève; and for such poor devils, they use small ceremony. Nevertheless, there are several illustrious people buried here. If it were daytime I could show you the place where Bouteville de Montmorency is buried, who was beheaded for fighting a duel; and the Chevalier de Rohan, decapitated for conspiring against the government; and Count Horn, broken on the wheel for assassinating a Jew; and Damiens, quartered for trying to kill Louis Fifteenth, —

and I don't know who else. Oh, you 're wrong to traduce Saint John Cemetery. It 's badly kept, but very well inhabited."

Beausire followed on, fitting his step to Cagliostro's, as regularly as a soldier, in the second rank, is in the habit of doing with his file-leader.

"Ah!" said the leader, suddenly stopping, in such a way that Beausire, who expected no such halt, ran into Cagliostro's back. "Hold, here 's something new. This is the grave of your comrade, Fleur d'Épine, one of the murderers of François the baker. Épine was hanged a week ago, by order of the Châtelet Court. This ought to interest you, as he was an old exempt soldier, like yourself, a genuine recruiter and a sergeant."

Beausire's teeth literally chattered. It seemed as if the thorns, amidst which he was walking, were so many clinched hands, stretching out of the earth to draw him down by his legs, and make him understand that Destiny had there marked a place for his eternal sleep.

"Ah!" said Cagliostro, stopping before a sort of ruin, "here we are, at last!"

Seating himself on a broken stone, he pointed Beausire to another, which seemed placed side by side with the first, expressly to spare Cinna the pains of bringing his seat nearer that of Augustus. It was time, for the legs of the ex-soldier were shaking in such a way that he fell, rather than sat, down upon the stone.

"Now that we can talk at our ease," said Cagliostro, "let us hear what took place under the arcades of Royal Square. The meeting must have been interesting."

"My faith, I must acknowledge that just now my head spins, and I think we shall both be the gainers if you will please question me."

"So be it! I 'm a good-natured prince; and if I can

only learn what I want, never mind the form. How many were there under the arcades in Royal Square?"

"Six, including me."

"Six, including yourself? Well, let us see if they were indeed the men I think. Imprimis, yourself, beyond a doubt."

Beausire sighed, as much as to say that he should be glad if the doubt were possible.

"You do me the honor to begin with me," he said, "but there were much greater personages with me."

"My dear boy, I follow the precept of the Gospel, which declares that the first shall be last. Now if the first are to be last, the last naturally will be first. I proceed, as I tell you, according to the Gospel. First, you *were* there, were you not?"

"Yes!" said Beausire.

"Then there was your friend Tourcaty, — an old recruiting officer, intrusted with raising the legion for Brabant."

"Yes, Tourcaty was there."

"Then there was a good Royalist named Marquié, formerly a sergeant in the French Guards, but now a sublieutenant of a central company."

"Yes, Marquié was there."

"Next, Monsieur de Favras?"

"Yes, Favras comes next."

"Next, the masked man?"

"Next, the masked man!"

"Have you any information to give me about that masked man, Beausire?"

He looked at Cagliostro so intently that his eyes seemed to illuminate the obscurity. "Well," he finally began, "is he not —?" and then Beausire stopped, as if he feared he should commit a sacrilege by going so far.

"Is he not who?" demanded Cagliostro.

"Is he not —?"

"So! Your tongue is evidently tied, my dear Beausire. You must pay attention to that. Knots in the tongue sometimes bring on knots in the throat; and those, though movable, are not the less dangerous."

Forced from his last intrenchment Beausire finally replied: "Is he not *Monsieur?*"

"Monsieur who?"

"*Monsieur*, — *Monsieur*, the King's brother."

"My dear Beausire, it is quite conceivable that the Marquis de Favras should represent this masked man to be Monsieur de Provence, because Favras has an interest in having it believed that he is supported by the hand of a Prince of the blood royal; and a man who does not know how to lie, does not how to conspire; but that you and your friend Tourcaty, two old recruiters, should let yourselves be imposed upon in this sort of way, is hardly probable, — you, who are accustomed to taking the measure of people about them by feet and inches."

"What then?"

"*Monsieur* is five feet, three inches, and a fraction in height," Cagliostro went on, "while the masked man is nearly five feet and six inches."

"That is true, and I had already thought of it; but if not *Monsieur*, who then can it be?"

"Ah Beausire, I am proud and happy at my ability to teach you something, when I expected only to learn something from you."

"Then," said the ex-soldier, returning little by little to his natural condition, as he realized that he was dealing with realities, "then you know who this man is?"

"Perhaps!"

"Would it be indiscreet to ask —?"

"His name?"

Beausire bowed, to show that this was what he wanted.

"A name is always a ticklish thing to speak, Monsieur, and really, I should like it better if you would guess."

"Guess? I have been trying to, for a fortnight."

"Ah! because nobody aided you!"

"Please aid me yourself, Monsieur Count."

"I ask nothing better. Do you know the history of Œdipus?"

"Hardly. I saw it played once at the Comédie Française, but towards the end of the fourth act I had the misfortune to get drowsy."

"Pest! I wish you many such misfortunes, my dear fellow."

"But you see that just now it leaves me ignorant —"

"Well, in two words I will tell you about Œdipus. I was acquainted with him as a child at the Court of King Polybius, and as an old man at the Court of King Admetus; so you can believe what I tell you, better than you can believe what is said by Æschylus, Sophocles, Seneca, Corneille, Voltaire, or Monsieur Ducis, who have heard a great deal about Œdipus, but never enjoyed the advantage of his acquaintance."

Beausire made a movement, as if to ask Cagliostro for some explanation of this strange pretence of having known a man who had been dead thirty-six hundred years; but thinking that it was hardly the thing to interrupt the narrator for such a trifle, he checked himself, and made a sign, as much as to say: "Keep on; I am all attention;" and as a matter of fact Cagliostro did keep on.

"Well, I knew Œdipus. It had been predicted that he would be the murderer of his father and the husband of his mother; so believing Polybius to be his father, he left the old man's Court without saying good-bye, and

started for Phocis. At the time of his departure I advised his taking a mountain road which I was acquainted with, instead of travelling by the usual road from Daulis to Delphi; but he was pig-headed, and as I could not tell him why I so advised, all my exhortations to change his route were useless. At the branching of the road from Delphi to Thebes, he encountered a man followed by five slaves. This man was mounted in a chariot, and the chariot took up the whole road. All would have been easily adjusted, if the man in the chariot would have consented to move a little to the left, and Œdipus a little to the right; but each wanted to keep in the middle of the highway. The man in the chariot had a choleric temperament, and Œdipus was not naturally patient. The five slaves threw themselves upon Œdipus, one after the other, in front of their master; and one after the other was tumbled over, till at last their master was slain in his turn. Œdipus marched over six corpses, and among them was the man who was really his father; so part of the oracle was fulfilled."

"The Devil," said Beausire.

"Then Œdipus resumed his journey towards Thebes. On the road rises Mount Phocion; and in a pathway, even narrower than that where Œdipus slew his father, a singular animal had his cavern. This animal had wings like an eagle's, body and claws like a lion's, and breasts and head like a woman's."

"Oh Monsieur," said Beausire, "can you believe that such a monster ever existed?"

"I cannot so affirm," replied Cagliostro, gravely, "for when I passed over this road, — a thousand years afterwards, in the time of Epaminondas, — the Sphinx was dead. However, he was living in the Œdipus epoch, and had a mania for stationing himself in the road, proposing

a conundrum to travellers, and devouring them if they could n't guess it. As he kept this up for over three centuries, travellers became more and more scarce, and the Sphinx's teeth very long. When he saw Œdipus coming, the Sphinx placed himself in the middle of the road, and lifted one paw as a sign for the young fellow to stop. 'Traveller,' said he, 'I 'm the Sphinx.' — 'What then?' said Œdipus. — 'Well, Destiny has placed me on the earth to propose an enigma to mortals. If they can't solve it, they belong to me. If one should guess it, why I should belong to Death, and of my own accord I should throw myself into yon abyss, where at present I throw the corpses of all those who have the misfortune to come my way.' Œdipus looked over the precipice, and there saw the bleaching bones. 'Very well,' said the young fellow, 'what is the riddle?' — 'This is the riddle,' said the lion-bird: 'What is the animal who goes on four paws in the morning, two at noon, and three at night?' Œdipus reflected an instant and then said, with a smile which did not make the Sphinx altogether comfortable: 'And if I guess it, thou will throw thyself into yon abyss?' — 'Such is the law,' responded the Sphinx. — 'Well, that animal is *man!*' replied Œdipus."

"How, *man?*" interrupted Beausire, who was as much interested in the story as if it concerned his Parisian contemporaries.

"Yes, *man.* In infancy — that is, in the morning of life — he creeps on both hands and feet. In adult age — that is, at midday — he walks properly on his two feet. In the evening — that is, in old age — he leans on a cane."

"Mordieu, that's true!" said Beausire. "That staggered the Sphinx!"

"Yes, my dear fellow, staggered him so that he precipitated himself head first into the ravine; and as he

was too honorable to save himself with his wings, which *you* will doubtless think proves him an idiot, he broke his head on the rocks. As to Œdipus, he went on his way, arrived at Thebes, found Jocasta a widow (of the man he had killed at the cross-roads) and married her, thus accomplishing both prophecies, as to killing his father and wedding with his mother."

"But after all, what analogy do you find between the history of Œdipus and the man with the mask?"

"A great analogy. Listen! To begin with, you want his name."

"Yes."

"And I propose to you a conundrum. True, I am of better stuff than the Sphinx, and I won't eat you alive if you can't guess it. Attention! I raise my paw. What young lord is the grandson of his father, the brother of his mother, and the uncle of his sisters?"

"The Devil!" said Beausire, falling into a revery not less profound than that of Œdipus.

"Think it out, my dear fellow!"

"Help me a little, Count."

"Willingly. I asked if you knew the history of Œdipus."

"You did me that honor."

"Well, now we 'll pass from profane history to sacred. Do you know the anecdote about the Patriarch Lot?"

"With his two daughters?"

"Precisely."

"Of course I know it," said Beausire; "but — wait a minute — Hey! — yes — what used to be said about old King Louis Fifteenth and his daughter, Madame Adelaide?"

"You are near enough to burn, my dear man."

"Then the man with the mask must be — "

"Five feet and six inches tall."

"Count Louis —!"

"That will do!"

"Count Louis de —"

"Hush!"

"But as you said there was nobody here but dead folks —"

"Yes, but grass sprouts over their graves, and grows faster there than anywhere else. Well, these weeds, like the weeds of King Midas, — do you know the story of King Midas?"

"No, Monsieur!"

"I will tell it you some other time. For the nonce, let us return to our own muttons."

Then he resumed, more seriously: "You were saying, Beausire?"

"Excuse me, Monsieur, but I believe *you* were asking certain questions."

"You are right;" and thereupon Cagliostro mentally pondered his catechism.

"On my word, that is true," muttered Beausire. "His father's grandson, his mother's brother, and his sisters' uncle! That is Louis de Nar —!"

"Attention!" said Cagliostro.

Beausire interrupted his monologue, and listened with all his ears.

"Meanwhile, as there is no longer any doubt about the conspirators, masked or not masked, let us go to the end of the plot."

Beausire indicated with a nod that he was ready to answer.

"The object is to carry off the King, is it not?"

"That is indeed the aim of the conspiracy."

"To take him to Péronne?"

"To Péronne!"

"And the means?"

"Pecuniary?"

"Yes, pecuniary, first of all."

"They have two millions."

"Borrowed of a Genoese banker. I know that banker. Is he the only one?"

"I don't know."

"Well, that 'll do very well for the money; but money is not enough. Men must be had."

"Lafayette has just authorized raising a legion to go to the help of Brabant, which is in revolt against the German Empire."

"Oh that amiable Lafayette," said Cagliostro to himself; "that is just like him!" Then he added aloud: "So, they 'll have a legion! But a legion can't execute such a project. They need an army."

"They have an army!"

"Ah, show us the army!"

"Twelve hundred horsemen will assemble at Versailles. They will start on the day appointed, at eleven at night. By two o'clock in the morning they will enter Paris in three columns."

"Good!"

"The first will enter by the Chaillot Gate; the second by the Roule Barrier; and the third by the Grenelle. The Grenelle column will swallow up General Lafayette. The Chaillot column will choke off Prime Minister Necker. The other column will dispose of Bailly."

"Good!" repeated Cagliostro.

"This done they are to spike the guns, and then the three columns will reunite on the Champs Élysées, and march on the Tuileries, which will be on our side."

"How on your side? Where is the National Guard?"

"The Brabant volunteers will attend to that. Aided by part of the hired soldiery, — four hundred Swiss, — and by three hundred confederates from the country, the Brabant delegation, thanks to our accurate information about the Tuileries, will take possession of the doors, inside and outside. They will rush in upon the King, exclaiming: 'Sire, the Saint Antoine section is in full insurrection. A carriage is all harnessed. You must flee!' If the King consents to flee, the rest will take care of itself. If he consents not, they will capture him forcibly, and take him to Saint Denis."

"Good!"

"There they will find twenty thousand infantry, whereto will be added twelve hundred horsemen, the Brabant legion, the four hundred Swiss mercenaries, the three hundred confederates, besides ten, twenty, thirty thousand Royalists, gathered along the route; and in great force they will conduct the amiable King of the French to Péronne."

"Better and better! And at Péronne, what will be done, dear Beausire?"

"At Péronne they will find twenty thousand, who will arrive at about the same time from the Flanders shipping, from Picardy, from Artois, Champagne, Burgundy, Lorraine, Alsace, and Cambrésis. They are also bargaining for twenty thousand more Swiss hirelings, twelve thousand Germans, and twelve thousand Sardinians, which, added to the King's large escort, will form an effective force of fifty thousand men."

"A very pretty number!" said Cagliostro.

"Finally, with these fifty thousand men, they will march on Paris, take possession of the river Seine above and below the city, so as to cut off all supplies. Paris, being famished, will capitulate. The National Assembly

will be dissolved. The King will be replaced — a King in deed and in truth — on the throne of his fathers."

"Amen!" said Cagliostro. Then he added, rising: "My dear Beausire, your conversation is very agreeable; but it is with you, as with most great orators, — when you have said everything, you have nothing more to say; and you have told the whole story, I believe?"

"Yes, for the present!"

"Very well! When you want ten more louis, — always as a *gift*, be it understood, — come and find me at my place, Bellevue."

"At Bellevue; and I shall ask for Monsieur Cagliostro?"

"Cagliostro? Oh no, they would n't understand you. Ask for the Baron Zannone."

"Baron Zannone?" cried Beausire. "Why, that 's the name of the banker who has discounted two millions worth of paper for *Monsieur*."

"Very possible!"

"How, *possible?*"

"Yes; only I do so much business, that one item may easily be confounded with others. That is why I did n't at first recollect; but I think I do recall the fact now."

Beausire was in a state of stupefaction, in the presence of a man who could forget business involving two millions, and began to think, that even from a pecuniary point of view, it is better to be of service to the lender than the borrower.

As this stupefaction was not so deep as to make him forget where he was, at the sound of Cagliostro's first move towards the gate, Beausire noted the action, and followed, with a step so closely modelled after his leader's, that, seeing them march thus in single file, one after the other, one might mistake them for automatons, moved by the same spring. Only at the entrance, after the

grating was fastened, did the two appear to be wholly separate.

"Well," asked Cagliostro, "which way do you go?"

"And yourself?"

"In the direction which you do *not*."

"I am going to the Palace Royal, Monsieur."

"And I to the Bastille."

On this the two men separated, Beausire saluting the Count with deepest respect, and Cagliostro responding with a slight nod; and both disappeared, almost at the same time, in the midst of the obscurity, Cagliostro going towards the Rue Temple, and Beausire towards the Rue Verrerie.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN WHICH GAMAIN PROVES THAT HE IS TRULY MASTER OF THE MASTER, MASTER OF ALL.

It may be remembered that the King expressed, in presence of Lafayette and young Louis de Bouillé, a desire to have near him his old teacher Gamain, to aid in an important bit of mechanism. He even added, — and it may be well to record this detail, — that an adroit apprentice would not be unwelcome to complete the mechanical triumvirate. This number three, which pleases the gods of good-luck, was happily not displeasing to Lafayette; and he consequently gave orders for the free access to the King of Master Gamain and his apprentice, and that they should be admitted to the forge whenever they presented themselves.

It was not therefore astonishing, several days after the conversation before reported, to see Master Gamain, — who is no stranger to our readers, as he was carefully pointed out on the morning of the Sixth of October, drinking a bottle of burgundy with an unknown gunmaker, in the tavern near Sevres Bridge, — it was not therefore astonishing, we repeat, a few days after the King's conversation with Lafayette, to see Gamain, accompanied by an apprentice, both clad in working-clothes, present themselves at the entrance of the Tuileries. After their admission, which was accorded without any difficulty, they walked around the royal apartments by way of the public corridors, ascended the staircase to the

attics, and gave their names and titles as follows, to the attendant on duty: Nicholas Claude Gamain, master locksmith; Louis Lecomte, apprentice.

Although there was nothing aristocratic in either of these names or titles, hardly were they announced when Louis Sixteenth ran to the door, exclaiming, "Come in!"

"Here we are!" said Gamain, entering, not merely with the familiarity of a guest, but as if he were at least the master.

Perhaps because he was less accustomed to intercourse with royalty, and naturally endowed with great respect for crowned heads, in whatever costume they appeared to him, or in whatever guise he appeared before them, — at any rate, for some reason, the apprentice, by not responding at once to the King's bidding, left a convenient interval between Gamain and himself, and so remained standing, his jacket on his arm and his cap in his hand, near the door, which the valet had closed behind them.

Perhaps it was easier from this point, than it would have been if he had stood side by side with Gamain, to catch the flash of joy which gleamed in the dull eye of the King, and respond thereto with a respectful inclination of the head.

"Ah, is it thou, my dear Gamain?" said the King. "I am right glad to see thee. Indeed, I did not expect thee, and believed thou hadst forgotten me."

"And that 's why you took an apprentice! That 's all right, seeing I was n't here; but unhappily," he added, with a sly gesture, "the apprentice is n't a master, hey?"

The apprentice made a sign to the King.

"What wouldst thou have, my poor Gamain?" asked the King. "I was assured thou wouldst never have

anything to do with me, — never again, — for fear of compromising thyself."

"Faith, Sire, you must have been convinced, for yourself, at Versailles, that it went hard with your friends; and in the cabaret at Sevres Bridge I saw, with my own eyes, two heads frizzled by Monsieur Leonard himself, — two heads which grinned horribly, — of those two guardsmen who happened to be in your antechamber, when your good friends came from Paris to visit you."

A cloud swept over the King's face, and the apprentice lowered his head.

"But," continued Gamain, "they say things are better since you came back to Paris, and that now you can do what you please with these Parisians. Oh, that 's not strange! Your Parisians are such asses, and the Queen is such a wheedler, when she chooses."

Louis Sixteenth said nothing, but a faint blush reddened his cheeks.

As to the young man, he seemed greatly distressed by these familiarities on Gamain's part. After wiping his forehead, with a handkerchief somewhat too fine for a locksmith's apprentice, he came nearer and said: "Your Majesty will perhaps allow me to tell how it is that Master Gamain has the honor of seeing the face of your Majesty once more, and how I happen to be with him?"

"Yes, my dear Louis," replied the King.

"Ah, there it is! *My dear Louis!* as large as life," muttered Gamain. — "*My dear Louis!* — to an acquaintance of a fortnight, — to a workman, an apprentice. What do you call me, — me, who have known you five-and-twenty years, — me, who put the first file into your hand, — me, the master? That 's what it is to have a glib tongue and white hands!"

"I call thee, *My good Gamain*, and I call this youth, *My dear Louis*, not because he expresses himself more elegantly than thyself, not because he washes his hands oftener, — for I care little, as thou knowest, for these trifles, — but because he found a way of bringing thee here, my friend, when they told me thou wouldst refuse to see me again."

"Oh, it was n't *me* who would n't see you; for as for me, — well, in spite of your faults, I rather like you, after all; but it was my wife, Madame Gamain, who kept saying to me: 'Thou hast bad associates, Gamain, — associates too high for thee. It is not well to visit aristocrats in these days. We have n't much property, but let us guard it. We have children; let us look out for them! If the Dauphin wishes to learn lockmaking by-and-by, let him go to somebody else. There is no scarcity of locksmiths in France.' This is how she talked; and even *you* know how women *can* talk!"

The King glanced at the apprentice, and said, stifling a sigh, half humorous and half piteous: "Undoubtedly there are plenty of locksmiths in France, but not another like thyself."

"That 's what I told the master, Sire," interrupted the apprentice, "when I went to see him in your behalf. I told him the King was trying to make a secret lock, and needed the aid of a locksmith; that the King heard of me, and sent for me; that this was very flattering, and so far, so good; but that it was fine work the King was about. The lock was well enough, so far as the partitions, the case, and the springs went, because everybody knows that three springs, dovetailed on to the flange, are enough to connect the partition solidly with the box; but when it came to moving the bolt, then the workman was bothered."

"I believe you!" said Gamain. "The bolt is the very soul of the lock."

"And the masterpiece of lockmaking, when well done," said the apprentice; "but there are bolts and *bolts*. There is the sleeping-bolt; there is the lever-bolt, which moves with the half-turn; there is the nut-bolt, for moving the latch. Well, suppose now, for instance, that we have a bored key, which must be thrust through an aperture in the woodwork, with a shallow sinkage on one side, and a deeper sinkage on the other, requiring two wheels with a reversible catch inside, to be pushed from the outside, what sort of a bolt would be necessary for such a key? That 's where we came to a standstill."

"The fact is, everybody can't do such a job as that," said Gamain.

"Precisely! That 's why I went after you, Master Gamain. Whenever the King was bothered he would say to me, with a sigh: 'Oh, if Gamain were only here!' So at last I said to the King: 'Well, why not have him here, this famous Gamain, and let him finish the work;' but the King always answered: 'Useless, my poor Louis. Gamain has forgotten me!' — 'Forget his Majesty, a man to whom had been accorded the honor of working at his Majesty's side? Impossible!' — So I said to the King: 'I will go and find this master of masters, this master of all.' The King said: 'Go, but thou canst not bring him!' But I declared I *would* bring you, and so set forth. Ah, Sire, I did not know what a task I had undertaken, and with what sort of a man I had to deal. Why, when I went to him as an apprentice, he put me through an examination which was worse than that required for entering the School of Cadets. Well, never mind, I stayed there with him. The next day I ventured to tell him that I had come on your account. Well, I began to

think he would put me clean out of doors. He called me a spy. I tried to convince him that I was really sent by the King; but that counted for nothing. It was only when I declared that the King and I had begun together a piece of work we could not finish properly, that Master Gamain opened his ears to me; but even this did not decide him. He said it was a snare set by his enemies. It was only yesterday, when I handed him the twenty-five louis which your Majesty had given me for that purpose, that he at last said: 'Ah ha! That certainly does come from the King himself. Well, we 'll go to-morrow, for whoso nothing risks shall nothing gain.' — All the evening I kept the master in good humor; and this morning I said to him: 'See, it 's time to go!' I still had some difficulty with him, but at last he decided; so I tied his apron about him, put his staff in his hand, and urged him out of doors. We took the road to Paris, and here we are!"

"And you are welcome!" said the King, thanking the young man with a sidelong glance; for the apprentice had evidently taken as much pains with the matter, and especially with the manner of his recital, — which sounded almost as if it were read, — as Master Gamain might have done with a sermon by Bossuet or a speech by Fléchier.

"Now Gamain," added his Majesty, "as thou art forced here at last, let us lose no time."

"That 's right!" said the locksmith, "for I promised Madame Gamain to be home to-night. Let 's see this famous lock!"

The King placed in the master's hands a lock three-quarters made.

"Why didst thou tell me this was a hidden mortised lock?" said Gamain to his apprentice. "That sort of a lock fastens from two sides, stupid! This is only a closet-lock. Let 's see a little about it! This don't work

very well, hey? Well, with Master Gamain, it 'll *have* to work!" and he tried to turn the key. "Ah, there it is!"

"Thou hast found the defect, dear Gamain?"

"I should say so!"

"Well, show me!"

"That 's quickly done! Look! The ward of the key catches the large ridge well enough, and the ridge describes a half circle; but then, as it is not bevelled off, the key finishes its twist all alone, and the spring falls back again. That 's all! The play of the ridge being six lines, the shoulder should be one line wide." Both King and apprentice noted Gamain's science with wonder.

Encouraged by their tacit admiration he continued: "Good gracious, it 's very simple. I don't see how you managed to forget it. You must have been mixed up with a heap of foolishness, since you saw me, which has spoilt your memory. You have three ridges, — have n't you? — one large and two small, — one five lines long, and the others only two lines."

"Undoubtedly," said the King, following Gamain's demonstration with some interest.

"Well, as soon as the key releases the large ridge, it should unfasten the bolt, which had been held in place, — should n't it?"

"Yes," said the King.

"Very well, on its second half-turn the key must catch the second ridge, the minute the first is released?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" said the King.

"Yes, yes, yes!" repeated Gamain, impertinently. "Well, how do you suppose this poor key can do that, if the space between the large and small ridges is not equal to the thickness of the wards of the key, and allows too much play?"

"Ah!"

"Ah!" repeated Gamain jeeringly, as before. "You are the fine great King of France, and say, *I will.* The little ridge says *I won't*; and so, good-night, lock! This is just the way you bicker with the Assembly, and the Assembly is the strongest."

"However, this lock may be cured, master, may it not?" asked the King.

"Great Heavens, there's always a remedy. It is only necessary to sharpen the first ridge a little, to enlarge the shoulder a trifle, to remove the first ridge a little farther from the second, and replace, at the same distance, the third ridge, — the one which makes part of the spur, and rests on the pin, — and there you are!"

"But it will take a day's work to make all these changes," said the King.

"Yes, for anybody else, — a day's labor; but for Gamain, two hours will suffice, — if he is let alone, and not bothered with remarks, — Gamain this, Gamain that! The forge appears to be well supplied with tools; and in two hours, if I'm let alone, — especially if the labor is comfortably moistened," — continued Gamain, smiling, "you may come back and find the agony all over."

What Gamain requested was exactly what the King desired. The locksmith's desire for solitude furnished the King an excuse for a *tête-à-tête* with the apprentice. However, the King pretended to raise objections.

"But if thou hast need of anything, my dear, good Gamain —?"

"If I need anything I will call the lackey, and provided he has orders to give me what I want, — well, that's all I need."

The King went himself to the door, saying as he opened it: "François, stay at your post! Here is Gamain, my old instructor in lockmaking, who is correcting a bad

piece of work. You will get him whatever he wants, and particularly one or two bottles of excellent bordeaux."

"If you would have the goodness to remember, Sire, I like burgundy much better! — To the Devil with your bordeaux. It 's like drinking lukewarm water."

"Yes, yes, that 's true! I forgot!" said the King, laughing. "We have clinked glasses many a time together, my poor Gamain. — Some burgundy, François, — you hear, some Volnay!"

"Good!" said Gamain, licking his chops, "I remember that name."

"And it makes thy mouth water?"

"Don't talk about water! Water? I don't see what use it is, unless for tempering iron. Those who use it for anything else turn it from its proper destination. Water? Pooh!"

"Well, be calm. While here, thou shalt hear nothing of water; and lest the word should escape one of us involuntarily, we will leave thee all alone. When we are wanted, send for us."

"And what are you going to do all this time?"

"See to the closet, for which this lock is intended."

"Well, that 's the kind of work you 're fit for. Good luck!"

"Good courage!" responded the King; and nodding his head familiarly to Gamain he went out with the apprentice, Louis Lecomte, or Count Louis, as the reader prefers, — the reader to whom we ascribe perspicacity enough to have recognized the son of the Marquis de Bouillé in the sham workman.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH SOMETHING BESIDES LOCKMAKING IS DISCUSSED.

THE King did not leave his workshop by the outside staircase, common to all the occupants of the palace, but by the private stairs reserved for himself. This stairway led directly into his study.

One table in this office was covered by an immense map of France, which showed that the King had already often considered what would be the shortest and easiest route out of his kingdom.

It was not, however, till they had reached the bottom of the staircase, and the door was fastened behind both himself and his companion, that Louis Sixteenth, after looking carefully about the room, appeared to recognize the person who followed, with his jacket over his shoulder and his cap in hand.

"At last," he said, "we are alone, my dear Count. First of all, let me congratulate you on your adroitness, and thank you for your devotion."

"As for me, Sire, let me apologize to his Majesty," said the young man, "for daring, even in his own service, to present myself, while clad in such a fashion, before the King, and for talking to him as I have."

"You have acted as a brave gentleman, my dear Louis, and however you may be clothed, a loyal heart always beats under your coat. But come, we have no time to lose. Everybody, even the Queen, is ignorant of your

presence here. Nobody is within hearing. Tell me quickly what has brought you."

"Your Majesty has done my father the honor of sending an officer to his house?"

"Yes, — Monsieur de Charny."

"Precisely, Charny. He brought a letter —?"

"An insignificant letter," interrupted the King, — "only to furnish him with an introduction for the delivery of a verbal message."

"This verbal mission he fulfilled; and it was to make its execution sure that I came to Paris, under orders from my father, and in the hope of speaking face to face with your Majesty."

"Then you have been informed of everything?"

"I know that the King wishes to have the power of leaving France, at any given moment."

"And that he relies upon the Marquis de Bouillé, as a man capable of seconding his project."

"And my father is both proud and grateful, because of the honor you have done him."

"But let us come to the principal point. What does he say of the project?" asked the King.

"That it is hazardous, that it demands the greatest precautions; but that it is not impossible."

"To begin with, in order that the co-operation of De Bouillé may be as efficacious as his loyalty and devotion promise, would it not be well to add several other provinces to his present jurisdiction at Metz, and especially the command of Franche Comté?"

"That is exactly the advice of my father, Sire; but I am glad the King is first to express his opinion on that point, for the Marquis feared lest the King should attribute such a desire to personal ambition."

"What? Am I not already well acquainted with the

disinterestedness of your father? But go on! Did he talk with you about the particulars?"

"Above all, Sire, my father dreaded one thing."

"What was that?"

"That if several plans of flight should be presented to your Majesty, one from Spain, one from the German Empire, one from the emigrés at Turin, and these projects should run counter to one another, that his own plan might prove abortive, through some of those fortuitous circumstances usually ascribed to Fate, which are almost always the result of imprudence or jealousy in the interested parties."

"My dear Louis, I promise you to let all the world carry on its intrigues about me, without my interference. In the first place, some parties need such experiments; and then, this is a necessity of my position. As long as the wit of Lafayette and the interest of the Assembly are drawn towards threads whose only purpose is to mislead, we can take our own way, with no other confidants than the persons strictly necessary for the accomplishment of our plans, — all of them persons on whom we can thoroughly rely, — and we can do this with as much security as privacy."

"That point being determined, Sire, here is what my father has the honor of proposing to your Majesty."

"Speak on!" said the King, bending over the map of France, in order to follow with his eyes the different routes which the young Count was about to explain.

"Sire, there are several places to which the King might retire."

"Undoubtedly!"

"Has the King made his choice?"

"Not entirely. I waited for the advice of the Marquis, and I presume you bring it."

The young man made a respectful and affirmative response with his head.

"Go on," said the King.

"In the first place, there is Besançon, whose citadel makes it a very strong position, and very advantageous for the collection of troops, and for summoning the Swiss soldiers to our aid. These Swiss, added to our forces, could advance through Burgundy, where Royalists are numerous, and thence march upon Paris."

The King shook his head, in a way which signified: "I should prefer something different."

The young man therefore resumed: "Then there is Valenciennes, or some other place in Flanders, with a secure garrison. Either before or after the King's arrival, my father would betake himself thither with the men under his immediate command."

Louis Sixteenth gave another nod, which seemed to say, "Something else, Monsieur!"

"The King might go by way of Ardennes and Austrian Flanders, and return by the same frontier, to some one of the places controlled by the Marquis, which he would surrender to the King's authority, and where troops could be gathered in advance."

"I will tell you presently why I must still ask if you have nothing better to propose."

"Lastly, the King might betake himself straight to Sedan or Montmédy. There, being at the centre of his command, the General would be able to obey the King's wishes, and assure him liberty of action, whether he should wish to leave France or to march against Paris."

"My dear Count," said the King, "in two words I will explain what makes me reject the first three propositions, and why I shall probably adopt the fourth. First, Besançon is too far off, and consequently I should run

too many chances of being arrested before reaching my destination. Next, Valenciennes is well enough as to distance, and would be agreeable to me also, because of the excellent spirit of that city; but Rochambeau is in command of Hainault, — that is, at the very gates of Valenciennes, — and he is wholly given over to the democratic spirit. As to going by way of Ardennes and Austrian Flanders, and so appealing to Austria — *no!* Apart from my dislike of Austria, who never meddles with French affairs without embroiling us somehow, — apart from this, Austria has enough to do just now, — what with the illness of the Emperor, my brother-in-law, the war with the Turks, and the revolt in Brabant, — without increasing her embarrassment by a rupture with France. Besides, I will not go out of France. Once outside his kingdom, a king knows not if he shall ever return. Consider Charles the Second and James the Second, of England. Charles did not go back till the end of thirteen years, and James, never! — No, I prefer Montmédy. Montmédy is at a convenient distance, and is the centre of your father's jurisdiction. Tell the Marquis that my choice is so far made, and that it is to Montmédy I will retire."

The young Count ventured to ask: "Is the King resolved upon flight, or is it only a project as yet?"

"My dear Louis, nothing is decided. All must depend upon circumstances. If I see that the Queen and my children are exposed to new perils, like those of that terrible night and day in early October, I shall make up my mind at once; and tell your father that when the decision is once made, it will be irrevocable."

"Meanwhile, Sire, may I be permitted to submit to the King's judgment the advice of my father as to the details of the journey?"

"Certainly! Speak on!"

"His opinion is, that we should diminish the dangers of the trip by dividing them."

"Explain yourself!"

"Your Majesty should go in one direction, with Madame Royale, your daughter, and with Madame Elizabeth, your sister; while the Queen should go another way, with Monseigneur the Dauphin, in order that —"

The King did not let the young man finish his sentence.

"It is useless to discuss that point, my dear Louis. In a very solemn moment we decided, the Queen and myself, that we would never separate. If your father can save us, we must be saved together, or not at all!"

The Count bowed and said: "When the right time comes the King has but to give his orders, and the royal orders will be executed; only I must be permitted to suggest to the King, that it will be difficult to procure a vehicle large enough for the accommodation of their Majesties, their august children, Madame Elizabeth, and the two or three attendants who ought to accompany them for the sake of comfort."

"Don't worry about that, my dear Louis. A carriage is being made on purpose. That contingency is provided for."

"One other thing, Sire! There are two roads to Montmédy. It only remains to ask which of these your Majesty would prefer, in order to have the matter looked into by a trustworthy expert."

"This trustworthy surveyor we already have, — in Charny, who is all devotion, and has already revised the maps of Chandernagor, with remarkable fidelity and skill. The fewer persons with whom we place our secret, the

better; and we have in Charny an approved follower, intelligent and courageous, and will avail ourselves of his services. As to the route, you see that I have been thinking about that. As I had already selected Montmédy, the two routes which lead thither are marked on this map."

"There are three roads, Sire," answered the young man respectfully.

"Yes, I know. There is the one leading from Paris to Metz, which one must quit after passing Verdun, in order to take the road along the river Meuse, as far as Stenay, from which Montmédy is only three leagues distant."

"There is the route by way of Rheims, the Isle de France, Rethel, and Stenay," said the young Count, so vivaciously that the King could see that his interlocutor gave this plan the preference.

"Ah! ah!" said the King, "it appears that you like that way best?"

"Not I, Sire! God forbid that I, little more than a boy, should take the responsibility of giving an opinion about so grave a matter. No, Sire, that is not my opinion, except as it is my father's; but he based his judgment on the fact that this route lies through a district so poor as to be almost a desert, one wherein fewer precautions would therefore be needed. He added, that the best regiment in the army, the only one which is known to remain thoroughly faithful, — the Royal German, — is stationed at Stenay, and could be the King's escort beyond Rethel, thus avoiding the danger of too many military transfers."

"Yes," interrupted the King, "but we should have to go through Rheims, where I was crowned, and where the first comer would be sure to recognize me. No, my dear Count, on that point my decision is final."

The King pronounced these words in so firm a tone that Count Louis had no thought of combating this determination; so he asked: "The King has then chosen — ?"

"— The route to Châlons, through Varennes, avoiding Verdun. As to the regiments, they can be gradually stationed in the small cities between Montmédy and Châlons. It would not be inconvenient, so far as I can see, if the first detachment should wait for me in the latter city."

"Sire, when the time comes, we can discuss in what city the regiments will incur the least risk; but the King is not aware of one thing, that there is no station for posthorses at Varennes."

"I'm glad to see you so well posted," said the king, laughing. "It proves that you have seriously meditated upon our venture. But do not be uneasy on that score. We shall find means for having posthorses on hand, either beyond the city or this side of it. Our surveyor will tell us which is best."

"Now that all is arranged," said the young Count, "will his Majesty authorize me to recite to him, in the name of my father, some lines from an Italian author, pertinent to the royal situation, — some lines he had me learn by heart, in order that I might repeat them here?"

"By all means, Monsieur!"

"Here they are, Sire: 'Delay is always dangerous, and circumstances are never entirely favorable to any undertaking; so that if we wait for the perfect time, we shall never undertake anything; or if we do, it will turn out badly.' Your Majesty will remember, it is the author who speaks."

"Ah yes, Monsieur, and that author is Machiavelli. I will not forget the counsel of the ambassador of the

Magnificent Republic, believe me! — But hush! I hear steps on the stairs. Gamain is coming down. Let us get in ahead of him, so that he will not notice that we have been occupied with anything but the closet."

With these words the King opened the door of the private staircase. It was time, for the master locksmith was on the lower steps, with the lock in his hand.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN WHICH IT IS DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE IS TRULY A PROVIDENCE FOR DRUNKARDS.

On the same day, about eight o'clock in the evening, a man clad like a mechanic, — and pressing his waistcoat pocket, as if on this particular evening the pocket contained a considerably larger sum than is customary with a mechanic's pocket, — a man, we say, came out of the Tuileries, over the Swinging Bridge (which had not at that date been removed), turned to the left, and walked from one end to the other of the grand avenue of trees, which runs along the side of the Seine, forming that portion of the Champs Élysées formerly called the Marble Pier, or sometimes the Stone Pier, but now known as the Queen's Drive.

At the end of that avenue he found himself on what was then called the Quay of Soapworks, though this appellation has long since disappeared.

This quay, at that epoch, was very lively in the daytime, and well lighted in the evening by a crowd of booths, where, on Sunday, good citizens could buy the provisions, liquid and solid, which they wished to take with them on the freight-boats, which, at two sous a head, would land them on the Isle of Swans for a day's outing; an island where, without this precaution, they would run the risk of being famished, — on week-days, because the place was utterly deserted, and on holidays and Sundays, because it was so thickly populated.

At the first wineshop he encountered on the way, this man, clothed like a mechanic, appeared to have a violent combat with himself, — a combat wherein he came off conqueror, — to decide whether he should or should not enter that wineshop.

He did not enter, but passed along.

At the second cabaret the temptation was renewed; and this time another man, — who followed the first one like a shadow, but without being perceived, — evidently believed that the mechanic would succumb to the temptation; inasmuch as he deviated from the straight line, and bent his steps towards that annex of the Temple of Bacchus, whose threshold he fairly grazed.

Nevertheless, temperance triumphed this time also. If a third wineshop had not put itself in his path, and he could not have broken the pledge (which he had apparently made to himself) without retracing his steps, it is probable he would have continued soberly on his way, — not indeed fasting, for our traveller had already taken a square dose of that liquor which rejoices the heart of man, but in that state of self-control which would allow his head to keep his legs in a reasonably straight course in the journey before him.

Unluckily there was not only a third, but even a tenth, — yes, and a twentieth wineshop on the way. The temptation being too often renewed, and the resisting force finding itself unequal to the power of the temptation, the result was that he yielded on the third trial.

It is but fair to say that by a sort of bargain with himself, at the very entrance of the wineshop, the mechanic (who had so far happily and successfully fought the demon of wine) remained standing at the counter, and asked for only a pint.

Meanwhile the wine-devil, against whom he had struggled so victoriously heretofore, seemed to be typified by the Unknown who followed at a distance, taking care to keep always in the obscurity; but who, though remaining out of sight, was none the less vigilant.

Doubtless it was to enjoy the perspective, which seemed to be so very agreeable to him, that he seated himself on the parapet, just opposite the sign of the bush over the door where the mechanic was drinking his pint; but he resumed his travels five minutes later, when the mechanic, having finished his drink, crossed the threshold of the door, and took his line of march.

But who can say where the lips will stop when once they have drunk from the fatal cup of intoxication, and they perceive, with that mingled astonishment and satisfaction peculiar to tipplers, that nothing excites thirst like drinking. Hardly had the mechanic gone a hundred paces than his thirst was such that he felt obliged to again pause and quench it; only this time he understood that a pint was not enough, and so he asked for a half-bottle.

The shadow, which seemed to belong to him, did not appear to feel displeased with these delays, which the need of refreshment occasioned in the course of the journey. He stopped in the angle of the cabaret, and while the drinker was seated, in order to be more at his ease, and took a full quarter-hour for sipping his half-bottle, the good-natured shadow manifested no impatience, but contented himself, when the drinker came out, by following at the same distance as before.

At the end of the next hundred paces his forbearance was put to a new and harder proof. The workman made a third halt, and this time his thirst had become so augmented that he demanded an entire bottle.

This meant a half-hour for the patient Argus who dogged his steps.

Probably these five, fifteen, and thirty minutes, successively lost, roused some remorse in the heart of the tippler; for not wishing to delay any longer, but yet desiring to continue his refreshment, he apparently made another bargain with conscience, which ended in his providing himself, on his departure, with another bottle, already uncorked, which he resolved to take along as a travelling-companion.

This was a wise resolution, and one which did not retard him much, except for the curves, more and more extended, and the zigzags, more and more frequent, which were the result of each contact of the neck of the bottle with the thirsty lips of the tippler.

In one of these curves, adroitly swung, he crossed the Passy Barrier, without disturbing anybody, — for liquors, as we know, were free from excise duty, when they were taken away from the capital, though not when they were brought into it from the country beyond.

The Unknown passed through behind him, and with the same success.

A hundred paces beyond the barrier our man felicitated himself over his innocent precaution; for from that point the wineshops became few and far between, till at last they disappeared altogether; but what mattered it to our philosopher? Like a classic sage, he carried with him not only his fortune, but his happiness.

We say his happiness, because, when the bottle was about half empty, the tippler began to sing; and nobody has ever contested the fact that singing, like laughing, is one of the methods by which man expresses his joy.

His shadow appeared duly sensible of the harmony of the tippler's song, for he hummed the air after him; and

the expression of joy, with which he followed the tippler's movements, evinced some special interest.

Unfortunately the joy was ephemeral and the song very short. The joy only lasted as long as there was wine in the bottle; and the bottle being empty, and several times fruitlessly squeezed between the tippler's hands, the singing changed to growling, which grew more and more emphatic, till at last the growls expanded into oaths, and the oaths into imprecations.

These imprecations were addressed to some unseen persecutors, of whom our traveller complained as he staggered along.

"Wretches!" he said, "wretches! to give an old friend, — and a master, too, — such doctored wine! Ugh! Well, when he sends for me again to patch up his old locks, when he sends after me by that traitor of a comrade who abandons me, I will say to him: 'Good-d-day, Sire, but thy M-m-majesty may patch up his locks himself.' Then he 'll see if — if — if a lock can be m-made as easily as a m-m-manifesto! Ah, *I* 'll give thee a lock with three ridges. — I 'll g-g-give thee a b-bolt with three t-t-tumblers. Oh yes, — I 'll give thee — bored keys and side h-handles — notched — notch — Oh you wretches! decidedly they 've poisoned me."

As he uttered these words the unfortunate victim, doubtless vanquished by this poison, fell at full length, for the third time, on the road, softly spread with a thick covering of mud.

Twice our man was able to get up alone. The operation was indeed difficult, but he finally accomplished it creditably. The third time, after desperate efforts, he felt obliged to own that the task was beyond his strength; and, with a sigh which resembled a groan, he apparently

decided to take for his couch that night the breast of our common mother, the earth.

It was apparently for this point of discouragement and feebleness that the Unknown waited, who had followed him from Louis Fifteenth Square with so much perseverance; for after watching, from a distance, the ineffectual efforts which we have tried to depict, he approached the man very cautiously, made a detour around his fallen grandeur, and then hailed a passing cab.

"Hold on, friend!" he said to the driver. "My companion here has been taken sick. Take this crown of six livres, put the poor devil inside the carriage, and take him to the tavern at Sevres Bridge. I will ride aloft with you."

There was nothing surprising to the coachman in this proposition, that one of the two companions should remain with him and share his seat, especially as they appeared to be common sort of men; so with that touching confidence which men of that condition repose in one another, he said: "Six francs? And where are the six francs?"

"Here they are, my friend!" replied the man who had made the offer, giving the crown to the driver, and without appearing offended the least in the world.

"And when we are there, goodman," said the coachman, softened by the sight of the royal head on the coin, "there will be not even a trifle for drink-money?"

"That depends upon how we get on. Put this poor devil in thy cab, shut the windows carefully, try to keep thy two plugs on their four legs, and when we reach Sevres Bridge, — well, we shall see. According to *thy* conduct will be *mine*."

"All right! Money talks. Be easy, goodman. I know what 's what! Climb into my seat, and don't let

those young turkeys get foolish. Gracious, at this hour they smell the stable, and are anxious to get there again. I 'll see to the rest."

The generous Unknown, without another word, followed the instruction given him; and on his side the driver, with all the delicacy whereof he was capable, lifted the drunkard in his arms, laid him softly between the seats of his cab, closed the door, remounted his seat, where he found the Unknown already established, turned his team about, whipped his horses, who jogged along at that melancholy pace common with these unfortunate quadrupeds, speedily passed through the village called Daybreak, and at the expiration of an hour's ride, reached the cabaret near the Sevres Bridge.

After ten minutes spent in unloading our belated citizen Gamain, — whom the reader of course long ago recognized, — we once more find the worthy master of the master, and master of all, seated at the same table, and face to face with the same gunmaker, as we saw him in the first chapter of this history.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHAT IS CALLED CHANCE.

MEANWHILE, how was this unloading managed, and how did Master Gamain emerge from that almost cataleptic state, wherein we left him, into the nearly normal condition, wherein we now find him?

The landlord of the inn at Sevres Bridge was abed, and not the faintest streak of light filtered through the chinks of his outside shutters, when the first blows of the fist of our philanthropist, who had rescued Master Gamain, resounded at the door. These blows of the fist were administered in a fashion that did not allow the occupants of the house to long believe themselves able to enjoy repose in the face of such an attack, however given over to sleep they might be.

Very sleepily, very clumsily, and very fractiously, the innkeeper himself came to open the door for the disturbers of his slumbers, promising himself to administer a rebuke worthy of the occasion, — if, as he said to himself, the game should not prove worth the candle.

It appeared that the game *was* worth the candle; for at the first word whispered to mine host, by the man who had knocked so loudly, the innkeeper doffed his cotton nightcap, making certain salutes which his costume rendered singularly grotesque, and at once introduced Gamain and his conductor into the little apartment, where we formerly saw the locksmith discussing a bottle of burgundy, his favorite liquor; though this time, from

having tested his wine too roundly, Master Gamain was nearly insensible.

As the coachman and his horses had done their best, one with his whip and the others with their legs, the Unknown began by discharging his debt to them, — adding a coin of twenty-four sous, by way of drink-money, to the six francs already paid.

Then, seeing Master Gamain seated squarely on a chair, — his head leaning against the wall, with a table in front of him, — the Unknown bade the landlord hasten to bring two bottles of wine and a decanter of water, and himself threw open the casements and blinds, in order to change the mephitic air which filled the room.

Under any other circumstances this action would have compromised his incognito; for every observer knows, that while there are people, of a certain class, who need to respire the atmosphere in its natural condition, — that is, air composed of seventy parts of oxygen, twenty-one of nitrogen, and two of water, — there are nevertheless hosts of ordinary people, accustomed to unventilated habitations, who breathe the air without any difficulty whatsoever, even if it is charged with carbon or nitrogen.

Fortunately nobody was there to take note of his actions. The landlord, after having brought with alacrity two bottles of wine, and, more slowly, a decanter of water, respectfully withdrew himself, and left the Unknown alone with Master Gamain.

First of all, as we know, the Unknown took care to change the air. Then, before the window was closed, he placed a vial of salts to the sniffling and dilated nostrils of Master Locksmith, who was now involved in disgusting drunken slumber, — a slumber which would surely cure tipplers of their love of wine, if, by the miraculous power

of the Most High, they could once behold themselves asleep.

As he inhaled the penetrating odor of the liquid contained in the vial, Master Gamain opened his eyes very wide, and immediately began to sneeze furiously. Then he uttered some words, unintelligible to almost anybody except some expert philologist, like him who now listened with profound attention, and managed to catch these three or four words: "The wretch! She 's poisoned me — poisoned! —"

The gunsmith saw with satisfaction that Master Gamain was still under the dominance of the same idea, and again he put the vial to the drunkard's nostrils. This restored the worthy son of Noah sufficiently for him to complete the sense of his phrase, and add thereto a few last words, containing an accusation all the more terrible, because it denoted abuse of confidence and want of heart.

"Poison a friend! — a friend!" he said.

"That is indeed horrible!" observed the gunsmith.

"Horrible!" babbled Gamain.

"Infamous!" replied Number One.

"Infamous!" echoed Number Two.

"Luckily I was on hand," said the gunsmith, "to administer an antidote."

"Lucky indeed!" muttered Gamain.

"Lest the first dose may not be sufficient to counteract such a poisoning, better take another!" said the Unknown; as into half a glass of water he put five or six drops of liquid from his flacon, — which contained nothing more nor less than some strong diluted hartshorn, or ammonia.

He placed the glass to Gamain's lips. "Ah," stammered the latter, "that 's to be drunk with the mouth!

I like that better than by the nose;" and he thirstily drank the entire contents of the goblet.

Hardly had he swallowed this diabolical liquor, when he stretched his eyes to their utmost capacity, and cried, between two sneezes: "Ah, you rascal, what have you given me? — Pouah! Pouah!"

"My dear fellow," responded the Unknown, "I have only given you some liquor, which may save your life."

"Well, if 't saves my life, you do right to give it to me; but if you call that *liquor*, you 're wrong;" whereupon he began to sneeze again, pursing his mouth and opening his eyes to their fullest extent, like a classic mask of Tragedy.

The Unknown profited by this pantomimic movement, to go and close, not the window, but the outside shutters.

Gamain opened his eyes for the third or fourth time. In the midst of his convulsive movements he looked about him; and, with that ready recollection which tipplers cherish of wineshop walls, he recognized this as one of his familiar resorts.

Indeed, on his frequent trips to Paris, which his trade necessitated, it was seldom that Gamain did not stop at the Sevres Bridge Inn. From one point of view, this halt was necessary as well as very agreeable, the wineshop in question being practically the half-way tavern between Versailles and the capital.

This recognition produced a good effect. It inspired Master Locksmith with confidence, and proved that he was in a friendly country.

"Ah ha! It appears that I have already finished half my journey."

"Yes, thanks to me!" said the gunsmith.

"How, *thanks to you?*" stammered Master Gamain,

transferring his interest from inanimate to animate objects. "*Thanks to you?* Who are you, pray?"

"My dear Monsieur Gamain," said the Unknown, "that question proves you have a very short memory."

Gamain looked at his interlocutor with more attention than at first. "Hold on, hold on!" he said. "It seems to me that I 've seen you before."

"Truly? Well, that 's pleasant!"

"Yes, yes, yes! But when and where? That 's the thing!"

"*Where?* Look about you! Perhaps something will strike your eye and refresh your memory. — *When?* That 's another thing. Perhaps we must try another dose of the antidote, to help you tell me that."

"No, thanks," said Gamain, putting up his hand; "I 've had enough of your antidote! If I 'm nearly saved, I 'll stop right here. — Where have I seen you? — Where have I seen you? — Dear me, it was *here!*"

"Right, so far!"

"*When* did I see you? — Hold on! It was the day when I came back from a job in Paris, — secret! It seems that I 'm lucky in such enterprises," added Gamain, laughing.

"Very well! Now who am I?"

"Who are you? You 're the man who paid the drinks, and consequently a good feller. Put it there!"

"With much pleasure!" said the Unknown; "Master Locksmith and Master Gunsmith must certainly shake hands."

"Ah, good, good! Now I remember! Yes, it was that Sixth of October, when the King returned to Paris. Why, we were talking about him that time!"

"And I found your conversation very interesting, Master Gamain; and this makes me glad to enjoy it again.

When your memory comes back, I wish to ask you to tell me, if it is not indiscreet, what you were doing an hour ago, stretched at full length across the roadway, and only twenty paces from a freight-wagon, — which might have cut you in two, if I had n't interfered. Were you blue, Master Gamain, and had you taken a fatal resolve to commit suicide?"

"Me? Suicide? Me? Well, I guess not! What was I doing in the middle of the road, — abed in the dirt? Are you sure it was so?"

"Look at yourself!"

Gamain threw an eye over his clothes and said: "Oh ho! Madame Gamain will make a fuss! 'Don't put on thy new clothes. Wear the old blouse! That 's good enough for the Tuileries!' — That 's what she said to me yesterday."

"How? To go to the Tuileries?" said the Unknown. "You were coming from the Tuileries when I met you?"

Gamain scratched his head, trying to recall his scattered senses.

"Yes, yes. There 's it! Certainly I came from the Tuileries. Why not? It was no secret that I was once the teacher of Monsieur Veto."

"How, Monsieur Veto? Whom do you call Monsieur Veto?"

"Well, well! And you did n't know they called the King that? Well, well, where 've you been? In China?"

"What can you expect? I attend to my trade, and don't bother my head with politics."

"You 're lucky! I *do* attend to politics; that is, my trade makes me do it. There 's what ruins me!" and Gamain lifted his eyes piously to the ceiling, and sighed.

"Bah! Were you summoned to Paris for another piece of work, of the same sort you had been doing there the first time I saw you?"

"Precisely! Only, then I did n't know where I went, with my bandaged eyes; but this time, I knew where I was, and kept my eyes open."

"So that you had no difficulty in recognizing the Tuileries?"

"The Tuileries? Who told you I went to the Tuileries?"

"Why, *you* did, just now! How should I know you went to the Tuileries, if you had n't told me?"

"Sure enough," said Gamain to himself. "How should he know it, if I had n't told him?" Then, looking at the Unknown, he added: "Perhaps I did wrong to tell you that; but then, my faith, you 're not everybody, — you! Well, so I told you that? Well, I won't go back on it! I *did* go to the Tuileries."

"And you worked with the King, who gave you the twenty-five louis you have in your pocket."

"Hey? Well, yes, I *had* twenty-five louis in my pocket."

"And have them still, my friend!"

Gamain thrust his hand quickly into the depths of his waistcoat, and drew out a handful of gold, mixed with silver money and a few big copper sous. "Hold on!" he said, "hold on! Five, six, seven! — Good! And I 'd forgotten all about it! — Twelve, thirteen, fourteen! — Twenty-five louis is quite a sum! — Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen! — A sum, as times go, one don't pick up under his horse's hoofs! — Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five! — Ah! Thank God they 're all here!" and Gamain breathed more freely.

"When I told you so, you seemed to doubt me."

"You? How should you know I had twenty-five louis about me?"

"My dear Monsieur Gamain, I have already had the honor of telling you that I found you lying right in the middle of the highway, only twenty steps ahead of a wagon, which was likely to run straight over you. I called out to the teamster to stop. I then called a passing cab. One of its lanterns I took, and by its light I discovered two or three goldpieces rolling on the ground. As these louis were near the mouth of your pocket, I guessed they had fallen out of it. I put in my hand, and by the score of other louis it contained, I found I was not mistaken. Then the coachman shook his head, and said: 'No, Monsieur, no!' — 'What do you mean by *no?*' — 'No, I can't take that man!' — 'And why not take him?' — 'Because he 's too rich for his dress. Twenty-five gold louis in the pocket of a cotton velvet waistcoat! You can smell the gibbet a league off!' — 'How,' said I, 'you believe him a thief?' — Doubtless the word roused *you.* — '*Thief*, me a thief?' said you. — 'Undoubtedly a thief!' replied the cabman. 'If you 're not a thief, how do you happen to have so many goldpieces in your pocket?' — To which you replied: 'I have twenty-five louis in my pocket, because my pupil, the King of France, gave them to me.' — At these words I thought I remembered you. I held the lantern nearer your face, and said: 'Ah, all is explained. This is Monsieur Gamain, a locksmith from Versailles. He has been at work with the King, and the King has given him twenty-five louis for his pains. I 'll be responsible for him.' — After that the driver made no further objections. I replaced the louis in your pocket. You were properly laid in the cab. Then I mounted the box. We dismounted at this tavern, and, thanks to God, there is

nothing for you to complain of, except that your apprentice abandoned you."

"Did I talk about an apprentice? Me, — complain of his leaving me?" cried the bewildered Gamain, more and more astonished.

"Well, now, — here 's a fellow for you, — who can't remember what he says!"

"Me?"

"Why, yes! Did n't you say, a moment ago, 'It 's all the fault of that stupid —' Well, I forget what you called him — "

"Louis Lecomte?"

"That 's it! You said: 'It 's all the fault of that stupid Louis Lecomte, who promised to go back with me to Versailles, and who, up to the moment when we parted, fairly scorched me with his politeness.' — That 's what you said."

"The fact is, I might well have said so, for it is the truth."

"Well, then, if it 's true, why do you deny it? Don't you know that all these evasions would be dangerous for you in such times as these, — with any other man except myself."

"Yes, but with *you*, — " said Gamain, fawningly.

"With *me!* What do you mean?"

"That is to say, with a *friend.*"

"Ah yes! Great confidence you manifest towards your friend! First you say *yes*, and then you say *no*. First you say a thing is true, and the next minute you say it is n't true. Here, the other day, you told me a story, on your word of honor. Psha! Tell that story to the marines!"

"What story?"

"The story of a secret door you had arranged, in the

house of some great lord, whose address and name you could n't even tell me!"

"Well, you can believe me or not, as you choose; but this time it was another door."

"For the King?"

"For the King. Only, instead of a door on a stairway, it was the door of a closet."

"And you expect me to believe that the King, himself an adept in lockmaking, would send for you to put a lock on a door? Oh, come off!"

"Well, it 's just so! Poor man! To be sure he believed himself able to get on without me. He began his lock. Well, then, — oh Lord! — 'What 's the use of Gamain? Can't we get on without Gamain? Why send for Gamain?' — Oh yes! but he got muddled with those bolts and ridges, and had to send after poor Gamain, after all!"

"So he sent after you by some confidential attendant, — Weber, or Durey, or Hue?"

"That 's where you 're mistaken! He had taken a helper, a companion who knew less about it than himself. Well, one fine morning this companion came to Versailles, and said to me: 'See here, Father Gamain. We have been trying to make a lock, the King and me; but good-night, lock. It won't work.' — 'Well, what do you want of me?' says I. — 'That you shall come to Paris, and put it into shape,' says he. — Says I: 'That 's a humbug! You don't come from the King. You want to get me into a trap!' — Says he: 'That 's all right; so the King has commissioned me to give you twenty-five louis, in order that you sha'n't be in doubt about it.' — 'Twenty-five louis,' says I; 'where are they?' — 'Here they are!' says he; and sure enough, there they were, and he gave them to me."

"And these are the twenty-five louis you have with you?" asked the gunsmith.

"No! These here are another lot. The twenty-five first ones were only on account."

"Pish! Fifty goldpieces for touching up a lock? There must be some fraud underneath all that, Master Gamain!"

"That 's just what I said to myself. Besides, you see that his companion —"

"Well, — his companion!"

"Well, he had the look of a sham. I 'd ought to 've questioned him about the details of his journeyman's tour through France, and what the mother of us all calls herself."

"But you 're not a man to be cheated, when you see an apprentice at his work."

"I don't say he can't work. This feller handled his file and chisel well enough. I saw him cut off a hot iron bar at one blow, bore an eyelet with a rat-tail, as well as if he 'd had a gimlet and a lathe. But you see there was, in all this, more theory than practice. No sooner 'd he finished a bit of work, than he washed his hands; when he washed 'em, they came out white. Do the hands of a genuine locksmith bleach out like that? Bah, I can't wash *mine* out so!" and Gamain proudly displayed his black and callous hands, which seemed able to defy all the almond paste and soaps on earth.

"But," said the Unknown, recurring to the point which seemed to him most interesting, — "once at the King's, what did you do?"

"Well, it appeared that we were expected. They took us to the workshop. The King showed me a lock, not badly begun; but he had come to grief over the ridges. A lock with three ridges, you see! Well, there ain't

many *locksmiths* capable of making one, — much less *kings*, — you understand. I looked at it, and saw what was the matter with it; so, says I: 'Good! Let me alone for an hour, and by that time the lock 'll be all right on its pins.' — Says the King: 'All right, my friend, thou 'rt at home here. There are the files and the pincers. Work, my boy, work,' says he; 'and as for us, we 'll go and get the closet ready.' — Then he went out, along with his devilish comrade."

"By the broad stairway?" carelessly asked Master Gunsmith.

"No, by the small private staircase, which leads directly into his office. — Well, when I 'd done my job, says I to myself: 'That there closet 's a blind! Them two are shut up there together, to concoct some plot or 'nother. I 'll go downstairs very soft. I 'll open the door into the office, — whew, — and then I 'll see what they 're up to,' says I."

"And what were they doing?"

"Doing? Listening, probably! Me? I hain't got the foot of a ballet-master, you understand. I tried to make my tread light as possible; but the stairway creaked under my heels, and I was heard. They made believe just coming after me. The minute I put my hand on the knob, — crick! the door opened! — Who got left? Gamain."

"So you learned nothing?"

"Wait a bit! — 'Ah ha, Gamain, is 't thou?' says the King. — 'Yes, Sire,' says I, 'I 'm done.' — 'And we too,' says he, 'we 're done. Come on, I 've another job for thee;' and he led me rapidly through his study, but not so rapidly but I could see, spread out on the table, a large map, which I know was a map of France, for on one corner of it were the three lilies of the kingdom."

"And you noticed nothing peculiar about that map of France?"

"Oh yes, — three long lines of pins stuck into it. They started from the centre, and ran toward the side of the map, about equal distances apart. You might 'a thought 'em soldiers, marching to the frontier by three different routes."

"Indeed, my dear Gamain," said the Unknown, laughing his appreciation, "you have a perspicacity which nothing escapes. So you think that instead of bothering about that closet, the King and your companion had been studying that big map?"

"Sure on 't!"

"You can't be *sure* of it!"

"But I *am*, though!"

"How so?"

"It 's very simple. The pins had wax heads, — some black, some blue, and others red; and the King thoughtlessly picked his teeth with a red-headed pin, which he happened to have left in his hand."

"Ah Gamain, my friend," said the Unknown, "when I invent something new in gunmaking, I shall not invite you into my cabinet, nor even let you pass through it, — I can assure you of that; unless your eyes are bandaged, as they were the day you were summoned to the grand seigneur's mansion; yet even so, you discovered there were ten main steps, and that the house looked out upon the boulevards."

"Hold on," said Gamain, enchanted with these compliments, "we 're not through yet. There was really a closet!"

"Ah ha! Where was it?"

"Ah yes, where? Guess a little. — Buried in the wall, my friend."

"In which wall?"

"In the wall of the interior passage-way, which connects the King's alcove with the Dauphin's chamber."

"Do you know this is very curious, what you tell me? And that closet is in plain sight?"

"I should say so! — Not much, Monsieur. I looked about with all my eyes, and could see nothing; so I says: 'Where is your closet?' — The King glances about; and says he: 'Gamain, I've always put confidence in thee; and I should n't want anybody else to know this secret. See here!' As he spoke these words, and the 'prentice held the light for us, — for there 's no daylight in that passage-way, — the King moved a panel of the wainscot, and I saw a round hole, two feet in diameter, at its entrance, — or a little more. Seeing my surprise, says he: 'My friend,' and he winked at the apprentice as he spoke, 'thou seest that hole? I've had it made to keep my money in. This young man helped me during the four or five days he spent in the palace. But it is necessary to put a lock on its iron door; and it must be hidden in such a way that when the panel is replaced it will conceal everything. If help is needed, here is this youngster. He will help. Don't want him, hey? Then I'll keep him busy elsewhere, but always in *my* service?' — 'Oh,' says I, 'you know very well, that when I can do a job alone, I ask nobody's help. Here are four hours' work for a workman; but I 'm a master, and I'll do it in three. Go about your own affairs, youngster; and you can attend to yours also, Sire,' says I, 'and if you have anything to lock up in that hole, come back in three hours.' — It must be so, because the King said so, — that our companion went to do some work somewhere else, — for I have n't seen him since. The King returned alone at the end of the three hours, and says: 'Well, Gamain,

where are we?' — 'Done, Sire!' says I; and I let him see the door — which moved as if it enjoyed moving, without the least creak — and the lock, which worked as smooth as one of Vaucanson's automatons. — 'Good enough!' says the King. 'Now, Gamain, thou wilt help me count the money I wish to put away.' Four bags of double louis were brought in by a valet; and says the King, says he: 'Now let 's count 'em!' I accounted for one million, and he for another. There were twenty-five left over, miscounted somehow. — 'Here, Gamain,' says the King, 'these twenty-five louis are for thy pains!' as if it were not a shame to make a man count a million louis, — a poor man with five young ones, — and give him only twenty-five for a recompense! — Say, what do *you* think?"

The Unknown made a motion with his lips. "The fact is, it 's shabby," he said presently; but it may be an open question, to whom he applied the epithet.

"Hold on! That ain't all! I took the twenty-five louis, put 'em into my pocket, and says I: 'Thanks, Sire; but for all that, I have n't ate or drunk since the forenoon, and I 'm direfully thirsty.' I had hardly said this, when the Queen came in through a concealed door, so that all in a minute, before you could say *boo*, there she was, in front of me. She held a napkin in her hand, on which I could see a glass of wine and a cake. — 'My dear Gamain,' says she to me, 'you 're thirsty. Try a glass of wine. You 're hungry. Have a cake.' — 'Ah, Madame Queen,' says I to her, bowing, 'no need to trouble yourself on my account. It ain't worth while.' — Now then, Monsieur Gunsmith, what do you think of that? One glass of wine, for a man who says he 's thirsty, and one cake, for a man who declares himself famished. What was that Queen thinking about? One

can easily see that *she* was never hungry or thirsty. — A glass of wine! Why, it 's stingy!"

"Then you refused it?"

"I should 'a done better to refuse it! No! I drinks it! As to the cake, I twists it up in my handkerchief, and I says: 'What is n't good for the father may be good for his children.' Then I thanked my lady for her pains, and put myself on the road for home, swearing I 'd never go to the Tuileries again."

"Why do you say you should have done better to refuse the wine?"

"Because they must have put poison in it! Hardly had I crossed the Swing Bridge than I was thirsty again, — and such a thirst! It was right there where the river runs along on the left, and the wineshops were at my right. — Ah, it was there I found out the bad quality of the wine they 'd given me. The more I drank, the thirstier I grew. Things went on like that till I lost consciousness. One thing they may be easy about. If ever I 'm called to testify against them, I will say that the King and Queen gave me twenty-five louis, for working four hours and counting a million of money; and then, for fear I should tell where they 'd hid their treasure, they poisoned me like a dog."

This was in fact the very accusation (so it is recorded in history!) which this miserable fellow subsequently made against the Queen, in the presence of the Convention.

"And I can back up your testimony, dear Gamain," said the gunsmith, rising, "by saying that it was I who furnished you with the antidote, thanks to which you have been recalled to life."

"Henceforth it is friendship in life and death between us two," said Gamain, taking the hands of the Unknown in his own.

Refusing for the third or fourth time, with almost Spartan firmness, the wine which the Unknown offered him (for the ammonia had the double effect of sobering him instantly, and disgusting him with wine for twenty-four hours), Gamain, after swearing eternal friendship, resumed his journey to Versailles, which he reached safe and sound, at two in the morning, with the King's twenty-five goldpieces secure in his vest, and the Queen's cake in his coat-pocket.

Lingering later in the cabaret, the sham gunsmith drew from his pocket some tortoise-shell tablets, encrusted with gold, and therein wrote with a pencil this brace of notes:

Behind the King's alcove, in the dark corridor leading to the Dauphin's chamber, an iron closet.

See if this Louis Lecomte, a locksmith's helper, is not simply Count Louis (son of the Marquis de Bouillé), who came from Metz eleven days ago.

CHAPTER XL.

DOCTOR GUILLOTIN'S MACHINE.

By the second day afterwards, thanks to the wires (controlled by Cagliostro) among all classes of society, reaching even to the royal household, he knew that the young Count Louis had arrived in Paris in the middle of November; that his presence had been discovered by his cousin Lafayette three days later; that he had been presented to the King on that day; that he had offered his services as a workman to Gamain on the Twenty-second of November; that he remained with him three days; that on the fourth day he went from Versailles to Paris with his master; that they were introduced at once to the King's presence; that young Louis returned afterwards to his lodgings, in the apartments of his friend Achille du Chastelet; that he then changed his costume immediately, and departed the same evening for Metz, posthaste.

The day after Cagliostro's conference with Beausire in Saint John Cemetery, the ex-soldier, much excited, hastened to the banker Zannone's residence at Bellevue.

Returning from the gaming-house at seven o'clock in the morning, after losing his last louis, — despite Law's infallible combination and sequence, — Master Beausire had found his rooms entirely empty, Mademoiselle Olivia and the young Toussaint having disappeared.

Then it came into his mind that Cagliostro had refused to leave the house with him the evening before, because

he had something confidential to say to Olivia. Here was a way open for suspicion. Olivia had certainly been led astray by the Count. A good bloodhound, Beausire put his nose to the ground, and followed the scent as far as Bellevue.

On giving his name, he was at once received by the Baron Zannone, or Count Cagliostro, — whichever the reader, for the moment, pleases to call the principal personage, the kingpin, of the drama which we have undertaken to recount.

Conducted into the same parlor wherewith we became acquainted at the beginning of this narrative, — when Doctor Gilbert and Favras met each other, — Beausire hesitated on finding himself face to face with the Count. Cagliostro appeared such a mighty lord, that Beausire hardly dared reclaim his mistress from him ; but as if he could read the heart of the ex-soldier, the Count said : "I have noted one thing, that you have only two passions in this world, gambling and Mademoiselle Olivia."

"Ah!" cried Beausire, "you know what brings me here?"

"Perfectly well! You come to demand Olivia. — She is at my house."

"How, she 's with you?"

"Yes, in my house in the Rue Saint Claude. She occupies her old apartment there ; and if you 're careful, and I 'm pleased with your behavior, — if you bring me news to interest and amuse me, — at such times I shall give you twenty-five louis for your pocket, wherewith you can visit the gamesters at the Palace Royal, and also buy a coat for your back, in order to visit your mistress in the Rue Saint Claude."

Beausire had a great mind to raise his voice, and demand Olivia ; but Cagliostro said two words about that

miserable affair connected with the Portuguese embassy, — which was always suspended over the ex-soldier's head, like the sword of Damocles, — and Beausire held his peace.

As Beausire manifested some doubt whether Olivia was really at the mansion in the Rue Saint Claude, the Count ordered his carriage, took Beausire with him to that house on the boulevards, and introduced him into the *sanctum sanctorum*, the Holy of Holies. There, by displacing a picture, he allowed Beausire to see, through a skilfully contrived aperture, Mademoiselle Olivia, established like a queen. Seated on a huge sofa, she was reading one of those naughty books so common at that epoch, and which constituted the joy of her life, whenever the former chambermaid of Mademoiselle de Taverney was happy enough to light upon them. Her son Toussaint was attired like the son of a king, with a Henry Fourth hat, caught up with white feathers, and a sky-blue sailor suit, kept in place by a tricolored belt, fringed with gold. He was enjoying some beautiful playthings.

Then Beausire's heart dilated, as a lover and father. He promised whatever the Count desired. Cagliostro agreed that Beausire, whenever he brought important news, should first receive his payment, gold in hand, and then seek the prize of love in the arms of Mademoiselle Olivia.

All was going on as Cagliostro desired, and very much as Beausire wished also, when, towards the end of December, at an hour very unseasonable for that time of the year, — namely, at six in the morning, — Doctor Gilbert, who had already been at work an hour and a half, heard three raps at his door, which he recognized, by their peculiar intervals, as made by a brother in Free Masonry.

He opened the door therefore, and found Cagliostro, with a smile on his lips, standing the other side of it. Gilbert never met this mysterious man, face to face, without a certain shiver. "Ah Count, is it you?" he said; and then, with an effort, extended his hand, saying: "Welcome, at whatever hour you come, and whatsoever cause brings you hither."

"The cause which brings me, my dear Gilbert, is the wish to have you assist in a philanthropic experiment, of which I have already had the honor of speaking to you."

Gilbert in vain tried to remember to what experiment the Count alluded, and finally said: "I do not recollect it."

"Come with me, all the same, my dear Gilbert; for I have not disturbed you for nothing, I assure you. Besides, you will meet noteworthy people in the place to which we are going."

"Dear Count, wherever you wish me to go, I will go, — first, for your sake. The place whither I go, and the people whom I may meet there, are of secondary importance."

"Come then, for we have no time to lose."

Being already dressed, Gilbert needed only to lay down his pen and don his hat. These two operations accomplished, he said: "Count, I am at your service."

"Let us go!" replied the Count, simply; and he walked ahead while Gilbert followed.

A carriage was in waiting, and the two men entered it. As they started rapidly, without any new orders from the Count, it was evident that the coachman already knew where he was to drive. At the expiration of fifteen minutes, during which Gilbert noticed that they crossed the city, and passed through one of the

barriers, the carriage brought up in a large square court-yard, upon which opened two tiers of small, grated windows.

The gate, which had opened to give the vehicle access, closed behind it. As he stepped out, Gilbert perceived that he was in the courtyard of a prison, which presently he recognized as the one named Bicêtre.

The place, already gloomy enough in its natural aspect, was rendered more so by the dubious daylight, which seemed to descend regretfully into that courtyard. It was about quarter past six in the morning, — the worst hour of the winter, because it is the hour when the cold makes itself felt, even by the most vigorous organizations. A foggy rain, fine as crape, was falling diagonally, and made the walls look gray.

Under the lead of their boss, — but under the special direction of a little man clad in black, who gave the signal for every movement, — five or six carpenters were at work, setting up some machine, of a form unknown and queer.

At sight of the new arrivals the little man in black raised his head. Gilbert shuddered, as he recognized Doctor Guillotin, whom he had met in Marat's cellar. This machine was, in fact, a large copy of the one whereof Gilbert had seen a small model in the home of the editor of "The Friend of the People."

On his side, the little man recognized Cagliostro and Gilbert; and the arrival of these two personages seemed sufficiently important for him to leave the work for an instant, and come to greet them; but he did not do this without bidding the master carpenter give his best attention to the work in hand.

"There, there, Master Guidon, that 's very well. Arrange the platform first. The platform 's the base of

the structure. When the platform 's done, then set up the two posts, and be sure and follow the building-marks on the timber, so that the posts shall be neither too far apart nor too near. For the rest, — well, I shall be close by, and sha' n't lose sight of you."

Then approaching Gilbert and Cagliostro, who met him half-way, he said: "Good-day, Baron. It is very kind of you to come first, and bring the Doctor. Doctor, you will remember that when we met at Marat's, I invited you to share this experiment; only I afterwards forgot your address. You will see something very curious, — the most philanthropic machine ever invented."

Suddenly turning towards the machine, the object of his dearest hopes, he exclaimed: "Here, here, Guidon, what are you about? You 're putting it wrong end foremost."

Rushing up the ladder, which two of his assistants had placed against one side of the scaffolding, he was on the platform in an instant, and there his presence served to correct, in a few seconds, the errors committed by the mechanics, — not yet well posted as to the working of this new-fangled machine.

"There, there!" said the Doctor, seeing with satisfaction that everything was now going according to his directions, "there, there! Now the cutter must be placed between the grooves. — Guidon, Guidon," he exclaimed suddenly, as if struck with fear, "why are n't the grooves faced with copper?"

"It was this way, Doctor. I thought that good oak, thoroughly dry, would do as well as copper," replied the master carpenter.

"Oh yes, there it is!" replied the Doctor, disdainfully. "Economy, always economy! — when it is a question of the progress of science and the good of humanity. Guidon,

if our experiment fails to-day, I shall hold you responsible. — Gentlemen, I call you to witness," continued the Doctor, addressing Cagliostro and Gilbert, — "I call you to witness that I ordered copper-lined grooves, and that I protest against the omission of the copper; so if the cutter catches on its way down, or slides badly, it is not my fault, and I wash my hands of it." As he spoke, the Doctor, standing there on the platform of his machine, made the same gesture which was made by Pontius Pilate, on the terrace of his palace, 1700 years before.

At last, despite these little annoyances, the machine was set up, and took on a certain homicidal air, which delighted its inventor, but which chilled Doctor Gilbert.

As to Cagliostro, he remained unmoved; for ever since the death of Lorenza, this man had become marble.

This is the form which the machine now assumed.

First there was a staging, reached by a short step-ladder. This staging, like a scaffold, furnished a platform, measuring some fifteen feet on each side. On this platform, about two-thirds back, and facing the stairs, rose two parallel posts, ten or twelve feet high.

These two posts were ornamented with the famous grooves, from which Master Guidon had economically withheld the copper, — a saving which, as we know, roused the regrets of the philanthropist, Doctor Guillotin.

When released by means of a spring, a crescent-shaped cutter, or knife, was allowed to fall precipitously, its own natural force being augmented a hundred-fold by additional weights placed upon it.

Between the two posts was a small opening. There were two leaves in this opening, and when a man's head was thrust between them, they closed together about the neck, like a collar. A movable board, composed of a

plank as long as the height of an ordinary man, was so hinged as to move up and down at the proper time. When turned down, this plank came upon a level with this opening before described.

This was all very ingenious, as one could readily see.

While the carpenters, Master Guidon, and the Doctor were putting the last touches to the erection of their machine, Cagliostro and Gilbert were discussing the problematical novelty of this instrument, — the Count disputing the originality of the invention, whereto he found something analogous in the Italian *mannaya*, and especially in the *doloire* of Toulouse, used in the execution of Marshal Montmorency, whereof Puységur says: "In this country they make use of a *doloire*, or knife placed between two pieces of wood. When a head is placed on the block, some one loosens the cord, and the knife descends, and separates the head from the body."

Meanwhile new spectators entered the yard, undoubtedly summoned to assist in the experiment.

There was first an old man of our acquaintance, who has played an active part in this long narrative. Touched with a malady wherewith he must soon die, he yet left his chamber, — at the urgency of his confrère Guillotin, and in spite of the bad weather, — in order to see this machine work. Gilbert recognized him, and advanced respectfully to meet him. He was accompanied by Giraud, city architect of Paris, who, by reason of his public position, had been favored with a particular invitation.

The second group — saluting nobody, and by nobody saluted — was composed of four men, very plainly dressed. As soon as they entered, these four men took their places in the corner of the yard farthest removed from Gilbert

and Cagliostro, and humbly remained there, talking in low tones, and standing hat in hand, notwithstanding the rain.

He who appeared to be chief among the four, and to whom the others listened with deference, as he spoke some words in a bass voice, was a man fifty or fifty-two years old. He was tall in stature, and had a benevolent smile and an open countenance. This man was Charles Louis Sanson. He was born on February 15, 1738. He saw his father cut Damiens in quarters; and he also aided him, when he had the honor of cutting off the head of Lally Tollendal. Sanson was commonly called *Monsieur de Paris.* The three other men were his son — who was subsequently to have the honor of aiding in the decapitation of Louis Sixteenth — and his two assistants.

The presence of Monsieur de Paris, his son, and two assistants, lent a terrible eloquence to Guillotin's machine, showing that the experiment was to be made, if not with the guaranty of the government, at least with its approbation.

For the moment Monsieur de Paris appeared somewhat sad. If the machine should be adopted, which he came to see, the picturesque side of his profession would be curtailed. The executioner would no longer appear to the crowd as the Destroying Angel, armed with a flaming sword, — like him who stood at the gate of Eden, to guard it from those who had rebelled against Jehovah. On the contrary, the headsman would appear like a sort of house-porter, pulling the latchstring for the dead, instead of the living. Therein lay Sanson's real objection to the invention.

As the misty rain continued to fall, not so penetratingly, but more steadily, Doctor Guillotin — who doubt-

less feared lest the bad weather should keep away some of his spectators — addressed the most important group, comprising Cagliostro, Gilbert, Doctor Louis, and Architect Giraud, and said to them, like a manager who scents the public impatience: "Gentlemen, we only wait for one person, Doctor Cabanis. When he comes, we will begin."

Hardly were these words out of his mouth than a third vehicle entered the yard, from which emerged a man thirty-eight or forty years old, with a high forehead, intelligent face, and a vivid, inquisitive eye. This was the last visitor expected, Doctor Cabanis. He saluted everybody, with an affable air, such as becomes a medical philosopher, and hastened to offer his hand to Guillotin, who cried, from his place on the platform, "Come then, Doctor, come on. We only waited for you." Then Cabanis mingled in the group with Cagliostro and Gilbert, while the carriage ranged itself with the other two carriages. As to the cab of Monsieur de Paris, that remained modestly outside the gate.

"Gentlemen," said Guillotin, "as nobody else is expected, we will begin at once."

At a sign from his hand a door opened, through which came two men, clad in a sort of gray uniform, carrying on their shoulders a sack, beneath whose folds one could see the outline of the human form.

Behind the panes of the small windows could be seen the pale faces of certain prisoners, whom nobody had dreamed of inviting, but who nevertheless watched the unexpected and terrible spectacle, though understanding neither the apparatus nor its object.

CHAPTER XLI.

A SOIRÉE IN THE FLORAL PAVILION.

On the evening of the same day, — that is, on Christmas Eve, — there was a reception in the Floral Pavilion.

The Queen, not wishing to hold receptions in her own apartments, the Princess Lamballe received for her, and did the honors of the circle until the Queen arrived. After her Majesty came, everything went on as if they were in the Marsan Pavilion, instead of the Floral.

In the course of the morning the young Baron Isidore de Charny had returned from Turin. As soon as his arrival was known, he was admitted first to the King's presence, and then to the Queen's.

Both received him with extreme friendliness, but especially the Queen, whose noticeable good-will arose from two causes. In the first place, Isidore was Charny's brother; and Charny being absent, it was a great pleasure for the Queen to see his brother. In the next place, Isidore came from the royal relatives, the Comte d'Artois and the Prince de Condé, and brought with him their messages, which were only too much in harmony with ideas cherished in the Queen's own heart.

The Princes commended to the Queen the projects of Favras. They invited her to profit by the devotion of this courageous gentleman, and come at once to Turin. Isidore was also commissioned to express to Favras, in the name of the Princes, their full sympathy with his plans, their approval thereof, and their best wishes for his success.

The Queen kept Isidore with her for an hour, and invited him to come in the evening to Madame Lamballe's circle; and she only permitted him to retire, when he asked leave to go and discharge his all-important errand to Favras.

The Queen said nothing positive in regard to the project of flight; only she charged Isidore to repeat to Monsieur and Madame de Favras, what she had already said when she received Madame at their first meeting, and had repeated when she so abruptly entered the King's rooms, and found Monsieur de Favras there.

After leaving the Queen, Isidore betook himself at once to the abiding-place of Favras, who lived at Number Twenty-one in Royal Square.

He was received by Madame, who at first told him that her husband was out; but when she noted the name of her visitor, and learned what august personages he had just interviewed, and what others he had left five or six days before, she acknowledged that her husband was in the house, and sent for him.

The Marquis came in with a frank look and a smiling eye, for he knew in whose behalf Isidore had come.

The message from the Queen filled the heart of the young conspirator with joy. Everything encouraged his hopes. The plot was going on marvellously well. Twelve hundred horsemen were already assembled at Versailles. Each of them could carry a foot-soldier on his crupper, and this would make twenty-four hundred instead of twelve hundred.

As to the triple assassination of Necker, Bailly, and Lafayette, to be undertaken simultaneously by the three columns, — entering Paris, one by the Roule Barrier, another by the Grenelle Barrier, and the third by the Chaillot Gate, — this had been relinquished, as it was

thought sufficient for their purpose if they should dispose of Lafayette alone.

For this expedition, four men would be enough, provided they were well mounted and well armed. These four were to await Lafayette's carriage at eleven o'clock in the evening, the time when he usually left the Tuileries. Two of them would take positions on the right and left of the street, while the other two would place themselves in front of the carriage.

One of these, holding a letter in his hand, would make a sign for the driver to stop, declaring that he had an important communication for the General. When the carriage stopped, the General would naturally put his head out of one of the windows, and immediately the conspirator would blow his brains out with a pistol.

This was the only special change made in the scheme. The other arrangements were unaltered. As money had been disbursed and the men notified, the King had only to say *yes;* and at a sign from Favras he would be carried off.

Only one thing disquieted the Marquis, — the silence of the King and Queen in regard to this affair. The Queen's silence was now broken by the intervention of Isidore; and vague as were the words transmitted through him to Monsieur and Madame de Favras, these words, coming from a royal mouth, became vastly important.

Isidore promised to report to the King and Queen, that evening, an assurance of the devotion of Favras.

The young Baron, as we know, had left for Turin on the very day of his arrival in Paris, early in October; and he consequently had no lodging, except the chamber belonging to his brother, in the Tuileries; and that brother being absent, Isidore had the chamber opened by the Count's lackey.

At nine in the evening he entered Madame de Lamballe's apartments. He had never been introduced to the Princess, and she did not know him by sight; but having been forewarned of his visit during the day, by a word from the Queen, the Princess arose when his name was announced. With that charming grace which, in her, took the place of wit, she drew him at once into the circle of her intimate friends.

The King and Queen had not yet arrived. *Monsieur* de Provence, who appeared very uneasy, was talking in the corner with two gentlemen of his inner circle of friends, De la Châtre and D'Avaray. Louis de Narbonne went from one group to another, with the ease of a man who feels himself in his own family.

This circle of intimates was made up of young gentlemen who had resisted the mania for emigration. There was Lameth, who was so much to the Queen, and had never taken part against her. There was D'Ambly, one of the best or worst men of that epoch, according to one's point of view. There were De Castries and De Fersen; and there was Suleau, chief editor of that witty journal, "The Acts of the Apostles." All these had loyal hearts, but hot heads, and some of them were feather-brained.

Isidore was acquainted with none of these gentlemen; but when his name was announced, and the Princess honored him with so much affability, all hands were outstretched to him.

Besides, he brought news from that other France, which had established itself in a foreign city. Each of these young men had a relative or friend with the exiled Princes in Turin. Isidore had seen everybody there, and was consequently a sort of second Gazette.

We have indicated Suleau as chief among these men. He was leading the conversation, which roused great

laughter. Suleau had been present that day, at the session of the Assembly. Guillotin had mounted the tribune, vaunted the advantages of the machine he had devised, described the triumphant trial of it made that very morning, and demanded the privilege of substituting it for all the other instruments of death, which had successively stained the Place de Grève, — the wheel, the gallows, the stake, the rack. Seduced by the smoothness of his machine, the Assembly was quite ready to adopt it.

Apropos to this theme, Suleau had written some verses, to the air of the *Exaudet Minuet*, which were to appear next day in his journal.

This song, which he sang in a low voice to the jovial circle about him, provoked such free laughter, that the King, who was coming in with the Queen, heard it in the antechamber; and as he, poor King! could laugh no longer, he promised himself to inquire what possible subject had been found provocative of so much gayety in such a sorry time.

Needless to say, as soon as one usher announced the King, and another the Queen, that all whispering, all conversation, and all bursts of laughter ceased; giving place to respectful silence.

The two royal personages entered. At that time, when the genius of Revolution despoiled royalty of many privileges, one by one, these outward tokens of respect were augmented in private, especially by all true Royalists, to whose courtesy the royal misfortunes lent new force. The year 1789 witnessed great ingratitude; but 1793 witnessed supreme devotion.

Madame de Lamballe and Madame Elizabeth joined the Queen.

Monsieur walked up to the King to present his re-

spects, and, as he bowed, said to him: "My brother, can we not make up a special party, yourself, the Queen, myself, and one of your friends, to the end that we may converse confidentially, under cover of a game of whist?"

"Willingly, my brother," replied the King. "Arrange it with the Queen."

Monsieur approached Marie Antoinette, to whom Charny was offering his respects, and saying, in a low voice: "Madame, I have seen Favras, and have communications of the highest importance for your Majesty."

"My dear sister," interrupted *Monsieur*, "the King desires us to make a card-party of four. We two will unite against yourself, and leave you to choose your own partner."

"Very well," replied the Queen, who suspected that whist was only a pretext, "my choice is made. Monsieur Baron de Charny, you will join our game; and while we play, you can give us the news from Turin."

"Ah, you come from Turin, Baron?" said *Monsieur*.

"Yes, Monseigneur; and in returning from Turin, I came by way of Royal Square, where I saw a man most devoted to the King, the Queen, and your Royal Highness."

Monsieur blushed, coughed, and went farther away. He was a man so full of circumspection, that a straightforward mind disconcerted him. He glanced at De la Châtre, who drew near. After receiving some orders in a low voice, De la Châtre left the room.

Meanwhile the King saluted the gentlemen, and the few ladies, who frequented these receptions at the Tuileries, and in return received their homage. Then the Queen took his arm, and drew him towards the card-table.

He approached the table, looked for the fourth player, and perceived Isidore.

"Ah, Monsieur de Charny," he said, "in the absence of your brother, is it you who make up our table? He could not be better replaced, and you are welcome."

By a sign he bade the Queen be seated, sat down himself, and *Monsieur* after him. Then the Queen, in her turn, made a sign of invitation to Isidore, who took the last place.

Madame Elizabeth ensconced herself on a small sofa behind the King, and leaned both arms on the back of his armchair.

They played two or three hands of whist, speaking only the words sacred to the game. At last, though still playing, the Queen — having remarked that respect was keeping everybody conveniently aloof from the royal table — ventured to say to *Monsieur:* "My brother, has the Baron told you that he is just from Turin?"

"Yes," replied *Monsieur*, "he mentioned it."

"He told you that Artois and Condé strongly urge us to join them?"

The King let an impatient movement escape him.

"Brother, I beg you to listen!" whispered Madame Elizabeth, with the sweetness of an angel.

"And you also, my sister?" said the King.

"I, more than anybody else, dear Louis; for, more than anybody else, I love you, and am uneasy about you."

"I also added," Isidore ventured to say, "that I had returned by way of Royal Square, and remained an hour at number twenty-one."

"At number twenty-one?" asked the King. "What is going on there?"

"At number twenty-one dwells a gentleman devoted

to your Majesty, as we all are, — ready to die for your Majesty, as are all of us, — but who, more active than all others, has arranged a plan — "

"What plan, Monsieur?" demanded the King, raising his head.

"If I should have the misfortune to displease the King, by repeating to his Majesty what I know of this project, I will hold my peace."

"No, no, Monsieur," said the Queen, hastily. "Speak! People enough form projects *against* us. It is at least well for us to know those who conspire on our side, — that in pardoning our enemies, we may also remember our friends. Tell us, Baron, who is this gentleman?"

"The Marquis de Favras."

"Ah," said the Queen, "we know him. And you believe in his devotion, Baron?"

"In his devotion? Yes, Madame! Not only do I believe in it, but I am sure of it."

"Look out, Monsieur," said the King, "you are going too far!"

"The heart judges with the heart, Sire. I answer for the devotion of Favras. As to the excellence of his project, as to his chances of success, — oh, that is another thing. I am too young and too prudent to put forth any opinion on such a subject, especially when it concerns the welfare of the King and Queen."

"And this project, let us hear what it is!" said the Queen.

"Madame, it is ready for execution. If it pleases the King this evening to speak a word or make a sign, to-morrow, at the same hour, he may be at Péronne."

The King kept silence. *Monsieur* twisted the spine of a poor knave of hearts, who could not very well help himself.

"Sire," said the Queen to her husband, "do you hear what the Baron says?"

"Of course I hear," replied the King, scowling.

"And you, my brother?" she asked *Monsieur*.

"I am not more deaf than the King."

"Well, what do you say to it? At least it is a definite proposition!"

"Undoubtedly," said *Monsieur*, "undoubtedly!" Then turning to Isidore, he added: "Repeat that pretty suggestion."

Isidore replied: "I said that if the King would pronounce the word, or make but a sign, he might be at Péronne within twenty-four hours, thanks to the measures taken by Favras."

"Well, my brother," asked *Monsieur*, "is it not tempting, what the Baron proposes?"

The King turned sharply to *Monsieur* and looked at him searchingly. "If I go, will you go with me?"

"I?"

"Yes, you, my brother of Provence," said the King. "You want me to pledge myself to quit Paris. I repeat my question: If I go, will you go with me?"

"I — but," stammered *Monsieur*, "I was not aware. — None of my preparations are made."

"How? You were not *aware*," said the King, "when you furnished Favras with the money! None of your preparations are made, when you have been informed, hour by hour, as to every point in this plot?"

"This plot?" repeated *Monsieur*, growing pale.

"Undoubtedly, this plot; for it is a conspiracy, — a conspiracy so real, that if it is discovered, Monsieur de Favras will be imprisoned, tried at the Châtelet, and condemned to death, — unless, by solicitations and money, you can save him, as we saved Besenval."

"But if the King could save Besenval, he can rescue Favras also."

"No! What I did for the one, I probably cannot do for the other. Besides, Besenval was *my* man, as Favras is *yours*. Let each save his own, my brother, and we shall both have done our duty."

As he spoke, the King rose, but the Queen held him by the flap of his coat.

"Sire," she said, "whether you accept or refuse, you owe Favras some response."

"I?"

"Yes, something which the Baron de Charny may convey to Favras in the King's name."

"He responds," said Louis Sixteenth, disengaging his coat from the Queen's grasp, "the King responds, that he will not allow himself to be abducted!" And with these words his Majesty walked away.

"That is to say," said *Monsieur*, "if Favras abducts the King without permission, he is welcome to do so, — especially if he succeeds; for whoever fails is a fool, and, in politics, fools deserve double punishment."

"Monsieur de Charny," said the Queen, "this evening, without loss of time, run after Favras, and tell him the King's exact words, — *the King will not allow himself to be abducted.* It is for Favras to comprehend these words, or for you to explicate them. — Go!"

The Baron, who, not without reason, regarded the King's response and the Queen's advice as a double consent, took his hat, went out hurriedly, and threw himself into a cab, bidding the driver take him to Royal Square, number twenty-one.

CHAPTER XLII.

WHAT THE QUEEN HAD SEEN IN A DECANTER TWENTY YEARS BEFORE AT THE TAVERNEY CHÂTEAU.

When the King left the card-table, he walked towards the group of young fellows, whose joyous laughter had attracted his attention before he entered the room.

At his approach a noticeable silence prevailed in the group, so that he asked: "Well, gentlemen, is the King so unhappy that he carries sadness wherever he goes?"

"Sire!—" murmured the young men.

"Your gayety was lively enough, and your mirth buoyant, when we came in a while ago, the Queen and myself." Then, shaking his head, he added: "Woe to kings, in whose presence none dare laugh!"

"Sire, — the respect, —" began Monsieur de Lameth —

"My dear Charles," interrupted the King, "when you used to leave your seminary on Sundays or Thursdays, and I bade you seek recreation at Versailles, did you deprive yourself of laughter, because I was there? I said a minute ago, Woe to the king, before whom none dare be merry. Now I say, Happy the king, in whose presence men may laugh."

"Sire," said Monsieur de Castries, "the subject, which afforded us so much mirth, might not appear so comical to your Majesty."

"Of what were you talking, gentlemen?"

"Sire," said Suleau, coming forward, "I deliver the culprit to your Majesty."

"Ah, Monsieur Suleau! I have read the last number of your 'Acts of the Apostles.' Have a care! Have a care!"

"Of what, Sire?" demanded the young journalist.

"You are a little too much of a Royalist. You might easily get yourself into a bad scrape with the lover of Mademoiselle Théroigne."

"With Monsieur Populus," laughingly asked Suleau.

"Precisely. By the way, what has become of the heroine of that poem?"

"Théroigne?"

"Yes. I hear nothing of her nowadays."

"Sire, I believe she thinks our Revolution does not get on fast enough, and has gone to hurry up the Revolution in Brabant. Your Majesty is doubtless aware that this chaste amazon is at Liége?"

"No, I did not know it. Is this what you were laughing at just now?"

"No, Sire, but about the National Assembly."

"Ah ha, gentlemen! Then you did well to become serious when you saw me. I can't allow anybody in *my* house to laugh at the National Assembly. To be sure," added the King, by way of compromise, "I am not now at home, but in the apartments of the Princess Lamballe; so if you laugh at that no longer, or even laugh at it very softly, you can still tell me what made you laugh so loud awhile ago."

"Does the King know what question was agitated to-day at the session of the National Assembly?"

"Yes, and that makes me even more interested. Was there not under consideration a new machine for the execution of criminals?"

"Offered by Doctor Guillotin to the nation! Yes, Sire," said Suleau.

"Oh Monsieur! and you were ridiculing Guillotin, a philanthropist? You forget that I am a philanthropist myself."

"Oh Sire, I do not forget! There are philanthropists *and* philanthropists. For instance, there is, at the head of the French nation, a philanthropist who has abolished the preparatory suffering, the examination of prisoners under torture. Such a philanthropist we respect, we venerate; nay, we do more, we love him, Sire."

All the young fellows bowed low, as by common consent.

"But," continued Suleau, "there are other philanthropists who, being already physicians, and having in their hands the means, more or less skilful, for disposing of sick folks, are still seeking some means of getting rid of the well ones. Faith, Sire, I beg you to leave such philanthropists to my tender mercies."

"And what would you do with them, — behead them *without suffering?*" asked the King, alluding to the claim set forth by Doctor Guillotin. "Would they quit this world with only *a slight coolness* about their necks?"

"Sire, that is precisely what I wish for them, but that is not what I have promised them."

"How? What you wish for them?" said the King.

"Yes, Sire! I wish that all fellows who invent such machines might be the first to try them. I do not pity Master Aubriot very much, because he had a chance to test the walls of the Bastille; nor Messire Enguerrand de Marigny, who was the first to enjoy the gibbet at Montfaucon. Fortunately I have not the honor of being a magistrate. It is therefore probable that I shall be obliged, in the presence of the respectable Guillotin, to confine myself to what I have promised him, and have already begun to accomplish."

"And what have you promised, — or rather, what have you done?"

"Well, the notion struck me that this great benefactor of humanity ought to derive some recompense from the benefaction itself; so to-morrow morning — in the copy of my 'Acts of the Apostles,' which is being printed to-night — a christening will take place. It is but just that the child of Monsieur Guillotin — recognized to-day as such publicly, by its father, in the presence of the National Assembly — should be named *Mademoiselle Guillotine.*"

Even the King could not help smiling.

"And as there is never a marriage or baptism without its song," said Lameth, "Suleau has made a couple of songs for his godchild."

"Two?" said the King.

"Sire," said Suleau, "the poet must suit all tastes."

"And to what melody have you set these songs? *I* can think of nothing so suitable as the funereal chant, *De Profundis*, — 'Out of the Depths.'"

"Oh, your Majesty! You forget the pleasure it will be to have one's throat cut by the daughter of Monsieur Guillotin, — that is, if he thrusts his head into her doorway. No, Sire! One of my songs is set to an air which is just now all the rage, the *Exaudet Minuet*. The other takes in several melodies, — a sort of mixture."

"And may one have a foretaste of your poesy?" asked the King.

Suleau bowed and said: "I do not belong to the National Assembly, and therefore do not presume to limit the authority of my King. No, I am an obedient subject of your Majesty; and my opinion is, that the King should have whatever he wishes."

"Very well, I am listening."

"Sire, I obey," said Suleau; and he sang, in a low voice, the following ditty, to the melody called the *Exaudet Minuet*, as we have said:[1]

Guillotin,
Deep-learned man, —
Politician
And physician, —
Took a shine, one morning fine,
Hanging not to deem divine,
Nor his country's mission.

In a trice,
His device, —
Such a beauty! —
Having neither rope nor stress,
Must the hangman's art suppress,
And his duty.

All in vain a few may teach,
This the craft of envious leech, —
To uphold
The school of old
Hippocrates, —
The trade to swift monopolize,
Of dealing death to convict flies,
For frequent fees,
All at their ease.

[1] This somewhat rough version of these Revolutionary songs is furnished by the Translator, with the hope of reproducing, in some degree, not merely the ideas of Suleau's stanzas, but their satire, spirit, metrical rhythm, and recurrent rhymes; and to this end all attempts at poetic sentiment have been subordinated. It may be helpful, for those unacquainted with French, to know that the final syllable *in*, in such words as *Guillotin*, is always so pronounced as nearly to rhyme with our word *man*. Except where two or three lines have been added, so as to convey the whole meaning, this translation follows the French verses pretty carefully, though the Translator is fully aware of its many deficiencies.

Our doctor bold —
As we are told,
This work to do —
Consulted with his colleagues suave,
Chapelier, and eke Barnave, —
The headsman too.

Straightway stands,
From his hands,
This machine, —
Which with ease may slay us all,
And which, after him, we call,
Guillotine!

The laughter of the young fellows redoubled. Although these verses did not appear so very amusing to the King; yet, as Suleau was one of his most steadfast adherents, he did not wish that journalist to note the peculiar feeling which agitated the royal heart, and which the King himself could not account for; so he said, "But, my dear Suleau, you spoke of *two* songs. You have given us the *godfather*. Now for the *godmother* at the baptism."

"Sire," responded Suleau, "the godmother awaits the honor of an introduction. She marches to the tune, *Paris, the King's.*"

Monsieur Guillotin,
The medicine-man,
Whom the good of his race
Must ever engage, —
Advances apace,
With demeanor so sage,
And the word for the age, —
Prompt suggesting
A small blessing, —
Interesting, —

In words not prolix ;
But his phrases
Win him praises,
From fools five or six, —
Grandiloquent tricks !

"Dear gents, who safely lead us ! —
For every human flaw,
Your wisdom hath decreed us
Equality in law.
Awhile if you deign to listen,
Persuaded you soon must be,
That if it is cruel to hang men,
Far worse to be hanged it must be.

"What shall be done ?
When a worthy citizen,
In choler or in fun,
Assassinates his neighbor,
What shall be done ?

"To benefit is my intention,
And drag you through these straits,
And so I have made an invention,
Which quick decapitates.

"'T is a blow which is received,
Ere one hears it popping ;
Scarcely is the cut perceived, —
One sees next to nothing.

"A hidden spring, with a boost,
All of a sudden unloosed,
Sets gliding,
Ding — ding !
Sets shying,
Ying — ying !
Sends gliding,
Sends shying,
Sends flying
The head.
Very little to dread !"

"Well, gentlemen, you laugh," said the King; "nevertheless, this machine is intended to spare condemned criminals much suffering. What does society ask, when it demands the death of the guilty? Solely and simply this, — the suppression of the individual. If that suppression is accompanied by suffering, as with the wheel or the rack, then punishment is no longer justice; it is vengeance."

"But, Sire," observed Suleau, "who can assure your Majesty that suffering is diminished by the severance of the head thus from the body? Who can say whether life does not survive in both sections, the trunk and the head, and that the dying person may not suffer doubly, having a horrible consciousness of his duality?"

"That is a fair question for discussion among the members of the faculty. — By the way, an experiment was made at the Bicêtre Prison, this very morning, I believe. Was no one of you gentlemen present at that experiment?"

"No, Sire! No, no, no!" exclaimed a dozen or fifteen merry voices, almost simultaneously.

"I was there, Sire," said a graver voice.

The King turned and saw Gilbert, who had entered during the conversation, had respectfully drawn near, but had stood silent till now, when he suddenly answered the King's interrogation.

"Ah Doctor," said the King, with a shudder, "so you were there."

"Yes, Sire."

"And how did the experiment succeed?"

"Perfectly well, with the first two subjects, Sire; but with the third, though the vertebral column was cut, it was still necessary to use a knife in severing the head entirely from the body."

The young men listened with open mouths and horrified eyes.

"How, Sire," said Charles Lameth, evidently speaking for the others, as well as for himself, "three men were executed this morning?"

"Yes, gentlemen," said the King; "only these three men were three corpses, sent from the hospital, Hôtel Dieu. — And your opinion, Gilbert?"

"As to what, Sire?"

"As to the instrument."

"Sire, it is evidently a great improvement on any machine for this purpose hitherto invented; but the accident, which happened to the third victim, proves that the machine needs perfecting."

"And how is it constructed," asked the King, whose instinct for mechanism was at once aroused.

Thereupon Gilbert endeavored to give some description; but as the King could not understand the exact shape of the instrument, even from the Doctor's explanation, he said: "Come, come, Doctor. Here, on this table, are quills, ink, and paper. You draw, I believe?"

"Yes, Sire!"

"Make me an outline, and I shall understand better." As the young gentlemen, restrained by their respect for the King, did not venture to follow without an invitation, he added: "Come, gentlemen, come. This subject is one which should interest all mankind."

"And then who knows," said Suleau, in a low voice, "if one of us is not destined for the honor of espousing Mademoiselle Guillotine? Come, gentlemen, let us make the acquaintance of our future bride."

Following Gilbert and the King they clustered about the table, where (by the King's bidding) Gilbert seated himself, the better to draw his design.

He began the sketch of the machine, and Louis followed every line with the closest attention. Nothing was wanting, — neither the platform, the stairway which led to it, the two upright beams, the movable plank, the little aperture, nor the crescent-shaped blade.

Gilbert was finishing this last detail, when the King stopped him. "Parbleu! It is not surprising the experiment failed, especially with the third trial."

"Why so?" asked Gilbert.

"On account of the shape of the cutter," replied the King. "It was certainly no mechanic's idea, to give the crescent shape to a blade intended for cutting any material likely to offer much resistance."

"But what form would your Majesty have given to it?"

"It is very simple, — a triangle."

Gilbert undertook to correct his sketch.

"Not so, not that way," said the King. "Give me your quill."

"Sire, here is the quill and the chair," said Gilbert, rising.

"See here, see here!" said King Louis, carried away by his fondness for mechanism. "Bring the steel to a point, so, — like a wedge. Bevel it, thus, — so — and so! Then, I warrant you it will cut off twenty-five heads, one after the other, without a rebuff from one of them."

He had hardly uttered these words when a piercing cry — a cry of fright, almost of despair — sounded just above his head. He turned quickly and saw the Queen, pale, distracted, reeling, as she fell fainting into Gilbert's arms.

Urged by curiosity, like the others, she had approached the table, and was leaning on the King's chair, looking over his shoulder, at the very instant when he added his correction to the sketch. She instantly recognized the

hideous machine, of which Cagliostro had made her see the image, twenty years before, at the Château de Taverney.

At this sight she had only strength enough to scream; and then, as if life had already abandoned her, — by the fatal operation of the machine itself, — she fell, as already related, into the arms of Gilbert.

NOTE. — The original of the two Guillotine songs is here appended.

SONG FIRST.

Guillotin,
Médecin
Politique,
Imagine, un beau matin,
Que pendre est inhumain,
Et peu patriotique.

Aussitôt
Il lui faut
Un supplice,
Qui, sans corde ni poteau,
Supprime du bourreau
L'office.

C'est en vain que l'on publie
Que c'est pure jalousie
D'un suppôt
u tripot
D'Hippocrate,
Qui du tuer impunément,
Même exclusivement,
Se flatte.

Le Romain
Guillotin,
Qui s'apprête,
Consulte gens du métier,
Barnave et Chapelier,
Même le coupe-tête ;

Et sa main
Fait soudain
La machine,
Que simplement nous tûra,
Et que l'on nommera :
Guillotine.

SONG SECOND.

Monsieur Guillotin,
Ce grand médecin,
Que l'amour du prochain
Occupe sans fin,
S'avance soudain,
Prend la parole enfin,
Et, d'un air bénin,
Il propose
Peu de chose,
Qu'il expose
En peu de mots ;
Mais l'emphase
De sa phrase
Obtient les bravos
De cinq ou six sots.

" Messieurs, dans votre sagesse,
Si vous avez décrété,
Pour toute humaine faiblesse,
La loi de l'égalité,
Pour peu qu'on daigne m'entendre,
On sera bien convaincu,
Que, s'il est cruel de pendre,
Il est dur d'être pendu.

" Comment donc faire,
Quand un honnête citoyen,
Dans un mouvement de colère,
Assassinera son prochain ?
Comment donc faire ?
En rêvant à la sourdine,
Pour vous tirer d'embarras,
J'ai fait une machine,
Qui met les têtes à bas !

" C'est un coup que l'on reçoit,
Avant qu'on s'en doute ;
À peine on s'en aperçoit,
Car on n'y voit goutte ;
Un certain ressort caché,
Tout à coup étant lâché,
Fait tomber!
Ber! ber!
Fait sauter!
Ter! ter!
Fait tomber;
Fait sauter;
Fait voler
La tête !
C'est bien plus honnête ! "

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE PHYSICIAN FOR THE BODY AND THE PHYSICIAN FOR THE SOUL.

One can readily understand that such an occurrence inevitably interrupted the soirée.

Although nobody could assign any cause for the Queen's swoon, the fact remained, that as soon as she had looked at the design drawn by Gilbert, and retouched by the King, the Queen fainted.

When this was known throughout the room, all retired, except those who belonged to the household, or were among the special friends of the royal family.

Gilbert gave his first attention to the Queen. Madame Lamballe would not consent to have her removed to the royal apartments. Indeed this would have been difficult, as Madame Lamballe lived in the Floral Pavilion, while the Queen occupied the Marsan Pavilion, and it would have been necessary to carry the lifeless body the whole length of the palace.

The royal invalid was consequently placed on a lounge in the bedroom of the Princess, who — having divined, with the intuition peculiar to women, that there was something mysterious and dark concealed beneath this unexpected event — sent everybody away, even the King, and stood at the foot of the couch, with a tender but anxious mien, awaiting the moment when, thanks to Gilbert's remedies, the Queen should recover her senses.

Now and then the Princess asked the Doctor a question; but he was powerless to hasten the Queen's recovery, and could only tranquillize her friend with commonplace assurances.

For some time the shock to the poor Queen's nervous system was so intense that the application of smelling-salts to her nose and of vinegar to her temples was insufficient to restore her to life; but at last a slight cramp in the extremities indicated a return to sensibility. She moved her head slowly from right to left, as if waking from a painful dream. Then she heaved a sigh, and reopened her eyes.

It was evident that life had returned before reason. For some seconds she looked about the room, with that vague expression belonging to one who neither knows where she is nor what has happened; but presently a light tremor ran through her body. Then she uttered a faint cry, and placed her hand over her eyes, as if to dispel some horrible illusion.

Memory had reawakened. The crisis was past.

Gilbert could not conceal from himself that the accident had some moral cause. He knew how little effect medicine has in such phenomenal cases, and he prepared to withdraw; but at his first backward step, as if by some interior sense she had guessed his intention, the Queen put out her hand and grasped his arm, and said, with a voice as nervous as the gesture which accompanied it, "Remain!"

Gilbert paused, much astonished. He was not ignorant of the Queen's want of sympathy with himself; albeit, on the other side, he had before remarked the strange and almost magnetic influence which he exercised over her.

"I am at the Queen's orders," he said; "but I think

it would be well to calm the anxiety of the King, and of the other friends who remain in the drawing-room, and if your Majesty will permit — "

"Thérèse," said the Queen, addressing Madame Lamballe, "go and tell the King that I am myself again; and then see that I am not interrupted, for I must talk with Doctor Gilbert."

The Princess obeyed, with that passive amiability which was the dominant trait in her character, and even in her physiognomy.

Leaning on her elbow the Queen followed the Princess with her eyes, and waited till there was time to fulfil her errand. Then, seeing how effectually that mission was accomplished, — thanks to the vigilance of the Princess, — the Queen felt at liberty to converse at her leisure with the Doctor; so she turned toward him, fixing her glance upon his face.

"Doctor," she demanded, "are you not astonished that accident constantly brings you face to face with me, in the physical and moral crises of my life?"

"Alas, Madame! I do not know whether I ought to be thankful or regretful over such accidents."

"Why so, Monsieur?"

"Because I read in the depths of your heart that it is neither to your desire nor your will that I owe this honorable contact."

"I said *accident!* You know that I am frank. Under the trying circumstances which have recently brought us together, you have shown genuine devotion. I do not forget it, and I thank you for it."

Gilbert bowed. The Queen noted the movement of his face, as well as of his body. "I also am a physiognomist," she said. "Do you know that you have answered me without speaking a word?"

"Madame, I should be in despair if my silence were less respectful than my speech."

"You were saying to yourself, that I had thanked you, because that was the regular thing for me to do, but that we had better change the subject."

"I at least showed my wish that her Majesty should put my devotion to the proof, and permit me to manifest it in some more efficacious manner than I have been able to do so far; and perhaps this sort of wistful impatience is what the Queen noticed in my countenance."

"Monsieur Gilbert," she said, looking steadfastly at the Doctor, "you are a superior man, and I wish to make the *amende honorable*. I was formerly prejudiced against you, but those prejudices exist no longer."

"Her Majesty will permit me to thank her from the bottom of my heart, not for the compliment wherewith she deigns to honor me, but for the assurance which she gives me."

"Doctor," replied the Queen, as if what she was about to say was the natural outgrowth of what she had said already, "what do you think of the illness which has just come to me?"

"Madame, I am an exact man, a scientific man. Have the goodness to put your question in a more precise form."

"I ask if you believe my swoon was caused by one of those nervous crises to which we poor women are subjected by the weakness of our organization, or do you suspect that the accident had a more serious cause?"

"I answer your Majesty, that the daughter of Maria Theresa, — that the woman whom I saw so calm and courageous on that terrible October night, — is no ordinary woman, and consequently not moved by one of those accidents which take hold of ordinary women."

"You are quite right, Doctor. — Do you believe at all in presentiments?"

"Science rejects all phenomena which tend to reverse the material and natural order of things, and therefore it sets aside all such facts as give the lie to natural law."

"I should have said, Do you believe in predictions?"

"I believe the Supreme Goodness, for our best good, hides the future behind an impenetrable veil. Some minds, endowed by Nature with great scientific accuracy, may sometime be able, through a study of the past, to lift a corner of the veil, and see dimly, as through a mist, events to come; but these exceptions are rare; for since religion would abolish belief in fatality, and philosophy has set limits to faith, the prophets have lost three quarters of their art. Nevertheless — "

"Well, nevertheless — ?" rejoined the Queen, seeing him lost in thought.

"Nevertheless, Madame," he continued, as if it required an effort to deal with questions which his reason relegated to the domain of skepticism, — "nevertheless, there is a man — "

"A man — ?" repeated the Queen, who followed with interest his halting words.

"There is a man who has confounded, with incontestable facts, all the arguments of my intelligence."

"And that man is — ?"

"I dare not name him to your Majesty."

"That man is your master, is he not, Monsieur Gilbert? This man, all-powerful, immortal, is the divine Cagliostro."

"Madame, my only master, my true master, is Nature. Cagliostro is only my benefactor. Pierced by a ball, which passed through my breast, — rapidly losing my blood, through a wound which, since I have become a

physician, and after twenty years of study, I still regard as incurable, — he healed me in a few days, thanks to a balm, of whose composition I am yet ignorant. Thence arises my gratitude, — I might almost say, admiration."

"And this man has made you predictions which have been accomplished?"

"Strangely and incredibly, Madame! Yes, that man marches forward in the present, with an assurance which compels you to believe in his knowledge of the future."

"So if that man had predicted something about yourself, you would believe his prophecy?"

"I should certainly act as if it might be fulfilled."

"So that if he had predicted for you a premature death, terrible and disgraceful, you would prepare yourself for that death?"

"After everything else, Madame, — after having tried to escape, by all accessible means."

"Escape? No, Doctor, no! I see plainly that I am condemned. This Revolution is a maelstrom which will engulf the throne. The populace is a lion which will devour me."

"Ah, Madame! The lion, which you dread, you can compel to lie down at your feet, like a lamb."

"Have you not seen the populace at Versailles?"

"Have *you* not seen the populace at the *Tuileries?* They make an ocean, Madame, which beats incessantly upon, and threatens to extirpate, the rock which opposes its course, yet caresses the ship which is intrusted to its keeping."

"Doctor, all was long ago at an end between the people and myself. They hate me, and I do not understand them."

"Because you do not know each other. Cease to be a Queen to the people, and become a mother. Forget that

you are the daughter of Maria Theresa, our old enemy. Forget that you are the sister of Joseph the Second, our false friend. Be a Frenchwoman, and you will hear the voices of the people uplifted to bless you, and you will see the arms of the people extended to caress you."

Marie Antoinette shrugged her shoulders. "Yes, I know them! They blessed yesterday. They caress to-day. To-morrow they will throttle those whom they have blessed and caressed."

"Because they feel that there is in such unfortunates some resistance to the popular will, that hatred is returned for love."

"Do they know what they love and what they hate? The populace becomes an element of destruction, like wind, water, and fire, yet with all the caprices of a woman."

"Because you only see the shore, Madame, as the visitor on the cliffs sees the ocean. Advancing and retreating, without any apparent motive, it breaks in foam at your feet, and enwraps you in moans which you mistake for roars. But this is not the way you ought to consider it. You should regard the ocean as moved by the spirit of the Lord who rules the great waters. You should see the ocean as God sees it, marching on in unity, yet breaking through whatever obstacle stands in its way. You are Queen of the French, not merely of France, Madame; yet you ignore what is taking place in France at this very hour. Raise your veil, Madame, instead of lowering it, and you will admire, instead of fear the people."

"What then shall I see, — so fine, so magnificent, so splendid?"

"You will see a new world born amidst the ruins of the old. You will see the cradle of France, floating like the bulrush ark of Moses, but on a stream much bigger

than the Nile, than the Mediterranean, or even the ocean. God protect thee, oh cradle, God guard thee, oh France!"

Though so little of an enthusiast, Gilbert lifted his eyes and arms towards Heaven. The Queen regarded him with surprise. She could not understand him.

"And whither will this cradle float?" she asked. "To the National Assembly, that convention of disputants, of destroyers, of levellers? Is old France to guide the new? Unhappy mother, for so beautiful a child!"

"No, Madame! but wherever that cradle may find a resting-place, one day or another, — to-day, perhaps to-morrow, — men will call that unknown land their Nation; and the babe will find a vigorous nurse, a nourisher of strong people, — Liberty!"

"Grand words, which abuse has killed, — Nation and Liberty."

"No, Madame, not only grand words, but grand ideas, grand facts. Look at France, at a moment when she is already bruised, when nothing is as yet reconstructed; when she has no regular municipalities, and hardly departments; when she has no laws, and everybody is a law unto himself. See her cross, with steadfast eye and assured step, the passage which leads from the old to the new, that narrow bridge across the abyss. See that bridge, — slender as that which Mohammed saw leading into Paradise, — which France traverses without swerving. Whither goeth that ancient France? Into the unity of a common country. All that was heretofore believed to be difficult, painful, insurmountable, has become not only possible, but easy. Our loosely bound union of provinces was but a sheaf of prejudices, a bundle of opposing interests, of individual notions. Nothing could prevail, it was believed, against the twenty-five or

thirty nationalities, which repelled the one general nationality. Would old Languedoc, old Toulouse, old Brittany, consent to make themselves part of Normandy, Burgundy, or Dauphiny? No, Madame; but all together they are willing to make France. Why were they so obstinate about their rights, their privileges, their independent legislation? Because they had no common country, no Nation. Now, as I have told you, Madame, National Unity has appeared to them. Somewhat far in the future, it may be, but still they have seen it, — the fruitful and immortal mother, calling to her arms her isolated and lost children. She who calls them is their common mother. In their humility they have called themselves Languedocians, Provençals, Bretons, Normans, Burgundians, Dauphinese; but they were mistaken, for they are all French, they are part of France."

"But according to you, Doctor," said the Queen, with a touch of irony, "France, this ancient France, — the eldest daughter of the Church, as the popes have called her since the Ninth Century, — never existed till yesterday."

"That is precisely wherein lies the miracle, Madame. There was *a France*, but now there are *the French;* and not only are they French, but they are brothers, brothers who grasp each other by the hand. My God, Madame, men are not so bad as your world may think. They tend towards sociability. All your unnatural inventions have failed to keep them entirely apart, — your interior custom-houses, your innumerable tollgates, your ferries on the rivers, your turnpikes on the highways, your diverse local laws, your differing regulations, weights, and measures, your provincial rivalries, in towns, cities, and hamlets. Some fine day a trembling of the earth will shake the throne, will overturn ancient walls, will destroy all obstacles. Men will then look at each other in

the face of Heaven, — basking in the peaceful and happy light of that sunshine which not only fertilizes the earth but the heart. Fraternity will hasten a holy harvest. Enemies, astonished at the hatred which has so long agitated them, will advance, not against one another, but towards one another, with open arms, not filled with weapons; and this will be done naturally, not officially, or by command. Under the flood-tide, rivers and mountains will disappear. Geography will be no more. The universal hymn, which thirty millions of French people chant, will be in these words:

Praise God who hath made us a Nation!

and there will be many accents, but one tongue."

"What are you coming to, Doctor? Do you hope to reassure me by a vision of such a general federation, of thirty millions of rebels against their King and Queen?"

"Ah Madame, undeceive yourself!" cried Gilbert. "It is not the people who rebel against King and Queen. It is King and Queen who are in rebellion against the people, — rulers who continue to talk about *privileges* and *royalty*, when all around them the people are talking of fraternity and duty. In your mind's eye glance at some popular feast, and you will almost always see an altar, in the middle of a vast plain, or on some hillock, — an altar pure as Abel's; and on that altar you will see a little child, which all the feasters have adopted. Dowered with the vows, the gifts, the tears of all, it becomes the child of all, — the child of a regiment of hearts. Madame, France — the France of yesterday, of which I speak — is the infant on the altar. Only around that altar are no longer grouped villages and cities, but peoples and nations. France is the Christ born in a manger, amidst the lowly, for the salvation of a world. Peoples shall

rejoice in this birth. Kings shall bend the knee and bring their tributes, like the three from the far East, who came to the stable in Bethlehem. Italy, Poland, Ireland, and Spain look to this infant, born yesterday, who yet prophesies their future. With tear-filled eyes they stretch forth their enchained hands, and exclaim: 'France, France, in thee are we free!' — Madame, Madame," continued Gilbert, appealingly, "it is not yet too late. Take this infant on the altar, and be you its mother!"

"Doctor, you forget that I have other children, the offspring of my life, and that in doing what you suggest, I should be disinheriting them for a stranger."

"If it be so, Madame," replied Gilbert, with deep sorrow, "wrap your children in the war-mantle of Maria Theresa, and take them outside of France; for you say truly, the people will devour you, and your babes with you. Only there is no time to be lost. Hasten, Madame, hasten!"

"And you do not oppose our departure, Monsieur?"

"Far from it! When I learn your real intentions, I will aid you, Madame."

"This falls out marvellously well," said the Queen, "for there is a gentleman already at work for us, devoted until death."

"Ah, Madame!" exclaimed Gilbert, with terror, "it cannot be the Marquis de Favras of whom you speak?"

"Who has told his name? Who has betrayed our project?"

"Oh Madame, be on your guard. A fatal prediction pursues him also."

"And by the same prophet?"

"Even so!"

"And according to that prophet, what fate awaits Favras?"

"A premature death, disgraceful and terrible, — like the one you spoke of just now!"

"You say well, there is no time to lose, if we would disappoint this prophet of evil."

"You mean to notify Favras that you accept his help?"

"At this very instant he is being notified, Monsieur Gilbert, and I await his reply."

Affrighted by the events in which he suddenly found himself embroiled, Gilbert passed his hand over his forehead, as if to gain some light. At that moment Madame Lamballe entered, and whispered two words in the Queen's ear.

"Let him come in! Let him come in!" cried the Queen. "The Doctor knows all. — Doctor, this is Vicomte Isidore de Charny, who brings me a response from the Marquis de Favras. By to-morrow the Queen will have quitted Paris. The day after, we shall be outside of France. Come, Monsieur de Charny, come. — Great God! — What is the matter? — Why are you so pale?"

"The Princess says I may speak before Doctor Gilbert — ?" said Isidore.

"And that is true! Yes, yes, — speak! You have seen Favras? He is ready? We accept his offer! We will leave Paris, leave France."

"The Marquis has been arrested within the hour, on the Rue Beaurepaire, and taken to the royal prison of the Châtelet."

The Queen's glance met Gilbert's. Hers was luminous, desperate, wrathful. All the strength of Marie Antoinette seemed concentrated in that look.

Gilbert approached her, and said, with an accent of profound pity: "Madame, if I can be of any service to you,

dispose of me. My intelligence, my devotion, my life, are at your feet."

The Queen raised her eyes slowly towards the Doctor and said calmly, in a resigned tone: "Monsieur Gilbert, you who are so wise, you who witnessed the experiment this morning, is it your opinion that death by this hideous machine will be as easy as its inventor claims?"

Gilbert sighed, and covered his eyes with his hand.

At that moment *Monsieur*, who knew all he wished to know, — for the news of the arrest of Favras had spread over the palace in a few seconds, — *Monsieur* ordered his carriage in all haste, and was going out without bothering himself to inquire about the Queen's health, and almost without taking leave of the King; but Louis Sixteenth barred his passage, saying: "My brother, you are not in such urgent haste to reach the Luxembourg that you have no time to give me a little counsel, I suppose? In your opinion, what ought I to do?"

"You ask what I would do, if I were in your place?"

"Yes!"

"I should abandon Favras, and swear fidelity to the Constitution."

"How could you swear fidelity to a Constitution not yet completed?"

"All the more reason, my brother," replied *Monsieur*, with that false and indirect look, which shared the serpentine ways of his heart, "all the more reason why you would not feel obliged afterwards to keep your oath."

The King remained an instant in thought. Then he said: "This will not interfere with my writing to Bouillé that our plan still holds good, but is postponed. This delay will give Charny time to go carefully over the route we ought to take."

CHAPTER XLIV.

PROVENCE DISAVOWS FAVRAS AND THE KING SWEARS TO SUPPORT THE CONSTITUTION.

THE day after the arrest of Favras, the following singular circular was scattered throughout Paris :

The Marquis de Favras, living in Royal Square, was arrested, with Madame his wife, during the night of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth, on account of a plot which had for its purpose the enlistment of thirty thousand men, to assassinate M. de Lafayette and the Mayor of the City, and also to deprive us of the means of subsistence.

Monsieur, the King's brother, was at the head of the affair.

Signed: BARAUZ.

One can understand the commotion which such a circular would create in the Paris of 1789 and 1790, so easily roused. A lighted train of powder could not have produced a more rapid flame, than that set afoot by this incendiary paper. It was at once in everybody's hands ; and two hours later, everybody knew it by heart.

On the evening of the twenty-sixth, the day after Christmas, the members of the City Government were assembled in council at the Hôtel de Ville, or City Hall, reading the report rendered by the Investigating Committee, when the usher unexpectedly announced that *Monsieur* requested admission.

" Monsieur ! " repeated the worthy Bailly, who presided at the meeting, " which Monsieur ? "

" *Monsieur*, the King's brother," replied the usher.

At these words the members looked at one another, for since yesterday the name of *Monsieur* had been in everybody's mouth; but they also arose respectfully in their places.

Bailly threw an inquiring glance around the circle, and as the mute responses, which he read in the eyes of his colleagues, seemed to him unanimous, he said: "Go tell *Monsieur* that we are ready to receive him, though very much astonished at the honor he does us."

A few seconds later *Monsieur* was introduced.

He was alone. His face was pale. His step, ordinarily not very steadfast, was to-night more vacillating than usual.

Happily for the Prince, the members of the Common Council sat around a large semicircular table, shaped like a horseshoe, and near each seat were lights, to aid the Councillors in their work; whereas the Prince stood facing them, from the enclosure of the horseshoe, which was left in comparative obscurity.

This circumstance did not escape *Monsieur's* notice, and tended to give him confidence. He looked timidly at the large assemblage, wherein he at least saw some respect, in default of sympathy, and spoke with a trembling voice, which grew stronger as he went on. This speech is reproduced from the historic records, without the alteration of a syllable.

"Gentlemen, the desire to repel a calumny has brought me into your midst. Monsieur de Favras was arrested night before last, by order of your Investigating Committee; and to-day the report is abroad that *I* am entangled with him."

Smiles lighted the faces of his auditors, and the first part of his address was received with chuckles.

He continued: "In my character as a citizen of Paris

I think it a duty to myself to inform you of the only relations which I have ever sustained towards Favras."

As one may easily imagine, the attention of the members of the Common Council redoubled. They were glad to hear from *Monsieur's* own mouth, whether they believed him or not, what the relations were between Favras and his Royal Highness.

He continued in these terms: "In 1772 the Marquis de Favras enlisted in my Swiss Guards, which he left in 1775. Since that date I have not spoken with him."

A murmur of incredulity passed through the audience; but it was checked by a look from Bailly, and *Monsieur* was left in doubt whether it was a murmur of approbation or disapprobation.

He resumed: "Deprived, during several months, of the enjoyment of my revenues, and anxious about some heavy payments which I must make in January, I wished to be able to meet these agreements, without being indebted to the public treasury. I therefore resolved to obtain a loan. Favras had been hereabouts a fortnight or so, and he was pointed out, by Monsieur de la Châtre, as a man able to procure such a loan, from a certain Genoese banker. Consequently I signed an obligation for two millions, the amount necessary for meeting my engagements at the commencement of the year, and for supporting my regular establishment. This affair was purely financial, and I charged my steward to see to it. I have not seen Favras. I have not written him, or held any communication with him. What he has done in other matters is utterly beyond my knowledge."

A contemptuous laugh, which came from some of his audience, proved that everybody was not disposed to credit, even on his own word, the Prince's singular assertion, — that without seeing the agent, especially when

that agent was one of his old officers, Provence had intrusted to him negotiations for two millions of francs.

Monsieur blushed. Anxious to get out of the false position in which he found himself, he hastily continued: "Well, I learned yesterday, gentlemen, that there was being profusely distributed, throughout the capital, a paper which reads thus."

Thereupon he read the bulletin just now cited, — a very useless proceeding, as everybody had the circular, either in his hand or his head.

At the last words, "*Monsieur*, the King's brother, was at the head of the affair," all the members of the Common Council bowed. Did the members mean that they were of the same mind as the circular; or did they simply mean that they were not ignorant of the accusation?

Monsieur persevered: "You would hardly expect me, I suppose, to so far forget my rank as to condescend to justify myself from such a charge; but at a time when the most absurd calumny may easily lead you to confound your best citizens with enemies of the Revolution, I have concluded, gentlemen, that it is due to the King, to you, and to myself, to enter into all the details to which you have listened, in order that public opinion may not remain unsettled. Since the day when, in the Second Assembly of the Notables, I declared myself as to the fundamental question, which as yet divided many minds, I have not ceased to believe the times ripe for a grand Revolution; whereof the King, by reason of his motives, his virtues, and his supreme rank, ought to be the chief, for the Revolution could not be advantageous to the nation, without being equally so to the monarch, — to the end that the royal authority should be the safeguard of national liberty, as national liberty is the basis of royal authority."

Although the sense of this phrase was not very clear, the habit of applauding certain combinations of words led the hearers to applaud these.

Thereby encouraged, *Monsieur* raised his voice, and added, addressing the assemblage with more assurance: "Who can cite one action or speech of mine, which contradicts the principles I have just uttered? Who can show, under any circumstances in which I have been placed, that I have ceased to make the welfare of the King and of the people the sole object of my thoughts and vows? Till then, I have the right to be believed. I have never changed my sentiments or my principles, and I never shall change them."

Novelist though the writer may be, he has encroached upon history, by giving this spun-out speech of his Royal Highness in its full extent. It is well that even novel-readers should know what was the condition of a Prince at the age of thirty-five, who, at sixty, wished to grant us the charter, graced with its Article Fourteen.

As we wish to be no more unjust to Bailly than to his Royal Highness, we quote the response of the Mayor of Paris, as we have quoted *Monsieur's* speech.

Bailly said: "It is a great satisfaction for the representatives of the Parisian community, to see among them the brother of their cherished King, a King who is the restorer of French liberty. August brothers, they are united by the same sentiments! *Monsieur* has shown himself the first citizen of the kingdom, by voting, in the Second Assembly of Notables, for the admission of the Third Estate to equal legislative rights. He was then almost alone in his opinion, supported by a very small number of the friends of the people; but he adds the dignity of reason to all his other titles to national respect. *Monsieur* is therefore the chief author

of the doctrine of civil equality. Of this he gives a new example to-day, by coming voluntarily to mingle with the representatives of the people, where he wishes to be appreciated only through his patriotic opinions. These opinions are involved in the explanation which *Monsieur* has given the meeting. The Prince confronts public opinion. As a citizen, he sets a value on the judgment of his fellow-citizens; and, in the name of this assemblage, I offer *Monsieur* the tribute of respect and gratitude due to such sentiments, to the honor of his visit, and above all to the value which he attaches to the opinions of free men."

As *Monsieur* well understood, despite the eulogy on his conduct pronounced by Bailly, that conduct might be differently regarded by others. He however responded, with that paternal air which he so well knew how to assume, in situations where it might be useful: "The duty which I have discharged is painful to a virtuous heart; but I am well repaid by the sentiments which this assemblage has manifested towards me, and my mouth need only open once more, to demand pardon for those who have wronged me."

One can see that *Monsieur* pledged himself to nothing, nor did he ask anything definite of the assemblage. For whom did he crave pardon? Certainly not for Favras, because nobody really knew that Favras was culpable. Besides, Favras had not wronged *Monsieur*.

No! *Monsieur* only asked mercy for the anonymous author of the accusing circular; but this author, being unknown, had no need of municipal favor.

Historians so often pass over the crimes of princes without notice, that it is left for novelists to do the historian's office in such a case, at the risk of making a romance, as in this chapter, as tiresome as history. It

goes without saying, that when we talk of blind historians and stupid histories, we take it for granted that everybody will know to what historians and histories we allude.

Monsieur had now put into practice, on his own behalf, the advice which he gave his brother Louis. He had renounced Favras; and, as may be seen by the eulogium bestowed by the worthy Bailly, this move proved a complete success.

It was doubtless in consideration of this that Louis Sixteenth decided, on his part, to swear fidelity to the Constitution.

As the usher of the Common Council had announced to the Mayor the advent of *Monsieur*, so, on one fine morning, another usher announced to the President of the National Assembly, who that day happened to be Bureaux de Puzy, that the King, with three or four officers and two cabinet ministers, was in waiting at the door of the Riding School (which had at last been put into proper trim for the legislative sessions), as *Monsieur* had not long before knocked at the door of the Hôtel de Ville.

The representatives of the people looked up in amazement. What could the King have to say, who had so long kept away from them?

Louis the Sixteenth was invited to enter, and the President ceded to him the chair.

The hall resounded with acclamations. Apart from such men as Pétion, Camille Desmoulins, and Marat, all France was at that time Royalistic, or believed itself so.

The King had been moved to come and felicitate the Assembly on its efforts. He wished to praise the admirable division of France into geographical departments;

but above all, what he could no longer delay expressing, — what filled him to repletion, — was his ardent love for the Constitution.

The beginning of his speech (let us not forget that nobody — White or Black, Royalist or Constitutionalist, Aristocrat or Patriot — knew what the King was driving at!) caused some uneasiness; the middle of it disposed the general mind to gratitude; but the termination — oh, that termination! — roused the Assembly to enthusiasm.

The King could not resist his desire to express his love for the Little Constitution of 1791, which was not yet born. What would he think of it when completely unveiled to the light of day? There could be no greater love than the King would cherish for it.

All this was sheer fanaticism!

We do not quote the King's entire discourse. Pest! It was six pages long. It is quite enough to have given entire *Monsieur's* discourse, which was only one page, and which yet seemed terribly tedious.

However, the King's speech did not seem prolix to the Assembly, which melted into tears as it listened.

When we say the members wept, this is no metaphor. Barnave wept. Lameth wept. Duport wept. Mirabeau wept. Barrère wept. There was a veritable deluge; but where was the Ark?

The Assembly lost its head. The members arose in a body. The tribunes arose. Every man extended his hand, and took an oath of fidelity to the Constitution, — the Constitution which did not yet exist.

The King went out; but the King and the Assembly could not separate like that. The members marched out behind him. They gathered about him, and formed themselves into an escort.

When they reached the Tuileries, the Queen welcomed them.

The Queen! She was no enthusiast, — she, the severely candid daughter of Maria Theresa! She did not weep, the dignified sister of Leopold; but she presented her little son to the Deputies of the Nation and said: "Gentlemen, I share the King's sentiments. I, also, cherish in my heart the affectionate demonstration inspired by his tender regard for the people. — Here is my son! I shall forget nothing which will teach him, at the proper time, to imitate the virtues of the best of fathers, to respect public liberty, and to maintain the laws, which I hope he will be the foremost to sustain."

It was necessary that the unfeigned enthusiasm for such a discourse should not cool. That of the Assembly was already at white heat. It was proposed, on the instant, to take an oath of Constitutional allegiance, which was formulated on the spot. First of all the President repeated the words: "I swear to be faithful to the nation, to the laws, to the King; and to maintain, with all my might, the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the King."

All the Deputies except one raised their hands, each in his turn, and repeated, "I swear it!"

The ten days following this auspicious event — which brought joy to the Assembly, tranquillity to Paris, and peace to France — was spent in feasts, balls, and illuminations. One could hear nothing but Constitutional oaths taken on all sides. People swore everywhere, — on the Place de Grève, at the Hôtel de Ville, in the churches, on the streets, in the public squares. The altars were dressed in patriotic colors. Schools were taken thither, and scholars took the oath, as if they were already men, and knew the value of an oath.

The Deputies commanded a *Te Deum* to be sung, and were present in a body. There at the altar, in the face of God, the oath was again solemnly taken.

Only the King did not go to Notre Dame, and consequently did not take this sacred oath.

His absence was remarked; but everybody was so happy, so confident, so hopeful, that everybody was content with the first excuse that anybody offered for his absence.

"Why were you not at the *Te Deum?* Why did you not swear on the altar of your fathers?" asked the Queen.

"Because, though I am willing to *lie*, Madame, I will not *perjure* myself."

The Queen breathed more freely. Until then, like all the world, she had believed in the good faith of the King.

CHAPTER XLV.

A GENTLEMAN.

THE King's visit to the Assembly took place on February 4, 1790. Twelve days later, on the night of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth of the same month, during the absence of the Governor of the Châtelet, — who had asked and obtained permission, that very day, to go to Soissons, so as to be with his dying mother, — a man presented himself at the door of the prison, bearing an order, signed by the Lieutenant of Police, — an order which authorized the visitor to confer with Monsieur de Favras, without witnesses.

Whether this order was genuine or counterfeit, we dare not say; but at any rate, the sub-director — who was roused from sleep to inspect it — pronounced it good; and notwithstanding the hour was far advanced into the night, he gave permission for the bearer of the order to be introduced into the cell of Favras.

After assuring himself of the faithfulness of the turnkeys inside and the sentinels outside the prison, the sub-director returned to his bed, in order to finish the night so disagreeably interrupted.

The visitor — under pretence of having dropped an important paper, when he drew his order from his pocket-book — took the lamp, and searched all over the floor for it, until the sub-director had regained his chamber.

Then the visitor declared that he must have left this paper on his nightstand at home; but if anybody found

it, he begged it might be returned to him when he went away.

Then, returning the light to the turnkey in waiting, he asked to be conducted to the dungeon where Favras was confined. The jailer opened a door, let the Unknown enter, passed through after him, closed the door, and locked it behind them. He then looked at the Unknown curiously, as if he expected, at any moment, that he might receive from him some important communication.

They descended a dozen steps, and entered a subterranean corridor. There a second door presented itself, which the jailer opened and shut like the first.

The Unknown and his guide now found themselves on a sort of landing-place, having before them another flight of stairs, leading downward. The Unknown here paused, and looked searchingly into the shadows of the dark corridor. When he was sure that the obscurity was as solitary as it was silent, he asked: "You are the turnkey Louis?"

"Yes," responded the jailer.

"A brother from the American Lodge?"

"Yes."

"You were placed here a week ago, by some mysterious agency, in order to accomplish an unknown purpose?"

"Yes."

"Are you ready to do that work?"

"I am ready."

"You are to receive orders from a certain man —?"

"Yes, from the Anointed One."

"How were you to recognize him?"

"By three letters embroidered on his breastplate."

"I am that man, and here are the three letters." At these words the visitor threw back his lace collar; and on his breast he displayed the three embroidered letters,

L. P. D., the influence whereof we have had occasion to note more than once in the course of these narratives.

"Master, I am at your orders," said the jailer, bowing.

"Very well! Open the cell of Favras, and hold yourself in readiness to obey orders."

The jailer bowed without answering, walked on before to light the way, and whispered, as they stopped before a low door, "Here it is."

The Unknown made a sign with his head. The key, introduced into the lock, twice grated, and the door opened.

Although taking the most rigorous measures for the security of the prisoner, even assigning him a cell twenty feet underground, the authorities had him treated with the attention due to his rank. He had a regular bed with white curtains. Near the bed was a table, covered with books, ink, quills, and paper, intended for use in the preparation of his defence. Above them all towered an extinguished lamp. In a corner, on a second table, glittered several toilet utensils, taken from an elegant dressing-case, which bore the Marquis's coat of arms. Against the wall was a small glass, belonging to the same dressing-case.

The prisoner slept soundly. Although the door opened, and the Unknown approached the bedside, — although the jailer placed the second lamp near the first, and then went out again, at a sign from the visitor, — yet neither the noise nor the motion disturbed the prisoner's slumber.

The Unknown for a moment gazed with deep melancholy upon the sleeping man. Then, as if remembering that time was precious, whatever his regret at troubling such sweet repose, he laid his hand on the sleeper's shoulder.

The prisoner started and turned quickly, with eyes

wide open, as is the habit of those who fall asleep in the expectation of being roused by some painful intelligence.

"Be calm, Monsieur," said the Unknown, "it is a friend."

Favras looked at his nocturnal visitor with some suspicion, mingled with astonishment that a friend should be searching for him after midnight, eighteen or twenty feet below the ground. Then, suddenly recalling his thoughts, he said: "Ah! the Baron Zannone? —"

"Myself, dear Marquis!"

Favras glanced smilingly about, and pointed the Baron to a stool, free from both books and clothes. "Be kind enough to sit down!" he said.

"My dear Marquis, I come to propose to you something which does not admit of long discussion. Besides, we have no time to lose."

"What do you propose, Baron? I hope it is not another loan."

"Why so?"

"Because the guaranties which I could give you appear not to be altogether safe —"

"That would not matter with me, Marquis. On the contrary, I am quite ready to offer you a million."

"Me?" laughed Favras.

"Yes, you; but unless you accept certain conditions, I cannot make you this offer."

"Then, as you have already warned me that you are in haste, my dear Baron, come to business at once."

"You know that to-morrow you are to be tried?"

"Yes, I have heard something of the sort," responded the Marquis.

"You know that the judges, before whom you are to appear, are the same who acquitted Augeard and Besenval?"

"Yes."

"You know that neither of them would have been acquitted, but for the all-powerful intervention of the Crown?"

"Yes," responded Favras for the third time, but without showing the least change in his voice.

"You hope, undoubtedly, that the Court will do for you what it did for your predecessors?"

"Those with whom I have had the honor to be connected, in the enterprise which I headed, know what ought to be done in my behalf, Monsieur; and whatever they do will be well done."

"They have already taken their stand in regard to you, Marquis, and I am able to tell you exactly what they have done."

Favras evinced no desire to be thus informed.

Nevertheless the visitor continued: "*Monsieur* went to the Hôtel de Ville, and declared that he hardly knew you; that in 1772 you enlisted in his Swiss Guards; that in 1775 you withdrew from that regiment; and that he had not seen you since that time."

Favras bowed, in token of acquiescence.

"As to the King, not only had he no thought of flight (as he says), but more than that, — on the fourth day of the current month, he went to the National Assembly, and swore his adherence to the Constitution."

A smile passed over the Marquis's lips.

"You doubt me?" asked the Baron.

"I do not say so."

"Thus you see, you cannot rely upon *Monsieur*, you cannot rely upon the King."

"What then, Baron?"

"You will come before your judges —"

"You do me the honor to tell me so."

"You will be condemned — "

"It is probable ! "

"To death ! "

"That is possible ! " and Favras bowed his head, as if ready to receive the blow that should come to him, whatever it might be.

"But," urged the Baron, "do you know by *what* death, my dear Marquis ? "

"Are there two deaths, my dear Baron ? "

"Oh, there are six. There is impalement, quartering, the wheel, pressure, the gallows, decapitation ; or, rather, a week ago there were all these methods of death. To-day, as you say, there is only one, — the gibbet."

"The gibbet ? "

"Yes. The National Assembly, after having declared all men equal before the law, has now proclaimed equality in death. Nobles and commons are to go out of the world by the same door, — they will be hanged ! "

"Ah — ah ! " said Favras.

"Condemned to death, you will hang, — a sorrowful ending, even for one who does not fear death, — I am sure of that, — but shrinks from the gallows."

"So, Monsieur ! Have you come hither solely to tell me all this good news, or have you something still better in store ? "

"I have come to tell you that all is ready for your escape, — to say that in ten minutes, if you wish, you may be outside your prison, and in twenty-four hours, outside of France."

Favras reflected an instant, — not, however, that the Baron's offer appeared to cause him any emotion. Then he said : "Does this offer come from the King or his Royal Highness ? "

"No, it comes from myself."

Favras looked at the Baron. "From you? And why from you?"

"Because of my interest in you, Marquis."

"What interest can you take in me, having only met me twice before?"

"No need to see a man twice in order to know him. True gentlemen are rare, and I wish to save *one*, — I do not say to France, merely, but to humanity."

"You have no other reason?"

"This, Monsieur, that having negotiated with you this loan of two millions, — and you having disbursed the money, — I really furnished you the means of going forward in the plot now unearthed; and consequently I contributed involuntarily to your death."

Favras smiled. "If you have committed no other crime, sleep in peace, for I absolve you."

"How?" cried the Baron, "you refuse to flee?"

Favras extended his hand. "I thank you from the depths of my heart; I thank you, in the name of my wife and my children; but I refuse."

"Perhaps you think our plans badly laid, and fear lest an attempted escape should aggravate your case?"

"I believe, Monsieur, that you are a prudent man, and — I may add — adventurous, when you come in person to propose this escape; but I repeat to you, I will not flee."

"Perhaps you fear, being compelled to quit France, that you will leave your wife and children in misery? I have provided against this, Monsieur, and can offer you this wallet, in which are a hundred thousand francs in banknotes."

Favras looked at the Baron with a species of admiration. Then he said, with singular serenity, and shaking his head: "This astonishes you, Monsieur, and you ask

yourself, without daring to ask me, whence arises this strange resolution to go to the end, and die, if need be, whatever the manner of death."

"I own it!"

"Well, I will tell you. I am a Royalist, but not after the manner of those who emigrate to foreign lands, or play the hypocrite in Paris. My opinion is not based on calculation or interest. It is a worship, a creed, a religion. I must look on kings as I look on an archbishop or a pope, — as the visible representatives of that religion whereof I have spoken. If I flee, it may be thought that the King or *Monsieur* made me do so, and is therefore my accomplice; and *Monsieur*, who has denied me at the tribune, and the King, who feigns not to know me, would be destroyed by a blow which strikes in the dark. Religions fail, when there are no more martyrs. Well, I will revive *my* religion, by dying for it. This will be a reproach to the past, an encouragement to the future."

"But think of the manner of the death which awaits you!"

"The more infamous the death, the more meritorious the sacrifice. The Messiah died on a cross, between two thieves."

"I should understand you, Marquis," said the Baron, "if your death would do for Royalism, what Christ's death did for the world; but such are the sins of kings, that I fear they will not only require the cleansing blood of a gentleman, a nobleman, but that even a king's blood will not suffice for their justification."

"That will be as it pleases God, Monsieur; but in this age of irresolution and doubt, when so many fail in their duty, I can die with the consolation of having done mine."

"Oh no, Monsieur," said the Baron, with an air of

impatience, "you can die simply with regret at being uselessly sacrificed."

"When the disarmed soldier will not flee, when he awaits the enemy, when he braves death, when he meets it, he knows perfectly well that his death is useless; but he also knows that desertion would be shameful, and he prefers to die!"

"I cannot stay to argue," said the Baron, drawing out his watch, which pointed to three in the morning. "We have yet an hour. I will sit by the table, and read half an hour. Meanwhile, think it over. In half an hour you can give me a definite answer."

Taking a chair he seated himself before the table, with his back to the prisoner, opened a book, and began to read.

"Good-night, Monsieur!" said Favras, as he turned his face to the wall, doubtless to think without distraction.

The reader looked at his watch two or three times, more impatient than the prisoner. When the half-hour had rolled away, he arose and approached the bed; but he waited in vain, for Favras did not turn. Bending over him the Baron perceived, by his regular breathing, that the prisoner was really asleep.

"Well, I am defeated," he said to himself; "but judgment is not yet pronounced. Perhaps he still hopes!"

Not wishing to awake the unfortunate man, for whom a sleep so long and so profound was in store, the Baron took a quill, and wrote, on a sheet of blank paper, the following note:

When the sentence is pronounced, when the Marquis de Favras is condemned to death, when he has no longer any hope, either from judges, from *Monsieur*, or from the King, — if he changes his mind, he has only to appeal to the turnkey

Louis, and say *I have decided to flee!* and means will be found to favor his flight.

Even when the Marquis is in the fatal death-cart, when he makes his public confession in front of Notre Dame Cathedral, when he crosses, with bare feet and corded hands, the short space which separates the vestibule of the Hôtel de Ville — where he will enter to make his dying will — from the gibbet erected in the Place de Grève, the Marquis has only to say, in a loud voice, *I wish to be saved!* and he shall be saved.

CAGLIOSTRO.

Then the visitor took the lamp and again approached the bed, to see if the prisoner had not awakened. Finding him still asleep, he went — though not without returning several times — to the door of the cell, behind which the turnkey Louis stood, upright and immovable, with that placid resignation which belongs to those adepts who are ready for all sacrifices, in order to attain the accomplishment of any grand work which they have undertaken.

"Well, master," he asked, "what am I to do?"

"Remain in the prison, and do whatever Monsieur de Favras commands."

The turnkey bowed, took the lamp from Cagliostro's hands, and walked respectfully before him, like a lackey who lights his master's way.

END OF VOL. I.

LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH CAGLIOSTRO'S PREDICTION IS FULFILLED.

THE same day, an hour after noon, a clerk of the Châtelet Court descended, with four armed men, into the dungeon of Favras, and summoned him to appear before his judges.

During the night Favras had been warned of this by Cagliostro; and at about nine o'clock in the forenoon, the sub-director of the prison had notified him of the same likelihood.

The general proceedings had begun at half-past nine, and as late as three o'clock in the afternoon the trial still continued.

Ever since nine the hall had been filled with gossips, who packed themselves in, to see the man against whom sentence was to be pronounced. We use these last words advisedly, because no one doubted the condemnation of the accused.

In political conspiracies there are some unfortunates whose sacrifice is a foregone conclusion. It is felt that there must be expiatory victims; and these are fated to be those victims.

Forty judges were seated in a raised circle at the upper end of the hall, the President under a canopy. Behind him was a painting of Jesus Crucified; while opposite, at the other end of the hall, was a portrait of the King.

A row of National Grenadiers surrounded the place of trial, both inside and outside. The door was guarded by four men.

At quarter-past three the judges gave orders for the accused to be brought in. A detachment of a dozen grenadiers — who, with guns at their sides, awaited this order, in the middle of the hall — at once marched out. All heads, even those of the judges, were turned towards the door at which Favras must enter.

At the end of ten minutes or so four grenadiers reappeared. Behind them walked the Marquis de Favras. The other eight grenadiers followed him.

The prisoner entered amidst one of those oppressive pauses, which two thousand people, crowded into the same apartment, are sure to make, when the man or the thing appears which is the object of general expectation.

His face was calm. His toilet had been made with great care. He wore a silk coat, broidered with bright gray, a white satin waistcoat, small-clothes of the same material as his coat, silk stockings, and buckled shoes; and at his buttonhole hung the cross of Saint Louis.

His hair was dressed with rare nicety, and powdered with white. As it is said by the Two Friends of Liberty, in their History of the Revolution, "not one hair displaced its neighbor."

During the short time which it took for Favras to traverse the interval from the door to the prisoner's dock, everybody's breath seemed suspended.

Several seconds intervened between the arrival of the

accused, and the first words addressed him by the President. At last he made the customary gesture for enforcing silence, — though in this case it was entirely needless, — and asked, with a voice full of emotion: "Who are you?"

"I am an accused prisoner," responded Favras, with great calmness.

"What is your name?"

"Thomas Mahi, Marquis de Favras."

"Whence come you?"

"From Blois."

"What is your business?"

"I am a colonel in the King's service."

"Where do you live?"

"In Royal Square, number twenty-one."

"What is your age?"

"Forty-six years."

"Be seated."

The Marquis obeyed. Not till then, seemingly, did the crowd breathe again; and their respiration sounded like a blast, — a blast of vengeance.

The accused did not shrink when he looked about him, and saw all eyes burning with hate, and so many fists threateningly raised. There was a feeling that some victim must be provided for the populace, from whom Augeard and Besenval had been snatched, and who daily demanded, with great outcries, that the Prince of Lambesq should be hanged, at least in effigy.

Amidst these angry countenances and flaming glances, the accused recognized the calm figure and sympathetic eye of his nocturnal visitor, whom he saluted with an imperceptible gesture, and then continued his survey.

"Accused," said the President, "hold yourself ready to answer questions."

Favras bowed. "I am wholly at your orders, Monsieur President."

Then began a second examination, which the accused sustained as calmly as the first.

Next came the witnesses for the prosecution.

Though Favras refused to save his life by flight, he wished to defend it by argument, and fourteen witnesses had been summoned for the defence; but after the evidence for the prosecution was heard, the President unexpectedly said: "Gentlemen, the arguments are ended."

"Excuse me, Monsieur," said Favras, with his habitual courtesy, "you forget one thing. True, it is of no great importance, but you have forgotten to hear the fourteen witnesses summoned in my behalf."

"This Court has decided," said the President, "that no more witnesses shall be heard."

Something like a cloud passed over the face of the accused, and then lightning shot from his eyes.

"I believed myself on trial before the Châtelet Court of Paris," he said. "I was mistaken. It appears that I am judged by the Spanish Inquisition."

"Remove the accused," commanded the President.

Favras was reconducted to prison. His calmness, courtesy, and courage made a favorable impression on those spectators who came unprejudiced to the court-room; but it must be admitted that the number of such auditors was small. The exit of Favras was accompanied by cries, menaces, and howls.

"No mercy! No mercy!" shouted five or six voices on the way, and these clamors followed him the other side of the prison gates.

Then he said, as if talking to himself: "This comes of conspiring with princes!"

Immediately after the departure of the accused, the judges began their deliberations.

At his usual hour Favras went to bed. Towards one o'clock in the morning somebody came into the cell and roused him. It was the turnkey Louis, who made a pretext of bringing to the prisoner a bottle of bordeaux, which he had not asked for.

"Monsieur," he said, "the judges are at this moment pronouncing your sentence."

"My friend, if it is for this thou hast awakened me, better leave me sleeping."

"No, Marquis, I have awakened you to ask if you have nothing to say to the personage who visited you last night."

"Nothing!"

"Reflect, Monsieur. When judgment is finally pronounced, you will be more carefully guarded; and then, however powerful that personage may be, even his will may be fettered by impossibilities."

"Thanks, my friend; but I have nothing to ask of him, either now or later."

"Then I am sorry I awakened you; but you would have been roused within an hour."

"So in thy opinion," smilingly said Favras, "it is hardly worth my while to fall asleep again?"

"Wait, and judge for yourself."

Indeed, they could already hear a great noise in the upper stories, — doors opening and shutting, and the butt-ends of muskets striking the ground.

"Ah ha!" said Favras, "is all this turmoil for me?"

"They are coming to deliver your sentence to you in person, Monsieur."

"The Devil! Ask Monsieur the Registrar to give me time to get into my breeches."

The jailer went out, and pulled the door to behind him.

Favras drew on his silk hose, his buckled shoes, and his small-clothes, and had so far made his toilet, when the door reopened. He did not think it necessary to further dress himself, but remained as he was. Truly a handsome man, with his head thrown proudly back, his hair half disarranged, his lace shirt open on his breast!

At the moment when the Registrar entered, the Marquis pushed away his shirt-collar from his shoulders, and said to the new-comer: "You see, Monsieur, that I await you in fighting costume;" and he passed his hand over his uncovered neck, ready for the aristocratic sword or the plebeian rope. "Speak, Monsieur, I am all attention."

The Registrar read, or rather mumbled over, the judicial sentence.

The Marquis was condemned to death. He was to make public confession in front of Notre Dame, and then be hanged in Place de Grève.

Favras listened to this reading with the utmost calmness. He did not even frown at the word *hanged*, — a word harsh to a nobleman's ears. Only, after a moment of silence, he looked the Registrar square in the face, and said: "I pity you, for being compelled to condemn a man on such meagre proofs!"

The Registrar avoided an answer. "Monsieur, you know that now there remain to you only the consolations of religion?"

"You are mistaken, Monsieur; there remain to me the consolations of a conscience void of offence."

Upon this Favras saluted the Registrar, who withdrew, having no further duties in that department.

At the door he turned, however, and said to the condemned man: "Do you wish me to send you a confessor?"

"A confessor sent by those who assassinate me? No, Monsieur! I should suspect him. I am willing to deliver my body to you, but I reserve my salvation! I should be glad to see the Curate of Saint Paul's, however."

Two hours later the venerable ecclesiastic whom he had named was in the cell.

CHAPTER II.

PLACE DE GRÈVE.

THESE two hours were well employed, for immediately after the Registrar had gone, two other men entered, with solemn faces, and dressed like executioners. Favras understood that they were the forerunners of death, the advance-guard of the hangman.

"Follow me!" said one of these men.

Favras bowed, in token of assent; but pointing to the rest of his clothes, which lay on a chair, he asked: "Will you not give me time to dress?"

"Take it!" said the same man who had spoken before.

Favras went to the table, whereon were scattered different articles from his dressing-case. With the aid of his little glass, which ornamented the wall, he buttoned the collar of his shirt, bestowed a graceful fold upon his frill, and gave the most aristocratic turn he could to the bow of his cravat. Then he slipped on his vest and coat.

"Ought I to take my hat, gentlemen?" he asked.

"It is useless," replied the same speaker.

Meanwhile the man who had been silent looked at Favras, in a way to attract his attention. It even seemed as if this man made him some incomprehensible sign with his eye, but so rapidly, that the Marquis was left in doubt. Besides, what could this man have to say to him? So the Marquis thought no more about it, but waved his hand to the jailer Louis, with an amicable gesture, and said: "All right, gentlemen! Go ahead! I'm with you."

An usher was in attendance outside the door. He walked first, then Favras; and after them came the two funereal messengers.

This sinister group directed their steps upwards towards the ground floor of the prison.

Between the two wickets a platoon of National Guardsmen were in waiting.

Feeling himself sustained by their presence, the usher then said: "Monsieur, as you are condemned, give me your Saint Louis Cross."

"I supposed I was condemned to death, not degradation," said Favras.

"That 's the order, Monsieur," responded the usher.

Favras detached his cross; but not wishing to deliver it to this legal officer, he placed it in the hands of the sergeant-major, who commanded the platoon of National Guards.

"That is just as well," said the usher, without insisting that the cross should be delivered to himself personally. "Now then, follow me!"

They went up some fifty stairs, and then stopped in front of an oaken door, heavily spiked with iron, — one of those doors which send a shiver through the veins of a condemned man, — one of those doors whereof there are two or three on the road to the sepulchre, behind which he conjectures that something terrible awaits him, though he does not know what.

This door opened. They did not give Favras time to enter, but pushed him inside. Then the door suddenly closed, as if under the impulsion of an iron arm.

Favras saw that he was in the torture-chamber. "Ah, gentlemen," he said, growing slightly pale, "when you take a man into such tight places, — the Devil, you ought to let him know beforehand!"

Hardly had he uttered these words when the two followers threw themselves upon him, tore off his coat and waistcoat, pulled away his cravat, so artistically arranged, and tied his hands behind his back. In fulfilling his part of this duty with his comrade, the same torturer who, as Favras fancied, had previously made a sign to him, whispered in his ear : " Will you be rescued? There is still time ! "

This offer brought a smile to the Marquis's lips, for it reminded him of the greatness of his mission ; but he softly shook his head.

A sort of rack, called a wooden horse, was already prepared, on which they stretched the condemned man. The other torturer approached with his apron full of oaken wedges, and an iron mallet in his hand. Favras extended to this man his handsome leg, still graced by his red-heeled shoe and his silk stocking; but the usher lifted his hand and said : " That is enough ! The Court excuses the condemned from the torture."

" Ah ! It seems that the Court is afraid that I may speak out. None the less am I thankful. I shall march to the gallows on two good legs, and that 's something. Meanwhile, gentlemen, you know I am quite at your disposal."

" You are to spend an hour in this hall," replied the usher.

" If not very amusing, it is at least interesting," said Favras ; and he began to walk about the hall, examining, one after another, certain hideous implements, resembling colossal spiders and gigantic iron scorpions. He felt as if at any given moment, by command of a fatal voice, all these instruments might become animate, and bite cruelly.

There were patterns of torture, of all ages, — from the time of Philip Augustus to the reign of Louis Sixteenth.

There were the hooks, wherewith they lacerated Jews in the Thirteenth Century. There were the wheels, whereon they crushed Protestants in the Seventeenth.

Favras stopped before each trophy, and demanded the name of each implement. This coolness astonished even the torturers themselves, — fellows not easily astonished, as everybody knows; and one of them asked Favras: "With what object do you ask these questions?"

The prisoner regarded him with a jesting air, common with gentlemen. "Well, Monsieur, it is possible that I may encounter Satan on the journey I am about to take, and I should not be sorry to make a friend of him, by communicating what I know about machines for torturing the damned, machines *he* has never heard of."

The prisoner had just completed his examination, when five o'clock sounded from the bell on the Châtelet. Two hours had elapsed since he left his dungeon. They took him back again, and there he found the Curate of Saint Paul's, already waiting.

As may be seen, Favras had not wasted the two hours of delay; and if anything could favorably dispose a man towards death, it must be such a spectacle as he had contemplated.

On seeing him, the curate opened his arms. "My father," said Favras, "excuse me if I can only open to you my heart. These gentlemen have taken good care that I shall open nothing else to you;" and he showed his hands, bound tight behind him.

"Can you not release the arms of the condemned man, during the little time he is with me?" asked the kind old priest.

"It is not in my power," responded the usher.

"Father," said Favras, "ask them if they cannot fasten my hands in front, instead of behind. That will

be more convenient for the time when I have to hold the penitence candle, in order to read my sentence."

The two assistants looked inquiringly at the usher, who nodded, as much as to say, there would be nothing out of the way about that; and so the favor which the Marquis asked was granted. Then he was left alone with the priest.

What took place at this supreme interview, between the man of the world and the man of God, is known only to themselves. In the presence of the sanctities of religion, did Favras unseal his heart, which had remained firmly closed before the majesty of law? In the presence of the consolations offered by that unknown world he was about to enter, were his eyes, heretofore dry with irony, moistened with the tears pent-up in his heart, as he thought of the cherished objects he must leave alone in the world behind him?

These things were not even revealed to those who entered his dungeon about three hours after noon, and found him with a smiling mouth, dry cheeks, and a stout heart. They came to announce the hour of his death.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I ask your pardon, but you have kept me waiting."

As he was already without vest and coat, and as his hands were bound, they took off his shoes and hose, and put a white shirt over the rest of his attire; and on his breast they placed an inscription bearing these words:

CONSPIRATOR AGAINST THE STATE.

At the Châtelet gate a tumbrel was in waiting, surrounded by a numerous guard. In the wagon was a lighted torch.

Perceiving the condemned, the multitude clapped

their hands. The judgment had been noised abroad since six in the morning, and the crowd thought the hours very tedious which intervened between the sentence and its execution.

Some fellows ran about the streets claiming drink-money from the passers-by.

"Why do you demand drink-money?" they were asked.

"We wished to drink to the execution of the Marquis de Favras," responded these death-mendicants.

Favras mounted the wagon with a firm step. He sat down on the side where the torch was placed, rightly believing the torch was there with that intention.

The Curate of Saint Paul's followed, and sat at his left hand.

The executioner mounted last, and sat behind the prisoner.

This executioner was the same man, with the grave but mild face, whom we saw at the Bicêtre Prison, when the trial of Guillotin's new machine was made. We have seen him before, we see him now, we shall see him again, — the true hero of the epoch upon which we are entering.

After seating himself, the hangman passed a rope about the Marquis's neck, — the rope wherewith Favras was to be hanged; but the hangman retained the end in his own hand.

When the tumbrel put itself in motion, there was a movement in the crowd. Favras naturally glanced towards the quarter where this movement took place. He saw some fellows pressing forward, so as to be in the front ranks, and have better places on the street.

Suddenly he started, in spite of himself; for in the first row — in the midst of five or six companions, who

had forced their way through the crowd — he recognized, in the costume of a porter from the market-place, his nocturnal visitor, who had promised to watch over him up to the last moment.

The condemned man made him a sign with his head, but it was only a sign of recognition, with no other meaning.

The wagon continued on its way, till it stopped in front of Notre Dame. The central door was open, so as to allow a view, at the other end of the darkened church, of the high altar, aflame with lighted candles.

There was such a rush of curiosity-seekers, that the wagon had been compelled to pause now and then, and could only go on when the guards had cleared the way, which was repeatedly closed up again by a flood of bystanders, breaking through the frail dike opposed to them.

On the Cathedral Purview, there was a struggle to make an empty place.

"It is necessary to get out here, Monsieur," said the executioner to the condemned man, "in order to make public confession."

Favras obeyed without a word.

The priest dismounted first, then the prisoner, then the hangman, still grasping his end of the rope.

The prisoner's arms were tied somewhat loosely at the wrists, so as to allow him the use of his hands.

In his right hand they placed the torch; in his left hand, the sentence. The condemned man advanced as far as the portico, and knelt. In the front ranks of those who surrounded him, he recognized the same market-porter and his companions, whom he had seen as he emerged from the Châtelet. This persistence seemed to touch him, but not a word of appeal escaped his lips.

A clerk from the Châtelet was in attendance. "Read, Monsieur!" he said, in a loud voice; adding, in a whisper: "Monsieur, if you wish to be rescued, you have only to say the word."

Without answering, Favras began to read. This he did in a firm voice, with nothing in its accent to betray the least perturbation.

When the reading was over he addressed the crowd around him, and said: "About to appear before my God, I pardon those men who, contrary to their own consciences, have accused me of criminal projects. I love my King, and to this sentiment I die faithful. This is an example which I leave behind me, and which I hope will be followed by many noble hearts. The populace demand my death, with a great outcry. They must have a victim. So be it! I am glad this fatality falls on me, rather than on some faint heart, whom the sight of an unmerited scaffold might lead to despair. — Now, unless there is something else for me to do here, let us continue our journey, gentlemen."

The procession passed on. It was not far from the porch of Notre Dame to the Place de Grève, and the tumbrel made good time on the road.

When they reached their destination Favras said: "Gentlemen, may I not enter the Hôtel de Ville awhile?"

"Have you any revelations to make, my son?" asked the priest, quickly.

"No, my father; but I wish to dictate my last will and testament; and I have heard it said that this last favor is never refused to the condemned man who asks for it."

Instead therefore of going straight to the gibbet, the wagon turned towards the Hôtel de Ville, on the other

side of the square. A great clamor was heard among the people.

"He 's going to make revelations! He 's going to make revelations!" they shouted on all sides.

At this cry an observer might have noticed that a young man, clad in black, — who stood upright on a horseblock, at the corner of the Quay Pelletier, — grew pale.

"Fear nothing, Count Louis!" said a satirical voice near him. "The condemned will not speak a word as to what took place in Royal Square."

The young man in black turned quickly. These words had been spoken to him by a market-porter, whose face could not be seen, because, in the very act of speaking, he had pulled his large hat over his eyes.

Moreover, if the fine young man cherished any doubt about the matter, it was speedily dissipated.

At the top of the portico of the City Hall, Favras made a sign that he wished to speak. On the instant all noises were hushed, as if a puff of east wind had passed by, and blown away all disturbance.

"Gentlemen," said Favras, "I hear it rumored about me that I am going into the Hôtel de Ville to make revelations. Not so! In case there is any man among you, — as is possible, — who has anything to fear from such revelations, he may rest easy; for I am only going to make my dying testament."

With firm step he passed under the sombre vault and ascended the stairway, which led to the chamber whither it was customary to conduct prisoners at such a time, and which was therefore called the Chamber of Revelations.

Three men in black were there on duty; and among the three Favras recognized the clerk who had spoken to him near the cathedral.

As the condemned man could not write with his hands tied, he began to dictate his will.

We have heard much of the testament of Louis Sixteenth, because much is said of kingly documents; but we have the testament of Favras before our eyes, and we must say this one thing to the dear public: *Read and compare!*

His will finished, Favras asked the privilege of reading it, in order to sign it. They untied his hands, and the papers were given him. He read them carefully, and corrected such mistakes in spelling as the clerk had made. At the bottom of each page he wrote, *Mahi de Favras.*

After that he held out his hands, that the bands might be again tightened, an operation accomplished by the hangman, who had not left his side for a single instant.

The dictation of this will had taken over two hours. The populace, who had been on hand ever since the forenoon, became very impatient. Many excellent fellows had come there with empty stomachs, intending to breakfast when the execution was over; but they were still fasting.

The crowd began to murmur; and it was such a threatening murmur as had been already heard in the same place, — on the days when De Launay was killed, when Foulon was hanged, when Berthier was torn asunder.

Moreover the public began to think that Favras had been allowed to escape by some back passage.

At this juncture it was even proposed to hang the municipal officers in Favras's stead, and to demolish the Hôtel de Ville.

Fortunately, about nine in the evening, the prisoner reappeared. Torches were furnished to the soldiers, who formed a hedge about the place. All the windows on the

square were lighted. The gibbet alone remained in mysterious and terrible obscurity.

The appearance of the condemned man was greeted with unanimous cries, and by a great commotion among the fifty thousand people who crowded the square.

Now they were sure, not only that he had not escaped, but that he *could* not escape.

Favras looked about him. Speaking to himself, with an ironical smile peculiar to him, he murmured: "Not a carriage? Ah, nobility is forgetful. They were more polite to Count Horn than to me."

"That was because Horn was an assassin, while as for thee, thou art a martyr," responded a voice.

Favras turned, and again saw the market-porter, whom he had noticed twice before on the way to the gallows.

"Adieu, Monsieur," said Favras to him, "I hope, if there is any need of it, you will testify in my behalf."

Then, with a steadfast walk, he came down the vestibule steps, and walked towards the scaffold.

As he placed his foot on the first rung of the ladder leading to the gallows, a voice cried: "Jump, Marquis!"

The prisoner replied with a voice sonorous and serious: "Citizens, I die innocent. Pray to God for me!"

At the fourth round he stopped again, and spoke in a voice as firm and clear as before: "Citizens, I ask the aid of your prayers. I die innocent!"

At the eighth step, the one from which he was to be launched into eternity, he repeated, for the third time: "Citizens, I die innocent. Pray to God for me!"

One of the two hangman's assistants, who mounted the stairs with him, said again: "You do not wish to be rescued?"

"Thanks, my friend, no! But God reward you for your good intentions."

Then bowing to the executioner, who seemed to wait for orders, instead of giving them, Favras said: "Do your duty!"

Hardly had he uttered these words than the hangman pushed him off, and the body swung into vacancy.

During the immense commotion produced in the Place de Grève, — while some amateurs clapped their hands, and cried *Encore!* as they might have done after a topical song in a vaudeville, or a grand aria in the opera, — the young man in black slipped away from the horseblock on which he was mounted, threaded his way through the crowd, and at the corner of the New Bridge sprang swiftly into a carriage, without livery or escutcheon, exclaiming to the coachman: "To the Luxembourg, at the top of your speed." The carriage started at a gallop.

Three men were awaiting the arrival of this carriage with much impatience.

These three men were *Monsieur* de Provence, and two of his gentlemen already named in the course of this narrative, but whom it is needless to name again at this point.

They waited with the greatest impatience, because they would have been at table two hours ago, but for their anxiety.

On his part the cook was in despair. This was the third dinner he had begun; and as it had been ready for ten minutes, it would be spoiled in another quarter-hour.

At this critical moment they heard a carriage roll into the courtyard.

Provence hurried to the window. In the darkness he could only see a shadow leap from the upper step of the carriage to the platform of the palace. So he left the window and ran towards the door; but before the future

King of France reached it, for his pace was always somewhat halting, the door opened, and admitted the young man in black, saying : " Monseigneur, all is over ! Favras died without speaking a word."

" Then we can eat our dinner in peace, my dear Louis ?"

" Yes, Monseigneur. — By my faith, he was a worthy gentleman, that man ! "

" I am of your opinion, my dear fellow," said his Royal Highness. " At dessert, let us drink his health in a glass of wine from Constance. — To dinner, gentlemen."

As he spoke, the two leaves of the door swung apart, and the illustrious comrades went into the dining-room.

CHAPTER III.

THE MONARCHY IS SAVED.

SEVERAL weeks after the execution which we have just described, — into the details whereof we entered, in order to forewarn our readers what gratitude may be expected from kings and princes, towards those who sacrifice themselves in behalf of such royal patrons, — a man, riding a dapple-gray horse, was climbing slowly up the avenue at Saint Cloud Palace.

This slowness must be attributed neither to the lassitude of the rider nor the fatigue of his horse. That neither the one nor the other had taken more than a short trip, it was easy to see; for the foam which escaped from the horse's mouth was not the result of over-riding, but rather of hard restraint.

As to the horseman, one could see, at first sight, that he was a gentleman; and his entire dress was not only free from dirt, but attested the precautions taken to preserve his garments from the mud which covered the road.

What retarded the horseman was the deep thought wherein he was evidently absorbed, and possibly his wish not to reach his appointment until a certain hour, which had not yet sounded.

He was a man about forty years old, whose powerful ugliness did not conceal his greatness of character. He had a head disproportionately large, bloated cheeks, a face seamed by the smallpox, an animated expression,

eyes with latent lightning, a mouth accustomed to deliberate irony and biting sarcasm. Such was the aspect of this man, destined, as one instinctively felt, to occupy a large place and make a great noise in the world.

His whole physiognomy, however, seemed covered with a veil, thrown over it by one of those organic maladies against which the most vigorous temperaments struggle in vain. His complexion was dull and gray. His eyes were weary and red. His jaws were overweighted with flesh, — the beginning of an unwholesome obesity.

Thus appeared the man whom we wish to place before the eyes of our readers.

Reaching the head of the avenue, he passed, without hesitation, through the gate opening into the courtyard of the palace, and measured the recesses of that courtyard with his eyes.

At the right, between two wings, which enclosed a sort of blind lane, a man was in waiting, who made a sign for the rider to come in that direction.

A gate was open. The attendant led the way beneath that gate. The horseman followed, and presently found himself in a second courtyard.

There the man on foot — who, by the way, wore coat, breeches, and waistcoat of black — stopped. Looking about him, and seeing that the place was quite deserted, he approached the horseman, hat in hand; and the cavalier, by leaning over his horse's neck, brought himself nearer to the man in black, and said in a low tone: "Monsieur Weber?"

"Monsieur de Mirabeau?" was the response.

"The same," said the rider, as he sprang to the ground, with more lightness than one would have believed possible.

"Enter," said Weber, quickly, "and be kind enough to wait an instant, till I can put your horse in the stable myself."

Meantime he opened the door of a parlor, whose windows and a second door looked out into the park.

Mirabeau entered this parlor, and employed the few minutes, during which Weber left him alone, in unbuckling his leathern overboots, which had excluded the dirt from his silken hose, and kept the gloss of his shoes untarnished.

As he had promised, Weber came back in five minutes, saying: "Come, Monsieur, the Queen is waiting for you."

"The Queen waiting?" replied Mirabeau. "Am I so unhappy as to have kept her waiting? I thought I was right on time."

"I only meant that the Queen was impatient to see you. Come, Monsieur!"

Weber opened the door leading into the garden, and entered the labyrinth of alleys which led to the most solitary and elevated portion of the park.

There, amid trees with outstretched and leafless arms, in an atmosphere gray and cheerless, appeared a pavilion, of the sort known as a *kiosk*.

The shutters of this pavilion were hermetically sealed, with the exception of two; and even these were pushed close together, and only allowed a brace of rays of light to enter, as through loopholes in tower-walls, — rays barely sufficient to render the darkness visible.

A huge fire burned in the fireplace, however, and two candelabras burned on the chimney-piece.

Weber made the gentleman he guided enter a sort of antechamber. Then, opening the door of the main room of the kiosk, after softly rapping, he announced the

Count Riquetti de Mirabeau, and drew back to let the visitor pass in front of him.

If he had been carefully listening, at the moment when the Count passed by, Weber would certainly have heard the statesman's heart beating against his great breast.

At this announcement a lady arose in the farthest corner of the room, and took several steps forward, with some hesitation, and even fear. This lady was the Queen.

Her heart also beat violently. Here, before her eyes, was this hated, decried, dangerous man ; the man accused of bringing about the terrors of early October ; the man towards whom royalty had turned for one instant, but who had been presently repulsed by political courtiers ; the man who had since made them feel the necessity of conciliating him, by his two magnificent outbursts of wrath, which became almost sublime.

The first of these outbursts was his apostrophe to the Clergy.

The second was an address, in which he explained how the representatives of the people, from being merely the deputies of certain townships, had constituted themselves the National Assembly.

Mirabeau approached with graceful courtesy, which the Queen was surprised to note in a man whose energetic organization seemed to exclude such niceties.

Then he bowed respectfully, and waited.

The Queen was the first to break silence, with a voice in which she could not entirely suppress her emotion.

" Monsieur Mirabeau, Doctor Gilbert has assured us of your readiness to ally yourself with our party."

Mirabeau bowed, in token of assent.

The Queen resumed: "A former overture was made to you, to which you responded with a plan for a new cabinet."

Again Mirabeau bowed.

"It was not our fault, if this first plan failed."

"I so believe, Madame, especially on the part of your Majesty; but it was the fault of fellows who pretend to be devoted to the monarchy."

"What can you expect?" said the Queen. "This is one of the misfortunes of our position. Kings can no more choose their friends than they can choose their enemies; and sometimes they are compelled to accept the most disastrous sacrifices. We are surrounded by men who wish to save us, but who really ruin us. Their resolution to rule out of the King's cabinet all members of the Assembly, was a specimen of this blundering, directed against yourself. Do you wish me to cite a blunder which works against me? Can you believe that one of my most faithful friends, — a man who, I am sure, would readily die for us, — can you believe that this man, without giving us any hint in advance of his plan, brought to our dinner, — generally enjoyed under the public eye, as you know, — the widow and children of Monsieur de Favras, all three clad in deep mourning? My first thought was to rise and run to them, and to place these orphans of a man who so courageously died for us, — for I am not one of those who deny their friends, — to seat these children, I say, between the King and myself. All eyes were fixed on us, waiting to see what we would do. I turned. Do you know whom I saw behind me, not four steps from my armchair? Santerre, the man from the Faubourg Saint Antoine. I sank back into my chair, almost weeping with anger, and not daring to look again on that widow and her orphans. The Royalists blame

me for not braving everything, in order to mark my interest in that unhappy family. The Revolutionists are furious, not believing that these visitors were brought there without my permission. Oh Monsieur," continued the Queen, shaking her head, "we must indeed perish, when attacked by men of genius, but defended by men — very estimable no doubt — who have no idea of our situation;" and the Queen sighed, as she pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Madame," said Mirabeau, touched by her great misfortune, which was not unknown to him, — and which, either from the Queen's habitual policy, or through her womanly weakness, she allowed him to discern, by her tears and agony, — "Madame, when you talk of men who attack you, you do not include me, I trust? I professed monarchical principles, when I could see nothing but weakness in the Court, when I understood neither the heart nor mind of the imperial daughter of Maria Theresa. I fought for the rights of the throne, when I inspired only suspicion, and all my measures, poisoned by malignant misinterpretation, appeared like so many snares. I served the King, when I knew well that I could expect from him — just, but deceived as he was — neither benefit nor reward. What may I do now, Madame, when confidence restores my courage, and gratitude — for your Majesty's reception of me — makes my former principles a duty and delight?"

Mirabeau continued, in his turn shaking his head: "It is late, very late, — I know it, Madame. In asking me to save it, perhaps the monarchy only proposes to me, in reality, that I should die with itself! If I had reflected, perhaps I should have chosen, in accepting the favor of this interview, some other moment than this one, so soon after his Majesty had delivered over to the Chamber of

Deputies his famous Red Book, — thus most unfortunately betraying the honor of his friends."

"Oh Monsieur, can you believe the King guilty of such intentional treason? Are you ignorant how it happened? The Red Book, forced from the King, would never have been delivered to the committee, if they had not promised to guard it sacredly. Then they had it printed! This was an offence of the committee against the King, not the King's betrayal of his friends."

"Alas, Madame! you know what causes led the committee to this publication, — which I disapproved as a man of honor and which I disavowed as a Deputy. At the very time when the King was swearing his love for the Constitution, he had a permanent agency at Turin, amidst the mortal enemies of that Constitution. When he was talking of financial reforms, and apparently accepting those proposed by the Assembly, his stables, large and small, were established at Trèves, hired and equipped by himself, and maintained under the orders of the Prince de Lambesq, — the mortal enemy of the Parisians, whose hanging they daily demand, — at least, in effigy. Enormous pensions have been paid to Artois, to Condé, to all the Court fugitives, and this in spite of a decree passed two months ago, which suppressed these pensions. True, the King forgot to sanction this decree. Well, Madame, what would you have? For two months there had been an unsuccessful effort to find out what was done with sixty millions of francs. The King was urged, pleaded with, to say what had become of that money; but he refused to say. The committee therefore believed themselves released from their pledge, and they accordingly printed the Red Book. Why did the King give up a weapon which could be so cruelly turned against him?"

"Oh Monsieur," cried the Queen, "if you were admitted

to the honor of membership in the King's Council, you would not advise him to such disastrous weaknesses, by which, — oh yes, I must use the word, — by which he is not only ruined, but dishonored."

"If I was honored by a call to the Royal Council, Madame, I should be near him as the defender of monarchical power, regulated by laws, and as the apostle of liberty, guarantied by the monarchical power. This liberty, Madame, has had three enemies, — the Clergy, the Nobility, the Royal Parliaments. The Clerical Power does not belong to this age, and was killed off by the resolutions of Talleyrand. The Nobles are to be found in every age, and I fancy we cannot reckon without them, — because, without Nobility, there can be no monarchy; but they must be restrained, and this is possible, only through the coalition of the people with the royal authority. Now so long as Royal Parliaments continue to exist, or can be summoned at the King's will, the royal authority cannot coalesce in good faith with popular legislation; because these Royal Parliaments, in France, are not representative and popular, like the English Parliament or the American Congress, but are more like conventions of lords; and they keep alive, in the King and the Nobility, a fatal hope, — the desire to restore the ancient order of things. After the Clerical Power is annihilated, and the Royal Parliaments forever dissolved, the Executive Power of the Crown may revive, regenerate the royal authority, and reconcile it with liberty. There you have my political policy! If it is also the King's, let him adopt it. If not his, let him repudiate it."

The Queen was impressed with the irradiation which his vast intelligence shed over the past, present, and future.

"Monsieur, Monsieur," she said, "I do not know whether or not these are the King's political views; but this I know, if I have any weight, — they are *my* views. As for the means of reaching this desirable end, make me to know them. I will listen to you, not only with attention, but with avidity, — yes, if I may say so, with gratitude."

Mirabeau glanced rapidly at the Queen, as if to measure her heart with his eagle eye; and he saw that, if not already convinced, she was in a fair way to be so.

This triumph, over so superior a woman as Marie Antoinette, petted the vanity of Mirabeau in the sweetest fashion.

"Madame, we have lost Paris, or nearly so; but there remain to us multitudes of Royalists, scattered through the provinces, and of these we must make our bundle of sound sticks, our sheaf of good wheat. That is why it is my opinion the King should quit Paris, but not France, — that he should retire to Rouen, in the midst of his troops; that from there he should publish ordinances more popular than the decrees of the Assembly. Then there need be, could be, no civil war, because the King would be more Revolutionary than the Revolution itself."

"But this Revolution, whether it goes ahead of us or behind us, does it not terrify you?"

"Alas, Madame! I believe I know, better than anybody else, that the Revolution must have its part in the matter. It must have its cake, — the sop thrown to Cerberus. I have already said to the Queen, that any attempt to reconstruct, on its ancient basis, the monarchy which the Revolution has destroyed, involves an enterprise beyond human power. All France has concurred in this Revolution, from the King to the poorest of his subjects, — either intentionally and actively, or negatively. It is

scarcely the old monarchy which I pretend to defend, Madame; for I dream of modification and regeneration, so as to establish a form of government more or less like that which has led England to the height of glory and power. Gilbert has told me something about the King's meditation over the prison and scaffold of Charles the First. After such a terrible vision, will his Majesty not be better contented with a throne like that of the Third William or the First George?"

"Oh Monsieur," cried the Queen, — to whom a single word spoken by Mirabeau recalled, with its mortal shiver, the vision at the Château Taverney, — the outline of the death-instrument invented by Guillotin, — "Oh Monsieur, restore to us such a liberal monarchy, and you will see if we are such ingrates as we are often represented to be."

"Well, Madame, this is what I will do," said Mirabeau, in his turn. "If the King sustains me, and the Queen encourages me, here at your feet I lay my oath as a nobleman, that I will accomplish the promise I now make to your Majesty, or die in the attempt, with all my armor on."

"Count, Count, do not forget, — it is more than a woman who hears your oath. You are heard by a dynasty of five centuries, — seventy kings of France, from Pharamond down to Louis Fifteenth, sleeping in their tombs, — which will be dethroned with us, if our throne should crumble."

"I know the obligations I incur. The task is immense. I know it! But it is not grander than my will, or stronger than my devotion. If sure of the sympathy of my Queen and the confidence of my King, I could undertake any work."

"If such promises only are needed, I can pledge

both!" and as she spoke, she saluted Mirabeau, with that siren smile which won all hearts.

He understood that his audience was over. The pride of the politician was satisfied, but his vanity as a gallant required something more; so he said, with bold but respectful courtesy: "Madame, when your imperial mother, Maria Theresa, admitted a subject to the honor of her presence, she never dismissed him without offering her hand for his kiss."

As he stood there, upright and expectant, the Queen looked upon him as a chained lion, who asked nothing better than to crouch at her feet.

With a smile of victory on her lips she extended her hand slowly, — that beautiful hand, cold as alabaster, and almost as transparent.

Mirabeau bowed, pressed his lips on that hand, and lifted his head proudly, saying: "Madame, through this kiss the monarchy is saved."

He went out, much moved, but joyous, himself believing — poor man of genius! — in the fulfilment of the prophecy he had made.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RETURN TO THE FARM.

WHILE Marie Antoinette is opening her aching heart to fresh hopes, and for a time forgetting her sufferings as a woman, in her anxiety for her safety as a queen, — while Mirabeau, like Alcidamas, the classic athlete, dreams of sustaining, single-handed, the dome of the falling monarchy, which threatens to crush him in its ruins, — we will take the reader, weary of so much politics, back among more humble people, and into an atmosphere less tainted.

We have seen with what fears Billot's heart was inspired by Pitou, the Lafayette of Haramont Village, when the latter made his second journey to the capital, — fears which recalled the farmer to his farm, — or, rather, the father to his daughter's side; and these fears were not exaggerated.

This return took place on the second day after the famous night on which occurred three important events: the flight of Sebastien Gilbert from his school to Paris; the hasty and unexpected departure of Isidore de Charny for Turin, following his equally sudden arrival in Paris; and Catherine's swoon on the highway from Villers Cotterets to Pisseleu.

In another chapter of this book we have related how Pitou, after having carried Catherine home to the farm, after having learned from her, in the midst of tears and moans, that the accident which had prostrated her arose

from the departure of Isidore, — we have related how, after all this, Pitou, overcome by her avowal, returned at once to his own home; where he found Sebastien's letter, which led him to hurriedly follow the boy to Paris; where we saw him awaiting the return of Doctor Gilbert, with so much anxiety that he did not at first think of speaking to Billot about affairs at the farm.

It was only when reassured as to Sebastien's fate, by seeing him come to the Rue Saint Honoré with his father, only when he learned, from the lad's own mouth, the details of his journey, — his meeting with Isidore, who had brought him to the city on the crupper of his horse, — it was only then that Pitou remembered Catherine, the farm, and Mother Billot, and spoke to Father Billot of the bad harvest, the continual rains, and Catherine's swoon.

As we have said, this swoon was what particularly disturbed Billot, and decided him to ask his dismissal of Gilbert, which was at once granted.

All the way along, Billot catechized Pitou about this fainting-fit. He loved his farm, this worthy farmer; he loved his wife well, this excellent husband; but above all else he loved his daughter Catherine; although, thanks to his unvarying ideas of honor and his invincible probity, this love, even if there had been any occasion, would have found him as inflexible a judge as he was a tender father.

When Billot questioned, Pitou answered. He had found Catherine lying across the road, so mute, motionless, and lifeless, that at first he believed her dead. In despair he lifted her in his arms, and placed her across his knees. Then, perceiving that she yet breathed, he ran with her towards the farmhouse, where, aided by Mother Billot, he put her to bed.

There, while Mother Billot was lamenting, he brutally

(as he said) threw water into her face. The cool shock made Catherine open her eyes. Seeing this, Pitou, as he told Billot, felt that his presence at the farm was no longer necessary, and went away to his own lodgings in Haramont.

The rest of Pitou's recital, — that is, what related to Sebastien, — Father Billot only heard once, and that sufficed; but thinking unceasingly of Catherine, Billot exhausted himself with conjectures about her accident, and its possible causes.

These conjectures crystallized themselves into questions addressed to Pitou, questions which Pitou answered diplomatically: "I don't know!"

There was the more merit in this answer, "I don't know," because Catherine had been cruelly frank in telling him everything, and consequently Pitou *did* know.

He knew that her heart was bruised by Isidore's farewell, and that this was why she fainted where Pitou found her; but this is what he would not have told the farmer, for all the gold in the world.

On the contrary, he was seized with the greatest pity for Catherine.

Pitou loved Catherine, — more, he admired her. We saw, at the proper time and place, how this love and admiration, though so little appreciated and so badly recompensed, brought both suffering to Pitou's heart and transports to his imagination; but however sharp his grief, — however exalted these transports, — causing Pitou such gastric disturbances that sometimes he could not dine or breakfast for an hour or two after his usual time, — these transports and sorrows had never brought him to such a point of weakness as to make him swoon.

Pitou put his feelings into the form of a syllogism, which he divided into three parts, with his accustomed

logic: "If Mademoiselle Catherine loves Isidore so much as to swoon when he goes away, then she loves Isidore more than I love Mademoiselle Catherine; for I never swooned in parting from her."

From this first premise he proceeded to the second: "If she loves him more than I love her, she must suffer more than I; in which case she suffers very much."

Thence he passed to the third part of his syllogism, — the conclusion, — a conclusion the more logical, because, like every right conclusion, it grew naturally out of its premises: "She suffers more than I, since she fainted, while I never swooned in my life."

These feelings rendered Pitou mute, in Billot's presence, as to Catherine's exact condition, a silence which augmented Billot's anxiety.

Billot's worriments became sharper as he drew nearer home, and they sought relief in the blows of the whip which the worthy farmer applied without stint, sometimes with one arm and sometimes with the other, to the flanks of the horse he hired from the stable in Dammartin. So effectual were his efforts, that by four in the afternoon the tilt-cart, with its two travellers, stopped at the door of the farmhouse, where their presence was greeted by the barking of the dogs.

Hardly had the cart come to a standstill in the courtyard, when Billot leaped to the ground and ran into the house; but an obstacle, which he did not expect, met him on the threshold of the girl's bedroom, which opened from the kitchen, on the ground floor.

This was Doctor Raynal, — a man we have already had occasion to see in these narratives, — who declared, that in Catherine's present state, not only would excitement be dangerous, but might prove fatal. This was a fresh blow to Billot.

He knew the fact of her swoon; but from the moment when Pitou told him how he saw her reopen her eyes and return to herself, Billot's mind had been preoccupied — if it may be so expressed — with only the moral causes and consequences of this event; but now, as ill luck would have it, here was a physical result, outside of moral cause and effect.

This physical consequence was a cerebral fever, which had declared itself the day before, and threatened to reach a high degree of intensity.

Doctor Raynal was busy fighting this fever, with all the means used for such cases by old-fashioned medical experts, — bleeding and mustard-plasters included; but this treatment, active as it was, did not overtake the malady. The struggle had hardly begun between disease and remedy, and since morning Catherine had been a prey to violent delirium.

In this delirium the young girl undoubtedly said some strange things; so, under the pretext of shielding her from excitement, Doctor Raynal had kept her mother well out of the way, as now he meant to keep her father.

Mother Billot was seated on a stool, in the shadow of the huge chimney. Her head was buried in her hands, and she seemed to be a stranger to what was going on around her.

She was insensible to the noise of the wagon, to the barking of the dogs, to Billot's entrance into the kitchen; but she roused herself at the sound of his voice, disputing with the Doctor, and began to collect her wits, which had been drowned in her gloomy revery.

She accordingly raised her head, opened her eyes, fixed her dull look on Billot, and cried: "Hey, it 's our old man!"

Rising, she tottered forward with open arms, and threw herself upon the breast of Billot, who looked at her in a wild sort of way, as if he hardly knew her.

"Hey," he said, as the sweat of agony stood on his brow, "what 's been going on here?"

"This," said the Doctor, "that your daughter has what we call acute meningitis; and when patients have that disease, they must take only certain remedies, and see only certain persons."

"But is it dangerous, this sickness, Doctor? Will she die of it?" asked Billot.

"People die of all sorts of diseases, my dear Monsieur Billot, if not properly cared for; but let me care for your girl in my own way, and she will not die."

"Truly, Doctor?"

"I will answer for her; but it is important, for two or three days, that only myself, and the persons whom I designate, should enter her chamber."

Billot sighed. He believed himself conquered, but made one more effort.

"May n't I at least *see* her?" he asked, in the tone of a child begging a last favor.

"And if you see her, if you embrace her, will you leave me in peace three days thereafter, without any more teasing?"

"I swear it!"

"Very well! — Come in!"

The Doctor opened the door of Catherine's room, and Father Billot could see the young girl, her eyes wild, her face flushed and feverish, her forehead bound with a band wet in icy water.

She muttered a few broken words, and when Father Billot pressed his pale and trembling lips on her damp

brow, it seemed to him as if he caught, among her incoherent words, the name of Isidore.

On the threshold of the door, which led into the kitchen, were several friends: Mother Billot, with clasped hands; Pitou, standing on tiptoe, and trying to see over her shoulder; and two or three day-laborers, who, being in the house, were curious to see for themselves what was the matter with their young mistress.

Faithful to his promise, Father Billot retired as soon as he had kissed his child; only he came away with a frowning brow and dark looks, murmuring: "Go to, go to! I see it was indeed time for me to come home!"

He re-entered the kitchen, whither his wife followed him mechanically; and whither Pitou was about to follow, when the Doctor pulled him by the flap of his blouse, and said hastily: "Don't quit the farmhouse. I must speak to thee!"

Somewhat surprised, Pitou turned, and was about to inquire of the Doctor of what use he could be; when the latter, in a mysterious way, pressed a finger to his lips, by way of enforcing silence.

Pitou therefore remained standing upright in the kitchen, on precisely the same spot where he had been before, imitating, though in a fashion more grotesque than poetic and beautiful, those terminal gods of classic antiquity, who, with their feet rooted closely in the earth, marked the limits of their own particular domains.

In five minutes the door of Catherine's chamber opened, and the Doctor's voice was heard calling for Pitou.

"Hey?" said Pitou, coming out of his prolonged revery. "What do you want of me, Doctor?"

"Come and help Madame Clement hold Catherine, while I bleed her for the third time."

"A third time!" murmured Mother Billot. "They 'll bleed her the third time! My God! Oh my God!"

"Woman, woman," muttered Billot, in a severe voice, "all this would not have happened if you had watched over your child better."

Then he entered his own chamber, from which he had been absent three months, while Pitou, raised to the rank of surgical student, by Doctor Raynal, went into Catherine's room.

CHAPTER V.

PITOU AS SICK-NURSE.

Pitou was much surprised that he could be thought good for anything in the sick-room, by Doctor Raynal; but he would have been yet more astonished had he known that the aid expected from him was moral, rather than physical.

As a matter of fact, the Doctor had remarked, in her delirium, that Catherine generally coupled Pitou's name with Isidore's; that is, she best remembered the last faces which had been in her normal mind, — Isidore's, when she closed her eyes, Pitou's, when she reopened them.

As the sick girl did not pronounce these two names with the same accent, Doctor Raynal — a no less careful observer than his illustrious namesake, the author of the "Philosophical History of the Indies" — promptly inferred from these different, but equally expressive tones, used by the girl, that *Ange Pitou* must be the name of a friend, and *Isidore* the name of a lover; and he concluded that it would not be disadvantageous to have the friend near the invalid, with whom she could talk about her lover.

To Doctor Raynal, — and without wishing to decry the acumen of Doctor Raynal, we must hasten to say that the whole thing seemed very simple, — to Doctor Raynal, everything was now clear as day, and it was only necessary for him to do what physicians always have done in their professional studies, — group the facts together, — in order to learn the entire truth.

Everybody in Villers Cotterets knew that George de Charny was killed on that terrible night at Versailles; and that on the evening of the next day, his brother Isidore, summoned by the Count de Charny, started for Paris.

Now Pitou had found Catherine in a swoon on the road between Villers Cotterets and Pisseleu, which is also the highway from Boursonnes to Paris. He bore her, insensible, to the farmhouse; and as a result of this occurrence, the girl was seized with brain fever. This fever led to delirium; and in this delirium she implored a fugitive to return, and called that fugitive *Isidore*.

It was therefore very easy for the Doctor to divine the secret of Catherine's malady, which was really the secret of her heart.

In this conjunction of facts the Doctor reasoned as follows:

The first need, of a patient with a head-trouble, is calmness.

What will bring this tranquillity to Catherine's heart? News as to the whereabouts of her lover.

From whom can she obtain this news? From somebody who knows about him.

And who is likely to know about him? Pitou, who has just come from Paris.

This reasoning was at once simple and logical, and the Doctor compassed it without difficulty.

Although it was as surgeon's assistant that he first employed Pitou; yet the Doctor could have done very well without Pitou in that capacity, for it was not a new bleeding of the patient which was proposed, but only a reopening of the former gash.

The Doctor lifted Catherine's arm softly from the bed, loosened the knot which compressed the wound,

separated its unhealed lips with his thumbs, and the blood flowed.

Seeing this blood, for which he would gladly have sacrificed his own, Pitou felt his strength begin to fail.

He therefore went and sat down in Madame Clement's armchair, sobbing, with his hands over his eyes; and each sob drew these words from his heart: "Oh Mademoiselle Catherine! Poor Mademoiselle Catherine!"

At each of these words he said to himself, with that double mentality which considers at the same moment the present and the past: "Certainly she loves Monsieur Isidore more than I love her. Certainly she suffers more than I ever suffered, for they have been obliged to bleed her because she is delirious with brain fever, — two very disagreeable things, which I never had."

As he drew this fresh blood from Catherine's arm, the Doctor, who had not taken his eyes from Pitou, felicitated himself on having shrewdly guessed that in this young man his patient would have a devoted friend.

As the Doctor expected, this slight flow of blood lessened the fever. The arteries in her temples beat more peacefully. Her breast was freer. Her breathing, which had been labored, became mild and regular. Her pulse fell from one hundred and ten pulsations to eighty-five. Everything indicated a quiet night for the girl.

Raynal breathed more freely in his turn. He gave Madame Clement all necessary instructions, — among others this strange direction, that she should sleep two or three hours, while Pitou watched in her stead.

Then, with a sign for Pitou to follow, the Doctor returned to the kitchen. Pitou did follow, and they found Mother Billot still buried in the shadow of the great chimney-piece.

The poor woman was so stunned, that she hardly

understood what the Doctor said, though his were comforting words for a mother's heart.

"Come, come! Courage, Mother Billot!" said the Doctor. "Things are going as well as we can expect."

The good woman seemed like one coming from another world as she said: "Oh, dear Monsieur Raynal, is it really true, what you say?"

"Yes. She won't have a bad night. Don't be anxious, even if you hear some crying in your daughter's chamber; and, above all, don't go in there."

"My God, my God!" said Mother Billot, with an accent of deep sorrow. "That 's hard, that a mother may n't go into her child's room!"

"What would you have?" said the Doctor. "This is my absolute prescription, — neither you nor Monsieur Billot."

"But who will take care of my poor girl?"

"Be easy as to that! We have both Madame Clement and Pitou."

"What? Pitou?"

"Yes, Pitou. I find him very capable in medical matters. I shall take him to Villers Cotterets, where I will have a prescription prepared by the apothecary. Pitou will bring back this potion. Madame Clement will have the invalid take it by the spoonful. If anything unexpected should happen, Pitou, who is to watch with Madame Clement, will put his long legs in motion, and be at my place in ten minutes! — Hey, Pitou?"

"In *five*, Monsieur Raynal," said Pitou, with such confidence in himself as left no room for doubt in the minds of his auditors.

"You see, Madame Billot!" said the Doctor.

"Well, so be it!" said Mother Billot; "only, say a hopeful word to poor father."

"Where is he?" asked the Doctor.

"Up in this side room."

"Useless!" said a voice from the door, up a short flight of stairs. "I have heard everything."

As the three interlocutors turned at this unexpected response, they saw the farmer standing, pale and upright, in the doorway.

Then, as if this was all he wished to hear or say, Billot returned to his own room, making no comment whatever on the arrangements Raynal had made for the night.

Pitou kept his word. In the course of a quarter-hour he returned with the composing draught, ornamented with the label and guaranteed by the seal of Master Pacquenaud, — pharmacist at Villers Cotterets, like his father before him.

The messenger crossed the kitchen and entered Catherine's chamber, not only without hindrance, but without hearing anything from anybody, except a few words from Madame Billot: "Ah, it 's thee, Pitou?" to which he only answered: "Yes, Ma'am Billot!"

Catherine was asleep, as the physician had foreseen, and her slumber was quiet. Near by — stretched out in a big armchair, her feet on the andirons — was the nurse, a prey to the special drowsiness peculiar to the honorable class to which she belonged. Having neither the right to sleep, nor yet the strength to keep awake, these nurses seem like Virgil's unfortunate ghosts. Forbidden to descend into the Fields Elysian, and yet unable to return to the light of earth, they wander like shades on the borders of night, continually hovering between slumber and wakefulness.

In the state of somnambulism habitual with her she received the bottle from Pitou's hands, uncorked it, set it

on the lightstand, and placed near it a silver spoon, so that the patient might only wait as short a time as possible, in her next hour of need. Then the nurse returned to her armchair.

As for Pitou, he sat on the window-seat, from which he could easily see Catherine.

The sentiment of pity which he felt, in thinking about Catherine, was not diminished by the sight of her. When he was permitted to touch her disease with his finger, if we may so express it, and to see for himself what terrible ravages could be committed by the abstraction called *love*, he was more than ever disposed to sacrifice his love to hers, — *his* love, which seemed to him a very simple affair, compared with the importunate, feverish, terrible passion, which appeared capable of consuming the young girl in its fierce flame.

Unconsciously to himself, these thoughts put him into the condition most favorable to the Doctor's plan. In fact, that sensible man rightly believed, that the remedy Catherine chiefly needed, was what is commonly called a *confidant*.

Though not a great physician, one thing is sure, — that, as we have said, Raynal was a quick observer.

About an hour after Pitou's return, Catherine moved, sighed, and opened her eyes.

In justice to the worthy Clement it should be said, that at the first movement made by the invalid the nurse was standing by her side, stammering: "Here I am, Mademoiselle! What do you want?"

"I am thirsty!" murmured the sick girl, returning to life through physical distress, and a feeling of bodily need.

The nurse poured into a spoon several drops of the sleeping mixture brought by Pitou, pressed the spoon

between Catherine's parched lips and set teeth, and the girl mechanically swallowed the soothing liquid.

Then Catherine let her head fall on the pillow, and the nurse, satisfied with the conviction that she had fulfilled her duty, again sought her comfortable armchair.

Pitou uttered a sigh, believing that Catherine had not even seen him.

Pitou was in error. When he aided Madame Clement to raise the girl's head, as she swallowed the decoction, as her head fell upon the pillow, Catherine half opened her eyes, and in the misty view which she had through her lashes, she fancied she could see Pitou; but in the delirium of fever, which had now endured for three days, she had seen so many phantoms, appearing only to vanish, that she now regarded the real Pitou as if he were but another phantasm.

Pitou's sigh was not a very loud one; but thereby this apparition of her old friend, towards whom she had sometimes been so unjust, made a deeper impression on her delirious mind than all the preceding phantoms. As she lay with closed eyes, her calmer and less feverish mind seemed to see before her the brave traveller, whom she had imagined, in the broken thread of her ideas, as being with her father in Paris, — as was partly true.

The result of this was, that after being awhile tormented with the doubt if Pitou was a reality, and not the evolution of feverish dream, she timidly opened her eyes, and looked about, to see if he was still in the same place.

It goes without saying that he had not budged. Seeing her eyes reopen, and rest on him, Pitou's face brightened. Seeing those eyes once more filled with life and intelligence, he extended his arms.

"Pitou!" she murmured.

"Mademoiselle Catherine!" exclaimed Pitou.

"Hey?" said Madame Clement, suddenly turning.

Catherine gave the nurse a restless glance; and then, with a sigh, she again let her head fall upon the pillow.

Pitou surmised at once that Madame Clement disturbed the girl; so he went to the nurse, and said to her very softly: "Don't deprive yourself of sleep. You know very well that Doctor Raynal had me stay here to watch Mademoiselle, purposely so that you could take some repose."

"Ah, yes! That 's true," said Madame Clement; and as if she only awaited this permission, the good woman once more disposed herself comfortably in her big chair, and sighed.

After an instant of silence she indicated, by her snoring, — which was at first timid, but grew rapidly bolder, till in a few minutes it dominated the whole situation, — that she had entered the enchanted land of sleep with all sails set, — a land she usually visited only in disjointed dreams.

Catherine noted Pitou's movements with astonishment. With the peculiar acuteness of invalids she did not lose a word of what Pitou said to Madame Clement.

He stayed near the nurse a moment, to be sure that her sleep was sound. When there was no longer any doubt of it, he approached Catherine, shaking his head, and letting his arms listlessly fall.

"Ah, Mademoiselle Catherine! I well knew that you loved him; but I did not know that you loved him so much as all this."

CHAPTER VI.

PITOU AS A CONFIDANT.

Pitou spoke these words in such a fashion that Catherine could discern therein, not only the expression of his great sorrow, but a proof of his great kindness.

Each of these two sentiments, emanating simultaneously from the heart of the brave fellow who was gazing at her so sadly, touched the sick girl in an equal degree.

So long as Isidore lived at Boursonnes, so long as she felt that her lover was only three quarters of a league away, — in a word, so long as Catherine was happy, — except for little annoyances, such as Pitou's persistence in accompanying them in their walks, and some slight disquietude raised by certain paragraphs in her father's letters, — so long as this happy time lasted, Catherine buried her love in herself, like hid treasure, to be safely guarded, lest a single farthing of it should tumble into any heart save her own; but now that Isidore was gone, while Catherine remained behind, and her felicity was thereby changed to infelicity, and the poor girl was vainly seeking for courage equal to her former self-satisfaction, she felt that it would be a great solace to meet some one with whom she could gossip about her fine gentleman, who had left her so suddenly, without being able to say anything positive about the date of his return.

She could not talk about Isidore, either with Madame Clement, Doctor Raynal, or her mother, and she was suffering sharply from this enforced silence; when suddenly,

at the moment when she least expected it, Providence placed a friend before her eyes, just as they were reopening to life and reason, — a friend who, for an instant, she suspected of not having kept silence concerning her affairs, but whose first words banished all such doubt from her breast.

Therefore, when these compassionate words escaped so painfully from the heart of Aunt Angelica's poor nephew, Catherine responded, without the least attempt to conceal her sentiments: "Ah, Monsieur Pitou, you see how unhappy I am."

From that moment the dike was broken through on one side, and the current flowed freely from the other.

"Anyhow, dear Mademoiselle Catherine," said Pitou, "though it gives me no great pleasure to talk about Monsieur Isidore, if that subject is most agreeable to you, I will give you some news of him."

"Thou?" asked Catherine.

"Oh yes!" said Pitou.

"Thou hast seen him?"

"No, but I know he reached Paris in good health."

"And how knowest thou that?" she asked, her face radiant with love.

This look drew a great sigh from Pitou; but he answered, in his usual conscientious way: "I know about him through my young friend Sebastien Gilbert, whom Monsieur Isidore overtook that night, just beyond Clear Water Spring, and carried to Paris on his crupper."

Making an effort, Catherine raised herself on her elbow, and said pointedly, looking full at Pitou: "Then he is in Paris?"

"Well, no," objected Pitou, "he can't be there at present."

"And where can he be?" languishingly asked the girl.

"I don't know. I only know this, that he had to go away on a mission, — to Spain, or Italy."

At the words *go away*, Catherine let her head fall upon her pillow, with a sigh which was followed by abundant tears.

"Mademoiselle," said Pitou, whose heart was bruised by her sorrow, "if you must absolutely know where he is now, I will find out."

"From whom?"

"From Doctor Gilbert, who left him at the Tuileries! — Or, if you like it better," he added, seeing Catherine shake her head, with a smile of negative thanks, "I will go back to Paris for intelligence. — Oh Lord, it would n't take long. It 's only an affair of twenty-four hours."

Catherine extended her feverish hand, and offered it to Pitou, who, not guessing that she could mean to accord him such a favor, did not permit himself to touch it.

"Well, Monsieur Pitou," said she, smiling, "art afraid of catching my fever?"

"Oh, excuse me, Mademoiselle," said Pitou, squeezing the girl's moist hand between his two big fists. "I did n't quite understand, you see. — Then you accept?"

"No, Pitou, quite the contrary; but I thank thee. It would be useless. It is impossible that I should get no letter from him to-morrow morning."

"A letter from him?" said Pitou, abruptly; and then he paused, looking anxiously about him.

"Why, yes, a letter from him," said Catherine, also looking about, to see what could thus disturb his usual placidity.

"A letter from him, — the Devil!" repeated Pitou, biting his nails, as an embarrassed man is apt to do.

"Why certainly, a letter from him. Is it astonishing that he should write to me, — astonishing to one who

knows all?" she asked, — adding softly to herself, "or *nearly* all."

"I am not astonished that he should write you. If I was allowed to write you, God knows I would do so quick enough, and long letters, too; only I 'm afraid —"

"Afraid of what, my friend?"

"That Monsieur Isidore's letter might fall into your father's hands."

"My father's?"

Pitou nodded thrice.

"What, my father's?" asked Catherine, more and more surprised. "Is n't he in Paris?"

"Your father is in Pisseleu, at the farm, here, in the chamber on the other side of the kitchen; only, Monsieur Raynal forbade his coming in here, because of your delirium; and I think the Doctor was right."

"And why so?"

"Because Monsieur Billot does not appear well inclined towards Monsieur Isidore; and once, when you pronounced that name, and he heard it, he made a grimace, — I can tell you."

"My God, my God!" ejaculated Catherine, all of a shiver. "What art thou telling me, Pitou?"

"The truth! I even heard him growl, between his teeth, that though nothing could be said while you were ill, yet when you were well, he should *see about that.*"

Catherine grasped Pitou's hand, with so vehement a gesture that he trembled before her.

"Monsieur Pitou!"

"Mademoiselle Catherine!"

"Right. My letters must not fall into father's hands. My father would kill me!"

"You see, you see! In such a matter as this, Father Billot would not listen to reason."

"What 's to be done?"

"Gracious! *You* must answer that question your own self, Mademoiselle."

"There must be some way out — "

"If there *is* a way, we must adopt it," said Pitou.

"I dare not!"

"How, you *dare* not?"

"I dare not tell thee what ought to be done."

"The means are in my hands, and yet you dare not tell me?"

"Oh Pitou — !"

"Ah, that is not right, Mademoiselle Catherine! I would n't have believed you could have so little confidence in me."

"I do not lack confidence in thee, dear Pitou!"

"That sounds better," responded Pitou, much flattered by her growing familiarity.

"But it will be a bothersome task for thee, my friend!"

"Oh, it won't be hard for me. Don't let that trouble you, Mademoiselle."

"Thou wilt consent in advance, to do what I ask."

"Certain sure! Gracious goodness! — at least, if it is n't impossible."

"It is very simple, on the contrary."

"Well, if it 's so simple, speak out!"

"Go to Mother Colombe's — "

"The barley-candy seller?"

"Yes. She is also distributor for the letters which come by post."

"Ah, I see! And I am to tell her to deliver your letters only to yourself?"

"Thou wilt bid her give my letters only to *thyself*, Pitou."

"To me? Ah, yes. At first I did n't understand," said Pitou; and he sighed three or four times.

"That is the surest way, thou seest? At least, unless thou dost refuse me this service."

"Me? *Refuse?* Mademoiselle Catherine!"

"Thanks, then, thanks!"

"I 'll go! Certainly, I 'll go — to-morrow."

"To-morrow will be too late, dear Pitou. This must be done to-day!"

"So be it, Mademoiselle. I 'll go to-day, this morning, right off!"

"Thou 'rt a brave lad, Pitou!" said Catherine. "How I love thee!"

"Oh Mademoiselle, only say such words to me, and I 'll go through fire for your sake."

"See what time it is, Pitou!"

He looked at the girl's watch, hanging over the mantelpiece, and said: "Half-past five in the morning."

"Well, my good friend —"

"Well, Mademoiselle?"

"It is perhaps time —"

"To go and see Mother Colombe? — I am at your orders. — But you had better take a little medicine. The Doctor advised a spoonful every half-hour."

"My dear Pitou," said Catherine, herself pouring out a spoonful of the druggist's compound, and looking at Pitou with glances which went straight to his heart, "what *thou* doest for me is better than all the decoctions on earth."

"That 's why Doctor Raynal said I had such an aptitude for medical study!"

"But where canst thou pretend to be going, Pitou, so that nobody at the farm shall have any suspicion?"

"Oh, be easy as to that!" said Pitou, taking his

hat. Then he paused to ask: "Shall I wake Madame Clement?"

"Oh no! Let her sleep, poor woman! I have no need of anything, except —"

"Except what?"

Catherine smiled.

"Ah yes, I catch on," murmured Cupid's messenger, — "except the letter from Monsieur Isidore." After an instant's silence he added: "Well, be calm! If it's there, you shall have it. If it isn't there —!"

"Well, if it isn't there?" anxiously asked Catherine.

"If it isn't there! — Well, for the sake of having you look at me again, as you did just now, — of having you smile on me again, as you did just now, — of having you call me your dear Pitou and your friend, — well, if the letter isn't there, I'll go to Paris after it."

"Good and kind heart!" murmured Catherine, following Pitou with her eyes, as he left the chamber. Then, tired with her long conversation, she laid her head on her pillow once more.

Ten minutes later the girl could hardly tell herself whether what had happened was a real accompaniment of returning reason, or a dream born of her delirium; but this was sure, that a refreshing and sweet calm had spread from her heart, throughout her feverish and aching extremities.

As Pitou passed through the kitchen, Mother Billot raised her head. She had not been abed, and for three days she had scarcely slept. During these three days she had hardly quitted her stool, buried under the shadows of the great chimney-piece, whence her eyes, in default of seeing her daughter's self, could at least see the door of her daughter's room, which the mother was forbidden to enter.

"What is it, Pitou?" she asked.

"Everything goes well, Mother Billot!"

"Whither goest thou?"

"To Villers Cotterets."

"What to do there?"

Pitou hesitated. Pitou was not the man for petty evasions.

"What am I to do there?" he repeated, to gain time.

"Yes," said Father Billot's voice: "My wife asks thee, what thou art to do there."

"I 'm going to let Doctor Raynal know —"

"He told thee not to rouse him, unless there was some change."

"Well," said Pitou, "when Mademoiselle is so much better, it seems to me that 's a change."

Whether it was because Father Billot found Pitou's response so peremptory, or whether he did not wish to bother a fellow who brought him such good news, Billot raised no further objection to Pitou's departure; and the lad passed along as soon as the farmer re-entered his chamber, and Mother Billot let her head fall again on her breast.

Pitou reached Villers Cotterets at a quarter-past six in the morning. He scrupulously awoke Doctor Raynal, to tell him how much better Catherine was, and to ask if anything different should be done.

The Doctor questioned him about his night-watch; and to the great astonishment of Pitou, who was as circumspect as possible in his answers, the good fellow perceived that the Doctor soon knew what had passed between the lad and Catherine, almost as correctly as if he had been concealed in some corner of the chamber, behind the window-curtains or bed-hangings, overhearing the conversation of the girl with her confidant.

The Doctor promised to call at the farm during the day, giving but one direction, that Catherine should be *regularly dosed from the same cask;* and with this he dismissed Pitou, who meditated some time over these enigmatical words, finally concluding the Doctor meant him to continue his chats with the young girl about Isidore de Charny.

From the Doctor's, Pitou went to Mother Colombe's. The letter-agent lived at the end of the Rue Lormet, at the other side of the village. Pitou reached her house just as she was opening her door.

Mother Colombe was a great friend of his Aunt Angelica; but this friendship for the aunt did not prevent her from appreciating the nephew.

As he entered her shop, full of gingerbread and barley candy, Pitou began to realize, as he had not before, that if he wished to succeed in his negotiation, and have the agent deliver Catherine's letters to himself, it would be necessary to employ, if not bribery, at least persuasion; so he bought two sticks of barley sugar and a junk of gingerbread.

The purchase made and paid for, he ventured to ask the desired favor.

There were grave difficulties. Letters were to be delivered only to those persons to whom they were addressed, — or, at least, only to those who brought written orders from those persons.

Mother Colombe did not doubt Pitou's word, but she insisted upon his having written authority.

Pitou saw that he must make a sacrifice. He promised to bring next day a receipt for the letter, if there was a letter, and an order for him to take any more that might come for Catherine; and this promise he accompanied with a second investment in barley candy and gingerbread.

How could she refuse such a favor to such a persuasive hand, above all, to a hand that persuaded so liberally, so sweetly.

Mother Colombe made a few more feeble objections, but ended by authorizing Pitou to follow her to the post-house, where she would deliver to him Catherine's letter, if one had come for her.

Pitou followed, eating his two wedges of gingerbread and sucking his four sticks of barley sugar.

Never, *never* before had he permitted himself such extravagance; but, as we know, owing to the liberality of Doctor Gilbert, Pitou was comparatively rich.

When he came to the Great Square he climbed the bars enclosing the fountain, applied his mouth to one of the four jets then running, and for five minutes absorbed the entire stream of water, not losing a drop.

As he came down from the fountain he threw a glance about the square, and saw that in the middle of it a staging had been erected, a sort of theatre.

Then he remembered that, at the time of his departure after Sebastien, there was talk about a convention at Villers Cotterets, to form the basis of a federation between the surrounding villages and the chief town of the section.

Various private occurrences, enchaining his interest, had made him forget this political event, which was, nevertheless, not unimportant.

He at once thought of the twenty-five louis which, when he came from Paris, Doctor Gilbert had given him, to aid in putting the Haramont National Guard on the best possible footing.

He threw back his head with pride, dreaming of the splendid figure which, — thanks to these twenty-five

goldpieces — the thirty-three guardsmen now under his orders would make.

This helped him to digest the two wedges of gingerbread and four sticks of barley sugar, which, added to the jorum of water he had swallowed, might have proved too much for the warmth of the gastric juice with which nature had provided him, and lain heavily on his stomach, if he had not also possessed that excellent aid to digestion which we call *self-esteem.*

CHAPTER VII.

PITOU AS A GEOGRAPHER.

WHILE Pitou was drinking, while Pitou was digesting, while Pitou was cogitating, Mother Colombe finished her journey, and entered the posthouse.

This did not disturb Pitou. The posthouse was situated opposite a street called New, a sort of lane, running from that part of the park known as the Avenue of Sighs, — the scene of lugubrious memories.

With fifteen of his long strides he could overtake Mother Colombe. He took these fifteen long strides, and reached the threshold of the posthouse, just as Madame Colombe came out, with the packet of letters in her hand.

Amidst these letters was one carefully folded, and enclosed in a handsome envelop, which was daintily fastened with a waxen seal.

This letter was addressed to Catherine Billot. It was evidently the letter Catherine expected.

According to their agreement, this letter was delivered, by the agent, to her customer for barley sugar, who at once departed for Pisseleu, in a mental state at once joyful and sorrowful: joyful, because he had good news for Catherine; sorrowful, because, in the source of the young girl's happiness, his lips found a fountain of bitter waters.

Despite this bitterness, the messenger was so generous-hearted that, in order to carry this confounded letter the

quicker, he unconsciously accelerated his walk into a trot, and his trot into a gallop.

Fifty yards from the farmhouse he suddenly stopped, rightly thinking, if he arrived in such a winded condition, and all covered with sweat, this would inspire Father Billot with distrust, since the good man appeared to have already entered the narrow and thorny way of suspicion.

At the risk therefore of being a minute or two late, Pitou decided to accomplish the rest of his journey at a more dignified pace; and to this end he walked with the gravity of some pretentious personage in classic tragedy, which, indeed, Catherine's confidence in Pitou caused him to resemble. As he passed by the side of the house whereon her chamber was located, he saw that the nurse had swung open half the window, doubtless to let fresh air into the room.

Pitou thrust first his nose and then his eyes into this opening. More he could not do, because of the bars; for in that time and region the windows all opened sidewise, on hinges, like double doors, and the shutters were carefully provided with bars, especially on the ground floor.

This enabled him to see Catherine awake and expectant, and for her to see Pitou mysteriously making signs.

"A letter! A letter!" babbled the girl.

"Hus–s–s–sh!" said Pitou.

Looking about him like a poacher, who wishes to avoid the gamekeepers, and finding that they two were entirely alone, he scaled the letter through the opening, with such skill that it lighted in exactly the place she had arranged for it, beside her pillow.

Then, without waiting for the thanks which were sure

to come, he drew himself from the window, and kept on his way towards the door of the house, where he found Billot standing on the threshold.

But for the projection of the wall, the farmer must have seen what had taken place; and in his present attitude of mind, God knows what would have happened, if his surmises had been changed into certainties.

Honest Pitou no sooner found himself thus unexpectedly face to face with the farmer, than he felt that he was blushing up to his ears, in spite of himself.

"Oh Monsieur Billot, how you frightened me!" he said.

"Frightened, — thee, Pitou, — a captain in the National Guard, — a conqueror of the Bastille! — *Frightened?*"

"What would you have? There are some moments, — Great Heavens! — when one is n't expecting — "

"Yes," said Billot, "especially if a fellow expects to meet a girl, and runs into her father, — hey?"

"Oh Monsieur Billot, as to that, *no!* I did not expect to see Mademoiselle Catherine! Oh, no! Although she 's getting better little by little, as I hope, she is still too ill to get up."

"Hast nothing to say?" asked Billot.

"To whom?"

"To Catherine!"

"Oh yes, I have to report that Monsieur Raynal says she 's doing very well, and that he 'll call in the course of the day; but somebody else can tell her that, as well as I."

"Besides, thou must be hungry!"

"Hungry? — Peuh!"

"What? Thou 'rt not hungry?" cried the farmer, very much surprised.

Pitou saw that he had made an asinine blunder. For

Pitou not to be hungry, at eight in the morning, would indicate a derangement in the equilibrium of nature.

"Certainly, oh yes, I *am* hungry!" said he.

"Very well, go in and eat. The hands are already at breakfast, but they 've kept a place for thee."

Pitou entered; and Billot watched him, although the lad's good-nature had almost disarmed the farmer's suspicions. He saw Pitou sit down at the upper end of the table, and attack the round loaf and his plate of bacon, as if he had not already in his stomach two balls of gingerbread, four sticks of barley candy, and a pint of water.

It is true, in all probability, that Pitou's stomach had been liberalized in the two hours since he saw Mother Colombe.

Pitou could not do many things at a time, but what he did, he did well. Intrusted by Catherine with a commission, he executed it well. Invited to breakfast by Billot, he breakfasted well.

Billot continued to watch him; but seeing that Pitou did not turn his eyes from his plate, that his interest was absorbed in the bottle of cider in front of him, and that not once did he look at Catherine's door, the farmer finally concluded that the little trip to Villers Cotterets had no other motive than Pitou had avowed.

Towards the end of Pitou's breakfast Catherine's door opened, and Madame Clement came into the kitchen, with the habitually humble smile of a nurse on her lips. She came, in her turn, for a cup of coffee.

Of course it is to be taken for granted that at six o'clock, a quarter-hour after Pitou's departure, she had made her first appearance in the kitchen, to get her little glass of brandy, — the only thing, as she said, which sustained her, especially when she had to watch all night.

As soon as she appeared Madame Billot ran to her, and Monsieur Billot came into the house. Both wished to hear about Catherine's health.

"She 's doing very well," replied Madame Clement; "although I believe that just now she 's getting a little delirious."

"What 's that?" said the farmer. "A little delirium? Has that taken her again?"

"Oh my God! My poor child!" murmured Mother Billot.

Pitou raised his head and listened.

"Yes!" continued the nurse. "She talks about a city she calls Sardinia, and a country named Turin; and she calls for Monsieur Pitou to tell her which is the city and which the country."

"Here I am!" said Pitou, swallowing the rest of his can of cider, and wiping his mouth on his sleeve; but a glance at Father Billot checked him, so he added: "That is, if Monsieur Billot judges it proper for me to give Mademoiselle the explanations she wants."

"Why not?" said Mother Billot. "If she asks for thee, poor child, go to her, my boy. Did n't Monsieur Raynal declare thee a good helper?"

"Gracious!" said Pitou, innocently. "Ask Madame Clement how we cared for Mademoiselle all night. Madame Clement never slept a wink, the good woman, — no more than I."

It showed much cunning on the part of Pitou to attack the nurse's vulnerable point. She had taken a prolonged snooze, from midnight till six o'clock; and to declare that she had not slept a moment, was to make her a friend, — yes, and more than a friend, — an out-and-out accomplice.

"That 's all right!" said Father Billot. "If our

Catherine asks for thee, go to her. Perhaps the time will come when she 'll ask for her mother and me."

Pitou felt instinctively that there was a storm in the air; and, like the shepherd out in the fields, though ready to confront the storm if necessary, he looked about in advance for some shelter for his head.

This shelter was Haramont, where he was king. King? — He was more than king. He was Commander of the National Guard, he was Lafayette!

Besides, many duties summoned him to Haramont. So he decided that, after making the proper arrangements with Catherine, he would return promptly to Haramont.

Thus meditating he entered the sick-chamber, having the permission of both the farmer and his wife.

Catherine was waiting impatiently. By the color of her cheeks and the fire in her eyes, one might well think, as Madame Clement had said, that she was still under the dominion of the fever.

Hardly had he shut the door than Catherine — recognizing his step, for which she had been longing an hour — turned quickly towards him, and extended both her hands. "Ah, it 's thou! How late thou art!"

"That 's not my fault, Mademoiselle! Your father detained me."

"My father?"

"His very self! Oh, he suspects something. Besides," added Pitou, with a sigh, "I did n't hurry! I knew you had what you most wanted."

"Yes, Pitou, yes," said the girl, lowering her eyes. "Yes, and I thank thee!" and then she added, in a low voice: "Thou art so good, Pitou, and I love thee so!"

"You are very good, yourself, Mademoiselle," answered Pitou, ready to cry; for he felt that all this friendship was but a reflection of her love for another. Modest as

the brave fellow was, he could not help feeling humiliated, in his heart of hearts, at being only the moon to Charny's sun ; so he answered quickly : " I have come to set you right, because they told me you wanted to know something."

Catherine put her hand on her heart, seeking Isidore's letter, in order to get courage from it for questioning Pitou. At last she made an effort, and said : " Pitou, thou art so wise, perhaps thou canst tell me something about Sardinia."

Pitou invoked all his geographical reminiscences. " Wait a minute, — wait a minute, Mademoiselle ! I ought to know that. One of the things the Abbé Fortier tried to teach me was geography. Wait a minute ! Sardinia ? I 'll get there ! — Ah, if I could only catch the first word, I could tell you all the rest."

" Oh, try, Pitou, try ! " said Catherine, clasping her hands.

" Parbleu, that 's what I *am* doing ! — Sardinia — Sardinia ! — Ah, I have it."

Catherine breathed more freely.

" Sardinia, so named by the Romans, is one of the three large islands of the Western Mediterranean Sea. It is south of Corsica, from which it is separated by the straits of Bonifacio, and forms part of the Sardinian States, which derive their name from it, and are called the Kingdom of Sardinia. It measures sixty leagues from north to south, and sixteen from east to west, and has fifty-four thousand inhabitants. Cagliari is the capital. — There, that 's what I know about Sardinia, Mademoiselle Catherine."

" Oh Heaven," said the girl, " how happy it must make one to know so many things ! "

" The fact is," replied Pitou, as happy in his self-respect

as he was wounded in his love, "the fact is, I have a good memory."

Catherine ventured to say, with less timidity: "Now that I have heard what there is to hear about Sardinia, tell me about Turin."

"Turin? Certainly, Mademoiselle Catherine. I ask nothing better than to tell you all about it, — if I can remember."

"Try to recollect. This is the most important, Pitou, — dear Pitou!"

"The Devil! If it is so important, it must — Besides, if I can't recollect, I 'll make inquiries."

"It is — it is — what I must know right away!" insisted Catherine. "Think, my dear Pitou, think!"

She spoke these words in so caressing a voice, that they sent a thrill through every part of his body.

"I *am* thinking, Mademoiselle," said he, "yes, I *am* thinking."

She covered her eyes. Pitou threw back his head, as if to interrogate the ceiling.

"Turin? Turin? Gracious, Mademoiselle, it 's no harder than Sardinia. — Sardinia is a large island in the Mediterranean Sea. There are three great islands in the Western Mediterranean: Sardinia, which belongs to the King of Piedmont, Corsica, which belongs to the King of France, Sicily, which belongs to the King of Naples; whereas Turin is simply a capital."

"What didst thou say about Sardinia?"

"I said that Sardinia belongs to the King of Piedmont, and I 'm sure I 'm not mistaken, Mademoiselle."

"It is exactly so, my dear Pitou. In his letter Isidore says he is going to Turin, in Piedmont!"

"Ah," said Pitou, "I understand now. — Good, good, good! It is to Turin that Monsieur Isidore has been

sent by the King, and you are pumping me, in order to find out where *he* is!"

"Why should I do so, if not for his sake?" said the girl. "What else do I care about Sardinia, Piedmont, Turin? As long as he was not there, I was ignorant which was the capital and which the state, and little cared I; but now *he* has gone to Turin, — do you comprehend, dear Pitou, — and so I want to know about Turin."

He uttered a great sigh, shook his head; but none the less he made a further effort to satisfy Catherine.

"Turin — hold on! — Yes — Turin, capital of Piedmont. Turin, Turin! I 'm on to it! Turin, called by the ancients, *Bodincemagus*, *Taurasia*, *Colonia Julia*, *Augusta Taurinorum;* to-day the capital of Piedmont and the Sardinian States; situated on the Po and the Doire; one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. Population, one hundred and twenty-five thousand; reigning King, Charles Emmanuel. There 's your Turin, Mademoiselle Catherine."

"And how far is Turin from Pisseleu, Monsieur Pitou? Thou, who knowest so much, ought to know that."

"Gracious!" said Pitou. "I can tell you how far Turin is from Paris; but from Pisseleu, that 's harder!"

"Well, tell me first about Paris. Then we can add the eighteen leagues from Paris to Pisseleu."

"That 's so!" said Pitou, who then continued his lesson "Distance from Paris, two hundred and six leagues; from Rome, one hundred and forty; from Constantinople —"

"I only need to know about Paris, my dear friend. Two hundred and six leagues plus eighteen, — two hundred and twenty-four. So he is two hundred and twenty-four leagues away from me. Only three days ago he was right here, only three-quarters of a league from my side;

and to-day — to-day," added Catherine, melting into tears and wringing her hands, "to-day he is two hundred and twenty-four leagues away from me."

"Oh, not yet," timidly suggested Pitou. "He only started day before yesterday. As yet he is only half-way, and hardly — "

"Where is he, then?"

"Oh, as to that, I know nothing about it," responded Pitou. "The Abbé Fortier taught us all about the kingdoms and their capitals, but he said nothing about the roads leading to them."

"Then this is all thou knowest, dear Pitou?"

"Oh Lord, yes!" said the geographer, humiliated that the limits of his knowledge were so soon reached, — "except that Turin is a great place for aristocrats."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That Turin, Mademoiselle, is the rendezvous for all the princes, all the princesses, all the fugitives, — D'Artois, Condé, Madame de Polignac, — a parcel of brigands, who conspire against the nation, and whose heads will be cut off some day, it is to be hoped, by a very ingenious machine in process of invention by Monsieur Guillotin."

"Oh Monsieur Pitou!"

"What then, Mademoiselle?"

"You 're getting ferocious again, as after your first visit to Paris."

"Ferocious? Me? Ah, that 's true. Yes, yes, yes! Monsieur Isidore is one of the aristocrats, and you are afraid on his account!"

Then he added, with one of those big sighs, which we have more than once noticed: "Let us talk no more of that! Let us talk of yourself, Mademoiselle Catherine, and of the way in which I can be most useful to you."

"My dear Pitou, the letter which I received this morning is probably not the only one I shall receive —"

"And you wish me to go after the others, as I did after this one?"

"Pitou, thou hast begun by being so good —"

"That I had better keep on, — would you say?"

"Yes."

"I ask nothing better."

"Thou seest, I am so watched by my father, that I cannot go to the village."

"Ah yes! but I must tell you that he watches me also, this Father Billot. I can see it in his eye."

"Yes, but thou, Pitou, he cannot follow thee to Haramont, and we can agree upon some place of deposit for our letters."

"Very well," said Pitou, — "such, for example, as the great hollow willow-tree, near the place where I found you in that swoon."

"Exactly! That is almost at the entrance of the farm, yet out of sight of the windows. It is then agreed that the letters shall be put in there?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle."

"Only, have a care that nobody sees!"

"Ask the gamekeepers at Longpré, at Taille Fontaine, at Montaigu, if they ever saw me; nevertheless, I have started up hares by the dozen. — But you, Mademoiselle Catherine, how will you manage to go after these famous letters?"

"I?" said Catherine, with a smile full of hope and determination, "I shall set myself at work to get well right away."

Pitou breathed the greatest of all possible sighs. At that moment the door opened, and Doctor Raynal appeared.

CHAPTER VIII.

PITOU AS DRESS-CAPTAIN.

Doctor Raynal's visit came very opportunely, to facilitate Pitou's departure.

The physician could not approach his patient, without perceiving the great change which had come over her since the evening before.

Catherine smiled upon the Doctor, and offered him her wrist.

"My dear Catherine," said he, "if it were not for the pleasure of touching your pretty hand, I should not even test your pulse. I wager it won't exceed seventy-five beats a minute."

"It 's true I 'm much better, Doctor, and your prescriptions have worked wonders."

"My prescriptions! *Hum–m–m!* You will understand, my child, that I ask nothing better than to be credited with all the honors of your convalescence; but, vain as I am, I must concede part of the credit to my medical student, Pitou."

Raising his eyes heavenward, he exclaimed: "Oh Nature, — powerful Ceres, mysterious Isis, — what secrets thou guardest, even from those who know how to question thee!"

Then, turning towards the door, he called out: "Now then, come in, you sober-visaged father, you restless-eyed mother, — come in, and see our dear invalid. She needs only one thing to complete the cure, — your love and your caresses."

At the Doctor's summons Father and Mother Billot hurried in, the father with a remnant of suspicion in his physiognomy, the mother's face all radiant with joy.

As they were going in, Pitou slipped out, after responding, with a knowing wink, to Catherine's farewell glance.

Let us now leave Catherine, — with Isidore's letter pressed against her heart, in place of having cold-water bandages about her head and mustard poultices on her feet, — let us leave Catherine, we say, to recover hope and life, under the caresses of her worthy parents, and follow Pitou, who has just accomplished, simply and unconsciously, one of the most difficult tasks imposed by Christianity on Christian souls, — forgetfulness of self, united with devotion to one's neighbor.

To say the brave fellow quitted Catherine with a joyous spirit, would be too much. We must be content to say that he went away with a satisfied heart. Although he did not stop to think of the greatness of his deed, he did feel — through the congratulations of that inward voice, which everybody carries about with him — that he had done a good and holy thing, from the human standpoint; though not perhaps from the standpoint of morality, which would certainly not have approved Catherine's intrigue with Isidore de Charny, — of a peasant-girl with a noble lord.

At the epoch of which we are speaking, *humanity* was one of the popular catchwords; and Pitou, who had often spoken this word, without quite knowing what it implied, now put his humanity into practice, though hardly knowing enough to call it by that name.

Had he not acted out of the genuine kindness of his heart, what he did for Catherine would have required unusual sharpness for its achievement.

From being the rival of Isidore de Charny, — a posi-

tion Pitou could not possibly have maintained, — he had become the confidant of Catherine. Instead of repulsing Pitou rudely, treating him like a brute, and putting him outside the door, as Catherine did on the return from his first trip to Paris, she now petted him, caressed him, and called him *thee* and *thou.*

As her confidant, he obtained a place in her regard which, as a rival, he could never have dreamed of holding, — without calculating that events must, sooner or later, necessitate his increasing participation in the intimate life and private sentiments of this beautiful peasant-girl.

In order to provide for a continuance of these friendly relations, Pitou began by carrying to Madame Colombe a billet, almost illegible, given him by Catherine, authorizing him to receive for her, and in her name, all letters which might come addressed to her.

To this written authority Pitou added Catherine's verbal promise, that on Saint Martin's Day she would give all the laborers at Pisseleu a treat of gingerbread and barley candy. Thanks to this authorization and this promise, — one of which satisfied the conscience, while the other gratified the business instincts of Mother Colombe, — she agreed to take from the post-packet, every morning, any letters which came for Catherine, and hold them at Pitou's disposal.

This point adjusted, and having nothing else to do in the *city,* — as Villers Cotterets was pretentiously styled, — Pitou took his homeward way.

Pitou's return to Haramont was a public event. His precipitate departure for the capital gave rise to a great many comments; for ever since the arrival from Paris, through one of Lafayette's aide-de-camps, of an order for the seizure of certain guns, kept in store at the Abbé

Fortier's, the Haramont citizens had not doubted Pitou's political importance.

Some declared that he had been summoned to Paris by Doctor Gilbert. Others thought he had been sent for by Lafayette. Others again — though, it must be acknowledged, these constituted the smallest number — thought he had been summoned by the King himself.

Although Pitou was ignorant of the rumors which were thus spread abroad during his absence, — rumors which added to his personal importance, however, — none the less did he set foot on his native heath with an air of such dignity, that everybody was greatly impressed therewith.

To be rightly estimated, men must be seen in their natural environment. At Fortier's seminary, Pitou was a pupil; at Billot's farm, he was a day-laborer; but at Haramont, he was a man, a citizen, the *Captain.* Without counting five or six louis which belonged to him personally, by virtue of his rank as Captain, it will be remembered that he had brought home twenty-five louis, generously bestowed by Gilbert, with a view to the equipment of the Haramont National Guard.

As soon as he reached home, and the drummer came to see him, Pitou ordered the lad to announce for the next Sunday, at noon, an official review, with arms and equipments, in the public square of the village. From this moment nobody doubted that Pitou had some communication to make, from the government to the Haramont Guards. Many came to chat with him, in order to learn this great secret in advance of their neighbors; but Pitou maintained a majestic silence as to public matters.

That evening, — for Pitou would no more allow his public affairs to distract him from his private duties, than he would allow his private affairs to distract him

from his public duties, — that evening he went to look after his hares, and present his compliments to Father Clouis; but this did not prevent him from calling on Master Dulauroy, the tailor, at seven o'clock next morning, — after leaving three rabbits and a hare at his own lodging, and asking Mother Colombe if there were any letters for Catherine.

There was not one; and this troubled Pitou, as he thought how disappointed the poor convalescent would be.

Pitou's visit to Monsieur Dulauroy was for the purpose of ascertaining if he would consent to undertake the job of clothing the Haramont National Guards, and what price he would charge for the same.

Master Dulauroy asked the usual questions about the height of the men, questions which Pitou answered by placing before his eyes the official list of thirty-three men, — officers, subalterns, and privates, — composing the active force of the Haramont Militia.

As all these men were known to Master Dulauroy, he could easily calculate their aggregate length and breadth; so, quill and pencil in hand, the tailor declared that he could not furnish thirty-three coats and thirty-three breeches, properly finished, for less than thirty-three louis; and that even at that price, Pitou must not expect entirely new cloth.

Pitou protested, declaring he had it from Lafayette's own mouth, that the General had clothed the three millions of men, composing the French Civic Guard, at the rate of twenty-five francs per man, or seventy-five millions for the whole.

Master Dulauroy replied, that with such an immense contract, what was lost in certain details might be retrieved in the grand result; but this was what *he* would

do, — and this was his last word, — he would uniform the Haramont Guards for twenty-two francs apiece; but there must be an advance payment, for he could not undertake such a job on credit.

Pitou carelessly drew a handful of gold from his pocket. He declared that though there was no difficulty about cash payments, he was limited as to price; and that if Master Dulauroy could not make thirty-three coats and thirty-three breeches for twenty-five golden louis, the captain must go to Master Bligny, Dulauroy's rival; although the preference had been given to Dulauroy, because he was the friend of Pitou's aunt.

Indeed, Pitou was not sorry to have Aunt Angelica learn, in this roundabout way, that he had a spadeful of gold; and he doubted not that, on that very evening, the tailor would report what he had seen, declaring that Pitou was as rich as Crœsus.

The threat of taking such an important order elsewhere, had its due effect. Master Dulauroy agreed to do as Pitou wished; and even acceded to Pitou's demand for a captain's suit for himself, to be made of new cloth, and finished in good shape, epaulets included. He was not particular about fine cloth, — he even liked coarse cloth better than fine, — but it must be new.

This occasioned a new debate, not shorter or less fiery than the first; but again Pitou was victorious, — thanks to that terrible threat of patronizing Master Bligny, if Master Dulauroy could not accept these terms.

The end of all this discussion was an agreement to furnish, by the next Saturday, thirty-one coats and thirty-one breeches for the privates, two coats and two breeches for the sergeant and lieutenant, and one coat and breeches for the captain, this last coat to be graced with epaulets.

In default of punctual delivery of the goods, the tailor would be held responsible for procuring the postponement of the ceremony of public confederation, — of Villers Cotterets and the other villages, — which was to take place in the chief town of the neighborhood, on the Sunday following that Saturday. This condition was accepted by the tailor, like the others.

By nine o'clock in the morning, the important bargain was concluded.

At half-past nine Pitou returned to Haramont, proudly anticipating the surprise which he had prepared for his fellow-citizens.

At eleven o'clock the drummer beat his call.

At noon the National Guard manœuvred under arms, with their usual precision, in the public square of the village.

After an hour of drill, which won for the brave guardsmen the praises of their chief, — and the cheers of the women, children, and old men, who looked upon this touching spectacle with the greatest interest, — Pitou summoned Sergeant Claude Tellier and Lieutenant Desiré Maniquet, and ordered them to call their men together, and invite them, in behalf of himself, in behalf of Doctor Gilbert, in behalf of General Lafayette, and in behalf of the King, to call upon Master Dulauroy, the tailor at Villers Cotterets, who had important communications for them all.

The drummer beat the call to order. The sergeant and lieutenant, who knew as little about it as those whom they addressed, transmitted the orders to the privates, in the exact words of their captain. Then the order to break ranks was pronounced by the ringing voice of Pitou himself.

Five minutes later the thirty-one brave privates of the

Haramont Guard, plus Sergeant Tellier and Lieutenant Desiré Maniquet, were hurrying along the road to Villers Cotterets.

That night the two fiddlers of Haramont gave the captain a serenade. The air was alive with crackers, gunshots, Roman candles, and pinwheels, and several voices — slightly inebriated, to be sure — called out at intervals: "Long life to Ange Pitou, the Father of the People!"

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE ABBÉ FORTIER GIVES A NEW PROOF OF HIS ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT.

THE following Sunday the inhabitants of Villers Cotterets were awakened by the drummer, enthusiastically beating his call to arms, at five o'clock in the morning.

In my opinion, nothing is more impertinent than this fashion of arousing people, the majority of whom — almost always, it is safe to say — would prefer to finish the night peacefully, and complete their seven hours of sleep, which, according to popular hygiene, every man needs, to keep himself in good health; but so it is in revolutionary epochs; and when a man lives in one of these periods of agitation and progress, he must philosophically reckon slumber among the sacrifices to be made for his country.

Satisfied or dissatisfied, Patriotic or Aristocratic, the inhabitants of Villers Cotterets were thus aroused on that Sunday, October 18, 1789, at five o'clock in the morning.

The ceremony was not to begin till ten, but five hours were none too long for the accomplishment of what yet remained to be done.

During the preceding ten days a large platform, or stage, had been erected in the middle of the square; but this stage, the rapid construction whereof attested the zeal of the carpenters, was but the skeleton of the edifice, — so to speak.

The structure was intended for a Patriot Altar; and, more than a fortnight before, the Abbé Fortier had been invited to come and celebrate Mass at that altar, on Sunday, October 18, instead of doing so in his church.

To make this stage worthy of its double purpose, religious and social, it was necessary to ask donations from the rich accumulations of the community; and it must be said that all had generously offered their possessions in aid of this grand solemnity, — one sending a carpet, another an altar-cloth, a third giving silk curtains, and a fourth lending a sacred picture; but as stability is not the strong point of the weather in the month of October, and as the barometer seldom points to *fair* during the reign of the Scorpion, nobody liked to expose his offering before the proper time, and each preferred to delay bringing forward his tribute till the feast-day arrived, and proved to be bright and pleasant.

The sun rose at six and a half o'clock, according to its custom at that period of the year, announcing, by the softness and warmth of its rays, one of those beautiful autumn days, which may well challenge comparison with the loveliest days of spring.

By nine o'clock the Patriot Altar was spread with a magnificent Aubusson carpet, draped with lace-edged linen, and surmounted with a picture representing John the Baptist Preaching in the Wilderness; while it was sheltered by a canopy of gold-fringed velvet, from which hung magnificent brocade curtains.

The utensils necessary for the celebration of Mass would naturally be sent from the chapel, and everybody knew these would be all right.

Moreover, every citizen, as on Corpus Christi, decorated his doorway, or the front of his house, with tapestries

embroidered with flowers and human figures, or else with hangings twined with ivy.

All the young girls in Villers Cotterets and its vicinity — clad in white, wearing tricolored sashes, and carrying green branches — were to surround the Patriot Altar.

After Mass the men were to take the oath in support of the Constitution.

The Villers Cotterets National Guards, under arms since eight o'clock, awaited the coming of the military companies from the other villages, and fraternized with them as fast as they arrived.

It need scarcely be said that, among all these companies, the one expected with the most impatience was the Haramont Civic Guard, — it having been noised abroad that (thanks to the influence of Pitou and to the royal bounty) the thirty-three men composing that company, plus their captain Ange Pitou, would appear in new uniforms.

The shop of Master Dulauroy had not been empty all the week. Outside and inside there was a stream of inquisitive folks, anxious to see the ten workmen employed on this gigantic order, — an order unparalleled within the memory of the oldest inhabitant of Villers Cotterets.

The last uniform, the captain's, — for Pitou had insisted that he should not be served before the others, — the last uniform was ready for delivery, according to the agreement, on Saturday night, at fifty-nine minutes past eleven.

Equally according to agreement, Pitou counted out, on the nail, the twenty-five louis to Monsieur Dulauroy.

All this having made a great stir in the chief village of the canton, it is not astonishing, on the day appointed, that the Haramont Guards were so anxiously expected.

At precisely nine o'clock the sound of fife and drum was heard from the extremity of the Rue Largny. Great cries of joy and admiration were also heard, and from afar could be perceived the form of Pitou, on his white horse, — or, rather, on the white horse belonging to his lieutenant, Désiré Maniquet.

The Haramont Guard, as is not commonly the case with things long expected, did not disappoint expectation.

It may be remembered what a triumph these Haramontonians obtained when their uniforms were only thirty-three similar hats, and Pitou had nothing distinctive to mark his rank, except a plain dragoon's cap and sabre.

One can imagine what a martial display Pitou's thirty-three men now made, with their uniform coats and breeches, and what an air their chief put on, with his little cap cocked over his eye, his gorget on his breast, his catspaw-epaulets on his shoulders, and his sword in his hand.

There was one cry of admiration from the end of Rue Largny to Fountain Square.

Aunt Angelica could hardly bring herself to recognize her nephew; and she barely escaped being knocked down by Maniquet's white horse, in trying to look at Pitou under the animal's very nose.

Pitou made a majestic salute with his sword, and pronounced these words, in a tone to be heard twenty rods away: "Good-day, Madame Angelica."

Crushed by this respectful salutation, the ancient maiden took three steps backward, and exclaimed, lifting her eyes to Heaven: "Oh, the rascal! His honors have turned his head. He no longer knows his own aunt."

Pitou passed majestically along, without noticing this

apostrophe, and took his place at the foot of the Patriot Altar, — this place of honor being assigned to the Haramont Guards, because they were the only company completely uniformed.

There Pitou dismounted, and gave his horse into the care of an urchin, who received for his task six big sous from the munificent captain.

In the course of the next five minutes this fact was reported to Aunt Angelica, who cried: "The wretch! Is he a millionnaire?" Then she added, in a lower tone: "I was badly influenced when I quarreled with him. Aunts may inherit property from nephews!"

Neither exclamation nor reflection reached Pitou, who was simply in ecstasy; for among the girls belted with tricolored ribbons, and carrying green branches, he recognized Catherine.

She was still pale, for her disease was hardly vanquished; but she was more beautiful in her paleness than any other girl in the rosiest health.

Catherine was pale, but happy; for that very morning, thanks to Pitou, she had discovered a letter in the hollow tree.

As we have said, poor Pitou found time for everything. That morning, at seven, he found time to go to Mother Colombe's, after a letter. At quarter-past seven he placed that letter in the willow. At eight he was all dressed in his new uniform, at the head of his thirty-three followers.

He had scarcely seen Catherine since the day he left her on her bed at the farmhouse; and — we repeat it — when he now beheld her, so beautiful and so happy, it threw him into ecstasies.

She made him a sign to come to her. Pitou looked about, doubtful if this sign could be intended for himself. Catherine smiled again, and renewed the invitation. He

was not mistaken ; so he replaced his sword in its scabbard, lifted his hat gallantly by one corner, and marched bare-headed toward the young girl ; whereas, in the presence of Lafayette, Pitou would simply have touched his hat.

"Ah, Monsieur Pitou," said Catherine, "I hardly knew you. My goodness ! How fine we look, in our new uniform." Then she added, in a whisper : "Thanks, thanks, my dear Pitou. How kind you are, and how much I love you."

As she spoke she took his hand, and pressed it between her own. A dizziness came over Pitou. His hat slipped from his relaxed hand, and fell to the ground ; and possibly the poor lover would have fallen atop of his hat, if a great noise, accompanied by threatening tones, had not been heard from the direction of Rue Soissons.

Whatever the cause of this disturbance, Pitou profited by the incident to escape from his embarrassment. He withdrew his hand from Catherine's pressure, replaced his hat, and shouted "To arms !" as he ran to place himself at the head of his thirty-three men.

Let us see what caused this great tumult and these threatening cries.

It was well known that Abbé Fortier had been appointed to celebrate the Mass on this Patriot Altar, in honor of the local federation to be inaugurated, and that the sacred dishes, and other accessories of worship, — such as the crucifix, banners, candlesticks, — were to be transported from the church to this new altar, erected in the middle of the square.

The orders relating to this part of the ceremony had been given by the Mayor, Monsieur de Longpré.

It will be remembered that Monsieur de Longpré formerly had trouble with Abbé Fortier, when Pitou,

with Lafayette's warrant in his hand, made requisition for an armed force, in order to take possession of the guns unlawfully concealed by the priest. Acquainted well with the abbé's character, as was everybody else, Longpré knew him to be so self-willed as easily to lose his head, and irritable to the point of violence. He reasonably doubted whether the priest did not hold a grudge against the Mayor, on account of his interference in this old affair of the guns. So instead of calling personally upon Fortier, and conferring with him as to the respective duties of the civil and religious functionaries, the Mayor contented himself with sending to the worthy minister of God the programme of the festival, which was in part as follows:

ARTICLE IV.

Mass will be celebrated on the Patriot Altar, by the Abbé Fortier, commencing at ten o'clock in the morning.

ARTICLE V.

The sacred vessels, and other articles necessary for the service, under Abbé Fortier's care, will be taken from the church in Villers Cotterets, and placed on the Patriot Altar.

The Mayor's secretary had personally delivered this official programme to the priest, who glanced over it with a sneering air, and answered in a tone which corresponded with his looks: "Very well!"

By nine o'clock, as we have said, the Patriot Altar was all prepared, with its carpet, curtains, linen, and the picture of Saint John Preaching in the Wilderness. There were lacking only the candles, the crucifix, the tabernacle containing the consecrated wafer, and such other utensils as are essential to the divine service called the Sacrifice of the Mass.

At nine and a half o'clock these articles had not yet appeared.

The Mayor grew uneasy, and sent his secretary to the church, to inquire when they would bring these things over.

The secretary returned, saying that he had found the church doors locked.

Then he received orders to run after the beadle, as the beadle would naturally be the man to take charge of the articles to be moved; but he found the beadle with his leg stretched out on a hassock, and making faces like one possessed. The unfortunate mace-bearer had sprained his foot.

The secretary next received orders to go after the choristers. Both their bodies were out of kilter. By way of remedy, one had taken an emetic and the other a purgative. Both medicines were operating miraculously well, and the two sick men hoped to be out by the next day.

The Mayor began to smell a conspiracy. He sent his secretary to the priest's house. Behold, Abbé Fortier had been seized, that very morning, with an attack of the gout, and his sister feared lest it should mount as high as his stomach.

There was no longer any doubt in Mayor Longpré's mind. Not only was Fortier unwilling to say Mass on the Patriot Altar, but in putting the beadle and the choristers out of service, and locking all the doors of the church, he meant to prevent any other priest — if perchance one was present — from celebrating Mass in his stead.

The situation was grave. At that epoch it was not yet thought possible for the civil to be separated from the religious authorities, on any important occasion, or that

any festival could possibly be celebrated without the Mass; though a few years later, men went to the other extreme.

Of course all these trips of the secretary to and fro, did not take place without his uttering hints about the sexton's sprain, the choral purgative and emetic, and the priestly gout.

A deep murmur began to make itself heard among the populace. They even talked of breaking down the church doors, in order to get the sacred utensils and ornaments, and of bringing the priest by force to the Patriot Altar.

The Mayor was essentially a conciliatory man. He checked the first effervescent movements, and offered to go as an ambassador to treat with Abbé Fortier.

He therefore went to the Rue Soissons and knocked at the priest's door, which was as carefully bolted as the doors of the church. He knocked in vain, for the door remained shut.

Monsieur de Longpré then concluded that it was time to call for the intervention of an armed force; so he sent word to the quartermaster and the corporal of gendarmes. Both were in Grand Square, and hastened to obey the official summons, followed by an immense concourse of people.

Having neither ram nor catapult wherewith to force the door, a locksmith was sent for; but at the moment when the locksmith inserted his picklock, the door opened, and Fortier appeared on the threshold. He did not look like Coligny, when he said to his assassins: "My brothers, what wish you with me?" but rather like Calchas, "with his hair standing on end, and his eyes brilliant with gory light," as Racine says in Iphigenia.

"Back!" cried the priest, lifting his hand with a menacing gesture. "Back, ye heretics, ye renegades, ye

Huguenots, ye backsliders! Back, Amalakites, Sodomites, Gomorrites! Leave the threshold of God's servant!"

There was a great murmur in the crowd, a murmur not in the priest's favor.

"Pardon me," said the Mayor, in a mild voice, into which he conveyed the most persuasive possible accent; "pardon me, we only wish to learn whether you will or will not celebrate Mass on our Patriot Altar."

"Whether I will say Mass on that altar?" cried the priest, rushing at once into one of those fits of holy anger to which he was so inclined. "Do you wish me to sanction revolt, rebellion, ingratitude? Do you expect me to pray God to curse virtue and bless sin? You do not expect it, Monsieur Mayor! You want to learn, yes or no, whether I will celebrate your sacrilegious Mass? Well, take my answer! — No, *no*, NO, — I will *not*!"

"Very well, Monsieur Fortier," replied the Mayor, "you are free, and no one can force you."

"Ah, it is indeed fortunate that I am free. It is indeed lucky that I am not to be compelled. — Indeed, you are too kind, Monsieur Mayor!"

Thus the Abbé replied, with a most insolent sneer, as he began to shut his door against the very noses of the authorities.

The door was about to present — as one might say in vulgar language — its wooden face to the stunned assemblage, when a man rushed out of the crowd, and, with one powerful effort, banged open the door, which was nearly shut, — thereby almost upsetting the priest, so vigorous was the attack.

This man was Billot, — Billot, pale with anger, his brows contracted and his teeth set.

It will be remembered that Billot was a philosopher.

In this quality he detested the priests, whom he called *smallcaps* and *loafers*.

He caused a profound silence. Everybody felt that something terrible was likely to happen between the two men.

Although compelled to use great force in holding the door open, Billot nevertheless spoke with a calm and almost gentle voice.

"Pardon me, Monsieur Mayor, but what did you say? You said — I beg to repeat it — you said, if Abbé Fortier did not wish to discharge the duties of his office, no one could compel him to do so?"

"Yes, about that!" stammered poor Monsieur de Longpré. "Yes, I said something like that!"

"Then you have advanced a great error, Monsieur Mayor; and, in our day, it is important such errors should not propagate themselves."

"Back, profane one! Back, impious man! Back, renegade! Back, heretic!" cried Abbé Fortier, addressing Billot.

"Hold your tongue," said Billot, "or, I give you fair warning, things will turn out very badly for you. I am not insulting you. I am here for discussion only. The Mayor believes that you cannot be forced to say Mass, and I say that you *can* be so compelled."

"A Manichæan! a Calvinist!" cried the priest.

"Silence!" said Billot. "What I say, I can prove."

"Silence, silence!" cried everybody.

"You hear, Monsieur Fortier," said Billot with uninterrupted calmness, "everybody is of my opinion. I may not preach like you, but it appears to me that I can say some interesting things, if anybody will listen."

The priest wanted to reply to this novel appeal, but the powerful voice of the multitude impressed him, in

spite of himself. "Speak, speak!" he said mockingly. "Let us hear what you have to say."

"You certainly *shall* hear!" said Billot.

"Go on! I'm listening!"

"Then you're doing well!" said Billot.

Throwing a side look at the priest, to see if he meant to keep still and listen, Billot continued: "I say that one thing is very simple, — whoever receives a salary is obliged, in exchange for that salary, to do the work for which it is paid."

"Ah!" said the priest, "I see what's coming."

"My friends," continued Billot, with the same easy voice, yet addressing himself to the two or three hundred spectators of the scene, "which do you prefer to hear, the anathemas of Monsieur Fortier, or my arguments?"

"Speak, Billot, speak! We are listening. Silence, Abbé Fortier, silence!"

This time Billot contented himself with a glance at Fortier, and then went on. "I say, that whoever touches a salary is obliged to do the work for which it is paid. For example, here is the Mayor's secretary. He is paid for doing certain writing for his Honor, for carrying his messages, for replying to certain letters which are addressed to him. His Honor sends him to you, Monsieur Abbé, to bring you a programme of this festival. Well, it would never enter his head to tell the Mayor that he would rather not take this programme to Monsieur Fortier! Am I not right, Monsieur Secretary, — that such a notion would not occur to you?"

"Certainly it would n't! My faith, no!" responded the secretary, ingenuously.

"Do you hear, Monsieur Abbé?" asked Billot.

"Blasphemer!" cried the priest.

"Silence!" cried the audience.

Billot went on: "Here's the quartermaster of the police, who is paid to maintain good order, where good order is endangered. When his Honor the Mayor thought, just now, that you were likely to disturb the peace, and summoned the quartermaster to his aid, did that officer think of replying: 'Execute the order if you will, Monsieur Mayor, but don't expect me to execute it'? Did you even think of responding in such a way, Monsieur Quartermaster?"

"My faith, no!" replied the gendarme. "It was my duty to come, and I came."

"You hear, Monsieur Fortier?" said Billot.

The priest ground his teeth.

"Wait!" continued Billot. "Here is an honest man, a locksmith. Just now the Mayor sent for him to come and open your door. The locksmith did not think of replying that he did not wish to open Fortier's door. Am I not right, Picard, in saying that idea did not occur to you?"

"To be sure," replied the locksmith. "I took my picks, and here I am. When each one does his duty, the cows are well cared for."

"You hear, Monsieur Abbé?" said Billot.

The priest tried to interrupt, but the farmer stopped him with a gesture.

"Tell me now, how comes it that you, who are appointed to set a good example, — how comes it that you alone are excused, when everybody else is held fast to his duty?"

"Bravo, Billot! bravo!" cried the audience, with one voice.

"Not only do you shirk your duty, but you set an example of disorder."

"Oh!" said the priest, perceiving that it was necessary for him to defend himself, "the Church is independent. The Church obeys nobody, and is responsible only to herself!"

"There 's just the mischief of it," said Billot. "You set up another power within the country, a separate body within the state. You are either French or foreign; either you are a citizen, or you are not a citizen. If you are Prussian, English, or Austrian, — if you get your pay from Pitt of England, from Cobourg, or from Kaunitz of Austria, then obey the directions of Pitt, Cobourg, or Kaunitz; but if you are a Frenchman, if you are a citizen, if the nation pays your salary, then obey the nation."

"Yes, yes!" cried three hundred voices.

"Therefore," said Billot, with a scowl on his face, and his eye full of lightning, laying his strong hand on the priest's shoulder, "therefore, thou priest, in the name of the nation, I summon thee to fulfil thy mission of peace, to appeal for the favors of Heaven, the good bounty of Providence, the mercy of the Lord, to fall on all thy fellow-citizens and on thy country! Come on!"

"Bravo, Billot! Long live Billot!" shouted the crowd. "To the altar with the priest! To the altar!"

Encouraged by these acclamations, with his vigorous arm the farmer dragged the priest from the sheltering arch of his great doorway, — perhaps the first priest in France who openly took his stand in favor of a counter-revolution.

The Abbé Fortier understood that resistance was no longer possible; so he said: "Very well, make a martyr of me! I call for martyrdom! I pray for martyrdom! I demand martyrdom." Then he intoned, in a full

voice, the Psalm, *Libera nos, Domine!* (Deliver us, oh Lord!)

This was the singular procession which advanced towards Grand Square, accompanied by the cries and clamors whose noise reached Pitou, when he was ready to faint under Catherine's thanks and tender words, added to the pressure of her hand.

CHAPTER X.

THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

PITOU, to whose mind this noise recalled the Parisian riots, which he had more than once witnessed, — believing that he saw a band of ruffians approaching, believing that he should be called upon to defend some new Flesselles, some new Foulon, some new Berthier, — gave the order "To arms!" and put himself at the head of his thirty-three men.

Then the crowd divided, and he saw advancing the Abbé Fortier, dragged along by Billot, and needing only a palm-branch to make him like the ancient Christians, when they were forced into the arena of the Coliseum.

A natural feeling impelled him to the support of his old teacher, of whose offence he was as yet ignorant.

"Oh Monsieur Billot!" he cried, throwing himself in front of the farmer.

"Oh father!" cried Catherine, with a movement so exactly like Pitou's, that one might believe they had been trained by the same scene-manager.

It only required a glance from Billot, to check Pitou on one side, and Catherine on the other. There were both the eagle and the lion in that man, who represented the incarnation of the popular uprising.

At the foot of the staging he loosed his hold upon the priest, and said, pointing to the platform with his finger: "There is the Patriot Altar, at which thou hast disdained to officiate, but which I now declare thee unworthy to

serve. To ascend these sacred steps the heart should be filled with three sentiments — desire for liberty, devotion to country, love of humanity. Priest! dost thou desire the enfranchisement of the world? Priest! art thou devoted to thy country? Priest! lovest thou thy neighbor as thyself? Then ascend boldly to the altar, and call upon God! but if thou dost not feel thyself to be a leader among us, as a citizen, — chief among us, because best serving the common weal, — then yield thy place to one more worthy, and take thyself hence! — Go thy way! Disappear!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed the priest, as he retired, threatening Billot with his fist. "Thou dost not know against whom thou declarest war!"

"Yes, I do know!" said Billot. "I declare war against wolves, foxes, serpents, — against whatsoever stings, whatsoever bites, whatsoever wounds in the dark. Well," he added, smiting his large breast with a powerful gesture of both hands, "stab, bite, sting! Here I am!"

There followed a moment of silence. The crowd opened to let the priest escape, and then closed up again, remaining motionless with admiration, in the presence of Billot's vigorous nature, which offered itself as a target for the shafts of that terrible power, by which, at that epoch, half the world was still enslaved, and which was called the Clergy, or the Church. There was no longer any mayor, no longer a deputy-mayor, no longer a municipal council; there was only Billot!

Monsieur de Longpré drew near, saying: "But with all this, Monsieur Billot, we have still no priest."

"And what then?"

"Having no curate, we can have no Mass."

"Pity about that!" said Billot, who, since his boyhood's first and only communion, had but twice set foot

in a church, — on the day of his own marriage, and the day of his daughter's baptism.

"I do not call it a misfortune," replied the Mayor, who held, with good reason, that it was not best to cross Billot's grain, "but what can we have in place of the Mass?"

"In place of the Mass?" cried Billot, borne along by a wave of genuine inspiration. "I 'll tell you. Ascend with me to this Patriot Altar, Monsieur Mayor! — ascend with me, Pitou! — you on my right hand, and you on my left, — so! What we will have in place of the Mass, — listen, all of you! — is the Declaration of Human Rights, which is the Creed of Liberty, the Evangel of the Future."

There was a simultaneous clapping of hands. All these people, so recently emancipated, — barely unchained, — were hungry for some knowledge of the rights won for them, which they were some day to enjoy. They were more thirsty for that gospel, than for what Abbé Fortier called the Word Celestial.

Standing between the Mayor, who represented legal power, and Pitou, who represented military force, Billot stretched forth his hand. Speaking from his heart and memory, — for, it will be remembered, the worthy farmer knew not how to read, — he delivered his speech in a resounding voice, while the people listened, standing with uncovered heads. His speech took the form of a sermon on a series of texts, — texts furnished by the famous Declaration of Human Rights, written perhaps by Thomas Paine, who so ably defended it, — perhaps by Dumont, the friend and coadjutor of Mirabeau, — and adopted, while as yet the Constitution was in embryo, by the National Assembly, on August 18, 1789, two months before this confederation at Villers Cotterets.

As if the printed page were before him, Billot repeated each section of this remarkable document, often deducing certain inferences therefrom.

DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

Article One.

Men are born, and should live, with free and equal rights. Social distinctions should have no other foundation than the common welfare.

Article Two.

The object of political association should be the preservation of natural and inalienable human rights. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

These words, *resistance to oppression*, were spoken by Billot as a man who had seen the walls of the Bastille tumble before his very eyes, and knew that nothing could resist the strength of the people, when they put forth that strength.

Then arose one of those murmurs which, coming from a multitude of people, sound like distant thunder, while Billot continued:

Article Three.

The principle of all government resides primarily in the Nation. No corporation, no individual, can rightfully exercise any authority which does not emanate directly from the Nation.

This last phrase so vividly recalled what had just been said in the discussion between Billot and the priest, — wherein Billot had invoked this very principle, — that the words could not pass by unnoticed; and the farmer's recitation of the lines was therefore interrupted by cheers

and plaudits, which Billot allowed to die away before he resumed his address.

Article Four.

Liberty consists in the right to do anything which does not injure others. The exercise of any man's natural rights is therefore only limited by the restraints necessary to secure to other members of society their enjoyment of the same rights, similarly assured to them; and these limits should be fixed only by law.

This article, though so fundamental, was somewhat too abstract for the simple folks who listened to it; and so it was received more coldly than the others.

Article Five.

The law has only the right to condemn such actions as are injurious to society. Anything not prohibited by law cannot be rightfully forbidden; and no one can lawfully be compelled to do what is not ordained by law.

"That is to say," said a voice from the crowd, "if the law no longer ordains the *corvée*, or enforced public labor, and abolishes ecclesiastical tithes, then the priests have no longer any right to take their tithes from my fields, nor the King to force me to do public work without pay, on the highways, in the forests, or elsewhere."

"Precisely," said Billot, replying to his questioner; "and for the present and future we are forever exempt from these shameful extortions."

"In that case," said the questioner, "Long live the Law!" and the whole audience repeated in chorus: "Long live the Law!"

Here Billot lifted his finger solemnly: "Listen well to this, — friends, brothers, citizens, men!" and as he went

on with the next article, he raised his voice higher and higher, so that not a syllable of it should be lost:

Article Six.

Law is the expression of the will of the community. All Frenchmen have the right to participate, personally, or by their representatives, in the establishment of law, which must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal before the law, are equally admissible to all dignities, places, and offices, *according to their individual capacities*, and without other distinctions than those which arise from *virtues* and *talent*.

This Sixth Article roused universal applause; so Billot passed at once to the next:

Article Seven.

No man can be rightfully indicted, arrested, or imprisoned, except in cases determined by law, and in accordance with prescribed forms. All those who incite, expedite, or execute unlawful commands, or cause them to be executed, must be punished; but every citizen, summoned or seized in the name of the law, should instantly obey, and not render himself culpable by resistance.

Article Eight.

The law should ordain only such penalties as are strictly necessary; and no one should be punished, except in accordance with a law ordained and promulgated prior to the offence, and legally applied.

Article Nine.

Every man being presumably innocent, until he is declared guilty, if his detention is judged indispensable, all severity not found necessary for the custody of his person, should be severely forbidden by law.

Article Ten.

No man should be molested on account of his opinions, even in religion, provided their manifestation does not disturb the order established by law.

Article Eleven.

The free expression of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious human rights. Every citizen may therefore speak, write, and print freely; although he must be held responsible for any abuse of this liberty, in cases determined by law.

Article Twelve.

A guaranty of the rights of men and citizens requires public force. This force is instituted for the benefit of all, and not for the special use of those to whom its duties are confided.

Article Thirteen.

For the support of public authority, and the defrayal of government expenses, a common contribution is indispensable; but it should be equally divided among all citizens, in proportion to their means.

Article Fourteen.

All citizens have the right to determine, either personally or by their representatives, the necessity of any public contribution, to discuss it freely, to learn how it is used, and to determine its proportional assessment, its collection, and its duration.

Article Fifteen.

Society has the right to demand of every public agent an account of his administration.

Article Sixteen.

Society in which the guaranty of rights is not assured, and the distribution of power is undefined, has no proper Constitution.

Article Seventeen.

The right to property being inviolable and sacred, no one should be deprived of it, except when it is evidently exacted by public necessity, legally determined, and under the condition of fair preliminary indemnity.

"Now," said Billot, "here is the application of these principles, as adopted by the National Assembly. Hearken, my brothers! Hearken, fellow-citizens! Hearken, ye men of France, set free by this Declaration of Human Rights, — of *your* rights!"

"Hush! Silence! Hear!" shouted at least twenty voices together.

Billot went on, with a threatening accent, expressing his hatred of tyranny:

The National Assembly, wishing to establish the French Constitution on the principles recognized in this Declaration, abolishes irrevocably all institutions which wound liberty and equality.

Henceforth there shall be neither nobility nor peerage, neither hereditary distinctions nor distinctions of rank, neither feudal government nor hereditary judgeships, nor any of the titles, attributes, or prerogatives derived therefrom, no orders of knighthood, nor any corporations or decorations which may demand proofs of nobility, or which presuppose distinctions of birth; nor shall there be any superiority except that belonging to public officers in the exercise of their duties.

No public office shall henceforth be salable or hereditary. There shall not be for a part of the nation, nor for an individual thereof, any privilege or exemption not belonging equally to all the French people.

There shall be no restrictive guilds, no professional corporations, no monopolies of the arts and trades.

Finally, the law recognizes the validity, neither of religious vows, nor of any other pledges contrary to natural human rights and the Constitution.

Billot finished his address, which had been listened to in religious silence.

For the first time, and with surprise, the people heard their rights proclaimed in open day, in the light of the sun, and in the presence of their Lord, to whom they had long prayed for such a charter of natural rights, which they had now obtained only after cycles of slavery, misery, and suffering.

For the first time humanity, real manhood, on which the edifice of the monarchy — with the peerage on the right, and the clergy on the left — had been pressing for six hundred years, — for the first time the laborer, the artisan, the mechanic, could recognize his own strength, could appreciate his own value, could calculate his rightful position on the earth, could measure the shadow which he cast in the sunshine; and do all this, not by reason of the good pleasure of some master, who claimed an inborn right to rule, but at the word of one of his own equals.

After the last lines, which he repeated: "The law recognizes the validity neither of religious vows, nor of any other pledges contrary to natural human rights and the Constitution," Billot lifted up his voice in words so new as to seem almost wrong: "Long live the Nation!" When he thus spoke he extended his two arms, and drew to his breast, in one fraternal embrace, the Mayor's scarf and Pitou's epaulets. Though the Mayor ruled in a very small community, and Pitou was chief only of a handful of peasants, — despite the smallness of the things represented, — the principle was none the less grand, and every mouth repeated the shout, "Long live the Nation!"

All arms opened and closed in a general embrace. There was a sublime fusion of all hearts into one general

heart, — an absorption of all interests into one common devotion.

It was such a scene as Gilbert described to the Queen three months later, — in a conversation already recorded in this narrative, — a scene which she could not at all understand.

Billot came down from the Patriot Altar amidst the joyous acclamations of the whole population.

The musicians of Villers Cotterets, assisted by the musicians from the neighboring villages, soon began to play that melody of fraternal reunion, so familiarly used at weddings and baptisms :

Where can one better be
Than in his family ?

Dating from that era France became one grand national family. Religious hatreds were extinguished. Provincial prejudices were annihilated. What is one day to come to pass for all the world, then began for France. Geographical distinctions were erased. No more mountains, no more rivers, no more obstacles of any sort, intervened between man and man. There was one language, one country, one heart.

Hearing this rustic melody, wherewith the nation had formerly welcomed Henry the Fourth, and with which, even in our day, Liberty is still saluted, — the crowd began to wreathe themselves into that ancient dance from Provence, called the Farandole. In an instant they formed an endless chain, which rolled itself into living rings about the centre, and then strung itself out into the streets which led away from the square.

Then they set up tables in front of their doors. Poor or rich, every one brought his dish of food, his pot of cider, his mug of beer, his bottle of wine, or his jug of

water; and the whole population blessed God, while they shared this love-feast, — this *agapé*, — which might well derive its name from the assemblages of the apostolic Christians. Six thousand citizens thus received the elements at the same table, as it were, — the holy table of fraternity, the Eucharist of Humanity.

Billot was the hero of the hour; but he shared his honors generously with the Mayor and Pitou.

It is needless to say that in the dance Pitou managed to give his hand to Catherine, — needless to say that he found a place near her at the table.

She was unhappy, poor child. The joy of the morning had vanished, as the rosy and smiling rays of the dawn disappear beneath the storm-clouds of midday.

In his struggle with Fortier, in his speech over the Declaration of Human Rights, her father had bidden defiance to the Clergy and the Nobility, — a defiance the more terrible, coming from so humble a quarter.

She thought of Isidore, who was no longer anything, — that is, was nothing socially more than other men.

It was not his title, not his rank, not his wealth, which she regretted, for she would have loved Isidore as a simple peasant; but it seemed to her that the world was violent, unjust, brutal towards this gentle youth. It seemed to her as if her father, by wresting from Isidore his titles and privileges, was separating him from her forever, instead of drawing him towards her.

As to the Mass, nobody said anything more about it. They almost pardoned the priest's anti-Revolutionary outburst; although he perceived the very next day, by an almost empty class-room, that his refusal to officiate at the Altar of Liberty had deprived him of his popularity with the Patriots of Villers Cotterets.

CHAPTER XI.

BENEATH THE WINDOW.

THE ceremony we have just described was a local federation; and the purpose of such local reunions was to more closely knit together all the communities in France.

Such celebrations were but the preludes, however, of a grander reunion, which was to take place in Paris, on July 14, 1790.

At these partial and local reunions the citizens looked about them, to decide upon the deputies who should be sent to this general federation.

The parts sustained by Billot and Pitou on Sunday, October 18, commended them naturally to the suffrages of their fellow-citizens, for the great day which was to come.

Meanwhile people resumed their ordinary routine of life, out of which they had temporarily emerged, through the wrench which this memorable event had given to their calm provincial habits.

When we speak of the usual stagnation of provincial habits, we do not mean to say that in the country, less than elsewhere, the course of life is cheered by joy or clouded by sorrow. There is not a streamlet, however small, — from that which bathes the grass of the poor peasant's little orchard, to the majestic river which descends from the Alps as from a throne, to throw itself like a conqueror into the sea, — but has along its banks (modest or proud, strewn with daisies or dotted with villages) its intervals of sunshine and shadow.

If we have any doubt about this, after seeing the trouble in the Tuileries, which we have unveiled, then the farm of Father Billot — whereto also we lead our readers — may furnish the needed example.

On the surface, however, everything appears calm and almost jubilant. At about five in the morning the great gate swings open, towards the field extending away to the forest, which in summer sways like a green curtain, and in winter stands like a dark shroud.

The sower goeth forth to sow, bearing on his back his bag, filled with wheat mingled with wholesome ashes. The laborer goeth forth to find, awaiting him in the field, the plow which overnight he left standing, at the end of the furrow. The herdswoman leads forth her lowing troop, guided by the majestic and imperious bull, and followed by the cows and the heifers, among whom marches the favorite cow, recognizable by the clear-toned bell which hangs about her neck.

Behind them all, mounted on his vigorous Norman gelding, trotting and ambling along, comes Billot, — the master, the heart, the life, the soul of this world in miniature, this epitome of a nation.

A disinterested observer would remark nothing particular in his demeanor. From beneath his dark brows his eye looks searchingly about, and his ear is attentive to every sound within the radius of his view. During this investigation, by eye and ear, he is like a hunter who catches the scent of game, is tracing its flight, and dares not lift his eyes from the earth.

In all this the indifferent spectator may see only the natural action of the landed proprietor, assuring himself that the day is fine, and wondering if, during the night, the wolves have invaded his sheepfold, the wild boars have rooted up his potatoes, or the rabbits have inter-

fered with his clover, sallying forth from the forest, the asylum wherein they can be shot only by the princely bullets of the Duc d'Orleans or his gamekeepers; but to any one who can look into the heart of the sturdy farmer, each of his movements, his gestures, and glances will bear a graver interpretation.

Why is he gazing into the mist of the morning? To see whether some prowler cometh nigh his farm, or is furtively stealing away from it.

Why is he so intently listening? To ascertain if some mysterious signal is not sent from Catherine's chamber to the clustering willows along the roadside, or to the ditches which divide the forest from the plain.

What does his penetrating glance ask of the soil? He looks to see if perchance it preserves the mark of a foot-step, whose lightness and size denounce it as aristocratic.

As to Catherine, as we have said, although her father's face is softened towards her, she none the less feels the paternal distrust which encompasses her, like the shadowing wings of some watchful angel; and this makes her wonder, during the long nights of winter, so solitary and anxious, whether she would prefer to have Isidore return to Boursonnes, or remain far away.

As for Madame Billot, she has resumed her vegetative life. Her husband having returned, and her daughter being restored to health, the mother sees nothing beyond this limited horizon; and it would take a sharper insight than hers to find the suspicion at the bottom of her husband's mind, or the anguish in the depths of her daughter's heart.

Having enjoyed his military triumph, with a pride not unmixed with sadness, Pitou has fallen back into his ordinary condition of mild and benevolent melancholy.

With his customary regularity he daily visits Mother

Colombe. If there is no letter for Catherine, he returns mournfully to Haramont; because, on the day when she gets no letter from Isidore, she has no occasion to think of the fellow who brings it to her. If, on the contrary, there is a letter, he deposits it religiously in the willow; yet he often returns home more sorrowfully than on those days when there are no letters, because Catherine will only think of him on the rebound, — because that fine gentleman (who may be deprived of his title by the Assembly, and by the Declaration of Human Rights, but cannot be dispossessed of his grace and elegance) is the connecting link, through whom Pitou has received his life's most painful experiences.

Nevertheless, as may be easily understood, Pitou was no purely passive messenger. If he was dumb, he was not blind. Apart from Catherine's catechism about Turin and Sardinia, which revealed the goal of Isidore's journey, Pitou learned, from the postmarks on the letters, that the young gentleman was in the capital of Piedmont. One fine day the postmark showed the word *Lyons* in place of *Turin;* and two days later, — that is, on December 25, a letter arrived which bore the name *Paris*, instead of *Lyons*.

Without any great keenness, Pitou comprehended that Isidore de Charny had left Italy and returned to France.

Once in the capital, it would evidently not be long before he quitted Paris for Boursonnes.

Pitou's heart was pained. Although devotion was the fixed purpose of his life, his heart was not therefore insensible to the different emotions which assailed it.

On the day when the letter came which was dated at Paris, he resolved, by way of pretext, to go and place his snares in the forbidden section called Wolf Heath, where he had effectually operated in former days.

As the Pisseleu Farm was situated exactly on the road between Harmmont and that part of the forest called Wolf Heath, it is not surprising that Pitou stopped at the farm on his way, choosing for his visit the hour when Billot was likely to be riding through the meadows, about dinner-time.

It was Pitou's custom to cut across the fields, take the highway which runs from Villers Cotterets to Paris, follow along the broad road to the Pasture Farm, and thence to follow the ravine till he reached Pisseleu.

Then he would walk around the walls enclosing the farm, pass by the sheepfolds and stables, and at last come to the great gate, on the other side of which rose the dwelling-house of the inmates.

This time he followed his wonted route.

When he reached the gate he looked about him, after Billot's fashion, and saw Catherine at her chamber window.

She seemed to be waiting for some one. Without being fixed on any particular spot, her gaze ran vaguely up and down the part of the forest line comprised between the road from Villers Cotterets to Ferté Milon, and that from Villers Cotterets to Boursonnes.

Not wishing to surprise Catherine, he placed himself in such a position, within the range of her inquiring glance, that soon his presence arrested her eye.

She smiled upon him. For Catherine, Pitou was only a friend; and yet he had become more than a friend, for he was her confidant.

"So it 's you, my dear Pitou! What good wind blows you here?"

Pitou showed her his snare strings, rolled about his arm, and said: "I had a notion of getting a couple of rabbits for you to eat, tender and well-flavored; and as

the best ones are to be found on Wolf Heath, because of the thyme which grows there in profusion, I started very early, so as to come round this way, and see how you were getting along."

Catherine began to smile at this attention on Pitou's part; but after having thus responded to the first portion of his speech, she replied to the second half of it in these words: "You want news of my health? You are very good, dear Pitou. Thanks to the pains which you took for me when I was sick, and which you have continued during my convalescence, I am nearly well."

"*Nearly* well?" repeated Pitou, with a sigh. "I wish, with all my heart, that you were entirely well."

Catherine blushed, sighed in her turn, and grasped Pitou's hand, as if she had something very important to communicate; but thinking better of it, perhaps, she released his hand, and took several steps across the room, as if searching for her handkerchief. Having found it, she wiped her brow, which was wet with perspiration, albeit the day was one of the coldest of the year.

None of these movements escaped Pitou's keen regard.

"You have something to tell me, Mademoiselle Catherine?" he asked.

"Me?—Oh, no,—nothing!—You deceive yourself," replied the girl, in an altered tone.

Pitou made another effort. "You understand, Mademoiselle, if you need me, nothing must stand in your way—"

Catherine reflected, or rather hesitated, for an instant.

"My dear Pitou, you have proved that I can count upon you, when there is any occasion, and I am very grateful; but now, for a second time, I can only *thank* you for your offer."

Presently she added, in a lower voice: "It will be

useless for you to go to the post for me this week. I shall have no letters for several days."

Pitou was about to tell her what he thought, yet he wished to see how far her trust in him would extend; but she limited her statement to what she had just said, and her only purpose seemed to be, to save Pitou a needless walk every morning.

In his eyes, however, her words seemed to have a hidden meaning.

There was no reason why Isidore should not write, simply because he had returned to Paris. If Isidore no longer wrote to Catherine, it was because he expected to see her.

Who should assure Pitou that this Paris letter, which he had placed in the hollow tree that very morning, did not announce to Catherine her lover's immediate return? Who dare say that her gaze — which appeared lost in space, till his presence drew it towards himself — was not directed towards the line of the forest, for some sign which would indicate to the young girl that her lover was near at hand.

Pitou waited, to give Catherine time to debate within herself whether she had any further confidences for his ear. Then, seeing that she maintained an obstinate silence, he said: "Have you not observed the change which has come over your father?"

The girl trembled, and answered his question with another: "Ah! Have you also noticed something?"

"Mademoiselle Catherine," said he, mournfully shaking his head, "a moment will come, as sure as fate, when he who has caused this change will have a hard reckoning with your father, — let me tell you that! — though as to time and place, I know nothing. Do you understand?"

Catherine grew pallid, but all the same she looked

sharply at Pitou. "Why do you say *he* instead of *she*? It is perhaps a woman, and not a man, who must suffer from my father's smothered wrath."

"You frighten me, my dear Mademoiselle! Have *you* any reason to fear?"

"My friend," ruefully said the girl, "I have to fear what any girl must fear from an angry father, when she has forgotten her rank, and loves above her station."

"Mademoiselle," said Pitou, venturing to give his advice, "it seems to me that in your place —" He paused.

"It seems to you that in my place —" repeated Catherine.

"Well, it seems to me that in your place — But no! You almost died when he was simply absent. If you had to give him up altogether, you would die outright; and I do not want you to die. I would rather see you sick and sorry, than to see you laid down there, at the end of the valley. — Ah, Catherine, this is all very wretched!"

"Hush!" said she. "Let us talk of something else, or not talk at all. There's father!"

Pitou looked in the direction of Catherine's glance, and saw the farmer advancing on horseback, at a smart trot.

Perceiving a man near Catherine's window, the farmer stopped; but, seeing with whom he had to deal, he presently rode on.

Pitou stepped towards him, hat in hand, smiling as he did so.

"Ah, is it thou, Pitou? Comest thou after a dinner, my boy?"

"No, Monsieur Billot! I should n't think of doing such a thing; but —"

At that moment he noted an encouraging look on Catherine's face.

"But what?" asked Billot.

"Well, if I was invited, I should accept."

"Very well," said the farmer, "I invite you."

"Then I accept," rejoined Pitou.

The farmer touched the horse with his spur, and rode under the porch into the carriage-house.

Pitou turned towards Catherine. "Is that what you wished to speak about?" he asked.

"Yes. He is gloomier to-day than he ever has been before."

Then she added to herself: "Oh, my God! does he know?"

"What, Mademoiselle?" asked Pitou, who overheard Catherine, though she spoke so low.

"Nothing!" said she, withdrawing her head into the chamber, and closing the window.

CHAPTER XII.

FATHER CLOUIS REAPPEARS ON THE SCENE.

CATHERINE was not mistaken. In spite of the affable reception he had accorded Pitou, her father was gloomier than ever.

He shook Pitou's hand, and Pitou noticed that the farmer's hand was cold and damp. According to her custom, his daughter offered him her pale and cold cheek, but he only brushed her forehead with his lips.

As to Mother Billot, when she saw her husband enter the room, she rose, as was her custom, thus expressing both her respect for him, and a sense of her own inferiority; but the farmer did not pay her the least attention.

"Is dinner ready?" he asked.

"Yes, goodman," replied Mother Billot.

"Then, let us sit down," said he, "for I have lots of things to do before night."

They went into the small, family eating-room, which overlooked the courtyard, so that nobody from outside could enter the kitchen without passing by the window, whereby this room was lighted.

A plate was added for Pitou, who was seated between the two women, facing the farmer, and with his back to the window.

Preoccupied as Pitou was, he had with him an organ over which his mental disturbance had little influence, — namely, his stomach. The result was that Billot, notwithstanding his clear-sightedness, could detect nothing

in his guest but evident satisfaction with an excellent cabbage soup, and with the platter of beef and bacon which followed.

Nevertheless, Billot wished to ascertain if it was chance or design which brought Pitou to the farm; so while they were taking away the beef and bacon, to give place to a quarter of roasted lamb, — a dish which Pitou beheld with obvious pleasure, — the farmer unmasked his batteries, and questioned Pitou directly.

"My dear Pitou, as thou knowest, thou art always welcome at the farm; but might one ask what draws thee into these parts to-day?"

Pitou smiled, and looked about him, to make sure there were no indiscreet observers or telltale ears, and then pulled up the right sleeve of his blouse, with his left hand.

"There, Father Billot," he said, showing some twenty snares of wire, wound around his arm like a bracelet.

"Ah ha!" said Father Billot. "Hast thou depopulated the warrens of Longpré and High Spring, that thou comest trapping hither?"

"Not so," said Pitou, naïvely; "but I 've done business with those rascally rabbits over there so long, that they recognize my snares, and give them the go-by; so I thought I 'd speak a couple of words to-night to Father Lajeunesse's rabbits, who are less sly and more delicate, through constantly feeding on heather and thyme."

"Pest! I knew not thou wast such an epicure, Master Pitou."

"Oh, I 'm not dainty for my own sake," said Pitou, "but for Mademoiselle Catherine's. As she has been ill, she needs good meat."

"Yes," said Billot, interrupting Pitou, "thou art right; for thou seest, she has no longer any appetite."

As he spoke he pointed to Catherine's clean plate; for since eating a few spoonfuls of soup, she had touched neither the beef nor the bacon.

"I have no appetite, father," said Catherine, blushing at this sudden remark, "for I had just eaten a great bowl of bread and milk, when Monsieur Pitou passed near my window, and I called to him."

"I do not seek to know the cause of thy loss of appetite," said Billot, "I only state the fact." Then, glancing through the window into the courtyard, he rose, saying: "Ah, there 's somebody after me!"

Pitou felt Catherine's foot treading on his own, under the table. He turned towards her, and saw that she was pale as death, and trying to make him look towards the courtyard.

His glance followed Catherine's, and he recognized his old comrade, Father Clouis, who passed in front of the window, with Billot's double-barrelled gun on his shoulder.

The farmer's gun was distinguishable from others, by having silver rings and trigger-guard.

"Ah!" said Pitou, who saw nothing alarming in all this, "it 's Father Clouis. He 's bringing home your gun, Monsieur Billot."

"Yes," said Billot, reseating himself, "and he 'll dine with us, if he has n't dined already. — Wife, open the door for Father Clouis."

Mother Billot arose, and went to open the door; while Pitou, his eyes fixed on Catherine, was wondering how there could be, in what was taking place, anything to occasion her paleness.

Father Clouis entered. On his shoulder he carried the farmer's gun; and in the same hand he carried a hare, which he had evidently shot with this gun.

It will be remembered that Father Clouis had received, from his Grace of Orleans, permission to kill one rabbit and one hare, on alternate days. This, it appeared, was hare-day.

With his unoccupied hand he doffed a sort of fur cap which he habitually wore, but of which there was little left beyond the skin, so constantly was it torn by the brakes, through which Father Clouis scrambled; for he was nearly as insensible to thorns as a wild boar.

"Monsieur Billot, and all the company," said he, "I have the honor of saluting you."

"Good-day, Papa Clouis," said Billot. "Well, I see you 're a man of your word. Thanks!"

"Oh, what 's agreed 's agreed, Monsieur Billot. You met me this morning, and you said to me, like this: 'Father Clouis, you 're such a good shot, that if you 'll sort me out a dozen balls, of the calibre of my gun, you 'll do me a favor.' — To which I answered: 'When do you want 'em, Monsieur Billot?' — You said: 'This afternoon, without fail.' — Then I said: 'That 's all right! You shall have 'em.' And here they be."

"Thanks again, Father Clouis," said Billot. "You 'll dine with us, won't you?"

"Oh, you 're very kind, Father Billot, but really, I don't need anything."

Father Clouis believed that civility required him to say he was not tired, whenever he was asked to sit down, and that he was not hungry, whenever he was invited to eat.

Billot understood him, and said: "Never mind, draw up to the table. Here 's both food and drink. If you can't eat, you can drink."

Meantime Mother Billot, as methodically and almost as silently as an automaton, laid another plate on the

table, with a napkin and a platter. Then she drew up a chair.

"Gracious, if you insist upon it—!" said Father Clouis.

So he placed the gun in one corner, laid the hare on the edge of the buffet, and came to the table, where he found himself seated face to face with Catherine, who looked at him with terror.

The old guard's placid face seemed so little calculated to inspire such a feeling, that Pitou could not account for the emotions betrayed, not only by Catherine's face, but also in a nervous tremor, which agitated her whole form.

Meanwhile Billot filled the plate and glass of his guest, who attacked both, as bravely as if he had not declared himself free from hunger.

"Very pretty wine, Monsieur Billot," he said, as if he wished to render proper respect to the facts, "and a very enjoyable lamb. It appears that you have the same opinion as the proverb, about eating the lambs when they 're too young, and drinking the wines when they 're too old."

As nobody responded to this pleasantry, and the conversation flagged, Clouis felt it his duty, as a guest, to sustain it; so he continued: "Just now I reminded myself as how this was hare-day; and as I can kill my hare on one side of the forest, as well as the other, I thought I would go into Father Lajeunesse's ward, where I might, at the same time, try how a silver-mounted gun would carry a ball; for I had cast thirteen balls instead of twelve. Faith, it carried that ball very well,—your gun."

"Yes, I know it," said Billot. "It 's a good weapon."

"Hold on!" said Pitou. "Twelve balls? Is there to be a shooting-match somewhere about?"

"No," said Billot.

"Ah, I know that gun very well," continued Pitou. "They call it hereabouts, the *silver-mounted customer*. I saw it do its work two years ago, at the Boursonnes festival. Hold on! That 's where it won the silver dish from which you 're eating, Madame Billot, — yes, and the mug from which you 're drinking, Mademoiselle Catherine. — Oh my!" cried Pitou, scared, "what is the matter with you, Mademoiselle?"

"Me? Nothing," said Catherine, reopening her half-closed eyes, and sitting upright in her chair, against the back whereof she had been leaning, as if about to faint.

"Catherine? Why should anything be the matter with her?" said Billot, shrugging his shoulders.

"Exactly," continued old Clouis. "Well, I must tell you, — among the old iron at Montagnon's, — the gunsmith's, you know, — I found a mould; and what 's more remarkable, it was just such a mould as you needed. Those devilish little barrels, made by Leclerc, nearly always take a calibre of twenty-four, — which don't prevent them from carrying well, however, — though God knows how they do it; but here I found a mould of just your size, — a trifle smaller, perhaps; but that 's nothing, if you only cover your balls well with grease. Do you wish to shoot something in motion or standing still?"

"I don't know yet," answered Billot. "All I can say is, that it will be used on the watch."

"Ah yes, I see," said Clouis. "The Duke's boars are very fond of your roots, and you recall the old proverb, that when once the pork 's in pickle, it never 'll eat any more."

There was general silence, broken only by the labored breathing of the girl. Pitou's eyes went from the old

gamekeeper to Billot, and from Billot to the daughter. He tried to see through the mystery, but could form no reasonable conclusion.

As to Mother Billot, it was useless to seek any light in her face. She could not understand what people were saying, not to mention what they were merely thinking about.

"Well," said Clouis, continuing his own line of thought, "if them balls are for the boars, — well, they 're a *leetle* small, as one might say; because the hide of those gentlemen is very tough, not counting how much they can carry away. I've known boars who had five, six, or eight balls between the hide and the flesh, — regular balls, too, sixteen to the pound; and they were none the worse for it."

"These are not for boars," said Billot.

Pitou's curiosity was irresistible. "Pardon me, Monsieur Billot, — if not for prize-shooting, and not for boars, for what then *do* you want these bullets?"

"A wolf!" said Billot.

"Oh, well, if it 's a wolf, here 's just your pattern," said Father Clouis, taking a dozen balls from his pocket, and clinking them upon an empty plate, as he counted them out. "As to the thirteenth, that 's in the hare's stomach. — Ah, I don't know how your gun would carry small shot, but it carries a bullet to a charm."

If Pitou had glanced at Catherine he would have seen that she was again nearly fainting. While Clouis was talking, the lad did not once look at the girl; but when he heard the old gamekeeper say that the thirteenth ball was in the hare's stomach, he could not resist the temptation to lift the carcass and verify the statement.

"Sure enough," he said, thrusting his little finger into the bullet-hole, "you did it, Father Clouis. Monsieur

Billot, *you* shoot well, but you can't kill hares with a free ball, like that."

"No matter!" said Billot. "As the animal I want to shoot is twenty times as big as a hare, I hope I sha'n't miss him."

"The fact is," said Pitou, "that a wolf — But talking of wolves, — are there any in the district? That's surprising, before the snow flies."

"It *is* surprising; but it is true, notwithstanding."

"You are sure, Monsieur Billot?"

"Very sure!" replied the farmer, looking both at Pitou and Catherine, which was very easy to do, as they sat so near each other. "The shepherd saw one this morning."

"Where?" asked Pitou, innocently.

"On the road from Paris to Boursonnes, near the Ivors Copse."

"Ah!" said Pitou, in his turn looking at the farmer and his daughter.

"Yes," continued Billot, tranquilly. "One was observed last season, and I was duly notified. After a while it was supposed he had gone away, never to return; but —"

"But —?" asked Pitou.

"Well, it seems he *has* returned," said Billot, "and may take a turn about my farm. That's why I told Father Clouis to clean up my gun, and run me some balls."

This was as much as Catherine could bear. She rose, uttered a stifled cry, and went tottering towards the door.

Half-bewildered and half-anxious, Pitou also arose, and, seeing Catherine reel, he ran to her support.

Billot cast an awful look towards the door; but Pitou's

honest face manifested so much surprise, as to put to flight any suspicion the farmer might entertain, of the young fellow's complicity with Catherine.

Without showing any further anxiety about either Pitou or his daughter, the farmer went on: "As you say, Father Clouis, to make the blow sure, it will be well to cover the balls thick with grease."

Pitou heard this question; but he did not hear the answer; because, at that moment, he had rejoined Catherine in the kitchen, and felt the girl sinking into his arms.

"What is it? My God, what is it?" he anxiously asked.

"Oh!" said she, "can't you understand? He knows that Isidore arrived in Boursonnes this morning; and he will kill him, if he comes near the farm."

At that moment the door of the dining-room flew open, and Billot appeared in the doorway.

"My dear Pitou," he said, in a severe tone which admitted no reply, "if thou hast really come for the Lajeunesse rabbits, I fancy it is time for thee to attend to thy snares. Later, thou 'lt not be able to see."

"Yes, Monsieur Billot," said Pitou humbly, looking at both father and daughter, "I came for that, and for nothing else, I swear."

"Well, then —?"

"Well, then, I 'm going!"

He went out by the door leading into the courtyard, while Catherine retired weeping to her chamber, bolting the door behind her.

"Yes," muttered Billot, "yes, — lock yourself in, wretched girl. No matter! It is not on *this* side I shall lay my ambush."

CHAPTER XIII.

A GAME OF TAG.

All dumfounded Pitou left the farmhouse. To be sure Catherine's last words let in the sunlight, upon what had been obscure up to that moment; but this sunlight blinded him.

Pitou now knew all he wanted to know, and more. He knew that Isidore de Charny had arrived the day before at Boursonnes, and that, if Isidore ventured to visit Catherine at the farm, he would run the risk of a gunshot.

Of this Pitou could no longer harbor a doubt. Billot's parabolic innuendos had been illumined by Catherine's few words. The wolf which had been seen last season, prowling about the farmer's sheepfold, — which had gone away for good, as was believed, but had been seen again that morning, near Ivors Copse, on the way from Paris to Boursonnes, — was the young Viscount.

For his benefit the gun had been cleaned; for him the bullets had been cast. The situation was very grave.

When there was occasion for it, Pitou had the force of a lion, and almost always the prudence of the serpent.

Ever since he attained the age of reason, he had been able, under the very noses of the country constables, to despoil the close-hedged orchards, or the fruit-laden trees in the open fields; and under the very claws of the wood-rangers, he had spread his snares and lime-twigs.

Thus had he gained a habit of practical thought, combined with rapid decision, which stood him in good stead

in the most perilous cases, and enabled him to get the best results from the most untoward circumstances. This time, calling to his aid his customary rapidity, he decided forthwith to gain the edge of the wood, which was only eighty paces from the farmhouse.

This wood was a covert, and under such a covert one could remain unseen, and meditate at his ease.

As may be seen, Pitou reversed the usual order of things, by putting the rapid action first, and leaving thought to come afterwards; for, with all his instinctive intelligence, Pitou was now hard pressed, and his most pressing need was, to find an immediate refuge.

He walked towards the forest with a careless air, as if he were not the bearer of a world of cogitation, and reached his retreat without looking behind him; although once, when he calculated that he was out of sight of the farmhouse, he stooped over, ostensibly to buckle his shoe, but really to take the opportunity of looking backward, between his long legs, and thus studying the outlook.

The outlook was clear, and no sign of danger presented itself. Seeing this, Pitou resumed his straight line, and with a bound was in the woods.

The forest was Pitou's domain. There he was at home; there he was free; there he was king.

He was king, — like the squirrel, whose agility he shared, like the fox, whose cunning he possessed, like the wolf, for Pitou also had eyes which could see in the night; but at this hour he needed neither the agility of the squirrel, the cunning of the fox, nor the night-seeing eyes of the wolf.

It seemed to Pitou a very simple matter, to cut diagonally across that part of the woods in which he was now concealed, and come out by another part of the border

of the forest, which extended along the whole length of the farm.

From a distance of sixty or seventy paces Pitou could see whatever took place. At sixty or seventy paces, Pitou could challenge anybody whatsoever, who was obliged to depend upon his hands and feet, whether for motion or attack.

Of course he could easily outrun a horseman, for there was not one who could make his way a hundred rods in the forest, by the tracks through which Pitou scrambled; therefore Pitou could not find any comparisons disdainful enough to express his contempt for a horseman — in the woods.

Pitou stretched himself along near a cluster of trees, placed his neck between two twin branches, where their stems separated, and then cogitated.

He wondered if it was in his power, much as he wished to do so, to prevent Father Billot from putting into execution the terrible vengeance which he meditated.

The first method of prevention which occurred to Pitou's mind, was to run to Boursonnes, and warn Monsieur Isidore of the danger which awaited him, if he ventured near the farm.

At the same time Pitou bethought himself of two things: first, that Catherine had not commissioned him to do so; second, that there was danger of not being able to forewarn Monsieur Isidore.

What certainty was there that the Viscount, who doubtless meant to conceal himself, would ride over a road frequented by vehicles, and not come by one of those pathways, whereof the woodcutters and foresters availed themselves, to shorten the journey through the woods?

Besides, in going after Isidore, Pitou would have to

abandon Catherine; and, taking all things together, although Pitou would be sorry if any misfortune happened to the Viscount, he would be in despair if any ill befell Catherine.

It appeared wisest to remain where he was, and to take counsel of circumstances, whatever might happen.

Meantime he waited, and watched the farmhouse, his eyes as glaring and steadfast as those of a wildcat, crouching for its prey.

The first observable movement was the departure of Father Clouis.

Pitou saw him take leave of Billot, under the porch, after which the old man hobbled along by the wall, and disappeared in the direction of Villers Cotterets, — which he must either go through or around, in order to return to his hut, which was a league and a half distant from Pisseleu.

When Clouis went away, twilight was coming on.

As Father Clouis was a very secondary personage in the drama which was taking place, — a sort of supernumerary, — Pitou gave him but a fragment of attention; and having satisfied conscience by following the old man till he disappeared behind an angle of the wall, Pitou again fixed his eyes on the centre of the farmhouse, — that is, the porch and the windows.

In an instant one of these windows was lighted, — the one in Billot's chamber.

From Pitou's coign of vantage he could look straight into this chamber. Pitou could see Billot enter the room, and load his gun, with all the precautions recommended by Father Clouis.

Meanwhile, night began to fall.

His gun being loaded, Billot extinguished his light, and closed both shutters of his window, but in such a way as

to leave a slight opening, doubtless to enable the owner to observe what was going on thereabouts.

From Billot's window, situated a short flight of stairs up from the kitchen, as we have perhaps already said, it was impossible, on account of an elbow formed by the outline of the house, to see Catherine's window, which was situated on the lower floor; but Billot's window commanded a view of the entire road from Boursonnes, and the circle of the forest, from the hill of Ferté Milon to Ivors Copse.

Although Billot could not see Catherine's window, yet if she should go out by the window, and try to reach the woods, he would be able to see her the moment she entered the radius included in his survey; only, as night was deepening, if Billot should see a woman, and suspect that woman to be Catherine, he could not identify her for a certainty.

We advance these remarks, because they were those which Pitou made to himself.

He did not doubt that Catherine would attempt a sortie, so as to warn Isidore, as soon as the darkness fully set in.

Without losing sight of her father's window, it was on Catherine's casement that Pitou's eyes were specially fixed.

Pitou was not mistaken. When the evening had reached a degree of obscurity which seemed to the girl sufficient for her purpose, Pitou — for whom, as we have said, there was no obscurity — saw half of her window slowly turning on its hinges. Presently she climbed over the sill, closed the window after her, and glided alongside the wall.

There was no danger of the girl's being seen, as long as she followed the line of the buildings and the fences,

and if she meant to go to Villers Cotterets, she might get away unperceived; but if, on the contrary, her business took her in the direction of Boursonnes, she could not fail to come within the radius included in the view from her father's window.

At the end of the wall she hesitated a few seconds; so, for an instant, Pitou cherished the hope that she might be bound for Villers Cotterets, and not for Boursonnes; but suddenly her hesitation ceased. Bending over, so as to conceal herself as far as possible from all prying eyes, she crossed the roadway, and entered a narrow footpath, which would lead around, by a cut in the forest, to the Boursonnes highway, about a quarter-league farther on, at the crossways known as Borough Spring.

Once in this pathway, the course she intended taking was so clear in Pitou's mind, that he paid her no further attention, but watched the half-open shutters of Billot's window, through which, as through the loopholes of a citadel, Billot could see from one extremity of the forest to the other.

Apart from a shepherd, who was taking care of his flock, the whole field, included in Billot's vision, was solitary.

When she entered this field therefore, although her black mantle rendered her almost invisible, she could not escape the farmer's eye.

Pitou saw the window-leaves partially turn. Billot's head was thrust through the opening; and for an instant he remained still, as if, amidst the darkness, he doubted the testimony of his eyes; but as the sheep-dogs, having run towards the flitting shadow, returned to their keeper after a few yelps, Billot no longer doubted that the shadow was Catherine's self. The dogs had recognized her, and therefore instantly ceased barking.

All this translated itself to Pitou, as clearly as if he had been notified in advance of the various incidents of the drama. He waited, therefore, to see Billot shut his chamber window, and open the outside door.

Indeed, after a few seconds, the door did open, just as Catherine reached the edge of the wood; and Billot, with his gun on his shoulder, crossed the threshold of the big vestibule, and marched with long strides towards the forest, following the Boursonnes road, towards the point where it must meet, an eighth of a league away, the path followed by Catherine.

There was not an instant to lose, for in ten minutes the girl would be face to face with her father.

All this Pitou well understood. He sprang up, bounded through the forest like a startled deer, cutting across the woods diagonally, reversing his former course, and reached the edge of the pathway, just as the hurried steps and hasty breathing of the girl were drawing near.

Pitou stopped, and hid behind the trunk of an old oak. In ten seconds Catherine passed within two steps of the tree.

Then Pitou came forth, barring the girl's way, and at the same time calling her by name. This triple unity of action he judged best, in order not to frighten Catherine the more.

As it was, she uttered a feeble cry, and paused, trembling, — less with present than with past emotion, however, — as she said: "You, Monsieur Pitou, here! What do you want with me?"

"In the name of Heaven, not a step further, Mademoiselle," said he, clasping his hands.

"And why not?"

"Because your father knows you are out! Because he has taken the road to Boursonnes, with his gun!

Because he 's waiting for you at the Borough Spring Crossroads."

"But *he*, HE!" cried Catherine, almost overcome. "Must *he* not be warned?" and she made a movement, as if to continue her journey.

"Your attempt will do *him* no good, so long as your father bars your progress."

"What is to be done?"

"Return, Mademoiselle, return at once to your chamber. I will put myself into ambuscade near your window, and when I see Monsieur Isidore, I will warn him."

"You will do this, dear Monsieur Pitou?"

"For you I would do anything, Mademoiselle Catherine! Ah, how much I love you!"

Catherine pressed his hands, and said, after a brief consideration: "Yes, you are right! Take me home."

As her legs began to fail her, she put her arm under Pitou's, who sustained her, half walking, half running, all the way back to the farm.

In ten minutes more she re-entered her own room, without having been seen; and she closed the window behind her, as Pitou pointed out the group of willows, in which he intended to watch and wait.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WATCH FOR THE WOLF.

THE willows, twenty or twenty-five paces from Catherine's window, were on a slight elevation, overlooking a ditch through which ran a small stream of water, seven or eight feet below the top of the ground.

This stream, which followed the winding of the roadway, was shaded here and there by other willows, similar to those forming the group whereof we speak, — that is, trees which resembled dwarfs, especially in the night, — dwarfs with small bodies, and big heads of spiky and tangled hair.

It was in the last of these trees, hollowed by time, that Pitou had deposited Catherine's letters, morning after morning; and thither Catherine had gone after them, when she saw her father leave the house, and disappear in the opposite direction.

Pitou had taken so much precaution on his side, and Catherine on hers, that it was not from this quarter the blaze had been fanned. It had been started by an untoward accident, which that morning placed the head shepherd in Isidore's way. Without attaching to it any special importance, the shepherd mentioned, to the farmer, the news that the Viscount had returned. This unannounced return, at five o'clock in the morning, appeared more than suspicious to Billot. Ever since his own return from Paris, and Catherine's illness, — especially since Doctor Raynal advised him not to enter her sick-chamber

during her delirium, — Billot had been convinced that young Charny was his daughter's lover; and as the farmer could see only disgrace as the result of this entanglement, — for Isidore could hardly marry Catherine, — the farmer had resolved to wipe away this dishonor, by bringing it to a bloody termination.

All the details we have recounted, though insignificant to one not informed as to the underlying causes, had a terrible significance in Catherine's eyes, — and in Pitou's also, after Catherine gave him the clew.

Divining her father's intention, Catherine's sole opposing attempt was to warn Isidore, — an undertaking which Pitou luckily checkmated; for otherwise, she would have encountered her father on the road, in place of Isidore.

She knew the farmer's fierce character too well, to expect anything from him by prayers and supplications. They would only hasten the storm, and provoke the catastrophe, instead of turning it away. To prevent a collision between her sweetheart and her father, was her sole ambition.

She had believed herself dying, because of Isidore's absence; but now she ardently wished his absence had been prolonged. How she could bless the voice which said to her, "He is gone," even though it added, "gone forever."

Pitou understood this just as well as Catherine, and that was why he offered to act as a go-between for the girl. Whether the Viscount came afoot or on horseback, Pitou expected to hear him or see him, in season to get in front of him, and speak two words, which would inform him as to the turn of affairs, and so persuade him to get away from that neighborhood, with the understanding that Pitou would bring him intelligence of Catherine the next day.

Pitou stuck to his willow, as if he were a part of the vegetable family in whose midst he found himself, and devoted all his senses — which were so accustomed to the darkness, the fields, and the woods — to seeing if he could detect a shadow or hear a sound.

Suddenly it seemed as if he could hear behind him, coming from the direction of the forest, the noise of an irregular step, like that of a man stumbling over the furrows. As this step was too heavy to belong to the young and elegant Viscount, Pitou turned slowly and quietly around in his willow, and perceived the farmer only thirty paces off, with his gun on his shoulder.

As Pitou at once surmised, Billot had waited awhile at the Borough Spring; but seeing nobody emerge from the footpath which he supposed Catherine had taken, he believed himself in error, and decided that he would go back, and put himself in ambush opposite Catherine's window, feeling sure that it was through this window the Viscount would try to visit his *inamorata*.

By an unlucky chance, what should Billot do, but choose for his ambush the very cluster of willows where Pitou was trying to hide.

Guessing the farmer's intention, and having no disposition to contend for the place, Pitou let himself roll gently down the declivity, till he disappeared in the ditch, where his head was concealed among the projecting roots of the very willow against which Billot presently leaned.

Happily the wind blew with some violence, or Billot would have heard the throbbing of Pitou's heart; but it must be said, to the honor of our hero's admirable nature, that the sense of personal danger troubled him far less than anxiety lest he should break his word to Catherine.

If Monsieur de Charny should come, and some misfortune should befall her lover, would Catherine think, that perhaps Pitou had betrayed them?

Pitou would prefer to die, rather than have Catherine so misjudge him; yet there was nothing to be done but to remain where he was, and keep perfectly still, as the least movement would betray Pitou as a second watcher.

A quarter-hour passed without anything breaking the silence of the night. Pitou cherished a last hope, — that if by some accident the Viscount should be late, Billot would get tired of waiting, would doubt if Charny was coming at all, and go into the house.

Pitou's position was such, that his ear came naturally against the earth, and suddenly he thought he heard a horse's gallop. This horse, if it was a horse, must be coming by way of the footpath leading from the woods.

Very soon there was no room for doubt that it was a horse, for he crossed the road, hardly sixty paces from the willows, and they heard his tread on the broken stones, one of which gave forth sparks of fire, when smitten by the animal's shoe.

Above his head Pitou could see the farmer bending over, and trying to see into the obscurity; but the night was so dark that Pitou's own eyes, accustomed as he was to seeing in the gloom, could only discern a sort of spectre, which bounded across the roadway, and disappeared along the walls of the enclosure.

Pitou did not doubt for an instant that the spectre was Isidore, but he hoped the Viscount had some other access to the farmhouse besides the window. Billot feared the same thing, and muttered something like blasphemy.

Then there were ten minutes of painful silence. At the end of these ten minutes, thanks to his acute vision, Pitou distinguished a human form at the extremity of the wall.

The rider had tied his horse to some tree beyond, and was now returning on foot.

The night was so dark that Pitou hoped Billot might not see this sort of a spectre, or see it too late.

He was mistaken. Billot saw; and twice Pitou heard, above his own head, the click made by the farmer, in setting the triggers of his gun.

The man who was gliding along by the walls heard the same noise, to which the ear of a sportsman is seldom deaf, for he stopped, and tried to pierce the obscurity with his gaze; but it was impossible for him to see anything definite.

During this halt of a second, Pitou cast his eyes upward, and saw the gun-barrel raised above the ditch; but the farmer was either doubtful of his aim at that distance, or feared making some mistake, for the barrel, so rapidly raised, was as slowly lowered again.

The shadow once more began to move onward, stealing along against the wall. Evidently it was approaching Catherine's window.

This time it was the farmer's heart-beats which might be heard by Pitou, who was asking himself what he could do, — by what outcry he could warn the unfortunate young man, by what means he could save him. Nothing occurred to his mind, and he despairingly buried his hands in his hair.

Again Pitou saw the gun-barrel rise, but a second time it was lowered. The victim was too far away.

A half-minute hardly elapsed before the young lover crossed the remaining twenty steps, which still separated him from the window, on which he thrice rapped softly, at equal intervals.

There was no longer a shadow of doubt. The intruder was a lover, and he came after Catherine.

A third time the gun-barrel was raised, just as Catherine, recognizing the customary signal, half opened her casement.

Pitou panted, as he almost felt the spring of the trigger overhead. The noise of the flint made itself heard, as it struck the steel, a lightning gleam flashed across the road; but no explosion followed the glare, for the priming alone had been burned. It was a flash in the pan.

The young gentleman now saw the danger into which he had run, and made a movement to rush towards the fire; but Catherine grasped his arm, and drew him towards herself, saying, in a low voice: "It 's my father! He knows all! Come!"

With force almost superhuman she aided him to clamber up and through the window, closing the flap behind him.

There remained a second shot in the farmer's gun, but the two young people were so entwined at that moment, that if he fired on Isidore, he feared he should kill the girl; so he muttered to himself: "He will have to go away; and when he goes, I won't miss him the second time!"

Meanwhile, with the priming wire from his cartridge-box, he cleaned out the vent-hole of his gun, and filled it with fresh powder, in order not to renew the miracle of failure, to which Isidore owed his life.

During the next five minutes no noise was heard. Even Pitou's breathing was nearly suspended, as well as the farmer's, and the throbbing of their hearts was inaudible.

Suddenly, amidst the silence, was heard the barking of the dogs, confined in the courtyard on the farther side.

Billot stamped his foot, listened an instant, and then

stamped again, saying: "Ah, she is sending him away through the orchard, and the dogs are barking at him."

Bounding across the ditch, over Pitou's invisible head, the farmer slipped on the other side; but in spite of the darkness, thanks to his acquaintance with the locality, he disappeared around the angle of the wall, quick as lightning, hoping to reach the other side of the farm enclosure as soon as Isidore.

Pitou saw through this manœuvre. With the alertness of a man of his nature, he clambered out of the ditch, went straight across the road to Catherine's window, pulled open the outside shutter, which was unfastened, pushed open the casement, climbed into the empty room, passed through into the lamp-lighted kitchen, entered the courtyard, and ran along the alley-way leading into orchard, where — thanks to his power of seeing in the the darkness, like an owl — he could discern two shadows, one bestriding the high wall, the other at its foot, standing upright, with extended arms.

Before throwing himself down on the other side of the wall, her lover turned to Catherine for the last time, saying: "We shall meet again! Do not forget, thou art mine!"

"Yes, yes, yes!" said the girl, "but go, go!"

"Yes, — go, go, Monsieur Isidore!" cried Pitou.

They could hear the noise made by the young nobleman, as he struck the earth on the other side of the wall, and then they heard the neigh of recognition from his horse. Presently they heard also the animal's rapid gallop, then one gunshot, and then another.

At the first shot Catherine uttered a cry, and made a motion as if she would rush to Isidore's assistance. At the second she groaned, and fell nerveless upon Pitou's arm.

He listened, with extended neck, to see if the horse continued his course with the same rapidity as before the shots were fired. Hearing the uninterrupted gallop of the animal, as it receded farther and farther away, Pitou said sententiously: "Good! There 's some hope. One can't see by night as well as by day, and the hand is not so sure when it draws on a man, as when it draws on a wolf or a boar."

Lifting Catherine, he intended carrying her in his arms; but by a powerful effort of will she rallied all her strength, slid to the ground, and asked Pitou, holding him by the arm: "Where art thou taking me?"

"Why, to your chamber, Mademoiselle," said the astonished Pitou.

"Pitou," she demanded, "is there any place where I can hide?"

"Oh yes, Mademoiselle; or if not, I can find one," said Pitou.

"Then take me there!"

"But the farmhouse —?"

"In five minutes I hope to leave it, never to return."

"But your father —?"

"All is broken between me and the man who wishes to kill my lover."

"But, nevertheless, Mademoiselle, —" Pitou ventured to say.

"Thou refusest to accompany me, Pitou?" asked the girl, abandoning his arm.

"No, Mademoiselle Catherine, God forbid!"

"Then follow me!"

Walking ahead, Catherine went through the orchard, into the kitchen-garden. At the other end of the kitchen-garden was a small door, opening towards the Pasture Farm.

Catherine opened it without hesitation, took out the key, shut the door, double locked it behind her, and threw the key into a cistern near the wall.

With a firm step she walked over the uneven earth, leaning on Pitou's arm, and the two soon vanished into the valley, extending from the village of Pisseleu to the Pasture Farm.

Nobody saw them go; and God alone knew where Catherine found the refuge which Pitou had promised her.

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER THE STORM.

It is with human storms as with meteorological hurricanes. The sky is shrouded, the lightning flashes, the thunder rumbles, the earth seems quivering on its axis. There is a moment of paroxysm, when we may well believe men and things to be alike on the verge of annihilation, when we tremble, moan, and lift our hands to our Lord, as the One good and merciful.

Little by little calmness supervenes. Night flees and day reappears. The sun revives. The flowers reopen their petals. The trees straighten themselves. Men return to their business, their pleasures, their passions. Life laughs and sings, along the highways and in the doorways, and nobody worries about the partial desert left in the track of the storm, or where the lightning had fallen.

Thus it was at the farm. All night long there was a terrible tempest in the heart of that man, resolved upon a vengeful project, which he had partially carried out.

When he discovered his daughter's flight, when he searched vainly in the darkness for some trace of her footsteps, when he called her name, — first in anger, then in supplication, and finally in despair, and no response came to these passionate moods, — he was smitten in some vital part of his powerful organization; but at last, when the silence of exhaustion succeeded the lightning and thunder, as after an atmospheric storm; when the dogs,

having nothing more to disturb them, ceased their barking; when rain, mixed with hail, effaced the traces of blood, which, like a half-loosed belt, encircled one side of the farm; when the village clock, that mute witness of whatever had taken place, sounded out on the air, with its vibratory wings of bronze, the last hours of the night, — then, at last, things resumed their usual course at Pisseleu.

The big courtyard door creaked on its rusty hinges. The laborers again went forth, some to sow seed, some to ply the harrow, others to harness the wagons. Then Billot appeared in his turn, crossing the field, with all his senses level.

Finally, when it was full day, the rest of the village awoke, and some, who had not slept so soundly as the others, said, with an air half inquisitive and half careless: "Father Billot's dogs howled tremendously last night, and two gunshots were heard in the neighborhood of the farmhouse."

This was all! Ah, so we deceive ourselves.

When Father Billot returned to the house at nine o'clock, for his breakfast, as was his custom, his wife asked: "Say, my goodman, where 's Catherine? Dost know?"

"Catherine?" answered the farmer, with an effort. "The air of the farm does n't agree with her, and she has started for Sologne, to visit her aunt."

"Ah!" said Mother Billot, "will she stay long at her aunt's?"

"As long as she 's no better," replied the farmer.

Mother Billot sighed, and pushed away her cup of coffee and milk.

On his side the farmer made an effort to eat; but at the third mouthful his food choked him. He lifted a

bottle of burgundy by the neck, emptied it at a draught, and then said, with a hoarse voice: "They haven't unsaddled my horse, I hope?"

"No, Monsieur Billot," replied the timid voice of a child, who every morning came to the farm after some breakfast.

"Good!" said the farmer, as he brusquely shoved the little fellow aside, mounted his horse, and pushed his way into the fields; while his wife, drying a couple of tears, retreated to her usual corner, under the huge chimney-piece.

Minus the singing bird, minus the smiling flower, — which the young girl resembled, in those traits which cheered and perfumed the old walls, — the farm took up its wonted course, and went on the next day as it had gone on the day before.

As for Pitou, he saw the daybreak from his own home in Haramont; and those who were there at six o'clock found his place lighted by a candle, which had apparently been burning a long time, if one could judge by the slanting wick, which needed snuffing; for Pitou was preparing to send to Gilbert, with all the receipts, an account of the use he had made of the twenty-five louis which the Doctor had donated for the clothing and equipment of the Haramont National Guards.

It is true that a woodcutter declared he had seen Pitou about midnight, going down the steep declivity leading to the hermitage of Father Clouis, and carrying on his arm something heavy, which looked like a woman; but this report was hardly credible, inasmuch as Father Lajeunesse pretended to have seen Pitou running, with all his legs, along the road to Boursonnes, at one o'clock in the morning; whereas Maniquet, who lived at the extremity of the town, on the Longpré side, asserted

that at two, or half-past, he saw Pitou pass by his door, and called out, "Good-evening, Pitou!" a courtesy to which Pitou had responded by saying: "Good-evening, Maniquet."

There was therefore no reason whatever for doubting that Maniquet saw Pitou at two o'clock, or thereabouts; but whether the woodcutter did or did not see Pitou at midnight, in the neighborhood of Clouise Rock, carrying a heavy object resembling a woman; whether Father Lajeunesse did or did not see Pitou running, with all his legs, at about one o'clock, along the Boursonnes road; whether Maniquet did or did not say Good-evening to Pitou, who was passing by Maniquet's house about two or half-past, — this is certain: that if Pitou, — of whom we lost sight, along with Catherine, about half-past ten or eleven in the evening, in the valley which divides Pisseleu from the Pasture Farm, — if Pitou did go from there to Clouise Rock, a league and a half; if he went from Clouise Rock to Boursonnes, two leagues farther; if from Boursonnes he returned to Clouise Rock; if, finally, he returned from Clouise Rock to his own home, — if Pitou did these things, we say, it may be well conjectured that first, he put Catherine into a place of safety; then, went to Boursonnes after news of the Viscount; next, returned to Catherine, with intelligence concerning the Viscount; and that he covered all this ground, eight or nine leagues, between eleven o'clock in the evening and two or two and a half in the morning, — a supposition hardly admissible, even for one of those royal couriers, who, as some people assert, could formerly break all present records; but this effort need not astonish those who have heretofore learned to appreciate Pitou's locomotive faculties.

Nevertheless, as Pitou revealed to nobody the secrets

of that night, when he was apparently endowed with the gift of ubiquity, the result was, — with the exception of Désiré Maniquet, to whose Good-evening he had responded, — that nobody, not even Father Lajeunesse or the woodcutter, dared affirm on oath, that it was indeed Pitou, who was seen in these other places, — at the declivity of Clouise Rock or on the Boursonnes Road, — and not a spectre or phantom, taking on some resemblance to Pitou.

At about six o'clock the next morning, as Billot was mounting his horse to ride afield, Pitou was seen, without any appearance of fatigue or excitement, making up Tailor Dulauroy's accounts, to which he added, as vouchers, the receipts of each of the thirty-three soldiers.

There is one other person of our acquaintance who slept badly that night. This was Doctor Raynal.

At one o'clock he was roused by the Viscount's lackey, who rang the bell as if he would pull it off.

The Doctor, as was his custom when the night-bell sounded, opened the door himself. The Viscount's lackey had come for him, because of a serious accident to his master; and he led a second horse, ready saddled, so that Doctor Raynal need not be delayed a single instant.

The Doctor dressed himself in a turn of his hand, straddled the horse, and started at a gallop, preceded by the lackey, as if he were a courier.

What was the accident? He would be informed at the château; only he had better bring his case of surgical instruments.

The accident proved to be a wound in the left side and a scratch on the right shoulder, made by two balls, which appeared to be of the same calibre, that is, twenty-four; but as to the details of the occurrence, the Viscount would say nothing.

One of the two wounds, the one in the side, was serious, but not dangerous, as the ball passed through the flesh, without touching any important organ.

As to the other wound, it was not worth talking about.

When the injuries were dressed, the young man gave the Doctor twenty-five louis to maintain silence.

"If you wish me to keep silence, you must pay me only my ordinary fee, that is, one pistole, or ten francs," responded the brave physician; and taking only one louis (twenty-four francs) from the pile, he gave fourteen francs in change to the Viscount, who in vain urged him to accept more.

This the Doctor would not do; but he announced that he thought three visits would be necessary, and that he would therefore return the next day, on the day after that, and again on the day following.

At the second visit the Doctor found his patient up. By the aid of a band, which held the plaster in its place against the wound, Isidore was able the next day to mount his horse, as if nothing had happened to him; so that nobody in the household knew anything of his accident, except his confidential servant.

At the third visit Doctor Raynal found his patient had gone out; and therefore he would only accept a half-pistole, or five francs, for his visit.

The Doctor was one of those rare physicians who are worthy to have in their offices a certain famous engraving, which represents Hippocrates refusing the gifts of Artaxerxes.

CHAPTER XVI.

MIRABEAU'S GREAT TREASON.

MIRABEAU'S last words to the Queen are not forgotten, — the words which he spoke just before leaving the pavilion at Saint Cloud, when she gave him her hand to kiss: "Madame, through this kiss the monarchy is saved."

This promise, made by Prometheus to Juno, on the eve of her dethronement, Mirabeau endeavored to make good.

He began the struggle, confident of his own strength, not dreaming that — by reason of so many royal imprudences, and three abortive conspiracies — he was bidden to wage a losing fight.

Perhaps if Mirabeau had been able to work longer under the shelter of a mask, anonymously, — and this would certainly have been more prudent, — he could have fought to better advantage; but one day, not many weeks after his interview with the Queen, as he was on his way to the Assembly, he saw groups of men standing here and there, and heard various outcries.

He approached one of these groups, to ascertain the cause of the commotion.

Leaflets were being handed about. From time to time a voice cried out: "The Great Treason of Monsieur de Mirabeau! The Great Treason of Monsieur de Mirabeau!"

"Ah ha," said he, drawing a piece of money from his pocket, "I fancy this concerns me! — My friend," he continued, — addressing the man who was distributing

the pamphlets, and who had several thousand of them in the panniers placidly borne by a donkey, whithersoever his master wished his stock to be transported, — "My friend, how much for Mirabeau's Great Treason?"

The distributor looked Mirabeau straight in the face and said: "Count de Mirabeau, I give it away for nothing;" adding in a lower voice: "And a hundred thousand copies have been printed."

Mirabeau thoughtfully passed along. That leaflet, which was given away! That colporter, who recognized him! Doubtless this was one of those stupid or malicious publications, which appeared by millions at that epoch. Undue malice or foolishness would rob it of all mischief, and deprive it of all value.

Mirabeau threw his eyes over the first page, and grew pale. This first page contained a list of Mirabeau's debts, and — strangely enough! — the list was exact: two hundred and eight thousand francs!

Below this list was the precise date on which this sum was to be paid to Mirabeau's different creditors, by the Queen's treasurer, Monsieur de Fontages.

Then came an estimate of the sum paid him monthly by the Court, — six thousand francs.

Finally, there was a full account of his recent interview with the Queen.

What Mirabeau could not understand was this, — the anonymous pamphleteer was not wrong in a single cipher, and had hardly misstated a single word.

What enemy pursued him thus, — terrible, mysterious, full of dangerous secrets? or rather, what enemy thus pursued the monarchy, through him?

The colporter to whom he had spoken, who had recognized him, who had called him by name, — it seemed to Mirabeau the man's face was not strange to him.

He retraced his steps. The donkey was still there, with his panniers three-quarters empty; but the first distributor had disappeared, and another had taken his place. The new man was entirely unknown to Mirabeau; but he did not carry on the distribution with less alacrity than his predecessor.

It chanced at this moment that Doctor Gilbert — who was present nearly every day at the Assembly debates, especially when those debates were important — passed by the place where the colporter was stationed.

Absorbed in meditation, his attention would perhaps not have been drawn, either towards the groups of people or their exclamations, if Mirabeau, with his customary audacity, had not walked up to Gilbert's right side, taken him by the arm, and led him straight to the leaflet-distributor, who said to Gilbert, as he said to everybody else, stretching out his hand: "Citizen, here's Mirabeau's Great Treason!" but at the sight of Gilbert his tongue and arm were checked as if by paralysis.

Gilbert in turn looked at the fellow, dropped the pamphlet in disgust, and went away, saying: "This is a rascally business you are up to, Monsieur Beausire!" and taking Mirabeau's arm he continued his way towards the Assembly, which, as we have said before, had forsaken the Archbishop's Palace for the Riding School.

"Do you know that man?" asked Mirabeau of Gilbert.

"I know him as one often knows such fellows," said Gilbert. "He is a discharged soldier, a gambler, a shark. For want of something better to do, he has evidently turned slanderer."

"Ah, if it *was* slander!" murmured Mirabeau, putting his hand on the place where his heart had been, — a place now occupied by a wallet containing money from the palace; and then he walked sadly along.

"Are you so little of a philosopher that you will let yourself be floored by such an attack as this?" asked Gilbert.

"I?" cried Mirabeau. "Ah, you don't know me, Doctor. — They say I 'm *sold*, when they should say I 'm merely paid! Well, to-morrow I 'll buy a mansion; to-morrow I 'll set up a carriage, horses, servants; to-morrow I 'll have a cook, and keep open house. Floored? I? After all, what matters the popularity of yesterday and the unpopularity of to-day? Have I no future before me? — No, Doctor, what kills me is this, that the promise I made I shall not probably be able to keep. This comes from the error — I might say, the treachery — of the Court towards me. I saw the Queen, did I not? Well, she appeared to put entire trust in me. For an instant I dreamed — an insensate dream, with such a woman! — well, for an instant I dreamed, not merely of being Prime Minister for the King, like Richelieu, but the minister — or, let us rather say, the lover — of a Queen, as was Mazarin of Anne of Austria; and the world of politics was no worse off on that account. Very well, what did *she* do? The very same day, after she left me, she wrote to her agent in Germany, Herr Flachslauden: 'Tell my brother Leopold that I am of his mind; that I make use of Mirabeau, but there is nothing serious in my relations with him.' — I have proof of this!"

"You are sure of that?" asked Gilbert.

"Sure, — practically sure. — That is n't all! You know what question is before the Assembly to-day?"

"I know it 's some question of war, but I am not well posted as to the cause of that war."

"Oh Lord, it 's very simple," said Mirabeau. "Europe is divided between two parties, Austria and Russia on

one side, England and Prussia on the other side; yet both are moved by the same sentiment, hatred of our Revolution. For Russia and Austria, a manifestation of this dislike is not difficult, for it is their natural bias; but as for liberal England and philosophical Prussia, it takes some time for them to decide to change from one pole to its opposite, — to abjure what they have been, and swear allegiance to what they have not appeared to be, and so avow themselves, what they really are, the enemies of liberty."

Gilbert listened eagerly as Mirabeau went on: "England, on her part, sees Brabant extending her hand to France for help; and this has hastened England's decision. Our Revolution, my dear Doctor, is alive; it is contagious. That Irishman, Edmund Burke, a pupil of the Saint Omer Jesuits, and the sworn enemy of Pitt, has just launched a manifesto against France, for which he is paid in good yellow gold by Mr. Pitt. England does not declare war against France; no, she dares not do so, as yet; but she abandons Belgium to the Emperor Leopold, and she will go to the end of the world to pick a quarrel with Spain, our ally."

Coming from things foreign to those with which Gilbert was more familiar, Mirabeau continued: "Well, yesterday, Louis Sixteenth informed the Assembly that he had put fourteen ships on a war footing. Thereupon will arise the great discussion in to-day's session. This is the question: To which department of Government belongs the right to declare war? Already the King has lost the right of administering Interior Affairs, of levying taxes, and so on. He has also lost control over the department of Law and the Courts. If he loses the administration of the War Department, what is there left for him?"

As Gilbert made no reply, Mirabeau began to talk

very confidentially: "On the other side, — as friends, my dear Doctor, let us frankly grapple with questions which cannot be wisely touched in the Assembly, — on the other side, the King is distrusted. The Revolution is not yet completed, — though I flatter myself that I have done more to help it than anybody else, — and it will not be completed, without breaking the sword in the King's hands. Of all his privileges, the most dangerous to leave in his hands is the power of waging war."

"And what then will you do, Count?"

"Oh well, faithful to my plighted word, I shall demand that this power be left in the King's hands; though I risk my popularity, and perhaps my life, in maintaining this demand. I shall propose to the Assembly a decree which will render the King victorious, triumphant. Now what is that King doing, at this very hour? He is having the Keeper of the Seals search the old Parliamentary records, for certain ancient formulas of protestation against the States General, in order to draw up a new and secret protest against the Assembly."

"Is it possible?"

"Ah, there 's the pity of it, my dear Gilbert! There is too much of this secret business, and not enough frankness, — not enough publicity! And that 's why I wish — I, Mirabeau, do you hear? — that 's why I wish that everybody should know that I 'm on the royal side, since so I am. You think that this slander, directed against myself, must trouble me? Not so, Doctor, it will help me. To bring me out, I require what a storm requires for its outburst, — dark clouds and contrary winds. — Come in, Doctor, come in, — and you 'll see a great session, I answer for it."

Mirabeau was not mistaken. As soon as he entered the Riding School he had a chance to prove his courage.

Everybody cried *Treason*, under his nose; while one showed him a cord and another a pistol.

Mirabeau shrugged his shoulders, and walked on like Jean Bart, elbowing aside those who were in his way.

The outcries followed him inside the hall, and seemed to evoke new cries therein. Hardly did he appear than a hundred voices shouted: "There he is! The traitor! The renegade orator! The man with a price!"

Barnave was on the rostrum, speaking against Mirabeau. Mirabeau looked at him pointedly.

"Well, yes," said Barnave, "it is thyself who is called a traitor, and against whom I am speaking."

"Then if it's against me thou art talking, I will take a turn in the Tuileries. I shall have time to get back before thy peroration."

Sure enough, with head erect and threatening eye, he went out, — amidst hisses, imprecations, menaces, — took the Feuillant Terrace (so called, because an order of Cistercian monks once had a convent on this site) and thence descended towards the Gardens of the Tuileries.

Half way down the Grand Avenue was a young woman, holding in her hand a spray of verbena, whereof she was inhaling the perfume, while a circle of listeners gathered about her.

On her left was a vacant place, to which Mirabeau drew a chair, and sat down by her side.

Half of those who sat near them rose and walked away. Mirabeau smiled, as he saw them go. The young woman offered him her hand.

"Ah, Baroness," he said, "have you no fear of catching the pest?"

"My dear Count," responded the young woman, "they say you are leaning towards our side, and I would draw you still nearer to us."

Mirabeau smiled, and for three-quarters of an hour he chatted with this young woman, — none other than Anne Louise Germaine Necker, Baroness de Staël.

At the end of three-quarters of an hour, looking at his watch, he said: "Ah, Baroness, I ask you to excuse me. Barnave is making a speech against me. He had been talking an hour when I came away from the Assembly. I have had the happiness of chatting with you three-quarters of an hour. That makes two hours that my accuser has been on the rostrum. His speech must be near its end, and it is necessary for me to answer him."

"Go!" said the Baroness, "speak, and be of good cheer."

"Give me that branch of verbena, Baroness," said Mirabeau, "and it will serve me as a talisman."

"This verbena? Have a care, my dear Count! Verbena is the herb for funeral libations."

"Give it me, all the same. It is well to be crowned as a martyr, when one descends to fight brutes in the amphitheatre."

"The truth is," said Madame de Staël, "it is difficult to be more brutish than yesterday's session of the National Assembly."

"Ah, Baroness," responded Mirabeau, "why limit the date to yesterday."

Taking from her hands the sprig of verbena which she offered him, partly in recompense for his jest, Mirabeau saluted her gallantly, went up the steps which led to the Feuillant Terrace, and re-entered the Assembly.

Barnave descended from the tribune, amidst the acclamations of the whole assemblage, having pronounced one of those high-sounding discourses which go well with all parties.

Hardly was Mirabeau seen on the tribune than a storm

of cries and curses uprose against him. Lifting his powerful hand, he waited. Profiting by one of those intervals of silence, which always come amid storms or riots, he presently exclaimed: "I well know that it was not far from the Roman Capitol to the Tarpeian Rock."

Such is the majesty of genius, that this bright saying silenced the most angry listeners. When Mirabeau had thus compelled silence, the victory was half gained.

He demanded that to the King should be given the right to declare war. This demand was too great, and it was refused. Then began a struggle over the amendments. The principal attack having been repulsed, it was necessary to gain the day by partial onslaughts; and five times Mirabeau mounted the tribune.

Barnave had spoken two hours. During three hours, at different times, Mirabeau spoke; and this is what he obtained: That the King should have the right of making warlike preparations, and directing the forces as he wished; that he might propose a declaration of war to the Assembly; and that the Assembly should decide nothing warlike, unless sanctioned by the King.

What might Mirabeau not have obtained, but for that leaflet, gratuitously distributed, at first by some colporter unknown, and afterwards by Beausire, and which was entitled, as we have said, Mirabeau's Great Treason?

At the close of the session Mirabeau was fortunately not chopped into mincemeat.

On the other hand, Barnave was carried away in triumph by the people.

Poor Barnave! The day was not far distant when, in his turn, he would hear a cry: "The Great Treason of Monsieur Barnave."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE.

MIRABEAU went away from the Assembly with a proud eye and high head. So long as he was in the presence of danger, he considered only the task, and not his own strength.

In this respect he was like Marshal Saxe, at the battle of Fontenoy. Enfeebled, ill, Saxe remained all day on horseback, firmer than the most valiant soldier in his army; but when the English ranks were broken, when the last smoke of the last cannon-shot saluted the rout of the English, he fell dying on the field of battle he had won.

It was the same with Mirabeau. One day, when he returned home, he threw himself down on a pile of cushions, in the midst of a profusion of flowers.

Two passions had Mirabeau, women and flowers.

Since the organization of the Assembly, his health had visibly altered. Notwithstanding his vigorous temperament, he had suffered much, both physically and mentally, from persecution and imprisonment; so that he was never in a state of perfect health.

So long as a man is young, and all his organs are submissive to his will, ready to obey the first commands communicated to them from the brain, they work together simultaneously, and fulfil, without opposition, every desire of his heart; but as a man advances in years, every organ (if it may be so expressed) begins to argue, — like some old servant, who still obeys, but has been spoiled by long

service; and it is not without patience and effort that these faculties are brought to reason.

Mirabeau was at this stage of life. To make his physical organs continue to serve him with their wonted alacrity, he had to rouse them; and anger alone would stimulate these aching and exhausted servants to action.

This time he felt that his condition was more critical than ever; and he offered but faint resistance to his lackey, who was urging the necessity of sending for a physician, when Doctor Gilbert rang, and was immediately ushered into the room.

Mirabeau offered his hand, and drew the Doctor down upon the cushions, where he was reclining, amidst leaves and flowers.

"Well, my dear Count," said Gilbert, "I could not go home without congratulating you. You promised me another victory to-day; but you have done better than that, for you have wrought a triumph."

"Yes! but this sort of a victory is like one achieved by the great Pyrrhus, — won by awful losses. One more such triumph, and I am done for."

Gilbert looked at Mirabeau, and said: "In fact, you are sick!"

Mirabeau shrugged his shoulders, and replied: "At my rate of living, anybody else would have died a hundred times. I have two secretaries; they are both up to their eyes in work, and under the weather. Pellinc, especially, has been sick abed three days. It is his business to copy the loose sheets, covered with my abominable handwriting; and I can't get along without him, because he alone can decipher and understand me. Doctor, point out something, I don't say by which I may live, but which will give me force while I live."

"What can you expect?" said Gilbert, after having

felt the sick man's pulse. "There is no advice to be given to an organization like yours. Why counsel repose, to a man who finds all his strength in activity? Why advise temperance, to a genius who flourishes in the midst of excess? If I advise the removal from your rooms of all these flowers, which send forth their oxygen by day and their carbonic acid by night, — why, flowers have become a necessity with you, and you suffer more by their absence than by their presence. If I warn you to treat the ladies like the flowers, and keep them at a distance, especially overnight, you may say you would rather die. Live, then, my dear Count, according to the conditions of your life; but have about you only scentless flowers and platonic affections."

"As to the last requirement, my dear Doctor, you are well served. Passionate love has been too poor a success, for me to recommence it. Three years in prison, one death-sentence, the suicide of the woman whom I loved, — killing herself for another man, — these occurrences have cured me of that sort of passion. For an instant, as I told you, I dreamed of something great! I dreamed of an alliance like that between Elizabeth and Essex, between Anne of Austria and Mazarin, between Catherine the Second and Potemkin; but it was only a dream. That woman, in whose behalf I have contended, I have not seen since that interview; and probably I never shall see her again."

Gilbert mournfully contemplated the great statesman, as he continued: "See here, Gilbert, there is no torture so great as the feeling that one carries in his brain immense projects, — the prosperity of a kingdom, the triumph of his friends, the annihilation of his enemies, — and that all these plans elude him, by a wrong throw of the dice, by some caprice of fatality. Oh, the follies

of my youth! How they make me atone for them! How they avenge themselves!"

He paused a moment, and then went on: "Why do the royal family mistrust me? Except on two or three occasions, when I was pressed to the wall, and when I had no choice but to strike back, in order to show them the strength of my blows, — except on those occasions, have I not belonged completely to the royal side, from beginning to end? Did I not contend for the King's right to an absolute Veto, when Monsieur Necker was contented with a provisional Veto, which might be overruled by the Assembly? Did I not oppose the proceedings of the night of the Fourth of August, when the nobility were despoiled of their privileges? Did I not protest against the promulgation, by the Assembly, of the Declaration of the Rights of Humanity, — not that I wished to destroy it, but because I believed the day for its proclamation had not yet come? To-day, — yes, even to-day, — have I not served royalty beyond its hopes? Have I not obtained what nobody else could have obtained, — whether cabinet-minister or prince, — and have I not done this at the expense of my honor, my popularity, my life? Reflect well on what I am telling you, you great philosopher, for perhaps the downfall of the monarchy lies in these simple facts. Perhaps I ought to regard it as a great favor, but only once have I been allowed to speak to the Queen! Yet when I think of it, if my father had not died so short a time before the Bastille was destroyed, and if decency had not prevented me from appearing in public on the second day after his death, — the day when Lafayette was appointed General of the National Guard, and Bailly was appointed Mayor of Paris, — I should undoubtedly have been chosen Mayor in place of Bailly. How

things would have been changed! The King would have then seen the necessity of being in harmony with me. I should have inspired him with different ideas from those which he now cherishes, towards a city which encloses the Revolution within its walls. I should have won his confidence. I should have led him, before the evil was too deeply seated, into decisive and preventive measures. Instead of that, I am merely an Assembly Deputy, a man suspected, feared, hated, envied, kept away from the King, and slandered to the Queen. Can you believe this, Doctor, that when she saw me at Saint Cloud, she grew pallid? The explanation is very easy. Has she not been led to believe that I brought about the horrors of the Fifth and Sixth of October? Well, during the past year I have tried to do all that I was urged to do; but to-day, — ah, to-day! — both for the safety of the monarchy and myself, — I fear it is too late."

With an expression of pain over his whole physiognomy, Mirabeau grasped the flesh on his chest, just over his stomach.

"You are suffering, Count?" said Gilbert.

"Like the damned! There are some days, on my honor, when I could believe my enemies to be torturing my body with arsenic, as they torture my mind with slander. Do you believe in the Borgia poisons, the *aqua tofana* of Pérouse, the Inheritance Powder of Lavoisin?" asked Mirabeau, smiling.

"No; but I believe in that fiery steel which wears out its scabbard, in that lamp whose dilated flame shatters its globe."

Gilbert drew from his pocket a small crystal vial, containing two thimblefuls of greenish liquor.

"Here, Count," he said, "we 're now going to try an experiment."

"What is it?" asked Mirabeau, regarding the vial with curiosity.

"One of my friends, who I wish might be one of yours also, — a man thoroughly instructed in all natural sciences, and in occult science also, as he pretends, — has given me a recipe for this decoction, as a sovereign antidote, as a universal panacea, — almost an elixir of life. Often, when I have been afflicted with those gloomy thoughts which lead our English neighbors to melancholy, spleen, and even death, I have taken several drops of that liquor; and I must say that the effect has always been salutary and prompt. Will you try it?"

"From your hand, dear Doctor, I would drink anything, even hemlock, — and certainly, the elixir of life. Does it require some preparation, or do you take it clear?"

"No, this liquor is very powerful. Tell your servant to bring a few drops of brandy, or spirits of wine, in a spoon."

"The Devil! Brandy, spirits of wine, to soften your beverage? Then it must be liquid fire! I did n't suppose anybody had drunk such a beverage since Prometheus poured it out for the great ancestor of the human race. However, I warn you that my lackey may not be able to find six drops of brandy in the house. I 'm not like Pitt, and don't draw my eloquence from that fountain."

However, the lackey returned a few seconds later, bringing a spoon containing five or six drops of brandy.

To this Gilbert added an equal quantity of the liquid contained in the vial. As soon as the two liquors met, they assumed the color of absinthe. Seizing the spoon, Mirabeau hastily swallowed its contents.

"Morbleu, Doctor," he cried to Gilbert, "you did well to warn me this drug was so vigorous. It seems as if I had swallowed lightning."

Gilbert smiled, and appeared entirely confident of the result.

Mirabeau looked for an instant as if he were being consumed by those drops of fire; his head hung down upon his bosom, and his hand was pressed against his stomach. Suddenly he raised his head, and said: "Ah, Doctor, that is truly an elixir of life, which you made me drink!"

Then he rose and said, with his forehead elevated, his breathing buoyant, and his arms extended: "Even though the monarchy totters, I have strength enough to sustain it."

Gilbert smiled and asked: "You feel better, then?"

"Doctor, tell me where they sell this decoction! I tell you, I 'd have that flaming liquid, although I had to pay, for every drop of it, a diamond of equal size, and renounce every other luxury in life; for I should then feel myself invincible."

"Count, give me your promise not to take this medicine more than twice a week, and to apply to no one except myself for a renewal of the prescription, and this little bottle is yours."

"Give it me, and I 'll promise anything you wish."

"Good!" said Gilbert, "but that is n't all. You mean to buy a carriage and horses, you told me."

"Yes."

"Well, then, live in the country. These flowers, which vitiate the air of your rooms, would purify the air of your garden. The drives which you would have to take every day, to and from Paris, would be very healthful. If possible, select a residence on high ground, amidst

trees, or near a river, — say at Bellevue, Saint Germain, or Argenteuil."

"At Argenteuil!" replied Mirabeau. "That's just the thing! I sent my man to look up a country-house. Teisch, did n't you tell me you had found something that would just suit me?"

"Yes, Monsieur," responded the man who had been assisting the Doctor, "yes, a charming house, about which a compatriot of mine, one Fritz, spoke to me. It appears that he once lived there, with his master, who is a foreign banker. It is vacant, and Monsieur can take it, if he will."

"Where is the place?"

"Just outside of Argenteuil. It is called the Château Marais," (a name which might be rendered, Swamp Castle).

"Oh, I know it very well," said Mirabeau. "When my father drove me away from home, with his curse, and several whacks of his cane, — you know, Doctor, my father lived at Argenteuil —?"

"Yes."

"Well, as I was saying, when he drove me away from home, it often happened that I promenaded up and down outside the walls of that same beautiful house, and exclaimed with Horace, — I ask pardon, if the quotation is wrong, — *O rus quando te aspiciam?* — Oh villa, when shall I behold thee?"

"Then, my dear Count, the time has come for realizing your dream. Go at once. Visit the Château Marais, and take your household with you, — the sooner the better."

Mirabeau reflected, and then turned to Gilbert. "It 's your duty to watch over the invalid whom you have restored to life. It 's now only five o'clock. The days are

at their longest. It 's fine weather. Let us take a carriage, and go to Argenteuil."

"So be it," said .Gilbert, "let us go to Argenteuil. When one undertakes the care of health so precious as yours, my dear Count, everything should be considered. Let us go and examine your villa."

CHAPTER XVIII.

NO KINSHIP BEYOND THE FOURTH GRADE.

MIRABEAU had as yet no well-appointed establishment, and consequently no carriage of his own. The servant was therefore sent after a hack.

At that epoch it was almost a journey to Argenteuil, which one can now reach in eleven minutes, and which one may reach in eleven seconds, ten years hence.

Why did Mirabeau choose Argenteuil? Because of the life-long remembrances, as he told the Doctor, which bound him to the little town; for this man was so convinced of the need of doubling the short period of existence left to him, that he was glad to lay hold upon the past, in order to avoid being drawn too swiftly into the future.

It was at Argenteuil, on July 11, 1789, that his father, the Marquis de Mirabeau, died, — like a true gentleman, who would not aid in the capture of the Bastille.

At the end of Argenteuil Bridge Mirabeau ordered the carriage to stop.

"Are we there?" asked the Doctor.

"Yes and no! We have not yet reached the Château Marais, which is situated a quarter-league the other side of Argenteuil; but what we are making to-day, dear Doctor, — I forgot to tell you, — is not merely a visit, but a pilgrimage, — such as devotees make in their devotions, — a pilgrimage with three stations."

"A pilgrimage?" said Gilbert, smiling; "and to what saint?"

"To Saint Riquetti, my dear Doctor, — a saint whom you do not recognize, but a saint whom men have canonized. In truth, I greatly misdoubt if God — supposing he pays any attention to the foolery of this stupid world — has ratified this canonization. None the less a fact is it, that here died Riquetti, Marquis de Mirabeau, — the Friend of Mankind, as men called him, — martyrized by the extravagance and debauchery of his unworthy son, Honoré Gabriel Victor Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau."

"True!" said the Doctor. "Your father *did* die at Argenteuil. Pardon me for having forgotten it, my dear Count. My excuse is this, — that I arrived from America in the early days of July, and was arrested on the way from Havre to Paris. When your father died, I was imprisoned in the Bastille. On the Fourteenth of July I was released, with seven other prisoners. Important as was this personal occurrence, it was nevertheless forgotten, — to say nothing of lesser details, — in the tremendous events which came to light before the month was over. — Where did your father live?"

At the moment when Gilbert asked this question, Mirabeau stopped — for they had left the carriage, and were on foot — in front of the gateway of a mansion situated on the pier, facing the river, from which it was separated by a lawn of three hundred paces and by a row of trees.

Seeing a man stop in front of the gate, an enormous dog — of the race found in the Pyrenees — sprang forward, growling, and thrust his head between the bars of the gate, trying to grab a mouthful of Mirabeau's flesh, or else a fragment of his coat.

"Pardieu, Doctor!" said Mirabeau, recoiling a step,

in order to escape from the fierce white teeth of this Thracian watchdog, "pardieu, nothing is changed! I'm received just as if my father were alive."

Thereupon a young man appeared on the porch, and advanced towards the strangers, after silencing the dog, and calling him back.

"Your pardon, gentlemen," said the young man. "His masters have no share in the reception accorded you by their dog. Many wayfarers stop in front of this house, which was once occupied by the Marquis de Mirabeau, and as our poor Cartouche cannot comprehend the historic interest connected with the abode of his humbler masters, he growls eternally. — To your kennel, Cartouche!"

The young man made a threatening gesture, and the dog went growling to his kennel; but on his fore paws, which protruded through the opening, he laid his head, with its sharp teeth, red tongue, and fiery eyes. Meanwhile Gilbert and Mirabeau exchanged glances.

"Gentlemen," continued the young man, "there is now within this gate only a host, ready to open it and welcome you, if your curiosity is not limited to the outside."

Gilbert touched Mirabeau with his elbow, as a sign that he would be glad to see the inside of the mansion. Mirabeau understood. Besides, his wishes accorded with Gilbert's, and so he replied to the young man: "You have read our thoughts, Monsieur. Aware that this house was formerly occupied by the Friend of Mankind, we are curious to visit it."

"And it will increase your interest to know, gentlemen," said the young man, "that while the father lived here, the house was twice or thrice honored by visits from his illustrious son, who — if one may judge from hearsay — was not always received as his merits warranted, — as we would receive him, if he should ever have the

fancy which you have, gentlemen, and which I hasten to gratify."

Bowing, the young man admitted the two visitors, and preceded them towards the house; but Cartouche did not seem disposed to let them enjoy the proffered hospitality, for he darted out of his kennel, barking frightfully.

The young man threw himself between the dog and the one visitor against whom Cartouche seemed particularly enraged; but Mirabeau gently pushed the young man aside with his hand, saying: "Monsieur, dogs and men always bark at me like this. Moreover, men have bitten me, but dogs, never! It is said that the human gaze is all-powerful over animals. So please you, let me make an experiment."

"Monsieur," said the youth, quickly, "I warn you that Cartouche is ugly."

"Let me alone, Monsieur, let me alone," replied Mirabeau, "I have business, every day, with uglier beasts than he. Yes, this very day I had to do with just such a whipper-in, — a hound, a pack of hounds."

"Oh yes, but you could talk to those hounds," said Gilbert, "and nobody can doubt the power of your tongue."

"Doctor," said Mirabeau, "I believe you are an adept in magnetism?"

"Undoubtedly! What then?"

"In that case, you ought to recognize the power of the human gaze. Let me magnetize Cartouche."

Mirabeau spoke in that venturesome mood, so well understood by superior minds.

"Try it!" said Gilbert.

"Oh Monsieur," repeated the youth, "don't expose yourself!"

"By your leave?" said Mirabeau.

The young man bowed his consent; and he retired to the left, while Gilbert stepped to the right, as if they were witnesses at a duel, where the adversary was to fire on their friend.

The young man also went up two or three steps towards the porch, so that he could stop Cartouche, if the words or looks of the unknown gentleman should not suffice.

The dog turned his head right and left, as if to see if the enemy, against whom he had apparently vowed eternal hatred, was really cut off from all help. Seeing the man alone and unarmed, he crawled slowly out of his kennel, more like a serpent than a quadruped, and then suddenly leaped forward, clearing at the first bound a third of the distance between the kennel and his antagonist.

Mirabeau crossed his arms, and with that tremendous look which made him the *Jupiter Tonans* (the Thunderer) of the rostrum, he fixed his eyes on the animal. At the same time, all the electricity which his powerful body could contain seemed to concentrate itself in his countenance. His hair bristled like a lion's mane; and if it had been in the first hours of the night, — instead of an hour of the day when it was still quite light, though the sun was setting, — one would undoubtedly have seen every hair sparkling with electric fire.

The dog stopped short, and looked at him. Mirabeau stooped, snatched up a handful of gravel, and threw it in the dog's face.

The dog howled, and made another leap, which brought him within three or four feet of his adversary; but now it was the man who advanced upon the dog.

For an instant the animal remained immovable, like the granite dog of Cephalus the Hunter, in the classic

fable. Disquieted by Mirabeau's steady approach, he appeared to hesitate between anger and fear, still threatening with his eyes and teeth, yet crouching on his hind legs. At last Mirabeau lifted his arm, with a commanding gesture, — such as he often used on the tribune, when he hurled sarcasm, irony, and insult at his enemies; whereupon the conquered dog retreated, trembling in every limb. Glancing backward, to see if the way was still open, he finally turned tail, and rushed precipitately into his kennel.

Mirabeau lifted his head, as proud and joyous as any victor in the Isthmian Games of ancient Greece. "Ah, Doctor," he said, "the elder Mirabeau had good reason to call dogs the types of humanity. You shall see this blatant coward become as servile as any man!"

With a tone of command he then said, letting his hand fall by his side: "Here, Cartouche, here!"

The dog hesitated; but as the man made an impatient gesture, he crawled again out of his kennel, his eyes fixed on Mirabeau's, and crossed the intervening space till he reached the feet of his conqueror, the ends of whose fingers he lapped with the tip of his palpitating tongue, after slowly and timidly raising his head.

"That 's right!" said Mirabeau. "Now go back to your house!" and, at a sign, the dog went back, and lay down on his straw.

While the youth remained on the steps of the porch, cold with fear and mute with wonder, Mirabeau turned to Gilbert, and said: "Do you know what I was thinking of, when engaged in the bit of folly you have just witnessed?"

"No; but tell me, for you have not acted from simple bravado, I take it."

"I was thinking of that famous night of the Fifth and

Sixth of October. Doctor, Doctor, I would give half the remainder of my life, to have had King Louis the Sixteenth see that dog spring at me, retreat to his niche, and return to lick my hand." Then he said to the young man: "You will pardon me, doubtless, for having humiliated Cartouche? Now we will see the Friend of Mankind's house, whenever you will allow us to do so."

The youth stepped aside to let Mirabeau enter, who indeed seemed to need no guide, but to know the house as well as if he had been there before.

Without pausing on the ground-floor, he rapidly mounted the stairs, ornamented with an artistically wrought iron balustrade, saying: "This way, Doctor; this way!"

Indeed, with the leadership habitual to him, — arising from that domination which belonged to his temperament, — Mirabeau at once ceased to be a spectator, and became an actor, seeming to be the master of the house, rather than a mere visitor.

Gilbert followed. Meanwhile the youth summoned his father, a man of fifty or fifty-five, and also two sisters, girls from fifteen to eighteen years old, in order to tell them what a singular guest had come thither.

While the young man was telling them the story of Cartouche's defeat, Mirabeau showed Gilbert the former Marquis's study, bedroom, and parlor; and as each corner roused some remembrance, Mirabeau recounted anecdote after anecdote, with that charm of narration which was one of his characteristics.

While this cicerone told them the story of their own house, the proprietor and his family listened, — hearing and looking with open ears and big eyes.

The upper apartments having been inspected, and seven o'clock sounding from the Argenteuil church,

Mirabeau feared they should be too late if they remained any longer, and urged Gilbert to descend, setting him the example by striding at a leap down the first four steps, to the turn of the staircase.

"Monsieur," then said the owner of the house, "you seem to know very much about the history of the Marquis de Mirabeau and his illustrious son; and it seems to me that you could, if you would, tell us the story of these four stairs, — an account — from what I hear — which would be no less entertaining than your others."

Mirabeau stopped and smiled, saying: "Very true, but I meant to pass this by in silence."

"Why so, Count?" asked the Doctor.

"Faith, you shall judge! In leaving his dungeon at Vincennes, where he had been eighteen months, Mirabeau — being double the age of the Prodigal Son in the parable, and not perceiving any preparation for killing the fatted calf in joy over his return — took a fancy to come hither, and reclaim his legitimate rights. There were two reasons why Mirabeau was badly received in the paternal mansion. In the first place, he had come away from Vincennes against the old Marquis's will. In the second place, he came home to ask for money. The consequence was that the Marquis, who was busy putting the last touch to a philanthropic disquisition, arose when he saw his son, grasped his cane when the boy began to speak, and sprang upon him as soon as the word *money* was mentioned. The young Count well knew his father, yet had hoped his thirty-seven years might save the son from the punishment wherewith he was menaced; but he saw his error when he felt a shower of blows on his shoulders, dealt with the cane."

"How? Blows with a cane?" said Gilbert.

"Yes, and good cuts, too, — not such as they get at the Comédie Française, in Molière's plays, but real blows, enough to split one's head and break one's arms."

"And what did the son do?" asked Gilbert.

"Gracious! He did what Horace did, at his first fight, — he ran away! Unfortunately he had no buckler, such as Horace wore; or he might have used it to parry his father's attack, instead of throwing it away, as did the Lydian songster; so, having no shield, he flung himself down these four steps, to the turn of the staircase, — as I did just now. At this point the son faced about. Lifting a cane, in his turn, he cried to his father: 'Hold on, Monsieur! There is no kinship beyond the fourth grade.' It was a wretched pun, — comparing the gradation of a stairway to the grades, or degrees, of family relationship; but all the same it checked the good man, when fair reasoning would have failed; for he said: 'What a pity the Bailiff is dead, or I would have written that out for him;' — referring of course to his brother, who was known as the Bailiff."

The narrator continued: "Mirabeau was too good a strategist not to profit by the chance thus offered for beating a retreat. He descended the rest of the flight, almost as quickly as he had the first few steps; and, to his great sorrow, he never entered the house again. He was a great *knave*, that Count de Mirabeau, was n't he, Doctor?"

"Oh Monsieur," said the young man, approaching Mirabeau with clasped hands, — as if he asked pardon of his guest for entertaining a contrary opinion, "I would rather call him *a great man!*"

Mirabeau looked into the youth's face, and said: "Ah ha! Are there really some people who think well of Mirabeau?"

"Yes, Monsieur," said the young man; "and at the risk of displeasing you, I think so, first of all."

"So?" replied Mirabeau, laughing. "Well, it won't do to say that too loud in this house, young man, or the walls may tumble about your ears."

Saluting the old man respectfully, and the young ladies courteously, Mirabeau crossed the garden, making a sign of good-will to Cartouche, who responded by a sort of growl, — the remnant of his protest against absolute submission.

Gilbert followed Mirabeau, who ordered the coachman to drive into the village, and as far as the church; but at the corner of the first street he stopped the carriage, took a card from his pocket, and said to his servant: "Teisch, take this card back to that young man who does not agree with me about Monsieur de Mirabeau." Then he added, with a sigh: "Ah, Doctor, — there is somebody who has not yet read about Mirabeau's Great Treason."

Teisch returned, followed by the youth.

"Oh Monsieur de Mirabeau," he said, with an accent of admiration which it was impossible to mistake, "grant me the same privilege accorded to Cartouche, — the honor of kissing your hand."

Mirabeau opened both arms, and pressed the youngster to his heart.

"Count," he said, "my name is Mornais. If ever you need the help of one who is ready to die for you, remember me!"

Mirabeau's eyes were suffused with tears, as he said: "Doctor, these are the men who will succeed us. Upon my word, I believe they will be worth more than we are."

CHAPTER XIX.

A WOMAN RESEMBLING THE QUEEN.

THE hack stopped at the door of the Argenteuil church.

"I told you I had never set foot in Argenteuil, since my father turned me violently out of doors. I forgot! I did come back one day, when I escorted his body to this church."

Mirabeau left the carriage and doffed his hat. With uncovered head, with slow and solemn step, he entered the sacred edifice.

There were in that singular man such contradictory sentiments, that sometimes he clung to the commonplaces of religion, in an epoch when everybody talked of philosophy, which many pushed into the extreme of absolute atheism.

Gilbert followed, a few steps behind. He saw Mirabeau walk the whole length of the church, and lean against a massive pillar, which stood near the altar consecrated to the Madonna, — a pillar whose Roman capital evidently belonged to the Twelfth Century.

With bowed head he gazed steadfastly at a black slab, forming the centre of the small chapel before that altar.

The Doctor tried to see what could so absorb Mirabeau's attention; and as his eyes followed his friend's, they were arrested by the following inscription:

Here reposes

FRANÇOISE DE CASTELLANE, MARQUISE DE MIRABEAU,

a model of piety and virtue, a happy wife and mother.

Born in Dauphiny, 1685; *died in Paris*, 1769:

She was first interred in Saint Sulpice, Paris;
then brought here, to be reunited in the same tomb
with her worthy son

VICTOR DE RIQUETTI, MARQUIS DE MIRABEAU,

surnamed the FRIEND OF MANKIND:

Born at Pertuis, in Provence, October 4, 1715;

died at Argenteuil, July 11, 1789.

Pray for their Souls.

The religious instinct is so powerful in connection with death, that Doctor Gilbert lowered his head, and tried to find a prayer remaining in his memory, that he might obey the invitation which the sepulchral stone addressed to all Christians who chanced to cast their eyes upon it; but if ever in his infancy, which is doubtful, Gilbert had learned the language of humility and faith, skepticism, that gangrene of the last century, had effaced it, to the last line in that living book, and philosophy had inscribed sophisms and paradoxes in the place of religion.

Finding his heart and tongue alike mute, Gilbert lifted his eyes, and saw a few tears roll down Mirabeau's strong face, seamed by passion, as the slopes of a volcano are scored by fiery lava.

Those tears moved Gilbert so strangely, that he went to Mirabeau and took him by the hand. Mirabeau understood him.

Tears shed in memory of such a father, who had imprisoned, tortured, martyrized his son, seemed so utterly incomprehensible and perfunctory, that Mirabeau hastened to show Gilbert the true cause of this sensibility.

"She was a worthy woman, this Françoise de Castellane, my father's mother. When all the world found me hideous, she found me only plain. When everybody else hated me, she almost loved me. But most of all, she loved her son. As you see, my dear Gilbert, I have reunited them; but who can reunite me to them? Whose bones will lie next to mine? I have not even a dog to love me!" and he laughed gloomily.

"Monsieur," said an authoritative voice, with the rasping tone, full of reproach, which belongs to devotees, "Monsieur, people do not laugh in church!"

Mirabeau turned his tear-stained face towards the side whence the voice sounded, and saw a priest.

"Are you the priest in charge of this chapel?" he mildly asked.

"Yes. What do you wish?"

"Have you many poor folks in your parish?"

"More poor folks, than rich folks disposed to relieve them."

"You have however some charitable hearts, some philanthropic souls — ?"

The priest began to laugh.

"Monsieur," said Mirabeau, "you did me the honor just now to remark that people do not laugh in church!"

"Monsieur," said the priest, a little touched, "do you pretend to lecture me — ?"

"No, Monsieur, but to show you that people who feel it their duty to come to the relief of their fellow-men are not so rare as you suppose. In all probability, Monsieur, I am going to live in the Château Marais. Well, every

laborer out of work may find employment there, at good wages. Every hungry old man may come there for bread. Every invalid may find help there, whatever his religious or political opinions. Beginning with to-day, Monsieur Curate, I offer you, to that end, a credit of a thousand francs a month."

Tearing a leaf from his tablet he wrote on it, with a pencil, as follows:

Good for the sum of twelve thousand (12,000) francs, which M. the Curate of Argenteuil may expend for me, at the rate of one thousand (1000) francs per month, to be employed by him for charitable purposes, beginning with the day of my residence in the Château Marais.

Done at the Argenteuil church, and signed on the altar of the Virgin.

MIRABEAU.

Mirabeau indeed wrote and signed this promise on the altar dedicated to the Madonna. When it was done he gave the note to the curate, who was stupefied when he read the signature, and more so when he read the agreement.

Then Mirabeau left the church, beckoning Gilbert to follow, and they re-entered the carriage.

As short a time as Mirabeau had been in Argenteuil, he had already left behind him two souvenirs which would endear him to posterity.

It is the faculty of some organizations to make something eventful spring up wherever they touch their feet; as Cadmus raised soldiers from the soil of Thebes, as Hercules wrought his twelve famous labors in the face of the world; and so to-day, though Mirabeau has been dead over sixty years,[1] you may find at Argenteuil, in

[1] This was written by Dumas nearly forty years ago, and Mirabeau has now, in 1890, been dead nearly a century.

the same place where Mirabeau found them, both the stations which Mirabeau selected for his pilgrimage; and unless the mansion is uninhabited, or the church abandoned, you will also find there somebody to confirm these details, as if they were events of yesterday.

The carriage followed the main street to the very end. Then they branched away from Argenteuil, and rolled along the road towards Besons. They had not gone a hundred rods in this direction, before Mirabeau saw, at his right hand, groups of tufted trees, cloven by the slated roofs of the château and its outbuildings. This was Marais.

At the right of the road, before reaching the avenue which led up to the gate of the château, there was a poor little cottage. In the doorway was seated a woman on a wooden stool, holding in her arms a haggard child, emaciated by fever. As she rocked her half-dead little one, she raised her eyes to Heaven and wept, addressing herself to that power to which we all appeal, when there is no help to be obtained from a human source.

From afar Mirabeau noted this sorrowful scene, and said to Gilbert: "Doctor, I am as superstitious as any old woman. If that child dies, I won't take the Château Marais. See what is before you!"

He stopped the carriage opposite the hut, and added: "Doctor, as I have only twenty minutes more of daylight, in which to inspect the château, I will leave you here. You can rejoin me presently, and tell me if you hope to save the child."

Then he said to the mother: "Good woman, here is a gentleman who is a great physician. Thank Providence which has sent him to you. He will try to heal your babe."

The woman doubted if this was not a dream. She

rose, holding her child still in her arms, and stammered her thanks.

Gilbert left the carriage, which continued its journey. Five minutes afterwards Teisch rang the bell at the gate of the château. They waited some time without seeing anybody, but at last a man came to open the gate, whose costume made it easy to recognize him as the gardener.

Mirabeau first inquired about the condition of the building. The château was in good order, — at least, the gardener said so; and certainly it so appeared, at first sight.

The place had formed part of the estate of the Abbey Saint Denis, and been the headquarters of the Argenteuil Priory, and was now for sale, on account of the decrees which deprived the clergy of their landed property.

As we have said, Mirabeau knew the place already; but he never before had the opportunity of examining it so attentively as he could under present circumstances.

Passing the gateway he found himself in the first court-yard, which was nearly square. At the right was a pavilion, or small house, occupied by the gardener. At the left was another pavilion; but by the style of its decorations, even on the outside, one might well doubt, for an instant, if it was meant to be the twin brother of the one opposite.

The two pavilions were mates, however; but its setting made one of these plebeian edifices almost aristocratic. Gigantic rose-trees, in full bloom, formed an open-work robe, which was girded with a belt of vines, like a green border. Every window was shielded by a curtain of carnations, heliotropes, fuchsias, whose thick branches, embossed with flowers, kept both the sun and the eye from penetrating within. In front of this little house was a little garden, filled with the lily, the cactus, the

narcissus, — a veritable carpet of flowers, such as might have been embroidered by the hand of Penelope; and this garden extended all the way along the first court-yard, making a beautiful contrast to a gigantic weeping willow and some magnificent elms, growing on the other side.

We have already spoken of Mirabeau's passion for flowers. At the sight of this charming garden, and this pavilion buried among its roses, which seemed like a little Mansion of Flowers, he uttered a cry of joy, and said to the gardener: "Is this pavilion for sale or to let, my friend?"

"Certainly, Monsieur, as it belongs to the château, and the château is to be let or sold. Just now the pavilion is occupied; but there is no lease, and if Monsieur takes the château, the tenant of the pavilion can be sent away."

"Ah! And who is this tenant?"

"A lady."

"Young?"

"Thirty or thirty-five."

"Handsome?"

"Very handsome!"

"Well," said Mirabeau, "we will see. A beautiful neighbor is n't a bad idea! Show me the château, my friend."

The gardener walked on ahead, from the first court-yard into the second, from which it was separated by a bridge, beneath which was a rivulet.

There the gardener paused, and said: "If Monsieur does not wish to disturb the lady in the pavilion, the matter may be easily adjusted; for this little stream completely isolates the rest of the garden from that portion of the grounds belonging to her residence.

She would be by herself, and Monsieur could be by himself."

"Good, very good! Now show me the château," said Mirabeau, as he briskly sprang up the five steps of the porch.

The gardener opened the principal door, which led into a vestibule, finished in stucco, with niches containing statues, and columns supporting vases, in the fashion of that era.

A doorway at the other end of the hallway, opposite the main entrance, afforded an exit into the large garden beyond.

On the right of the hallway were a billiard-room and dining-room, and on the left were two parlors, one large and one small.

This arrangement pleased Mirabeau well enough, who, however, appeared absent-minded and impatient.

They went upstairs to the main story of the mansion. This story was composed of a large drawing-room, marvellously well fitted for an office or study, and three or four bedrooms, for the master of the house.

The windows were closed in the drawing-room and bedrooms. Mirabeau went himself to open one of the windows; and the gardener was about to open the others, when Mirabeau made a sign for him not to do so, and the gardener obeyed.

Just beneath the window which Mirabeau opened, at the foot of the big weeping willow, a woman was reclining and reading; while a few steps away was a little child, five or six years old, playing on the grass and among the flower-beds.

Mirabeau understood at once that this was the lady of the Floral Pavilion.

It was impossible to appear more gracefully or more

elegantly arrayed than was this woman. She wore a loose muslin morning gown, trimmed with lace, over a white taffeta bodice, ornamented with red and white ribbons. Her skirt was also of white muslin, with quilled flounces of red and white, like the bodice. On her rose-colored taffeta corsage were knots of the same color. Her hood was bordered with lace, which fell down like a veil; and through this, as through a mist, one could see her face.

Her hands were beautiful, and her fingers tapering, with aristocratic nails. Her infantile feet played in and out of loose slippers, made of white taffeta, with red knots, completing a harmonious and seductive vision.

The child was clad in a suit of white satin. He wore a little Henry the Fourth hat and — a singular combination, not unusual at that epoch — a tricolored belt, called the National. What was more surprising, his dress resembled the costume worn by the young Dauphin, the last time he appeared on the balcony at the Tuileries, with his mother.

The sign made by Mirabeau to the gardener was to prevent him from disturbing the beautiful reader. She was indeed the lady of the Floral Pavilion, the queen of this garden of the lily, cactus, and narcissus, such a neighbor as Mirabeau — a man whose senses always inclined him towards the voluptuous — would have chosen, if chance had not led him into her neighborhood.

For a while he devoured with his eyes this charming creature, immovable as a statue, ignorant of the ardent gaze which enveloped her; but, either by chance, or drawn by a magnetic current, her eyes suddenly detached themselves from the book, and turned towards the window.

She saw Mirabeau, uttered a little cry of surprise, arose, called her child, and went away, holding him by

the hand, — not, however, without two or three times turning her head. She disappeared among the trees, in the midst of which Mirabeau could see her striking dress here and there reappearing, as its whiteness struggled with the first shadows of night.

To the cry of surprise uttered by the unknown lady, Mirabeau responded with a cry of wonder. Not only had this lady the royal bearing, but her face — so far as the lace veil, which half covered it, would permit a judgment — wore the features of Marie Antoinette.

The child added to the resemblance. He was exactly the age of the Queen's second son, the Dauphin, — of that Queen whose walk, whose face, whose every movement had so steadfastly remained, not merely in the memory, but in the heart of Mirabeau, ever since the interview at Saint Cloud, that he could recognize her wherever he might see her, even were she enwrapt in a divine cloud, like that in which Virgil declares Venus was encompassed, when she appeared to her son on the outskirts of Carthage.

What marvel had led this mysterious woman into the park of the mansion which Mirabeau was about to hire, — a woman who, if not the Queen, was her living portrait?

At that instant Mirabeau felt a hand on his shoulder.

CHAPTER XX.

WHEREIN THE INFLUENCE OF THE UNKNOWN LADY BEGINS TO MAKE ITSELF FELT.

MIRABEAU turned with a start. It was Doctor Gilbert who had touched his shoulder.

"Ah, it 's you, Doctor! Well?"

"Well," said Gilbert, "I 've seen the child."

"And you hope to save it?"

"A physician should never lose hope, even in the face of death itself."

"The Devil! That 's as much as to say the malady is serious."

"More than serious, my dear Count; it is mortal."

"What 's the trouble?"

"I ask nothing better than to enter into the details of this subject, inasmuch as these details will not be devoid of interest to a man who has made up his mind to live in this château, without knowing to what he is exposing himself."

"What? Do you mean to tell me that they run the risk of the plague here?"

"No; but I will tell you how this poor child caught the fever, of which it will probably die in a week. Its mother was helping the gardener cut the grass hereabouts. In order to work more freely, she laid the child down by itself, in a place which happened to be only a few steps from one of those ditches of stagnant water which encircle the park. The good woman, having no

idea of the duplex movement of the earth, laid the little thing in the shade, without thinking that in an hour the shadow would give place to the sun. When she came after her infant, attracted by its cries, she found it doubly injured, — injured by prolonged exposure to the sun, which had brought a sunstroke to its young brain, and injured by absorption of the marshy effluvia, which brings on a species of poisoning called malaria."

"Excuse me, Doctor," said Mirabeau, "but I do not understand you very well."

"Have you not heard more or less about the fevers which come from the Pontine Marshes, outside the city of Rome? Are you not acquainted, at least by reputation, with the deleterious miasma which exhales from the Tuscan swamps? Have you not read the Florentine poet's story of the death of Pia dei Tolomei?"

"Oh yes, Doctor, I know all that; but as a man of the world, as a poet, not as a chemist or a physician. Cabanis told me something like this, the last time I saw him, in reference to the Assembly Hall, at the Riding School, where we are so badly off. He even pretends, if I don't go out three times during every session, and breathe the air of the Tuileries Gardens, that I shall die of poison."

"And Cabanis is right."

"Will you not explain this, Doctor? It will give me great pleasure."

"Seriously?"

"Yes. I know my Greek and Latin well enough. During my four or five years spent in prison, at different periods, — thanks to the social irritability of my father, — I have had a good chance to study antiquity. I even wrote, in some odd moments, an obscene book, on the morals and manners of the aforesaid antiquity, — a

book which is not destitute of a certain kind of science; but I am completely ignorant how one can be poisoned in our National Assembly Hall, — at least, unless he is bitten by Abbé Maury, or reads Marat's daily sheet."

"Then I will tell you. Perhaps the explanation may be obscure, for a man who modestly avows his ignorance of chemistry and his small knowledge of medicine. However, I 'll try to make it as clear as possible."

"Speak on, Doctor. You will never find an auditor more willing to learn."

"The architect who constructed the Riding School, — and, unfortunately, most architects, like yourself, are very bad chemists, — the architect who built that hall had no idea of so arranging the chimneys as to carry off the bad air, nor of having a secondary system of pipes, for the admission of fresh air. The result is that eleven hundred mouths, shut up within that hall, exhaust the oxygen, and leave carbonized vapor in its place. Consequently, at the end of an hour's session, — especially in winter, when the windows are shut and the stoves heated, — the air is not fit to breathe."

"That 's just the sort of thing I should like to understand, if only to pitch into Bailly about it."

"Nothing is simpler than the true explanation. Pure air, the air designed for absorption through our lungs, the air which is breathed in a dwelling-house half-turned towards sunrise, with running water in the neighborhood, — that is, in the best conditions under which air can possibly be breathed, — is composed of seventy-seven parts of oxygen, twenty-one parts of nitrogen, and two parts of what is called watery vapor."

"Very well! So much I can understand, and I note your figures."

"Well, now listen to this. The venous blood, black and full of carbon, is carried into the lungs, where it should be revived and cleansed by contact with the outside air, — that is, by the oxygen which the act of breathing borrows from the free air. Here a double phenomenon is produced, which we designate by the name of *hematose.* The oxygen, brought into contact with the blood, so combines with it as to change the color from black to red; and also imparts the element of vitality which is needed throughout the system. At the same time the carbon, which combines with part of the oxygen, is transformed into carbonic acid, or oxide of carbon, and is exhaled from the lungs, being mixed with a certain quantity of watery vapor, in the act of expiration. Well, this pure air, absorbed by inspiration, is vitiated by expiration, and forms, in a close room, an atmosphere which not only ceases to be in a proper condition for breathing, but may reach a point where it acts as a genuine poison."

"According to your theory, Doctor, I am already half poisoned."

"Precisely. Your intestinal discomforts arise from no other cause; but you will understand that the poison you now breathe, in the present Assembly Hall, follows and augments the poison you breathed in the Archepiscopal Palace, in the dungeon at Vincennes, in the fortress at Joux, and in If Castle. Do you not recollect what Madame Bellegarde said, that there was, in Vincennes Castle, one chamber worth its weight in arsenic?"

"So, dear Doctor, that poor infant is wholly what I am partially, — that is, poisoned!"

"Yes, dear Count; and the poisoning has brought with it a pernicious fever, whose seat is in the brain, or in the coatings of the brain. This fever has brought on

another malady, commonly called cerebral fever, but which I would baptize with a new name. It might be called, if you please, a hydrocephalic ague. From this malady come convulsions, a pimply face, purple lips, lock-jaw, a displacement of the eyeballs, labored respiration, a pulse which trembles instead of beating regularly, and finally a viscous sweat over the whole body."

"My dear Doctor! Do you know that it gives me the shivers, this enumeration of yours? Indeed, when I hear a physician discourse in such technical words, it is much the same as if I were reading a paper crammed with astrological terms; and it always seems as if the pleasantest thing awaiting me was death. — But what have you ordered for the poor little thing?"

"The most energetic treatment; and I ought to say that one or two louis, wrapt in the prescription paper, will enable the mother to follow it. I have ordered cooling applications on the head, irritants on the extremities, emetics, and a decoction of that invaluable tonic, known as Peruvian Bark."

In 1790 the sulphate of quinine was unknown, and it was not yet the custom to apply leeches behind the ears. Doctor Gilbert's directions were as complete as the medical progress of the Eighteenth Century permitted.

"Indeed! And will all that do no good?" asked Mirabeau.

"All that will do no great things, without the aid of nature; but to satisfy my conscience, I have prescribed this treatment. Its good angel, if the little one has a good angel, must do the rest."

"Hum!"

"You understand, do you not?" said Gilbert.

"Your theory of poisoning by the oxide of carbon? Partly!"

"No, not that. I want to know if you understand that the air of this Château Marais will not suit you."

"You think so, Doctor?"

"I 'm sure of it."

"That 's very unlucky, for the château suits me to a charm."

"There you are, your own eternal enemy! I advise high ground; you select a flat locality. I suggest running water; you choose a stagnant pool."

"But what a park! Just look at yonder fine trees, Doctor!"

"Sleep a single night here with open windows, or walk about in the shade of those beautiful trees, — well, you may tell me the news the next day!"

"Which is to say, that in place of being half poisoned, as I am already, I shall be poisoned outright?"

"Have n't you asked for the truth?"

"Yes; and you are telling it, are you not?"

"Oh yes, in all its baldness. I know you, my dear Count. You come here to escape the world. The world will come and find you. Every man drags his own chain after him, whether it be of iron, gold, or flowers. Your chain is made up of pleasures by night and study by day. As long as you were young, voluptuousness afforded you relief from work; but now you are used up with your days of work, and weary with your nights of passion. You once told me, in your own language, — so expressive and picturesque, — that you felt as if you had passed from summer into autumn. Well, my dear Count, if, following this excess of pleasure by night and this excess of work by day, I should be obliged to bleed you, after such a multiplied loss of force, you would be more apt than ever to absorb this air, vitiated at night by the great trees in the park, and vitiated during the day by

the malarial miasma from the standing water. What will happen? There will be two against me, both stronger than I, — you and nature. I might as well give up."

"So you believe, Doctor, it is through the intestines I must perish. The Devil! You pain me when you say that. Long and unbearable are these intestinal maladies. I should prefer a good rousing fit of apoplexy, or even heart-enlargement. Can't you arrange one of them for me?"

"My dear Count," said Gilbert, "don't ask me for anything of that sort! What you desire is as good as done. In my judgment, your entrails are only secondary; it is your heart which plays, and will play, the chief rôle. Unhappily, heart-diseases are numerous and various, with men of your age, and do not always lead to instant death. As a general rule, my dear Count, — listen well to this; it is nowhere written down, but I state it, more as a philosophic observer than as a physician! — as a general rule, acute distempers in mankind follow an absolute order. In infancy it is the brain which is attacked; in youth, it is the chest; in maturity, it is the bowels; in age, either the brain or the heart, — that is, the parts which have respectively been used most and suffered most. When science speaks its last word, when the whole universe, at man's interrogation, delivers up its last secret, when every malady finds its cure, when men — with few exceptions — die only from old age, like the animals around them, then the only two attackable organs will be the brain and the heart; and even then, brain-disease will have its seat in heart-disease."

"Mordieu, my dear Doctor! You have no idea how this interests me. Look here! One would think my heart knew what you 're talking about. See how it beats."

Mirabeau took Gilbert's hand, and placed it against his heart.

"There!" said the Doctor, "there comes an illustration of what I have been explaining. How can you suppose that an organ which shares all your emotions, which increases or decreases its pulsations in following a simple pathological conversation, how can you think that such an organ — above all, yours — should not be affected? By the heart you have conquered; by the heart you will be conquered. Understand this: there is not a mental or moral emotion, not an acute physical sensation, which does not give a man a sort of fever. There is no fever, without greater or less acceleration of heart-beats. Well, in painful and tiresome work, especially in that which is accomplished outside the normal order of things, the heart exhausts itself and undergoes some change. With old folks this change leads to hypertrophy of the heart, — that is, its too great development, — or to aneurism, a diminution of the heart. Aneurism leads to laceration of the heart, the only death which is instantaneous. Hypertrophy leads to apoplexy of the brain, and a slower death. Therein intelligence is destroyed, and, consequently, genuine pain no longer exists; because there is no suffering, without the feeling which judges and measures that suffering."

Mirabeau listened in wonder to Gilbert's exposition.

The Doctor continued: "Well, consider within yourself that you have loved, that you have been happy, that you have suffered, that you have had joyful and happy hours, such as nobody else ever had; that you have attained unheard-of triumphs, that you have descended to unknown deceptions; and that for forty years your heart has been precipitating the blood in boiling cataracts from the centre to the extremities of your body, while you

have thought, worked, and talked the livelong day, while you have drunk, laughed, and indulged in pleasures the livelong night; and all this time your heart, though you have used and abused it, has not once failed in a single beat. Yet, my dear friend, the heart is like a purse. However well lined it may be, if we go to it often enough, it runs dry. In showing you the worse side of your condition, let me also speak of the better. The heart must have time wherein to do its work. Do not tax your heart more than it can endure. Do not ask of it more work than it is able to perform. Give it no more excitement than it can bear. Try and maintain the conditions which do not lead to grave disorders in the three chief functions of life, — respiration, which has its seat in the lungs, circulation, the seat whereof is in the heart, digestion, whose seat is in the intestines, — and you may live twenty or thirty years longer, and die of old age. On the contrary, if you wish to commit suicide, — my God, nothing is easier than for you to voluntarily hasten or retard your own death. Imagine that you are driving a pair of fiery steeds, who drag you along, — you, their guide. Constrain them to trot moderately, and they will last a long time and make a long journey. Let them gallop, and, like the fabled Horses of the Sun, they will make the everlasting circuit of the sky, doing a year's work in a single day and night."

"Yes," replied Mirabeau, "but during that day they lighten and warm the world, which is a good thing. — Come, Doctor, it is growing late. I 'll think about all this!"

"Reflect upon it as much as you please," said Gilbert, following Mirabeau; "but begin by obeying the orders of the Faculty. Promise me, first of all, not to hire this château. You will find, in the neighborhood of Paris,

ten, twenty, fifty, which will offer you the same advantages as this."

Perhaps Mirabeau, yielding to the voice of reason, would have made this promise; but suddenly, amid the first shadows of evening, it seemed to him that he saw, behind a curtain of flowers, the head of the woman wearing the skirt of white taffeta, with rosy flowers. This woman smiled, — at least, Mirabeau so believed; but there was no time to make sure of it, for in an instant, guessing that something new had come across his patient's mind, Gilbert looked in the same direction, in order to account to himself for the nervous tremor of the arm on which the Doctor was leaning. The woman's head was speedily withdrawn, and one could see nothing, at the pavilion window, except the slightly agitated branches of roses, heliotropes, and pinks.

"You do not answer," said Gilbert.

"My dear Doctor, you recollect what I told you I said to the Queen, when she gave me her hand to kiss, as she left me: *Madame, through this kiss the monarchy is saved!*"

"Yes!"

"Well, I took upon myself a heavy load, Doctor, — especially if they abandon me, as heretofore they have done. However, I must not fail in this undertaking. Don't misjudge the suicide of which you spoke, Doctor. Suicide may perhaps be the only honorable way out of this affair."

Two days later, by a lease of the ground rental, Mirabeau had bought the Château Marais.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CHAMP DE MARS.

We have already tried to make our readers understand into what an indissoluble knot of union all France was about to bind herself, and what effect this national federation, anticipatory of a more general federation, produced in Europe.

Europe began to understand that some day, though the dawning of this day was hidden in the clouds of the great future, — Europe, we repeat, began to understand that some day she must become an immense federation of citizens, a colossal society of brothers.

Mirabeau urged the grand gathering of the French people, which was about to take place. To the fears expressed to him by the King he responded, that if there was any salvation for royalty in France, it must be sought, not in Paris, but in the provinces.

Moreover, he saw one great advantage in such a reunion of men, from every corner of France, — that the King would see his people, and the people would see their King. When the whole population of France, represented by three hundred thousand delegates, — tradesmen, magistrates, soldiers, — should shout "Long live the Nation," and strike hands over the ruins of the Bastille, certain purblind courtiers, or courtiers interested to blindfold the King, could no longer insist that Paris, led by a handful of factious agitators, demanded

a measure of liberty which the rest of France was far from claiming.

Mirabeau counted on the good sense of the King. He relied upon the spirit of loyalty still surviving, at that date, in the hearts of the French. He argued for this unusual, unheard-of, novel contact of the monarch with his subjects, and believed it would result in a sacred alliance, which no intrigue could thereafter break.

Men of genius are sometimes possessed with such sublime follies, which furnish the political blackguards of the future with a chance to laugh their memories to scorn.

Already one preparatory federation, so to speak, had been held on the plains of Lyons. France was instinctively marching towards unity, and believed the definite watchword of that unity might be found in the valley of the Rhone; but it soon became obvious, that while Lyons might betroth France to the Genius of Liberty, the marriage must be solemnized and consummated in Paris.

When this proposition for a general convention was brought before the Assembly by the Mayor and Council of Paris, who could not resist the impulsion of other cities, there was a great commotion in the audience. This reunion, which would bring innumerable men to Paris, — that eternal centre of agitation, — was disapproved by each of the two parties which divided the Chamber, the Royalists and the Jacobins.

The Royalists declared that to invite such a gathering would be to risk another gigantic Fourteenth of July, not against the Bastille this time, but against royalty itself. What would happen to the King, amidst such a frightful medley of opposing passions, such an inevitable conflict of differing opinions?

On the other side, the Jacobins, who were not ignorant what a hold Louis the Sixteenth still had upon the masses, liked this project of a convention no better than did their political opponents. In the eyes of the Jacobins, such a reunion would deaden the public spirit, lull mistrust to sleep, awaken the old idolatry, — in a word, *royalize* France.

There was no way, however, of paralyzing this movement, which was without a parallel since the Eleventh Century, when all Europe was roused to recapture the Holy Sepulchre of Jesus at Jerusalem; and these two movements were not as foreign to each other as might at first be supposed, inasmuch as the first tree of liberty was planted on Calvary.

The Assembly tried, however, to make the reunion less formidable than was expected. The members dragged out the discussion; so it came to pass, for those who travelled from the ends of the kingdom, — what had happened likewise to the delegates from Corsica to the Lyons Federation, — that they did not arrive till the last gun-fire, — and scarcely before the day after the wedding.

Besides, the expenses were to be charged to the different sections; and, as the opponents of the convention very well knew, there were provinces so poor as to be able to raise, even with their strongest efforts, only enough money to defray half the expenses of their deputies, or even a quarter-part of the cost of travel; and that consequently these deputies would not be able to reach Paris, to say nothing of getting home again.

These enemies had reckoned, however, without their host, without the popular enthusiasm. They had not taken into consideration the spirit of co-operation, whereby the rich give twice, — once for themselves, and once for

their poorer neighbors. They had not counted on that hospitality which exclaimed, all along the roads: "Ye French, open your doors! Here are your brothers, who come to you from the ends of France!" — a cry which did not find a deaf ear or a rebellious door.

There were no longer strangers or foreigners, but everywhere Frenchmen, relations, brothers. Unseen voices cried: "Come, ye pilgrims, to the grand festival! Come ye National Guards! Come soldiers! Come mariners! Come among us! You will find fathers and mothers and wives, whose sons and husbands are elsewhere, in other generous homes, enjoying the same hospitality we offer you."

If one could have been transported, as the Christ was, not indeed to the summit of the highest mountain on earth, but simply to the highest peak in France, he might have seen a splendid spectacle, — three hundred thousand citizens marching towards Paris, all the rays of the star converging into a common centre.

And by whom were they guided, these Pilgrims of Liberty? By aged men; by soldiers of the Seven Years War; by subordinate officers who had fought at Fontenoy; by volunteers, for whom it had required all the labor, courage, and devotion of a lifetime to reach the two epaulets of a captain or the one epaulet of a lieutenant; by poor miners, compelled to bear on their foreheads the sign of the granite rule of ancient France; by sailors, who had conquered the Indies under Bussy and Dupleix, and lost their prize under Lally Tolendal, — living ruins, broken down by cannon on fields of battle, or worn out by the ebb and flow of the sea.

During the last days, veterans of fourscore made long journeys, of ten or a dozen leagues at a stretch, in order to arrive in time; and they *were* in time. At the moment

when they were about to lie down forever, and sleep the slumber of eternity, the force of their youth was renewed, and they mounted on wings of eagles.

Their country had made them a sign, beckoning them with one hand, while with the other she pointed to the future of their children. Before them was the banner of Hope.

They chanted one unique song, these pilgrims, coming from the north, the south, the east, the west, from Alsatia, Brittany, Provence, Normandy. Who taught them this song, clumsily and heavily rhymed, like the ancient canticles which guided the Crusaders across the seas of the Grecian Archipelago and the plains of Asia Minor? No one knows! The angel of the Revolution, perchance, scattering music from his passing wings, as he soared over beautiful France.

This song was the famous *Ça ira*, — not the Terror Song of 1793; for in '93 everything was inverted, hope was changed into tearful laughter, and France "sweat, as it were, great drops of blood."

As all France was leaving home, to bear to Paris the universal oath, she sang no words of threat. She had not yet learned to sing the *Ça ira* of later days; which ran thus:

Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates à la lanterne;
Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates, on les pendra!

This quatrain may be translated as follows:

Ah, go ahead, go ahead, go ahead!
Aristocrats straight to the rope!
Ah, go ahead, go ahead, go ahead!
The Royalists, let them all hang!

No ! The song was not then a death-chant, but a life-giving melody, not a hymn of despair, but a canticle of hope; for to another air they chanted the following verses :

Le peuple en ce jour sans cesse répète:
Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira !
Suivant les maximes de l'Évangile.
Ah ! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira !
Du législateur tout s'accomplira :
Celui qui s'élève, on l'abaissera ;
Celui qui s'abaisse, on l'élèvera !

These lines may be rendered thus :

The people this day without ceasing, repeat,
Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead !
The plain Gospel precepts are guiding their feet :
Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead !
The Lawgiver's word is fulfilled in all ways :
Whoever is lofty shall soon be abased ;
Whoever is humble, the same shall be raised.

To receive five hundred thousand souls, from Paris and the provinces, there was needed a monstrous arena, — besides a colossal amphitheatre, capable of accommodating a million spectators.

For the arena, the Champ de Mars (Field of Mars) was selected ; for the amphitheatre, the heights of Passy and Chaillot.

As the Champ de Mars presented a flat surface, it was necessary to turn it into a vast basin, by digging out the earth in some places, and piling it up in others.

Fifteen thousand laborers — men of the sort who eternally complain aloud of their fruitless search for work, while, with bated breath, they pray God not to let them find it — fifteen thousand such laborers were set to work,

with spades, pickaxes, and hoes, by the city of Paris, in order to transform this plain into a valley, flanked by a large amphitheatre. Only three weeks remained for these fifteen thousand men to accomplish this Titanic work; yet at the end of two days it was evident these men would not get through in three months.

Besides, they were being paid more for doing nothing, than they could have earned at their regular trade, — if they had any.

Then there occurred a species of miracle, whereby one may measure the enthusiasm of the Parisians. That immense labor, which thousands of lazy workmen could not or would not accomplish, was undertaken by the entire population. On the very day when it was noised abroad that the Champ de Mars would not be ready for the festival of the Fourteenth of July, a hundred thousand men rose up and said, with that assurance which belongs to the popular will, as it does to the will of God: "It shall be done!"

Deputies went to the Mayor of Paris, in the name of these hundred thousand laborers, and it was agreed that the volunteers should work by night, in order not to interfere with those who worked by daylight.

The same evening, at seven o'clock, a cannon-shot announced that the task of the day was finished, and that the night's work would begin. At this sound the Champ de Mars was invaded from its four sides, — from the side of Grenelle, of the river Seine, of Gros Caillou, and of Paris.

Each workman bore some implement, — a hoe, shovel, wheelbarrow, or pickaxe.

Others rolled along casks of wine, to the accompaniment of violins, guitars, drums, and fifes.

All ages, both sexes, and all sorts and conditions of

men mingled in the crowd, — citizens, soldiers, curates, monks, actresses, fine ladies, Dames from the Market-place, Sisters of Charity, together with many others who could handle a pickaxe, trundle a barrow, or drive a wagon. Children marched ahead, bearing torches. Bands followed, playing on all sorts of instruments; and sounding above all this noise, all this hubbub, all these instruments, might be heard the *Ça ira*, chanted by an immense choir of a hundred thousand voices, to which responded three hundred thousand voices, coming from all parts of France.

Among the most earnest workers two were noticeable, who arrived first, and wore their uniforms, as deputies to the great Federation.

One was a man forty years old, of robust and muscular proportions, but gloomy face. He sang not, and hardly talked.

The other was a young fellow of twenty, with a frank and smiling countenance, big blue eyes, white teeth, blond locks, standing square on his great feet and straightening his broad knees. With his large hands he lifted enormous weights. He constantly pushed wagons and handcarts, always singing, and without once stopping to rest. He watched his companion, out of the corner of one eye, and occasionally addressed a few words to him, which the older man did not answer. He brought him a glass of wine, but it was thrust aside; and so the younger man returned to his own place, shrugged his shoulders, and again put himself to work like ten men, while he sang like twenty.

These two men were two deputies from the new department of Aisne, only some ten leagues from Paris. Hearing that strong arms were needed, they hastened to offer their services, — one for silent work, the other for brisk and

joyous co-operation. These two men were Billot and Pitou.

Let us see what was taking place at Villers Cotterets during the third night after the arrival of these two men at Paris, — that is, on the night of the Fifth and Sixth of July, at the very time when they were doing their best in the midst of so many laborers.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHEREIN ONE SEES WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO CATHERINE, BUT NOT WHAT WILL BECOME OF HER.

DURING that night, of the Fifth and Sixth of July, about eleven o'clock, Raynal, who had gone to bed, in the hope of sleeping the livelong night, — a hope often deceptive with physicians and surgeons, — Doctor Raynal, we say, was awakened by three vigorous blows at his door.

As we know, it was the Doctor's custom, when anybody rapped or rung for him in the night, to go to the door himself, in order to come into quicker contact with whoever demanded his services.

This time, as always, he jumped out of bed, slipped on his dressing-gown, put on his slippers, and descended the narrow stairway as rapidly as possible.

However diligent the Doctor's movements, they doubtless appeared very slow to the nocturnal visitor; for this visitor began to rap again, and this time his blows were without number or limit, when suddenly the door opened.

The Doctor recognized the lackey, who had come on a certain previous night to take him to Isidore de Charny's, and exclaimed: "Oh ho! Are you here, my friend? I do not say it by way of reproach, you understand, but if your master is wounded again, he will have to be very careful. It is not well for him to go into neighborhoods where it rains bullets."

"No, Monsieur, it is not for my master, nor even for a wound, but for something very different, and not less pressing. Finish your toilet. Here is a horse, and you are waited for."

The Doctor never wanted more than five minutes for his toilet. This time — judging by the tone of the lackey's voice, and particularly by the way in which he had knocked, that a physician's presence was urgent — he was dressed in four minutes.

"Here I am!" he said, reappearing almost as soon as he had disappeared.

Without dismounting, the lackey offered the bridle of the extra horse to Doctor Raynal, who climbed at once into the saddle; but instead of turning to the left from the house, as on the former occasion, he turned to the right, following the lackey, who pointed out the road, which was in the direction exactly opposite to that which led to Boursonnes.

They crossed the park and entered the forest, leaving Haramont on the left, and soon found themselves in a very uneven part of the woods, where it was difficult to proceed on horseback.

All at once a man sprang from behind a tree. "Is it you, Doctor?" he asked.

The Doctor reined in his horse, ignorant of the newcomer's intentions; but at these words he recognized the Viscount, and replied: "Yes, it's I. Where the Devil are you taking me to, Monsieur?"

"You 'll see," said Isidore. "I beg you to dismount and follow me."

The Doctor dismounted, and said, as he began to understand the situation: "Ah ha, it 's a case of confinement, I see!"

Isidore grasped his hand. "Yes, Doctor; and you

will positively promise me to keep silence, will you not?"

The Doctor shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say: "Oh Lord, be easy! I've been there before!"

"Then come this way," said Isidore, replying to the Doctor's unspoken words.

Amidst the holly-bushes, treading on the dry and rustling leaves, the travellers were soon lost in obscurity, under gigantic beeches, through whose tremulous leafage they from time to time perceived the scintillation of a star; and thus the two men descended into the depths of the forest, where, as we have said, horses could not penetrate.

Presently the Doctor could see the height of Clouise Rock, and exclaimed: "Oh ho! Is it to Goodman Clouis's hut we are bound?"

"Not exactly, but very near it."

Walking around the immense rock, he led the way to the door of a little brick building, a sort of lean-to against the old gamekeeper's hut, so built that an observer might well believe, — as was generally believed in the neighborhood, — that the good man, for his own convenience, had added an annex to his lodge.

Apart from the fact that Catherine was lying prostrate on a bed, any observer would have been undeceived at the first glance into the interior of that little chamber.

A pretty paper covered the walls, and the woollen window-curtains were similar in pattern to the paper. Between the two windows was a handsome mirror, beneath which was a dressing-table, furnished with all sorts of toilet utensils, in porcelain. There were two chairs, two armchairs, a small sofa, and a diminutive bookcase. Such was the interior, — pretty comfortable, as one would say, even to-day, — which disclosed itself to view, as one

entered the little room; but the good Doctor's glance did not rest on all this. He saw the woman on the bed, and went straightway to her relief.

Perceiving the Doctor, Catherine hid her face in her hands; but she could not repress her sobs or conceal her tears.

Isidore approached, and called her by name. She threw herself into his arms.

"Doctor," said the young man, "to you I confide the honor and life of one who is to-day my mistress, but who, I hope, will some day be my wife."

"Oh, thou art good, my dear Isidore, to say such things to me; but thou knowest well how impossible it is, for a poor girl like me ever to be the Viscountess. None the less I thank thee. Thou knowest I shall need strength, and it is thy wish to give it me. Be calm! I shall have courage; and the first manifestation of it, — the greatest I can display, — is to show you my uncovered face, dear Doctor, and offer you my hand;" and she at once extended her hand to Doctor Raynal.

A pain, more violent than any she had before felt, made Catherine clinch her hand the instant it touched the Doctor's; and he made a sign to Isidore, who understood that the decisive moment had come.

The young man knelt by Catherine's bedside, and said: "My darling child, perhaps I ought to remain here, to sustain and encourage thee, though I fear my strength would fail; but if thou desirest —"

Catherine put her arm about Isidore's neck, saying: "Go, go! I thank thee for loving me so much, that thou canst not bear to see me suffer."

Isidore pressed his lips lovingly to hers, shook the Doctor's hand, and hurried out of the room.

For two hours he wandered, like the ghosts of whom

Dante speaks, who could not stop for a single instant's repose; or, if they did pause, were at once spurred into motion, by a demon with an iron trident. After taking a circuit, more or less extended, he invariably returned to that door, behind which the sorrowful mystery of childbirth was taking place; but whenever Catherine uttered a cry loud enough for him to hear, it pierced him like the demon's iron prongs, and forced him to resume his errant course, going once more to the same point, from which he inevitably returned again.

In the midst of the darkness he heard himself called by the Doctor, and also by a voice more sweet and feeble. In two bounds he was at the door, which was open this time; and on the threshold of which the Doctor stood, holding an infant in his arms.

"Alas, alas, Isidore!" said Catherine. "Now I am doubly thine, — as thy mistress, and also as the mother of thy babe."

A week later, at the same hour, on the night of July 13, that door again opened. Two men came out, bearing a woman and child in a litter, escorted by a young man on horseback, who urged the bearers to the greatest precautions. On reaching the highway, between Haramont and Villers Cotterets, they found there a berlin, drawn by three horses, in which they placed the mother and babe.

The young man dismounted, threw the bridle to the domestic, to whom he also gave some orders, and entered the vehicle, which, without stopping at Villers Cotterets, or even passing through it, drove along by the park, as far as the Pheasantry, at the end of the Rue Largny, whence it started at a round trot for Paris.

Before their departure, however, the young man had left a purse of gold at the disposal of Father Clouis,

and the young woman had left a letter, addressed to Pitou.

Doctor Raynal had decided, in view of the rapid convalescence of the mother, and the good constitution of the infant, which was a boy, that the journey, from Villers Cotterets to Paris, might be made without detriment, in a comfortable carriage. It was in virtue of this assurance that Isidore decided upon the trip, which was, moreover, rendered imperative by the speedy return of Billot and Pitou.

God — who, up to a certain moment, watches over those whom he afterward seems to abandon — had permitted her confinement to take place in the absence both of Billot, still ignorant of his daughter's retreat, and of Pitou, innocently unsuspicious of Catherine's maternal condition.

Towards five o'clock in the morning, the vehicle arrived at the Saint Denis Gateway, but could not cross the boulevard, because of the blockade occasioned by the holiday.

Catherine ventured to thrust her head outside the curtain; but she instantly withdrew it, uttering a cry, and hid her face in Isidore's bosom.

The first two persons whom she saw, among the federal delegates, were Billot and Pitou.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JULY 14, 1790.

THE work necessary to convert an immense plain into an immense valley, between two hills, was completed, thanks to the co-operation of all Paris, on the eve of the Thirteenth of July.

Many of the laborers, in order to secure places for the next day, slept there over night, like victors couching on the battlefield.

Billot and Pitou joined the federal delegates, and took their places in the midst of their brethren on the boulevard. As we have seen, chance assigned these deputies from the Aisne Department a position opposite the point where the carriage halted, which was bringing Catherine and her babe to Paris.

This line, composed wholly of federal delegates, reached from the Bastille to the Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle.

All did their best to receive these welcome guests. When it was known that the Bretons, those eldest sons of liberty, had arrived, the vanquishers of the Bastille marched in front of them, as far as Saint Cyr, and constituted themselves their entertainers.

There was a singular glow of disinterestedness and patriotism.

The innkeepers came together, and with one accord agreed to lower their prices, instead of raising them. So much for disinterestedness!

The journalists, those tournament-fighters of these latter days, who constantly embitter, instead of allay, the general spirit of hatred, — these journalists — two of them, at least, Loustalot and Camille Desmoulins — proposed a federal compact between the scribblers. They renounced all competition, all jealousy. They promised, in future, only to cultivate that emulation which is for the public good. So much for patriotism! Unhappily this proposition found no echo in the press; and it remained for that time, as for the future, a sublimely Utopian suggestion and a dead letter.

On its side, the Assembly imbibed a portion of that electric concussion, which shook France like an earthquake. Several days before the festival, under the lead of Montmorency and Lafayette, the Assembly abolished hereditary titles of nobility, which were defended by the Abbé Maury, the son of a village cobbler.

As long ago as the month of February, the Assembly had begun by abolishing hereditary responsibility for crime, or bills of attainder. As a result of the hanging of the brothers Agasse, condemned for forging bills of commerce, it was decided that the scaffold should not cast a blight over either the children or other relatives of criminals.

On the same day when the Assembly abolished the hereditary transmission of privileges, as it had already abolished transmitted criminal responsibility, a German from the borders of the Rhine, — a Prussian baron, born at Clèves, a man who had exchanged his baptismal names, John Baptist, for Anacharsis, Anacharsis Clootz, — presented himself at the bar of the Assembly, as a Deputy from the Human Race. He was the leader of a score of men, — all political exiles, dressed in their respective national costumes, — who came to demand,

in the name of all races of people, — the only legitimate sovereigns, — a place in the great federation. A place was duly assigned to the Orator and Delegates of the Human Race.

The influence of Mirabeau made itself felt in these days. Thanks to this powerful champion, the Court gained many adherents, not only in the ranks of the right, but also in the left benches of the Assembly, — not only among Royalists, but among the Jacobins; for the King had been growing unpopular with both parties. The Assembly voted him — we might almost say, with enthusiasm — a civil list, or income, of twenty-five million francs, and also a dower of four millions for the Queen.

This liberality recompensed them for the two hundred and eight thousand francs wherewith they had paid all the debts of their eloquent defender, Mirabeau, and the six thousand francs salary which he was to receive from the Crown every month.

It appeared that Mirabeau was not deceived as to the spirit abroad in the provinces. Those federal delegates, who were received by Louis Sixteenth, brought to Paris their enthusiasm for the National Assembly; but their feeling towards the Crown was a religion. They lifted their hats to Monsieur Bailly, and cried, "Long live the Nation!" but they bent the knee before Louis, and laid their swords at his feet, crying, "Long live the King!"

Unhappily the King, not very poetic or chivalrous, responded clumsily to this hearty enthusiasm.

Unhappily the Queen was too haughty, — too Lorrainish, so to speak, — to rightly estimate these testimonials, coming straight from the soul. Besides, poor woman, she had a great sorrow in the depths of her

heart, like one of those dark spots which speck the sun.

This spot, this ulcer which gnawed into her heart, was the absence of Charny, who certainly was able to return, but chose to remain with the Marquis de Bouillé, at Metz; though she knew not his whereabouts.

For a moment, when she met Mirabeau, she had an idea of seeking distraction, by coquetting with him. His powerful genius flattered her self-respect, both royal and feminine, by bending at her feet; but after all, what is genius to the heart? Of what value, to the passions, are the triumphs of self-respect, the victories of pride?

After all, the Queen could only see Mirabeau with a woman's eyes, could see in him but the material man, — the man with unwholesome corpulence, his cheeks furrowed, creased, torn, and distorted with the smallpox, his eyes red and his neck swollen.

She immediately compared him with Charny,—Charny, the elegant gentleman, in the flower of his age, the maturity of his beauty. Charny, in his brilliant uniform, was like a prince of battles; whereas Mirabeau, in whatever costume, except when genius animated his powerful figure, looked like some sensual monk in disguise.

She shrugged her shoulders. With eyes red with tears and sleeplessness, she sighed deeply. She tried to pierce the distance, and with a mournful voice, full of sobs, she murmured, "Charny, Charny!"

At such moments what mattered, to this woman, the assembled population at her feet? What mattered the great waves of men, driven, like the sea, by the four winds of heaven, beating against the steps of the throne, and murmuring, "Long live the King! Long live the Queen!"

If a familiar voice could but have murmured in her ear:

"Marie, nothing is changed with me! Antoinette, I love thee!" this voice would have made her forget that anything was different around her, and would have contributed more to her heart's delight, and the serenity of her countenance, than all these shouts, all these promises, all these oaths.

The Fourteenth of July crept along imperceptibly, bringing with it events, great and little, which make up the history of both the humble and the exalted, of kings and common folks.

As if this disdainful Fourteenth of July did not know it was to witness an unprecedented, novel, and splendid spectacle, it came on with a face veiled with clouds, the wind soughing and the rain falling; but one quality of the French people is to laugh at everything on feast-days, — even at the storm.

As early as five in the morning the boulevards were crowded with Parisian National Guards and federal delegates, soaked with rain and dying with hunger, but laughing and singing.

Though they could not save these gallant fellows from the rain, the Parisians caught the idea of at least curing their hunger. From the windows, bottles of wine, loaves of bread, and hams were lowered by cords. In all the streets through which they marched it was the same.

While the procession was in progress, a hundred and fifty thousand persons took their places on the hillocks in the Champ de Mars, and a hundred and fifty thousand more stood behind them.

As to the amphitheatres of Chaillot and Passy, they were crowded with spectators, whom no man could number.

Magnificent field, gigantic amphitheatre, splendid arena, where was symbolized the Federation of France, and

where the Federation of the World will take place some day. Whether we see that day or not, what matters it? Our sons will see it! The world will see it!

One great human error is the notion that the whole world is for our short lives; whereas times and seasons are composed of a chain of human lives, each link infinitely short, ephemeral, almost invisible, — except to the divine eye, which embraces the period, longer or shorter, during which Providence (that four-breasted Isis who watches over the nations) disentangles the mysterious web and evolves the incessant genesis.

Certainly those who were there expected to detain, by her two wings, the fugitive goddess, whom we call Liberty, — a goddess who escapes and disappears, only to reappear, each time more proud and brilliant; but they deceived themselves, — as their sons deceive themselves, if they believe Liberty lost forever.

What joy, what confidence possessed that waiting crowd, seated or standing, as well as the long procession which, crossing the river, over the wooden bridge built in front of Chaillot, invaded the Champ de Mars, through a triumphal arch.

When the federal battalions entered, they uttered great cries of enthusiasm, and perhaps also of admiration at the picture which met their eyes, — cries which escaped from the heart through the lips.

Indeed, no such spectacle had ever before greeted the human gaze.

In half a month the Champ de Mars had been transformed, as if by enchantment, from a plain into a valley, which measured a league in circumference.

On the quadrangular sides of this valley were standing or sitting three hundred thousand persons.

In the middle was the Patriot Altar, the Altar of our

Country, accessible by four stairways, corresponding to the four faces of the obelisk which surmounted the altar.

At each angle of this monument was an immense censer filled with incense, which the National Assembly had decreed should henceforth burn for God alone.

On the four faces of the monument were inscriptions, announcing that the French people were free, and invoking other nations to share this freedom.

Oh, the great joy of our fathers at this sight, — which was so living, so profound, so real, that its echoes survive to our own day!

And yet the heavens were discoursing like Sinai's ancient oracles.

At each instant there were heavy sheets of rain, gusts of wind, black clouds, — prophetic of 1793, 1814, 1815. Then there were occasional sunbursts in the midst of the gloom, symbols of 1830 and 1848.

If a prophet had appeared, to reveal the future to this million souls, how would he have been received? As Calchas was received by the Greeks, and Cassandra by the Trojans; for on that day but two voices were heard, the voice of Hope, antiphonally responding to the call of Faith: "Lift up your hearts!" — "We lift them up unto Jehovah!"

In front of the buildings belonging to the Military School, at the farther end, galleries had been erected. These balconies, covered with drapery, and canopied with tricolored flags, were reserved for the Queen, the Court, and the National Assembly.

Two twin thrones, three feet apart, were designed for the King and for the President of the Assembly.

The King, appointed to be the supreme and absolute head of the French National Guard, *for that day only*,

transferred his command to Lafayette; and Lafayette was therefore, on that day, the Generalissimo and Constable of six millions of armed men. His fortunes had reached their culmination. Greater than himself, their decline and extinction could not be retarded. On that day he was at his zenith. Like those fantastic nocturnal apparitions, projected upon the sky, which surpass all human proportions, he had grown disproportionately, only to dissolve into vapor, vanish, and disappear; but during that federative festival, everything was real, or had the power of reality.

There were personages present who would soon go into disgrace, the King whose head would soon fall from his shoulders, the Generalissimo, whose white horse's four feet would soon bear him into exile.

In this wintry rain, amidst these tempestuous squalls, beneath occasional rays of daylight, — hardly of the sun, — filtering through the sombre vault of the clouds, the procession of federal delegates marched into this immense arena, through the three openings of the triumphal arch. Behind this advance guard, so to speak, of some twenty-five thousand men, — who separated into two circular lines, to embrace the circuit of the arena, — behind them came the electors of Paris, the city officers, and finally the National Assembly. For all these bodies places had been reserved in the galleries, built up in front of the Military School, towards which these men marched in a straight line, opening only to flow around the Patriot Altar, like waves around a rock, reuniting again on the farther side; till at last the head of the procession reached the galleries, while its undulating body, like that of a huge serpent, extended back to the entrance.

Behind the electors, the city representatives, and the National Assembly, came the rest of the procession, —

more delegates, military deputations, and local militia companies.

Each department bore its distinctive banner; but these local banners were united, enveloped, nationalized, by that grand girdle of tricolored banners, which spoke two words to the eyes and hearts of the people, *Country* and *Unity*, — words with which God's workers can do so much.

At the moment when the President of the Assembly ascended to his armchair, the King ascended to his also, and the Queen took her place in the tribune.

Alas, poor Queen! Her retinue was shabby enough. Her nearest friends had quitted her, through cowardice. Perhaps if they had known, thanks to Mirabeau, that the King had obtained twenty-five millions for his civil list, and the Queen a dower of four millions, some of these Royalist fugitives would have returned!

As for the one person whom her eyes vainly sought, Marie Antoinette knew that neither gold nor power could again draw him to her side. In his absence, her eyes longed at least to rest on the face of some devoted friend.

She asked for his brother Isidore, and wondered why the defenders of the Crown were not at their posts, near the King or at the feet of the Queen, inasmuch as royalty had so few partisans amidst that great crowd.

Nobody knew anything about Isidore de Charny; and if anybody had said, that just then he was conducting a little peasant-girl, his mistress, to a modest house on the declivity of the hill at Bellevue, every shoulder would have shrugged with pity, unless some heart had been pierced by jealousy.

Who knows, indeed, if this heiress of the Cæsars would not have given her throne and crown, would not have

consented to be an obscure peasant, — the daughter of an obscure farmer, — to be once more loved by Oliver, as Catherine was loved by his brother Isidore?

These were the thoughts revolving in her mind, when Mirabeau, catching one of her dubious looks, — half like a ray from heaven, and half like a flash from a storm-cloud, — could not refrain from exclaiming aloud: "What can that lovely magician be thinking about?"

If Cagliostro had heard these words he might have responded: "She is thinking of that fatal machine which I caused her to see in a decanter, at the Château Taverney, and which she recognized one evening at the Tuileries, under the pen of Doctor Gilbert!" but he would have been mistaken, — this great seer, who so rarely blundered; for she was thinking of the absent Charny and his extinguished love.

Amidst the noise of five hundred drums, and two thousand other musical instruments, were heard shouts of "Long live the King! Long live the Laws! Long live the Nation!"

Suddenly there was a great silence. The King, like the President of the National Assembly, sat down.

Two hundred priests, clad in white albs, advanced towards the altar, preceded by the Bishop of Autun, Talleyrand, the patron saint of all oath-brokers, past, present, and future. On his lame foot he mounted the staircase leading to the altar, — a Mephistopheles, awaiting the Faust who was to appear on the Thirteenth Vendémiaire. A Mass, recited by the Bishop of Autun! Among so many bad omens, we have forgotten that one.

At that moment the storm redoubled its fury. One might imagine Heaven was protesting against the false priest who was about to profane the holy Sacrifice of the

Mass, and to offer, as a tabernacle for the Lord Christ, a breast prophetically soiled with future perjuries.

The department banners and the tricolored flags drew nearer the altar, forming a breezy circle, whose thousand colors were violently agitated by a southeast wind.

When Mass was over, Talleyrand descended a few steps, and blessed the national standard, and the flags from the eighty-three departments.

Then began the sacred ceremony of taking the national oath. First, Lafayette took the oath, in the name of the National Guards throughout the kingdom. Second, the President of the Assembly swore, in the name of France. Lastly, the King swore, in his own name.

Lafayette dismounted from his horse, crossed the intervening space between him and the altar, ascended the steps to the altar, drew his sword, touched with its point the Book of the Gospels, and said, in a firm, decided voice: "We swear to be ever faithful to the Nation, the Laws, the King; to maintain, with all our might, the Constitution, decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the King; to protect, in conformity with the laws, the safety of persons and property, the circulation of grain, and other articles of food, in the interior of the kingdom, the receipt of the public revenues, in whatever form they exist; to live united with all the French people, in the indissoluble bonds of fraternity."

There was a great silence during this oath. Hardly was it taken, when a hundred cannon thundered the signal to the neighboring departments.

The whole fortified city was ablaze with an immense flash, followed by the menacing thunder of human invention, — a thunder far superior to heaven's, if measured by its devastation, which long ago distanced the mischief caused by natural storms.

As the circles produced by a stone, thrown into the midst of a lake, grow larger and larger, till they are lost on its banks, so each circle of flame, each growl of thunder, enlarged itself, going from centre to circumference, from Paris to the frontiers, from the heart of France to foreign lands.

Then the President of the National Assembly arose in his turn, and all the members stood around him, while he said: "I swear to be faithful to the Nation, the Laws, the King, and to maintain, with all my might, the Constitution, decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the King."

Hardly had he completed his oath, than again the flame broke forth, again the volleys thundered, and echoes upon echoes rolled to the farthest boundaries of France.

Then came the King's turn. He arose. Silence! Listen, all, to the voice in which he takes the national oath, — which he betrays in his heart, even while he is uttering it.

Have a care, Sire! The cloud breaks, the sky clears, the sun shines. The sun is God's eye! God sees you!

"I, King of the French, swear to use all the power delegated to me, by the State Constitutional Laws, in maintaining the Constitution, decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by myself, and to see the laws properly executed."

Oh Sire, Sire! Why, even on this occasion, did you prefer not to swear on the altar?

The Twenty-first of June might respond to the Fourteenth of July; Varennes might explain the riddle of the Champ de Mars.

False or genuine, however, this oath roused no less flame and thunder than the other two. The hundred cannon blazed, as they had for both Lafayette and the

President of the Assembly. A third time the artillery of France bore this threatening notice to the kings of Europe: "Have a care! France is afoot! Have a care, for France means to be free! Like the Roman ambassador, who carried in a fold of his cloak both peace and war, France is ready to spread her cloak over the world!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

DANCING HERE.

It was an hour of great joy with the multitude. For an instant Mirabeau forgot the Queen, and Billot forgot Catherine.

The King withdrew, amidst universal acclamations. The members of the Assembly returned to their hall, accompanied by the same escort which had graced their arrival at the arena.

As to the flag, given by Paris to the veterans of the army, it was decreed — so says the History of the Revolution, by Two Friends of Liberty — that the flag should be suspended on the walls of the Assembly Hall, as a symbol, to coming legislatures, of the happy epoch just celebrated, and as a reminder to the troops, that they should be submissive to those two conjoint higher powers, the Crown and the Assembly, without whose concurrence the military strength must not be employed.

Did Chapelier, in making this proposition, anticipate the Twenty-seventh of July, the Twenty-fourth of February, and the Second of December?

Night came on. The festival of the morning had been at the Champ de Mars. The evening festival was at the Bastille.

Eighty-three trees, covered with foliage, — as many as there were departments in the kingdom, — stood in

place of the eight towers of the prison, on the foundations whereof they were planted. Rows of lights were hung from tree to tree. In the middle rose a gigantic mast, bearing a flag, on which was the word LIBERTY. Near the ditches, in a tomb purposely left open, were interred the chains, instruments, and gates of the Bastille, together with that famous bas-relief from the old clock, representing enchained slaves. Moreover, there had been left yawning, and lighted in a lugubrious fashion, those basement dungeons, which had absorbed so many tears and stifled so many groans. If, finally, attracted by the music which sounded from amidst the trees, one found his way as far as the spot formerly occupied by the interior courtyard, there he found a ballroom, brilliantly lighted, above whose entrance were these words, which were but the fulfilment of Cagliostro's prediction :

DANCING HERE.

At one of the thousand tables set up in the vicinity, under the improvised forest, — which represented the ancient fortress almost as well as the little stones carved by Architect Palloy, — two men were recruiting their strength, exhausted by a whole day of marching, countermarching, and manœuvring. Before them were two bottles of wine, a four-pound loaf, and an enormous sausage. The youngest of the two wore the uniform of a captain in the National Guards; while the other, twice his age, wore the uniform of a federal delegate.

" By my faith," said the younger, emptying his glass at a single draught, " it is a good thing to eat when one 's hungry, and to drink when one 's thirsty." After a pause he asked : " Are you neither hungry nor thirsty, Father Billot ? '

"I have drunk and I have eaten," was the reply, "and I now hunger and thirst for only one thing."

"And what is that?"

"I'll tell thee, friend Pitou, when the hour comes for my banquet."

Pitou saw no malice in Billot's response. However, Billot had eaten and drunk very sparingly that day, as Pitou said, despite the fatigue of the festival, and the hunger which beset him. In fact, ever since his departure from Villers Cotterets, — notwithstanding his five days, or rather five nights, of labor in the Champ de Mars, — Billot had drunk and eaten very little.

Pitou knew that certain diseases, without being otherwise serious, temporarily deprive the most robust men of their appetites; and every time he noticed how little Billot ate, the lad asked him the reason, as he did now. Billot always answered that he was not hungry, an answer which satisfied Pitou.

There was one thing, however, which perplexed Pitou. This was not Billot's physical abstinence, for everybody is at liberty to eat or not to eat. Besides, the less Billot ate, the more remained for Pitou. What perplexed him was, the farmer's abstinence from speech.

When Pitou ate in company, he liked to chat. He had noticed that conversation is an aid to digestion, not a hindrance; and this fact had taken such a deep root in his mind, that when Pitou ate all alone, he aided his digestion by a song.

Pitou was not melancholy. He had no motive for being sad, but quite the contrary.

For a considerable time his life at Haramont had become very agreeable. As we know, Pitou loved Catherine, or rather he *adored* her; and I ask the reader to take this word literally. How is it with the Italian or the

Spaniard, who adores the Madonna? To see Mary, to kneel before her, to pray to her, — that is his need.

What had Pitou been doing for six months? When night came, he went to Clouise Rock. There he saw Catherine, kneeled to Catherine, prayed to Catherine; and the girl, recognizing the service he had rendered her, allowed this to go on, although her gaze was always higher and farther away.

Sometimes there was a slight feeling of jealousy in the brave boy, when he brought Catherine Isidore's letters from the post, and carried back one of hers, directed to Isidore; but, take it for all in all, his situation was incomparably better than when he returned to the farm, after his first visit to Paris, and Catherine — seeing in him only a demagogue, an enemy of nobles and aristocrats — had shown him the door, telling him there was no work on the farm for such as he.

Blind to Catherine's maternal condition, Pitou had no misgivings lest their mutual relations should not last forever.

He therefore left Haramont with the greatest regret, though forced to go away by his superior grade, which bound him to set a zealous example; so he took leave of Catherine, recommending her to Father Clouis, and promising to return as soon as possible.

Pitou therefore left nothing behind to make him sorrowful; nor had he run against anything in Paris, to rouse this sentiment in his heart.

He found Doctor Gilbert, to whom he rendered an account of the use made of his twenty-five louis, and reported the vows and thanks of the thirty-three National Guardsmen, who had been clothed with the aid of those twenty-five louis; and Doctor Gilbert gave him twenty-five louis more, to be applied, not to the exclusive use

of the Haramont National Guard, but to Pitou's own needs.

Pitou accepted these twenty-five louis simply and ingenuously. Whatsoever Monsieur Gilbert — who was a god in Pitou's eyes — saw fit to give, it could not be wrong to accept.

When God sent rain or sunshine, it never occurred to him to hold up an umbrella or a parasol, and repel the divine gifts. No, Pitou accepted both, and like the flowers, the plants, the trees, he found every gift profitable.

At this visit, after thinking an instant, Gilbert raised his handsome and thoughtful head, and said to Pitou: "I believe, my dear Pitou, that Billot has many things to tell me. Wouldst thou like, while I am talking with Billot, to visit Sebastien?"

"Yes, indeed, Monsieur Gilbert," cried Pitou, clapping his hands like a child, "I wish it awfully, but have n't dared to ask permission."

Gilbert reflected an instant. Then he took a quill, wrote a few words, sealed the letter, addressed it to his son, and said to Pitou: "Take a hack, and go after Sebastien. After what I have written, he will probably wish to make a visit. Thou wilt take him whither he wishes to go, wilt thou not, dear Pitou? Thou wilt wait at the door. He may make thee wait an hour, perhaps more, but I know thy good-nature; and, knowing thou doest me a service, thou wilt not be weary."

"Be easy," said Pitou. "I am never bored, Monsieur Gilbert. Besides, on the way I will get a morsel of bread, and if I am tired of waiting in the carriage, I can eat."

"A good idea!" smilingly responded Gilbert. "Only, hygiene says, it is not good to live by dry bread alone, but to drink while we eat."

"Then I will buy, besides the bread, a junk of hogs-head cheese and a bottle of wine."

"Bravo!" said Gilbert.

Thus encouraged, Pitou went down and hired a cab, and was driven to College Louis le Grand, where he inquired for Sebastien, who was promenading in the private garden. Pitou lifted the boy in his arms, as Hercules did Telephus. Having embraced him at his leisure, and set him down again, Pitou gave the boy his father's letter.

Sebastien kissed the letter, with that tender and respectful love which he cherished for his father, and then said · "Pitou, did my father tell thee that I was to go somewhere with thee?"

"Is it agreeable to thee to go with me?"

"Yes, yes," said the boy, quickly, "yes, indeed, it is agreeable, and thou wilt tell my father how eagerly I accepted."

"Good!" said Pitou. "It appears that this is a place where thou wilt be amused."

"It is a place where I have been only once, Pitou, but one to which I shall gladly return."

"In that case," said Pitou, "it's only necessary to notify Abbé Bérardier of thy going out, as the cab's at the door."

"In order to lose no time, dear Pitou," said the youth, "go thyself to the abbé, with my father's message. I will make my toilet, and rejoin thee in the courtyard."

Pitou carried the message to the principal, received a permit for Sebastien, and then went down into the courtyard.

The interview with Abbé Bérardier gave great satisfaction to Pitou's self-respect. For the first time the principal saw him, a poor peasant, sporting a helmet and

armed with a sabre, and no longer wearing the breeches, which, on the day when the Bastille was captured, a year before, had made him the cause of such commotion in the school, as well by the clothing which he lacked, as by the arms which he bore.

To-day he wore a three-cornered hat, a blue coat with white lappels, short breeches, and had the epaulets of a captain on his shoulders. To-day he bore himself with the confidence derived from the respect of one's townsmen. To-day he presented himself as a federal delegate, with a right to proper deference; and Abbé Bérardier treated him accordingly.

By the time Pitou came down the stairs from the director's office, Sebastien, who had a private chamber, came down the staircase leading to it.

Sebastien was no longer a child, but a charming lad of sixteen or seventeen, whose face was framed in chestnut hair, and whose blue eyes shot forth their juvenile flame, bright as the golden rays of dawning day.

"Here I am!" he joyously said to Pitou; "so let 's go."

Pitou looked at him with such great pleasure, mingled with astonishment, that Sebastien was obliged to repeat the invitation; but at the second call, he followed the youth.

At the gate he said to Sebastien: "Hold on! Thou must be told that I don't know whither we 're bound. It 's for thee to give the address."

"Be easy!" said Sebastien; while to the coachman he added: "Rue Coq Heron, number nine, the first coach-way from the Rue Plâtrière."

This address meant absolutely nothing to Pitou; but he entered the cab after Sebastien, without any remarks.

"My dear Pitou," said the lad, "if the person upon whom I am going to call is at home, I may remain an hour, or even more."

"That 's all right," said Pitou, opening his big mouth, and laughing merrily. "That calamity was foreseen. — Here, coachy! Hold on!"

They were just passing a bakery. The hack stopped. Pitou got out, bought a two-pound loaf, and returned to the cab.

A little farther on, Pitou stopped the carriage again, before a wineshop. He went in, purchased a bottle, and returned to Sebastien once more.

Presently he stopped the carriage for the third time, in front of a pork-shop, where he bought a quarter-pound of hogshead cheese.

"There!" he said to the driver, "now go to the Rue Coq Heron as fast as you please. I 've got all I want."

"Good!" said Sebastien. "I see through thy plans now, and shall be easy on thy account."

The hack trundled along the Rue Coq Heron, not stopping till it reached number nine.

As they approached the house, Sebastien manifested a feverish and increasing agitation. He stood up in the carriage, put his head out of the window, and called out to the driver, "Go ahead, coachman! hurry up!" though it must be admitted, to the credit of the driver and his two plugs, that this adjuration did not quicken their pace a bit.

However, as everything reaches its end, — the streamlet flowing into the brook, the brook into the river, the river into the ocean, — the cab reached Rue Coq Heron, as we said before, and stopped at number nine.

Without waiting for the coachman, Sebastien opened

the door, embraced Pitou for the last time, jumped to the ground, rang sharply at the door, which was opened, asked the porter for Madame de Charny, and, before the porter could answer, rushed towards the little pavilion.

The porter, seeing him to be so handsome and well-dressed a youth, did not try to stop him; but, as the Countess was at home, he contented himself with fastening the gate, after assuring himself that nobody was following the boy, and wished to come in with him.

At the expiration of five minutes, — during which Pitou attacked the lump of head-cheese with his knife, held his uncorked bottle between his knees, and crunched, with his fine teeth, the soft bread and its crispy crust — the porter opened the carriage-door, hat in hand, and addressed these words to Pitou, which he had to repeat twice: "The Countess de Charny begs Captain Pitou to do her the honor of coming in, instead of waiting for Monsieur Sebastien in the cab."

Pitou, as we have said, had to hear the words twice; but at the second hearing he had no reason for misapprehending them, and so he was compelled, with a sigh, to swallow his mouthful, to restore — to the paper in which it had been wrapped — that part of the hogshead cheese which had been already cut off, and prop up his bottle in an angle of the cushions, in order that the wine should not be spilled.

Then, quite dumfounded by this adventure, he followed the porter; but his surprise was great when he saw Sebastien in the antechamber, in company with a beautiful woman, who pressed him to her side, as she extended the other hand to Pitou, and said: "Monsieur Pitou, you give me such great and unexpected joy, in bringing Sebastien to me, that I wish to thank you for it in person."

Pitou stared, Pitou stammered; but Pitou did not take the hand extended to him by the beautiful and unknown lady.

"Take her hand, and kiss it!" said Sebastien. "My *mother* permits it."

"Thy mother?" said Pitou; and Sebastien nodded affirmatively.

"Yes, his mother," said Andrée, her looks radiant with delight, — "his mother, to whom you have brought her boy, after nine months' absence; his mother, who never saw him but once before, and who, in the hope that you will bring him here again, will not keep her secret from you, although this secret would make a great deal of trouble, if it were known."

When anybody appealed to Pitou's affections or loyalty, the brave fellow could always answer without trouble or hesitation. "Oh, Madame!" he cried, seizing her hand and kissing it, "be tranquil! Your secret is here!" and drawing himself up, he laid his hand on his heart, with a certain air of dignity.

"Meanwhile, Monsieur Pitou," pursued the Countess, "my son says you have not lunched. Go into the dining-room; and while I talk alone with Sebastien, — you will accord me that happiness, will you not? — you shall be served, and make up for lost time."

Saluting Pitou, with such a look as she had never once bestowed upon the richest noblemen of the Courts of Louis the Fifteenth and Louis the Sixteenth, she drew Sebastien across the parlor and into her bedroom, leaving Pitou, already quite stunned, to await, in the eating-room, the fulfilment of the promise she had made him.

In a few minutes this promise was indeed fulfilled. Two cutlets, a cold fowl, and a pot of preserves were placed on the table, near a bottle of bordeaux, a Venetian goblet,

— its glass as fine as lace, — and a pile of porcelain China plates.

Despite the elegance of the service, we dare not say that Pitou did not regret his two-pound loaf, his head-cheese, and his bottle of wine with the green seal.

As he was cutting up the pullet, after having absorbed the two cutlets, the door of the dining-room opened, and a young man appeared, as if about to go through it, into the parlor.

Pitou raised his head, and the young gentleman looked down, each recognizing the other, and uttering a slight sound. "Ange Pitou!" said one. "Monsieur Isidore!" said the other.

Pitou rose, his heart beating violently. The sight of this young gentleman recalled the saddest emotions Pitou had ever experienced.

As for Isidore, the sight of Pitou recalled to his mind nothing except the obligations which Catherine had told him she owed the brave fellow. Of the love which Pitou cherished towards Catherine, Isidore had not the faintest idea, — a love which Pitou had been strong enough to transform into devotion. Consequently, Isidore came straight to Pitou, in whom, in spite of his double epaulets and his uniform, Isidore could only see (such is the force of habit) the peasant from Haramont, the poacher of Wolf Heath, the farm-boy at Pisseleu.

"Ah, Monsieur Pitou, is it you?" he said. "I am enchanted to meet you, and offer you my thanks for the services you have rendered me."

"Monsieur," said Pitou, with a firm voice, although he felt a shiver through his body, "I rendered those services to Mademoiselle Catherine, and to her alone."

"Yes, up to the moment when you knew that I loved her; but from that moment I claimed part of your help.

As in transmitting our letters, and building that little house at Clouise Rock, you must have expended something—" and Isidore carried his hand to his pocket, as if thus to question Pitou's conscience; but Pitou checked him.

"Monsieur," said he, with that dignity which one was occasionally astonished to observe in him, "I give my services when I please, but I do not ask pay for them. I repeat to you, those services were rendered to Mademoiselle Catherine. She is my friend. If she believes that she owes me anything, she will arrange the debt with me; but you, Monsieur, *you* owe me nothing, for whatsoever I did was for Mademoiselle Catherine, and not for you. You need offer me nothing."

These words, and especially the tone in which they were spoken, impressed Isidore, who then noted, perhaps for the first time, that the man who spoke wore a captain's uniform and epaulets.

"Indeed, Monsieur Pitou," he insisted, bowing slightly, "I do owe you something, and I have something to offer you. I owe you my thanks, and I offer you my hand. I hope you will do me the favor to accept my thanks and to grasp my hand."

Isidore's reply was so high-toned, and the gesture which accompanied it so lofty, that Pitou was conquered, and extended his hand. The ends of his fingers touched Isidore's, just as the Countess appeared on the threshold of the door leading into the parlor.

"Monsieur Isidore," she said, "you asked for me, and here I am."

Isidore bowed to Pitou, and accepted the Countess's invitation to enter the parlor. As he was about to close the door, doubtless in order to be alone with the Countess, Andrée took hold of the door, which thus remained half-

open. This was evidently her intention. Pitou could therefore hear whatever was said in the parlor. He noticed that the door at the opposite end of the parlor, leading into the bedroom, was also open; so that Sebastien, although invisible to Pitou, could hear, as well as Pitou himself, what took place between the Countess and the Viscount.

"You asked for me, Monsieur?" said the Countess to her brother-in-law. "May I learn to what I owe the honor of this visit?"

"Madame, I yesterday received news of Oliver. As in the other letters which I have received from him, he charged me to lay his remembrances at your feet. He does not yet know when he will return, but he would be glad to hear of your welfare, — whether you wish to send a letter through me, or simply to charge me with your compliments."

"Monsieur, I have not been able, until now, to answer the letter written me by Monsieur de Charny when he went áway, because I do not know where he is; but I will gladly profit by your good-will, to send him my compliments, as a respectful and submissive wife. To-morrow, if you will take a letter to Monsieur de Charny, I will hold that letter ready for your convenience."

"By all means, write your letter, Madame," said Isidore; "only, instead of coming for it to-morrow, I will do so in five or six days. I have to make a journey, which is absolutely necessary. How long it will last, I do not know; but as soon as I return, I will call upon you with my respects, and receive your commissions."

Isidore bowed to the Countess, who returned the salutation, and doubtless showed him another way out; for in retiring he did not pass through the eating-room, where Pitou, having brought the pullet to reason, as he had

previously done with the two cutlets, began to attack the pot of sweetmeats.

This jar had been long ago conquered, and left as dry as the bottle, from which Pitou had squeezed the last drops of bordeaux, before the Countess reappeared, leading Sebastien.

It would have been difficult to recognize the prim Mademoiselle de Taverney, or the grave Countess de Charny, in the young mother, — her eyes sparkling with joy, her mouth lighted with an ineffable smile, — who stood leaning on her boy. Under the tears of a happiness hitherto unknown, her pale cheeks had taken on a rosy hue, which surprised Andrée herself; for maternal love, which is half a woman's existence, had re-entered her heart during the two hours passed with her child.

Once more she covered Sebastien's face with kisses. Then she restored him to Pitou, pressing the rough fist of the brave fellow between her white hands, which seemed like marble, softened and warmed.

On his side, Sebastien embraced Andrée with that ardor which he put into everything he did; and which had cooled only for an instant towards his mother, by reason of that imprudent exclamation, which Andrée could not keep back, when he talked to her about Gilbert, nearly a year before.

During his solitude, in College Louis le Grand, during his long walks in the private gardens, the sweet maternal phantom had often reappeared, and love had returned little by little to the child's heart; so that when Gilbert's letter reached him, permitting him to go to his mother for an hour or two, under Pitou's guidance, that letter gratified the most tender and secret desires of his heart.

It was Gilbert's delicacy which had retarded this interview. If he conducted Sebastien to her himself, he knew his presence would deprive her of half the happiness of seeing her son; and if he intrusted the matter to anybody but Pitou, — that good heart and innocent soul, — Gilbert knew he should compromise a secret not wholly his own.

Pitou took leave of the Countess without asking any questions, without even looking inquisitively about. Leading Sebastien, who half turned back, to exchange kisses with his mother, they regained the cab, where Pitou found his head-cheese safely wrapped in its paper, and his bottle of wine still ensconced in its corner.

In this experience, as in the journey from Villers Cotterets, nothing had happened to sadden Pitou.

In the evening Pitou worked in the Champ de Mars, where he went also the next day, and again on the days following. He received compliments from Monsieur Maillard, who recognized him, and from Monsieur Bailly, to whom he made himself known. He again met Élie and Hullin, two conquerors of the Bastille, like himself; and he saw, without envy, the medals they wore in their buttonholes, to which he and Billot had as much right as anybody in the world.

At last, when the famous day arrived, he took his place in the ranks with Billot, at the Gate Saint Denis, in the morning. From the ends of three different strings, hanging from hospitable windows, Pitou detached a ham, a loaf, and a bottle of wine.

He went near the high Altar of Patriotism, where he danced the farandole, holding an actress from the opera with one hand, and a Bernardine nun with the other. When the King entered, Pitou returned to his place; and he had the satisfaction of seeing himself represented by

Lafayette in the oath-taking, which Pitou felt to be a great honor.

When the oaths were all taken, the guns fired, the flourish of trumpets over, and Lafayette, on his white horse, passed along the line of his dear comrades, Pitou had the great satisfaction of being recognized by his General, and getting one shake of the hand, out of the thirty or forty thousand which Lafayette distributed along his way.

After this, Pitou left the Champ de Mars with Billot. They stopped to see the games, illuminations, and fire-works on the Champs Élysées. They walked along the boulevards; and then, in order not to lose any of the diversions of the great day, instead of going to bed, as anybody else would have done, — whose legs would have fairly doubled up with weariness, — Pitou, who never knew what it was to be weary, came to the Bastille, where he found an unoccupied table in one corner, upon which he had ordered two loaves of bread, two bottles of wine, and a sausage.

He did not know, when Isidore announced an absence of several days, that Isidore would pass this time in Villers Cotterets. He did not know that, six days later, Catherine was brought to bed with a boy, that she left Clouise Rock in the night; that she arrived in Paris with Isidore on that feast-day morning; that she uttered a terrified cry, when she saw Pitou and Billot from her carriage window, at the Gate Saint Denis.

Not knowing these things, he had nothing to make him sad. On the contrary, he found delight in his labor at the Champ de Mars; in his meeting with Maillard, Bailly, Élie, and Hullin; in the farandole, where he danced with a figurante and a Bernardine sister; in his kind recognition by Lafayette, and the squeeze of the

hand he had the honor of receiving from the General; and finally in the fireworks, the illuminations, the Bastille display, and this table spread with bread, sausage, and two bottles of wine.

The one thing which saddened Pitou was the sadness of Billot.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

As we have seen, at the commencement of the preceding chapter, Pitou was resolved to be as gay as possible himself, and dissipate Billot's sadness; so, as we have said, Pitou was determined to talk to Billot.

After a moment of silence, during which he appeared to be laying in a supply of words, — as a rifleman, before beginning to shoot, provides himself with a store of cartridges, — Pitou broke the ice: "Tell me, Father Billot, who the Devil would have guessed, only a year and two days ago, when Mademoiselle Catherine gave me a louis, and cut the cords which bound my hands, — with this very knife, — hold on, here it is! — who would have expected, I say, that in only one year and two days so many events would turn up?"

"Nobody!" answered Billot, but without our Pitou's noticing what a terrible look shot from the farmer's eyes, when Catherine's name was mentioned.

Pitou waited, to see if Billot would not add a few syllables more, to the one solitary word wherewith he responded to the lad's long paragraph, which seemed to Pitou to be passably well turned.

Seeing that Billot maintained his silence, Pitou, like the rifleman already mentioned, reloaded his piece, and fired a second time.

"Say now, Father Billot, who would have said, when you ran after me over Ermonville Plain; when you

almost broke Cadet all up, and made me do so too, as you overtook me, called my name, and compelled me to mount your crupper; when you changed horses at Dammartin, in order to get the quicker to Paris; when we reached Paris in time to see the barriers afire; when we were hustled in the Faubourg Villette, by the German fellers; when we met a procession shouting long life to Necker and Orleans; when you had the honor of carrying one staff of a platform, on which were the busts of those two great men, while I was trying to save Margot's life; when the Royal German Regiment fired upon us in the Square Vendôme, and the bust of Monsieur Necker tumbled on your head; when we escaped down the Rue Saint Honoré, calling, 'To arms! They are assassinating our brothers;' — who, I say, would then have supposed that we should capture the Bastille?"

"Nobody!" replied the old farmer, as laconically as before.

"The Devil!" said Pitou to himself, after waiting an instant. "It appears that this is all on one side. — Well, here goes for a third volley!"

Then he went on aloud: "Say, Father Billot, who would have believed, when we took the Bastille, that a year and a day afterwards I should be captain, and you a federal delegate; and that we should be supping together, the two of us, — me, especially, — under this fortress of leaves, planted just here, where the old fortress stood? Hey? Who would have believed it?"

"Nobody!" repeated Billot, with a more melancholy air than ever.

Pitou saw there was no way of making the farmer talk; but he consoled himself with the thought that he had not parted with the right to talk himself. He

therefore kept on, leaving Billot the right to respond whenever it pleased him.

"When I remember, it is just a year since we entered the Hôtel de Ville; that you took Monsieur de Flesselles, — poor Flesselles, where is he now, and where is the Bastille? — that you took him by the collar; that you made him furnish you with powder, while I mounted guard at the door, — and, besides the powder, a note to Monsieur Delaunay; that after the powder was distributed, we quitted Monsieur Marat, who went to the Hôtel des Invalides, while we two came to the Bastille; that at the Bastille we found Monsieur Gonchon, — the Mirabeau of the People, as they called him — Do you know what has become of Monsieur Gonchon, Father Billot? Hey? Don't you know what has become of him?"

Billot this time contented himself with a negative shake of the head.

"You don't know?" continued Pitou. "Neither do I. Perhaps there has happened to him, what has happened to the Bastille, what has happened to Monsieur de Flesselles, — what will happen to us all," philosophically added Pitou: "*Pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris*, — Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return! — It was through the gateway which stood right there, but is there no longer, that you entered the Bastille, after making Monsieur Maillard write the famous billet, which I was to read to the people, if you did not reappear. There, where those old chains and handcuffs are, in that great hole which resembles a ditch, — that is where you met Monsieur Delaunay. Poor man, I can see him now, in his coat of unbleached linen, his three-cornered hat, with his red ribbon and his sword-cane! There is another, who has gone to find Flesselles!"

As Billot still maintained silence, Pitou kept on:

"Think of it! Why, Monsieur Delaunay showed you the old Bastille from bottom to top, while you studied it and measured it, — those walls, thirty feet thick at the base, and fifteen at the summit. Why, you climbed up one of the towers with him, and threatened to jump off with him, if he was n't very careful. To think, when you came down, that he showed you that piece of artillery, which, ten minutes afterward, would have sent me where Flesselles now is, — and poor Delaunay himself, — if I had n't found an angle of protection. Well, at last, after seeing all this, you said, — as if it were a matter of scaling a hayloft, a dovecote, or a windmill: 'Friends, let us take the Bastille!' And we did take it, that famous old Bastille, — took it so thoroughly, that to-day there is not one stone left on another; and here we are, sitting in the very place where it once stood, eating sausage and drinking burgundy, — sitting on the very spot where stood the tower called the Third Berthaudière, where Doctor Gilbert was shut up."

Still the farmer was silent, but Pitou continued his reflections: "What a singular affair it was! When I recall all that piece of work, all those shouts, those rumors, the noise — Hold on! Talking of noise, what 's going on over there? Say, Father Billot, something 's up! Somebody 's going by. Everybody's up! Everybody 's running! Come and see, with the rest of the world! Come, Father Billot, come on!"

Pitou passed his hand under Billot's arm, and started him up; and both went to the side whence the noise proceeded, — Pitou with curiosity, and Billot with complete indifference.

The noise was occasioned by one man, who had the rare faculty of raising a furor wherever he went.

In the midst of the noise was heard the cry, "Long

live Mirabeau!" from a thousand vigorous throats, — the throats of men who are the last to change their opinions about leaders whom they have once fairly adopted.

It was indeed Mirabeau, who, with a woman on his arm, had come to visit the new Bastille. He was recognized, and this raised all the coil. The woman was veiled.

Anybody except Mirabeau would have been frightened at having such a crowd at his heels, especially as, amidst the glorifying voices, were heard some dull yet threatening cries, — such as followed the chariot of the Roman conqueror, when some one called out to him: "Cæsar, forget not thou art mortal."

Like a bird in the tempest, this man of storms seemed to belong in the midst of thunder and lightning. He walked through the tumult with a smiling face, with a calm eye and masterful gesture, still holding on his arm the unknown woman, who shivered before the breath of this terrible popularity. Doubtless, like Semele, the foolish creature had wished to see Jupiter; and here was his thunder, ready to consume her.

"Ah, Monsieur de Mirabeau!" said Pitou. "Here, it 's the Mirabeau of the Nobility. You recollect, Father Billot, it was just here that we saw Gonchon, the Mirabeau of the People, and I told you I did n't know how it was with the Mirabeau of the Nobility, but I found the Mirabeau of the People homely enough. Well, do you know, now that I 've seen both, I find one as ugly as the other? but this don't prevent me from showing my respect for so great a man."

Pitou stepped upon a chair, and from the chair to the table, hoisted his three-cornered hat on the point of his sword, and shouted: "Long live Mirabeau!"

Billot did not utter a sign of sympathy or antipathy.

He simply crossed his arms over his brawny breast, and murmured, in a melancholy tone: "They say he betrays the people!"

"Bah!" said Pitou. "They said as much of all the great men of antiquity, from Aristides to Cicero;" and with a full voice, more sonorous than before, he cheered for Mirabeau, till the illustrious orator disappeared, amidst a vortex of men, cries, and turmoil.

"That 's all right!" said Pitou, jumping down from his table. "I 'm very glad I 've seen Monsieur de Mirabeau. —Now let 's go and finish our second bottle, and get the better of our sausage!" and he led the farmer back to the table, where the remains of the repast, almost absorbed by Pitou alone, still awaited them. They found a third chair drawn up to their table; and a man was sitting in it, who appeared to be waiting for them.

Pitou looked at Billot, who looked at the Unknown.

True, this was a day of fraternization. Consequently, some familiarity was allowable among fellow-citizens; but in the opinion of Pitou, who had not yet finished the second bottle or devoured the whole sausage, this was a liberty almost as great as that taken with the Chevalier de Grammont, by an unknown gamester; only that person, whom Anthony Hamilton, the Count de Grammont's brother-in-law, called the Little Pumpkin, asked pardon of Grammont, for his great familiarity; whereas this Unknown asked pardon neither of Pitou nor Billot, but looked at them, on the contrary, with a humorous expression which seemed natural to him.

Billot was evidently in no mood to bear this look without explanation, for he walked quickly up to the Unknown; but before the farmer had time to open his mouth or make a gesture, the Unknown gave a Masonic sign, to which Billot at once responded.

The two men were not acquainted, it is true, but they were brothers. Besides, the Unknown, like Billot, wore the costume of a federal delegate; although, by certain peculiarities in that costume, Billot remembered that the man wearing it had been one of the group of strangers who came with Anacharsis Clootz, when they appeared at the festival, as deputies from the Human Race.

At this sign, made by the Unknown and recognized by Billot, the farmer and Pitou resumed their places. Billot even bowed his head, by way of salutation, while Pitou smiled graciously. As both seemed to question the Unknown by their looks, he was the first to speak.

"Brothers, you do not know me; but as for me, I know both of you."

Billot looked steadfastly at the Unknown; but the more outspoken Pitou said: "Bah! Do you then really know us?"

"I know thee, Captain Pitou; and I know thee, Farmer Billot."

"You 've hit it!" said Pitou.

"Why this gloomy air, Billot?" asked the stranger. "Is it because, having been a conqueror of the Bastille, and the first to pass through its portals, they have forgotten to hang a Fourteenth-of-July medal in thy buttonhole, and render thee such honors as have been this day paid to Maillard, Élie, and Hullin?"

Billot smiled, like a man misunderstood, and said: "Brother, if thou knowest me, thou must know that such a disappointment as that would not break *my* heart."

"Is it because, in the generosity of thy heart, thou didst try in vain to oppose the murder of Delaunay, Foulon, and Berthier?"

"I did what I could, and according to my strength, to

prevent these crimes," said Billot. "More than once have I seen those victims in my dreams, but neither of them ever accused me of the crime of their taking-off."

"Is it because, on returning to thy farm, soon after the Fifth of October, thy granaries were found empty and thy fields fallow?"

"I'm rich," said Billot. "What matters the loss of a single harvest?"

The Unknown looked Billot full in the face, and asked: "Is it because thy daughter Catherine — ?"

"Silence!" said the farmer, grasping the Unknown's arm. "Don't talk about it!"

"Why not, — if I speak to thee in order to aid thy revenge?"

"That's a different matter!" said Billot, smiling and growing pale simultaneously.

Pitou forgot to eat and drink. He looked at this man, as one might gaze at a magician.

"Thy vengeance? How dost thou hope to accomplish it?" smilingly asked the Unknown. "Tell me! Is it by meanly killing one individual, as thou hast wished to do?"

Billot became livid, and Pitou felt a shiver run down his back.

"Or is it by pursuing his whole caste?"

"By pursuing them all," said Billot, "for the crime of one is the crime of all. As Monsieur Gilbert said to me, when I complained to him: 'Poor Billot! What has come to thee has already happened to a hundred thousand fathers! What would these young noblemen do, if they could n't lead astray the daughters of common folks, — or the old ones, if they could n't eat at the King's expense.' Doctor Gilbert is wise!"

"He told thee so, Gilbert?"

"Thou knowest him?"

The Unknown laughed and said: "I know everybody, as I do thee, — thee, Billot, the farmer of Pisseleu; as I know Pitou, captain of the Haramont National Guards; as I know the Viscount de Charny, Lord of Boursonnes; as I know Catherine."

"I have already bidden thee not pronounce that name, brother!"

"And why so?"

"Because there is no longer any Catherine."

"What has become of her?"

"She's dead!"

"No, she's not dead, Father Billot," cried Pitou, "for —"

Doubtless he would have added, "for I know where she is, and I see her every day;" but Billot repeated, in a voice which admitted no rejoinder: "She's dead!"

Pitou bowed. He understood. For others, Catherine might be alive; but to her father, she was dead.

"Ah!" said the Unknown, "if I were Diogenes, I should extinguish my lantern, for I believe I have found one *man*." Then he rose, and offered his hand to Billot, saying: "Brother, while this good fellow drinks his bottle and eats his sausage, come and take a turn with me."

"Willingly, for I begin to comprehend thy proposal."

Taking the arm of the Unknown, Billot added to Pitou: "Wait for me here! I'll come back!"

"Say, Father Billot," said Pitou, "if you're long away, I shall be bored; for I have only a half-bottle of wine left, a fragment of bread, and a bit of their famous sausage."

"All right, my brave Pitou," said the Unknown. "They know the measure of thy appetite, and they

will bring something more, to make thee a patient waiter."

Sure enough. Hardly had the Unknown and Billot disappeared behind one of the walls of verdure, than another sausage, a second loaf, and a third bottle graced Pitou's table.

Though he did not understand what was going on, Pitou was anxious and surprised; but astonishment and anxiety, like every other emotion, made Pitou's stomach feel very hollow. He therefore felt, despite his astonishment and anxiety, an irresistible desire to do honor to the provisions brought him; and he was yielding to this desire with his accustomed ardor, when Billot returned quietly and alone, but with a joyful light in his face, and resumed his place at the table, opposite Pitou.

"Well now, what's the news?" he asked of the farmer.

"That thou wilt depart for home alone on the morrow, my boy."

"And you?"

"*I?* I shall remain here," said Billot.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LODGE IN RUE PLÂTRIÈRE.

If our readers wish, — a week having rolled away since the events just recorded, — if our readers wish, we say, to again meet some of the chief personages of our narrative, — personages who have not only played important rôles in the past, but will play these rôles in the future, — then our readers must place themselves with us, near the fountain in the Rue Plâtrière, wherein we used to see Gilbert, when he was a lodger at Rousseau's house, come and wet his dry bread.

Once near this fountain, let us watch and follow a man who will soon pass by, and whom we may recognize, not indeed any longer by his federal delegate's costume, — a costume which, after the departure from Paris of the hundred thousand provincial delegates, could not be worn without attracting greater attention to the wearer than our friend would desire, — but by the simpler costume, although quite as well known, of a well-to-do farmer, from the environs of the city.

Needless to tell the reader that this personage is no other than Billot, whom we may follow along the Rue Saint Honoré, past the gates of the Palais Royal, — which has resumed its nocturnal splendor since the return of Orleans, after his eight months' exile in London, — till the farmer takes the Rue Grenelle at his left, and turns unhesitatingly into the Rue Plâtrière.

As he reaches the fountain, where we are waiting for him, he pauses, hesitates; not that his heart fails him, — for those acquainted with the courageous farmer know perfectly well, that if he made up his mind to go to hell, he would go without a tremor, — but evidently because his information is imperfect.

Indeed, it is not difficult to see, — especially for us, who act as spies over his footsteps, — that he examines attentively every door, like a man who is bound to make no mistake.

Notwithstanding this careful examination, he goes nearly two-thirds the length of the street, without finding what he seeks. At that point the way is interrupted by wayfarers, gathered about a group of street musicians, one of whom sings, in a loud voice, a topical song on the events of the day, — a song which would not probably rouse any great interest, if one or two couplets, in each stanza, did not relieve the other verses, by their personal hits.

Among others was one song, called "The Riding School," which raised great merriment in the crowd. As the National Assembly occupied the building formerly used as a riding-school, not only were the different parties in the Assembly compared with the colors of the equine race, — whites and blacks, chestnuts and bays, — but different members of the Assembly were designated by epithets applicable to horses. Mirabeau was called the Petulant; Count Clermont Tonnerre was called the Skittish; Abbé Maury, the Balky; Thouret, the Bolter; Bailly, the Lucky.

Billot stopped an instant to listen to these attacks, more tart than witty, and then glided to the right, towards the houses, till he disappeared among the crowd.

He had possibly found what he sought, while amidst

the crowd, for after thus leaving one side of the street, he did not return to the other.

Following Billot's footsteps, let us also see what the presence of the crowd now hides from us.

There is a low door, surmounted by three initials, traced in red chalk, which are doubtless the symbols of reunion for that night, and to be rubbed out to-morrow morning. These three letters are an L, a P, and a D.

This deep-set door seems like the entrance of a cave, from which you descend several steps into a gloomy lobby.

Doubtless the second direction confirmed the first; for after regarding these three letters with attention, — a sign insufficient for Billot, who could not read, it will be remembered, — the farmer went down the steps, counting them one by one as he did so, and boldly entered the passage-way at the bottom.

At the end of this passage a pale light trembled. In front of this light was seated a man, reading, or pretending to read, a newspaper.

At the noise of Billot's steps this man arose, placed one finger against his breast, and awaited the farmer's arrival.

Billot held out the corresponding finger, by way of reply, and then pressed it on his lips, like a padlock.

This was probably the countersign expected by the mysterious doorkeeper, for he pushed open a door at his right hand, a door entirely invisible when it was shut, and allowed Billot to see a steep and narrow staircase, which apparently plunged into the very earth.

Billot entered. Silently and swiftly the door closed behind him.

This time the farmer counted seventeen steps; and, in spite of the dumbness to which he was apparently

condemned, he said, in a low voice: "Good! Here I am!"

A curtain hung before a doorway, a few paces in front of him. Passing to the right of this curtain he lifted it, and found himself in a large, circular, subterranean hall, where some fifty persons were already assembled.

Into this hall our readers descended fifteen or sixteen years ago, under the lead of Rousseau.

As in Rousseau's days, the walls were hung with red and white tapestry, into which were woven the compasses, square, and level.

A single lamp, hanging from the vaulted ceiling, threw a feeble light over the middle of the circle, and gave it a certain brightness; but this was insufficient to reach those who remained outside its circumference, not wishing to be recognized, perhaps.

A platform, accessible by four steps, was provided for speakers and candidates; and on this platform, in the part nearest the wall, was a solitary desk, and also an empty armchair, for the president.

In a few minutes the hall was so full, that it was almost impossible to move about. There were all sorts and conditions of men present, from the peasant to the prince. Each came in alone, as Billot had done. If they did not recognize the others, or were not recognized by them, the new-comers took their places as chance or convenience directed.

Each of these men wore, under his coat or overcoat, the Masonic apron, if he were simply a Mason, or the scarf of the Enlightened Ones, if he belonged to both bodies, — that is, had been initiated into the higher mysteries.

Only three men were without the latter insignia, and wore simply the Masonic apron. One of these was

Billot. Another was a young man about twenty-two years old. The third was a man of forty-two, whose manners indicated him as belonging to the highest classes of society.

A few seconds after the last man had arrived, and without more ceremony than attended the entrance of the subordinate members of the association, a secret door opened, and the president appeared, wearing the insignia of the Grand Orient and of the Sublime Kophta.

Billot uttered a feeble cry of astonishment. This president, before whom all heads bowed, was no other than the federal delegate Billot had encountered at the Bastille.

The president slowly ascended the platform, and said, turning towards the assemblage: "Brothers, there are two things to be done to-day. I have to receive three new candidates. I have also to give an account of my work, from the day when I undertook it, until now; for this work becomes hourly more difficult, and it is your right to learn if I continue worthy of your confidence, and mine to learn if I still receive it. It is by receiving light from you, and imparting it to you in return, that I am able to march along in the gloomy and terrible work in which I am engaged. Now, let the chiefs of the order alone remain in the hall, while we proceed to the reception or rejection of the three applicants who come before us. When these three applicants have been either accepted or rejected, all the members may return to the meeting, from the first to the last; for it is in the presence of all, and not merely of the Supreme Circle, that I wish to report my conduct, and receive blame or praise."

At these words another door was opened, opposite the one which had already been disclosed. Through this

second door could be seen extensive vaulted cellars, similar to the crypts of an ancient basilica. Like a procession of spectres, the crowd silently retreated beneath these arches, lighted here and there by copper lamps, whose light was just sufficient to "render darkness visible," — as the poet expresses it.

Three men only remained, — the three candidates, — who, as it chanced, were leaning against the wall, at equal distances from one another. All three looked at each other in astonishment; for then only did they learn who were to be the three heroes of the occasion.

At that moment the door by which the president had entered was again opened. Six masked men came in, and stood near the armchair, three on the right and three on the left.

"Numbers Two and Three will withdraw awhile," said the chairman. "Only the Supreme Chiefs are allowed to know the secrets which attend the acceptance or rejection of a brother Mason, who wishes to enter the higher order of the Enlightened."

The young man and the aristocratic-looking man retired to the corridor by which they first came in. Billot remained alone.

"Approach!" said the chairman, after an instant of silence, whose only purpose was to allow the two other candidates time to withdraw.

"What is thy name among the profane?" asked the president.

"François Billot."

"What is thy name among the elect?"

"Force."

"Where didst thou first see the light?"

"In the Friends of Truth Lodge, at Soissons."

"How old art thou?"

"Seven years;" and Billot made a sign indicating that he had been advanced to the grade of Master in the Masonic Order.

"Why dost thou desire to take a higher degree, and be received among us?"

"Because I have been told that this degree is one step nearer the universal light."

"Hast thou godparents?"

"Only the man who is now in front of me, who himself was the first to suggest my application;" and Billot looked straight at the presiding officer.

"What sentiments lead thee to desire to walk in the way which may be opened to thee?"

"Hatred of the mighty and love of equality."

"What will vouch for thy love of equality and hatred of the mighty?"

"The word of a man who has never broken that word."

"What has inspired in thee this love of equality?"

"The inferior condition in which I was born."

"What has led to this hatred of the mighty?"

"That is my secret, — a secret known to thee. Why dost thou wish me to repeat aloud, what I hesitate to say to myself?"

"Wilt thou walk, and wilt thou promise to persuade others to walk, in this way of equality, according to thy strength and ability?"

"Yes."

"According to thy strength and ability, wilt thou overturn every obstacle to the liberty of France and the emancipation of the world?"

"Yes."

"Art thou freed from prior engagements; or, if any engagements have been entered into, art thou ready to

break them, if they involve aught contrary to the promises now made?"

"Yes."

The president turned towards the six masked men, and said: "Brothers, this is a true man. I, myself, invited him to become one of us. A great sorrow binds him to our cause, by the brotherhood of hate. He has already done much for the Revolution, and can do yet more. I can gladly vouch for him, for his past, his present, and his future."

"Let him be received!" said the six consulting voices, unanimously.

"Thou hearest?" said the president. "Art thou ready to take the oath?"

"Dictate the oath, and I will repeat it!" said Billot.

The chairman raised his hand, and slowly and solemnly said: "In the name of the crucified Son, swear to break all fleshly ties which now bind thee to father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, kindred, friends, sweetheart, kings, benefactors, or any other being or beings to whom thou mayest have pledged, or shalt hereafter pledge, thy faith, obedience, gratitude, or service."

Billot repeated, with a voice as firm as the chairman's, the words which the latter had spoken.

"Now," said the president, "from this hour thou art freed from any so-called oath, made to the country and its laws. Swear also to reveal to the new chief, whom thou hast acknowledged, whatever thou hast seen or done, read or heard, learned or guessed, or shalt see, do, hear, read, learn, or guess, and to search out, as a spy, what is not apparent to the eye."

"I swear it!" repeated Billot.

"Swear to honor and respect poison, sword, and fire, as the promptest agents, sure and necessary, for purging

the globe of all who try to debase truth, or snatch it from our hands."

"I swear it!"

"Swear to avoid Naples, Rome, Spain, and every country under the curse. Swear to flee from the temptation to reveal anything of what thou shalt see or hear in our meetings; for the lightning is not swifter to strike, than will be the invisible knife to find the traitor, wherever he may be hidden."

"I swear!"

"And now be thou Enlightened, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!"

A brother concealed in the shadow opened the door of the crypt, where the inferior members of the order were promenading, waiting for the triple reception to be over. The president made a sign to Billot, who went to join those with whom he was now affiliated, by the terrible oath he had taken.

"Number Two," said the chairman, in a loud voice, as soon as the door closed behind the new disciple.

The tapestry covering the lobby door was slowly pushed aside, and there entered the young man dressed in black. He let the tapestry fall behind him, and stopped on the threshold, waiting for the word which was to be spoken.

"Approach!" said the president, and the young man did so.

As we have already said, he was a young man of twenty or twenty-two years, who might have passed for a woman, so white and fine was his skin. His enormous and close-fitting cravat, which he alone wore at that epoch, might have suggested that the lightness and transparency of his skin was not principally caused by the nobility of his blood, but, on the contrary, that this whiteness arose from

some unknown disease; for despite the great height of his cravat, his neck appeared relatively small. His forehead was low, and the top of his head appeared depressed. His hair, without being longer in front than it was the fashion to wear it, almost reached his eyes; and behind, it descended almost to his shoulders. There was an automatic rigidity about him, which made this young man, on the very threshold of life, appear like an envoy from the other world or a candidate for the tomb.

The president regarded him with some attention, before beginning the interrogation; but this look, of mixed astonishment and curiosity, did not make the young man lower his steady gaze. He waited.

"What is thy name among the profane?"

"Antoine Saint-Just."

"What is thy name among the elect?"

"Humility."

"Where didst thou first see the light?"

"In the lodge called Humanitarian, at Laon."

"What is thy age?"

"Five years;" and the candidate made a sign to show that he had reached the degree of Fellow Craft in Free Masonry.

"Why dost thou wish to take a step higher, and be received among us?"

"Because it is the instinct of man to aspire to the highest, and on the heights the air is purer and the light more brilliant."

"Hast thou some pattern before thy mind?"

"The Genevan Philosopher, the Man of Nature, the immortal Rousseau."

"Hast thou sponsors?"

"Yes."

"How many?"

"Two."

"Who are they?"

"Robespierre the elder and Robespierre the younger."

"With what sentiment seekest thou to enter the way which may open before thee?"

"With faith."

"Whither ought that way to lead France and the world?"

"France into greater liberty, and the whole world into enfranchisement."

"What wouldst thou give to lead France and the world to this end?"

"My life, which is all I own, having already given my property."

"Wilt thou walk, and persuade others about thee to walk, in this way of liberty and enfranchisement, according to the measure of thy strength and ability?"

"I will both walk in this way, and compel others to do so."

"According to thy strength and ability, wilt thou overturn every obstacle encountered on the road?"

"I will!"

"Art thou free from all entanglements; and if thou art under any engagements, contrary to the vows just made, wilt thou break those engagements?"

"I am free."

The chairman turned to the six masked men, saying: "Brothers, you have heard?"

"Yes," responded the six members of the Supreme Circle, all at once.

"Has he spoken the truth?"

"Yes," they again responded.

"Is it your opinion that he should be received?"

"Yes," they responded, for the last time.

"Art thou ready to take the oath?" demanded the chairman, of the candidate.

"I am ready," answered Saint-Just.

Word for word the president repeated the triple oath, which he had previously administered to Billot; and at each pause Saint-Just answered, with a firm and strident voice, "I swear!"

The oath taken, the same door opened, under the hand of an invisible brother, and Saint-Just retired, with the same stiff demeanor which characterized his entrance, leaving behind him not a tinge of doubt or regret.

The president waited till there was time to close the door of the crypt, and then called for Number Three.

A second time the tapestry was lifted, and the third applicant appeared.

As we said before, this was a man forty or forty-two years old, with a high color, a face almost pimpled, but breathing — despite these signs of vulgarity — an aristocratic air, mingled with a whiff of Anglomania, visible at first acquaintance.

His costume, although elegant, displayed something of the severity which was becoming fashionable in France, and the true source whereof was in the relations we had begun to have with America.

His step, without being really vacillating, was neither so firm as Billot's nor so stiff as Saint-Just's.

"Approach!"

The candidate obeyed.

"What is thy name among the profane?"

"Louis Philippe Joseph, Duke d'Orleans."

"What is thy name among the elect?"

"Equality."

"Where didst thou first see the light?"

"In Free Men's Lodge, Paris."

"What age art thou?"

"I have no longer any age," and the Duke made a Masonic sign, to show that he had been elevated to the dignity of the Croix Rose, or Rosy Cross.

"Why dost thou desire to be received among us?"

"Having lived always among the great, I desire now to live among *men*. Having lived always among enemies, I wish now to live among brethren."

"Hast thou sponsors?"

"I have two."

"How are they named?"

"Disgust and Hate!"

"With what special desire dost thou wish to enter the way which opens before thee?"

"The desire for vengeance."

"On whom?"

"On a man who has misunderstood me, a woman who has humiliated me."

"What art thou willing to give, in order to reach that end?"

"My fortune; more than my fortune, my life; more than my life, my honor."

"Art thou free from all other engagements; or if thou hast made any pledge, contrary to the promises now made, wilt thou break it?"

"Since yesterday, every other bond is broken."

"Do you hear, brothers?" said the chairman, again turning towards his masked associates.

"Yes."

"You know this man, who offers himself as a worker with us?"

"Yes."

"Knowing him, is it your mind that he be received into our ranks?"

"Yes, but he must take the oath."

"Knowest thou the oath which remains for thee to pronounce?" said the chairman to the Prince.

"No; but propose it to me, and I will take it, whatsoever it be."

"It is terrible, especially for *thee*."

"Not more terrible than the outrages I have received."

"So terrible, that, after having heard it, we declare thee free to depart, if thou doubtest, even at the last moment, thine ability to keep it, in all its rigor."

"Pronounce it!"

The president fixed his eyes on the candidate with a piercing look. As if to prepare the Duke gradually for the sanguinary pledge, he inverted the usual order of the paragraphs, beginning with the second instead of the first.

"Swear to honor steel, fire, and poison, as the surest agents, prompt and necessary, for purging the globe, by the death of those who seek to debase truth, and snatch it from us."

"I swear," said the Prince, in a firm voice.

"Swear to break all fleshly ties, which still bind thee to father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, mistress, kindred, friends, kings, benefactors, or any other human being to whom thou mayest promise faith, obedience, gratitude, or service."

The Duke stood silent a moment, and cold sweat could be seen standing in pearls on his forehead.

"I have pronounced the oath to thee," said the president.

Instead of answering simply "I swear!" as he had done after the preceding paragraph, the Duke, as if to do away with any excuse for thereafter retracing his steps, repeated the whole oath, in a gloomy tone: "I swear to break all fleshly ties, which bind me to father, mother,

brothers, sisters, wife, mistress, kindred, friends, kings, benefactors, and any other human being to whom I have promised, or may ever promise, faith, obedience, gratitude, or service."

After the third item of the oath, the president turned again to the masked men, who had been exchanging glances among themselves, so that their eyes could be seen, flashing through the openings in their masks.

Turning finally to the Prince he said : "Louis Philippe Joseph, from this hour thou art free from oaths made to country or law. Only, do not forget, if thou betrayest us, the lightning is not more sure in its blow, than will be the invisible and inevitable knife to find thy heart, wheresoever thou mayest be hidden. — Now, be thou Enlightened, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost ! "

With his hand the chairman indicated the door into the crypt, which opened before the Duke.

Like a man relieved of a burden greater than he can bear, he passed his hand over his brow, breathed hard, and made an effort to move from his position.

"Ah," he cried, as he went into the crypt, "I shall at last be avenged."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ACCOUNT RENDERED.

LEFT by themselves, the chairman and the six masked men exchanged a few words in low tones.

Then Cagliostro called aloud: "Let all the brethren enter. I am ready to give the report I promised."

The door immediately opened, and the members of the association — who had been in the crypt, chatting in groups, or promenading in pairs — were admitted, and again filled their customary hall.

Hardly had the door closed behind the last member, than Cagliostro — like a man who knows the value of time, and is not willing to lose a second — held out his hand, and said in a loud voice: "Brothers, perhaps some of you assisted at the reunion which took place precisely twenty years ago, five miles from the borders of the Rhine, about two miles from the village of Danenfels, in one of the grottoes of Mount Thunder. If any of you were there present, will those venerable upholders of our great cause raise their hands, and say so."

Five or six hands were raised above the heads of the crowd, and five or six voices exclaimed, as the president had requested "I was there!"

"That is as it should be," said the speaker. "The others are dead, or dispersed over the face of the globe, doing the work of our brotherhood, — that holy work, which is for all humanity.

"Twenty years ago this work, which we are now to consider in its various episodes, had hardly begun. The day, which is now so bright, hardly reddened the east. The strongest gaze could not see the future, except through clouds, which the eyes of the elect alone could pierce.

"At that reunion I explained the miracle by which death — which is nothing, for any man, but forgetfulness of time's revolutions and passing events — exists not for me; for during the past twenty centuries I have been thirty-two times laid in the tomb, in the different bodily and transitory forms which my immortal soul has inherited, without that soul's losing consciousness, or reaching that state of forgetfulness which, as I have told you, is the only real death. Through all these ages I have followed the development of the Word of Jesus the Christ, the Anointed One, and seen nations pass slowly but surely from slavery to serfdom, and from servitude to that ambition which precedes liberty.

"As the stars of night begin to shine in the sky before the sun has fully set, so we have successively seen various European communities strive for liberty, — such communities as Rome, Venice, Florence, Switzerland, Genoa, Pisa, Lucca, Arezzo. Those cities of sunshine, where flowers open so quickly, where fruits ripen so early, have made, one after the other, a series of republican experiments, whereof only two or three survive to our day, and still brave the league of kings.

"But all these republics have been tainted with some innate sin. Some were aristocratic, some oligarchical, some despotic. Genoa, for example, one of the few which at present survive, is given over to the aristocratic idea. Within her own walls, her subjects are indeed equal citizens; but they consider themselves noblemen every-

where else. The Swiss have democratic institutions; but their small cantons, hidden among their mountains, can offer neither precedent nor aid to the human race.

"The great need is this, — a great country, which shall not merely receive the free impulsion, but impart it to others, — an immense machine, which shall entangle all Europe, — a flaming planet, which shall enlighten the world."

An approbative murmur ran through the assemblage; and Cagliostro continued, like one inspired: "I interrogate God, the creator of all things, the source of all progress, and I see his finger pointing me to France. France has been Catholic since the Second Century, national since the Eleventh, and a unit since the Sixteenth. The Lord himself, through his successors in the papal chair, has called France his eldest daughter, — undoubtedly indicating her right, in supreme moments of devotion, to offer herself on the cross of humanity, as did the Christ himself. Having tried all forms of despotic government, — feudal, lordly, monarchical, aristocratic, — France long ago appeared the most ripe for submission to our influences; and so we decided, — guided by a celestial ray, as the Israelites were led by a column of fire, — that France should first be liberated.

"Cast your eyes over the France of twenty years ago, and you will see that there was great audacity, or else sublime faith, in such an undertaking. Twenty years ago France, in the debilitated hands of Louis Fifteenth, was still the France of Louis Fourteenth, — that is, a great aristocratic kingdom, where all rights belonged to the nobles, and all privileges to the rich. At the head of the state was a man who represented at once the highest and lowest elements, the greatest and the smallest, God and the people. With a word this man could

raise men to wealth or reduce them to poverty, could make them happy or miserable, could release them or imprison them, sentence them to life or death. This man, Louis Fifteenth, had three grandsons, three little princes, to inherit his throne.

"Fate so willed it that his successor, Louis Sixteenth, was not only designed by primogeniture for this position, but by the public voice also, — so far as there was any public voice at that time. He was said to be good, just, honest, unselfish, well educated, — almost a philosopher. In order to put an end forever to the disastrous wars which had been lighted in Europe, by the fatal succession of Charles the Second, the wife chosen for this man was the daughter of Maria Theresa. The two great nations, which were then the counterweights of Europe, — France, on the shores of the Atlantic, and Austria, on the shores of the Black Sea, — would thus be indissolubly united. This was well calculated by Maria Theresa, the brainiest political head in Europe.

"At that time, leaning on Austria, Italy, and Spain, France was about entering upon an untried but desired reign; and that was the time we selected, not to make France the first kingdom among many, but to make the French people the first among many nations.

"The sole question was, who would enter this lion's den? What Christian Theseus, guided by the torch of faith, would find his way through the twistings and turnings of this great labyrinth, and confront the royal Minotaur. Upon whom should this task devolve? *Upon me*, I answered. As some ardent spirits, with restless organizations, wished to know how long a time it would take for me to accomplish the first part of my work, which I divided into three periods, I demanded twenty years. They exclaimed at this. Do you understand?

For twenty centuries these men had been slaves or serfs, and they cried out in dismay when I asked for twenty years in which to make them free men!"

Cagliostro looked around upon his auditors, among whom his last words had provoked some ironical smiles.

Then he went on: "Finally the brethren granted me the twenty years asked for. I then gave them our notable device, *Lilia pedibus destrue*, and set to work, inviting all others to help me."

The Enlightened Ones, even if they did not all understand Latin, knew that this motto referred to the *fleur-de-lis*, the royal lilies of France, always to be found on the banners, shields, and arms of the Bourbon dynasty; and that the words might be translated thus: "Trample the lilies under foot!" or, more figuratively, thus: "Pluck up the lilies by their roots!" The idea involved was the destruction of French royalty; and for that end this secret order existed, with its awful annihilistic oaths.

Cagliostro went on: "I came to France amidst the shadows of triumphal arches. From Strasbourg to Paris, laurels and roses made a pathway of flowers and foliage. Everybody was shouting for long life to the Dauphiness, the future Queen of France. The hopes of the kingdom hung upon the fruitfulness of this saving marriage.

"Well, I do not arrogate to myself the glory of initiating all the stirring events which have since transpired, or the merit of their results. God was with me, and he permitted me to see his hand divine, holding the reins of his flaming chariot. God be praised! Some stones I have removed from the road. Rivers I have bridged, precipices I have levelled; and the holy chariot rolls over them, — that is all.

"Now, brethren, see what has been accomplished in twenty years.

"The Parliaments have been broken up.

"Louis Fifteenth, called the Well Beloved, died in the midst of general mistrust.

"The Queen, after being seven years barren, brought into the world children, whose legitimacy is disputed. At the time of the Dauphin's birth, her character was openly assailed; and as a wife, she was dishonored by the affair of the Diamond Necklace.

"The present King, bearing the sacred title of Louis the Long Desired, having the kingdom to sustain, but being as impotent in politics as in love, rushed from one Utopian scheme into another, till he reached bankruptcy, and changed from minister to minister, till he reached Monsieur de Calonne.

"The Assembly of Notables convened, and decreed the recognition of the States General, — the rank and file of the community. The States General, elected by universal suffrage, transformed themselves into the National Assembly. The Nobility and the Clergy were overborne therein by the Third Estate.

"The Bastille was captured. The foreign, hireling troops were driven from Paris to Versailles.

"The night of the Fourth of August showed the Aristocrats the end of their Old Nobility. The Fifth and Sixth of October showed to King and Queen the end of their Ancient Royalty. The Fourteenth of July, of the next year, displayed to the world the Unity of France.

"The other Royal Princes have lost their popularity, by emigration; and *Monsieur* has lost his, by the trial and condemnation of Favras.

"Finally, the Constitution has been adopted by oath, on the Altar of Patriotism, the President of the National Assembly occupying a throne equal to the King's, — the

Law and the Nation being seated side by side. Listening Europe, silent and attentive, bends toward us. They tremble, who do not applaud.

"Brothers, has France become what I predicted, a mill to feed Europe, a sun to illumine the world?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" cried every voice.

"Now then, brothers," continued Cagliostro, "do you believe the work so far advanced that it can be left to itself? The Constitution is sacredly accepted; but do you believe we can trust the royal oath?"

"No, no!" shouted everybody.

"Then we must enter upon the second Revolutionary period of the great democratic work we have all undertaken.

"In your eyes, as in mine, — so I joyfully perceive, — the Federation of 1790 was not the end, but only a breathing-place on the road. Very well! A halt has been called, rest has been enjoyed; but the Court has set itself to work, to bring about a counter-revolution. Let *our* loins be girded about also, and let our lights be burning for the journey.

"Undoubtedly, for timid hearts, there will be anxious hours, moments of misgiving. Often the ray which lights our path will seem ready to die out altogether. The guiding Hand will seem to forsake us. More than once, in the long lane still before us, our party will seem compromised, — almost lost, — through some unforeseen accident, some fortuitous occurrence. Everything will seem to put us in the wrong, — unfavorable circumstances, the victory of our enemies, the ingratitude of our fellow-citizens. Many will ask themselves, — and those the most conscientious of our number, — after so much real effort, and so little apparent effect, if they are not on the wrong road, and engaged in a bad scheme.

"No, brethren, no! At this very hour, I tell you, *no;* and I would my word might sound eternally in your ears, — as a trumpet-blast in times of triumph, as a tocsin of alarm in the midst of defeat. No! I say.

"Popular leaders have a holy mission, which they must accomplish, providentially or fatally. The Lord who guides them has his own mysterious ways, not revealed to our eyes, save in the splendor of their accomplishment. Often clouds and darkness are round about him, and hide him from our eyes, and we believe him absent. Often a principle recoils, and seems beaten backward; when, on the contrary, it is like some old knight, in a tournament of the Middle Ages, who takes a step rearward, till he can put his lance in rest, and then rushes more fiercely upon his adversary.

"Brothers, brothers!. The end we seek is a beacon on a high mountain. A score of times, along the road, earthly catastrophes will cause us to lose sight of the beacon, and believe it extinguished. Then the weak will murmur, complain, pause, and say: 'We have no guide. We are marching in the night. Let us stay where we are. Why are we so misguided?' The strong will continue in the way, smiling and confident. Soon the beacon-light will reappear, only to vanish and reappear again, — each time more clearly defined and brilliant, as we near the goal.

"Thus fighting, persevering, believing, the world's chosen ones will at last arrive at the saving lighthouse, whose brightness must one day enlighten, not merely France, but all races.

"Let us swear, brethren, for ourselves and our descendants, — for perchance the eternal principle may require the service of several generations, — let us swear, for ourselves and for them, not to stop until we establish,

in all the earth, the Christ's holy motto, of which a third only has been partly won : Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."

Cagliostro's words were followed by a burst of applause ; but, in the midst of bravos and cheers, a few words were heard, from a sharp and cutting voice, which fell upon the general enthusiasm like drops of icy water, from the side of a wet rock, falling upon a feverish forehead.

"Yes, we will swear," said the strident voice ; "but first explain what these three words mean to thee, that we, thy plain apostles, may be able to explain them in the same way."

Cagliostro's piercing glance alighted, like the reflection from a mirror, on the pale face of the Deputy from Arras, — Robespierre.

"So be it!" said Cagliostro. "Listen, Maximilian!"

Then, raising voice and hand at the same time, so as to be heard by the crowd, he added : "Listen, all of you!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LIBERTY ! EQUALITY ! FRATERNITY !

THERE came over the assemblage a solemn silence, which measured the importance attached to what was to be said.

"Yes, you have the right to demand of me a definition of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, and I will give it.

"Let us begin with Liberty. First of all, brethren, do not confound Liberty with Independence, for they are not two sisters, resembling each other, but two rivals, who hate each other. Nearly all races living among the mountains are independent; but I do not know of one nation, except the Swiss, which is truly free. Nobody will deny that the Calabrians, the Corsicans, the Scotch are independent; but no one dare call them free. If the Calabrian's whims are interfered with, or the Corsican's honor, or the Scot's interests, then the Calabrian, as he can have no recourse to law, — because there is no real law among an oppressed people, — the Calabrian appeals to his poniard, the Corsican to his stiletto, the Scotchman to his dirk. He strikes, his enemy falls, and the assassin is avenged. The mountain is there, to offer him an asylum; and in default of that liberty, vainly invoked by the dwellers in cities, he finds independence in deep caverns, dense forests, high cliffs, — that is, the independence of the fox, the antelope, and the eagle; but the eagle, antelope, and fox — unmoved, indifferent, unchangeable spectators of the great human drama, unrolling itself

before their eyes, — are animals dependent upon instinct and destined for solitude.

"The early civilizations, antique and (we might say) maternal, the civilizations of India, Egypt, Etruria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Latium, uniting their science, religion, art, and poetry into one cluster of lights, which they held aloft, over the world, in order to illuminate its cradle, and be a beacon-light for the development of modern civilization, — these ancient civilizations, I say, still left the foxes in their holes, the antelopes on their cliffs, the eagles in their eyries.

"For these creatures also time passed, but they took no note of it. The sciences flourished, but with the eagle there was no progressive step. Nations rose, matured, and declined, but the fox knew nothing of these changes. Why? Because Providence has limited the circle of the faculties of these creatures to the instinct of self-preservation; whereas God has given to man the knowledge of good and evil, an appreciation of justice and injustice, a horror of isolation, and a fondness for society.

"This is why mankind — created as solitary as the fox, as wild as the antelope, as isolated as the eagle — soon united into families, which were afterwards welded into tribes, till the tribes became nations. As I tell you, brethren, the individual who isolates himself, acquires only the right of Independence; while men, who unite together, have a right to Liberty."

Cagliostro then took up, one after the other, the three watchwords of the Enlightened.

LIBERTY.

"Liberty is not a primitive substance, like gold. It is a flower, a fruit, an art, — yes, a product. It needs cultivation for its unfolding and growth.

"Liberty is the right of every one to work for his own benefit, his own interest, his own satisfaction, his own well-being, his own glory, his own amusement, — so long as he does not wound the interests of others. Liberty involves a partial relinquishment of individual independence, for the increase of the general fund of liberty, which each may equally share in turn.

"Liberty is even more than all this. It involves an obligation, taken before the world, not to confine the accumulated enlightenment, progress, privileges, — already won, — to the selfish circle of one community, one nation, one race, but, on the contrary, to cast them abroad with full hands, whether as individuals or as society, whenever a poor individual or an indigent community asks the privilege of sharing these treasures. Do not fear the exhaustion of this treasure, for Liberty has the divine privilege of multiplying by its very prodigality, like that fountain of great waters which supplies the earth, and whose fulness at its source is in proportion to the abundance of its discharge.

"Thus you see what Liberty is, — celestial manna, to which every one has an equal right, and which the chosen people, for whom it falls, should share with all others who ask for their part of it. Such is Liberty, as I understand it."

Without deigning a direct reply to the man who had questioned him, Cagliostro added · "Now let us pass to Equality."

A great murmur of approbation rose to the vaulted ceiling, embracing the orator with the caress of popularity, — a caress very sweet to the pride of man, if not to his heart; but like one accustomed to such ovations he hastily raised his hand to restore silence.

"Brothers," said he, "the hour passes; time is pre-

cious. Any minute of lost time may accrue to the profit of the enemies of our holy cause, to dig a pit beneath our feet, or to place some obstacle in our path.

"Let me now define Equality, as I have already defined Liberty."

At these words there were loud cries of *hush!* followed by a profound silence, in the midst whereof Cagliostro's voice rose clear, sonorous, and distinct, as he went on with his exposition.

"Brethren, I will not do you the injustice to suppose that a single one among you is misled by that seductive word, even for an instant, into a belief in an equality of matter or intelligence. No, you know very well that any such equality is repugnant to true philosophy, and that Nature herself cuts short this question, by placing the hyssop beside the oak, the valley beside the mountain, the rivulet beside the river, the lake beside the ocean, stupidity beside genius. All the decrees in the world cannot lower, by a single cubit, Chimborazo, the Himalayas, or Mont Blanc. No decree of any human assembly can put out the light which burns on the forehead of Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare. No one can rationally cherish the idea that the equality sanctioned by law can be material and personal, — that from the moment when such an edict was inscribed on the tables of the Constitution, the generations would possess the proportions of Goliath, the valor of the Cid, or the genius of Voltaire. No, both individually and collectively, we perfectly understand that the question which we agitate is, purely and simply, social and political Equality. Now, brothers, what is this Equality?"

The speaker then proceeded to define the second most important principle.

EQUALITY!

"Equality is the abolition of all transmitted privileges, save as they are transmitted through natural aptitude and ability. It involves free access to all employments, all grades, all ranks. It means that the recompense should be according to merit, genius, virtue, and not be awarded as the perquisite of caste, family, or race.

"Thus the throne, supposing there should still be a throne, will be only an exalted position, accessible to the most worthy; while those of lesser worth will occupy secondary positions, but still according to merit; and if their present acquirements are adequate, whether they are kings, ministers, councillors, generals, judges, nobody will care from what point they started. Thus royalty or magistracy, the monarch's throne or the president's chair, will no longer be the hereditary perquisite of a family, but come by *election*. For council, for war, for judicial offices, there will be no longer any question of class privilege, but of *aptitude*. In the arts, in science, in letters, rank will no longer be determined by favor, partiality, and patronage, but by *general agreement* and *generous rivalry*. This is true social Equality.

"In proportion to the increase of education, — and education should not only be gratuitous, and brought to everybody's door, but enforced upon all, — ideas would grow, and equality would rise with them. Instead of staying with its feet in the mud, Equality should soar to the highest summits. A great nation, like France, ought to recognize only the equality which raises, not that which abases. Equality which abases is not that of a Titan, but of a bandit. It is no longer the Caucasian couch of Prometheus, but the narrow bed of Procrustes. — There you have the true Equality."

Such a definition could not fail to command full assent, in an association of men possessing exalted minds and ambitious hearts, each of whom — apart from a few rare and modest exceptions — naturally looked upon his neighbor as a convenient step in his own future elevation. The cheers, plaudits, and stamping testified that all present at that moment accepted Equality — in theory, at any rate — as it was understood by the puissant genius of the singular chief whom they had chosen; albeit there were some in that assemblage, who were ready to show, as soon as they could do so practically, that they adopted Equality in a fashion quite different from that held and taught by Cagliostro.

Cagliostro, becoming more glowing and more ecstatic, as the subject grew upon him, again commanded silence, as he had done before, and continued his speech, in a voice wherein it was impossible to observe the least weariness or detect the slightest hesitation.

"Brothers, we come now to the third word in our motto, a word which men will be a long time in understanding, and which, for that very reason, the highest civilization places last. Brethren, that word is Fraternity."

Then he entered upon his third division.

FRATERNITY !

"Fraternity ! A grand word, if properly understood ! A sublime word, if rightly explained ! God forbid my declaring that he must have a bad heart, who, having imperfectly measured the height of this word, accepts it in any narrow way, and applies it only to the inhabitants of a single village, the citizens of one town, or the subjects of one kingdom. No, brethren, such an one is only poor in intelligence. Let us pity such ignorant minds, and teach them to shake off their leaden sandals of

mediocrity, plume their wings, and rise far above all low ideas.

"When Satan wished to tempt Jesus, he transported him to the highest mountain in the world, — from whose summit the Tempter could show the Redeemer all the kingdoms of the earth, — not to a tower in Nazareth, whence he could see only a few poor Galilean villages. Brothers, it is not one city, it is not even one kingdom, to which Fraternity must be applied. The world must learn it.

"Brothers, the time will come when this word which we now consider sacred, — the word *country*, — and that other word which appears holy to us, — *nationality*, — will vanish like some theatric scenes, which are only lowered provisionally, while the scene-shifters and machinists behind are preparing their infinite distances, their immeasurable horizons. Brethren, the day will come when those who have conquered earth and sea will conquer fire and air. The flaming coursers of the sky will be harnessed, not only to thought but to matter; and the winds, which are to-day but the undisciplined couriers of the tempest, will become the intelligent and docile messengers of civilization.

"Brothers, a day will finally come, when all nations — thanks to terrestrial and aerial intercommunication, before which kings will be powerless — will understand that they are bound together, each to the others, by the solidarity of past trials, — when the people will understand that kings who have put weapons into their hands, wherewith to destroy each other, were urging them on, not to glory, as they pretended, but to fratricide, and that a full account must be rendered to posterity, for every drop of blood drawn from the least member of the great human family.

"Then, brethren, you will see a magnificent panorama, unrolled before the face of the Lord. Every imaginary frontier will disappear. Every artificial boundary will be laid low. Rivers will be no hindrance, mountains no obstacle. People will clasp hands across the rivers; and on the highest peak will be erected an altar, the altar of Fraternity.

"Brothers, brothers, brothers! Therein, I tell you, lies the true apostolic brotherhood. The Christ did not die for the rescue of Jews alone, but to redeem all the nations of the earth. 'Go and teach all nations!' was his command. Do not make these three words, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, the motto of France alone. Inscribe them on the banner of humanity, as the motto for the world.

"And now go forth, brethren. Your task is great, — so grand, through whatever valley of blood and tears you may pass, that your descendants will envy the holy mission which you accomplish. Be like the Crusaders, who were always most numerous in roads leading to saintly places, and did not pause, even when they saw, along the route, the whitening bones of their fathers.

"Courage, then, ye apostles! Courage, ye pilgrims! Courage, ye soldiers! Apostles, convert all men! Pilgrims, march on! Soldiers, fight the good fight!"

Cagliostro paused, but he had barely ceased speaking when he was interrupted by applause and enthusiastic cries. Thrice the plaudits were hushed, and three times were they renewed, echoing through the crypt like a subterranean storm.

The six masked men bowed before him, one after the other, kissing his hand, and then retired.

Then each brother, bowing in turn before the platform, — from which, like another Peter the Hermit, this new

apostle had preached the Crusade of Liberty, — passed out, repeating the fatal motto: *Lilia pedibus destrue!*

With the last brother's departure the lamp went out.

Cagliostro remained alone, buried in the bowels of the earth, lost in silence and darkness, — like those gods of India, into whose mysteries he professed to have been initiated two thousand years before.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WOMEN AND FLOWERS.

SEVERAL months after the events just recounted, towards the end of March, 1791, a carriage, going rapidly along the road from Argenteuil to Besons, made a detour a half-league from the city, drove towards the Château Marais, through the gate which opened before it, and stopped in the inner courtyard, near the lower steps of the piazza.

The clock on the front of the building indicated eight o'clock in the morning.

An old servant, who seemed to be impatiently awaiting the arrival of the carriage, hurried towards it, and opened the door for a man clad entirely in black, who rushed up the steps of the house.

"Ah, Monsieur Gilbert," said the valet, "you are here at last."

"What is the matter with him, my poor Teisch?" asked the Doctor.

"Alas, Monsieur, you will see," said the servant.

Going before the Doctor, he led the way across the billiard-room, where the lamps, probably lighted at a late hour of the night, were still burning, and then through the dining-room, where the table, covered with flowers, empty bottles, fruits, and pastry, gave evidence of a supper prolonged far beyond the usual hours.

Gilbert glanced sorrowfully over this scene of disorder, which proved how badly his own prescriptions had been

followed. Then shrugging his shoulders with a sigh, he ascended the staircase which led to Mirabeau's chamber, situated up one flight, on the main story.

"Monsieur, here is Doctor Gilbert," said the domestic, taking a step into the room.

"How, the Doctor?" said Mirabeau. "No need to send after him, for such a piece of foolishness as this."

"Foolishness?" murmured poor Teisch. "Judge for yourself, Monsieur."

"Oh Doctor," said Mirabeau, raising himself up in his bed, "believe me, I regret that they should trouble you without consulting me."

"First of all, it is never a trouble for me to have an excuse for seeing you. You know I only practise medicine for my friends, and that I belong entirely to them. Let us see what has happened, — and, above all, no secrets from the Faculty! — Teisch, draw the curtains and open the windows."

This order being obeyed, daylight flooded Mirabeau's chamber, even reaching its corners, and the Doctor could see the change which had come over the whole appearance of the celebrated orator, since he examined him a month or two previous.

"Ah —!" said Gilbert, in spite of himself.

"Yes," said Mirabeau, "I *am* changed, am I not? I'll tell you how it happens."

Gilbert smiled sadly; but as an intelligent physician, he always learned what he could from his patients, and let it pass, even if he knew they were telling him lies.

"You know," continued Mirabeau, "what question was debated yesterday?"

"Yes, something about mines."

"That's a question not yet well understood or weighed. The interests of the proprietors and the Government are

not sufficiently distinct. Besides, my intimate friend De la Marck is much interested in the question. Half his fortune depends upon it. His purse, dear Doctor, has always been mine, and I am bound to him in gratitude. I have spoken, — or, rather, I have assailed the outposts, — five times. At the last attack I put my enemies to rout, though I remained nearly on my back. On returning home, therefore, I wished to celebrate the victory, so I had a few friends to supper. We laughed and joked till three this morning, and then went to bed. At five o'clock I was taken with horrible pains inside, and cried like a fool. Teisch was frightened, like a poltroon, and sent after you. Well, you 're wiser than I. There 's my pulse, and there 's my tongue. I suffer like the damned. Pull me through, if you can. As for me, — well, I promise you I won't meddle with such matters any more."

Gilbert was too skilful a physician not to see, without consulting tongue or pulse, the gravity of Mirabeau's situation. The sick man was at the point of suffocation, hardly able to breathe. His face was swollen by the stagnation of blood in the lungs. He complained of cold feet and hands, and from time to time the violence of his pain drew from him a moan or a groan.

The Doctor wished, however, to confirm his opinion, already well defined, by an examination of the pulse. The pulse was convulsive and intermittent.

"Well, my dear Count, we shall not say Good-bye to you this heat, but I am barely in time;" and he drew his instrument-case from his pocket, with that calm rapidity which belongs to true genius.

"Ah, you 're going to bleed me?"

"At once."

"In the right arm, or left?"

"Neither. Your lungs are already engorged. I shall

bleed your foot, while Teisch must go to Argenteuil Village for mustard and cantharides, so that we can apply poultices. — Take my cab, Teisch."

"The Devil," said Mirabeau. "At that rate, I should say it *was* time."

Without answering, Gilbert proceeded at once to the operation, and very soon some thick, black blood, which seemed to hesitate for an instant, oozed from the sufferer's foot. The relief was instantaneous.

"Morbleu!" said Mirabeau, breathing more easily. "Certainly, Doctor, you 're a great man."

"And you 're a great fool, Count, to risk a life, so precious to France and your friends, for a few hours of false pleasure."

Mirabeau smiled sadly, almost ironically. "Bah! my dear Doctor. You exaggerate the feeling of France and my friends towards myself."

"On my honor," smilingly said Gilbert, "great men always complain of the ingratitude of other men, when, in reality, they themselves are the ingrates. Be seriously ill, and to-morrow you will have all Paris at your windows. Die to-morrow, and you will have all France for your pall-bearers."

"Do you know that 's very consoling?" laughingly responded Mirabeau.

"It is precisely because you can see the gratitude, without risking your life, that I say to you, seriously, — you need a great demonstration to reinvigorate you, morally and mentally. In two hours let me take you back to Paris. Then let me tell a commissioner, at the first street corner, and you 'll see."

"You believe that I 'm strong enough to be transported to Paris?"

"This very day, — yes! — How do you feel?"

"I breathe better, my head is clearer, and the mist before my eyes has disappeared; but I suffer internally all the time."

"Oh, that 's an affair for the plasters, my dear Count. The bleeding has done its work. Now the plasters must do theirs. — Hold on! Here 's Teisch."

Teisch brought with him the ingredients demanded. In another quarter-hour relief came, as predicted by the Doctor.

"Now I 'll give you an hour to rest, and then take you away."

"Doctor," said Mirabeau, smiling, "will you not permit me to stay here till evening, and to appoint a rendezvous with you, at my mansion in Rue Chaussée d'Antin, at eleven o'clock?"

Gilbert looked at Mirabeau. The sick man could see that the physician clearly divined the cause of this postponement.

"What else can I do," said Mirabeau, "when I have a visit to receive?"

"My dear Count, I saw the flowers on the table in your dining-room. It was not merely a friendly supper which you gave yesterday!"

"You know I can't get on without flowers. That 's my folly!"

"Yes, but the flowers were not alone."

"Oh, Lord! If flowers are a necessity with me, why, I must abide by the fatal consequences of that beautiful necessity."

"Count, Count, you are killing yourself!" said Gilbert.

"Acknowledge, Doctor, that this will at least be a charming suicide."

"Count, I sha'n't quit you all day long!"

"Doctor, I have given my word. Would you make me break it?"

"You will be in Paris to-night?"

"I tell you that I will expect you at eleven, in my little mansion on the Rue Chaussée d'Antin. — Have you seen it?"

"Not yet!"

"It's a purchase I made from Julie, Talma's wife. — Indeed, I begin to feel well, Doctor."

"That is to say, you want me to be off!"

"Oh, — as to that —"

"Well, you're doing very well. This is my quarter at the Tuileries, remember."

"Ah, so! You'll see the Queen," said Mirabeau, his face darkening.

"Probably! Have you any message for her?"

Mirabeau smiled bitterly. "I should not take such a liberty, Doctor. Don't even tell her you've seen me."

"Why so?"

"Because she'll ask you if I've saved the monarchy, as I promised; and you'll have to say *no.* Besides," added Mirabeau, with a nervous smile, "it's as much her fault as mine."

"You do not wish me to tell her how you have overworked, and how your struggle in the Assembly is killing you?"

Mirabeau reflected. "Yes, tell her that! Make me out more sick than I am, if you please."

"Why so?"

"Oh, nothing, — say for curiosity's sake, — so that you'll have something to tell me."

"All right!"

"You promise me, Doctor?"

"I promise you!"

"And you'll repeat to me what she says?"

"Her very words!"

"Well, good-by, Doctor. A thousand thanks!" and he extended his hand to Gilbert, whose searching look seemed to embarrass him.

"By the way," said the invalid, "won't you prescribe for me before you go?"

"Oh yes," said Gilbert, "I'll prescribe some hot drinks, — well diluted, — of chiccory or borage, a simple diet, and above all — "

"Well, above all — ?"

"No nurses, at least not one under fifty! You understand, Count?"

"Doctor," said Mirabeau, laughing, "rather than fail in following your prescription, I'll take two nurses, each twenty-five years old."

At the door Gilbert met Teisch. The poor fellow had tears in his eyes, as he said: "Oh, Monsieur, why do you go away?"

"I go away because I'm driven," said Gilbert, smiling.

"And all on account of that woman!" murmured the old man, "all on account of that woman, who looks like the Queen. A man who has so much genius, as they say! My God, how can he be such an ass!"

Thus concluding, he opened the door for Gilbert, who, with a preoccupied mind, entered his cab, saying to himself: "What did he mean, about a woman who looks like the Queen?"

He grasped Teisch's arm, as if to question him; but only said, in a low tone: "What am I doing? This is Mirabeau's secret, not mine. — To Paris, coachman!"

CHAPTER XXX.

WHAT THE KING SAID; WHAT THE QUEEN SAID.

GILBERT scrupulously fulfilled the double promise made to Mirabeau. On his return to Paris the Doctor met Camille Desmoulins, — the living newspaper, the incarnate gazette of the times. To him Gilbert announced the illness of Mirabeau, which he intentionally represented as graver than it was at the moment, but not more so than it would become, if Mirabeau indulged in any fresh imprudence.

Then Gilbert went to the Tuileries, and communicated the news to the King. The King only said: "Ah, poor Count! Has he lost his appetite?"

"Yes, Sire," responded Gilbert.

"Then it's a grave case!" said the King; and straightway he began to talk of other matters.

Leaving the King, Gilbert went to see the Queen, and repeated to her what he had told the King.

The daughter of Maria Theresa knitted her high forehead, and she said: "Why did n't this malady overtake him on the morning of the day when he made his fine speech on the tricolored flag?"

Then she added, as if repentant for letting such an expression of hatred for the sign of French nationality escape her in Gilbert's presence: "Never mind that! It would be a great misfortune for France, and for ourselves, if this indisposition should increase."

"I believe I have already had the honor of telling the Queen that it is more than an indisposition, — that it is a malady."

"Of which you will make yourself master?" said the Queen.

"I shall do my best, Madame, but I cannot answer for it."

"Doctor, I shall count on you, — you understand that? — to bring me the news about Monsieur de Mirabeau;" and then she also talked of other matters.

That evening, at the appointed hour, Gilbert ascended the stairs in Mirabeau's small city mansion.

Mirabeau was lying on an extension chair, and expecting him; but as he had been kept waiting several minutes in the parlor, under the pretext of notifying the Count of his presence, the Doctor glanced about him as he entered the bedroom, and his eyes were attracted by a cashmere scarf, carelessly left on an armchair.

To turn Gilbert's attention, or else because he attached great importance to the first words exchanged with the Doctor, Mirabeau said: "Ah, it 's you! I have found out that part of your promise is already fulfilled. All Paris knows that I 'm ill; and for two hours poor Teisch has n't rested ten minutes from telling the news to my friends, who have come to inquire if I am any better. So much for your first promise! Have you been as faithful with the second?"

"What do you mean?" smilingly asked Gilbert.

"You know well enough!"

Gilbert shrugged his shoulders, as a sign of negation.

"Have you been to the Tuileries?"

"Yes."

"Did you see the King?"

"Yes."

"Did you see the Queen?"

"Yes."

"And you told them they would n't be bothered with me much longer?"

"I told them how ill you were."

"And what did they say?"

"The King asked if you had lost your appetite."

"And when you answered affirmatively —?"

"He pitied you very sincerely."

"Oh that good King! On the day of his death he 'll say to his friends, as did Leonidas of old: 'I sup with Pluto to-night!' — But the Queen?"

"The Queen pitied you, and inquired about you with interest."

"In what terms, Doctor?" asked Mirabeau, who evidently attached a very great value to Doctor Gilbert's next response.

"Oh, in kind terms!"

"You gave me your word of honor that you would repeat to me exactly what she told you."

"Oh, I can't recall it, word for word."

"Doctor, you have n't forgotten a syllable!"

"I swear to you —"

"Doctor, I have your word! Do you wish me to regard you as faithless?"

"You are importunate, Count."

"I 'm precisely that!"

"You wish me absolutely to repeat the Queen's words?"

"Word for word."

"Well, she said this malady ought to have taken hold of you the morning before you appeared on the tribune, to defend the national tricolor."

Gilbert wished to see what influence the Queen had

over Mirabeau. The latter bounded from his chair, as if he had been brought into contact with a voltaic pile.

"Oh, the ingratitude of crowned heads!" he murmured. "That one speech, then, was sufficient to make them forget a civil list of twenty-five millions for the King, and her own dower of four millions. She does n't know, that woman, — that Queen can't see, — that by one such move I regained the popularity I had lost on her account. A fault! She forgets, moreover, that I proposed the adjournment of the reunion of Avignon with France, to satisfy the King's religious scruples. A fault! She forgets, during my presidency of the Jacobin Club, — a presidency of three months, which used up ten years of my life, — that I defended the law which confined membership in the National Guard to actual citizens. A fault! She forgets that in the Assembly's discussion over the law as to priestly oaths, I demanded that this law should not apply to oaths connected with the confessional. A fault!"

Gilbert listened with some surprise, as Mirabeau went on: "Oh, these faults, these faults! I've paid in full for them all. However, it was n't my faults which upset me; for there are some epochs, singular and abnormal, when men do not fall by the errors they commit. One day, — for *them* also, — I supported a question of justice, of humanity. There was an attack made upon the King's aunts, because they had emigrated, and a law against emigration was proposed, and I said: 'If you make a law against emigration, I swear I 'll never obey it;' and this project was rejected unanimously. Well, what my defeats never could effect, my victory has accomplished. They called me Dictator. They made me go upon the rostrum in anger, — the worst thing an orator can do. I triumphed a second time, but it was in attacking the

Jacobins. Then the Jacobins swore my death, — the fools! Duport, Lameth, Barnave, — none of them could see, that in killing me, they gave the dictatorship of their clique to Robespierre. Me, whom they should have guarded as the apple of their eye, they voted down by a stupid majority. They have made me sweat great drops of blood. They have made me drink the bitter cup to its dregs. They have crowned me with thorns, put a reed in my hands, — yes, crucified me! Happy is he who submits to this Passion, as the Christ did, for humanity's sake!"

With increasing admiration for the man before him, Gilbert listened.

"The tricolored flag! Can't they see it is their only refuge, — that if they can loyally and publicly seat themselves in its shadow, that shadow may yet save them? But the Queen does n't care to be saved. She wants to be avenged; and therefore she indulges in no reasonable ideas. The means which I propose as being the only efficacious ones, she most repulses, — namely, moderation, fairness, feasibility, which are always right. I wished to save two things at once, royalty and liberty. It was a thankless combat, in which I fought single-handed, while I was abandoned, — and against what? If against men, that would be nothing; if against tigers, that would be nothing; if against lions, it would be nothing; but to fight against an element, against the powers of nature, — against the sea, against the mounting waves, against the inflowing tide! Yesterday the water came up to my ankles. To-day it reaches my knees. To-morrow it will be up to my waist, and the next day it will be over my head."

Turning towards the Doctor he added: "Doctor, I must be frank with you. Chagrin first seized me, and

then disgust. I dreamed of being an arbitrator between the Revolution and the monarchy. I believed I could gain the ascendancy, as a man, over the Queen; and, as a man, if some fine day she should venture imprudently into the stream, and lose her footing, I thought I could throw myself into the water, and rescue her. But no! she did not seriously wish my help. She wished to compromise me, make me unpopular, ruin me, annihilate me, — render me powerless for either good or evil. — So, Doctor, what I had better do, as I 've already suggested, is to die in season, — to lie down artistically, like a classic athlete, gracefully yielding my throat to the knife, giving up the ghost in good form."

Then Mirabeau fell back upon his great chair exhausted, and bit his pillow with all his might.

Gilbert now knew what he wished, — namely, wherein lay the life or death of Mirabeau.

"Count," he asked, "what should you say, if to-morrow the King should send to inquire after you?"

The invalid made a movement of his shoulders, as much as to say, "That would be all one to me."

"The King, — or the Queen?"

"What?" said Mirabeau, half rising.

"I said, the King or Queen," repeated Gilbert.

Mirabeau raised himself on his two fists, like a crouching lion, saying, as he tried to read Gilbert's heart: "She won't do it!"

"But if she should?"

"You believe she would so far condescend?"

"I believe nothing; I only suppose, I presume."

"So be it," said Mirabeau. "I 'll wait till to-morrow night."

"What do you mean?"

"Take my words in their plain sense, Doctor, and

don't see in them anything else: I 'll wait till to-morrow night."

"And to-morrow night?"

"Well, by to-morrow night, if she sends to inquire, — if, for instance, Weber comes, then I 'm in the wrong; but if, on the contrary, he comes not, — oh! well, then, — why, you 're in the wrong, Doctor, and I 'm in the right."

"So be it, — to-morrow night. Till then, my dear Demosthenes, take plenty of rest, calmness, and tranquillity."

"I will not quit my long chair."

"And that scarf?" Gilbert pointed to the object which met his eyes on first entering the chamber.

Mirabeau smiled, and said: "Word of honor!"

"Good!" said Gilbert, as he left the room. "Try to pass a peaceable night, and I 'll answer for the rest."

Teisch was waiting at the door.

"Well, my brave Teisch," said the Doctor, "thy master is going to get better."

The old servant shook his head sorrowfully.

"How? Thou doubtest my word?"

"I doubt everything, Monsieur Doctor, so long as his evil genius is near him," said Teisch, heaving a sigh, and letting Gilbert pass down the narrow staircase.

In the corner of one of the landing-places Gilbert saw a veiled figure waiting, and asked: "Who is that woman?"

"It is *she*," responded Teisch.

"Who is *she?*"

"The woman who looks like the Queen."

For the second time Gilbert was struck with the same idea, in hearing the same phrase. He took two steps, as if to follow the phantom, but paused, saying to himself, "Impossible!" and continued on his way, leaving the

old servant wondering that such a learned man as the Doctor should not undertake to conjure away the demon, who, in Teisch's profound conviction, was an envoy straight from Hell.

Mirabeau passed a comfortable night. The next day, at an early hour, he summoned Teisch, and made him open the windows, in order to breathe the morning air. The only thing which troubled the old servant, was the feverish impatience to which the invalid was evidently a prey.

When, being interrogated by his master, Teisch had replied that it was hardly eight o'clock, Mirabeau would not believe it, and made Teisch bring his watch, so that he could see for himself. Then he laid the watch on the table beside his couch.

Presently he said to the old man: "Teisch, you will take your station below, in Jean's place, who will attend to me to-day."

"Oh, my God, have I been so unfortunate as to displease Monsieur?"

"On the contrary, my good Teisch," kindly said Mirabeau, "it is because I can confide only in thee, that to-day I want thee at the door. To every comer thou wilt say that I'm better, but yet not able to see people. Only, if anybody comes on the part of the —" Mirabeau paused, and then resumed: "Only if anybody comes from the palace, if they should send from the Tuileries, thou wilt have the messenger come up, — understand me! — no matter what the pretext, the messenger must not go away, without my talking with him. Thou seest, my good Teisch, that in sending thee farther away, I am raising thee to the post of my confidant."

Teisch kissed Mirabeau's hand, saying: "Oh Monsieur, if you would only *will* to live!" and then went out.

"Parbleu!" said Mirabeau, as he watched the servant withdraw, "that 's just the difficulty."

At ten o'clock Mirabeau rose, and dressed himself with unwonted care. Jean shaved him and dressed his hair, and then pushed his armchair up to the window, from which he could see into the street.

At each blow on the knocker, at each vibration of the bell, his anxious face might have been seen, by anybody in front of the house, peering from behind the lifted curtain, and looking searchingly along the street. Then the curtain would fall, to be raised again at the next ring of the bell or blow of the knocker, — and so on, over and over again.

At two Teisch came up, followed by a lackey. Mirabeau's heart beat violently. The lackey wore no livery. Mirabeau's first idea was that this fellow out of livery came from the Queen, but was so dressed, in order not to compromise the woman who sent him; but Mirabeau was mistaken.

"From Doctor Gilbert," said Teisch.

"Ah!" said Mirabeau, paling as if he were twenty-five, — when he waited for a message from Madame de Monnier, and saw instead a courier from his uncle, the bailiff.

"Monsieur," said Teisch, "as the boy comes from Doctor Gilbert, and is the bearer of a letter for you, I thought it right to make him an exception to your orders."

"And thou hast done well," said the Count. Then he said to the lackey, "The letter!"

Teisch took it in his hand, and presented it to the Count.

Opening it, Mirabeau found it contained only these few words:

Let me know how you are. I shall be with you by eleven to-night. I hope your first word will be that I was right, and that you were wrong. GILBERT.

"Tell your master that you found me up," said Mirabeau to the lackey, "and that I expect him to-night." Then he added, to Teisch: "See that this boy goes away satisfied!"

Teisch made a sign that he understood, and took the messenger away.

One hour followed another. The bell seldom ceased to vibrate or the hammer to sound. All Paris called on Mirabeau. In the street were groups of men, who, hearing news which did not quite correspond with the statements in the papers, were incredulous as to Teisch's reassuring bulletins, and compelled carriages to turn off to the right or left, through the side streets, so that the noise of the wheels might not disturb the illustrious invalid.

Towards five o'clock Teisch judged it proper once more to make his appearance in Mirabeau's chamber, in order to tell him this fact

"Ah, my poor Teisch," said Mirabeau, "the sight of thee made me believe there was something better for me to hear."

"What better news?" asked the surprised Teisch. "I did not suppose I could announce anything better than such a proof of love."

"Thou art right!" said Mirabeau, "and I spoke ungratefully."

As soon as Teisch had closed the door, Mirabeau opened his window, stepped out upon the balcony, and made a sign of thanks to the brave fellows who had constituted themselves the guardians of his repose.

They recognized him, and shouts of "Long live Mirabeau" could be heard from one end of Rue Chaussée d'Antin to the other.

Of what did Mirabeau think at this unexpected homage, which, under other circumstances, would have made his heart bound with joy? He thought of that haughty woman, who did not disquiet herself about him, and his eye searched beyond the groups pressing about the mansion, to see if he could not discern some lackey in blue livery, coming from the boulevards; but he re-entered his chamber with a wounded heart. The shadows began to fall, and he had seen nothing.

The evening passed along like the day. Mirabeau's impatience was changed to bitter despondency. His heart no longer beat with hope, when he heard the bell or the knocker.

At eleven the door opened, and Teisch announced Doctor Gilbert, who entered smiling, but was alarmed at the expression in Mirabeau's face. That face was a faithful mirror of the upheavals of the heart.

Gilbert's mind misgave him. "Has no one come?" he asked.

"From where?" said Mirabeau.

"You know very well what I mean."

"Me? No, on my honor!"

"From the palace, — from *her*, — in the Queen's name?"

"Nobody in the world, my dear Doctor. Nobody has come!"

"Impossible!" said Gilbert.

Mirabeau shrugged his shoulders. "Oh you innocent man!" he said. Then he asked, seizing Gilbert's hand with a convulsive movement: "Do you wish me to tell you what you have been doing to-day, Doctor?"

"I? I've done pretty much what I do every day."

"No, for every day you do not go to the palace, and to-day you have been there. Every day you do not see the Queen, but to-day you have seen her. Every day you do not allow yourself to advise her, but to-day you have done so."

"Well, go on!" said Gilbert.

"Oh Doctor, I can see what took place, — and hear, as well as if I had been there."

"Well, Monsieur Second Sight, what did happen, and what was said?"

"You presented yourself at the Tuileries to-day, at one o'clock. You asked to speak with the Queen, and you did speak with her. You told her that my condition grew rather worse, and suggested to her that it would be kind in her as Queen, kind in her as a woman, to send and inquire for me, if not because she was solicitous about my welfare, at least for policy's sake. She discussed the matter with you, appeared convinced by your reasoning, and dismissed you, saying that she would send and inquire. Happy and satisfied you came away, depending on the royal word; while she remained haughty and bitter, smiling at your credulity, which forgets that a royal word pledges nothing. — On the faith of an honorable man, Doctor," and Mirabeau looked Gilbert full in the face, "is n't this about so?"

"Truly, if you had been there, my dear Count, you could scarcely have seen and heard better."

"Blunderers!" said Mirabeau, bitterly. "As I've told you, they never know enough to do the proper thing. The royal livery, entering my mansion to-day, in the midst of that crowd before my door and under my windows, shouting long life to me, would have redounded to the royal interest, with a whole year of popularity."

Shaking his head, Mirabeau put his hand quickly to his eyes, and Gilbert was surprised to see him wipe away a tear.

"What 's the matter, Count?"

"With me? Nothing. Is there any news from the National Assembly, from the Cordelier or the Jacobin clubs? Has Robespierre drizzled out a new speech, or has Marat vomited a new pamphlet?"

"How long is it since you ate anything?" asked Gilbert.

"Not since two o'clock in the afternoon."

"In that case you had better take a bath, my dear Count."

"That 's an excellent idea of yours, Doctor. — Jean, a bath!"

"Here, Monsieur?"

"No, no, — one side, in my toilet-room."

Ten minutes later Mirabeau was having his bath, and, as usual, Teisch was showing Gilbert out.

Mirabeau raised himself in his tub, in order to follow Gilbert with his eyes. When he was out of sight Mirabeau bent his ear, to hear the sound of his steps. He remained quiet till he heard the house door open and shut, and then rang violently.

"Jean, set the table in my room, and ask Olivia if she will do me the favor to sup with me." As the lackey was going out to obey, Mirabeau cried: "Some flowers, — above all, some flowers. I adore flowers."

At four in the morning Doctor Gilbert was awakened by a violent pull at the bell. "Ah," he said, jumping out of bed, "I 'm sure Mirabeau 's worse!"

He was not mistaken. After Mirabeau's supper had been served, and his table covered with flowers, he ordered Teisch to go to bed, and also sent Jean away.

Then he had all the doors fastened, except one leading into the room of that unknown woman, whom Teisch called Mirabeau's evil genius.

Neither of the two servants went to bed, although the younger, Jean, fell asleep in his armchair in the antechamber. Teisch was on the alert.

At quarter of four a loud blow was heard on the small table bell. Both servants hurried to the chamber, but the doors were locked.

Then they bethought themselves to go to the unknown woman's apartment, and reach their master's chamber through her bedroom.

Lying backward, and half fainting, Mirabeau was holding this woman in his arms, to prevent her from summoning help; while she, in fright, was ringing the little bell on the table, not being able to reach the bellrope hanging by the chimney. Seeing the servants, she begged them to help both herself and Mirabeau, who was suffocating her in his convulsive writhing, and looked like Death in disguise, dragging her to the tomb.

Thanks to the united efforts of the servants, the arms of the deathstruck man were unclasped. She retreated, weeping, to her own room, while Mirabeau fell back on his extension chair.

Jean ran to find Doctor Gilbert, while Teisch gave all his attention to the master.

Gilbert took neither the time to have his horse harnessed, nor to call a cab. As Rue Saint Honoré is not far from the Rue Chaussée d'Antin, he followed Jean, and in ten minutes they were at Mirabeau's house.

Teisch was waiting below, in the vestibule.

"What is it this time, my friend?" asked Gilbert.

"Ah Monsieur," said the old servant, "that woman,—

always that woman, — and those cursed flowers. Go and see, Monsieur, go and see!"

At that instant something like a sob was heard. Gilbert sprang upstairs. On the last steps a door next to Mirabeau's opened, and a woman, clad in a white chamber-gown, suddenly appeared, falling at the Doctor's feet.

"Oh Gilbert, Gilbert," she said, clasping her hands across her breast, "in the name of Heaven, save him!"

"Nicole!" cried Gilbert, "Nicole! You wretch, it 's you, is it?"

"Save him! Save him!" cried Nicole.

Gilbert paused an instant, engrossed with a terrible idea.

"Oh!" he murmured. "Beausire distributing pamphlets against him, and Nicole his mistress! He is indeed lost, for beneath all this is Cagliostro!" and he rushed into Mirabeau's apartment, knowing there was not an instant to lose.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LONG LIVE MIRABEAU!

MIRABEAU was on his bed. He had regained consciousness. The fragments of his supper, the dishes, the flowers were there, accusing witnesses, like the dregs of poison, found in the bottom of a goblet, beside a suicide's deathbed.

Gilbert advanced quickly towards him, and breathed more freely as he said: "Ah, it 's not so bad as I feared!"

Mirabeau smiled. "You think so, Doctor?" he said, shaking his head, like a man who thinks he knows his own condition quite as well as his physician knows it, who often tries to deceive himself, in order the better to deceive others.

This time Gilbert did not content himself with an external diagnosis. He tested the pulse; the pulse was lively and high. He inspected the tongue; the tongue was coated and bilious. He inquired into the condition of the head; the head was heavy and aching. A chill pervaded the lower extremities.

All at once the spasms, experienced by the sick man two days previous, reappeared, reaching in turn the shoulder-blade, the collar-bone, and the diaphragm. The pulse, which, as we said, had been lively and high, now became intermittent and spasmodic.

Gilbert ordered the same remedies which had produced the previous convalescence.

Unfortunately, at the end of fifteen minutes, — either because he had not strength to bear such powerful remedies, or because he did not wish to be cured, — the invalid complained of so much suffering in the poulticed regions, that it became necessary to remove the mustard plasters. The improvement, which had been evident while the poultices were at work, immediately ceased.

It is not our intention to follow the phases of this terrible illness in all their details; only, a rumor that morning ran throughout the city, that the sick man was in a more serious condition than on the evening before. There had been a relapse, it was said; and a relapse meant death.

Then it was really possible to judge what a gigantic place one man could occupy in the heart of a nation. All Paris was moved, as in times when a general calamity menaces both the whole community and individuals. All day long, as had been the case the evening before, the street was barred and guarded by men of the people, in order that the noise of passing vehicles might not disturb the sick man. Hour after hour the groups, assembled beneath the windows, asked for news. Bulletins were sent out, which in an instant circulated from Rue Chaussée d'Antin to the ends of Paris. The door was besieged by a crowd of citizens of all conditions and opinions, as if each party, however opposed to the others, would lose something in losing Mirabeau. During this time the friends, relatives, and particular acquaintances of the great orator filled the courtyard, vestibule, and lower rooms, without having the least idea that they were in the way.

Meanwhile very few words were exchanged between Mirabeau and Doctor Gilbert.

"Decidedly, you mean to die," said the Doctor.

"What 's the good of living?" answered Mirabeau.

Recalling the engagements Mirabeau had entered into with the Queen, and her ingratitude, Gilbert insisted no longer, promising himself to do his duty as a physician to the very end, but knowing that he was no deity, to struggle against the inevitable.

On the evening of the first day after the relapse, the Jacobins sent for information as to the health of their ex-president, and Barnave headed the deputation. It had been proposed to send the two Lameths with Barnave, but they declined the appointment.

When Mirabeau was informed of this circumstance, he said: "Oh well, I knew they were cowards, but I did n't suppose they were idiots."

For twenty-four hours Doctor Gilbert did not quit Mirabeau an instant. On Wednesday evening, towards eleven o'clock, the invalid was so comfortable that Gilbert consented to go into the next chamber, and take a few hours of rest. Before doing so he ordered that he should be called at the slightest appearance of any bad symptoms.

At daybreak he awoke. Nobody had roused him from sleep, yet he arose anxiously. It seemed to him impossible that there should have been so sustained an improvement without one drawback.

In fact, when the Doctor came down, Teisch told him, with eyes and voice full of tears, that Mirabeau was very ill, but had forbidden them, whatever his sufferings might be, to rouse his physician.

Sure enough, the sick man had suffered cruelly. His pulse was in an alarming condition. The pains had become ferocious. Both his suffocation and convulsions had returned.

Several times, — and this Teisch had attributed to the beginning of delirium, — the sick man had pronounced the Queen's name. "Ingrates!" he had said. "They

have n't once sent to inquire after me!" Then, as if talking to himself, he had added: "I wonder what *she'll* say, when she learns that I 'm dead, — to-morrow or next day."

Gilbert thought everything depended upon the impending crisis. He proposed to fight the malady vigorously, and ordered an application of leeches to the breast; but as if they had been accomplices of the dying man, the leeches took hold badly, and the Doctor had to resort to musk pills and a second bleeding in the foot.

This attack lasted eight hours. During this eight hours Gilbert fought with death, — like an expert duellist, so to speak, parrying each thrust, repaying each attack with others, but sometimes getting touched himself. At the expiration of eight hours the fever abated, and death beat a retreat; but the enemy left the imprint of his claw on the invalid's visage, like a tiger who flees, only to return.

Gilbert stood beside the bed, with his arms crossed, while this terrible struggle took place. He was too far advanced in the secrets of his art to cherish any hope, or even to entertain a doubt as to the result. Mirabeau was doomed. In the body lying before Gilbert's eyes, despite a remnant of life, it was impossible to see the living Mirabeau.

From that moment, by a strange coincidence, yet with one accord, as if struck by the same idea, Gilbert and Mirabeau began to talk about the latter as one who *had* been, but had ceased to be.

From that moment also Mirabeau's physiognomy took on a solemn character, which belongs peculiarly to the agony of great men. His voice became slow, grave, almost prophetic. There was something purer, profounder, broader in his words; while in his sentiments

there was something more affecting, more unselfish, more sublime.

It was announced to him that a young man, who had never seen him but once, and would not explain who he was, insisted upon coming in. Mirabeau turned towards Gilbert, as if to ask permission to receive this young man.

Gilbert understood. "Let him come in!" he said to Teisch.

Teisch opened the door. A young man of nineteen or twenty appeared on the threshold, entered slowly, kneeled before Mirabeau's bed, took his hand, and kissed it with sobs.

Mirabeau seemed to search his memory for some vague remembrance of the young man. "Ah," he said suddenly, "I recognize you! You are the young man from Argenteuil."

"God be praised!" said the youth; "that is all I could ask;" and, rising, he withdrew, with both hands pressed over his eyes.

Several seconds later Teisch came in with a note, which the youth had written in the antechamber. It contained these simple words:

When I kissed the hand of M. de Mirabeau at Argenteuil, I told him that I was ready to die for him.

I wish to keep my word.

Yesterday I read, in an English paper, that the transfusion of blood proved successful in London, in a case similar to that of our illustrious invalid.

If a transfusion of blood should be thought useful, in order to save M. de Mirabeau, I offer mine, which is young and pure. MARNAIS.

In reading these lines, Mirabeau could not keep back his tears. He ordered them to bring back the youth;

but, as if wishing to escape the gratitude he so well merited, Marnais had gone away, leaving his double address, both in Paris and at Argenteuil.

A few minutes later, Mirabeau consented to receive everybody: his friends, Monsieur de la Marck and Monsieur Frochot; his sister, Madame du Saillant; his niece, Madame d'Aragon.

He however refused to see any physician except Gilbert, and said, when the latter insisted: "No, Doctor. You have had all the annoyances of my malady. If you heal me, you shall have all the credit of the cure."

From time to time he wished to know who had inquired for news of his condition; and though he did not ask outright, "Has the Queen sent anybody from the palace?" Gilbert divined, by the dying man's sigh, — when the end of the list was reached, — that the one name he wished to find therein was the very one he could not find.

Then, without speaking about the King or Queen, — Mirabeau was not yet near enough to death to do that, — he began to discourse with wonderful eloquence about general politics, and to talk particularly of the course he should pursue towards England, if he were prime minister. It was especially with Pitt he would like to contend, man to man.

"Oh, that Pitt!" he cried. "He 's a great man for *preparations*. He governs rather by what he threatens, than by what he performs. If I had lived, I should have taken him down with mortification!"

Sometimes a clamor rose to the windows, — a sorrowful cry of "Long life to Mirabeau," sent up by the populace, a cry which resembled a prayer, — wailing, rather than hopeful.

Then Mirabeau listened, and had the window opened,

that this compensating sound might reach him, and partly repay him for his sufferings. For several seconds he remained with hands and ears bent forward, drinking in and absorbing each sound. Then he murmured: "Oh, the good people, — calumniated, injured, misunderstood, like myself, — it would be more just if it were *they* who forgot me, and *she* who rewarded me."

Night came. Gilbert would not quit his patient, but had the extension chair pushed near the bed, and lay down at its foot.

Mirabeau did not object to this. Now that he was sure of death, he no longer seemed afraid of his physician.

As soon as daylight appeared he bade them open the windows.

"My dear Doctor," said the sick man to Gilbert, "to-day I shall die. When one has reached my condition, he has only to perfume himself, and be crowned with flowers, in order to fall, agreeably as possible, into that sleep which knows no waking. Have I your permission to do as I wish?"

Gilbert made a sign to indicate that Mirabeau was entirely his own master. Then the Count called his servants:

"Jean," said he, "get me the finest flowers you can find, while Teisch will take pains to make me look as handsome as possible."

Before going out Jean seemed to wait for permission from Gilbert, who nodded his head in the affirmative.

As to Teisch, who had himself been ill the night before, he began to shave his master and dress his hair.

"By the way, thou wast ill thyself yesterday, my poor Teisch," said Mirabeau. "How is it to-day?"

"Oh, very well, my dear master," said the honest old servant, "and I wish *you* were in my place!"

Mirabeau laughed. "As for me," he said, "as worthless as thy life seems to *thee*, I do not wish thee to be in *my* place."

At this moment a cannon-shot was heard. Whence came it? Nobody knew.

Mirabeau started. "Oh!" said he, sitting up, "have they already begun the obsequies of Achilles?"

Hardly had Jean told the crowd around the mansion, — when they rushed up to him for news about the illustrious invalid, — that he was in search of flowers, than men ran up the street crying out, "Flowers for Mirabeau." All doors opened, and all offered what they could, whether from their apartments or their conservatories, so that in less than fifteen minutes the house was filled with flowers most rare.

By nine o'clock Mirabeau's chamber was transformed into a veritable garden. At that moment Teisch finished his master's toilet.

"My dear Doctor," said Mirabeau, "I ask for a single quarter-hour, in order to make my adieux to some one who must quit the house before me. If anybody wishes to insult that person, I commend her to your protection."

Gilbert understood. "Well, I will leave you alone," he said.

"Yes; but you will wait in the side room? When this person has gone away, you will not leave me again till I am dead?"

Gilbert nodded assent.

"Give me your word," said Mirabeau.

Gilbert stammered as he did so. This stoic was surprised to find himself in tears, for he believed that he had become immovable, through the force of his materialistic science and philosophy.

He went towards the door. Mirabeau stopped him.

"Before going," he said, "open my secretary, and bring me a small casket you will find there."

Gilbert did as Mirabeau desired. The casket was heavy. Gilbert surmised that it was full of gold. Mirabeau made a sign for him to put it on the table, and then extended his hand.

"You will have the goodness to send Jean to me," he said. — "Jean, you understand, not Teisch. It tires me to call or ring."

Gilbert withdrew. Jean was waiting in the next chamber; and as Gilbert came out, the servant went in. Behind Jean, Gilbert heard the door fastened with a bolt.

The next half-hour Gilbert employed in giving the news from the sick-room to the people thronging the lower part of the house. This news was disheartening, for he did not conceal from them the fact that Mirabeau would not probably live through the day.

A carriage stopped in front of the outer door. For an instant Gilbert had an idea it was a carriage from the Court, which, out of respect, had been allowed to drive up to the porch, despite the general prohibition.

He ran to the window. It would be such a consolation for the dying man to know that the Queen remembered him.

It was a simple hired carriage, however, for which Jean had been sent. The Doctor guessed what it meant. Indeed, five minutes afterward, Jean ushered out a lady, wrapped in a large mantle. This woman entered the cab. Before this cab, without asking who the woman was, the crowd respectfully divided.

Jean returned to the house. An instant later the door of Mirabeau's chamber re-opened, and the feeble voice of the invalid was heard asking for the Doctor. Gilbert ran to his side.

"Hold!" said Mirabeau. "Put this casket back in its place, my dear Doctor." Then he added, as Gilbert appeared astonished at finding the casket as heavy as it had been before: "Yes, is n't it odd? Where the Devil has all this disinterestedness been hiding itself so long?"

In returning to the bed Gilbert found on the floor an embroidered handkerchief, trimmed with lace. It was wet with tears.

"Ah!" he said to Mirabeau, "she took nothing away, but she has left something behind."

Mirabeau took the handkerchief, and, noticing its dampness, pressed it to his brow.

"Oh," murmured he, "it is only *she* who has no heart!"

He fell back on his bed, with his eyes closed; so that one might have supposed him dead or in a swoon, but for the rattle in his chest, which indicated that he was only on the road to death.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FLEE ! FLEE ! FLEE !

THEREAFTER the few hours remaining to Mirabeau were one prolonged agony. None the less Gilbert kept his promise, and remained at his bedside till the last sigh.

However painful, there is always much instruction, for the physician and philosopher, in the spectacle of that last struggle between matter and spirit. The greater the genius, the more interesting is it to study the combat of that genius with death, though it must end in death's victory.

Moreover, in the sight of this great man dying, the Doctor found another cause for sombre reflections. Why should Mirabeau die, this man of athletic temperament and Herculean constitution?

Was it not because he had put forth his hand to sustain a crumbling monarchy? Was it not because he had for an instant pressed the hand of that unfortunate woman, Marie Antoinette?

Had not Cagliostro predicted such a death as lying in wait for Mirabeau? Those two singular beings whom Gilbert had encountered, — one killing the reputation, and the other the health of the great orator of France, after he became the main support of the monarchy, — were they not new proofs that every obstacle was to be crushed, even the Bastille itself, if it came in Cagliostro's way, — or rather, in the way of the ideas he represented?

While Gilbert was plunged in such speculations, Mirabeau made a movement and opened his eyes. He was returning to life, through the gateway of pain.

He tried to speak, but the effort was futile. Far from appearing greatly affected by this new incident, as soon as he was sure that his tongue was mute, he smiled, and tried to express through the eyes his sentiment of obligation towards Gilbert, and towards all others whose care kept him company in that supreme and last stage of the journey whose end was death.

Then a solitary idea seemed to fill his mind. Gilbert alone could guess what it was, and did so.

The sick man could not understand how long the state of unconsciousness had lasted, out of which he had now emerged. Had it lasted an hour? Had it lasted a day? During that hour, or day, had the Queen sent for news of his condition?

The registry was brought up from the door, in which every caller had inscribed his name, whether sent as a messenger, or coming on his own account.

No name, known as being in the circle of royal intimacy, denoted even a disguised solicitude in that quarter. Jean and Teisch were summoned and questioned; but neither valet nor usher had come from the royal household, or even from the Tuileries.

It was evident that Mirabeau was making a supreme effort to speak a few words, — an effort like that ascribed to Crœsus's son, who, seeing his father menaced with death, was able to break the bonds which chained his tongue, and cry out: "Soldier, slay not Crœsus!"

Mirabeau succeeded. "Oh!" he cried, "do they not know that when I am dead *they* will be lost? I bear with me the monarchy's mourning, and on my tomb the factions will share its tatters."

Gilbert darted to the invalid's bedside. Like a skilful physician he cherished hope so long as there was life. Besides, he would use all the resources of his art, if only to persuade those eloquent lips to speak a few more words.

He took a spoon, and poured into it a few drops of that greenish liquid, a vial of which he had once given Mirabeau, — only this time he did not dilute it with brandy, — and placed it at the mouth of the sick man, who said, smiling: "Oh, dear Doctor, if you want that life-giving liquor to have any effect on me, give me a spoonful, if not all there is in the vial."

"How so?" asked Gilbert, looking inquiringly at Mirabeau.

"Did you believe that I, the pre-eminent abuser of every good gift, could have such a treasure in my hands without abusing it? Not I! I had that liquid analyzed, my dear Æsculapius. I learned that it contained the root of Indian hemp; and then I took it, not only by drops, but by the spoonful, — not for the sake of life, but for the sake of the visions it brought me."

"Unhappy man!" whispered Gilbert. "I little thought I was furnishing you poison."

"Sweet poison, Doctor, thanks to which I have doubled, quadrupled, the last hours of my life, — yes, multiplied them by the hundred. Thanks to that liquid, though I die at forty-two, I have lived a century, and have possessed in imagination, what evaded me in reality, — strength, riches, love. Oh Doctor, Doctor, don't repent this gift, but congratulate yourself over it. God only gave me actual existence, — a life sorrowful, poor, botched, wretched, worthless, — a loan, which man is expected to render up with usury. Doctor, I do not know that I owe God thanks for such a life; but I owe you thanks

for your poison. Fill up the spoon, Doctor, and give it me once more."

Gilbert did as Mirabeau demanded, and gave him the medicine, which he relished as something delicious.

After a few silent seconds he said, as if, at the approach of eternity, the dying man was permitted to lift the veil of futurity: "Ah Doctor, happy those who die in this year 1791. They have seen the Revolution, with its face serene and resplendent. Up to this day, no revolution so great has cost so little blood; because heretofore it has been a revolution of minds only; but the time is coming when it will take hold of facts and things. Perhaps you fancy they will regret me, down there at the Tuileries. No! My death will relieve them of an embarrassing bargain. With me, they would have been obliged to govern in a certain way, and I was therefore no longer a support, but an obstacle. *She* apologized to her brother on my account. She wrote that Mirabeau believed he was advising her, and did not see that she was amusing herself at his expense! Oh, that 's why I wished that woman was my mistress, and not merely my Queen. What a splendid part to sustain in history, Doctor, — that of a man who sustained with one hand the aged monarchy, and youthful liberty with the other, and forced them to march with equal step towards the same end, the welfare of the people, and respect for royalty."

He paused, and then went on: "Perhaps this was a possibility, perhaps it was a vision; but I had a conviction that I alone could realize this vision. What pains me, Doctor, is not that I die, but that I die so incomplete, having undertaken a work, but knowing I cannot carry out that work. Who will glorify my mission, if that mission is abortive, beheaded, maimed? What will be

known about me, Doctor, is exactly what were better not known, — that is, my unregulated, foolish, vagabond life. What will be read of my writings, except my 'Letters to Sophia,' my 'Erotica Biblion,' my 'Prussian Monarchy,' and other obscene books and pamphlets? I shall be reproached with having bargained with the Crown, — reproached because nothing came out of this compact, as it should. My work will be but an unformed fœtus, a monster without a head. Dying at forty-two, I shall be judged as if I had lived a whole human lifetime, as if I had not disappeared in the midst of a tempest, as if I had been marching over a good solid road, paved with laws, ordinances, and regulations, instead of stumbling ceaselessly in chaos, and over an abyss. Doctor, to whom can I bequeath, not my dilapidated fortune, — that matters little, since I have no children, — but to whom can I bequeath my calumniated memory, a memory which should one day be a heritage honorable to France, Europe, the world?"

"Why then are you in such haste to die?" sorrowfully responded Gilbert.

"Oh, there are moments when I ask that question of myself, — as you ask it. Listen to this! I can do nothing without *her*, and she will have none of me. I pledged myself like a fool. I swore fidelity like an idiot, always submissive to those invisible wings in my brain which bore away my heart; while *she* swore to nothing, promised nothing. So, Doctor, all is for the best; and if you'll promise me one thing, not a single regret will trouble me during the few hours I have to live."

"In Heaven's name, what can I promise you, my own dear friend?"

"Well, promise me, if my exit from life is too hard, too painful, — promise me, not only as a physician, but also

as a man, and yet more as a philosopher, — promise to help me on the way."

"Why do you ask me such a thing?"

"Ah, I 'll tell you. Though I feel that death is here, I also feel that life remains strong within me. I pass away, not as one dying, but I die alive, dear Doctor, and the last step will be hard to take."

The Doctor bent his face near the invalid's. "I have promised not to leave you, my friend. If God, — and I still hope this is not so, — if God has condemned you to death, — well, in that awful moment, leave it to my tender care to accomplish all I have to do. If death is here, I shall be here also."

It was evident the invalid only waited for this promise. "I thank you!" he murmured, and then his head fell back on the pillow.

This time, despite that hopefulness which it is the duty of a physician to instil into the mind of a sick man, even to the last drop, Gilbert could no longer doubt the end. For a few minutes the strong dose of hasheesh, which Mirabeau had taken, — like the shocks of an electric battery, — had restored to the sick man, together with his speech, that play of the muscles, — that vitality of thought, so to speak, — which accompanies speech; but when he ceased to talk, the muscles drooped, that brain-life vanished, and the death-marks, imprinted on his face ever since the last crisis, now appeared more deeply graven than ever.

For three hours his icy hand rested in Gilbert's. During these three hours, — from four o'clock till seven, — his agony was quieted. He was so calm, that all the world might have been allowed to visit him. You might have believed him asleep.

Towards eight, however, Gilbert felt the cold hand

tremble in his own. This motion was so violent that it could not be mistaken. " Now comes the hour of struggle, now begins the last agony," said Gilbert to himself.

The forehead of the dying man was covered with perspiration. His eyes re-opened, and shone brightly. He made a motion, which indicated his wish to drink. They hastened to offer him water, wine, orangeade ; but he shook his head. These were not what he wished.

Then he motioned for them to bring him a quill, ink, and paper. They obeyed him, in order that no thought of his might be lost, whether it was the sentiment of a great genius, or only the words of delirium.

He took the quill, and traced these words with a firm hand : *To die, to sleep,* — the words of Hamlet, in his great soliloquy upon life and death.

Gilbert seemed not to understand. Mirabeau dropped the quill, grasped his chest with both hands, as if he would tear it open, uttered a few inarticulate syllables, took up the quill again, and wrote, with a superhuman effort, as if commanding the pain to stand still an instant : " These pains have become grinding, insupportable. Must a man be left on the rack for hours, perhaps for days, when a few drops of opium will spare him this torture ? "

The Doctor hesitated. Yes, as he had said to Mirabeau, — in this agonizing moment, he was there, face to face with death ; but he was there to fight against death, not to be its second in the duel.

The distress became more and more violent. The sick man straightened himself out, distorted his hands, gnawed his pillow.

At last he broke the paralytic bonds, and suddenly exclaimed : " Oh, these doctors, these doctors ! Gilbert, are you not my physician and my friend ? Have n't you

promised to spare me the agony of such a death? Will you make me regret having trusted you? Gilbert, I appeal to your friendship, I appeal to your honor!" and with a sigh, a groan, a scream of pain, he fell back on his pillow.

Gilbert sighed in his turn, and offered his hand to Mirabeau. "You are right, my friend. You shall have what you wish."

He took the quill to write a prescription, which was for a strong dose of the syrup of diacodium, in a glass of distilled water; but hardly had he written the last word, when Mirabeau raised himself on his bed, and put out his hand for the quill, which Gilbert hastened to give him.

Then with a cramped hand, already clinched in death, he inscribed on the paper these words, in writing scarcely legible, "Flee! Flee! Flee!"

He tried to sign it, but could hardly trace the first four letters of his name, and extended his convulsive arm towards Gilbert. "For *her!*" he whispered; and again fell on his pillow, — motionless, breathless, sightless.

He was dead!

Gilbert approached the bed, looked into the face, felt the pulse, placed his hand over the heart. Then, turning to the spectators of this trying scene, he said: "Gentlemen, Mirabeau no longer suffers."

Pressing a last kiss on the forehead of the dead man, he took the paper, whose destination he alone knew, folded it religiously, placed it in his breast-pocket, and went out, thinking that he had no right to detain the message an instant longer than the time required for conveying the advice of the illustrious dead from the Chaussée d'Antin to the Tuileries.

A few seconds after the Doctor left the death-chamber,

there arose a great clamor in the street. The rumor of Mirabeau's death had begun to spread.

Soon came a sculptor, sent by Gilbert, in order that an image of the great orator, at the very moment when he was vanquished by death, might be preserved for posterity.

A few minutes of eternity had already given back to the fleshly mask that serenity reflected on Mirabeau's features by a powerful soul, in quitting the body it had animated.

Mirabeau was not dead. He seemed asleep, and his slumber was full of life and smiling dreams.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE OBSEQUIES.

GRIEF was wide-spread, universal. In an instant it spread from centre to circumference, from Rue Chaussée d'Antin to the barriers of Paris.

The populace raised a tremendous clamor. Then they took it upon themselves to see that the city showed proper respect for the dead. They ran to the theatres, tore down the placards, and closed the doors. A ball was in progress that evening, in a mansion in Rue Chaussée d'Antin. The populace invaded the house, dispersed the dancers, and broke the musicians' instruments.

The bereavement was announced to the National Assembly by its President. Barrère immediately ascended the rostrum. He moved that, with the official proceedings of that sorrowful day, should be recorded testimonials of the Assembly's regret at the loss of such a great man; and insisted, in the name of the Nation, that an invitation be given to all the members of the Assembly to attend the funeral.

On the next day, April 3, the Department of Paris presented itself to the National Assembly, and demanded and obtained a vote that the Church of Saint Genevieve be constituted a Pantheon, consecrated to the sepulture of distinguished men, and that Mirabeau should be buried there first of all.

Here let us put on record the magnificent decree of the Assembly. Even in such books as this, — which

politicians esteem frivolous, because stories teach history in a form not quite so heavy as that employed by the historians,—it is well, we say, to meet such grand decrees as often as possible, no matter where we find them, provided they come within reach of the public eye,—decrees drawn out by the admiration or respect of a nation.

Here is the decree, as originally voted:

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DECREES:

Article First.

The new edifice of Saint Genevieve shall be set apart for the reception of the ashes of illustrious men, dating from the epoch of French liberty.

Article Second.

The Legislative Body alone shall decide upon whom this honor shall be bestowed.

Article Third.

Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau is judged worthy of this honor.

Article Fourth.

No Legislature shall hereafter award this honor to its own deceased members; but such propositions must be referred to the Legislature following.

Article Fifth.

Exceptions in favor of those great men who died before the Revolution can only be made by the Legislative Body.

Article Sixth.

The administration of the Department of Paris shall be charged with promptly putting the edifice of Saint Genevieve

into proper condition to fulfil its new destination, and on its front shall be graven these words:

TO HER GREAT MEN, BY A GRATEFUL NATION.

Article Seventh.

While the new Church of Saint Genevieve is being prepared for the purpose, the body of Riquetti Mirabeau shall be laid beside the remains of Descartes, in the basement of the Church of Saint Genevieve.

The Pantheon was subsequently made the object of several decrees, which are here cited side by side, — or rather one after the other, — but without comment.

A decree was passed February 20, 1806. In the First Section it is provided that the Church of Saint Denis shall be the burial-place of the emperors. In the Second Section are the following articles:

Article Seventh.

The Church of Saint Genevieve shall be completed and used for public worship, conformably to the intentions of its founder, under the invocation of Saint Genevieve, the Patron Saint of Paris.

Article Eighth.

It shall also continue to serve the purpose to which it was dedicated by the Assembly of 1791, and shall be consecrated to the burial of great dignitaries, distinguished officers of the Empire and the Crown, of Senators, of the chief officers of the Legion of Honor, and — by virtue of our special decrees — of other citizens, who by a career of arms, statesmanship, or literature, render eminent service to their country; their bodies to be embalmed and buried in the church.

Article Ninth.

The slabs now kept in the Museum of French Monuments shall be transported to this church, and there be arranged in the order of their respective centuries.

Article Tenth.

The Metropolitan Chapter of the Church of Notre Dame, increased by six members, shall have charge of the services at the Church of Saint Genevieve. The guardianship of that church shall be specially confided to an archpriest (or dean), chosen by the canons.

Article Eleventh.

There shall be solemn official services on January 3, the Feast of Saint Genevieve ; on August 15, the Feast of Saint Napoleon, and the Anniversary of the conclusion of the Concordat (legally restoring public worship to France); on All Souls Day ; on the First Sunday in December, the anniversary of the Emperor's Coronation and of the Battle of Austerlitz ; and whenever there shall be burials, in pursuance of the present decree. No other public religious services shall be held in this church, except with our approbation.

Signed : NAPOLEON.

Countersigned : CHAMPAGNY.

On December 12, 1821, another order was issued :

LOUIS (THE EIGHTEENTH) BY THE GRACE OF GOD, KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE, TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN — GREETING :

The church which our grandfather, Louis the Fifteenth, began to build, under the invocation of Saint Genevieve, is happily finished. Though it has not yet received all the ornaments which will complete its splendor, it is nevertheless in a condition to permit the celebration of divine service. In order, therefore, not to longer retard the accomplishment of the founder's intentions, and to re-establish, conformably to

his views and our own, the worship of the Patron Saint, whose aid our good City of Paris has been accustomed to implore in all times of need ; and in accordance with the report of our Minister of Internal Affairs, we have ordained and do ordain as follows :

Article First.

The new church, founded by King Louis Fifteenth, in honor of Saint Genevieve, the Patron Saint of Paris, shall be forever consecrated to divine worship, under the invocation of that saint. To this end the church is placed at the disposition of the Archbishop of Paris, who will have it provisionally served by ecclesiastics whom he may appoint.

Article Second.

There shall be subsequent provisions in regard to regular and perpetual services in this church, and the nature of those services.

Signed: LOUIS.

Countersigned: SIMÉON.

On August 20, 1830, another ordinance was passed :

Considering that national justice and the honor of France require that illustrious men, who have deserved well of their country, — by contributing to its honor and glory, — should receive, after their death, open testimonials of public recognition and esteem ; considering also, for the attainment of this end, that the laws setting apart the Pantheon for such a purpose, should be vigorously renewed, — we have ordained, and do ordain, as follows :

Article First.

The Pantheon shall be restored to its former legalized uses. The remains of illustrious men, who have deserved well of their country, shall be buried in this church. The inscription shall be restored on its front, —

TO HER GREAT MEN, BY A GRATEFUL NATION.

Article Second.

Measures shall be taken to determine upon what conditions and in what form this testimonial of national gratitude shall be bestowed in the name of the country. A commission shall be immediately appointed, to prepare a draft of a law to this effect.

Article Third.

The decree of February 20, 1806, and the ordinance of December 12, 1821, are repealed.

Signed: LOUIS PHILIPPE.

Countersigned: GUIZOT.

On December 6, 1851, another decree was issued :

THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC,

in view of the law of April 4/10, 1791, of the decree of February 20, 1806, of the ordinance of December 12, 1821, of August 26, 1830, decrees as follows :

Article First.

The old Church of Saint Genevieve is restored to public worship, conformably to the intentions of its founder, under the invocation of Saint Genevieve, the Protectress of Paris. Measures shall ultimately be taken for regulating the permanent exercise of Catholic worship in this church.

Article Second.

The ordinance of August 26, 1830, is repealed.

Article Third.

The Minister of Public Instruction and Worship, and the Minister of Public Works, are entrusted, — so far as this duty comes under their respective jurisdictions, — with the execution of this decree, which shall be inserted in the Bulletin of Laws.

Signed: LOUIS NAPOLEON.

Countersigned: FORTOUL.

Returning to the thread of our narrative, on the next day, at four in the afternoon, the National Assembly left the Riding School, in a body, and proceeded to Mirabeau's mansion, where they were awaited by the director of the Department of Paris, by all the cabinet ministers, and by more than a hundred thousand other persons; but among these hundred thousand, not one specially represented the Queen.

The procession took up its line of march. At the head was Lafayette, as the general in command of the National Guard of the Kingdom.

Then came the President of the National Assembly, Tronchet, royally surrounded by a dozen ushers, wearing their insignia of office.

Next came the cabinet ministers; and next, the members of the Assembly, without distinction of party, Sieyès giving his arm to Charles de Lameth.

After the Assembly came the members of the Jacobin Club, like a second National Assembly. They were especially noticeable for their grief, which was probably quite as ostentatious as it was real. The Club had voted to wear mourning for eight days; and Robespierre, too poor to afford the expense of a new coat, wore a hired garment, as he had done when in mourning for Benjamin Franklin.

Following the Jacobins came the entire population of Paris, hedged in between two lines of National Guardsmen, amounting to over thirty thousand men.

Funeral music, in which were two instruments, until then unknown, — the trombone and the tamtam, — marked step for this immense crowd.

It was eight o'clock by the time the procession arrived at Saint Eustache. The funeral eulogy was pronounced by Cérutti. At his last word ten thousand National Guards, who were inside the church, discharged their

muskets at one instant. The populace, who had not expected this discharge, set up a great outcry. The commotion was so violent that not a tile remained unbroken. For an instant it seemed as if the arch of the temple was falling, and that the church would serve as a tomb for both the living and the dead.

The procession resumed its march, with torches. The night-shades had descended, and not only invaded the streets through which the mourners passed, but permeated most of the hearts passing through them.

The death of Mirabeau was indeed a political eclipse. Mirabeau dead, who knew into what path France might enter? The skilful tamer was no longer there to guide the mettlesome coursers called Ambition and Hate. It was felt that he carried away with him something which in future the Assembly would greatly miss, — the spirit of peace, watching in the midst of war, and goodness of heart, hidden beneath a fiery nature.

All the world was the loser by his death. The Royalists had no longer a spur, nor the Revolutionists a bridle. Henceforth the chariot would roll more rapidly, and the descent be sharper. Who could tell whither it was rolling, — towards victory or towards an abyss?

The Pantheon was not reached till midnight.

In that procession one man only was lacking, — Pétion. Why had Pétion remained away? He gave a reason to two of his friends, who next day reproached him for his absence. He said that he had read a plan for an Anti-Revolutionary conspiracy, written in Mirabeau's hand.

Three years afterward, on a gloomy autumn day, no longer in the hall at the Riding School, but in the hall of the Tuileries, the Convention, — after having killed the King, after having killed the Queen, after having killed the Girondists, after having killed the members of

the Cordelier Club, after having killed the Jacobins, after having killed the ultra Republicans, after having killed itself, — having nothing living left to kill, began to kill off the dead.

With savage joy the Convention declared that it had been deceived in the judgment given in Mirabeau's honor, as, in its eyes, his genius could not atone for his corruption. A new decree was therefore enacted, excluding Mirabeau from the Pantheon.

On the threshold of that temple an usher published the decree, which declared Mirabeau unfit to share the burial-place of Rousseau and Descartes, and ordered the guardian of the church to deliver up the great orator's body.

Thus a voice, more terrible than the one to be heard in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, cried out, before its time: "Pantheon, give up thy dead!"

The Pantheon obeyed. Mirabeau's corpse was delivered to the usher, who, as he himself declared, "removed the aforesaid coffin, and placed it in the common burial-place;" and this common burial-ground was Clamart, the cemetery for criminals.

Doubtless to render this punishment more terrible, — a punishment which pushed its inquisition beyond death's door, — this removal was accomplished by night, and without an escort; and the coffin was again buried, but this time in solitude, without any indication of the place of interment, — without cross, stone, or inscription.

Later, however, an old gravedigger, — questioned by one of those inquisitive spirits, who are anxious to know what others ignore, — led him, one evening, across the desolate graveyard, stopped at the centre of the enclosure, and said, stamping his foot, "It is here!"

Then he repeated, as the curious visitor asked for more

proof: "It is here! I can answer for it, for I helped lower it into the grave; and I nearly tumbled in after it, the confounded leaden coffin was so heavy."

This man was Nodier, — Charles Nodier. One day he conducted me also to Clamart, stamped his foot in the same place, and said to me, in his turn: "It is here!"

For more than fifty years have successive generations passed the unknown tomb of Mirabeau. Is this not a sufficiently long expiation for a contestable offence, which belonged rather to Mirabeau's enemies than to Mirabeau himself? Will it not be time, at the first opportunity, to dig up that impure soil, in which he rests, till we find this leaden coffin, which weighed down the poor gravedigger's arms so wofully, and which may be recognized as belonging to the man proscribed from the Pantheon?

Perhaps Mirabeau did not deserve the Pantheon; but this is sure, — many repose, and will repose, in Christian earth, who deserve, more than he, to be denied the rites of sepulture.

O France! either outside of consecrated ground, or in the Pantheon, let Mirabeau have a tomb! and let it have his name for its single epitaph, his bust for its only ornament, with the future for his sole judge.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MESSENGER.

On the morning of April 2, an hour or so before Mirabeau breathed his last, a naval officer, wearing his uniform as captain of a ship, came along the Rue Saint Honoré, and turned towards the Tuileries, passing through Rue Saint Louis and Rue Échelle.

At the end of the Stable Courtyard he turned to the right, climbed over the chains which separated the stables from the interior courtyard, returned the salute of the sentinel who presented arms, and entered the Swiss Courtyard.

Like a man to whom the way is familiar, he then went up a small staircase, used by the servants, which, through a long and winding corridor, communicated with the King's private office.

On perceiving him the valet uttered a cry of surprise, almost of joy; but the new-comer placed his fingers on his lips, as he said: "Monsieur Hue, can the King receive me soon?"

"The King is with General Lafayette, to whom he is giving his orders for the day; but as soon as the General leaves —"

"You will announce me?"

"Oh, that's hardly necessary! His Majesty expects you, and yesterday evening gave orders for you to be admitted as soon as you arrived."

At that moment they heard the small bell jingle in the King's office.

"There!" said the valet. "Probably the King is ringing, in order to inquire about you."

"Go in, Monsieur Hue, and lose no time, — if, indeed, the King is free, and can see me."

The valet opened the door, and almost instantly announced the visitor, — a proof that the King was alone. Charny entered quickly, and with respectful earnestness approached the King, who was saying: "Let him come in! Let him come in! I have been waiting for him ever since yesterday."

"Sire," said the Count, "I am a few hours behindhand, as it appears; but I hope your Majesty will pardon me, when you learn the reasons of my tardiness."

"Come, come, Monsieur de Charny. I was waiting impatiently for you, it is true; but to begin with, I agree with you, that only an important matter could make your journey less rapid than it might have been. You are here, and you are welcome!" and he offered the Count his hand, which the Count kissed respectfully.

"Sire," said Charny, as he observed the King's impatience, "I received your orders day before yesterday, in the night, and I started from Montmédy yesterday morning, at three o'clock."

"How did you travel?"

"By postchaise."

"That explains the few hours of delay," said the King, smiling.

"Sire, I came at full speed, — at such a rate that I should have been here by ten or eleven last night, and perhaps sooner, if I had taken the direct route; but I wished to inform myself as to the chances, good or bad, of the route chosen by your Majesty. I wanted to know

which posts were well furnished with horses, and the reverse. Above all, I wished to know how much time, to a minute, — or even a second, — would be required in travelling from Montmédy to Paris, and consequently from Paris to Montmédy. I noted every point, and am therefore, in a measure, able to answer for everything."

"Bravo, Monsieur de Charny! You 're an admirable helper. However, let me begin by telling you how we are situated here. Then you can tell me how it is with you out there."

"Oh, Sire, if I may judge by what I have heard, things here are going very badly."

"They have reached such a point that I am a prisoner in the Tuileries, my dear Count! As I just now said to that dear Monsieur Lafayette, my jailer, I would rather be King of Metz than of France. — But happily, you 're here!"

"Your Majesty did me the honor of saying you would post me as to the run of affairs."

"Yes, in two words. You have heard of the flight of my aunts?"

"As all the world has heard of it, Sire, but not the details."

"Oh Lord, it 's very simple. You know the Assembly allows us only sworn priests, who have taken the oaths of allegiance to the Constitution. Well, those poor women were frightened at the approach of Easter. They believed it would be at the peril of their souls, if they should confess to a Constitutional priest; and by my advice — I acknowledge it — they went to Rome. There was no law to prevent the trip, and there was no reason to fear lest two poor old ladies should strengthen the party of absentees. Narbonne had entire charge of their departure, but I do not know how he managed. The

whole affair was discovered, however, and one night they had a visit, — of the same sort as ours, on that dreadful Fifth of October, — at Bellevue, on the very evening of their departure. Fortunately they went out by one door, just as the mob arrived at the other. You will understand, — there was not a carriage to be had. Three were to have been in waiting, according to agreement. They had to go afoot as far as Meudon. There, at last, they found carriages, and were soon on their journey. Three hours later there was a great rumpus throughout Paris. Those who intended to prevent their departure found the nest warm, but empty. The journals were all ablaze the next day. Marat declared they had carried off millions. Desmoulins said they had carried off the Dauphin. There was no truth in all this. The poor ladies had three or four hundred thousand francs in their purses, and they were bothered enough over that, without having charge of a child, whose presence would certainly have betrayed them; and the proof of this is, that they were themselves recognized, first at Moret, where they were allowed to pass on, and then at Arnay le Duc, where they were stopped. They made me write to the Assembly, asking permission for them to continue their journey. Despite that letter, the Assembly discussed the point all day. Finally my aunts were authorized to continue their journey, but on condition that the committee prepare a law against future emigration."

"Yes," said Charny, "but I believe, after Mirabeau's magnificent speech, the Assembly rejected that law."

"Undoubtedly it was rejected; but side by side with this petty triumph was a great humiliation. When they saw what a disturbance was created by the departure of these poor old ladies, some devoted friends, — and more such friends remain to me than I had supposed, — some

devoted friends, about fifty gentlemen, hurried to the Tuileries, to offer me their lives. It was immediately noised abroad that a conspiracy for carrying me away had been brought to light. Lafayette was hurried off to the Faubourg Saint Antoine, under the pretext that there was a row near the ruins of the Bastille. Furious at being duped, he returned to the Tuileries, which he entered sword in hand, with bayonets paraded in front of him, and arrested and disarmed our poor friends. Pistols and knives were found on some of them. Each had taken any weapon readiest to his hand. Good! That day will be entered in history under a new name. It will be called the Day of the Poniard Knights."

"Oh Sire, Sire, in what terrible times we live!" said Charny, shaking his head.

"But listen! — Every year we drive to Saint Cloud, — an agreeable as well as a customary diversion. Well, day before yesterday we ordered the carriages. When we went down to the courtyard, we found fifteen hundred people around those carriages. We took our seats in them, but it was impossible to drive on. The people grabbed the horses' bridles, and declared that I meant to run away, but should n't. After an hour of wasted effort, we had to come back. The Queen cried with vexation."

"But was n't Lafayette there to compel the populace to respect your Majesty?"

"Lafayette? Do you know what he did? He had them sound the tocsin on Saint Roch. He ran to the Hôtel de Ville, to ask for the red flag, in order to declare the country in danger. — The country in danger, because the King and Queen were going to Saint Cloud! — Do you know who refused him the red flag, and even snatched it from his hands, — for he already held it? Danton!

Then he pretended that Danton had sold himself to me, — that Danton received from me a hundred thousand francs a month. — That 's where we stand, my dear Count, without counting Mirabeau, who is dying, — who is perhaps dead, at this very hour."

"All the more reason for making haste, Sire."

"That 's what we 're going to do. Tell me what you decided over there with Bouillé. Everything is strong there, I hope. That little affair at Nancy furnished an occasion for increasing his command, and putting fresh troops at his disposal."

"Yes, Sire; but unhappily the arrangements of the Minister of War ran counter to ours. He has withdrawn the regiment of Saxon hussars, and refuses to send the Swiss regiments. It was with great difficulty Bouillé retained the regiment of Bouillon infantry at the Montmédy fortress."

"The War Minister suspects, then?"

"No, Sire. It was only a coincidence; but no matter! In such enterprises, we must take the chances of fire and accident; but if an enterprise is well conducted, there are always ninety chances of success out of a hundred."

"Well then, as that is so, let us return to our own affairs."

"Sire, your Majesty is still determined to follow the route through Châlons, Saint Menehould, Clermont, Varennes, and Stenay, — although that route is at least twenty leagues longer than the others, and there is no post-agency at Varennes?"

"I have already explained to Bouillé my motives for preferring that road."

"Yes, Sire, and he transmitted to us your Majesty's orders on this subject. It is in accordance with these orders that I have marked out the route, bush by bush,

stone by stone. The chart should be in your Majesty's hands."

"And it is a model of clearness, my dear Count. I know the route about as well as if I had taken the trip myself."

"Well, Sire, here is the information gained from my last journey, to be added to the rest."

"Speak, Monsieur de Charny, and I will listen; and for greater clearness, here is the map, prepared by yourself."

As he spoke, the King drew from a portfolio this map, which he spread on the table. This map was not engraved, but drawn by hand. As Charny had said, not a tree, not a rock was missing, and the map was the result of eight months' labor. Charny and the King bent over this chart.

"Sire," said Charny, "the real danger for your Majesty begins at Saint Menehould, and ceases at Stenay. It is over those eighteen leagues that we should spread our detachments."

"Could they not come yet nearer to Paris, Monsieur de Charny, — as far as Châlons, for example?"

"Sire, it would be difficult. Châlons is too strong a town for anything efficacious to be accomplished there for your Majesty's safety, by forty, fifty, or even a hundred men, if that safety should be endangered. Besides, Bouillé can be responsible for nothing, after leaving Saint Menehould. The best he can do — and he bade me discuss this with your Majesty — is to place his first detachment at Sommevelle Bridge. — You see, Sire, here it is, on the map, — the first post-station beyond Châlons;" and Charny pointed out with his finger the place in question.

"So," said the King, "in ten or twelve hours we should be at Châlons. In how many hours did you make your whole ninety leagues?"

"Sire, in thirty-six hours."

"But that was in a light vehicle, and you had with you only one servant."

"Sire, I lost three hours on the journey, in examining the neighborhood of Varennes, to see where relays of horses had best be placed, — whether this side of the town, towards Saint Menehould, or the other side, towards Dun. We will revert to that again presently. Those three lost hours will compensate for the weight of your coach. My opinion is, that the King could go from Paris to Montmédy in thirty-five or thirty-six hours."

"And what did you decide about the relays at Varennes? That 's the important point. We must be sure not to miss our horses."

"Yes, Sire; and my opinion is that the relays should be stationed beyond the town, on the side towards Dun."

"On what do you base that opinion?"

"On the situation of the town, Sire."

"Describe the locality, Count."

"Sire, it is easily done. I have passed through Varennes five or six times, since I left Paris, and yesterday I remained there over noon, — three hours. Varennes is a small town of sixteen hundred inhabitants, divided into two distinct parts, called the Upper and Lower Villages, separated by the River Aire, and connected only by the bridge which spans the river. If your Majesty will follow me on the map — There, Sire, there it is, near the Argonne Forest, on the very edge of it! — See?"

"Yes, here I am," said the King. "The highway makes a tremendous elbow, in the forest, so as to reach Clermont."

"Even so, Sire."

"But all this does not show me why you would place our relays beyond Varennes, rather than this side of it."

"Wait, Sire. The bridge, which leads from one village to the other, is commanded by a high tower. This tower, the old tower of a tollhouse, is situated in a gloomy, dark, narrow place. The least obstacle would obstruct the way. As there is some risk to be run, better take the chances of getting over this bridge, with the horses and postilions from Clermont, rather than change horses five hundred paces this side of that bridge, which, if the King *should* be recognized, could be guarded and defended, — if a simple alarm was given, — by three or four men."

"That is sensible," said the King, "though in case of any difficulty, *you* will be there."

"That will be at once my duty and honor, if the King judges me so worthy."

The King again offered his hand to Charny, and said: "So Bouillé has already marked the sections, and chosen the men who are to dot the way."

"With your approbation, — yes, Sire."

"Has he given you a memorandum on this subject?"

Charny drew out a folded paper, and presented it respectfully to the King. The King unfolded it and read:

The opinion of the Marquis de Bouillé is, that the military detachments should not go beyond Saint Menehould, on the Paris side. If, however, the King insists that they should be sent as far as Sommevelle Bridge, I would station, as follows, the forces destined to serve as his escort:

1. At Sommevelle Bridge, forty hussars from the Lauzun Regiment, commanded by Choiseul, with Lieutenant Boudet under his orders.

2. At Saint Menehould, thirty dragoons from the Royal Regiment, commanded by Captain Dandoins.

3. At Clermont, a hundred dragoons from *Monsieur's* Regiment, and forty from the Royal, commanded by Charles de Damas.

4. At Varennes, sixty hussars from Lauzun s Regiment, commanded by Rohrig, Jules (not Louis) de Bouillé, and Raigecourt.

5. At Dun, a hundred hussars from Lauzun's Regiment, commanded by Captain Deslon.

6. At Mouzay, fifty horsemen from the Royal German, commanded by Captain Guntzer.

7. Lastly, at Stenay, the Royal German Regiment, under its lieutenant-colonel, Baron de Mandell.

After reading this memorandum the King said: "This appears to me very well; but as these detachments must be stationed in the villages or cities two or three days beforehand, what pretext can be given for their presence?"

"Sire, the pretext is provided for. They will be ordered to act as escorts for messengers bringing a large sum of money, sent by the Minister of War to the army in the north."

"Then all is provided for," said the King, with evident satisfaction.

Charny bowed.

"And speaking of a remittance of money," said the King, "do you know whether Bouillé received the million I sent him?"

"Yes, Sire. Only, your Majesty knows this million was in *assignats*, and those bonds are now twenty per cent below par." These notes had just been placed in the financial market.

"And could you discount them at that rate?"

"Sire, a faithful subject of your Majesty was glad to be able to take them, for his own use, at a hundred thousand crowns, — that is, without discount."

The King looked at Charny. "And the rest, Count?"

"The rest were discounted for Louis de Bouillé, by his

father's banker, Monsieur Perregaux, who gave him the amount in letters of exchange on the Bethmanns of Frankfort, who have already accepted this credit. Money will be forthcoming, at the proper time."

"Thanks, Monsieur," said King Louis. "Meanwhile, you must tell me the name of this loyal servant, who has perhaps compromised his fortune, in order to furnish this hundred thousand crowns to Bouillé."

"Sire, this faithful servant is rich, and consequently claims no merit for what he has done."

"Never mind, Monsieur, the King wishes to know his name."

"Sire," responded Charny, "the sole condition he placed upon this service to your Majesty, was that he might remain unknown."

"Then you know him?"

"I know him, Sire."

"Monsieur de Charny," said the King, with that soulful dignity which he occasionally displayed, "here is a ring, which is very precious to me." He drew a plain gold ring from his finger. "I took this from the hand of my dying father, as I kissed that hand, cold in death. Therein lies its value, for it has no other; but to a heart able to understand me, this ring will become more precious than a diamond of the first water. Repeat to this faithful friend what I tell you, and give him this ring, in my name."

A couple of tears escaped from Charny's eyes. His breast swelled and palpitated. He knelt on one knee, to receive the ring from the King's hands.

At that moment the door was opened, without announcement. The King turned quickly, for this was an infraction of the royal etiquette, and was considered a great insult, if not excused by a great necessity.

It was the Queen. The Queen was pale, and held a paper in her hand; but at the sight of the kneeling Count, kissing the King's ring, and putting it on his own finger, she dropped the paper, and uttered a cry of astonishment.

Charny rose, and respectfully saluted the Queen, who stammered between her teeth: "Monsieur de Charny! — Monsieur de Charny! — here! — with the King! — at the Tuileries — ?" and then she added to herself: "And I did not know it!"

There was such sorrow in the poor Queen's eyes, that Charny, who divined the end of her sentence, though he could not hear it, took two steps towards her.

"I have just arrived," he said, "and was about asking permission to present my homage to your Majesty."

The blood rose to the Queen's cheeks. It was a long time since she had heard Charny's voice, and longer still since she had heard, in that voice, the sweet intonation which he gave to these few words.

She extended both hands, as if to go to him; but almost instantly she recovered herself, and placed one hand on her heart, which was doubtless beating violently.

Charny saw all, understood all. Although it has required many lines, in which to describe and explain these sensations, they all developed themselves in the little time it took the King to pick up the paper which had escaped from the Queen's grasp, and which a current of air — caused by the opening of the door while the window also was open — had blown to the end of the room.

The King read what was written on the paper, but without understanding it; so he asked: "What do these three words mean, — *flee! flee! flee!* — and this fragment of a signature?"

"Sire," responded the Queen, "they mean that Mirabeau died ten minutes ago, and sends us this dying counsel."

"Madame," said the King, "this counsel shall be followed, for it is good, and the time has now come for putting it into execution."

Turning to Charny he continued: "You can follow the Queen to her apartments, and tell her all."

The Queen raised herself, looked alternately at Charny and the King, and then said: "Come with me, Monsieur."

She went out precipitately; for she felt it would be impossible, if she remained an instant longer, to conceal the conflicting emotions within her heart.

Charny bowed again to the King, and followed Marie Antoinette.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PROMISE.

THE Queen regained her own apartments, and fell upon a sofa, making a sign for Charny to close the door behind him.

Fortunately the boudoir which they entered was deserted, Doctor Gilbert having requested the privilege of speaking to the Queen without witnesses, in order to tell her what had happened, and to give her Mirabeau's last words.

Hardly was she seated when her too full heart overflowed, and she sobbed pitifully.

These sobs were so genuine and so deep, that they went to the bottom of Charny's heart, and stirred up the remnants of his passion.

We say the remnants of his passion, because such a passion, as we have seen quicken and glow and burn in the heart of this man, is never wholly extinguished, unless there comes to it one of those terrible shocks which make love give place to hate.

Charny was in such a strange situation as only those can appreciate who have been in similar situations. He had an old and a new passion on his hands at the same time; and there is a certain English poet who says something about being "off with the old love, before we are on with the new."

He had learned to love Andrée with all the fire of his heart, yet he loved the Queen with all the pity of his soul.

At each laceration of her poor love, a laceration caused by egotism, — that is, by the excess of that love, — he had, so to speak, felt his heart bleed for the woman; and each time, understanding this egotism, like all to whom a past amour has become a burden, he was not strong enough to excuse it.

Whenever this genuine grief burst forth in his presence, without recriminations and reproaches, he measured the depth of the Queen's love. He recalled what human prejudices, what social duties, this woman had despised for his sake. Bending over this abyss, he could not prevent himself from dropping a regretful tear and a consoling word.

When, however, reproaches mingled with her sobs, and recriminations found expression on her lips, he immediately remembered the tyranny of her passion, her absolute will, — the royal despotism which was always mixed with her sentiments of tenderness and the outcome of her passion, — then Charny straightened himself against this tyranny, armed himself against this despotism, entered into combat with this will. He mentally compared Andrée's sweet and unalterable face with the Queen's; and he gave the preference to that statue, all ice as he believed it to be, rather than to this passionate image, always ready to launch the lightnings of her love, her jealousy, or her pride.

On this occasion the Queen wept without speaking. It was more than a year since she had seen Charny. Faithful to the promise he had made the King, during all this time the Count had concealed himself from nearly everybody.

For an unprecedented time, therefore, the Queen had remained in the densest ignorance concerning the welfare — yes, and the whereabouts — of one who had been so

closely allied to her, during the two or three years preceding, that she then fancied it quite impossible to separate one heart from the other, without breaking both.

Yet, as we know, Charny had left her, without even telling her his destination. There was this one consolation, however, — she knew him to be employed in the King's service, and in such a way that she could say to herself: "In working for the King, he works also for me; and so he is forced to think of me, even if he wishes to forget me."

It was a feeble consolation to know that his remembrance reached her on the rebound, when for a long time it had belonged to her directly and alone.

Meeting Charny again, at a moment when she least expected to see him, finding him with the King on his return, almost on the same spot where she saw him on the day of his sudden departure, all the sorrows which had stung her soul during the Count's long absence — all the thoughts which had tormented her heart, all the tears which had burned her eyes — rushed back upon her in one tumultuous flood, inundating her cheeks, and filling her bosom with all the anguish she fondly believed to be vanished, all the sorrows she had tried to relegate to the past.

She wept for the sake of weeping. Her tears must stifle her, if they could not find egress.

She wept without speaking a word. Was it from joy? Was it from sorrow? From both, perhaps; for every powerful emotion takes the form of tears.

Also without speaking, and therefore with more love than respect, Charny approached the Queen, drew from her face one of the hands which covered it, and pressed his lips to that hand.

"Madame, I am happy and proud to tell you there

has not been an hour, since the day when I took leave of you, when I was not busy in your behalf."

"Oh Charny, Charny, there was a time when you would have been less busy in my behalf, but would have thought of me much more."

"Madame, I was charged with a grave responsibility. This responsibility imposed upon me the most absolute silence, till my mission should be completed. This completion has been achieved only to-day. To-day I can see you again, I can talk with you; whereas, until to-day, I could not even write."

"You have given a beautiful example of loyalty, Oliver," dolefully said the Queen; "and I regret but one thing, — that you were only able to do this at the expense of another sentiment."

"Madame, permit me, since I have the King's permission, to inform you what has been done for your safety."

"Oh Charny, Charny, have you nothing more pressing to say to me?"

She pressed the Count's hand tenderly, and gave him such a look as would once have made him devote his life to her, — a life he was still ready to sacrifice for her, though not perhaps to consecrate it to her desires.

As she thus regarded him, she noticed that he was not a dusty traveller, just descended from a postchaise, but an elegant courtier, who shows his devotion by adherence to the rules of etiquette. His toilet was so complete, that even this fastidious *Queen* could find no fault; and yet the *woman* was evidently dissatisfied therewith.

"When did you arrive?" she asked.

"I have just arrived, Madame."

"And you come —?"

"From Montmédy."

"Then you have travelled over half the breadth of France?"

"I have travelled ninety leagues since yesterday morning."

"On horseback, or by carriage?"

"By postchaise."

"How is it, after so long a journey, — excuse my questions, Charny! — that you are as well brushed, polished, and combed, as one of Lafayette's aides, coming from headquarters? Was the news you brought of so little importance?"

"Very important, on the contrary, Madame; but I thought if I came to the courtyard of the Tuileries in a postchaise, covered with mud or dust, I should arouse curiosity. The King has told me, within the hour, how narrowly you are all watched; and when I heard this, I congratulated myself on having taken the precaution to come afoot and in my uniform, like a simple officer returning to Court, after an absence of a week or two."

The Queen squeezed Charny's hand convulsively. One could see that a last question rankled in her mind, and that she had more difficulty in formulating that question, than was demanded by its apparent importance. She decided upon another form of interrogation, and said, with a stifled voice: "Ah, yes! I forgot you had a lodging-place in Paris!"

Charny started. Not until then did he see the object of all these questions.

"Me, a lodging in Paris? And where may it be, Madame?"

The Queen made an effort. "In the Rue Coq Heron. Is n't that where the Countess lives?"

Charny was ready to kick, like a horse, who feels the spur in the living wound; but there was such hesitation

in the Queen's voice, such an expression of grief, that he pitied her sufferings, — she, so proud and self-controlled, — and would not let her discover the emotion which overcame him.

With an accent of profound sorrow, not entirely caused by the Queen's suffering, he said: "I believe I had the honor of telling you, before my departure, that the mansion of Madame de Charny is not mine. I went to the rooms of my brother, Viscount Isidore, and there changed my clothes."

The Queen uttered a joyful cry, and sank upon her knees, pressing her lips to Charny's hand. With equal rapidity he grasped her under the arms and raised her, crying, as he did so: "Oh Madame, what are you doing?"

"I thank you, Oliver," she said, in so mild a voice that Charny felt the tears come into his own eyes.

"Thank me? My God, and for what?"

"For what? You ask me for what? For giving me the one completely joyful moment I have had since your departure. My God! I know this is insensate folly, — this jealousy, — but it is worthy of pity. You also were jealous at one time, Charny; but you have forgotten it now. Oh, these men! When they are jealous, they are happy, for they can fight with their rivals, — kill and be killed; but women can only weep, even when they know how useless, how dangerous are their tears; for we know very well that our tears, instead of attracting toward us those for whom they are shed, drive them farther away. This is the vertigo of love. It sees the abyss, and plunges into it, instead of drawing farther away. Thank you once more, Oliver. You see, I am joyous, and weep no longer."

Indeed, the Queen tried to laugh; but as if, through

her sorrows, she had forgotten how to be merry, her laughter had so doleful and grieved an accent that the Count was startled. "Oh my God," he murmured, "can it be that she has suffered so much?"

Marie Antoinette clasped her hands as she said: "Thanks be to thee, oh Lord! for in the day when he understands my sorrow, he will not have strength enough to wholly cease loving me."

Charny felt himself on a declivity, where he would soon find it impossible to maintain his equilibrium. He made an effort to sweep backwards, as skaters do, even at the risk of breaking the ice over which they glide.

"Madame," he said, "will you not allow me to harvest the fruit of this long absence, by explaining what I have been so happy in doing for you?"

"Ah Charny," responded the Queen, "I like better something else, as I told you just now; but you are right. The woman must not too long forget that she is a queen. Speak on, Monsieur Ambassador. The *woman* has already obtained all she had any right to expect, and the *Queen* listens."

Then Charny told her all: how he had been sent to Monsieur de Bouillé; how young Count Louis had last year come to Paris; how Charny himself had surveyed the route, bush by bush, by which the Queen was to flee; how, finally, he had come to tell the King there was no longer any material reason why the project should not be put into immediate execution.

The Queen heard Charny with great attention, and also with profound appreciation. It seemed impossible that simple devotion should go so far. Love, passionate and anxious love, alone could anticipate such obstacles, and invent the methods for surmounting them.

She therefore heard him through. When he had finished, she said, regarding him with an expression of supreme tenderness: "You will then be very happy in saving me?"

"What? Can you ask me that? Why, it is the dream of my ambition; and if I succeed, it will be the glory of my life!"

"I should be more pleased if it were simply the recompense of your love," said the Queen, sadly. "Never mind! You warmly desire that this great work of rescuing the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin of France should be accomplished by yourself, do you not?"

"I await but your assent, to devote my existence to this end!"

"Yes! and I understand, my friend, that this devotion ought to be free from all outside entanglements, all material affection. It is impossible that my husband and children should be rescued by a hand which dare not extend itself towards them, to sustain them, if they should slip on that road which we are to travel together. To you I commend their lives and mine, my brother; but in your turn, have pity on me, will you not?"

"Pity on you, Madame?" said Charny.

"Yes! In such moments, when I need all my strength, all my courage, all my presence of mind, you would not, — it is a foolish idea, perhaps, but how can I help it! for there are people who dare not venture forth in the night, for fear of spectres, which, when day comes, they know do not exist, — you would not wish me to be lost perhaps, for want of one promise, one little word? You would not —?"

Charny interrupted the Queen. "Madame, I desire

the safety of your Majesty. I desire the welfare of France. I desire to finish the task which I have begun. I acknowledge I should be in despair, if I could not make so feeble a sacrifice. I swear to you not to see Madame de Charny again, save by your Majesty's permission."

Saluting the Queen, coolly but respectfully, he withdrew; although the Queen, chilled by the tone in which he spoke these words, tried to detain him.

Hardly had Charny shut the door behind him, than she stretched out her arms and cried pitifully: "Oh, how glad I should be if it were myself he had sworn not to see, if he only loved me as he loves her!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SECOND SIGHT.

On the following Nineteenth of June, about eight in the morning, Gilbert was walking with long steps to and fro in his lodgings in Rue Saint Honoré, and now and then going to the window, to lean out, like a man impatiently expecting somebody who does not come.

In his hand he held a paper, folded square, through which you could see the impression of the writing and seals on the other side. Doubtless this was a very important paper, for twice or thrice, during these anxious minutes, Gilbert unfolded it, read it, unfolded it anew, reperused it, and refolded it, only to reopen and refold it again.

At last the noise of a carriage was heard, stopping at the door, and he ran again to the window; but he was too late. Whoever had come in the carriage, had already entered the passage-way.

Gilbert apparently had no doubt of the identity of this personage; for, pushing open the door of the antechamber, he called out: "Bastien, open the door for Count Charny, who is waiting."

Again he unfolded the paper, which he had so often perused, when Bastien announced, not Count Charny, but Baron Zannone.

This name was just then so far from Gilbert's thoughts that he started, as if lightning had flashed before his eyes and heralded the thunder. Hastily he refolded the

paper, concealing it in his coat-pocket. "Cagliostro!" he repeated, astonished at the announcement.

"Oh Lord, yes, myself, my dear Gilbert," said the visitor. "It was n't I whom you expected, — I know that, very well, — it was Charny; but Charny is busy, — I will presently tell you about what, — so that he won't be here for half an hour. Knowing that, faith, I said to myself: 'Seeing I 'm in his vicinity, I 'll run in on Doctor Gilbert an instant.' Though unexpected, I hope I 'm none the less welcome."

"Dear master, you know that at all hours, by day or night, two doors are always open to you here, — the door of the house and the door of the heart."

"Thanks, Gilbert. Some day I also may be able to prove how much I love *you*. When that day comes, the proof will not be wanting. Meanwhile, let us gossip."

"About what?" asked Gilbert, smiling, for the advent of Cagliostro always preluded some new and astounding development.

"About what? Why, the fashionable topic, — the King's near departure."

Gilbert felt himself shivering from head to foot, though the smile did not disappear from his lips for an instant; and, thanks to his will-power, if he could not prevent the sweat from rolling up to the roots of his hair, he could keep the pallor from his cheeks.

"As we shall have some time to talk the matter over, I 'll sit down," said Cagliostro, suiting the action to the word.

The first feeling of terror being past, Gilbert reflected that very likely Cagliostro was there by accident, but that his coming was also providential. Having no secrets from Gilbert, undoubtedly Cagliostro would tell him

all he knew about the royal departure he had come to talk about.

"Well," said Cagliostro, seeing Gilbert waiting, "it 's arranged for to-morrow, is it?"

"Dearest master," said Gilbert, "you know I always let you talk on to the end. Even if you err, there is always something for me to learn, not only from your set speeches, but from your slightest word."

"And in what have I been mistaken, up to date? Was I mistaken in predicting the death of Favras? Yet up to the decisive moment, I did all I could to prevent his death! Was I wrong in declaring the King was intriguing against Mirabeau, and that Mirabeau would not be appointed cabinet-minister? Was I mistaken in saying that Robespierre would rebuild the scaffold of Charles the First, and Bonaparte the throne of Charlemagne? As to this last point, you cannot yet accuse me of mistakes, since the times are not yet ripe; and part of these events belong to the end of this century, and part to the beginning of the next. Nevertheless, to-day, my dear Gilbert, when I tell you that the King proposes to flee to-morrow night, you know it is true, — you, better than anybody else, because you are one of the agents for this flight."

"If that is so," said Gilbert, "you hardly expect me to avow it, I suppose."

"And what do I want of your avowal? You very well know that I 'm not only the *living one*, but the *knowing one*."

"If you are the *knowing one*," said Gilbert, "you know the Queen yesterday said to Monsieur de Montmorin, in reference to the refusal of Madame Elizabeth to attend the festival on Corpus Christi Day, that she was much troubled because Madame Elizabeth would not go to

Saint Germain l'Auxerrois with them, and thought Elizabeth might sacrifice her opinions a little for the King's sake. Now if the Queen should go with the King to Saint Germain Church on that day, they cannot leave that night, — certainly not for a long journey."

"Yes! but I also know," responded Cagliostro, "that a great philosopher says that words are given men to conceal their thoughts. Now God is not so partial as to bestow a gift so precious upon men alone."

"My dear master," said Gilbert, trying to remain on the plane of pleasantry, "you know the story of the incredulous apostle, who — "

"Who began to believe, when the Messiah showed him his hands, his feet, and his side. Well, my dear Gilbert, the Queen is accustomed to all life's elegancies, and is not willing to be discommoded during her travels, which will last thirty-five or thirty-six hours, if Charny's calculation is accurate; so she has ordered from Desbrosses, — whose shop is on the street called Our Lady of Victory, — a charming dressing-case, finished in silver-gilt, and said to be destined for her sister, the Archduchess Christine, the governor's lady, in the Netherlands. This dressing-case, only completed yesterday morning, was carried home last night to the Tuileries. There! — so much for the hands! Next, they will go in a travelling coach, spacious and commodious, — one which will readily hold six persons. This was ordered of Louis, the nobby coachmaker, who lives on the Champs Élysées, by Charny, who is with him at this very moment, paying him one hundred and twenty-five louis, — half the sum agreed upon. The coach was tried for one drive, yesterday, with four horses, and worked perfectly well; so that Charny's report was most favorable. Well, there are the feet, you doubting Thomas! Lastly, Montmorin, with-

out knowing what he was signing, signed a passport for the Baroness de Korff, her two children, her two chambermaids, her steward, and her three lackeys. Well, Madame de Korff is Madame de Tourzel, governess of the two royal children of France, — Madame Royale and my Lord the Dauphin. Her two chambermaids are the Queen and Madame Elizabeth. Her steward is the King. Her three lackeys, who will precede and accompany the carriage, dressed as couriers, are Isidore de Charny, Monsieur de Malden, and Monsieur de Valory. The passport is the paper which you were holding when I came in, and which you folded and hid in your pocket, when you saw me." Then Cagliostro repeated, word for word, as if he had been reading it, the contents of this passport:

IN THE KING'S NAME:

You are commanded to pass the Baroness de Korff, with her two children, one woman, a valet, and three lackeys.

MONTMORIN,
Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Then Cagliostro smilingly added: "There! So much for the wounded side of the Messiah, you unbelieving disciple! Am I well informed, my dear Gilbert?"

"Yes, apart from a little contradiction between your former descriptive words and your version of the aforesaid passport."

"How so?"

"You said that Madame Elizabeth and the Queen were to represent Madame de Korff's two chambermaids, but in the passport there appears to be only one such woman."

"So? Well, this is how it is. On arriving at Bondy, Madame de Tourzel, who expects to go through to Mont-

médy, will be asked to leave the carriage. Charny, a devoted man, who can be depended upon, will take her place, so as to keep his nose at the carriage window, in case of need, and fire off the two pistols he has in his pocket, if necessary. Then the Queen will become Madame de Korff; and as there will be but one other woman in the coach, Madame Elizabeth, — except Madame Royale, who is reckoned, of course, as one of the children, — it would be useless to have two chambermaids on the passport. — Perhaps you would like other details. So be it! The details are at your service! The departure was to have been on the First of June. Monsieur de Bouillé fully expected it. On this subject he even wrote the King a curious letter, in which he invited him, — urged him, — to come at once, because the soldiers were being *corrupted* day by day; and if his soldiers were allowed to take the Constitutional oath, he would not answer for them. By this word *corrupted*, he meant," added Cagliostro, in his jesting mood, "that the soldiers are beginning to understand that a choice is offered them between a monarchy, which has sacrificed the people to the nobility for three centuries, — the private to the officer, — and a Constitution, which proclaims equality before the law, and makes promotion the recompense of merit and courage; and that this ungrateful army has a sneaking fondness for the Constitution. Alas! Neither the coach nor the dressing-case was quite done, and so it was impossible to start on the First; which was a great misfortune, as, since the First, the army has been corrupted more and more, and the soldiers of the regular army have taken the oath to support the Constitution. Then the departure was set down for the Eighth; but Bouillé received the intimation of this date so tardily, that it was now his turn to reply that he was not ready.

Next, with one accord, the Twelfth was decided upon. They preferred the Eleventh; but a very Democratic woman — one, moreover, who is the sweetheart of Monsieur de Gouvion, one of Lafayette's aides, — Madame de Rochereul, if you wish to know her name, — was engaged in the household service, for the Dauphin; and they feared lest she should see something, and report (as poor Mirabeau once expressed it) some concealed pot kept a' boiling in some corner of the palace, after the fashion of kings. On the Twelfth the King bethought himself that it was only six days before he should touch another quarter's payment of his government income, — six millions. Pest! You will agree that this was worth waiting six days for, my dear Gilbert. Besides, Leopold, the grand temporizer, — the very Fabius of kings, — had promised that by the Fifteenth, fifteen thousand Austrians should occupy the approaches to Arlon. Heavens, you understand! It is n't the good-will of these good kings which fails them, but they have various little affairs of their own to arrange. Austria has just devoured Liege and Brabant, and is digesting both the city and province; and Austria is like a boa-constrictor, — while it digests, it sleeps. The Empress Catherine, of Russia, has been fighting that kinglet, Gustavus the Third, — to whom she has granted a truce, in order to give him time to receive the Queen of France, when she descends from her travelling carriage, at Aix, in Savoy. During this time Catherine is whetting her teeth on Turkey, and gnawing the bones of Poland; for she likes the lion's marrow, this worthy empress. Philosophic Prussia and philanthropic England are just changing their skins, so that the one seasonably ranges over the borders of the Rhine, and the other over the North Sea. Be easy! Having once tasted human flesh, like Diomed's horses,

these kings don't care to eat anything else, if we don't interrupt their delicate feasts. Briefly, this departure was fixed for Sunday the Nineteenth, at midnight. Then, on the Eighteenth, a new despatch was sent, postponing it till Monday, the Twentieth, at the same hour, — that is, to-morrow night, — an arrangement which may have its inconveniences, as Bouillé has already given orders to all his detachments, and has not countermanded them. — Be on your guard, my dear Gilbert, be on your guard! All this changing wearies the soldiers, and sets people a' thinking."

"Count," said Gilbert, "I will not dissemble with you. All you have said is true! And I dissimulate the less, because it was not my private opinion that the King had better go away, — certainly not that he should quit France; but now acknowledge frankly, in view of his personal danger, in view of personal danger to the Queen and their children, if the King is not allowed to remain as a king, a man, a husband, a father, is he not authorized to flee?"

"Well, will you let me tell you something, my dear Gilbert? It is not as a father, not as a husband, not as a man, that Louis the Sixteenth flees from France. Neither is it because of the famous Fifth and Sixth of October. No! By his father, from whom he inherits everything, he is a Bourbon, and the Bourbons know how to face danger. He leaves France because of the Constitution, which is being modelled after that of the United States of America, by the National Assembly, without reflecting that such a model, shaped for a republic, but applied to a monarchy, does not leave the King enough breathable air. He quits France on account of the famous affair over the Knights of the Poniard, wherein your friend Lafayette dealt irreverently with royalty and

its faithful adherents. The King goes away because of that famous Saint Cloud affair, when he wished to assert his liberty, and the people meant to show him that he was a prisoner. Now Gilbert, *you* are honestly, frankly, loyally a Constitutional Royalist, and believe in that pleasant and consoling Utopia, a monarchy tempered by liberty; so you ought to know one thing, — namely, that kings, in imitation of God, whose representatives on earth they pretend to be, have one religion, the religion of Royalty. Not only are their persons sacred, having been rubbed down with holy oil at Rheims, but their dwellings are sacred, their servants are sacred. Their palace is a temple, whereinto one must enter only in prayer. Their servants are priests, to whom one should speak only on the knee. One must not touch a king, under pain of death. Their attendants must not be touched, under pain of excommunication. Now on the day when they prevented King Louis from going to Saint Cloud, somebody laid hands on his royal person. When the Knights of the Poniard were expelled from the Tuileries, the King's servants were profaned. This is what the King can't abide. This is his idea of the Abomination of Desolation, set up in the Most Holy Place, as predicted by Daniel the Prophet. That's why he recalled Charny from Montmédy. That's why the King, who refused to let himself be spirited away by Favras, or to escape with his aunts, consents to flee to-morrow, with Montmorin's passport, — who did not know for whom he signed that passport, — under the name of Durand, and in the dress of a servant; only, as kings are kings to the end of the chapter, he bade them not forget to pack in his trunks the red robe, embroidered with gold, which he wore at Cherbourg."

While Cagliostro was talking, Gilbert regarded him

earnestly, as if he would dive to the bottom of his thoughts.

This was useless. No human gaze could pierce the mask of raillery wherewith this disciple of Althotas always covered his face. Gilbert therefore decided to question him openly.

"Count, all that you have said is true. I repeat it! Nevertheless, why do you come to me with all this? In what capacity do you present yourself to me? Come you as an open enemy, to warn me of your opposition? Come you as a friend, to proffer help?"

"First, my dear Gilbert," was the affectionate reply, "I come, as a teacher might come to a pupil, to warn him that he is espousing the wrong cause, in attaching himself to a falling ruin, to a crumbling edifice, to a dying principle called Monarchy. Such men are not men of the past, nor even of the present. They are men of the future. Abandon that in which thou believest not, for that in which we do believe. Do not leave the substance and follow the shadow. If not an active soldier in the Revolution, be a looker-on, and do not cumber the road. Mirabeau was a giant; but even Mirabeau had to go down before the great work."

"Count," said Gilbert, "I will reply to that appeal, whenever the King, who relies upon me, is in safety. Louis the Sixteenth has made me his confidant, his auxiliary, — his accomplice, if you will, — in the work he has undertaken. I have accepted the trust, and I will fulfil it to the end, with heart open and eyes shut. I am a physician, my dear Count. Before all else, I consider the physical health of my patient. Now then, you must answer in your turn. In your mysterious projects, in your shady combinations, is it necessary for this flight to succeed or fail? If you wish it to fail, it

is useless for us to contend. Bid us not to go, and we will remain, bow our heads, and await the stroke."

"Brother," said Cagliostro, "if, impelled by God, who has mapped out my way, I should find it necessary to smite those whom thy heart loves or thy genius protects, I should certainly remain in the shadow, and ask only one favor of the Superhuman Power whom I obey, — to leave thee in ignorance whence came the blow. No, if I do not come as a friend, — for I cannot be the friend of kings, I who have been their victim, — I do not come as an enemy. Nay, I come with the scales in hand, to tell thee I have weighed the last Bourbon in the balances, and found him wanting; but I have forecast his destiny, and do not believe his death will affect the health of our cause. Like Pythagoras, I scarcely recognize the right to dispose of the life, even of the last-created insect; and God forbid that I should thoughtlessly lay my hand on man, the king of creation. — I come here, not merely to say, however, that I will remain neutral, but to ask if my aid is needed, which hereby I proffer."

Once more Gilbert tried to read Cagliostro's heart.

"Good!" continued the Count, resuming his tone of raillery, "what a skeptic you are. See here now! As a man of letters, don't you know the story of the lance of Achilles, which could both wound and heal? That lance I possess. The woman who once passed for the Queen, in the thickets of Versailles, might she not also pass for the Queen in the apartments of the Tuileries, or on some road the opposite of that taken by the real fugitive? What I propose is not to be despised, my dear Gilbert."

"Be frank to the end, and tell me why you make us this offer?"

"Oh, it 's very simple, my dear Doctor. In order that

the King may quit France, and leave us to proclaim a republic."

"A republic!" said the astonished Gilbert.

"Why not?"

"My dear Count, I look France all over, from south to north, from east to west, and I don't see a single Republican!"

"To begin with, you are mistaken, for I can see three, — Pétion, Camille Desmoulins, and your humble servant. Those you can see, as well as I can; but I can see many others, whom you do not see, but whom you will see, when it is time for them to appear. Then rely upon me to make a theatrical display that will astonish you. Only, I desire that the accompanying accidents in the transformation shall not be too grave; for accidents always recoil on the machinist."

Gilbert reflected an instant. Then he extended his hand to Cagliostro, and said: "Count, if it concerned only myself, if it concerned only my life, if it concerned only my honor, reputation, memory, I would at once accept your offer; but this matter concerns a kingdom, a king, a queen, a dynasty, a monarchy, and I cannot make any compact for them. Remain neutral, my dear Count! That's all I ask!"

Cagliostro smiled. "Yes, I understand, — I'm the Necklace Man! Well, my dear Gilbert, the despised Necklace Man is going to give you some exceedingly good counsel."

"Silence!" said Gilbert. "Somebody rings!"

"What matters it? You know very well who is ringing. It's Monsieur de Charny. The counsel I would give you, he also may hear with profit. Enter, Count, enter!"

Charny appeared at the door. Seeing a stranger, when

he expected to find Gilbert alone, he stopped hesitatingly and anxiously.

"This counsel," continued Cagliostro, "is this: Distrust dressing-cases too rich, carriages too heavy, and likenesses too striking. Adieu, Gilbert! Adieu, Count! and — to employ the formula of those to whom I wish a prosperous journey, as I do to yourselves — God have you in his holy keeping!"

Saluting Gilbert amicably and the Count courteously, Cagliostro withdrew, followed by the anxious eye of his host, and the questioning glance of the visitor.

"Who is that man, Doctor?" asked Charny, when the noise of the retreating steps had died away on the staircase.

"One of my friends," said Gilbert, "a man who knows all, but who came to give me his word not to betray us."

"And you call him — ?"

"Baron Zannone."

"That 's queer," replied Charny. "I don't know that name, and yet I seem to know that face. — Have you the passport, Doctor?"

"Here it is, Count!"

Charny took the passport, unfolded it, and was so completely absorbed in attending to this important piece of paper, that he appeared to forget the Baron Zannone, — at least, momentarily.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE EVENING OF THE TWENTIETH OF JUNE.

MEANWHILE, let us see what happened on the Twentieth of June, in the evening, from nine o'clock till midnight, in various parts of the capital.

Not without reason was Madame de Rochereul mistrusted. Although her duties ceased on the Eleventh, she contrived, being already suspicious, to find some excuse for returning to the palace; and she noticed, albeit the Queen's jewel-caskets were in their accustomed places, that her diamonds were there no longer. In fact, they had been confided, by Marie Antoinette, to her barber, Leonard, who was also to depart on the night of the Twentieth, a few hours in advance of his august mistress, with Monsieur de Choiseul, commanding the first detachment of soldiers, stationed at Sommevelle Bridge. Choiseul was also to have charge of the relays for Varennes, consisting of six good horses, which were now at his residence in Rue Artois, where he awaited the last orders of the King and Queen.

It was perhaps a little indiscreet to embarrass Choiseul with Master Leonard, and a little imprudent for the Queen to take a hairdresser with her; but what artist, in a strange land, could undertake to build those admirable coiffures, which Leonard so jauntily reared for her? What would you have? When a barber is a man of genius, he is not to be dispensed with lightly.

The Dauphin's chambermaid suspected that the departure was fixed for Monday, the Twentieth, at eleven in the evening, and she gave due notice thereof, not only to her lover, Monsieur de Gouvion, who was Lafayette's aide, but also to Bailly, the head of the city government.

After going to the King, for a free talk over this denunciation, Lafayette only shrugged his shoulders.

Bailly did better. While Lafayette became as blind as an astronomer, Bailly became as chivalrous as any knight, and even sent Madame de Rochereul's letter to the Queen.

Gouvion, being directly influenced by his sweetheart, alone retained his more intense suspicions. At her suggestion, under the pretext of a social military reunion, he brought together, at his lodgings, a dozen officers of the National Guard. Five or six of them he placed on the watch, at different entrances of the palace; while he charged himself, assisted by five battalion officers, with the oversight of the doors leading to the suite of rooms occupied by Monsieur de Villequier, to which his attention had been specially called.

About the same hour, at number nine in Rue Coq Heron, in a parlor with which we are familiar, — seated on a lounge where we have seen her before, — was a young woman, apparently calm as well as beautiful, but profoundly moved in the depths of her heart. She was conversing with a young man twenty-three or twenty-four years old, who was standing in front of her. He was armed with a hunting-knife, and wore a courier's suit, — a buff jacket, and pantaloons tight as his skin, terminating in a pair of boots turned down at the top. In his hand he held a round laced hat.

The young woman appeared to be insisting upon something to which the young man objected.

"Once more, Viscount," she said, "why has he not been near me, during the two months and a half since his return to Paris?"

"Several times since his return, Madame, my brother has charged me to bring him news of yourself."

"I know it, and I am duly grateful to him, — as to yourself, Viscount; but, on the eve of a new departure, it seems to me he might himself come and say farewell."

"Undoubtedly this was not possible, for he entrusts me with this duty."

"And this journey which you undertake, will it be long?"

"I do not know, Madame."

"I say *you*, because, by your costume, I must think you also are to go."

"In all probability, Madame, I shall be away from Paris by midnight."

"Do you accompany your brother, or do you go in an opposite direction?"

"I believe, Madame, we are to follow the same road."

"Will you tell him that you have seen me?"

"Yes, Madame; for — judging by the solicitude which he evinced in sending me to you, and his repeated instructions not to rejoin him till I had seen you — he would not pardon me, if I forgot his commission."

The young woman brushed a tear from her eye, heaved a sigh, and said, after reflecting an instant: "Viscount, you are a gentleman, and will comprehend the import of the demand I make upon you. Answer me, as you would if I were truly your sister, — as you would answer before God. In this journey which he undertakes, will Monsieur de Charny incur serious danger?"

"Who can say, Madame," replied Isidore, trying to evade the question, "where there is danger, and where

there is no danger, in the age in which we live? If on that Fifth of October, in the morning, our poor brother George had been asked if he thought there was any danger, he would have said No. The next day he was lying, pale and inanimate, across the Queen's doorway. Danger, Madame, in the age wherein we live, rises out of the earth, and one finds himself face to face with death, without knowing whence it comes or who has summoned it."

Andrée grew pale, as she said: "Then he runs the peril of death! Is it not so, Viscount?"

"I did not say so, Madame."

"No! but you thought so!"

"I think, Madame, if you have anything important to say to my brother, the enterprise upon which he is venturing — like myself — is sufficiently grave for you to entrust me, either in writing or by the living voice, with the transmission of your desires."

"Very well, Viscount, I will only ask for five minutes," said Andrée, rising.

With her customary slow and cool step the Countess entered her bedroom, shutting the door behind her.

As she left the parlor, the young man looked anxiously at his watch.

"Nine o'clock and a quarter," he said to himself, "and the King expects us at half-past. Fortunately, it 's only a step from here to the Tuileries." The Countess did not even take as much time as she had named, and at the expiration of a few seconds she re-entered, holding in her hand a sealed letter. "Viscount," she said solemnly, "to your honor I confide this letter."

Isidore extended his hand to receive it. "Wait," said Andrée, "and understand well what I say to you. If your brother, if the Count, accomplishes his undertaking without accident, there is nothing different to say to

him from what I have already told you, — to give him my sympathy with his loyalty, my respect for his devotion, my admiration for his character. — If he should be wounded —" Andrée's voice changed slightly. "If he is wounded grievously, you will ask him to accord me the privilege of going to him. If he should grant me that favor, you will send a messenger, who can tell me where I can surely find my husband, and I will go to him at once. — If he is wounded unto death," — and here Andrée's voice almost broke with emotion, — "you may give him this letter. If no longer able to read it himself, you may read it to him; for before his death I wish him to know what this letter contains. On your faith as a gentleman, you will do what I desire, Viscount?"

With equal emotion Isidore again extended his hand, as he said: "On my honor, Madame."

"Then take this letter, and go, Viscount!"

Isidore took the letter, kissed the Countess's hand, and went away.

"Oh!" cried Andrée, falling upon her sofa, "if he should die, I want him at least to know that I loved him."

At the same moment when Isidore left the Countess, and placed the letter in his breast-pocket, beside another letter, — whose address he read by the light of the reflector which was lighted at the corner of Rue Coquillière, — two other men, clad exactly like himself, also approached a designated place of reunion, by different passages, — that is, the Queen's boudoir, into which our readers have already been introduced. One of the two men followed the gallery of the Louvre, along the side of the river pier, — that gallery which is to-day a picture museum, — at the end whereof he found Weber waiting for him. The other ascended the narrow stair-

case, which we saw Charny use, on his first return from Montmédy. As this man's coadjutor had been waited for at the end of the Louvre, by Weber, the Queen's chamberlain, so this second comer was waited for at the head of the staircase, by François Hue, the King's chamberlain. Both were introduced to the boudoir almost at the same time, but by different doors. The first comer was Monsieur de Valory. A few seconds after, a second door opened, and with astonishment Valory saw his own counterpart enter the room. Taking it for granted they were summoned for the same purpose, the two officers saluted each other, and drew nearer together.

At that moment a third door opened, and the Viscount appeared. He was the third courier, though as yet unacquainted with the other two.

Isidore was the only one of the three who knew why they were assembled, and what task lay before them. He would undoubtedly have been ready to answer any questions addressed to him by his two future comrades, when the door opened anew, and the King appeared.

"Gentlemen," said King Louis, addressing Malden and Valory, "pardon me for having disposed of you without your permission, but I hold you to be faithful servitors of royalty, since you both formerly belonged to my bodyguard. I asked you both to call on a tailor, whose address I gave you, in order that each should have a courier's suit made for him, and then to come to the Tuileries to-night, at half-past nine. Your presence proves that you are willing to accept the mission with which I may charge you, whatever it may be."

The two former guardsmen bowed, and Valory said:

"Sire, your Majesty well knows that he has no need to ask his gentlemen for permission to dispose of their devotion, their courage, and their lives."

"Sire," said Malden, "my colleague has responded for me, in responding for himself; and I presume he speaks for our third companion."

"Your third companion, gentlemen, — whose acquaintance I commend to you, for it is a good acquaintance to make, — is Viscount Isidore de Charny, whose brother was killed at Versailles, in defending the Queen's portal. We are accustomed to the devotion of the men of his family; but however familiar their sacrifices have become, we are nevertheless thoroughly grateful for them."

"From what the King says, doubtless the Viscount knows the purpose of our meeting, although we are ignorant of it, and have hastened hither to learn it."

"Gentlemen," replied the King, "you are not ignorant that I am virtually a prisoner, — a prisoner of the Commander of the National Guard, a prisoner of the President of the Assembly, a prisoner of the Mayor of Paris, a prisoner of the populace, — in a word, everybody's prisoner. Well, gentlemen, I have counted on you to aid me in shaking off this humiliation, and regaining my liberty. My fate, with that of the Queen and our children, is in your hands. All is ready for us to hasten our departure to-night; only you must help us to get away."

"Sire, give your orders!" said the three young men.

"We cannot all go out together, — you can well understand that, gentlemen. Our rendezvous is to be at the corner of Rue Saint Nicaise, where Count Charny will await us with a hired carriage. Viscount, you will take charge of the Queen, and answer to the name of Melchior. Malden, you will have the care of Madame Elizabeth and

Madame Royale, and will be called Jean. You, Valory, will take charge of Madame de Tourzel — or Korff, as she will be called — and the Dauphin, and your name will be François. Do not forget your new names, my friends, and remain here for further instructions."

In turn the King offered his hand to each of the three young men, and went out, leaving three men all ready to die for him.

Meanwhile Choiseul, who had declared to the King, the night before, in Bouillé's behalf, that it would be impossible to postpone the flight later than midnight of the Twentieth, — and that Bouillé would start by four o'clock on the morning of the Twenty-first, if he received no contrary advice, and take all his detachments to Dun, Stenay, and Montmédy, — Choiseul, as we have before said, was at his home in the Rue Artois, whither he had come to get the last orders from Court. As it was already nine o'clock, he began to despair, when the only servant whom he had retained, and who believed him on the point of departure for Metz, came to say that a man wanted to speak with him, in the Queen's name.

Choiseul ordered him to be shown in. A man entered, wearing an enormous topcoat, and a round hat, slouched over his eyes.

"Ah, it's you, Leonard! I have been waiting for you very impatiently."

"If you have been kept waiting, it is n't my fault, but the Queen's, who told me only ten minutes ago, that I was to come here."

"She told you nothing else?" asked the Duke.

"Yes, indeed, Monsieur. She entrusted me with all her diamonds, and told me to bring you this letter."

"Hand it over, then!" said the Duke, with some impatience; for he was not altogether pleased with

the immense importance enjoyed by the pretentious personage who brought him the royal despatch.

The letter was long, and full of directions. It announced that they would leave at midnight, advised Choiseul to start at once, and renewedly begged him to take Leonard along, who had received orders, as the Queen added, to obey Choiseul as he would obey herself; and she underlined the following words: *I hereby renew this order!*

The Duke looked at Leonard, who was waiting with manifest anxiety. The barber looked very grotesque, under an enormous hat, and lost in an immense overcoat, with large capes.

"Now get your wits together," said the Duke. "What did the Queen say to you?"

"I can repeat it, word for word, Monsieur."

"Go on! I'm listening."

"She sent for me three-quarters of an hour ago, Monsieur."

"Good."

"She said, in a low tone —"

"Her Majesty was not alone, then?"

"No, Monsieur. The King was talking with Madame Elizabeth, in the alcove of the window. Monsieur the Dauphin and Madame Royale were playing together. As to the Queen, she was leaning wearily against the mantel-piece."

"Go on, Leonard, go on!"

"The Queen said to me, in a low voice: 'Leonard, I can depend upon you?' — Says I: 'Ah Madame, dispose of me as you please. Your Majesty knows that I am devoted to her, body and soul.' — 'Take these diamonds,' says she, 'and bury them in your pockets. Take this letter, and carry it to Rue Artois, to the Duke de Choiseul,

and deliver it only to himself. If he is n't at home, you will find him with the Duchess de Grammont.' — Then, as I was coming away, to obey the Queen's orders, her Majesty called me back. 'Put on a broad-brimmed hat,' says she, 'and a big riding-coat, in order not to be recognized, my dear Leonard; and obey Monsieur de Choiseul as you would me.' — Then I returned to my lodgings, took a riding-coat and hat belonging to my brother, and here I am."

"So the Queen instructed you to obey me as you would herself?"

"Those were truly the august words of her Majesty, Monsieur."

"I am glad you recollect her verbal instructions. Anyway, here 's the same order, in writing, and as I must burn the letter, read it first!" and Choiseul offered the paper to the barber, who read it aloud:

I have given orders to my hairdresser, Leonard, to obey you as he would myself. *I hereby renew this order!*

"You understand, do you not?" said the Duke.

"Yes, Monsieur! but you may well believe that her Majesty's spoken order would be sufficient."

"Never mind that!" said the Duke, as he burned the letter.

At that instant the Duke's servant returned to say that the carriage was ready.

"Come, my dear Leonard!" said the Duke.

"What? Am I to come? And the diamonds?"

"You 'll take them with you."

"And where?"

"Where I take you."

"And where do you take me?"

"Some leagues away, and you have a special commission to fulfil."

"Impossible, Monsieur!"

"Why impossible? Did n't the Queen bid you obey me as herself?"

"That 's true; but how can I do it? I left the key in the door of our lodgings. When my brother goes home, he won't find his riding-coat or his hat. Not seeing me return, he won't know where I am. And then there 's Madame de l'Aage, whose hair I 've promised to dress, and who waits for me. As a proof of this, Monsieur, my cabriolet and my servant are in the courtyard of the Tuileries."

"Come, come, my dear Leonard, what would you have?" laughingly said Choiseul. "Your brother must buy another hat and another riding-coat. You must barber Madame de l'Aage some other day. Not seeing you return, your lackey will unharness your horse, and take him back to the stable. Meantime, *our* team is harnessed, and *we* must be off."

Without paying further attention to Leonard's complaints and regrets, the Duke made the disconsolate barber get into the cabriolet, and then set off, at a fast trot, towards the Little Villette Barrier.

The Duke had hardly passed the last houses of Little Villette, when a group of five men, coming into Rue Saint Honoré from the Jacobin Club, directed their steps towards the Palais Royal, remarking, as they sauntered along, upon the deep tranquillity of the night.

These five persons were Danton, Fréron, Chénier, Legendre, and Desmoulins, who himself relates the incident.

As they reached the end of Rue Échelle, Desmoulins said, glancing towards the Tuileries: "Faith, does n't it

seem to you to-night that Paris is as tranquil as if she were forsaken? During our whole walk, not a solitary patrol have we encountered."

"That's because measures have been taken to leave the road clear for the King," said Fréron.

"How, — the road clear for the King?" asked Danton.

"Undoubtedly," said Fréron, "he starts to-night."

"Go along with your joking!" said Legendre.

"It may be a joke," replied Fréron, "but I have been so notified in a letter."

"A letter announcing the flight of the King? A letter signed?"

"No, an anonymous letter. I have it with me. — Here, read!"

The five Patriots approached a hack, which was standing at the head of Rue Saint Nicaise, and by the light of its lantern they read the following lines:

Citizen Fréron is informed that to-night Monsieur Capet, the Austrian Woman, and their two whelps will quit Paris, to join General Bouillé, the slaughterer of Nancy, who awaits them on the frontier.

"Hold on!" said Desmoulins. "*Monsieur Capet!* That's a good name! Henceforth I'll call him *Monsieur Capet*, instead of Louis Sixteenth."

"And there will be only one fault to find," said Chénier, "that the family name of Louis Sixteenth is not *Capet*, but *Bourbon*."

"Bah! Who cares?" said Desmoulins. "Two or three pedants, like Chénier, perhaps! Is n't that so, Legendre, — is n't *Capet* a good name?"

"Meanwhile," said Danton, "what if the letter speaks the truth, and this is really the night when the whole royal gang is to decamp?"

"As we 're here, at the Tuileries, let us see about it!" and the five Patriots amused themselves by walking around the palace.

In returning towards Rue Saint Nicaise, they perceived Lafayette and his staff going into the Tuileries.

"Faith!" said Danton. "Why, there 's Blondinet, coming to help put the royal family to bed. Our duty is done, and his begins. Good-night, gentlemen! Who comes with me, towards Rue Paon?"

"I!" said Legendre.

The group separated into two parties. Danton and Legendre crossed the Carrousel Square, while Chénier, Fréron, and Camille Desmoulins disappeared around the corner of Rue Rohan, into Rue Saint Honoré.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE DEPARTURE.

At eleven in the evening, at the very time when Madame Tourzel and Madame Brunier, after having undressed and put Madame Royale and the Dauphin to bed, woke them up again, and dressed them in their travelling clothes, — to the great mortification of the Dauphin, who wished to put on his usual masculine attire, and obstinately refused the girlish garments, — the Queen and Madame Elizabeth received Lafayette and his two aides, Gouvion and Romeuf.

This visit was specially disquieting, on account of their suspicions of Madame de Rochereul.

In the evening the Queen and Madame Elizabeth went out, for a promenade in the Bois de Boulogne, — the park beyond the termination of the Champs Élysées, the other side of the point where now stands the great Triumphal Arch erected by Napoleon. Lafayette asked the Queen if the drive had been pleasant; only he added that she was wrong to be out so late, as he feared the evening fogs might not be good for her.

"Fogs in a June evening?" said the Queen, smiling; "but truly, unless made purposely to conceal our flight, I don't know where we should find them. I say, to conceal our flight; for I suppose the rumor still spreads that we are about running away."

"The truth is, Madame," said Lafayette, "there is more talk than ever about your departure, and I have been notified that it is to take place to-night."

"Ah!" said the Queen, "I wager you learned that piece of news from Monsieur de Gouvion?"

"And why from me, your Majesty?" asked the young officer, blushing.

"Well, because I believe you have constant intercourse with the palace. Now here is Monsieur Romeuf, who has no such intercourse; and I 'm sure he 'll be answerable for us."

"And I should not deserve any great credit, Madame," responded the young aide, "inasmuch as the King gave the Assembly his word of honor not to quit Paris."

This time it was the Queen's turn to blush, and they subsequently chatted about other matters. At half-past eleven Lafayette and his two aides took leave of the King and Queen.

Thereafter Gouvion, ill-satisfied, returned to his room in the palace, where he found his friends on the watch; but instead of relieving them from duty, he urged them to redouble their vigilance.

As to Lafayette, he went to the Hôtel de Ville, to tranquillize Bailly about the King's intentions, if Bailly had any misgivings.

As soon as Lafayette had left them, the Queen and Madame Elizabeth called upon their attendants for the customary toilet services; after which, at the regular hour, everybody was dismissed.

Then the Queen and Madame Elizabeth helped each other to dress. Their gowns were extremely simple. Their bonnets were very large, with wide borders, which wholly hid their faces.

When they were dressed the King came in. He had a gray coat, and wore one of those bag (or pudding) periwigs, named after Jean Jacques Rousseau. He also wore short breeches, gray stockings, and buckled shoes.

Now and then, for a week, Hue, the King's valet, clothed in a costume exactly like the King's, had gone in and out the entrance of the apartments belonging to Monsieur de Villequier, — who had emigrated six months before, — and so into Carrousel Square, the great courtyard of the Tuileries, and thence to the Rue Saint Nicaise, which was not far away. This precaution had been taken so that people should become accustomed to seeing a man, dressed in this fashion, going about the neighborhood, and not be specially attracted by the King's appearance, when his turn should come to pass that way.

The three couriers were brought from the Queen's boudoir, where they had waited for the hour to arrive, and taken into the parlor in the suite occupied by Madame Royale, where she and the Dauphin were.

In anticipation of the flight, this suite, adjoining Villequier's former apartments, had been thus occupied since the Eleventh of the month; and on the Thirteenth the King took possession of the keys of the vacated rooms.

Once inside of Villequier's old apartments, there would be no great difficulty in getting outside the palace. These rooms were supposed to be deserted; and as it was not known that the King had taken the keys, this point was ordinarily not guarded.

Moreover, after it struck eleven, the sentinels in the courtyards were accustomed to see a great many different people go out together. These were mostly royal attendants, who did not sleep in the palace, but returned to their own lodgings, when their duties for the day were over.

In Madame Royale's parlor the royal family completed their arrangements for the journey.

Isidore de Charny, who had surveyed the road with his brother, and knew all the difficult and dangerous places,

would ride ahead, and notify the postilions, so that changing horses might cause no needless delay.

Malden and Valory would be on the rear outside seat, and pay the postilions thirty sous apiece. The ordinary price was twenty-five, but five were to be added, on account of the weight of the carriage. If the postilions made good time, they would receive large gratuities for drink-money. No postilion would receive over forty sous from them, however, the King alone paying a crown.

The elder Charny, Count Oliver, would be inside the carriage, prepared for all emergencies. He would be well armed, as would be also the three couriers. For each of them there would be a brace of pistols in the carriage.

By paying the postilions extra, and driving moderately fast, it was calculated that in thirteen hours the party would be at Châlons.

All the arrangements had been agreed upon between Count Oliver de Charny and the Duke de Choiseul. They were repeated several times to the three young gentlemen, in order that each should become fully acquainted with his functions.

Viscount Isidore de Charny would ride on ahead, and order the horses. Malden and Valory, on the rear outside seat, would pay for them. If anything needed to be said, the Count would do the talking from his place inside, putting his head through the coach window. Each one promised to adhere to his part of the programme.

Then the candles were blown out, and the party cautiously went into the Villequier apartments. Midnight sounded, as they passed from Madame Royale's suite into the other. The Count de Charny must have been at his post more than an hour already.

Feeling his way along, the King found the door leading into the corridor. He was about inserting the key, when the Queen checked him with a *hush!*

They listened. They could hear laughter and steps in the corridor outside. Something extraordinary was taking place out there. Madame de Tourzel, who lived constantly in the palace, and whose presence in the corridor, even at that hour, could surprise nobody, volunteered to go back and round the apartments to the other side, and ascertain the source of those chuckles and noisy steps.

They waited motionless, — almost breathless. The greater the silence, the easier it was to perceive the corridor was occupied by several persons.

Madame de Tourzel returned. She had recognized Gouvion, and noticed several uniforms.

It was obviously inexpedient to enter the corridor, and so leave the building, through the Villequier suite, unless there was some other outlet than the one already selected; only they had no light to aid their search.

A night-lamp was burning in Madame Royale's chamber, and Madame Elizabeth went there, to relight the candle which had been blown out. By the light of this candle the little band of fugitives tried to find some other place of egress from the Villequier rooms.

For some time their search was fruitless, and more than fifteen minutes were lost. At last they discovered a small staircase, which led to an isolated room in the lower story. This chamber had belonged to Monsieur de Villequier's servant, and had a door which connected it with the servants' entrance.

This door was locked. The King tried all the keys on his ring, but not one of them would fit. Isidore tried to push back the bolt with the point of his hunting-knife,

but the bolt resisted. To be sure they had found an outlet, yet they were shut in the great palace as tightly as ever.

The King took the candle from Madame Elizabeth's hands. Leaving the rest in obscurity, he went upstairs to his own bedroom, by the secret staircase, whence he could easily reach his workshop. There he took a bunch of picks of different forms, some of them quite odd, and then came down again.

Before rejoining the group, waiting for him with so much anxiety, he had decided which pick to try. This picklock easily entered into the keyhole, grated as it turned, caught the bolt, and twice let it slip; but the third time he pressed the pick so hard that the bolt flew back, after several seconds of careful effort. The latch yielded, the door opened, and everybody breathed more freely.

Louis turned to the Queen with a triumphant air. "Hey, Madame?" he said; "is n't this really worth knowing?"

"Yes, Monsieur," said the Queen, laughing; "and truly I never said it was bad to be a locksmith, only that it was better to be a king."

Meanwhile it was necessary to arrange the order of their departure. Madame Elizabeth went out first, conducting Madame Royale. At twenty paces distant they were followed by Madame de Tourzel, with the Dauphin. Between the two groups walked Monsieur de Malden, ready to give help to either party.

These first beads detached from the royal chaplet — these poor children, watched by love from behind, and depending upon that love which followed them with its keen eyes — went timidly out, on tiptoe, entered the circle of light formed by the street-lamp, shining above the

palace door which opened into the courtyard, and passed the sentinel quietly and unnoticed.

"Good!" said Madame Elizabeth, "there's one bad place over!"

At the wicket, which led into the Carrousel Square, they met a sentinel, whose line of march directly crossed their path. Seeing them, he paused.

"Aunty," said Madame Royale, pressing Madame Elizabeth's hand, "we are lost! That man knows us!"

"Never mind, my child," said Madame Elizabeth, "we shall certainly be lost if we hesitate!" and so they continued on their way.

When they were within four steps of the sentinel, he turned his back upon them, so they could pass by.

Did this man really know them? Did he know what illustrious fugitives he allowed to pass? The ladies were fully convinced that he did, and bestowed a thousand benedictions upon their unknown preserver, in the midst of their flight.

On the other side of the wicket they could see Charny's anxious face. The Count was wrapped in a great box-coat, and wore a round oil-cloth hat. "Thank God," he said, "you are here at last! But the King, the Queen!"

"They are following us," replied Madame Elizabeth.

"Come on!" said Charny; and he rapidly led the way to a hired carriage, stationed on Rue Saint Nicaise.

Another carriage had taken its stand beside the first, as if to play the spy.

"Well, comrade," said the driver of this second carriage, seeing Charny come along with this little party, "it seems there 's a fare!"

"Ay, ay, comrade!" replied Charny. Then he whispered to the bodyguard: "Malden, take that cab, and

go straight to Gate Saint Martin. You 'll have no difficulty in recognizing the coach which is there waiting for us."

Malden understood, and jumped into the carriage, while Charny said aloud to the strange hackman: "A load for thee also. To the Opera-house, — quick!"

The Opera-house evidently meant Saint Martin's Gate.

The coachman supposed Malden to be some footman, going to meet his master at the play, and drove away without any further observation, except a few words which related to his pecuniary interest in the price of the trip.

"You know it 's past midnight, my friend!"

"Oh yes! Go ahead, and be easy!"

As at this period lackeys were often more generous than their masters, the coachman drove off with no further remarks.

Hardly had this carriage turned the corner into Rue Rohan, than there came, at an ordinary gait, — through the same wicket which had given passage to Madame Royale and Madame Elizabeth, Madame de Tourzel and the Dauphin, — a man dressed like a clerk, leaving his office after a long and hard day's work. This good man wore a gray coat. His hat was tipped over his nose and he carried his hands in his pocket.

It was the King. He was followed by Valory. During his walk, one of the King's shoe-buckles became detached. He went on without noticing it, but Valory picked it up.

Charny came several steps towards them, having recognized Valory, — who followed the King, — but not the King himself.

Charny was one of those to whom a king is always the King. He heaved a sigh of sadness, almost of shame, as

he murmured: "This way, Sire!" adding, in a lower voice, to Valory: "And the Queen?"

"The Queen is following us, with your brother Isidore."

"Very well! Take the shortest cut, and wait for us at the Gate Saint Martin. I will take a longer way. The place of meeting is by the great coach which is waiting there for us."

Valory hurried from Rue Saint Nicaise to Rue Saint Honoré, then into Rue Richelieu, Victory Square, and Rue Bourbon Villeneuve, which led diagonally from this Square to Saint Martin's Gate.

Meantime the royal party waited for the Queen. A half-hour passed. We will not try to depict the anxiety of the fugitives.

Charny, upon whom rested the weight of responsibility, was almost crazy. He wished to return to the palace, and make inquiries; but the King held him back.

The little Dauphin wept, and cried aloud for his dear mamma. Neither his sister, his aunt, nor his governess could comfort him.

Their terror increased when they saw General Lafayette's carriage, accompanied by torchbearers, return that way, and drive into Carrousel Square.

This is what had happened. At the door of the courtyard the Viscount gave his arm to the Queen, and wished to turn to the left; but she stopped him.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To the corner of Rue Saint Nicaise, where my brother expects us."

"Is it on the riverside?" asked her Majesty.

"No, Madame."

"Well, it's at the wicket on the riverside, opposite the quay, where your brother is to wait."

Isidore tried to insist; but the Queen (who had been misled, perhaps, by the similarity of sound between the word *quay*[1] and the last syllable of *Nicaise*), appeared so sure of what she said, that he began to misdoubt his own memory.

"Before God, Madame," he exclaimed, "be very careful. An error now would be fatal!"

"To the riverside!" repeated the Queen. "I certainly heard something said about the *quay*."

"Then let us go to the riverside, Madame, for it is only on the other side of the palace; but if we do not find the carriage there, we will at once go to Rue Saint Nicaise, shall we not?"

"Yes, yes; but let us keep on now!"

The Queen led her cavalier through the three courtyards, separated, at that time, by thick walls, and opening from one to another through narrow passages, close to the palace buildings, each opening being protected with a chain and guarded by a sentinel.

One by one these openings were passed by Isidore and the Queen, who had to climb over the chains; but not a sentinel offered to bar their progress. Why should anybody fancy that this young woman, dressed like an attendant in some respectable mansion, and leaning on the arm of a handsome young fellow, in the livery of the Prince de Condé, — and climbing with agility over those great chains, — was the Queen of France?

They reached the waterside, and found the pier deserted.

"Then the carriage must be on the farther side of the river!" said the Queen.

[1] It will be remembered that though *quay* is sometimes pronounced like *key* in English, it is never so pronounced in French, but always has the long sound of *a*, — like *kay*.

Isidore wished to retrace their steps; but she persisted, as if seized by a sort of hallucination: "No, no! This way!" and she urged Isidore to go farther on, towards Royal Bridge.

They crossed this bridge, and found the quay and the other bank of the Seine, the left, just as deserted as the right bank, on the side of the Tuileries.

"Let us look into yonder street!" said the Queen; and she forced Isidore to try Rue Bac. At the end of a hundred steps she acknowledged to herself she must be mistaken, and stood still, panting for breath, for her strength began to give out.

"Well, Madame, do you still insist?"

"No! It all depends upon you! Take me where you will!"

"In Heaven's name, have courage!" said Isidore.

"It's not courage I lack, but strength," said Marie Antoinette. Turning her steps backward she added: "Oh Lord, oh Lord! it seems to me I shall never recover my breath!"

Isidore knew that in such an emergency breath was as necessary to the Queen's safety as it is to a fawn pursued by the hounds; so he paused.

"Breathe, Madame. We have time enough. I will answer for my brother. He 'll wait until daylight, if need be."

"You believe he loves me, then?" cried she, quickly and imprudently, pressing against her breast the young Viscount's arm, upon which she leaned.

"I believe that his life, like mine, belongs to you, Madame; and the sentiment of love, which belongs to us both, amounts to adoration in him."

"Thanks!" said the Queen. "You relieve me, and I breathe again. — Come, let us on!"

With feverish haste she resumed her walk. They re-crossed the bridge, and retraced the road already taken; only, in place of re-entering the other courtyards of the Tuileries, Isidore passed through the wicket of Carrousel Square, which they crossed. Until midnight this immense square was usually filled with hackney carriages, and movable stalls for the sale of small wares; but now it was almost deserted and correspondingly gloomy.

They could hear, however, a great noise of rolling wheels and clattering hoofs. When they reached the wicket opposite Rue Échelle, it was evident that the horses and carriage whose hoofs and wheels they had heard were coming that way. A light was already visible, proceeding doubtless from the torches which kept the carriage company.

Isidore wished to go back, but the Queen insisted upon going forward. Isidore threw himself under the wicket, in order to protect her, just as the heads of the torch-bearers' horses appeared at the opposite entrance. He pushed her into the darkest recess along the wall, and stationed himself in front of her; but even this dark recess was instantly flooded with light from the torches.

In the midst of the cavalcade, half reclining in his carriage, wearing his elegant uniform as General of the National Guard, might be seen Lafayette.

At the moment when this carriage passed by, Isidore felt a strong arm — enforced with will-power, if not with physical strength — push him aside. This arm was the strong left arm of the Queen.

In her right hand she carried a small bamboo cane, with a gilt knob, such as women generally carried at that epoch. With this she rapped the carriage-wheels, saying: "Go thy way, jailer! I 'm outside of thy prison!"

"What are you doing, Madame?" whispered Isidore. "To what are you exposing yourself?"

"I am revenging myself!" responded Marie Antoinette. "One would risk anything for *that!*"

As soon as the last torch had passed by them, she ran out of her retreat, as radiant as a goddess and joyful as a child.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A QUESTION OF ETIQUETTE.

THE Queen had not taken ten steps beyond the wicket, when a man wearing a huge boxcoat, his face hidden by an oil-cloth hat, grasped her peremptorily by the arm, and hurried her towards a hack, stationed at the corner of Rue Saint Nicaise.

This man was the elder Charny. The hack was one in which the rest of the royal family had been waiting half an hour. They expected to see the Queen perplexed, disheartened, hysterical, but here she came, laughing and joyous. The dangers she had run, the fatigue she had incurred, the errors she had committed, the time she had lost, the delay she had caused, — all these were forgotten, in the rap of the cane which she had given the wheels of Lafayette's carriage, and which seemed to her almost as if she had bestowed the blow upon himself.

Ten paces away from the hack, a servant was holding a horse by the bridle. Charny had no sooner pointed the animal out to Isidore than Isidore sprang upon his back, and was off at full speed. He was to ride in advance as far as Bondy, and see that relays of horses were in readiness.

Seeing him depart, the Queen threw after him several words of gratitude, which he could not hear.

"Come, Madame, come," said Charny, with that firmness, mingled with respect, which really strong men

know how to assume in great emergencies, "there is not a second to lose!"

The Queen entered the carriage, where were already the King, Madame Elizabeth, Madame Royale, the Dauphin, and Madame de Tourzel, — that is, five persons. She sat in the rear seat, and took the Dauphin on her knees. Next her sat the King. Madame Elizabeth, Madame Royale, and Madame de Tourzel sat facing them.

Charny closed the door, mounted to the driver's seat; and to put spies on the wrong scent, if any were lurking thereabouts, he turned the horses, drove up Rue Saint Honoré, entered the boulevards at the Madeleine Church, and followed the line of the boulevards around, till the curve brought them, in this roundabout way, to the Gate Saint Martin.

There, on a byroad outside the gate, leading to a place known as the Common Sewer, they found in waiting the unusually large coach, which had been built expressly for the royal flight.

The byway was deserted. Charny leaped to the ground and opened the door of the hack he had been driving. The door of the coach, which was to serve them for their journey, was already open. Malden and Valory, who had reached the place an hour or so earlier, stood by the steps, on either side.

In an instant the six persons who had come in the hack were standing in the road. Then Charny drove the hack, which was no longer needed, to the lower side of the way, managed to upset it into a ditch, and then returned to the large coach, to which he attached the extra horses.

First the King entered, then the Queen, then Madame Elizabeth. After their aunt, came the two children; and after them, Madame de Tourzel.

Malden mounted behind the coach, while Valory sat with Charny, on the driver's seat. The coach was now furnished with four horses. A *click* of the tongue made them start off at a trot, the director urging them to full speed. The quarter-hour after one rang from Saint Lawrence's Church.

It required an hour to go as far as Bondy. The fresh horses were waiting in the stable, with their harnesses on their backs, ready to be hitched to the coach. Isidore was on hand, near the horses.

On the other side of the road stood a hired cabriolet, attached to two posthorses. In this cabriolet were two chambermaids, belonging to the service of the Dauphin and Madame Royale. They had expected to find a livery hack at Bondy; but not finding one there, they arranged with the master of this cabriolet, who sold it to them for a thousand francs.

The master, well-pleased with his bargain, — and doubtless wishing to see who might be the persons who were such idiots as to give a thousand francs for such an old rattletrap, — was waiting and drinking in the posthouse. He saw the King's coach arrive, directed by Charny, who jumped down and approached the carriage window.

Under his coachman's coat he wore his uniform; and his hat was in the box, under the seat. It had been arranged between the King, Queen, and Charny, that the latter should take a seat inside the coach at Bondy, in place of Madame de Tourzel, who would return alone to Paris.

Unfortunately they had forgotten to consult Madame de Tourzel about this arrangement. The King submitted the question to her. Despite her heartfelt devotion to the royal family in other matters, Madame de Tourzel was a worthy disciple and appendage of old Madame de

Noailles on all questions of etiquette, — a perfect dragon on this subject.

She therefore replied: "Sire, my duty is to watch over the royal children of France, and not quit them for an instant. Unless I have an express order from your Majesty, — an order which would, however, be *unprecedented*, — I shall not leave them."

The Queen shook with impatience. A double reason made her wish to have Charny in the coach. As Queen, she saw in him her protector. As a woman, she found in him her delight.

"Dear Madame de Tourzel," said her Majesty, "we are as grateful to you as possible; but you are uncomfortable, and you have an exaggerated sense of your duty. Remain here at Bondy, for the present, and wherever we may be, you shall rejoin us later."

"Madame," responded Madame de Tourzel, "if the King so *orders*, I am ready to leave the carriage, and to remain in the middle of the highway, if necessary; but only an order from his Majesty will make me willing, not merely to fail in my duty, but to renounce my rights."

"Sire," said the Queen, "Sire!" but Louis dared not decide so grave a question. He sought for some expedient, some loophole of escape, some subterfuge.

"Monsieur de Charny," he said, "can you not remain on the box?"

"I can do whatever the King wishes," said Charny; "only, I must either wear my official uniform, — and during the past year I have been frequently seen on this route, wearing the same uniform, and everybody will recognize me; or else I must wear this boxcoat, and coachman's oil-cloth hat; and the latter dress is a little too ordinary for so elegant a carriage."

"Come inside, Monsieur de Charny, come in," said the Queen. "I will take the Dauphin on my knees. Madame Elizabeth will take little Maria Theresa on hers, and we shall get along very well. We shall be somewhat crowded, that 's all."

Charny awaited the decision of the King, who said: "Impossible, my dear! Think of it! We have ninety leagues to travel!"

Madame de Tourzel stood up, ready to obey the King's orders, and get out, if the King so decided; but the King dared not give this order, — so important, among Court people, seem the most trifling prejudices.

"Charny," said the King to the Count, "can't you take your brother Isidore's place, and travel in advance, to order the horses?"

"As I have already assured your Majesty, I am ready to do anything; only I beg your Majesty to remember, the posthorses are usually ordered by a courier, not by a naval captain. This novelty would astonish the postmasters at the stations, and might lead to serious difficulties."

"That 's true!" said the King.

"Oh my God, my God," said the Queen, overflowing with impatience. Then she added, turning to Charny: "Arrange it as you please, Count, but I don't wish you to leave us."

"That is also my wish, Madame," said Charny, "but I can see only one way of avoiding it."

"Which way? Speak quick!" said the Queen.

"It is this, — that instead of entering the carriage, instead of mounting the box, instead of travelling as a courier, I should follow you along, in the plain dress of a man who travels by post. Go on, Madame, and before you have made ten leagues, I shall be not more than five hundred paces behind your carriage."

"Then you will go back to Paris?"

"Undoubtedly, Madame; but as far as Châlons, your Majesty has nothing to fear, and before you reach Châlons, I 'll be with you again."

"But how will you get back to Paris?"

"On the horse which my brother has been riding. The animal is an excellent roadster, and has had time to breathe. In less than half an hour I shall be in Paris."

"And then?"

"Then, Madame, I shall put on suitable clothing, hire a posthorse, and ride with a free stirrup, until I overtake you."

"Is there no other way?" said Marie Antoinette, in despair.

"Good Lord, I see no other!" said the King.

"Then no time is to be lost," said Charny. "We 're ready. Here Jean, François, — to your places. Ride ahead, Melchior! Postilions, to your horses!"

Madame de Tourzel then reseated herself in triumph, and the coach started off at a gallop, followed by the cabriolet.

This all-important discussion made them forget to give Isidore, Valory, and Malden the loaded pistols, which were packed away in their case, inside the coach.

Meanwhile, how were things going in Paris, whither Charny was riding so fast?

A wigmaker named Buseby, living in Rue Bourbon, had been passing the evening at the Tuileries, with a friend who was there on guard. This friend had heard the officers talking of the flight, which some people were so sure had been projected for that night. He told the wigmaker about it; and the wigmaker could not drive from his mind the notion that this project was real, and that the

royal flight, so long the subject of gossip, was to be put into execution that night.

Returning home, he told his wife what he had learned at the Tuileries; but she treated the whole affair as a dream. Her ridicule so quieted her husband's suspicions, that he finally undressed himself and went to bed.

Once in bed, however, his former convictions returned upon him, and before long became so strong that he could not resist them. He sprang out of bed, redressed himself, and visited the apartments of one of his friends, named Hucher, who was not only a baker, but also a sapper in the Théatin Battalion.

To him the wigmaker reported all he had heard at the Tuileries, and imparted his fears in such a lively fashion to the baker, — as to the flight of the royal family, — that the baker not only shared his neighbor's apprehensions, but grasped them more ardently. He even jumped out of bed, and, without taking time to put on anything but his drawers, went out into the street, rapped at the doors, and roused some thirty of his neighbors.

This was at fifteen minutes past midnight, and just after the Queen encountered Lafayette at the wicket of the Tuileries.

The citizens who were awakened by the wigmaker Buseby and the baker Hucher decided that they would put on their uniforms as members of the National Guard, and then call upon General Lafayette, to let him know what was going on.

This resolution was at once put into execution. Lafayette lived on Rue Saint Honoré, in the Noailles Mansion, near the Feuillant Terrace. The Patriots put themselves in motion, and were there by half-past twelve.

After assisting the King to retire, after notifying Bailly that the King was safe abed, after paying a visit to Mon-

sieur Emmery, a member of the National Assembly, — after doing all this, the General had come home, and was preparing to undress.

At that moment there was a loud knock at the door of the Noailles Mansion. Lafayette sent his valet to see what was the matter. The valet soon returned, saying that some twenty-five or thirty citizens wished to see the General instantly, in an affair of the utmost importance.

At that period the General was accustomed to hold a reception at any hour when it happened to be necessary. Moreover, an affair which had disturbed twenty-five or thirty citizens might turn out of some importance; so he ordered his nocturnal visitors to be introduced. The General had only to slip on his coat, which he had just thrown off, to be in proper reception costume.

Messieurs Buseby and Hucher, for themselves and in behalf of their companions, made known their fears; Buseby basing his apprehensions on what he had gleaned at the Tuileries, — the others, on what they had daily heard in all quarters.

The General could only laugh at their fears. As he was a good fellow and a great talker, he told them whence these rumors had come; how they had been spread abroad by Madame de Rochereul and Monsieur de Gouvion; how, to reassure himself, the General had seen the King go to bed, — as his visitors might see himself go to bed, if they would remain a few minutes longer. As this conversation failed to reassure them, Lafayette added that he would make his own head answerable for the King, and for all the royal family.

After this assurance it was impossible to show any suspicion; so the citizens contented themselves with asking Lafayette for the watchword, so that no one

could molest them on their way home. Lafayette could not refuse them this favor, and gave them the word accordingly.

Armed with this watchword they resolved to visit the Riding School, to learn if there was anything new in that quarter, and also the palace courtyards, to ascertain if anything extraordinary was happening there.

From this trip they returned along Rue Saint-Honoré, and had reached Rue Échelle, when a horseman, at full speed, suddenly rode into their midst. In such a night, everything was eventful; so they crossed their muskets, and called upon the cavalier to halt.

He did so, and asked: "What do you want?"

"We want to know where you 're going," said the National Guardsmen.

"I 'm going to the Tuileries."

"What are you going to do at the Tuileries?"

"Render my account to the King, of a commission he has given me."

"At this hour?"

"Certainly, at this very hour!"

One of these astute fellows made a sign to the others, to let him speak, and said: "But at this hour the King 's abed and asleep."

"Yes," answered the rider, "but he can wake up."

"If you have business with the King, you must have the watchword," said the same man who had spoken before.

"That would be no reason, if I had come from the frontier, far away, instead of coming from a place only three leagues from here, and if I had parted from the King a month ago, instead of two hours."

"True," said the National Guardsmen.

"Then you saw the King two hours ago?" continued the first questioner.

"Yes."

"You spoke with him?"

"Yes."

"What was he doing two hours ago?"

"He was only waiting for General Lafayette to go out, in order to go to sleep."

"Then of course you have the watchword?"

"Certainly. The General, knowing that I must re-enter the Tuileries about one or two o'clock in the morning, gave me the watchword, so that I might not be delayed."

"And that watchword?"

"Paris and Poitiers."

"That 's all right," said the guardsmen. "Happy return, comrade. Tell the King you found us watching at his palace gate, so that he might not run away."

They stood aside to let the cavalier pass, as he responded, "I will not fail to do so;" and, pricking his horse with both spurs, he shot through the wicket of the Tuileries, where he disappeared from their sight.

"Had we better wait till he comes out of the Tuileries, and so learn if he saw the King?" said one of the wise citizens.

"If he lodges in the Tuileries, we shall have to wait till to-morrow!" said another.

"True," said the first; "and, my faith, if Lafayette 's abed, and the King 's abed, let 's take our turn in going to bed; and so, Hurrah for the Nation!"

The twenty-five or thirty Patriots repeated the cry in chorus: "Hurrah for the Nation!" and then went home to their little beds, happy and proud at having heard, from Lafayette's own mouth, that he had no fear of the King's quitting Paris.

CHAPTER XL.

ON THE ROAD.

We have seen the four horses start from Bondy at a vigorous trot, drawing the coach which bore the King and his family. Let us follow their journey in all its details, as we followed the details of their escape from Paris. The events were so important, and exercised so fatal an influence over the royal destiny, that the least accident on the route seems worthy of our curiosity or interest.

Day broke at about three in the morning. They changed horses at Meaux. The King was hungry, and began to break into their provisions. These provisions consisted of cold veal, which had been placed by Charny in the carriage wine-box, along with some bread, and four bottles of champagne, — not very sparkling.

As there were neither knives nor forks, the King summoned Jean. Jean, it will be remembered, was Monsieur de Malden's travelling name. Malden drew near.

"Jean," said the King, "lend me your hunting-knife, to cut this veal with."

Jean drew the knife from its sheath, and offered it to the King. During this transaction the Queen leaned out of the window and gazed backward, doubtless to see if Charny was not on the road.

"Won't you take something, Malden?" whispered the King.

"No, Sire," responded Malden, in tones equally low, "I need nothing."

"Don't let yourself or your companions discommode themselves unnecessarily," said the King. Then he added, speaking to the Queen, who was still looking out of the window: "A penny for your thoughts, Madame?"

"Mine? Oh, I was thinking of Lafayette," said the Queen, trying to smile. "He is probably not very comfortable, about this time." Then she said to Valory, who in his turn drew nearer the coach: "François, it seems to me that everything goes very well, and that we should be detained before this time, if we are likely to be detained at all. Our departure could not have been noticed."

"That is more than probable, Madame," responded Valory, "for I have observed no suspicious movements anywhere. Courage, Madame, all will yet be well."

"All ready!" cried the postilions. Malden and Valory remounted their seats, and the carriage drove on.

Towards eight o'clock in the morning they reached the bottom of a long hill. On both sides of the road stretched a lovely wood, where the birds were singing. The trees were illuminated by the first rays of a rare June day, piercing the foliage like golden arrows.

The postilions checked their horses. The two footmen came down from their seats.

"Jean," said the King, "stop the carriage, and open the door. I want to walk, and I believe the children and the Queen won't be sorry for a little diversion afoot."

Malden made a sign, and the postilions halted. The door was opened. The King, Queen, Madame Elizabeth, and the two children stepped out. Madame de Tourzel alone remained inside, being too ill to do otherwise.

In an instant the whole royal colony dispersed itself over the highway. The Dauphin began to chase butterflies, and Madame Royale to gather flowers. Madame Elizabeth took the King's arm, while the Queen walked on alone.

Seeing this family, thus scattered along the road, — the beautiful children running and playing; the sister smiling into the face of the brother, on whose arm she leaned; that beautiful and pensive woman, now and then looking backward; the whole scene lighted by the beautiful sun of a June morning, with the forest throwing its transparent shadows half across the road! — beholding this scene, one would have said this was a happy family, returning to their château, to resume the course of a peaceable and regular life, not a queen and king, fleeing from a throne, to which they would soon be restored, but only to be led thereafter to the scaffold.

It is true that an accident was soon to bring trouble into this serene picture, trouble arising from the different passions lying in the hearts of several personages of our narrative.

Suddenly the Queen stopped, as if her feet had taken root in the earth. A horseman appeared a quarter-league or so away, enveloped in a cloud of dust, raised by his horse's feet. Marie Antoinette dared not say, "There is Charny!" but a little cry escaped from her bosom, as she exclaimed: "Ah! News from Paris!"

Everybody turned, except the Dauphin. That happy child had just caught the butterfly he had been chasing, and cared little for the news from Paris.

The King, somewhat near-sighted, drew out a small lorgnette from his pocket, and said: "Hey? I do believe it 's Charny!"

"Yes, Sire, it *is* he," said the Queen.

"Let us keep on," said the King. "He'll soon overtake us, and we've no time to waste."

The Queen dared not say that undoubtedly the news brought by the Count must be worth waiting for. However, it was a delay of only a few seconds, as the horseman was coming at full speed.

As he drew nearer, he regarded the scene with great attention, and appeared unable to understand why that gigantic vehicle had spilled its passengers all over the road. At last he reached them, just as the coach attained the summit of the hill, where it halted.

It was indeed Charny, as had been conjectured by the Queen's heart and the King's glass. He wore a close, green riding-coat, with a rolling collar, a hat with a broad band and steel buckle, a white vest, tight breeches, and large military boots, which came up to his knees.

His complexion, usually a dull white, was flushed by his ride, and the jets of heat which reddened his cheeks shone even in his eyeballs. There was something of the air of a conqueror in his powerful breathing and dilated nostrils. The Queen had never seen him so handsome, and she heaved a profound sigh. He dismounted, and bowed to the King. Then he turned and saluted the Queen.

The whole group gathered about him, except the two guards, who remained discreetly aloof. "Approach, gentlemen, approach," said the King. "Monsieur de Charny's tidings concern everybody."

"To begin with, Sire, all goes well," said Charny, "and at two this morning, nobody suspected your flight."

Everybody breathed more freely. Then the questions multiplied.

Charny related how he had returned to Paris; how he

had encountered, in Rue Échelle, the patrol of Patriots; how they had catechised him; how he left them convinced that the King was abed and asleep.

Once inside the Tuileries, he had found everything as calm as on ordinary days. He went up to his room, changed his dress, came down again through the King's corridor, made sure that nobody suspected the escape of the royal family, — not even Monsieur Gouvion, who, finding that his sentinels, stationed in line around the royal apartments, were of no use, broke their ranks, and sent home the battalion officers.

Then Charny again mounted his horse, which had been held in the courtyard by one of the night watchmen. Thinking he should hardly be able to procure, at that hour, a nag at the posthouse in Paris, he set out for Bondy on the same horse he had so long been riding, whose feet were already used up; but he reached Bondy, and that was the one thing needful. There the Count had obtained a fresh horse, and continued his journey. Nothing disquieting had occurred on the road.

The Queen extended her hand to Charny. Such good news merited such a favor. He kissed that hand respectfully. Why did she grow pallid? Was it for joy, because Charny had pressed her hand?

They re-entered the carriage. The carriage started. Charny galloped beside the window.

At the next station they found the horses ready; only there was no saddle-horse for Charny. Isidore had not ordered a saddle-horse, not knowing that his brother would need one.

It was now arranged that Charny should not escort the royal coach, but simply follow it; although it was understood that he should keep near enough for the Queen to see him, if she put her head out of the window, and

so that he could exchange a few words with the illustrious travellers, whenever they changed horses.

Charny obtained a fresh horse at Montmirail. He believed the coach was fifteen minutes ahead of him, when suddenly, as he turned the corner of a street, his horse ran his nose against the coach, which was standing still, and against the guards, who were trying to mend a broken trace.

The Count dismounted, put his head into the carriage, to advise the King to keep out of sight, and the Queen not to be uneasy. Then he opened a box wherein had been placed all the implements and materials which accident might render necessary. He found a pair of traces, one of which he took to replace the one broken.

The two guards profited by this opportunity to ask for their pistols; but the King seriously opposed their request. To the suggestion that there might be some attempt to detain him, the King responded that under no circumstances could he allow blood to be shed for him.

At last the trace was replaced and the box closed. The guards returned to their seats and Charny to his saddle, and the coach set forward. They had lost a half-hour, however, and that, too, when the loss of a minute was irreparable.

In two hours they were at Châlons. "If we reach Châlons without being detained, all will go well." So the King had said. Here they were at Châlons. Their progress had not been checked, and they changed horses once more.

The King showed himself for an instant. Among the groups around the carriage were two men who looked at him steadfastly. Suddenly one of the two withdrew and disappeared. The other came nearer the carriage.

"Sire," said he, in a low voice, "don't let yourself be seen in this way, or you will be lost." Then he called aloud to the postilions: "Hurry up, lazy bones! Is this the way you serve smart travellers, who pay thirty sous a head?" and he set himself to work, helping the postilions. This man was the superintendent of the post.

At last horses were harnessed, and the postilions were in their saddles. The first postilion tried to start up the horses, but they both fell down. Under the strokes of the whip, they struggled to their feet, and the carriage started, when the second postilion's horses also fell, with him underneath.

Charny, who was silently waiting, pulled the postilion from under the horses, though the fellow's boots were left behind.

"Oh Monsieur," said Charny, addressing the superintendent, of whose devoted loyalty he knew nothing, "what sort of horses are you giving us?"

"The best in the stable," was the reply.

However, the horses were so tangled in their traces that the more the postilions tried to relieve them, the worse things became.

Charny took hold of the traces and exclaimed: "Here, let us unharness, and then begin again. We shall get through all the sooner."

The superintendent again set himself to work, almost weeping with chagrin.

Meanwhile, the man who had disappeared from the stables ran to the Mayor's residence, to announce that at that very moment the King, and the whole royal family, were getting a relay of horses at the post, and to beg the Mayor to order their detention.

Fortunately the Mayor was not much of a Republican, and did not care to take upon himself such a responsi-

bility. In place of promising to do what was demanded, he asked for all sorts of explanations, to see if the story was correct; and finally, when he could not help himself, he came to the posthouse, just as the coach was disappearing around the corner.

Nevertheless, twenty minutes had been sacrificed. There was some alarm in the royal carriage. Those horses, falling down one after the other, without apparent cause, recalled to the Queen's mind the four candles which went out, one after another, — without being touched by a human hand, — the first night she spent in the Tuileries, after the dreadful Sixth of October, nearly two years before.

However, as they drove through the gates of the town, the King, the Queen, and Madame Elizabeth exclaimed all together: "We are safe!" but a hundred paces farther on a man hurried up, put his head in at the window, and said to the illustrious travellers: "Your plans are badly arranged; you will be arrested."

The Queen screamed softly. The man threw himself to one side, and disappeared in a grove. Luckily it was not more than four leagues to Sommevelle Bridge, where they were to find Choiseul and his forty hussars; but it was already three o'clock in the afternoon, and they were nearly four hours late.

CHAPTER XLI.

FATALITY !

It will be remembered that the Duke de Choiseul was riding by post, with Leonard the barber, who was in despair at leaving a chamber door unlocked, at carrying off his brother's riding-coat, and at breaking his promise to dress Madame de l'Aage's hair.

What consoled poor Leonard was Choiseul's positive promise that he was only taking him two or three leagues (six or nine miles) from home, in order to give the barber a special commission from the Queen, and that he would then be set at liberty.

At Bondy, when he felt the vehicle coming to a stop, Leonard felt relieved, and made himself ready to get out; but the Duke checked him, saying: "This is n't the place."

Horses had been ordered in advance. In a very few seconds they were harnessed, and the carriage was off like a dart.

"But, Monsieur," said poor Leonard, "where then are we going?"

"Provided you start back by to-morrow morning, what matters anything else?"

"That is, if I can only be at the Tuileries by ten, to dress the Queen's hair —"

"That 's all you want?"

"Undoubtedly! Only, if I could be there sooner, it would n't be a bad idea, so that I could pacify my

brother, and explain to Madame de l'Aage that it was n't my fault, breaking my word."

"If that 's all, be easy, my dear Leonard; all will be for the best," responded Choiseul.

Leonard therefore had no reason for believing that the Duke meant to abduct him altogether, and became tranquil, — at least for a while; but at Claye, seeing them put fresh horses to the carriage, while nothing was said about stopping, the unlucky fellow exclaimed: "Oh Monsieur, are we going to the end of the world?"

"Listen, Leonard!" then said the Duke, with a serious expression. "I am not taking you to some mansion in the neighborhood of Paris, but to the frontier."

Leonard uttered a groan, placed his hands on his knees, and looked at the Duke in alarm. "To the — the — frontier?" he stammered.

"Yes, my dear Leonard. I expect to find there, with my regiment, a letter of the highest importance for the Queen. Not being able to deliver it myself, it was necessary for me to have some one with me who would safely do so for me. I begged her to name somebody. She chose you, as being one whose devotion made him most worthy of such a trust."

"Oh Monsieur, surely, if I'm worthy of the Queen's confidence — ! But how shall I get back to Paris. I 'm in pumps, with white silk stockings and silk shortclothes. I have neither a change of linen, nor money."

The good fellow absolutely forgot that he had two millions' worth of the Queen's diamonds in his pocket.

"Don't be troubled, my dear friend," said the Duke. "I have in the carriage everything you need, — boots, clothing, linen, money, — and you will lack for nothing."

"Doubtless, Monsieur, with you I shall want for

nothing; but my poor brother, whose overcoat and hat I have taken! and that poor Madame de l'Aage, whose hair is never dressed by anybody except myself. My God! my God! How will all this come out?"

"For the best, my dear Leonard. At least, I hope so."

They sped along like the wind. Choiseul had ordered his courier to prepare two beds and a supper at Montmirail, where they were to pass the night; and on reaching that point they found the beds ready and supper served.

Aside from his brother's coat and hat, aside from compulsorily breaking his word with Madame de l'Aage, Leonard was partly consoled. Now and then he let an expression of contentment escape him, from which it was easy to see that his pride was flattered by his being selected as the commissioner for so important a despatch as this apparently was to be.

After supper the two travellers went to bed, the Duke having ordered the carriage to be in readiness at four o'clock. Fifteen minutes before that hour they were to knock at his door and rouse him, in case he was asleep.

At three Choiseul had hardly closed his eyes, when from his chamber, which was immediately above the entrance gate, he heard the rumble of a carriage, accompanied by those cracks of the whip wherewith the postilions announced the advent of fresh arrivals.

To jump from his bed and run to the window, was the work of an instant with Choiseul.

A cabriolet was at the door. Two men stepped out of it, clothed in the costume of the National Guard, and imperatively demanded horses. Who were these National Guardsmen? What were they after at three in the morning? Why were they so much in a hurry about their horses?

Choiseul called his servant, and ordered him to have their own horses harnessed. Then he roused Leonard. Both travellers had lain down with their clothes on, and were therefore ready in an instant. When they came down, both carriages were ready. Choiseul told the postilion to let the guardsmen's carriage go first; only he must follow after, so as not for a moment to lose sight of it.

Then Choiseul examined the pistols, which he had placed in the carriage pockets, and renewed the priming, thereby causing Leonard grave misgivings.

They travelled thus a league or a league and a half; but between Étoges and Chaintry the cabriolet took a crossroad, going in the direction of Jalons and Épernay. The two guardsmen were only two good citizens, who had come from Ferté, and were returning homeward. With a more contented mind Choiseul pursued his journey. At ten they drove through Châlons. At eleven they reached Sommevelle Bridge.

There Choiseul inquired for his hussars, but they had not arrived. Stopping at the posthouse, he asked for a chamber, and there put on his uniform. Leonard observed all these preparations with lively anxiety, and his sighing accompaniment touched the Duke's heart. At last he said to him: "Leonard, it is time to let you know the truth."

"What? The truth?" said Leonard, going from one surprise to another. "Don't I know the truth already?"

"You know part of it, and I 'll tell you the rest."

Leonard clasped his hands and the Duke proceeded: "You are devoted to your employers, are n't you, my dear Leonard?"

"For life and death!"

"Well, in two hours they will be here."

"My God ! Is it possible ?" cried the poor fellow.

"Yes, here, with the children and Madame Elizabeth. You know what dangers they have run ?"

Leonard bowed his assent.

"You know what perils they still run ?"

Leonard lifted his eyes heavenward.

"Well, in two hours they will be safe !"

Leonard could not answer. He shed hot tears. Then he began to stammer: "In two hours ? — here ? — Are you sure of that ?"

"Yes, in two hours. They left the Tuileries at eleven o'clock last night, or soon after. At midday they were due at Châlons. Allowing them an hour and a half to do the remaining four leagues, they will be here two hours later. Let us order dinner. I expect here a detachment of hussars, commanded by Monsieur de Goguelat. We will make the dinner last as long as possible."

"Oh Monsieur," interrupted Leonard, "I am not hungry."

"Never mind that ! Make a valiant effort, and you can eat."

"Yes, Monsieur !"

"We must spin out the dinner as long as we can, so as to have a pretext for remaining here. — Eh ! Hold on ! There 's the trumpet of the hussars, now !"

Indeed, at that instant they could not only hear the trumpet, but the hoof-beats. Another moment, and Goguelat entered the chamber, and handed Choiseul a packet from Monsieur de Bouillé. This packet contained six blank orders, bearing each the royal signature, besides a duplicate of the King's formal order to all officers in the army, whatever their grade or priority of service, to obey the Duke for the present.

Choiseul had the horses picketed, distributed bread and wine to the hussars, and then sat down to dine.

The news brought by Goguelat was not good. Everywhere on his road he had found the people in an effervescent state. It was more than a year since a rumor of the King's intended departure had circulated, not only in Paris, but in the provinces, and the detachments of different military bodies, stationed at Saint Menehould and Varennes, were infected with the suspicion. He had even heard the alarm-bell sounding in one village along his route.

All this was quite enough to cut off Choiseul's own appetite. After an hour passed at table, he rose, as the clock sounded the half-hour after noon; and, leaving the command of the detachment to Monsieur Boudet, he walked up the street, to a height near the entrance of Sommevelle Bridge, whence he could have a good view over half a league of the road. He could see no sign of either courier or coach; but this was not surprising. Allowing for trifling detentions, he did not expect the courier before an hour or so later, and the King a half-hour after the courier.

Time rolled on, and still nothing was to be seen or heard on the road, — at least, nothing like what the Duke was looking for.

Every five minutes Choiseul drew out his watch; and each time he did so, Leonard said: "Oh, they 're not coming. My poor mistress! my poor mistress! Some ill-luck has overtaken them!"

By his despair the poor fellow added to Choiseul's disquiet.

At half-past two, at three, at half-past three, — still no courier, no coach! It will be remembered, though Choiseul was not aware of it, that the King did not

really leave Châlons till three o'clock; so it was no wonder he was not at Sommevelle Bridge by four.

While Choiseul was thus watching and waiting at the turn of the road, Fatality was busy at that point, preparing an event which was to have great influence in the drama we are describing. Fatality — we repeat the word — had so willed it, that a few days earlier the peasantry on the ground belonging to Madame d'Elbœuf, ground situated near Sommevelle Bridge, had refused payment of certain proprietary rights. Then they were threatened with military compulsion; but the Federation at Paris had borne its fruits, and the peasants in the neighboring towns had promised to assist the Elbœuf peasants with arms, if these threats were put into execution.

Seeing these hussars arrive at the station, the peasantry imagined they had come with hostile intent. Messengers were at once sent from Sommevelle Bridge to the neighboring villages, and by three o'clock the tocsin of alarm began to sound throughout that section of country.

Hearing the alarm, Choiseul returned to the posthouse. There he found Lieutenant Boudet, very uneasy. Deep threats had been uttered against the hussars, who belonged to one of the most detested corps in the army. The peasants defied them, and sang, under their very noses, this improvised ditty:

Les hussards sont des gueux ;
Mais nous nous moquons d'eux !

a couplet which may be thus translated:

The hussars are beggars tall ;
But we mock them, one and all !

Other people, better-informed or farther-sighted, began to whisper it about that the hussars were not there to

meddle with the Elbœuf farmers, but to meet the King and Queen.

Such was the outlook when four o'clock rung out, without bringing either courier or news.

Choiseul decided to wait for a while longer. However, he had the horses harnessed to his carriage, and took charge of Leonard's precious diamonds; but started Leonard himself towards Varennes, bidding him see Monsieur Dandoins at Saint Menehould, Monsieur Damas at Clermont, and Jules de Bouillé (not Louis, his brother) at Varennes, and explain to them the whole situation.

In order to calm the furor which was increasing about him, Choiseul declared that the hussars were not there, as was supposed by many, to proceed against Madame Elbœuf's peasants, but to act as escort for a treasure, which the War Minister was sending to the army.

This word *treasure*, being susceptible of two meanings, while it calmed the irritability on one side, confirmed the suspicions on the other. The King and Queen were a treasure, and this was certainly the treasure expected by Choiseul and the hussars.

In the course of fifteen minutes, Choiseul and his soldiers were so crowded and pushed, that he knew he could not long hold the position without disturbance; and that if the royal travellers should unhappily come while things were at such a pass, he would be almost powerless to protect them, with only his forty hussars.

His orders were, to see that the King's coach was allowed to continue its journey without obstruction. Instead of such a protection, his presence would now become an obstacle. The best thing to be done, even in case of the King's arrival, was to take the soldiers away. In fact, their departure would leave the road clear. Only he must find a pretext for this departure.

The post-superintendent was in the midst of five or six hundred inquisitive people, who needed only an imprudent word to become the Duke's enemies. The superintendent was looking on, like the others, with his arms crossed; only he stood very near the Duke, who said to him: "Monsieur, are you aware that about this time a large sum of money is on its way to Metz?"

"This very morning," responded the superintendent, "the stage carried a hundred thousand crowns, escorted by two policemen."

"Indeed?" said Choiseul, almost stunned by the partiality with which fate was serving him.

"Parbleu!" said a gendarme, "that 's true, for I and Robin acted as guards."

Choiseul turned quietly to Goguelat and said: "Well, if the Minister of War prefers that method of convoy, there 's no reason for *our* staying here, and I think we had better retire. Hussars, bridle your horses!"

The hussars, who were also anxious, asked nothing better than such an order. In an instant the horses were bridled, and the hussars in the saddle. They ranged themselves in line. Choiseul passed along the line, threw a glance towards the Châlons road, and said, with a sigh: "Forward, hussars. Break into fours, and move on!"

They rode over the Sommevelle Bridge, with their trumpets blowing, as the clock sounded half-past five.

Two hundred paces from the village, Choiseul took a crossroad, in order to avoid Saint Menehould, where it was said there was much agitation.

At this moment Isidore de Charny, lashing and spurring a horse, which had already required two hours to ride four leagues, arrived at the posthouse. While changing horses he inquired if a detachment of hussars had been there, and learned that the detachment had ridden

away only a quarter-hour before, by the Saint Menehould road. He ordered horses to be in readiness for the royal coach, and hoping to overtake Choiseul, and stop his retreat, galloped away on a fresh horse.

As we have seen, Choiseul left the direct road to Saint Menehould, and took the crossroad, at the very instant when the Viscount rode up to the posthouse at Sommevelle Bridge; and as the Viscount rode directly towards Saint Menehould, he did not succeed in overtaking the Duke.

CHAPTER XLII.

FATALITY ! !

TEN minutes after Isidore de Charny's departure, the royal coach arrived. As Choiseul had foreseen, the lookers-on had dispersed.

The elder Charny, Count Oliver, knowing that the first detachment of troops was to be here, at Sommevelle Bridge, had not supposed it might become necessary for him to remain behind. He galloped up to the carriage door, and urged on the postilions, who seemed to have received particular orders to drive at a slow trot.

When they reached Sommevelle Bridge, seeing neither the expected hussars nor the Duke, the King became anxious, and thrust his head out of the window.

"By your leave, Sire," said Charny, "don't let yourself be seen, and I 'll go and get what information I can."

Then the Count went into the posthouse. Five minutes later he reappeared, having learned all, and repeated the whole story to the King, who at once surmised that it was for the express purpose of allaying public irritation, and leaving the road clear, that Choiseul had gone away, and taken the hussars with him.

The important thing now was to get once more under way, and push on to Saint Menehould. Unquestionably Choiseul was bound for Saint Menehould, and in that town they would find him, with his hussars re-enforced by the dragoons.

At the moment of departure Charny came to the window, and asked: "What are the Queen's orders? Shall I push on ahead, or shall I follow behind?"

"Don't forsake me," said the Queen.

Charny bowed in his saddle, and cantered near her window.

Meanwhile Isidore was riding in advance; but he could not understand the solitude of the road, which was laid out in a line so straight, that from certain points he could see a league or a league and a half before him. He spurred his horse uneasily forward, thus getting farther and farther away from the coach; for he feared lest the citizens at Saint Menehould might take umbrage at the prolonged stay there of Dandoins's dragoons, as the Sommevelle populace had at the detention of Choiseul's hussars.

Isidore was not mistaken. The first thing noticeable at Saint Menehould was the great number of National Guardsmen walking about the streets, — the first he had encountered since leaving Paris. The whole town seemed to be in motion, and he could hear a drum beating on the farther side of the village.

The Viscount trotted coolly along the streets, without appearing disturbed, the least in the world, by the commotion about him. Crossing the Grand Square he drew rein at the posthouse. As he crossed the square, however, he noted a dozen dragoons seated on a bench, and wearing fatigue-caps. A few steps from them, at a window on the lower floor, he saw the Marquis Dandoins, also wearing a fatigue-cap, and holding his riding-whip in his hand.

Isidore passed by without a pause, as if he did not see Dandoins. He presumed that Dandoins, knowing that Isidore was to wear the costume of one of the royal

couriers, would recognize him, and that consequently no farther sign would be needful.

At the door of the posthouse was a young man about twenty-eight years old, clad in a dressing-gown, and wearing his hair cut after the fashion shown in the portrait of Titus, the Roman emperor, — as was the custom with the Revolutionist Patriots of that epoch, — and with whiskers encompassing his face and reaching his neck.

Isidore looked for somebody to whom he might speak. "What do you wish, Monsieur?" said the black-whiskered young man.

"To speak to the post-superintendent," said Isidore.

"He is absent just now, Monsieur; but I am his son, Jean Baptiste Drouet. If I can fill his place, say what you wish."

These three words, Jean Baptiste Drouet, the young man emphasized, as if he foresaw that these words, or rather these names, were destined to hold a fatally celebrated place in history.

"I wish for six posthorses, for two carriages which are coming after me."

Drouet nodded, as much as to say the courier could have what he wished, and walked out of the house into the courtyard, calling out: "Halloo, postilions, — six horses for two carriages, and a nag for the courier!"

At that moment the Marquis Dandoins entered hurriedly. "Monsieur," he said to Isidore, "you precede the royal coach, do you not?"

"Yes, Monsieur, and I 'm greatly astonished at seeing you — you and your men — still wearing fatigue-caps."

"We have not been forbidden to do so, Monsieur, nor forewarned of any approaching duty. Besides, there are threatening demonstrations all around us. They are trying to demoralize my men. What ought to be done?"

"As the King comes this way, watch the carriage, and take counsel of circumstances. Ride on a half-hour after the royal family has passed, and serve as rear guard."

Interrupting himself suddenly, Isidore exclaimed: "Silence! Somebody is playing the spy! Perhaps we have been overheard. Go to your squadron, and use every effort to keep your men up to their duty."

Drouet was indeed at the door of the kitchen, in which this conversation had taken place.

Dandoins withdrew. At the same moment the cracking of whips was heard. The royal coach crossed the square, and stopped in front of the posthouse. At this unusual noise the bystanders formed themselves into groups around the coach.

Dandoins, who had it in his heart to explain to the King why it was that he and his men were found at rest, instead of under arms, rushed up to the window, fatigue-cap in hand, and, with every possible mark of respect, offered his apologies to the royal family. In answering him, the King several times showed his head at the window.

Foot in stirrup, Isidore was standing near Drouet, who observed the carriage with deep attention. The summer before he had attended the great Federation at Paris. He had therefore seen the King, and now believed that he recognized him.

That morning Drouet had received a large sum in *assignats*, the paper money then issued by the Government. He had examined these bills, stamped with the King's likeness, one after the other, to see if any of them were counterfeit. The King's face therefore remained very distinct in Drouet's memory, and seemed to cry out: "This man before thee is the King!"

He drew an assignat from his pocket, and murmured: "Decidedly, it 's his very self!"

Isidore rode around to the other side of the coach, where his brother was standing in front of the window, partly for the purpose of screening from observation the Queen, who was leaning against it. Isidore hastily whispered to his brother: "The King has been recognized. Hasten the departure of the coach, and take heed of that great brown fellow over there. He 's the son of the post-superintendent. He it is who has recognized the King. His name is Jean Baptiste Drouet."

"All right," said Oliver de Charny, "I 'll watch. Now, be off, my brother."

Isidore was off like a shot, to order the relay of horses at Clermont.

Hardly was he at the end of the village street, before the postilions — stimulated by the persistence of Malden and Valory, and the promise of an extra crown — had all in readiness, and departed at a round trot.

The Count did not lose sight of Drouet. Drouet had not budged; only, he had been speaking in a low tone to one of the hostlers.

Charny rode up to him and said: "Monsieur, was no horse ordered for me?"

"Oh yes," answered Drouet, "but there are no more horses."

"How? No more horses? What then about that horse they are saddling yonder in the courtyard?"

"That 's mine!"

"Can't you let me have him? I 'll pay whatever you say."

"Impossible, Monsieur. It 's getting late, and there 's a trip which must be made."

To insist would be to increase Drouet's suspicions. To attempt taking the horse by force, would be to compromise everything.

Moreover, Charny thought of a way out of the difficulty. He went to Monsieur Dandoins, who had been looking after the coach till it turned the street corner. Feeling a hand on his shoulder, Dandoins faced about.

"Hush!" said Oliver. "It 's I, Count de Charny. There is n't a horse left for me at the posthouse. Dismount one of your dragoons, and let me have his horse. *I* must follow the King and the Queen. I alone know where to find Choiseul's relays, and if I 'm not on hand, the King will be bothered at Varennes."

"Count," responded Dandoins, "it is n't one of my men's horses that I 'll give you, but my own."

"I accept the offer. The safety of the King, and the whole royal family, hangs upon the least accident. The better the horse, the better their chances."

Both men walked through the streets, towards the Marquis's lodgings; but before doing so, Charny charged a sergeant to watch Drouet.

Unfortunately the Marquis's abiding-place was five hundred paces from the square. By the time the horses were saddled, fifteen minutes at least had been lost. We say the *horses*, because Dandoins meant to put himself also on horseback, in order to obey the royal wishes, by following after his Majesty, and constituting his men a rear guard.

Suddenly it seemed to Charny that he heard these words, mingled with other distant cries: "The King! The Queen!"

He hurried out of the house, requesting Dandoins to bring his horse to the square.

The whole village was in tumult. Hardly had Charny and Dandoins quitted the square, a few minutes earlier, when Drouet exclaimed, as if he had waited for that moment, in order to spread the news: "That coach,

which just went along, — that 's the King's. The King, the Queen, and the royal children of France are in that carriage."

Then Drouet threw himself on his horse. Several friends tried to stop him. "Where 's he going? What 's to be done? What 's his plan?"

To these questions he whisperingly replied: "The colonel of these dragoons is over there. There was no way of stopping the King here, without a collision which might turn out badly for us. What I can't do here, I can do at Clermont. Keep back the dragoons; that 's all I ask."

So saying, he galloped on after the King. Thus it was noised about that the King and Queen were in the coach which had just driven through the village; and the tumult spread so rapidly that it reached Charny's keen ears.

At these cries the Mayor and other municipal officers ran to the spot, and the Mayor ordered the dragoons to retire to their barracks till eight o'clock.

Charny learned all there was to know, — that the King had been recognized, and Drouet had ridden away. He stamped impatiently.

At that moment Dandoins rejoined him. As soon as he perceived him, Charny called out, from afar: "The horses, the horses!"

"They 're bringing them here now," said Dandoins.

"Have they put the pistols in my holsters?"

"Yes."

"Are they ready for use?"

"I attended to that myself."

"Good! Now all depends on the speed of your beast. I must overtake a man who is fifteen minutes ahead of me, and kill him!"

"What? You mean to kill him?"

"Yes! If I don't kill him, all is lost!"

"Mordieu! Let us go ahead with the horses, then."

"Don't concern yourself about me. Attend to your dragoons, who are being demoralized to the point of revolt. See there! The Mayor is haranguing them! You also have no time to lose. Go! Go!"

At that instant the orderly came up with the two horses. Without stopping to notice which was which, Charny sprang upon the back of the horse nearest him, snatched the bridle from the orderly, gathered the reins into his hand, used his spurs on both sides, and was off at full gallop, in Drouet's tracks, but without catching the last words which Dandoins hurled after him; albeit those last words, which the wind carried away, were of vast importance: "You have taken the horse I was to ride, instead of the one intended for you, and the pistols in the holsters are not loaded!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

FATALITY ! ! !

MEANWHILE the royal coach, preceded by Isidore, was flying along the road from Saint Menehould to Clermont. Daylight was fading, as we have said. Eight o'clock had sounded, and the coach entered Argonne Forest, through which ran the highway.

The elder Charny had been unable to warn the Queen of the awkward circumstances which had held him back, inasmuch as the royal carriage drove away from Saint Menehould before Drouet told Charny that he could not have a horse.

As they left the village the Queen noticed that her cavalier was no longer at the carriage window, but she had no excuse, either for retarding the journey or questioning the postilions. Once she thought she could see a horseman galloping a long way off; but this horseman was soon lost in the growing shadows of night.

During this time, — for, in order to make clear the events of this awful journey, we are obliged to go quickly from one actor therein to another, — during this time, while Isidore was riding a quarter-league ahead of the royal coach, while that coach was on the way from Saint Menehould to Clermont, and entering the woods of Argonne, while Drouet was riding in hot haste after the coach, and while the elder Charny was rushing after Drouet, — while all these events were simultaneously moving on, the Marquis Dandoins rejoined his soldiers, after Charny's

departure, and sounded the call to saddle; but when the soldiers tried to set out, all the people were crowding the streets, and the horses could not go a step forward.

Amidst that crowd were three hundred National Guardsmen, in their uniforms, with their muskets in hand. To risk a combat, — sure to be severe, — would be to ruin the King. Better to remain where they were, and, by so doing, keep all these people where they were.

Dandoins held a parley, and asked the ringleaders what they wanted, what they expected. He demanded the reason of these hostile menaces.

During this time the King reached Clermont, and there found Monsieur Damas, with his one hundred and forty dragoons.

If Dandoins had commanded a hundred and forty dragoons, like Damas, the Marquis might have been able to effect something; but he had only thirty. What could thirty dragoons do, against three or four thousand men? Talk, debate! and this is precisely what Dandoins did.

At half-past nine the royal coach — which Isidore preceded only by a few hundred paces, so fast did the postilions ride — neared Clermont. It had only taken seventy-five minutes to traverse the four leagues which separate one village from the other.

Up to a certain point, this explained Charny's absence to the Queen. He would surely overtake them while they changed horses.

Before they entered the village, Damas lay in waiting for the royal coach, having been forewarned by Leonard. He recognized the courier's livery, and stopped Isidore.

"Pardon, Monsieur, but are you not the forerunner of the King?"

"And you, Monsieur," said Isidore, "are perhaps Charles de Damas?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Very well, Monsieur, I am indeed the King's fore-runner. Assemble your dragoons, and escort his Majesty's coach."

"Monsieur," was the Count's reply, "there is the breath of insurrection in the air, and I 'm forced to own that I can't answer for my dragoons, if they recognize the King. All I can promise is, to close up the road behind him, after the royal coach goes by."

"Do your best, Monsieur," said Isidore. "Here *is* the King!" and he pointed to the oncoming coach amidst the darkness, its course being discernible by the sparks of fire which flew beneath the horses' feet.

As for Isidore, it was his duty to hurry forward and order the relays. In five minutes he stopped at the posthouse. Damas arrived at almost the same moment, with five or six dragoons.

Next came the royal coach, which followed hard upon Isidore's heels, before he had time to remount. This coach, without being a magnificent affair, was nevertheless remarkable, and many people began to assemble in front of the post-superintendent's house. Damas stood before the carriage door, as if unacquainted with the illustrious travellers; but as neither King nor Queen could resist the desire to learn the latest intelligence, the King beckoned to Damas on one side; while on the other, the Queen beckoned to Isidore.

"It is you, Monsieur de Damas?" asked the King.

"Yes, Sire."

"Why are not your dragoons here, under arms?"

"Sire, your Majesty is five hours behind time. My squadron was in saddle by four this afternoon. I held

the men in place as long as possible; but the whole village began to get into a turmoil. Even my dragoons began to be upset by conflicting conjectures. If a fermentation should occur before your Majesty's transit, the alarm-bell would be sounded, and your road barred. So I kept only a dozen men on horseback, and sent the others to their lodgings; but I kept the trumpeters with me, so as to be able to call the men to horse, at the first alarm. Your Majesty can see that my plan has worked well, for the way is comparatively clear."

"Very well, Monsieur," replied the King, "you have behaved like a prudent man. As soon as I am gone, let your men mount, and follow a quarter-league or so after the carriage."

"Sire," said the Queen, "hear what Monsieur Isidore has to say."

"What is it?" asked the King, with a certain display of impatience.

"He says that you were recognized by the post-superintendent's son, at Saint Menehould; that he is sure of it; that he saw the young man with an assignat in hand, studying your engraved picture thereon, and comparing it with yourself; that his brother the Count, being informed of this by Isidore himself, remained behind; and that undoubtedly something serious is taking place at this very moment, as we have seen nothing of Count Oliver since then."

"If we have been recognized, the greater reason for haste, Madame. — Monsieur Isidore, hurry up the postilions, and then ride on ahead."

Isidore's horse being ready, he sprang into the saddle, and cried to the postilions: "The road to Varennes!"

The two bodyguards, Malden and Valory, repeated the order, as they climbed to their places: "To Varennes!"

Damas stepped backward, bowing respectfully to the King, and the postilions whipped up their horses. The coach was ready, and in the twinkling of an eye it was off, with the rapidity of lightning. As they left the village they met a sergeant of hussars, who was just entering it.

For an instant Damas thought of following the royal coach, with the few men who were then at his disposal; but the King had given contrary orders, and he believed it his duty to obey those orders, — the more so, as the commotion began to spread through the town. The citizens were running from house to house. The windows were open, and one could see heads and lights moving about in the houses. Damas sought to prevent but one thing, the sounding of the alarm-bell; so he ran to the church, to guard the door.

Besides, at any moment Dandoins might arrive, and re-enforce Damas with thirty men.

Presently things began to grow calmer; so at the end of fifteen minutes Damas returned to the public square, where he found his chief of squadron, Monsieur de Noirville, to whom he gave instructions about the ride, commanding him to put the men under arms.

At that moment somebody came to notify Damas that a dragoon subaltern, sent by Dandoins, was waiting for Damas at his lodging.

This officer came to say that it would be better not to wait for either Dandoins or his dragoons, Dandoins being detained in their municipality by the inhabitants of Saint Menehould; and that besides this, — as Damas already knew, — Drouet had started, at full speed, to follow the royal coach, though he had not probably overtaken it, as he had not been seen at Clermont.

This was the condition of things, and Damas had

barely heard the report given by this subaltern, belonging to the Royal Regiment, when an orderly was announced from the other direction, — from the hussars belonging to the Lauzun Regiment.

This orderly had been sent by officers commanding the troops at Varennes, our friends Monsieur Jules de Bouillé and Monsieur de Raigecourt. Anxiously seeing the hours drag by, without the arrival of any one connected with the royal flight, these brave young gentlemen had at last determined to send this messenger to Damas, to ascertain if anything had been heard from the King.

Damas was glad to be able to ask the orderly this question : " In what condition did you leave affairs at Varennes ? "

" Perfectly tranquil," said the orderly.

" Where are the hussars ? "

" At their barracks, with their horses all saddled."

" Have you met no vehicles on your trip hither ? "

" Oh yes, — one carriage with four horses, and one with two."

It will be remembered that the female attendants of the Queen rode in the second carriage ; and though we have not always referred to their cabriolet, it was never far behind the royal coach.

Damas replied, therefore : " Those are the very carriages about which you have come to inquire. All then goes well."

Thereupon Damas returned to his station, and ordered the trumpets to sound the saddle-call. He meant to follow the King to Varennes, and give him armed assistance, if there was any need of it. In five minutes the trumpets sounded. All was going on very well, apart from the detention, at Saint Menehould, of the thirty soldiers under the command of Dandoins ; but having

already his one hundred and forty dragoons, Damas could manage very well without this increase of numbers.

Let us return to the King's coach, which, in driving from Clermont, took the road to the left, and was rolling away towards Varennes, instead of following the right-hand road, leading to Verdun.

We have already explained the topography of the town of Varennes, which is divided into the Upper and Lower Villages. We have stated that it had been decided to change horses at the farther end of the town, on the side towards Dun; and that in order to reach that point, it was necessary to leave the main road leading to the bridge, and reach this bridge by another route, cross the river under the old tower arch, and so join Choiseul's relays on the farther side, where they were to be in waiting, under the direction of Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt. As to Rohrig, a young officer only twenty years old, entire confidence had not been placed in him, and he still believed the military had been sent thither to guard the army funds.

After their arrival at this difficult point, it will be recalled, Charny was to guide the royal coach through the labyrinth of byways. Charny had spent a fortnight in Varennes, carefully studying and mapping out the entire route. There was not a milestone he did not know, not a lane wherewith he was not familiar.

Unhappily Charny was not on hand. The Queen's anxiety was doubled. Under such circumstances, Charny's failure to rejoin the royal party must be due to some serious accident.

As they drew nearer to Varennes, the King also grew uneasy. Depending upon Charny, he had not brought with him his map of the town.

Then the night was absolutely dark, lighted by the

stars alone, — one of those nights when it is easy to go astray, even in well-known localities, — to say nothing of the blind roads in a strange village.

Isidore's orders, received directly from his brother, required him to stop at the entrance of the village. There the elder Charny would change horses, and resume the direction of the journey.

Like the Queen, — more so, perhaps, — Isidore was worried about his brother's absence. The one remaining hope was that either Jules de Bouillé or Raigecourt would grow impatient, come to meet the King, and wait for him on this side of the village. In the two or three days they had spent there, these young men must have become acquainted with the town, and could easily serve as guides.

On arriving at the bottom of the hill, and seeing two or three scattered lights which showed the village to be near, Isidore halted irresolutely, and looked about him, trying to see into the obscurity. He could discern nothing definite.

Then he called softly, and afterwards more loudly, the names of Bouillé and Raigecourt, in case they should be thereabouts. Nobody responded. He could hear the rumble of the coach, a quarter-league away, which sounded like distant thunder, coming nearer and nearer.

An idea came to Isidore. Perhaps those two gentlemen were lying concealed in the edge of the woods, which stretched along the left side of the highway; so he entered the forest, and looked about. Nobody was to be seen.

There was now nothing to do but wait, and he waited. In five minutes the royal coach reached the place where Isidore was watching. Both the King and Queen thrust their heads out at opposite sides of the carriage, and both

said, at the same time: "You have n't seen your brother, the Count?"

"Sire," answered Isidore, "I have n't seen him; and as he is not here, it must be that he has met with some serious accident, in his pursuit of that rascally Drouet."

The Queen groaned.

"What is to be done?" asked the King. Then he said to the two bodyguards, Malden and Valory, who had sprung to the ground: "Are you acquainted with the place, gentlemen?"

As nobody was acquainted with the place, the answer was in the negative.

"Sire," said Isidore, "all is silent, and consequently all is probably safe. If your Majesty will be pleased to wait here ten minutes, I will enter the city, and try to get some information about Bouillé and Raigecourt, or at least about Monsieur de Choiseul's relays. Your Majesty cannot recall the name of the tavern where the horses were to be stationed?"

"Alas, no! I have known it, but I have forgotten it. Never mind! Go just the same. Meantime, we also will try to find out something or other."

Isidore galloped off towards the Lower Village, and soon disappeared behind the first houses.

CHAPTER XLIV.

JEAN BAPTISTE DROUET.

THE King's remark, about getting advice where they were, was explained by the presence of two or three houses, the advanced sentinels of the Upper Village, which were situated on the right side of the road.

In one of these houses, the nearest, somebody was on the alert, as could be seen by the light which fell athwart the half-open doorway.

The Queen left the carriage, took Malden's arm, and went towards this house. At their approach the door was shut, but not quick enough to prevent Malden, who perceived the intentions of the master of the house to be inhospitable, from springing forward and checking the door before the bolt had slipped into its socket. Under Malden's pressure the door reopened, although there was an attempt to close it tight.

Behind the door, trying hard to shut it, was a man fifty years old, with slippered feet and bare knees, and wearing a nightshirt. It was not without a natural surprise, as one may well understand, that the man in the nightshirt felt himself driven back into his own house, and saw his door pushed open by an unknown man, behind whom stood a woman.

The man in the nightshirt trembled, as he threw a rapid glance at the Queen, whose face was illuminated by the candle he held in his hand. "What do you wish, Monsieur?" he asked Malden.

"Monsieur," responded the bodyguard, "we are unacquainted with Varennes, and beg you to point out the road to Stenay."

"If I knew the way," replied the unknown man, "and if I gave you the information, what if I were ruined for giving you the information?"

"Ah Monsieur," said Malden, "even if you ran some risk in rendering us this service, you are too courteous not to oblige a woman, who finds herself in a perilous position."

"Monsieur," responded the man in the nightshirt, "the person behind you is no woman." Then he whispered in Malden's ear: "It 's the Queen."

"Monsieur?"

"I recognize her."

The Queen, who heard or guessed what was spoken, drew Monsieur de Malden backward, as she said: "Before going a step farther, notify the King that I am discovered."

In another second Malden had obeyed this command. "Indeed?" said the King. "Then beg the man to come and speak to me."

Malden returned to the house, and said, thinking dissimulation useless: "The King desires to confer with you, Monsieur."

The man sighed, kicked off his slippers, and walked towards the carriage with naked feet, so as to make less noise.

"Your name, Monsieur?" asked the King, first of all.

"Préfontaine, Sire," responded the man, hesitating.

"Who are you?"

"A Major in the cavalry, and a Knight of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Louis."

"In your double quality of Major, and Knight of Saint

Louis, Monsieur, you have twice taken an oath of fidelity to me. It is therefore your bounden duty to aid me in my present embarrassment."

"Certainly," responded the Major; "but I beg your Majesty to make haste, lest I should be seen."

"Monsieur, if somebody sees you, so much the better!" said Malden. "You will never have a finer occasion to show your loyalty."

The Major, who was not apparently of the same mind, almost groaned. The Queen shrugged her shoulders contemptuously, and tapped her foot impatiently.

The King made her a sign, as he said to the Major: "Have you by any chance heard of some horses waiting for a carriage, and have you seen some hussars, who were to be stationed in your village yesterday?"

"Yes, Sire. Both horses and hussars are on the other side of the town, — the horses at the tavern called the Grand Monarch, the hussars at the barracks."

"Thanks, Monsieur. Now return to your house. Nobody has seen you, and nothing will happen to you."

"Sire — !"

Without listening longer, the King took the Queen's hand, to help her into the coach, and said to the body-guards, who were waiting for orders: "Gentlemen, to your places, and drive to the Grand Monarch."

The two officers remounted their seats, and called out to the postilions: "To the Grand Monarch."

At that instant a spectral horse shot from the woods, and cut diagonally across the road, as his fantastical rider shouted: "Postilions, not another step!"

"Why not?" asked the astonished postilions.

"Because you are carrying the King, who is running away; but in the name of the Nation, I order you not to budge."

The postilions, who had already made a movement to drive on, at once paused, and murmured: "The *King!*"

Louis the Sixteenth saw that the crucial moment had come, and cried out: "Who are you, Monsieur, to give such orders here?"

"A simple citizen! Only I represent the law, and I speak in the name of the Nation. — Postilions, for the second time I order you not to move! You know me well enough! I'm Jean Baptiste Drouet, son of the post-superintendent at Saint Menehould."

"Oh, the wretch!" cried the two guards, springing from their seats, and drawing their hunting-knives. "It's *he!*" but before they had touched the ground, Drouet was riding rapidly along the streets towards the Lower Village.

"Ah Charny, Charny, what has happened to you?" murmured the Queen; and she fell back in the carriage, almost indifferent to what was taking place.

What had happened to Charny, and why had he allowed Drouet to escape him? Fatality, — always Fatality!

Dandoins's horse was a good roadster, but Drouet had an advantage of almost twenty minutes over the Count. This twenty minutes it was necessary to regain. Charny struck his spurs into his horse's flanks, and away bounded the animal at full speed, with smoking nostrils.

On the other side, Drouet, without even knowing that he was pursued, was speeding away with all his might; but he had only a posthorse, whereas Charny's horse was a thoroughbred. The result was that Charny had gained a third of the distance, by the time he had ridden a league. Then Drouet noticed that he was pursued, and redoubled his efforts to escape from the rider who threatened to overtake him.

At the end of a second league Charny continued to

gain at the same rate, and Drouet often looked behind, with increasing anxiety.

Drouet had started so unexpectedly, that he was weaponless. The young Patriot feared not death, as he afterwards proved; but if he were checked in his course, he feared the King would get away; and he also feared lest this splendid occasion for immortalizing his own name should forever escape him.

There were still two leagues to cover before he could reach Clermont; but it was evident that he would be overtaken at the end of the next league, — the third since his departure from Saint Menehould. Just then, to stimulate his ardor, Drouet scented the royal coach in front of him. We say *scented*, for it was already half-past nine, and though these were the longest days of the year, night had fallen; so Drouet redoubled the cuts of his whip and the digs of his spurs. They were only three-quarters of a league from Clermont, but Charny was not two hundred yards behind. Undoubtedly, — for Drouet knew there were no posthorses, — undoubtedly the King was to keep on to Verdun. Drouet began to despair. Before overtaking the King, he would be himself overtaken.

A half-league from Clermont he heard the gallop of Charny's horse, hard upon his own, and the neighs of Charny's horse responded to those of his own nag. It was necessary to give up the pursuit, or decide to face his adversary; but, as we have said, Drouet had no arms wherewith to encounter his pursuer.

Suddenly, when Charny was only fifty paces behind, Drouet met the postilions, returning to Saint Menehould with the detached horses, which Drouet recognized as those which had taken the King's carriages to Clermont.

"Ah, it 's you, is it?" he said. "The road to Verdun, is n't it?"

"What is it about the road to Verdun?" asked the postilions.

"I mean to say that the carriages which you drove are now on the road to Verdun;" and he rode by them, urging his horse to a last effort.

"No!" cried the postilions, "the road to Varennes!"

Drouet uttered a joyful cry. He was saved, and the King was lost! If the King had followed the straight road to Verdun, Drouet would have been obliged to follow straight on by the same line, the regular highway from Saint Menehould to Verdun; but the King had chosen to go from Clermont to Varennes, and the road to Varennes made an acute angle to the left. Drouet therefore at once made for Argonne Forest, wherein he knew every twist and turn; for by cutting thus across the woods, he could gain fifteen minutes on the King, besides having the obscurity of the forest for his protection.

Charny, who knew the general topography of the country almost as well as Drouet, saw that Drouet was escaping him, and uttered a cry of anger. Almost simultaneously with Drouet he urged his horse into the narrow margin which separated the highway from the woods, shouting, "Stop, stop!"

Drouet did not care to respond. He leaned over his horse's head, stimulating him with spurs, whip, and voice. If he could reach the wood, that was all he wanted. He would be safe! He reached the wood; but he was within ten steps of Charny, who drew a pistol, aimed at Drouet, and shouted: "Halt, or you 're a dead man!"

Drouet bent himself lower on his horse's neck, and urged him on. Charny pulled the trigger, but the

sparks of fire, as the flint struck the steel, only served to momentarily brighten the darkness.

Furious at this failure, Charny hurled the recreant pistol at Drouet, and drew a second, throwing himself into the woods, in the fugitive's train. Again he fired, through an interval between the trees; but this pistol failed, like the first.

Then he remembered that when he hurried away from Saint Menehould, at full gallop, Monsieur Dandoins had called out something which he could not understand.

"Ah!" thought Charny, "I see how it is! I took the wrong horse, and probably he called out to me that the pistols in *these* holsters were not loaded. Never mind! I 'll overhaul that rascal, and strangle him with my own hands, if necessary!" and he resumed his pursuit of the flying shadow, which could barely be discerned in the obscurity.

Hardly had he gone a hundred yards in the forest, with which he was not much acquainted, when his horse stumbled in a ravine. Charny rolled head over heels, extricated himself, jumped into the saddle again; but Drouet had disappeared.

This is how Drouet eluded Charny. This is how Drouet was able to cross the highway at Varennes, like a threatening phantom, bidding the postilions conduct the King no farther.

The postilions halted, because Drouet adjured them in the name of the Nation, which had begun to be more powerful than the name of the King.

Hardly had Drouet ridden on towards the Lower Village, when, instead of the gallop of a retreating horse, the royal party could hear the gallop of one coming nearer and nearer; and presently Isidore reappeared, by the same street through which Drouet had gone away.

His information was the same as that furnished by Monsieur de Préfontaine. Choiseul's horses, under the charge of Jules de Bouillé and young Raigecourt, were at the other end of the town, at the Grand Monarch. The third officer, Rohrig, was at the barracks, with his hussars. A waiter at an eating-house, who was just shutting up his establishment for the night, had given Isidore these details.

Instead of bringing joy to the illustrious travellers, as he had hoped, Isidore found them in a deep stupor. Préfontaine was in lamentations, and the two body-guards seemed to be threatening something or somebody invisible and unknown. Isidore therefore paused in the midst of his recital, and asked: "What has happened, gentlemen?"

"Did n't you see a man in the street, — a man who passed you at a gallop?"

"Yes, Sire," said Isidore.

"Well, that man was Drouet!" said the King.

"Drouet?" cried Isidore, with a deep throb in his heart. "Then my brother is dead!"

The Queen uttered a cry, and buried her face in her hands.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE TOLLGATE TOWER AT VARENNES BRIDGE.

THERE was an instant of inexpressible depression among the unfortunate travellers, thus detained on the highway, and menaced with perils unknown, but terrible.

Isidore was the first to rally. "Sire," said he, "dead or living, let us not think of my brother; let us think of your Majesty. There is not an instant to lose. The postilions know the way to the Grand Monarch. — Hurry up! To the Grand Monarch!"

The postilions did not stir.

"Can't you hear?" asked Isidore.

"To be sure we can!"

"Well, why don't you start?"

"Because Monsieur Drouet forbade."

"How? Drouet forbade? So! When the King commands and Drouet forbids, you obey Drouet?"

"We obey the Nation."

"Come, gentlemen!" said Isidore to his two companions. "There are moments when a man's life counts for nothing. Let each of you select his man. I'll take care of this one. Then we'll drive ourselves."

So speaking, he grasped the postilion nearest to him by the collar, and pricked the fellow's breast with the point of his hunting-knife.

The Queen saw the three blades glitter, and screamed out: "Mercy, gentlemen, mercy!" Then she added, to the postilions: "My friends, fifty louis on the spot, to

be divided among you three, and a yearly pension of five hundred francs apiece, if you save the King."

Either because they were frightened by the demonstrations of the three young men, or because they were attracted by the royal offer, the postilions started up their horses, and resumed the journey.

Monsieur de Préfontaine retreated to his house and barred the door.

Isidore galloped in front of the coach. He wished to go through the Upper Village, and cross the bridge. After passing through the town and crossing the bridge, five minutes would bring them to the Grand Monarch.

The coach was driven at full speed down the slope, towards the Lower Village; but when they reached the archway, which opened upon the bridge and ran beneath the tower, they could see that one half of the tollgate was shut. They opened this flap of the gate, and found that two or three wagons obstructed the way.

"Help me, gentlemen!" said Isidore, dismounting, and taking hold of these wagons.

At that moment were heard the first drumtaps and the first strokes of the tocsin. Drouet had done his work!

"Wretch!" cried Isidore, grinding his teeth, "if I ever find thee —"

By a tremendous effort he pushed one wagon aside, while Malden and Valory did as much for another. The third still rested crosswise on the bridge.

"Now for the last!" said Isidore, as the coach came part way through the arch.

Suddenly, between the stakes of the third wagon, were thrust the guns of four or five muskets.

"Not one step, or you 're dead, gentlemen!" said a voice.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the King, putting out his head, "don't try to force a passage!—I command you!"

The two officers and Isidore took a backward step, while the King asked: "What is wanted with us?"

At the same time a cry of distress was heard in the coach. Besides the men who intercepted the carriage in front, others had glided in behind it, and several musket-barrels were thrust in at the windows. One of these was aimed at the Queen's breast. Isidore saw the danger, sprang forward, grasped the muzzle, and pulled it aside.

"Fire, fire!" cried several voices. One man obeyed the popular cry, but fortunately his gun missed fire.

Isidore raised his arm, and was about stabbing the fellow with his hunting-knife, when the Queen stayed his arm.

"Ah Madame!" cried Isidore, furiously. "In the name of Heaven, let me finish this scoundrel!"

"No!" said the Queen. "Sheathe your knife! Do you hear?"

Isidore half obeyed. He let his knife fall to his side, but did not restore it to his belt, while he murmured: "Ah! If I encounter that Drouet—"

"As to him," whispered the Queen, pressing Isidore's arm with peculiar force, "as to *him*, I leave him to you!"

"Now, gentlemen," repeated the King, "what do you want?"

"We wish to see your passports," replied two or three voices.

"Our passports? So be it!" said the King. "Bring the town authorities, and we will show our passports."

"On my word, these are great goings-on," cried the

man whose gun had miscarried, thrusting his head into the King's face; but the two bodyguards threw themselves upon him, and knocked him down. In the tussle his gun went off, but the bullet hit nobody.

"Halloo there!" cried a voice. "Who fired?"

The man who was being crushed under the feet of the two guardsmen groaned, and cried for help. Five or six other armed men ran to his relief. The guardsmen drew their hunting-knives, and prepared for a fight. The King and Queen made useless efforts to check the onslaught; but the fight was about to begin, — terrible, ferocious, mortal.

At that moment two men threw themselves into the midst of the contest. One wore his uniform as a National Guardsman, and the other was girded with the tricolored scarf. The man wearing the tricolored scarf was Monsieur Sausse, the town-solicitor. The man in uniform was Hannonet, the commander of the local National Guards. Behind them might be seen a half-hundred muskets, glittering in the light of two or three torches.

The King understood that in these two men lay his help, or at least his safety; so he said: "Gentlemen, I am willing to confide to you both myself and my companions; but pray defend us from the brutality of these fellows." As he spoke he pointed to the men armed with muskets.

"Lower your arms, gentlemen!" cried Hannonet. The men grumblingly obeyed.

"You will excuse us, Monsieur," said the town-solicitor, addressing the King, "but it is noised about that you are his Majesty, Louis the Sixteenth, running away from France; and it is our duty to ascertain if this is true."

"Ascertain if it 's true!" cried Isidore. "If that

coach contains the King, you should be at his royal feet. On the contrary, if this coach contains only a private person, by what right do you stop it?"

"Monsieur," said Sausse, still speaking to the King, "I address myself to *you*. Will you do me the honor of answering?"

"Sire," whispered Isidore, "try to gain time. Damas and his dragoons are on the road, and must get here soon."

"You are right!" said the King to Isidore; and then he continued, speaking to Sausse: "If our passports are all right, Monsieur, shall we be allowed to pursue our journey?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Sausse.

"Well, Baroness," said the King to Madame de Tourzel, "have the goodness to hunt up your passport, and give it to these gentlemen."

Madame de Tourzel understood what the King meant by that phrase, *hunt up your passport;* and so she began to search in all those places where she was sure it was not to be found.

"There!" said an impatient voice, full of menace, "you see, very well, that none of these folks have a passport."

"Indeed, we have one, gentlemen; but not knowing that it would really be demanded, the Baroness de Korff does not at this moment remember exactly where she put it."

A sort of howl went up from the crowd, indicating that they were not the dupes of this subterfuge.

"There is a very simple way out of all this bother," said Sausse. "Postilions, drive the coach to my store. The gentlemen and ladies can enter my house, and there everything can be cleared up. — Drive on, postilions!

Gentlemen of the National Guard, escort the coach, if you please."

This invitation too much resembled a command, for anybody to venture upon its contradiction. Besides, resistance would probably have been useless, if attempted. The alarm-bell continued ringing, the drum beating, and the crowd around the carriage grew larger every instant. The coach was soon in motion.

"Oh Damas, Damas!" murmured the King, "if you'll only come before we reach that cursed house!"

The Queen said nothing; but she thought of Charny, stifled her sighs, and kept back her tears.

They reached Sausse's store, but they heard nothing from Damas.

What had happened, on his side, to prevent that gentleman, on whose devotion the King had so securely counted, from fulfilling the orders which he had received and the promises he had made?

We will tell you, in two words, in order to bring out of its obscurity every point in this lugubrious story, concerning which Michelet has written as follows:

The history of that tragic moment, when the King was arrested, has always been imperfectly known. The principal historians of the trip to Varennes knew nothing about it, except from hearsay. The two Bouillés, father and son, were not there. Choiseul and Goguelat did not arrive till an hour after the fatal moment. Deslon came still later.

We left Damas, just as he had ordered the call to saddle, by the trumpeters, whom he had kept with him for greater security.

When the first trumpet-blast sounded he took some money from the drawer of his desk, and in so doing he drew out several papers, which he neither wished to

leave behind him nor to take with him. He was thus occupied when the chamber door opened, and several town officials appeared on the threshold.

One of them approached the Count, who asked, surprised at this unexpected visit, what they desired, and so changed his position as to conceal a brace of pistols, lying on the chimneypiece.

"Monsieur," politely but firmly responded the visitors, "we wish to know why you are going away at this hour."

Damas was amazed that these men should ask such a question of a superior officer in the King's army; but he answered: "It is very simple, Monsieur! I go away at this hour, because such are my orders."

"Where do you go, Monsieur Colonel?" insisted the questioner.

Damas was more and more astonished. "Where do I go? To begin with, I don't know; but if I did know, I should n't tell you."

The municipal deputies exchanged glances and encouraging gestures, and the one who had before spoken continued the conversation with Damas.

"Monsieur, it is the wish of the Clermont town council that you should remain here till to-morrow morning, and not leave this evening."

Colonel Damas smiled contemptuously, as a military man can smile, when he is asked, either through ignorance or with a view to his intimidation, to do anything incompatible with martial law. "Ah!" said he. "So the town council wishes me to stay here till to-morrow morning?"

"Yes!"

"Well, Monsieur, say to the council that I supremely regret refusing their wish; but no law, that I ever heard

of, authorizes the municipal authorities of Clermont to impede the march of troops. As for me, I receive orders only from my military superior, and there 's his order for my departure."

As he spoke he extended the order towards the town deputies. The nearest man took the paper, and showed it to his companions; while Damas grasped the pistols which lay behind him on the mantelpiece, where they had been hidden from sight by his intervening form.

After examining the paper, with his colleagues, the councillor, who had before spoken, again said to Damas: "Monsieur, the more precise this order, the more it is our duty to oppose it; for undoubtedly it commands something which, in the interests of France, ought not to be done. In the name of the Nation, I announce that you are hereby placed under arrest."

"And I, gentlemen," said the Colonel, — displaying his pistols and covering with them the two councillors nearest him, — "I announce my immediate and positive departure."

Not expecting this armed threat, a natural sentiment of fear made them hastily retreat from the pathway of Damas, who sprang across the threshold, ran through the antechamber, double-locked the door after him, hastened down the staircase, found his horse at the door, jumped on his back, and rode at breakneck speed to the square, where his regiment was mustered. He said to Floirac, one of the officers whom he saw already in his saddle: "We must get out of here as we can, but the important thing is that the King is safe."

Ignorant of Drouet's mission from Saint Menehould, knowing only the insurrection at Clermont, Damas believed the King was safe, if he passed Clermont, as he had done already, and could reach Varennes, where were

stationed Choiseul's relays, and Lauzun's hussars, commanded by Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt.

Nevertheless, by way of precaution, he said to the regimental quarter-master, who had come to the square among the first, with his subordinate assistants and the dragoons from his lodgings: "Monsieur Remy, ride on! Take the road to Varennes, and ride like all-possessed. Overtake the carriages which passed through here a little while ago. You 'll answer to me with your head."

Using both spurs, off went the quarter-master, with his assistants and four dragoons; but when they reached the fork of the roads, they took the wrong direction and went astray. Everything turned out fatally on that most fatal night!

Meantime the cavalry formed slowly in the square at Clermont. The councillors, whom Damas had locked up, easily escaped, by forcing the door. They stirred up the populace and the National Guards, who came together more quickly and in better order than the dragoons. Whatever movement Damas made, he found himself cheek by jowl with three or four muskets, aimed straight at him, and this did not render him less anxious.

He saw that his soldiers were indifferent, and rode down the ranks, trying to rally their devotion to the King; but they shook their heads. Although the dragoons were not all assembled, he judged it high time to be on the move, and gave the order to ride forward; but nobody budged.

Meanwhile the town officials were saying: "Dragoons, your officers are traitors. They are leading you to butchery. The dragoons are the true Patriots. Huzza for the dragoons!"

As for the National Guards and the populace, they shouted: "Hurrah for the Nation!"

As Damas had given the order for departure in a low voice, he at first supposed the command had not been heard; but as he faced about, he saw the dragoons in the second rank jumping from their saddles and fraternizing with the people.

Seeing there was nothing to be hoped from such men, he called his officers to him by a glance of his eye, and said: "These troopers betray their King. I call upon you as soldiers, as gentlemen! Whoever is on my side will follow me. — On, to Varennes!"

Striking his spurs into his horse's flanks he flashed through the crowd, followed by Floirac and three officers. These three officers, or rather sub-officers, were Adjutant Foucq, and Sergeants Saint-Charles and La Potterie. Five or six loyal dragoons also left the ranks, and followed Damas.

A few bullets, sent after the heroic fugitives, were so many bullets thrown away.

Thus we see why Colonel Damas and his dragoons were not on hand to defend the King, when he was arrested in the archway of the old tollbridge tower at Varennes, and forced to leave his coach and go into the house of the town solicitor, Monsieur Sausse.

CHAPTER XLVI.

SAUSSE'S RESIDENCE.

The house occupied by Monsieur Sausse — at least, as much of it as could be seen by the illustrious prisoners and their companions in misfortune — consisted of a grocery, at the end whereof appeared the dining-room, beyond a glass door, through which, when seated at the table, the grocer's family could see any customers who might enter the store, their entrance being also advertised by a little bell, set swinging by the opening of a low door, with a clear opening upper half, like those still used in provincial stores, whose proprietors, either out of calculation or humility, seem to feel they have no right to entirely screen themselves from the gaze of passers-by.

In one corner of the grocery was a wooden staircase, which led by broad angles to the main story of the house.

This main story was made up of two rooms. The first, an annex of the store, was full of packages piled up from the floor, of candles hanging from the ceiling, of sugar-loaves ranged along the shelves. These sugar cones were wrapped in dark blue papers, with their caps a little tipsy, where the wrappers had been opened to show the fineness and whiteness of the crystalline sugar-peak within. The other room, the one over the dining-room, was the chamber of the proprietor of the establishment, who had been roused by Drouet, and whose room

showed traces of the disorder occasioned by this sudden awakening.

Madame Sausse, half-dressed, came out of the bedroom, crossed the storeroom, and appeared at the head of the staircase, just as several persons passed through the doorway from the street into the store, — first the Queen, then the King, then the royal children, and finally Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Tourzel.

Preceding these travellers, the town-solicitor had already entered his shop. More than a hundred persons had accompanied the coach, and now remained outside Monsieur Sausse's dwelling, which was situated on a small square.

"Well, well! What now?" said the King, as he entered.

"Well, Monsieur," answered Sausse, "there has been some talk about a passport. If the lady who calls herself the mistress of the carriage will produce her passport, I will take it to the townhouse, where the council is in session, to see if it's all right."

Come what would, the passport given by Madame de Korff to Charny, and by the Count to the Queen, was entirely regular; so the King made a sign for his wife to give up the passport.

She drew the precious paper from her pocket, and placed it in the hands of Monsieur Sausse, who charged his wife to do the honors of the house to his mysterious guests, and went at once to the townhouse.

The spirits engaged in this municipal conference were decidedly warm, for Drouet assisted at their deliberations. When Sausse came in with the passport, curiosity took the form of silence; for each one present knew the travellers had been conducted to Sausse's house.

He laid the passport on the table in front of the

Mayor. As we have already given the tenor of this passport, the reader knows there was nothing in it to make a reperusal needful.

After reading it, the Mayor said: "Gentlemen, the passport is perfectly good."

"Good?" repeated eight or ten astonished voices, while as many hands were outstretched to take the precious and mysterious document.

"Unquestionably good," said the Mayor, "for the King's signature is there!" and he pushed the passport towards the extended hands, which were at once laid upon it; but Drouet almost snatched it from the others, as he exclaimed: "Signed by the King, is it? May-be; but is it signed by the National Assembly?"

"Yes!" said one of his neighbors, who read the passport at the same time as Drouet, by the light of the candle, "for there is the signature of a member of the proper committee."

"Agreed!" replied Drouet; "but is it the President's? Besides," persisted the young Patriot, "that is n't really the question. These travellers are not a Russian lady named Korff, her children, her steward, her two companions, and three servants! These travellers are the King, the Queen, the Dauphin, Madame Royale, Madame Elizabeth, some other great lady belonging to the palace, and three couriers, — in fact, the whole royal family! Will you, or will you not, let the royal family leave France?"

The question was thus placed in its proper aspect; but this aspect only served to make it the more difficult for the poor officials of a third-rate town like Varennes to dispose of it.

As they discussed the matter, and their deliberations threatened to continue very late, the solicitor resolved

to leave the council to its legal meditations, and return home.

He found the travellers still standing in the shop. Madame Sausse had urged them to go upstairs into her chamber, or at least to be seated in the shop, and have something to eat; but they had rejected all these kindnesses. It seemed to the travellers that by installing themselves fairly in the house, or even by sitting down and accepting the proffered hospitality, they would be making some concessions to those who had arrested them, and give up their intended route, — the object of their fondest desires. All their faculties were held in suspense, so to speak, till the return of the master of the house, who would report the decision of the town officials on the important matter of the passport.

Suddenly they saw him threading his way through the crowd outside, and making an effort to reach the house.

The King advanced three steps to meet him, and asked, with an anxiety he vainly tried to conceal, but which made itself apparent in spite of his efforts: "Well, well, — the passport?"

"The passport," was Sausse's response, "has given rise to a grave debate, which is still going on at the townhouse."

"Why so?" demanded Louis Sixteenth. "Do they perhaps doubt its validity?"

"No; but they doubt if it is in the hands of the true Madame de Korff; for it is noised abroad that really we have the pleasure of receiving the King and his family within our walls."

Louis hesitated a moment, and then answered, suddenly determining the proper part to take: "Well, Monsieur, I am the King. This is the Queen. These

are our children. I beg of you to treat us with that respect which the French people have always shown towards their sovereigns."

As we have said, the upper half of the street door remained open, and a large number of inquisitive folks were gathered about the doorway. The King's words were therefore heard, not only by those inside, but by those outside.

Even if the King had pronounced these words with dignity, this dignity ill corresponded with his gray coat, his dimity vest, his gray breeches and stockings, and the little Rousseau wig which he wore. Think of finding the King of France in such a disguise!

The Queen felt the impression produced on the multitude, and the blood mounted to her face as she said: "Let us accept Madame Sausse's kindness, and go upstairs."

Monsieur Sausse took a lamp and walked towards the stairway, to show his illustrious guests the way.

Meanwhile the news had spread on the wings of the wind, through all the streets of the town, that it was really the King who had come to Varennes, and that the avowal had come from his own mouth.

One man rushed excitedly into the townhouse, and cried: "Gentlemen, the arrested travellers, at Sausse's house, are really the King and royal family! I have just heard so, from the King's own mouth."

"Ah ha, gentlemen, what did I tell you?" cried Drouet.

At the same time they could hear the noise in the streets. The drum continued to beat, and the alarm-bell to ring.

Now how did it happen that all this hubbub did not sooner attract towards the centre of the town, and

consequently nearer the fugitives, our young friends Raigecourt and Bouillé, with the hussars stationed beyond Lower Varennes, solely on the King's account.

By the way, this Monsieur de Bouillé, whose name appears so often in connection with the unfortunate royal journey, was Jules de Bouillé, and not Louis de Bouillé, his brother, who has already figured in this narrative, and who found his way to the Royal Forge, first in his proper person, introduced by Lafayette, and then in the disguise of a locksmith's journeyman.

Now let us see why Jules de Bouillé and Monsieur de Raigecourt did not come loyally to the King's relief.

At nine in the evening these two young officers had just entered the Grand Monarch Tavern, when they heard the roll of a carriage. Both were in the basement parlor, and ran to the window.

The vehicle was a simple cabriolet, and the two gentlemen therefore held themselves ready to order out their fresh horses, if there was need of it; only they soon perceived the traveller not to be the King, but a grotesque personage, covered with a broad-brimmed hat, and muffled in an enormous coat.

They had taken a step backward, when the traveller called to them: "Say, gentlemen, is n't one of you the Chevalier Jules de Bouillé?"

The Chevalier paused in his retreat, and answered: "Yes, Monsieur, it is I."

"In that case," said the man in the topcoat and the broad-brimmed hat, "I have many things to tell you."

"Monsieur," replied Jules, "I am ready to hear them, although I have n't the honor of your acquaintance; but if you will take the trouble to leave the cabriolet, and come into the inn, we will soon get acquainted."

"Willingly, Monsieur Chevalier, willingly!" cried the man in the big coat, as he sprang from the carriage without touching the steps, and hurriedly ran into the tavern.

The Chevalier noticed that the new-comer appeared somewhat flurried, when he presently said: "Ah, Monsieur de Bouillé, you will let me have the horses which are here, won't you?"

"How? The horses I have here?" So replied Jules, flurried in his turn.

"Yes, yes! You 'll let me have 'em! You need keep nothing from me. I 'm in it! I know all about it!"

"Monsieur, allow me to say that surprise forbids my answering," replied Jules, "and that I don't understand a word of what you 're talking about."

"I repeat to you, that I know all," persisted the traveller. "The King left Paris last night, but there is no likelihood that he can complete his trip. So I have already warned Colonel Damas, but he is out of the question. His regiment of dragoons mutinied, and there was a great commotion in Clermont. Why, I could hardly get through the place, — I, who speak to you."

"But you who are talking to me," said Jules, impatiently, "who are you, anyhow?"

"I 'm Leonard, the Queen's hairdresser. What? You don't know me? Just imagine it, now! Without my leave the Duke spirited me away, — Choiseul, I mean. I was at first carrying the Queen's diamonds, and Madame Elizabeth's; and when I think, Monsieur, that my brother, whose hat and overcoat I have on, does n't know what has become of me; and that poor Madame de l'Aage expected me to dress her hair yesterday, and is still waiting for me! Oh Lord, oh Lord! What a long story this is!"

Leonard walked up and down the inn parlor with long strides, lifting his hands desperately to the ceiling.

Jules began to understand. "So you 're Monsieur Leonard!" he said.

"Certainly, I 'm Leonard," replied the traveller, — waiving, after the fashion of great men, the title of Monsieur, conferred upon him by Bouillé. "Well, now you know me, you 'll let me have the horses, won't you?"

"Monsieur Leonard," replied Jules, obstinately remanding the illustrious barber to the class of ordinary mortals, "the horses I have are for the King, and no one shall use them except the King."

"But when I tell you, Monsieur, the King won't probably come this way —"

"That is very well, Monsieur Leonard; but the King *may* come this way; and if he should come, without finding the horses, and I should tell him I had given them to you, perhaps he would respond that I must pay for my bad reasoning."

"Bad reasoning?" said Leonard. "Why, do you suppose, in the extreme situation where we find ourselves, the King would blame me for taking his horses?"

The Chevalier could not suppress a smile. "I don't pretend that the King would blame you for taking the horses; but cock-sure he 'd find *me* blameworthy, for letting you have those horses."

"Ah, the Devil! I had n't faced the question from that point of view! Then you refuse me the horses, Monsieur?"

"Positively!"

Leonard sighed. "At least," he presently said, returning to the attack, "you 'll help me to get others?"

"As to that, my dear Monsieur Leonard, I ask nothing better."

In fact, Leonard was a very embarrassing guest. Not only did he talk loud, but he emphasized his words with most expressive pantomime; and this pantomime, thanks to the flapping brims of his big hat and the lappels of his enormous coat, took on a ridiculous appearance, whose absurdity could not but reflect somewhat upon his interlocutors.

Jules therefore made haste to rid himself of Leonard. He sent for the landlord of the inn, and begged him to find some horses, which would take Leonard as far as Dun. This done, he abandoned Leonard to his fate, telling him (what was true enough) that he must go elsewhere and learn the news.

The two officers, Bouillé and Raigecourt, returned to the Upper Village, passed through it, and rode a quarter of a league beyond it, on the Paris road; but they neither saw nor heard anything, and so they began to take their turn in thinking that the King, already eight or ten hours late, would not come, and finally they returned to the Lower Village and Grand Monarch.

Leonard had just departed. Eleven o'clock sounded.

Already disquieted by what they had heard from the royal hairdresser, at about quarter-past nine they sent an orderly to Clermont. This was the orderly who met the royal coach as it was leaving Clermont, and whom we heard in his chat with Colonel Damas.

The two young officers at the Grand Monarch waited till midnight. At midnight they lay down with their clothes on.

Half an hour later they were awakened by the alarm-bell, by drumming and shouting. Putting their heads out of the tavern window they could see the town in a hubbub, and people running, or rather scurrying, towards the townhouse. Many armed men were rushing in the

same direction, towards the Upper Village, some with muskets, and some with double-barrelled guns; while others only bore swords, sabres, and pistols.

The two young gentlemen ran to the stable and ordered out the King's horses, which they felt bound to retain at all hazards; and for better protection they took these horses outside the village, so that the King would find them, if he succeeded in passing so far through the town. Then they went back after their own horses, which they had kept near the King's, guarded by some postilions.

All this going and coming roused some suspicion, and in order to leave the tavern with their horses, they had to face a combat, wherein two or three shots were fired at them.

In the midst of howls and threats they learned that the King had been recognized, and taken to the town-solicitor's.

Then they took counsel as to what they had better do. Ought they to rejoin the hussars, and try to rescue the King? Ought they to ride on, and try to warn the Marquis de Bouillé, whom they were pretty sure to find, if not at Dun, certainly at Stenay?

Dun was only five leagues from Varennes. Stenay was eight leagues off. In ninety minutes they could be at Dun, and in two hours at Stenay. Then they could immediately march back on Varennes, with the small section of soldiers commanded by the elder Bouillé.

They chose the latter course; and at a half-hour after midnight, just as the royal party decided to enter Solicitor Sausse's chamber, our young men decided to leave the relays of horses they had so carefully guarded, and set off for Dun, at a grand gallop.

Thus it was that this succor, upon which he so surely relied, failed to reach the King.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE COUNSEL OF DESPERATION.

We may recall the situation in which Choiseul found himself, as commander of the first military station at Sommevelle Bridge. Seeing the rebellion on the increase about him, and wishing to avoid a collision, he did not wait any longer for the royal carriages, but said, carelessly, that the military funds had been carried by already; and then he straightway set out for Varennes.

In order not to pass through Saint Menehould, which was already in a ferment, — as we may remember, — he took a crossroad, taking care, however, to ride slowly, before quitting the highway, in order to give the King's advance courier time to overtake him; but the courier had not overtaken him at Orbeval, where he entered the side road; though Isidore (who was acting as courier) passed by the fork of the Orbeval road soon after Choiseul had taken it.

The Duke firmly believed the King had been detained by some unforeseen event. If he was happily mistaken in this surmise, and the King was still on the road, his Majesty would find Dandoins at Saint Menehould, and Damas at Clermont.

We have seen, however, what happened to Captain Dandoins at Saint Menehould, where he was detained by the town officials, and to Colonel Damas at Clermont, who was compelled to effect his escape almost alone; but what is well known to us — looking down on that

painful day from the height of sixty years, in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, with our eyes bent upon each separate actor in the great drama — was hidden from Choiseul by the cloud of doubt in which he was enfolded.

By taking the crossroad to Orbeval, towards night Choiseul reached the woods of Varennes, at the very moment when Charny was bewildered in another part of the forest, in his fruitless pursuit of Drouet.

At the last village on the borders of the forest — Neuville Bridge — Choiseul was obliged to lose a half-hour, waiting for a guide. During this delay he could hear the alarm-bells ringing in the neighboring villages, and the four hussars, constituting his rear guard, were arrested by the peasantry. Seasonably warned of this occurrence, Choiseul had only to make one rapid onslaught upon the group, and the four hussars were again free; but soon the tocsin began to ring more furiously than ever, and without a pause.

The crossroad through the forest was extremely difficult, and often dangerous. Either by design or unintentionally, the guide misled the little company. Frequently the hussars were compelled to proceed afoot, in order to ascend or descend some precipitous hill. Sometimes the path was so narrow that they had to march in single file. One hussar fell over a precipice, and as his shouts for help showed that he was not dead, his comrades naturally refused to abandon him. In the work of rescuing him three-quarters of an hour were lost; and these three-quarters of an hour included precisely the minutes when the King was forced to leave his carriage in the town of Varennes, and take refuge in Sausse's store.

At a half-hour after midnight, as Jules de Bouillé and

Raigecourt were fleeing along the road to Dun, Choiseul, with his forty hussars, appeared at the other end of the village, coming from the crossway through the woods.

At the end of the bridge he was greeted by a vigorous "Who goes there?" which came from a partisan member of the National Guard.

"France! The Lauzun Hussars!" was Choiseul's reply.

"You can't pass!" said the sentinel, and he shouted the call to arms.

At the same moment there was a great commotion among the populace. Through the thickening night masses of armed men could be seen; and in the glare of torches, and of candles beaming from every window, muskets were visible, glittering along the streets.

Not knowing what all this meant, nor what had happened, Choiseul wished first to reconnoitre. He began by demanding to be put in communication with the detachment of soldiers stationed at Varennes. This demand led to long debate; but finally it was decided to accede to his request.

While they were coming to this decision, and putting it into execution, Choiseul could see the National Guards utilizing their time in preparations for defence, putting up a barricade of broken branches, and bringing to bear two small cannon upon his forty men.

Just as the marksman had fulfilled his task, the detachment of hussars arrived from the station on foot. They knew nothing, except what they had been told, — that the King had been arrested and taken to the town-house. As to themselves, they had been surprised by the populace, and compelled to dismount, and did not know what had become of their companions.

As they finished these explanations, Choiseul thought

he could see a small troop of horsemen advancing through the darkness, and at the same time he heard the challenge, "Who goes there?"

"France," replied a voice.

"What regiment?"

"The dragoons of *Monsieur's* Regiment."

At these words a gunshot was heard, fired by a National Guardsman.

"Good!" whispered Choiseul to a subordinate officer near him. "There 's Damas, with his dragoons."

Without waiting to hear more, Choiseul broke away from two men who were clinging to his bridle, and who shouted to him that it was his duty to obey the town officials, and nobody else. He ordered an attack, took by surprise those who tried to stop him, forced a passage through the crowd, and found his way, followed by his men, into the lighted streets, swarming with people.

As he approached Sausse's residence Choiseul saw the royal coach, standing unharnessed; and presently he came into a small square, where a numerous guard was stationed before an unpretentious house.

In order not to bring his troops into contact with the inhabitants, he rode straight on to the barracks, whose location he well knew. The barracks were empty, but he placed his forty hussars therein.

As Choiseul was leaving the barracks he was stopped by two men, coming from the townhouse, and summoned to report to the town officials; but as his hussars were still within hearing, he shook off these two men, with the reply that he would come to the townhouse when he had leisure, and called aloud to the sentinel to admit nobody.

Two or three grooms remained in the barracks. Choiseul interrogated them, and thus learned that the

hussars there stationed, not knowing what had become of their chiefs, had followed the crowd who came after them, and were drinking with their captors, all over the village.

At this news Choiseul was somewhat dismayed. His force was reduced to forty men, whose horses had achieved more than twenty leagues that day. Men and horses were alike exhausted. There was therefore no time for dallying.

First he inspected the pistols, to see if they were loaded. Then he made a speech to the hussars in German, who, not understanding a word of French, knew little of what had been taking place around them at Varennes. He told them that the King, Queen, and whole royal family had been arrested, and that it was the duty of the Lauzun Hussars to rescue these august personages from the hands of those who held them as prisoners, and would perhaps put them to death.

The speech was short, but impassioned, and made a lively impression upon the hussars. *Der Koenig! Die Koenigen!* (the King! the Queen!) they repeated in astonishment, and in their own tongue.

Choiseul did not give them time to cool. He ordered them to draw their sabres, break into ranks by fours, and go at a rapid trot towards the house where he had noticed the guard, not doubting that the King was therein a prisoner.

Arriving there, — amidst the curses of the National Guards, but paying no attention to those curses, — he placed sentinels at the door, and dismounted, in order to enter the house.

As he crossed the threshold he felt a hand on his shoulder. Turning quickly he saw Charles de Damas, whose voice he had before recognized, answering the

challenge of the National Guards. Perhaps he had partly counted on this auxiliary.

"Ah!" said Choiseul, "are you here in force?"

"I 'm alone, or almost alone," replied Damas.

"And why so?"

"My regiment refused to follow me, and I am here with only five or six men."

"What a misfortune! Never mind! I have forty hussars remaining. We must see what we can do with them."

The King was just then receiving a municipal deputation, with Monsieur Sausse at its head. This deputation had come to say to the King, that as the Varennes people were so very fortunate as to have their King among them, they had come to him for orders.

"My orders?" responded the King. "Have my carriages made ready, and I will leave at once."

Nobody knows what the precise response of the municipal officials would have been to this demand, for just then the gallop of Choiseul's horses was heard, and through the windows could be seen the hussars, standing in columns, with sabres in hand.

The Queen trembled, and a joyful ray shone in her eyes. "We are saved!" she murmured in Madame Elizabeth's ear.

"God grant it!" replied this lamblike offspring of royalty, who referred everything to God, — good or ill, hope or despair.

The King drew himself up and listened. The town officials looked anxiously at each other.

At this instant a great noise was heard in the antechamber, which was guarded by peasants armed with scythes. Some words were exchanged, followed by a brief struggle. Then Choiseul appeared in the door-

way, bareheaded, and with his sword drawn. Over Choiseul's shoulder could be seen the pale but resolute countenance of Damas.

There was a threatening expression in the look of these two officers, which scattered the town deputies, leaving a clear space between the new-comers and the royal prisoners.

As the cavalry officers entered, the interior of the chamber presented the following tableau. In the centre of the room was a table, whereon stood an open bottle of wine, some wineglasses, and some bread. The royal pair stood, listening to the town deputies. Near the window were Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale, — the former, however, very near the Queen. On the bed, half exhausted, slept the little Dauphin, overcome with weariness. At his side was seated Madame de Tourzel, her head buried in her hands; and behind her were Madame Brunier and Madame de Neuville. Then there were the two bodyguards, Malden and Valory, and Isidore de Charny, — all three broken down by sadness and fatigue, — sitting in the shadows, and half reclining on their chairs.

Perceiving Choiseul the Queen crossed the room to clasp his hand. "Ah, Monsieur de Choiseul, is it you? You are most welcome!"

"Alas, Madame, it seems I come too late," said the Duke.

"Never mind that, if you come in good company!"

"Ah, Madame, on the contrary, we are almost alone. Dandoins has been forcibly detained, with his soldiers, at the townhouse in Saint Menehould; and Colonel Damas has been abandoned by his men."

The Queen shook her head sorrowfully.

"But, where is the Chevalier Jules de Bouillé? Where

is Monsieur de Raigecourt?" and as he spoke, Choiseul looked carefully about him.

Meanwhile the King drew near. "I have not seen those gentlemen," he said.

"Sire," said Damas, "I pledge you my word of honor, that they must have been killed under the wheels of your coach."

"What will you do?" asked the King.

"Save your Majesty, at all hazards! Give your orders!" said Damas.

"I have forty hussars," said Choiseul. "They have ridden twenty hard leagues to-day, but they will be able to go on as far as Dun."

"But how about ourselves?" asked the King.

"Listen, Sire," said the Duke, "for this is all that I can propose. I have forty hussars, as I told you. Seven shall dismount. You shall mount one of the horses, holding the Dauphin in your arms. The Queen will take a second horse, Madame Elizabeth a third, Madame Royale a fourth, while Madame de Tourzel, and the other ladies, Neuville and Brunier, — whom you do not wish to abandon, — will take the other three horses. We will surround you with the three and thirty hussars still mounted. With a few cuts of our sabres we will let in the daylight, and thus have a chance of safety. — Think well, Sire, and speedily; for this is a measure to be adopted at once, if at all; for in an hour, in half an hour, — yes, in fifteen minutes, perhaps, — my hussars will be won to the other side."

Choiseul paused, awaiting the King's response. The Queen appeared to like this project, and fixed her eyes on her husband, anxiously questioning him with her gaze.

He, on the contrary, seemed to avoid the Queen's glance, and the influence it exerted over him.

At last he said, looking Choiseul full in the face: "Yes, I know very well that this is one way of rescue; but can you promise me that a gunshot may not kill my son, my daughter, my wife, or my sister, in this unequal squabble of thirty-three men with seven or eight hundred?"

"Sire, if such a misfortune should come to them, and come because you yielded to my counsel, there would be only one thing to do, — slay myself before your Majesty's eyes."

"Very well, then!" said Louis. "Instead of letting ourselves be carried away by such extreme projects, let us reason coolly about our situation."

The Queen sighed, and took two or three steps backward. In this movement, whereby she did not conceal her regret, she saw Isidore go to the window, — attracted by a noise in the street, and always in hopes that any disturbance was caused by the arrival of his brother. She exchanged two or three whispered words with Isidore, and he hurried out of the room.

The King continued talking, without apparently noticing what took place between Isidore and the Queen.

"The town officials do not refuse to let me go away. They only ask me to wait till daybreak. I will not speak of Count Oliver de Charny, who is so deeply devoted to us, and of whom we have no intelligence; but there are Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt. They went away from here some ten minutes after our arrival, to notify the Marquis de Bouillé, and have him come with *his* troops, who are certainly in readiness. If I were alone, I would follow your advice, and leave at once; but my wife, my two children, my sister, and these ladies! It is impossible to risk so much with so small a force as yours, — and even more hussars would have to dismount, for I would not leave my three bodyguards here."

The King drew out his watch. "It is already three o'clock. Young Bouillé rode away at half-past twelve. His father certainly had troops stationed here and there on the road. By this time the first detachments have been notified by the Chevalier, and will be here one after the other. It is only eight leagues from here to Stenay. In two or two and a half hours a man on horseback could easily cover this ground. He will run across these detachments all right. In five or six hours the Marquis de Bouillé will be here in person; and then — without peril to my family, without any violence — we can quit Varennes, and continue our journey."

Choiseul recognized the logic of this reasoning; and yet his instinct told him there were certain moments when one must not hearken to logic.

He turned to the Queen, and his glance seemed to beseech her for different commands, or at least that she would persuade the King to revoke the decision just pronounced; but she shook her head. "I will take nothing on myself," she said. "It is the King who commands. My duty is to obey. Besides, I am of the King's opinion, that Bouillé will come."

Choiseul retreated several steps, taking with him Damas, with whom he wished to arrange some concerted method of action, and he also made a sign to Malden and Valory to come and take their part in the consultation.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

POOR CATHERINE!

THE chamber is not greatly changed in its aspect. As Madame Royale has not been able to overcome her weariness, Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Tourzel have put her to bed beside her brother, and she is now asleep. Madame Elizabeth sits beside the bed, resting her head against one of its corners.

The Queen, rigid with anger, stands near the mantelpiece, looking alternately at the King, who is seated on a bale of merchandise, — brought into the sparsely furnished chamber from the adjoining storeroom, — and at the officers, who are deliberating near the door.

An old woman, an octogenarian, is on her knees by the children's bedside, as if she were before an altar. This is the grandmother of the town-solicitor. Struck by the beauty of the two children, and the Queen's imposing air, she has fallen upon her knees, and is praying in whispers, her face bathed in tears.

What is the burden of her prayer? Is it that God will pardon these two angels, or that these two angels may pardon mankind?

Sausse and the other officials have retired, promising the King that horses shall at once be put to his coach; but the Queen's look shows that she puts no dependence whatever upon this promise.

This makes Choiseul say to Damas, to Floirac, and to Foucq, who are with him on one side of the room, — as

well as Malden and Valory, the two bodyguards: "Gentlemen, we must not rely upon the feigned tranquillity of the King and Queen. The question is not utterly desperate, but let us see exactly how we stand."

The other officers make a motion for Choiseul to proceed, as they are listening attentively.

"It is probable that by this time the Marquis de Bouillé is notified, and that he will arrive here by five or six in the morning; for he was to be between Dun and Stenay, with a detachment from the Royal German Regiment. It is even possible for his advance guard to be here a half-hour earlier, for under such circumstances everything possible ought to be done; but we must not forget that we are surrounded by four or five thousand antagonists, and that the moment when Bouillé's troops make their appearance will be a moment of great danger and of ungovernable turmoil. Our enemies will insist upon getting the King out of Varennes. They will try to make him mount a horse and ride back to Clermont. His life will be menaced, and perhaps attempted. This danger need last only for an instant, gentlemen; for as soon as the barrier is forced, and the hussars are fairly in the town, the rout will be complete. We shall only be compelled to hold our own for about nine minutes, and there are nine of us. As things are arranged here, we may hope they will be able to kill no more than one of us a minute; consequently there will be time enough."

His hearers contented themselves with nodding assent. This proposal was made with perfect simplicity, and accepted with equal simplicity; yet it meant devotion to the death.

Choiseul continued: "Well, gentlemen, here is what I think ought to be done. At the first shot heard, at

the first outcry round about us, we must go into the adjoining storeroom. All the people who happen to be there we must kill, and then take possession of the staircase and the windows. There are three windows. Three of us must defend them. The other six must make a stand at the staircase, which is so easy of defence, being built with broad landings, that one man alone can face five or six assailants. The bodies of those whom we have already killed may serve as a rampart against our living enemies. I 'll wager, a hundred to one, that the troops will be masters of the village before the last one of us is done for; and if we all perish, the place we shall occupy in history will hereafter be a full reward for our devotion."

These young gentlemen grasped one another's hands, like Spartans before a battle. Then each selected his post. The two bodyguards, with Isidore de Charny, — whose place was kept for him, though he was absent from the consultation, — were to guard the three windows, opening upon the street. The Duke was to be at the bottom of the staircase. Behind him was to be Damas; and then Floirac, Foucq, and the two subordinate dragoon officers, who had remained faithful to Damas, and had taken part in the conference.

Hardly had these arrangements been agreed upon, when a bustle was heard in the street.

This arose from the visit of a second municipal deputation, composed of Sausse, — who naturally appeared to be a prime element in every deputation, — Commander Hannonet, of the National Guard, and three or four other municipal officers.

They were duly announced, and the King, believing they had come to say his horses might be harnessed, ordered the admission of the deputation.

They entered. The young officers — who were on the lookout for every gesture, every sign, every motion — thought they could perceive some hesitation in Sausse's manner, and a set expression in Hannonet's face, which boded no good to the royal travellers.

At the same time Isidore came upstairs, spoke two words to the Queen, and hastily ran down again.

The Queen took a step backward, with pale cheeks, and leaned against the bedstead, where her children were lying. As for the King, he questioned the town envoys with his eyes, and waited for them to speak; but they bowed to the King, without saying a word.

Louis pretended to misunderstand their intentions, and said: "Gentlemen, the French people are only misled, for their attachment to their rulers is genuine. Weary with the continual outrages which I have endured in my capital, I have decided to retire to my most remote provinces, where still burns the sacred flame of loyalty. There I am sure to find the ancient love of my people for their sovereigns."

The envoys bowed anew, and the King continued: "I am ready to give proof of my confidence in my people. I will take an escort, half made up of National Guardsmen, and half of regular troops of the line, and they shall accompany me to Montmédy, whither I have made up my mind to retire. Consequently I beg you to choose half of my escort from among your men, and have horses at once put to my carriage."

There was a momentary silence. Sausse was probably waiting for Hannonet to begin, while the captain was waiting for Sausse. At last Hannonet bowed and said: "Sire, it would be very pleasant if I could obey your Majesty's commands; but there is, in the Constitution, an article which forbids the King's departure from the

kingdom, and forbids loyal Frenchmen from aiding him in so doing."

The King trembled, and Hannonet continued, with a gesture of supplication to the King to hear him through: "Consequently, the town of Varennes has decided, before permitting the King to go farther away, that a courier shall be sent to Paris, and that we will wait till we hear from the National Assembly."

The King felt great drops of sweat on his brow, while the Queen bit her pale lips impatiently, and Madame Elizabeth lifted her eyes and hands devoutly to Heaven.

"Indeed, gentlemen!" said the King, with a certain dignity, which came to him when he was pushed to the wall. "Am I no longer master of my own movements, to go whither I please? In that case, I am more a slave than the least of my subjects!"

"Sire," replied the captain of the National Guards, "you are always the master; only all men — kings, as well as ordinary citizens — are bound by their oaths. You have taken an oath. Be the first to fulfil that oath, Sire, and obey the laws. It will not only be a grand example to set, but a noble duty to discharge."

During this conversation the Duke glanced interrogatively at the Queen; and receiving an affirmative answer to his mute question, he went downstairs.

The King well understood that if he submitted to this rebellion, on the part of a village council, — and from his point of view it *was* a rebellion, — his cause was lost.

Besides, he recognized the same Revolutionary spirit, which Mirabeau had wished to subdue in the provinces, and which had already raised its venomous crest before the royal footsteps in Paris, on July 14, 1789, when the Bastille was taken; on October 5 and 6, 1789, when the royal family were assaulted in their palace at Versailles,

and dragged to Paris; on April 18, 1791, when the King had made a trial of his liberty, by attempting to drive to Saint Cloud, and had been hindered from doing so by the populace.

"Gentlemen," said he, "this is simply violence; but I am not so isolated as it might appear. Before this door I have forty faithful men; and in the neighborhood of your Varennes, I have ten thousand other soldiers. I command you to have my horses harnessed. You hear me, — this is my wish and my command."

The Queen came to his side and whispered: "Good, Sire, good! Let us risk our lives, but let us never sacrifice our dignity."

"And what will be the result, if we refuse to obey your Majesty?" said the commander.

"The result will be that I shall be compelled to resort to force, and you will be responsible for the blood which I have refused to shed, and which, in this event, will be shed by yourselves."

"Very well! So be it, Sire! Try to summon your hussars, and I will summon the National Guards!" and Hannonet went down into the street.

The royal pair looked at each other in dismay. Perhaps neither of them dared risk such a crisis.

Just then Madame Sausse, the solicitor's wife, entered. Pushing aside the old grandmother, who was in prayer at the bedside, she walked up to the Queen and said, with the rudeness and freedom of a woman of the people: "So, Madame, you 're really the Queen, are you?"

The Queen turned, and said, her pride wounded by such familiar questioning: "Oh yes! At least, I believed so an hour ago."

"Well, if you 're the Queen," went on Madame Sausse, unconcernedly, — "they give you and your good man

twenty-five millions a year for keeping your throne. The place is a good one, it seems to me, and well salaried. What do you want to quit it for ?"

The Queen uttered a grievous cry, and turned to the King. "Oh Monsieur, — anything, anything, anything else, rather than such indignities !"

Taking the Dauphin, half-asleep, from his bed, she ran to the window and opened it, saying to the King : "Monsieur, let us show ourselves to the people, and see if they are wholly poisoned towards us. If they are, let us appeal to the soldiery, and encourage them with voice and gesture. They at least merit so much, when they are willing to die for us."

The King followed his wife mechanically, and appeared with her on the balcony.

The whole square, into which King Louis and Marie Antoinette looked, presented a lively spectacle.

Half of Choiseul's hussars were on foot, and the others on horseback. Those on foot were lost, swallowed up amidst groups of citizens, whom they allowed to take their horses away in various directions. These hussars were already won to the National cause. Those on horseback seemed submissive to Choiseul, who was haranguing them in German; but they showed their colonel that half their companions had deserted.

Standing apart was Isidore, his hunting-knife in hand, — seemingly a stranger to all this hubbub, — waiting for a man, like a hunter on the watch for his game.

The King, the King, resounded from five hundred throats, as the royal family appeared on the balcony, — the Queen, as has been said already, holding the Dauphin in her arms.

If Louis the Sixteenth had been clad royally, or even in military garb, if he had wielded sceptre or sword, if

he had spoken in loud and impressive tones, his voice would have sounded to the people, even at that epoch, like the voice of God, or at least the voice of one sent from Heaven; and perhaps he would have gained that influence over the people which he hoped for; but at break of day, in the slanting twilight, which disfigures the greatest beauty, his appearance was against him. He was dressed like a servant, in his gray coat. His beard was three days old. His hair was not powdered, and he wore that ignoble little periwig, which we have before mentioned. He was pale with fatigue. His dull eye expressed no sentiment, either of tyranny or paternity, as he alternately lisped these few words: "Gentlemen! my children!" It was not such a sight as either the friends or enemies of royalty wished to see on that balcony.

As it was, when Choiseul called out, "Long live the King!" and Isidore responded, "Long live the King!" such was still the prestige of royalty, that, despite his aspect, — which so poorly corresponded with the popular idea of the chief of a great kingdom, — several voices repeated, "Long live the King!"

In response came a shout from the chief of the National Guardsmen, which met a far different greeting, and found a powerful echo: "Hurrah for the Nation!" Under such conditions this cry meant rebellion, and the royal pair could see that this cry was at once taken up by a party of hussars.

Marie Antoinette uttered a cry of rage. Pressing the Dauphin to her breast, — that poor child, ignorant of the importance of the events transpiring about him, — she leaned over the balcony, gnashing her teeth, and hissing at the crowd this one word: "Wretches!"

It was heard by a few, who responded with threats,

and the square became one great scene of tumult and noise.

In sheer desperation Choiseul wished to kill himself, but he made a last effort. "Hussars, rally, for honor's sake, and save the King!"

At that instant, amidst a score of armed men, a new actor appeared on the scene. This was Drouet, coming from the townhouse, where he had persuaded the officials to decide upon hindering the King's journey.

Marching up to Choiseul he cried: "So you mean to carry off the King? Very well! but one thing I tell you, you 'll bear him away a corpse!"

Choiseul advanced upon Drouet, with his drawn sword; but the commander of the National Guards was at hand, and said to the Duke: "A step farther, and I 'll kill you!"

At these words another man came forward, before the menacing groups could hinder him. It was Isidore de Charny. The man for whom he had been lying in wait was this very man, — Drouet.

"Back, back!" cried Isidore, pushing aside the crowd with the breastplate of his horse. "That man belongs to me!" Knife in hand, he rushed upon Drouet.

At that moment two simultaneous shots were heard, — from a pistol and from a musket. The pistol-ball flattened itself on Isidore's collar-bone. The musket-ball pierced his breast. The two shots were so near him that the unfortunate fellow was literally wrapped in a billow of flame and a cloud of smoke.

They saw him raise his arms, and heard him say: "Poor Catherine!"

Then, dropping his knife, he fell across his horse's crupper, and thence rolled to the ground.

The Queen uttered a startled cry. She let the Dauphin

slip from her arms, and then fell backward, not seeing a new horseman who came at full speed from the direction of Dun, and entered, so to speak, the wake traced in the middle of the crowd by poor Isidore's onslaught

The King left the balcony after the Queen, and closed the window.

It was not a few hussars on foot, but the whole crowd who now shouted: Hurrah for the Nation! Among that crowd only a score of hussars, still on horseback, remained faithful to the last, — the forlorn hope of royalty in distress.

The Queen threw herself into a chair, her head in her hands, thinking how she had seen Isidore fall at her feet and die for her sake, as she had before seen his brother George.

Suddenly the door opened, and a great noise compelled her to look up. What passed through the womanly and queenly heart in that instant, we will not try to describe.

Oliver de Charny, pale and bloody from his brother's last embrace, stood in the doorway.

As to the King, he was as one crushed to the earth.

CHAPTER XLIX.

CHARNY.

THE room was filled with National Guardsmen, and other outsiders led thither by curiosity.

The Queen's first impulse was to throw herself in front of Charny, wipe away, with her handkerchief, the blood wherewith he was covered, and utter those consoling words which go straight from heart to heart; but she restrained this impulse, and only dared rise from her seat, and extend her arms towards him, as she murmured, "Oliver!"

Calm and sad, he made a sign to the outside spectators, as he said, in a firm yet soft voice: "Pardon me, gentlemen, but I must speak alone with their Majesties."

The National Guardsmen tried to say that they were there for exactly the opposite purpose, to prevent the King from having any communication with outsiders. Charny compressed his lips, frowned, and opened his riding-coat. In so doing he allowed a brace of pistols to be seen, and repeated, in tones softer than before, and yet more menacing: "Gentlemen, I have already had the honor of telling you that I must speak privately with the King and Queen."

As he spoke he made a sign for the intruders to clear out.

Hearing his voice, and animated by the control exercised over others by his control over himself, Damas, Malden, and Valory recovered their faltering energy.

Pushing themselves against the intruding guardsmen and the rest, these young officers compelled them to evacuate the chamber.

Then the Queen realized how useful such a man would have been in the King's coach, if exacting etiquette had not demanded that Madame de Tourzel should retain her place.

Looking around, to be sure that nobody was near the Queen except her faithful servants, Charny approached her Majesty, and said: "Madame, I am here. I have seventy hussars at the entrance of the village, upon whom I think I can depend. What are your commands with me?"

"Oh, my poor Charny!" said the Queen, in German. "First of all, what has happened to *you?*"

Charny made a motion to the Queen, to show that Malden was within hearing, and understood German.

"Alas, alas!" she continued in French, "losing sight of you, we believed you dead."

"Unhappily, Madame," answered Charny, with deep melancholy, "it is not I who am dead; it is my poor brother Isidore —" and he could not restrain a tear. "But my turn will come!" he presently added, in a low voice.

"Charny, Charny, I ask what has happened to you, and why you disappeared so strangely!" said the Queen; adding in a whisper, in German: "Oliver, you have not treated us well, — myself, in particular."

Charny bowed, as he replied: "I supposed that my brother had apprised your Majesty of the reason for my temporary absence from your side."

"Yes, I know. You pursued that man, that rascally Drouet, and for an instant we believed this pursuit had led you into some great misfortune."

"Indeed, a great misfortune did come to me. In spite of all my efforts, I could not overtake Drouet in season. A postilion, returning from Clermont, apprised Drouet that your Majesty's coach, which he believed on its way from Clermont to Verdun, had taken the road from Clermont to Varennes. Thereupon Drouet plunged into Argonne Forest. I fired at him with both pistols, but they were not loaded. I had mounted the wrong horse at Saint Menehould, taking the one intended for Monsieur Dandoins, instead of the one intended for myself. What shall we call it, Madame? Fatality? I nevertheless followed Drouet into the woods; but I was unacquainted with the paths, whereas he knew every footway. Then the darkness became every moment more dense, so that I could not see the fellow; though I pursued him, as one might pursue a ghost. So long as I could hear him I followed the sound, but the sound was soon hushed, and the spectre had vanished; so I found myself alone, in the middle of the forest, enshrouded in shadows. Oh Madame! I am a man, as you well know. Here and now I weep no longer; but in the middle of that forest, amidst the gross darkness, I shed tears of anger, and swore with rage."

The Queen offered him her hand, which he touched with trembling lips, as he bowed over it.

"Nobody answered my outcry," continued Charny. "I wandered all night, and towards daybreak found myself near the village of Gèves, on the road from Varennes to Dun. I reasoned with myself thus: Had you been lucky enough to elude Drouet, as he had eluded me? This was possible! In that case you had passed through Varennes, and it would be useless for me to do anything but hasten after you. Had you been arrested at Varennes? Then I was alone, and my devotion would

be equally useless. I resolved finally to continue my journey towards Dun. Just before reaching that village I met Monsieur Deslon, with a hundred hussars. Deslon was uneasy. He had heard no news; only he had met Jules de Bouillé and Monsieur de Raigecourt, riding at full speed towards Stenay. Why had they not spoken to Deslon? Probably they distrusted him, though *I* knew Deslon to be a worthy and loyal gentleman. I at once surmised that your party had been arrested at Varennes, that Bouillé and Raigecourt had at once fled, in order to notify General Bouillé. All this I said to Deslon, and urged him to follow me with his hussars, which he at once did, leaving thirty of his men to guard the bridge over the Meuse. An hour later we were at Varennes, having gone four leagues in an hour. I wished at once to begin the attack, and go through all obstacles, to reach your Majesties. We found, however, barricade after barricade. To attack them would have been folly; so I tried a parley. An officer of the National Guards presented himself, and of him I asked permission to rejoin my hussars, who were in the city. This request was refused. I demanded permission to come and get orders from the King; and as they were preparing to refuse this second request, as they had the first, I put spurs to my horse, cleared the first barricade, and then the second. Guided by the noise, I came on at full gallop, and reached this square just as your Majesty was retreating from the balcony. — And now I await your Majesty's orders."

The Queen once more pressed Charny's hands in her own. Then turning to the King, still plunged in torpor, she said: "Sire, have you been hearing what has happened to your faithful servant, the Count?"

As the King answered not a word, she rose and went

to his side, saying: "Sire, there is no time to waste. Unhappily, we have lost too much time already! Here is Monsieur de Charny, with seventy reliable men, as he believes, and he asks for your orders."

She added, as the King shook his head: "Sire, in Heaven's name, — your orders!" and as the Queen pleaded with her voice, Charny pleaded as eloquently with his eyes.

"My orders?" echoed the King. "I have no orders to give. I 'm a prisoner. Do whatever you think you can do!"

"Very well!" said the Queen. "That 's all we ask." Drawing Charny aside, she added: "You have *carte blanche*, — full powers. Do, as the King says, whatever you think can be done." Then she added, in a whisper: "But act quickly and vigorously, or we are lost."

"That is so, Madame," replied Charny. "Let me confer an instant with these gentlemen, and what we decide upon shall be at once put into execution."

Just then Choiseul entered, holding in his hand some papers, folded in a blood-stained handkerchief, which he offered to Charny, without an explanatory word.

The Count understood at once that these were the papers found on his brother. He extended his hand to receive the bloody heritage, raised the package to his lips, and kissed it.

The Queen could not repress a sob. Charny did not falter; but, placing the papers in his breast-pocket, he said: "Gentlemen, can you aid me in the last effort which I shall make?"

"We are ready to sacrifice our lives!" responded one and another of the young men.

"Do you think you can be answerable for a dozen men who remain faithful?"

"We number eight or nine of ourselves."

"Well, I have returned with seventy hussars. While I attack the barricades in front, you can make a diversion in the rear. Under cover of that diversion, I will force the barricades, and with our united forces we can penetrate as far as this spot, and carry off the King."

The only answer of the young noblemen was to offer Charny their hands.

Then he turned again to the Queen and said: "Madame, in one hour your Majesty will be free, or we shall be dead."

"Oh Count, Count! Don't speak that word! It savors of ill-luck!"

Oliver contented himself with a bow, in confirmation of his promise; and without noting the renewed shouts and fresh rumors which made themselves heard, and appeared to be invading the house, he marched towards the door; but as he put his hand on the latch, the door opened, and gave ingress to a new personage, who came to take part in this drama, already so complicated.

He was a man forty or forty-two years of age, with a gloomy and severe face. His collar was rolled back. His coat was unbuttoned. His eyes, red with fatigue, and his dusty clothing, showed that he also, pushed on by violent passion, had entered upon an implacable warfare. In his belt he wore a brace of pistols, and a sabre hung at his side.

Breathless, and almost voiceless, when he opened the door, he appeared only to find relief when he recognized the King and Queen. Then a smile of vengeance wreathed his face, and without troubling himself about the secondary personages, who were in the shadows of the room, he stood in the doorway, which he almost filled with his powerful frame, and exclaimed, raising

his hand: "In the name of the National Assembly, you are my prisoners!"

By a swift movement Choiseul was in front of him, pistol in hand, and in his turn raised his arm, to blow out the brains of this new-comer, who appeared to surpass all his predecessors in insolence and revolution; but, with a movement equally rapid, the Queen grasped Choiseul's threatening hand, and said in a low voice: "Do not hasten our destruction, Monsieur. Be prudent! With all these interruptions we are gaining time, and General Bouillé cannot be far away."

"You are right, Madame," answered Choiseul; and he replaced his pistol in his breast.

The Queen glanced at Charny, astonished that he had not been the first to come forward in this new peril. Strangely enough, Charny seemed to avoid being seen by this intruder; and, to elude his observation, the Count had ensconced himself in the dimmest corner of the room. However, knowing Charny as well as she did, the Queen did not doubt that at the proper time he would emerge from both the shadow and the mystery.

CHAPTER L.

ONE ENEMY MORE.

THROUGH this entire scene, while Choiseul was menacing the man who spoke in the name of the National Assembly, this man apparently took no note of the fact that he barely escaped the peril of death.

He seemed occupied with some sentiment more powerful in his heart than the fear of death. His facial expression could not be mistaken. It was that of a hunter, who at last finds his prey in one den, — the lion, the lioness, and their cubs, which have devoured his only child.

At the word *prisoners*, which had roused Choiseul with a bound, the King raised himself, saying: "Prisoners? Prisoners in the name of the National Assembly? What are you talking about? I don't understand you."

"It is very simple, nevertheless, and quite easy to understand," replied the intruder. "Notwithstanding the oath you took not to leave France, you're fleeing from your country by night, — breaking your word, betraying the people, betraying the Nation, in such a way that the people are roused, and the Nation is calling her citizens to arms; and the Nation speaks to you, through the voice of one of the least of her subjects: Sire, in the name of the people, in the name of the Nation, in the name of the Assembly, you are my prisoner! for this voice is none the less powerful, because it comes from the lowly."

In the storeroom could be heard the sound of approbation, accompanied, or rather followed, by frantic *bravos.*

"Madame, Madame," murmured the Duke, in the Queen's ear, "do not forget it was yourself who checked me, and that you would not be subjected to such unparalleled insolence, if you had not shown your pity for this man a moment ago."

"All this is nothing, if we avenge ourselves!" whispered the Queen.

"Yes!" replied Choiseul; "but if we do *not* avenge ourselves —?"

The Queen groaned sadly and heavily; but Charny's hand was extended slowly over the Duke's shoulder, and touched the Queen's arm, so that she turned quickly.

"Let me talk and deal with that man!" hissed the Count, softly. "I know what to do with him!"

Meanwhile the King, stunned with this new blow, looked with astonishment upon this gloomy personage, who used such energetic language to a king, and spoke in the name, not of his Majesty Louis the Sixteenth, but of the Assembly and the Nation. With this surprise was mingled an element of curiosity, for it seemed to Louis that this was not the first time he had seen this man, though he could not recall where he had seen him. Finally the King said: "After all, what do you want with me? Speak!"

"Sire, I want you and your family not to take another step towards foreign parts."

"Doubtless you come with thousands of armed men, to oppose our journey?" said the King, who grew more dignified during this discussion.

"No, Sire, I am alone, or rather, there are only two of us, — one of General Lafayette's aides, and myself,

— a plain peasant; only the Assembly has issued a decree, and counts on us to execute it, and this will be done."

"Give me the decree, that I may at least read it!" said the King.

"I have n't it, but my companion. My companion is sent by General Lafayette and the Assembly, to execute the orders of the Nation. As for me, I am sent by Mayor Bailly, and especially by myself, to watch my companion, and to blow his brains out, if he balks."

The Queen, the Duke, Damas, and the other listeners, looked on in amazement. They had heretofore seen the populace only in their fury or their humility, either in the attitude of petitioners or assassins; but now they saw, for the first time, a man of the people, standing upright, with his arms crossed, feeling his own power, and declaiming in behalf of popular rights.

Louis quickly understood that nothing was to be hoped from a man of this temperament, and wished to have done with him at once; so he asked: "Well, where is your comrade?"

"There, behind me!"

With these words the peasant stepped aside, leaving the doorway clear. Through its opening they could see a young man, clad in the uniform of a staff-officer, leaning against a window. He, also, was in great disorder; only this disorder arose not from his energy, but from dejection. His face was begrimed with tears, and he held a paper in his hand.

This was young Romeuf, Lafayette's junior aide, with whom — as our readers doubtless remember — we made them acquainted, at the time of young Louis de Bouillé's visit to Paris.

Romeuf, if we may recall his conversation with the

young Royalist at that time, was a Patriot, a sincere Patriot; but during Lafayette's dictatorship the young fellow had been entrusted with the guardianship of the Queen, accompanying her Majesty whenever she left the palace. In this companionship, and in all his relations with her, he had shown a respectful delicacy, for which the Queen had several times expressed her gratitude.

On seeing him, therefore, it was natural for her to exclaim, in painful surprise: "Oh, is it you?" Then she added, with the sad moan of a woman who sees the failure of a power she had believed invincible: "Oh, I would never have believed it!"

"Well, well," said the elder envoy, smiling, "it appears I did well to come."

Romeuf advanced slowly, with downcast eyes, holding the decree in his hand; but the impatient King, without giving the young man time to present the paper, took a rapid step towards him, and snatched the decree from his grasp.

After reading it, he said: "There is no longer a king in France!"

Romeuf's comrade smiled, as much as to say, "I know that well enough!"

At the King's words the Queen made a movement, as if to question him.

"Listen, Madame!" he said. "Here is the decree which the Assembly has dared to vote;" and he read, with a voice tremulous with indignation, the following document:

The Assembly orders the Minister of the Interior to instantly send messengers into the various departments, with orders to all public functionaries, all National Guards, and all troops of the regular army, to arrest, or cause to be arrested,

all persons who may be leaving the kingdom, and to prevent the exportation of all sorts of goods, — arms and ammunition, horses and carriages, and gold and silver, in any shape ; and in case these messengers overtake the King, any members of the royal family, or those who have aided and abetted their flight, then the aforesaid public functionaries, National Guards, and troops of the regular army, shall take all possible measures to arrest their flight, and prevent the continuance of their journey, and render an account thereof to the legislative body.

The Queen listened in a sort of torpor ; but when the King finished his reading, she tossed her head, as if to recover her spirits. "Impossible!" she exclaimed, at the same time holding out her hand for the fatal paper. "Let me see it!"

Meanwhile Romeuf's comrade reassured, with his smile, the National Guards, and other Varennes Patriots, who were a little disturbed by the Queen's word, *impossible,* although one and all had already learned the tenor of the decree.

"Oh, read, Madame, read!" said the King, bitterly, "if you are still in doubt. Read the decree, indicted and signed by the President of the National Assembly."

"And what man dares to write and sign such a decree?"

"A nobleman, Madame," replied the King, — "Alexander de Beauharnais,[1] a marquis!"

Is it not strange, — is it not a proof of the mysterious chain which links the past to the future, — that this de-

[1] This allusion is to the first husband of the Empress Josephine. He was the father of Hortense Beauharnais, who became the wife of Louis Bonaparte, and consequently the mother of Napoleon the Third. As Louis Napoleon was on the throne of France when this story was written, such allusions will account for the fact that Dumas first published it in Belgium, instead of France. The omission of certain allusions to the greater Bonaparte, in later Paris editions, — especially from the witty Preface written by Dumas, — would naturally arise from the continued reign of Louis Napoleon.

cree, which arrested the flight of the royal family, should bear a name, though then obscure, which would thereafter attach itself, in a glaring way, to the history of the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

The Queen took the decree and read it, with contracted eyebrows and compressed lips.

Then the King took it again, and reperused it; after which he threw it on the bed, where were reposing the Dauphin and Madame Royale, insensible to the discussion which was deciding their fate.

At this slight action, the Queen, incapable of longer restraining herself, angrily seized the paper, crushed it in her hands, and threw it far from the bed, exclaiming as she did so: "Oh Monsieur, be careful! I don't wish my children to be contaminated by such a document!"

An immense clamor arose in the adjoining storeroom. The National Guardsmen who were there made a movement as if they were about to rush into the chamber occupied by the illustrious fugitives.

Lafayette's aide uttered a cry of terror.

His travelling companion uttered a cry of rage. "Ah," growled he between his teeth, "they insult the Assembly, they insult the Nation, they insult the people! Good!"

Then turning towards the men who crowded the other room, — armed with muskets, sabres, and scythes, and ready for a fight, — he called them to his aid.

There was a second movement to enter the chamber, — a movement which was the complement of the first, — and God only knows what would have been the result of this collision of angry men; but Charny — who had whispered to the Queen, at the beginning of the scene, the few words already reported, and, during the progress of affairs, had held himself entirely aloof — now came forward, and grasped the arm of the unknown

National Guardsman, at the moment when this belligerent intruder was drawing his sabre, and said to him: "A word, if you please, Monsieur Billot; I want to speak with you."

Billot, for it was he, let a cry of astonishment escape him, became pale as death, remained an instant irresolute, and finally said, pushing back his half-drawn sabre into its sheath: "Very well, so be it! I also have something to say to you, Monsieur de Charny."

Directing his steps to the door he added: "Citizens, give us room, if you please. I must have a private interview with this officer. But be easy, comrades!" he added in a lower voice, "for neither wolf, dam, nor whelps can escape. I 'm here, and will be responsible for all."

Although this man was as unknown to the others as he was to the King and his friends, Charny only excepted, the crowd felt that he had the right to give orders; and they accordingly backed downstairs, leaving the storeroom empty.

Moreover each man wanted to tell his friends below what was going on upstairs, and to advise the Patriots to keep better guard than ever.

Meanwhile Charny said to the Queen, in a low voice: "Monsieur de Romeuf is on your side, Madame. I leave you with him. Keep him as far off from us as possible."

This was the easier to do because, when he entered the other room, Charny closed the door, and setting his back against it, prevented anybody, even Billot himself, from going into the bedroom.

END OF VOL. II.

LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

CHAPTER I.

A PEASANT'S HATRED.

FINDING themselves face to face, the two men looked straight at each other, but the gaze of the nobleman did not make the farmer wince. Moreover it was Billot who first spoke.

"The Count has done me the honor to say he wishes to speak with me. I am ready to hear what he has to say."

"Billot," asked Charny, "how comes it that I meet you here, charged with such a vengeful mission? I supposed you were our friend, and a friend to other noblemen, as well as a good and faithful servant to the King."

"I was a good and faithful servant of the King. If not your friend, — an honor hardly allowable to a poor farmer like me, — I was at least your humble servant."

"Well, well?"

"Well, Monsieur, I am so no longer."

"I don't understand you, Billot!"

"Why do you seek to understand me, Monsieur? Do I demand the causes of your fidelity to the King, or of

your devotion to the Queen? No! I take for granted you have your reasons for it, and, as you are an honest and true man, that your reasons are good, — or, at least, satisfactory to your own conscience. I have not your high rank, Count, I have not your knowledge; but you know me to be an honest and true man, — or *have* known me to be so. Take for granted then that, like yourself, I have my reasons, which, if not the best, are equally conscientious."

Charny was completely ignorant of the farmer's motives for hating the nobility or royalty; so he said: "Billot, I have known you, — and not so long ago either, — when you were far different from what you are now."

"Oh, certainly, I do not deny it," said Billot, with a bitter smile. "Yes, you have known me a different man from what I am now. I 'll tell you what I *was*. I was a true Patriot, devoted to two men and one object. The two men were the King and Doctor Gilbert. The one object was my country. One day the King's commissioners came, — and I own," said the farmer, shaking his head, "that this first disaffected me towards him, — well, one day the King's commissioners came to my farm. Half by force, half by their unexpected arrival, they took from me a casket, a precious trust which had been confided to me by Doctor Gilbert. As soon as I was at liberty, I started for Paris, where I arrived on the evening of the Thirteenth of July, 1789, in the very midst of the outbreak over the busts of Orleans and Necker. They were carrying these busts through the streets, and shouting their cheers for these two men. This could do the King no great harm; yet, all of a sudden, the King's soldiers charged upon us. I saw the poor devils falling around me, — fellows who had committed no other crime than shouting *hurrah*, for two men whom they probably

knew little about, and cared less. Some fell with their heads laid open by sabre-cuts, others with their breasts riddled with bullets. I saw Monsieur de Lambesq, one of the King's friends, hunt down women and children, into the very Tuileries, who had not even shouted for Necker and Orleans; and under his horse's feet he trod an old man of seventy. This made me quarrel more and more with the King. The next day I went to the boarding-school of little Sebastien; and from this poor child I learned that his father was in the Bastille, under an order from the King, which had been solicited by a Court lady; and I continued to say to myself that, if the King was as good as they pretended, he had moments of awful ignorance, forgetfulness, and error in the midst of his goodness. Nay, more! I determined, as far as in me lay, to reform the faults committed by the King in his moments of error, ignorance, and forgetfulness; and I did all in my power to capture the Bastille. We did it, too, though not without some pains! The King's soldiers fired on us, killing nearly two hundred men; and this gave me new cause for not agreeing with the popular notion as to the King's wonderful goodness. However, the Bastille was taken. In one of its dungeons I found Monsieur Gilbert, for whom I had risked being killed twenty times; but all this I forgot in my joy at seeing him. Well, Monsieur Gilbert still declared that the King was good, that he was ignorant of the greater part of the wrongs done in his name, and that it was not with him I should be angry, but with his ministers. At that time everything Monsieur Gilbert said to me was like Gospel truth. I believed him. Seeing the Bastille destroyed, Gilbert set at liberty, and Pitou and myself safe and sound, I forgot the shots in Rue Saint Honoré, the attacks on the populace at the Tuileries, the one hundred

and fifty or two hundred men killed by the Prince of Saxe's *bagpipe*, as they called it. I forgot even the imprisonment of Doctor Gilbert, on the simple request of a Court lady. — But pardon, Monsieur," said Billot, interrupting himself, "all this does n't concern you, and you did n't ask for an interview with me to listen to all the parrotings of a poor uneducated peasant, — you, a noble lord and a learned man."

Billot made a motion as if about to unlock the door into the chamber where the King was, but Charny stopped him.

Charny had two reasons for so doing. First, it might not be unimportant, in such a situation, to ascertain the causes of Billot's enmity; and second, he should be gaining time. So he said: "No! tell me all, my dear Billot. You know the friendship we have had for you, — my poor brothers and myself, and what you say interests me in the highest degree."

At those three words, *my poor brothers*, Billot smiled bitterly.

"Very well, Monsieur Count, I will gratify you, — and I regret that *your two brothers* — especially *one of them, Monsieur Isidore* — are not here to listen."

Billot pronounced these words, *your two brothers*, and *one of them, Monsieur Isidore*, with so singular an emphasis, that Charny perceived the sad emotions which this beloved brother's name awakened in the farmer's heart; but without answering Billot, who was evidently ignorant of the misfortunes of the brother whose presence he desired, Charny made a sign for him to go on; and Billot did so.

"When the King set out for Paris I could only see in him a father returning to the midst of his children. I marched with Doctor Gilbert near the royal carriage,

making a rampart with my body against any attack, and shouting lustily for the King. This was his first trip, when all about him, — before him, behind him, in the street, under the feet of his horses and the wheels of his carriage, — there were benedictions and flowers. On our arrival at the Hôtel de Ville, it was noticeable that the King wore no longer a white cockade, but that he had not yet put on the tricolored cockade; so the crowd shouted, *Cockade! Cockade!* I took off the one on my hat, and offered it to him. He thanked me, and put it on his own hat, amidst the cheers of the multitude. I was intoxicated with joy, at seeing my cockade in the King's hat. Louder than all others I shouted the King's name. I became so enthusiastic for this good King, that I stayed in Paris. My crops were ripe, and needed my presence; but *bah!* What mattered the crops? I was rich enough to lose a whole harvest, and if my presence was of any use to this good King, — the Father of his People and the Restorer of French Liberty, as we were idiots enough to call him in those days, — why, it was certainly better for me to stay in Paris than to go back to Pisseleu. My harvest, which I had confided to Catherine's care, was ruined! — It appears that Catherine had something else to attend to besides the crops. — But don't let us talk about that! — Well, they began to say that the King did n't willingly accept the Revolution; that he acted under force and constraint; that it was not the tricolored cockade he wished to wear on his hat, but the white cockade. Those who said such things were partly slanderers, as was proved at the banquet held by the royal bodyguards, where the Queen put on neither the tricolored cockade nor the white cockade, — neither the National cockade nor the French, — but wore the cockade of her brother, the Emperor Joseph the

Second, — now dead and gone, — the Austrian cockade, the black cockade. Well, I acknowledge that my doubts recommenced; but Monsieur Gilbert told me it was not the King who did this, but the Queen, — that the Queen was only a woman, and we must be indulgent towards women. I believed him so truly, that when the mob came from Paris to Versailles to attack the palace, — although at the bottom of my heart I believed the assailants of the palace were not wholly in the wrong, — I sided with its defenders; so much so, that I was the first to run and rouse Lafayette, — who was asleep, poor dear man, as if he were at church, — and whom I brought to the palace in the nick of time, to save the King. Ah! On that day I saw Madame Elizabeth embrace Lafayette. I saw the Queen offer him her hand to kiss. I heard the King call Lafayette his friend; and I said to myself that Gilbert was perhaps right. Certainly it was not fear which led a king, a queen, and a royal princess to make such demonstrations; and even if they did not share Lafayette's opinions, and only valued his usefulness to themselves in a perilous moment, three such royal personages would not stoop to falsehood. Then I begin to pity the poor Queen, who was only imprudent, and the poor King, who was only feeble. However, I let them return to Paris without me. — *Me?* Oh, I was busy at Versailles, — you know about what, Monsieur de Charny."

Charny only sighed.

"They say the King's second trip was not quite so gay as the first. In place of blessings, they say there were curses. Instead of *vivas* there were death-cries. Instead of bouquets, thrown under the hoofs of the horses and the carriage wheels, there were severed heads, carried on pikes. I did n't see these things, for I was still at Versailles. All this time I was leaving my farm without a

master! *Bah!* I was rich enough, even if I had lost the harvest of 1789, to lose another for 1790! But one fine morning came Pitou, to tell me that I was on the point of losing something no father is rich enough to lose, — my daughter."

Charny started. Billot looked at him sternly, and continued: "I must tell you that only a league from my farm, at Boursonnes, lived a noble family, — a family of great lords, a family powerfully rich. This family was composed of three brothers. When they were children, and came often from Boursonnes to Villers Cotterets, the younger brothers almost always honored me by stopping at the farm. They said they had never drunk such good milk as my cows gave, nor eaten such good bread as Mother Billot's. Sometimes they would add, — and I, poor fool! believed they said this to repay me for my hospitality, — sometimes they added, they had never seen such a beautiful child as my little Catherine. Well, I was grateful to them for drinking my milk, eating my bread, and thinking my Catherine pretty. Well, why not? If I could trust the King, who is half German, on his mother's side, I could easily trust these boys. So when the second son — who had been a long time away from the neighborhood, and who was called George — was killed at Versailles, at the Queen's threshold, on that dreadful October night, while bravely doing his duty as a gentleman, — God knows how the same blow which killed him, wounded me. Ah, Monsieur, his brother saw me, — his elder brother, who had seldom been to my house, — not because he was too proud, — I do him that justice, — but because he had gone away from home earlier than his brother George. — I say he saw me on my knees before the dead body, pouring out hot tears, as George had

poured out his blood. Ah, I can see him now, — there, at the bottom of that little courtyard, mouldy and damp, whither I carried him in my arms, in order that his body should not be mutilated, — poor young man! — like the bodies of his companions, Varicourt and Huttes. I had almost as much blood on my clothes as you have on yours. Oh, he was a charming boy, when I used to see him on his gray nag, going to school at Villers Cotterets, with his basket in hand. Certainly, if I were thinking only of him, I believe I could weep as you do, Monsieur; but I think of the other one, and I mourn no longer."

"The other one? What do you mean?" asked Charny.

"Wait!" said Billot. "We shall come to that soon enough. — Pitou came to Paris, and spoke to me two words, which proved that it was not my harvest merely that was endangered, but my child, — that it was my happiness, not my fortune, which ran the risk of destruction. I left the King in Paris. If he was acting in good faith, as Monsieur Gilbert said, all things would work together for the best, whether I was there or not; and so I returned to my farm. At first I feared Catherine was in danger of death. She had delirium, a cerebral fever, — what did I know about it? The condition in which I found her made me uneasy, — the more so, because Doctor Raynal forbade my entering the chamber till she was better. Think of it! A despairing father, forbidden to enter his daughter's sick-room. I believed I had a right to listen at her door. I did listen! I then learned that she had caught the brain fever, that she had been almost crazy, because her lover had left her. I also had been away a whole year; but instead of being sick because her father was away, she had smiled over my absence. Why not? Did n't my absence leave the coast

clear for seeing her lover? — Catherine regained her health, but not her happiness. One month, two months, three months, six months passed away, without a single ray of gayety brightening that face, which I watched so constantly. One morning I saw her smile, and I trembled. Was her lover coming back? Was this why she smiled? Even so! The next day a shepherd, who had seen him pass by that morning, told me of it. I made no doubt that by the evening of that very day the lover would come to my home, — or, rather, to Catherine's. When evening came on, I loaded my double-barrelled gun, and put myself on the watch."

"You did that, Billot?" said Charny.

"Why not?" said Billot. "I place myself in ambush in order to kill the wild boar who roots up my potatoes, the wolf who devours my lambs, the fox who steals my chickens; and why not put myself into ambush, in order to kill the man who comes to rob me of my peace of mind, the lover who comes to dishonor my daughter?"

"But at the decisive moment your heart failed you, did it not?" said the Count, quickly.

"No, not the heart, but the eye and hand. A trace of blood showed that I had not entirely failed; only, you understand," added Billot, with increasing bitterness, "that between a father and lover, my daughter did not hesitate. When I entered Catherine's chamber, Catherine had vanished."

"And you have not seen her since?" asked Charny.

"No!" responded Billot. "Why should I see her again? She well knows that if I see her I shall kill her."

Charny shrank back, as he noted, with feelings of admiration mixed with terror, the powerful nature standing before him.

"I set myself to work on my farm," continued Billot. "What mattered my personal unhappiness, so long as France was happy? Was n't the King walking bravely in the Revolutionary road? Did n't he take part in the great Federal Feast? It was good to see once more that good King, to whom I had given my tricolored cockade on the Sixteenth of July, and whom I had helped to rescue on the Fifth of October! What happiness it must be for him to see all Frenchmen united on the Champ de Mars, pledging themselves, as one man, to their common country! When I saw this grand sight, I forgot all else for a moment, even Catherine. — No! That 's false! A father never forgets his daughter. — The King took the oath in his turn. It seemed to me that he took it very clumsily, and swore with lip-service. He certainly took the oath in his seat, instead of swearing at the Patriot Altar, as others did. But, nonsense! He swore, and that was the main thing! An oath is an oath. It is not the place of its ceremonial which makes it sacred. When an honest man takes an oath, he keeps it; and the King had taken *his* oath! When I once more returned to Villers Cotterets, having no longer a daughter, I occupied myself with politics; and then I began to consider how, the winter before, the King had been willing to be abducted by the Marquis de Favras, — as it was said, — although the scheme was soon strangled. Later I heard how the King wished to leave France with his aunts, though this project also failed; and how he tried to drive to Saint Cloud, intending to go from there to Rouen, though the people kept him at home. All these things I heard, but I did not credit them. Had I not seen him, with my own eyes, raise his hand, and take the oath of national allegiance, on the Champ de Mars? Could I believe that a king, having taken an oath in

presence of three hundred thousand citizens, would hold it less sacred than oaths taken by common men? It was not likely. Well, day before yesterday, I went to market, at Meaux, and I was very much astonished when, in the morning, — for I must tell you that I slept at the station-agent's, a good friend of mine, with whom I had finished a large sale of grain. Well, as I was saying, I was very much astonished when, in a coach which stopped to get fresh horses, I saw and recognized the King, Queen, and Dauphin. I could n't be mistaken, for I was accustomed to see them, — and in a carriage, too. Why, on that Sixteenth of July I had accompanied them from Versailles to Paris. — Then I heard one of their men, dressed in yellow, give the order to drive to Châlons. The voice struck me. I turned and recognized whom? The man who had stolen Catherine, — a noble gentleman, who was now doing duty as a lackey, running before the King's carriage."

As he spoke these words, Billot looked hard at the Count, to see if he understood that this concerned his brother Isidore; but Charny wiped away, with his handkerchief, the sweat which ran down his forehead, and held his peace.

Billot went on: "I wished to follow him, but he was too far off already. He was armed, and I was not; he was on horseback, and I was afoot. For an instant I ground my teeth over the idea that the King was escaping from France, and the ravisher escaping from me. I said to myself that I also had taken an oath of allegiance, — to the Nation; and though the King was breaking his word, I would not break mine. It was only three in the morning, and I was only a few leagues from Paris. On my good horse, this was only an affair of two hours. I would see Monsieur Bailly about it, —

an honest man, who, as it seemed to me, would be ready to side with those who keep their oaths, and against those who break them. This point settled, in order to lose no time, I begged my friend, the post-agent at Meaux, — without telling him what I was going to do, you understand, — to lend me his uniform as a member of the National Guard, and also his sabre and pistols. I also asked for the best horse in his stable, and instead of starting at a trot for Villers Cotterets, I started at a headlong gallop for Paris. My faith! I arrived just as they had discovered the King's flight, though nobody knew which way he had gone. Romeuf had been sent on the Valenciennes road, by Lafayette. See, now, how much there is in Chance! At the barrier he was arrested, but he persuaded them to send him to the National Assembly, which he entered just as Bailly, informed by myself, was giving more precise details of the royal journey. It was only necessary to prepare a properly written order, and change the route. The thing was done in an instant. Romeuf was started on the Châlons road, and I received an order to accompany him, — a mission which I fulfilled, as you see. Now however," added Billot, with a gloomy air, "I have overtaken the King, who has deceived me as a Frenchman, and I am satisfied that he will not escape me! It remains for me to overtake, at the appointed time, the man who has deceived me as a father; and he also will not escape me!"

"Alas, my dear Billot," said Charny, with a sigh, "you deceive yourself."

"How so?"

"I mean that the unhappy brother of whom you speak, towards whom you now feel so bitterly, has escaped you."

"He has fled?" cried Billot, with an indescribable expression of rage.

"No! but he is dead!"

"Dead?" cried Billot, trembling in spite of himself, and wiping his forehead, which was instantaneously covered with perspiration.

"Dead! and this blood, which you see on me, — and which you rightly compared just now to that with which you were covered in that little courtyard at Versailles, — this blood is his. If you doubt me, go downstairs, my dear Billot, and you will find his body lying in a little courtyard, — very like the one at Versailles, — where Isidore has been struck down in defence of the same cause which led to the blow which killed our brother George."

Billot looked at Charny, who spoke in a soft voice, while great tears rolled down his cheeks, and the farmer's eyes were hollow and his face dark. Suddenly he exclaimed: "Ah! There is then some justice in Heaven!" Then, as he hurried out of the room, he added: "Count, I believe your words; but no matter, I must myself see that justice has been done."

Charny saw him go down the stairs, stifling a sigh and wiping his eyes. Then, knowing he had no time to lose, Charny returned to the other chamber, went straight to the Queen's side, and asked softly: "Monsieur de Romeuf?"

"He is on our side," replied the Queen.

"So much the better," said Charny, "for there is nothing to hope from the other side."

"What is to be done?" asked the Queen.

"Gain time, till Bouillé arrives."

"Will he come?"

"Yes, for I am going after him."

"Oh Oliver, Oliver! The streets are blockaded. You are watched. You cannot get through, for you will be massacred."

Smilingly, but without speaking, Charny opened a window which looked out upon the garden, gave a last hopeful look towards the King, bowed to the Queen, and leaped down to the earth, fifteen feet below.

The Queen uttered a cry of terror, and hid her face in her hands; but the young gentlemen ran to the window, and responded to the Queen's affrighted cry with one of joy. Charny had scaled the garden wall, and disappeared on the farther side.

It was time. At that instant Billot reappeared in the doorway.

CHAPTER II.

THE MARQUIS DE BOUILLÉ.

DURING these hours of agony, let us see what happened to the Marquis de Bouillé, who was expected so impatiently at Varennes, and on whom rested the last hopes of the royal family.

At nine in the evening — that is, at the very hour when the fugitives were entering Clermont — the Marquis left Stenay with his son Louis, and rode towards Dun, in order to be nearer the King.

When within a quarter-league of that village, fearing his presence might rouse unfavorable comments, the Marquis called a halt, and he and his companion established themselves in a ravine near the roadside, keeping their horses behind them.

There they waited. It was the hour when, in all probability, the royal courier would make his appearance.

Under such circumstances minutes seem like hours, and hours like centuries.

With an indifference which the impatient listeners would fain have regulated by the beating of their own hearts, the clocks slowly sounded the hours, — ten, eleven, midnight, one, two, three.

Between two and three daylight began to break. During these six hours of waiting, the least noise which reached the ears of the listeners brought with it hope, if the sound drew nearer, or disappointment, if it receded.

By daybreak the two watchmen grew desperate. The Marquis felt sure that some mischance had occurred, but

as he was ignorant what it could be, he decided upon a return to Stenay, in order to be at the centre of his command, where he might provide against accidents, as far as possible.

They therefore remounted their horses, and slowly retraced their steps towards Stenay. They were hardly a quarter-league from that town when Louis, looking behind him, saw a cloud of dust, raised by the gallop of several horses.

Father and son stopped and waited. As the new-comers came nearer, the watchers thought they could recognize the riders. At last there was no longer any doubt. The new-comers were Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt.

It was now nearly four o'clock. The couple trotted out in front of the new-comers. As the riders met, each tongue in one company asked the same question, and each of the new arrivals made the same answer.

"What has happened?"

"The King has been arrested at Varennes!"

The news was terrible, — the more so, because the two youths, stationed at the extremity of the town, in the Grand Monarch Tavern, suddenly finding themselves in the midst of rebellion, had been obliged to escape by forcing their way through the crowd, and without being able to bring any definite information.

Terrible as was this vague information, it did not destroy every vestige of hope. Like all superior officers, who rely upon absolute discipline, the Marquis believed his orders had been fully executed, and did not dream of any obstacles on the military side. If the King had reached Varennes, then the different military detachments, which had been ordered to close in behind the King's progress, must also be at Varennes.

These detachments consisted of the forty hussars of Lauzun's Regiment, commanded by Choiseul; thirty dragoons at Saint Menehould, commanded by Dandoins; one hundred and forty dragoons at Clermont, commanded by Damas; sixty hussars at Varennes, commanded by Jules de Bouillé and Raigecourt, with whom these young men had not been able to communicate, on account of their own hasty departure, but who remained, in the absence of his superiors, under Rohrig's command.

True, no great confidence had been reposed in Rohrig, who was only twenty years old; but he would receive orders from his immediate superiors, Choiseul, Dandoins, or Damas, and join his men with those who came to the royal succor.

At that hour, therefore, according to the Marquis's reckoning, the King must have about him between one hundred and sixty and one hundred and eighty dragoons and a hundred hussars. Surely these would be equal to quelling an insurrection in a little town of sixteen or eighteen hundred inhabitants.

We have seen how events put all the Marquis's strategic calculations out of joint. Moreover a serious blow was soon to smite his sense of security.

While Jules and Raigecourt were telling their story to the General, they saw another rider coming towards them at full gallop. This meant more news. All eyes were turned upon him, and he was recognized as Rohrig.

The Marquis pushed towards him, for he was in one of those moods when one is not slow to see the weight of wrath fall even upon the innocent.

"What 's the meaning of this?" cried the General. "Why have you left your post?"

"Your pardon, General," replied Rohrig, "but I come by order of Colonel Damas."

"Then Damas is at Varennes, with his dragoons?"

"Colonel Damas is at Varennes, — not with his dragoons, General, but only with one officer, an adjutant, and two or three privates."

"And the others?"

"The others refused to march."

"And Dandoins, and *his* dragoons?"

"They are detained as prisoners by the town authorities of Saint Menehould."

"But surely," cried the General, "Choiseul is at Varennes, with *his* hussars and *yours?*"

"Choiseul's hussars have gone over to the popular side, and now hurrah for the Nation. As for mine, they are shut up in their barracks, guarded by the Varennes National Guards."

"And you did n't put yourself at their head? You did n't charge upon these riffraff? You did n't rally to the King's support?"

"My General forgets that I had no such orders, that Monsieur Jules and Monsieur Raigecourt were my chiefs, and that I was completely ignorant that his Majesty was expected at Varennes."

"That 's true!" said Jules and Raigecourt, in a breath, speaking in the interests of truth.

"When I heard the first noise of the outbreak," continued young Lieutenant Rohrig, "I went down into the street to ascertain what it all meant. I learned that about fifteen minutes earlier a coach had been stopped, said to contain the King and royal family, and that the persons inside had been taken to the town-solicitor's house. I went at once to the town-solicitor's. There were crowds of armed men in the streets. The drum was beating and the alarm-bell ringing. In the midst of this tumult I felt a touch on my shoulder.

I turned and saw Colonel Damas, with a riding-coat over his uniform. He asked if I was the lieutenant in command of the hussars at Varennes. 'Yes, my Colonel,' I replied. — 'You know me?' he asked. — 'You are Colonel Charles de Damas.' — Thereupon he ordered me to mount without losing a second, ride towards Dun and Stenay, till I met the Marquis de Bouillé, and tell him that Dandoins and his dragoons were prisoners at Saint Menehould, that his men had refused to obey, that Choiseul's hussars threatened to espouse the popular side, and that the only hope of the King and royal family, under arrest in that house, lay in the Marquis. Under such orders I supposed I had no right to raise any objections, but, on the contrary, that it was my duty to obey blindly. I mounted my horse, rode like the wind, and here I am."

"And Damas told you nothing else?"

"Yes, indeed! He told me they would make every effort to gain time, in order to give you, my General, time for reaching Varennes."

"Well, well!" said the Marquis, with a sigh, "I see that everybody has acted for the best. Now we must do *our* best!" Then he added, to his son Louis: "I will stay here. These gentlemen will carry my orders here and there. To begin with, the detachments from Mouza and Dun must at once set out for Varennes, guard the passage over the Meuse River, and begin the attack. — Rohrig, bear this order from me, and tell them they will soon be reinforced."

The young man to whom this order was addressed saluted the General, and started in the direction of Dun, to have it executed.

The General continued: "Raigecourt, head off the Swiss Regiment from Castella, which is on the march to

Stenay. As soon as you find them, explain the urgency of the situation, and give them my order to double their speed. — Away with you!"

After seeing Raigecourt ride off in the opposite direction from that taken by Rohrig, as fast as his tired horse would permit, the Marquis turned towards his second son. "Jules, change horses at Stenay, and be off for Montmédy. Let Klinglin start towards Dun with his regiment of Nassau Infantry, which is at Montmédy, and report personally at Stenay. Be off, now!"

Jules saluted and was off in a flash.

Then the General turned towards his eldest son. "Louis, the Royal Germans are at Stenay, are they not?"

"Yes, father!"

"They received my orders to be all ready to ride at daybreak?"

"I myself gave this order to their colonel."

"Bring me that regiment. I will wait for it, here in the road. Perhaps somebody will come along with fresh news. The Royal Germans are true blue, are n't they?"

"Yes, father."

"Very well, then, the Royal Germans will suffice. With them we will march on Varennes. — Go!"

Count Louis was off in his turn. In ten minutes he reappeared, for the distance was very short. "The Royal Germans are following me," he said to the General.

"They were ready for duty, then?"

"No! To my great amazement, they were not. The commander could not have understood me, when I gave him your orders yesterday, for I found him abed; but he at once rose, and promised to go himself to the barracks and hasten the preparations. Fearing you would

be anxious, I came back to tell you the cause of this delay."

"You think he will be here soon?"

"The commander said he would come straight after me."

They waited ten minutes, fifteen minutes, twenty minutes; but nobody came.

The General looked impatiently at his son, who said, in reply to this look, "I 'll ride back again, father!" and putting his horse at full gallop, he went back into Stenay.

Long as the interval had seemed to the Marquis's impatience, the commander had not used it profitably. Only a few men were ready. The young officer complained bitterly, repeated the General's orders, and on the commander's positive promise that in five minutes his soldiers should be outside the town, Louis returned to his father.

As he left the town, he observed that the gate, through which he was riding for the fourth time, was now held by the National Guards.

The Bouillés waited this time five, ten, fifteen minutes, and still nobody came; and the Marquis felt as if every minute lost was a year taken from the lives of the royal prisoners.

Presently they saw a cabriolet coming along the road from Dun. It was Leonard's cabriolet, for he was still pursuing his journey, but with increasing worriment.

The General stopped him; but the farther Leonard came from Paris, the more the image of his brother, — whose hat and overcoat he still wore, — and of Madame de l'Aage, who waited for him to dress her hair, and had never been barbered by anybody else, — passed and repassed before his mind, till these remembrances

reduced him to such a state of mental chaos, that the Marquis could get nothing out of him that savored of common sense. Indeed, having left Varennes before the King's detention, Leonard had little news to tell.

This incident served to allay the General's impatience for a few minutes; but at length, when nearly an hour had rolled away since the first orders were sent to the Royal Germans, he requested his son to ride into Stenay for the third time, and not to return without the troops.

Louis started at a furious pace. On arriving at the public square his anger was augmented. Only fifty men were in their saddles. He began by taking these fifty men, and stationing them at the gate, so as to be sure and keep it free for egress and ingress. Then he rode back to the General, who was still waiting, and assured him that this time the commander and soldiers were certainly at his heels, and so he believed; but not till ten minutes afterward, when Louis was about to ride into the town for the fourth time, did they see the head of the advancing regiment.

Under other circumstances the General would have had the commander arrested by his own men; but at such a moment he feared lest this should disaffect both officers and soldiers; so he contented himself with reproaching the commander for his tardiness, and then harangued the soldiers. He told them what an honorable task was reserved for them, — that not only the liberty, but perhaps the life of the King and royal family, depended upon them. He promised new honors to the officers and additional recompense to the soldiers; and, to begin with, he distributed four hundred louis to the privates.

This speech, ending with such a peroration, produced

the effect he desired. There was a tremendous shout for the King, and then the Royal Germans started for Varennes at a rapid trot.

At Dun they found, guarding the Meuse River, a detachment of thirty men, left by Deslon, when he left Dun with Charny. The Royal Germans united with these thirty men, and kept on their way.

They had eight long leagues to cover, and the road was full of hills and valleys, so the troops could not ride as rapidly as they wished. Moreover it was necessary to keep the soldiers fresh enough to sustain an attack or make a charge. They felt as if they were advancing into an enemy's country. Right and left, alarms were ringing in the villages. In advance of them they could hear something like a fusillade. Still they kept on.

At Grange au Bois they saw a hatless horseman, bending over his saddle, tearing down the road, and apparently making signals of distress. The soldiers hurried on, and horseman and regiment drew nearer and nearer together.

This horseman was Charny. "To the King! to the King, gentlemen!" he shouted, as soon as he could be heard, at the same time waving his hand.

"To the King! Long live the King!" shouted soldiers and officers in reply.

Charny took his place in the ranks, and in four words explained the situation. When he left Varennes the King was still there; so all was not yet lost.

The horses were already weary, but the men kept well their speed; for the beasts had been crammed with oats, and the men had been warmed to a white heat by Bouillé's speech and golden louis. The regiment therefore tore on like a hurricane, with shouts of loyalty.

At Crépy they met a priest, — a Constitutional priest. Seeing the troops rushing towards Varennes, he said: "Go on! Go on! Luckily you'll be too late!"

Louis de Bouillé overheard him, and rode upon him, with drawn sabre.

"Youngster, what are you at?" cried his father.

The young man understood full well that to attack an unarmed man, and an ecclesiastic to boot, was a double crime; but he took one foot out of his stirrup, and gave the priest a smart kick in the stomach.

"You'll be too late!" repeated the priest, as he rolled over in the dust.

On they went, cursing this prophet of evil, but drawing nearer and nearer to the distant gunshots. Deslon and his seventy hussars were having a skirmish with an equal number of National Guards. The Royal Germans charged upon the guards, dispersed them, and passed on. From Deslon they learned that the King had left Varennes at eight o'clock that morning. Bouillé consulted his watch, and found it now lacked only five minutes of nine.

So be it! All hope was not lost. They could not now think of going through the village, over barricades; so they must make a detour, turning to the left. To go to the right was impossible, on account of the lay of the land and the condition of the soil. By the left they must cross the river. Charny assured them it was fordable; so they left Varennes on the right, and rode into the open fields. However numerous the escort which accompanied the royal coach, the Royal Germans meant to attack it on the Clermont road, and either liberate the King, or be killed in the attempt.

About two-thirds of the length of the circuit they came to the river. Charny urged his horse into the water. The Bouillés followed. After them came the other officers,

and then the privates. The stream was almost hidden beneath so many horses and uniforms. In ten minutes the ford was crossed, and the passage through the cool running water had refreshed both the horses and their masters. Then they resumed their ride towards Clermont, like birds on the wing.

Suddenly Charny, who preceded the troops some twenty paces, paused, and uttered a cry. He was on the edge of a deeply embanked canal, whose opening was on a level with the grass. Though he had drawn it on his topographical maps, Charny had completely forgotten this canal, which extended several leagues, and everywhere presented the same difficulties as at this point. If they could not cross it here, neither could they cross it anywhere else.

Charny set the example, and urged his horse down into the water. Though the canal was too deep to ford, the Count's horse swam vigorously for the opposite side; only the bank was so steep and slippery that the Count's horse could not get any hold upon it with his iron hoofs. Three or four times Charny tried to climb up; but he failed, despite his skill as a horseman. After several desperate, intelligent, and almost human efforts, the horse each time trying in vain to gain a solid foothold for his forefeet, he finally slipped backwards into the water, snorting painfully, and almost falling upon his rider.

Charny knew that what could not be accomplished by his horse, a thoroughbred animal, with a rider of acknowledged ability, could certainly not be accomplished by the four hundred horses and men of the squadron.

The experiment was a failure. Fate was too strong. The King and Queen were lost. If Charny could not

save them, there was only one duty more, — to perish with them.

He made one last effort, useless like the others, to reach the turf above. In the midst of this effort he stuck his sabre, halfway up the blade, into the clay which formed the steep bank of the canal. This sabre made a foot-hold, — useless for a horse, but serviceable for a man.

Abandoning his stirrups and bridle, Charny let his horse fall riderless into the fatal water. Then the Count swam towards his sabre, grasped it, pulled himself up, and, after several unsuccessful efforts, finally scrambled over upon the grass above.

Then he looked back. On the other side of the canal he could see Bouillé and his son, weeping with anger, and the soldiers gloomy and spiritless; for they all knew, after seeing Charny's losing struggle before their very eyes, how useless it would be for them to try to cross this impassable canal.

The General wrung his hands in despair, — he, whose enterprises had always succeeded, whose actions had heretofore been always crowned with such success as to give birth, in the army, to the proverb: "Lucky as Bouillé."

"Oh, gentlemen," he cried, in dolorous tones, "never call me *lucky* again."

"No, General," cried Charny, from the other bank; "but pray be tranquil. I will say you have done all any man could do, and when I tell them that, I shall be believed. — Adieu, General!"

Across the fields, on foot, covered with mud, dripping with water, disarmed of his sabre, which remained in the clayey bank of the canal, — his pistols useless, because the powder was wet, — Charny took up his course, and soon disappeared amidst groups of trees, standing here

and there along the way, like advance sentinels of the forest. He soon reached the road by which the royal prisoners were sure to pass. He had but to follow it, in order to rejoin them.

Before doing so he turned for the last time, and saw Bouillé and his troops still standing on the edge of that cursed canal. Despite the impossibility of going forward, they could not make up their minds to beat a retreat.

Charny made them a last sign, turned a corner, and soon vanished altogether. For his guidance there was a tremendous noise, made up of the outcries, clamors, threats, jeers, and maledictions of ten thousand men.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEPARTURE.

Our readers know that the King had departed from Varennes; but it remains for us to say more or less about that departure and the journey, during which we shall see fulfilled the destiny of several faithful adherents and last friends, whom fate and devotion grouped about the dying monarchy.

Let us return to the house of Monsieur Sausse, the town-solicitor at Varennes.

As has already been stated, hardly had Charny's feet touched the soil, after he lowered himself from the window, than the door reopened, and Billot appeared on the threshold.

His face was gloomy. His eyes, overhung by brows weighty with thought, were deep and penetrating. He passed in review all the personages of the drama there being enacted, but only two seemed worthy of note within the circle of his observation.

Charny's flight was obvious enough; for the Count was no longer there, and Damas was closing the window. Leaning forward, Billot fancied he saw the fugitive clear the garden wall.

Some sort of a compact had been concluded between Monsieur Romeuf and the Queen, — a compact in which Romeuf would pledge himself to remain neutral. At least, so it seemed to Billot.

Behind Billot, the adjoining storeroom was again filled with the same sort of people whom the farmer's gesture had expelled, before his private interview with Charny in that very room, — men of the people, armed with muskets, scythes, and sabres. These men seemed instinctively drawn, as by magnetic influence, to obey this man as their chief, — a plebeian like themselves, in whom they discerned a democratic patriotism equal to their own, or — perhaps we ought to say — a hatred equal to theirs.

Billot looked about him. As his eye encountered the glances of these armed men, he saw that he could count upon their aid, in case it should become necessary to resort to violence.

"Well," he said to Romeuf, "have they decided to go?"

The Queen cast upon Billot one of her side glances, which would have pulverized those imprudent people upon whom they fell, if she could have infused into those glances the power of Jove's thunderbolts. Without any reply, she sat firmly down, grasping the arms of her chair as if she would weld herself to it.

"The King asks for a little delay," said Romeuf, "as nobody has slept all night, and their Majesties are overcome with fatigue."

"Monsieur de Romeuf," replied Billot, "you know very well it is not because their Majesties are tired, that they ask for delay, but because they hope the Marquis de Bouillé will arrive during that delay. Let their Majesties beware," added Billot, with emphasis, "for if they refuse to come of their own free will, they will be dragged by the feet to their coach."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Damas, rushing towards Billot, with his sword bare; but Billot only turned and folded

his arms. He had no need to defend himself; for in a second eight or ten men rushed in from the other room, and Damas found himself confronted by as many different weapons.

The King saw that it needed only a word or a gesture, and both bodyguards, Choiseul, Damas, and the two or three other officers who were near him, would be slaughtered; so he said: "All right! Harness the horses, and we 'll go."

Madame Brunier, one of the Queen's ladies, screamed and fainted. This scream wakened the two children, and the Dauphin began to cry.

"Ah Monsieur!" said the Queen, addressing Billot, "have you no children, that you are so cruel to a mother?"

Billot trembled, but he said, with a bitter smile: "No, Madame, I have none." Then he added, to the King: "No need to harness the horses. They are already harnessed."

"Ah, well! Let them drive up!"

"The coach is at the door."

The King went to the window, and saw the coach was indeed ready; though he had not heard it drive up, in consequence of the great noise in the street. The people could see the King through the glass. Then a formidable outcry, or rather, a formidable menace, arose from the multitude. The King grew pale.

Choiseul approached the Queen and asked: "What are her Majesty's orders? Myself and comrades would prefer to die, rather than see what we must see."

"Do you believe Monsieur de Charny is safe?" asked the Queen, in a hasty whisper.

"Oh, as to that, I am sure of it," replied Choiseul.

"Well then, let us go; but in the name of Heaven,

— I ask it more for your sakes than ours, — do not leave us, — either you or your friends."

The King understood the fear which possessed the Queen, and said: "Assuredly, Monsieur de Choiseul and Monsieur de Damas are to accompany us; but I do not see their horses."

"That 's true!" said Romeuf to Billot, "we have no right to prevent these gentlemen from following the King and Queen."

"These gentlemen may follow the King and Queen as they can," said Billot. "Our orders relate to the transportation of the King and Queen, and nothing was said about these gentlemen."

"But I declare," said the King, with more firmness than might have been expected of him, "I declare that I will not go, unless these gentlemen have their horses."

"What do you say to that?" said Billot, turning to the men who occupied the other room. "The King won't go, unless these gents have their horses!" The men burst into a laugh.

"I will go and get them," said Romeuf; but Choiseul stepped in front of him and said, barring Romeuf's way: "Do not leave their Majesties. Your commission gives you some power over the populace, and it is incumbent upon your honor not to see a hair of their Majesties' heads injured."

Romeuf stopped. Billot shrugged his shoulders, and said: "All right! I 'll go myself." At the door he turned, and said with frowning brows: "I shall be obeyed, sha'n't I?"

"Oh, be easy!" replied the men, with another burst of laughter, which indicated, in case of resistance, that they would attend to the matter without pity.

Indeed, such was their irritation, that these fellows were certainly ready to use force against the royal family, and fire upon any one of them who should try to escape.

Billot did not take the trouble to return to the chamber. One of the men was near the window, watching what took place in the street. Presently he said: "There are the horses! Now let 's be off!"

"Let 's be off!" repeated his comrades, with an emphasis which admitted no discussion.

The King walked first. Choiseul followed, giving his arm to the Queen. Next came Damas, giving his arm to Madame Elizabeth. Then came Madame de Tourzel and the two children. Around them, forming a group, were the other members of this faithful little company.

As the envoy of the National Assembly, and consequently endowed with a certain sacredness of character, it was Romeuf's particular duty to protect the royal party; but it must be said that Romeuf had abundant need to protect himself. It was rumored abroad that not only had he executed the Assembly's orders very mildly, but that by his inertia, if not actively, he had favored the escape of one of their Majesties' most devoted adherents, who had hastened to General Bouillé, with a command to come at once to the royal relief. The result was, that while Billot's conduct was glorified by the populace, who were disposed to recognize him as their leader, Romeuf, when he reached the street, heard about him cries of *Aristocrat!* and *Traitor!* accompanied by threats.

The royal party entered their carriages, in the same order they had followed in descending the staircase. The two bodyguards took their accustomed places on the seats outside.

On their way downstairs Valory had approached the King and said: "Sire, my comrade and myself have a favor to ask of your Majesty."

"What is it, gentlemen?" the King had replied, astonished that he could dispense any favor whatever.

"Sire, as we have no longer the happiness to serve you in any military capacity, we ask the favor of holding places near you as your domestics."

"My domestics, young gentlemen?" cried the King. "Impossible!"

Valory bowed: "Sire," said he, "in the situation in which your Majesty finds yourself, it is our opinion that such a position would be honorable to princes of the blood royal, and all the more so for poor gentlemen like ourselves."

"Well, gentlemen, so be it!" said the King, with tears in his eyes. "Remain, and never forsake us!"

This is why these two young men, making a reality of their livery, and their acquired functions as couriers, took their places on the upper seat, as Choiseul closed the door of the coach.

"Gentlemen," said the King, "I give you positive orders to take me to Montmédy. — Postilions, — to Montmédy!" but a single voice, an immense voice, — the voice not of one community, but of ten communities together, — shouted: "To Paris! To Paris!"

Then, after a moment of silence, Billot pointed with his sabre in the direction to be followed, and said: "Postilions, to Clermont!"

The coach began to move in obedience to that order, but Louis the Sixteenth leaned out to speak a last word of protest: "I call you all to witness that I am constrained by violence."

Overcome by this last effort of will, which surpassed

any he had previously made, the unhappy King sank back into the coach, between the Queen and Madame Elizabeth, while the carriage continued on its way. At the end of five minutes, before they had travelled two hundred steps, great cries were heard behind. On account of the positions which they occupied, and partly from their temperaments, the Queen was the first to thrust her head outside the curtain; but almost instantly she drew her head inside again, covering her eyes with both hands. "Oh, ill-fortune betides us! They have assassinated Choiseul!"

The King made a movement, but both his wife and sister held him back, and he sank down between them again. Besides, the coach just then turned a street-corner, and it was impossible to see more than twenty rods away.

This is what had happened. At Sausse's door Choiseul and Damas mounted their horses; but Romeuf's horse had disappeared, though it had been brought from the stables with the others. Romeuf, Floirac, and Adjutant Foucq therefore followed afoot, hoping either that some of the still faithful troopers would offer their own steeds, or that some horses might be found which had been abandoned by their masters, — faithless hussars and dragoons, who were busy fraternizing with the populace, and drinking the health of the Nation; but they had not walked fifteen rods when Choiseul, from his place beside the coach, saw that Romeuf, Floirac, and Foucq were in danger of being swallowed up, separated, suffocated in the crowd. Choiseul halted an instant, and let the coach pass on. Judging that Romeuf, by virtue of the mission wherewith he was charged, could be of most use to the royal family, and yet was in equal danger with his companions, he shouted to his servant, James Brisack,

who was somewhere in the crowd: "My second horse for Monsieur de Romeuf!"

Hardly were the words spoken, when the mob surrounded him, shouting: "It 's the Duke! It 's Choiseul! It 's one of them as wanted to steal the King! Death to the Aristocrat! Death to the traitor!"

In such popular tumults we know with what rapidity the blow follows the word. Wrenched from his saddle, Choiseul fell backward, head over heels, and was swallowed in that terrible gulf, — the multitude, — out of which, in that epoch of mortal passion, a man could emerge only in lacerated pieces.

As he fell five men rushed to his rescue, — Damas, Floirac, Romeuf, Foucq, and James Brisack, — the Duke's special servant, — from whose hands the bridle which he held had been snatched, so that, his hands being thus freed, he could devote them to his master's service.

There was an instant of awful contest, — like one of those combats of antiquity, or among the Arabs of our own day, — around the bleeding bodies of the wounded and dead.

Contrary to all probabilities, but luckily for him, Choiseul was neither killed nor wounded; or rather, considering the dangerous weapons borne by the mob, his wounds were slight. With his musket-barrel, a gendarme parried a scythe sweep, destined for the Duke. A second cut was parried by James Brisack, with a stick snatched from another assailant's hand. The stick was cut in twain like a reed, but the blow was turned aside, and so wounded only the Duke's horse.

Then Adjutant Foucq shouted: "Dragoons, to the rescue!" Several soldiers ran forward at this cry. Ashamed to let the man be massacred who was their commander, they soon cleared a pathway to his side.

Romeuf sprang in front of them, crying: "In the name of the National Assembly, whose commissioner I am, and of General Lafayette, by whom I am deputed, take these gentlemen at once to the townhouse."

As these two names, Lafayette and the National Assembly, were then enjoying their greatest popularity, Romeuf's words produced their intended effect.

"To the townhouse! To the townhouse!" shouted many voices.

A determined effort was made by right-minded men, and soon Choiseul and his companions found themselves dragged towards the townhouse.

It required an hour and a half to reach there; and each minute of the ninety was a menace or foretaste of death. The slightest opening in the protective circle around the prisoners at once gave passage to the blade of a sabre, the point of a scythe, or the prongs of a pitchfork.

At last they reached the townhouse. Only one town official remained there, and he was completely upset by the responsibility laid upon him. By way of discharging that responsibility, he ordered Choiseul, Damas, and Floirac to be locked up, under the supervision of National Guardsmen. As Romeuf declared he would not quit Choiseul, who, for Romeuf's sake, had exposed himself to all that had happened, the official ordered him to the lockup, with the other three.

At a sign from the Duke, his servant, who was of too little consequence to receive much attention, vanished. His first care — let us not forget that James Brisack was a groom — was to look after the horses. He learned that some of them, almost safe and sound, were in a tavern, guarded by several hostlers. Reassured on this point he entered the eating-room, asked for some tea, a

quill, and some ink, and wrote to Madame de Choiseul and Madame de Grammont, to assure them of the welfare of their son and nephew, who — in all human probability — was safe the moment he became a prisoner.

Poor James Brisack was far ahead of time in announcing this news. To be sure Choiseul was a prisoner. To be sure he was in the lockup. To be sure he was under the guard of the rural militia; but they forgot to station sentinels at the wicket of the cell, and through these loopholes the prisoners were several times fired upon, so that they were obliged to take refuge in the farthest corners. This precarious situation lasted twenty-four hours, during which Romeuf, with praiseworthy devotion, refused to quit his companions.

At last, however, the National Guards arrived from Verdun, and Romeuf had the three prisoners placed in their keeping; but he would not leave them till he received from the officers, who were to guard his friends, their solemn promise not to forsake the prisoners till they were safe in the custody of the High Court at Paris.

As to poor Isidore de Charny, his body was dragged to the house of a weaver, where he was shrouded by unfamiliar but pious hands, — less happy in this than his brother George, who at least received the last offices from the fraternal hands of the Count, and from the friendly hands of Gilbert and Billot.

Then Billot was a devoted and respectful friend of the family. We have seen how this friendship, devotion, and respect had changed into hatred, — a hatred as implacable as that friendship, devotion, and respect had been profound.

CHAPTER IV.

VIA DOLOROSA : STATION ONE.

As the terrible transit of Jesus, from the Mount of Olives to the Cross, is known as the *Via Dolorosa*, or Sorrowful Way, we may designate by that name the painful journey of the royal family to Paris, with each chapter as a station on that wearisome road.

Alas! Louis the Sixteenth and Marie Antoinette had also their Calvary! In their terrible suffering, — their *passion*, if we may apply to these human beings a word bearing a special and sacred significance, — were they expiating the accumulated faults of an overbearing monarchy, as Jesus the Christ atoned for the sins of a world? This is a problem not solved by the past, but perhaps the future will reveal its lesson.

The royal party advanced slowly, for the horses could only move as fast as the escort. This escort was largely made up of men, armed — as we have before said — with pitchforks, guns, scythes, sabres, pikes, and flails; but there were also large numbers of women and children, — the women often holding their children aloft, so that they could see the spectacle of a king carried by force to his capital city, a sight they were unlikely ever to behold again.

In the midst of this multitude, which flowed over the road, into the fields on both sides, was the King's big coach, followed by the cabriolet containing the ladies Brunier and Neuville, — the smaller vehicle tagging

after the larger, like a shallop following a big ship into the jaws of perdition, amidst furious seas threatening to engulf them both.

From time to time some unexpected circumstance increased the fury of the storm, — if we may be permitted to follow out this metaphor. The outcries, menaces, and imprecations redoubled. The human waves were agitated like the sea, now rising into mountains, now sinking again. Sometimes this sea seemed to completely absorb the ship whose prow could hardly breast its way through the waves, and with it the victims which the vessel carried, and the frail shallop which followed in its wake.

They reached Clermont without seeing the terrible escort diminish, though the distance was about four leagues. Those men in it, whose occupations recalled them to their homes, were replaced by others who ran in from neighboring villages along the route, and who wished to enjoy the spectacle whereof the others were weary.

Among all the captives transported in this perambulatory prison two were particularly exposed to the anger of the crowd, and made the butt of its gibes and assaults. These two were the unfortunate guards, Malden and Valory, who were on the large outside seat. Every instant, — and this was one way of striking at the royal family, whose persons were held inviolable by an order from the National Assembly, — every instant bayonets were pointed at their bodies. Sometimes a scythe — which seemed like the legendary scythe of old Death himself — was lifted above their heads ; or a spear, gliding like a perfidious serpent between the two men, would strike the living flesh with its sharp tooth, and then as rapidly retreat, with its point wet and red, satisfied to

show its master that the thrust had not failed of its sanguinary purpose.

All at once they were surprised to see, pushing his way through the crowd, a man hatless and unarmed, and with his clothes covered with mud. After respectfully saluting the King and Queen, he grasped the side of the coach, and drew himself up into the outside seat, between the two bodyguards.

The Queen uttered a cry of mingled fear, joy, and grief. She recognized Charny. Her fear arose from seeing him do such an audacious thing, for it was almost a miracle that he was able to gain so perilous a position without receiving a single wound. Her joy arose from her happiness in seeing that he had escaped the unknown dangers which he must have encountered in his flight that morning, — dangers which seemed all the greater, because, without being able to specialize any one of them, her imagination fancied him the victim of all. Yet she was sad, for she knew that Charny's return, in such a condition and alone, bade them renounce all hope of succor from General Bouillé.

The crowd, astonished at this man's audacity, seemed to respect him the more on that account.

Hearing the noise around the carriage, Billot, who was on horseback at the head of the escort, turned and recognized Charny, and said to himself: "Ah! I 'm glad nothing has happened to him; but woe to the foolhardy man who makes another such attempt, for he is sure to pay for both."

They arrived at Saint Menehould about two o'clock on that June afternoon.

The deprivation of sleep on the night of their departure from Paris, and the exertions and emotions of the night at Varennes, had powerfully affected all the

party, but especially the Dauphin; and by the time they reached Saint Menehould, the poor child was in a very feverish condition. The King therefore commanded a halt.

Unhappily, of all the villages scattered along the route, Saint Menehould was the most enraged towards that unhappy family, thus held in captivity. No attention was paid to the King's order; but contradictory orders were given by Billot, that fresh horses should immediately be attached to the carriage, and Billot was obeyed.

The Dauphin wept, and asked, amidst his sobs: "Why don't they undress me, and put me in my nice bed, when I'm so ill?"

The Queen could not withstand these complaints, and her pride was broken down. She raised in her arms the weeping and shivering prince, and said, as she showed him to the people: "Ah, gentlemen, for the sake of this poor child, let us stop!" but the horses were already hitched to the coach, and Billot gave the command "Forward!" which was repeated by the populace.

As the farmer rode by the window, to once more take his place at the head of the escort, the Queen addressed him: "Ah, Monsieur! I repeat, — it is evident you have no children."

"And I repeat to you in my turn, Madame," said Billot, with gloomy look and voice, "that I have had one, but I have her no longer."

"Do what you will," said the Queen, "since you are the stronger; but have a care! for there are no voices crying louder for Heaven's vengeance than the voices of little children."

Again the procession started. The journey through the village of Saint Menehould was most painful. The

excitement roused by the sight of Drouet, to whose exertions the arrest of the prisoners was due, would have been a pointed lesson for those prisoners, if kings were capable of learning anything; but in these popular outcries Louis the Sixteenth and Marie Antoinette could see only blind fury. In these Patriots, convinced that they were saving France, the King and Queen could see only rebels against lawful government.

The King was utterly cast down. The sweat of wrath and shame ran down the Queen's forehead. Madame Elizabeth, that heavenly angel astray on the earth, prayed in a low voice, — not for herself, but for her brother, her sister-in-law, her nephew, her niece, and all the people. In her prayer this saintly woman could not separate those whom she regarded as victims from those whom she looked upon as executioners, and in the same invocation she laid them all at the feet of her Lord.

At the entrance of Saint Menehould, the flood, which had covered all the plain like an inundation, could not force itself into the narrow streets, but surged out on both sides of the village. As the halt at Saint Menehould was only long enough, however, for a change of horses, the crowds came together again at the farther end of the town, and once more the human waves beat against the royal coach.

The King had been led to believe, — and this belief had perhaps impelled him forward in a wrong direction, — the King had been led to believe that the spirit of Paris alone was badly misguided, and he counted on provincial loyalty; yet here was the rural spirit, not only disappointing him, but turning pitilessly against him. These good country people had surprised Choiseul at Sommevelle Bridge, imprisoned Dandoins at Saint Menehould, driven Damas from Clermont by force of arms,

and murdered Isidore under the King's own eyes. Everybody was stirred up to prevent his flight, even the priest whom Louis de Bouillé had overturned with the toe of his boot, in the highway; though of this exploit the King was ignorant, for it had occurred during the ride of General Bouillé's troopers, and Charny was the only man in the present company who could know anything about that little occurrence.

It would have seemed still worse to the King, if he could have seen what was going on in various villages and cities, when they heard the news of his arrest. In an instant the whole population was roused. Women carried in their arms their babes in swaddling-clothes. Mothers led by the hand children old enough to walk. Men armed themselves. Whatever weapons they could lay their hands upon, they suspended around their bodies, or carried on their shoulders. They came with a resolution, — not to serve as the King's escort, but to kill the King; that King who, in a certain time of harvest, — a harvest more sorrowful than that in poor Champagne, on the very edge of Châlons, which was so poverty-stricken, that, in their vulgar but expressive language, the people began to call the province *lousy Champagne!* — the King who, in that time of trouble, sent for their harvest, that it might be trodden under the feet of the horses of pillaging pandours and thieving hussars. Three angels protected the royal carriage, — the poor little Dauphin, ill and fretful in his mother's lap; Madame Royale, who, glowing with the beauty which accompanies the sandy complexion, stood upright at the carriage window, looking upon everything with a steadfast but surprised gaze; and finally Madame Elizabeth, already twenty-seven years old, whose purity of heart and body wreathed about her forehead an aureole of purest youth.

When they saw all this, the Queen bending over her sick boy, and the King so broken down, the anger of these men's wrath abated, and sought some other object of attack. They jeered at the guards, sneered at and insulted those noble and devoted hearts, — calling them cowards and traitors.

Upon the heads of the multitude, mostly bare, and heated by the bad wine of the taverns, poured the rays of a June sun, making a rainbow of flame on the cloud of chalky dust, raised by the immense rabble as it passed along.

Two anecdotes are recounted by Michelet, the poetic and picturesque historian, who even names the two heroes, as the dignity of his recital permits him to do. These anecdotes may illustrate our point.

What would the King, who was still under an illusion, have said, had he known that a man went from Mézières, with his gun on his shoulder, and walked sixty leagues in three days, on purpose to kill the King, when he returned to Paris? Yet when this man reached Paris, and saw the King, so poor, so unhappy, so humiliated, he shook his head, and renounced his project.

What would the King have said, if he had known about a certain young carpenter, who — not doubting, after the King's flight, that he would be immediately brought to trial and condemned — left the farthest border of Burgundy, and hurried along the roads, in order to be present at that trial and condemnation? On his way a master carpenter made him understand that it would take much longer time than he supposed, and urged him to remain and work with him. The young carpenter did stay with the old master, and married his daughter.

What Louis the Sixteenth did see was perhaps more

significant, but no less awful; for we have shown how a triple buckler of innocence shielded him from wrath, but turned it against his attendants.

As they left Saint Menehould, when they were perhaps half a league (or a mile and a half) from the village, an old gentleman came galloping across the fields on horseback. He was a chevalier of the Order of Saint Louis, and wore its cross in his buttonhole. For a moment the crowd supposed the man had come out of simple curiosity, and made way for him. Hat in hand the old nobleman approached the carriage, saluting the King and Queen, and calling them by their royal titles; but the populace had begun to discover where genuine force and real majesty resided, and were indignant at this bestowal of empty honors upon the prisoners, — honors due to the Nation only, — and so they began to growl and threaten.

The King had learned to understand these growls. He had heard them at Varennes, and now divined their signification.

"Monsieur," he said to the old Knight of Saint Louis, "the Queen and myself are deeply touched by this mark of devotion, which you bestow upon us in this public manner; but in God's name go away, for your life is insecure!"

"My life is my King's," said the old nobleman, "and the last day of my life will be the more beautiful, if I die for my King!"

When these words were overheard, the growling grew louder.

"Retire, Monsieur, retire!" said the King. Then he added, leaning out of the carriage: "My friends, give place, I beseech you, to Monsieur de Dampierre!"

Those who were nearest, and heard the King's appeal,

tried to stand aside, and make room for the Chevalier; but unfortunately, a little farther off, both horse and rider found themselves uncomfortably crowded. The old nobleman used bridle and spur to excite his horse, but the crowd was so compact as to be hardly able to control its own movements. Several terrified women screamed, a child bawled with fright, the men doubled their fists, and the old gentleman shook his whip at them all. Then the menaces changed to roars, and the wrath of the populace rose like a lion's. Monsieur de Dampierre was already on the edge of the human forest. He pricked his horse on both sides, and the animal bravely leaped the ditch, and started across the fields at a gallop. At that moment the old gentlemen turned. Doffing his hat he shouted, "God save the King!" — a last honor to his sovereign, but an insult to the populace.

A gunshot was heard. Pulling a pistol from his holster, Dampierre returned shot for shot. Then everybody who had a loaded musket fired on the deluded man. His horse fell, riddled with bullets. Was the owner wounded by this frightful discharge? No one knew. The multitude rushed like an avalanche towards the side where man and horse had fallen, fifty paces from the royal coach. Then followed one of those tumults, such as sometimes arise around corpses, — disorderly movements, a formless chaos, a sea of cries and shouts. Suddenly, on the end of a pike they saw rising a head, crowned with white hair. It was the unfortunate Dampierre's.

The Queen screamed, and sank back into the coach.

"Monsters! Cannibals! Assassins!" shouted Charny.

"Hold your tongue, Monsieur!" said Billot, "or I can't answer for your safety."

"So be it!" said Charny. "I 'm weary of life!

What worse can happen to me than to my poor brother?"

"Your brother," replied Billot, "was guilty, and you are not."

Charny made a motion to leap from his seat; but the two bodyguards held him back, and twenty weapons were thrust towards him.

"Friends," said Billot, with his strong and impressive tones, "whatever he does or says, this man," and he pointed to Charny, "I forbid you to harm a hair of his head. I must answer for him to his wife!"

"To his wife!" murmured the Queen, trembling as if one of the bayonets which threatened Charny had pierced her heart. "To his wife! And why so?"

Why? Billot could not himself have answered the question. He had invoked the name and face of Charny's wife, knowing how powerful are such domestic words over crowds of people, — made up, take them for all in all, of fathers and husbands.

CHAPTER V.

VIA DOLOROSA : STATION TWO.

THEY arrived late at Châlons. The coach drove into the courtyard of the superintendent's house, for couriers had been sent ahead to prepare lodgings. The courtyard was filled with National Guardsmen and newsmongers. It was necessary to make spectators stand aside, before the King could step out of his carriage. First he alighted. Then came the Queen, carrying the Dauphin in her arms; then Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale, and finally Madame de Tourzel.

The instant Louis Sixteenth set foot on the stairs leading into the house a musket was discharged, and the bullet whistled by the King's ears. Was it fired with the intention of regicide, or was it a simple accident?

"Well," said the King, turning around with much coolness, "some awkward fellow let his gun go off!" Then he added, in a louder voice: "Take care, gentlemen, or we may have an accident!"

Without hindrance, Charny and the two bodyguards followed the royal prisoners, and entered the house behind them.

Apart from the unlucky gunshot, it already seemed to the Queen that she was in a milder atmosphere. At the door, when the tumultuous procession paused in its march, the shouts were stilled. A sort of compassionate murmur was heard when the royal family descended from their coach. When the prisoners reached the main story

of the mansion, they found dinner served as sumptuously as possible under the circumstances, and with an elegance which made them look at each other in astonishment.

Two servants were in attendance, but Charny claimed for himself and the two bodyguards the privilege of serving the table. This humble position, which otherwise might appear singular, would enable the Count to stay at the King's side, be always at his door, and so hold himself ready for any emergency.

The Queen comprehended all this; but she did not turn towards him, or reward him with a gesture, a glance, or a single word. That saying of Billot's, "I must answer for him to his wife," was muttering like an incipient storm in the depths of Marie Antoinette's heart. Charny, whom she expected to carry away from France, — whom she hoped would be expatriated with her, — Charny must now return with her to Paris, and again meet Andrée.

On his side, Charny was ignorant of what was passing in the Queen's heart. He had forgotten he had ever heard these words. Besides, he began to entertain hopeful views of the present situation.

As we know, Charny had spent much time in exploring the route from Paris to Montmédy, and had thoroughly fulfilled his duty as advance agent. He therefore understood the spirit of this village. Châlons was an old town, where there was little business, — a town inhabited by retired tradesmen, noblemen, capitalists, people holding Royalist opinions.

One consequence of this was, that hardly were the august guests seated at dinner, when their host, the legal Intendant of the Department, entered, bowing respectfully to the Queen, who, expecting nothing agreeable, looked at him suspiciously, till he said: "Madame, there are some maidens of our village of

Châlons, who beg the privilege of proffering some flowers to your Majesty."

Much surprised, the Queen turned to Madame Elizabeth and then to the King. "Flowers?" she said.

"Madame," replied the kind Intendant, "if the time is ill-chosen, or the request is too audacious, I will tell these girls not to come upstairs."

"Oh, no, no, Monsieur, but quite the opposite!" said the Queen. "Maidens? Flowers? Bring them right in!"

Then the Intendant withdrew; and in a moment a dozen girls, from fourteen to sixteen years old, appeared in the antechamber, and stopped before the open door.

"Come in, come in, my children!" cried the Queen, extending her arms.

One of the maidens — speaking not only for her companions, but for their families also, and for the whole town — had learned a beautiful little speech, which she was ready to repeat; but the Queen's welcome, her open arms, and the emotion displayed by the whole royal family so drove the address out of the poor girl's head, that it was lost in the general grief. She could find only tears, instead of the appointed words; and when she spoke, it was but to utter the commonplace sentiment: "Oh, your Majesty, what a misfortune!"

The Queen accepted the bouquet, and embraced the young girl.

While this was going on, Charny bent over the King's ear, and whispered: "Sire, perhaps something may be turned to our account in this place. All may not be lost. If your Majesty will grant me an hour's leave of absence, I'll go about the village, and afterwards render you an account of what I have seen and heard, and perhaps accomplished."

"Go, Monsieur," said the King, "but be prudent. If any misfortune happens to you, I shall never be able to console myself! Alas! It is enough that there should already be two deaths in one family!"

"Sire," responded Charny, "my life is the King's, as were the lives of my brothers!"

He left the room, but as he did so he dried a tear. It needed the presence of the royal family to make this man, with a heart so tender and true, appear as stoical as he pretended to be. When alone with himself, he was face to face with his sorrow.

"Poor Isidore!" he murmured, and pressed his hand on his breast, to see if his coat-pocket still contained the papers which Choiseul had brought to Charny from his brother's dead body, and which the Count meant to read, at the first feasible opportunity, as religiously as he would read a dying will and testament.

Behind the maidens, whom Madame Royale embraced as sisters, came their parents, who — as we have before said — were mostly old noblemen, and worthy citizens of the middle class. They entered modestly, humbly asking the privilege of paying their respects to their unhappy sovereigns. The King rose as they appeared; and in her sweetest tones the Queen bade them enter.

Were they at Châlons, or were they at Versailles? Was it possible that only a few hours had elapsed since the royal prisoners saw the unfortunate Monsieur de Dampierre torn in pieces under their very eyes?

In half an hour Charny came back. The Queen had seen him go out, and now noted his return; but the most piercing eye would have found it impossible to see in her face any indication of the effect of his exit and entrance upon her heart.

"Well?" said the King, leaning towards Charny's side.

"Well, Sire, all is for the best. The Châlons National Guards are willing to take your Majesty to Montmédy on the morrow."

"Then you have decided upon some plan?"

"Yes, Sire, with the principal leaders. To-morrow, before your departure, the King will demand the privilege of attending Mass. They cannot well refuse this request, as it is Corpus Christi Day. The coach will await the King at the church door. As he comes out to enter the coach, cheers for the King will resound; and amidst these cheers, the King will give orders to face about and drive towards Montmédy."

"Good!" said Louis. "Thanks, Monsieur de Charny. If nothing is changed before to-morrow, we will do as you say. — But go and get some repose, you and your companions, for you must need it even more than we do."

As may be easily understood, the reception of the maidens, the brave noblemen, and the good citizens did not last far into the night; and at nine the royal family retired.

When they entered their suite of chambers, the sight of a sentinel, stationed at the door, reminded both King and Queen that they were still prisoners, although the sentinel respectfully presented arms. By the precision with which he offered this homage to royalty, even though in captivity, the King saw that the sentinel was an old soldier; and so he asked: "Where have you served, my friend?"

"In the French Guards, Sire," responded the man.

"Then I am not surprised at seeing you here!" replied the King, in a dry tone; for Louis Sixteenth could not forget that on July 13, 1789, — at the time of the destruction of the Bastille nearly two years before, — the French Guards deserted to the popular side.

The royal couple entered their chambers, but this sentinel was at the very door of their bedroom.

An hour later, when relieved from guard, this sentinel asked for an interview with the chief of the escort. This chief was Billot. He was at supper in the street, with the men who had come thither from different towns along the route, and trying to persuade them to remain until the morrow; but the greater part of these volunteers, having seen what they came to see, — the King, — preferred to keep the feast of Corpus Christi in their own villages. Billot made an effort to retain them, because the Aristocratic disposition of the town worried him; but the brave rustics responded: "If we don't go home, who will celebrate the festival of the good Lord to-morrow, and hang the flags on our houses?"

This discussion was interrupted by the arrival of the sentinel, with whom Billot held a lively conversation. Then Billot sent after Drouet, and the conversation, animated and full of gestures, was renewed in a low voice. As a result of the consultation, Billot and Drouet went to the house of the post-superintendent, who was a friend of Drouet, — whose father, it will be remembered, held the same office at Saint Menehould. The post-superintendent at once saddled two horses, and in ten minutes Billot was galloping over the road to Rheims, and Drouet over the road towards Vitry le Français.

By daybreak hardly six hundred men belonging to the escort remained in Châlons; and those were the fiercest or the most exhausted, who had passed the night in the streets, on bundles of straw furnished them for that purpose. By the quivering rays of the first morning light, they could see a dozen men in uniforms, going into the Intendant's house (where the King was) from which they soon hurried out again.

Some of Villeroy's troops had been stationed at Châlons. A dozen of these gentlemen were still in the village, and it was they who had come to get Charny's orders. His orders were that they should put on their uniforms, and be at the church door on horseback, when the King came from Mass; and they went away to prepare for this duty.

As we have said, many of the peasants, who had helped to form the royal escort the evening before, did not go away immediately, because they were so worn out; but in the morning they counted the leagues. Some were ten leagues (nearly thirty miles) and some were even fifteen leagues from home; so one or two hundred set out at once, in spite of the opposition of their comrades. The faithful Patriots were therefore reduced to some four hundred or four hundred and fifty men, at the most.

Charny could count on an equal number of National Guardsmen, still devoted to the King, without reckoning the Royal Guards and the other officers, who were to form a sort of sacred battalion, ready to set a brave example of exposure to every kind of danger. Besides, as we know, the town was Aristocratic.

At six in the morning, those inhabitants most zealous for the Royalist cause were standing in the courtyard of the Intendant's house. Charny and his guards were in their midst, also in waiting.

The King rose at seven o'clock, and made known his intention of attending Mass. Search was made for Drouet and Billot, to make known the King's wish, but neither of them was to be found. Nothing was therefore in the way of the accomplishment of the royal desire. Charny went up to the King's room, and announced the absence of the two popular chiefs. In this the King rejoiced, but Charny shook his head. Though

he did not know much about Drouet, he knew Billot thoroughly.

However, all the auguries proved favorable. The streets were full of people, but it was easy to see that they were sympathetic. As long as the shutters of the royal chambers were closed, the crowd circulated with quiet steps and little noise, in order not to disturb the sleep of the prisoners. They even raised their eyes and hands pitifully to Heaven. So numerous were these friendly watchers, that the four or five hundred peasants from the adjacent country, who had persisted in not returning to their own villages, seemed lost in their midst.

When the windows swung open in the chambers of the august pair, cries of "God save the King" and "God save the Queen" resounded with such energy that, without any interchange of thoughts on the subject, both Louis and Marie Antoinette appeared on their respective balconies. Then the cries became unanimous, and once more the two victims of destiny were confirmed in their illusions.

Said the King to his wife, speaking from one balcony to the other: "All seems to be going very well!" She lifted her eyes to Heaven, but did not respond.

At that moment a few strokes on the bell announced that the church was open. At the same time Charny rapped lightly on the chamber door. "All right," responded the King, "I am ready!"

Charny hastily glanced at his Majesty. He was calm and almost firm. He had suffered much, and through the force of suffering one might have said he had lost his irresolution.

The coach was at the door. The royal family entered it, surrounded by a crowd not much smaller than on the

evening before; only, instead of insulting the prisoners, this crowd asked for a word or a look, and thought themselves happy if they could but touch the flaps of the King's coat, and were proud if they could kiss the hem of the Queen's skirts.

The three officers took their usual places on the outside seats. The coachman received orders to drive to the church, and he obeyed without a word. Indeed, who was there to give contrary orders, the two chiefs being still absent? Charny looked searchingly in every direction, but could see nothing of Billot or Drouet.

The peasantry took their usual place around the carriage, but the number of National Guards increased every moment, coming around each street corner by companies. When they reached the church Charny estimated that he had some six-hundred men at his disposal.

Places were reserved for the royal family, under a sort of canopy, and although it was only eight o'clock, the priests at once began the Mass. Perceiving this, Charny feared nothing but delay; for delay might prove fatal to their reviving hopes. He even warned the celebrant that it was absolutely essential that the Mass should not last over fifteen minutes.

"I understand," rejoined the priest, "and I pray God to accord to their Majesties a prosperous journey."

The Mass lasted precisely the time indicated, but twenty times Charny drew out his watch. The King could hardly conceal his impatience. The Queen, on her knees between the two children, leaned her head on the cushion of the prayer-desk. Madame Elizabeth, calm and serene as an alabaster Madonna, — either because she was ignorant of the latest project, or had already commended her own and her brother's lives to God's holy keeping, — gave no sign of impatience.

At last, turning to the congregation, the priest pronounced the closing sacramental words, — which indeed originally gave the name of Mass to this important service of the Roman Catholic Church, — *Ite, missa est!* (Go, it is done!); and descending from the altar, pyx in hand, he blessed, as he passed by, the royal family, who bowed, and responded a low *Amen*, to the desire formulated in the heart of the priest. With his disappearance into the sacristy the service was over.

Then they walked towards the door. All who had come to hear the Mass with them bent the knee as the royal family passed along. Their lips moved without speaking a word, but it was easy to conjecture for what those mute lips were praying.

At the door they found ten or a dozen guards on horseback. The Royalist escort began to assume colossal proportions. It was very evident, however, that the peasants, with their burly obstinacy, with their rude weapons, less mortal, perhaps, than those of the National Guards, but more terrible to the sight, — a third of them being armed with muskets, and the rest with knives and scythes, — it was evident that these peasants would be able, in a decisive moment, to turn the scale, by throwing their fatal weight into the balance.

It was not therefore without some fear that Charny leaned towards the King, to ask his orders, and said at the same time, by way of encouragement, "Let us move on, Sire!"

The King was decided. He leaned out of the carriage and said, addressing those nearest the window: "Gentlemen, yesterday, at Varennes, I was treated with violence. I gave orders to drive to Montmédy, but by force I was dragged towards a rebellious capital; but yesterday I was in the midst of rebels, whereas to-day I am among

loyal subjects, and I repeat my order of yesterday! — To Montmédy, gentlemen."

"To Montmédy!" cried Charny. "To Montmédy!" repeated the guardsmen of Villeroy's company. "To Montmédy!" repeated every National Guardsman belonging in Châlons. Then there went up a general chorus: "God save the King! Long live the King!"

The carriage turned the corner of the street, and started to retrace its way over the road by which it had come the evening before.

Charny kept his eye on the peasantry from the outside villages. It seemed to him, in the absence of Drouet and Billot, that these rough peasants were commanded by the same French Guardsman who had been on duty at the King's door on the night previous. Every movement this man observed silently, but with a gloomy look which indicated that he did not greatly relish the proceedings. His peasant followers shared this man's anxious dissatisfaction; but they allowed the National Guardsmen (who, it will be remembered, were here on the royal side) to go on in front, while the peasants massed themselves together, forming a rear guard as alarming as it was strong.

In the first ranks of this rear guard marched men with pikes, pitchforks, and scythes. One hundred and fifty men followed them, armed with guns. This manœuvre, as well executed as it would have been by troops accustomed to such exercises, made Charny restless; but he had no excuse for opposing it, nor could he even ask an explanation, under such circumstances.

The explanation, however, came soon enough. As they advanced towards the town gate, it seemed as if they could hear — despite the shouts and bustle which accompanied the coach, and the noise made by the

carriage itself — a dull and distant sound, which slowly increased in volume.

Suddenly Charny grew pale. Touching the knee of the bodyguard next him he said: "All is lost!"

"Why so?" asked the bodyguard.

"Don't you know that noise?"

"The drum-beat? What then?"

"Well, you 'll see!" said Charny.

At that instant they turned a corner, into a square where two roads met, — one leading from Rheims, and the other from Vitry le Français. Through these two streets, with drums beating and flags waving, advanced two large companies of National Guards, one numbering some eighteen hundred, and the other from twenty-five hundred to three thousand. Each of these companies was commanded by a man on horseback. One of these was Billot; the other was Drouet. Charny needed only to note the direction followed by each troop, in order to understand everything. The absence of Drouet and Billot, heretofore inexplicable, was now explained but too clearly. Forewarned of the blow planned at Châlons, they had undoubtedly started off suddenly, one to hasten the approach of the National Guards from Rheims, and the other to call out the National Guards at Vitry le Français. Their measures being well concerted, both companies arrived at the same time. They ordered their men to halt in the square, which was thus entirely closed up. Without any other demonstration, the order was given to load their guns.

The royal party paused. The King put his head out of the window. He saw Charny with his face pale and his teeth clinched.

"What is it?" asked the King.

"Our enemies have obtained reinforcements. They

are there, facing us, with their guns loaded. Moreover, in the rear of the Châlons Guards, who are our friends, are those terrible peasants, with their guns also loaded."

"What do you think of it, Monsieur de Charny?"

"I think we are between two fires. That will not prevent our pressing on, if you say the word, Sire; but how far your Majesty would go, I dare not say."

"Very well, let us go back!" said the King.

"Your Majesty has so decided?"

"Already too much blood has been spilled for me, blood which I mourn with bitter tears. I do not wish a drop more should be shed. — We will return, I say."

At these words the two young fellows on the outside seats jumped down to the doors, and the Villeroy Guards ran up. These brave and ambitious military men asked nothing better than to have a fight with the common people; but the King repeated his order, more positively than before.

"Gentlemen," said Charny, in a high and imperative voice, "let us return! The King so commands." Himself grasping the bridle of one horse, he had the heavy coach turned square about.

At the gate leading towards Paris, the Châlons National Guards, being no longer of any use, gave up their places to the peasants, and to the National Guards from Vitry and Rheims.

"Do you think I have done right, Madame?" asked Louis of Marie Antoinette.

"Yes, Monsieur," responded she; "but I think Monsieur de Charny obeyed you very readily."

So speaking, she fell into a gloomy revery, which had little to do with the situation in which they found themselves, terrible as it seemed.

CHAPTER VI.

VIA DOLOROSA : STATION THREE.

THE coach was following sadly the road to Paris, under the supervision of the two forbidding men who compelled the royal party to retrace their steps, when between Épernay and Dormans, Charny — thanks to his stature, as well as the elevation of the seat which he occupied — saw another carriage coming from Paris at full gallop, drawn by four posthorses.

Charny immediately guessed that this carriage was bringing some grave news, or contained some important personage. When this carriage met the advance guard of the escort, two or three words were exchanged, and then the ranks were opened, and the advance men respectfully presented arms. The King's carriage halted, and loud cries were heard, myriad voices repeating at the same time : " Hurrah for the National Assembly ! " The arriving carriage then continued on its way, till it was abreast of the royal coach, when three men, two of whom were completely unknown to the august prisoners, descended from it.

The third had hardly shown his head at the window when the Queen murmured in her husband's ear : " Monsieur de Latour Maubourg, the tool of Lafayette ! " Then she added, with a dubious shake of the head : " This presages no good for us ! "

The eldest of the three men came forward, and brutally pulled opened the door of the royal carriage, as he

said: "I'm Pétion; and here are Barnave and Latour Maubourg, who are sent, like myself, on the part of the National Assembly, to serve as your escort, and see that the anger of the people does n't make them take the law into their own hands. Squeeze up a little, and make room for us."

The Queen shot upon the Chartres Deputy and his two companions one of those disdainful glances which sometimes fell from the lofty pride of the daughter of Maria Theresa. Latour Maubourg, a courteous gentleman of the Lafayette school, could not endure this look; so he said: "Their Majesties are already crowded in this coach. As for me, I'll go in the second carriage."

"Ride where you please," said Pétion. "As for me, my place is in this coach, with the King and Queen!" and thus speaking, he stepped into their carriage.

In the rear seat were the King, Queen, and Madame Elizabeth. Pétion looked from one to the other. Then he said to Madame Elizabeth: "Excuse me, Madame, but, as representative of the Assembly, the place of honor belongs to me. Be kind enough to rise and take the front seat."

"What a speech!" murmured the Queen.

"Monsieur!" said the King.

"Certainly!" said Pétion. "Come, Madame, get up, and give me your place."

Madame Elizabeth rose and yielded her place, making a sign of resignation to her sister-in-law and brother.

Meanwhile Maubourg slipped away, and asked a place with the two ladies in their cabriolet; but he did so with more courtesy than Pétion vouchsafed to the royal family. Barnave remained outside, hesitating to jam into a carriage already uncomfortably crowded with seven persons.

"Well, Barnave," said Pétion, "are n't you coming?"

"But where can you put me?" said Barnave, somewhat embarrassed.

"Would you like my place?" asked the Queen, sharply.

"I thank you, Madame," responded Barnave, feeling wounded, "but the other seat is good enough for me."

Madame Elizabeth drew Madame Royale nearer to herself, while the Queen took the Dauphin on her knees. In this way they made room on the front seat, and Barnave found himself face to face with the Queen, and knee to knee.

"Now we 're ready, so go ahead!" said Pétion, without asking the King's permission ; and the procession moved on once more, amidst cheers for the National Assembly.

In the personality of Barnave and Pétion, the People now rode in the royal chariot, for they had won their right so to do on the Fourteenth of July and the Fifth and Sixth of October.

There was a moment of silence, which each of the travellers gave to self-examination, — except Pétion, who was so encased in rudeness as to seem indifferent to everybody. Let us take the opportunity to say a few words about the personages now brought more intimately upon the scene.

Jerome Pétion, often called Villeneuve, was a man of about thirty-two, with vigorous traits of character. His sole merit lay in the elevation, purity, and integrity of his political principles. He was born at Chartres, where he was admitted to practice as an advocate, and then sent to Paris as a Deputy to the National Assembly, in 1789. He was destined in a few months to be elected Mayor of Paris, and to enjoy a popularity which eclipsed that of either Bailly or Lafayette ; and it was subsequently his fate to die in the woods of Bordeaux, perhaps

devoured by wolves. His friends called him the Honest Pétion. He and Camille Desmoulins were already Republicans, when nobody else in France as yet proclaimed those principles.

Pierre Joseph Marie Barnave was born at Grenoble, and was now hardly thirty years old. Being elected to the National Assembly, he at once acquired a great reputation and wide-spread popularity, by entering the lists with Mirabeau, when the reputation and popularity of the Deputy from Aix were waning. All the enemies of the great orator, — and Mirabeau rejoiced in the usual privilege of men of genius, that of making an enemy of mediocrity, — Mirabeau's enemies were sure to be Barnave's friends, and they sustained him, encouraged him, stimulated him, in the stormy fights which accompanied the last days of the illustrious tribune.

He was — we speak of Barnave — a young man of hardly thirty at this period, and did not appear over twenty-five, with his blue eyes, his large mouth, his sharp voice, and his upturned nose. In person he was elegant. Aggressive and a duellist, he seemed like some young military captain in the garb of a tradesman. His aspect was cool, hard, and sinister; but he was better than his looks indicated. He belonged to the party of Royal Constitutionalists.

While he was taking his place in the forward seat, opposite the Queen, the King said: "Gentlemen, I begin at once by telling you, it was never my intention to quit the kingdom."

Barnave, half seated, stopped, and looked at the King. "Are you speaking the truth, Sire?" he asked. "If so, that assertion may save France!" and then he sat down.

Now something strange passed between that man, a

middle-class citizen from a small provincial city, and that woman, descended from one of the greatest dynasties in the world, and occupying half of one of its grandest thrones. Each tried to read the other's heart, not like two enemies, trying to discover state secrets, but like a man and woman, probing the mysteries of passionate love.

Whence came to Barnave's heart this surprising sentiment, which the piercing eye of Marie Antoinette discovered after a few minutes of study? This is what we are going to tell, bringing to light one of those heart-tablets which belong to the secret legends of history, but outweigh a legion of the official documents which refer to the great crises of destiny.

Barnave was ambitious to be, in all things, the successor and heir of Mirabeau. In his own mind, the mantle of the great orator had already fallen upon his shoulders. One point, however, was not yet scored. In the eyes of all — though we know how little there was in the prevalent opinion — Mirabeau had the reputation of being specially honored by the confidence of the King and the good-will of the Queen. The single audience, which took place at the palace of Saint Cloud, was exaggerated into several secret conferences, in which Mirabeau's presumption was represented as reaching the point of audacity, and the condescension of the Queen as amounting to feebleness; for at that day it was the fashion, not only to slander poor Marie Antoinette, but also to *believe* such calumnies.

Now Barnave's ambition was to be in all things Mirabeau's successor; and on this account he had procured his nomination as one of the three commissioners sent to meet the King. Being so appointed, he came hither with the self-assurance of a man who knows that he has

power to inspire hatred, even if he lacks the talent to make himself loved.

Nearly all this the Queen was able to read, with a glance of her feminine eye; and she divined one thing more, — the actual preoccupation of Barnave with herself. Five or six times in the space of the first quarter-hour while Barnave was face to face with her, the young Deputy examined, with scrupulous attention, the three men who were on the rear outside seat of the coach; and after each glance his look became harder and more hostile towards the Queen. The fact was, Barnave knew that one of these three men — but which, he was not sure — was Charny, and public gossip gave Charny the credit of being the Queen's absolute lover.

So much the Queen surmised, and from the moment of this surmise she was stronger; for she now knew the flaw in her adversary's coat of mail, and she had only to strike home when she chose.

"Monsieur," she said, addressing the King, "you heard what the man said who directs our journey?"

"On what subject, Madame?" asked the King.

"In regard to Monsieur de Charny."

Barnave trembled; and this tremor did not escape the notice of the Queen, whose knee was in contact with his.

"Did n't he declare," said the King, "that he took upon himself the responsibility of the Count's life?"

"Precisely, Monsieur; and he added, that he must answer for him to the Countess."

Barnave half closed his eyes, but listened so as not to lose a syllable of what the Queen was saying.

"What then?" asked the King.

"Well, Monsieur, the Count's wife is my old friend, Andrée de Taverney. Don't you think it will be well, on our return to Paris, if I give leave of absence to

Monsieur de Charny, so that he may comfort his wife? He has run great risks. His youngest brother was killed in our defence. I think that to ask a continuation of his services in the royal household, Sire, would be a cruel separation of a loving pair."

Barnave breathed hard and reopened his eyes.

"You are right, Madame," responded the King; "though, to tell the truth, I doubt if Charny will accept this dismission."

"In that case, Sire," said the Queen, "we shall all of us have done our duty, — we in offering him leave of absence, and Charny in refusing it."

As by some magnetic influence the Queen turned aside Barnave's irritation; and at the same time his generous heart accused himself of injustice towards this woman, and he felt ashamed as he looked her in the face. Hitherto Barnave had held his head high and insolent, like a magistrate before a culprit, whom he has the right to judge and condemn; but now that culprit, responding to his mental accusation, which she could not have guessed, spoke a word which was the outcome either of innocence or regret; and why not of innocence?

"We should do this all the more," continued the Queen, "because we did not mean to carry Monsieur de Charny forever with us; and, as for me, I supposed him to be quiet in Paris, when I suddenly saw him appear at the door of our coach."

"True," said the King; "and that shows you that the Count has no need to be stimulated in the performance of what he believes to be his duty."

She was innocent, — there was no doubt of it! Oh how glad Barnave would have been to ask pardon of the *Queen*, for his evil thoughts about the *woman*.

Should he speak to the Queen? He dared not. Wait

till the Queen first spoke to him? But the Queen, satisfied with the effect produced by the few words already spoken, said nothing more.

Barnave had become amiable, almost humble. With a look he implored her regard; but she appeared to take no notice of him.

This young man was in a nervously ecstatic condition, when, to attract the notice of an indifferent woman, he would have undertaken the twelve labors of Hercules, at the risk of being overcome by the first.

He begged the Supreme Being, — in 1791 they no longer asked anything of God, — he begged the Supreme Being to send him some occasion for drawing towards himself the notice of this royal icicle, when suddenly — as if the Supreme Being had heard this silent prayer which had been raised to him — a poor priest, who was waiting on the side of the road for a chance of seeing the august prisoners, raised his suppliant hands and tear-filled eyes to Heaven, and exclaimed: "Sire, God watch over your Majesty!"

It was some time since the rabble had found any pretext for wrath, or any object to vent it upon. No similar occasion had presented itself since they had torn in pieces the old Chevalier of Saint Louis, whose head was still borne in the procession, on the end of a pike. Another such occasion now offered itself, and they earnestly seized it.

To the old priest's gesture, and the blessing he invoked, the rabble responded by hooting. In an instant they threw themselves on the priest, and before Barnave came out of his revery, the priest was thrown down, and was likely to be slashed into pieces, when the frightened Queen cried out to Barnave: "Oh Monsieur, don't you see what they 're doing?"

Barnave raised his head, glanced at the human ocean wherein the poor priest had almost disappeared, and which was surging in tumultuous and growling waves about the coach.

Seeing what was the matter he exclaimed : "You wretches!" and threw himself so violently against the door that it flew open, and he would have tumbled out, if by one of the customary prompt movements of Madame Elizabeth's heart, she had not caught him by the flap of his coat.

"You tigers!" he went on. "You're no longer Frenchmen! Have the French people, once so brave, become assassins?"

To us this apostrophe may seem somewhat pretentious, but it was in accordance with the taste of the times. Besides, Barnave represented the National Assembly. By his voice the supreme power of the State was speaking. The rabble recoiled and the old priest was saved.

He rose, saying: "You have done well to save me, young man; an old man will pray for you!" and making the sign of the cross, he went away.

The rabble let him pass, controlled by Barnave's gesture and look, for the Deputy seemed like a statue of Law and Order.

When the old man was far away, the young Deputy reseated himself naturally and contentedly, — not with the air of a man who knows that he has saved another man's life.

"I thank you, Monsieur!" said the Queen; and these few words thrilled Barnave through and through.

Beyond contradiction, during all the long period in which we have kept company with the unhappy Marie Antoinette, she was never more touching than now,

though she had been more beautiful. Instead of being enthroned as a Queen, she was now enthroned as a mother.

On her left was the Dauphin, a charming child with blond hair, who had moved, with all the carelessness of his age, from the lap of his mother to the knees of the virtuous Pétion, who was still sufficiently human to play with the child's curly locks.

At her right was her daughter, Madame Royale, who seemed like a portrait of her mother in the flower of her youth and beauty.

Marie Antoinette herself, instead of a crown of royal gold, wore a crown of misery's thorns. Above her black eyes and white forehead, in the midst of her magnificent blond hair, glistened a few silvery threads, which had come prematurely, and which spoke more eloquently to the heart of the young Deputy than the most plaintive verbal appeal could have done. He contemplated this royal grace, and was ready to fall on his knees before this waning Majesty, when the young Dauphin uttered a cry of pain.

The child had annoyed the virtuous Pétion with some little act of playfulness, which Pétion thought proper to punish by a vigorous pull of the boy's ear.

The King grew red with anger, and the Queen grew white with mortification. She extended her arms, and took the little fellow from Pétion's knees; and as Barnave started to do the same thing, the Dauphin was lifted by their four arms, and being drawn towards Barnave, found himself on that gentleman's knees.

Marie Antoinette wished to draw the child into her own lap again, but the little fellow said, "No, I am very comfortable here!" and as Barnave, who saw the Queen's purpose, separated his arms to let her carry it into

execution, she — was it through the coquetry of the mother or the seductiveness of the woman? — left the young prince where he was.

At that moment there was an indescribable feeling in Barnave's heart. He was both proud and happy, all at once.

The child began to play with Barnave's shirt-frill, then with his belt, and finally with the buttons on the coat of his uniform as Deputy.

These buttons specially attracted the boy, for they bore a graven device. The Dauphin read the letters, one after the other; and then, putting them together, he made out these four words: *Live free, or die.*

"What does that mean, Monsieur?" he asked.

Barnave hesitated how to reply; but Pétion explained it: "That means, little chap, that the French people have sworn never to have another master. Do you understand that?"

"Pétion!" cried Barnave.

"Well," replied Pétion, as naturally as possible, "explain the device otherwise, if it *has* any other meaning."

Barnave was silent. That device, which last evening seemed sublime to him, appeared cruel in their present situation; but he took the Dauphin's hand, and kissed it respectfully.

The Queen wiped away a furtive tear, which had crept from her heart to her eyelids.

The coach, the scene of this strange little drama, — simple to the point of juvenility, — continued to roll along, amidst the growling of the crowd, — bearing to their deaths six of the eight persons it contained.

Presently they reached Dormans.

CHAPTER VII.

VIA DOLOROSA : STATION FOUR.

At Dormans nothing had been prepared for the reception of the royal family, who were therefore forced to stop at an inn.

Either by the order of Pétion, whom the reticence of the royal couple had deeply wounded during the journey, or else because the tavern was really full, there were only three attics in which the august prisoners could install themselves.

As they dismounted, Charny, according to his custom, wished to approach the King and Queen, and receive their orders; but by a glance the Queen indicated to him that he was to remain aloof. Without knowing the cause of this unspoken command, the Count hastened to obey.

It was Pétion who first entered the inn, and took upon himself the duties of quarter-master. He did not give himself the trouble of coming out again, but left it for one of the servants to announce to the royal family that their rooms were in readiness.

Barnave was greatly embarrassed. He was dying with anxiety to get out next, and so offer his arm to the Queen; but he feared lest the woman who had formerly jeered at etiquette, in the person of Madame de Noailles, might also laugh at him; so Barnave relinquished his purpose, and only waited.

First the King left the coach, leaning on the arms of his two bodyguards, Malden and Valory. As has been already stated, Charny stood apart, at a sign from Marie Antoinette.

Then the Queen stepped out, and extended her arms to take the Dauphin ; but as if the poor child had an intuitive sense of the benefit his mother might derive from such tact and flattery, he said : "No, I want to stay with my friend Barnave."

Marie Antoinette nodded assent, accompanied by a pleasant smile. Barnave waited for Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale to alight ; and then he followed them, still holding the Dauphin.

Madame de Tourzel came next, hoping to reclaim her royal pupil from the plebeian hands which held him ; but a new sign from the Queen calmed the aristocratic ardor of the governess of France's royal children.

The Queen mounted the winding and slippery stairs, leaning on her husband's arm. At the main story she paused, supposing that twenty stairs must be far enough ; but the waiter cried, "Higher, higher !" and on this adjuration she continued to ascend.

Barnave's forehead perspired with shame. "What, higher ?" he asked.

"Yes," said the waiter. "On this story are only the dining-room, and the apartments for the gentlemen from the National Assembly."

Barnave's eyes gleamed with anger. Pétion had reserved the main apartments on the second story for himself and colleagues, and had relegated the royal family to the third, or upper story. However, the young Deputy said nothing ; but, dreading the Queen's first movement, when she should see the mansard chambers, — destined for herself and her family by Pétion, — when

he reached the upper staircase, Barnave set the child down on the landing.

"Madame, Madame!" cried the little prince to his mother, "my friend Barnave is going away."

"He does well," said the Queen, laughingly, as she glanced at their new apartments.

As we have said, in this suite there were only three small rooms, connected together.

The Queen took possession of the first, with Madame Royale. The second was taken by Madame Elizabeth, for herself, the Dauphin, and Madame de Tourzel. The third — which was little more than a closet, with a side door opening upon the stairway — was left for the King.

As Louis was tired he wished to lie down a few minutes, while waiting for supper; but the bed was so short, that he was presently obliged to get up again. Opening the door, he called for a chair. Malden and Valory were already at their post on the staircase. Malden, who was nearest the door, went down, took a chair from the dining-room, and brought it up to the King. There was already one wooden chair in his closet; so Louis arranged the second chair, brought him by Malden, in such a way as to make the bed long enough to accommodate his height.

"Oh Sire!" said Malden, clasping his hands and sadly shaking his head, "can you manage to pass the night in this way?"

"Certainly, Monsieur," said the King. Then he added: "If the cries which reach my ears about my people are true, how many of my subjects would rejoice even in this closet, with its bedstead and two chairs!" and he stretched himself on this improvised couch, a prelude to the long days of privation in the Temple, where he was afterwards imprisoned.

An instant later somebody came to say that supper was spread for their Majesties. The King went downstairs, and saw that the table was laid for six.

"Why are there six plates?" he asked.

The waiter replied: "There is one for the King, one for the Queen, one for Madame Elizabeth, one for Madame Royale, one for Monseigneur the Dauphin, and one for Monsieur Pétion."

"And why not one for Monsieur Barnave and one for Monsieur Latour Maubourg?" asked the King, sarcastically.

"So there were, Sire," replied the waiter; "but Monsieur Barnave ordered them taken away."

"And left Monsieur Pétion's?"

"Monsieur Pétion so insisted."

Just then the more than grave face — the austere face — of the Chartres Deputy appeared, framed in the doorway. The King seemed not to notice him, and said to the waiter: "I never go to the table, except with my family. We eat only together, or with those whom we invite. Otherwise we never sit down."

"I was well aware," said Pétion, "that his Majesty had forgotten the first article of the Declaration of Human Rights; but I supposed he might *pretend* to remember it."

The King pretended not to hear Pétion, as he had pretended not to see him, and, with a movement of his eyes and brow, ordered the waiter to lift the covers. The waiter obeyed, and Pétion went away in a furious mood.

"Monsieur de Malden," said the King, "shut the door, so that we may be alone, if possible."

Malden also obeyed, and Pétion heard the door close behind him. So the King really had a family dinner,

the two bodyguards serving him, as was now their custom.

As to Charny, he did not appear. If no longer the Queen's cavalier, he was still her slave; but there were moments when his passive obedience grieved her woman's heart, and during the supper she impatiently looked for him; for she wished, after obeying her momentarily, that he would begin to disobey.

As supper ended, and the King pushed back his chair, to rise from the table, the door opened, and the waiter came in to beg their Majesties, in the name of Monsieur Barnave, to occupy his apartments on the main floor, in place of their own attics.

Louis and Marie Antoinette looked at each other. Should they stand upon their dignity, and repel the courtesy of one, in order to resent the impertinence of the other? Perhaps this was in the King's mind; but the Dauphin ran into the parlor, calling: "Where is my friend Barnave?"

The Queen followed her boy, and the King followed his wife; but Barnave was not in the parlor. Thence she went into the bedrooms, and found there were three, as in the attic above. Though not elegantly furnished, they were comfortable. To be sure, the candles burned in copper candelabra, but there were plenty of them.

Two or three times during the day's journey the Queen expressed her delight as they passed beautiful flower-gardens. Now she found her chamber embellished with the most beautiful blossoms of summer, while at the same time the open windows permitted the too pungent odors to escape. Muslin curtains, across the openings of the windows, shielded the fair prisoner from all indiscreet eyes.

It was Barnave who had taken all this care. She

sighed, the poor Queen; for six years earlier it was Charny who attended to all these little matters in her behalf. However, Barnave had delicacy enough not to present himself for thanks. This also was precisely like Charny. How was it that a petty country lawyer could be as delicate and devoted in his attentions, as the most distinguished and elegant gentleman of her Court? In all this there was much to make any woman dream, even if that woman was a queen; and Marie Antoinette did dream over this mystery, during a considerable part of the night.

Meanwhile, what had become of Count Charny? As we have seen, he quietly withdrew at a sign from the Queen, and did not reappear. Although duty enchained him to the steps of Louis Sixteenth and Marie Antoinette, Charny was rejoiced at his dismissal by the Queen, — not even asking the cause of it, — because it gave him some time for solitude and reflection. Throughout the last three days he had lived at lightning speed. He had lived outside of himself, so to speak, — lived so entirely for others, that he was not sorry to drop their burdens awhile, and think of his own sorrows.

He was a gentleman of the old school, and the head of his family. He adored his brothers, to whom he was rather a father than an elder brother.

At George's death the Count's grief had been very great; but at least he had been able to kneel over George's dead body, in that small and dark courtyard at Versailles, and expend his grief in tears; and then there remained to him his second brother, to whom his entire affection was transferred, — Isidore, who had become dearer to him than before, if that were possible, during the months of Oliver's absence at Metz, — and

preceding his final departure with the King, — when the younger man had acted as a go-between for the Count and Andrée.

Though we cannot fully explain the mystery, we have tried to show how certain hearts grow warmer, instead of colder, when they are separated, as if absence furnished fresh material for memory to dwell upon. Even a certain English poet has said: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder."

The less Charny saw of Andrée the more he thought about her; and to think more and more of Andrée, was to love her.

Indeed, when he was near Andrée, when he saw Andrée, it seemed to him purely and simply as if he were near a statue of ice, who would melt at the least touch of the rays of love's amorous sunshine, and who retired into the shade, as if fearful lest the sun should find her out. When they met he was brought into contact with her cool and moderate gestures, with her grave and careful reticence, with her voiceless and veiled look. Behind her gestures, behind her words, behind her glances he did not penetrate, — or, to speak more accurately, he caught a glimpse of nothing. Her whole personality seemed white, pale, and dull as alabaster, and as cold and impenetrable.

Except at rare intervals of animation, brought about by painful situations, it was thus Andrée always appeared during their latter interviews, and especially in the interview he had with that unhappy woman, in her pavilion in Rue Coq Heron, the evening when she recovered and again lost her son; though of her relation to Sebastien, her husband was utterly ignorant.

When away from her, distance produced its usual effect, and lent "enchantment to the view," by softening

the more glaring colors and smoothing the sharper edges. Then Andrée's languid and frigid motions seemed to him more vivacious. Then her calm and subdued voice became sonorous as a bell. Then her quiet and shy glances gave place to a passionate and kindling flame, which shot from beneath her long lashes. Then it seemed as if an interior fire illuminated the soul of this statue, through whose alabaster flesh he could see the circling blood and palpitating heart.

It was in these moments of solitude that Andrée became indeed and in truth the Queen's rival in Charny's heart. In the feverish obscurity of night Charny would behold the walls of his chamber open and the tapestry recede; and then he would behold this transparent statue, — the flame in her soul radiating light all around her, — approach his bed with extended arms, whispering lips, and an eye moist with love. Then Charny also would extend his arms; then he would speak to the sweet vision; then he would try to press the phantom to his heart; but, alas! the phantom always escaped him; he embraced only vacancy, and sank from his elusive dream into the sad and cold reality.

Isidore had become more dear to Charny than ever George had been; and, as we know, the Count had not even the melancholy joy of weeping over Isidore's dead body, as he had over George's. Both, one after the other, had died for that fateful woman, — for that monarchical cause, so full of pitfalls. For the same woman, and into a similar abyss, Charny must certainly fall in his turn.

For two days since the death of his brother, since their last interview, which left his garments stained with Isidore's blood, and his lips warm with the victim's last sigh, since the hour when Choiseul placed in the Count's

hands the papers discovered on Isidore's body, Charny had hardly found a moment in which he could give way to his personal grief.

The Queen's gesture, which bade him remain away from her, he had welcomed as a favor, and accepted with joy. Thereafter he searched for some corner, some nook, some retreat, where he could be near the royal door, ready to aid the royal family at the first appeal, the first outcry, and nevertheless be alone with his sorrow, in privacy with his tears.

Now he found an attic room, situated at the top of the staircase, where we saw Malden and Valory on duty. Once there, alone and shut away from the world, — seated before a table, lighted by one of those copper lamps, with three burners, which are still to be found in old country-houses, — he drew from his pocket those blood-stained papers, his sole relics of his brother.

With his forehead in his hands, and his eyes fixed on these letters, containing the thoughts of him who was no more, Charny took no note of time, while the overflowing and silent tears fell from his cheeks to the table.

At last he sighed, raised his head, took up one letter, and opened it. It was from poor Catherine. For several months Charny had suspected his brother's relations to the farmer's daughter; and Billot had related to the Count further details thereof, in their interview at Varennes; but it was not till after listening to the farmer's recital that he gave to the affair the importance it deserved, and allowed it to influence his mind.

This interest was increased by the perusal of this letter. Therein he saw how the title of mistress had been rendered sacred by the title of mother; and in the simple terms by which Catherine acknowledged her

love, he could see that the whole life of the woman must expiate the fault of the girl.

A second letter he opened, and then a third. In each there were the same plans for the future, the same hopes of happiness, the same maternal joys, the same loving fears, the same griefs, the same regrets.

In the midst of these letters Charny suddenly came upon one whose handwriting impressed him strangely. It was Andrée's writing, for she herself had written the superscription. To this letter a square folded paper was attached by a waxen seal, which bore Isidore's coat of arms. This letter, in Andrée's writing, — addressed to Charny, yet found among Isidore's papers, — appeared to the Count so singular, that he began by opening the annexed billet, before opening the letter itself.

This billet was written in pencil, probably on some tavern table, while they were saddling a horse, and contained the following lines:

This letter is not addressed to me, but to my brother, Count Oliver. It is written by his wife, the Countess.

If anything happens to me, whoever finds this paper is requested to send it to my brother, or else return it to the Countess.

I received it from her with the following instructions:

If in the enterprise in which we are engaged the Count is successful, and no mishap befalls him, the letter is to be returned to the Countess.

If he is grievously wounded, but not unto death, he is to be requested to grant his wife the favor of letting her come to him.

Finally, if he is wounded unto death, this letter is to be given him; and if he cannot read it himself, it is to be read to him, in order that he may know, before he dies, the secret it contains.

If her letter is sent to my brother Oliver, undoubtedly he

will receive this note at the same time, and he will act in regard to these three requests as his sense of delicacy may dictate.

I commend to his care poor Catherine Billot, who lives in the town of Ville d'Avray, with my babe.

ISIDORE DE CHARNY.

At first the Count appeared entirely absorbed in the perusal of his brother's letter. His tears, which had been dried for a moment, began once more to roll down his cheeks in abundance. Then he once more turned his misty eyes to Madame de Charny's letter. After a long look he carried it to his lips, and pressed it against his heart, as if thus it might communicate the secret it contained. Then he again read — once, twice, thrice — the requests Isidore's note contained, and said, in a low voice, shaking his head: "I have no right to open this letter, but I will supplicate her to let me read it."

As if to encourage himself in this resolution, impossible to a heart less loyal than his, he repeated his words: "No, I will not read it!"

Indeed he did not read it; but daylight surprised him sitting at the same table, devouring with his gaze the superscription on that letter, damp with his breath, so often had he pressed it to his lips.

Suddenly, amidst the noise in the tavern announcing preparations for departure, he heard Malden's voice calling him.

"I am here!" responded the Count; and pressing poor Isidore's papers once more into his coat-pocket, he again kissed the unopened letter, placed it near his heart, and hastened down the stairs.

On the way he met Barnave, who was asking how fared the Queen, and bidding Valory get her orders as to the hour of departure. It was easy to see that

Barnave had not been abed, and had slept no more than Charny himself.

The two men saluted each other, and Charny must surely have noted the jealous light in Barnave's eyes, while the Deputy inquired about the Queen's health, if he had been able to think of anything except that letter, against which his heart was beating.

CHAPTER VIII.

VIA DOLOROSA : STATION FIVE.

WHEN they again entered their carriage the King and Queen saw with surprise that only the population of the town were there to witness their departure, and only cavalry to accompany the royal coach.

Here was another attention from Barnave. He remembered that the day before, being forced to travel so far and at such a slow rate of speed, the Queen had greatly suffered from heat, dust, and insects, and also from the multitude, who had menaced the royal guards, and ill-treated those faithful adherents who came to bestow upon royalty a last salutation; so he pretended to have received warning of an invasion, — that General Bouillé was about re-entering France with fifty thousand Austrians; and that to contend against this danger every man would be needed who had a musket, a scythe, a pike, or any other weapon. Thereupon the rabble, hearing this appeal, started back towards their own homes.

There was at that era in France a deep-seated hatred of foreigners, a hatred so powerful that it even overbore the hatred these men had vowed towards the King and Queen, — especially towards the Queen, whose greatest crime lay in the fact that she was foreign-born.

Marie Antoinette guessed from whom this blessed relief had emanated. We say *blessed* relief, for the word is not too strong; and she thanked Barnave with a grateful glance.

As she resumed her place in the coach she looked for Charny. He was already on his outside seat; only, instead of sitting in the middle, as on the previous day, between the two bodyguards, he now insisted upon giving this position to Monsieur de Malden, which was somewhat less exposed than the one previously occupied by that faithful gentleman.

In truth Charny really hoped that some wound would give him an excuse for opening his Countess's letter, which still burned against his heart. He did not see that the Queen was trying to catch his eye; but she heaved a deep sigh, which Barnave noted.

Anxious to learn the cause of this sigh, the young Deputy paused on the carriage steps, and said: "Madame, I yesterday noticed that you were much discommoded in the coach. One person less will give you more elbow-room. If you wish it, I will ride in the other carriage, with Monsieur de Latour Maubourg, or I can accompany you on horseback."

Although he made this offer, Barnave would have given half the remnant of his days — and not many remained to him — to have the offer refused; and it *was* refused.

"No!" said the Queen, quickly, "stay with us!" and the Dauphin exclaimed, extending his little hands, in order to draw the young Deputy towards himself: "My friend Barnave! My friend Barnave! I won't have thee go away from us."

Barnave was radiant, as he took his former place in the coach. Hardly was he seated when the Dauphin, of his own accord, slipped from his mother's lap to Barnave's knees. As she let him do so, she kissed the little fellow on both cheeks.

The warm trace of her lips was imprinted on the child's velvety cheek. Barnave watched this trace of maternal

love, as Tantalus might have looked at the forbidden fruit suspended above his head.

"Madame," he said to the Queen, "will your Majesty deign to accord me the privilege of embracing the august prince, who, guided by the infallible instinct of childhood, has called me his friend?"

The Queen smilingly assented. Then Barnave's lips glued themselves with such ardor to the spot where the Queen's lips had rested, that the child uttered a little cry of annoyance.

Nothing of all this byplay was lost upon the Queen. Perhaps she had slept no better than Barnave and Charny; perhaps the animation which lighted her eyes was caused by the fever which burned within; but her lips were covered with a warm purple, her cheeks with a rosy tint almost imperceptible, transforming her into a dangerous siren, capable, with a single hair from her beautiful head, of drawing her deluded worshippers into an unfathomable and seething whirlpool.

Thanks to Barnave's precautions the carriage rolled along at the rate of two leagues (nearly six miles) an hour.

At Château Thierry they stopped for dinner. The mansion where they halted was by a river, on a charming site, and belonged to a rich woman who traded in wood, and who had not really expected that her house would be so honored. Nevertheless, the evening before, learning that the royal family was to pass through Château Thierry, she had sent one of her clerks, on horseback, to offer the Assembly Delegates, and also the King and Queen, the hospitalities of her home; and the invitation was graciously accepted.

As soon as the carriage stopped, a respectful concourse of attendants indicated to the august prisoners a very

different reception from that to which they had been subjected the night before, at the inn in Dormans. The King, the Queen, Madame Elizabeth, Madame de Tourzel, and the two children were conducted into separate chambers, where every preparation had been made, so that each could make as careful a toilet as fastidiousness might prompt.

Not since her departure from Paris had the Queen found anything like this thoughtfulness. Her most delicate womanly habits were anticipated by this refined attention; and as Marie Antoinette began to appreciate such attentions, she asked for her kind hostess, that she might thank the lady.

Soon a woman of forty years, but still blooming, and dressed with extreme simplicity, presented herself. She had been thoughtful enough not to intrude upon her guests.

"You are the mistress of the mansion, Madame?" asked the Queen.

"Oh Madame!" cried this excellent woman, melting into tears, "wherever her Majesty deigns to stop, in whatever house is honored by her presence, — wherever the Queen may be, — the Queen is always the sole mistress."

Marie Antoinette looked about the chamber, to see if they were quite alone. Sure that nobody else could see or hear her, she took the lady's hand, drew her towards herself, and said, while she embraced her as a friend: "If you care for our peace of mind, and have any regard for your own safety, calm yourself and moderate your expressions of grief; for if the cause of your tears is perceived, they might be very harmful to you. You must understand that if any misfortune should happen to you, it would increase our troubles. Perhaps we may meet

again. Restrain yourself, and think of me as a friend, to whom our meeting to-day is both precious and rare."

From the narrative of one of the bodyguards, who aided in the royal flight and was the King's companion, we copy these very words, spoken by Marie Antoinette.

After dinner they again set forth. The heat increased. Seeing that Madame Elizabeth, overcome with fatigue, had several times let her head fall upon her bosom, in spite of all she could do to keep awake, the King insisted that she should take the more comfortable back seat as far as Meaux, where they were to sleep; but only at his express order would Madame Elizabeth consent.

Pétion heard all this conversation without proffering his place. Purple with shame, Barnave hid his face in his hands, but through the openings of his fingers he could see the Queen's melancholy smile.

At the end of an hour's journey Madame Elizabeth's weariness became so uncontrollable that she suddenly fell asleep, so entirely losing consciousness that her angelic head, after nodding right and left, ended by reposing on Pétion's shoulder.

This is what enabled the Deputy from Chartres to say, in his unpublished account of the trip, that this saintly creature, Madame Elizabeth, became amorous towards him, and yielded to her natural disposition, by laying her head on his shoulder.

About four in the afternoon they arrived at Meaux, and stopped in front of the Bishop's palace, where Bossuet, the author of the "Discourse on Universal History," once lived, and where he died eighty-seven years before.

The palace was occupied by a sworn Constitutional Bishop. Later we shall see in what sort of fashion he received the royal family.

The Queen was at once struck with the sombre aspect

of the building which they entered. Nowhere else could be found a palace, royal or religious, whose melancholy aspect would render it more worthy to hide the bitter misery which now sought an asylum for the night. It was not like Versailles, where the grandeur is magnificent. The grandeur of the palace at Meaux lay in its simplicity. A wide slope, paved with brick, led to the living-apartments, which opened into a garden, planted almost on the ramparts which form the foundation of the city. This garden was overshadowed by the church tower, entirely mantled with ivy. Thence, by an alley bordered with holly, you could reach the room which was once the study of the eloquent Bishop of Meaux, whence, from time to time, came those warning utterances which presaged the downfall of monarchies.

The Queen cast her eyes on this lugubrious building, and finding it harmonious with her mental condition, she looked about for some arm upon which she could lean, while visiting that part of the palace.

No one was near except Barnave. She smiled and said : "Give me your arm, Monsieur, and have the goodness to serve as my guide in this old palace. I dare not venture alone. I should be afraid of again hearing that grand voice, which once made Christendom tremble at the cry : *Madame is dying ! Madame is dead !*"

Barnave approached hastily, and offered his arm to the Queen, his pleasure mingled with respect ; but the Queen looked around, for Charny's absence disturbed her.

Barnave, who saw everything, noticed this look. "Does the Queen desire anything ?" he asked.

"Yes ! I wish to know where the King may be."

"He is doing Monsieur Pétion the honor to receive him, and they are conversing," replied Barnave.

The Queen appeared satisfied. Then, as if she needed

to snatch herself out of selfish thoughts, she said, "Come, Monsieur!" and led Barnave through the apartments of the old part of the palace, — almost fleeing, as if she were following a shadow, outlined by her imagination, and dared look neither before nor behind. In the bedroom of the great preacher she paused, almost out of breath. By chance she found herself in front of a woman's portrait. Raising her eyes mechanically she read on the frame the name, *Madame Henriette*, and trembled.

Barnave felt this tremor, without understanding it. "Is your Majesty in pain?" he asked.

"No! — but that portrait! — Madame Henriette!"

Barnave conjectured what was passing in the poor woman's mind, and said: "Yes, Madame Henriette, — Madame Henriette of England; not the widow of the unfortunate Charles the First, but their daughter, the wife of that careless Philippe d'Orleans, — not the Henriette who thought she should die of cold in the Louvre, but the Henriette who died of poison at Saint Cloud, and who sent her ring to Bossuet on her deathbed." After a moment's hesitation he added: "I should like it better if this were the portrait of the other."

"And why so?"

"Because there are some lips which alone dare give certain counsels, — above all, lips which are closed in death."

"Can you not tell me, Monsieur, what counsel would come to me from the lips of the widow of Charles the First?"

"If your Majesty so commands, I will try."

"Do so!" said the Queen.

"This is what those lips would say," said Barnave: "'Oh my sister, do you not perceive the resemblance

between us? I came from France, as you came from Austria. To the English people I was a foreigner, as you are a stranger to the French. I might have given my erring husband good advice; but I either kept silence, or gave him bad counsel. In place of trying to unite him to his people, and his people to him, I incited him to war. I advised him to march against London with the Protestant Irish. Not only did I carry on a correspondence with England's enemies, but twice I went to France, in order to bring foreign troops into his kingdom. At last — ' "

Barnave paused. "Go on!" said the Queen, her forehead frowning and her lips compressed.

"Why continue, Madame?" said the young orator, sorrowfully shaking his head. "You know well enough the end of that crimson history!"

"Yes! and I will go on, and tell you what Madame Henriette's portrait says to me, so that you can inform me if I am mistaken: 'At last the Scotch betrayed and gave up their King. Charles the First was arrested as he was about crossing the channel to France. A tailor apprehended him. A butcher led him to prison. A wagoner purged the judicial chamber, which should have judged him. A beer-seller presided at the court of justice which tried him; and that nothing odious might be omitted from the trial, — and from the revision of that iniquitous judgment, carried before the presiding justice, who confirmed all such English decisions, — a masked executioner beheaded the royal victim.' — That is what Madame Henriette's portrait would say to me! My God! I know all this as well as anybody. Yes, I know more, — that nothing is wanting in this fatal parallel. We have our beer-seller; only they call him Santerre, instead of Cromwell. We have our butcher; only, in-

stead of Harrison, they call him — what? — Legendre, I believe. We have our teamster; only, in place of calling him Pridge, they call him — Oh, as to him, well I don't know even his name, he is so small a creature, — nor you either, I 'm sure; but ask him his name, and he 'll tell you! I mean the fellow who directs our escort, — a peasant, a villain, a clodhopper! — Well, there you hear what Queen Henriette says to me!"

"And what is your answer?"

"I answer her thus: 'Poor dear Princess. This is not *advice* which you give me. This is the doom of history which you recall. Well, the history is done! Now I wait for counsel.'"

"Oh Madame, as to good counsel," said Barnave, "if you would not decline following it, not only the dead, but the living, would gladly furnish it."

"Dead or alive, let those who ought to speak, do so. Who dare say that the advice will not be followed, if it is good?"

"Ah Madame! The dead and the living can give you only the same advice!"

"Which is — ?"

"To make yourself loved by the people!"

"And is it so easy to make one's self loved by *your* people?"

"Ah Madame, the people are more yours than mine; and the proof is, that when you first came to France the populace adored you."

"Oh Monsieur, you speak of a very fragile thing!"

"Madame, Madame!" said Barnave, "if I, an unknown man, emerging from my obscurity, have been able to achieve some popularity, how easy it will be for you to retain it, or to regain it! No," continued Barnave, growing more animated, "your cause, the cause of

the monarchy, — the most holy and noble of causes, — to whom have you confided it? What arms and what voices have defended it? Oh, what blindness to the signs of the times! What forgetfulness of the genius of France! Bear with me, who have desired the opportunity of being with you now, for this very purpose; — for at last I see you, at last I speak to you. How many times, my God! have I been at the point of speaking to you, to offer you my advice, my devotion, my — "

"Silence!" said the Queen. "Somebody is coming! We will talk of this again, Monsieur Barnave. I shall be ready to receive you again, listen to you, and perhaps heed your counsels."

"Oh Madame, Madame!" cried Barnave, in a transport of satisfaction.

"Silence!" repeated the Queen.

"Your Majesty is served, and the table is prepared," said the servant, whose footsteps they had heard, as he appeared on the threshold.

They entered the dining-room. The King came from another room, where he had been talking with Pétion, while the Queen was talking with Barnave; and his Majesty appeared much excited.

The two bodyguards were in attendance, claiming the usual privilege of serving their Majesties. Charny stood a little farther off, in the embrasure of the window.

The King looked about him; and profiting by a moment when he was alone with his family, the two guards, and the Count, he said to these gentlemen: "After supper I must confer with you. If you please, you will then follow me to my rooms." The three officers bowed.

Dinner began as usual; but although this time it was

served in the palace of one of the chief bishoprics of the kingdom, the tables were as poorly spread that evening at Meaux, as they had been well spread that morning at Château Thierry.

The King, who always had a good appetite, ate heartily, in spite of the poor fare. The Queen only ate two fresh eggs.

All day the Dauphin, who was somewhat ill, had been asking for strawberries; but the poor child was no longer with those who anticipated his least desires. The attendants whom he asked for strawberries all replied that there were none, or that none could be found; yet, along the road, he had seen the rugged peasant children eating whole handfuls of strawberries, which they had culled in the woods. He even envied these healthy children, with light hair and rosy cheeks, who had no need to ask for strawberries, but could pluck them for themselves, whenever they pleased, and knew in which glades the berries were to be gathered, as little birds know in what fields rapeseed and hempseed abound.

This desire, which she had not been able to gratify, troubled the Queen; so that when he refused what was set before him, and asked again for strawberries, the tears came into the eyes of this powerless mother.

Looking about for some one to whom she could speak about it, she saw Charny, silent, upright, and motionless. She beckoned to him once, — twice; but, absorbed in thought, he did not notice her signs.

At last, in tones hoarse with emotion, she called him by his full name and title.

Charny started, as if emerging from a dream, and made a movement to go towards the Queen.

At that moment the door opened, and Barnave appeared with a plate of strawberries in his hand.

"The Queen will excuse me," he said, "for entering in this way, and the King will be so good as to pardon me, I hope; but several times during the day I have heard the Dauphin ask for strawberries, and finding this plateful on the Bishop's table, I have taken it for him."

Meanwhile Charny made the circuit of the table and was approaching the Queen; but she did not give him time to come very near.

"Thanks, Count," she said, "but Monsieur Barnave has anticipated my wishes, and I need nothing more."

Charny bowed and returned to his place, without a word.

"Thank you, my dear Barnave," said the young Dauphin.

"Monsieur Barnave," said the King, "our dinner is not very good; but if you will share it with us, you will give pleasure to both the Queen and myself."

"Sire," said Barnave, "an invitation from the King is a command. Where does it please your Majesty I should sit?"

"Between the Queen and the Dauphin," said the King.

Barnave took his seat, beside himself with pride and passion.

Charny looked upon this scene without a shiver of jealousy running through his heart and veins; only, as he saw this poor butterfly burning his wings at the royal flame, he said to himself: "Another man lost! Too bad, for he is worth more than the others." Then relapsing into his constant meditation he thought: "That letter, that letter! What can there be in that letter?"

CHAPTER IX.

CALVARY.

After supper the three officers, who had been requested to do so, went up to the King's chamber.

Madame Royale, the Dauphin, and Madame de Tourzel were in their own rooms. The Queen, the King, and Madame Elizabeth were in attendance.

As soon as the young gentlemen entered, the King said: "Monsieur de Charny, do me the favor of fastening the door, so that nobody can come in and disturb us. — I have something of the highest importance to communicate. Yesterday, gentlemen, at Dormans, Monsieur Pétion proposed to me that you should escape in disguise. To this the Queen and myself were both opposed, for fear the proposition was a snare, and they only wished to tempt you away from us, in order to assassinate you, or else give you up to some provincial military commission, which would condemn you to be shot, without the possibility of appeal. We therefore, the Queen and I, took it upon ourselves to reject this proposition; but to-day Monsieur Pétion returns to the charge, pledging his honor as a Deputy in its support; so I think it right to make you acquainted with what he fears and what he proposes."

"Sire," interrupted Charny, "before your Majesty goes any farther, — and I speak not only in my own name, for I feel sure that I interpret the sentiments of my brother officers also, — before going any farther, will the King promise us one favor?"

"Gentlemen, your devotion to the Queen and myself has endangered your lives during the last three days. For these three days you have been repeatedly threatened with the most cruel deaths. You have shared the shame into which we are plunged, the insults which cover us. Gentlemen, you have not only the right to ask a favor, but you have only to make known your wishes, to ensure their immediate fulfilment, if not beyond the power of the Queen and myself."

"Well, Sire," said Charny, "we humbly but urgently ask your Majesty, whatever may be the propositions made by the Deputies on our behalf, to leave us at liberty to accept or refuse these propositions."

"Gentlemen," said the King, "I give you my word to exert no pressure over your wills in this matter. Whatever *you* desire, shall be done."

"Then we will gratefully listen to you, Sire," replied Charny.

The Queen looked at him in astonishment. She remarked in him a growing indifference, which she could not reconcile with his obstinate decision not to withdraw an instant from what he considered his duty. However, she said nothing, but let the King continue the conversation.

"With this liberty of choice left entirely to yourselves, here is Pétion's proposal, in almost his own words. From the moment of our arrival in Paris, he says, there will be no security for the three officers accompanying me; for neither himself, Barnave, nor Latour Maubourg can agree to save them from deadly peril, and their blood will depend upon the caprice of the people."

Charny looked at his two companions. A smile of contempt was on their lips. "Well, Sire, and what then?" he asked.

"This is what Pétion proposes. He proposes to procure for you three uniforms as National Guardsmen, to have the doors of this palace left open to-night, and so give each of you liberty to escape."

Charny again consulted his companions, but the same smile was his answer.

"Sire," he said, again addressing the King, "our days have been consecrated to your Majesties; and as you have deigned to accept our homage, it will be easier for us to die for you than to be separated from you. Do us the favor to treat us to-morrow as you did yesterday. But of all your Court, of all your army, of all your guards, there remain to you three faithful hearts. Do not take from them the sole glory to which they aspire, — faithfulness to the end."

"Very well, gentlemen, we accept," said the Queen; "only, you will understand that henceforth all must be in common between us. You are no longer our servants; you are our friends, brothers. I do not ask you to give me your names, for I know them; but," and as she spoke she drew her tablets from her pocket, "give the names of your mothers, brothers, and sisters. We may be so unhappy as to lose you, without being ourselves ruined. Then it will be my task to apprise these loved ones of our mutual grief, and at the same time aid them in bearing their sorrows, by any means in my power. Go on, Monsieur de Malden, go on, Monsieur de Valory! Speak boldly! In case of *death*, — and we are all so close to the reality that we ought not to recoil at the word, — who are your relatives, who are the friends you would specially commend to our devout remembrance and lasting gratitude?"

Malden mentioned his mother, an infirm old lady, living on a small estate in the neighborhood of Blois.

Valory mentioned his sister, a young orphan, at school in a convent at Soissons.

Certainly, no hearts could be stronger or more full of courage than those of these two young men; yet as the Queen wrote down the addresses of Madame de Malden and Mademoiselle de Valory, both the bodyguards made ineffectual efforts to restrain their tears. Even the Queen was forced to suspend her writing, in order to take out her handkerchief and dry her eyes; for she was easily moved by the thought of death.

When she had finished noting these addresses, she turned towards Charny. "Alas, Monsieur, I know that you have no near relatives to commend to our care. Your father and mother are both dead, and also your two brothers —" but here the Queen's voice failed.

Charny took up her word: "My two brothers had the happiness of suffering death for your Majesty, — yes, Madame; but the last brother left a poor babe, whom he commended to my care, in a sort of will which I found among his papers. He led a young girl astray from her family, from whom she can hardly expect pardon. So long as I live, neither she nor their babe shall want for anything needful; but as your Majesty has said, with most admirable courage, we are all face to face with death, and if I am struck down, the poor girl and her babe will be without resources. Madame, deign to inscribe on your tablets the name of a poor peasant-girl; and if, like my two brothers, I have the happiness to die for my august master and mistress, lower your generous eyes to the estate of Catherine Billot and her child, both of whom are to be found in the little village of Ville d'Avray."

Doubtless the picture of Charny, dying as his two brothers had died, was too much for Marie Antoinette's

imagination; for she turned with a feeble cry, dropped her tablets, and tottered to an armchair.

The two bodyguards hurried towards her, while Charny picked up the royal tablets, wrote therein the name of Catherine Billot, and placed them on the chimneypiece.

The Queen made an effort and recovered herself. Then the young gentlemen, understanding that she ought to be alone, after such an outburst of emotion, ceremoniously withdrew, one after the other; but she extended her hand, saying: "Gentlemen, I hope you will not go away without kissing my hand."

The two bodyguards advanced in the same order as before, — Malden first, and then Valory.

Last came Charny. The Queen was tremulous, awaiting his kiss, for whose sake alone she had offered her hand to the other two officers; but hardly did the Count's lips touch that beautiful hand, for it seemed to him — with that letter of Andrée's on his heart — that he should be guilty of sacrilege in pressing the Queen's hand with his lips.

Marie Antoinette heaved a sigh which resembled a groan. Never had she realized, as in that abortive kiss, how the abyss between herself and her lover had been growing wider and wider day by day.

The next day, at the moment of departure, Latour Maubourg and Barnave — doubtless ignorant of what had taken place the evening before between the King and the three officers — renewed their proposal for the young men to dress themselves as National Guardsmen; but they refused, declaring that their places were on the seat of the royal coach, and that they should wear no other costume than that commanded by the King.

Then Barnave had boards fastened on each side of the upper seat, in order that two grenadiers might occupy

these extra places, and protect, as far as possible, the King's obstinate servitors.

At ten o'clock they left Meaux. They were to re-enter Paris, from which they had been five days absent. Five days! What a bottomless pit had been dug during these five days!

Hardly had they driven a league from Meaux, before their cortege took on a more terrible aspect than ever.

The populace from the environs of the capital flowed into the ranks. Barnave wished the postilions to drive at a fast trot; but the Claye National Guards barred the road with their bayonets. To attempt a break through this dike would be indeed imprudent. The Queen saw the danger and begged the Deputies to do nothing to augment the anger of the rabble, for they could scent the coming wrath, and hear the mutterings of a formidable storm.

Soon the crowd was so great that the horses could hardly move at all. Never had the weather been so hot. It was no longer air they breathed, but fire.

The insolent curiosity of the people followed the King and Queen into the farthest corners of their coach, where they tried to find a refuge.

Men mounted the steps and pushed their heads inside the carriage. Some hoisted themselves upon the outside, while others straddled the horses.

It was a miracle that Charny and his two companions were not killed twenty times. The two grenadiers were not strong enough to parry every blow. They besought and even supplicated the rabble to desist, and even commanded submission in the name of the National Assembly; but their voices were lost amidst the tumult of shouts and vociferations.

An advance guard of more than two thousand men

preceded the coach, while there was a rear guard of over four thousand.

As they drew nearer and nearer to Paris, it seemed as if the very air failed them, absorbed by the giant city.

The carriage moved on beneath the sun thirty-five degrees high, and amidst a cloud of dust, of which each atom was like a speck of pounded glass.

Twice or thrice the Queen sank back, declaring that she was suffocating. At Bourget the King became so pale that they feared he was ill. He asked for a glass of wine, for his heart began to fail him. To complete a sacred parallel, it was only necessary that some one should offer him, as was offered Jesus, a sponge soaked with gall and vinegar; and indeed the suggestion was made, but it was happily repelled.

At last they reached Villette. It took an hour for the crowd to spindle out sufficiently for them to go between the two rows of stone houses, whose whiteness so reflected the sun's rays as to double the heat.

Everywhere were men, women, and children. The eye could hardly measure such a crowd. The pavement was so thickly covered, that those who occupied it could not stir. The doors, windows, and roofs of the houses were filled with spectators. The trees bent beneath their weight of living fruit. All the people wore their hats; partly because this notice had been placarded all over Paris the previous evening:

WHOEVER SALUTES THE KING SHALL BE FLOGGED.

WHOEVER INSULTS HIM SHALL BE HANGED.

All this was so terrifying that the commissioners dared not pass through the street called Faubourg Saint Martin,

which was full of encumbrances, and consequently of dangers, — a mournful street, a bloody street, a street celebrated for its records of assassination, as witness the terrible history of Berthier.

It was decided to enter the city by way of the Champs Élysées, thus compelling the procession to make the circuit of Paris by way of the outside boulevards.

This entailed three hours more of distress; and this distress was so insupportable that the Queen begged they might take the shorter cut, even though it were more perilous.

Twice she tried to lower the blinds; but twice the muttering of the crowd compelled her to raise them again.

At the barrier a large company of grenadiers surrounded the carriage. Several marched near the windows, almost obstructing those openings with their great fur hats.

At last, about six o'clock, an advance guard appeared at the end of the Monceau Gardens, dragging along three pieces of artillery, which rebounded with heavy jerks along the uneven pavement. This advance guard was composed of cavalry and infantry, but so mixed in among the people, that the soldiers found it almost impossible not to break their ranks. Those who perceived them hurried along towards the heights of the Champs Élysées.

This was the third time Louis the Sixteenth entered Paris by this fatal gateway. He came in that way the first time, after the fall of the Bastille; the second time, on that awful Sixth of October; the third time, — the present, — after the flight to Varennes.

All Paris, on learning that the procession was coming by the Neuilly Road, hurried to the Champs Élysées;

so when the royal family reached the barrier, they could see, stretching far away from the gate, a vast sea of humanity, silent, gloomy, menacing, and as unrespecting as the sea, which would not ebb at the command of a crowned Canute.

More lugubrious than all else, if not more frightful, was a double hedge of National Guardsmen, extending away to the gateway of the Tuileries, and carrying their muskets reversed, as a sign of mourning.

It was indeed a day of mourning, of great mourning, — mourning for a dynasty of seven centuries. The coach, which rolled along slowly amidst all these people, was a funeral chariot, conveying royalty to its tomb.

On perceiving these long rows of National Guards, the soldiers who accompanied the coach waved their weapons, and shouted: "Hurrah for the Nation!" and this cry echoed all along the line, from the barrier to the Tuileries.

Then the immense human wave, lost under the trees, — spreading out as far as the streets of the Faubourg Roule on one side, and as far as the banks of the Seine on the other, — undulated with the cry, "Long live the Nation!"

From all France went up this shout of fraternity. Only one family, the family which wished to escape from France, was excluded from that fraternity.

It took an hour to go from the barrier to Louis Fifteenth Square. The horses bent beneath their loads, for each carried a stalwart grenadier.

Behind the coach, which still contained the King, Queen, Dauphin, Madame Royale, Madame Elizabeth, Madame de Tourzel, Pétion, and Barnave, came the cabriolet containing the Queen's two female attendants and Latour Maubourg. Behind this cabriolet was to be seen an open

carriage, — shaded, however, with green boughs, — occupied by Drouet, who had arrested the King, and by Guillaume and Maugin, who had aided by main force in this arrest. Fatigue had driven them to adopt this method of locomotion.

Billot alone, as if the zeal of his vengeance were of bronze, remained on horseback, and seemed to dominate the whole occasion.

As they entered Louis Fifteenth Square (now called Place de la Concorde) the King noticed that somebody had bandaged the eyes of his grandfather's statue. "What is that intended to express?" Louis asked of Barnave.

"I 'm sure I don't know, Sire," responded the man to whom the question was addressed.

"I know," said Pétion. "It refers to the blindness of the monarchy."

During the journey — despite the escort, despite the commissioners, despite the placards which forbade any insult to the King, under pain of hanging — the rabble two or three times broke through the line of grenadiers, a feeble and powerless dike against an element to which God had forgotten to say, as to the sea, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther."

When this occurred, when the ranks of the grenadiers were broken through, the Queen suddenly saw two men appear at the carriage windows, with hideous and pitiless faces, — such men as only appear occasionally on the surface of society, as certain monsters only rise to the surface of the ocean in the midst of storms.

At first she was so affrighted by this apparition, that she again hastily closed one of the carriage windows.

"Why do you lower the glass?" cried ten furious voices.

"Look at my poor children," said the Queen, "and see what a state they are in!" and she wiped the sweat from their wet cheeks. "We are suffocating!" she added.

"Bah!" replied a voice. "That's nothing! Make yourself easy! We'll suffocate you in another fashion!" and a blow of the fist broke the glass into shivers.

Amidst this awful spectacle were a few episodes which must have consoled the royal pair, if they were accessible to expressions of good-will as readily as to its opposite.

Despite the placard which forbade any expression of respect to the King, Monsieur Guilhermy, a member of the Assembly, uncovered his head as the King passed by; and when they wished to force him to put on his hat, he threw it far away and exclaimed: "Who dares bring that back to me?"

At the entrance of the swinging bridge, leading to the palace gardens, they found Twenty Deputies who had been delegated to protect the royal prisoners.

Then came Lafayette and his staff. Lafayette approached the coach.

"Oh Monsieur," cried the Queen, as soon as she saw him, "save our bodyguards!"

This was not a needless request, for danger was at hand, and great danger, too.

Meantime a scene took place at the gates of the palace, which was not without its poetic side.

Five or six women, among the Queen's personal attendants, who had left the Tuileries after the royal flight, — believing the Queen had gone away forever, — now wished to re-enter the palace, in order to receive her properly.

"Be off!" cried the sentinels, presenting the points of their bayonets.

"Slaves of that Austrian woman," shouted the fish-wives, shaking their fists.

Beset by the bayonets of the guards, and braving the threats of the Dames from the Market-place, a sister of Madame Campan stepped forward and said: "Listen! Since the Queen was fifteen years old I have been in her personal service. She endowed me, and gave me my wedding outfit. I served her when she was powerful. Ought I to abandon her now, when she is miserable?"

"She's right," was the outcry. "Soldiers, let 'em pass!" and at that order, from rulers not to be gainsaid, the military ranks opened, and the women went into the palace; and soon after, the Queen could see them wave their handkerchiefs from the windows on the main floor.

Meanwhile the coach moved slowly on, driving before it a tide of people and a cloud of dust, as a ship pushes its way through the ocean waves and a cloud of foam; and the comparison is the more exact, because never were the victims of shipwreck threatened by a sea more agitated and turbulent than that which was preparing itself to swallow up this unhappy family when they reached the Tuileries, which they regarded as their haven of safety.

At last the carriage stopped. They had reached the steps of the Great Terrace.

"Oh gentlemen," again said the Queen, but this time addressing herself to Pétion and Barnave, "the bodyguards, the bodyguards!"

"You have no one in particular among these gentlemen, whom you would commend to our protection?" asked Barnave.

The Queen looked at him sharply, with surprised eyes, and said, "No one!" Then she insisted that the King and the children should get out of the carriage first.

The next ten minutes which rolled away were the most cruel of her life, — not excepting those when she was led to the scaffold.

She felt convinced, not that she should be assassinated, — death would be nothing, — but that she would be given to the mob for a plaything, or shut up in some prison, whence she could emerge only by the doorway of personal infamy and dishonor.

As she put her foot on the carriage steps, protected by the arch above her head, formed — by Barnave's order — of the muskets and bayonets of the National Guards, a flash of faintness through her brain made her believe she should fall to the ground; but as her eyes were about closing, in a last agonizing look, she saw, or thought she saw, in front of her, that terrible man, who, at Taverney Château, had so mysteriously raised for her the veil of the future; the man whom she had seen only once since that time, — on her return from Versailles, on that dreadful Sixth of October; that man, who only appeared when he predicted some great catastrophe, or at the hour when those great catastrophes were being fulfilled.

When she was sure her eyes did not deceive her, she closed them and uttered a cry. She could be strong in fighting against realities, but she fell powerless and inert before this sinister vision.

It seemed as if the earth fled from beneath her feet, that the crowd, the trees, the burning sky, the motionless palace, — all were in a whirlpool about her. Vigorous arms seized her, and she felt herself borne along amidst clamors and shouts. At that instant she thought she heard the voice of the bodyguards, trying to call upon

themselves the anger of the populace, and thus turn it from the intended victim. She reopened her eyes an instant, and saw those unfortunate men torn from their seats on the coach. Pale and handsome as ever, Charny was fighting against ten men, — the martyr-light in his eyes, a disdainful smile on his lips. From Charny her glance turned upon a man who seemed to rise up in the midst of this cyclone, and with increased terror she now distinctly recognized the mysterious personage whom she had seen at Taverney and Sevres Bridge.

"You? you?" she cried, trying to repulse him with her rigid hands.

"Yes, I!" he whispered in her ear. "I have need of thee, to push the monarchy into its last abyss, and therefore I save thee."

This time it was more than she could bear. She uttered a shriek and fell in a dead swoon.

Meantime the rabble were trying to cut Charny, Malden, and Valory into pieces, while they carried Drouet and Billot in triumph on their shoulders.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHALICE.

When the Queen came to herself she saw that she was in her old bedroom in the Tuileries. Her two favorite waiting-women were at her side, — Madame de Misery and Madame Campan.

Her first inquiry was for the Dauphin. He was in his chamber, lying in his own bed, cared for by Madame de Tourzel, his governess, and by Madame Brunier, his chambermaid.

This assurance was not enough for the Queen. She arose at once, and ran into her son's apartment, though she was all in disorder.

The child had been wofully frightened, and had cried pitifully; but they had calmed his agony, and he was now asleep, although slight shudders disturbed his rest.

For a long time she leaned on a post of his bed, and looked at him fixedly through her tears.

The terrible words uttered by that fearful man seemed incessantly to reverberate in her ear: "I have need of thee, to push the monarchy into its last abyss, and therefore I save thee!" Was this true? Was it she who was urging the monarchy on to its destruction? It must be so, since her enemies, who kept vigilant watch over the monarchy, had confided to her this destructive task, because she could accomplish it better than themselves.

This abyss, towards which she was pushing the monarchy, would it close up again, after devouring the King,

herself, and the throne? Must her two children be thrown into the gulf? In the religions of antiquity did childlike innocence disarm the vengeance of the gods? It is true that Jehovah refused Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac; but he afterward accepted the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter.

These were gloomy meditations for a queen, — more gloomy for a mother.

At last she shook her head sadly, and returned, with slow steps, to her own room. There she noted the disorder in which she found herself. Her clothing was tumbled, and it was torn in many places. Her shoes had been pierced by the sharp stones of the rugged pavement over which she had been dragged. She was covered with dust. She asked for some other shoes and a bath.

Barnave had twice called to inquire after her welfare. Madame Campan looked at the Queen with surprise, as she announced this visit.

"You will thank him affectionately, Madame," said Marie Antoinette. Madame Campan was more and more amazed.

"We are under great obligations to that young man, Madame," added the Queen, condescending, though this was not her custom, to give her reasons.

"But I have thought, Madame," the attendant ventured to say, "that Monsieur Barnave was a demagogue, a man of the people, to whom any means seem good, if they only help him to gain his point."

"Any means offered by his talent? Yes, Madame, that is true. But now remember well what I tell you. A sentiment of pride, which I cannot blame, has made him approve everything which smooths the way to honor and glory for the class wherein he was born. There is no pardon for the nobility who cast themselves

into the Revolution ; but if power returns to us, the pardon of Barnave is accorded beforehand. — Go, now, and try to find out something about Monsieur de Malden and Monsieur de Valory."

The Queen's heart added Charny's name to these two, but her lips refused to pronounce it.

Some one came to say that the Queen's bath was ready. During the brief interval which had elapsed since her visit to the Dauphin, sentinels had been stationed everywhere, even at the door of her toilet closet and bathroom. With difficulty she persuaded them to let the door be fastened while she bathed.

Here is what Prudhomme says about it, in his record of Revolutions in Paris :

Some good Patriots, in whom the sentiment of compassion is not so dead as that of royalty, have been anxious about the mental and physical condition of Louis Sixteenth and his family, after a journey so disastrous as that from Saint Menehould.

They may be reassured. The above-mentioned gentleman, on his return to his apartments Saturday evening, did not find himself more uncomfortable than after a fatiguing chase, — and perhaps less so. He ate his chicken as usual. The next day, after dinner, he played with his son.

As to the mother, she took a bath when she arrived. Her first orders were for some boots, taking care to show how those which she had worn during the journey were frayed into holes. Towards the officers stationed as her particular guardians, she conducted herself somewhat testily, and thought it ridiculous and indecent that they should leave open the doors of her bathroom and bedroom.

See how this Monster of Infamy ate a pullet as soon as he reached home, and played with his little son the very next day ! Behold this Sybarite, who absolutely

took a bath after five days' journey in a carriage, and three nights in public houses. Behold this Prodigal, who asked for a change of shoes, because hers were worn into holes by her journey. Look upon this Messalina, who, thinking it indecent and ridiculous that she should be compelled to leave open the doors of her bathroom and bedroom, asked her guards for permission to close those doors.

Ah Monsieur Journalist, you appear very much like a man who eats chicken only on the four feastdays of the year, who has no children, who never takes a bath, and goes to his seat in the National Assembly with his shoes full of holes.

Risking all the scandal such a deed might occasion, the Queen took her bath, and obtained permission to shut her door; but the sentinel did not miss the opportunity of taunting Madame Campan as an Aristocrat, when she returned with such information as she had been able to gather, and entered the bathroom.

This news was not so painful as had been feared.

After they passed the barrier, on their way through the Champs Élysées, Charny and his two companions formed a plan. This plan was to draw upon themselves a portion of the dangers to which the royal family were exposed. To do this it was agreed that as soon as the coach came to a full stop, one officer should spring off towards the left and another towards the right, while he who sat in the middle should scramble towards the front. In this way the troop of assassins would divide, being forced to go in opposite directions, — following three different scents, after as many different quarries; and perhaps the way might thus be left clear for the King and Queen to enter the palace.

As has already been stated, the coach halted at the

first pond, near the Grand Terrace of the palace. The would-be murderers were in such haste that they rushed in front of the horses, and two were badly hurt. For an instant the two grenadiers, still on the box, were able to protect the three officers; but the grenadiers were soon pulled to the ground, and this left the three officers defenceless.

This was their chosen opportunity. All three sprang rapidly away, but not so rapidly, nevertheless, as not to be able to capsize five or six men who were mounted on the wheels and steps, for the very purpose of tearing the brave officers down. Thus, as had been anticipated, the wrath of the people was scattered in three directions.

Hardly had Malden touched the ground, when he found himself under the axes of two sappers. Both axes were lifted, and only waiting for a chance to strike him, without injuring anybody else. By a violent and rapid movement he was able to push away some men who were holding him by the collar, so that for a second he stood alone.

Then he crossed his arms and said, "Strike!" One of the two axes remained uplifted. The victim's courage paralyzed the assassin. The other axe fell, thirsting for Malden's blood; but as it fell it encountered a musket-barrel, which turned it aside, so that only the edge grazed Malden's throat, giving him but a slight wound.

Then he lowered his head and ran towards the by-standers, who drew back to let him pass; and a few steps farther on he was received by a group of officers who, in order to save him, shoved him the other side of the row of National Guards, who were forming, for the royal prisoners, a covered pathway from the coach to the palace. At that moment General Lafayette perceived Malden.

Urging his horse towards him, the General seized him by the collar, and pulled him against his stirrups, so as to shield Malden, in some degree, by the General's popularity; but Malden, recognizing him, cried out: "Let me alone, Monsieur! Attend to the royal family, and leave me to these cutthroats." In fact Lafayette did release him; for seeing a man who was trying to carry off the Queen, he rushed to that man's side.

Malden was knocked down by some, and helped up by others. Some attacked him, while others defended him. Covered with bruises and bleeding wounds, he at last reached the gateway of the palace. There an officer, seeing that he was almost overcome, seized him by the collar, jerked him along, and exclaimed: "It 's too bad to have such a wretch die in this easy way. Some special punishment should be invented for scoundrels of this sort. Leave him to me. I 'll see to him!"

So he continued to insult Monsieur de Malden, saying, "Come along, you jack! Come here! You 'll settle this affair with *me!*" till at last he drew him into a dark corner, when he said: "Save yourself, Monsieur, and forgive the ruse which enabled me to get you out of the hands of those wretches." Then Malden ran up the steps of the palace, and disappeared.

Somewhat similar were Valory's experiences. He received severe wounds in the head; but at the moment when a score of bayonets, a score of sabres, and a score of daggers were raised to put an end to his defenceless existence, Pétion threw himself forward, and repulsed the assassins with all the vigor he possessed.

"In the name of the National Assembly," he cried, "I declare you unworthy the name of Frenchmen, if you do not instantly get out of the way, and let this man alone. I am Pétion!"

Under a somewhat rude exterior Pétion concealed great honesty and a loyal and courageous heart. Thus speaking, he seemed so noble in the eyes of these assassins that they went away, and left Valory in his hands.

Then Pétion helped him, supported him, — for, exhausted with the blows he had received, Valory was hardly able to stand upright, — conducted him as far as the line of National Guards, and confided him to the hands of Pétion's aide, Matthew Dumas, who promised to answer for Valory with his head, and protected him till they were safe in the palace.

Just then Pétion heard Barnave's voice, calling for help, as he found himself unable to defend Charny single-handed.

The Count was seized by a score of arms, and dragged along in the dirt; but he recovered his feet, wrenched a bayonet from a gun, and ploughed his way through the crowd about him; yet he would have been soon overcome in this unequal struggle, if first Barnave and then Pétion had not come to his relief.

The Queen listened to this report while in her bath. Campan, who brought a portion of these facts, could give positive information only about Malden and Valory, who had been seen in the palace, battered and blood-stained, but, on the whole, without serious wounds.

As to Charny, nothing certain was known about him, except that he had been saved by Barnave and Pétion, for he had not been seen to enter the palace.

When Madame Campan reported this last fact, such a mortal pallor overspread the Queen's face that her attendant, believing that this change was owing to fear lest some great misfortune had happened to the Count, exclaimed: "Her Majesty need not despair of

Charny's safety because he has not been seen in the palace. The Queen is aware that Madame de Charny lives in Paris, and perhaps the Count has found a place of security with his wife."

This was the very idea which had occurred to Marie Antoinette, and made her turn so frightfully pale. She came out of her bath, crying: "Dress me, Campan, dress me quick. It is absolutely necessary that I should know what has become of the Count."

"Which Count?" asked Madame de Misery, who just then entered the room.

"Charny!" said the Queen.

"He is in her Majesty's antechamber, and solicits the honor of a brief interview."

"Ah!" murmured the Queen. "Then he has kept his word!"

The two ladies looked at their mistress, not knowing what the Queen meant to say. Trembling, and incapable of pronouncing a word, she made a sign for them to hurry.

Never was toilet more rapid. Marie Antoinette contented herself with having her hair simply twisted into a knot, after her head had been washed in perfumed water, to cleanse it from the dust. She slipped a loose muslin robe over her chemise, returned to her reception-room, and, white as the gown she wore, ordered Charny's admission.

CHAPTER XI.

THE THRUST OF THE LANCE.

A FEW seconds thereafter the chamberlain announced Monsieur de Charny, who stood framed in the doorway, and lightened by the golden reflection of a ray of the setting sun.

Like the Queen, he had employed the time since his return to the palace in effacing the traces of his long journey, and of the terrible combat he had encountered on his arrival.

He had put on his old uniform, — that is, his costume as captain of a frigate, with red lapels and lace ruffles.

This was the very style of costume he had worn on a certain day when he met the Queen and Andrée de Taverney in Palace Royal Square, whence he afterwards conducted them to a cab, and attended them home to Versailles.

Never had he appeared so elegant, so calm, so handsome; and the Queen could hardly believe, as she looked upon him, that this was the same man who had been in imminent peril of being torn into pieces by the rabble, an hour before.

"Oh Monsieur," she cried, "they must have told you how anxious I was on your account, and that I sent out for intelligence of you."

"Yes, Madame," said Charny, bowing; "and, believe me, I did not go to my own apartments till after I was assured, through your ladies, that you were safe and well."

"They say you owe your life to Pétion and Barnave. Is this true? and am I therefore under a new obligation to Barnave?"

"It is true, Madame; and I owe double thanks to Monsieur Barnave, for being in no haste to leave me. Even after I was safe in my chamber, he was so kind as to tell me, in the course of our conversation, that you spoke of my welfare during our homeward journey."

"Of your welfare, Count? and in what way?"

"In telling the King of the anxiety you felt sure your old friend Andrée must feel on account of my absence. — I am far from agreeing with you, Madame, as to the liveliness of her anxiety. However —" Here he paused, for the Queen, already so pale, grew livid.

"However —?" repeated the Queen.

"However, without accepting, in all its generosity, the leave of absence which your Majesty proposed offering me, yet now that I am assured of the safety of the King, of yourself, and of your august children, it would be agreeable to me if I could in person report my condition to the Countess."

The Queen pressed her left hand over her heart, as if she wished to assure herself that she was not deathstruck by the blow thus received, and in a voice choking and parched she said: "That is indeed but fair, Monsieur; only I ask myself why you have waited so long before discharging this duty."

"The Queen forgets that I pledged my word not to see the Countess again without the royal permission."

"And you come here to ask for that permission?"

"Yes, Madame! and I beg your Majesty to grant it."

"With which permission, in your present ardor to once more see Madame de Charny, you might possibly dispense! Is it not so?"

"I consider the Queen unjust at my expense," replied Charny. "When I left Paris I supposed I was leaving it for a long time, if not forever. It was not my fault, as your Majesty will remember, that I did not lay down my life at Varennes, like my brother, or have my body torn asunder along the road, or in the Tuileries Gardens, like Monsieur de Dampierre. During the journey I did all that lay in my power to make our scheme a success. If it had been my good fortune to conduct your Majesty beyond the frontier, or to have the honor of dying, I should have died or become an exile, and never have seen the Countess again; but, I repeat to your Majesty, on my return to Paris, if I am not permitted to give any information about myself to the lady who bears my name, — and you know how she chances to bear it, Madame! — it will be indeed a mark of indifference; especially, as my brother Isidore is no longer here to take my place. If I am not mistaken, this was your Majesty's idea two days ago."

The Queen allowed her arm to glide slowly along the back of her lounge, and then followed this movement with an inclination of her shapely form, which brought her a little nearer to Charny, while she pathetically said: "You must love that woman very much, Monsieur, to so coolly cause me a similar heartache."

"Madame, it is hardly six years ago since you yourself, at a time when I fancied there existed for me only one woman on earth, — and she the one woman God had placed so high above me that I could not attain her level, — it is but six years since you imposed me upon Mademoiselle Andrée de Taverney as her husband, and gave her to me as a wife. During these six years my hand has but twice touched hers. Except when absolutely necessary, I have not addressed ten words to her, and

our eyes have not met ten times. On my part, my life has been both occupied and filled, — filled with another passion, occupied with a thousand cares, a thousand tasks, a thousand contests, which make up a man's career. I have lived at Court. I have travelled great distances. With the clew confided to me by the King, I have been engaged in this gigantic intrigue, — tangled to me, — which fatality has now unravelled. I have counted neither the days, the months, nor the years. Time has passed all the more rapidly, because I have been so occupied with these passions, these cares, these intrigues, of which I speak. Not so has it been with Madame de Charny. Since she had the misfortune of leaving you, — undoubtedly because she had displeased you, — she has lived alone, in her pavilion in Rue Coq Heron. This solitude, this isolation, this abandonment, she has endured without complaint, for her heart, being exempt from love's passion, has not felt the need of the same affection that other women feel; but she might not perhaps accept without complaint my neglect of the simplest attentions, the commonest courtesies."

"My God, Monsieur, you are certainly much concerned with what the Countess does or does not think of you, — whether she sees you or not! Before taking all this trouble, it might be well to ascertain if she thought of you when you went away, or thinks of you now, on your return."

"Whether or not she thinks of me on my return, I do not know; but I am sure my Countess did think of me when I went away."

"Then you saw her before you went away?"

"Already I have had the honor of telling your Majesty that I have given the Queen my word not to see my wife!"

"Then she wrote you?"

Charny was silent; but Marie Antoinette exclaimed: "Come, Monsieur, she *did* write you! Why not acknowledge it?"

"She entrusted my brother Isidore with a letter for me."

"And you have read that letter? What did she say to you? What could she write? Yet she swore to me — Speak! Answer at once! In that letter she said to you —? Speak out! Can't you see I'm boiling over!"

"I cannot repeat to your Majesty what the Countess said in her letter. I have n't read it!"

"You tore it up?" said the joyous Queen. "You threw it into the fire without reading it? Charny, Charny, if you did that, you are the most faithful of men; and I am wrong to complain, for I have lost nothing."

She extended both arms to draw him to herself; but Charny remained where he was, and said: "I did not tear it or burn it!"

"Then why did n't you read it?" asked the Queen, sinking into her chair.

"The letter was not to be given me by my brother, unless I was mortally wounded. Alas! It was not I who was marked for death, but he. When he was dead, some one brought me his papers. Among them was this letter from the Countess, with this memorandum attached to it. — Here, Madame —!"

As he spoke Charny handed the Queen the note written by Isidore's hand, and which he had affixed to the Countess's letter. Marie Antoinette received it with trembling fingers, and struck her bell.

During the interview we are recording, night had come on; so she exclaimed: "Lights, instantly!"

The chamberlain went out, and a moment of stillness ensued, during which no other sound was to be heard save the Queen's irregular breathing and the tumultuous pulsation of her heart.

The chamberlain returned with two girandoles, which he placed on the mantel. The Queen barely allowed him time to retire; and as soon as he had withdrawn, and closed the door, she approached the mantel with the note in her hand.

Twice she looked at the paper without seeing anything. "Oh," she muttered, "it is n't paper! It 's flame!"

Passing her hand over her eyes, as if to restore the faculty of sight, which she seemed to have lost, she tapped her foot impatiently and exclaimed: "My God! My God!"

At last, by sheer force of will, her hand ceased trembling, and she regained her clearness of sight. In hoarse tones, wholly unlike her usual voice, she began the note:

This letter is not addressed to me, but to my brother, Count Oliver. It is written by his wife, the Countess.

The Queen here paused a few seconds, and then resumed:

If anything happens to me, whoever finds this paper is requested to send it to my brother Oliver, or else return it to the Countess.

Again the reader paused and shook her head, and then went on reading:

I received it from her with the following instructions.

"Ah, let us see the instructions," muttered the Queen, as again she rubbed her hand over her eyes.

If in the enterprise in which we are engaged the Count is successful, and no mishap befalls him, this letter is to be returned to the Countess.

The Queen's voice became more and more tremulous as she read; but she persevered.

If he is grievously wounded, but not unto death, he is to grant his wife the favor of letting her come to him.

"Oh, all is too plain!" stammered the Queen; and then she continued, in an unintelligible voice:

Finally, if he is wounded unto death, this letter is to be given him; and if he cannot read it himself, it is to be read to him, in order that he may know, before he dies, the secret it contains.

"Well, do you still deny it?" asked Marie Antoinette, covering the Count with her flaming gaze.

"Deny what?"

"Deny what? Oh, my God! — deny that she loves you!"

"What, I? The Countess loves me? What are you saying, Madame?" cried Charny, in his turn.

"Miserable woman that I am, I speak the truth."

"The Countess loves me? Impossible!"

"And why? Do I not love you myself?"

"But in six years, if the Countess loved me, she would have told me so, or let me find it out!"

The moment was at hand when poor Marie Antoinette, suffering so much, felt that she must sink under this suffering, which was like a dagger buried in her heart.

"No!" she cried, "no! She would let you see nothing, she would say nothing; but if she said nothing, if she let you discover nothing, it was because she knew she could not be really your wife."

"The Countess could not be really my wife?" repeated Oliver.

"No! because, as she knew very well," continued the Queen, more and more crazed with her personal grief, "there is between you a secret which must kill your affection."

"A secret which must kill our affection?"

"Because she knew very well you would despise her the moment she uttered it."

"I — despise my Countess?"

"Unless one does not despise a young girl who is a wife without marriage, a mother without a husband."

It was now Charny's turn to grow pale as death, and lean on the armchair nearest him, as he said: "Madame, Madame, you have either said too much or too little, and I have the right to demand an explanation."

"An explanation, Monsieur? An explanation from me, the Queen?"

"Yes, Madame, I demand it!"

At that moment the door opened. "What is wanted?" asked the indignant Queen.

"Your Majesty has heretofore declared that you were always at home to Doctor Gilbert."

"Well?"

"The Doctor claims the honor of presenting his humble respects to your Majesty," said the attendant.

"Doctor Gilbert!" said the Queen. "Are you positive it is Doctor Gilbert?"

"Yes, Madame!"

"Let him enter, then, — let him enter!" said the Queen.

Turning to Charny she added, raising her voice: "You wish for some explanation in regard to Madame de Charny. Wait! Ask that explanation of Doctor Gilbert, who is better able than anybody else to give it."

Meanwhile Gilbert entered. He heard Marie Antoinette's words, and remained upright and motionless on the threshold.

As to the Queen, throwing his brother's note to Charny, she took several steps towards her toilet-room; but with a more rapid step Charny passed in front of her, barred the way, and grasped her wrist, as he said: "Pardon me, Madame, but this explanation must be made in your presence."

"Monsieur," said she, with feverish eyes, and between her set teeth, "I fear you forget that I am the Queen."

"You 're an ungrateful woman, who calumniates her friend. You 're a jealous woman, who slanders another woman, — the wife of a man who, in the last three days, has risked his life for you twenty times, — the wife of Count de Charny. It is here, in the presence of one who has insulted, who has defamed her, that justice shall be rendered. Sit you down, and listen!"

"Well, so be it!" said the Queen. — "Monsieur Gilbert," she continued, with a forced laugh, "you hear what the Count wishes."

"Monsieur Gilbert," said Charny, in a dignified and courteous tone, "you hear the Queen's commands."

Gilbert came forward, and looked sorrowfully at Marie Antoinette. "Oh Madame, Madame!" he murmured.

Then he added, turning to Charny: "Monsieur, what I have to say redounds to the glory of a woman and the shame of a man. A wretch, a peasant, a worm of the earth, loved Mademoiselle de Taverney. One day he

chanced to find her unprotected and in a swoon. Without respect for her youth, her beauty, her innocence, the wretch took advantage of her situation, and thus it was that this young girl became a wife without a husband, a mother without marriage. Madame de Charny is a martyr!"

Charny wiped the sweat from his brow as he said: "I thank you, Monsieur Gilbert." Then he added, to the Queen: "Madame, I was not aware that Mademoiselle de Taverney had been so unhappy. I was ignorant that she was so good. Otherwise, I beg you to believe, I should have fallen at her feet six years ago; and then I should not have adored her as she deserves."

Bowing to the stupefied Queen, Charny went away, without that unhappy lady's daring to make a motion to detain him; but he heard the sad cry which she uttered as she saw the door shut between them.

Then she realized that on that door, as above the gate of hell, the hand of the demon of jealousy had just written that awful sentence, which signifies that hope is forever left behind:

LASCIATE OGNI SPERANZA.

CHAPTER XII.

DATE LILIA : RING IN THE LILIES.

LET us see how it had fared with Andrée, while the scene just described was taking place between Charny and the Queen, wherein a long series of heart-troubles came to an abrupt termination.

For us, already acquainted with the state of her heart, it is easy to imagine how Andrée suffered on account of Isidore's departure.

Conjecturing that the project in which the brothers were engaged was the royal flight, she trembled equally at the thought of its success or failure.

If the project succeeded, she knew enough of Charny's devotion to the royal family, to be sure he would not forsake them in exile. If the enterprise failed, she knew Oliver's courage would make him fight against all obstacles whatsoever, as long as there was any hope, and even when all hope was lost.

From the moment when Isidore took his leave of her, the Countess's eye was constantly open for any glimmer of light, and her ear to catch the slightest rumor.

The next day, in common with all other Parisians, she learned that the King and his family had flown from Paris during that Monday night. No accident had signalized this abrupt departure.

That Charny was an important factor in this flight she had no doubt, and he was going farther and farther away from her. She heaved a deep sigh, and fell upon her knees to pray for their successful journey.

For two days Paris remained mute and echoless. On the morning of the third day a startling report ran through the city. The King had been arrested at Varennes. There were no details. Apart from this one thunder-clap, there was no noise. Beyond this one flash of lightning, all was night. The King had been arrested at Varennes, and that was all!

Andrée did not even know where Varennes was located. This little town, so fatally celebrated ever since, — whose very name became a terror to royalty, — at that time shared the obscurity which enshrouded, and still enshrouds, ten thousand French communities, which are just as unimportant and unknown as this one.

Andrée opened her geographical dictionary and read:

Varennes, in Argonne; chief town in the district; 1607 inhabitants.

Then she studied a map, and located Varennes, — placed in the middle of a triangle between Stenay, Verdun, and Châlons, on the edge of Argonne Forest, and on the banks of a little river. It was on this obscure spot that France now concentrated its attention. There were enshrined the thoughts, hopes, and fears of a nation.

Little by little, in the track of this stupendous news, came secondary information; as at sunrise, after the grand total has been drawn from its chaos by the flooding light, the details come into view, one by one. For Andrée, these details were of vast importance.

It was said that the Marquis de Bouillé had pursued the arrested party, attacked the escort, and had been driven back after a fierce fight, leaving the royal family in the hands of the victorious Patriots. Charny must have taken part in this combat; and if so he would have

been the last to retire from the fight, even if he did not perish on the field of battle.

Presently it was said that one of three guardsmen who accompanied the King had been killed. Then the name came to light; only it was not known which Charny was killed, the Count or Viscount, Isidore or Oliver. It was a Charny, and nobody could say more. During two days, while that question was undecided, Andrée's heart endured inexpressible agonies.

At last the return of the royal party was announced for Saturday, June 26. The august prisoners had slept at Meaux. Calculating time and space, in the ordinary way of travel, the King would reach Paris before noon; and if he returned to the Tuileries by the most direct route, he would re-enter Paris through the Faubourg Saint Martin.

By eleven o'clock — veiled, and wearing a very plain dress — Andrée was at the barrier. There she waited four hours, — till three o'clock.

At that hour the first billows of the multitudinous human sea, driving everything before it, announced that the King would make the circuit of Paris, and enter the city proper by the barrier at the end of the Champs Élysées Avenue.

There was the whole city to cross, and Andrée must go afoot; for nobody dared drive a carriage through the dense crowd which everywhere filled the principal streets. Never had the Boulevards been so obstructed since the capture of the Bastille, nearly two years before.

Andrée did not hesitate, but took her way to the Champs Élysées, where she arrived among the first. There she waited three more hours, — three mortal hours, — till it was between six and seven o'clock.

At last the procession appeared, if procession it can be

called. We have already learned the order and circumstances of the march.

Andrée saw the coach pass by; and she uttered a cry of great joy, for she recognized Charny on the outside seat.

Another cry responded, which sounded like the echo of her own; only it was a cry of despair. Andrée turned towards the side whence came this cry. A young girl was supported by the arms of three or four kind-hearted persons, who were trying to give her relief. She appeared a prey to the most violent despair.

Perhaps Andrée would have given more efficient attention to this girl, had she not heard, on all sides, muttered imprecations against the three men on the outside seat of the royal coach. On them was launched the wrath of the populace. These three were the scapegoats of royalty's great treason, and would undoubtedly be torn into pieces as soon as the carriage reached its destination.

One of these three scapegoats was Charny. Andrée resolved to do all she could to enter the gardens of the Tuileries. To do that she must circumnavigate the multitude, and return by the waterside, — that is, by Conference Pier, — and get into the garden, if such a thing were possible, by way of the Tuileries Pier. She went through the Rue Chaillot, and by a smaller cross-street, she reached the riverside.

By dint of many experiments, and at the risk of being crushed twenty times over, she reached the gateway; but there was such a jam about the place where the carriage stopped, that she could not dream of getting into the front ranks.

From the terrace nearest the water Andrée thought she could look over the heads of the crowd. To be sure, the distance was too great for her to distinguish the

details or learn anything definite. Never mind! It was better to be able to hear a little and see a little, than to be able to see and hear nothing at all.

She accordingly ascended the terrace on the side towards the Seine. Thence she could indeed see the royal coach, and the seats on the top of it. She could see Charny and the two bodyguards. Little did Charny suspect that, a hundred rods away, there was a heart beating violently for him. Doubtless — so she believed — he had at that moment not a single thought for Andrée. He was thinking only of the Queen, and forgot his own safety in watching over hers. Oh, if Andrée had but known that Charny was at that very instant pressing her letter against his heart, and mentally offering to her his last sigh, for he supposed the next moment he might breathe his last breath!

At last the coach halted, amidst hooting, howling, and shouting. In an instant there was a tremendous noise, a great hubbub, and a mighty tumult about that coach. Bayonets, pikes, and swords were raised. One seemed to be looking upon a rye-field of iron, bending before a storm.

The three men whom Andrée was watching were precipitated from their seats, and vanished, as if they had tumbled into a gulf. Then there was such an eddy amidst the multitude, that the rear ranks crowded backward, and were jammed against the stone abutment of the terrace.

Andrée was now enveloped in a cloud of agony. She could see nothing, hear nothing. With palpitating breath and extended arms she threw a few inarticulate sounds into the midst of this terrible concert, made up of maledictions, blasphemies, and death-cries.

Then she could no longer take note of what was going

on about her. The earth was in a whirl, the sky turned red, and a murmur, like that of the sea, surged in her ears. It was the blood mounting from her heart to her head, and overwhelming the brain. Then she fell down, half swooning, but knowing that she must be alive, because she suffered.

A refreshing coolness brought Andrée to herself. One woman was pressing to Andrée's forehead a handkerchief wet with water from the river; while another was compelling her to inhale the pungency from a vial of salts. She recognized the second of these two women as the one whom she had seen sinking at the barrier, as Andrée was sinking now; but Andrée did not know that they were instinctively drawn together by unknown ties, which bound the sadness of that young girl to her own.

Returning to herself, Andrée's first question was: "Are they dead?"

Compassion is intelligent. Those who were near Andrée understood that she was agitated by her thoughts of those three men, whom she had just seen so cruelly endangered.

"No, they are saved!" was the response.

"All three?" she asked.

"All three, — yes."

"God be praised! — Where are they?"

"They say they 're in the palace."

"In the palace? Thanks!"

Rising, and shaking her head, her gaze still somewhat wild, Andrée left the garden by the gateway leading to the waterside, in order to re-enter it again by the wicket leading into the Louvre Palace, adjoining the Tuileries. She thought, with reason, that the crowd would be less compact on that side. In fact the Rue Orties was nearly empty.

Crossing an angle of Carrousel Square she entered the Princes Courtyard, and looked for the porter. This man knew the Countess, having seen her go in and out of the palace during a day or two after the royal return from Versailles, in the autumn of 1789. Then he saw her go out one day, never to return again, — the day when she was pursued by Sebastien, and took the boy away in her carriage.

The porter consented to go after information. By the interior corridors he could speedily reach the heart of the palace. He learned that the three officers were all right. Monsieur de Charny, safe and sound, had first retired to his chamber; but fifteen minutes later he came out again, wearing his uniform as a marine officer, and reported himself to the Queen, in whose apartments he must be at that moment.

Andrée offered a reward to the man who brought her this good news; and then, stunned and trembling, she asked for a glass of water. Ah! Charny was at least safe!

After again thanking the kind-hearted porter, Andrée wended her way to her home in Rue Coq Heron. Once within its protection, she fell, not into an armchair or upon a sofa, but upon her prayer-stool.

It was not a verbal prayer she offered. There are times when our gratitude towards God is so great that words fail us, — when the hands, the eyes, the whole body, the whole heart, and the whole soul are raised to God.

She was absorbed in this happy ecstasy when she heard the door open. Slowly she turned, not understanding why any earthly noise should summon her from so deep a revery. There stood Andrée's chambermaid, looking for her mistress, who was almost lost in the obscurity of the room.

Behind the chambermaid was a shadow, whose outlines were undecided in the darkness; but Andrée's instinct at once gave to that shadow distinct outlines and a name, even before the chambermaid had time to announce the Count, Andrée's legal husband.

Andrée tried to rise from her knees, but her strength failed. Her knees fell again upon the cushion. Half facing around, she rested her arm on the slope of her priedieu, murmuring: "The Count, the Count!" Though he stood there before her eyes she could not believe him present.

Unable to speak she nodded for him to come in. The chambermaid stood aside to let Charny pass, and then shut the door. Charny and his Countess were alone.

"They told me you had come in, Madame. Am I indiscreet in following you so closely?"

"No!" replied Andrée, in tremulous tones, "no! You are welcome, Monsieur. I was so anxious that I have been out to learn what was taking place."

"You have been out? How long?"

"Since morning, Monsieur. First I went to the Saint Martin Barrier and then to the end of the Champs Élysées. There I saw — I saw —" She hesitated! — "I saw the royal family. — I saw you, and I was reassured, — at least momentarily; but everybody was alarmed on your account, when the time should come to leave the royal coach. Then I returned to the Tuileries Gardens. Ah! then I thought I should die."

"Yes!" said Charny, "the press was great. You were crowded, almost stifled! — I can understand —!"

"No, no!" said Andrée, shaking her head. "Oh no, it was n't that! At last I made inquiries, I heard of your safety. Then I came home, and — as you see, I am on my knees. I have been praying, — I — thanking God!"

"As you are on your knees, Madame, as you are in communion with God, do not rise without remembering in your petitions my poor brother!"

"Monsieur Isidore? Then it was indeed he! Unfortunate boy!" and as she spoke, she let her head fall upon her hands.

Charny took a few paces forward, and looked, with a profound expression of tender melancholy, upon this pure woman, as she prayed. There were also in his gaze elements of sympathy, pity, and gentleness, and something like repressed desire. Had not the Queen told him — or rather had she not allowed the strange revelation to escape her — that Andrée loved him?

Her prayer finished, the Countess turned towards him, and said:

"And so Isidore is dead?"

"Dead, Madame, — dead, like poor George; and he died for the same cause, and in the fulfilment of similar duties."

"And amidst the great sorrow which you must have felt over your brother's death, you have found time to think of me, Monsieur?" said Andrée, in such feeble tones that her words could hardly be understood.

Fortunately Charny listened with both heart and ears. "Madame," he said, "did you not charge my brother with an errand for me?"

"Monsieur!" stammered Andrée, partly raising herself, and regarding the Count with anxiety.

"Did you not give him a letter to my address?"

"Monsieur!" repeated Andrée, with quivering voice.

"After poor Isidore's death, his papers were handed to me, Madame, and your letter was among those papers."

"And you read it?" cried she, hiding her face in both hands.

"Madame, I was not to know the contents of that

letter unless I was mortally wounded; and, as you see, I am safe and sound."

"And the letter—?"

"Is here and intact, Madame, just as you gave it to Isidore."

"Oh!" murmured Andrée, as she received the letter, "what you have done is either very kind or very cruel."

Charny extended his arms, and clasped Andrée's hand in both of his. She made a movement to withdraw her hand; but as Charny persisted, saying, "By your leave, Madame!" she heaved a sigh, almost of dread; but, powerless against her own heart, she left her tremulous and moist hand in his.

Embarrassed, not knowing which way to look, she was unable to escape Charny's ardent gaze, which was fixed on herself; and she could not withdraw, leaning, as she still was, against her priedieu.

At last she said: "I understand, Monsieur, and you have come to return me that letter?"

"For that, Madame, and for something else. — I have to ask your pardon, my Countess."

Andrée was thrilled to the core of her heart. This was the first time, so far as she could remember, that Charny had ever given her this title, without preluding it with the word *Madame*, or some more formal prefix. Then his voice pronounced the phrase, *my Countess*, with an inflection of infinite kindness.

At last she said: "My pardon, Monsieur? On what account, may I ask?"

"For the manner in which I have behaved towards you during the last six years!"

She looked at him in unfeigned surprise. "Have I ever complained, Monsieur?"

"No, Madame, — because you are an angel!"

In spite of herself her eyes grew dim, and she felt tears on her eyelids.

"You are weeping, Andrée?"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "forgive me, Monsieur, but I am not used to hearing you talk to me in this way. Ah, my God, my God!"

With an effort she rose to her feet, and then sank upon a lounge, burying her face in her hands. Presently she lowered her hands and said, shaking her head mournfully: "Indeed, I am but a foolish woman —!"

Then she paused suddenly. While her eyes were hidden, Charny had fallen upon his knees before her. "What? You on your knees, — at my feet?" she said.

"Did I not say I had come to ask your pardon?"

"At my knees, — at my feet?" she repeated, like one who could not believe her eyes.

"Andrée, you have taken away your hand!" and again Charny offered his hand to the young wife; but she recoiled, with an expression which resembled fear, as she asked: "What does this mean?"

"Andrée!" said Charny, in his softest tones, "it means that I love you."

She pressed a hand upon her heart and uttered a cry. Then she sprang to her feet, as if moved by an unseen spring. Pressing her temples between her hands she echoed his words: "He loves me! He loves me! Oh, but it 's impossible!"

"Say it may be impossible for you to love me, but do not say it is impossible for me to love you."

She looked down upon Charny, as if to ascertain if he were speaking the truth. The Count's great black eyes spoke far more eloquently than his tongue. If she doubted his words, she could not doubt his face.

"Oh my God, my God!" she moaned, "was ever in this world a creature so unhappy as myself?"

"Andrée, say you love me! or, if you cannot say you love me, at least say you do not hate me."

"I?—hate you?" and her eyes, usually so calm, so limpid, so serene, flashed with unwonted light. "Oh Monsieur, you would indeed be unjust, if you mistook for dislike the sentiment you rouse in me."

"If not antipathy and not love, what then is this sentiment, Andrée?"

"It is not love, because I have no right to love you. Did you not hear me just now cry aloud, before God, that I was the unhappiest woman on earth?"

"And why may you not love me, when I love you so much,—with all the strength of my nature?"

"That is what I do not wish to tell you! That is what I cannot, dare not tell you!" answered Andrée, wringing her hands.

Charny's voice grew softer and softer, as he said: "But what if this which you dare not, cannot, will not say, had already been told me by another?"

Andrée laid both hands on Charny's shoulders as she uttered a startled groan.

"What if I knew it all?" continued Charny.

"Oh God!"

"And what if I found you all the nobler, all the worthier, because of your misfortune? What if it is my knowledge of this which decided me to come and say that I love you?"

"If you have done this, Monsieur, you are the noblest and most generous of men."

"I love you, Andrée! I love you! I love you!" repeated Charny.

"Oh my God!" said she, lifting her hands to Heaven,

"I did not know there could be so much joy for me in the world."

"But now it is your turn, Andrée! Say that you love me!"

"Oh no, I dare not!" said Andrée; "but read that letter, which was to have been given you on your death-bed!" and she offered the Count the letter he had brought her.

While she covered her face with both hands, Charny broke the seal of that letter. As he read the first lines he uttered a cry. Then he removed Andrée's hands from her eyes, and at the same time folded her to his heart, as he passionately exclaimed: "Saintly creature! So thou hast loved me ever since our first meeting, six years ago. How ought I to love thee, to make thee forget all thy sufferings."

"My God!" murmured Andrée, bending like a reed under the weight of so much happiness, "if this is a dream, never let me awake from it, or I shall die in the waking!"

So let us forget those who are so happy, while we tell of others, who still suffer, who struggle, who hate; and perhaps the evil destiny of Charny and Andrée will also pass them by.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LITTLE SHADOW AFTER THE SUNSHINE.

On July 16, 1791, some twenty days after the events just described, two new personages whom we have till now delayed making known to our readers, in order that they might be presented in their most important period, are writing at the same table, in a little parlor opening on the fourth flat of the Hotel Britannique, situated on the Rue Guénégaud.

The little parlor is connected by one door with a modest dining-room, wherein may be seen the movables usually found in furnished lodgings, while another door opens into a chamber, where stand twin bedsteads.

The two writers are of opposite sexes, and each merits particular mention.

The man appears to be about sixty. He is tall and spare, and has the air of being both austere and impassioned. The straight lines of his face bespeak the calm and serious thinker, in whom upright and stern mental qualities dominate the imaginative fancies.

The woman would hardly be credited with years more than thirty or thirty-two, although in reality she is already over thirty-six. By a certain elasticity of the blood, by certain brilliant hues in her complexion, it is easy to see that she comes from plebeian stock. She has charming eyes, of that variable tint which takes on different shades of gray, green, and blue, — eyes which are at once mild and firm. Her mouth is large, but

graced with rosy lips and white teeth. Both chin and nose are uptilted a trifle. Her hands are beautiful, as well as strong. Her form is undulating, womanly, and even voluptuous. Her throat is marvellous in outline, and she has the hips of the Syracusan Venus.

This man is Jean Marie Roland de la Plâtière, born in 1732, at Villefranche, near Lyons. The woman is Manon Jeanne Phlipon, born at Paris, in 1754. They have been married about eleven years, — that is, since 1780.

We have said that this woman arose from the people, as is proven by her names. Her baptismal names, Manon Jeanne, and her family name, Phlipon, alike indicate her origin. The daughter of an engraver, she worked at the same trade till the age of twenty-five, when she married Roland, who was two and twenty years her senior. Then she became a copyist, translator, compiler. Such works as one on Pyrotechnics, another on the Manufacture of Wool, and a Dictionary of Manufactures, absorbed the freshest years of her rich nature in crude and uncongenial labor; while her life remained free from error, almost from passion, — not through barrenness of heart, but through purity of soul.

In her relations to her husband, filial respect displaced womanly passion. Her affection was a species of chaste worship, outside of conjugal affinity, which often led her to quit her day's work at an early hour (though to do this she had afterwards to encroach upon the small hours of the night) in order to prepare a toothsome repast for the old man, whose enfeebled stomach could only bear certain peculiar kinds of food.

In 1789 Madame Roland was living an obscure and laborious life in the provinces. Her husband lived in the close, or purview, called Plâtière, from which he

derived his surname. This court was situated at Villefranche, near Lyons, where they lived when both were roused by the cannons of the Bastille.

At this sound all that was grand, patriotic, saintly, and French awoke in the heart of this noble woman. France was no longer a kingdom; it was the Nation. It was not simply a country where people lived; it was Fatherland.

Then came the great Federation of 1790, in Paris, which was preceded, as may be remembered, by the lesser Federation at Lyons.

Jeanne Phlipon had been reared in her father's house on the Quai Horloge, along the bank of the Seine, near the Palace of Justice. From her girlhood's window, as she gazed upon the blue sky, she could see the sun rise, and follow its course as far as the end of the Champs Élysées, where it seemed to sink into a hillock of green and leafy trees. She also saw arise that other sun, at three in the morning, on the heights of Fourvières, — a sun far more luminous, more absorbing, which men call Liberty. At the period of the Lyons Federation her observation embraced the whole of that grand reunion of citizens; and her heart was plunged into an ocean of fraternity, whence she emerged like Achilles, invulnerable except in one spot. It was in this spot that Cupid wounded her, though she did not fall a helpless victim before his attack.

On the evening of that glorious day, thoroughly enthusiastic over what she had seen, with the feeling of the poet as well as the historian, she penned a description of the Federative Festival. This account she sent to her friend Champagneux, editor-in-chief of "The Lyons Journal." Astonished, dazzled, awe-struck with this blazing recital, he published it in his paper; and the next

day, instead of the usual edition of twelve or fifteen hundred copies, this journal had to print sixty thousand.

In two words let us explain how it was that her poetic imagination and womanly heart embraced politics with such ardor. It was because Jeanne Phlipon, treated like an engraver's apprentice by her father, — it was because Madame Roland, treated like a secretary by her husband, — found, alike in the paternal home and the matrimonial residence, only the severer side of life. Madame Roland, through whose hands had never passed a frivolous book, found her greatest recreation, her supreme pastime, in such works as the "Official Report of the Electors of 1789" and the "Story of the Capture of the Bastille."

As to Roland, he was in himself an example of how chance or fate, through some apparently unimportant occurrence, may bring about immense changes in the career of a man or the existence of an empire.

He was the youngest of five brothers. They wished to make a priest of him, but he preferred to remain a man. At the age of nineteen he left the paternal mansion, on foot, alone, and without money. Traversing France he went to Nantes, took service with a shipowner, and was ordered to go to India. When the time came for his departure, at the very hour when he was due aboard the ship, he began to spit blood, and the physician straightway forbade his going to sea.

Had Cromwell sailed for America, instead of remaining in England, — detained by order of Charles the First, — mayhap the scaffold of Whitehall would never have been reared. If Roland had sailed for the Indies, perhaps the Tenth of August would never have found its historic place.

Unable to fulfil his agreement with the merchant,

Roland left Nantes and went to Rouen, where one of his relatives, upon whom he called, recognized the ability of the young man, and obtained him a position as Inspector of Manufactures.

Henceforth Roland's life became one of constant study and labor. Economy was his muse, and Commerce his inspiring god. He travelled, he edited the writings of others, he wrote essays on the breeding of sheep and on theories of mechanism. He wrote Letters from Sicily, from Italy, from Malta. He wrote also "The French Financier," and other works before alluded to, — which were copied by his wife, whom he espoused, as we have already stated, in 1780.

Four years afterward he went with her to England. On their return he sent her to Paris, to ask for a patent of nobility and solicit an appointment as Inspector at Lyons, instead of Rouen. As far as the appointment was concerned, her mission was a success. As to the letters of nobility, they were not granted. So Roland went to Lyons, where he belonged to the popular ranks in spite of himself, — whereto he was also impelled by his instincts and convictions.

When the Revolution broke out he was exercising his functions as Inspector of Commerce and Manufactures for the Lyons District; and at the dawn of this new and regenerating period, he and his wife felt germinating in their hearts that beautiful plant called Enthusiasm, with its leaves of gold and its diamond flower.

We have seen how Madame Roland wrote her account of the Lyons Federation; how the journal publishing it had to print sixty thousand copies; and how each National Guardsman, returning to his native village, town, or city, carried with him a portion of Madame Roland's heart.

As the journal did not name the author, and as the

article itself was not signed, everybody was free to think that it was Liberty herself who came down to earth, and dictated to some unknown prophet the story of the festival, — as the angel dictated to Saint John the Revelation bearing his name.

The Rolands were full of faith, full of confidence, full of hope. They were living in a circle of friends, — Champagneux, Bosc, Lanthenas, and perhaps two or three others, — when this circle was enlarged by a new friend.

Lanthenas, who lived on very familiar terms with the Rolands, — passing days, weeks, months in their home, — one evening brought with him one of those Electors whose Official Report Madame Roland had so much admired.

This new-comer was Bancal des Issarts. He was a man thirty-nine years old, — handsome, unostentatious, noble, tender, and religious, without intellectual brilliancy, but with a generous heart and a loving soul. He had been a notary, but had given up his business in order to devote himself wholly to politics and philosophy.

At the end of a week spent in the Roland home, the new guest, their host, and Lanthenas agreed so well, — the group formed such a harmonious trinity in their devotion to country, their love of liberty, and their respect for all things holy, — that the three men resolved never to separate, but to live together and bear the expense in common. Especially when Bancal left them for a season was the need of this reunion peculiarly felt. Thus did Roland write :

Come, my friend. Why do you delay ? You have seen our free and open way of living and acting. It is not at my age that a man changes, whose life has never varied. We preach Patriotism. We elevate the soul. Lanthenas does duty as

physician ; and my wife is the sick-nurse of the district ; while you and I, — well, we manage the business of the society.

The union of these three well-to-do gentlemen furnished something like a small fortune. Lanthenas had some twenty thousand francs, Roland had sixty thousand, and Bancal a hundred thousand.

Roland fulfilled his mission as an apostle. In his rounds as Inspector he catechised the peasants of the countryside. An excellent pedestrian, this pilgrim of humanity, staff in hand, went north and south, east and west, everywhere sowing the new word of life, the fertile grain of liberty, — on the right and left, before and behind him.

Simple, eloquent, passionate, under his cool exterior, Bancal was truly a helper, a disciple, a second self for Roland. The notion never entered the head of the future colleague of Clavière and Dumouriez that Bancal might fall in love with his wife, and that she might reciprocate this sentiment. During five or six years had not Lanthenas, young man as he was, remained near this chaste, industrious, sober, pure woman, like a brother near his sister? Was not Jeanne, Madame Roland, a very statue of Force and Virtue?

Roland was therefore very happy when Bancal answered the billet just cited, with an affectionate letter full of tender allegiance. Roland received this letter while he was at Lyons, and immediately sent it to Plâtière, where his wife was.

Do not read what I say! Read Michelet, if you would have a clear analysis of that admirable woman whom we call Madame Roland!

She received that letter on one of those hot days when electricity courses through the air, when the coldest

hearts are animated, when marble itself sees visions and quivers with dream-life. It was already autumn, and yet a heavy storm was muttering in the sky.

Since the day when she first saw Bancal, new emotions had been awakened in the heart of this chaste woman. That heart opened, like the chalice of a flower, and gave out its perfume. A sweet song, like that of some bird in the deepest forest, was warbling in her ear. One could see that it was springtime in her fancy, and that she could now see beyond the mist — which heretofore had obstructed her view — those unknown fields, where the hand of the powerful machinist, whom we call Deity, was preparing a new outlook into life, full of odorous thickets, refreshing cascades, shady grassplots, and vistas of sunshine.

She had never really known love's passion; but, like all women, she divined its nature. She understood the peril. Smiling through her tears, she went straight to her desk. Without hesitation, without circumlocution, she wrote to Bancal, exposing to him — poor wounded Chlorinda as she was — the flaw in her armor, avowing her sentiments, yet with the same breath killing the hope to which this avowal must give birth.

Bancal understood. No longer did he talk of rejoining their family, but went to England, where he remained two years.

Such hearts as these belong to classic antiquity. After all the tumults and passions of which we have been the mutual witnesses, it has seemed to me well to let my readers repose awhile in the shadow of such pure and refreshing beauty, strength, and virtue.

Let it not be said that we represent Madame Roland as otherwise than she really was, — chaste in her father's workshop, chaste in the chamber of her elderly spouse,

chaste by the cradle of her child. At an hour when one does not lie, standing face to face with the guillotine, she wrote: "I have always commanded my passions, and no woman ever lived freer from sensuality than myself."

Coldness must not be credited with the merit of her chastity. No! The epoch in which she lived was an epoch of hatred, I know; but it was also an epoch of love.

France set the example. This poor captive, long imprisoned, long in fetters, had shaken off her chains, and been restored to liberty. Like Marie Stuart, when she came from her prison-house, France wished to kiss the lips of all creation, and inspire it with her breath, that it might bring forth liberty for her country and independence for the world.

All these women loved holily, all these men loved ardently, — Lucile and Camille Desmoulins, Danton and his Louise, Mademoiselle de Kéralio and Robert, Sophie and Condorcet, Vergniaud and Mademoiselle Candeille. There was not one, even the cynical and sarcastic Robespierre, cutting and cold as the knife of the guillotine, who did not feel his heart throb before the hearthstone of love. Robespierre loved the daughter of his landlord, the carpenter, whose acquaintance we shall hereafter make.

Love is the one great virtue of the heart. Though the love we refer to was less pure, — that must be acknowledged! — yet was it not as genuine as the love of Madame Tallien, as the love of Madame de Beauharnais, as the love of Madame de Genlis, — as the affection of all lovers whose whispered consolations illuminated the pale faces of their dying friends, even on the scaffold?

At that happy epoch all the world was in love; and love must be taken in all its senses. Some loved ideals,

and others loved matter. These loved their country, and those the human race. The need of love had been growing ever since Rousseau's time. One might have supposed it was necessary to hasten after love before it had flown, — that as they drew nearer the tomb, the gulf, the abyss, each heart palpitated with an unknown emotion, passionate and devouring. It seemed as if each bosom inhaled its breath from the universal fireside, whereon all affections were merged in one universal love.

We have wandered far from the old husband and the young wife, writing in the fourth story of the Hotel Britannique. To them let us return anon.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRST REPUBLICANS.

On February 20, 1791, Roland was sent from Lyons to Paris, as a special Deputy, to plead the cause of twenty thousand famished laborers.

He had been over four months in Paris when the startling events occurred at Varennes, — events which had such an influence over our personages, and over the destiny of France, that we have felt it our duty to devote many chapters to this subject.

In the interval between the royal return, June 26, and the date of the events now to be recorded, July 16, a great many things had come to light.

Everybody shouted, "The King is saved!" Everybody ran after the King. Everybody assisted in bringing him back to Paris; but when the King had returned, when once more the King was in Paris, when once more the King was in the Tuileries, — why, nobody knew what to do with him.

Everybody had an opinion. Opinions blew from all points of the compass, like the wind in a gale. Ill fares the ship at sea in such a storm!

On June 21, when the King's flight became known, the Cordelier Club issued a notice, signed by Legendre, the French butcher, whom the Queen (in her conversation with Barnave) referred to as a copy of the English butcher, Harrison.

For an epigram the placard bore the following stanza:

Si, parmi les Français, il se trouvait un traître,
Qui regrettât les rois et qui voulût un maître,
Que le perfide meure au milieu des tourments,
Et que sa cendre soit abandonnée aux vents.

This epigram may be almost literally translated into English as follows:

If, among the French people, there liveth a traitor,
Who regretteth our kings and who wisheth a master,
May the false-hearted die amidst torments of mind,
And his ashes be scattered on wings of the wind.

Although written by Voltaire, these verses are not remarkably well rhymed; but they neatly expressed the ideas of those who issued the notice, and also lent a literary flavor to the placard.

This poster declared that all the members of the Cordelier Club had sworn to stab any tyrant who dared attack the country, liberty, or the Constitution.

As to Marat, who always marched on alone, — and who offered, as the excuse for his isolation, that turkeys train in flocks, while the eagle lives in solitude, — Marat proposed a dictatorship, as may be seen by the following paragraph in his journal:

Take a worthy Frenchman, some good Patriot, — take a citizen who, ever since the beginning of the Revolution, has shown the most intelligence, the most zeal, fidelity, and disinterestedness, — take such a one for a leader, without further delay, or the Revolutionary cause is lost!

All of which meant, *Take Marat!*

As to Prudhomme, he proposed neither a new man nor a new government; yet he abominated the old dynasty, in the person of Louis Sixteenth and his descendants. Hear him:

On the next day but one the Dauphin was taken out for the air, on the terrace of the Tuileries, which looks out upon the river. Whenever they saw a sizable group of citizens a hireling grenadier took the child in his arms, and seated him on the stone parapet of the terrace; and the royal puppet, faithful to his morning's instructions, threw kisses to the populace. This was done to curry favor for his papa and mamma. Several spectators were cowardly enough to shout "Hurrah for the Dauphin!"

Citizens, be on your guard against such cajoleries from a Court which only fawns upon the people and grovels before them, when not itself the stronger.

After these paragraphs came certain historic citations:

It was on January 27, 1649, that the English Parliament condemned Charles the First to have his head cut off, for having tried to extend the royal prerogatives, and for maintaining the encroachments of his father, James the First. It was on January 30 that he expiated his misdeeds, — almost legalized by usage, and sustained by a numerous party; but the people made themselves heard, and Parliament declared the King a *fugitive*, *traitor*, and *public enemy*, and Charles Stuart was beheaded in front of the banquet-room of Whitehall Palace.

Bravo, Citizen Prudhomme! You are certainly not behindhand; and on January 21, 1793, when Louis Sixteenth takes his turn at decapitation, you may well claim the initiative step, having suggested this example as early as June 27, 1791.

It is true that Monsieur Prudhomme, — who must not be confounded with our witty friend Monnier, for the former was an honest man, though a fool, — it is true that Monsieur Prudhomme later became a Royalist and a Conservative, and published his "History of the

Crimes Committed during the Revolution." What a good thing is conscience!

"The Iron Mouth" was more outspoken. No hypocrisy, no words of double meaning, no perfidy. It was Bonneville who edited it, — young Bonneville, — faithful, fearless, and admirably foolish fellow, who erred in regard to common affairs, but was never mistaken in great matters. It was published, this "Iron Mouth," in the Rue Ancienne Comédie, near the Odéon, two steps from the meeting-place of the Cordelier Club. This is what it said:

By the Constitutional oath the infamous word *king* has been effaced. No more kings for us! No more man-eaters! Often has the *name* been changed heretofore, but the *thing* has been retained. Now let us have no Regent, no Dictator, no Protector, no Orleans, no Lafayette. I like neither the son of Philippe d'Orleans, who to-day mounts guard at the Tuileries, nor his father, who is never seen at the Assembly, but who may constantly be seen on the Feuillant Terrace, at the gate of the palace. Must a nation be always under tutelage? Let our departments unite, and declare that they will have neither tyrants nor monarchs, neither protector nor regent, nor any such ghosts of royalty, — whose shadow is as fateful to the public weal as is the cursed Indian Upas to those who come beneath its shade.

It is not enough to pronounce the word *Republic!* Venice was a republic, but full of tyranny. What is needed is a National Commonwealth, a National Government. Call together the people in the light of the blessed sunshine. Proclaim to them Law as the only sovereign. Swear that Law alone shall reign. There is not a friend of liberty on earth who will not repeat that oath!

As to Camille Desmoulins, he mounted a chair in the gardens of the Palace Royal, the usual scene of his ora-

torical exploits, and said: "Gentlemen, it will be a misfortune if this faithless man is brought back to us. What shall we do with him? He comes like Thersites, to shed the great tear of which Homer speaks. If he is brought back, I make a motion that he be three days exposed to public ridicule, with a red handkerchief on his head, and then conducted to the frontier by easy stages."

Let us own, of all the propositions offered, that this one, from that terrible fellow called Camille Desmoulins, was not the silliest.

One more word, to picture the general sentiment. It is Dumont who speaks, a Genevese, pensioned by England, and therefore not to be suspected of partiality towards France.

> The people seem inspired with supreme wisdom. We are rid of a great embarrassment; but if the King has cleared out, the Nation remains. It is easy enough to get on with a kingless nation, but not with a nationless King.

Among all these utterances we can see that the word *republic* was not yet spoken, except by Bonneville. Neither Brissot nor Danton nor Robespierre — not even Pétion himself — dared utter that word. It frightened the Cordeliers, and was beneath the notice of the Jacobins.

On July 13 Robespierre said, on the platform: "I am neither a Republican nor a Monarchist."

If Robespierre had been driven to the wall, he would have been greatly embarrassed to say what he was.

Well, everybody was in just about that condition, except Bonneville, — and also except that lady who, sitting opposite her husband, on the fourth floor in the Rue

Guénégaud, was busily engaged in copying a political protest. On June 22, the Wednesday after the royal flight, she wrote:

Sentiments of republicanism, of indignation against Louis the Sixteenth, and of hatred of kings in general, are breathed on all sides.

This sentiment, as we see, the *sentiment* of republicanism, was in every heart, but the word *republic* was spoken by few lips. Above all, the Assembly was hostile thereto.

It is the great misfortune of assemblies and parliaments to come to a stop as soon as they are elected, — to no longer take note of events, no longer march on with the national spirit. They do not follow whither the people lead, and yet they claim to still represent the people.

This is what the Assembly said:

The customs of France are not Republican.

The Assembly had a tussle with Monsieur de la Palisse, and in our opinion got the better of that illustrious truth-teller. What was to give Republican manners and habits and customs to France? The monarchy? No, the monarchy was not so stupid. The monarchy wanted obedience, servility, corruption, and the monarchy therefore cultivated the fashions of corruption, servility, and obedience. First get your Republic, and Republican manners will come in good time.

There was one moment when the proclamation of a republic would have been very easy; and that was when the King was on the wing, taking the Dauphin along with him. Instead of being pursued and brought back,

the royal fugitives should have been furnished with the best horses from the post-stables, and with vigorous postilions, with whips in their hands and spurs on their boots. Then the courtiers should have been driven away after the King, and the priests after the courtiers; and the door should have been shut behind them. Even Lafayette, who sometimes had flashes of sense, though he rarely had ideas, enjoyed one of these flashes.

At six in the morning of June 21 somebody came to inform Lafayette that the royal family had run away. It required all the pains in the world to wake him up, for he generally slept that historic "sleep of the just" for which he had already been reproached at Versailles.

"Gone? Impossible! Why, I left Gouvion leaning sleepily against the door of their bedrooms." So spake the General.

Forthwith he left his bed, dressed himself, and went downstairs. At the door he met Bailly, who was Mayor of Paris, and Beauharnais, the President of the Assembly. Bailly's face was as yellow and his nose as long as ever. Beauharnais was in consternation.

Curious, was it not, that Josephine's first husband, whose death, on the scaffold, left the way clear for his widow to ascend the throne as Napoleon's wife, should have felt such consternation over the flight of Louis the Sixteenth?

"What a misfortune," cried Bailly, "that the Assembly is not yet in session!"

"Yes," said Beauharnais, "a great misfortune!"

"Wait a bit!" said Lafayette. "Is he really gone?"

"Alas, yes!" responded the two astute statesmen, simultaneously.

"Why *alas?*" asked Lafayette.

"What? Can't you understand?" cried Bailly. "Why, he'll come back with Prussians, Austrians, and all the Court fugitives at his heels; because he'll force us into civil war or foreign war."

"Then," said Lafayette, hardly convinced, "you think that the public welfare demands the return of the King?"

"Yes!" was the united reply of Mayor Bailly and President Beauharnais.

"In that case we must send after him," said Lafayette; and he wrote the following order:

The enemies of our country having abducted the King, the National Guards are ordered to arrest them.

Take notice that all the politics of 1791, and the entire aim of the National Assembly, turned upon this one point: as the King was a French necessity, and must be brought back, it must not be said that he had escaped of his own accord, but that he had been abducted by his enemies.

However, Lafayette was not convinced; so he sent Romeuf on the royal track, with instructions not to be too much in a hurry. The young aide would have taken the road opposite to the King's, so as not to overtake him. Indeed he did start the wrong way, but unfortunately Billot was on the right track.

When the Assembly heard the news it was terrified. Indeed, on his departure the King had left a menacing letter, and it was perfectly evident that he had gone over to the national enemies, with whom he would return, and try to bring France to reason. On the other hand the Royalists raised their heads and lifted their voices. One of them, Suleau, wrote as follows:

All who wish to be included in the amnesty which we offer our enemies in the name of the Prince de Condé, may inscribe their names in our office, between now and the month of August. We have fifteen hundred registers for the accommodation of the public.

One of the most frightened citizens was Robespierre. The session of the Assembly being suspended from three till half-past five, he ran to Pétion. The weak man sought the support of the strong.

According to Robespierre, Lafayette was but an accomplice of the Court. He was agitated over nothing less than a prospective Saint Bartholomew Massacre among the Deputies. "I shall be one of the first to suffer," he said. "I have not over twenty-four hours to live."

Pétion's character, on the contrary, was calm and lymphatic, and he saw things differently. He replied: "Oh, now we know the King so well, we can act accordingly."

Brissot came in, — one of the most progressive men of that epoch, and a writer for "The Patriot." He exclaimed to his friends: "A new journal is to be founded, of which I 'm to be the editor."

"What is it?"

When he explained that it was to be called "The Republican," Robespierre made a grimace and said: "I wish you would explain to me what a republic is."

They were there, in Pétion's apartments, when the two Rolands came to see their friend. The husband was austere and resolute, as always. The wife, with her beautiful, sparkling, and speaking eyes, was calm and jubilant, rather than dismayed. They had come from home, and had seen the notice issued by the Cordeliers. Like the Cordeliers, the Rolands did not believe a king was of the least earthly importance to a nation.

The courage of this husband and wife restored Robespierre's. He returned to the session of the Assembly as an observer, ready to profit by any turn of affairs, as the fox watches the terrier from his hiding-place. Towards nine o'clock in the evening he found that the tendency of the members was towards sentimentalism, that they were preaching fraternity; and that, to join example to theory, they would soon adjourn in a body to the Jacobin Club, with whom they had been on bad terms, — the Deputies even calling the Jacobins a band of assassins.

Robespierre slipped from his bench, crawled towards the door, squirmed through it without being noticed, ran to the old chapel where the Jacobins were assembled, mounted the platform, denounced the King, denounced the cabinet, denounced Bailly, denounced Lafayette, denounced the entire Assembly, repeated his fable of the morning, described an imaginary Saint Bartholomew's Day, and finished by laying his existence upon the altar of Patriotism.

When Robespierre spoke on his own account he always attained a certain standard of eloquence. At the very idea that the virtuous, the austere Robespierre was incurring any great danger, the audience sobbed. "If thou diest, we will die with thee!" cried a voice. "Yes, yes! All of us, all of us!" repeated a chorus of auditors. Some raised their hands to swear it. Some drew their swords, while others fell upon their knees, with their arms raised to Heaven. Everybody lifted his arms heavenward in those days. It was the fashion of the epoch. Look at David's picture of the Oath in the Tennis Court.

Madame Roland was there, not too well understanding how Robespierre was running any special danger; but she was a woman, and consequently accessible to emotion.

The excitement was great. She also was moved, as she herself acknowledges.

At that moment Danton entered the chapel. As his popularity was growing, it was for him to assail the wavering popularity of Lafayette.

Wherefore this general dislike of Lafayette? Perhaps because he was an honest man, and always the dupe of those who appealed to his generosity.

When the members of the Assembly were announced, when Lafayette and Lameth, two mortal enemies, entered the hall arm in arm, in order to set an example of fraternity, the cry was heard on all sides: "Danton to the platform! To the platform! Danton!"

Robespierre asked nothing better than to yield his place. Robespierre, as we have said, was a fox, and not a mastiff. He pursued the absent enemy, sprang upon him from behind, pinned his shoulders, gnawed his skull to the quick, but rarely attacked him face to face.

The tribune was vacant, waiting for Danton; only it was difficult for Danton to take the stand. If he was the only man able to assail Lafayette, Lafayette was perhaps the one man whom Danton dared not attack.

Why? Ah, we will tell you. There was much of Mirabeau in Danton, as there was much of Danton in Mirabeau. They had the same temperament, the same need of sensual pleasure, the same need of money; and they consequently offered the same facilities for corruption.

We are assured that, like Mirabeau, Danton received Court gold. When? By what means? How much? No one knew; but that he had received it, everybody was sure. At least, so it was said.

Here is the reality underlying all this talk. Danton had just sold to the ministry his position as Advocate to

the King's Council, and it was said he received from the ministry four times as much as the office was really worth, or as appeared on the surface.

This was true; only the secret was between three persons: the seller, Danton; the buyer, Monsieur de Montmorin; the negotiator, Lafayette.

If Danton attacked Lafayette, the General might throw into Danton's face the whole story of this sale of an office for four times its value.

Any other man would have shrunk back. Danton, on the contrary, went straight on. He knew Lafayette, and how the generosity of his heart oft degenerated into asininity; in proof whereof we may recall his action in 1830, — forty years later.

Danton said to himself that Montmorin, the friend of Lafayette, — Montmorin, who had signed the King's passport, — was too much compromised at that moment for Lafayette to throw this new stone, which might prove a boomerang.

Danton ascended the platform. His speech was not long.

"Monsieur President, I accuse Lafayette. Let the traitor come here. Let two scaffolds be prepared, and I will consent to mount one of them, if he is not found worthy to mount the other."

The *traitor* did not come. He was there already. He heard the terrible accusation from Danton's mouth; but as Danton had foreseen, Lafayette was too generous to respond.

Lameth took this duty upon himself. Over Danton's stream of lava Lameth poured the lukewarm water of his ordinary pastorals, and preached fraternity.

Then came Sieyès, who also preached fraternity. Then Barnave preached fraternity.

These three popular orators finished by overpowering Danton's influence. The observers were glad Danton attacked Lafayette; but they were also glad that Lameth, Sieyès, and Barnave defended him; and when Lafayette and Danton left the Jacobin Club, it was Lafayette who was accompanied with torches and acclamations.

The Court party claimed a great victory in this ovation to Lafayette. The two great powers of the day had been beaten in the persons of their chiefs, — the Jacobins, in Robespierre, the Cordeliers, in Danton.

It is very evident that it will take another chapter to describe the protest which Madame Roland copied, as she sat face to face with her husband, in that little parlor on the fourth floor of the Hotel Britannique.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LOWER FLOOR OF THE TUILERIES.

Now we must learn the contents of the protest which Madame Roland was copying; but in order for the reader to become familiar with the situation, and see his way clearly through one of the darkest and most mysterious periods of the Revolution, let him go with us through the Tuileries, on the night of July 15, 1791.

Behind the door of a suite of apartments opening upon an obscure and deserted corridor, situated in the lower story of the palace, stands a woman "with an attent ear," and her hand on the key, who trembles at every step which rouses an echo in her neighborhood.

If we are ignorant who the woman is, it will be difficult for us to recognize her; for not only does darkness reign in this corridor in the daytime, but it is now night, and, either accidentally or intentionally, the wick of the one argand lamp, which burns near by, is turned down so far as to be nearly extinguished.

Moreover, the second room in the suite is the only one lighted, and it is against the door of the first room the woman stands listening and trembling.

Who is the woman who thus watches? Marie Antoinette! For whom doth she wait? Barnave!

Oh, superb daughter of Maria Theresa, who could have conjectured, on the day when you were consecrated as Queen of France, that there would come a time, when, concealed behind the door of your chambermaid's rooms,

trembling with fear and hope, you would await the arrival of a petty lawyer from Grenoble, — you, who so often disappointed Mirabeau, and deigned to receive but one visit from him?

Let there be no mistake, however. It is political interest which leads the Queen to thus await Barnave. In that suspended breath, in those nervous movements, in that hand which freezes to the key, the heart counts for nothing; pride only is concerned.

We say *pride;* for it is evident, despite the thousand persecutions of which the King and Queen have been the butt since their return, inasmuch as their lives are now safe, all questions are summed up in these few words: Shall the Varennes fugitives lose the rest of their power, or shall they reconquer the power already lost?

On that fatal evening when Charny quitted the Tuileries, nevermore to return, the Queen's heart ceased to throb with any tender sentiment. During several days she remained indifferent to everything, even to insults; but little by little she perceived that two traits in her powerful organization were still alive, pride and hatred, and she came to herself in order to hate and be avenged.

Not revenge on Charny did she seek, nor did she hate Andrée. When she thought of them, it was herself whom the Queen despised, and on herself she would be revenged; for she was too truthful not to see that on her side were all the wrongs, and on theirs all the devotion.

If she could have hated *them*, she would have been happy. What she did hate, from the bottom of her heart, was the populace, who had laid hands on her, as if she were an ordinary fugitive from justice, — the people who pursued her with insults, covered her with

shame, filled her with disgust. Yes, she hated the people who once called her Madame Deficit and Madame Veto, who now called her *that Austrian woman*, and who, in the future, were to call her the Widow Capet; and if ever she could be avenged, she meant to be.

Now that which summoned Barnave to her on July 15, 1791, at nine in the evening, — while Madame Roland, in that little parlor on the fourth floor of the Hotel Britannique, was copying that protest of whose contents we are still in ignorance, — was perhaps impotency and despair; but it was possibly also that divine recompense which we call Vengeance.

The situation was grave. Thanks to Lafayette and the National Assembly, the first blow had been parried with the shield of the Constitution. The King had not fled! Oh, no! He had been abducted, — that was all!

We must not however forget the bulletin issued by the Cordelier Club; we must not forget Marat's proposal for a dictatorship; we must not forget the petty diatribe of Citizen Prudhomme, about the Dauphin's outing on the terrace; we must not forget the whimsical utterances of Bonneville; we must not forget the suggestion that the King should be carried back to the frontier as a public curiosity; we must not forget the clever axiom of the Genevese Dumont; and we must not forget the establishment of a new journal, which Brissot was to control, and which was to be called "The Republican."

Would you like to see the prospectus of that journal? It is short, but explicit. It was written in English, by Thomas Paine, and then translated into French, by a young officer who had fought in the American Revolution; and it was published over the signature, Duchâtelet.

How strange was the fatality which, from the four corners of the world, called together new enemies of the crumbling throne. Thomas Paine! What brought him hither, — that man who belonged to all countries, England, America, France, who had tried all trades, as manufacturer, schoolmaster, tax-gatherer, sailor, journalist? What he came for was to mingle his breath with the storm which whistled pitilessly over a dying flame.

Here is the prospectus of "The Republican" of 1791, that journal which appeared, or was on the eve of publication at the very time when Robespierre was asking what a republic could be:

We have just proved that a king's absence is worth more than his presence. He deserted his throne, and this amounted to abdication. The Nation will never regain its confidence in the perjured runaway.

Was his flight the work of others, or himself? What matters that? Whether a knave or an idiot, he is equally unworthy of power. We are well rid of him, and he is free from us. He is now a simple individual, Louis de Bourbon. As for his safety, that is certain, for France will never dishonor herself; but royalty is finished. What is an office worth, when left to the chance of birth, and liable to be filled by an idiot? It is a cipher, a nonentity.

One may understand the effect produced by such a bulletin, pasted on the walls of Paris. Malouet, the Constitutionalist, was amazed. Affrighted and out of breath he entered the National Assembly, denounced the prospectus, and demanded the arrest of its authors.

"So be it!" said Pétion; "but let us first read the prospectus."

Pétion, one of the few Republicans then converted in France, knew this prospectus perfectly well. Malouet, who denounced it, was reluctant to have it read. What

if the Deputies should applaud it? and he was almost certain they would applaud it.

Two members of the Assembly, Chabroud and Chapelier, tried to repair the blunder of their colleague, by saying: "The press is free, and every one, wise or foolish, has a right to set forth his opinions. Let us pay no heed to the utterance of frenzy, but pass on to the business of the day!" and this the Assembly did; so let *us* talk no more about it.

Nevertheless, here was the hydra which menaced the monarchy. Cut off one head; and even as you push it aside, another stings you.

The conspiracy of *Monsieur* with Favras had not been forgotten, — the time when it was proposed to get the King out of the way and appoint *Monsieur* as Regent. Now nobody thought about *Monsieur*. He had fled at the same time as the King; only he was more lucky than his brother, and reached the frontier.

But the Duke d'Orleans still remained. He remained with his sworn friend, with the man who constantly urged him forward, — Laclos, the author of "Dangerous Entanglements."

There was in existence a decree concerning a regency, — a decree mouldering in the archives. Why not utilize that old decree?

In its issue of June 28 a certain journal offered the regency to Orleans. Apparently Louis Sixteenth no longer existed, as you see; although there was still the National Assembly. As there was no longer a king, why not offer the regency to Orleans? It may be readily understood that the Duke pretended to be astonished, and refused the offer.

Nevertheless, on the First of July, Laclos, on his own private authority, proclaimed the forfeiture of the throne,

and the need of a regent. On July 3 Réal set forth the idea that the proper guardian of the young prince was Orleans. On the next day he made a demand, from the rostrum of the Jacobin Club, that the old decree, as to a regency, be reprinted and published. Unfortunately the Jacobins, although they did not yet know precisely where they stood, at least knew where they did not stand. They were not Orleanists, although both Orleans and Chartres belonged to their society. The regency of Orleans was rejected by the Jacobins.

One night sufficed for Laclos to regain his breath. If not the master of the Jacobins, he was at least master of his journal, and in that he proclaimed the regency of Orleans; and as the word *protector* had been profaned by Cromwell, the Regent, though he was to have all power, was to be called the *moderator*.

All this, as one may see, was a campaign against royalty, — a campaign wherein royalty, in itself powerless, had no other ally except the National Assembly; whereas the Jacobins constituted an assembly more influential and more dauntless than the National Assembly itself.

On July 8 — you see we are gradually coming nearer the end! — Pétion brought up the question of royal inviolability; making, however, a distinction between political inviolability and personal inviolability.

It was objected that if Louis the Sixteenth should be deposed, this action would embroil France with the kings of other nations.

"If other kings wish to fight us," responded Pétion, "by deposing Louis Sixteenth we shall deprive them of their most powerful ally; whereas, if we leave him on the throne, we give our enemies all the force which we restore to King Louis."

Brissot mounted the tribune in his turn, and went yet farther. He examined this question: Can the King be legally tried. "Later," he said, "in case of *deposition*, we will discuss what sort of government shall be substituted for royalty."

It is said that Brissot was superb. Madame Roland was at the session. Listen to what she wrote:

Not merely plaudits, but cries and transports were heard on all sides. Thrice the entire legislative body was constrained to rise. Arms were upraised, hats were waving in the air, and there was inexpressible enthusiasm. Perish forever those who witness and share such great outbreaks, and yet are willing to resume their chains!

It was not only decided that the King might be tried, if necessary, but the resolution was passed with great enthusiasm.

Imagine what a terrible echo these plaudits must have roused in the Tuileries!

In its turn the National Assembly could not avoid grappling with this formidable question.

The Constitutionalists, instead of shirking this debate, provoked it, feeling sure of a majority; but the majority of the Assembly was far from representing the majority of the Nation. What mattered that? Legislative bodies seldom worry themselves over such little anomalies. They enact laws, and the people upset them; and when the people defeat what the legislature has decreed, then you have a revolution.

On July 13 the public seats were filled with reliable fellows, introduced in advance by special tickets. These constituted what we should to-day call, in a theatre, the *claque*, or hired band of applauders. Outside the hall,

the corridors were filled with Royalists. For this occasion the Poniard Knights again came to the front.

By request of a member the Tuileries Gardens were closed. Perhaps on that night the Queen waited for Barnave as impatiently as she did on the evening of July 15.

Nothing was decided on that day, however; only the report was read, as prepared by a committee. In this report it was said:

> The flight of the King is not a case provided for in the Constitution; but the royal inviolability is therein decreed.

That is, — the Constitution declared the King's royal person too sacred to be touched, but did not take into account the possibility of his running away.

The committee, therefore, regarding the King himself as beyond legislative jurisdiction, could only recommend the delivery to justice of the elder Bouillé, Charny, Madame de Tourzel, the young noblemen who acted as couriers, the attendants, and lackeys. Never was there a better illustration of the ingenious fable about great and little fishes. Let the net hold those who are not too strong to escape its meshes.

This question was debated far more zealously in the Jacobin Club than in the Assembly.

As it was not yet decided, Robespierre was still on the fence. He was neither a Republican nor a Monarchist. One could be as liberal under a king as with a senate.

He was a man who rarely compromised himself, this Robespierre; and yet we saw, at the end of the preceding chapter, what terrors gat hold upon him, even when he was not compromised.

There are some men, however, who have not so much precious prudence. Such men were Danton, the ex-advocate, and Legendre, the butcher, — a bulldog and a bear.

"The Assembly may absolve the King," said Danton; "but this judgment will be reversed by France, for France condemns him."

"The committee-men are fools!" said Legendre. "If they knew the spirit of the masses, they would return to reason. If I speak thus, it is for the committee's own good."

Such speeches roused the indignation of the Constitutionalists; but, unhappily for them, they did not form the majority among the Jacobins, as they did in the Assembly, and so they contented themselves by withdrawing from the club. They erred. It is always a mistake to quit one's place. "The absent are always in the wrong." There is also another old French proverb, full of good sense: "Who quits his place, loses it."

Not only did the Constitutionalists lose their places, but their places were speedily taken by popular deputations, bearing petitions against the committee. This was what took place at the Jacobin Club, where these new members were received with acclamations.

Meantime an address, which was bound to win for itself a certain importance in the events which followed, was prepared at the other end of Paris, in the Marais (or Swamp) district, by a club — or rather by a fraternal union — of men and women, called the Society of Minims, — a name suggested perhaps by the little fishes which abounded in that locality in those days.

This society was an appendage of the Cordelier Club, being also animated by the spirit of Danton. A young man of twenty-three or twenty-four years old, upon whom

Danton had breathed his spirit, and who was animated by that breath, held the pen and prepared the address.

This young man was Jean Lambert Tallien. The address bore a formidable signature. It was signed, *The People.*

On July 14 the discussion was begun in the Assembly. This time it was impossible to keep the public out of the galleries, impossible also to fill up the corridors and avenues with Royalists and with the Poniard Knights, and impossible to close the Tuileries Gardens, — as on the former occasion.

The prologue had been acted before the *claqueurs* alone, but now the main drama must be represented before the real public; and it must be acknowledged that this public was unfavorably disposed towards royal favoritism, — so much so that Duport, so popular three months before, was heard in glum silence, when he proposed that the King's offence should bring disaster only to those who surrounded his Majesty.

However, Duport went on to the end, surprised that he could speak without rousing a single word or sign of approbation, — an unprecedented experience. He was one of a triad of stars, — Duport, Lameth, Barnave, — whose lights went out one by one, in the political firmament.

Robespierre next mounted the platform. Robespierre, the prudent man, who knew so well how to hide his tracks, what would he say? This orator, who not many days before had declared himself neither a Monarchist nor a Republican, what position would he now take? He did not distinctly state.

He said, with his sweetest acidity, that he was there to constitute himself the advocate of the highest humanity. He said that it seemed to him both unfair and cruel to

smite only the weak; that he would not attack the King, inasmuch as the Assembly appeared to regard the King as inviolable, but he would defend Bouillé, Charny, Madame de Tourzel, the couriers, the lackeys, the attendants, and all others who had been forced to obey the King, by their dependent or subordinate positions.

The Assembly murmured during this speech. The galleries listened with great attention, not knowing whether to applaud or disapprove. At last they were able to see in the orator's words what was really there, a covert attack on royalty, and a satirical defence of courtiers and sycophants.

Then the galleries applauded Robespierre. The President tried to impose silence in the galleries.

Prieur de la Marne wished to bring the debate upon ground wholly free from subterfuges and paradoxes. He asked: "Citizens, what would you do, if the King were entirely out of the way, and somebody should come to you with the demand that he be reinstated in full power?"

This question was the more embarrassing, because it was so direct; but there are shameless times when nothing is embarrassing to reactionists and timeservers.

Desmeuniers replied, and appeared to sustain the cause of the Assembly, at the expense of the King. He said: "The Assembly is an all-powerful body; and in its power it has the right to suspend the royal prerogatives, and to maintain that suspension until the Constitution is completed and established."

That is, — as the King had not fled, but had been abducted, his power could only be suspended temporarily, because the Constitution was not yet completed; but when once the Constitution was finished, the King might again enter, with full rights, into the exercise of his royal functions.

"Finally," said the speaker, "if anybody asks me," — though nobody *did* ask him, — "if anybody asks me to give my explanation of the proposed decree, here is the project which I suggest: *First* — This suspension of the King's authority shall endure till the King accepts the Constitution. *Second* — If he does not accept it, the Assembly shall declare him deposed."

"Oh, be easy!" exclaimed Grégoire, without leaving his seat. "Not only will he accept it, but he 'll swear to anything you ask."

Desmeuniers would have been entirely right, if he had said "*swear and accept*, whatever you ask," instead of "*accept and swear;*" for kings promise much more readily than they perform.

The Assembly was about to seize this proposition on the wing; but Robespierre, without leaving his seat, threw out this word: "Be careful! Such a decree would be a decision, in advance, that the King is not to be tried."

Thus surprised in the very act of offending, the Assembly dared not vote this decree. A noise at the door of the hall also added to the embarrassment.

The noise came from a deputation of the Fraternal Society of Minims, bearing the proclamation inspired by Danton, prepared by Tallien, and signed by *The People.*

The Assembly revenged itself on the petitioners, by refusing to hear their address.

Barnave rose and said: "Let it not be read to-day, but hear it to-morrow; and do not let us be influenced by factious opinions. Let the Law hoist its ensign and display its signal, and we shall see a rally of all good citizens."

Reader, remember this speech! Reperuse these six

words! Meditate upon that phrase: *Let the Law hoist its signal!* The phrase was uttered on July 14; but the massacre of July 17 is in that phrase.

Thus the Assembly was not content with merely tricking the people out of their mastery, which they believed they had obtained by the royal desertion, — or rather, let us say, by the treachery of the people's representative; but that Assembly must publicly surrender this mastery to Louis Sixteenth; and if the people reclaimed their rights, if they offered petitions, this only indicated a factious disposition, which would give the Assembly, that other representative of the people, an excuse for raising its flag.

What signified these words, *Raise the signal of Law?* They signified the proclamation of martial law, and the display of the red flag.

Indeed on the next day — July 15, the decisive day — the Assembly presented a formidable aspect. Nobody menaced the Assembly, but it had the air of being menaced. Lafayette was summoned to its aid; and Lafayette, — who had always come very near the people, without really knowing it, — Lafayette sent to the Assembly five thousand National Guardsmen, with whom, in order to stimulate the people, he took pains to mix a thousand pikes from the Saint Antoine district. The guns were the aristocracy of the National Guard, and the pikes represented the proletariat.

Convinced, like Barnave, that it was only needful to hoist the signal of Law, in order to bring to its support, not the people particularly, but Lafayette, as commander of the National Guard, and Bailly, the Mayor of Paris, the Assembly decided to bring matters to a crisis.

Although the Assembly had hardly been in existence two years, it already moved on like the later assemblies

of 1829 and 1846. The leaders knew they had only to weary members and auditors with secondary discussions, and postpone to the end of the session the main question, in order to carry their point. Half of the session was wasted in listening to a military report on Department Affairs. Then they listened complacently to three or four members, who had a fashion of speaking in every special debate. Then, when the limits of discussion were reached, others were silent, while two speeches were delivered, one by Salles and the other by Barnave.

These two discourses were so convincing to the Assembly that Lafayette himself moved the closure of the debate, and the vote was taken in all serenity.

On that day the Assembly had nothing to fear. To use the slang of the times, because it is most significant, they had *done* the galleries. The Tuileries Gardens were closed. The police received their orders from the President. Lafayette sat in the Assembly, to move the previous question, and so cut off further debate. Bailly was in his place as the head of the city council. Everything was ready for the final stroke. Everywhere the authorities were under arms, and prepared to control the populace.

The populace, being in no condition for a contest, passed by the long array of pikes and bayonets, and betook themselves to their modern Mount Aventine, — that is, the Champ de Mars.

Note this! They did not rush to the Champ de Mars for rebellious purposes, as the Romans of old went to their Aventine, but because they hoped there to find the Patriot Altar, which, since the day before, — July 14, the Bastille anniversary, — the government had not found time to demolish, — prompt as governments usually are to pull down such patriotic structures.

There the crowd adopted a remonstrance, and sent it to the Assembly.

While this was going on, the Assembly voted, first, a preventive measure:

If the King breaks his oath, if he attacks or refuses to defend his people, he virtually abdicates his throne, becomes a simple citizen, and is personally responsible for all offences he commits after his abdication.

Secondly, a repressive measure was adopted:

Bouillé shall be prosecuted as the chief criminal; and all other persons who assisted in the King's abduction shall be prosecuted as secondary criminals.

At the moment when the Assembly was passing this vote, the crowd, having heard and signed their remonstrance, were returning to present it to the Assembly, which they found more strongly guarded than before. All the leaders of the Assembly were military men that day. The President of the Assembly was a young colonel, Charles Lameth. The Commander of the National Guard was Lafayette, a young general. Even our worthy astronomer, Bailly, had something the air of a warrior, amidst his bayonets and pikes, having knotted about his scientist's coat the tricolored sash, and adorned his pensive brow with the three-cornered cocked hat of the municipality. So well did he look in this guise that Madame Bailly mistook him for Lafayette, as (so they say) she had sometimes mistaken Lafayette for her husband.

The crowd talked. They felt so little hostility, that there was no reason why they should not talk. The result of their conference was, that deputies were permitted to confer with Robespierre and Pétion. You see

how the popularity of these new names waxed, in proportion as the popularity of the old names waned, — of Duport, Barnave, Lameth, Lafayette, Bailly. The delegates, six in number, started for the Assembly with a great company at their heels. Duly notified, Pétion and Robespierre hastened to the avenue of the Feuillant Terrace, to meet these delegates, and receive their message.

Too late! The vote in the Assembly had been taken.

These two members of the Assembly, not being favorable to this vote, did not so state the matter to the popular delegates as to make them swallow it kindly; and so these deputies returned furious to those who had sent them.

The people had lost their game, while holding the best cards fortune ever put into the popular hand.

At once the populace were enraged. They spread themselves over the city, and began by making the managers close the theatres. When the theatres are closed, as a friend says about a similar occasion in 1830, it is like a black flag over all Paris.

The Operahouse resisted, having a garrison within. Lafayette, with his four thousand muskets and thousand pikes, asked nothing better than the privilege of repressing this growing outbreak; but the municipal authorities refused to give the proper orders.

Up to this time the Queen had kept the track of events; but now reports were suddenly cut off, and the next intelligence was lost in a night less black than the events themselves.

Barnave, whom she awaited with so much impatience, was to come and tell her what had taken place during the day. All the world felt the approach of an impending crisis.

The King, who with the Queen had been awaiting Barnave's arrival in the second room of Madame Campan's apartments, was notified of a visit from Doctor Gilbert, and, in order to give the more attention to his reports, had gone upstairs to his own rooms, to see Gilbert, leaving Barnave to the Queen.

Towards nine a step resounded along the corridor. A voice was heard exchanging a few words with the sentinel who guarded the hallway. Then a young man appeared in the corridor, clad as a lieutenant in the National Guards.

It was Barnave. The Queen, her heart palpitating as if that man were a cherished lover, unfastened the door; and Barnave, after looking carefully before and behind him, glided through the open flap of it.

The door was instantly shut, and before a word was spoken, the grating of the bolt could be heard in its socket.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF JULY.

THE hearts of both were beating with equal violence, but under the impulse of very opposite sentiments. The Queen's heart was beating with hopes of vengeance; Barnave's heart was aflame with the desire for her love.

The Queen passed quickly into the inner room, — seeking for light, so to speak. She certainly did not fear either Barnave or his passion, for she well knew his love to be respectful and devoted; but with feminine instinct she fled from the darkness.

On entering this room she at once sat down. Barnave paused on the threshold, and surveyed the whole circumference of the little parlor, lighted only by two candles. He expected to find the King there; for the King had assisted at Barnave's two previous interviews with Marie Antoinette; but there was no third person present. For the first time since their promenade in the picture-gallery of the Archbishop's residence at Meaux, Barnave found himself *tête-à-tête* with the Queen. His hand involuntarily sought his heart, to suppress its beatings.

"Oh, Monsieur Barnave," said the Queen, after a moment of silence, "I have been expecting you for two hours."

At this reproach, made in a voice so soft that it ceased to be accusatory and became plaintive, Barnave's first impulse was to throw himself at the Queen's feet; but

respect forbade this demonstration. The heart sometimes tells us that to fall on our knees at a woman's feet is to fail in proper respect.

"Alas, Madame, it is true," he said; "but I hope your Majesty is convinced that my tardiness is not in my will."

"Oh, yes!" said she, with a slight affirmative nod of the head. "I know your devotion to the monarchy."

"Above all, I am devoted to the Queen," said Barnave. "I wish your Majesty might be persuaded of that!"

"I doubt it not, Monsieur Barnave. — So you could not get here sooner?"

"I attempted to do so at seven o'clock, Madame; but it was too near the broad daylight, and I met — how dares such a man approach your palace? — I met Marat on the terrace."

"Marat?" said the Queen, as if trying to place the name in her memory. "Isn't he a newspaper man, who writes against us?"

"Who scribbles against all the world! — Yes. His viperous eye followed me till I disappeared through the grating of the Feuillant Terrace. I passed along, without even a glance at your windows. Happily, on Royal Bridge, whom should I meet but Saint-Prix."

"Saint-Prix? Who is he, — an actor?" said the Queen, with almost as much scorn as she had just shown towards Marat.

"Yes, Madame, an actor!" replied Barnave; "but why not? This is one of the characteristics of our epoch. Actors and journalists, — fellows of whose very existence kings were formerly ignorant, save when their lordships gave orders which the poor fellows were only too glad to obey, — journalists and actors have become

citizens, having their share of influence, exercising wills of their own, acting according to their own inspiration, with power for good or ill, — important parts of the great social machine, wherein royalty is now but the superior wheel. — Saint-Prix took Marat's bad taste out of my mouth."

"How so?"

"Saint-Prix was in uniform. Knowing him very well, Madame, I spoke to him, and asked him where he was to be on guard. Fortunately he was to be here, in the palace. I knew I could trust his discretion; so I told him I was to have the honor of an audience with you."

"Oh, Monsieur Barnave!"

"Was it better to renounce the honor —" Barnave nearly said *happiness*, but he checked himself, and said *honor* — "of seeing you, and so leave you in ignorance of the important intelligence which I have to make known?"

"No, you did right, — if you think you can trust Saint-Prix."

"Madame, this is a critical moment," said Barnave, gravely, "as you may well believe. Those who remain faithful to you now are indeed true friends; for if to-morrow — and this point will be decided to-morrow — the Jacobins prevail over the Constitutionalists, your friends will be regarded as your accomplices. As you see, the legislative decrees only free you from punishment in order to strike your friends, who are called your accomplices."

"True!" replied the Queen; "but you were saying that Monsieur Saint-Prix —?"

"Saint-Prix told me that he should be on guard at the Tuileries from nine till eleven, that he would endeavor to get a post here on the ground floor, and thus your Majesty would have full two hours in which to give me

your orders. Only he counselled me to wear my uniform as an officer in the National Guard; and I have followed his advice, as your Majesty sees."

"And you found Saint-Prix at his post?"

"Yes, Madame. — It cost him two theatre tickets to get this appointment from his sergeant. You see how easy a thing is corruption!" added Barnave, smiling.

"Marat — Saint-Prix — two theatre tickets!" repeated the Queen, glancing with a startled look into the abyss, wherefrom emerge those petty spindles which weave the destinies of kings in times of revolution.

"Oh, my God, yes!" said Barnave. "Strange, is it not, Madame? This is what the ancients called Fate, what philosophers call Chance, what believers call Providence."

The Queen drew a lock of her long hair over her beautiful neck, and looked at it sadly. At last she said: "That is what whitens my hair!"

Returning to Barnave, and the political side of the situation, — for a moment forgotten in contemplating the mysterious and picturesque side, — she said: "I think I have heard it said that we have won a victory in the Assembly."

"Yes, Madame, we have gained a victory in the Assembly; but we have suffered a defeat at the Jacobin Club."

"But I can't understand all this. — I thought the Jacobins were on your side, with Lameth and Duport, — that you held the Jacobins in your hand, and could do with them what you chose."

Barnave shook his head sorrowfully as he said: "It was so formerly; but a new spirit has come over the Jacobins."

"Orleans, — is it not?" asked the Queen.

"Yes, at present the peril comes from that quarter."

"The peril? I ask again, are we not put out of danger by to-day's vote?"

"It is best to understand the difficulty well, in order to face the situation. The vote of to-day was to this purport, — that if the King forfeited his oath, if he attacked or did not defend his people, he practically abdicated his throne, and so became a plain citizen, and accountable for any offences which he might commit subsequent to his abdication."

"Well," said the Queen, "the King will not go back on his oath; he will not attack his own subjects; and if they are attacked, the King will defend them."

"Yes, Madame! but by this vote a door is left open for extreme Revolutionists and Orleanists. The Assembly has not yet decided about the King. Some preventive measures have been voted, in case of a second desertion; but the first flight has been left out of the question. Do you know what was proposed at the Jacobin Club this evening, by Laclos, Orleans's tool?"

"Something terrible, no doubt. What wholesome measure could be proposed by the author of such a vulgar story as his?"

"He demanded that a petition should be circulated in Paris, and all over France, to compel the King's resignation. He would be answerable for at least ten million signatures."

"Ten million signatures!" cried the Queen. "My God! Are we so much hated, that ten millions of people wish to push us from the throne?"

"Oh, Madame! majorities are easily obtainable."

"And Laclos's motion was passed?"

"It raised a discussion. — Danton sustained it."

"Danton? Why, I thought Danton was with us.

Montmorin talked to me about some office, connected with the Crown Council, — either bought or sold, I forget which, — which secured the aid of this man for our side."

"Monsieur de Montmorin was mistaken, Madame. If Danton belongs to anybody, it is to Orleans."

"And did Robespierre speak? They say he is beginning to have great influence."

"Yes, Robespierre spoke. He did not sustain the Laclos petition, but simply advocated some address to the Jacobin societies scattered through the provinces."

"But it is necessary to have Robespierre, if he has acquired such importance."

"Nobody owns Robespierre, Madame. He stands by himself, — for an ideal, for a phantom, for Utopia, — for an ambition, perhaps."

"Well, as for his ambition, whatever it may be, we can gratify it. — Suppose he wishes for wealth —?"

"He does not care to be rich."

"To be a cabinet-minister, then —?"

"Perhaps he wishes to be more than a cabinet-minister."

The Queen looked at Barnave almost in dread. Presently she said: "It seems to me that the royal ministry is the most elevated station to which one of our subjects may aspire."

"If Robespierre considers the King dethroned, he no longer regards himself as one of the King's subjects."

"To what then does his ambition point?" asked the amazed Queen.

"There are certain times, Madame, when men dream of new titles in politics, in place of old titles, which are effaced."

"Yes, I can understand that Orleans might dream of being Regent, for his birth entitles him to such high

functions ; but Robespierre, a pettifogger from the provinces — ! "

She forgot that Barnave also was an attorney from the provinces. Barnave remained motionless, either because the blow glided over him without touching his sensibility, or else because he had the courage to take the blow and make no sign.

" Marius and Cromwell rose from the ranks of the people," he said.

" Marius ? Cromwell ? — Alas, when I heard those names in my childhood, I little thought that one day they would return to my ear with so fatal a sound ! But we are all this time drifting away from the facts which demand our present appreciation. — Robespierre, you tell me, was opposed to the Laclos proposal, supported by Danton."

" Yes ! but at that moment a flood of people came into the meeting, ordinary kickers from the Palace Royal, — a band of snarling women, brought in to support Laclos ; and not only was his resolution passed, but it was decided that to-morrow forenoon, at eleven o'clock, the Jacobins would come together to hear the resolution read, which is then to be carried to the Champ de Mars, and there laid on the Patriot Altar, for the reception of signatures, and sent to all the societies in the provinces, for more signatures."

" And this petition, who is to prepare it ? "

" Danton, Laclos, and Brissot."

" Three enemies ? "

" Yes, Madame ! "

" But — my God ! — what are our friends, the Constitutionalists, doing about it ? "

" Ah, there it is ! Well, Madame, they have decided that to-morrow they will win or lose all."

"But the Constitutionalists cannot remain with the Jacobins, surely?"

"Your admirable penetration in regard to men and things enables you to see the situation precisely as it is. — Yes, led by Duport and Lameth, your friends at once separated themselves from your enemies. They set up the Feuillants in opposition to the Jacobins."

"What is meant by the Feuillants? Excuse me! for really, I know next to nothing. There are so many new names and new things in our political language, that every other word rouses a question in my mind."

"Madame, the old Feuillant Convent is a large building near the Riding School, — almost leaning against the Assembly Hall; and this convent gives its name, as you know, to a terrace belonging to the Tuileries."

"And who will belong to this new club?"

"Lafayette, — that is, the National Guard, — and Bailly, — that is to say, the municipality."

"Lafayette? You think you can count on Lafayette?"

"I believe he is sincerely devoted to the King."

"Devoted to the King? — Yes, as a woodchopper is devoted to the oak, which he means to fell to its very roots! Bailly? — Well, I have no cause of complaint against him. I might say even more; for when that woman, Rochereul, guessed at our departure, he sent her denunciation to me! — But Lafayette —? "

"Your Majesty may have had occasion to test him."

"Yes, that 's true!" said the Queen, with a mournful retrospect in her thoughts. "At Versailles! — Well, this new club, — let us hear more about it. What will the Feuillants do? What do they propose to do? What strength have they?"

"They have enormous strength, because, as I told your Majesty just now, they have at their disposal the National

Guards, the city authorities, and the majority of the National Assembly, who voted with us. Who are left with the Jacobins? Perhaps five or six Deputies, — Robespierre, Pétion, Laclos, Orleans, — heterogeneous elements, which can only stir up the herd of new members and the outsiders, — a band of snarlers, who make lots of noise, but have no influence."

"God grant it! But what does the Assembly mean to do?"

"The Assembly means to sharply admonish the Mayor of Paris on his leniency and hesitation to-day. The result will be that Goodman Bailly will go on straight; for he belongs to the *clock* family, and only needs to be wound up, and properly set, to run on time."

At that instant a clock was heard striking the quarter before eleven, and they also heard the warning cough of the sentinel.

"Yes, yes," murmured Barnave, "I know! it's time for me to retire; and yet it seems as if I had a thousand things to say to your Majesty."

"And I, Monsieur Barnave," said the Queen, "I can only make you one response, — that I am grateful to you, — to you and your friends, — on account of the dangers to which you have been exposed on my account."

"Madame," said Barnave, "this risk is a game in which I have everything to gain, whether I conquer or am conquered, — if, whatever the result, the Queen will repay me with a smile."

"Alas, Monsieur, I hardly know what a smile is like! but you are doing so much for us, that I will try to recall the time when I was happy, and I promise that my first smile shall be yours."

Barnave bowed and retired backward, with his hand on his heart.

"Monsieur," said the Queen, "when shall I see you again?"

Barnave began to calculate. "To-morrow there will be the petition, and the second vote in the Assembly. The next day will come the explosion, and the provisional repression. — On Sunday evening, Madame, I will try to come and tell you what has taken place in the Champ de Mars!" and then he went out.

Pensively the Queen went upstairs to her husband, whom she found equally thoughtful. Doctor Gilbert had just left him, and had told him much the same things which Barnave had told the Queen. The royal couple had only to exchange glances to know that on both sides the outlook was equally gloomy.

The King had just written a letter. Without a word he presented it to the Queen for her perusal.

This paper gave to *Monsieur* the power to solicit, in the name of the King of France, the intervention of the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia.

"*Monsieur* has done me much harm," said the Queen. "*Monsieur* still hates me, and will do me all the mischief he can; but if he has the King's confidence, he shall have mine also!"

Taking the quill, she heroically wrote her signature beside the King's.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEREIN WE AT LAST REACH THAT PROTEST WHICH MADAME ROLAND WAS COPYING.

We trust the conversation of the Queen with Barnave has given our readers an accurate idea of the attitude of all parties on July 15, 1791.

The New Jacobins had pushed their way into the place of the old.

The Old Jacobins had formed a new club, called the Feuillant.

The Cordeliers, represented by Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and Legendre, had united with the New Jacobins.

The Assembly, being filled with Royalists and Constitutionalists, had decided to maintain the King, at any price.

The people were resolved to have the King deposed by any feasible means, but they were willing first to employ protest and petition.

Meantime, what happened during the night and day intervening between Barnave's interview with the Queen, under the kind protection of the actor, Saint-Prix, and the moment when we at last return to Madame Roland's apartments, — that is, during the night of July 15 and the day following?

This we will relate in a few words.

While this conversation was going on between Barnave and Marie Antoinette, three men were seated around a

table, with paper, quills, and ink in front of them, — three men appointed by the Jacobins to prepare the petition. These three men were Danton, Laclos, and Brissot.

Danton was not the man for this kind of work. All his life, made up of action and pleasure, he always waited impatiently for the end of every committee-meeting in which he took part.

After a few moments he took himself away, leaving Brissot and Laclos to arrange the petition as they chose.

Laclos saw him go out, and followed him with his eyes till Danton disappeared, and with his ears till he heard the door shut.

This double action of the senses appeared to draw Laclos momentarily from that make-believe sleepiness under which he disguised his indefatigable activity. Then he buried himself again in his armchair, and let the quill fall from his hand, saying, as he did so: "Faith, my dear Brissot, draw this up as you think best. As for me, — well, I decline! — Ah! if it was only a bad book, as they say at Court, — a successor of my 'Dangerous Entanglements,' — I might undertake it; but a petition! — a petition makes me tired!" he added, yawning as if he would dislocate his jaw.

On the contrary, Brissot was just the man for this sort of composition. Convinced that he could draft it better than anybody else, he accepted the duty thus devolving upon him, through Danton's absence and the request of Laclos. The latter closed his eyes, and settled himself more comfortably into his armchair, as if he felt like taking a nap; while really he was prepared to weigh each phrase, each letter, in order to insert a loophole for the regency of his Prince, if he saw any possible chance for it.

As fast as Brissot wrote a phrase he read it aloud, and Laclos approved it by a slight nod of his head, and a muffled grunt of assent.

In outlining the situation Brissot enumerated the following points:

First. The hypocritical or timid silence of the Assembly, which either did not dare or did not wish to enact anything relating to the King.

Second. The virtual abdication of Louis the Sixteenth, by his flight, when the Assembly voted his suspension from office, and caused him to be pursued and arrested. As acknowledged kings are never suspended, arrested, or pursued, if Louis the Sixteenth was suspended, pursued, and arrested, this shows that he is no longer King.

Third. The necessity of providing for his replacement.

"Good, good!" said Laclos, when he heard this last word. Then the Duke's secretary continued, as Brissot was about writing something else: "Hold on! It seems to me that after those three words, *for his replacement*, something ought to be added, — something which will rally timid souls to our side. All men have n't burned their ships behind them, as we have."

"Perhaps so," said Brissot. "What shall it be?"

"Oh, it 's for you, rather than me, to decide that, my dear Brissot. — I should add — let me see — "

Laclos pretended to search for a phrase, which really had been long formulated in his brain, and was only waiting for the right time, in order to pop out.

"Well," he said at last, "after the words *provide for his replacement*, I would add, *by all Constitutional means.*"

Observe and admire, oh ye politicians, ye past, present, and future framers of petitions, protests, and law-drafts!

It was a very little thing, the addition of these few inoffensive words, was it not?

Well, you shall see — that is, if those of my readers who are so happy as not to be politicians wish to see — whither these four words, *by all Constitutional means*, might lead.

All Constitutional means for providing a substitute for the King would reduce the problem to a single word. That single word was *regency.*

In the absence of both *Monsieur* and Artois, the two brothers of Louis the Sixteenth and uncles of the Dauphin, — depopularized by their emigration from France, — who would succeed to the regency? Orleans!

This innocent little phrase, slipped into a petition drawn up in the name of the people, would really make the people ask, or appear to ask, that Orleans should be appointed Regent, during the minority of the Dauphin, who was as yet only five or six years old.

This Orleans, whom we have met at the Lodge of Enlightened Ones, and elsewhere, — who, for a season, had been exiled to England by Lafayette, — was a distant cousin of Louis Sixteenth, his great-great-grandfather having been the only brother of Louis the Fourteenth, who was the great-great-great-grandfather of Louis the Sixteenth. There were no direct male descendants of either Louis Fourteenth or Louis Fifteenth, except Louis Sixteenth, his brothers Provence and Artois, and his little son, the Dauphin. If Louis Sixteenth were deposed, and his brothers were out of the country and unpopular, then the nearest legitimate relative of the Dauphin on the spot (the illegitimate uncle, Narbonne, being of course left out of the question) would be Orleans, a cousin several times removed.

All this the astute Laclos had in mind. As being the

nearest resident relative, Orleans alone would have a Constitutional right to the regency, and this is what Laclos hoped for his ducal patron.

A beautiful institution, this politics, is it not? Only it takes time to see things clearly, when managed by men of such force as Monsieur de Laclos.

To this addition to his phrase Brissot raised no objection: perhaps because he did not discover the mine hidden in those five words, ready to explode at the proper time; perhaps because he did not see the serpent in the grass of that addition, whose hissing crest would be reared at the crucial moment; perhaps because, knowing the risk he would run as the writer of this petition, he was not sorry to provide a loophole of escape. So Brissot said to his colleague: "Indeed, that will rally some Constitutionalists to our support. The idea is a good one, Monsieur de Laclos."

The rest of the petition was in accord with the sentiments it was meant to convey.

The next day, July 16, Pétion, Brissot, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and Laclos went to the Jacobin Club, and carried the petition. The hall was empty, or nearly so.

Everybody had gone to the Feuillant Club. Barnave was not mistaken. The desertion was complete.

Pétion forthwith hurried to the Feuillant Club. What did he find there? Barnave, Duport, and Lameth, preparing a circular address to the provincial Jacobin societies, announcing to them that the Jacobin Club no longer existed, but had been transformed into the Feuillant Club, under the title, — Association of Friends of the Constitution.

Thus the Jacobin society, which had cost so much pains to establish, and which spread like a network over all France, ceased to be a moving power, paralyzed by

hesitation. Who was to be obeyed, who was to be trusted, — the Old Jacobins or the New?

Meantime an Anti-Revolutionary stratagem was preparing; and the people, who no longer had any proper representation, — sleeping, as they did, on their faith in their chosen watchmen, — would awake to find themselves pinioned and garrotted.

The storm must be met. Everybody must draw up a statement for himself, and send it to the province where he thought it would do the most good.

As the special Deputy from Lyons, Roland had great influence in the second capital of the kingdom. Before going to the Champ de Mars, where — in default of the Jacobins, who were not to be found there — Danton was to have the petition signed by the populace, he went to Roland's lodgings, explained the situation to him and his wife, and persuaded them to send, without delay, a protest to the Lyons people, — a protest which Roland himself was to prepare for that purpose. It was hoped that the Lyonese would join hands with the people of Paris, and make a similar and simultaneous protest.

This was the document, drawn up by her husband, which Madame Roland was copying.

As to Danton, he went to rejoin his friends in the Champ de Mars. When he arrived a great debate was going on.

In the middle of the vast arena was the Patriot Altar. It had been erected for the Festival of July 14, two days before, — the second anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, — and still remained there, a skeleton of the past.

This altar was like the one built for the Federation of 1790, the year before. It was a large platform, with stairs on four sides, corresponding to the four cardinal

points of the compass. Over this altar was a picture, representing the glorification of Voltaire, which had been celebrated July 12, only four days before. Over the picture was the placard of the Cordeliers, cited in a previous chapter, and containing the oath of Brutus, written by Voltaire.

The discussion, in progress when Danton appeared, concerned the five words introduced into the petition by Laclos. They were being passed by without notice, when a man, who appeared by his dress and manners to belong to the plebeian classes, brusquely interrupted the reader, with a freedom amounting to violence.

"Stop!" he said. "The people are being deceived!"

"How so?" asked the reader.

"By those words, *by all Constitutional means.* You would replace *King* with *Regent.* You would restore royalty, and we've had enough of it already."

"No more kings! No more royalty!" shouted most of the listeners.

What a singular thing! Here were the Old Jacobins apparently taking part with royalty! This is what they said: "Be on your guard, gentlemen! That cry, *no more kings, no more royalty,* means the beginning of a republic; and we are not ripe for a republic."

"No, we are not ripe!" said the man of the people. "That's so! But give us one or two more sunny weeks like Varennes, and we'll ripen fast enough."

"Acclamation! Let us vote a petition by acclamation!"

So shouted one voice; and the cry was cordially taken up by those who had already shouted: "No more royalty! No more kings!"

It was necessary to appeal to a hand vote, without a ballot. The unknown man put the question: "Let

those who will no longer recognize Louis Sixteenth, or any other king, raise their hands."

Such a powerful majority raised their hands that there was no need even to call for the negative vote.

"That is well," said the speaker. "To-morrow, Sunday, July 17, all Paris will be here to sign this resolution. I, Billot, will see that due notice is given."

By the utterance of this name, Billot, everybody recognized the formidable farmer who, accompanied by Lafayette's aide, had arrested the King at Varennes, and haled him back to Paris.

Thus, at one step, the boldest of the Cordeliers and the Jacobins were outstripped; and by whom? By a man of the people, — that is, by the instinct of the masses. As Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Brissot, and Pétion declared that, in their opinion, such an act could not be accomplished by the Parisian populace without raising a storm, it was deemed important to at once obtain permission, from the Hôtel de Ville, for the gathering appointed by Billot for the next day.

"So be it!" said Billot. "Get it! and if you can't get it peaceably, I'll exact it."

Desmoulins and Brissot were deputed to attend to this matter.

Bailly was absent, but they found the Mayor's First Assistant. He would not take it upon himself, either to refuse or give the authorization, but contented himself with a verbal endorsement of the petition; so Brissot and Desmoulins quitted the City Hall, feeling that this was sufficient license for their purpose.

Upon their heels, the First Syndic sent a messenger to warn the National Assembly of the march thus to be stolen upon them, under their very eaves.

The Assembly was thus caught in its own trap. The

Assembly had as yet voted nothing in relation to the present status of the fugitive Louis, who had been deprived of his royal titles, overtaken at Varennes, and brought back to the Tuileries, where he had been held as a prisoner since June 26.

No time was to be lost. Desmeuniers, with all the appearance of an enemy of the royal family, presented the draft of a decree, conceived in the following terms :

> The suspension of the Executive Power shall continue until the Constitution is presented to the King and accepted by him.

This decree, proposed at seven o'clock, in the evening of July 16, was adopted at eight, by an immense majority.

This would of course render the popular petition inoperative ; as, by the Assembly's vote, the King, suspended only till he accepted the Constitution, would become, by that simple act of acceptance, just as much of a king as he ever was before. Whoever demanded the removal of a king Constitutionally maintained by the Assembly, as long as the King showed himself disposed to accede to the legal conditions, would of course be in open rebellion ; and as the situation was grave, such rebels must be pursued with all the means which the law placed at the disposition of its agents.

That evening there was a meeting of the Mayor and Municipal Council, at the Hôtel de Ville. The session began at half-past nine. By ten it had been decided that on the next day, Sunday, July 17, by eight in the morning, the Assembly's decree should be printed, and affixed to all the walls of the city ; and that it should also be proclaimed, in all the crossroads of Paris, with

sound of trumpet, by the official criers of the city, under an armed escort.

An hour after this decision was reached, it was known to the Old Jacobins. They felt very weak. The desertion of the greater part of their numbers to the Feuillants had left the Jacobins isolated and without strength. They yielded.

Santerre, the man from the Faubourg Saint Antoine, the popular brewer of the Bastille neighborhood, — who was eventually to succeed Lafayette in his office, — took upon himself, in the name of the Jacobins, to go to the Champ de Mars, and withdraw the petition already started by them, and prepared by Brissot and Laclos.

The Cordeliers showed themselves more prudent. Danton declared that he must pass the next day at Fontenay by the Woods, where his father-in-law, the lemonade-seller, had a little country-house. Legendre promised to join him there, with Desmoulins and Fréron.

The Rolands received a little billet, warning them that it would be useless to send their protest to Lyons. Everything had either failed or been postponed.

It was nearly midnight, and Madame Roland had just finished her copy of the protest, when this little note came from Danton, which it was quite impossible to comprehend.

Just about this time two men, who were taking their third bottle of fifteen-sou wine at a table in the back room of a wineshop in Gros Caillou, hit upon a strange project.

One of these men was a barber, and the other a military pensioner.

"Ah, what droll notions you have, Lajariette," said the invalid pensioner, with a vulgarly stupid laugh.

"Here's the idea, Father Rémy," replied the barber. "You see it, don't you? Before daylight we 'll go to the Champ de Mars. We 'll rip up a plank from the Patriot Altar, slip underneath it, and replace the plank. Then with a big gimlet, an auger, we 'll bore holes in the plank. A crowd of young and pretty citizenesses will go upon that platform to-morrow, to sign that petition, — and, on my word, through the holes — "

The obscene and vacant laugh of the pensioner redoubled. Evidently he was already gazing, in imagination, through the holes in the altar platform.

The barber did not laugh so heartily. The honorable and aristocratic corporation to which he belonged found its business ruined by the plebeian turn of the tide. The emigration had been a loss to artistic hairdressers; and from what we have seen of the Queen's coiffures, we know that elaborate hairdressing was an art at that epoch. As we were saying, the aristocratic emigration had deprived these artists of their best trade. Moreover, Talma had acted the part of Titus, in Racine's "Bérénice," and his way of dressing his hair had given birth to a new fashion, which consisted of wearing the hair short and without powder.

In general, therefore, barbers were Royalists. Read Prudhomme, and you will see that a hairdresser cut his throat in despair, on the day of the King's execution.

So these two men thought it would be a good trick to play on those silly *Patriotesses* (as they were called by the grand ladies who still stayed in France) to peep under their petticoats; and Master Lajariette counted on certain prospective erotic souvenirs, wherewith to enliven his morning gossip for a month to come.

The notion of such a lark had come to him while drinking with his jocose old friend, who, when it was

suggested to him, felt a tingle through his nerves, — even through the old leg he had left on the field at the battle of Fontenoy, and which the state had generously replaced with a wooden limb.

As a result of their deliberations the two boon companions called for a fourth bottle of wine, which the landlord speedily supplied. They were about opening it, when the old pensioner broached an idea of his own. This was to get a little keg, to empty the wine into the keg (instead of into their glasses) along with two other bottles, to momentarily restrain their thirst, and then to carry the keg with them to the field of action.

The pensioner backed up his proposition with the axiom that it is very warm work, gazing up into the air.

The barber condescended to smile; and as the publican now suggested to the guests that it was useless for them to remain in his shop if they did not wish to drink any more, our two foxes bargained with him for a keg and an auger, pocketed the auger, and put the three bottles of wine into the keg. When midnight sounded, under cover of the darkness, they directed their steps towards the Champ de Mars, and pried up the plank. Then they couched themselves softly on the dirt under the platform, with the keg between them, and soon fell asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PETITION.

THERE are certain times when the people, after a cumulative series of excitements, rise like the sea, wave on wave, and need a grand cataclysm, which shall compel a return to their normal boundaries, as the ocean sinks back into the bed provided for it by bountiful nature. So was it with the Parisian populace during that fortnight of July, when so many events brought them to the boiling point.

On Sunday, July 10, there was to have been a procession in honor of Voltaire; but the bad weather prevented the festival from being carried out as projected, and the procession only went as far as the Charenton Barrier, where the crowd stayed all day.

On Monday, July 11, the weather was clear. The escort again put itself in motion, and traversed Paris, amidst an immense concourse of people, halting before the house where the author of the "Philosophical Dictionary" and "La Pucelle" had died, in order to enable his adopted daughter, Madame Villette, and the Calas family to put flowers on the casket, which was also honored with a chorus by artists from the opera.

On Wednesday, July 13, there was a great celebration at the church of Notre Dame, and a composition called "The Taking of the Bastille" was performed by a large orchestra.

Thursday, July 14, was the first anniversary of the Great Federation of 1790, and there was a pilgrimage to the Patriot Altar. Three-fourths of the population of Paris were in the Champ de Mars, and their heads were almost turned with Hurrahs for the Nation, and the sight of the universal illumination, in the midst whereof the Tuileries Palace seemed like a tomb, gloomy and mute.

On Friday, July 15, the reactionary vote was taken in the Assembly, protected by Lafayette's four thousand bayonets and thousand pikes.

The proposed petition was also prepared for the crowd. The theatres were closed; and there were rumors and disturbances during the entire evening and a part of the night.

Finally, on Saturday, July 16, there occurred the desertion of the Jacobins to the Feuillant Club. Violent scenes took place on the New Bridge, where the police belabored Fréron, and arrested an Englishman and an Italian teacher named Rotondo. On that day came also the outbreak in the Champ de Mars, when Billot exposed the mischievous phrase slipped into the petition by Laclos. A popular vote demanded the forfeiture of his throne by Louis Sixteenth; and an arrangement was made for receiving signatures to a petition on the day following.

The night of July 16 is agitated, dark, and full of tumult. The ringleaders of the Old Jacobins and the Cordeliers keep out of sight, having some hints as to the plans of their adversaries; but conscientious and innocent men of this progressive party agree to reunite, whatever may happen, and carry on the enterprise already begun.

Others are on the watch, with sentiments less honest

and less philanthropic. These are the hateful men, swarming around every great social commotion, who love riots, tumults, and the scent of blood; as vultures and tigers love armies which destroy one another, and so keep up the supply of corpses.

There is Marat, in his subterranean lair, alone with his mania, — Marat, who always believes himself the object of threats and persecutions, or pretends so to believe. He lives in the shadows, like beasts of prey and birds of night. Out of those shadows, as from the caves of Trophonius or Delphos, come every morning those sinister oracles which are spread over the pages of Marat's journal, called "The People's Friend."

For several days this journal has been tinted with blood. Since the King's return it has proposed, as the only safeguard of the rights and interests of the people, an absolute dictatorship and a general massacre. According to Marat's dictum, it is necessary to annihilate the Assembly and hang the authorities.

Then, by way of variety in the proceedings, as throat-cutting and hanging are not sufficient, he proposes to saw off hands, to cut off thumbs, to bury people alive, or impale them on knives. It is high time for Marat's physician to come to his employer's relief, according to his custom, and say: "Your writing is red with blood, Marat. I must let a little of it out of you with my lancet."

You remember Verrière, that abominable hunchback, that formidable dwarf, with his long arms and long legs, whom we saw at the very beginning of this narration, at work on October 5 and 6, 1789, and who thereafter retreated into his obscurity? Well, on July 16, 1790, he reappears, and is seen like a vision of the Apocalypse, — as Michelet expresses it, — mounted on Death's white

horse, down whose sides dangle his long legs, his huge feet, and his big knees. Like a harpy of misfortune, he pauses at each street corner, at each crossroad, and warns the populace to be on hand the next day, at the Champ de Mars.

Fournier, who enters our story for the first time, and whom they call Fournier the American, — not because he was born in America, for he comes from Auvergne, but because he has been a slave-driver in Saint Domingo, — Fournier is on hand. Ruined and soured by unsuccessful lawsuits, he is exasperated by the apathy with which the National Assembly has treated the twenty successive petitions he has sent to it. It is very easily explained, his ill-success; so he thinks. The wirepullers of the Assembly are planters, like the Lameths, or the friends of planters, like Barnave and Duport. Fournier is bound to be revenged on the first occasion; and he keeps his word, — this man with the traits of a brute in his intellect, and the grin of a hyena on his face.

Now then, we have before us the situation during the night of July 16.

The King and Queen are anxiously waiting at the Tuileries. Barnave has promised them a victory over the people. He does not say what the triumph will be, or how it is to be brought about. What matters it to them? They do not regard the means, if the efforts are for their advantage. Only, the King desires this triumph because it will ameliorate the condition of royalty; whereas the Queen sees in it the beginning of vengeance; and, in her mind, it is quite permissible to be avenged on those who have made royalty suffer so much.

The Assembly, depending upon one of the apparent majorities which satisfy such bodies, waits somewhat tranquilly. Its measures are taken. Whatever happens, the

law is on its side. If the game proves a losing one, and there is need of it, the Assembly can conjure with that supreme phrase, *the public safety.*

Lafayette waits without fear. He has his National Guards, as yet devoted to him; and among these guards is a corps of nine thousand men, composed of old soldiers, regular guardsmen, and enrolled volunteers. This corps belongs rather to the army than the city. It is under pay, moreover, which the National Guards, as a rule, are not. It is therefore nicknamed the Hireling Guard. If there is to be any terrible work to-morrow, this is the body to execute it.

Bailly and the other municipal officers are also in anxious expectation. After a life spent entirely in his study and in scientific inquiry, Bailly finds himself suddenly pushed forward into politics and public assemblies. Admonished yesterday, by the Assembly, for his weakness on the evening of July 15, he sleeps to-night with his head pillowed upon a treatise on martial law, which the next day he can rigorously enforce, if any necessity for it arrives.

The Old Jacobins are also in anxious expectation, but their demoralization is complete. Robespierre is in hiding. Laclos sulks, having seen his interpolated phrase detected and ousted. Pétion, Buzot, and Brissot are all prepared for some escape, in case to-morrow proves a hard day. Santerre, who is to go to the Champ de Mars at eleven in the morning, to withdraw the Danton-and-Brissot petition, may carry some news with him.

The Cordeliers have given up the struggle. Danton, as we have said, is at Fontenay, with his wife's father. Legendre, Fréron, and Camille Desmoulins are to rejoin him there. The other Cordeliers can do nothing without a head.

Ignorant of all this, the populace will go to the Champ de Mars to sign the petition. They will shout for the Nation. They will dance around the Patriot Altar, and sing the famous *Ça ira* of 1790.

Between 1790 and 1791 the reaction has dug a great pit. This pit must be filled with the dead bodies of the Seventeenth of July.

Whatever is to happen, the day dawns magnificently. By four o'clock all the pedlers, who live by small industries and dwell in beehives, those Bohemians who burrow in all great cities, — sellers of chocolate, gingerbread, cakes, and sweetmeats, — begin to wend their way towards the Patriot Altar, which stands solitary, in the middle of the Champ de Mars, like a grand and lonesome catafalque.

A painter, standing twenty paces from the riverside, is making a careful sketch of this altar.

At half-past four perhaps a hundred and fifty persons may be counted on the Champ de Mars.

Those who rise with the sun are generally those who sleep poorly; and, for the most part, those who sleep poorly (I speak of ordinary men and women) are those who sup poorly, or not at all.

When one has no supper and little sleep, he is apt to be in bad humor at four in the morning. There are, therefore, among those one hundred and fifty early risers now gathered about the Patriot Altar, some fellows ill-favored and in bad humor.

Suddenly a woman, a lemonade-seller, standing on the steps of the altar, screams. The point of an auger has pierced her shoe. She calls for help, and everybody runs to her. The plank is bored with holes, for which nobody can see any cause or reason; but the presence of that auger, whose point penetrated the lemonade-vender's

shoe, indicates the presence of one or more men beneath the platform, whereon the altar stands.

What are they doing there? They are spoken to. They are summoned to respond, to state their intentions, to come out, to show themselves. No response.

The sketcher, above referred to, leaves his stool, drops his canvas, and runs to Gros Caillou for the guard. The guard cannot see, in a woman's being pricked in the foot, any sufficient reason for disturbing himself, refuses to do anything about it, and sends the painter away dissatisfied. When he returns, the general exasperation overflows. All crowd about the Patriot Altar, — some three hundred persons. They lift the plank and look into the cavity beneath.

There they find two very shame-faced men, — our barber and our old pensioner. The barber, who feels that the auger may be a proof of his guilt, throws it away as far as he can, but he forgets about the wine-keg. They are taken by their collars, forced to come out upon the platform, and interrogated as to their intentions. As they hesitate, they are dragged before a police inspector.

Again questioned they acknowledge why they were hiding under the platform. The commissioner regards this as an unimportant and harmless joke, and liberates the two men; but at the gate they are met by the laundresses from Gros Caillou, with their beetles in their hands, which they use for beating the garments that they wash in the river, whither they are perhaps bound at that early hour.

The laundresses of Gros Caillou, it appears, are very ticklish in regard to female honor; so these irritated Dianas fall, with great blows of their beetles, upon these modern Actæons, these Peeping Toms.

At that moment a man comes along on the run. Under the Patriot Altar has been found a keg of powder. The two culprits must have been there, not for the sake of boring holes through which they could look upward, as they had pretended, but in order to blow up the assembled Patriots.

It is only needful to draw out the bung from the keg, in order to know that it contains, or has contained, cheap wine, and not powder. Even if the keg contains gunpowder, a little reflection would show that if the two conspirators fired that keg, they would be themselves blown up first, and more thoroughly, than any of the Patriots. These considerations should prove the two jokers innocent of any serious crime; but there are times when nobody reflects, when nobody weighs the evidence, — times when nobody *wishes* to know the truth, or reflect upon the consequences of an action.

In an instant the squall becomes a storm. A group of strange men come upon the scene. Whence come they? Nobody knows. Whence came the men who killed Foulon, Berthier, Flesselles, thus aggravating the horrors of October, 1789? Out of the shades, whither they returned when their work of death was over.

These new-comers seize upon the unlucky pensioner and the poor barber. Both are thrown down. Pierced by dagger-thrusts, one of them, the pensioner, cannot rise. The other, the hairdresser, is dragged to a lamp-post. In a few seconds the cord is about his neck, and he is hoisted into the air. At the height of ten feet the weight of his body breaks the cord. Still alive, he falls to the ground. Raising himself an instant, he sees his comrade's head on the end of a pike. How happens it that a pike is always ready, just on the instant? At this sight he utters a scream and then swoons. Now

his head is cut off, or rather hacked off, and a second pike is forthwith in readiness to receive this bloody trophy.

It is immediately felt that these two heads must promenade through Paris with a popular escort, and the head-bearers go singing up Rue Grenelle, followed by a hundred roughs like themselves.

At nine o'clock the municipal officers, with the accompaniment of ushers and trumpets, are proclaiming, in Palace Royal Square, the decree of the Assembly, and the protective penalties which will follow any transgression of that decree, when these ruffians, from the Champ de Mars, come pouring into the square, through the Rue Saint Thomas by the Louvre.

This is an admirable buttress for the position taken by the city government. However harsh the repressive measures threatened, they cannot reach the height of the crime just committed.

The members of the Assembly begin to gather. From Palace Royal Square to the Riding School is but a short distance, and the report of the rabble's proceedings has but to take a single bound, in order to set the legislative hall into confusion; only the victims of lawlessness are no longer merely a barber and an old pensioner, punished beyond all reason for a prank worthy of college boys. They are represented as two good citizens, the friends of public order, who have been slaughtered for advising the Revolutionists to respect the laws.

At once Regnault de Saint Jean d'Angély springs to the rostrum, and says: "Citizens, I call for martial law. I ask the Assembly that all those who encourage resistance among the people, whether by individual or collective publications, shall be declared guilty of the crime *lèse-nation*, — treason against France."

The Assembly rises almost in a body; and, in accordance with Angély's proposal, declares all shall be regarded as public criminals who individually or collectively, by writings or publications, urge the people to disregard the votes of the Assembly.

This is practically to pronounce the innocent petitioners, in the Champ de Mars, guilty of treason; and this is precisely what is intended by the vote.

Robespierre is on the watch in one corner of the Assembly. He hears the vote proclaimed, and at once hurries to the Jacobin Club, to give notice of what has been done.

The hall is deserted. Not over twenty-five or thirty members are wandering about in the old convent.

Santerre is there, however, awaiting the commands of his superiors. He is at once sent to the Champ de Mars, to warn the petitioners of approaching danger. There he finds two or three hundred people on the altar platform, signing the Jacobin petition prepared by Brissot, with Laclos's Royalist clause eliminated by popular vote.

The hero of the day before, Billot, is the centre of this movement. He cannot sign for himself; but he tells them his name, and his hand is guided, so that he inscribes his signature among the first.

Santerre ascends the platform, and announces that the Assembly declares all those to be in open rebellion who demand the dethronement of the King; and he further adds that he is the envoy from the Jacobins, sent to withdraw the Jacobin petition prepared by Brissot.

Billot comes down three steps, and faces the afterwards celebrated brewer. These two men looking at each other, each taking the other's measure, are types of the two material forces moving the Nation at this period, — Paris and the Provinces.

They recognize each other as true brothers, for they fought together at the Bastille two years ago.

"Very well," says Billot, "the Jacobins can have their petition back again, but we 'll make another."

"And that other petition," says Santerre, "needs only to be brought to me, in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, and I 'll not only sign it myself, but I 'll have it signed by all my hands." And he offers his coarse hand to Billot, who grasps it cordially.

At the sight of this powerful alliance, which unites city and country, there is loud applause.

Billot returns the old petition to Santerre, who at once takes himself off, making gestures of assent and comfort, which the people do not misunderstand. Besides, Santerre is already well known.

"It seems," says Billot, "that the Jacobins are afraid. Being cowards, they have the right to withdraw their document. So be it! But we, — we are not afraid, and we have the right to make another petition."

"Yes, yes!" cry several voices. "Another petition! Here! To-morrow!"

"And why not to-day?" asks Billot. "To-morrow? Who knows what may happen by to-morrow?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" cry several voices. "To-day! Right off!"

A group of noteworthy people forms around Billot. Strength has the virtue of the magnet, and draws others to itself.

This group is composed of delegates from the Cordeliers and the Amateur Jacobins. Either because they are more venturesome than their leaders, or not so well informed, these Revolutionists have come to the Champ de Mars in the teeth of counter-orders from their chiefs.

These persons for the most part bear names as yet unknown, but in one way or another they are soon to become celebrated.

There are Robert, Mademoiselle de Kéralio, the Rolands.

There is Brune, a typesetter, who is one day to become Marshal of France.

There is Hébert, a public writer, who is the future editor of that scurrilous journal called "Father Duchêne."

There is Chaumette, a journalist and medical student.

There is Sergent, a copperplate engraver, who is sometime to be the brother-in-law of Marceau, and also the manager of the famous Festivals of Reason.

There is Fabre d'Églantine, author of "The Epistolary Intrigue."

There is Henriot, the Master of the Guillotine.

There is Maillard, the dreaded sheriff of the Châtelet Court, of whom we have lost sight since that Sixth of October, but whom we may meet again on the Second of September.

There are Isabey the father and Isabey the son, — the latter the only one of the actors in the scene which we are describing, who will be alive and fresh to repeat its story sixty or seventy years hence, in 1855, at the age of eighty-eight.

"Now! Right off!" cry all those who are present; and a shout of applause goes up from the Champ de Mars.

"Who will wield the quill?" asks a voice.

"Me, you, everybody!" cries Billot. "This must be truly the people's petition."

One Patriot leaves the place at full speed. He is on the search for writing materials. While waiting for his return, the bystanders take hold of hands. They begin to dance the farandole, and sing the famous *Ça ira.*

In ten minutes the Patriot returns with the writing materials. For fear there should not be enough he brings a pint of ink, a whole package of quills, and five or six quires of paper.

Robert takes the pen. Mademoiselle de Kéralio, Madame Roland, and Monsieur Roland dictate by turns, while Robert writes the following petition:

PETITION TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

Written on the Patriot Altar,

July 17, 1791.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATION: You are near the end of your labors. Soon your successors, chosen by the people, will come and take your places, but without encountering the obstacles placed in your way by the Deputies of the two privileged orders, — the clergy and the nobility, — who are necessarily the enemies of the sacred principles of equality.

A great crime has been committed.

Louis Sixteenth fled. He unworthily abandoned his post of duty. The country was within a finger s breadth of anarchy. Certain citizens arrested the King at Varennes, and brought him back to Paris. The people of the capital request you to decide nothing hastily as to the fate of the royal culprit, but to wait for some expression of opinion from the eighty-two other departments of the Nation.

You differ in opinions. A cloud of addresses will come to the Assembly. All sections of the country will simultaneously demand that Louis shall be tried. You, gentlemen, have already prejudged him innocent, and beyond the reach of law, by declaring, in your vote of July 16, that the Constitutional Charter shall be presented to him for his adherence, as soon as that Constitution is finished.

Legislators! This is not the desire of the people, and we think that your greatest glory — your duty — consists in being the organ of the public will.

Undoubtedly, gentlemen, you have been constrained to this action by a crowd of refractory Deputies, who have beforehand recorded their antagonism to the Constitution ; but, gentlemen, — representatives of a generous and trusting people, — remember that two hundred and ninety Reactionists are not the voice of the whole National Assembly, and that the decree is null and void in its form and basis : inadequate in its basis, because contrary to the will of the true sovereigns; erroneous in form, because carried through by two hundred and ninety unqualified persons.

These considerations, all relating to the common weal, and growing out of an imperative desire to avoid anarchy, — to which we shall be exposed by any want of harmony between the people and those who represent them, — justify us in demanding, in the name of all France, that you reconsider your decree of July 16, in reference to the King ; that you regard the offence of Louis the Sixteenth as proven, and himself as having abdicated his throne ; that you accept this abdication, and convoke a new legislative body, to proceed in a truly Constitutional manner to judge the King, and replace him with a new Executive Administration.

The petition being prepared, silence is called for. At that summons all noise ceases and all heads are bared. In a loud voice Robert reads the lines, already placed before the eyes of our readers.

They meet the wishes of all. No objection is raised ; but, on the contrary, unanimous applause breaks out as soon as the last phrase is read.

Now the petition is to be signed, — not only by two or three hundred people, but by perhaps ten thousand ; for through all the entrances to the Champ de Mars crowds are pouring in, and it is evident that in an hour more than fifty thousand persons will surround the Patriot Altar.

Those who have prepared the petition are the first to

sign it, and then they pass the quill to their neighbors. In a few seconds the whole page is covered with signatures, and so leaves of blank paper are distributed, of the same shape as that whereon the petition is written. These extra sheets are numbered in order, so as to be added to the original sheet.

After these leaves are distributed the people first begin to sign, laying the paper on the posts which form the four angles of the Patriot Altar. Then they write on the steps, on their knees, on the crowns of their hats, on anything upon which they can lay the petition.

In accordance with the orders of the Assembly, sent to Lafayette, — to whom has also been reported, not the petition then being signed, but the morning's assassination, — the first troops now arrive on the Champ de Mars; but such is the preoccupation of the crowd, on account of the petition, that they hardly pay any attention to the troops; yet what is about to take place is of vast importance.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RED FLAG.

THESE troops are headed by one of Lafayette's aides. Which one? His name is unknown. Lafayette always had so many aides, that history loses itself among them.

Whoever he is, a gunshot comes from the hillside, and strikes the young man; but the wound is not dangerous, and as this is a solitary shot, the soldiers disdain to notice it.

A similar scene takes place at Gros Caillou, where Lafayette appears with three thousand men and some fieldpieces.

Fournier is there, at the head of a band of miscreants, — doubtless the same who have just assassinated the barber and the one-legged pensioner, — and they are putting up a barricade; but Lafayette marches upon this barricade, and demolishes it.

Through the wheel-spokes of a wagon, while this is going on, Fournier fires his musket at Lafayette; but fortunately the gun misses fire. The barricade is carried and demolished, and Fournier is seized and brought before Lafayette.

"Who is this man?" he asks.

"He 's the fellow who fired upon you; though it was a flash in the pan."

"Let him alone, and he 'll get himself hanged in some other way."

Fournier does not get himself hanged. He disappears temporarily from sight, to reappear at the September massacres next year.

Lafayette reaches the Champ de Mars. They are signing the petition, and the most perfect tranquillity reigns. This tranquillity is so great that Madame de Condorcet is there, promenading, with her infant, a year old.

Lafayette advances as far as the Patriot Altar. He inquires what is going on, and they show him the petition. The petitioners also agree to go about their usual business as soon as the petition is signed. He can see in this nothing reprehensible, and withdraws with his soldiers.

But if the shot which wounds Lafayette's aide, and the flint which misses fire on himself, have not made loud reports in the Champ de Mars, they have roused a tremendous echo in the Assembly. It must not be forgotten that the Assembly is looking for a Royalist opportunity, and that some very slight event may bring that opportunity.

"Lafayette is wounded! One of his aides is killed! There is slaughter in the Champ de Mars!"

Such are the reports which find currency throughout Paris, and which the Assembly officially transmits to the Hôtel de Ville; but the City Hall is already disturbed by what is going on at the Champ de Mars, and sends thither three municipal officers, Jacques, Hardy, and Renaud.

As they stand on the elevation of the Patriot Altar the signers of the petition see advancing towards them this new procession, which arrives from the waterside, for the Seine flows by one side of the field. A deputation of signers is sent to meet the procession.

The three city officials, who have come on purpose to see what is going on, go straight to the Patriot Altar; but instead of finding, as they expect, a factious crowd, irritated, threatening, and turbulent, they see only well-behaved citizens, some walking about in groups, others signing the petition, others dancing the farandole and singing the *Ça ira.*

The crowd is quiet, but perhaps the petition is rebellious. The officials ask to have it read to them.

The petition is read to them, from the first line to the last; and as has happened once before, this reading is followed by cheers and unanimous acclamations.

"Gentlemen," say the municipal officers, "we are charmed to note your orderly disposition. We have been told there was some disturbance here, but we have been deceived. We shall not fail to report what we have seen, to speak of the tranquillity which reigns in the Champ de Mars. So far from impeding the signing of your petition, we will protect your work with the public force, in case anybody tries to hinder you. If we were not engaged in official duties, we would sign the petition ourselves; and if you doubt our good intentions, we will remain here with you as hostages, till every signature is affixed to your paper."

This spirit of the petition must then be the general spirit, since the city officials themselves would gladly sign it, did not their position as office-holders forbid.

This adhesion of three men — whose advance the signers have defiantly awaited, regarding them as enemies, — encourages the petitioners.

In the foolish scuffle which has taken place between the populace and the National Guard, two fellows have been arrested. As commonly happens under similar circumstances, the two prisoners are perfectly innocent; so

the leaders among the petitioners demand that these two men be set at liberty.

"We cannot take that burden upon ourselves," respond the city delegates; "but name your commissioners. They shall go with us to the Hôtel de Ville, and justice will be done."

A dozen commissioners are accordingly appointed. Billot, being unanimously chosen to take part in this duty, takes his way towards the city, accompanied by his colleagues and the three public officials.

On their arrival at the Place de Grève, in front of the City Hall, the commissioners are surprised to find the square so full of soldiers that it requires some pains to get through this forest of bayonets.

Billot is their guide, for it will be remembered that he is well acquainted with the Hôtel de Ville, which we have heretofore seen him enter more than once, with our friend Pitou.

At the door of the Council Hall the three officials ask the twelve commissioners to wait an instant, and then they open the door, enter, and do not reappear.

A whole hour the commissioners wait. No news! Impatiently Billot stamps his feet and frowns.

Suddenly the door opens. The whole municipal corporation appears, with Bailly at its head.

Bailly is very pale. Being pre-eminently a mathematician, he has a nice sense of justice and injustice. He feels himself urged on to a mistaken course of action; but the orders of the Assembly are before him, and Bailly will fulfil them to the letter.

Billot walks straight up to him, and says, in that firm tone with which our readers are already familiar: "Monsieur Mayor, we have been waiting for you over an hour."

"Who are you, and what have you to say to me?" asks Bailly.

"Who am I?" answers Billot. "I 'm astonished you should ask such a question, Monsieur Bailly. Those who go to the left evidently don't recognize those who turn to the right. — I 'm Billot!"

Bailly starts. That name recalls to his mind the man who was one of the first to enter the Bastille; the man who aided in the protection of the City Hall, in those dreadful days when Foulon and Berthier were assassinated; the man who marched by the window of the royal carriage, the first time the King was brought from Versailles; the man who, on that occasion, affixed the tricolored cockade to Louis Sixteenth's hat; the man who roused Lafayette on that awful October night; the man who brought the King back from Varennes.

"As to what I have to say," continues Billot, "I have *this* to say, that we are sent here by an assemblage of people in the Champ de Mars."

"And what do these people ask?"

"They ask that you keep the promise made by your three messengers, by setting free two citizens unjustly accused, and for whose innocence we vouch."

"Well," responds Bailly, trying to pass along, "do you suppose we can rely upon such pledges?"

"And why not?"

"Because they are made by seditious fellows."

The commissioners look at one another in astonishment. Billot scowls and says: "Seditious fellows? So we are rebels, are we?"

"Yes," says Bailly, "very seditious fellows! and I 'm on my way now to the Champ de Mars, to restore good order."

Billot shrugs his shoulders and laughs, — such a rough

laugh as sounds like a threat, when coming from certain lips.

"Restore order in the Champ de Mars?" he says. "Why, your friend Lafayette has been there and gone away again; and your three delegates have been there, and they will tell you that the Champ de Mars is more quiet than the Hôtel de Ville!"

Just then the captain of a central company in the Bonne Nouvelle Battalion runs in, all excited.

"Where 's the Mayor?" he asks.

Billot stands aside, so that Bailly can be seen, as he answers: "Here I am!"

"To arms, Monsieur Mayor, to arms!" shouts the captain. "There 's fighting in the Champ de Mars, where fifty thousand scoundrels are preparing to march against the National Assembly."

Hardly are the words out of his mouth when Billot's heavy hand weighs on his shoulder, as the farmer asks: "Who says so?"

"Who says so? The Assembly!"

"Then the Assembly lies!" answers Billot.

"Monsieur!" says the captain, drawing his sword.

"The Assembly *lies!*" repeats Billot, grasping the sword, partly by the hilt and partly by the blade, and wrenching it from the captain's hands.

"Enough, enough, gentlemen!" says Bailly. "We will go and see for ourselves. Monsieur Billot, I beg you to return the captain's sword; and if you have any influence over those who have sent you here, go back to them, and ask them to disperse."

"To disperse?" cries Billot. "Let us see about that! The right of petition is guaranteed by law, and until the decree is annulled, nobody has any right — not even a mayor or the Commander of the National Guard — to

hinder citizens from expressing their wishes. You 're going to the Champ de Mars? We 'll precede you, Monsieur Mayor!"

Those who surround the actors in this scene wait but for an order — a word or a gesture — from Bailly, to arrest Billot; but Bailly feels that the voice which speaks so loudly and firmly is the voice of the people. He makes a sign to let Billot and the commissioners pass by unmolested.

As they descend to the square a large red flag, suspended from one of the windows of the City Hall behind them, shakes out its bloody folds in the first breezes of a storm which overspreads the sky.

Unhappily this storm does not last many minutes. There is thunder, but no rain, and this but increases the heat of the day, and permeates the air with a little more electricity.

By the time Billot and the eleven other commissioners reach the Champ de Mars, the multitude has increased by nearly one-third. As nearly as the number of people in that immense basin can be estimated, there must be about sixty thousand souls. These sixty thousand men and women are on the slope which surrounds the Patriot Altar, and on the platform and steps of the altar itself.

Billot and his colleagues appear. This causes immense commotion. From all points the people rush towards them and press about them. Have the two innocent citizens been released? What is the Mayor's response?

The two citizens have not been released, and the Mayor has given no answer about them, except to say that the petitioners are a set of seditious fellows.

At this title the seditious fellows laugh good-naturedly, and they all resume their places, their promenades, their occupations.

During all this time they continue to sign the petition. Already four or five thousand signatures are counted. Before evening they may reckon on fifty thousand. The Assembly will feel obliged to yield before such startling unanimity.

Suddenly a citizen comes running, out of breath. Not only, like the commissioners, has he seen the red flag flying from the City Hall windows, but he has also heard the joyful shouts with which the National Guards have greeted the announcement that they are to march on the Champ de Mars. Those guards have loaded their guns; and that being done, a municipal officer has gone from rank to rank, whispering to the leaders.

Then the whole mass of National Guardsmen, with Bailly and other municipal officials at the head, has put itself in motion, to come to the Champ de Mars.

The man who brings these details has hastened on ahead, in order to announce this sinister intelligence to the Patriots; but there reigns such peace, such harmony, such fraternity over the immense field, consecrated by the Federation of the preceding year, that citizens who are there, exercising a right recognized by the Constitution, cannot believe themselves to be thus menaced. They prefer to think the messenger mistaken.

They continue to sign the petition. The singing and dancing is redoubled.

However, they begin to hear the roll of a drum. The sound draws nearer. Then the petitioners begin to look about them and grow anxious. Among those standing on the slopes arises a great murmur, and they point to the approaching bayonets, which glitter like a waving field of steel.

The members of different Patriotic societies come together, and many propose to retire; but from the Patriot

Altar Billot calls aloud: "Brothers, what are we doing? Why this fear? Either the proclamation of martial law is directed against us, or it is not. If not aimed at us, why should we avoid it? If aimed at us, it will be made known to us. We shall be notified by public summons, and then it will be time enough to run away."

"Yes, yes!" is heard on all sides, "we are within the limits of the law. Let's wait for the summons. It must be three times read, — the Riot Act! Let's stay where we are."

Everybody remains. At that instant the beat of the drum draws very near, and detachments of the National Guards appear at the three entrances of the Champ de Mars.

A third of the armed mass appears at the opening near the Military Academy. Another third is seen through an opening a little lower down. The other third appears at the opening opposite the Chaillot Heights. On that side the troops cross the wooden bridge, and advance with the red flag at their head and Bailly in the ranks; only their red flag is an almost invisible ensign, which does not especially attract the eyes of the crowd to that detachment.

This is what the petitioners, gathered in the Champ de Mars, now see. Meanwhile, what do the new-comers see?

They see a vast plain, filled with inoffensive promenaders, and in the midst of this plain the Patriot Altar, a gigantic structure, on a platform which is accessible (as we have already said) by four wide staircases, over which four battalions could mount in solid ranks.

From this platform rise, like a pyramid, the steps leading to the smaller platform, crowned by the Patriot Altar, shaded by a beautiful palm. Each step, from the

lowest to the highest, serves as a bench, which holds a greater or less number of spectators, according to its capacity. This human pyramid is bright with animation.

The National Guards from Marais and from the Faubourg Saint Antoine, four thousand men or more, with their artillery, enter by the opening at the southern angle of the Military School, and range themselves in front of that building.

Lafayette has little confidence in the men of Marais and the Faubourgs, which constitute the democratic part of his army; so he has added to their numbers a battalion of hired soldiery.

These hirelings are the modern Pretorian Guard. They are composed, as we have said, of old soldiers, of members of the disbanded French Guard, of excited Lafayettites, who, knowing that their deity has been fired upon, wish to avenge this crime, which, in their opinion, is a greater offence than that of high treason against the Nation, which the King has committed.

The Hireling Guards come from the side near Gros Caillou, brilliant, formidable, and menacing. Entering the middle of the Champ de Mars, they find themselves at once in front of the Patriot Altar.

The third body, coming from the wooden bridge, preceded by the shabby red flag of which we have spoken, is composed of the National Guard Reserves, with which are mingled a hundred dragoons and a band of barbers, privileged to carry swords, and armed to the teeth.

Through the same openings by which the National Guards enter, come also several squadrons of cavalry. They raise the dust, scarcely laid by the short rain, which for a moment seemed like a harbinger of peace; and this dust shuts off from the spectators their view

of the impending drama, which can only be seen through a murky veil, or through rents in the sandy cloud.

What is thus partly seen by spectators, through a veil or through the rents, we will try to describe.

There is first the crowd, thrown into living eddies by the cavalry, whose horses are driven at full speed around this vast circus. The crowd, completely shut in by the circle of iron, seeks a refuge at the foot of the Patriot Altar, as at the threshold of an inviolable sanctuary.

Then from the waterside is heard a single gunshot, and the smoke of a vigorous fusillade rises towards the sky.

Bailly is received by shouts from the boys who cover the slopes of Grenelle. In the midst of these outcries a shot is heard. A ball whistles behind the Mayor's head, and slightly wounds a dragoon. Bailly orders his men to fire, but to fire into the air, simply to frighten the crowd; but hardly has the echo died away when another fusillade responds. This fusillade comes from the Hireling Guards.

Upon whom, upon what, do they fire? On that inoffensive crowd surrounding the Patriot Altar.

A scream of fright follows the discharge; and now is seen a rare spectacle, which is to be more common in the future, — the people fleeing in all directions, leaving behind them motionless corpses, and wounded bodies weltering in their blood. Amidst the smoke and dust the enraged cavalry are in pursuit of the fugitives.

The Champ de Mars presents a deplorable aspect. Everywhere are injured women and children.

As always happens under similar circumstances, the luxury of blood, the frenzy of carnage, spreads far and wide. The artillery is placed in position, and the gunners make ready to fire. Lafayette has barely time to

ride to the spot, and put himself and his horse before a cannon's mouth.

After a headlong and blind rush hither and thither, the doomed rabble instinctively throws itself into the ranks of the National Guards from the Marais and the Faubourg Saint Antoine. These guards open their ranks to receive the fugitives. The wind having blown the smoke in the faces of these friendly soldiers, they have not seen what has really taken place, and fancy the fugitives are actuated by fear alone. When the smoke is dissipated, they are horrified to behold a heap of dead bodies and the earth stained with blood.

At that instant comes an aide at full gallop, with orders for the National Guards from the Faubourg Saint Antoine and the Marais to march on and sweep the place, so as to effect a junction with the other two military detachments; but these democratic troops propose, on the contrary, to defy the aide, and the troopers who are charging upon the populace. The aide and the cavalry alike recoil before these Patriotic bayonets. All the people who have fled to that side find impregnable security.

In an instant the great field is evacuated. There remain in it only the bodies of men, women, and children, killed or wounded by the terrible discharge of the Hireling Guard, and the unhappy fugitives cut down by the dragoons or trampled under the feet of their horses.

In the very heat of this carnage, undaunted by the fall of the dead and the cries of the wounded, beneath the discharges of musketry and under the mouths of the cannon, a few Patriots gather up the papers containing the signatures to their petition; and even as the men have found a refuge in the ranks of the Marais and Saint Antoine National Guards, so these signatures,

in all probability, find a secure asylum in the house of Santerre.

Who gave that unfortunate order to fire? No one knows. That is one of the historic mysteries which remain unexplained, despite the most conscientious investigations. Neither chivalrous Lafayette nor honest Bailly loved bloodshed; and yet this blood, crying from the ground, pursued them to the end of their days. From that moment their popularity was lost.

How many victims remained on that field of carnage? Nobody knows. Some underrated the number, in order to lessen the responsibility of the Mayor and the Commanding General; while others overrated it, so as to increase the popular ire.

When night came, these corpses were thrown into the Seine. The Seine, a blind accomplice, carried them to the ocean, wherein they were swallowed up.

All in vain were Bailly and Lafayette not only absolved from guilt, but felicitated by the Assembly. Vainly did the Constitutionalist journals proclaim this day's work a triumph of law. The triumph was blasted with mildew and branded with shame, as should be every day of disaster, wherein rulers slay those who are not in arms against lawful authority; for such executions are only assassinations.

The people, who generally give things their proper names, called this pretended triumph the Massacre of the Champ de Mars.

CHAPTER XX.

AFTER THE MASSACRE.

LET us return to Paris, and see what is going on there. Paris heard the noise of the fusillade, and shuddered. Paris did not quite know which party was right and which party was wrong; but Paris felt that she had received a wound, and that her blood flowed from this wound.

Robespierre stayed at the Jacobin Club, like a commander in his fortress. There he was really strong; but that popular citadel had been ripped open, and everybody could enter through the breach left by Barnave, Duport, and Lameth, in their withdrawal.

The Jacobin sent one of their own number to learn the true state of things.

As to their neighbors of the Feuillant Club, they had no need to send out for the news. They were kept informed, hour by hour, minute by minute, of what was transpiring. Their own game was being played, and so far they were the gainers.

The Jacobin messenger returned in about ten minutes. He had met some of the fugitives, and they had hurled at him this horrible information: "Lafayette and Bailly are slaughtering the people."

Everybody had not heard Bailly's cry of woe, everybody had not seen Lafayette fearlessly throw himself directly in front of the loaded cannon.

The messenger at once hurried back to the old convent, and his cries frightened the small number of zealous members — not over thirty or forty — still remaining there.

They comprehended that it was upon themselves, the Jacobins, that the Feuillants would try to throw the responsibility of the first provocation. Had not the first petition come from the Jacobins? To be sure, it had been withdrawn; but the second petition — which had not been withdrawn — was evidently the offspring of the first. No wonder the Jacobins were frightened.

That white face, that phantom of virtue, that shadow of Rousseau's philosophy, called Robespierre, was no longer merely pale, but livid. The prudent Deputy from Arras tried to slip away, but could not. He was forced to remain and take his stand. His choice was inspired by fear.

The Jacobins declared their disavowal of the false, or falsified, publications attributed to them, and were ready to swear anew their fidelity to the Constitution, and their willingness to obey the decrees of the National Assembly.

Hardly had this declaration been made when, through the corridors of the old Jacobin convent, resounded a great noise from the street. This noise was made up of laughter, jeers, yells, threats, and songs.

The Jacobins pricked up their ears, and hoped the noise would pass them by, and keep on to the Palace Royal, which Orleans occupied. No! The noise ceased, and the rabble came to a halt in front of the low and gloomy convent portal, which opened upon the Rue Saint Honoré.

To add to the terror which already reigned within, somebody called out: "Those are the Hireling Guards,

returning from the slaughter of the Champ de Mars. They mean to demolish us with cannon-shot."

Fortunately some soldiers had been placed at the entrance, as a matter of precaution. They closed and secured all the openings into the old place, so as to prevent this troop, furious and drunk with the blood already spilled, from being tempted into a fresh onslaught.

One by one the Jacobins and spectators went away. This evacuation did not take long, for even when the hall was first opened, there were present barely thirty or forty members; and the galleries did not afterward contain over a hundred spectators.

Among the last was Madame Roland, who was everywhere that day. She relates how one Jacobin, when the rumor spread that the Hireling Guards were about to invade the hall, lost his head to such an extent that he climbed into the seats reserved for women. She, Madame Roland, made him ashamed of his alarm, and he returned to the floor, where he belonged.

As we have said, actors and spectators, one after the other, shied through the half-open door.

Robespierre went out in his turn. Should he go to the right or the left? He must turn to the left, if he wished to go to his own place; for, as is well known, he then lived at the farther end of the Marais; but in that case he must make his way through the ranks of the Hireling Guards. He preferred to go towards the Faubourg Saint Honoré, and ask an asylum with Pétion, who dwelt in that quarter; so he turned to the right.

Robespierre was very anxious to remain unnoticed, but how could he do so, with that olive coat, plain to the extreme limit of civic plainness, — for the short and striped coat did not come in till a later period; with

the spectacles, which testified that burning the midnight candle had aged the worthy Patriot's eyes earlier than usual; with that stealthy step, like that of the weasel and the fox?

Hardly had he taken twenty steps in the street before two or three persons said, one to another: "Robespierre! — See, Robespierre! — That 's Robespierre!"

Women paused and clasped their hands. Women liked Robespierre, who, in his speeches, took great pains to lay stress upon sentimentalism.

"How, that dear Monsieur Robespierre? Is that he?"

"Yes!"

"Where is he?"

"There, there! — See? — That little man, — slender and well powdered, — walking along by the wall. He tries to hide, because he 's so modest!"

Really our Robespierre did not hide himself through modesty, but through fear; but who dared suggest that the virtuous and incorruptible Robespierre, the tribune of the people, tried to conceal himself out of cowardice?

One man stuck his head under Robespierre's nose, to make sure it was he. Robespierre pulled his hat over his eyes, not knowing why he was so closely inspected. The man recognized him and cried out: "Huzza for Robespierre!"

Robespierre would have preferred having to do with an enemy, rather than with such a friend.

"Robespierre!" cried another bystander, still more fanatical. "Long live Robespierre! If we must needs have a king, why not Robespierre?"

Oh sublime Shakespeare! "Cæsar is dead, that his assassin might be Cæsar!"

If any man ever cursed his popularity, it was Robespierre at that moment. A great circle of people gathered about him, and it was even proposed to carry him along in triumph. Under his glasses he peeped in terror from right to left, trying to detect some open door or dark alley into which he could flee, and be out of sight.

Just then he felt himself grasped by the arm, and pulled violently aside, while a voice whispered, with a friendly accent: "Come!"

Robespierre yielded to the impulsion, and let himself be hurried on. Presently he heard a door shut behind him, and found himself in a joiner's shop.

This joiner was a man from forty-two to forty-five years old. Near him was his wife. In a room at the end of the shop were two girls, one sixteen and the other eighteen years of age, who were preparing the family supper.

Robespierre was very pale, and seemed on the verge of fainting.

"Leonora," said the joiner, "a glass of water!" Leonora, the carpenter's eldest daughter, approached timidly, with a glass of water in her hand. Perhaps the lips of the austere tribune touched the fingers of Mademoiselle Duplay; for Robespierre was now, for the first time, in the house of the carpenter of that name.

While Madame Roland, who knows Robespierre's peril and exaggerates it, is on a bootless errand to the Marais district, to offer him a shelter with herself and husband, let us forsake Robespierre, who is secure with the excellent Duplay family, — which he will one day make his own, — in order to enter the Tuileries, in the track of Doctor Gilbert.

Again the Queen is in expectation; but it is not Barnave for whom she waits; nor is she in the lower apartments of Madame Campan, but in her own rooms. Moreover, she is not standing, with her hand on the door-latch, but seated in an armchair, her head in her hand.

She is waiting for Weber, whom she has sent to the Champ de Mars, and who has witnessed the whole scene from the heights of Chaillot.

In order to be fair towards the Queen, — and better understand that hatred towards the French, for which she has been so greatly blamed, — inasmuch as we have recounted her sufferings during the journey from Varennes, let us also relate what she endured after her return. A historian may be partial; but we are only romancers, and partiality is not permitted to the romancer.

The King and Queen having been arrested, the people had but one idea, — that having once fled, they would flee a second time, and that the second time they would gain the frontier. There was a popular notion that the Queen was a clever sorceress, like Medea, who might fly from her window, in a car drawn by two griffins. Such ideas were not only current among the common people, but they found credence among the officers set to guard Marie Antoinette.

Gouvion, who had let her slip through his fingers at the time of the escape to Varennes, — and whose mistress, a guardian of the wardrobe, then warned Mayor Bailly of the intended departure, — declared that he would not be responsible for the result, if any other woman except Madame de Rochereul (this, it will be remembered, was the name of the lady of the wardrobe) had the right to enter the Queen's apartments. He therefore placed at the bottom of the stairs, leading to the royal apartments, a portrait of Madame de Rochereul, in order that sentinels

might detect any other woman who attempted to ascend to the Queen's rooms.

Being informed of this order, the Queen went at once to the King and complained of the insult. The King could not believe it, and sent downstairs to inquire into the matter; but he found the report to be true.

Then the King appealed to Lafayette, and demanded the removal of that portrait. The portrait was removed, and the Queen's usual attendants resumed their service; but in place of this humiliating order, another precaution was instituted, equally offensive. The battalion officers were regularly stationed in the parlor called the Grand Cabinet, adjoining the Queen's bedroom, and they were ordered to keep the door always open, so that they could have an eye on the royal family.

One day the King ventured to shut this door. Immediately an officer reopened it. A moment afterwards the King closed it again; but it was opened anew, and the officer said: "Sire, it is useless for you to shut this door; for as often as you shut it, I shall reopen it. Such are my instructions."

The door remained open. The only favor officially obtainable was this, — that while the Queen was dressing and undressing, the door might be closed against the framework, without being entirely shut. As soon as she was dressed or abed, the door was again set wide open.

This tyranny was so intolerable, that the Queen conceived the idea of placing her attendant's bed near her own, so that it should stand between her Majesty and the door; and this bed, furnished with curtains and rolling on castors, made a sort of screen, behind which she could dress and undress.

One night, seeing that the chambermaid was asleep and the Queen wide awake, the sentinel profited by

Madame Campan's somnolence to enter the room, and draw near the Queen's bedside.

The Queen met his approach with that haughty air which she knew how to assume when anybody failed in proper respect; but this courageous fellow, who had no idea of showing her any disrespect, was not disturbed by her haughtiness, and looked at her with an unmistakable expression of pity, as he said: "On my honor, Madame, now that I find you alone, I wish to give you some advice!" and at once, without caring to know whether the Queen did or did not wish to hear him, he unfolded to her what he should do, were he in her place.

The Queen had noted his intrusion with anger; but, reassured by his tone of good-nature, she let him go on, and finally listened to him with profound melancholy.

During the interview the attendant awoke. Seeing a man near the Queen's bed, she screamed, and wished to summon help; but the Queen checked her, saying: "No, Campan. Let me listen to what this gentleman says. Monsieur is a good Frenchman. Though he is deceived, like so many others, as to our intentions, his observations betray a genuine attachment to royalty." So the officer went on to the end, telling the Queen all he wished to say.

Before the Varennes journey Marie Antoinette had not a gray hair. During the night following the scene between Charny and herself, which we have before described, her hair became almost white. Perceiving this sorrowful change she smiled bitterly, and cut off a lock to send to Madame de Lamballe, then in London, with the following words:

Blanched by sorrow!

We saw her waiting for Barnave, and we know his

hopes; but he had great difficulty in leading her to share these hopes.

Marie Antoinette feared all scenes of violence. Hitherto these occurrences had always worked against her, as witness the capture of the Bastille, those dreadful October days, and the arrest at Varennes.

The fatal discharge in the Champ de Mars was heard as far as the Tuileries, and the Queen's heart was profoundly disturbed over it. Taking it all together, the Varennes affair was a great lesson to her. Until then the Revolution had seemed to her to mean no more than one of Pitt's English schemes, or one of Orleans's intrigues. She had believed Paris misled by a few demagogues, and she spoke, as did the King, about "our faithful provinces." Now she had seen the provinces, and found them more revolutionary than Paris.

The Assembly was too old, too decrepit, too much in its dotage to faithfully keep the engagements which Barnave had made in its behalf. Besides, was not its term of existence nearly over? The embraces of the dying are not always safe and wholesome.

The Queen was waiting with great anxiety for Weber, as already stated. The door opened. She turned her eyes quickly to that side; but instead of the portly Austrian form of her foster-brother, she saw the stern and cold face of Doctor Gilbert.

She did not much like this Royalist, with his Constitutionalist theories so plainly mapped out, and regarded him as little better than a Republican. Although she felt much respect for him, she would not have sent for him in any crisis, either physical or moral; but when he was in her presence, she submitted to his influence.

When she saw him enter she trembled, for she had not seen him since she listened to his scathing rebuke,

the evening of her return from Varennes. "It is you, Doctor?" she said.

Gilbert bowed as he replied: "Yes, Madame, it is I. I know that you are expecting Weber; but the news which he will bring you I bring you also, and more accurately. He was on the side beyond the Seine, where there was no slaughter; while I, on the other hand, was on the field, this side of the river, where the slaughter took place"

"Slaughter? What has happened, Monsieur?"

"A great misfortune, Madame. The Court party has triumphed."

"The Court party has triumphed? You call that a misfortune, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"Yes, because the victory has been won by terrible means, which will weaken the victors, and perhaps lay them low, beside the defeated party."

"But what has happened?"

"Lafayette and Bailly have fired on the populace, and in such a way that henceforth they can serve you no longer."

"Why so?"

"Because their popularity is gone."

"And what were the people doing upon whom they fired?"

"They were signing a petition asking for the removal."

"The removal of whom?"

"Of the King."

"And you think it was wrong to fire on them after that?" asked the Queen, her eyes aflame.

"I think it would have been better to convince than to shoot them."

"Convince them of what?"

"Of the King's sincerity."

"But the King is sincere!"

"Pardon, Madame! Three days ago I was with the King. I spent a whole evening trying to make him understand that his real enemies are his two royal brothers, Condé, and the other fugitives from the kingdom. On my knees I supplicated the King to break all relations with them, and honestly adopt the Constitution, with a proviso that two or three articles should be changed, whose performance would be practically impossible. The King was convinced, — at least so I believed, — and had the kindness to promise me that all should be over between himself and those refugees. Hardly was my back turned, Madame, when the King signed, and had you also sign, a letter for his brother, *Monsieur*, in which he gave him full powers to treat with the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia."

The Queen blushed, like a child detected in an act of disobedience; but a child, thus detected, would have bowed its head; whereas she, on the contrary, straightway recovered herself.

"Do our enemies have spies even in the King's study?"

"Yes, Madame," replied Gilbert, coolly, "and this is what makes every false step so perilous on the King's part."

"But, Monsieur, the letter was entirely written by the King's own hand. After being signed by myself, it was folded and sealed by the King, and then given to the messenger whose business it was to deliver it."

"True, Madame!"

"Was that messenger arrested?"

"The letter was read."

"Are we then surrounded by traitors?"

"All men are not Charnys!"

"What do you mean?"

"Alas, Madame, I mean that one of the fatal auguries which presage the destruction of kings is the alienation of their friends, who should be bound to their fortunes by hoops of steel."

"I have not sent Monsieur de Charny away," bitterly replied the Queen. "Charny withdrew of his own accord. When kings are unfortunate, there are no bonds strong enough to keep friends by royalty's side."

Gilbert looked at the Queen, and softly shook his head.

"Do not calumniate Monsieur de Charny, Madame, or the blood of his brothers will cry out from the tomb, that the Queen of France is ungrateful."

"Monsieur!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette.

"You know very well that I speak the truth, Madame! You know well enough that, whenever real danger betides you, Charny will be at his post, and that his post will be one of danger."

The Queen lowered her head; but presently she said, with much impatience: "You did not come to talk to me about Charny, I suppose?"

"No, Madame! but ideas, like events, are bound together by invisible threads; and those are suddenly brought into the daylight, which were better left hidden in the heart's obscurity. — No, I came to speak to the *Queen*. Pardon me if, in my temper, I have spoken to the *woman;* but I am ready to atone for my error."

"And what then do you wish to say to the Queen, Monsieur?"

"I wish to place before her eyes the situation both of France and Europe. This is what I wish to say: Madame, you are playing a game in which the happiness or

misery of the world lies in your hands. In that frightful October of two years ago you lost the first game of the rubber. Just now — at least so it seems in the eyes of your courtiers — you have won the second game. Now you are to begin the third game, which is called the *rub*. If you lose, away go your stakes, — throne, liberty, and perhaps life."

The Queen drew herself up proudly. "Monsieur, do you think we would recoil through cowardice?"

"I know the King is brave; he is a descendant of Henry the Fourth. I know the Queen's heroism, for she is the daughter of Maria Theresa. I only seek, therefore, to reach them through their convictions. Unhappily, I doubt if I can ever arouse in the heart of my King or Queen the conviction which is in my own."

"Why take so much trouble, Monsieur, if you deem it useless?"

"To discharge my duty, Madame. When one lives in such tempestuous times as ours, do you fancy it is pleasant to be continually compelled to say to one's self: This effort also will be unfruitful, but I will discharge my duty?"

The Queen looked Gilbert straight in the eyes. "First of all, Monsieur, do you think it may be yet possible to save the King?"

"I so believe!"

"And royalty also?"

"As I hope!"

"Well, Monsieur," said the Queen, with a sad, deep sigh, "you are happier than I. Both are lost, — as I believe, — and I contend with Fate, only for the sake of satisfying my conscience."

"Yes, Madame, I can well understand that, because

you desire a despotic sovereignty and an absolute monarch. You are like a miser, who will not sacrifice a part of his fortune for the sake of safety, even when he comes in sight of the shore, which will repay him more than he loses by shipwreck. He clings fast to his treasures, till drawn down by their deadly weight. You also will drown through your tenacity, hampered by baubles you strive to retain. Take advantage of the tempest. Throw the past to the winds, and swim towards the future!"

"To throw aside the past would be to break faith with all the kings of Europe."

"Yes! but that means an alliance with the French people."

"Frenchmen are our enemies!"

"Because you have taught them to distrust you."

"The French people cannot successfully fight against a European coalition."

"Let them have at their head a king who unreservedly adheres to the Constitution, and the French can conquer all Europe."

"It would require a million of men to do that!"

"Europe is not to be conquered with a million soldiers, Madame, but Europe may be conquered with a single idea. Plant along the Rhine and on the Alps the tricolored flag, with this motto, *Death to Tyrants! Liberty to the Nations!* and Europe will be conquered."

"Truly, Monsieur, there are times when I am tempted to believe the wisest men insane."

"Ah Madame, Madame! can you not see what France has become in the sight of all other nations? Whatever the crimes of individuals, whatever local excesses may be committed, these do not stain the white robe of France, nor soil her pure hands. France is the virgin Goddess of Liberty. The whole world loves her. From the Low

Countries of the north, from the Rhine, from sunny Italy, millions of voices invoke her aid. She has only to set her feet beyond her own frontier, to find the nations kneeling before her. When France comes with her hands full of liberty, she is no longer a single nation; she becomes the type of immutable justice, of eternal reason and right. Oh Madame, Madame! profit by the fact that France has not yet reached the point of violence; for if you wait too long, these hands, now extended fraternally to the world, will be turned upon herself. Belgium, Germany, Italy now follow each movement of France with looks of love and joy. Belgium says to France, *Come!* Germany exclaims, *I await thee!* Italy says to her, *Save me!* In the far north an unknown hand has written, in the Council of Gustavus of Sweden, *No war with France!* Besides, not one of the kings, whom you would call to your help, is ready for war. Two empires hate us profoundly. When I say two empires, I should rather say an empress and a minister, — Catherine the Second of Russia and Pitt of England; but they are powerless against us, — at least for the present. Catherine the Second holds Turkey under one claw and Poland under the other. She will need two or three years in which to subdue the one and devour the other. She urges the Germans against us, and offers them France. She makes your brother Leopold ashamed of his supineness. She calls his attention to the invasion of Holland by the King of Prussia, simply to avenge an affront to his sister. She says, Russia says, *March on!* but Leopold marches not. Pitt is swallowing India, and at this moment he is like a boa-constrictor, suffering from laborious indigestion. If we wait till he is all over it, he will attack us, not so much through a direct foreign war, as by encouraging civil war in France. I know you stand

in mortal dread of this Pitt. I know you acknowledge that you never speak of him without experiencing a death-shudder. Do you wish for some means of smiting his heart? Make France a republic with a king. Instead of that, what are you doing, Madame? What is your friend the Princess Lamballe doing? She tells England, where she represents you, that the great ambition of France is to have a Charter, something like the Great Charter, the *Magna Charta* of England; that the French Revolution, bridled and ridden by the King, has passed its crisis and suffers a reaction. What does Pitt respond to her advances? That he will not suffer France to become a republic, that he will save the monarchy; but all the caresses, all the arguments, all the prayers of Lamballe cannot make him promise to save the monarch, for he hates that monarch. Is it not this very monarch, Louis Sixteenth, — a Constitutional king, a philosophic king, — who has disputed Pitt's claim to India, and helped the American colonies to wrench themselves from under the British yoke? For Louis Sixteenth, Pitt desires but one thing, — that history shall paint him as the companion portrait of Charles the First."

"Monsieur, Monsieur!" cried the startled Queen, "who has disclosed to you all these things?"

"The same men who tell me the contents of your Majesty's letters."

"Then we have no longer a thought which belongs solely to ourselves?"

"I have already told you, Madame, that the kings of Europe are entangled in an invisible network, against which it is useless to contend. Do not resist, Madame! Put yourself at the head of the ideas you now try to hold back, and then this network will become your defensive armor. Those who now hate you will become

your defenders. Invisible daggers, which now threaten you, will be turned, not into pruning-hooks, but into swords, ready to smite your enemies."

"You forget, Monsieur, that those whom you call our enemies are kings, — our brothers."

"Ah Madame! Once call the French people your children, and you will see of how little account are brothers, in politics and diplomacy. Besides, can't you see that all these kings and princes are marked with a fatal seal, the stamp of madness? Let us begin with your brother Leopold, worn out at forty-two, in his Tuscan seraglio, transported to Vienna, trying to rally his moribund faculties with the murderous excitements he prepares for himself. Look at Frederick of Prussia. Look at Gustavus of Sweden. One died and the other will die without posterity; for it is well known to everybody, that the present heir of Sweden's throne is the son of Monk, and not of King Gustave. Look at Portugal's King, with his three hundred nuns. Look at the King of Saxony, with his three hundred and fifty-four bastards. Look at Catherine, the Pasiphae of the North, for whom the bull of classic story would not suffice, and who has three armies from which she chooses her lovers. — Oh Madame, Madame! can't you see that all these kings and all these queens are marching into a gulf, into an abyss, into suicide, and that if you wish, — *you*, — instead of marching with them into suicide, into a ravine, into the gulf of desolation, you may march into a world-wide empire, a universal monarchy?"

"Why don't you say all this to the King?" asked the disquieted Queen.

"Indeed I have, Madame; but, like yourself, he has evil geniuses, who undo all that I have done." Then he added, with deep melancholy: "You tired out Mirabeau,

you are wearying Barnave; and you 'll use me as you used them, and that 's all it amounts to!"

"Monsieur Gilbert," said the Queen, "wait here for me. — I wish to see the King a moment, and then I 'll come back."

Gilbert bowed; and the Queen went out by the door leading to the King's rooms.

The Doctor waited ten minutes, fifteen minutes, half an hour. At last a door opened; but it was one opposite to that by which the Queen had made her exit.

An usher entered. After looking carefully about him on all sides he came towards Gilbert, made a Masonic sign, gave him a letter, and went away again. Gilbert opened the letter and read:

Thou art wasting thy time, Gilbert. At this very moment the Queen and King are listening to Breteuil, who comes from Vienna, and brings with him this advice: "Treat Barnave like Mirabeau. Gain time by swearing to support the Constitution, and by executing it to the letter, so as to show its impracticability. France will cool off and get weary. The French are feather-brained. They will take up with some new fad, and Liberty will go its way; or if Liberty is not forgotten, a year will be gained, and in a year we shall be ready for war."

Gilbert, let those two fools slide, who are still derisively called King and Queen, and betake thyself forthwith to the hospital at Gros Caillou. There thou wilt find a dying man, — not so sick as Marie Antoinette and Louis, perchance; but thou mayest perhaps save *him*, whereas *they* cannot be saved, and may pull thee after themselves in their downfall.

The letter had no signature, but Gilbert recognized Cagliostro's writing. At that instant Madame Campan entered, by the private doorway, and handed Gilbert a note, which read as follows:

The King begs Doctor Gilbert to put in writing the policy which he has suggested to the Queen.

Detained by an important affair, the Queen regrets that she cannot see Doctor Gilbert again soon, and it will be useless for him to wait for her longer.

Gilbert read the note, meditated a moment, and muttered, shaking his head: "The idiots!"

"Have you no word to send to their Majesties, Monsieur?" asked Madame Campan.

Gilbert gave her the unsigned letter which he had just received. "There is my answer," he said, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXI.

NO MORE MASTERS! NO MORE MISTRESSES!

BEFORE following Gilbert to the hospital at Gros Caillou, where his services are needed for the unknown patient commended to his care by Cagliostro, let us take a leap of some weeks ahead, and get a last peep at the Assembly, which is about to dissolve, after accepting the Constitution, whereon depends the retention of Louis the Sixteenth upon his throne; and let us see what the Court has gained by that fatal victory of July 17, which will cost Bailly his head two years hence.

Then we may return to the chief persons of our narrative, of whom we have partly lost sight, carried away by the political vortex, which compels us to place under the eyes of our readers the great popular street disturbances, where individuals disappear, giving place to the masses.

We saw the danger incurred by Robespierre; and we know how he escaped — thanks to the intervention of Carpenter Duplay — the triumph brought upon him by his wellnigh fatal popularity.

While Robespierre was supping quietly, in the little dining-room opening upon the courtyard, with the husband, wife, and their two daughters, his friends were very anxious about him, having been informed of the perils to which he had been exposed.

Madame Roland was especially anxious. This devoted creature forgot that she had been seen and recognized at

the Patriot Altar, and ran the same risk as all the other Patriots who had taken part in drawing up that obnoxious petition. She began by bringing to her own lodgings Robert and Mademoiselle Kéralio; and when it was known, that same night, that the Assembly was preparing an accusation against Robespierre, Madame Roland sought his home at the extremity of the Marais District, in order to warn him. Not finding him there she came back along the Théatin Quay, to Buzot's house.

Buzot was one of Madame Roland's admirers. She knew her great influence over him. This was why she applied to him. Buzot immediately passed the word on to Grégoire. If Robespierre's name was attacked by anybody in the Feuillant Club, Grégoire was to defend him. If the attack was made in the Assembly, Buzot was to be the defender. This was the more praiseworthy in Buzot, because he was no worshipper of Robespierre.

Grégoire was on hand at the meeting of the Feuillants, and Buzot was at the Assembly; but in neither place was there any attempt to accuse Robespierre. Deputies and Feuillants were alike disconcerted by their victory, and in consternation over the sanguinary step which had been taken in behalf of the Royalists.

Instead of any attack upon individuals, one was made upon the clubs in general. One member of the Assembly demanded their immediate closure. For a few minutes it seemed as if this measure would be carried unanimously, but Duport and Lafayette opposed it. To abolish clubs would be to abolish the Feuillant Club, as well as the Jacobin and Cordelier. Lafayette and Duport had not yet outgrown their delusion as to the power which the Feuillant Club might become in their hands. They believed that the Feuillants would take

the place of the Jacobins, and that through this immense organization they could control the mind of all France.

The next day the Assembly received the reports from the Mayor of Paris and the Commander of the National Guard. All hands were agreed upon deceiving themselves, and so the comedy was not difficult to play.

Both Mayor and Commander referred to the great disorder in the city, which they had been obliged to repress. They spoke of the morning assassinations and the afternoon gunshots, two events which bore no special relation to each other. They spoke of the danger which threatened the King, the Assembly, and society in general, — dangers which they, better than anybody else, knew had never existed.

The Assembly thanked Lafayette and Bailly for an energy they had never thought of putting forth, and congratulated them over a victory which both deplored from the depths of their hearts. Thanks were also rendered to Heaven, that with "one fell swoop" the insurrection and the insurgents had alike been annihilated.

Listening to these felicitations, one might have believed the Revolution all over. The Revolution was just beginning!

While this was going on, the Old Jacobins, judging the next day by the evening before, imagined themselves attacked, pursued, tracked, and prepared to gain pardon for their real importance, by an assumption of feigned humility.

Although still trembling at the proposal that he should be King in place of Louis Sixteenth, Robespierre proposed an address, in the name of the absent as well as the present members of his club.

In this address he warmly thanked the Assembly for

its generous efforts, wisdom, firmness, and vigilance, its impartial and incorruptible justice.

How the Feuillants regained their courage! No wonder they believed themselves all-powerful, when they beheld this humiliation of their opponents. For a time they believed themselves not only masters of Paris, but of France.

Alas! The Feuillants did not understand the situation. In separating themselves from the Jacobins the Feuillants became simply a second Assembly, the duplicate, the reflection, the echo of the chief and real Assembly. The likeness between the two associations was seen even in this, that membership in each depended upon the payment of taxes, active citizenship, and registration on the voting list.

The people now had two chambers of middle-class representatives instead of one; but this was not at all what was desired. The call was for a popular chamber, one which was not the ally, but the opponent, of the National Assembly, a society which would not aid in royalty's reconstruction, but would force it onward to destruction.

The Feuillants did not meet the public demand, so the public abandoned the Feuillants during their short transfer; for their popularity was lost when they crossed the street, from one old convent to the other, though the two meeting-places were so near together.

In July there were four hundred prominent political societies. Of these four hundred societies, three hundred were affiliated equally with the Feuillants and Jacobins, while one hundred adhered to the Jacobins alone. Between July and September six hundred new societies were established, whereof only one hundred corresponded with the Feuillants.

In proportion as the Feuillants waned, the Jacobins renewed their youth, under the leadership of Robespierre, who began to be the most popular man in France. Cagliostro's prediction to Gilbert, in regard to the petty lawyer from Arras, was being accomplished. He was likely to be the death of royalty. Perhaps we shall see as faithfully fulfilled what Cagliostro said about the little Corsican from Ajaccio, who was to build anew the throne of Charlemagne.

Meantime the hour sounded for the end of the National Assembly. True it tolled slowly, as for an old man, with whom life consumes itself drop by drop and goes out spark by spark.

After voting three thousand laws, the Assembly at last finished its revision of the Constitution.

This Constitution was an iron cage, wherein — almost in spite of the Assembly, and without its own conscious knowledge — the King was tightly enclosed. The bars of the cage were gilded; but after all, however thick the gold-plating, these bars could not disguise their true intent.

The royal will had indeed become impotent. It was now a wheel which had its impetus from outside, instead of imparting a momentum of its own. All the King's power of resistance was reduced to his veto, which could delay for three years any measures not satisfactory to him. Thus certain wheels might come to a dead stop, through their own inability to put themselves in motion. Apart from this restrictive power of inertia, the monarchism, built up by two such mighty sovereigns as Henry the Fourth and Louis the Fourteenth, was now reduced to a condition of majestic inutility.

Meanwhile the day drew nigh when the King was to take his oath in support of the Constitution.

England and the titled refugees wrote to the King:

Perish, if necessary; but do not degrade yourself by this oath.

Barnave seconded the advice given by the King's brother-in-law, Leopold, — the successor of his brother Joseph on the Austrian throne, — who wrote as follows:

Take the oath! and let him keep it who can.

At last King Louis decided the question for himself, in this language:

I confess I do not see, in the Constitution, sufficient bonds of unity and action; but as opinions differ on this subject, I will consent to let experience be the sole judge.

It remained to be decided where the Constitution should be presented to the King for his acceptance, — at the Tuileries or at the Assembly. The King cut short the discussion by announcing that he would take the oath to support the Constitution in the very place where that Constitution had been adopted, the Assembly Hall. The day fixed by the King was September 13.

The Assembly received this communication with unanimous plaudits. The King would come to the Assembly! In a spurt of enthusiasm Lafayette rose and demanded a general amnesty for all against whom accusations were pending, on account of their participation in the King's flight to Varennes. This amnesty was voted by acclamation.

Thus the cloud which had momentarily darkened the sky for Charny and Andrée was dissipated almost as soon as it gathered.

A deputation of sixty members was appointed to thank the King for his letter. The Keeper of the Seals hastened to prepare the King for this deputation.

The same morning a decree was passed abolishing the Order of the Holy Ghost, four centuries old, but authorizing the King alone to wear its decoration, which had been an emblem of the highest nobility. The deputation found the King ornamented only with the cross of Saint Louis. As he noted the effect produced on the Deputies by the absence of the blue ribbon, the King said: "Gentlemen, you have to-day abolished the Order of the Holy Ghost, yet allowing its decorations to be used by myself alone; but as such insignia have no value in my eyes, except as a means of communicating pleasure and dignity to others, henceforth I shall consider it abolished for myself, as well as for all others."

The Queen, the Dauphin, and Madame Royale were standing near the entrance. The Queen was pale. Her teeth were clinched, and she trembled all over. Madame Royale, already passionate, irritable, and haughty, seemed chiefly impressed with her humiliations, past, present, and anticipatory. The Dauphin, careless as any child, seemed like the one living being in that group of marble, by the cheerfulness and vivacity he imparted to the scene.

As to the King, he said to Montmorin, several days before: "I know very well that I am ruined. Whatever is attempted for royalty in the future must be done for my boy."

His Majesty responded with apparent sincerity to the address of the deputation. At the conclusion he turned to the royal family, and added: "Here are my wife and children, who share my sentiments."

Yes, wife and children shared his *real* sentiments; for

when the deputation retired, and the King followed them with an uneasy and the Queen with a spiteful glance, the royal pair approached each other, and Marie Antoinette said, shaking her head, and laying her hand, cold and white as marble, on the King's arm: "These fellows want no more sovereigns. They are demolishing the monarchy stone by stone, and with those stones they will build us a sepulchre!"

She was mistaken, poor woman! When her time came she was laid on a bier with paupers, and not even allowed to have her own grave. She was not however mistaken in believing the last days of the royal prerogatives had come.

Monsieur de Malouet was President of the Assembly, a Royalist of the purest blood. However, he thought himself obliged to put before the Assembly the question whether the members should stand or be seated while the King was taking the oath.

"Seated! Seated!" was the cry on all sides.

"And the King?" asked Malouet.

"Standing, with head uncovered!" said a voice.

The whole Assembly was startled. That single voice was clear, strong, and vibratory. It sounded like the will of the people, and as if it were uttered by only one voice in order that it might be heard the better.

The President grew pale. Who spoke those words? Came they from the floor of the hall or from the galleries? It mattered not! They contained such power that the President was forced to reply. "Gentlemen, there are no circumstances in which the National Assembly does not recognize the King as chief, when he is present. If the King takes the oath standing, I request the Assembly to listen in the same attitude."

Again the unknown voice made itself heard. "I have

to propose an amendment which will satisfy everybody. Let us ordain that Monsieur de Malouet, and anybody else who prefers that posture, may listen to the King on their knees; but let us vote on the proposition already before us."

The proposition was set aside.

It was on the very day after this discussion that the King was to take his oath. The hall was full. The galleries were crammed with spectators. At noon the King was announced.

The King spoke standing. The Assembly listened standing. His speech being made, they all signed the Constitution, and then everybody sat down.

Then the President — it was Thouret, on this occasion — rose to make his address; but after the first two or three sentences, seeing that the King did not rise, Thouret sat down again.

This action provoked some applause in the galleries. As these plaudits were several times renewed, the King could not help growing pale. He drew his handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped the sweat from his brow.

The Queen was present at the session, in a special seat. She could bear no more, but rose and went out, slamming the door, and returned to the palace. She entered her apartments without a single word, even to her intimate friends. Since Charny was no longer near, her heart absorbed gall, even if she did not send it forth.

The King came home half an hour later, and immediately asked for the Queen. They told him where she was, and an usher wished to show him the way; but Louis sent the usher away by a sign, opened the doors himself, and suddenly appeared on the threshold of the room where he found the Queen. He was so pallid, so cast down, and the perspiration streamed in such great

drops from his face, that when the Queen perceived it she rose and uttered a cry. "Oh Sire, what has happened?"

Without answering, the King threw himself into an armchair and burst into tears. "Oh Madame, Madame! Why did you go to the session to-day? Was it necessary for you to be a witness of my humiliation? Was it for this that I brought you to France, under the pretext of making you its Queen?"

Such an outburst on the part of Louis was as distressing as it was rare. The Queen could not bear it. Running to his side, she fell on her knees before him. At that moment Madame Campan entered. Stretching her arms towards her attendant, the Queen cried: "Oh, leave us, Campan, leave us!"

Madame Campan was not deceived as to the sentiment which made the Queen send her away. She respectfully withdrew; but standing behind the door, she could hear the royal pair for a long time in conversation, interrupted by sobs.

At last the sobs grew calmer and the speakers became silent. In half an hour the door reopened, and the Queen called Madame Campan, and said to her: "Campan, take upon yourself the duty of delivering this letter to Monsieur de Malden. It is addressed to my brother Leopold. Malden will leave at once for Vienna. This letter must be there in advance of the report of what happened at the Assembly to-day. If he needs two or three hundred louis, give them to him, and I will repay you."

Madame Campan took the letter and went out. Two hours later Malden was on his way to Vienna.

Worst of all, it was necessary for the royal family to smile affably, and put on a joyous air.

During all the rest of the day the palace overflowed

with a prodigious crowd. In the evening the whole city sparkled with illuminations. The King and Queen were invited to drive in the Champs Élysées, escorted by the aides and chief officers of the Parisian National Guards.

As soon as they appeared, shouts for the King and Queen were heard on all sides; but in an interval, when these huzzas ceased and the carriage halted, a ferocious-looking man of the people, standing with folded arms near the carriage steps, said to her: "Don't believe them! Hurrah for the Nation!"

The carriage went slowly on again; but the man of the people laid his hand on the window and walked along beside the carriage. As often as the shouts were renewed for the King and Queen, this man repeated, in the same strident voice: "Don't believe that! Hurrah for the Nation!"

After the Queen returned she could hear this speech throbbing incessantly in her heart, like a hammer, smiting her senses with the regularity of hatred and obstinacy.

Special performances were held in the different theatres, — first at the Operahouse, then at the Comédie Française, then at the Italian Theatre. At the Operahouse and at the Comédie Française, everything was arranged for the occasion, and the King and Queen were received with unanimous acclamations; but when there was an effort to take the same precautions at the Italian, it was too late. All the seats in the parterre (parquet or pit) had been bought in a lump. It was at once understood that at the Italian Theatre things would not be as smooth as they had been at the Operahouse and the Comédie Française, and that there might be a disturbance in the evening.

Fear became certainty when it was seen how the pit

was occupied. Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Legendre, and Santerre occupied front seats. When the Queen entered the royal box (which, as usual in European theatres, was large, and situated in the centre of the main balcony) the boxes and balconies tried to applaud, but the pit hissed.

The Queen looked down with terror into the boiling crater below and in front of her. As through an atmosphere of flame she could see eyes full of anger and indignation; yet not one man did she know by sight. Indeed, she had scarcely heard their names.

Trying to hide her annoyance by a smile, she asked: "My God, what have I ever done to them, that they should detest me so?"

Suddenly her glance was arrested by the terrifying sight of a man standing by one of the columns which supported the gallery. That man was gazing at her with painful determination. It was the man whom she had seen at Taverney Château when she first entered France, at Sevres Bridge on her return from Versailles, in the Tuileries Gardens on the return from Varennes. It was the unknown man, whose words were menaces and whose actions were fearsome mysteries. When her eyes had once rested on this man, she could not turn them aside. He exercised over her the fascination of the serpent over the dove.

The play began. By an effort the Queen broke the charm, and turned her head so as to look at the stage. They were acting "Unforeseen Events," a now forgotten comic opera in three acts, by Grétry, which had been a dozen years before the public.

Despite every effort made by Marie Antoinette to distract her attention from that mysterious man, she could not avoid turning her awestruck gaze in that direction,

as if attracted towards him by a magnetic influence stronger than her own will. The man was always in the same place, immovable and sardonic, mocking. It was a painful, penetrating, and fatal spell which he exercised over her. What the nightmare is to the sleeper, was this cataleptic influence over one awake and watching.

Besides, a sort of electricity floated through the whole theatre. The opposing influences, though now held in abeyance, could not fail to explode, like two storm-clouds in August, coming from opposite extremes of the horizon, and hurling themselves at each other with lightning and thunder.

At last an occasion presented itself. Madame Dugazon, that charming woman who gave her name to a certain line of girlish and motherly parts in which she excelled, had a duet to sing with the tenor, and in that duet occurred this line:

Oh, how I love my mistress!

The courageous creature advanced to the front of the stage, raised her eyes and her hands respectfully towards the Queen, and uttered this fatal provocation.

The Queen saw that the tempest was upon them. Involuntarily her eyes sought the man at the gallery pillar. She thought she saw him make a sign of command, which was obeyed by all the occupants of the parterre.

As with one awful voice the pittites yelled: "No more masters! No more mistresses! Liberty!"

To this yell the galleries and boxes responded: "Long life to the King! Hurrah for the Queen! May they live forever, our noble Master and Mistress!"

"No more masters! No more mistresses! Liberty! Liberty!! Liberty!!!" were the answering shouts which arose from the pit.

In this second declaration of war the gauntlet was thrown down and accepted, and the fight began. The Queen screamed and shut her eyes. She had not even force enough left to look at the Unknown, who seemed like the Demon of Disorder, the Spirit of Destruction.

At that instant officers of the National Guard surrounded her, making a living rampart with their bodies, and led her out of the theatre; but into the corridors the yells followed her: "No more masters! No more mistresses! No more kings! No more queens!"

She was carried fainting to her carriage, and this was the last time she ever attended a theatre.

On September 30 the Constitution-making Assembly, through President Thouret, declared that having fulfilled its duties, its sessions were ended.

In a few lines here are the results of its work: the complete disorganization of the monarchy; the organization of the popular strength; the destruction of all special aristocratic and ecclesiastical privileges; the issue of twelve hundred millions of francs in assignats, or national paper currency, and the pledge of the national property for the payment of these obligations; the recognition of religious freedom; the suppression of the monastic orders; the abolition of secret imprisonment; the establishment of equality in official duties; the discontinuance of interior excise taxes; the formation of the National Guard; and finally, the adoption of the Constitution and the submission of the King thereto.

Sorrowful forebodings would have indeed been needed to make the King and Queen of France believe they had more reason to fear the new Assembly, which was about to convene, than the old one, which was just dissolved.

CHAPTER XXII.

BARNAVE'S FAREWELL.

On October 2, that is to say, two days after the dissolution of the Constitutional Assembly, at the hour when he was accustomed to see the Queen, Barnave was introduced, — no longer into Madame Campan's rooms, on the entrance floor, but into the room called the Great Cabinet.

On the evening of the day when the King swore allegiance to the Constitution, Lafayette's aides, and the other sentinels, disappeared from the interior of the palace; and if the King was not restored to power, he was at least restored to freedom. This was some consolation for the humiliation of which he had so bitterly complained to the Queen.

Though he did not undergo the formality of a solemn reception, yet Barnave was no longer subjected to the precautions formerly considered essential whenever he visited the Tuileries.

He was very pale and very sad. This pallor and sadness impressed the Queen. She received him standing; though she knew the young advocate's respect for her, and felt sure that, even if she sat down, he would not repeat the discourtesy of President Thouret, who took his seat when he saw that the King did not rise to listen to the official address.

"Well, Monsieur Barnave, you are doubtless contented, now that the King has followed your advice and sworn to support the Constitution."

"It is very kind of the Queen to say that the King has followed my advice. If this had not also been the advice of the Emperor Leopold and Prince Kaunitz, perhaps his Majesty would have hesitated more over this act, — the only one, however, which could save the King, if the King can —"

Barnave paused; but, grappling the question before her with that courage — we might call it *audacity* — which was a trait in her character, the Queen took up Barnave's word and said: "If the King *can* be saved! Is n't that what you mean?"

"God forbid that I should be the prophet of such evils, Madame! but in leaving Paris, in going away forever from the Queen, I would neither depress his Majesty's hopes, nor yet leave him too many illusions."

"You are leaving Paris, Monsieur? You are going away from me?"

"The labors of the Assembly, of which I was a member, are finished, and as that Assembly has decided that none of its own members are eligible to the Legislature which is to come, I have no longer any reason for staying in Paris."

"Not even the motive of being useful to us, Monsieur Barnave?"

Barnave smiled gloomily. "Not even that motive, Madame; for henceforth, dating from day before yesterday, I can no longer be useful to you."

"Oh Monsieur! you presume too little on your own merits."

"Alas, no, Madame! I examine myself, and find only feebleness. I weigh myself in the balances, and am found wanting. What gave me force, which I begged the monarchy to use as a lever, was my influence in the Assembly, my leadership among the Jacobins, — my

laboriously acquired popularity; but the Assembly is dissolved, the Jacobins are transformed into the Feuillants, and I greatly fear the Feuillants sacrificed their last trump when they separated from the Jacobins. — Finally, Madame, my popularity — " Barnave smiled more sorrowfully than before — " my popularity is lost."

The Queen looked at Barnave, and a strange light, like a flash of triumph, shone in her eyes, as she said: "Well then, you see, Monsieur, that popularity is very short-lived."

Barnave sighed, and the Queen saw that she had been guilty of one of those little cruelties habitual with her.

Indeed, if Barnave had lost his popularity, if a few months had brought about this result, if he had been forced to bow his head under Robespierre's dictation, whose was the fault? Was it not the fault of that fatal monarchy, which dragged everything it touched into the destruction to which it was hastening, — to that terrible destiny which transformed Marie Antoinette, as it had transformed Mary Stuart, into a death-angel, whose presence dooms to the grave all those to whom he once appears?

She tried to retrace her steps, well knowing that it was generous in Barnave to respond by a simple sigh, when he might have asked in thundering words: "For whom have I sacrificed my popularity, Madame, if not for you?" and so she said to him: "But you will not really go away, Monsieur Barnave?"

"I will certainly remain, if the Queen so commands. I will remain, as a soldier remains under his flag, that he may guard it in battle, even though he has received his discharge. But if I remain, do you know what will happen? Instead of being feeble, I shall become a traitor."

"How so, Monsieur?" said the Queen, slightly offended. "Explain yourself! I don't understand you!"

"Will the Queen permit me to bring her face to face, not merely with her present situation, but with that in which she will soon find herself?"

"Do so, Monsieur! I am accustomed to looking down this precipice, and if I were easily afflicted with dizziness, I should long ago have fallen over it."

"Perhaps the Queen regards the retiring Assembly as hostile."

"Let us distinguish, Monsieur Barnave. In that Assembly I have some friends; but you cannot deny that the majority of its members are hostile to royalty."

"Madame, that Assembly was never guilty of but one act of hostility towards the King and yourself; and that was when the decree was passed that none of its members could take part in the coming Legislature."

"I don't understand you, Monsieur. Explain that to me!" said the Queen, with an incredulous smile.

"It is very plain. The old Assembly has snatched the buckler from the arms of your friends."

"And also, as it seems to me, the sword from the hands of our enemies."

"Alas, Madame, you deceive yourself! This blow comes from Robespierre, and is as terrible as every blow from that man's hand. First of all, in the new Assembly, you will be brought face to face with the unknown. In the Constitutional Assembly you knew what you were fighting, and with whom. With this Legislative Assembly you must begin all over again. Mark this well, Madame! In proposing that none of us should be eligible for re-election, Robespierre meant to put before France this alternative, — of electing to the legislative body either our superiors or else our

inferiors in rank. Now above us, there is nobody left. The aristocratic emigration has disorganized everything; and even if the nobles were left among us, it is not from among the nobility the people would choose their representatives. The choice must then be from those below us, and there the people must find their new Deputies. Thus the whole Assembly will be democratic. There will be some shades of color in the democracy, that is all."

One could see, by the Queen's face, that she was following Barnave's demonstration with profound attention, and that in proportion as she understood him she was alarmed.

"For three or four days these Deputies have been flowing into Paris, and I have seen some of them, — particularly those sent from Bordeaux. Almost all of them are men without reputation, who are hastening to make themselves a name; and they are all the more in a hurry because they are so young. Apart from Condorcet, Brissot, and some others, the oldest among them is not over thirty. This onslaught of youth will drive out mature age and dethrone tradition. No more white hair in the Assembly! but a new France, with black hair!"

"And you believe, Monsieur, we have more to fear from those who come than from those who take their departure?"

"Yes, Madame! for the coming legislators are armed with instructions to make war on priests and nobles! As to the King, no orders have yet been issued in regard to him, but we shall see. If he will rest content with retaining executive power, perhaps the past may be pardoned —"

"How?" interrupted the Queen. "How? The past

pardoned? But it will be for the King to pardon, I take it?"

"Yes, certainly; but that is exactly what is no longer understood, Madame. The new-comers — and of this, unhappily, you will soon have abundant proof — will not even keep up the hypocritical conventionalities of their predecessors. To them, — so I have it from a Deputy named Vergniaud, one of my associates from the Gironde, — to them the King seems like an enemy."

"An enemy?" said the astonished Queen.

"Yes, Madame, an enemy. That is to say, voluntarily or involuntarily, he is the watchword of all the Nation's enemies, foreign or domestic. Yes, it must be acknowledged that these new-comers are not all in the wrong; although they think they have discovered a new truth, when their only merit is in crying from the housetops what heretofore your warmest enemies only dared say with bated breath."

"An enemy?" repeated the Queen, — "the King the enemy of his people? Oh, Monsieur Barnave, that is something which you can never make me believe, for you can never make me understand it!"

"Nevertheless it is the truth, Madame! He is an enemy by temperament, an enemy by force of hereditary training! Three days ago he accepted the Constitution, did he not?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"On his return to the palace his Majesty was almost ill with anger, and that evening he wrote to the Emperor."

"But how do you suppose we can possibly bear such humiliations?"

"You cannot avoid seeing the truth! The King is our enemy, — fatally our enemy. He is a voluntary

enemy; for, having been educated by Monsieur de la Vauguyon, the leader of the Jesuit party, the King places his heart in the hands of priests, who are national enemies. He is also an involuntary enemy, because he is the compulsory chief of the Anti-Revolutionary party. Even if he never quits Paris, his heart is at Coblentz with the emigrants, in the Vendée with the priests, in Vienna or Prussia, with his allies, Leopold and Frederick. The King himself does nothing, — I admit that he does nothing, Madame," said Barnave, sorrowfully; "but in default of the King's personal activity his name is used. In the cottage, in the school, in the château, the Royalists talk of the *poor* King, the *good* King, the *saintly* King, till there are threats of a revolt against the Revolution, — a revolt growing out of pity."

"Is it really you, Monsieur Barnave, who are saying such things to me? And yet, were you not the first to pity us?"

"Oh yes, Madame, I pitied you. Yes, I still pity you, and sincerely; but there is this difference between myself and those of whom I speak, — that they pity you to your ruin, whereas my pity would lead me to save you."

"But, Monsieur, among those new-comers, who are to wage a war of extermination against us, — if your representation must be credited, — has any definite plan been agreed upon in advance?"

"No, Madame, and as yet I can hear only of certain vague schemes, — such as the suppression of the title *Majesty* at the opening of the session, and the use of a plain armchair at the right of the presiding officer, instead of a throne."

"Do you see in this anything worse than what Monsieur Thouret did, — seating himself because the King was seated?"

"It is certainly a step ahead, not a step backward. — What is still worse for you, Madame, is that Lafayette and Bailly will be superseded."

"Oh, as to those men," said the Queen, quickly, "I don't regret them!"

"And you are wrong, Madame! Bailly and Lafayette are your friends."

The Queen smiled bitterly.

"Your friends, Madame, — perhaps your last friends! Keep them! If they have any popularity left, use it but make haste. Their popularity is fast slipping away, like my own."

"After all, Monsieur, you show me the volcano, you lead me to its crater, you tell me of its depths; but you show me no way of avoiding it."

Barnave remained mute for an instant. Then he heaved a sigh, and murmured: "Ah, Madame! why were you arrested on the way to Montmédy?"

"Good!" said the Queen. "Then even you, Monsieur Barnave, approve our Varennes expedition?"

"I did not approve it, Madame; and the situation in which you find yourself to-day is the natural result of that journey; but when I see the fatal consequences of that flight, I deplore its failure."

"So that to-day, you, Monsieur Barnave, a member of the National Assembly, — delegated by that Assembly, with Pétion and Latour Maubourg, to bring back the King and Queen to Paris, — you regret that the royal family did not one and all escape safely to a foreign land?"

"Let us understand each other well, Madame. He who regrets the result is not a member of the National Assembly, is not the colleague of Pétion and Latour Maubourg, but only poor Barnave, who is no longer

anything but your humble servitor, ready to give his life for you, which is all he has now left in the wide world to give."

"Thanks, Monsieur," said the Queen. "The accent with which you make this offer shows you to be a man of your word; but I trust it will never be needful to exact of you such devotion."

"So much the worse for me, Madame!" modestly replied Barnave.

"How? So much the worse?"

"Yes. Taking one downfall with another, I would rather fall in combat, than endure what will happen to me; but in the depths of Dauphiny, where I shall be useless to you, I can only pray for the young and beautiful wife, for the tender and devoted mother, rather than for the Queen. The errors of the past have determined your future. You count on foreign aid, which will not arrive, or will come too late. The Jacobins will grasp the controlling power, either in the Assembly or outside of it. Your friends will quit France, flying from persecution. Those who remain will be arrested, imprisoned. I shall be among those, for I will not flee. Then I shall be tried, condemned. Perhaps my obscure death will be as useless to you as it will be unknown; but if a report of that death perchance reaches you, you will look upon me only as one of your unfortunate helpers, and you will forget the hours when I hoped I might really help you."

"Monsieur Barnave," said the Queen, with great dignity, "I am wholly ignorant what future Fate may have in store for us, — the King and myself; but this I know, that the names of all who have helped us are carefully inscribed in our memories, and that whatever happens to them, whether good or evil fortune, will not be

unknown to us. — Meanwhile, Monsieur Barnave, can we do anything for you now?"

"Much, — you personally, Madame. You can prove to me that I have not been a man wholly without value in your eyes."

"And how can I do that?"

Barnave knelt and said: "By giving me your hand to kiss, Madame."

A tear mounted as far as Marie Antoinette's dry eyelashes. She extended to the young man her cold white hand, which (with only a year's interval) was thus touched by the most eloquent lips in the Assembly, those of both Mirabeau and Barnave.

Barnave barely swept those fingers with his lips. If he once pressed his mouth to that beautiful marble hand, it was easy to see that the infatuated fellow feared he should lack the power to detach them again.

Then he arose and said: "Madame, I lack the pride which would enable me to say with Mirabeau, *the monarchy is saved;* but this I may say to you: If the monarchy is lost, one will perish with it who can never forget the favor which the Queen has condescended to grant him."

Saluting the Queen, he went out. Marie Antoinette watched his sighing, and when the door closed behind him she said to herself: "Poor squeezed lemon! But little time was needed to reduce thee to an empty rind!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BATTLEFIELD.

We have tried to describe the terrible events which took place at the Champ de Mars, on the afternoon of July 17, 1791. Having thus put before the eyes of our readers the drama then performed, in which Bailly and Lafayette were the principal actors, let us now try to depict the scene after the tragedy was over.

A sad spectacle smote the eyes of a young man, clad like an officer of the National Guard, as he came from the Rue Saint Honoré, crossed the river by Louis Fifteenth Bridge, and so reached the Champ de Mars by way of Rue Grenelle.

This spectacle, illuminated by the moon, — which had reached two-thirds of its crescent period, and was sailing among dense black clouds, wherein from time to time it was lost, — was indeed lugubrious to look upon.

The Champ de Mars wore the aspect of a battlefield, covered with the dead and wounded, in the midst of whom wandered, like so many ghosts, the men charged with the duty of throwing the dead into the Seine, and of carrying the wounded to the military hospital of Gros Caillou.

The young officer, whom we have followed from Rue Saint Honoré, paused at the entrance of the Champ de Mars, and clasped his hands with an expression of unconscious dread.

"Jesu God!" he murmured, "things were even worse than they told me!"

After watching for a few moments the extraordinary work which was going on, he approached two men, whom he saw carrying a corpse towards the river, and said to them: "Citizens, will you tell me what you are going to do with that man?"

"Follow us, and see!" answered the men; and the young officer did follow them.

When they reached the wooden bridge, the two men swung the body back and forth, as they counted *one, two, three*, and at the third word threw the man into the Seine.

The young officer uttered an exclamation of horror, and asked: "Citizens, what *are* you about?"

"You can see well enough!" responded the two men. "We are clearing the ground."

"And you have orders for doing this?"

"Apparently!"

"From whom?"

"The City!"

The young man uttered an *oh* of stupefaction.

After a moment of silence, while he returned with the bearers to the Champ de Mars, he added: "Have you already thrown many bodies into the Seine?"

"Five or six," responded both men.

"Excuse me, citizens," said the young man, "but I have a great interest in the question which I ask. Among those five or six bodies, was there one of a man forty-six or forty-eight years old, about five feet and five inches tall, — a stocky, vigorous man, half peasant, half tradesman?"

"My faith," said one of the men, "we only notice one thing, — whether the folks lying here are dead or alive. If dead, we throw 'em into the river. If they 're alive, we carry 'em to the Gros Caillou Hospital."

"Ah," said the young man, "I ask, because I have a good friend who has not returned where he belongs; and as I am told that he was here, or has been here part of the day, I 'm afraid he may be among the dead or wounded."

"Heavens!" said one of the bearers, shaking a corpse, over which the other held a lantern, "if he was here at all, probably he 's here still. If he did n't go home, he probably never will."

Shaking the body at his feet roughly, the city agent cried out: "Halloo! Dead or alive? If not dead, try and answer."

"Oh, as to this fellow, he 's dead fast enough," said the second bearer. "He has a ball in the middle of his breast."

"Then ho for the river!" said the first; and the two men lifted the corpse, and started again towards the wooden bridge.

"Citizens," said the officer, "you have no need of your lantern to throw this man into the water. Have the kindness to lend it to me an instant. While you 're making your trip, I 'll look for my friend."

The bearers consented, and the lantern was handed to the young officer, who carefully began his search, with an expression of countenance which indicated that the titles of respect, bestowed upon the dead or wounded man for whom he was searching, came not from his lips alone, but from his heart.

Ten or a dozen other men, likewise provided with helpful lanterns, were prosecuting a similar funereal investigation.

From time to time, amidst the silence, — for the awful solemnity of the scene, and the sight of the mute dead, seemed to extinguish the voices of the living, — from time to time, amidst the silence, a name was spoken in

a tone so loud that it could be heard across the field. Sometimes a lament, a groan, a cry responded to that call; but oftener the only response was a mournful stillness.

After hesitating awhile, as if his voice were paralyzed by fear, the young officer followed the example of the others, and called out thrice: "Monsieur Billot! Monsieur Billot! Monsieur Billot!" but there was no response.

"He 's dead, for sure!" murmured the young man, wiping away with his sleeve the tears which streamed from his eyes. "Poor Father Billot!"

At that moment two other men passed by, carrying another corpse towards the river.

"Hey!" said the one who upheld the shoulders, and was therefore nearer the head, "I believe our body just heaved a sigh."

"Ugh!" said the other, laughing, "if we listened to all these fellows, there would n't be a dead man among 'em."

"Citizens!" said the young officer, "by your leave, let me see the man you 're carrying."

"Willingly, Monsieur Officer," said the men; and they laid the corpse on its back, so as to enable the young officer's lantern to shine more upon the face. He held the light near it and uttered an exclamation.

Despite the terrible wound which disfigured the body, the searcher thought he recognized the man for whom he was looking; but was he dead or alive?

The head of this man, who was already halfway towards a watery grave, had been laid open by a sabre. The wound, as we have already said, was frightful. Half the hairy flesh had been cut from the left side of the head, and hung over the cheek, leaving bare the skull.

The temporal artery had been severed, so that the whole body of the wounded or dead man was covered with blood. On the side of the cut he was unrecognizable. With a trembling hand the young man held the lantern on the other side, and then cried: "Oh citizens, it 's he! It 's the man I 'm looking for! It 's Monsieur Billot!"

"The Devil!" said the bearers. "Well, he 's somewhat damaged, your Monsieur Billot!"

"Did n't you say he sighed?"

"I thought I heard him!"

"Then do me a favor!" and as he spoke the young officer drew a half-crown from his pocket.

"What is it?" asked the bearer, filled with good-will at sight of this piece of money.

"Run to the river, and get some water in your hat."

"With pleasure!"

While this man ran to the riverside, the young officer took his place, and supported the wounded man.

In five minutes the man was back again.

"Throw some water in his face!" said the young man.

The bearer obeyed. He dipped his hand into his hat, as if it were a church basin, and shook the water over the wounded face.

"He shivers!" cried the young man, who still held the wounded man in his arms. "He ain't dead. Oh, dear Monsieur Billot, how lucky I came in time!"

"Faith, yes! it was lucky!" said the man. "Twenty rods more, and your friend would have come to himself in the fishing-nets at Saint Cloud."

"Sprinkle him again!"

The bearer did so. The wounded man shuddered and heaved a sigh.

"Well, well! decidedly he 's no dead man!" said the second bearer.

"Well, what are we going to do about it?" said the first.

"Help me to carry him to Rue Saint Honoré, to Monsieur Doctor Gilbert's, and you 'll be well paid!" said the young man.

"We can't!"

"Why?"

"Our orders are to throw the dead into the Seine, and take the wounded to the hospital at Gros Caillou. As this fellow pretends not to be dead, and we can't throw him into the river, we must take him to the hospital."

"Well, let 's take him to the hospital as soon as possible!" Looking about him, he added: "Where is the hospital?"

"Three hundred rods off, not far from the Military Academy."

"Then it 's over there?"

"Yes!"

"We have to go across the whole field!"

"And farther!"

"My God, have n't you a stretcher or a barrow?"

"Heavens, one can be found, I guess," responded the second bearer. "It 's like the water, — with a little silver —"

"That 's fair," said the young man, "you 've had nothing, have you? Hold on! There 's another little crownpiece. Find me a stretcher!"

In ten minutes a stretcher was ready. The wounded man was laid on the canvas. The two bearers bore it by the handles, and the funereal party took up its line of march towards the hospital at Gros Caillou, escorted by the young man, who carried the lantern and steadied the wounded man's head.

It was terrible, that nocturnal march over ground soaked with blood, among cold and rigid bodies, which were disturbed at every step, and among those who tried to raise themselves, and then fell back, begging for help.

At the end of a quarter-hour the party crossed the threshold of the hospital at Gros Caillou.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HOSPITAL AT GROS CAILLOU.

At that epoch the hospitals, especially military hospitals, were far from being organized as they are to-day. It is not therefore astonishing that disorder reigned in the hospital at Gros Caillou, and that this disorder stood in the way of proper surgical work.

The great demand was for a supply of beds. Mattresses belonging to the inhabitants of the neighboring streets had to be brought into requisition. These mattresses were laid on the floors, and even in the courtyard, and on each mattress was a wounded man, waiting for succor; but surgeons were lacking as well as mattresses, and were more difficult to find.

The officer — in whom our readers have of course recognized their friend Pitou — was able to procure a mattress, as he had obtained a stretcher, by the judicious use of a few more half-crowns; so that Billot was very comfortably lying in the courtyard of the hospital.

Wishing to make the best of his situation, Pitou had his wounded friend placed as near the entrance as possible, in order to intercept the first surgeon who went out or came in. He had a great mind to go through the wards, and compel some physician to help him, cost what it would; but he dared not quit the wounded man. He was afraid lest somebody should throw Billot on the pavement of the courtyard, under the pretext that he was already dead, — as, indeed, one might honestly think.

Pitou had been there an hour, and had stoutly appealed to the two or three surgeons who passed that way, though without winning them to his service, when he saw a man dressed in black, accompanied by two hospital attendants with lights, visiting the beds of agony, one after the other. The nearer this man clad in black came towards Pitou, the more sure the latter felt that he knew him. Soon his doubts ceased, and Pitou ventured to go a few steps towards him, away from the wounded man, and call to the surgeon, with all the strength of his lungs: "Hi! This way! Monsieur Gilbert! Here I am! Here! This way!"

The surgeon, who was indeed Doctor Gilbert, hastened towards him at the sound of this familiar voice.

"Ah, is it thou, Pitou?"

"Oh my God, yes, Monsieur Gilbert."

"Hast thou seen Billot?"

"He's here!" replied Pitou, pointing to the still motionless form beside him.

"Is he dead?" asked the Doctor.

"Alas, dear Monsieur Gilbert, I hope not; but I won't try to hide from you that he don't lack much of it."

Gilbert came near the mattress, and the attendants followed, so as to light up the face of the invalid.

"It's the head, Monsieur Gilbert, it's the head! Poor dear Monsieur Billot! His head is cut open, clear down to his jaw."

Gilbert examined the wound carefully, and said: "The truth is, it's a very serious matter." Then he added, turning to the two attendants: "I must have a separate room for this man, who is one of my friends."

The attendants conferred together, and then said: "There is no separate room, unless it's the laundry."

"Capital!" said Gilbert. "Just the thing. Take him into the laundry!"

They lifted the wounded man as gently as possible; but despite every precaution, a groan escaped him.

"Ah!" said Gilbert, "no cry of joy ever gave me equal pleasure with this groan. He lives! That 's the principal thing."

Billot was taken to the laundry, and placed on a bed belonging to one of the hospital servants. Then Gilbert began carefully to examine and dress the wounds.

The temporal artery had been cut, and from this had come an immense loss of blood. This loss of blood had led to insensibility; and this lessening of the heart's pulsations had checked the hemorrhage. Nature had profited by this cessation to form a clot of blood, and this closed up the wounded artery.

With admirable skill Gilbert first tied the artery with a silk thread. Then he washed the flesh and replaced it over the skull. The coolness of the water, and perhaps also some pain arising from the treatment, made Billot open his eyes; and he uttered a few muffled and disconnected words.

"There 's concussion of the brain," said Gilbert.

"But if he is n't dead, you can save him, can't you, Monsieur Gilbert?"

Gilbert smiled sadly. "I shall try; but thou must learn one thing, my dear Pitou, — that Nature is a much better surgeon than any of us."

Gilbert finished dressing the wound. After the hair was cut off as closely as possible, he brought the two edges of the wound together, secured them in place with bandages of diachylum plaster, and ordered the attendants to place the sick man in almost a sitting position, with his back, and not his head, propped up by the pillows.

It was only when all these duties had been attended to that Gilbert asked Pitou how it happened that he was in Paris; and how, being in Paris, he had managed to be just in the nick of time to rescue Billot.

The matter was very simple. After the disappearance of Catherine and the departure of the farmer, Mother Billot, whom we have never represented to our readers as possessing a very vigorous mind, fell into a sort of apathy, which had been constantly on the increase. She was alive, but it was mechanical life, and every day some new spring in the poor human machine either weakened or broke. By degrees her words became more and more infrequent, till she ended by not talking at all, and even took to her bed. Doctor Raynal declared that only one thing in the world could drag Mother Billot out of this deathly stupor, — the sight of her daughter.

Pitou himself offered to go to Paris at once; or rather he started, without saying anything about it. Thanks to the long legs of our Captain of the Haramont National Guards, the eighteen leagues, which separated the Demoustier region from the capital, were to him but a promenade. He left home at four in the morning, and between seven and eight in the evening he was in Paris.

Pitou seemed destined always to come to Paris when great events were transpiring. On the first trip he came in time to help capture the Bastille. The next time he came in Sebastien's footsteps, on the very day after the royal family had been dragged from Versailles to Paris, by the mob. The third time he came as a delegate, to assist in the Federation of 1790. The last time, the present, his trip was taken on the very day of the massacre in the Champ de Mars.

He found Paris alive with rumors; though, as to that, this was always the condition in which he found Paris.

From the first groups of people he met, he learned what had happened on the Champ de Mars. Bailly and Lafayette had fired on the populace. The populace were cursing Bailly with loud voices. When Pitou was last in Paris these men were adored as deities. Now he found their altars overturned and the men cursed. He absolutely could not understand all this.

What he did understand was, that there had been fighting, massacre, and slaughter in the Champ de Mars, all on account of a Patriotic petition, and that Gilbert and Billot had been there.

Although Pitou, to express it vulgarly, had eighteen leagues in his stomach, he redoubled his speed, and soon reached the Rue Saint Honoré and Gilbert's apartments. The Doctor had returned, but nobody had seen Billot. The Champ de Mars — so said the servant who gave Pitou his other information — was strewn with the dead and wounded. Mayhap Billot, his kind old friend and master, was among them.

The Champ de Mars covered with the dead and wounded! This news did not astonish Pitou less than he had been astonished by the fact that Bailly and Lafayette, those two popular idols, had fired upon the populace.

The Champ de Mars covered with the wounded and dead? Pitou could not picture it to himself! The Champ de Mars which he had helped to level, working with ten thousand comrades, remained in his memory as aglow with illuminations, joyful songs, and gay dances. Covered with the dead and wounded? and all because the people wished to celebrate the second anniversary of the Bastille, as they had celebrated the first anniversary the year before? It was impossible! In one year, how could their motives for joy and triumph have become the

cause of rebellion and massacre? What spirit of vertigo had entered the Parisian head within a twelvemonth?

As we have said before, during the year preceding, thanks to the influence of Mirabeau, thanks to the new club of the Feuillants, thanks to the support of Bailly and Lafayette, — thanks especially to the reaction which followed the return from Varennes, — the Court had regained something of its lost power; and now this power clothed itself in mourning and massacre.

July 17, 1791, was a fearful retaliation for October 5 and 6, 1789.

As Gilbert told the Queen, the populace and royalty stood game to game. It remained to be seen who would win the rubber.

Preoccupied with these ideas, — though not one of them had influence enough to retard his strides, — we have already seen how our friend Ange Pitou, still wearing his uniform as captain of the Haramont National Guards, reached the Champ de Mars, by way of Louis Fifteenth Bridge and Rue Grenelle, just in time to prevent Billot from being thrown into the river, like a dead man.

On the other hand we may remember how Gilbert — after waiting a long time for the Queen, who did not return according to her promise — received an unsigned letter, whose handwriting he recognized as Cagliostro's, and in which he found the following paragraph:

Gilbert, let those two fools slide, who are still derisively called King and Queen, and betake thyself forthwith to the hospital at Gros Caillou. There thou 'lt find a dying man, — not so sick as Marie Antoinette and Louis, perchance; but thou mayst perhaps save *him*, whereas *they* cannot be saved, and may pull thee after themselves in their downfall.

As soon as Gilbert learned, through Madame Campan, that the Queen, who had asked him to await her return,

would not come back, and had sent him his dismission, he at once left the Tuileries, and following almost the same road as Pitou, reached the hospital at Gros Caillou. Aided by two attendants, with their lights, he went from bed to bed, from mattress to mattress, through the halls and corridors, into the vestibule, and even into the court-yard, without finding anybody whom he knew, when suddenly a voice called him by name, and summoned him to the couch of a man half dead. That voice, as we know, was the voice of Pitou. The half-dead man was Billot.

We have described the condition in which Gilbert found the worthy farmer, and his chances for life, — chances both good and bad; but chances in which the worse would have overcome the better, if the wounded man had been under the care of a man less skilful than Doctor Gilbert.

CHAPTER XXV.

CATHERINE.

Of the two persons who Doctor Raynal thought should be notified of the desperate condition of Madame Billot, one, as we know, was confined to his bed, and was a near neighbor to death. This was the husband. The other alone could be present in the distress of the mother's last moments. That was the daughter.

It was necessary to acquaint Catherine with her mother's condition, and with her father's also; but where was Catherine? There was only one way of ascertaining, and that was by applying to the Count de Charny.

So kindly and hospitably had Pitou been received by the Countess, — when he went to her house in Gilbert's behalf, taking her son thither, — that now he did not hesitate to propose going again to the Rue Coq Heron, to inquire Catherine's whereabouts, though the hour was well advanced into the night.

In fact the clock on the Military School had sounded half-past eleven before the surgical treatment was finished, so that Gilbert and Pitou could leave Billot's bedside.

Gilbert commended his patient to the care of the attendants. There was nothing to do except wait for Nature to do her work. Besides, the Doctor would himself be there again the next forenoon.

Pitou and Gilbert took the latter's carriage, which was waiting at the hospital door, and the Doctor ordered the coachman to go to the Rue Coq Heron.

All was dark in that quarter. After ringing for fifteen minutes Pitou tried the knocker, and then he heard the creaking of a door, — not the street door, but the door of the porter's lodge, and a fractious and hoarse voice asked, with an accent of impatience which could not be mistaken: "Who 's there?"

"Me!" said Pitou.

"Who are you?"

"Ah, sure enough! — Ange Pitou, a captain in the National Guard."

"Ange Pitou? I don't know him."

"Captain in the National Guard!" reiterated Pitou.

"Captain," repeated the porter, "captain —"

"Captain!" rejoined Pitou, emphasizing the word; for he knew the influence of a title.

Indeed the porter began to think that he had to do with at least one of Lafayette's aides, for at that period the National Guard equalled in importance the Royal Army of former days. He consequently came nearer the outer door, and spoke more courteously, though without opening it. "Well, Monsieur Captain, what do you want?"

"I want to speak with the Count."

"He 's not here."

"With the Countess, then."

"She ain't here, neither."

"Where are they?"

"They went away this morning."

"In what direction?"

"To Boursonnes, their country-place."

"The Devil!" said Pitou, as if talking to himself.

"Those must have been the folks I passed by at Dammartin. Probably they were in that postchaise. — If I'd only known it!"

But as Pitou had not known it, he had missed seeing the Count and Countess.

"My friend," said the Doctor, interfering at this point of the conversation, "can't you, in the absence of your employers, give us a little information?"

"Ah, pardon, Monsieur!" said the porter, at once recognizing, by virtue of his aristocratic associations, the voice of a master, in the polite and mild tones which reached his ear. Opening the gate, the good man came forth in his drawers, and with his nightcap in hand. He went at once to the carriage door, to take the Doctor's orders, as servants expressed it in those times.

"What information do you wish, Monsieur?" he asked.

"Do you know a young woman, my friend, in whom the Count and Countess take a great interest?"

"Mademoiselle Catherine?" asked the porter.

"Precisely!" said Gilbert.

"Yes, Monsieur. The Count and Countess have been twice to see her, and have often sent me to ask if she needed anything; but, poor girl! though I don't believe she's rich, — neither she, nor the child which has come to her from the good God, — she always says she does n't need a thing."

At these words about a child, Pitou could not repress a great sigh.

"Well, my friend," said Gilbert, "poor Catherine's father has been wounded to-day in the Champ de Mars; and her mother, Madame Billot, is dying at Villers Cotterets. We must carry her this bad news. Will you give us her address?"

"Oh, poor girl! God help her! She's unhappy enough already! She lives at Ville d'Avray, Monsieur, in the main street. I can't tell you positively the number, but it's opposite a fountain."

"That's near!" said Pitou. "I'll find it!"

"Thanks, my friend!" said Gilbert, slipping a six-franc piece into the porter's hand.

"I don't need anything for that, Monsieur," said the old man. "Please God, Christians ought to be willing to help one another."

The porter bowed very respectfully to the Doctor, and went back into his lodge.

"Well?" said Gilbert, turning to Pitou.

"Well," said Pitou, "I'm off for Ville d'Avray." Pitou was always ready to go anywhere.

"Knowest thou the road?" asked the Doctor.

"No, but you can tell me."

"Thou hast a heart of gold and muscles of steel!" said Gilbert, laughing. "But come and get some rest, and go to-morrow morning."

"But if time presses —?"

"There is no such haste required in either case," said the Doctor. "Billot's condition is serious; but, unless there is some unforeseen accident, he is not at death's door. As to Mother Billot, she may live ten or twelve days."

"Oh, Monsieur Doctor! When she was put to bed, day before yesterday, she did n't talk, she did n't move. Nothing seemed alive but her eyes."

"Nevertheless I know what I'm talking about, Pitou; and I'll be answerable for her, as I say, for ten or a dozen days."

"Well, Monsieur Gilbert, you know better than I do!"

"It 's best to leave poor Catherine another night of restful ignorance. For the unhappy, a good night's sleep is very important, Pitou."

Pitou yielded to the force of this reasoning and asked: "Well, then, where shall we go, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"To my place, and thou shalt have thy old chamber."

"Well," said Pitou, smiling, "it 'll give me pleasure to see it again."

"And to-morrow," continued Gilbert, "at six o'clock in the morning, the horses will be all harnessed."

"Why have the horses harnessed?" asked Pitou, who always regarded horses as articles of luxury.

"To take thee to Ville d'Avray."

"Good!" said Pitou. "Is it fifty leagues from Paris to Ville d'Avray?"

"No, only two or three," replied Gilbert; and as he spoke there passed before his eyes, in the light of youth, the walks he used to take in the woods of Louveciennes, of Meudon, and of Ville d'Avray, with his old teacher, Rousseau.

"Well, then," said Pitou, "it 's only a matter of an hour, three leagues, and I 'll gobble it down like an egg."

"But Catherine! Dost fancy she also can gobble them down like an egg, those three other leagues, from Ville d'Avray to Paris, and the eighteen leagues from Paris to Villers Cotterets?"

"True!" said Pitou. "Excuse me for being such a fool, Monsieur Gilbert. — By the way, how goes it with Sebastien?"

"Marvellously well. Thou 'lt see him to-morrow."

"Still with Abbé Bérardier?"

"Still there!"

"So much the better, for I shall be so glad to see him."

"And he also to see thee, Pitou; for, like myself, he loves thee with all his heart."

Just as these words were spoken, the Doctor and Ange Pitou stopped at the door in the Rue Saint Honoré.

Pitou slept with all his heart, — as he walked, as he ate, as he fought; only, owing to his country habit of rising very early, he was up by five o'clock.

At six the carriage was ready. At seven he knocked at Catherine's door. It had been agreed with Doctor Gilbert that at eight they should be at Billot's bedside.

Catherine opened the door, and cried out at the sight of Pitou: "Ah, my mother is dead!" and then grew pale, and supported herself against the wall.

"No," said Pitou; "only, if you wish to see her before she dies, you must make haste, Mademoiselle Catherine."

This interchange of words, wherein so many things were said in a few sentences, dispensed with all preliminaries, and placed Catherine face to face with her misfortune at a single bound.

"Then there 's another trouble," continued Pitou.

"What is it?" asked Catherine, with the brusque and almost indifferent tone of one who fears no additional sorrow, having borne already her full share of human woe.

"Monsieur Billot was dangerously wounded yesterday, on the Champ de Mars."

"Ah!" was all she said, evidently less sensitive to this misfortune than to the other.

"Then here 's what I says to myself," said Pitou, "and this was also Doctor Gilbert's opinion: Mademoiselle Catherine must make a passing visit to Monsieur Billot, at the Gros Caillou Hospital, and then take the stage to Villers Cotterets."

"And you, Monsieur Pitou?"

"Me? Well, as you must go to your mother's death-bed, I think I ought to stay here and try to help Monsieur Billot to get well. I will remain with him; for he has nobody else, you understand, Mademoiselle Catherine."

Pitou uttered these words with angelic ingenuousness, not dreaming that therein he was revealing the whole history of his devotion.

Catherine offered him her hand. "Yours is a brave heart, Pitou. Come in, and embrace my poor Isidore."

She led the way, for the short scene we have described took place in the alley-way of the house, by the street door. She was as beautiful as ever, poor Catherine, clad in full mourning as she was; and this drew a fresh sigh from Pitou.

Catherine preceded him into a little chamber, opening into the garden. In that chamber, which, with a kitchen and toilet-closet, comprised Catherine's lodging, there were a bedstead and a cradle, — the bed for the mother, and the cradle for her child.

The infant was asleep. Catherine pulled away a gauze curtain, and stood aside, so that Pitou could see into the cradle.

"Oh, the beautiful little angel!" said Pitou, clasping his hands; and as if the babe were really an angel, he knelt and kissed its hand.

Pitou was speedily repaid for what he did. He felt Catherine's hair float over his face, and two lips were pressed upon his forehead. The mother was paying back the kiss given to her boy.

"Thank you, good Pitou!" she said. "Since the last kiss he received from his father, nobody else has kissed the poor little thing, except his mother."

"Oh, Mademoiselle Catherine!" stammered Pitou, dazzled and shaken up by the young girl's kiss, as if by an electric spark; yet this kiss came purely from the holy and grateful love of a mother's heart.

It was not the kiss of a sweetheart, a passionate woman, or even of a loving friend. It was a sacred, a divine kiss, and in this light did our honest and unselfish Pitou receive it; though it nevertheless vibrated in his heart, his brain, and throughout his stalwart form, touching the life-centres of his being, and toning them to ecstatic harmony.

What is so strong, so wide, so deep, so penetrating as mother-love? It distances all the other affections of this world, and is excelled only by the infinite and creative love of Heaven, to which it is akin.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DAUGHTER AND THE FATHER.

Ten minutes later Catherine, Pitou, and little Isidore were rolling along the road to Paris in Doctor Gilbert's carriage. The carriage stopped in front of the hospital at Gros Caillou. Catherine dismounted, took her babe in her arms, and followed Pitou.

At the door of the laundry she paused and said: "You say we shall find Doctor Gilbert by father's bedside?"

"Yes," said Pitou, half opening the door, "and there he is!"

"See if I can go in without exciting him too much."

Pitou entered the room, questioned the Doctor, and at once came back after Catherine. "The shock — so says Monsieur Gilbert — was so great that as yet he recognizes nobody."

Catherine was about to enter, with little Isidore in her arms, when Pitou said: "Give me your baby, Mademoiselle Catherine!"

Catherine hesitated a moment; but Pitou said: "Oh, give him to me! Then it will seem as if you had never been away from your father!"

"You are right!" said Catherine; and with more confidence, perhaps, than if he had been her brother, she placed her babe in Pitou's arms. Then, with a firm step, she went into the room, and straight to her father's bedside.

As we have said, Doctor Gilbert was at the head of the wounded man's bed. There was little change in the condition of the patient. His back was supported by pillows, as on the evening before; and with the aid of a wet sponge, which he gently squeezed, the Doctor was moistening the bandages which held the wounded parts in place. In spite of the beginning of a well-defined inflammatory fever, Billot's face wore a deathly pallor, on account of the quantity of blood he had lost, the inflammation being visible only in the eye and part of the left cheek.

At the first feeling of coolness he babbled and rolled his eyes; but his words were lost in that sleepiness which physicians call *coma*, and his eyes straightway closed again.

When Catherine reached her father's bedside she fell on her knees, and said, raising her hands to Heaven: "My God, bear witness that from the bottom of my heart I pray for my father's life!"

That was as much as the daughter could ask for the father who had intended to kill her lover.

At the sound of her voice a shudder ran through the sick man's frame. His respiration became more labored. He again opened his eyes. His glance — after wandering about a little, as if to see whence came the voice — fixed itself on Catherine. His hand moved, as if to repel the apparition, which he doubtless mistook for a feverish vision.

The girl's glance met her father's; and with a sort of terror Gilbert saw these flaming glances clash against each other like two lightning-flashes of hate, rather than meet like two rays of affection.

Then the girl rose to her feet, and went out as deliberately as she had entered. She found Pitou on all-fours,

playing with Baby. Catherine took her little one again, with the violence of the lioness rather than the woman, and cried, as she pressed the babe to her breast: "My child, — oh, my child!"

In this cry was all the agony of the mother, all the grief of the widow, all the sorrow of the woman.

Pitou wished to accompany Catherine as far as the office of the stage, which was to leave at ten in the forenoon; but she refused his offer, in these words: "No! As you have well said, your place is near one who is all alone. Stay here, Pitou!" and she pushed Pitou back into the laundry.

When Catherine commanded, Pitou had no choice or wish but to obey.

As Pitou approached the bed, Billot was roused by the noise made by the somewhat heavy step of the Captain of the Haramont National Guard. He once more opened his eyes, and an expression of good-will chased from his countenance the imprint of hatred, — which, like a tempestuous cloud, had come over it at the sight of his daughter.

Catherine descended the staircase with her babe in her arms, and took her way through the Rue Saint Denis to the inn called the Pewter Plate, which was the starting-point for the diligence which ran to Villers Cotterets.

The horses were already harnessed and the postilion in his saddle. There was one seat left inside, and that Catherine took.

Eight hours later, at six in the afternoon, — while it was still daylight, — the stage drew up at the Rue Soissons.

If Isidore had still been alive, and the young girl had come to see her mother in good health, Catherine would have been led by a sense of shame to let the stage leave

her at the end of Rue Largny, and then would have made the circuit of the village, so as not to be seen; but as a widowed mother she paid no heed to rural raillery, — or rather she did not think of it. So she left the diligence modestly, but unabashed. Her mourning made her resemble a sorrowful angel, from whom scorn and malice must surely be averted by that smiling angel, her babe.

Catherine was not readily recognized. She was so pale and so altered, that she no longer seemed like the same woman. More misleading than her looks was the air of distinction which had come to her insensibly, through intimate association with a high-bred gentleman like Isidore.

However, one person recognized her, while she was still some distance away. This was Aunt Angelica.

Aunt Angelica was at the townhouse gate, conversing with two or three gossips about the oath demanded of the priests. She said that she had heard Abbé Fortier declare that he would never take the oath of allegiance to the Jacobins or the Revolution, but that he would submit to martyrdom rather than bend his head beneath the Revolutionary yoke.

"Oh Jesus God!" she cried suddenly, interrupting her story, "if there ain't that Billot girl and her young one, getting out of the stage!"

"Catherine? — Catherine?" repeated several voices.

"Yes indeed! See! There she is, shying up that lane!"

Aunt Angelica was mistaken. Catherine was not striving to get out of sight; but she was in haste to be near her mother, and so walked rapidly; and she chose the lane because it afforded a far shorter cut than the highway.

When they heard Aunt Angelica's remark, "It 's that Billot girl!" and the exclamations of the other women, that it was Catherine, several children started to run after the girl; and when they overtook her they cried out: "Yes, yes, it 's true! It 's Mademoiselle!"

"Yes, children, it 's I!" said Catherine, pleasantly.

As she was always a favorite with the children, especially as she always had something for them, — a caress, if nothing more, — they shouted, "Good-day, Mademoiselle Catherine!"

"Good-day, my friends," she replied. "My mother is not dead yet, is she?"

"Oh, no, Mademoiselle, not yet!" they said; and then one child added: "Monsieur Raynal says she may last eight or ten days longer."

"Thank you, children!" said Catherine; and she kept on her way, after giving them a few coins.

The children ran back again to the square, and the gossips said to them, "Well —?"

"Well, it *is* she!" said the children; "and that 's sure, for she asked us about her mother! and see what she gave us!" and the children exhibited the pieces of money received from Catherine.

"Her goods must bring a big price in Paris," said Aunt Angelica, "if she can afford to give silver to all the brats who run after her."

Aunt Angelica did not love Catherine Billot. Catherine was young and handsome, while Aunt Angelica was old and homely. Catherine was tall and well-formed, while Aunt Angelica was short and lame.

Then again, it was at Billot's farm that Ange Pitou had found a shelter, when his aunt drove him away from her home.

Besides, it was Billot who read the Declaration of

Human Rights on that never-to-be-forgotten Federation Day, nearly two years before, and hustled Father Fortier, to make him say Mass at the Patriot Altar, in the square.

All these reasons sufficed, especially when added to the natural acidity of her disposition, to make Aunt Angelica dislike the Billots in general and Catherine in particular; and when Aunt Angelica hated, she hated vigorously, like all religious devotees.

She hastened speedily to find Mademoiselle Adelaide, the niece of Abbé Fortier, and tell her the news.

The priest was enjoying a fine carp from the Wallue pond, flanked by a dish of scrambled eggs and a plate of spinach. It was a maigre day, and the priest had put on the ascetic and severe aspect of a man who expects to be martyrized every instant.

"What is it?" he inquired, hearing the women jabbering in the entry. "Are they after me, to make me avow my unalterable loyalty to God's name?"

"Not yet, my dear uncle," said Mademoiselle Adelaide. "No, it 's only Aunt Angelica," — for everybody, following Pitou's example, called the old maid by this title, — "it 's only Aunt Angelica, who has come to tell me the latest scandal."

"We live in an era when scandal runs abroad in the streets," responded Father Fortier. "What is the latest scandal which Aunt Angelica brings you?"

Mademoiselle Adelaide introduced Aunt Angelica, who, it will be remembered, had the business of letting chairs to the worshippers at the village chapel, — as is customary in Catholic churches in Europe; where there are no pews, such as are provided in Protestant churches, especially in England and America.

"Your servitor, Monsieur!" said the old maid.

"You should say *servant*, Aunt Angelica," said the priest, who could never quite throw aside his pedagogical habits.

"I 've always heard folks say *servitor*," said Aunt Angelica, "and I only repeat what I 've heard. Excuse me if I 've offended, Monsieur Abbé."

"You don't offend *me*, Aunt Angelica, but *syntax!*"

"I 'll make my excuses to Monsieur Syntax the first time I see him," humbly replied the old woman.

"Very well, Aunt Angelica, very well! Now won't you have a glass of wine?"

"Thanks, Monsieur Abbé, but I never drink wine."

"You are wrong. Wine is not forbidden by the rules of the Church."

"Oh, it ain't because wine is disallowed that I don't drink it. It 's because it costs nine sous a bottle."

"You are still penurious then, Aunt Angelica?" asked the priest, turning around in his chair.

"Oh, my God, Monsieur Abbé! Penurious? How can poor folks help it?"

"Go along, you poor woman! — getting the chair-rental for nothing, when I might get a hundred crowns for it from the first applicant!"

"Oh, Monsieur Abbé, how could anybody pay that? Why, I can only afford water to drink, though I do get the chair business for nothing."

"That 's why I offer you a glass of wine, Aunt Angelica."

"Take it!" said Mademoiselle Adelaide. "It will displease my uncle if you don't accept his offer."

"You think he 'll be provoked, your uncle?" said Aunt Angelica, who was dying to accept.

"Most certainly!"

"Then, Monsieur Abbé, you may give me two fingers'

worth of wine, if you please, for I would n't disoblige you."

"Here you are, then!" said he, filling a glass to the brim with burgundy as pure as rubies. "Swallow that, Aunt Angelica; and when you next count your crowns, you 'll think you have twice as many."

As Aunt Angelica raised the glass to her lips she said: "My crowns? Ah, Monsieur Abbé, don't talk to me in such a way, — you, a priest of the good God, — you who stand between the living and the dead, as they say."

"Drink, Aunt Angelica, drink!"

Aunt Angelica moistened her lips with the wine, as if to please the priest, and then, shutting her eyes tight, she beatifically swallowed nearly a third of the contents of the glass.

"Oh, how strong!" she said. "I don't see how anybody can drink wine clear!"

"And I," said the priest, "don't see how anybody can put water into his wine; but never mind that! You can't prevent me from betting that Aunt Angelica has a pretty plum of a fortune laid away!"

"Oh Monsieur Abbé, Monsieur Abbé, don't say such things. I can't even pay my taxes, which are three francs ten sous [about seventy cents] a year!" and Aunt Angelica swallowed another third of the contents of her glass.

"Yes, I know you say so; but if I 'm not greatly mistaken, when the day comes for you to give up your soul to God, if your nephew, Ange Pitou, hunts about carefully, he 'll find, in some old stocking or other, enough money to buy the whole of the Rue Pleux."

"Monsieur Abbé, Monsieur Abbé!" cried Aunt Angelica, "if you say such things you 'll get me assassinated by some of those brigands who burn up barns and cut

down the crops; for on the word of a holy man like you, they 'll believe I 'm rich. — Oh Lord, oh Lord, what a misfortune!" and with her eyes moist with tears of satisfaction she swallowed the rest of her wine.

"Well, well," said the priest, still in a jesting mood, "you see you can get used to this nice little wine, Aunt Angelica."

"All the same," said the old maid, "it 's awful strong!"

Having finished his supper the abbé said: "Well, now, what new scandal is troubling our Israel?"

"Monsieur Abbé, that Billot girl came home in the stage from Paris, with her baby."

"Ah ha! Why I supposed she would put it into the Foundling Hospital."

"And she would do well," said Aunt Angelica, "for then the poor little thing would n't have to blush for its mother."

"Indeed," said the priest, "that 's putting the institution in a new light. — And what does she come here after?"

"It appears she comes to see her mother, for she asked some children if her mother were still alive."

"You know, Aunt Angelica, that Mother Billot has neglected the sacrament of confession," said the priest, with a malicious smile.

"Oh Monsieur Abbé," replied Aunt Angelica, "that is n't her fault! The poor woman has been losing her wits for the past three or four months, as it seems; but before her daughter gave her so much trouble she was a very devout woman, one who feared God; and when she came to church she always hired two chairs of me, — one to sit upon, and the other to put her feet on."

"And her husband," asked the priest, his eyes fairly

glistening with anger, "*Citizen* Billot, the captor of the Bastille, — how many chairs did he hire of you?"

"Well, I don't know!" answered Aunt Angelica, simply. "He never did come to church! But as to Mother Billot —"

"Well, well," said the priest, "there 's an account to be settled when she 's buried!"

Then he added, making the sign of the cross: "Return thanks with me, my sisters."

The old maids also made the sign of the cross, and devoutly said their prayers with him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE DAUGHTER AND THE MOTHER.

MEANWHILE Catherine kept on her way. On leaving the lane she turned to the left, went through the Rue Lormet, at the end of which she re-entered the main road to Pisseleu, by a narrow footpath through the woods.

All along this road mournful memories were aroused in Catherine's mind. To begin with, there was the little wooden bridge where Isidore bade her farewell, on the day when Pitou found her by the roadside, in a cold and frigid swoon. At the entrance of the farmhouse was the hollow willow-tree, where Isidore had secretly deposited his letters. Drawing nearer the house, she could see the little window by which Isidore gained access to her room, — the very place where the young man would have more speedily ended his career, on the very night when she left her home, if the farmer's gun had not luckily missed fire. Finally, in front of the great door of the farmhouse was the main road to Boursonnes, which Catherine had so often traversed, and which she knew so well, — the road by which Isidore used to come to the farm.

How many times by night, leaning against that window, her eyes fixed on that highway, had she breathlessly awaited his arrival, till at last she could perceive her lover, — always punctual and faithful, stealing along in the shadows, — and felt a great burden lifted from her breast, as she opened her arms to receive him.

And now he was dead; but when her arms met across her breast they pressed his babe to her heart. What were people saying about her dishonor and shame? Could such a beautiful child ever be a shame and dishonor to its mother?

Fearlessly and quickly she went into the house. A great dog began to bark; but suddenly he recognized his young mistress, came as near her as the length of his chain would permit, and rose with his paws in the air, whining joyfully.

At the barking of the dog a man appeared in the doorway, desirous of knowing what was the matter. "Mademoiselle Catherine!" he exclaimed.

"Father Clouis!" said Catherine.

"Welcome, my dear young lady!" said the old gamekeeper. "The house sadly needs your beautiful and cheerful presence!"

"And my poor mother?"

"Alas! — neither better nor worse! — or rather worse than better. She is sinking, poor dear soul!"

"And where is she?"

"In her chamber."

"All alone?"

"No, no, no! — oh no, I would n't have that! You must excuse me, Mademoiselle, if in your absence, and everything, I have somewhat made myself master here. The time you spent in my poor hut made me feel like one of the family. I loved you so much, — you and that poor Monsieur Isidore!"

"You know — ?" said Catherine, drying a few tears.

"Yes, yes! — killed for the Queen, like Monsieur George! But then, he has left you this beautiful child, — is n't it so? Though you weep for the father, you must smile for the child."

"Thanks, Father Clouis!" said Catherine, offering her hand to the old gamekeeper; "but my mother — ?"

"She 's there in her chamber, as I told you, with Madame Clement, — the same sick-nurse who took care of you."

"And has she her senses still, my poor mother?" asked Catherine, hesitatingly.

"There are times when we think so," said Father Clouis; "and that 's when somebody speaks your name. That 's the way we roused her the day before yesterday; but since then she has made no sign of recognition, even when we speak of you."

"Let 's go in, Father Clouis!" said Catherine.

"Enter, Mademoiselle!" said the old gamekeeper, opening the door into Madame Billot's bedroom.

Catherine looked into the room. Her mother was lying in a bed surrounded by green serge curtains. The room was lighted by one of those old-fashioned lamps with three tubes, still to be found in ancient farmhouses.

The invalid was being cared for by Madame Clement, as Father Clouis had said. The nurse was nodding in a big armchair, in that somnolent state peculiar to nurses, which is a somnambulic condition, midway between waking and sleeping.

Poor Mother Billot seemed little changed, except that her skin was the color of ivory. She seemed to be asleep.

"Mother, mother!" cried Catherine, throwing herself on the bed, as the nurse took the baby.

The invalid opened her eyes, and moved her head towards Catherine. An intelligent gleam came into her face. Her lips babbled some unintelligible sounds, which did not even reach the dignity of disconnected

words. She put out her hand, as if to confirm, by the sense of touch, her almost extinguished hearing and eyesight; but the effort was abortive, the motion a failure. The eyes closed again. The arm rested like a dead weight on Catherine's head, who was on her knees by her mother's bedside; and the invalid relapsed into that insensibility from which she had been momentarily roused by her daughter's voice, as by a galvanic shock.

Like two lightning flashes coming from opposite quarters of the horizon, so Catherine's father and mother sent out contrary emotions from their respective conditions of lethargy. Father Billot emerged from his swoon as if to repulse Catherine far from him. Mother Billot emerged from her torpor as if to draw Catherine nearer to herself.

Catherine's arrival revolutionized things at the farm. Billot had been expected, but not his daughter. She described the accident which had happened to Billot, and told them that the husband was as near death in Paris as was the wife at Pisseleu; only it was evident that the two dying persons were on different roads, — Billot on the road from death to life, his wife on the road from life to death.

Catherine once more entered her maiden chamber. There were many tears for her in the remembrances recalled by that little bedroom, where she had indulged in the sweet dreams of childhood, the burning affection of maidenhood, and to which she now returned with the bruised heart of the widow.

At once she assumed, in the disordered household, the authority which her father had aforetime delegated to her, even to the neglect of her mother. With thanks and recompense Father Clouis returned to his burrow, as he called the hut at Clouise Rock.

The next day Doctor Raynal came to the farm. He was accustomed to pay a professional visit every other day, inspired by a sense of duty rather than hope. He knew that nothing he could do would be of any avail, and that Mother Billot's life, like a lamp from which the oil is exhausted, could not be prolonged by any human effort. He was right glad to find the daughter there. At once he broached a question which he would not have dared debate with Billot, — the question of the sacraments of Holy Church.

Billot, as everybody knew, was an extreme disciple of Voltaire; nor was the Doctor's religious devotion exemplary. On the contrary, to the skeptical spirit of the age, the Doctor added what would now be called the scientific temper. Though the age had only reached the stage of doubt, science was already at the point of negation. Nevertheless, under such circumstances as these, he considered it his duty to speak to the family on the subject.

Pious relatives usually profited by his notice to send for the priest; while unreligious relatives gave orders, if the priest should present himself, that the door should be slammed in his face.

Catherine was pious. She wholly ignored the dissensions which had taken place between Billot and Fortier, or rather she attached no great importance to this antagonism. She sent Madame Clement to the rectory to ask the pastor to come and administer the last sacraments to her mother. Being too small a hamlet for a separate chapel and curate, Pisseleu relied upon Villers Cotterets for its sacred offices. It was even in the cemetery of Villers Cotterets that the dead of Pisseleu were buried.

An hour afterward the bell of the viaticum was heard tinkling at the farmhouse door. The priest had come to

administer the sacrament of Extreme Unction. The advent of the Sacred Host was welcomed by Catherine on her knees.

Hardly had the abbé entered the chamber, hardly did he perceive that she for whose benefit he had been summoned was speechless, sightless, voiceless, before he declared that he would not give absolution except to those who were able to make their confession before receiving the holy wafer; and, in spite of every request, he carried the pyx away.

Fortier was a priest of the gloomy and fanatical type. In Spain he might have been a Saint Dominic, and in Mexico a Valverde. It was useless to appeal to any other priest. Pisseleu was in his parish, and no other curate would dare encroach upon his rights.

Catherine's heart was pious and tender, but she was also very rational. She looked upon the refusal of the abbé only as a burden she must bear, hoping that God would be more indulgent than his minister to the poor dying woman.

She continued to discharge the duties of a daughter towards her mother, and the duties of a mother to her child, dividing her whole life between the young soul, newly entering into this world, and the weary one who was leaving it. For eight days and nights she only left her mother's bed when called to her infant's cradle.

During the eighth night, as the girl was still watching by the bed of the invalid, — who, like a bark foundering in the sea, was gradually being submerged in eternity, — the door of the chamber opened, and Pitou appeared on the threshold. According to his usual habit he had left Paris that morning.

When she saw him Catherine trembled. For an instant she feared lest her father was dead; but Pitou's face,

without being precisely gay, did not belong to a bearer of fatal intelligence.

In point of fact Billot was going from better to best. For several days the Doctor had felt sure of his case. On the very morning of Pitou's departure the farmer had been transported from the hospital at Gros Caillou to the Doctor's residence. As soon as Billot was out of danger, Pitou announced his resolution of returning to Pisseleu. He was no longer troubled on Billot's account, but on Catherine's. Pitou foresaw what would happen when they should tell Billot, what as yet it had not been considered safe for him to know, about the condition of his wife. Pitou was sure that Billot, feeble as he still was, would start for home. What if he should find Catherine at the farm?

Doctor Gilbert had not concealed from Pitou the effect produced upon the wounded man by the entrance of Catherine into the hospital laundry, and her brief stay at her father's bedside. Evidently this vision remained in the depths of his soul; and when he awoke to renewed life, he remembered her advent as part of a disordered dream. As reason slowly returned, he cast about him anxious and hateful glances. Doubtless he expected to see the painful vision reappear.

Not a word did he say about it, however, not once did he utter Catherine's name; yet Doctor Gilbert was too profound an observer not to read or conjecture everything. As soon therefore as Billot was convalescent he sent Pitou back to the farm.

This was for the purpose of getting Catherine out of the way. Pitou would have two or three days in which to bring this about, as not for two or three days longer would the Doctor risk the announcement of the painful information brought to Paris by Pitou the week before.

All this was imparted to Catherine by Pitou, with all the deferential fear inspired in him by Billot's character; but Catherine declared that she would not go away without closing the dying woman's eyes, even if her father wished to kill her beside her mother's pillow.

Pitou sadly lamented this determination, but he could not find a word to say against it. He could only hold himself ready to interpose, in case of need, between father and daughter.

Two more days and nights rolled away. During these two days and nights Mother Billot's life seemed to steal away, breath by breath. For ten days she had eaten nothing. They could only sustain life by occasionally introducing a spoonful of syrup into her mouth. One could hardly believe life could be retained in the body by so little sustenance; and certainly the poor woman was barely alive.

During the tenth night, when the breath had apparently forsaken her body, the invalid suddenly appeared to revive. Her arms moved. Her lips were agitated. Her eyes opened into a full stare.

"Mother! mother!" cried Catherine; and she rushed to the door to get her babe.

One might say that Catherine bore with her the mother's very soul; for when she returned, holding little Isidore in her arms, the dying woman made an effort to turn in that direction. Her eyes remained open and staring; but there was a gleam of welcome therein for the returning daughter. She even extended her arms and uttered a moan.

Catherine fell on her knees, as she placed her son on the bed.

Then occurred a strange phenomenon. Mother Billot lifted herself from her pillow, and laid her hands on the

heads of Catherine and her babe. Then, with such an effort as was made by the youthful son of Crœsus, who broke through his dumbness in a moment of peril, this dying mother ejaculated: "My children, I bless you!" and then fell back on her pillow, her arms lifeless and her voice mute.

She was dead. Her eyes only remained open, as if the poor woman, not having seen enough of her daughter while living, wished to gaze at her from beyond the grave.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH THE ABBÉ FORTIER PUTS INTO EXECUTION THE THREAT MADE TO AUNT ANGELICA IN REFERENCE TO MOTHER BILLOT.

CATHERINE piously closed her mother's eyes, first with her fingers and then with her lips.

Madame Clement had long anticipated the last sad hour, and provided some candles. While Catherine, full of tears, carried her crying child into her own chamber, and lulled him to sleep on her bosom, Madame Clement lighted two candles on each side of the head of the bedstead, crossed the hands of the dead woman over her breast, placed a crucifix between those lifeless fingers, and set a bowl of consecrated water on a chair, with a spray of boxwood kept over from the previous Palm Sunday.

When Catherine came back, the only pious duty left for her was to kneel beside the deathbed, with her prayer-book in her hands.

Meanwhile Pitou took upon himself the care of the burial arrangements. Not liking to go personally to Father Fortier, with whom there had been so much unpleasantness, he went to the sexton, to order a Mass for the dead, to the bearers, to let them know at what hour they would be needed, and to the gravedigger, to tell him to dig the grave.

Thence he went to Haramont, in order to notify his lieutenants, and the other thirty and one members of the

Haramont National Guards, that the interment of Madame Billot would take place the next day at eleven o'clock.

As Mother Billot had never in her life occupied any public position, and held no rank in the Royal Army or the National Guard, Pitou's communication to his soldiery was perhaps officious, but certainly not official, — as may be readily understood. It was an invitation, not a command, to assist at the funeral.

However, it was but too well known how much Billot had done for the Revolution, which had turned the public brain and inflamed the general heart. It was known that he was couched on a bed of pain at that very moment, and not wholly out of danger, and that he had been wounded in defence of the holy cause of Liberty. Pitou's invitation, therefore, had all the force of a command. All the Haramont Guards promised their chief that they would willingly be on hand the next day at eleven, promptly and punctually, at the bereaved home.

As Pitou returned to the farm that night, he met the undertaker at the door, carrying the coffin on his shoulder. Intuitively Pitou possessed a delicacy of heart rarely found among peasants, or even among the higher classes. He placed the undertaker and his coffin in the stable, and went into the house alone, fully determined to spare Catherine the sight of this mournful box and the painful noise of the hammer.

Catherine was praying at the foot of her mother's bed. The pious care of the two women had already washed the dead, wrapped her in her shroud, and made her ready for the last rites.

Pitou gave Catherine his account of what had been done during the day, and invited her to go out for a

little air; but she refused, wishing to discnarge her filial duties to the very end.

"It will be bad for your dear little Isidore, if you don't go out," said Pitou.

"Then *you* may take him out and give him the air, Monsieur Pitou."

She must have had great confidence in Pitou, or she would not have trusted him with her babe, even for five minutes.

Pitou went out, as if to obey her orders; but he was back again in five minutes, to say: "He won't go with me. He's crying!"

Indeed, through the open doors Catherine could hear her baby's grief. She kissed the covered forehead of the corpse, whose form and features were almost distinguishable through the linen. Recognizing a divided duty between her feelings as a daughter and as a mother, she then left her parent and went to her child.

Little Isidore was indeed crying; and Catherine took him in her arms, and followed Pitou out of doors. As soon as her back was turned, the undertaker came into the house with his burden.

Pitou wished to keep Catherine away for half an hour or so. As if by chance he led her along the road to Boursonnes. This highway was so full of reminiscences to the poor girl, that she walked a long distance without speaking a word to Pitou; but she silently answered the various voices which made themselves heard in her heart.

When Pitou thought it was about time for the undertaker's work to be done, he said: "Mademoiselle Catherine, suppose we return to the farm."

She emerged from her thoughts as from a dream. "Oh, yes! How kind you are, dear Pitou!" and then she began to retrace her steps homeward.

When they reached the house, Madame Clement made a sign to Pitou that the undertaker's work was over. Catherine re-entered her own chamber, to put little Isidore to bed. This maternal duty accomplished, she wished to resume her place by her mother's bedside; but Pitou met her at her chamber door and said: "It will be useless, Mademoiselle Catherine, for everything is done."

"How, — all is done?"

"Yes, during our absence, Mademoiselle — " Pitou hesitated and then added: "Yes, in our absence the joiner — "

"Ah, that's why you insisted upon my going out. — I understand, you kind Pitou!"

By way of recompense he received from Catherine a grateful look, as she added: "One last prayer, and I will come away!"

She went straight to her mother's room. Pitou followed on tiptoe, but paused on the threshold. The coffin was placed on two chairs in the middle of the room. At this sight Catherine paused tremblingly, and fresh tears coursed down her cheeks. Then she knelt beside the coffin, and pressed her forehead, pale with weariness and grief, against the oaken coffin.

Along the dolorous way, wherein the living follow the dead from their beds of suffering to the eternal rest of the tomb, some fresh detail constantly disturbs the memory, and wellnigh draws the last tear from the heart's fountain.

Catherine's prayer was long. She could not detach herself from the coffin. The poor girl knew that after Isidore's death she had but two friends on earth, her mother and Pitou.

Her mother had blessed her and said farewell. Her

mother was here in the coffin, and to-morrow would be in the grave. Pitou was now therefore her only friend. It was hard to part with her last friend but one, especially when that one was her mother.

Pitou felt that he must come to Catherine's relief. He came into the chamber, and as words were useless, he tried to raise Catherine from her knees, by placing his hands under her arms.

"One prayer more, Monsieur Pitou," she said, "only one more!"

"You will make yourself ill, Mademoiselle Catherine!" said Pitou.

"What then?"

"Then I must hunt up a nurse for little Isidore!"

"Thou art right, thou art right, Pitou! My God, how kind in thee! My God, how I love thee!"

Pitou staggered, and almost fell backward. He had to support himself against the wall, as he retreated towards the door; and silent tears, almost of joy, rolled down his cheeks. Had not Catherine said that she loved him? He did not deceive himself as to the nature of her affection; but in whatever way she loved him, the simple fact was everything to his heart.

Her prayer being finished, Catherine kept her promise to Pitou, by rising and leaving the room. She walked slow, leaning on his shoulder, while Pitou put his arm around her waist to help her along.

She allowed him to take her away; but at the door she raised her head from his shoulder, threw a final glance at the corpse, gloomily lighted by the two candles, and said: "Adieu, my mother! For the last time, adieu!" Then she passed out.

At the door of her own chamber, as she was about to enter it, Pitou checked her. She had now learned to

understand Pitou so well, that she knew he had something to say to her.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Well," stammered Pitou, somewhat embarrassed, "don't you think the time has come when you must quit the farm, Mademoiselle Catherine?"

"I shall not leave the farm till my mother herself leaves it!" said the girl.

She spoke these words with such firmness that Pitou saw her resolution was irrevocable; so he said: "When you do quit the farm, you know there are two places within a league of it, where you are sure to be welcome, — the hut of Father Clouis, and Pitou's little house."

Pitou called his chamber and his little office a *house*.

"Thanks, Pitou!" answered Catherine, indicating with a nod that she would accept one or the other of these two asylums.

Then she went into her room without farther anxiety about Pitou, who was always sure of making himself a home somewhere.

The next day, at ten in the forenoon, the friends invited to the funeral began to flock towards the farm. All the farmers in the neighborhood were there, from Boursonnes, from Noue, from Ivors Copse, from Largny, from Coyolles, from Haramont, and from Vivières.

Among the first arrivals was the Mayor of Villers Cotterets, the friendly Monsieur de Longpré.

At half-past ten came the Haramont National Guardsmen, with drum beating and flag trailing. Not a soldier was absent.

Each comer was welcomed by Catherine. She was clad in black, and she held her babe, also clad in black. It must be said that nobody felt anything but respect for this mother and infant, standing in

the gloom of their double bereavement and double mourning.

At eleven o'clock more than three hundred people were at the farmhouse. The priest, the bearers, and other parish officers were not there, however.

There was a delay of fifteen minutes. Nobody else arrived. Pitou climbed to the top of the highest barn, whence he could overlook a circuit of two miles, reaching from Villers Cotteret to the little village of Pisseleu. Though he had good eyes, he could see nothing of the expected ecclesiastical visitors.

He came down and imparted to Monsieur de Longpré, not only his observations, but his conclusions. His observations showed him that nothing priestly was to be seen on its winding way. His conclusion was, that nothing priestly would come; for he had heard of Father Fortier's visit, and his refusal to administer the last sacraments to Mother Billot.

Pitou knew Fortier, and so guessed the whole truth. Fortier was resolved not to give the aid and countenance of his sacred office to the interment of Madame Billot, and the pretext, not the cause, for this refusal was the omission of her dying confession.

These reflections, communicated by Pitou to the Mayor, and by the Mayor to his assistants, produced a despondingeffect. At first everybody was silent. Then somebody said: "Well, if old Fortier won't say Mass, we can get on just as well without him."

This was the voice of Désiré Maniquet, whose antireligious sentiments were well known.

There was another silence. Evidently it seemed a very bold thing to propose the omission of the Mass for the dead, for this was an indication of adherence to the school of Rousseau and Voltaire.

"Gentlemen," said the Mayor, "let us go to Villers Cotterets. At Villers Cotterets everything will be explained."

"To Villers Cotterets!" cried every voice.

Pitou made a sign to four of his men. They slid two gun-barrels under the coffin, and so lifted the corpse. At the door the coffin was carried before Catherine, who was kneeling, and in front of little Isidore, whom she had placed on his knees.

After the coffin had passed out, Catherine kissed the threshold of the outer door, for she never again expected to enter the farmhouse, and said to Pitou, as she rose from the ground: "You will find us in the hut at Clouise Rock."

Then she walked rapidly away through the courtyard of the farm, and the gardens nearest the Noue.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH THE ABBÉ FORTIER SEES THAT IT IS NOT ALWAYS AS EASY AS ONE SUPPOSES TO KEEP ONE'S WORD.

THE procession advanced silently, forming a long line, when suddenly those who brought up the rear heard a loud call behind. They turned to see what was the matter.

A horseman was riding at full gallop from the direction of Ivors, — that is, along the Paris road. Part of his face was disfigured by two black bandages. He was waving his hat as a sign for them to wait.

Pitou turned to the others and said: "Hold on! It 's Monsieur Billot. — Gracious! I would n't be in Abbé Fortier's skin!"

At the mention of Billot's name, everybody halted. The horseman was riding rapidly; and as he came nearer, others recognized the farmer, as Pitou had already done.

As soon as he reached the head of the procession, Billot leaped from his horse, threw the bridle on the animal's neck, and said, in very emphatic tones: "Good-day and thank you, fellow-citizens!" Then he took his place behind the coffin, instead of Pitou, who had led the mourners in Billot's absence. A stable-boy took charge of the horse and rode back to the farm.

Every one looked curiously at Billot. He was somewhat haggard and very pale. Part of his forehead and the flesh about his left eye were still black and blue, with

the blood which had settled there. His set teeth and frowning brows bespoke gloomy wrath, which was only waiting for the opportune moment to burst forth.

"Do you know what is going on?" asked Pitou.

"I know all!" answered the farmer.

As soon as Gilbert had told Billot about his wife, the farmer hired a cabriolet, in which he rode as far as Nanteuil. As the horse was able to go no farther, the farmer, feeble as he was, had hired a saddle-horse. At Levignan he had changed horses, and reached home just after the funeral procession had started.

In a few words Madame Clement had told him everything. Billot at once remounted. As he turned the wall he could see the procession, which was moving slowly along the road, and he straightway called upon it to stop.

Thereafter, as we have said before, it was he who headed the funeral procession, with scowling forehead, threatening mouth, and arms folded over his breast.

Already quiet and mournful, the company became still more silent and gloomy.

At the entrance of the village of Villers Cotterets they found a group of persons waiting. These persons took their places in the procession. As the party moved along the streets, men, women, and children came out of their houses, saluted Billot, — who answered with a nod, — and then took their places at the end of the line. By the time the procession reached the public square it numbered more than five hundred.

From the square one could see the church. What Pitou had foreseen proved to be true. The church was closed.

In front of the door the procession came to a standstill. Billot was livid. The expression of his face became more and more menacing.

It was the fashion in those days for a horn to be played in church services; and as the horn most in favor was coiled like a snake, not only did the instrument receive a name indicative of its shape, but the hornplayer was also called a *serpent*.

The church and the Mayor's office stood side by side. As the church *serpent* also acted as janitor for the town-house, and was therefore dependent equally upon the Mayor and upon the priest, Monsieur de Longpré sent for the *serpent* and questioned him.

The priest had forbidden everybody connected with the church from having anything to do with the burial.

The Mayor asked for the church keys. The keys were at the beadle's.

"Go and get them!" said Billot to Pitou.

Pitou stretched his legs, which were like a pair of compasses, and was back again in five minutes, with this message: "Fortier has had the keys taken to the parsonage, so the church can't be opened."

"It is necessary to get the keys from old Fortier, then!" said Désiré Maniquet, who was a born advocate of extreme measures.

"Yes, yes! We 'll go to the parsonage for the keys!" cried two hundred voices.

"That will take too long," said Billot; "and when death knocks at the door, he is not in the habit of waiting."

Then he looked about him. Opposite the church there was a house in process of erection. The workmen were squaring off a beam. Billot marched straight up to them, and motioned with his hand that he wanted the piece of timber they were shaping. The workmen at once gave it up.

The timber rested on two joists. Billot passed his

arms under the beam, near the middle of it, and raised it by a single effort; but he had counted on lost strength. Under this enormous weight the colossus trembled, and for an instant they thought he would fall. There was a lightning glance in his eye. With an awful smile he regained his equilibrium. Then he crossed the street with the beam in his arms, his step slow but firm. He was like one of those ancient battering-rams, with which Alexander, Hannibal, and the Cæsars were wont to beat down opposing walls.

With his legs apart Billot placed himself before the door, and this formidable machine began its awful play. The door was oaken. The locks, bolts, and hinges were iron. At the third blow bolts, locks, and hinges flew off, and the oak door was half open.

Then Billot dropped the beam, which four men with difficulty carried back to the place whence he had taken it.

"Now, Monsieur Mayor," said Billot, "have the coffin of my poor wife, who never did any harm to a living person, placed in the middle of the chancel. Pitou, get the beadle, the sexton, the choristers, and the altar-boys. I will see to the priest myself!"

The Mayor entered the church, with the coffin. Pitou went after the choristers, the altar-boys, the beadle, and the sexton. He was accompanied by Désiré Maniquet and four other men, in case they should find these church people obstinate. Billot set out for the priest's house.

Several men wished to follow Billot, but he said: "Let me alone! Perhaps something serious will happen. Let each man bear the responsibility of his own deeds."

Then he passed along Church Avenue, into the Soissons Road.

Thus for the second time, nearly two years after the first, the Revolutionary farmer was to find himself face to face with the Royalist priest. Everybody remembered what had happened the first time. Probably they should now be witnesses of a similar scene. However, seeing Billot striding towards the priest's house the people remained in their places, shaking their heads, but not taking a step.

"He told us not to follow him!" said the spectators, one to another.

The big door of the priest's house was as fast as the church door. Billot looked about him, to see if he could find another new building going up thereabouts, so as to borrow another beam. He could only see a freestone post, which had been dislodged somewhat by children at play, and now trembled in its hole, like a loose tooth in its socket.

The farmer went up to this post, shook it violently, enlarged its socket and finally tore the stone up from the earth in which it was embedded.

Lifting it above his head, like another Ajax or a new Diomed, he drew back a step, and then launched the granite block, with as much force as if it had been a catapult. The door was shivered into morsels.

At the same time that Billot opened this formidable passage, the window on the first story opened, and Fortier appeared there, shouting to all his parishioners for help; but the pastor's flock did not choose to hear his voice. They preferred letting the wolf and the shepherd fight it out together. It took a little time for Billot to break down two or three inside doors, which still separated him from the priest, as he had broken through the first. Perhaps this required ten minutes. As these minutes rolled away the priest's cries became more and more

violent and his gestures more and more expressive. It was easy to see that danger was coming nearer and nearer to the holy man.

Suddenly Billot's pale face was visible behind the priest, and the farmer's heavy hand was laid on the pastoral shoulder. The priest braced himself against the wooden crosspiece, which divided the swinging window. He also was noted for his strength, and it would have been no easy thing for a Hercules to dislodge him from his hold.

Billot put his arms about the priest's waist, and braced himself well on his legs. With a shock that might have uprooted an oak-tree, he wrenched his opponent away from the window, with such force that the wooden crosspiece remained broken in the ministerial hands.

Then both farmer and priest disappeared in the depths of the room, and the receding cries of the abbé could be heard coming from afar, like the bellowing of a bull, borne away to his lair by some fierce lion of the Atlas Mountains.

Meanwhile Pitou had gathered together the sexton, the choristers, the altar-boys, the beadle, all trembling. Following the example of the janitor-serpent they hastened to put on their capes and frocks, light the candles, and prepare everything for a mortuary Mass.

They were busy doing this when they saw Billot reappear at the side door of the parsonage, opening upon Château Square, though they had expected to see him at the large door, opening on Rue Soissons. He was dragging the priest after him; and despite the priestly resistance, the farmer walked as rapidly as if he had been alone.

Billot was no longer a man. He was one of nature's forces, like a torrent or an avalanche. Nothing human

seemed capable of resisting him. Only some other element of nature could struggle successfully against him.

When they were a hundred paces from the church the poor priest ceased to resist. He was completely subdued. Everybody stood aside to let the two men pass along. The frightened priest threw a startled glance at the door, broken into fragments like a pane of glass. When he saw in their several places — with book, halbert, or instrument in hand — those whom he had forbidden to set foot in the church, the priest shook his head, as if he at last realized that something powerful and irresistible weighed down religion, as well as its ministers. He entered the sacristy, and presently came forth in his professional robes, with the holy eucharist in his hands. He mounted the altar steps, placed the pyx on the holy table, and turned to speak the first words of the service; but at that instant Billot lifted his hand and said: "Enough, you miserable slave of God. I wished to curb your pride, — that 's all! I want people to understand that a good woman, like my wife, can get along without the prayers of a bigoted and despisable priest like you!"

As a great noise rose to the church rafters after these words, Billot added: "If this is sacrilege, let the sacrilege fall on me alone!"

Turning towards the crowd, which now not only filled the church, but the courtyard of the townhouse next door, he said: "Citizens, — to the cemetery!"

The general voice repeated his words: "To the cemetery!"

The four military bearers once more thrust their gun-barrels under the coffin and lifted the corpse. As they had come, — without priest, without hymns, without any

of the funereal pomp with which religion is accustomed to escort the bereaved friends, — they now resumed their walk to the cemetery, Billot leading the mourners. There were six hundred persons in the procession.

The cemetery was situated, it may be remembered, at the end of a lane called Pleux, twenty-five rods from Aunt Angelica's cottage. The gate was locked, like the doors of the church and parsonage. Strangely enough, Billot paused before this frail obstacle. The dead showed respect to the dead!

At a sign from the farmer, Pitou ran after the gravedigger. The gravedigger of course had the key of the cemetery. Five minutes later Pitou brought not only the key, but two shovels.

Fortier had interdicted the poor dead woman both from the church and from holy ground. The gravedigger had received orders not to dig a grave.

At this fresh manifestation of the priest's malevolence towards the farmer, something like a threatening shiver ran through the crowd. If in his heart Billot had cherished a quarter part of the gall which belongs to religious fanatics, — gall which had aforetime astonished the satirical poet Boileau, — the farmer had only to speak the word, and the priest would have enjoyed the satisfaction of that martyrdom for which he had so ardently appealed, on that beautiful day in the autumn of 1789, when he refused to celebrate Mass on the Patriot Altar in the square.

Billot possessed the lion-like anger of the populace. He tore his way along, he broke through all obstacles which beset him, but he never retraced his steps.

He made a sign of thanks to Pitou, whose intentions he understood. He took the key, opened the gate, let the coffin pass in, followed it himself, and was in turn

followed by the funeral escort, which now included nearly everybody in the neighborhood who could walk.

Only the ultra Royalists and bigots stayed at home. It need not be said that Aunt Angelica, who was among the stay-at-homes, locked her door in terror, crying out against "the Abomination of Desolation set up in the Holy Place," and calling down the thunderbolts of Heaven upon the head of her nephew.

All those, however, who had kind hearts, good sense, domestic affection, all those who were disgusted at seeing hatred substituted for mercy, and vengeance for humanity, — that is to say, three-fourths of the population, — were on hand, to protest, not against God, not against religion, but against priestly bigotry.

When they arrived at the place where the grave should have been dug, — for the gravedigger had already marked the spot before he received orders not to dig it, — Billot extended his hand to Pitou, who handed him one of the spades.

Then Billot and Pitou, with bare heads, surrounded by a circle of citizens whose heads were likewise uncovered, — under the devouring sun of the latter days of July, — began to dig the grave for that unhappy woman; a woman so pious and resigned in all things, that she would have been greatly surprised at what was taking place, and would have greatly preferred not to die, if she had foreseen the scandal which her death was to cause.

The labor lasted an hour, and neither of the two diggers had any idea of stopping till the grave was finished.

Meantime somebody had brought some ropes, and when the grave was dug the cords were in readiness. Billot and Pitou lowered the coffin into the grave. These two men undertook this last duty so simply and naturally, that

not one of the onlookers thought of offering to help them. Indeed they would have deemed it a sacrilege to interfere with this pious task.

As the first lumps of earth fell upon the oaken coffin, Billot passed his hand over his eyes, and Pitou wiped his tears on his cuff. Then they resolutely replaced the earth.

When all was over, Billot threw his shovel aside, and extended both arms to Pitou, who threw himself upon the farmer's breast.

"God is my witness," said Billot, "that in thee I embrace all the grand and simple virtues on earth, — charity, devotion, unselfishness, fraternity, — and that I devote my life to the triumph of these virtues."

Then, extending his hand over the grave, he added: "God also be my witness that I swear eternal warfare against the King, who has tried to have me murdered, against the nobles, who have dishonored my daughter, against the priests, who have refused burial to my wife!"

Turning towards the spectators, who were full of sympathy over this triple adjuration, the farmer said: "Brothers, a new Assembly is to be convened in Paris, in place of that convention of traitors now sitting in the shadow of the Feuillant Club. Choose me for your representative in that new Assembly, and you shall see that I know how to keep my oaths!"

A cry of universal assent met this proposition from Billot; and in such an hour, on the grave of his wife, — an awful altar, worthy of the most solemn oath that could be taken, — Billot was named as a candidate for the new Legislative Assembly.

Billot thanked his compatriots for their sympathy, which they had shown him both in his hatred and his

; and then each one went home, — citizen or
– carrying in his heart the ultra Revolutionary
e weapons therefor being furnished, in their
by kings, nobles, and priests, — the very
that were to destroy themselves.

CHAPTER XXX.

DEPUTY BILLOT.

THE events which we have recorded produced a deep impression, not only on the inhabitants of Villers Cotterets, but on the farmers in the neighboring towns.

In electoral matters the farmers were a great power. They employed ten, twenty, or thirty day-laborers each; and though nominally suffrage was of two kinds at that era, the election really depended upon what were called the *rural districts.*

Each of these men, as he went home after the funeral, grasped Billot's hand, and said to him these two simple words: "Be easy!" and Billot indeed returned to his farm in a tranquil frame of mind, for now he could see, for the first time, an efficacious method of repaying the nobility and royalty for the evil they had wrought.

Billot *felt!* He did not reason; and his desire for vengeance was as blind as the wounds which he had received.

He returned to the farm without saying a word about Catherine. Nothing indicated that he had known of her temporary presence at the farm. For a year he had not spoken her name under any circumstances. To him his daughter was as if she had never existed.

It was not so with Pitou, — that heart of gold. From the bottom of his nature he regretted that Catherine could not love him; but when he thought of Isidore, and compared that elegant young man with himself, Pitou

perfectly understood how it was that Catherine could not choose but love the Viscount.

Pitou envied Isidore, but he entertained no ill-will towards Catherine. On the contrary, he still loved her with profound and absolute devotion.

To say that this devotion was wholly exempt from pain would be false; but the agony which harrowed Pitou's heart, at each new proof of affection given by Catherine to her lover, only showed the ineffable goodness of the lad's soul.

When Isidore was killed at Varennes, Pitou felt for Catherine only the deepest pity. His feelings were the very opposite of Billot's, and he rendered complete justice to the young nobleman, remembering all that was worthy, good, and generous, even in a rival.

As we have seen, the result of this was not solely that Pitou perhaps loved Catherine the more when she was sadly clad in mourning, than he had loved her when she was joyous and merry, but also — what one might have believed impossible — that he found himself loving the poor little orphan almost as much as he loved Catherine herself.

We ought not to be surprised, therefore, that after Pitou had taken leave of Billot, like the others, he did not return to the farm, but wended his way towards Haramont.

So accustomed were his neighbors to his frequent disappearances and returns, that despite the high position which he occupied in their village, as their military chief, nobody minded his absence. When Pitou went away, they whispered: "General Lafayette has sent for Pitou!" and that was all.

When he returned they asked their captain for the news. Thanks to Gilbert, Pitou was always able to

impart the freshest and most reliable intelligence; and when, several days later, the villagers found that Pitou's predictions were fulfilled, they continued to repose in him the blindest confidence, as if he were their prophet as well as their captain.

Gilbert knew all that was good and true in Pitou. He felt that when a critical moment should come, here was a man to whom he might confide his own life or Sebastien's, a treasure or a commission, trusting to his strength and fidelity.

Every time Pitou went to Paris, Gilbert would ask Pitou if he needed anything, and that, too, without making him blush the least in the world. Pitou always replied: "No, Monsieur Gilbert;" but this did not prevent Gilbert from giving Pitou several louis, which Pitou quietly put into his pocket.

Several louis was a fortune to Pitou, added to the special resources and the tithes which he was able to levy on the Orleans forest. So Pitou never reached the end of his handful of louis before he saw the Doctor again; and then the Doctor once more replenished Pitou's pockets from the spring of Pactolus.

Considering Pitou's disposition towards Catherine and Isidore, it is not surprising that he hastily separated himself from Billot, in order to learn how it fared with the young mother and her child.

On his way to Haramont, Pitou passed by Clouise Rock. A hundred paces from the hut he met Father Clouis, who was on his way home with a hare in his gamebag; for it was Hare-day.

In two words Father Clouis announced to Pitou that Catherine had come to ask for her former dwelling-place, which the old man had hastily restored to her. The poor girl had wept plentifully on entering the little

room where she had become a mother, and where Isidore had conferred upon her such lively proofs of his affection.

All these sorrows were not without a certain charm. Whosoever has suffered a great affliction knows that the most cruel hours are those when the fountains of tears are dried, and the happiest hours are those when the tears flow freely.

When Pitou presented himself at the threshold of the hut, he found Catherine seated on her bed, her cheeks wet and her babe in her arms.

Seeing Pitou, Catherine set her babe on her knees, and offered both hands and her forehead to the young man. Pitou joyfully grasped her hands and kissed her forehead; and so for an instant Baby was enclosed by the arch above him, formed by the four clasped hands, and Pitou's lips resting upon the mother's fair forehead.

Then falling on his knees before Catherine, and kissing the infant's little hands, Pitou said: "Ah, Mademoiselle Catherine, be easy; for I 'm rich, and little Monsieur Isidore sha'n't want for anything."

Having fifteen louis, Pitou called himself rich. Herself good in heart and mind, Catherine appreciated all that was good in others.

"Thanks, Monsieur Pitou," she said. "I believe you, and it makes me very happy to believe you; for you are my only friend. If you abandon us, we shall be alone in the world; but you will never abandon us, will you?"

"Oh, Mademoiselle," said Pitou, sobbing, "don't say such things to me, or you 'll make me cry away all the tears in my body!"

"I was wrong to speak so," said she, "I was wrong! Please forgive me!"

"No, you were right, on the contrary! It 's I who am a fool, for crying in this way."

"Monsieur Pitou," said Catherine, "I need the air. Give me your arm, and we'll walk under the great trees. I think it 'll do me good."

"And me too, Mademoiselle," said Pitou, "for I feel quite stifled."

The baby did not need the air. He had drunk largely at the maternal fountain, and needed sleep. Catherine laid him on the bed, and gave her arm to Pitou.

Five minutes later they were walking beneath the noble trees of the forest, that magnificent temple reared by the hand of the Lord of Nature, — his divine and immortal daughter. As a certain American poet has said:

The groves were God's first temples.

In spite of himself this promenade, with Catherine leaning on his arm, recalled to Pitou the Whitsunday, some two years and a half earlier, when he conducted Catherine to the ballroom, and Viscount Isidore danced with her, to the lad's great distress.

What an accumulation of events during these thirty months! Without being so great a philosopher as Voltaire or Rousseau, Pitou could understand that Catherine and himself were but atoms involved in the general whirlpool; but, however small, these atoms have their joys and sorrows, just as much as the grand lords, princes, or even the kings and queens.

Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small.

Turned by the hands of Fatality, the millstones crush crowns and thrones into powder; and they had crushed into dust Catherine's happiness, quite as positively as if she had been seated on a throne and worn a crown on her head.

In a word, note the difference which the Revolution had made in Pitou's situation, — that Revolution to which he had contributed so ably, though without knowing what he did, and building better, or worse, than he knew.

Two and a half years before, Pitou was but a poor little peasant-boy, driven away from her home by Aunt Angelica, harbored by Billot, befriended by Catherine, sacrificed to Isidore.

To-day Pitou was a power. He wore a sabre at his side, and epaulets on his shoulders, and he was called *captain;* while Isidore was dead, and it was he, Pitou, who protected Catherine and her child.

In Pitou was a perfect illustration of Danton's response to some one who asked him: "What is your purpose in fostering the Revolution?"

"To put down those who are on top, and to raise those who are under foot!" was Danton's reply.

Although all these notions rattled through Pitou's brain, Pitou was too good and modest to take any advantage of them; but, on his knees, he begged Catherine to let him protect herself and her child.

On her side, Catherine — as is the case with all suffering hearts — found her appreciation heightened by sorrow, rather than by joy. In her days of happiness Pitou was only a good-natured boy, of very little importance, in her estimation. Now he had become in her eyes the unselfish creature he really was, — a man full of goodness, candor, and devotion.

Unhappy as she now was, and greatly in need of a friend, she saw in Pitou just the friend she needed. As Catherine therefore always welcomed him with outstretched hands and smiling lips, Pitou began to live a life of which he had no previous glimpse, even in his utmost dreams of paradise.

Meanwhile, though still mute in regard to his daughter, Billot pursued, even while busy with his harvest, his idea of being elected a Deputy to the Legislature. One man only might possibly prevail against Billot, if he cherished the same ambition; but Charny was enjoying unexpected felicity in the château at Boursonnes, where he was shut up with Andrée, and absorbed wholly in love and happiness. He was so oblivious to all the world, that he believed the world had forgotten him.

So the Count cared naught for politics; and as there was no special opposition to Billot's election in the district of Villers Cotterets, the farmer was elected Deputy by a big majority.

Once elected, Billot set about making as much money as possible. The year had been a good one. He settled with his tenants, reserving the part of their earnings which belonged to him. He set aside as much seed-grain as was necessary for planting, and as much hay, oats, and straw as was needful for his cattle. He put aside as much money as was required for the support of his laborers.

Then, one morning, he sent for Pitou. As we know, Pitou was in the habit of visiting Billot from time to time. Billot always received him with open hands, offering him breakfast, if it was the breakfast hour, asking him to dinner, if it was time for dinner, or giving him a glass of wine or cider, if it was the hour only for drinking a glass of wine or a mug of cider; but never before had Billot specially sent after Pitou, and it was not without trepidation that Pitou went to the farm.

Billot was always serious. Since his daughter left her home, nobody could say that he had ever seen a smile on the farmer's lips. Now Billot was more grave than usual.

According to his custom he offered Pitou his hand; but the hand which Pitou gave him he squeezed harder than usual, and retained in both his own.

Pitou looked at the farmer in astonishment, and the latter said: "Pitou, thou 'rt an honest man!"

"Gracious, Monsieur Billot," replied Pitou, "I hope so!"

"And I 'm *sure* of it!"

"You 're very kind to say so, Monsieur Billot!" said Pitou.

"I 've decided, as I 'm going away, that it 's thee who must be at the head of the farm."

"Me, Monsieur?" said our Pitou, greatly astonished. "Impossible!"

"Wherefore impossible?"

"Why, Monsieur Billot, because there are lots of little things where the eye of a woman is indispensable."

"I know that," said Billot. "Pick out a woman who will share the care with thee. I won't even ask her name. I need n't know it. When I 'm coming home to the farm, I 'll notify thee a week beforehand, in order that she may get herself out of the way, if the woman don't wish to see me, or I had better not see her."

"Well, Monsieur Billot?" said Pitou.

"Well," continued Billot, "all the grain necessary for sowing is in the loft. In the granaries are all the straw, hay, oats, and fodder necessary for the horses and cattle. In this drawer is the money needed for the wages and nourishment of the household."

As he spoke Billot pulled out a drawer full of money.

"Stop a minute, Monsieur Billot!" said Pitou. "How much is there in that drawer?"

"I don't know!" said Billot, closing the drawer again.

Then he locked it and gave Pitou the key, as he added: "When there is need of more, ask me for it."

Pitou understood how much confidence was implied in this response. He opened his arms to embrace Billot, but suddenly he thought how bold such an action must appear, in a lad like himself; and so he said: "Pardon, Monsieur Billot, I ask a thousand pardons!"

"Pardon for what, my friend?" asked Billot, touched by this humility. "Pardon for an honest man, because he reaches out his arms to embrace another honest man? Come, Pitou! Come, embrace me!"

Pitou threw himself into the farmer's arms.

Presently Pitou said: "But if by chance you happen to need me down there —?"

"Be easy, Pitou! I sha'n't forget thee!"

Presently Billot added: "It 's now two o'clock in the afternoon. At five I start for Paris. At six thou wilt be here with the woman selected to help thee."

"So?" said Pitou. "Then I 've no time to lose. Good-bye, dear Monsieur Billot!"

"Good-bye, Pitou!"

Pitou hurried away from the farm. Billot watched him till he was out of sight.

When the lad had disappeared the farmer said to himself: "Why could n't my girl Catherine fall in love with a brave fellow like him, instead of that snake-in-the-grass of a nobleman, who leaves her a widow without being married, a mother without being a wife?"

Needless to say that at five o'clock Billot took the stage at Villers Cotterets for Paris; and that at six Pitou, Catherine, and little Isidore came again to the farmhouse.

CHAPTER XXXI.

APPEARANCE OF THE NEW LEGISLATURE.

It was on October 1, 1791, that the new Assembly was to be inaugurated. Like the other Deputies, Billot was on hand towards the end of September.

The new Legislature was made up of seven hundred and forty-five members. Among them were four hundred attorneys and solicitors; seventy-two authors, journalists, poets; seventy Constitutionalist priests, — that is, priests who had taken the oath of allegiance to the Constitution. The two hundred and three other members were either landowners and farmers, like Billot, — who was both landlord and farmer, — or men engaged in some literary or mechanical pursuit.

The special characteristic prevalent among the new Deputies was their youthfulness. Most of them were not over twenty-six years. It seemed as if France had sent a new and unknown generation of men, to break violently with the past. Noisy, stormy, revolutionary, she wished to dethrone tradition.

The members generally had cultivated minds. As we have said, there were poets, lawyers, chemists. They were full of energy and grace, possessing extraordinary verve, and the courage of their convictions. They were debaters and fighters, but they were ignorant of state-affairs, inexperienced, and evidently brought with them that grand but terrible element which we call the *unknown*.

Now the unknown in politics always engenders anxiety. With the exception of Condorcet and Brissot, the same question might have been asked of almost any one of these men, — Who is he?

Where were the great lights or even the torches of the Constitutional Assembly? Where were the Mirabeaus, the Sieyès, the Duports, the Baillys, the Robespierres, the Barnaves, the Cazalès? All had vanished.

Here and there, as if astray among these ardent youngsters, were a few white heads. The others were representatives of a young and manly France, — a black-haired France. Fine heads these, to cut off in a revolution, — and nearly all of them were put to that use.

Within the kingdom there was the scent of civil war. Outside were rumors of foreign wars. These young men were not therefore Deputies simply; they were warriors. The advance guard came from the Gironde, a department which, in case of war, had offered to send to the frontier all its men between the ages of twenty and fifty.

This vanguard included men like Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Fonfrède, Ducos, — the clique soon called the Girondists, giving their name to a famous party which, in spite of its faults, has always received the sympathy of the world by reason of its misfortunes.

Born in the breath of war, the members leaped with a single bound into the bloody arena of political life, like athletes thirsting for contest.

Simply by seeing these Deputies rush tumultuously to their seats in the hall, one could catch anticipatory glimpses of the tempest which was to break forth in the storms of June 20, August 10, and January 21.

No longer were part of the benches known as the Right. In other words, there were no more Aristocrats, and the Right was therefore suppressed.

Nearly the whole Assembly came to Paris armed against two enemies, — the nobility and the priesthood. If these enemies resisted, the Deputies were under orders, from their constituents, to trample down this resistance.

As to the King, it was left to the consciences of the Deputies to dispose of him as they judged best. He was pitied; and it was hoped that he would escape from the triple power of the Queen, the Aristocracy, and the Clergy. If he sustained them, he must be crushed with them.

Poor King! He was no longer to be called King, Louis Sixteenth, or even his Majesty, but simply the Executive Power.

The first movement of these Deputies was to look about them, as they entered a hall with whose arrangements they were wholly unfamiliar.

On each side was a reserved gallery.

"For whom are those reserved places?" asked several voices.

"For the outgoing Deputies," responded the architect; for the place had been reconstructed.

"Oh ho!" growled Vergniaud, "what does that mean, — a censorial committee? Is this the Legislative Hall of the representatives of the Nation, or is it a schoolroom?"

"Hold on!" said Hérault, of Séchelles, "let us see how our masters behave!"

"Usher!" cried Thuriot, "you will tell people, as they come in, that there is in this Assembly a man who had the Governor of the Bastille thrown from the summit of his own walls, and that the name of this man is Thuriot." Eighteen months later this man called himself *Tue-roi* (the King-killer, — or literally, *kill-king*).

The first act of the new Assembly was to send a deputation to the Tuileries.

The King was so imprudent as to meet the deputation by one of his ministers, as proxy, who said: "Gentlemen, the King cannot receive you at this time. Return at three o'clock."

The delegates returned to the Assembly.

"Well?" said the other members, as they saw the deputation re-enter.

"Citizens," said one of them, "the King is not quite ready, and we have three hours before us."

"Good!" cried Couthon the cripple, speaking from his chair. "Let us utilize these three hours. I propose that the title of Majesty be suppressed!"

The response was a general hurrah. The title of Majesty was suppressed by acclamation, without a demand for a more explicit vote.

"What shall the Executive Power be called?" asked another voice.

"Let him be called the King of the French!" responded another voice. "With such a fine title as that, Monsieur Capet ought to be contented."

All eyes were turned upon the man who ventured to call the King of France Monsieur Capet. It was Billot.

"Let it be King of the French!" was the nearly unanimous cry.

"Look here!" said Couthon, "there are two hours left. I have another proposition to make."

"Go on!" shouted everybody.

"I move that when the King comes in we rise, but that when he is seated, we sit down again, and put on our hats."

For a few minutes there was a fearful tumult. The

shouts of agreement were so boisterous as to be mistaken for cries of opposition.

At last, when the noise was stilled, it was found that everybody was agreed. The proposition was adopted.

Couthon looked at the clock. "We have yet an hour to wait," he said, "and I 've a third proposal to make."

"Hear! Hear!" cried everybody.

"I propose," added Couthon, with that soft voice of his, which upon occasion could vibrate so terribly, "I propose that there shall be no throne for the King, but simply an armchair."

The speaker was interrupted by loud applause.

"Hold on!" said Couthon, raising his hand. "I 've not yet finished."

Silence was at once restored.

"I move that the King's armchair be placed at the President's left hand."

"Take care!" called a voice. "That will not only abolish the throne, but subordinate the King!"

"Very well!" said Couthon. "I move, not only to suppress the throne, but to put down the King."

There was a frightful outcry. In that awful hand-clapping was the terrible spirit of June 20 and August 10.

"Very well, citizens," said Couthon, "the three hours have slipped away. I thank the King of the French for not being on hand. We have not wasted our time in waiting."

The deputation again went to the Tuileries. This time the King received them; but the inimical step had already been taken.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I cannot go to the Assembly for three days."

The delegates looked at each other, and then said: "Then, Sire, that will be on the fourth?"

"Yes, gentlemen, on the fourth!" said the King, turning his back upon them.

On October 4 the King said he was not well, and could not come till the seventh.

The absence of the King on the fourth did not prevent the Constitution of 1791 — that important work of the old Assembly — from entering the new Assembly.

It was escorted by a guard of a dozen of the oldest members of the defunct Constitutional Assembly.

It was borne by Camus, the Recorder. He ascended the platform, and exhibited the document to the public.

"Citizens," said he, like another Moses, "here are the tables of the law!"

Then began the ceremony of taking the oath.

All the Deputies filed past the precious document, but they were glum and cold. Many foresaw that this powerless Constitution would not last a year. They swore for the sake of swearing, because it was a ceremony imposed upon them, — the thing to be done.

Three-quarters of those who took the oath did not mean to keep it.

The report of the first day's three votes spread rapidly throughout Paris: No more talk about Majesty! No more thrones! A simple armchair at the President's left-hand.

This was as much as to say: "No more kings!"

As usual, finances first took the alarm. The public bonds fell terribly in value. Bankers began to tremble.

On October 9 a great change was made.

By the terms of this new law there was no longer a commander of the National Guard. On the ninth Lafayette was to resign his post, and each of the six chiefs of the six legions was to take his turn in being general commander.

The day fixed for the royal visit at last arrived. Everybody had forgotten that it was to be on the seventh.

The King entered. In opposition to what had been planned, so great an honor was a royal visit still esteemed, that the Deputies not only rose and took off their hats, but saluted his Majesty with loud acclaims. The Assembly even shouted: "Long live the King!"

In an instant, as if the Royalists present wished to throw their defiance in the face of the new Deputies, some people in the galleries shouted: "Long live his Majesty!"

A long murmur ran through the benches occupied by the members. They raised their eyes to the galleries, and saw that these cries came chiefly from the seats set apart for the members of the late Constitutional Assembly.

"All right, gentlemen," said Couthon, "to-morrow we 'll attend to your case!"

The King made a sign that he wished to speak. Everybody listened. The discourse which he pronounced, composed by Duport Dutertre, was one of the highest ability, and produced a grand effect. It related entirely to the necessity of maintaining order, and of rallying to the support of a beloved country.

Pastoret presided at the Assembly. Pastoret was a Royalist.

In his speech the King had said that he wished to be loved.

"We also, Sire," said the President, "wish to be loved, and by yourself!"

At these words general applause broke forth.

The King, by his discourse, took it for granted that the Revolution was finished. At that time the Assembly

apparently believed as he did. But if the Revolution is to be finished, Sire, it will not do for you to be longer the voluntary King of the priests, or the involuntary King of fugitive noblemen!

The impression produced upon the Assembly spread rapidly through Paris.

That night the King went to the theatre with his children. He was received with thunders of applause.

Many wept; and even the King shed tears, he was so easily moved by his sensibilities.

During that night the King wrote to all the European powers to announce his acceptance of the Constitution of 1791. It will be remembered that once, in a moment of enthusiasm, he swore to support that Constitution, even before it was completed.

The next day Couthon remembered what he had promised the old Constitutional Assembly members the day before. He announced that he had a motion to make.

Everybody knew what Couthon's motions were, and everybody was silent.

"Citizens," said Couthon, "I move that every trace of privilege be effaced from this Assembly, and that consequently all the galleries be henceforth open to the public."

This motion was unanimously passed.

The next day the populace invaded the seats hitherto belonging to the outgoing Deputies; and in the face of this invasion, the ghost of the Constitutional Assembly vanished forever.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FRANCE AND FOREIGN PARTS.

As we have said before, the new Assembly was specially instructed to work against the priesthood and the nobility.

It was a genuine crusade; only the motto on the banners was not *God so Decrees!* but *The People so Decree!*

On October 9, the day of Lafayette's dismission, a report on the religious troubles in the Vendée was read by Gallois and Gensonné. It was wise and moderate, and thus made a deep impression.

Who had inspired such a document, — if, indeed, he were not its sole author? A keen and skilful politician, who will shortly enter the scenes depicted in our pages.

The Assembly was tolerant. One of the members, Fauchet, asked only that the State should cease to pay those priests who declared their unwillingness to obey the voice of the Nation, though pensions might be given to old and infirm priests, even if they continued to be refractory.

Ducos went farther. He demanded toleration. He insisted that the priests should be granted entire liberty, either to take or not to take the oath.

Farther still went the kind Constitutionalist Bishop Torne. He declared that even rebellious refusal, on the part of these priests, was a proof of their truth and honesty.

We shall presently see how the fanatics at Avignon responded to this forbearance.

Before the discussion about the Constitutionalist priests was fairly over, the question of the refugees was taken up in the Assembly. This was to transfer the debate from civil war to foreign, and so touch both of France's bleeding wounds.

Fauchet had treated the clerical question. Brissot took up the emigrant question.

Brissot took a stand both humane and elevated. He took up the question where Mirabeau had let it fall from his dying hands a year before.

He asked that a difference should be recognized between those who fled their country from fear, and those who went away in hate. For the former he asked indulgence; for the latter, severity.

In his opinion, it was not right to force citizens to remain within the kingdom. On the contrary, he thought it better to leave every door open.

He did not wish the confiscation of the estates, even of those who had emigrated through enmity to progressive principles. He only demanded that no funds should be paid over to those who were in arms against France.

Indeed it was a marvellous fact, that France continued to pay foreigners for their support of Condé, of Lambesq, of Charles de Lorraine, and their followers. In due time we shall see how the fugitives deserved this gentleness.

As Fauchet finished his speech, important news came from Avignon. As Brissot ended his speech, equally important intelligence came from other parts of Europe.

Then a bright light shone like an immense conflagration, from the land of the setting sun. This was the news from the West Indies, where France still held fast to certain islands.

Let us begin with the disturbances at Avignon. Let us narrate briefly the history of this second Rome.

Benedict the Eleventh died in a most scandalous fashion, in 1304. It was said that he was poisoned by eating some figs.

The King of France was Philip the Fourth, — Philip le Bel (the Fair), as he is always called.

Not many years before, when Boniface the Eighth was Pope, Philip the Fair had violently insulted him, through the hands of Prince Colonna, who was the ally of France; and in return Boniface placed Philip under the ban of the Papal See.

Now that a new pope was to be chosen, Philip the Fair kept his eyes keenly fixed on Perugia, where the electoral conclave was to be held.

For a long time Philip had cherished the idea of drawing the papal seat away from Rome, and establishing it in France. When once he had it in his own jail, so to speak, he could make the papacy work for his own profit. In the words of our great master, Michelet, the Pope might write lucrative ecclesiastical bulls for Philip, while displaying his own infallibility, and thus establish the Holy Ghost as the scribe and preceptor of the House of France, — that eldest daughter of the Church.

One day there came to Philip a messenger covered with dust, and so dead with fatigue that he could scarcely speak.

He brought this news. In the electoral conclave the French and Anti-French parties were so equally balanced that no pope could possibly be elected by the usual ballot; so there was talk about convening a new conclave, in some other city.

This idea did not suit the Perugians, who wanted to

have a pope elected in their own city. They therefore resorted to an ingenious artifice. They placed a guard around the conclave, so that nobody could carry food or drink to the cardinals composing it, who were, as usual, in secret session. The cardinals uttered loud protests.

"Name your pope," cried the Perugians, "and you shall have plenty to eat and drink."

The cardinals held out twenty-four hours. At the end of twenty-four hours they had come to a decision.

They decided that the Anti-French party should choose three cardinals; and that out of the three the French party should choose one, who should be made pope.

Naturally enough, the Anti-French party nominated three enemies of Philip the Fair. One of these three enemies of Philip was Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux; who was, however, known to be far less the enemy of France than he was the friend to his own personal interests.

A messenger was at once sent to Philip with the news. It was the messenger who covered the ground in four days and nights, and arrived half dead with fatigue. There was no time to be lost. Bertrand de Got must be secured to Philip's interests. Philip accordingly sent to Bertrand de Got an express messenger — completely ignorant of the aim of the high mission with which he was charged — to ask the Archbishop to meet the King in the forest of Andelys.

The place of the meeting was at the crossing of three roads, and the night was dark enough for an incantation. It was under such conditions that those who seek superhuman favors of the Devil are obliged to swear allegiance as his liegeman, and kiss his cloven foot.

To quiet the Archbishop's suspicions, the interview began with a celebration of Mass. On the altar, at the

moment of the elevation of the Sacred Host, — which announces the miracle of transubstantiation, and gives life to the service, — both King and Prelate swore themselves to secrecy. Then the candles were extinguished. Those who had celebrated the Mass withdrew, — followed by the altar-boys, carrying the crucifix and the sacred vases, — as if they feared it would be a profanation for them to be even mute witnesses of the scene about to take place.

The King and Archbishop remained alone.

Who told Villani the incidents we are about to describe, and which we gather from him? Satan, perhaps, who must have been a third party in that interview.

"Archbishop," said Philip le Bel to Bertrand de Got, "I can make thee pope, if I choose. That 's why I 've sought this meeting."

"The proof?" asked Bertrand.

"The proof is here!" and Philip showed a letter from the cardinals of his own party; wherein, instead of announcing their choice of a pope, they asked whom Philip wished them to vote for, out of the three candidates nominated.

"What must I do to be pope?" asked the Gascon, overcome with joy, and throwing himself at Philip's feet.

"Agree to grant me the six favors I ask."

"Speak, my sovereign! I am your subject, and it 's my duty to obey."

The King raised him, kissed him on his lips and said: "The six special favors which I ask of thee are as follows."

Bertrand listened with all his ears; for he feared, not so much lest the King should ask favors which would compromise the Archbishop's spiritual salvation, as those which were beyond his power to grant.

"The first favor," quoth Philip, "is that I shall be reconciled with Holy Church, and that my offence against Boniface Eighth, at Anagni, may be pardoned."

"Granted," was Bertrand's hasty response.

"Secondly, the holy sacrament of communion shall be administered to me and mine."

This was a great favor, for it will be remembered that Philip the Fair was under the ban of excommunication.

"Granted!" said Bertrand, astonished that such small rewards should be asked in return for a boon so great as the papal tiara. However, there were four other favors to come!

"Thirdly, the tithes of the clergy in my kingdom must be given to the Crown for the next five years, to help defray the cost of war with Flanders."

"Granted!"

"The fourth favor is that the bull issued by Boniface, and called *Ausculta fili*, shall be annulled and destroyed."

"Agreed! Agreed!"

"Fifthly, that Marco Jacopo, Messire Pietro de Colonna, and other friends of mine, shall be raised to the rank of cardinal."

"Granted! Granted! Granted!"

Then Philip paused.

"And the sixth favor, Monseigneur?" anxiously asked the Archbishop.

"The sixth," replied Philip, "I reserve for another time and place, for it is something very important and secret."

"Important and secret?" repeated Bertrand.

"So important and secret, that I wish to swear thee to it beforehand on the cross!" and drawing a crucifix from his pocket he presented it to the Archbishop.

The latter hesitated an instant. This was the last ditch to be crossed. Once over it, he would be supreme pontiff!

Presently he took the image of the Saviour in his hand, and said, in a firm voice: "I swear!"

"Very well!" said the King. "In which city of my kingdom wilt thou be crowned?"

"In Lyons!"

"Come with me! Thou art Pope, under the name of Clement the Fifth."

Clement the Fifth followed Philip the Fair, but he was uneasy about the sixth claim which his suzerain held in reserve.

On the day when this sixth demand was presented he found it to be a comparatively small matter, and made no difficulty about granting it. This favor was the destruction of the Order of Knights Templar.

The King had sworn to make Bertrand supreme pontiff; and to ensure the latter's faithfulness he had to leave a brother and two nephews in Philip's care, as hostages.

Probably all this was not quite after God's own heart, for the divine displeasure was manifested in a most decided way.

As the procession left the church after Clement Fifth's coronation, and was passing a wall loaded with spectators, the wall gave way, wounded the King, killed Brittany's Duke, and knocked down the Pope. His triple crown fell off, and this symbol of the papacy was rolled in the dirt.

A week later, in a banquet given by the new pontiff, the servants of his Holiness got into a quarrel with the attendants of some of the cardinals. The Pope's brother tried to separate them, and was killed.

These were bad omens; and to these omens was added a bad example.

The Pope fleeced the Church, but a woman fleeced the Pope. This woman was the beautiful Brunissande, who cost Christendom more than the Holy Land, — if we may trust the Chroniclers of that era.

Meanwhile the Pope kept his promises, one by one. The Pope whom Philip had created was a pontiff after Philip's own heart. For the King, he was a sort of hen laying golden eggs, whom his Majesty forced to lay both night and morning, threatening to cut her open if she did not attend strictly to business.

Every day, like Shylock in "The Merchant of Venice," he levied a pound of flesh from his debtor, according to the bond.

Boniface Eighth was declared to have been a heretic and a false pope. King Philip was relieved from his excommunication. The clerical tithes were remitted to the Crown for five years. Twelve cardinals were appointed, all devoted to Philip the Fair. The bull was revoked which Boniface Eighth had fulminated, and which alienated from Philip the ecclesiastical funds. The Order of Knights Templar was abolished, and the Templars put "in durance vile."

After all these things had been done according to agreement, it came to pass that on May Day, 1308, the Emperor of Germany, Albert of Austria, died. Then Philip conceived the idea of having his own brother, Charles of Valois, elected Emperor. It was the business of Clement Fifth to work for the accomplishment of this result.

The bondage of the pontifical hireling still continued. Bertrand's poor soul, saddled and bridled, was being ridden to Hell by the King of France.

He at last found spirit enough to throw his awful rider. Ostensibly Clement wrote in favor of Charles of Valois, for the imperial crown; but secretly he acted against him.

Thereafter he began to see the necessity of getting outside of France. The Pope's life was no longer secure in Philip's territory, especially as the accession of a dozen of Philip's friends to the College of Cardinals placed future papal elections wholly in Philip's hands.

The Fifth Clement remembered the figs which the Eleventh Benedict had eaten.

Clement was at Poitiers. He managed to escape in the night, and go to Avignon.

To explain the status of Avignon is no easy task. It was France, and yet it was not France. It was in France, yet not of it. It was a frontier, a neutral realm, an asylum, a city of refuge. It was an old principality, a republic, like San Marino; only it was ruled by two sovereigns: by the King of Naples, through his rights as Count of Provence; by the King of France, through his rights as Count of Toulouse.

Each of these two rulers held the lordship over one half of Avignon. Neither could arrest a fugitive on the soil governed by the other.

Clement Fifth naturally sought refuge in that part belonging to the King of Naples.

In escaping, however, from the power of Philip the Fair, he did not escape from the curse of the Grand Master of the Templars.

When Jacques de Molay ascended the pyre built for him in Paris, — in the Isle of the Cité in the River Seine, which is still the centre of the capital, — that noble man challenged his two executioners, Philip the Fair and Bertrand the Bold, to meet him at the divine

Judgment Seat within the year. Aristophanes declares that dying men have the spirit of prophecy.

Clement was the first to obey this funereal summons. One night he had a vision of his palace in flames. Thereafter, says his biographer, "he was no longer gay, and did not last very long."

Seven months later it was Philip's turn. How did he die?

There are two versions of the story of his death. Both make it seem like the work of God's avenging hand.

The Chronicle, translated by Sauvage, relates that he died in the chase.

He saw a deer coming towards him, drew his sword, and pricked up his horse with his spurs; but instead of striking the deer, as he meant to do, he was carried by his steed straight against a tree, and with such violence that the good King fell to the earth, fatally wounded in the heart, and was taken at once to Corbeil.

At Corbeil, according to the Chronicles, his malady grew worse till he died. One might say that the malady could not well be graver.

On the other hand Guillaume of Nangis thus describes the death of the conqueror of Mons en Puelle.

Philip, King of France, was long afflicted with a malady, whose cause, unknown to his physicians, was a matter of surprise and wonderment both to them and to many others; though neither his pulse nor his urine indicated him to be in danger of death.

By his own desire he was at last transported to Fontainebleau, his birthplace. There, after receiving the sacrament with admirable fervor and devotion, in the presence and sight of a great number of his people, he happily surrendered his soul to his Creator, in the confession of the true and Catholic faith, in the thirtieth year of his reign, on Friday, on the eve of the Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle.

It was not till Dante's time that a fit death was found for such a despicable man. According to that poet, Philip was gored to death by a wild boar.

He died by a boar's tusk, the robber whom we saw debasing the people's money on the banks of the Seine.

The popes who lived at Avignon after Clement Fifth, — John the Twenty-second, Benedict the Twelfth, Clement the Sixth, — waited for a chance to purchase Avignon. Such an occasion at last presented itself.

A young girl still in her minority, Jeanne of Naples, did not exactly sell Avignon to the papacy, but she gave it up, in return for the papal absolution granted to her lovers for an assassination they had committed in her behalf.

When she reached her years of majority she undertook to reclaim the territory; but Clement the Sixth held it, and held it successfully, — so successfully that when Gregory the Eleventh, in 1377, restored the seat of the papacy to Rome, Avignon was still governed by a papal legate, and remained a vassal to the Holy See.

This was the condition of things in 1791, when the events happened which are the cause of this long digression.

As in the times when Avignon was divided between the King of France, as Count of Toulouse, and the King of Naples, as Count of Provence, so in 1791 there were two Avignons in Avignon, — the Avignon of the priests, and the Avignon of the commonalty.

In the priestly Avignon there were a hundred churches, two hundred cloisters, and a papal palace. Its many bells were ready to sound an alarm or to ring for worship.

In the commercial Avignon there was a river, the Rhone, and there were silk-factories. There were two

main roads which crossed each other, one running from west to east, from Nismes to Turin, the other running from north to south, from Lyons to Marseilles.

In this unfortunate town it might be said there were two sorts of French people, — the King's French and the Pope's French.

The Frenchmen of France were French indeed and in truth. The Frenchmen of Italy were almost Italians.

The French Frenchmen — that is, the traders and artisans — had to give themselves entirely to business, and work hard for the sustenance of themselves and their families; and then they hardly succeeded in their efforts.

The Italian French — that is, the ecclesiastics — had all the riches and power. They were the priests, the bishops, the archbishops, and absentee cardinals, off duty, — idle, elegant, bold, immoral ladies' men. They were masters among the women of the people, who knelt before them to kiss their white hands as they passed along the streets, and whom they misled practically and doctrinally. Among the higher classes they were gallants among the titled dames and autocrats of the salon.

Do you wish for a type of this class of priests?

Take the handsome Abbé Maury. He was a Franco-Italian of that sort, if one ever lived. He was the son of a shoemaker, but he was as aristocratic as Duke Lauzun, as haughty as Clermont Tonnerre, as saucy as any lackey.

Commonly, in all regions, children love those who live about them. This they do naturally before they become adults, and develop strong masculine and feminine passions. At Avignon, on the contrary, children were born with hatred in their souls.

On September 14, 1791, — while the Constitutional Assembly was still in session, — a royal decree was issued

which united (or reunited, rather) Avignon and the whole County of Venaisin to the Kingdom of France.

During the year previous Avignon had been sometimes in the hands of the French party, and sometimes in the hands of the Anti-French party.

The storm burst forth in 1790. One night the Papists — the Italian French — amused themselves by hanging an effigy decorated with the Revolutionary tricolor, — the red, white, and blue.

By the art of man the Rhone had been deflected from its ancient course, for purposes of traffic and manufacture. The Durance had also been made navigable. Barriers had been constructed to restrain the swift destructive streams which were liable to rush from the heights of Ventoux, in the thawing days of spring. But when once the living human torrent in Avignon broke through its bounds, who could check its headlong and turbulent course?

All Avignon was in commotion over the sight which that morning brought to their eyes, — an image wearing the National colors, yet dangling like a criminal at the rope's end. Out of the Patriotic homes of Avignon came the people, clamorous with rage.

Four Papists, suspected of this indignity, were dragged from their houses, — two noblemen, one tradesman, and one mechanic, — and all four were hanged in place of the manikin. This was on June 11, 1790, just before the great Federation at Paris.

The French party had for its leaders two young men, Duprat and Mainvielle, and an older man, named Lescuyer.

Lescuyer was a Frenchman, in the fullest sense of the term. He was from Picardy, and possessed the opposite characteristics of impulsiveness and deep reflection. At

Avignon he was established as a notary, and served as the secretary to the municipality.

These three chiefs raised some troops, two or three thousand perhaps, and with them made an expedition against Carpentras, — an expedition which did not well succeed.

A shower of ice-cold rain, mingled with hail, — such as sometimes falls from Mount Ventoux, — dispersed the forces of Mainvielle, Duprat, and Lescuyer, as the northern tempest dispersed the famous Invincible Armada, which Philip the Second sent against England in the days of Good Queen Bess.

What caused this miraculous shower, powerful enough to scatter the Revolutionary army? The Madonna!

Remember, dear reader, that Avignon was like Italy, where miracles were the daily bread of life. As Italy was both poetic and chivalrous, everything must have some reference to the Madonna. If there were no real miracles, some must be invented; for the mind, the heart, the tongue of Italy were filled with these two words, *Miracle* and *Madonna*. However, Duprat, Mainvielle, and Lescuyer, so strongly suspected a Catelan, one Chevalier Patus, of having efficaciously seconded the Madonna in her miracle, that they credited him with all the honor thereof.

At Avignon justice was sometimes wreaked upon treason. They often killed traitors. Patus was killed!

Now who made up the army representing the French party? Peasants, porters, deserters.

They searched for a man to command these common men. Such a man they thought they found in Matthew Jouve, who preferred to be called Jourdan. He was born at Saint Just, near the town of Puy in Velay. He was first a muleteer among the steep hills near his native

town. Next he was a soldier, but without any experience of war, which might have humanized him. Then he kept a wineshop in Paris. At Avignon he traded in madder, so much used by the clothmakers and dyers.

He was a braggart of murders, a boaster of crimes. He displayed a big sabre, wherewith he said he had cut off the head of the Governor of the Bastille the year before, and also of the two royal bodyguards at Versailles on the Sixth of October.

Half in jest, half in fear, the people added the name of Headsman to the surname of Jourdan which he claimed.

Duprat, Mainvielle, Lescuyer, and their General Jourdan Headsman remained so long in control of the city that people began to be less afraid of them.

A widespread conspiracy was formed against them, a conspiracy crafty and mysterious, as are all priestly conspiracies. Religious fanaticism was roused against the Revolutionists.

The wife of a French Patriot gave birth to an armless babe. A rumor was circulated that the father had once broken off the arms of a silver angel which he was confiscating by night from a church. This imperfect child was therefore a token of the just vengeance of offended Heaven.

The father was obliged to hide, or they would have cut him in pieces, without even asking when and from what church, if any, the angel had been stolen.

Everywhere the Madonna seemed to protect Royalists, whether they were called Papists in Avignon, or called themselves Chouans (brown owls) in the distant province of Brittany.

In 1789 the Madonna in a church on the Rue Bac began to weep.

In 1790 she appeared behind an old oak-tree, in the Bocage (thicket) of the department of Vendée.

In 1791 she dispersed the troops of Duprat and Mainvielle, by driving sleet into their faces.

Lastly, in the church belonging to the Cordelier Monks at Avignon, she was seen to blush, doubtless with shame over the religious indifference of the inhabitants of the city.

This last miracle, attested by all the women, — the men had no great faith in it, — had already lifted the public mind to a great height, when a far different rumor spread throughout Avignon.

A great chest of valuables had been carried outside the town. This roused public curiosity. By the next day there was no longer one chest; there were six. By the second day it was said that eighteen full chests had been carried away.

What treasure did these eighteen coffers contain? Property belonging to Mont de Piété (Mount of Piety, or Pity), the government pawnshop. A porter let out the secret that the French party meant to evacuate Avignon, and wished to take these valuable pledges with them.

At this news a storm of wind passed through the city. This wind was the famous Avignon cry of *zou-zou*, heard in every popular outbreak, — a cry which was like a cross between a tiger's roar and a snake's hiss.

Everybody was so poor in Avignon (outside the ecclesiastical party) that nearly every family had some article in pledge at the great pawnshop; and robbery of its stores meant the robbery of the poor, of the fatherless and the widow. However small the forfeiture, everybody felt himself ruined. The rich are ruined by the loss of a million francs, the poor by the loss of a rag. All is relative.

This outbreak was on October 16, 1791. As it was Sunday morning, all the peasants of the neighborhood had come to Mass in the city. At that period everybody went armed; consequently all were ready for a fight. The moment was well chosen.

The game, moreover, was cleverly played. It appeared to be no longer a question between the French and Anti-French parties, but public sentiment was roused against robbers, — robbers guilty of the infamous crime of stealing from the poor.

The rabble rushed into the Cordelier church. Peasants and porters, white, red, and tricolored in politics, shouted for the municipal officers to at once publish their brokerage accounts, through their secretary Lescuyer.

Why did the popular wrath vent itself on Lescuyer? Nobody knows. When a life is to be violently sacrificed, there is always some fatal haphazard in the selection.

Suddenly Lescuyer was brought into the middle of the church. He was seeking a shelter in the townhouse when he was recognized and arrested, — no, not arrested, but driven into the church by kicks and cuffs and blows. Once inside the church, the unfortunate man, pale but nevertheless cool and calm, mounted a pulpit, and undertook to justify himself.

One would suppose it easy to do so by saying: "Open the storehouse, and let the people see for themselves that all the articles which we are accused of stealing are still there in safety."

Instead of this he began as follows: "My brethren, I believe the Revolution necessary, and have therefore aided it with all my might — "

They let him go no farther, for his enemies feared he would justify himself. He was interrupted by the terrible *zou-zou*, harsh as the awful storm known as

the *mistral*, the northwest wind of the Mediterranean Sea.

A porter sprang up behind him into the pulpit, and threw Lescuyer down into the crowd. From that moment the tallyho of death was sounded.

They dragged him towards the altar. It was there the Revolutionist was to be butchered, for such a sacrifice must be acceptable to the Madonna, in whose name all this was going on. In the chancel, still alive, he escaped from the hands of his assassins, and took refuge in one of the canonical stalls behind a desk.

Some charitable hand passed him something to write with, as if he could write what he had not time to speak.

Unexpected aid gave him a brief respite. A Breton gentleman, who was on a journey to Marseilles, accidentally entered the church, and was seized with pity for the poor victim. With the courage and foolhardiness of a Breton he tried to save him. Twice or thrice he thrust aside the knives and clubs raised to strike Lescuyer, and called out: "Gentlemen, in the name of the law! Gentlemen, in the name of honor! Gentlemen, in the name of humanity!"

Then the knives and clubs were turned upon the Breton himself; but in the very thick of the assault he shielded poor Lescuyer with his body and still shouted: "Gentlemen, in the name of humanity!"

At last the rabble, tired at being so long kept from their prey, seized upon the gentleman himself, and dragged him along, intending to hang him; but three men rescued the stranger and shouted: "Let us finish with Lescuyer first. We can find this other fellow any time."

The scoundrels acknowledged the justness of this

reasoning, and let the Breton alone. Then his rescuers forced him to save himself. His name was Monsieur de Rosély.

Lescuyer had no time to write. Even if he had time for it, his billet would not have been read. The tumult was too great.

In the midst of this tumult Lescuyer noticed a little door of egress behind the altar. If he could reach this door he might yet be saved. In a second, when they supposed him crushed by terror, he darted towards this door.

So surprising was this unexpected movement that he nearly reached the door; but there, at the very foot of the altar, a ribbon-maker struck him such a terrible blow with his club that the club was broken. Lescuyer fell stunned, like an ox beneath the sledge-hammer. He rolled just where they had wished him to be, — to the base of the altar.

Then, as if to punish the lips which had uttered blasphemous cheers for Liberty, the women cut and slashed those lips into strips; while the men, with that grim humor for which Southern France has sometimes been noteworthy, danced on his body, and crushed him with stones like Saint Stephen, singing the while with fiendish joy.

"Pardon, my brothers! Mercy, my sisters! In the name of humanity, in the name of the Virgin above, let me die!" This was the prayer which came from his lacerated lips.

This was asking too much; for the rabble meant that their victim should live in agony.

This went on till evening. For five hours the mangled victim lay there beneath the altar, suffering the agonies of death, while brutal jeers and laughter surged about him.

This is the news which reached the National Assembly in response to the philanthropic speech made by Fauchet.

It is true that very different intelligence came a day later.

Duprat and Jourdan were notified as to what was going on. Where could they find their scattered forces?

Duprat had an idea, — to sound the alarm on that famous silvern bell, which was rung only on two occasions, — the death or consecration of a pope.

It gave forth a strange and mysterious sound, rarely heard. This sound produced two entirely opposite effects. It chilled the hearts of the Papists. It gave courage to the Revolutionists.

At the sound of this bell, an unfamiliar tocsin, the country folks who were in the city rushed out of it, and fled to their several homes.

By this silvern alarm Jourdan was able to get together some three hundred soldiers. He took possession of the city gates, and left a hundred and fifty men to guard them.

With the other one hundred and fifty he marched upon the Cordelier church. He had two pieces of artillery. These he brought to bear upon the rabble, shooting and killing at random.

Then he entered the church. The church was deserted; but Lescuyer lay moaning at the feet of the Virgin, — the Madonna who had done so many miracles, and even blushed, but did not deign to stretch forth her divine arm to rescue this wretched man. It seemed as if he could not die. That bloody heap of flesh, one mass of wounds, still clung to life.

As they bore him through the streets, the people everywhere closed their windows as the escort passed

by; and they shouted: "I was n't there at the Cordelier church!"

Jourdan, with his one hundred and fifty men, could have crushed Avignon, and its thirty thousand inhabitants, so great was the general cowardice. They did, on a small scale, what Marat and Panis did at Paris, on a large scale, on September 2, 1792.

By-and-by it will be seen why we say Marat and Panis, instead of Marat and Danton.

Jourdan and his men drove seventy or eighty unfortunate victims into the pontifical dungeons in the Glacière Tower, — a name which indicates their dismal and icy comfort, — the Trouillas Tower, as it is called in those parts.

Such was the news which reached Paris, and caused Lescuyer's death to be forgotten in the darkness of such awful reprisals.

As to the emigrants, whom Brissot defended, and to whom he wished to throw open the doors of France, let us see what they busied themselves about in foreign parts.

They reconciled Prussia with Austria, and made friends of these natural-born enemies.

They persuaded Russia to forbid the French ambassador from showing himself in the streets of Saint Petersburg, and sent a minister to the refugees at Coblentz.

They compelled Berne to punish an old Swiss for singing the Revolutionary song, *Ça ira.*

They persuaded Geneva, the birthplace of Rousseau, — who had done so much for the Revolution which was still in the process of evolution in France, — to direct its cannon against that country.

They compelled the Bishop of Liége to refuse to receive the French ambassador.

All this was brought about by the Royalist refugees; but other things foreign governments did on their own account against the interests of France.

Russia and Sweden returned to Louis Sixteenth, with the seal unbroken, the despatch in which he announced his adhesion to the Constitution.

Spain also refused to receive it; and delivered into the hands of the Inquisition a Revolutionary Frenchman, who only by suicide evaded the torture known as the San Benito, whereby delinquents are arrayed in yellow gowns, decorated with black and grotesque figures, and then delivered to the arm of the civil power, for the punishment of the stake.

Venice threw into Saint Mark's Square the corpse of a man strangled in the night, by order of the Council of Ten. On the breast of the dead man was a scroll with this inscription:

Strangled as a Free Mason.

The Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia responded to the French King's missive, but they did so with a menace:

> We desire that this may be a warning as to the necessity of taking serious precautions against the renewal of a condition of things which makes such deplorable results possible.

In the Vendée, — that is, on the Atlantic coast of France, along the Adour River, — there was civil war. The Vendeans, wedded to the old régime, were in arms against the Revolutionary Government; and they were assisted by the Chouans, who were smugglers or Royalists, as best served their turn, and probably took their *owlish* name from the warning signal which was imitated

from that bird, and which they used to give notice when the enemy was nigh.

There was also a local civil war at Avignon.

As for foreign wars, they were on every side.

From the other side of the Atlantic came the cries of the entire population of an island, who were being slaughtered.

What was happening over there in the West? Who were these black slaves, weary of stripes, who were taking their turn at killing? They were Saint Domingo negroes, entering on a bloody revenge.

How did this state of things come about? In two words, — that is, in a less prolix fashion than we have been led into in reference to Avignon, for Avignon has decidedly carried us off our feet, — in two words, we will explain the situation.

The new Constitution promised freedom to the negroes.

Ogé, a young mulatto, — one of those brave hearts, as earnest and devoted as any I have ever heard of, — recrossed the seas, carrying with him the decree of emancipation as soon as it was voted.

Although the official sanction of these decrees had not yet been sent to the West Indies, in his haste for freedom Ogé clamored for the Governor to proclaim liberty to the oppressed.

The Governor ordered Ogé's arrest, and Ogé sought a refuge in the Spanish part of the island.

The Spanish authorities, — we know full well how Spain felt about the Revolution, — the Spanish authorities gave him up. Ogé was broken alive on the wheel.

This torture was followed by terror among the whites, who supposed he had many accomplices in the island. The planters made themselves the judges, and executions multiplied.

One night sixty thousand negroes rose in an insurrection. The whites were awakened by an immense conflagration, sweeping over their plantations. A week elapsed before the fire was quenched in blood.

What could France do, poor salamander, thus encircled with fire? We shall see!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WAR.

In his splendid and energetic speech about the refugees, Brissot clearly exposed the intentions of the European sovereigns, and the sort of death they kept in reserve for the French Revolution.

Would they attempt to fight it down? No, they would stifle it!

Then he pictured the European league. He depicted a circle of sovereigns, some of them sword in hand, frankly flinging to the breeze their banners of hate; the others covering their faces with mantles of hypocrisy, till they should feel strong enough to unmask.

After thus describing the situation Brissot said: "Well, so be it! Not only do we accept the challenge of monarchical Europe, but we anticipate it. We will not wait for the attack. We will make the attack!"

At this appeal an immense burst of applause greeted the orator.

Being a man of instinctive intuition, rather than a man of genius, Brissot had expressed a most fervent thought, and his words echoed the deep-seated idea of duty which had guided France in the elections of 1791, — war! — not a war of egotistical vanity, instigated by a despot, in revenge for some insult to his throne, his name, his allies, or waged for the purpose of adding another submissive province to his kingdom or empire; but a war which carries with it the breath of life, — a

war whose clarion-blasts everywhere seem to say: "Arise, ye who would be free! We bring you liberty!"

The world began to hear a great murmur, which rose and increased, like the roar of the sea.

This murmur was the undertone of thirty millions of minds, which had not yet spoken out plainly, but were already muttering deeply; and this growling Brissot voiced by his words: "We will not wait for the attack! We will make the attack!"

When these threatening words met with a universal national response, France was strong, — able not only to attack, but to conquer. There remained only questions of detail to be considered.

Our readers are already aware that this is a historic work which we are making, rather than a romance. We shall never probably recur again to this great epoch, to which are related two stories already published, "Blanche de Beaulieu" and "Chevalier de Maison-Rouge," — and one other story, written three years ago, but not yet published, which will most certainly appear, however, in due season.

We ought briefly to explain the occurrences embraced in that epoch. Nevertheless we must pass rapidly over minor questions, in order to promptly reach those events which remain to be described, with which the personages in our book are particularly concerned.

The recital of the events in the Vendée, of the massacre at Avignon, of the insults from various European countries, came like thunderbolts upon the Legislative Assembly.

On October 20 Brissot was contented to propose the imposition of a tax on the property of refugees. On the twenty-fifth Condorcet urged the confiscation of their goods, and also the exaction of the civil oath. Think of

asking such an oath from men living outside France, and in arms against her!

This brought forward two Deputies, one of whom became the Mirabeau of the new Assembly, and the other its Barnave. These two able men were Vergniaud and Isnard.

Vergniaud was one of those poetic characters, tender and sympathetic, which Revolutions always bring to the surface. A native of fertile Limoges, he was mild, moderate, and affectionate, rather than passionate. Well and happily born, he was singled out by Turgot, the Intendant of Limousin, and placed in important positions at Bordeaux. His utterances were less acrid, less powerful than Mirabeau's. Although inspired by Greek literature, and somewhat surcharged with mythology, he was less prolix and less partisan than Barnave.

What made his eloquence vivacious and influential was the humane tone which forever vibrated within it. At the Assembly, in the midst of his sublimest and most indignant appeals from the rostrum, his breast always sent forth the accents of nature and piety. The leader of an aggressive, noisy, disputatious party, he always rose calmly and majestically above the situation, even when that situation was critical or even fatal.

Vergniaud's enemies called him undecided, unstable, and generally indolent. They inquired the whereabouts of his soul, which seemed ever to be absent. They were right. His soul was never under his own control, unless he made an effort to bind it within his breast. His whole heart was with a woman, — straying over her lips, coming to the light through her eyes. Only in the harp of the beautiful, the good, the charming Candeille did his soul vibrate with life.

Isnard was the opposite of Vergniaud. If Vergniaud

was the Tranquillity of the Assembly, then Isnard was its Wrath.

Born at Grasse, in the country of perfumes and gales, he had the hasty and choleric temperament of that giant of the air, the *mistral*, which in the same breath uproots the rocks and pets the roses.

His voice, previously unknown, broke upon the Assembly like one of those unexpected thunderclaps which usher in the earliest storms of summer. At the first accent of his tongue, all the members of the Assembly were impressed. The most preoccupied among them trembled like Samuel, when he heard the voice of Jehovah, and was ready to say : " Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth ! "

Somebody presently interrupted him.

" I ask the Assembly, I ask France, I ask the world, — I ask *you*, Monsieur," — and he pointed to the member who had spoken, — " I ask if there is anybody, who, in good faith, in the secret recesses of his conscience, will maintain that the emigrant princes are not conspiring against their country. In the second place, I ask if there is any one in the Assembly who dares maintain that the man who conspires against his country ought not to be immediately indicted, arrested, and punished. If there is such an one, let him stand up ! "

After an impressive pause he resumed his speech.

" We are told that strength should be indulgent, that certain great national powers are disarming; but I say unto you, Watch ! Despotism and Monarchism are neither dead nor asleep. If the nations sleep an instant, they will awake in chains. The most unpardonable crimes are those which aim to restore men to bondage. If the lightnings of heaven were in the human grasp, they should strike those who molest popular liberty."

This was the first time such words had been uttered

within those walls. Isnard's savage eloquence carried everything before it, as the Alpine avalanche drags trees, herds, shepherds, and houses in its downward course.

Before the session ended, the following decree was voted:

That if Louis Stanislaus Xavier, a French Prince commonly called *Monsieur*, does not return within two months, he shall forfeit his claim to the Regency.

On November 8 another vote was passed:

Those refugees who do not return by January 1, 1792, will be declared guilty of conspiracy, and will be liable to arrest and punishment by death should they return thereafter.

On November 29 came the turn of the priesthood.

The civil oath must be taken before the expiration of eight days.

Those who refuse to take it will be regarded as ripe for revolt, and recommended to the watchguard of the authorities.

If they live in a community where there are religious disturbances, the Directory of the Department may cause their removal from their ordinary places of residence.

If they disobey, they shall be imprisoned for a year or more. If they incite others to disobedience, they shall be imprisoned for two years.

If it becomes necessary to maintain an armed force in any community, that community must defray the expenses thereof.

Churches must be used only for forms of worship supported by the state. Churches not needed for this purpose may be sold for other religious uses, but not to persons who refuse the oath of Constitutional allegiance.

The municipalities shall send to the departments, and the departments shall transmit to the Assembly, full lists both of those priests who do and those who do not take the oath, with notes as to any conspiracy which may exist between priests

and refugees, in order that the Assembly may be advised as to the best means of extirpating rebellion.

The Assembly looks with approval upon such writings as tend to enlighten the people as to questions ostensibly religious. Such works shall be printed, and their authors recompensed.

We have already shown what became of the Constitutionists, — or Constitutionalists, as they were formerly called, — the members of the defunct Constitutional Assembly. We have shown with what object the Feuillant Club was founded. The spirit of both these parties was wholly in accord with the disposition of the leaders of the Department of Paris. This was the spirit of Barnave, Lafayette, Lameth, Duport, and also of Bailly, who was still Mayor, though his term was nearly ended.

In the decrees against the priests, — decrees which they said were contrary to the public conscience, — and in the decrees against the refugees, — which they said were inimical to family bonds, — these conservative politicians saw a means of testing the King's authority.

A protest against these edicts was prepared by the Feuillants and signed by the Directory of Paris, in which Louis the Sixteenth was specially asked to veto the decree concerning the priesthood.

It will be remembered that the Constitution reserved to the King the right of veto.

Who signed this protest? The man who had been the first to attack the clergy, — that Mephistopheles whose clubfoot had broken the ice of opposition to the vested rights of the clergy, in whose ranks he belonged. This was Talleyrand, a man whose example makes it evident that the magnifying-glass of diplomacy does not see clearly in revolutionary times.

The rumor of this royal veto was spread abroad prematurely.

The Cordeliers pushed forward Camille Desmoulins, that free lance of the Revolution, who was ever ready to couch his spear against any fair game.

He also prepared a petition; but as he was liable to sputter when he tried to speak, he asked Fauchet to read it for him.

Fauchet read it; and it was applauded from end to end.

It would be difficult to treat the question with more irony, and at the same time more profoundly. He was Danton's friend, and the college comrade of Robespierre. This is what he said:

We do not complain, either of the Constitution for giving the King the power of the veto, or of the King for using that power. We recall the maxim of that great politician Machiavelli: "Even if the Prince ought to renounce his sovereignty, his subjects would be too cruel, too unjust, if they should blame him for persistently opposing the general will, inasmuch as it is contrary to nature that a man should voluntarily fall from a higher station to a lower."

Penetrated with this truth, taking the example of God himself, whose commandments are never impossible, we should not exact from the ex-sovereign an impossible love for the popular sovereignty of the Nation, and we should not take it ill of him if he affixes his veto to the best edicts of the Assembly.

As we have said, the Assembly applauded, adopted this declaration, decreed its insertion in the official report, and sent that report to the departments.

That night the Feuillants were in commotion. Many members of the club, though also members of the Assembly, had not been present at the session.

The next day those who had been absent the day before were in their places at the Assembly. They

numbered two hundred and sixty. Amid a storm of howls and hisses from the galleries, the edict of the day before was annulled.

This meant war between the Assembly and the Feuillants, and led the Assembly to lean more and more upon the New Jacobins, represented by Robespierre, and the Cordeliers, represented by Danton.

Danton constantly gained in popularity. His monstrous head began to show itself above the crowd. A giant Adamastor, he towered in the path of royalty to say: "Beware! The sea which thou art navigating is called the Sea of Tempests!"

Suddenly the Queen came to the aid of the Jacobins against the Feuillants.

The animosities of Marie Antoinette were, to the Revolution, what squalls and flurries are to the great Atlantic.

Marie Antoinette hated Lafayette, — Lafayette, who had saved the royal family at Versailles on October 5, 1789, and lost his popularity, for the sake of the Court, by firing upon the populace on July 17, 1791.

Lafayette wished to succeed Bailly as Mayor of Paris. Instead of helping Lafayette, the Queen advised the Royalists to vote in favor of Pétion, — strange blindness! — of Pétion, her brutal companion during the return from Varennes!

On December 19 the King presented himself at the Assembly, bringing his veto of the decree against the priesthood.

The evening before, there had been a serious demonstration at the Jacobin Club.

A Swiss named Virchaux, from Neuchâtel, — the same man who, at the Champ de Mars, wrote out the petition for a republic, — offered the society a Damascus sword,

destined for the first general who should win a victory over the enemies of liberty.

Isnard was there. He took the sword from the young Republican, drew the blade from its sheath, and sprang to the platform, crying out: "Behold the sword of the exterminating angel! It will be victorious! France will lift up her great voice and the nations will reply. The earth will be covered with warriors. Freedom's foes will be blotted from the list of mankind!"

The prophet Ezekiel could not have preached better.

The drawn sword was never replaced in its sheath. Twofold hostilities were declared, at home and abroad.

The Neuchâtel Republican's sword was first to smite the King of France, and then the kings of other lands.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MINISTER AFTER MADAME DE STAËL'S OWN HEART.

GILBERT had not seen the Queen since the day when she begged him to wait for her an instant in her room, and then left him, in order to listen to a political scheme, brought from Vienna by Monsieur de Breteuil, and couched in the following terms:

Treat Barnave like Mirabeau. Gain time, by swearing to support the Constitution, and by executing it to the letter, so as to show its impracticability. France will cool off and get weary. The French are feather-brained. They will take up with some new fad, and Liberty will go its way; or if Liberty is not forgotten, a year will be gained, and in a year we shall be ready for war.

Six months had rolled away since that date, and it was now in the winter of 1791–1792. Liberty had not been forgotten; and evidently foreign sovereigns were preparing to fulfil their promises and be ready for war.

One morning Gilbert was astonished to receive a visit from one of the royal chamberlains. At first Gilbert thought the King must be ill, and had sent for him professionally.

The chamberlain reassured the Doctor, and said he was simply wanted at the palace.

Gilbert insisted upon knowing who wanted him; but the chamberlain, doubtless acting under instructions,

would only repeat his formula, that Gilbert was "wanted at the palace."

Gilbert was warmly attached to the King; whereas he pitied Marie Antoinette more as a woman than as a queen. She inspired him with neither love nor devotion, but moved him to deep compassion.

Gilbert hastened to obey the summons, and was introduced into the basement story, where Barnave had formerly been received.

In an armchair a lady was waiting, who rose when she saw Gilbert.

He recognized Madame Elizabeth, for whom he had great respect, well knowing the angelic goodness of her heart.

Gilbert bowed, at once taking in the situation. Neither the King nor Queen wishing to send for him in their own names, they had evidently made a convenience of Madame Elizabeth.

So he imagined; but her first words suggested that he was wrong in his conjectures.

"Monsieur Gilbert," she said, "I know not if others have forgotten the marks of interest which you displayed towards my brother at the time of our return from Versailles, two years ago, and towards my sister, on our return from Varennes last summer; but I, for one, remember these services."

Gilbert bowed and said: "Madame, God has chosen, in his wisdom, to give you all the virtues, even those of memory and gratitude, — rare virtues in these days, especially with crowned heads."

"You surely do not say that of my brother, Monsieur Gilbert? My brother often talks of you, and greatly values your experience."

"As a physician?" asked Gilbert, smiling.

"As a physician, — yes, Monsieur! but he believes your experience may be useful for the King's health and the kingdom's at the same time."

"The King is very kind, Madame. For which patient am I now summoned?"

"It is not the King who has summoned you, but myself," said she, blushing a trifle; for her pure spirit could not tell an utter falsehood.

"You, Madame? Oh, your health need not trouble you in the least. Your pallor arises from fatigue and anxiety, not from disease."

"You are right, Monsieur, and it is n't for myself I tremble, but for my brother. He worries me very much indeed, Monsieur."

"And myself also!" responded Gilbert.

"But our anxiety does not probably come from the same source. I must tell you that what disturbs me is the King's health."

"The King is ill?"

"No, not exactly! but he is depressed, discouraged. Listen! It is now ten days, — you see I count by days, — it is now ten days since he has spoken a single word, except with me. Even in his customary game of backgammon he only speaks such words as are indispensable to the game."

"It is now eleven days," said Gilbert, "since he went to the Assembly with his veto. Why did he not become speechless on the morning of that day, instead of losing his tongue the day after?"

"Did you then suppose," said Elizabeth, with alacrity, "that my brother could sanction such an impious decree?"

"My opinion is, that to put the King in the same boat with the priesthood, in the face of the rising sea and the

coming storm, is to compel King and priesthood to be overwhelmed in the same deluge."

"But in the place of my poor brother, what would you do?"

"Madame, there is now one political party which is growing as rapidly as that gigantic afrite of which we read in the Arabian Nights story. He was at first enclosed in a small casket; but in the hour after the casket was opened he expanded a hundred-fold."

"You speak of the Jacobins, Monsieur?"

Gilbert shook his head. "No, I refer to the Girondists, — so named, because their leaders come from the department of France called the Gironde. The Jacobins do not wish for war. The Girondists demand it. War is a national affair."

"War? War with whom? My God, — war with our brother the Emperor? — with the King of Spain, our nephew? Our enemies, Monsieur Gilbert, are in France, not outside; and in proof of it — "

Madame Elizabeth hesitated. "Speak, Madame!" said Gilbert.

"I do not know, in truth, how to tell you, Doctor; and yet it is precisely for this that I have sent for you."

"You can trust me, Madame, as a man ready to give his life for the King."

"Monsieur, do you believe there is an antidote to poisons?"

Gilbert smiled. "A universal antidote? No, Madame! Every poisonous substance has its own antidote; although it must be said, in a general way, that these antidotes are powerless."

"Oh, my God!"

"In the first place, it is necessary to know whether the poison is vegetable or mineral. Usually mineral

poisons take hold of the stomach and other digestive organs, while vegetable poisons affect the nervous system. The mineral poisons excite and inflame the parts they affect, while the vegetable poisons stupefy. Of what poison do you speak, Madame?"

"Listen, for I am telling you a great secret, a very great secret, Monsieur."

"I am listening, Madame."

"I fear they are trying to poison the King."

"Whom do you suppose guilty of such a crime?"

"This is what has happened. You know the Superintendent of the Civil List, Monsieur Laporte?"

"Yes, Madame!"

"Well, Monsieur Laporte has warned us that a man who belongs in the royal household, and is also connected with a pastry-cook's establishment in the Palace Royal, is a frightful Jacobin, and has been heard to say openly, that it would be a great thing for France if somebody should poison the King."

"Generally, Madame, people who wish to commit such crimes do not boast of it in advance."

"Oh Monsieur! but it would be so easy to poison the King. Fortunately, the man whom we distrust only has charge of the pastry in the palace."

"You have taken some precautions, Madame?"

"Yes. It has been decided that the King shall eat only roasted meats; that bread shall be brought from Ville d'Avray by Monsieur Thierry, the Superintendent of the Small Apartments, who at the same time is to furnish the wine. As to pastry, as the King likes it, Madame Campan has received orders to buy it as if for herself, sometimes at one shop and sometimes at another. We have been advised to be on our guard especially against powdered sugar!"

"Because arsenic can be more readily mixed with it, without being noticed?"

"Precisely. It was the Queen's habit to sweeten her water with this sugar, but this custom we have entirely discontinued. The King, Queen, and myself eat together. We dispense with the constant attendance of the servants. If anything is needed, we ring for it. While we are at table Madame Campan, by a private entrance, brings in the bread, pastry, and wine. We hide these things under the table, and pretend to drink the wine from the cellar, and the bread and pastry baked purposely for us. That 's the way we live; and we tremble all the time, the Queen and I, lest we should see the King suddenly turn pale, and hear him say that he is in pain."

"First," said the Doctor, "let me say that I take no stock in these threats of poison. Nevertheless, I put myself entirely at the disposal of their Majesties. What does the King wish? Does he wish me to have a chamber in the palace? I could do so, and thus be on hand for any moment I might be needed, until the King's fears —"

"Oh, my brother fears nothing," said Madame Elizabeth, quickly.

"I was wrong, Madame. I should have said, until *your* fears are over. I have had some experience with poisons and antidotes. I will hold myself in readiness to fight the poison, whatever its nature; but permit me to add, Madame, that the King, if he so chooses, will soon have nothing to fear."

"How can that be brought about?" said a voice which did not belong to Madame Elizabeth, and whose resonant and positive tones made Gilbert look around. The Doctor was not mistaken. That voice was the Queen's.

Gilbert bowed and said: "Madame, is it needful to repeat to the Queen my protestations of devotion, just now made to Madame Elizabeth?"

"No, Monsieur, no. I have heard all. I wish chiefly to know what disposition you still maintain towards us."

"The Queen doubts the stability of my sentiments?"

"Oh, Monsieur! So many heads and hearts have been alienated from us by this boisterous wind, that one scarcely knows who is trustworthy!"

"And is it for this reason that the Queen accepts, from the Feuillant Club, a minister recommended by Madame de Staël?"

The Queen started as she said: "You know that?"

"I hear that your Majesty is making arrangements with Monsieur de Narbonne."

"And I suppose you blame me?"

"No, Madame! As well make this effort as some other. When the King has tried everything else, perhaps he 'll end where he ought to have begun."

"You are acquainted with Madame de Staël, Monsieur?" asked the Queen.

"I have that honor, Madame. When I left the Bastille I was presented to her by Monsieur Necker, her father, from whom I learned that my arrest and imprisonment had been at the Queen's instigation."

The Queen reddened perceptibly, and then said, with a smile: "We once agreed not to revert to that error."

"I do not recall the error, Madame! I only reply to the question the Queen has deigned to put to me."

"What think you of Monsieur Necker?"

"He 's a worthy German, composed of heterogeneous elements. He is more than eccentric, and sometimes rises to the point of bombast."

"Yet were you not one of those who urged the King to take him again into government service?"

"Right or wrong, Necker was the most popular man in the kingdom; and therefore I urged the King to avail himself of that popularity."

"And Madame de Staël?"

"Am I to understand that your Majesty honors me by asking my opinion of Madame de Staël?"

"Yes."

"Well, as to her physique, she has a large nose, coarse features, a large waist —"

The Queen smiled. As a woman, it was not disagreeable to hear it said that the lady of whom she so often thought was not handsome. "Go on!" was all she said.

"Her skin is not very attractive. Her gestures are energetic, rather than graceful. Her voice is coarse, so that it sometimes seems as if it did not belong to a lady. In spite of all this she is only twenty-four or twenty-five years old. She has the throat of a goddess, magnificent black hair, superb teeth, a passionate eye. Her glance is a world in itself."

"But morally, intellectually, — as to talent and merit?" the Queen asked eagerly.

"She is good and generous. No one can remain her enemy after hearing her talk fifteen minutes."

"I refer to her genius, Monsieur. Politics require something more than the heart."

"Madame, the heart does no harm, even in politics. As to that word *genius*, which you first used, be very chary with that word. Madame de Staël has great, immense talent, but it does not reach the point of genius. Something heavy as well as strong, clumsy as well as powerful, weighs down her feet when she wishes to quit the earth. Between herself and her teacher, Jean Jacques

Rousseau, there is the difference you find between iron and steel."

"You speak of her talent as a writer, Monsieur. Speak of the lady in her political capacity."

"In my opinion, Madame," replied Gilbert, "they value Madame de Staël beyond her merits. Since the emigration of Mounier and Lally, her parlors have become the headquarters of the English party, half Aristocratic, and preferring two legislative bodies, the Lords and Commons. As she belongs to the middle class, and most decidedly so, she has the insular weakness of adoring great noblemen. She admires the English people, because she believes they are eminently aristocratic. She does not know the whole history of England. She is unacquainted with the machinery of its government. Gentlemen who have only recently risen from the lowest classes, she mistakes for noblemen whose titles antedate the Crusades. In other nations they try to sustain and strengthen the nobility with new men and new blood. In England they use the old families to maintain the new men."

"You believe that this sentiment leads Madame de Staël to propose Narbonne for a prominent place?"

"In this instance two passions are united, love of aristocracy, and love of an aristocrat."

"You think Madame de Staël loves Monsieur de Narbonne because of his aristocratic connection?"

"It is not because of his merit, I fancy!"

"But nobody is less a born aristocrat than Monsieur de Narbonne. Even his father is unknown"

"Ah! — because nobody dares look straight at the sun!"

"See here, Monsieur Gilbert, I 'm a woman, and consequently I like gossip. What is said about Narbonne?"

"That he is brave, witty, profligate."

"But I refer to his birth."

"They say that when the Jesuits were trying to drive away Voltaire, Machault, Argenson, — the so-called Philosophic School, — it was necessary to contend also with Madame de Pompadour. This is what we learn from the traditions of the Regency, which preceded your Majesty's reign. They knew the possibilities of paternal love, when doubled by love of another sort. So they chose for this purpose, — for the Jesuits have a skilful hand in drawing such lots! — they chose a daughter of the King, and persuaded her to devote herself heroically to this incestuous task. Hence the generation of this charming cavalier, whose father is unknown, as your Majesty says, — not because his birth is lost in obscurity, but because it is as clear as the sunshine."

"Then you do not believe, like the Jacobins, — like Robespierre, for example, — that Narbonne comes from the Swedish embassy, of which De Staël is chief?"

"Oh yes, Madame; only he comes from the wife's boudoir, not from the husband's cabinet. To suppose that Monsieur de Staël had anything to do with this, would be to suppose him the husband of his wife. — Oh, my God, no! This is not the treachery of an ambassador, Madame, it is the weakness of lovers. Nothing less than love, the eternal fascinator, would lead a woman to place the gigantic sword of the Revolution in such frivolous hands."

"Do you speak of the sword which Monsieur Isnard kissed at the Jacobin Club?"

"Alas, Madame! I speak of the sword which is suspended over your head."

"Then in your opinion, Monsieur Gilbert, we are wrong in accepting Narbonne as Minister of War?"

"You will do better, Madame, if you at once take his successor."

"And who is that?"

"Dumouriez."

"Dumouriez, — a Soldier of Fortune?"

"Ah, Madame! that is a grand name gone wrong, ruined by bad usage, — a cowardly word! and it is an unfair epithet, as applied to him of whom you speak."

"Was n't Monsieur Dumouriez once a simple soldier?"

"I know very well, Madame, that Monsieur Dumouriez lacks that Court distinction, those titles of birth, to which everybody bows down. A provincial gentleman, unable to purchase a colonelcy and a regiment, he enlisted as a simple hussar. At the age of twenty he endured the sword-thrusts of five or six cavaliers, rather than surrender; but in spite of this manifestation of bravery, despite his genuine intelligence, he was allowed to vegetate in the lower ranks of the army."

"His intelligence? Yes, it was developed by espionage, in his service as a spy for Louis the Fifteenth."

"Why use the words *espionage* and *spy* in regard to him, to indicate what you call *diplomacy* in others? I happen to know that it was purely at the instance of the prime-minister of Louis the Fifteenth that Dumouriez entered into correspondence with the King. Where is there a Court noble who would not do as much?"

"But, Monsieur," said the Queen, showing her deep study of politics by her familiarity with the details, "he is essentially immoral, this man whom you commend. He lacks principle, and has no sentiment of honor. Monsieur de Choiseul himself told me that Dumouriez unfolded to him two projects in relation to the Corsicans, — one to subdue them, the other to give them liberty."

"True! but Choiseul forgot to tell you that when the

first was preferred, Dumouriez fought valiantly for its success."

"If we should accept Dumouriez for Minister of War, this would be equivalent to a declaration of hostilities against Europe."

"Well, Madame, that declaration is already made in the popular heart. Do you know how many citizens of this department have already registered their names as volunteers? Six hundred thousand! In the Jura district the women declare that all the men may go, and that if the women can have pikes, they will defend their territory themselves."

"You use a word which always makes me tremble," said the Queen.

"Excuse me, Madame," replied Gilbert, "but will you tell me which word, in order that I may not again pain you by its use?"

"You used that word *pikes!* Oh, the pikes of Eighty-nine! I can still see the heads of my two faithful body-guards on the ends of those pikes!"

"Yet it is a wife, a mother, who proposes to open a subscription, in order to have more pikes manufactured."

"Is it also a wife and a mother who has persuaded the Jacobins to adopt the red caps, — the color of blood?"

"There again your Majesty is in error. It was desirable to consecrate the ideas of Equality and Fraternity by a symbol. It would be impossible to persuade all the French people to wear similar costumes; so it was determined to select a single article of dress, — the peasant-cap. The color was chosen, not because it is the mournful color of blood, but, on the contrary, because red is a gay and striking color, agreeable to the masses."

"Well, Doctor, you are such an advocate of new inventions, that I do not despair of yet seeing you with

a pike in your hand, and a red cap on your head, feeling the King's pulse."

The Queen spoke half bitterly, half jestingly, and then withdrew, seeing that she could not overcome this man at any point.

Madame Elizabeth was preparing to follow her, when Gilbert said, in almost supplicating tones: "Madame, you love your brother, do you not?"

"It is more than love I feel for him, — it is adoration!"

"And you are willing to transmit good counsel to him, if it comes from a friend?"

"Speak out! If the counsel is really good —"

"From my point of view it is excellent."

"Then speak, speak!"

"Well, when the Feuillant ministry comes to nothing, — and that won't be long, — advise him to select a ministry composed wholly of men wearing those red caps, which alarm the Queen so much!"

Then, bowing low before Madame Elizabeth, Gilbert left the room and the palace.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DUMOURIEZ.

We have reported the foregoing conversation between the Queen and Doctor Gilbert, in order to interrupt the course, always somewhat monotonous, of a historic recital, and to set forth, in a form less bald than a chronologic table, the situation of the various political parties.

The Narbonne ministry lasted three months. One of Vergniaud's speeches killed it.

Mirabeau once exclaimed: "I see from here the window!"

In like manner, when the news arrived that the Empress of Russia had made a treaty with Turkey, and that Austria and Prussia had signed, at Berlin, on February 7, a compact of alliance offensive and defensive, — when this news arrived, Vergniaud mounted the rostrum and said: "I too may say, that from this platform I can see the palace wherein they are plotting a counter-revolution, and preparing measures which will enslave us to Austria. The time has come when you must put an end to such audacity, and confound the conspirators. Often enough, in the olden days, have Terror and Dismay stalked forth from yonder palace, in the name of Despotism. Now let Terror and Dismay re-enter that palace, in the name of the Law."

By a powerful gesture this magnificent orator seemed to drive before him Terror and Dismay, those two demoralized daughters of Awe and Majesty.

Dismay and Terror did indeed return to the Tuileries. Narbonne, elevated to office by a puff of amorous admiration, was overturned by a tempestuous flaw. This downfall occurred in March, 1792.

Hardly three months had elapsed after Gilbert's interview with the Queen, when a new man was introduced into the King's presence. He was short in stature, active, nimble, nervous. He had an intelligent head, in which sparkled eyes full of enterprise. He was fifty-six years of age, though he appeared ten years younger. His face was overspread with the brown tints of the bivouac, and he wore the uniform of a field-marshal.

He was only an instant alone in the parlor, into which he was shown; for at once the door opened and the King entered.

For the first time these two historic personages found themselves face to face. The King regarded the little man with a dull and heavy look, which was nevertheless not devoid of penetration. The little man returned the King's glance with one full of defiance and fire.

Nobody was there to introduce the stranger, which proved that his coming had been announced beforehand.

"It is Monsieur Dumouriez?" asked the King.

Dumouriez bowed.

"How long is it since you came to Paris?"

"I came at the beginning of February, Sire."

"Monsieur de Narbonne sent for you —?"

"To tell me that I was detailed to the army corps in Alsatia, under Marshal Luckner, and that I was to command the Besançon division."

"You did not go, however?"

"Sire, I accepted the commission; but I believed it my duty to suggest to Narbonne that as war was at hand," — here the King made a perceptible movement,

but Dumouriez did not appear to notice it, — "and threatened to become general, I thought it would be better to pay more attention to Southern France, which was unprepared for an attack; and that consequently it seemed to me important that a plan of defence should be adopted for the lower districts, and that a general-in-chief and an army should be sent there."

"Yes, and you unfolded your views to Narbonne, after having communicated them to Monsieur Gensonné and to several other Girondists?"

"Gensonné is my friend, Sire, and also a friend to your Majesty, I believe."

"Then I 'm doing business with a Girondist, am I?" said the King, smiling.

"You have to do with a Patriot, and a faithful subject of his sovereign."

Louis bit his big lips and said: "And was it for the sake of serving your sovereign and country more efficiently that you refused an appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs *pro tem?*"

"Sire, I responded that I should prefer the command promised me, rather than a place in the cabinet, either *pro tem* or not *pro tem;* for I am a soldier, and not a diplomat."

"On the contrary, I am assured that you are both a soldier and a diplomat."

"I am too much honored, Sire!"

"And it is under that assurance that I still insist upon the appointment," said the King.

"Yes, Sire! and I continue to refuse, despite my great regret at disobeying you."

"And why do you refuse?"

"Because the situation is grave, Sire. It has already upset Narbonne and compromised Monsieur de Lessart.

Every man, who thinks anything of his own capability, has the right not to let himself be employed in any way whatever, or else to insist that he shall be employed according to his value. Now, Sire, I am either worth something or nothing. If nothing, leave me in my obscurity. Who knows to what destiny you are driving me? If I am worth anything, do not try to make me the minister of a day, a passing power; but give me some definite support, so that you can then lean more securely on me. Our affairs — your pardon, Sire, for making his Majesty's affairs my own — our affairs are in such a bad odor with foreign lands, that a temporary Council cannot properly deal with other nations. Such a temporary arrangement, a ministry *pro tem*, — excuse the frankness of a soldier!" — nobody could be less frank than Dumouriez, but under certain circumstances he liked to appear so — "this arrangement would affect the Assembly badly, and destroy my popularity with its members. I will say further, that this *pro tem* business would compromise the King, and give him the appearance of clinging to his old Council, which he meant to recall at the first opportunity."

"Do you think the move would be possible, even if I cherished such an intention?"

"I believe it is time for your Majesty to break with the past in good faith."

"Yes, and make myself a Jacobin outright, perhaps? You said as much to Laporte!"

"Zounds! If your Majesty should do that, it would embarrass all parties, — the Jacobins most of all."

"Why don't you advise me to put on the red cap at once?"

"Well, Sire, if that would help matters —" said Dumouriez.

The King looked in a somewhat defiant way at the man who could begin such a response; but he only said: "Then it 's a permanent portfolio you wish for, is it, Monsieur?"

"I wish for nothing, Sire. I am ready to receive the King's orders; only I should like it better, if the King would send me to the frontier, instead of keeping me in Paris."

"And if I command you, on the contrary, to remain in Paris, and become definitely the Minister of Foreign Affairs, what should you say?"

Dumouriez smiled. "I should say that his Majesty was overcoming the prejudice with which others had inspired him against me."

"Well, yes, entirely so, Monsieur Dumouriez. You are henceforth my Prime Minister!"

"Sire, I devote myself to your service; but —"

"Some conditions?"

"Some explanations, Sire!"

"Speak! I 'm listening."

"The place of Prime Minister is not what it was formerly. Without being the less your Majesty's faithful servant, yet, in entering your cabinet, I become a National executor. Do not expect of me, hereafter, the language to which you have been accustomed from my predecessors. I only know how to speak according to Liberty and the Constitution. Confined by my official duties, I cannot pay my court to you. I shall not have much leisure, and I shall disregard the King's etiquette, in order better to serve the King himself. I shall work constantly for you or your Council; and I forewarn you, this work involves conflict."

"Conflict, Monsieur? Why so?"

"Oh, it 's very plain, Sire! Nearly all your foreign

representatives are openly hostile to the Revolution. I forewarn you that I shall change them, and may go contrary to your selections and preferences. I may propose to your Majesty nominees whom you do not even know by name, and others whom you dislike — "

"And in that case, Monsieur?" said Louis, interrupting him hastily.

"In that case, Sire, when your Majesty's repugnance is too strong and outspoken, I shall obey, because you are master; but if your selections emanate not from your own choice, but are suggested by those around you, and seem evidently intended to compromise me, then I shall beg your Majesty to appoint my successor. Sire, think of the awful dangers which beset your throne. It must be buttressed by public confidence, and all depends upon you!"

"Permit me to interrupt you, Monsieur."

"Sire —!" said Dumouriez, bowing.

"I *have* thought of these dangers for a long time!"

Then, pointing to the portrait of Charles the First, and wiping his face with his handkerchief, Louis continued: "And if I try to forget them, there is a picture which keeps them in mind."

"Sire!"

"Wait till I've done, Monsieur. My situation is the same as his. Our perils are similar. Perhaps the scaffold of Whitehall is even now building itself in the Place de Grève."

"This is looking too far ahead, Sire!"

"It is looking at the horizon, Monsieur! If my fear be correct, I shall march to the scaffold as Charles did, — not perhaps in so knightly a fashion, but at least in a Christian way. — Now go on, Monsieur!"

Dumouriez paused, astonished at this unexpected

display of firmness; but presently he said: "Sire, allow me to change the theme of our conversation?"

"As you will, Monsieur; but I wish to prove that I am not afraid to meet the fate with which they try to affright me; or, if I do fear it, that I am prepared to face it."

"Sire, despite all I have had the honor of saying to you, am I still to regard myself as your Minister of Foreign Affairs?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Then at the first meeting of the Council I shall introduce four despatchès. I warn the King that neither in style nor principles will they resemble those of my predecessors. If my initiatory efforts are acceptable to your Majesty, I shall keep on; otherwise my travelling equipage is in readiness for my departure, to serve France and my sovereign on the frontier. Whatever may have been said of my talents as a diplomatist, the field is my true element, the aim of all my endeavors for the past six and thirty years."

Thus speaking he bowed, and was about taking his leave, when the King checked him. "Wait a moment! We have settled one point, but there are five others to adjust."

"My colleagues?"

"Certainly. I do not mean to have you coming to me with complaints that you are hindered by this man or that. Choose your cabinet, Monsieur."

"Sire, you impose upon me a grave responsibility."

"I believe I best serve your wishes by charging you with this duty."

"Sire, I know scarcely anybody in Paris, except Lacoste, whom I recommend to your Majesty for the Naval Department."

"Lacoste? Is n't he merely a chief commissary?"

"Yes, Sire, — one who sent his resignation to Monsieur de Boynes, rather than pursue an unjust course."

"That 's a good recommendation! Whom do you propose for the other places?"

"I will consult others, Sire."

"May I know whom you will consult?"

"Brissot, Condorcet, Pétion, Rœderer, Gensonné —"

"All the Girondists, in fact?"

"Yes, Sire!"

"Ho for the Girondists, then! Let us see if they can manage better than the Constitutionalists and the Feuillants."

"There is another point, Sire!"

"What is it?"

"To ascertain whether the four letters which I am to write will be agreeable to you."

"That we shall learn to-night."

"To-night, Sire?"

"Yes, for matters are driving! We are to have an extraordinary meeting of my Council, composed of Monsieur de Grave, and Monsieur Cahier de Gerville."

"But Duport Dutertre?"

"He has resigned."

"I shall be at your Majesty's disposal," said Dumouriez, again bowing and about to withdraw.

"No, wait a minute. I want to compromise you." Hardly were these words out of his mouth when the Queen and Madame Elizabeth appeared, with their prayerbooks in their hands.

"Madame," said the King to his wife, "this is Monsieur Dumouriez, who promises to help us, and with whom we are this evening to form a new Council."

Dumouriez bowed, and the Queen looked with curiosity

at the man who was to wield such an influence in the affairs of France.

"Monsieur," she said, "are you acquainted with Monsieur Gilbert?"

"No, Madame."

"Better make his acquaintance, Monsieur."

"May I ask in what capacity you recommend him?"

"As an excellent prophet. Three months ago he predicted that you would be Narbonne's successor."

At this moment the doors of the King's study were thrown open, and he went out to attend Mass.

Dumouriez followed in the royal train; but the courtiers avoided him as they would a pestilence.

"Did n't I say you would be compromised?" whispered the King, laughing.

"In the eyes of the aristocracy, Sire! This is a new favor which the King bestows upon me!" and so speaking, he at last succeeded in getting away.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BEHIND THE TAPESTRY.

On that evening, at the hour named, Dumouriez came with the four despatches. Grave and Cahier de Gerville were already in the Council Chamber, awaiting the King.

As if the King himself only delayed his coming till Dumouriez's arrival, hardly had this gentleman entered by one door, before his Majesty came in by the other.

The two retiring ministers rose quickly. Dumouriez was already standing, and could only bow. The King responded with a nod. Then he said, as he took an armchair at the head of the table: "Gentlemen, be seated."

It seemed to Dumouriez that the door into the King's private room had been left open, and that the portière in front of it moved slightly. Was it the wind? Was it the touch of some person listening behind the tapestry, which intercepted sight but not sound?

The three ministers sat down.

"Have you your despatches, Monsieur?" asked the King, of Dumouriez.

"Yes, Sire!" and the General drew four letters from his pocket.

"To what national powers are they addressed?" asked the King.

"To Spain, Austria, Prussia, and England."

"Read them!"

Dumouriez again glanced at the tapestry, and its tremor convinced him that somebody was listening.

He began his reading in a firm voice. In these despatches he spoke in the name of the King, but in the spirit of the Constitution, — without acrimony, but also without feebleness.

He discussed the true interests of each government in its relation to the French Revolution. As each government might reasonably complain of the utterances in certain Jacobin pamphlets, he attributed these injurious misrepresentations to the freedom of the press, under whose sunshine, while rich harvests were ripening, impure vermin might also be warmed into life. In conclusion he demanded peace in the name of a free nation, whereof the King was the hereditary representative.

The King listened, and gave increasingly close attention to each successive despatch.

When Dumouriez had finished his reading, the King said: "I never before heard anything equal to this, General!"

"It is thus ministers ought always to write and speak in the names of their sovereigns!" said Cahier de Gerville.

"Well," resumed the King, "give me the despatches, and they shall go to-morrow."

"Sire, the couriers are already waiting in the court-yard below" said Dumouriez.

"I wish to have duplicates for safe keeping, and to show to the Queen," said the King, with some little embarrassment.

"I have anticipated your Majesty's wish, and here are four copies, certified to be genuine, by myself."

"Then let your missives be sent!" said the King.

Dumouriez went to the door by which he had entered.

An aide was in waiting, to whom he gave the despatches. Presently they heard several horses galloping out of the courtyard.

"That is done!" said the King, in response to his own thoughts, when this significant sound had died away; "and now let us see your list of colleagues."

"Sire," said Dumouriez, "I wish first of all that your Majesty would urge Monsieur Cahier de Gerville to consent to remain with us."

"I have already done so," said the King.

"And I regretfully persist in my refusal, Sire. My health is being undermined day by day, and I need rest."

"You hear, Monsieur," said the King, turning towards Dumouriez.

"Yes, Sire!"

"Well," insisted the King, "your ministers?"

"We have Monsieur de Grave still with us."

Grave raised his hand and said: "Sire, if the language of Monsieur Dumouriez astonished you just now by its frankness, mine will astonish you still more by its humility."

"Speak, Monsieur!" said the King.

"Here, Sire," replied Grave, drawing a paper from his pocket, "here is a somewhat severe but fair criticism made upon me, by a lady of great merit. Have the kindness to read it."

The King took the paper and read as follows:

Grave is spoken of for the War Portfolio. He is a small man in every way. Nature has made him mild and timid. His prepossessions lead him into superciliousness, albeit his heart inspires him with amiability. As a result, in an embarrassing effort to conciliate all parties, he becomes absolutely nothing.

Methinks I see him walking like a courtier behind the King, his head erect and his body weak, showing the whites of his blue eyes, which he cannot keep open after dinner, without the aid of three or four cups of coffee.

He talks little, as though his reserve were instigated by wise reticence; but in reality this silence arises from a lack of ideas. He will lose his head so completely in the midst of the affairs of his department, that one day or other he must ask permission to withdraw.

Louis hesitated about reading the paper through, and would not have done so except by the request of Monsieur de Grave himself.

"Well," said his Majesty, "there 's a woman's estimate. Is it from Madame de Staël?"

"No, better than that. It is from Madame Roland, Sire."

"And you say, Monsieur de Grave, that this is also your judgment of yourself?"

"In many points, Sire!—I will remain in the ministry until I can instruct my successor as to the run of affairs, and then I must ask your Majesty to accept my resignation."

"You were right, Monsieur. This language is yet more astonishing than the language of Monsieur Dumouriez. If you are resolved upon withdrawal, however, I should be glad to have you nominate your successor."

"I was about to beg your Majesty to allow me to suggest Monsieur Servan, an honest man, in every sense of the word, a man of solid temperament and pure morals, with something of the austerity of a philosopher, added to the sympathetic goodness of a woman. Besides, Sire, he is a clear-headed Patriot, a courageous soldier, a vigilant politician."

"Here goes for Servan! We have three secretaries

then already, — Servan for War, Lacoste for the Navy, Dumouriez for Foreign Affairs. What shall we do about Finance?"

"Monsieur Clavières, Sire, if you approve the choice. He is a man of great financial knowledge, and superior skill in the management of money." So spake Dumouriez.

"Yes," said the King, "he is indeed active and industrious; but they also say he is irascible, self-opinionated, fussy, and wayward in discussion."

"These are the common faults of able cabinet-ministers, Sire."

"Well, we 'll overlook the shortcomings of Monsieur Clavières. So be it! Monsieur Clavières, Minister of Finance. Now how about Justice? To whom shall we give her?"

"Duranthon, a Bordeaux barrister, is very strongly recommended."

"By the Girondists, of course?"

"Yes, Sire. He is a level-headed, upright, and most excellent citizen, but somewhat weak and slow. We must light a fire under his feet, and supply the strength he lacks."

"There still remains one portfolio, — Interior Affairs."

"The unanimous opinion is that it belongs to Monsieur Roland."

"To Madame Roland, you mean?"

"To Monsieur and Madame Roland, — to both the learned husband and the brilliant wife!"

"You know them?" asked the King.

"No, Sire; but I am assured that he resembles one of Plutarch's heroes, while she is a woman from the pages of Titus Livius."

"Do you know what they will call your cabinet,

Monsieur Dumouriez, or rather, what it is already nicknamed?"

"No, Sire."

"The Sans Culotte[1] Ministry."

"I accept the appellation, Sire. All the better will it be seen that we are men."

"And are your colleagues all ready for duty?"

"Half of them are not aware of their appointment."

"Will they accept?"

"I 'm sure of it."

"Very well, let us adjourn; and day after to-morrow we will hold our first session."

"Day after to-morrow, Sire!"

"You see," said the King, turning to Grave and Cahier de Gerville, "that you will have till the day after to-morrow for reflection and suggestion."

"Sire, our determination is already taken, and we will come on the day after to-morrow only to install our successors."

The three ministers retired, but before they reached the broad staircase a chamberlain overtook them, and said to Dumouriez: "Monsieur General, the King requests you to follow me, as he has something to say to you."

Dumouriez saluted his colleagues, and remained behind to ask: "The King or the Queen?"

"The Queen, Monsieur; but she judged it inexpedient to let the other two gentlemen know that it was she who sent for you."

Dumouriez shook his head and said: "Just what I feared!"

[1] This term means *breechless*, or *unbreeched*, — literally, *without breeches*, — and might be translated *tatterdemalion* or *ragamuffin*. It was applied to the Republicans by the Nobility, to indicate their opinion as to the Plebeian character of the ultra Revolutionary party.

"Do you refuse?" asked the chamberlain, who was no other than Weber.

"No, I'm with you."

"Come this way."

Through the poorly lighted corridors the chamberlain conducted Dumouriez to the Queen's apartments, and then said, without announcing the General by name: "Here is the person your Majesty asked for!"

Dumouriez entered. Never had our soldier's heart beat so violently, even when executing a battle-charge or mounting the deadly breach.

As he well understood, this was because he had never before encountered the same danger. The road which now opened before him was strown with dead and living sacrifices. At any moment he might stumble against the memory of Calonne, of Necker, of Mirabeau, of Barnave, of Lafayette.

The Queen was pacing the room with long steps, and she was very red. Dumouriez paused just inside the door, which was closed behind him. The Queen came towards him with a majestic and irritated demeanor.

At once taking up the question, with her usual vivacity, she said: "Monsieur, at this moment you are all-powerful; but you are so by the favor of the people, and the people quickly break their idols. They say you have much talent. First of all, have the wit to understand that neither the King nor myself will sanction all these new notions. Your Constitution is a perfect air-pump, an exhauster. Royalty suffers under it for want of air. I have sent for you to say, before you go any farther, that you must decide what part you will take, and choose between us and the Jacobins."

"Madame, I am grieved at the painful communications which your Majesty makes; but having detected the

presence of the Queen behind the curtain which concealed her, I expected what now comes to pass."

"In that case, you are ready with your answer?" said the Queen.

"Here it is, Madame. I am between the King and the Nation; but before all, I belong to my country."

"The country! the country!" repeated the Queen. "The King then is nothing! Everybody apparently cleaves to the Nation, and nobody to the King."

"Oh yes, Madame, the King is always the King; but he has taken an oath to support the Constitution, and from the day when that oath was taken, the King became one of the chief subjects of the Constitution."

"A compulsory oath, Monsieur, — null and void."

For an instant Dumouriez stood speechless. Like the skilful actor he was, he looked at the Queen with profound pity.

At last he said: "Madame, permit me to say that your safety, the King's safety, and that of your august children, is bound up with the Constitution which you undervalue, and which will save you, if you will consent to be saved thereby. I should ill serve you, Madame, — I should ill serve the King, — if I talked to either of you otherwise."

The Queen interrupted him with an imperious motion. "Oh Monsieur, Monsieur! You are on the wrong road, I assure you." Then she added, with an undefinable touch of menace: "Be on your guard, Monsieur!"

"Madame," responded Dumouriez, in a perfectly calm tone, "I am more than fifty years old. My life has been beset with perils. In accepting the Portfolio of State I have said to myself that my official responsibility is by no means the greatest danger into which I run."

"Oh!" cried the Queen, striking her hands together,

"there is only one thing left for you to do, — slander me!"

"Slander you, Madame?"

"Yes. Do you wish me to explain your last words?"

"Do so, Madame!"

"Well, you implied that I was capable of assassinating you. — Oh Monsieur! — " and as she spoke, two great tears fell from her eyes.

Dumouriez had gone as far as possible. He had learned what he wished to know, — that is, if a single sensitive fibre remained at the bottom of her seared heart.

"God forbid," he said, "that I should so insult my Queen. Your Majesty's character is too great, too noble, to suggest such a suspicion, even to her most obdurate enemies. She has given proofs of heroism which I admire, and which have drawn me towards her."

"Do you speak the truth, Monsieur?" asked she, with tones in which emotion alone remained.

"On my honor, Madame, I swear it!"

"Then pardon my error, and give me your arm; for there are moments when I am so weak that I feel as if I should drop."

Indeed she did turn pale, and threw back her head.

Was this real? Was it one of those enticing perilous bits of comedy, not uncommon with this seductive Medea?

Cunning as he was, Dumouriez let himself be caught; or else, a more subtle actor than the Queen, he pretended to be deceived.

"Believe me, Madame, I can have no motive for deceiving you; for I abhor anarchy and its crimes as much as you do. Believe me, for I speak from my

experience. I am better situated than the Queen for estimating events. What is now taking place is not some Orleans intrigue, as some would have you believe. It does not emanate from Pitt's animosity, as you have sometimes imagined. It is not even a transient popular movement. It is the almost unanimous protest of a great nation against ancient abuses. In all this, as I know very well, there are great animosities, which are liable to start a conflagration. Let us leave miscreants and fools on one side. Let us see only our Nation and our King, in this Revolution. What tends to separate these two, the Crown and the Nation, leads to mutual ruin. As for myself, Madame, I have undertaken, with all my might, to reunite them. Help me, instead of working against me! You dislike me? Am I an obstacle to your Counter-Revolutionary projects? If so, tell me, Madame. The King shall have my resignation on the spot, and I will sit in a corner, and mourn the fate of your country and mine."

"No, no! Keep your office, and pardon me!"

"I — pardon you, Madame? Oh, I beseech you not to humiliate yourself thus."

"Why not humiliate myself? Am I any longer a queen? Am I any longer a woman, even?"

She went to the window and pushed it open, notwithstanding the coldness of the March evening. The moon was silvering the leafless treetops in the gardens below.

"All people have a right to air and sunshine, have they not? To me only are sunshine and air denied. I dare not show myself at the windows, either on the courtyard side or the garden side. Day before yesterday I looked out into the courtyard. A gunner, who was there on guard, insulted me grossly, and said he should like the fun of carrying my head on the end of his bayonet.

Yesterday I opened the window looking towards the garden. On one side I saw a man standing on a chair, and reading aloud horrible things about us. On the other side I saw a priest insulted, beaten, and dragged away to one of the ponds. As if such scenes were of every-day occurrence, other people were all this time playing ball and promenading serenely, not troubling themselves about priest or speaker. — What times, Monsieur! What a situation! What people! And you wish me to believe myself a queen, when I can hardly believe myself a woman."

The Queen threw herself on a sofa, hiding her head in her hands. Dumouriez bent his knee, and respectfully kissed the hem of her robe.

"Madame," he said, "as surely as I undertake to sustain this struggle, you shall become once more a happy woman. You shall again become a powerful sovereign, or I will give up my life in the effort."

Rising, he saluted the Queen, and hurriedly left the room.

With an air of despair the Queen watched his withdrawal, repeating to herself: "A powerful sovereign? Perhaps that is yet possible, thanks to the sword; but a happy woman? Never, never, never!"

Murmuring a name which day by day became dearer and sadder, — the name of Charny, — she buried her head among the cushions on the sofa.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE RED CAP.

DUMOURIEZ withdrew rapidly from the Queen's presence, partly because her despair was painful. Though seldom moved by sentimental ideas, he was strongly affected by personal contact. There was no sentiment in his political conscience, but he was very sensitive to human suffering.

Moreover Brissot was waiting to accompany him to the Jacobin meeting, and Dumouriez did not wish to delay his submission to that terrible club.

As for the Assembly, he felt sure of his hold upon that body, so long as he was the choice of Pétion, Gensonné, Brissot, and the Girondists generally; but he was not the candidate of Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois, and Couthon, and it was Robespierre, Couthon, and Collot d'Herbois who managed the Jacobins.

Dumouriez's presence was unexpected. It was an audacious move for one of the King's ministers to come to the Jacobin Club. Hardly was his name spoken, when all eyes were turned towards him.

What would Robespierre do about it? Robespierre turned like the others, and bent his ear to catch the name flying from lip to lip. Then he knitted his brows, and again became cool and mute.

A glacial silence immediately spread through the hall. Dumouriez understood perfectly well that he must burn his vessels behind him, like the famous general who was

bound not to retreat from the foreign shore where he had landed.

The Jacobins had just adopted the red cap as a sign of equality, only three or four members being of the opinion that their patriotism was sufficiently well known without giving this outward demonstration of it. One of this small number was Robespierre.

Dumouriez did not hesitate. He flung away his hat, snatched from a Patriot, sitting near, the red cap which adorned his head, and pulled it down over his own ears. Parading this sign of equality, he then mounted the rostrum.

The entire assemblage broke into applause. In the midst of this applause a sound was heard like the hiss of a viper, and the plaudits at once suddenly died away. It was the cry of *hush*, coming from Robespierre's puny lips.

More than once, at a later day, Dumouriez acknowledged that never did the whistle of bullets, within a foot of his head, make him shudder as did that *hush*, escaping from the lips of the ex-Deputy from Arras; but he was a rude fighter, this Dumouriez, a general and an orator rolled into one, — difficult to overthrow, either on the battlefield or on the rostrum.

He waited with a calm smile till the chill silence was fully restored, and then said, in vibratory tones: "Brothers and friends: henceforth every moment of my life will be consecrated to doing the will of the people and justifying the confidence of a Constitutional King. In my negotiations with foreign lands I shall be upheld by the strength of a free people, and these negotiations must lead either to solid peace or decisive war."

Here the applause broke out afresh, despite Robespierre's hiss.

"If we have war," continued the orator, "I will snap my political quill and take my place in the army, ready for victory or death with my brothers. A heavy burden rests on my shoulders. Brothers, aid me to bear it! I need your counsel. Let me receive it through your publications. Tell me the truth, the honest truth. Repel calumny, but do not repulse a citizen whom you know to be sincere and intrepid, and who is devoted to the Revolutionary cause."

Dumouriez was done. He came down amidst loud plaudits. These plaudits irritated Collot d'Herbois, — that speaker who was himself so often hissed, so rarely applauded.

"Why this applause?" he cried, without stirring from his place. "If Dumouriez comes hither as a cabinet-minister, there is nothing to answer. If he comes here as an affiliated member, as a brother, he only does his duty, and puts himself on the plane of our opinions. In that case, there is only one answer to make, — that he should act as he talks."

Dumouriez raised his hand, as much as to say: "That is just what I mean to do."

Robespierre rose, with his severe smile. Everybody understood that he wished to ascend the tribune, and made way for him to pass. When he deigned to speak, all others were silent; only the silence was soft as velvet, compared with that which had greeted Dumouriez. He mounted the rostrum, and began with his customary solemnity.

"I am not among those who believe it absolutely impossible for a cabinet-minister to be patriotic. I even accept, with pleasure, the assurances Monsieur Dumouriez gives us. When he accomplishes these predictions, when he overthrows the enemies armed against us by his

predecessors, and by conspirators who still direct our government, — despite the expulsion of several royal councillors, — then, and not till then, I shall be disposed to chant his eulogy. Even then I shall still think every good citizen in this society is his equal. The Nation alone is great, is worthy of respect in my eyes. The traditions of ministerial power vanish before the people. Out of respect for the people, for the minister himself, I demand that his entrance here shall not be signalized by such marks of homage, which will indicate the decay of public spirit. He asks our advice. I promise, for my part, to give him counsel which will be both useful to him and beneficial to the public weal. As long as Monsieur Dumouriez proves — by his open declarations, and above all by real service to his country — that he is the fellow of all honest citizens, and the defender of the people, he will find only support in this club. I do not fear the presence of a cabinet-secretary in this society; but the instant that secretary is treated as if he had an ascendency over other citizens, I shall demand his expulsion; for that superiority can never be allowed."

The astute orator left the rostrum in the midst of cheers, but a snare awaited him on the lower step. Dumouriez was there with outstretched arms, pretending great enthusiasm.

"Virtuous Robespierre!" he cried, "incorruptible citizen! permit me to embrace thee!" and despite the resistance of the old Constitutionalist, the General pressed Robespierre to his heart.

The crowd only saw the deed, and not Robespierre's repugnance to its accomplishment. Once more the assemblage broke into applause.

"Come!" said Dumouriez to Brissot, in a low voice,

"the comedy is over! I have worn the red cap and embraced Robespierre! Now I 'm doubly a saint."

Indeed he walked to the door amid hurrahs from the floor and the galleries.

At the door was a young man, clothed with the dignity of an usher, who exchanged a rapid glance with the minister, and a still more rapid shake of the hand. This young man was the Duke de Chartres.

Eleven o'clock in the evening rung out. Brissot acted as guide to Dumouriez, and both hastily wended their way towards Roland's lodgings.

The Rolands were still living in the Rue Guénégaud. They had been notified the night before, by Brissot, that Dumouriez, at the instigation of Gensonné and Brissot, wished to name Roland to the King for the Portfolio of the Interior. Brissot had asked Roland if he felt strong enough for such a task; and Roland, with his usual simplicity, had replied that, on the whole, he thought he was.

Now Dumouriez came to announce that the choice was made. Roland and Dumouriez only knew each other by name, and had never met. One can understand with what curiosity the future colleagues regarded each other.

After the customary compliments, in which Dumouriez assured Roland of his satisfaction in calling to the government such an enlightened and honest Patriot, the conversation naturally reverted to the King.

"There is the difficulty!" said Roland, with a smile.

"Well, therein you display a simplicity which I certainly have not the honor of sharing with you," said Dumouriez. "I believe the King to be an honest man and a sincere Patriot."

Observing that Madame Roland answered not a word,

but contented herself with a smile, Dumouriez asked: "Is n't that your opinion, Madame?"

"You have seen the King?"

"Yes."

"Have you seen the Queen?"

This time it was Dumouriez who did not answer, but contented himself with a smile.

An appointment was made for the next day, at eleven in the forenoon, when the new ministers were to take their oaths of office. On leaving the Assembly, they were to go at once to the King.

It was now nearly midnight. Dumouriez would have stayed longer, but this was a late hour for plain folks like the Rolands.

Why did Dumouriez wish to remain? Ah! There it is!

By a quick glance at the husband and wife when he entered, Dumouriez noted the age of the husband. Roland was only ten years older than Dumouriez, but Dumouriez appeared twenty years younger than Roland.

The General also noted the beautiful outlines of the wife. As the daughter of an engraver, Madame Roland labored in her father's workshop when she was a maiden; and after she became a wife, she worked in her husband's study. Labor, that harsh protector, had been her safeguard as a maiden, and should have been her safeguard as a wife.

Dumouriez belonged to that race of men who can never behold an old husband without laughing, or a young woman without disobeying the commandment against covetousness. His manners were therefore displeasing to both the wife and husband, and this is why they called the attention of Brissot and the General to the lateness of the hour.

rissot and Dumouriez both took their leave. When door closed behind them, Roland said to his wife: ell, my dear friend, what thinkest thou of our future eague?"

Iadame Roland smiled as she replied: "There are e men whom it is needless to see twice, in order to n an opinion about them. He has a sly character, ıpple mind, a crafty look. He expressed great satis- ion with the patriotic selection he came to announce. ll, I sha'n't be surprised if he sends thee away some ."

'That 's exactly my opinion!" said Roland.

Both went to bed, with their habitual serenity, neither the two dreaming that the iron finger of Destiny was ting their names in letters of blood on the tablets of Revolution.

The next day the new members of the royal cabinet k their oaths of allegiance before the National Assem-, and then went to the Tuileries.

Roland wore shoes with strings, probably because he d no silver to spend on buckles. He wore a round t, for he had never worn a hat of any other sort. He nt to the Tuileries in his usual attire, and happened come last in the line of secretaries.

Monsieur de Brézé, the Master of Ceremonies, let the ıer five pass in, but he stopped Roland.

Not understanding why he was refused entrance, land said: "But I also am a minister, like the others, Minister of the Interior!"

The Master of Ceremonies did not, however, appear all convinced.

Dumouriez heard the debate and interfered.

"Why do you refuse admission to Monsieur Roland?" asked.

"Ah Monsieur!" said the Master, twisting his arms; "a round hat! no buckles!"

"Ah Monsieur!" replied Dumouriez, with the utmost sangfroid, "a round hat! no buckles! All is indeed lost!" and as he spoke, he pushed Roland into the King's study.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THE ministry which had so much trouble in getting into the King's study might well be styled the War Cabinet.

On March 1, 1792, the Emperor Leopold of Austria died in the midst of his Italian harem, slain by the aphrodisiac love-potions which he prepared for himself.

Marie Antoinette, who had one day read, perhaps in some Jacobin pamphlet, that a pastry-crust would some day bring the Emperor his just dues, — and thereupon sent for Gilbert, to ask if there was a universal antidote for poisons, — now declared openly that her brother had been poisoned by his enemies.

With Leopold, Austria's temporizing policy also died.

He who now ascended the throne was Francis the Second, with whom later generations have been well acquainted, because he was the contemporary of our fathers, as he has been of ourselves. He had in him a mixture of Italian and German blood, his father being the deceased Leopold, and his mother being Maria Louisa of Spain.

Though an Austrian, he was born at Florence in 1768, but returned to the Court of Vienna at an early age. A year or two before his accession to the throne, he married Maria Theresa of Naples.

He was weak, violent, and treacherous. According to the priestly estimate, he was an honest man. His nature

was hard and bigoted. His duplicity was concealed beneath a placid countenance. Under a rosy mask he maintained a fearful tenacity of purpose. He accomplished his career like an automaton animated by springs, — like the statue of the Commander in the opera of "Don Giovanni" or the apparition of the King in Shakespeare's "Hamlet."

In order to avoid the loss of portions of his territory, he twenty years afterwards gave his daughter, Maria Louisa, in marriage to his vanquisher, Napoleon Bonaparte; and yet, when his new son-in-law was driven back by the icy winds of the north in the retreat from Moscow, Francis Joseph hastened to stab him in the back at the first step.

In a word, Francis Second was the man whose tyranny was shown in the lead mines of Venice and the dungeons of Spitzberg. He was the executioner of Andryane, and also of Silvio Pellico, the Italian poet, who for nearly ten years was incarcerated at Spielberg, and whose charming work, "My Prisons," won him the sympathy of the reading world.

The new Emperor was at once the protector of the aristocratic refugees, the ally of Prussia, and the enemy of France.

The French ambassador at Vienna, Monsieur de Noailles, was, so to speak, a prisoner in his own palace.

Our ambassador to Berlin, Monsieur de Ségur, was preceded by the rumor that he was coming to Prussia to obtain possession of the King's secrets, by making love to the royal favorites. It so chanced that the King of Prussia had both.

Ségur presented himself during a public reception, at the same time with the envoy from Coblentz. The King turned his back upon the French ambassador; and in a

loud voice he inquired, of the messenger from the emigrant princes, as to the health of the Count d'Artois.

Prussia believed herself at that epoch, as she believes herself to-day, at the head of German progress. Prussia lived amidst the peculiar philosophical traditions of King Frederick, who aided the Turkish resistance and the Polish Revolution, while he at the same time strangled the liberties of Holland. He governed with crooked fingers, which incessantly fished for spoils in the troubled waters of revolutions, hooking now a part of Poland, again a fraction of Pomerania, or a slice of Neuchâtel.

France had two avowed enemies in 1792, Francis Second of Austria and Frederick William of Prussia, the nephew of the Great Frederick, whom he had succeeded not many years before.

The secret enemies of France were England, Russia, and Spain.

The head of this coalition was to be the bellicose King of Sweden, that dwarf, armed like a giant, who was known as Gustavus the Third, and whom Catherine the Second kept under her thumb.

If we were obliged to cite our great historian, Michelet, every time we borrowed a fact from his ample pages, readers would find this honored name on almost every leaf; and from him we learn the contents of the following diplomatic note, issued soon after the accession of Francis Second to the Austrian throne, — a note intended to humiliate France. Francis claimed to be ruler of the whole German Empire, as well as the Emperor of Austria.

First. Satisfactory arrangements must be made with the German princes, who have possessions within the limits of the kingdom of France, and Austria must be supported by

France herself; or else the imperial sovereignty of the German Empire must be recognized as in the other departments of our empire.

Second. Avignon must be given up, in order that Provence may be divided, as aforetime.

Third. The French monarchy must be re-established on the footing of June 23, 1789.

It is only too evident that these demands corresponded with the secret desires of the King and Queen of France.

One might have supposed Austria had fallen asleep on June 23, 1789, and had awakened after a slumber of three years, under the impression that only one night had elapsed, and it was now June 24, 1789.

On March 16, 1792, Gustavus of Sweden was assassinated in the midst of a masquerade ball. On the second day afterwards, while the assassination was still unknown in France, this Austrian document reached Dumouriez, who shrugged his shoulders, and carried it at once to Louis Sixteenth.

Marie Antoinette belonged to the extreme party. She desired war, because she believed it must bring deliverance to royalty; whereas the King — who was lethargic, and given to indirection and evasion — belonged to the middle party, and dreaded a war.

If war was declared and France was victorious, the King would be at the mercy of the conquering general. In case of a defeat, the people would hold the King responsible, raise the cry of treason, and rush upon the Tuileries.

If their enemies should invade France as far as Paris, whom would they bring with them? *Monsieur,* — that is to say, the King's brother, the hereditary Regent of the kingdom.

'he deposal of Louis Sixteenth, the indictment of 'ie Antoinette as an unfaithful wife, the possible .aration that the royal children of France were ille- mate, — these would be the results of the return of aristocratic refugees to Paris.

'he King had confidence in the Austrians, the Ger- ıs, the Prussians; but he distrusted the émigrés.

Nevertheless, when the Austrian note was read, it at once understood that the hour had come when nce must draw the sword, and that the King could back out.

)n April 20, 1792, the King and Dumouriez together er the National Assembly. They bring with them leclaration of war against Austria. This declaration war is enthusiastically received.

At this solemn hour — upon whose details Romance not the courage to enter, preferring to leave their ısideration entirely to History — there are four dis- ctly defined parties in France: Absolute Royalists, of om the Queen is one; Constitutional Royalists, whereto King professedly belongs; Republicans; Anarchists.

Apart from the Queen, the Absolute Royalists have able leaders in France. In foreign lands they are ıresented by *Monsieur*, by Count d'Artois, by Prince ndé, and by Duke Charles de Lorraine. Monsieur de eteuil, at Vienna, and Monsieur Merci d'Argenteau, Brussels, are the Queen's representatives in this ty.

The leaders of the Constitutional party are Lafayette, illy, Barnave, Lameth, Duport, — in a word, the Feu- nt Club. The King would ask nothing better than abandon the idea of absolute monarchism, and go h the Constitutionalists; although he inclines rather hold back than march forward.

The leaders of the Republican party are Brissot, Vergniaud, Guadet, Pétion, Roland, Isnard, Ducos, Condorcet, and Couthon.

The Anarchist chiefs are Marat, Danton, Santerre, Gonchon, Camille Desmoulins, Hébert, Legendre, Fabre d'Églantine, and Collot d'Herbois.

Dumouriez is willing to be anything anybody wants, provided he finds it for his own interest and renown.

Robespierre has retreated into the shadows. He waits!

Meanwhile, to whom shall be committed the Revolutionary flag, which that uncertain Patriot, Dumouriez, has flaunted on the rostrum of the Assembly?

To Lafayette, who bears the unenviable notoriety of causing the Champ de Mars massacre! To Luckner, who is only known to France by the mischief he did her as a partisan during the Seven Years War! To Rochambeau, who wishes only a defensive war, and is mortified by seeing Dumouriez address his orders directly to his subordinates, without submitting those orders to the criticism of Rochambeau's long experience.

Here we have the three men in command of the three military divisions, ready to enter upon this campaign.

Lafayette holds the centre. He is to rapidly follow the windings of the Meuse, and push Givet back to Namur. Luckner guards Franché Comté. Rochambeau commands in Flanders.

Supported by the detachment which Rochambeau has sent into Flanders, under the leadership of Biron, Lafayette is to capture Namur, and then march on Brussels, where the Brabant Revolution awaits him with widespread arms.

Lafayette has a fine opportunity. He is the advance guard. It is for him Dumouriez intends the first victory. That victory will make him Commander-in-chief.

Lafayette once victorious, and therefore Commander-in-chief, with Dumouriez as a successful War Secretary, the Royalists may throw the red cap to the nettles, — to the dogs, as the English might say, — and then crush the Girondists with one hand and the Jacobins with the other. Then the Counter-Revolution will be an established fact.

But Robespierre? As we have said, Robespierre has retreated into the shadow. Many go so far as to accuse him of Royalist sentiments, and pretend that there is an underground passage from the carpenter Duplay's workshop to the royal dwelling of Louis Sixteenth. Is it not from this source that the pension will hereafter come, which is to be paid, at a later day, to Mademoiselle de Robespierre, by the Duchess d'Angoulême?

This time, as always, Lafayette fails to embrace his opportunity.

The war is waged by peace-partisans. The contractors are the special friends of the enemy. They would gladly leave the troops without ammunition and without provisions, if by so doing they could supply bread and powder to the Austrians and Prussians.

Note also that Dumouriez, the man of deep intrigues and darksome tunnels, does not throw aside his relations with Orleans, — relations which will ultimately be his ruin.

Biron also is an Orleans general. Thus the Orleanists and the Feuillants, through Biron and Lafayette, may become the first to wield the sword and sound the trump of triumph.

On the morning of April 28, 1792, Biron captures Quiévrain and marches towards Mons. The next day, April 29, Théobald Dillon rushes from Lille to Tournay.

Biron and Dillon are both aristocrats. They are hand-

some, witty, dissipated, and brave young fellows, of the school of Richelieu. The one is frank in his avowal of patriotic opinions. The other will not have time to ascertain his own opinions before he is killed.

As we have stated somewhere before, the dragoons are the arm of Royalist France.

Two regiments of dragoons are at the head of Biron's three thousand men. Suddenly these dragoons, without even seeing the enemy, begin to shout: "We are betrayed! Shift for yourselves!"

Still shouting, they wheel about, and plunge through the infantry, who flee in their turn, believing themselves pursued. The panic is complete.

The same thing happens to Dillon. Dillon encounters a corps of nine hundred Austrians. The dragoons of his advance guard get frightened, run away, and drag the infantry along with them. Abandoning artillery, wagons, and military equipage, they do not pause till they bring up at Lille, whence they started.

Then the fugitives lay all the blame of their cowardice upon their chiefs, and put to death Théobald Dillon and Lieutenant-Colonel Bertois; after which they deliver the bodies of these unfortunate officers to the populace of Lille, who hang them, and then dance about their swinging corpses.

By whom has this defeat been organized, having for its aim the awakening of hesitancy in the hearts of the Patriots, and confidence in the hearts of their enemies?

The Girondists have desired war, and bleed on both sides with the double wound thus received. Well, the Girondists (and it must be confessed that all appearances confirm the opinion) blame the Court, — that is, the Queen. Their first idea is to return Marie Antoinette blow for blow; but they have given royalty time to put

on a breastplate more solid than the chain armor the Queen once gave the King, and which her Majesty, in company with Andrée, tested one night, in an obscure corner of Versailles.

Little by little the Queen has reorganized the famous guard, authorized by the Constitution for which it was named. She has enlisted not less than six thousand men.

And what men! Fencing-masters and bullies, who insult representative Patriots, even on their benches in the Assembly; gentlemen from Brittany and the Vendée; provincials from Nismes and Arles; robust priests, who, under the pretext of refusing to take the Constitutional oath, have thrown their cassocks to the winds, and taken up, instead of the sprinkler, the sword, dagger, and pistol. Besides all these, there are many Knights of the Order of Saint Louis, who have come from nobody knows where, and have been decorated nobody knows why.

Even Dumouriez complains of this in his Memoirs:

> Whatever government may succeed the one now in power, it cannot restore to honor this Order, of whose beautiful but unlucky crosses it has been so prodigal, bestowing six thousand in two years.

It is at this time that the Minister of Foreign Affairs refuses for himself the grand cordon, and has it given to Monsieur de Watteville, a major in the Swiss Regiment of Ernest.

It is necessary first to take away this armor, and then to smite the King and Queen.

Suddenly a rumor spreads abroad that a white flag has been found at the old Military Academy, — that this flag is constantly displayed, and is a gift from the

King. This recalls the incident of the white cockade, on October 5 and 6, 1789.

Everybody is astonished, so well known are the Counter-Revolutionary opinions of the King and Queen, not to see a white flag floating on the Tuileries, and they expect to see it streaming above some other public building on any fine morning.

At the report of the discovery of this flag, the people flock to the barracks. The officers of the school set out to resist the popular invasion, but the soldiers will not help their leaders.

A white flag is indeed found, — a flag as large as your hand, — which has been stuck into a loaf of cake, sent to the school by the Dauphin.

In addition to this unimportant scrap, they find a number of hymns composed in honor of the King, and some scurrilous songs about the Assembly, besides thousands of Anti-Revolutionary leaflets.

Bazire hereupon sends a report to the Assembly. The King's Guards have broken into cries of joy on learning the defeats of Tournay and Quiévrain. They have even expressed the hope that in three days Valenciennes will be taken, and that in a fortnight a foreign army will be in Paris.

Nor is that all! A cavalier in that guard, a good Frenchman named Joachim Murat, — who entered this corps under the delusion that it was what its name indicated, the Constitutional Guard, — has tendered his resignation; and there has been an effort to bribe him with money, and then send him to Coblentz.

These Constitutional Guards form a fearful weapon in the hands of royalty. May they not, under the King's orders, march upon the Assembly, besiege the Riding School, make prisoners of the National Deputies, and

them all off, one after the other? Or, not so bad as , what hinders them from taking the King, leaving s, and going with him to the frontier, — thus repeat- the Varennes flight, which this time would not be a ıre?

ccordingly on May 22, that is, three weeks after the ble check at Tournay and Quiévrain, Pétion, the new ·or of Paris, elected by the influence of the Queen, ·m he had brought back from Varennes, — a man ·m she befriends out of sheer hatred towards one who ld have been quite willing to let her escape from nce, namely, Lafayette, — Pétion sends a written ɛr to the Commander of the National Guard, in which ɔpenly expresses his fears as to the possible departure ;he King, urges the guards to "observe and watch, to multiply the patrols in the neighborhood."

'o watch what? To observe whom? Pétion does not . To multiply the patrols in what neighborhood? ɛ answer is silence.

What would be the use of saying *King* and *Tuileries* right?

Who is to be watched? *The enemy!*

Around what shall sentinels be multiplied? *Around enemy's camp!*

What is the enemy's camp? The Tuileries!

Who is the enemy? The King!

There you have the great question in a nutshell.

It is Pétion, a petty lawyer from Chartres, the son of olicitor, who thus arrays himself against the King of ance, — against a descendant of Saint Louis, a great- ndson of Louis the Fourteenth.

The King of France laments, for he knows that this ce speaks louder than his own. He complains in a ter, which the Directory of the Department of Paris

causes to be posted on the walls of the city; but Pétion is not at all disquieted. He does not answer, but he maintains his order.

So Pétion is the true king. If you doubt it, you shall presently have proof of it.

Bazire's report demands the suppression of the King's Constitutional Guard, and that a warrant of arrest shall be issued against its commander, Monsieur de Brissac.

The iron is hot. The Girondists are hammering it, — strong blacksmiths as they are. For them the question arises: "To be, or not to be?"

The decree is voted the same day. The Constitutional Guard is disbanded. The arrest of the Duke de Brissac is received, and the guardianship of the Tuileries is again placed in the hands of the National Guards.

Oh Charny, Charny! Where art thou? At Varennes a year ago, with three hundred cavalry, thine attempt to rescue the Queen was a failure! but what couldst thou not do at the Tuileries, with six thousand men?

Charny is living in bliss, forgetful of all else, in Andrée's beautiful arms.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE RUE GUÉNÉGAUD AND THE TUILERIES.

We may perhaps recall Grave's resignation of his office as Minister of War, which was partly refused by the King and wholly refused by Dumouriez. The latter was bent on retaining Grave, because Grave was Dumouriez's ally. Indeed he did keep him in office awhile. When the news came, however, of a double check to the national arms, the Minister-in-chief felt that the Minister of War must be sacrificed.

He therefore abandoned Grave, as a sop thrown to the many-headed Jacobin Cerberus, in order to stop his barking; and in Grave's place he put Colonel Servan, ex-Tutor of the Pages, whom he at once mentioned to the King.

Undoubtedly Dumouriez did not foresee what this colleague would do, and what a blow he would aim at royalty.

While the Queen was watching on the roofs of the Tuileries, so to speak, — searching the horizon for some token of the longed-for coming of the Austrians, — another woman was also on the watch, in the little parlor in the Rue Guénégaud. The one typified the Counter-Revolution; the other typified the Revolution.

It is Madame Roland to whom our last words allude. It is she who urged Servan for the ministry, as Madame de Staël had urged Narbonne. Throughout those three terrible years, 1791, 1792, 1793, the hand of woman was everywhere.

Servan was always at Madame Roland's reunions. Like all the Girondists, of whom she was the vital breath and light, — as the nymph Egeria was to Numa Pompilius, in the establishment of the religion and laws of ancient Rome, — Servan was inspired by her valiant soul, which (like the miraculous bush of Moses) forever burned without being consumed.

It was even said that she was Servan's mistress. She let them talk on; for having a clear conscience, she could smile at calumny.

Every day she saw her husband come home weighed down with the contest. He felt himself hurried towards destruction, with his colleague Clavières; but as there was nothing visible to support his allegations, they might all be denied.

On the evening when Dumouriez came to tender him the Portfolio of the Interior, Roland made certain conditions.

"I have no other fortune save mine honor," he said. "I wish to leave the cabinet with that honor unstained. A recording secretary should be present at all the deliberations of the Royal Council, and note down each member's opinion, so that my record may be seen, if ever I am found wanting in patriotism and faithless to liberty."

To this Dumouriez agreed. He felt the need of covering his own unpopularity with the mantle of the Girondist name. Dumouriez was one of those men who always promise, and then keep or forget their pledges, as it happens to suit their convenience.

Dumouriez had not kept this promise, and Roland still waited in vain for his recording secretary. As Roland could not have this private record, he resorted to publicity. He founded a journal named "The Thermometer;" but no one understood better than himself that there

d be some decisions of the Council whose disclosure
d afford treasonable aid to public enemies.
ıe nomination of Servan came as a help to Roland,
this was not enough; for this new influence being
ralized by Dumouriez, the Council made no liberal
ress.
ıe Assembly struck one blow, in disbanding the
ıtitutional Guards and arresting Brissac. On his
:n home with Servan, in the evening of May 29,
nd reported the news.
What has been done with the discharged guards-
?" asked Madame Roland.
Nothing!"
They are free, then?"
Yes! only they must put away their blue uniforms."
To-morrow they will put on the red uniform, and
ort themselves as Swiss Guards."
ure enough. The next day the streets were dotted
ı Swiss uniforms. The disbanded guardsmen had
ıged their coats, and that was all. They were there
'aris, extending a hand to foreign invaders, beckoning
n to come, and ready to open to them the city gates.
or this condition of things the two men, Roland and
'an, could see no remedy. Madame Roland took a
:t of paper, put a quill into Servan's hand, and dic-
d to him as follows:

ı proposition to establish in Paris, on account of the ap-
ıching festival of the Great Federation and the Capture of
Bastille, on July 14, an encampment of twenty thousand
ınteers.

ervan dropped the pen after writing this one phrase.
he King will never consent!" he said.

"Well, it is not to the King this measure should be proposed, but to the Assembly. Moreover, it should not be suggested by yourself as a Royal Councillor, but as a citizen."

By the gleam of this lightning-flash, Servan and Roland could see an immense horizon stretching before them.

"You are right!" said Servan. "With that, and also an edict against the priesthood, we shall hold the King."

"You understand me perfectly, do you not?" said Madame. "The priests are the Counter-Revolutionary influence in families and in society. The priesthood have added this phrase to the Creed: *and those who pay their taxes shall be damned!* Within six months fifty Constitutionally sworn priests have been slain, — their houses sacked, their fields devastated. Now let the Assembly aim a strong decree at the rebellious priests. Finish your proposal! Roland will prepare the other!"

Servan finished his document, while Roland wrote as follows:

Every rebel priest shall be taken outside the kingdom, within a month, if his removal is demanded by twenty registered citizens, approved by the district officers, and ordained by the government. Each exile shall receive three francs a day, for the defrayal of his travelling expenses as far as the frontier.

Servan read his proposition as to the proposed camp of twenty thousand volunteers. Roland read his outline of an edict for the expulsion of the priests. Therein lay the solution of the whole difficulty.

Would the King act frankly in regard to these projects? Would he act treacherously?

If the King were an honest Constitutionalist, he must

sign both these decrees. If not, he must oppose his veto.

"I will sign my proposition for a volunteer camp as if I were an ordinary citizen," said Servan.

"And Vergniaud shall propose the decree against the priests," said the husband and wife, both at once.

The next day Servan sprung his demand upon the Assembly. Vergniaud put the other paper in his pocket, and promised to bring it out at the proper time.

On the evening after he sent his proposal to the Assembly, Servan attended the Council as usual. Of course his action was under discussion. Roland and Clavières sustained it, against Dumouriez, Lacoste, and Duranthon.

"Come, Monsieur!" cried the Premier, "and give an account of your conduct."

"To whom, if you please?" asked Servan.

"To the King, to the Nation, — to me!" Servan only smiled.

"Monsieur," continued Dumouriez, "you have to-day taken a very important step."

"Yes, I am aware of it, Monsieur, — a step of the highest importance."

"Had you orders from the King for thus acting?"

"No, Monsieur! I acknowledge that I had not."

"Did you take advice from your colleagues?"

"No more than from the King. That I also avow."

"Then why did you take this step?"

"Because it was my privilege, both as a private individual and as a citizen."

"Then it was as a private citizen you presented this incendiary motion?"

"Yes!"

"Why then did you add to your signature your title as Minister of War?"

"Because I wished to show the Assembly that I am ready to support, as a public officer, what I demand as a private citizen."

"Monsieur," said the Premier, "what you have done is unworthy equally of a citizen and a royal minister."

"Monsieur," said Servan, "permit me to say that I must be the judge of all matters pertaining to my conscience; and if I seek for any other judge in a question so delicate, I promise you his name will not be Dumouriez."

Dumouriez grew pale, and took a step towards Servan. Servan grasped his sword-hilt. Dumouriez did the same.

At this moment the King entered. He was as yet ignorant of Servan's proposal, and nothing further was then said about it.

The next day the Assembly entered upon a discussion of this proposal to convene twenty thousand Federal Volunteers in Paris.

The King was in consternation over this intelligence, and sent for his Premier.

"You are a loyal servant, Monsieur," said the King, "and I know how vigorously you have taken hold of royal interests, as an offset to this contemptible Servan."

"I thank your Majesty," said Dumouriez. Then he asked, after a pause: "The King is aware that the obnoxious decree has been passed?"

"No! but that does n't matter. I have decided, in that case, to exercise my right of veto."

Dumouriez shook his head.

"Is n't that your advice?" asked the King.

"Sire," replied the Premier, "you are the target for the suspicions of the greater part of our country. You are without the means of resistance, and against you

are directed the rage of the Jacobins and the deep policy of the Republicans. Under these circumstances such a veto on your part would be equivalent to a declaration of war with the Assembly."

"Very well! So be it! I have made war upon my friends who are outside. I may as well have war with my friends inside."

"In one case you have ten chances of victory. In the other you have ten chances of defeat."

"You evidently do not understand the object of assembling these twenty thousand men "

"If your Majesty will allow me five minutes of free speech, I hope to prove that I not only know what is hoped for, but also what will come out of all this."

"Speak on! I am all attention!" said the King; and with his elbow on the arm of his chair, and his head in his hand, Louis Sixteenth listened.

"Sire, they who ask for this enactment are as much the country's enemies as the King's."

"You see," interrupted Louis, "you acknowledge it yourself!"

"I will say more, — that the accomplishment of their desires will bring them bad luck."

"Well then —"

"Permit me, Sire —"

"Yes, yes! Go on!"

"The Minister of War did very wrong to propose an assemblage of twenty thousand men near Paris, while our armies are so feeble, our frontiers so bare, and our treasury so empty."

"Wrong?" said the King. "I should say so!"

"Not merely wrong, but imprudent, — which is even worse. It will be imprudent to have such an assemblage of undisciplined troops so near the Assembly, — troops

disposed to overrate their patriotism, and liable to be brought under control by the first ambitious leader."

"It is really the Girondists who are speaking through Servan's voice!"

"Yes," replied Dumouriez, "but the Girondists will not profit by it!"

"Perhaps the Feuillants will be benefited?"

"Neither Feuillants nor Girondists, but the Jacobins, who have affiliations throughout the kingdom, and who will perhaps find nineteen thousand of their own liege members among the twenty thousand volunteers. Be certain of this, Sire, that the promoters of this edict will be overturned by the edict itself."

"If I could believe that, I should be consoled," said the King.

"I think, Sire, the decree is dangerous to the Nation, to the King, to the National Assembly, and, above all, to its authors, who will find their chastisement in their own action. Therefore my opinion is that you cannot well do otherwise than sanction it. It has been evoked by malice so profound that I venture to say there is a woman at the bottom of it!"

"Madame Roland, you mean? Why are not women content to sew and knit, instead of turning themselves into politicians?"

"What would you have, Sire? Madame de Maintenon, Madame de Pompadour, and Madame Dubarry made women lose their old habits. This decree, I say, has been instigated by deep malice, has been fiercely debated, and has been adopted with enthusiasm. Everybody is blind to the effects of this wretched decree. Even if you add your veto, the decree will be put into execution just the same. Instead of merely twenty thousand men, assembled according to law, and consequently submissive

to lawful power, at the approaching Federative Festival, forty thousand men, who have not been thus legally summoned, will flock to Paris from the provinces, — enough to upset the Constitution, the Assembly, and the Crown at one blow! If we had been the vanquishers instead of the vanquished in our recent battles," added Dumouriez, lowering his voice, "if I had thus found a good pretext for making Lafayette Commander-in-chief, and putting a hundred thousand men under his control, then I should not bid you sanction this decree; but we are beaten at home and abroad, so I bid you sign it."

Just then there was a tap at the King's door. "Enter!" said Louis. It was the chamberlain, Thierry.

"Sire, Monsieur Duranthon, the Minister of Justice, wishes to confer with your Majesty."

"What can he want? See to it, Dumouriez."

The instant the Premier left the room the tapestry which covered the door communicating with the Queen's room was lifted, and Marie Antoinette appeared.

"Sire, Sire," she said, "be firm! This Dumouriez is a Jacobin, like the others. Did he not put on their red cap at the club? As to Lafayette, as you know, I would rather be ruined outright than be saved by that man!"

As the Premier's returning step was heard, the tapestry fell and the vision disappeared.

CHAPTER XL.

THE VETO.

As the portière fell back into its usual place the public door reopened.

"Sire," said Dumouriez, "on the motion of Vergniaud, the edict against the priests has been passed."

"It 's a conspiracy!" said the King, rising. "And how was the edict expressed?"

"Here it is, Sire. Duranthon brought it to you. I thought your Majesty would do me the honor of privately giving me your opinion about it, before conferring with the whole Council."

"You are right. Give me the paper."

With a voice trembling with agitation the King read the decree, written by Roland and proposed by Vergniaud, the text whereof has already been given.

After reading it, the King crushed it in his hands and threw it away, saying: "I will never sanction such an edict."

"Excuse me, Sire, for once more having a mind opposed to your Majesty's."

"Monsieur, I may hesitate in political matters, but in religious matters, — never! In political affairs I decide with the intellect, and the intellect is fallible. In matters of religion I decide according to my conscience, and conscience is infallible."

"Sire, more than a year ago you approved the law in regard to administering the Constitutional oath to the priests."

"Ah Monsieur! but I was forced to it!"

"Sire, then was the proper time to affix your veto. This second edict is only a natural result of the first. The first edict has produced all the evils in France. This edict is the remedy for those evils. It is severe, but not cruel. The other was an anti-religious edict. It attacked freedom of thought in matters of worship. The new law is political, and concerns only the security and tranquillity of the kingdom. It protects unsworn priests from persecution. Your veto, instead of protecting them, will deprive them of judicial aid, expose them to massacre, and force France to become their executioner. This is my opinion, Sire, — excuse a soldier's frankness, — this is my opinion, which I venture to express, — that having endorsed the former decree, making the oath almost compulsory, your veto of the second decree, — which may prevent an impending deluge of blood, — your veto, Sire, will burden your Majesty's conscience with all the crimes to which it may lead among the populace."

"To what crimes will it lead, Monsieur, — to what crimes greater than those already committed?" asked a voice from the end of the room.

Dumouriez started at the sound of this resonant voice. He recognized the Queen's metallic and ringing accent.

"Ah Madame!" he said, "I should have greatly preferred pursuing this discussion entirely with the King."

With a bitter smile at Dumouriez, and an almost scornful glance at the King, she said: "Monsieur, I have only one question to ask you."

"What is it, Madame?"

"Do you think the King ought longer to endure Roland's threats, Servan's knavery, and the insolence of Clavières?"

"No, Madame," said Dumouriez. "I am as indignant as yourself on that point. I wonder at the King's patience; and if we may now grapple with that question, I shall dare to beg the King to make an entire change in his Council."

"Entire?" said the King.

"Yes, — that your Majesty will send away the whole six of us, and select advisers who do not belong to any party, — if they can be found."

"No, no!" said the King. "I wish you to remain, — you and the worthy Lacoste, and also Duranthon; but do me the favor of disembarrassing me of those three insolent partisans, for I swear to you that my patience is exhausted."

"A dangerous undertaking, Sire."

"And you shrink from the danger?" said the Queen.

"No, Madame; only I must make certain conditions."

"Your conditions?" said the Queen, haughtily. The Premier bowed.

"Speak on, Monsieur!" said the King.

"Sire, I am the target of the three factions which divide Paris. The Feuillants, the Girondists, and the Jacobins all aim at me. I have become decidedly unpopular; and as it is only with the support of public opinion that one can hold the reins of government, I can be really useful to you only under one condition."

"Well?"

"Let it be said publicly, Sire, that I remain in the Council, — I and my two colleagues, — only to sanction the two edicts just passed, about the priestly oath and the military camp."

"That cannot be!" cried the King.

"Impossible! Impossible!" said the Queen.

"You refuse?"

"My most cruel enemy, Monsieur," said the King, "could not well impose upon me very much harder conditions."

"Sire, on my word as a gentleman and a soldier, I believe them essential to your safety."

Turning to the Queen, he continued: "Madame, if not for yourself, — if the intrepid daughter of Maria Theresa not only despises danger, but, following her mother's example, is ready to encounter it, — pray remember that you are not alone. Think of the King! Think of your children! Instead of pushing them into the abyss, join hands with me in holding back his Majesty from the precipice over which his throne already totters."

Then he added, speaking directly to the King: "If I judged the sanction of these two decrees advisable, — even before his Majesty expressed his desire to be rid of the factious half of his cabinet, which so weighs upon him, — the proposition to dismiss these three secretaries now makes the royal endorsement of these obnoxious decrees indispensable. If you send away these secretaries without endorsing these decrees, the people will have two motives for displeasure. They will regard you as an enemy of the Constitution, and the discharged ministers will pose as martyrs; and I will not promise that the gravest events may not imperil your crown and your life before many days. As for myself, I forewarn your Majesty that I cannot, even to serve royalty, go contrary, I will not say to my principles, but to my convictions. Duranthon and Lacoste think as I do, though I am not commissioned to speak for them. As far as I am concerned, however, as I have said, Sire, — and now I repeat it, — I cannot remain in the Council unless your Majesty signs both these new laws."

The King moved impatiently. Dumouriez started for the door.

The King exchanged a rapid glance with the Queen, who called the Premier by name.

Dumouriez paused, and she continued: "Do you realize how hard it is for the King to sanction a decree which will bring to Paris twenty thousand miscreants who would like to murder us?"

"Madame, the peril is great, I know. That is a reason for facing it, but not for exaggerating it. The decree empowers the Executive to name the gathering-place of these twenty thousand men, — who are not all rascals, however. Moreover, it confides to the Secretary of War the appointment of the officers and the methods of organization."

"And the Secretary of War is Servan!"

"No, Sire. From the moment of Servan's retirement, the War Secretary is myself."

"What, you?" said the King.

"You will take the Portfolio of War?" demanded the Queen.

"Yes, Madame; and I hope I may be able to turn against your enemies the sword now suspended over your own heads."

The King and the Queen again exchanged consulting glances.

"Suppose," continued the Premier, "that I should name Soissons as the place of encampment, and that I should name as commander some firm and wise lieutenant-general, with two good marshals under him. They might form the men into battalions. As there would be four or five divisions, the War Secretary could avail himself of the demands of our generals in the field, and send one or more of these divisions to the frontier.

Then, as you see, Sire, this edict, though voted with bad intent, so far from being a hindrance to us, will be very useful."

"But are you sure of obtaining permission to place the camp at Soissons?" asked the King.

"Sure of it!"

"In that case, take the War Office!"

"Sire, as Minister of Foreign Affairs I have only a light and indirect responsibility. It is quite otherwise with the Department of War. Your generals are my enemies. You have already learned their weakness. I shall be held responsible for their faults; but as this concerns your Majesty's life, as well as the safety of the Queen and your august children, and the maintenance of the Constitution, I accept the burden. We are therefore agreed on one point, — the endorsement of the edict about the twenty thousand volunteers?"

"If you are Secretary of War, I confide myself entirely to your judgment."

"Then let us come to the edict about priests."

"That I can never sanction, as I have already told you."

"You have made your sanction of this second decree necessary by sanctioning the former decree, relating to the same subject."

"I committed a fault, for which I reproach myself. That is no reason why I should be guilty of a second, greater than the first."

"Sire!" said the Queen.

Louis turned towards his wife, and asked: "You also, Madame?"

"Sire," said the Queen, "I must acknowledge that on this point, after the explication which he has given us, I am of the Premier's opinion."

"Well, then —" said the King.

"Well, Sire —?" repeated Dumouriez.

"I consent! but with the condition that you relieve me of my three obnoxious ministers as soon as possible!"

"Believe me, Sire, that I will seize the first occasion to do so; and I feel confident that occasion is not far off."

Saluting their Majesties, the Premier then retired. They gazed after their new War Minister till the door closed behind him.

"You made me a sign to agree to his proposal," said the King. "Now what have you to say about it?"

"Accept first the military edict. Let the camp be established at Soissons. Let Dumouriez disperse the men as he proposes; and afterward — well, afterward you can see what had better be done about the priestly edict."

"But he would remind me of my pledge, Madame!"

"Good! He would be compromised, and you would have a hold upon him."

"On the contrary, he would have a hold upon me, Madame! He has my word!"

"Bah! There 's a remedy for that, when one has been trained by such a Jesuit as Monsieur de la Vauguyon!" and taking the King's arm, she drew him with her into the next room.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE OCCASION.

As we have already hinted, the real battle was now between the Rue Guénégaud and the Tuileries, between the Queen and Madame Roland.

It is indeed strange that both these women exercised over their husbands an influence which led all four to death; only they travelled towards this end by opposite roads.

The events which we have narrated took place on June 10. The next day, in the evening, Servan came joyously to Madame Roland's.

"Congratulate me, dear friend," he said. "I have the honor of being turned out of the Council."

"How so?" asked Madame Roland.

"This is actually the fact. This morning I went to the King, for an interview about certain affairs in my department. When those had been attended to, I warmly attacked the question of the encampment for twenty thousand volunteers; but — "

"But —?"

"At the first word I spoke, his Majesty turned his back on me, being in a very bad humor; and this evening, in his Majesty's name, Dumouriez sent to me for the War Portfolio."

"Dumouriez?"

"Yes!"

"He is playing a villanous part, but that does n't surprise me. Ask Roland what I said to him about that

man, the evening he came to us for the first time. Besides, we are informed that he is in daily conference with the Queen."

"He 's a traitor!"

"No! but he 's ambitious. Go and find Roland and Clavières."

"Where is Roland?"

"He is attending to his duties at the Bureau of the Interior."

"And you, — what are you about meanwhile?"

"Writing a letter which I will communicate to you on your return. — So be off!"

"You are certainly the famous Goddess of Reason, whom philosophers have invoked from time immemorial."

"And whom conscientious people have found. — Don't come back without Clavières."

"That request will probably cause some delay."

"I need an hour."

"Take it! and may the Genius of France inspire you!"

Servan went away. Hardly was the door shut before Madame Roland was at her desk, writing the following letter to the King, though it was not to appear in her own name.

SIRE: The present state of affairs in France cannot long continue. It is a crucial condition, whose tide is attaining its highest mark. It cannot but end in a storm, which must concern your Majesty as well as the whole country.

Honored with your confidence, and placed in a position where I owe you the truth, I venture to speak. Indeed, this is an obligation imposed upon me by yourself.

The French people have had a Constitution bestowed upon them. Some it makes discontented, and some rebellious; but the majority of the people wish to maintain it. They have sworn to maintain it, even at the cost of their own

blood, and they have even joyfully greeted a civil war, which offered them a strong means of ensuring the maintenance of the Constitution.

Meanwhile the minority, buoyed up by certain encouragements, have used every effort to get the advantage. Hence an internal struggle against the laws. Hence the anarchy which good citizens lament, and which evil-wishers have used as an occasion for deriding the new order of things. Out of this arise the divisions everywhere showing themselves; for indifference is nowhere to be found. There is a popular demand for either the triumph or the amendment of the Constitution. People are working for either its maintenance or its alteration.

I herein abstain from any examination of what the Constitution is in itself, in order to consider only what present circumstances require. So far as possible I place myself outside the Constitution, in order to learn what is expected of it, and what measures ought to be favored.

Your Majesty rejoices in certain important prerogatives, which you believe to rightfully belong to royalty. Brought up with the idea of maintaining those prerogatives, you cannot gladly see them taken away. The desire for their restoration is as natural as regret at their disappearance.

These sentiments, which inhere in the nature of the human heart, must have entered into the calculations of the enemies of the Revolution. They have counted on secret favor, until such a time as circumstances may permit open protection. These tendencies cannot escape the notice of the Nation, and they inspire distrust.

Your Majesty has been constantly placed between two alternatives. On the one side you have been tempted to seek a return to ancient customs and personal preferences. On the other you have been urged to make those personal sacrifices which are dictated by philosophy and exacted by necessity.

This has led you to doubt whether you should embolden the malecontents who disturb the Nation, or appease the Nation by uniting yourself with it. Everything has an end, however, and the end of uncertainty has at last arrived.

Will his Majesty openly ally himself with those who pretend to wish to reform the Constitution, or generously and unreservedly devote himself to making it triumphant? That is the question whose solution is rendered inevitable by the absolute condition of things.

As to that very metaphysical inquiry, whether the French people are ripe for liberty, its discussion is not now in order; for it does not concern us so much to decide what our people may be a century hence, as to know of what the present generation is capable.

The Declaration of Human Rights, so early adopted by the Assembly, has become a political Gospel, and the French Constitution has already become a religion, for which the people are ready to die. This elation has already reached a point where it sometimes overrides the laws; and where the laws were not strong enough to repress malecontents, citizens have taken retribution into their own hands. In this way the estates and property of refugees, or of persons known to belong to their party, have been exposed to ravages inspired by revenge. This is why the authorities, in so many districts, have been obliged to deal severely with those priests who are proscribed by a public opinion which makes them its victims.

In this collision of interests, all sentiments have taken on a tinge of passion. *Our Country* is not simply a phrase for the imagination to dilate upon and embellish. It is a living being, for which sacrifices must be made, and which is the more endeared to us by the solicitude it causes. The Nation has been developed by great efforts, and reared in the midst of anxieties; and she is loved as much for what she has cost as for the hopes she holds forth. All the attacks made upon her but add so much fuel to the popular enthusiasm in her behalf.

To what a height will not this enthusiasm mount, whenever the united forces of our outside enemies combine with intestine intrigues to smite our Nation with fatal blows?

There are great disturbances in all parts of the kingdom. This fermentation will lead to a terrible explosion, unless

calmed by a rational confidence in your Majesty's intentions. This confidence cannot be built on protestations. It must rest upon a basis of facts.

It is evident that the Constitution will be an established fact for the French Nation, and that our government will have all essential guarantees, as soon as your Majesty — absolutely desiring the success of that Constitution — is ready to sustain the Legislature to the full extent of your power in the Executive Department, so that the uneasiness of the people may be removed, and no aid and comfort be afforded to malecontents.

For example, two important edicts have been passed by the Assembly. Both intimately concern the public peace and the safety of the state. Delay in signing these edicts rouses distrust. If prolonged, it will cause great dissatisfaction.

In view of this impending effervescence of the public mind — I must say this — the turbulent elements of society may sweep all before them.

It is no longer possible to draw back. There are no further means of temporizing. The Revolution has taken fast hold upon our minds. It will become an accomplished fact, even at the price of blood; and therewith it will be cemented, unless wisdom anticipates such a misfortune, which it is yet possible to evade.

I am aware that some people imagine that anything can be accomplished or upheld by extreme measures; but if force should be employed to constrain our Assembly, as soon as terror spread over Paris, and division and dismay seized upon the suburbs, all France would rise in indignation. Torn with the horrors of civil war the Nation would develop that gloomy energy, — mother alike of virtues and of crimes, — always fatal to those who provoked it.

The welfare of the state and the happiness of your Majesty are closely connected. No force can separate them. Cruel woes and dire misfortunes will surround your throne, if it is not planted by yourself on the groundwork of the Constitution, and so bound firmly to that peace which the maintenance of that Constitution must finally procure for us.

Thus it is that the public disposition, the general course of events, political policy, and your Majesty's interest, all render indispensable your obligation to unite with the legislative body in responding to the wishes of the Nation. These reasons make a necessity of what principle sets forth as a duty. The natural sensibility of an affectionate people is ready to adopt any method of showing its gratitude.

You have been cruelly deceived, Sire, by those who have inspired you to distrust the people, or estrange yourself from subjects so easily touched with affection. It is through your perpetual alarm from this direction, that you have been pushed into a line of conduct which causes public disturbance. Only let it be seen that you are resolved to aid the success of the Constitution with which the popular happiness is so bound up, and soon you will again become the object of your people's fervent prayers.

The conduct of the priests in many sections affords a pretext which encourages the fanaticism of agitators, and this has made it necessary to pass a law against such disturbers. Oh that your Majesty would approve that edict! The public tranquillity demands it. The safety of the priesthood requires it. If that law is not put into operation, the departmental authorities will be compelled to substitute violent measures in place of legal measures, as has already been done in all directions, and the irritated people will rush into immediate excesses.

The attempts of our enemies; the agitation which has manifested itself in the capital; the great anxiety inspired by the behavior of your disbanded guards, and especially the ardent satisfaction shown by your Majesty, in a proclamation decidedly impolitic under the circumstances; the situation of Paris, and its nearness to the frontiers, — all these facts have created a necessity for a military encampment in our neighborhood.

This measure, whose urgency and expediency commend it to all well-disposed minds, still awaits your Majesty's approval. Why is tardiness allowed to give this approval an air of reluctance, when celerity would win all hearts?

Already the efforts of the staff-officers of the Parisian National Guards against this measure have roused the suspicion

that they are instigated thereto by a higher authority. Already the declarations of several fanatical demagogues have awakened a suspicion of their alliance with those who are interested in the overturn of the Constitution. Already these facts have compromised your Majesty's intentions. If there is further delay, the disappointed people will see in their sovereign the friend and accomplice of conspirators.

Great Heaven! hast thou struck earthly powers with blindness? Shall we never have other counsel than that which leads to ruin?

I know that the severe language of truth is rarely welcome near the throne. I know also that revolutions are made necessary by the fact that truth is so seldom heard by royalty. I also know that I sustain to your Majesty, not solely the relation of a simple citizen, amenable to the laws, but also the relation of a cabinet-minister, honored with your confidence, and clothed with functions which confirm that trust; and I am unacquainted with any reason which should prevent me from fulfilling a duty I owe to my conscience.

It is in the same spirit that I reiterate my representations to your Majesty, as to the obligation and utility of putting into execution the law which ordains the appointment of a recording secretary for your Council. The simple existence of this law speaks so powerfully, that the execution thereof should follow without delay. It is important that all means should be employed to give such deliberations the proper gravity, prudence, and maturity; and if cabinet-ministers are to be held responsible, their opinions should be duly recorded. If such records were kept, I should not now be writing this letter to your Majesty.

Life is naught to one who esteems duty as of the highest importance; but next the happiness of having fulfilled the obligations of conscience, the single remaining pleasure is to prove that this task has been faithfully performed; and even that charge is not merely a public officer's pleasure, but his duty.

June 10, 1792.
The year IV. of Liberty.

This letter was hardly finished, and Madame Roland had barely traced the last word, when Servan, Clavières, and Roland came in.

In two words Madame Roland unfolded her plan to the three friends.

The letter, which was now read among the three, was to be next day read to the other three ministers, Dumouriez, Lacoste, and Duranthon.

Either they would approve it, and add their signatures, or they would reject it. In the latter event, Servan, Clavières, and Roland would at once offer their resignations, moved to do so by the refusal of their colleagues to sign a letter which seemed truly to express the opinions and wishes of the French people.

Then they would deposit the letter with the National Assembly, that there might be no doubt throughout France of the cause of the withdrawal of these Patriots from the Council.

The letter was read by the three friends, who did not find a word they wished to change. Madame Roland was the common soul, from which each drank the elixir of patriotism.

It was not the same on the morrow, after the letter was read by Roland to Dumouriez, Duranthon, and Lacoste.

All three approved the ideas, but differed as to the manner of expressing those ideas. At last they rejected the letter, declaring it would be worth more if reported personally to the King. Of course this was only an evasion of the question.

That evening Roland sent the letter to the King, signed by himself alone. Almost immediately Lacoste sent a dismissal to Roland and Clavières.

As Dumouriez had said to the King, they did not have

long to wait for an occasion of dismission. It is also true that the King did not try to retard the occasion.

The next day, as had been planned, Roland's letter was read from the rostrum of the Assembly, at the same time as the announcement of the removal of himself and his two colleagues, Clavières and Servan.

By an immense majority the Assembly voted a record of its opinion, that the three deposed ministers deserved well of their country.

Thus war was declared both inside and outside France. Before dealing the opening blows, the Assembly only waited to learn what were the King's intentions in reference to the two decrees.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE PUPIL OF MONSIEUR DE LA VAUGUYON.

At the very moment when the Assembly was voting, by acclamation, thanks to the three retiring ministers, and ordering that Roland's letter should be printed and sent to all the departments of the kingdom, Dumouriez appeared at the legislative door.

He was known to be brave, but it was not supposed that he was audacious.

He had been apprised of what was going on, and had come boldly to take the bull by the horns.

The pretext for his appearance at the Assembly at that moment was a remarkable report on the condition of the Nation's military forces. As Minister of War only since the evening previous, he had, with the help of others, prepared this report during a single night. It was an attack upon Servan, which in reality fell upon Grave, and above all upon their predecessor, Narbonne. Servan had only been minister during ten or twelve days.

Dumouriez came well fortified. He had just left the King, whom he had urged to remain faithful to his double pledge in regard to his approval of the two decrees; and the King had responded, not only by renewing his promise, but by affirming that the clergy, whom he had consulted in order to satisfy his conscience, were of the same opinion as Dumouriez. So the War Minister went straight to the rostrum, which he ascended amid confused outcries and fierce shouts.

As soon as he reached the platform he coolly asked for a hearing.

This was granted, in the midst of an ungovernable tumult. At last, curiosity to hear what Dumouriez had to say brought about a calm.

"Gentlemen, General Gouvion has recently been killed. God has rewarded him for his courage. He died fighting the enemies of France. He is indeed happy! He is not a witness of our frightful discords! I envy his lot!"

Such words, uttered with dignity and deep melancholy, made their impression on the Assembly. Moreover this death caused a diversion in the sentiments of the members. They began to consider what ought to be done by the Assembly, in order to express its regret to the General's family, and it was decided that the President should write a letter of condolence.

Then Dumouriez again asked for the floor, which was again accorded.

He drew his report from his pocket; but hardly had he read the title, "Report on the Ministry of War," before the Girondists and Jacobins began to yell, in order to prevent him from reading it.

In the midst of this noise he read the introduction, but in such elevated tones, and with such clear enunciation, that they could not help hearing that this exordium dwelt upon the respect due a cabinet-minister, and was also an attack upon party divisions.

Such cheek was likely to excite his hearers, even if they had been in a less irritable mood.

"Do you hear him?" cried Guadet. "He already feels so sure of his strength, that he dares take us to task!"

"Why not?" replied Dumouriez, tranquilly, turning towards his interrupter.

It was long ago said, and truly, that in France the

most prudent thing is courage. Dumouriez's courage vanquished his adversaries. They held their peace. That is, as they wished to hear, they listened.

The report was learned, luminous, able. Strong as was the prejudice against the speaker, he was twice applauded.

Lacuée, who was a member of the Committee on Military Affairs, took the stand to reply, while Dumouriez rolled up the report and was coolly replacing it in his pocket.

The Girondists saw this movement, and one of them called out: "See him, the traitor! He 's putting his report into his pocket. He means to run away with it. Stop him! That document will serve to confound him later on!"

At this outcry Dumouriez, who had not taken a single step towards the entrance, again drew the report from his pocket, and offered it to an usher.

A secretary stretched out his hand to receive it; and having received it, he searched for the signature. "Gentlemen, the report is not signed."

"Sign it! Sign it!" came from all sides.

"That was my intention," said Dumouriez. "So religiously is it drawn up, that I need not hesitate about putting my name to it. Give me the ink and a quill!"

Some one offered him a quill wet with ink. He then set one foot on the platform steps, and signed the report upon his knee.

The usher offered to take it again; but Dumouriez pushed him aside, and went and deposited the report on the desk. Then he crossed the hall with short steps, stopping here and there, and went out through the door behind the benches on the left.

His entry had been greeted with yells and shouts; but

his exit, on the other hand, was accompanied by the profoundest silence.

The spectators in the galleries hurried out through the corridors, to have another look at the man who had dared to confront the whole Assembly.

At the Feuillant gate he was surrounded by three or four hundred persons, who pressed about him through curiosity or dislike, as if they had foreseen that three months later he would be the savior of France at Valmy.

Several Royalist Deputies left the hall, one after the other, and ran after Dumouriez. In their minds there was no longer any doubt that the General belonged to their party. This was precisely what Dumouriez had anticipated; and this was why he had made the King promise to sanction the two edicts.

"Well, General," said one of them, "they are raising the Devil in there!"

"They may well do that," answered Dumouriez, "for I don't know but what the Devil is at the bottom of it."

"You don't know?" said another. "Why, the Assembly has raised the question whether it is not best to send you to Orleans, and let you be tried there."

"Good!" said Dumouriez. "I need a vacation. There I can take the baths, drink fresh milk, and get rested."

"General," cried a third person, "they are voting not to print your report."

"So much the better. It is a blunder which will win unprejudiced observers to my side."

In the midst of such an escort and of such speeches Dumouriez arrived at the palace. The King welcomed him most cordially, for now the War Minister was decidedly compromised.

The new Council was already in session. In dismissing Roland, Servan, and Clavières, the Premier had believed himself well able to replace them.

For Minister of the Interior he proposed Mourgues, of Montpellier, a Protestant and a member of several scientific academies, who had formerly belonged to the Feuillant Club. This name the King had accepted.

For the Foreign Portfolio he had proposed either Maulde, Sémonville, or Naillac. The King preferred Naillac.

For Secretary of Finance he had proposed Vergennes, a nephew of the old Secretary. Vergennes was acceptable to the King, who immediately sent after him; but this gentleman, though expressing a deep attachment to the King, declined the honor.

It was therefore decided that during the interim the Finance Portfolio should be held by the Secretary of the Interior; and that while waiting for the return of Naillac, who was absent from Paris, Dumouriez should continue in charge of Foreign Affairs.

These four ministers, however, did not conceal from themselves the gravity of the situation; and they agreed that if the King, after the dismissal of Servan, Clavières, and Roland, should not keep the promise which was the price of this dismissal, they also would resign.

The new Council, as we have said, was already in session. The King knew what had taken place at the Assembly. He congratulated Dumouriez on the attitude he had maintained, and immediately signed the decree for the establishment of a camp of twenty thousand volunteers; but he postponed till the next day his official approval of the edict concerning the recalcitrant priests. He said he had still some scruples of conscience, which might be relieved by his confessor.

The ministers looked at one another. A faint suspicion glided through their minds. All things considered, however, the King's timorous conscience might need this delay, in order to become thoroughly strengthened.

The next day the Council returned to the question of the evening before. Sure enough, the night had done its work. The King's will was strengthened, if not his conscience. He declared he should append his veto to that edict.

One after the other, Dumouriez leading, — because to him the royal pledge had been personally given, — the four ministers spoke to the King firmly, but respectfully.

The King listened with closed eyes, in the attitude of a man who has made up his mind. When they had all spoken he said: "Gentlemen, I have written a letter to the President of the Assembly, to inform him of my resolution. One of you will countersign it, and all four of you will take the letter to the Assembly."

This was an order, issued in the style of the old régime, but ill-sounding to the ears of ministers made responsible under the Constitution.

"Sire," said Dumouriez, after an ocular consultation with his colleagues, "have you no other commands to issue?"

"No!" replied the King; and then he at once left the room.

The ministers remained in their places and voted to request an audience for next day. It was agreed that they should enter into no explanations, but simply resign in a body.

Dumouriez returned home. The King had almost beaten him in the game of politics, the finesse of diplomacy, — him, the general whose courage had been doubly buttressed by intrigue!

He found three notes from different persons, announcing mischievous gatherings in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, and cabals at Santerre's brewery. He at once wrote to the King to warn him of these occurrences.

An hour later he received a billet, not signed by the King, but in his handwriting:

Do not imagine, Monsieur, that I am to be intimidated by threats. My stand is taken.

In his turn Dumouriez seized his pen and wrote:

SIRE: You misjudge me, if you suppose me capable of employing such a method of maintaining my position. My colleagues and myself have the honor of writing to your Majesty, to ask for the favor of an audience to-morrow, at ten in the forenoon. Meanwhile I beg your Majesty to have the goodness to accept my resignation, and to select a successor who will take my place within twenty-four hours, and take charge of the departments both of War and Foreign Affairs.

This letter he sent by a clerk, in order to ensure a response. The clerk departed exactly at midnight, and in half an hour returned with the following note:

I will meet my ministers to-morrow at ten, and we will then talk over what you have written.

The Counter-Revolution was evidently at work in the palace. The Crown must indeed depend upon some reliable support.

There were the Constitutional Guards. To be sure they had been disbanded, but they were ready to come together at the first call.

Then there were seven or eight thousand Chevaliers of the Order of Saint Louis, for whom their red ribbon was a rallying sign.

Three Swiss battalions, of sixteen hundred men each, constituted an impregnable body of men, firm as the ancient Helvetian rocks.

Better than all was a letter from Lafayette, in which this phrase occurred:

> Persist, Sire! Strong in the authority delegated to you by the National Assembly, you will find all good Frenchmen arrayed in support of your throne!

Thus we see that something might be done. This was what was proposed: in one breath to reunite the Constitutional Guards, together with the Knights of Saint Louis and the Swiss mercenaries; on the same day, and at the same hour, to seize upon the cannon in the different sections, close the Assembly and the Jacobin Club, rally all the Royalist members of the National Guard, — forming a contingency of some fifteen thousand men, — and then wait for Lafayette, who in three days of forced marching could come from Ardennes.

Unfortunately the Queen would not listen to the suggestion of Lafayette's assistance. He was a moderate Revolutionist. In the Queen's opinion a moderate Revolution might be able to establish itself and persistently hold its own; whereas a Jacobin Revolution would run into such extremes that it could not last.

Oh, if Charny had only been there! but nobody knew where Charny was; and even if they had known, it would have been too great a humiliation for the Queen — not to mention the woman — to run after him.

The night was passed in tumultuous deliberation at the palace. The Court had the means of defence, and even of attack; but there was lacking a strong hand to arrange and direct.

At ten in the forenoon the ministers came. This was

on June 16. The King received them in his private parlor.

Duranthon spoke first. In the name of all four, and with tender and deep respect, he offered the resignations of himself and colleagues.

"Yes, I quite understand you," said the King, — "the responsibility!"

"Sire," said Lacoste, "the *royal* responsibility! As to ourselves, you may surely believe that we are ready to die for your Majesty; but by dying for a set of priests, we should only hasten the fall of royalty."

Louis turned to Dumouriez. "Do you still entertain the same sentiments which you expressed in your letter?"

"Yes, Sire," responded Dumouriez, "if your Majesty is not converted by the fidelity of our attachment."

"Very well!" said the King, with a gloomy air. "If your decision is made, I accept your resignations, and will attend to your affairs."

All four bowed. Mourgues had his resignation already written out, and handed it to the King. The others gave theirs orally.

There were courtiers waiting in the antechamber. They saw the ministers come out, and saw, by the official faces, that all was over. Some courtiers rejoiced. Others were scared. The atmosphere was heavy, as often happens in the hot days of summer, and everybody felt the coming of the storm.

At the gates of the Tuileries, Dumouriez met a commander of the National Guard, Romainvilliers. He was coming with all haste.

"Monsieur Secretary," he said, "I come for orders."

"I am no longer minister, Monsieur," answered Dumouriez.

"But there are disturbing assemblages in some of the districts."

"Go to the King for orders!"

"This is a pressing affair!"

"Hurry, then! The King has already accepted our resignations."

Romainvilliers ran up the staircase.

On June 17, in the morning, Dumouriez saw Chambonnas and Lajard enter his apartments. They came on behalf of the King, — Chambonnas to receive the Portfolio of Foreign Affairs, and Lajard, the Portfolio of War.

The King expected Dumouriez on the next morning, June 18, to arrange with him the last details of his office, and go over the account of secret expenditures.

Seeing him re-enter the palace, it was believed that he had been recalled to his station, and many came up to congratulate him.

"Gentlemen," said Dumouriez, "be careful! You are making friends, not with a man who is coming in, but with a man who is going out. I only come to surrender my accounts."

Immediately there was a general stampede in his neighborhood.

At that moment an usher announced that the King would see Monsieur Dumouriez in his chamber.

The King had regained his serenity. Was this from mental force, or did it arise from a delusive sense of security?

Dumouriez presented his accounts. This task being finished, Dumouriez arose.

The King turned his armchair around and said: "Then you propose to rejoin Luckner's army?"

"Yes, Sire. I am glad to quit this dreadful city, and

do so with only one regret, — that of leaving you in danger."

"Indeed," said Louis, with comparative indifference, "I know that I am always more or less in peril."

"Sire, you must know that what I now say to you has no personal interest to me. Once out of your Council, I am forever separated from you. It is out of fidelity, out of the purest attachment to yourself, out of my love of country, — it is for the sake of your crown, your wife, your children, it is in the name of all that is dear and sacred to the human heart, — that I beg your Majesty not to persist in your veto. This tenacity will do no good, and you will be lost, Sire!"

"Speak no further," said the King, impatiently, "my position is taken!"

"Sire, Sire, you said the same thing here, in this very room, in the Queen's presence, when you promised to approve those two edicts."

"I was wrong so to promise, Monsieur, and I have repented."

"Sire, I repeat to you, — and as this is the last time I shall have the honor of seeing you, pray pardon my frankness, — that you were not in the wrong when you promised to uphold these decrees; but you are wrong to-day, when you refuse to keep your promise. Your conscience is abused. You are urged on to a civil war. You have no strength. You will be overcome. History will pity you; but it will reproach you as the cause of our country's woes."

"Our country's woes?" said Louis. "Do you pretend to say I shall be blamed on that account?"

"Yes, Sire!"

"God is my witness, that I wish only the best happiness of France."

"I have no doubt of it, Sire! but you must render an account to God, not only for the purity, but also for the sagacity of your intentions. You think you are serving religion. You are destroying it. Your priests will be massacred. Your crown will be broken and rolled in your own blood, — in the blood also of the Queen and your children. Oh, my King, my King!"

Almost suffocating, Dumouriez pressed his lips on the hand which the King extended to him.

Then the King said, with that perfect serenity and majesty of which one might have supposed him incapable: "You are right, Monsieur. I expect a violent death, and I pardon my murderers in advance. As to yourself, you have served me faithfully. I esteem you, and I know that your intuitions are right. — Adieu, Monsieur!"

Rising quickly, the King retired into the embrasure of a window.

Dumouriez slowly gathered his papers together, in order to give himself time to compose his countenance. With lingering steps he went towards the door, ready to turn back at the first word from Louis the Sixteenth; but the first words were also the last.

"Adieu, Monsieur! May you be happy!" said the King.

After these words there was no excuse for tarrying an instant longer. Dumouriez went out.

Royalty had broken with its last prop. The King had dropped his mask. He stood with uncovered face before the people.

Let us see what the people were doing on their side.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A CABAL AT CHARENTON.

All day long a man parades up and down the Saint Antoine Quarter. He is dressed in a general's uniform, rides a huge Flemish horse, shakes hands right and left, kissing the pretty girls, and giving the young fellows drink-money.

This man is one of the six who have succeeded Lafayette, in joint command of the National Guards, — a silver piece divided into six copper sous. In other words, this is General Santerre, chief of a battalion.

Near him, like an aide-de-camp near his general, — and mounted also on a strong horse, — trots a man whose costume shows him to be a Patriot from the rural districts. A cut has left its scar on his forehead. His eye is gloomy and his physiognomy threatening. He presents a marked contrast to his commander, who has a frank smile and an open countenance.

"Be on the alert, my good friends! Watch over the Nation! Traitors are conspiring against her, but we are at the front." So speaks Santerre.

"What must we do, Monsieur Santerre?" ask the citizens of the ward. "You know we are with you! Where are the traitors? Lead us against them!"

"Wait!" replies Santerre. "When the right moment comes —"

"And is it coming?"

Santerre really does not know; but he responds at a venture: "Yes, yes! Be easy! You 'll be notified!"

The man following Santerre bends over his horse's neck, and whispers in the ear of certain men, whom he recognizes by certain signs: "The Twentieth of June!"

These men go away with that date on their lips. At a distance of every ten, twenty, or thirty paces a group forms about him, and this message circulates: "The Twentieth of June!"

What is to happen on that day? Nobody yet knows; but this they do know, that on June 20 *something* is to be done.

Among the men to whom this date is communicated may be recognized some who are no strangers to the events already recorded in our narrative.

There is Saint-Huruge, whom we saw on the morning of October 5, 1789, at the head of the first detachment which left the Palace Royal Garden for Versailles. Saint-Huruge is a husband who had been deceived by his wife at some time prior to 1789. He was imprisoned in the Bastille, from which he was delivered on July 14, when that fortress was demolished, and thereafter he devoted himself to revenge on nobility and royalty, in return for his conjugal wrongs and his illegal incarceration.

You recognize Verrières, do you not? Twice before have we met this Apocalyptical hunchback, with legs so long and body so short that he looks as if he were cloven in twain from toe to chin. Once we met him in the wine-shop at Sevres Bridge, in company with Marat and Aiguillon, the Duke being disguised as a woman. Again we saw him at the Champ de Mars, an instant before the firing began.

There is Fournier the American (so-called) who shot at Lafayette through the wheels of a carriage, and whose

musket missed fire. He then promised himself that next time he would strike higher than the Commander of the National Guard, and in order that his gun should not thwart him again, he determined that he would strike with the sword.

There is Monsieur de Beausire, who has not amended his ways during the time he has been left in the background by our story, — after he reclaimed Olivia from the arms of the dying Mirabeau, — as the Chevalier des Grieux reclaimed Manon Lescaut from the hands which lifted her temporarily from the mud, and then let her fall again into the mire.

There is Mouchy, a short, twisted, lame, bandy-legged man, enveloped in an enormous tricolored scarf, which covers half his body, as if he were a municipal officer, a justice of the peace, or something of that sort.

Behold Gonchon, the Mirabeau of the People, who was once judged by Pitou to be homelier than the Mirabeau of the Nobility, — Gonchon, who disappears after an outbreak, as if he were part of a supernatural spectacle; but who vanishes only to reappear afterwards, more impassioned than ever, more terrible, more venomous, like a demon, without whom the manager of the spectacle could not get along.

Up and down through the crowd — reunited around the ruins of the Bastille, as on a modern Mount Aventine — passes and repasses a spare and pale young man, with hair brushed down smooth, and eyes full of fire. He is acquainted with nobody, and nobody is acquainted with him. He is as solitary as the eagle, which some day he is to make the national emblem.

This is Bonaparte, a lieutenant of artillery, who by chance is spending his furlough in Paris. It will be remembered that Cagliostro made a singular prediction

to Gilbert concerning this man, when he once came to the Jacobin Club.

By whom is this crowd moved, influenced, excited? By a man with a powerful frame, a roaring voice, and hair like a lion's mane, whom Santerre, on his return home, finds waiting for him in his back shop, — Danton.

This is the hour when this terrible Revolutionist — hardly known heretofore, except by the noise which he made in the pit at the Theatre Français, over the representation of Chénier's "Charles the Ninth," and by his awful platform eloquence at the Cordelier Club — makes his first real appearance on the political stage, where he extends his giant arms.

Whence comes this man's power, which threatens to be so fatal to royalty? From the Queen herself.

She would not have Lafayette for Mayor of Paris, — this vengeful Austrian woman. She preferred Pétion, the man who was so discourteous to her on the journey from Varennes. Hardly was he installed as Mayor when he began the contest with the King, by placing the Tuileries under surveillance.

When he took possession of the City Hall, Pétion had two friends whom he stationed on his right hand and left, — Manuel on his right, Danton on his left. He appointed Manuel to the office of City Solicitor, with Danton as his substitute.

Standing on the rostrum and pointing to the Tuileriès, Vergniaud had said: "Often enough, in the olden days, have Terror and Dismay stalked forth from yonder palace, in the name of Despotism. Now let Terror and Dismay re-enter that palace, in the name of Law."

Well, the hour has come when the Girondist orator's grand yet fearful metaphor is to be translated into action. Terror is to be sought for and found in the Saint

Antoine District, and hurried, with her discordant cries and distorted arms, into the palace reared by Catherine de Medicis.

What better can be done than to evoke that terrible Magician of the Revolution, whom men call Danton?

Danton has large shoulders and a heavy hand. Beneath his athletic breast beats a stout heart. Danton is the signal gong of the Revolution. To the blow struck upon his breast he responds with a powerful vibration, which spreads throughout the crowd, which is drowned in the noise.

On one side Danton touches the people, through Hébert. On the other he reaches the throne, through Orleans. He stands midway between the petty tradesman, at the street corner, and the prince royal, on the steps of the throne.

By a touch upon each connecting key before him, he can reach a responsive social fibre. Cast your eyes over this gamut, which runs over two octaves, in harmony with this powerful voice: Hébert, Legendre, Gonchon, Rossignol, Momoro, Brune, Huguenin, Rotondo, Santerre, Fabre d'Églantine, Camille Desmoulins, Dugazon, Lazouski, Sillery, Genlis, the Duke of Orleans.

Take note that we cognize only the visible outlines of power; but who shall say to what depths this force descends, and out of what depths it arises, — depths beyond the reach of our vision?

Well, it is this unseen power which sways the Saint Antoine Quarter.

On June 16 one of Danton's men, Lazouski the Pole, — a member of the Communal Council, — shoots the arrow.

He announces in the Council that on June 20 two districts, Saint Antoine and Saint Marceau, will present

petitions to the King and to the Assembly, on the subject of the royal veto of the edict relative to the non-juring priests; and that at the same time they will plant a tree in the Feuillant Terrace, to be christened the Tree of Liberty, in commemoration of the session and oath in the Tennis Court, on June 20, 1789. To this scheme the Council refuses its sanction.

"We must get along without its sanction," whispered Danton in Lazouski's ear.

Lazouski repeats aloud: "We can get along without it!"

So this date of June 20 has an exoteric and an esoteric meaning. One is a pretext — the presentation of a petition and the planting of a Liberty Tree.

The other significance of the day is as yet known only to a few of the initiated. There is to be an attempt to rescue France from Lafayette and the Feuillants, and warn the incorrigible King, still a sovereign of the old school, that there are political tempests wherein a monarch may be engulfed, with his throne, his crown, his family, — as a ship is swallowed up in the ocean, with many lives and chattels, "with all her crew complete."

As we have said, Danton has been waiting for Santerre in the latter's back shop. He sent word last night, by Legendre, that to-day the awakening of the district must begin. In the morning Billot presented himself at the brewer's. After making a sign of recognition, he announced that for all day the committee had assigned him the duty of remaining near Santerre. This is how it happens that Billot, while apparently acting as Santerre's aide, really knows more about the whole matter than Santerre himself.

Danton makes an appointment with Santerre for the evening of the next day, in a small house at Charenton,

situated on the right bank of the Marne, at the end of the bridge.

There may be met all those men, of mysterious and secret ways, who always direct the current in times of commotion. Each one of them is punctual at the rendezvous.

The passions of these men are diverse. Whence do they take their rise? That is indeed a gloomy page of history. Some are moved by love of liberty. Many, like Billot, are moved by the desire of vengeance for insults received. The greatest number are moved by hatred, misery, and bad instincts.

On the main floor is a closed room, into which only the chiefs have the right of entrance. From this room they emerge with careful, exact, and peremptory injunctions. One might call this room a Shekinah, where some god utters his oracles.

An immense map of Paris is spread on the table. Danton's finger traces the springs and brooks, — the courses and junction-points of these rivulets, these rivers, these streams of men, which two days later will inundate Paris.

Bastille Square, into which empty all the streets from the Saint Antoine, Saint Marceau, and Arsenal quarters, is named as the place of meeting. The Assembly Hall is to be the ostensible aim of the march, the Tuileries its real object.

The boulevard is to be the wide and safe street through which the thundering human wave is to roll.

Posts having been assigned to each conspirator, and each having promised to be on hand, the chiefs separate.

The general order is, to finish up at the palace. How are they to finish up at the palace? That is left in uncertainty.

During the whole day, on June 19, groups of people are standing on the embankments of the ruined Bastille, in the neighborhood of the Arsenal, and in the Saint Antoine District.

Suddenly a bold and fearsome amazon, clad all in red, appears in the midst of the Saint Antoine crowd. In her belt she carries her pistols. At her side she wears a sword, which, after eighteen other wounds, is destined to search out the heart-life of Suleau.

This is Théroigne de Méricourt, the beautiful citizeness of Liége. We saw her on the road to Versailles, on that memorable day in October. Where has she been in the interval?

Her native city, Liége, was in revolt. Théroigne wished to go to its help. She was arrested by the agents of King Leopold, and detained eighteen months in Austrian prisons.

Did she escape? Was she allowed to get away? Did she file her bars? Did she corrupt her jailer? Everything about this woman is as mysterious as the beginning of her life, as terrible as its end.

Whatever may be the other facts, she has returned! Here she is! From being a courtesan, rolling in wealth, she has become the people's prostitute. The nobility have given her the gold, wherewith she has procured the well-tempered blades and the embossed pistols with which she is to smite her enemies.

The people recognize her and welcome her with loud cries. How seasonably she arrives, the beautiful Théroigne, clad in red for the bloody festival of the morrow!

On the evening of the same day the Queen sees her gallop along the Feuillant Terrace. She is on her way from Bastille Square to the Champs Élysées, from the popular assemblage to the Patriotic banquet.

From the attics of the Tuileries, whither the Queen ascends when she hears the outcries, she can see the well-spread tables. Wine circulates. Patriotic songs resound. As each toast is drunk, — to the Assembly, to the Girondists, to Liberty, — the feasters shake their fists at the Tuileries.

Dugazon, the actor, sings couplets deriding the King, the Queen, and the palace; and the King and Queen can hear the applause which follows each refrain.

Who are these feasters? Marseilles Federals, led by Barbaroux. They only arrived last night.

On June 18 the Tenth of August makes its entry into Paris.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE TWENTIETH OF JUNE.

In the month of June daylight comes early. By five in the morning the battalions had assembled. This time the uprising was systematic, and appeared almost like an invasion. The crowd knew its leaders and was submissive to discipline. Each man had his appointed place, under his own flag and in his proper rank.

Santerre was on horseback, with the staff of men belonging to his district. Billot did not leave Santerre for an instant. One might have supposed him charged, by some occult power, with the guardianship of his chief.

The multitude was separated into three divisions. The first was commanded by Santerre, the second by Saint-Huruge, the third by Théroigne de Méricourt.

Towards eleven o'clock, under an order brought by some man unknown, the immense mass of people put itself in motion. At its departure from the Bastille, the procession was composed of nearly twenty thousand men.

This troop presented a savage, terrible, and unique aspect. Santerre's division was the best-ordered. There were in it a goodly number of uniforms; and for weapons they had a fair supply of muskets and bayonets. The other two divisions constituted the army of the populace, ragged, lean, and haggard, — after four years of privation and of bread-scarcity, with three Revolutionary years among the four. This was the slum from which this army had come forth.

They had no guns and no uniforms. Their vests were in tatters, their blouses torn. Their odd weapons were such as they could light upon in the first wrathful impulse, at the first call for defence. There were pikes, pitchforks, rusty spears, sabres without hilts, blades fastened to long sticks, carpenters' axes, masons' hammers, shoeknives.

For a standard there was a gibbet, with a dangling puppet, to represent the Queen. There was also an ox-head, with an obscene motto interlaced with the horns; and a calf's heart stuck on the point of a spit, with the words: *Heart of an Aristocrat!*

Then there were flags with these legends:

APPROVE THE EDICTS, OR DIE!

RECALL THE PATRIOT COUNCIL!

TYRANT, TREMBLE! THY HOUR HAS COME!

At the corner of the Rue Saint Antoine the multitude split into two parts. Santerre and his National Guards marched along the boulevards, — the General wearing his uniform as battalion commander. Saint-Huruge rode a perfectly caparisoned horse, brought him by an unknown groom, and was backed by strong muscles from the market-place. Théroigne de Méricourt was couched on a cannon drawn by bare-armed men. Both these divisions went up the Rue Saint Antoine. They were all to go through Vendôme Square and reunite at the Feuillant Terrace.

For three hours this army marched along, drawing after it the population of the districts through which it passed. It was like torrents which leap and froth as they increase in volume. At each crossroad the

army grew larger. At each street corner it burst into fresh foam.

The mass of the people were silent; but at unexpected intervals the silence was broken by loud clamors. Then they sung the famous *Ça ira* of 1793. Little by little, this had changed from a song of encouragement to one of menace. Then might have been heard the shouts: "Long live the Nation! Hurrah for the People! Down with Monsieur and Madame Veto!"

Long before the vanguard of the column hove in sight, the tramp of this army could be heard, like the noise of the inrushing tide. From time to time resounded the songs, the cries, the hurrahs, as the distant tempest comes howling through the air.

With Santerre's division were the people who carried the poplar-tree, to be planted on the Feuillant Terrace. In Vendôme Square they found a detachment of National Guards barring their passage. Nothing would have been easier than for this multitude to crush this detachment in its thousand serpentine coils. But no! The people were out on a holiday. They wished to laugh, to be amused, to terrify Monsieur and Madame Veto. They did not wish to kill anybody. The tree-bearers gave up their project of planting it on the Feuillant Terrace, and went around the palace to set it out in the courtyard of the old Capuchin Convent.

For nearly an hour the Assembly had been within earshot of the noise, when messengers came from the crowd to claim, for those whom they represented, the favor of passing in review before the National Deputies.

Vergniaud moved that the request be granted; but at the same time he proposed to send sixty Deputies to protect the palace. Even the Girondists did not wish

harm to the King and Queen, though they were glad to give them a scare.

One of the Feuillants opposed Vergniaud's motion, on the ground that such a precaution would be insulting to the Parisians. Was this objector secretly hoping this demonstration would end in crime?

The admission was voted, and the armed populace from the faubourgs permitted to defile through the hall. The doors were soon opened, to give ingress to thirty thousand petitioners. The march began at noon and was not over till three o'clock.

The crowd had now obtained the first part of their demand. They had been admitted to the Assembly, and their petition had been read. It only remained for them to go to the King, and demand his sanction to the decrees about ecclesiastical exiles and the proposed encampment.

As the Assembly had received the deputation, would there be any valid excuse for the King's not receiving it? The King was certainly no greater lord than the President. When the King came to the Assembly, he had no better armchair than the President's, and moreover sat at his left hand!

The King expressed his willingness to receive the petition by the hands of twenty messengers. The crowd did not expect to enter the Tuileries. They believed the committee would go inside, while the crowd marched by the windows. All their banners, with the threatening mottoes, all their dismal standards, would be seen by the King and Queen through the windows.

All the gateways leading to the palace were closed. In the courtyard and in the Tuileries Garden were stationed three regiments of regular troops, two squadrons of police, several battalions of the National Guard, and

four pieces of artillery. From their windows the royal family could see this apparent protection, and appeared correspondingly tranquil.

Meanwhile the crowd, still without any evil designs, asked to have the iron grating opened which separated them from the Feuillant Terrace. The officers on guard refused to open the gate without an order from the King.

Three city officials then asked permission to go in and ask for such an order. They were allowed to do so. Montjoye, author of the "History of Marie Antoinette," has recorded their names. They were Boucher René, Boucher Saint-Sauveur, and Mouchet. Mouchet was the little Justice of the Peace from the Marais District, a crippled, misshapen, twisted dwarf, wearing a big tri-colored scarf. They were admitted to the palace and conducted to the King. Mouchet did the talking.

"Sire, a body of men are acting under the shield of the law. Their actions should arouse no uneasiness. Peaceful citizens have united in bringing a petition to the National Assembly, and wish to hold a civic banquet in commemoration of the famous oath taken in the Tennis Court, in 1789. These citizens ask permission to enter the Feuillant Terrace. Not only is the gateway closed, but a mounted cannon bars the way. We come to ask that this gateway may be opened, and that we may be accorded a free entrance."

"Monsieur," responded the King, "by your scarf I see that you are a civic officer. It is your duty to see that the laws are executed. If you judge it necessary, for the evacuation of the Assembly grounds, let the gate be opened into the Feuillant Terrace, and let the citizens go through that terrace, and out by the gates from the Courtyard of the Stables. Arrange the matter

with the Commanding General of the National Guards; and, above all, see that the public tranquillity is not disturbed."

The three city officials saluted and withdrew, accompanied by an officer, charged with the duty of confirming their statement that the order had been given by the King himself.

The grating was unlocked, and all tried to crowd through it. They were suffocating. Everybody knows how stifling it is in a crowd. The air blazes and bruises.

The iron gate leading to the Feuillant Terrace cracked like a wicker screen. The crowd breathed more freely, and dispersed themselves over the garden. Through some neglect the gate near the stables had not been opened. Finding it shut, the visitors turned aside, and marched past the National Guards, ranged like a hedgerow along the front of the palace.

Then they went out through the gate leading to the pier on the riverside. If they wished to return to their own districts, it was necessary to recross the palace grounds, through the wickets, and across Carrousel Square.

These wickets were shut and guarded; but the rabble, squeezed, bruised, and hustled, began to grow irritable. On account of this grumbling the wickets were opened, and the crowd spread itself throughout this great square.

Then they began to recall the principal affair of the day, — the petition for the King to remove his veto; so instead of keeping on their way towards home, they remained in Carrousel Square, — that is, within the rectangular enclosure between the walls of the Tuileries and Louvre palaces.

An hour passed. The populace grew impatient. They

might as well have gone peacefully homewards; but this was not the plan of their leaders.

There were a few fellows who went from group to group, saying: "Stay here! The King will do what you ask! Don't go home without the King's sanction to those edicts, or we shall have all this work to do over again!"

These suggestions seemed entirely reasonable; but at the same time the visitors began to think that this famous approval was a long time on the way.

"We are hungry!" was the general cry. The bread-famine had indeed ceased; but there was a lack of work and money, and however low the price of bread, it cannot be had for nothing.

These people had all been up since five in the morning, many of them leaving pallets upon which they had lain down hungry the night before. They had all started out — mothers with their children, laborers with their wives — in the vague hope that the King could be persuaded to sign certain decrees, and that all would go well thereafter.

Now the King did not seem at all disposed to sanction those edicts. It was a hot day, and the people were thirsty. Hunger, thirst, and heat will even make dogs mad.

Well, these poor folks waited, and tried to borrow a little patience; but they presently began to shake the iron gates of the palace.

A city officer came into the courtyard, and harangued the multitude.

"Citizens, this is the royal domicil, and a forcible entrance would be a violation of civic rights. The King is willing to receive your petition, but only by the hands of a score of your representatives."

So then, the commissioners for whom the crowd had waited an hour, believing them to be in the royal presence, had not yet been introduced to the King!

Suddenly a great outcry was heard from the side towards the river. Santerre and Saint-Huruge were there on their horses, and Théroigne on her cannon.

"What are you doing there in front of the grating?" cried Saint-Huruge. "Why don't you enter?"

"Sure enough," said several fellows in the crowd, "why don't we enter?"

"Can't you see the gate is fastened?" exclaimed several voices.

Théroigne leaped from her cannon. "It 's loaded," she said. "Make the gate fly open with a cannon-ball!"

The cannon was brought to bear upon the gate.

"Wait! Wait!" cried two city officials. "No violence! The gate shall be opened." In fact they bore with all their might upon the crossbar, which held the two leaves of the gate together, till the bolt moved and the gate flew open.

The rabble rushed through the breach.

Do you want to know the nature of a mob, and what a turbulent torrent it may become?

Well, the mob entered. The cannon, drawn along in the rush, was dragged across the courtyard, and even rolled up the steps, till it reached the top of the stairway!

There some municipal officers were in waiting, wearing their scarfs of authority.

"What do you mean to do with that cannon?" they asked. "A piece of artillery in the King's apartments? Do you think you can get anything out of him by such violence?"

"That 's true!" responded the intruders, surprised to

find they had brought the cannon there; and they turned it around, so as to get it downstairs again. The axle was somehow jammed against the doorpost, and there it stood, with its muzzle directed against the multitude outside.

"Well, that's good!" ejaculated those who were coming in. "Artillery in the King's house!"

Not knowing how the cannon came there, or that it was Théroigne's carriage, they believed royalty had aimed this gun at the populace.

Meanwhile, under orders from Mouchet, two men, with hatchets, were hacking and chopping the doorpost, and succeeded in splitting away one piece of it, which was lowered into the basement vestibule.

This operation — which was simply intended to liberate the cannon, and get it out of the way — sounded as if the doors were being hewn down.

Some two hundred gentlemen came hurrying to the palace, not with any hope of defending it, but believing the King's last days had come, and holding themselves ready to die with him.

Among them were the old Marshal de Mouchy; Monsieur d'Hervilly, a commander in the disbanded Constitutional Guards; Acloque, commander of the battalion of the National Guards from the Saint Marceau District; three grenadiers from the Saint Martin Battalion, who alone had remained at their posts, — Lecrosnier, Bridaud, and Gosse; and also a man in black, who had once before hastened to expose his breast to the assassin's bullet, — a man whose advice had always been thrust aside, yet who came forward again, in the very day of the danger he had tried to avert, to present himself as a last rampart between peril and the King. This was Doctor Gilbert.

The King and Queen, though greatly agitated by this fearful noise, became gradually used to it. It was now half-past three in the afternoon, and they hoped the end of the day would roll along as smoothly as its beginning.

The royal family were all together in the King's apartment. Suddenly the noise of the axes reached these rooms, rising above the gusty clamor, which seemed like the distant howling of the tempest.

At that moment a man rushed into the King's bedroom, exclaiming: "Sire, do not leave me! I will be responsible for your safety!"

CHAPTER XLV.

IN WHICH THE KING SEES THAT UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES ONE MAY PUT THE RED CAP ON HIS HEAD WITHOUT BEING A JACOBIN.

THIS man was Doctor Gilbert, who is only seen in our history at certain periodical distances, but is sure to appear in every great catastrophe of the immense drama which unrolls itself before us.

"Ah Doctor, is it you? What is going on?" asked the King and Queen, both at once.

"This, Sire, — that the palace is invaded; and the noise you hear is made by the populace, who demand a sight of you."

"Oh Sire, we 'll never desert you!" said the Queen and Madame Elizabeth, with one breath.

"Will the King give me, for a single hour, such authority as a sea-captain has over his ship in a storm?" asked Gilbert.

"I do give it!" said the King.

At this moment Acloque, a commander of the National Guard, appeared at the door, — pale, but resolved to defend the King to the very end.

"Monsieur," exclaimed Gilbert, "here is the King. He is ready to follow you. Take care of him!" Then Gilbert added, speaking to the King: "Go, Sire, go!"

"But what of me?" cried the Queen. "I must follow my husband!"

"And I my brother!" cried Madame Elizabeth.

"Follow your brother, Madame!" said Gilbert to Madame Elizabeth; "but you, Madame, remain here!" he added, addressing the Queen.

"Monsieur —!" said Marie Antoinette.

"Sire, Sire!" cried Gilbert, "in Heaven's name, beg the Queen to trust me, or I cannot be answerable for anything."

"Madame," said Louis, "listen to Monsieur Gilbert's advice, and obey his orders if necessary!" Then he said to Gilbert: "Monsieur, will you answer for the safety of the Queen and the Dauphin?"

"Yes, Sire, or I will die with them! That is all a pilot can promise in the midst of a tempest."

The Queen tried to make one more effort; but Gilbert stretched out his arms to bar the passage.

"Madame," he said, "it is you, and not the King, who runs the greatest danger. Rightfully or wrongfully, you are blamed for the King's resistance. Your presence will expose him to danger, without shielding him. Take upon yourself the office of the lightning-rod. Turn aside the electric stroke, if you can!"

"Then let the stroke fall on me alone, and spare my children!"

"I have promised the King to save both you and them, Madame! Follow me!"

Then turning to Madame de Lamballe (who had arrived from England a month before, and from Vernon within three days, and was again as one of the royal family) and to the other ladies of the household, he said: "Follow us!"

The other ladies with the Queen were the Princess de Tarente, the Princess de la Trémouille, Madame Tourzel, Madame de Mackau, and Madame de la Roche Aymon.

Gilbert was acquainted with the interior of the palace,

and took his bearings. What he sought was a large apartment, where all the world could see and hear. This was the first task. He would put the Queen, her children, and her ladies behind some rampart, and take his own stand in front of it.

He thought of the Council Chamber, which they could reach without passing through the corridors. Fortunately it was still empty. He pushed the Queen, the children, and the Princess Lamballe into a recessed window. The minutes were so precious that there was no time for words. Already the intruders were pounding on the door.

He dragged the heavy Council table in front of the window, and his rampart was provided.

Madame Royale stood on the table beside her brother, who was seated. The Queen was behind them. Innocence was to be the defence of Unpopularity.

Marie Antoinette wished, on the contrary, to place herself in front of her children. "All is as it should be!" said Gilbert, in the tone of a general commanding a decisive movement. "Now don't stir!"

As the door was violently shaken, and he knew that there was a wave of women in that boisterous sea, he said, as he pulled back the bolts: "Enter, Citizenesses! Enter, for the Queen and her children are expecting you!"

As soon as the door was open the deluge poured in, as through a ruptured dike.

"Where 's that Austrian woman? Where 's Madame Veto?" cried five hundred voices.

It was an awful moment. Gilbert understood that in this decisive hour the power had escaped from the hands of the men, and passed into the hands of the women.

"Be calm, Madame!" he said to the Queen. "I need not counsel you to be gentle also!"

One woman was in advance of the others. Her hair was flying, and she brandished a sabre. She was fairly brilliant with rage, and perhaps with hunger.

"Where's that Austrian minx?" she cried. "She sha'n't die by any hand but mine!"

Gilbert took her by the arm, and led her in front of the Queen.

"Here she is!" he said.

Then the Queen said, in her sweetest tones: "Have I done you any personal wrong, my daughter?"

"None, Madame," replied the woman, astonished by Marie Antoinette's blended mildness and majesty, as well as by her beauty.

"Why do you wish to kill me, then?"

"They say you're leading the country to perdition!" stammered the confused woman, lowering the point of her sword to the floor.

"Then you have been deceived! I am the wife of the King of France. I'm the mother of the Dauphin,—this boy here! Very well! I'm a Frenchwoman, then, and shall never see my own country again. I can neither be happy nor unhappy, except in France. Alas! I was happy when you loved me!"

The Queen sighed. The young woman dropped her sabre and began to cry.

"Ah, Madame!" she said, "I did n't know you! Pardon me! I see you're a good woman."

"Keep on in this way, Madame!" whispered Gilbert, "and not only will you be saved, but in fifteen minutes all these people will be at your knees."

Leaving the Queen in the care of two or three National Guardsmen, who had just come in, and of Secretary of

War Lajard, who had entered with the crowd, Gilbert now hastened to find the King.

His Majesty had encountered a similar scene. Just as he entered the salon called the Ox's Eye, the door-panels were broken in, and bayonet-points, spear-heads, and axe-blades were thrust through the openings.

"Open the door!" cried the King.

"Citizens," said Monsieur d'Hervilly, in a loud voice, "you need n't smash the door. The King wishes it opened."

As he spoke, he slipped the bolts and turned the key; and the door, already half broken down, creaked on its hinges.

Monsieur Acloque and the Duke de Mouchy had barely time to push the King into the window-recess, while several grenadiers, who were there, made haste to pile some benches and chairs in front of him.

Seeing the crowd rush in with shouts and imprecations, the King could not avoid calling out: "Help, gentlemen, help!"

Four grenadiers drew their swords and placed themselves by his side.

"Put up your swords, gentlemen!" said the King. "Only stay by me! That 's all I ask!"

A moment more and it would have been too late! The flash of the sabres seemed like a challenge.

A ragged fellow, with naked arms and foaming at the mouth, threw himself towards the King.

"So it 's thee, is it, Monsieur Veto?" he said; and he tried to stab the King with a blade tied to the end of a stick.

One of the grenadiers, who had not yet replaced his sabre in its scabbard, despite the King's order, beat down the stick with his weapon.

By that time the King had entirely regained his composure. Pushing the grenadier aside, he said: "Allow me, Monsieur! What have I to fear in the midst of my people?"

Taking a step forward, with a dignity of which he hardly seemed capable, and a courage to which he had hitherto been a stranger, the King presented his breast to the weapons aimed against it.

"Silence! I wish to speak!" exclaimed the voice of a stentor, in the midst of the uproar.

A cannon would have tried in vain to make itself heard amidst such yells and vociferations, and yet the tumult ceased at the sound of this voice.

It was the voice of Legendre, the butcher. He approached the King near enough to touch him. A circle was formed about them.

At that moment a man appeared at the outer extremity of the circle; and behind Danton's terrible *double,* as Legendre was called, the King saw the pale but calm face of Doctor Gilbert.

A glance from the royal eye asked the question: "What have you done with the Queen, Monsieur?" and the Doctor's smile responded: "She is safe!" The King thanked him with a sign.

"Monsieur," said Legendre, addressing the King.

At this title of *Monsieur,* which seemed to point a special insult, the King turned, as if he had been stung by an adder.

"Yes, Monsieur! — Monsieur Veto! I 'm talking to *you!*" continued Legendre. "Now listen, for it 's your business to hear us! You 're a tricky fellow! You 've always cheated us, and you 'll cheat us again. But look out for yourself! Your measure is almost full, and the people are tired of being your playthings and victims."

"Very well, I 'm listening!" said the King.

"So much the better! Do you know what we 're here after? We 're here to demand your signature to the decrees about the priests and the camp, and also the recall of your old Councillors. — Here 's our petition!"

Legendre unfolded a paper which he drew from his pocket, and recited the same threatening petition which had already been read that day to the Assembly.

The King listened, his eyes fixed on the reader. When it was finished, he said, without any emotion, — at least, any that was apparent: "I shall do, Monsieur, whatever the laws and the Constitution order me to do!"

"Oh, yes!" said a voice. "That 's your great war-horse, the Constitution! — the Constitution of '91, which lets you muddle the whole machine, tie France to the whipping-post, and give the Austrians time to come and swallow us up."

The King turned in the direction of this new voice, for he understood that this meant a still graver attack.

Gilbert also made a movement, and laid his hand upon the shoulder of the last speaker.

"I have seen you before, my friend!" said the King. "Who are you?" He spoke with curiosity, rather than with fear, although the man's face bespoke a resolute and formidable character.

"Yes, you have seen me before, Sire! You have now seen me thrice, — once on your way back from Versailles, on July 16, 1789; again at Varennes, a year ago. The other time, Sire, — here! Sire, recall my name! I have a name of sinister import. They call me Billot!" (the *block.*)

At this moment the noise redoubled. A man armed with a pike tried to dart it at the King; but Billot

grasped the weapon, wrenched it from the assassin's hands, and broke it over his knee.

"No assassinations!" he said. "Only one weapon has any right to touch that man, — namely, the Law! They say there was once a King of England who had his head cut off, by the legal sentence of the people whom he had betrayed. His name should be known to thee, Louis. Don't forget it!"

"Billot!" murmured Gilbert.

"Oh, you 've done well enough!" said Billot, shaking his head; "but that man will be tried as a traitor, and condemned!"

"Yes, as a traitor!" cried a hundred voices. "Traitor! Traitor! Traitor!"

Gilbert threw himself between the King and his adversaries, and said: "Fear nothing, Sire! but try, by some open act, to give these furious men a little satisfaction."

The King took Gilbert's hand, and pressed it on his heart. "You see I fear nothing!" he said. "This morning I received the holy sacrament. Let them do with me what they please! As to the outward sign you wish me to give — Well, see here! How does this please you?"

As he ceased speaking, the King snatched a red cap from the head of a young ragamuffin, and placed that red cap on his own head.

The crowd broke into immediate applause. "Long live the King! Hurrah for the Nation!" shouted everybody.

One man made his way through the jam, and approached the King. In his hand this man carried a wine-bottle.

"If thou lovest the people as thou sayest, Fatty Veto,

prove it by drinking this to their health!" he said, offering the bottle to the King.

"Don't drink, Sire!" said a voice. "Perhaps the wine is poisoned!"

"Drink, Sire. I'll be responsible!" said Gilbert.

The King took the bottle. "To the health of the people!" he said, and drank the wine.

Again huzzas for the King resounded.

"Sire," said Gilbert, "you have nothing more to fear. Let me return to the Queen."

'Go!" said the King, pressing the Doctor's hand.

As Gilbert went out, Isnard and Vergniaud came in. They had come thither from the Assembly, in order to make a hedge about the King with their popularity,— and with their bodies, if need be.

"The King?" they asked. Gilbert pointed him out, and the two Deputies went towards him.

In order to reach the Queen, Gilbert had to pass through several rooms, and among others the King's bedroom. The people had taken possession of it.

"Ah ha!" said some men, sitting down on the royal bed. "Gracious! Fatty Veto has a better bed than ours!"

There was nothing alarming about this sort of talk. The first effervescence had subsided.

Gilbert tranquilly rejoined the Queen. As he entered the salon where he had left her, he threw a hasty glance about him and breathed more freely.

She was still in the same place. The little Dauphin, like his father, had donned a red cap.

A great noise arose in the next room, which drew Gilbert's attention towards the door. This noise was caused by the approach of Santerre. This colossus came into the hall.

"Oh ho! The Austrian Woman is here, then!" Santerre exclaimed.

Gilbert crossed the hall diagonally, walked straight up to him, and said: "Monsieur Santerre?"

Santerre turned. "Ah, it 's Doctor Gilbert!" he cried joyfully.

"Who has not forgotten that you were one of those who opened the doors of the Bastille for him. — Let me present you to the Queen, Monsieur Santerre!"

"To the Queen? Present me to the Queen?" growled the brewer.

"Yes, to the Queen! Do you refuse?"

"No, on my word!" said Santerre. "I was going to present myself on my own account, but since you are here, why —"

"I know Monsieur Santerre already," said the Queen. "I know that during the famine he fed half the Saint Antoine District!"

Santerre paused in astonishment. Glancing in a somewhat confused way at the Dauphin, and seeing the sweat running in great drops down the little fellow's cheeks, he called to those near the table: "Take off his cap. Can't you see you 're suffocating the little chap?"

The mother thanked him with a look.

Then leaning on the table, and bending towards her, the sturdy Fleming said, in a low voice: "You have very awkward friends, Madame. I know those who could serve you better!"

An hour afterwards the crowd had all melted away, and the King, accompanied by his sister, entered the room where the Queen and their children were expecting him.

The Queen ran to him, and threw herself at his feet. The children grasped his hands. They all embraced one another, as might a rescued family after a shipwreck.

Only then did the King remember that he had the red cap still on his head. "Ah, I had forgotten that!" he cried; and crushing it in his hand with disgust, he threw it far away.

A young artillery officer, hardly twenty-two years old, witnessed this whole scene from outside, as he leaned against a tree on the edge of the pond. Through the windows he saw all the perils the King had encountered, all the humiliations heaped upon him. When he saw this incident of the red cap, he could no longer hold his peace.

"Oh!" he murmured. "If I only had twelve hundred men and two cannon I'd very soon relieve that poor King of all these hoodlums!"

As he had neither the twelve hundred men nor his two pieces of artillery, and as he could no longer bear the sight of this offensive spectacle, he went away.

This young officer was Napoleon Bonaparte.

END OF VOL. III.

LA COMTESSE DE CHARNY.

CHAPTER I.

REACTION.

The evacuation of the Tuileries was as quiet and pensive as its invasion had been noisy and terrifying. Surprised at the meagre results of their day's work, the rioters began to say to one another: "We got nothing! We shall have to go back again!"

Those who thought they foresaw what would happen, judged Louis Sixteenth by his reputation. They remembered how the King appeared at Varennes, clad like a lackey. They prophesied that at the first alarm Louis would hide in some closet, under a table, or behind a curtain; that somebody would stab him by accident; and then get himself off by saying "How now? A rat?" as Hamlet says in the play, when he slays old Polonius behind the arras, thinking it is his uncle, the tyrant of Denmark.

It had turned out quite otherwise with Louis. Never was the King so calm. Nay, more! Never had he been so great.

The insult had been tremendous; but it had not surpassed his resignation. His timid firmness, if one may so speak, needed to be excited; and in the heat it was tempered like steel.

Elevated by the desperate circumstances amid which he stood, for five hours he saw hatchets gleam above his head, and lances, swords, bayonets recoil before his breast, — and all this without growing pale. No general in ten battles, howsoever bloody, ever incurred more danger than had confronted him during the tedious onflow of that riot.

The Théroignes, the Saint-Huruges, the Lazouskis, the Fourniers, the Verrières, all these murderous demons, set out with the positive determination of killing the King; but his unexpected dignity, in the midst of the stress and storm, made the poniards drop from their hands.

If a sacred word may be used in such a connection, this was the *passion* of Louis the Sixteenth. *Ecce homo!* (Behold the Man!) was Pilate's exclamation about Jesus, when the Messiah was led forth crowned with thorns. This phrase might be repeated of Louis, when his head was encircled with that hateful red cap. As Jesus, in the midst of insults and injuries, still said in spirit, "I am your Messiah!" so Louis, in the midst of outrage and obloquy, never for an instant ceased to say, by word or manner, "I am your King!"

This is what had happened. It was the expectation of the Revolutionary transcendentalists, on forcing the gates of the Tuileries, that only the trembling and inert ghost of royalty would be found on the other side. To their great surprise they encountered the spirit of the Middle Ages, erect and living. For an instant the two opposing principles were seen face to face. One was like the setting sun. The other was rising in the east. This was as startling as if we should see another sun shining in the sky, ere one had sunk to its rest. There was as much grandeur and splendor in the one as in the other,

as much faith and spirit in the importunity of the populace as in the royal tenacity.

Royalists were delighted. On the whole, the victory was on their side.

Commanded so violently to obey the Assembly, instead of signing one of the two decrees, — the one relative to a volunteer encampment, — as he had been ready to do, the King now made up his mind to veto both, knowing that he ran no more risk in rejecting both than in rejecting one.

On that fatal Twentieth of June, royalty sank so low that it seemed to touch bottom, so that henceforth it could not help rising again. In fact affairs began to take this direction.

On June 21, the next day, the Assembly voted that never again should an armed posse of citizens be allowed to cross its threshold. This was a disavowal — or better, a condemnation — of the uprising of the previous day.

On the evening of the twentieth, Mayor Pétion went to the Tuileries, immediately after the hostilities were over.

"Sire," he said to the King, "I have only just now heard of your Majesty's situation."

"That 's strange," said the King; "for it has lasted long enough!"

On the very next day Constitutionalists, Royalists, and Feuillants all united in demanding of the Assembly a proclamation of martial law. Everybody knew what the first proclamation of martial law brought about, on July 17, 1791, the year before.

This proposal was said to be founded on the discovery of new cabals.

Pétion hastened to the Assembly. He declared that such cabals had never existed. He was willing to

answer for the tranquillity of Paris, so martial law was not proclaimed.

At the close of the session, about eight in the evening, Pétion went to the Tuileries, to reassure the King as to the peaceful condition of the capital. He was accompanied by Sergent, — Sergent, who was a copperplate engraver, a brother-in-law of Marceau, a member of the City Council, and one of the Commissioners of Police. Two or three other city officials went with them.

As they crossed the Carrousel Courtyard they were insulted by certain Knights of Saint Louis, Constitutional Guards, and National Guards who were there. Pétion was personally attacked. Despite the official scarf which he wore, Sergent was struck in the breast and face, and finally knocked down with a blow of the fist.

Hardly were they introduced, when Pétion saw that they were in for a contest.

Marie Antoinette launched upon him such arrows as the eyes of Maria Theresa might have discharged. Her eyes were like two rays of defiance and scorn, two terrific flashes of lightning.

The King knew what had taken place at the Assembly, and said: "Well, Monsieur Pétion, you fancy that peace is re-established in our capital, do you?"

"Yes, Sire. The people have made their wants known to you, and now they are peaceful and satisfied."

"Confess, Monsieur," said the King, plunging at once into the combat, "that yesterday's piece of work was a great scandal, and that your municipality neither did what it should nor what it could."

"Sire, the city did its duty. Public opinion must be the judge of that!"

"Say the entire country, Monsieur!"

"The city need not fear the national judgment."

"What is the present condition of Paris?"

"Quiet!"

"That is n't true!"

"Sire — !"

"Hold your tongue!"

"A magistrate of the people has no need to hold his tongue, especially when doing his duty and speaking the truth."

"That 's enough! Take yourself off!"

Pétion bowed and went out. The King was so irritable, his face wore such an expression of deep anger, that even the Queen — excitable woman and fiery amazon as she was — became fairly alarmed.

When Pétion had disappeared, she said to Rœderer: "My God, don't you think the King has been too choleric, and that this haste will put him at loggerheads with the Parisians?"

"Madame," answered Rœderer, "no one should be disturbed because the King imposes silence upon one of his subjects who fails in proper respect."

The next day the King wrote to the Assembly, complaining of this profanation of royalty, — of the royal palace and person.

Then he issued a proclamation to his people. He said he had two peoples, — those who had made the disturbance on June 20, and those to whom he complained of this disturbance. On June 24 their Majesties held a review of the National Guard, and were enthusiastically greeted.

On the same day the Directory of Paris suspended the Mayor. What had inspired such audacity? Three days later the matter was understood.

Lafayette came away from his army with a single officer, and on June 27 reached Paris, and went to the

house of his friend Rochefoucauld. During the night the Constitutionalists, Feuillants, and Royalists were duly notified, and they planned to pack the galleries the next day.

On that day Lafayette presented himself at the Assembly. Three salvoes of applause welcomed him, but they were lost in the murmurs of the Girondists. It was easy to see that the session was to be painful.

Lafayette was certainly one of the bravest men who ever lived, but his bravery was not foolhardy. Rarely does it happen that a truly brave man is audaciously foolhardy as well.

Lafayette fully comprehended the danger to which he was exposed. Fighting single-handed against all others, he was about to stake the remnant of his popularity. If that was lost, he should perish with it. If he won, he might save the King.

This was the more magnanimous on his part, because he knew the King's repugnance and the Queen's hatred towards himself. Her Majesty had virtually said: "I would rather perish through Pétion, than be saved by Lafayette."

Perhaps he had come hither to gratify the bravado of some subaltern, rather than to meet a challenge.

Thirteen days earlier he had written both to the King and the Assembly, — to the King, to encourage his resistance, to the Assembly, to warn it against continual attacks on the Crown.

"He is insolent enough, surrounded by his troops!" said a voice. "We shall see if he 'll talk the same way here among us!"

These words had been reported to Lafayette in his camp at Maubeuge. Perhaps they were the true cause of his journey to Paris.

Amid applause from one side, but also amid groans from the other, he crossed the hall and ascended the rostrum.

"Gentlemen! I have been reproached with writing my letter of the Sixteenth of June in my camp. It therefore devolves upon me to protest against this imputation of cowardice, by coming out from behind the honorable bulwark with which the affection of my troops encircles me, and presenting myself alone at your bar. A still more imperative motive calls me hither. The outrages of the Twentieth of June have roused the indignation of all our best citizens, and especially of the army. The officers, subalterns, and privates have but one opinion about it. From all the military divisions I have received assurances of devotion to the Constitution and opposition to partisanship. I have checked these manifestations of loyalty. I have charged myself with the duty of expressing to you the general sentiment. I speak to you only as a citizen, however. It is time to guarantee the stability of the Constitution, to ensure the freedom of the National Assembly and the King, as well as the King's dignity. I beg the Assembly to treat the excesses of the Twentieth of June as treasonable crimes against his Majesty, to adopt efficacious measures for compelling respect to Constitutional authority, — especially yours and the King's, — and to give the army some assurance that the Constitution will not be disgraced at home, while brave Frenchmen are pouring out their blood for its defence at the frontiers."

Guadet rose slowly, as he saw that Lafayette was approaching his peroration. In the midst of cordial applause the sharp-tongued Girondist orator lifted his hand as a sign that he meant to reply. When the

Girondists wished to shoot an arrow tipped with sarcasm and irony, it was Guadet to whom the bow was entrusted; and Guadet needed only to draw a dart at random from his quiver. Hardly had the echoes of applause died away before the sound of his resonant voice was heard.

"The moment I saw Monsieur Lafayette," so he began, "a very consoling idea offered itself to my mind. I said to myself, that evidently we had no more foreign enemies, that the Austrians were doubtless vanquished; for here was Monsieur Lafayette, to announce the news of his victory and their destruction. This illusion was short-lived. Our enemies are still the same! Our external perils have not changed! Nevertheless, Monsieur Lafayette is in Paris. He constitutes himself the organ of the worthy fellows in the army. Who are these honest fellows? What chance has the army had for deliberation? First of all, let Lafayette show us his leave of absence."

At this speech the Girondists felt the wind shifting to their quarter; and hardly was his mouth closed, when a thunder of applause broke forth.

One Deputy rose and said, without ascending the tribune: "Gentlemen, you forget to whom you speak, and you forget the question at issue. You forget that this is Lafayette! Lafayette is the eldest son of French Liberty. Lafayette has sacrificed his fortune, his titles, his life to the Revolution."

"Hold on!" cried a voice. "You 're pronouncing his funeral elegy!"

"Gentlemen," said Ducos, "freedom of discussion is hindered by the presence on the floor of one who does not belong to the Assembly."

"That 's not all!" said Vergniaud. "This general has forsaken his post in the face of the enemy. It is

to him, not to the simple field-marshal whom he has left in his place, that his division of the army is confided. We know that Lafayette has left his post without a furlough ; and if he has left his post without a furlough, let him be arrested and tried as a deserter."

"That is the point of my question," said Guadet, "and I second Vergniaud's motion."

"Seconded ! Seconded ! " cried all the Girondists.

"Call the roll ! " said Gensonné.

The roll-call gave Lafayette's friends a majority of ten.

Like the populace on June 20, Lafayette had dared too much or too little. It was one of the sort of victories which made Pyrrhus bitterly lament the loss of half his army. "One more such victory, and I am lost ! " said the Roman general.

Like Pétion, when Lafayette left the Assembly he reported himself to the King. He was received with a milder face, but with a cankered heart.

Lafayette had sacrificed for the King and Queen more than his life. He had sacrificed his popularity. This was the third time he had made this offering, more precious than any sovereign can bestow. The first time was at Versailles, in October, 1789. The second time was at the Champ de Mars, in July, 1791. The third time was on this very day.

Lafayette had one last hope. It was this hope which made him espouse the side of his sovereign.

The next day he would witness a review of the National Guards with the King. He could not doubt the enthusiasm inspired by the presence of their old commander. Profiting by this influence, Lafayette would march upon the Assembly, and put the Girondists under arrest. During the tumult the King should flee to the camp at Maubeuge.

This would be a bold move, but in the present condition of things it would be sure.

Unhappily Danton went to Pétion's lodgings at three in the morning, to notify him of the scheme. At daybreak Pétion countermanded the review.

Who had betrayed Lafayette and the King? The Queen! Had she not already declared that she would rather perish through somebody else than be saved by Lafayette? Thus she aided the Fates. She was to perish through Danton's instrumentality.

At the hour when the review was to take place, Lafayette quitted Paris and returned to the army. He had not, however, given up all hope of saving the King.

CHAPTER II.

VERGNIAUD WILL SPEAK.

LAFAYETTE'S victory — a dubious victory, followed by a retreat — had one singular result. It floored the Royalists, who were supposed to be the gainers, while it puffed up the Girondists, who were supposed to be defeated. It aided them by revealing the precipice over which they were liable to fall.

If there had been less animosity in Marie Antoinette's heart towards Lafayette, the Girondists might have been forthwith suppressed.

The Court was not to be allowed time to repair the error it had committed. It was necessary to renew the force and tendency of the Revolutionary current, whose course had been temporarily stemmed, and turned backward towards its source. Every one sought for the best method, and all thought they had found it; but as fast as each method was discussed, its inefficiency was seen, and that special plan was relinquished.

Madame Roland, the soul of the party, wished for the evolution of some grand commotion in the Assembly. Who could bring about such a commotion? Who could strike such a blow? — Vergniaud!

Why was Achilles sulking in his tent? or, rather, why was Rinaldo wandering in Armida's bower? He was in love. It is difficult to hate when one is in love!

Vergniaud loved the beautiful Madame Simon Candeille, the actress, poetess, and musician. His friends

would sometimes look for him two or three days without meeting him. At last they would find him lying at the feet of this charming woman, one hand resting on her lap, the other sweeping listlessly her harpstrings. Every night, in the orchestra of the theatre, he was on hand to applaud the woman whom he had adored all day.

One evening two Deputies left the Assembly in desperation. Vergniaud's inaction alarmed them, on account of France. These members were Grangeneuve and Chabot.

Grangeneuve was a Bordeaux advocate, the friend and rival of Vergniaud, and like him a Deputy from the Gironde.

Chabot was an unfrocked capuchin, the author, or one of the authors, of the "Catechism for Sans Culottes," a work which sprinkled royalty and religion with the gall he had secreted in the cloister.

Grangeneuve, sober and pensive, walked along by Chabot's side. As Chabot looked at his colleague, he thought he could see in his face the shadow of his thoughts.

"What art thou dreaming about?" asked Chabot.

"I am thinking that all these loiterers enervate the Nation and kill the Revolution."

"Ah! Dost thou think so?" replied Chabot, with the saturnine laugh habitual to him.

"I am thinking," continued Grangeneuve, "that if the people give royalty much more time, the people will be lost."

Chabot again emitted his harsh laugh.

"I am thinking," continued Grangeneuve, "that there is only one certain hour for revolutions, — that those who let this one opportunity escape them will never find it again, and must later be held to a strict account by God and posterity."

"Thou believest God and posterity will hold us accountable for our procrastination and inaction?"

"I fear so!"

After a silence Grangeneuve resumed: "See here, Chabot, I have a conviction. It is this, — that the people are disheartened by this last check, and that they will not be raised from their discomfiture without some powerful lever, without some sanguinary incentive. They need a chalice of rage or fright, from which to quaff redoubled energy."

"How can they get this fit of wrath and fear?" asked Chabot.

"That 's what I 'm cogitating," said Grangeneuve, "and I believe I 've found the secret."

Chabot drew nearer. By the intonation of his companion's voice, he knew there was something painful to be suggested.

"But," continued Grangeneuve, "can I find a man sufficiently capable, and possessing sufficient resolution, to carry out the plan?"

"Speak out!" said Chabot, with a firmness of accent which left no doubt in his colleague's mind. "I am capable of doing anything, to destroy those whom I hate; and I hate kings and priests."

"Well," said Grangeneuve, looking cautiously up and down the street, "I find there has always been innocent blood shed at the cradling of all revolutions, from the suicide of Lucretia to the beheading of Sidney. For statesmen, revolutions are theoretical; but for the populace, they are revengeful. If the multitude are urged to the point of vengeance, they must have a victim. That victim the Court withholds. Very well, then, let us sacrifice ourselves to the cause."

"I do not understand."

"Well, it is needful for one of us — one well known, energetic, upright — to fall beneath Royalist blows."

"Go on!"

"The man who falls must be a member of the National Assembly, so that the Assembly may take retaliation into its own hands. The victim must be myself!"

"But the Royalists will not injure thee, Grangeneuve! They 'll take especial care not to!"

"I know it! That 's why I say we must find a man of great determination."

"What for?"

"To kill me!"

Chabot recoiled a step; but Grangeneuve grasped him by the arm and said: "Chabot, just now thou hast boasted thyself capable of doing anything to destroy what thou hatest. Art thou capable of assassinating me?"

The monk was speechless; but Grangeneuve continued: "My oratory is nothing. My life is useless to Liberty; while my death, on the other hand, may be profitable to her. My corpse will be the standard of insurrection, and I tell thee — "

He paused. Then, with a vehement gesture, he extended his hand towards the Tuileries, and said: "That palace, and those whom it contains, must disappear in a cyclone."

Chabot looked at Grangeneuve, and trembled with admiration.

"Well?" insisted Grangeneuve.

"Well, sublime Diogenes, blow out thy lantern. The man is found!"

"Very well! Let us so arrange that the whole affair may be over this evening. To-night I will promenade all alone here," — they were opposite the wickets of the

Louvre, — "in the most deserted and gloomy part of the neighborhood. If thou fearest lest thy hand fail thee, bring two other Patriots. I will make this sign, so that I may be recognized."

As he spoke Grangeneuve raised both arms, and then continued: "They must stab me, and I promise thee I will fall without a cry."

Chabot wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

"In the daylight my body will be found. The Court will be blamed. The indignation of the people will do the rest."

"Very well, let it be to-night!" and the makers of this strange compact shook hands and separated.

Grangeneuve went home to make his will, which he dated a year back, at Bordeaux.

Chabot went to dinner at a restaurant in the gardens of the Palace Royal. After dinner he went to a cutler's and bought a knife. As he left the cutler's, his gaze fell upon the theatre posters. Candeille was to play. The monk therefore knew where to find Vergniaud.

Chabot went to the Comédie Française, which was only a few rods away, went up to the beautiful actress's dressing-room, and found there her usual admirers, Vergniaud, Talma, Chénier, Dugazon. She was to appear in two pieces. Chabot remained till the end of the performance.

When the plays were over, when the beautiful player resumed her usual dress, and Vergniaud stood ready to conduct her to the Rue Richelieu, where she lived, Chabot stepped into the carriage behind his colleague.

"You have something to say to me, Chabot?" asked Vergniaud, who at once saw that the capuchin had some special business with him.

"Yes! but be easy, for it won't take long."

"Speak at once, then."

Chabot pulled out his watch, saying, as he did so: "It's not yet time!"

"And when will it be time?"

"At midnight."

The lovely Candeille trembled at this mysterious dialogue, and murmured: "Oh, Monsieur!"

"Reassure yourself," said Chabot. "Vergniaud has nothing to fear; only his country needs him."

The carriage rolled along towards the actress's dwelling-house. The lady and both men remained silent. At Candeille's door Vergniaud asked: "Will you go in, Chabot?"

"No; you must come with me."

"My God, whither will you take him?" asked the actress.

"Some two hundred rods from here. In fifteen minutes he will be back again! I promise you that!"

Vergniaud pressed the hand of his lovely mistress, made her a reassuring sign, and went away with Chabot, through the Rue Traversière. Then they crossed the Rue Saint Honoré, and took the Rue Échelle. At the corner of that street the monk placed his hand on Vergniaud's shoulder, and called his attention to a man who was walking along beside the lonely walls of the Louvre.

"Seest thou?" he asked of Vergniaud.

"What?"

"That man!"

"Yes," said the Girondist.

"Well, that's our colleague, Grangeneuve."

"What's he doing there?"

"Waiting!"

"What for?"

"For somebody to kill him."

"To kill him?"

"Yes."

"And who is to kill him?"

"I!"

Vergniaud looked at Chabot as he would have looked at a madman.

"Remember Sparta, remember Rome, and then listen!" said Chabot.

Then he related the whole story. As the monk went on, Vergniaud lowered his head. He realized how far he was inferior — amorous lion and effeminate leader that he was — to that earnest Republican, who, like Decius, only asked for a gulf into which he could throw himself, in order to save his country.

"Very well," he said, "I want three days in which to prepare my oration."

"And in three days —?"

"Rest easy! In three days I shall either be bruised against the idol, or I shall overturn it!"

"I have thy word, Vergniaud?"

"Yes!"

"It is the pledge of a man?"

"Of a Republican!"

"Very well! I have no more need of thee at present. Go and comfort thy mistress."

Vergniaud retraced his steps to the Rue Richelieu. Chabot kept on towards Grangeneuve, who, seeing a man coming towards him, retreated towards the darkest angle. Chabot followed him.

Grangeneuve stopped at the foot of the wall, because he could go no farther. Chabot approached him. Grangeneuve made the sign agreed upon, by raising his arms. Then he stood still, like Chabot.

"Well, what hinders thee? Strike!"

"It 's useless!" said Chabot. "Our Vergniaud is to speak."

"So be it!" said Grangeneuve, with a sigh; "but I fancy the other means would be best!"

How could royalty possibly contend against such men as these?

CHAPTER III.

VERGNIAUD SPEAKS.

It was time for Vergniaud to decide. Perils were increasing at home and abroad.

As to foreign affairs, the Council of Ambassadors, at Ratisbon, unanimously refused to acknowledge the French Minister.

England, who called herself France's friend, was recruiting an immense force.

The Princes of the German Empire, who boasted of their neutrality, were secretly admitting the enemy into their territory.

The Duke of Baden allowed the Austrians to enter Kehl, which was only a league from Strasburg.

In Flanders it was worse yet. Luckner was a deaf old dotard, who managed to counteract all the plans of Dumouriez, — the only level-headed man, though not a genius, whom France had placed face to face with the foe.

Lafayette belonged to the Court party, and his last undertaking showed that the Assembly — that is to say, France — could not depend upon him.

Lastly Biron, though courageous and loyal, was discouraged by former reverses, and was only prepared to wage a defensive warfare.

So much for outside affairs.

At home Alsatia was loudly clamoring for arms; but the War Secretary, who was of the Court party, took care not to send what was wanted.

In the South, a lieutenant-general, belonging to the princely party, was the Governor of Lower Languedoc and Cévennes, and acknowledged the authority of the local nobility.

At a town in the West, it was announced at the conclusion of Mass, by a simple peasant named Allan Redeler, that an armed gathering of the friends of royalty would be held in a neighboring chapel. Five hundred peasants came at the first call. Thus were the Chouans planted in Vendée and Brittany. They only needed time to grow.

From nearly all the departments of the kingdom came Counter-Revolutionary addresses.

The danger was imminent, portentous, and great, — so great that it was no longer individuals alone who were in peril, but the country. Though not spoken publicly, these words were everywhere whispered : "The country is in danger!"

The Assembly waited. Chabot and Grangeneuve gave out word that in three days Vergniaud would speak, and they counted the hours as they sped.

Neither on the first or second day did Vergniaud appear in the Assembly. The third day arrived, and everybody was in trepidation. Not a Deputy was absent from his bench. The galleries were full.

Last of all Vergniaud entered. A buzz of satisfaction ran through the Assembly. The galleries applauded, as the pit applauds the entrance of a favorite actor. Vergniaud looked about, to see whom they were applauding, whereupon the plaudits redoubled, and apprised him that he was their object.

Vergniaud was hardly thirty-three years old. His character was pensive and phlegmatic. His genius was indolent, and amused itself with trifles. Ardent only in

love, he seemed to be hastily culling by handfuls the flowers of a youth which would have but a short spring-time. He went late to bed, and seldom rose before noon.

When he was to speak, he prepared his speech three or four days in advance, — furbishing, polishing, sharpening it, as a soldier, on the eve of battle, sharpens, furbishes, and polishes his weapons.

He was, in oratory, what in a fencing-school would be called a fine player. No thrust seemed to him good, unless it was brilliantly made and loudly praised. It was indispensable for him to keep his speeches for moments of danger, for important crises. As a poet has well said: "He was not a man for all occasions. He was a man for grand emergencies."

As to his physique, Vergniaud was short rather than tall, though he had a robust frame which made him seem like an athlete. His hair was long and flowing. In his oratorical gesticulation he would shake it, as a lion shakes his mane.

Beneath his large forehead, shaded by heavy eyebrows, blazed two black eyes, filled with amiability or with fire. His nose was short, but somewhat large, with flaring nostrils. His lips were thick.

As when a spring is opened, the water gushes forth in joyful abundance, so his words fell from his mouth in high cascades, foaming and bubbling.

Pitted with the smallpox, his skin seemed like dotted marble, not yet polished with the sculptor's chisel, but only roughed out by the apprentice's hammer. His complexion was pale, purple, or livid, proportionately as his blood mounted to his face or retreated to his heart.

In repose or in a crowd, Vergniaud was an ordinary

man, upon whom the eye of the historian, however piercing, would find no special reason to rest; but when passion's flame set his blood boiling, when his facial muscles palpitated, when his lifted hand asked for silence and controlled the crowd, then the man became a demi-god, the orator was transfigured, the platform became his Mount Tabor, whereon, like the Israelites, he won great victories.

Such was the man who now came to the Assembly, his hand as yet closed, but filled with thunderbolts. By the applause which broke out on his entrance, he divined that he was expected.

He did not ask for the floor, but went directly to the tribune, which he ascended in the midst of a quivering silence, and at once began his speech.

His first words had a mournful accent. They were deep and concentrated, — the utterance of a downcast man. He seemed as weary at the beginning as one ordinarily is at the close. This arose from his three days' contest with the spirit of eloquence. This was because he knew, in the supreme effort he was about to make, that he should overturn the temple of the Philistines. He mounted the rostrum in the midst of pillars standing erect about him, and upholding the dome of government; but he might descend therefrom clambering over the ruins of royalty.

As Vergniaud's genius is wholly embodied in this oration, let it here be given in its wholeness. We believe its reading will rouse the same curiosity one might have on visiting an arsenal, and standing before one of those historic engines of war, which levelled the walls of Rome, Carthage, and Saguntum.

He began in tones hardly intelligible; but his voice soon became deep, sonorous, and pealing.

CITIZENS: I come to you and I ask, — What then is the meaning of the singular situation in which the National Assembly finds itself? What fatality pursues us, and signalizes each day with events which bring disorder into our plans, and throw us back into a tumultuous whirlpool of hope, anxiety, and passion? What destiny has brought France into such a state of effervescence, wherein one begins to doubt whether the Revolution is retrogressing, or advancing towards its proper end?

At the very moment when our arms were apparently making some progress in Belgium, we saw them bowed before our enemies. They brought the war into our own territory. The only souvenirs of us Frenchmen, retained by the unfortunate Belgians, are the conflagrations which marked our retreat.

Along the Rhine the Prussians are concentrating their troops on our defenceless borders. How could it happen, precisely at a crisis so decisive for our national existence, that the movement of our troops should be suspended, and that by a sudden disorganization of our political ministry, the bonds of confidence should be broken, and the safety of the kingdom left with inexperienced hands?

Can it be that our triumphs are feared at home? Is it that the blood of the army at Coblentz is more sacred to us than our own? When priestly fanaticism threatens to deliver us over simultaneously to the ravages of both civil war and invasion, what can be the intentions of those who, with invincible obstinacy, refuse to sanction edicts aimed against the promoters of these disturbances? Do our rulers wish to reign over forsaken cities and blasted fields? Precisely what amount of tears, misery, blood, and death will satiate their vengeance? In a word, where do we stand?

Gentlemen, the enemies of the Constitution believe they have shaken your courage. Every day they attempt to alarm your consciences and your probity, to modify your love of liberty with the spirit of faction, — as if you had forgotten that a despotic Court and cowardly aristocratic leaders have bestowed the appellation of *partisans* upon public represent-

atives who took the famous Oath of the Tennis Court, upon the conquerors of the Bastille, upon all who have instigated or fostered the Revolution.

Gentlemen, you are slandered only because you are strangers to that caste of nobility which the Revolution has humbled in the dust; and by those degraded men who regret the loss of their privilege of cringing and crawling, like so many worms, in the presence of rank and title, — a privilege they cannot hope to regain by your assistance.

Your enemies wish to estrange you from the people, because they know the people are your supporters. If by a culpable desertion of the people's cause you deserve popular neglect, it will be easy enough to crush your Assembly.

They wish to divide you, — you, who will postpone your differences and quarrels till war is over, and who do not find so much pleasure in hating, that you prefer such infernal recreation to the welfare of your country. They hope to see you overawed by armed petitioners, as if you did not know that in the commencement of the Revolution the sanctuary of Liberty was surrounded by the satellites of despotism, Paris besieged by Court troops, and that the days of peril in our first Assembly were the days of glory also.

Finally, I wish to call your attention to the crisis which we have now reached.

Our internal troubles have two causes, — aristocratic scheming and ecclesiastical scheming. Both tend towards the same result, — a Counter-Revolution.

The King refuses to sanction your edict in regard to the sacerdotal troubles. I know not if the gloomy genius of the Medicis and of Cardinal Lorraine still hover beneath the vaulted roof of the Tuileries Palace, and if the King's heart is disturbed by the ghostly ideas which their presence might suggest; but we cannot certainly believe — without injustice to the King, and without supposing him the Revolution's most dangerous foe — that he willingly encourages those attempts of priestly ambition, by letting them go on with impunity in their effort to win back the arrogant power wherewith these supporters of the Tiara have oppressed both kings and people.

Unless we are ready to credit the King with injustice, and pronounce him the most cruel enemy of his country, we cannot believe that he delights in encouraging sedition, and in perpetuating those disorders which lead to ruin through the medium of civil war.

I have come to the conclusion that if the King resists your laws, it is because he judges himself strong enough to maintain public peace without your aid. If it happens that the public peace is not maintained, that the torch of fanaticism threatens to raise a conflagration in the kingdom, that sectarian violence still spreads desolation in the various departments, then the agents of the royal authority are themselves the cause of all our evils.

Very well! Let them answer with their heads for all those troubles of which Religion is made the pretext! By thus placing the terrible responsibility where it belongs, you will show that there is an end both to your own patience and to the national turmoil.

In your solicitude for the external safety of the kingdom, you voted the establishment of a military encampment near Paris. On the Fourteenth of July, thither would come the Federationists of France, to repeat the oath of Liberty or Death! The poisonous breath of calumny has extinguished this project. To that also the King has refused his sanction.

I respect too much the exercise of his Constitutional rights to even propose that his Council should be held responsible for this refusal; but if, before the assembling of their battalions, it happens that the soil of Liberty is profaned, then those who are responsible for this delay should be dealt with as traitors! They should be thrown straightway into the pit which their carelessness or their malevolence has dug in the pathway of Liberty.

We must tear away the bandage which flattery and intrigue have tied over the King's eyes, and show him the terminus to which his perfidious friends will compel him to lead us.

It is in the King's name that the French refugee princes stir up the courts of Europe against us. It is to avenge the King's dignity that the treaty of Pilnitz has been concluded. It is for

the defence of the King that we have seen his former body-guards flee to Germany under rebellion's flag. It is to give aid and comfort to the King that the refugees enroll themselves in the Austrian army, and sustain its efforts to tear the breast of their native land. It is in order to join these valiant chevaliers in their adherence to the royal prerogatives, that officers have abandoned their posts in the presence of the enemy, broken their oaths, stolen the funds entrusted to their charge, and corrupted their men, thus staining their honor with cowardice, perjury, insubordination, theft, and murder. In all these disasters the King's name has been cited.

Now in the Constitution I read as follows: "If the King puts himself at the head of an army, and directs its force against the Nation, or if he does not oppose, by some formal act, any such enterprise undertaken in his name, he shall be regarded as having abdicated his throne."

All in vain will it be for the King to reply: "It is true the national enemies pretend to act in my behalf, but I have proved myself not their accomplice. I have obeyed the Constitution. I have put troops into the field. To be sure the troops are weak, but the Constitution does not designate how strong I shall make my army. It is true that some encampments of troops might have been held in reserve to relieve those in the field; but the Constitution does not compel me to form such reserve camps. It is true that when my generals advanced without resistance into the enemy's country, I ordered their recall; but the Constitution does not compel me to achieve victories. It is true that my ministers have deceived the National Assembly as to the number, disposition, and supplies of our troops; but the Constitution gives me the right of choosing my own Council, and nowhere commands me to give my confidence to Patriots, and drive from me all Counter-Revolutionists. True, the Assembly has voted some decrees necessary to the defence of our dear country, and I have refused them my approval; but the Constitution guarantees me this right. Finally, it is true that the Counter-Revolution is at work, that despotism wishes to replace in my

hands an iron sceptre, — that I may crush you with it, that you may be compelled to grovel before me, that I may punish you for having the insolence to wish for freedom ; but all this is strictly in accordance with the Constitution. Not one act has emanated from me which the Constitution condemns. No one has any right to doubt my fidelity to the Constitution, or my zeal in its defence."

If it were possible, gentlemen, amidst the calamities of a baleful war, amidst the disorders of an Anti-Revolutionary upheaval, that the King of France should use such derisive language, — if it were possible to talk of his love for the Constitution with such insulting irony, should we not have a right to answer him in the following strain ?

"Oh King! Doubtless you believe, like the tyrant Lysander, that truth is worth no more than falsehood, and that it is well to amuse men with oaths, as children are amused with jackstones.

"You have pretended to love the laws, only for the sake of retaining as much power as would serve you in defying them. You have only agreed to the Constitution, lest it should push you from your throne, upon which you need to remain, in order that you may destroy that Constitution. You profess to love the Nation, only that you may inspire the people with confidence, and so assure the success of your perfidy.

"Think you still to abuse us with hypocritical protestations ? Do you think you can give a different complexion to the cause of our misfortunes, by your artifice, your impudence, your sophisms ?

"Was it for the sake of defending us that you sent an inferior force to resist foreign invasion, and so left your troops no possibility but defeat ? Was it for the purpose of defending us that you neglected projects for fortifying the interior of the kingdom, and failed to make preparations for resistance, against a time when we might become the prey of tyrants ? Was it in our defence that you failed to reprimand a general who violated the Constitution, and so weakened the courage of those who served under him ?

"Is it for our sakes that you have constantly disorganized

your Council? Does the Constitution leave to you the choice of your ministers for our weal or for our woe? Does it make you commander-in-chief of our armies for our glory or our shame? Does it give you the right of approval or veto, a large income, and great prerogatives, in order that you may use these privileges to the detriment of the Constitution and the kingdom?

"Not so, thou man whom the generosity of the French people has roused to no responsive emotion, — man sensible only to the love of despotism.

"You have not kept your vows to the Constitution. The Constitution may be upset, but you shall not gather the fruit of your perjury. You have not formally repudiated the victories which in your name have been achieved over Liberty, but yours shall not be the fruit of these unworthy triumphs. Henceforth you are naught to the Constitution which you have so unworthily violated, or to the people whom you have so pusillanimously betrayed!"

So might we speak to the King!

As the facts which I have recalled to your notice do not lack striking support from several acts of the King; as it is certain that the false friends who surround him are bribed by the conspirators at Coblentz, who burn to lead the King to his perdition, in order to place the crown on the head of some one of their own chiefs; as it is important for his personal safety, as well as the safety of the kingdom, that his conduct should not be clouded with suspicion, I propose an address which shall remind him of the truths I have here recited, through which it may be urged upon the King that the neutrality which he maintains, between his own country and Coblentz, is treason towards France.

Moreover, I demand that you shall declare the country to be in danger. At this cry of alarm you will see all citizens rally. The earth will be covered with soldiers, who will renew the prodigies of valor which covered with glory the nations of antiquity. After being regenerated in 1789, have the French people been shorn of their patriotism?

Has the day not dawned when those who dwell in the

stability of Rome can reunite with those who have taken their stand on the Mount Aventine of resistance? Are you waiting for the time when, weary with the fatigues of the Revolution, or corrupted by the habit of living as palace parasites, weak men can without enthusiasm talk of liberty, and discuss slavery without a shiver?

What are we waiting for? Is it a military government, which some wish to establish? The Court is suspected of treasonable projects. There is talk of military movements and martial law. The public imagination is being familiarized with the idea of bloodshed. The French King's palace is gradually being changed into a fortified castle.

Where are our enemies? Against whom are these bayonets and cannon pointed?

The friends of the Constitution have been driven out of the Royal Council. The reins of government are dangling at random, needing the grasp of vigor and patriotism. Everywhere discord is fomented and fanaticism triumphs. The connivance of the government increases the audacity of powerful foreign states, who belch forth against us their armies and their weapons; and this same connivance cools the sympathy of those nations who secretly pray for the triumph of Liberty. The cohorts of our enemies stretch wider and wider. The shuttles of intrigue and perfidy are weaving treason. The Legislature opposes rigorous but necessary edicts to head off these plots. The King's own hands tear these edicts in twain.

Summon, — for it is time, — summon the French people to save their native land! Show them the gulf in all its immensity! Only by an extraordinary effort will they be able to cross it. It is for you to move them, by an electric movement which will send a shock throughout the land.

Imitate the Greeks at Thermopylæ, or those venerable Roman senators who, on their own thresholds, awaited the death which their savage enemies brought into their country. It is only needful to make such sacrifices, in order to find avengers of your ashes. The day when your blood reddens the soil, tyranny — with its pride, its palaces, its upholders —

will vanish before an all-powerful nationality and the wrath of the people.

In this speech there was an ascending force. By increasing gradations, like the crescendo of a tempest, it beat the air like the wings of some huge bird, rising like a hurricane.

The effect was like that of a water-spout. The whole assemblage, Feuillants, Royalists, Constitutionalists, Republicans, members on their benches and spectators in the galleries, were overwhelmed, caught up, and carried away by this powerful whirlwind. Everybody yelled with enthusiasm.

On the same evening Barbaroux wrote to his friend Rebecqui, who remained in Marseilles:

Send me five hundred men who know how to die!

CHAPTER IV.

THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE CAPTURE OF THE BASTILLE.

On July 11 the Assembly declared that the country was in peril. For the promulgation of this declaration the King's authorization was requisite, according to the Constitution. This the King did not give till the evening of the twenty-first.

Indeed, to proclaim the country in peril was an acknowledgment of royal impotence. It was an appeal to the Nation to save itself, inasmuch as the King either could or would do nothing about it.

During the interval from July 11 to July 21 the palace was greatly agitated by fear.

On July 14 the Court expected the development of some plot against the King's life. A bulletin from the Jacobins confirmed this expectation. It was prepared by Robespierre. His two-edged sword was easily recognizable.

This circular was addressed to the Federationists who were coming to Paris for their festival of July 14, so cruelly stained with blood the year before. Thus spake the Incorruptible:

> Greeting to the French people in their eighty-three departments! Greeting to Marseilles! Greeting to the Nation, powerful and invincible, who gathers her children about her in all times of her fears and her festivals! We open our doors to our brothers!

Citizens, do you come hither merely for an empty federal ceremony, and for superfluous adjurations? No, no! You hasten at the appeal of the Nation, menaced from without, betrayed from within!

Our perfidious chiefs lead our armies into snares. Our generals respect the territory of the tyrannical Austrian, and burn the villages of our Belgian brothers. A monster — Lafayette! — has insulted the National Assembly to its very face.

Reviled, threatened, outraged, does the Assembly still exist? So many attacks have at last awakened the Nation, and so you are gathering here together. Those who sing the Nation's lullaby will try to seduce you. Flee from their caresses! Flee from their banquets, when they drink to the success of Moderation and imbibe forgetfulness of duty! Keep your suspicions intact! The fatal hour is about to sound!

Behold the Patriot Altar! Will you allow base idols to come between you and Liberty, to usurp the adoration which belongs to her alone? Let us swear allegiance only to our country, sustained by the everlasting arms of the King of Nature.

At the Champ de Mars everything will remind you of the treachery of our enemies. Not a sod can there be upturned which is not soiled with the innocent blood poured out upon it. Purify that soil! Avenge that blood! Do not leave that sacred precinct till you have determined the salvation of our native land!

It would be difficult to speak more explicitly. Never was slaughter advised in more positive terms. Never were sanguinary reprisals preached in more clear and urgent tones.

Mark this! It was Robespierre, the caustic tribune, the fine-spun orator, who said to the eighty-three departments, in his blandest voice: "My friends, believe me, it is best to kill the King!"

Everybody was in consternation at the Tuileries,

especially the King. The Court partisans were positive that the outbreak of June 20 had for its object the assassination in the midst of a riot; and that if this crime had not been committed, it was solely on account of the King's courage, which had awed the murderers. There was some truth in all this.

Now all the courtiers still remaining with those two condemned persons called the King and Queen, declared that the crime which had miscarried on June 20 had been merely postponed till July 14.

Of this they were so fully persuaded that they begged the King to put on a tunic of chain mail, so that the first stab or the first shot would be blunted on his breast, and his friends have time to rally to his assistance.

Alas! The Queen no longer had Andrée to aid her in this nocturnal task, as on a former similar occasion, and to go with her, at midnight, to some remote corner of the Tuileries, there to test, with a tremulous hand, the solidity of this silky cuirass, as she had once done at Versailles.

Fortunately the King's breastplate had been preserved; although at the time of his first violent journey to Paris the King had only tried it on, in order to please the Queen, and afterwards refused to wear it. Now the King was so closely watched, that his friends could find no opportunity of again having him put it on, and correcting any faults which might be found in it.

For three days Madame Campan carried it about under her clothing. At last, when she was one morning in the Queen's chamber, while her Majesty was still abed, the King came in, rapidly threw off his coat, and tried on the armor, while Madame Campan fastened the doors.

When the shirt of mail had been thus put on, the King called Madame Campan, and said in a low voice: "It is

to satisfy the Queen that I do this. They won't assassinate me, Campan, you may be sure. Their plans are changed, and I must expect a different sort of death. At any rate, come to my rooms, when you leave the Queen's, as I have something to confide to you."

The King left the room. The Queen had observed this interview, but without hearing anything. She followed the King with a restless glance till the door closed behind him, and then asked: "Campan, what did the King say to you just now?"

In tears Madame Campan threw herself on her knees by the bedside of the Queen, who took her attendant's hands, while that lady repeated aloud what the King had whispered.

The Queen sorrowfully shook her head and said: "Yes, that is the King's opinion, and I begin to think as he does. The King believes that what is taking place in France is but a repetition of what happened in England during the last century. He reads continually the history of the unfortunate Charles the First, in order to bear himself better than the English monarch. Yes, yes! I begin to think the King will be tried, my dear Campan! As to myself, I am a foreigner, and I shall be assassinated. Alas! What will become of my poor children?"

The Queen could proceed no further. Her strength abandoned her, and she began to sob.

Madame Campan arose and hastened to prepare a glass of sweetened water, mixed with ether; but the Queen made a negative sign.

"Nervous maladies belong to happy women; but all the medicine in the world can do naught for maladies of the soul. In our misfortunes I am no longer sensible of my bodily existence. I think only of my fate. Do not say anything about this to the King, but go and find him."

Madame Campan hesitated about obeying.

"What is the matter?" asked the Queen.

"Oh, Madame!" cried Madame Campan, "I must tell your Majesty that I have had made for you a chain tunic like the King's. On my knees I beg your Majesty to wear it."

"Thank you, dear Campan!" said Marie Antoinette.

"Ah! Your Majesty accepts it, then?" cried the attendant, joyfully.

"I accept it as a token of your devotion; but I shall take good care not to put it on."

Then, taking her attendant's hand, she added softly: "I shall only be too happy if they assassinate me! My God! They will then do more than Thou hast done in giving me life, for they will deliver me from it!—Go Campan, go!"

Madame Campan left the room; and it was time, for she was stifling.

In the corridor she met the King, who was walking towards her. On seeing her, he stopped, and offered his hand. Madame Campan took his hand, and wished to kiss it; but the King drew her to himself, and kissed her on both cheeks.

Before she could recover from her astonishment he bade her follow him.

Walking in advance of her, and pausing in an inside entry which led to the Dauphin's chamber, the King felt with his hand till he found a spring, and opened a cupboard, so carefully concealed in the wall that the aperture was completely lost among the brown patches which formed the darker parts of the painted stones.

This was the iron vault which the King had made and walled up with Master Gamain's help, more than two years before.

There was a large portfolio filled with papers in the safe, and on one of the shelves were piled several millions in golden louis.

"Here, Campan," said the King, "take this portfolio, and carry it to your own room."

Madame Campan tried to lift it, but the portfolio was too heavy.

"Sire, I cannot!" she said.

"Wait, wait!" said the King.

After shutting the safe, which again became entirely invisible, he took the portfolio, and himself carried it to Madame Campan's room.

"There!" he said, drying his forehead.

"Sire, what ought I to do with this portfolio?"

"The Queen will tell you, when she tells you what it contains."

The King left the room. In order that the huge portfolio might not be seen, Madame Campan, with an effort, pushed it between the two mattresses of her bed, and then returned to the Queen, to whom she said: "Madame, I have in my possession a portfolio which the King has just brought me. He says your Majesty will apprise me what it contains, and what is to be done with it."

The Queen laid her hand on Madame Campan's, who stood before the bed, waiting for an answer.

"Campan, those are writings which would be fatal to the King, if things should come to a trial, — which God forbid! At the same time, — and doubtless this is what he wishes me to tell you, — in that portfolio is a full account of a session of the Council in which the King advised against a declaration of war. He had it signed by all his Councillors. In case of a trial he thinks that if these other papers are harmful to him, this one may be useful."

"But, Madame," asked the alarmed tiring-woman, "what is to be done with them?"

"Whatever you choose, provided they are in safety. You alone are responsible for them. Only you must not go away from me, even when you are not on duty. Such are our circumstances, that at any moment I may need you. As you are one of our trustworthy friends, I wish to have you always at hand."

The festival of July 14 took place. It concerned itself with the Revolution, not with the assassination of the King. Probably no such idea as that was really entertained; but there was a disposition to celebrate Pétion's victory over the King.

We know already that immediately after the Twentieth of June Pétion was suspended from office by the Directory of Paris. Without the King's concurrence, this act would have been inoperative; but the suspension was confirmed by a royal proclamation, sent to the Assembly.

On July 13, the eve of the anniversary of the downfall of the Bastille, the Assembly, acting on its own separate authority, removed the injunction from Pétion.

On July 14, at eleven in the forenoon, the King came down the great staircase, with the Queen and their children. Three or four thousand unorganized troops escorted the royal family. The Queen looked in vain into the faces of these soldiers, and also of the National Guards, for any mark of sympathy. The most devoted turned away their heads and avoided her glance.

As to the people, there was no mistaking their sentiments. Cheers for Pétion were heard on all sides. Then, as if there were a desire to make the ovation more lasting than the enthusiasm of a moment, on every man's hat the King and Queen could see the words which announced

at once the royal defeat and the Mayor's victory: *Long live Pétion !*

The Queen was pale and trembling. In spite of what she had said to Madame Campan, she was convinced that there was a plot against the King's life. She shuddered every instant, fancying she saw an outstretched arm with a knife, or a hand levelling a pistol.

At the Champ de Mars the King descended from his carriage, took his place at the left of the President of the Assembly, and with him walked on towards the Patriot Altar.

There it was necessary for the Queen to separate herself from the King, in order to ascend, with her children, to the balcony reserved for them. She paused, refusing to go up the stairs until her husband was safe in his place, and anxiously followed him with her eyes.

At the foot of the Patriot Altar there occurred one of those sudden movements, such as crowds often make. The King disappeared, as if he had been submerged. The Queen screamed, and started towards the place; but presently he reappeared, walking up the steps of the Patriot Altar.

Among the ordinary symbols which figure in solemn festivals, — such as Justice, Force, Liberty, — there was one which gleamed mysteriously and formidably under a crape veil. This symbol was borne by a man dressed in black and crowned with cypress, and it particularly attracted the Queen's notice.

She was glued to the spot where she stood. Though assured of the safety of the King, who had now reached the top of the altar platform, she could not detach her gaze from this gloomy apparition.

At last she made an effort to unloose the chains of her tongue, and said, though without addressing anybody in

particular: "Who is that man in black, crowned with cypress?"

"The headsman!" was the response of a voice which made her tremble.

"And what does he carry in his hand, under that crape veil?"

"The axe of Charles the First."

The Queen grew pale and looked around her. It seemed as if she had heard the sound of that voice before.

She was not mistaken. The man who spoke was the man she had seen at Taverney Château, at Sevres Bridge, and on her return from Varennes. In a word, it was Cagliostro. Uttering a cry, she fell fainting in Madame Elizabeth's arms.

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNTRY IN PERIL.

On July 22, at six in the morning, a week after the Bastille Festival at the Champ de Mars, all Paris shuddered at the sound of a heavy piece of artillery, discharged on New Bridge. A cannon at the Arsenal answered like an echo.

From hour to hour, during the day, this alarming detonation was renewed.

The six legions composing the National Guard, led by their commanders, assembled by daybreak at the Hôtel de Ville.

Two processions were organized, to carry throughout the streets of Paris and its suburbs the proclamation that the country was in danger.

It was Danton who conceived the idea of having this alarming display, and he asked Sergent to arrange the programme.

As an engraver Sergent was an artist of only moderate ability, but he was great at planning spectacular shows. The outrageous insults heaped upon him by Royalists in the yard of the Tuileries, when he went there with Pétion after the riot of June 20, had augmented his hatred. In his programme for July 22 he showed the same magnificent skill which was to reach its culmination on August 10.

Both processions, which were to go through the city in opposite directions, left the City Hall at six in the morning.

First came a detachment of cavalry, with music at its head. A gloomy melody had been composed for the occasion, and resembled a funeral march.

Behind this detachment of cavalry came six pieces of artillery, which marched abreast, when the quays and streets were wide enough, and two-by-two, where the streets were narrow.

Next came four officers on horseback, bearing as many ensigns, on each of which was one of the four words :

LIBERTY — EQUALITY — CONSTITUTION — COUNTRY.

Then followed a dozen municipal officers, with their scarfs and swords.

Following them — solitary and isolated, like France herself — came a National Guardsman on horseback, holding aloft a large tricolored banner, on which were inscribed these words :

CITIZENS, OUR COUNTRY IS IN DANGER.

Then came six other pieces of artillery, arranged like the first, rumbling and jolting heavily.

They were followed by a detachment of the National Guards, after which a second body of horsemen brought up the rear.

At every square, bridge, and crossroad the procession halted. Silence was commanded by the drum-roll. The banners waved ; and when the noise was subdued, and ten thousand spectators held their breath captive within their breasts, a city official raised his voice, and read aloud the legislative act, to which he always added this watchword :

THE COUNTRY IS IN PERIL.

This last startling cry vibrated in every heart. It was the cry of the Nation, of France, of Native Land. It

was the utterance of an agonized mother, crying, "Help, my children!"

Meanwhile, hour by hour, the roar of cannon at New Bridge found its echo in the detonation at the Arsenal.

In all the large squares of the city, the Notre Dame Purview being the chief centre, platforms had been erected for the enlistment of volunteers. In the middle of each staging was a large plank, resting on two drums, which served as a recruiting table; at every jarring movement on the platform, these drums sent forth gloomy vibrations, like the rumbling of a distant storm.

Around each of these platforms were tents, surmounted with tricolored flags, each tent graced with red, white, and blue streamers, and crowned with a chaplet of oak-leaves.

Around the table were seated municipal officers, arrayed in their official scarfs, who delivered the certificates to the recruits as fast as their names were registered.

At each side of the staging were two cannon. At the foot of the wide staircase leading up to the table were musicians, who played continually. Beyond the tents, following the same curved line, was a circle of armed citizens.

All this was both grand and terrible. It was the frenzy of patriotism.

Everybody rushed up to have his name inscribed. The sentinels were powerless to keep back the applicants, who continually broke through the ranks. The two staircases, one for ascending and the other for descending, large as they were, were not adequate for the crowd.

Every man climbed up as he could, aided by those who had already reached the top of the platform. As soon as his name was registered, and the certificate filled out, he jumped to the ground with proud cheers, flourishing

his parchment, running to kiss the cannon's mouth, and singing the *Ça ira.*

Thus were celebrated the nuptials between War and the French People, — that war of two and twenty years' duration, which would result in a freer future for the world, though it failed somewhat of this effect in its own day and generation.

Among these volunteers were many past the military age, who, with sublime idiocy, tried to disguise their years. Others were too young for service; but these pious liars were so anxious to be soldiers, that they stood on tiptoe and answered *sixteen*, when they were really only fourteen.

In this way the aged Latour d'Auvergne came from Brittany, and the youthful Viala from the south.

Those who were kept back by indissoluble ties wept because they could not go. They hid their faces in their hands to conceal their shame, when the successful recruits called out to them: "Sing, you fellows! Hurrah for the Nation!"

As the cannon sounded, hour by hour, from New Bridge to the Arsenal, so these cheers for the Nation continually rose higher and louder in the air.

The excitement was so great, the people were so frenzied, that the Assembly was alarmed at its own work. Four members were delegated to go over Paris in all directions. It was their business to say: "Brothers, in the name of our country, no riots The Court would like to have one, in order to raise some excuse for getting the King out of the way. Don't give the Court such a pretext. He must stay with us."

Then these terrible word-planters would add, in an insidious whisper: "It is necessary for *him* to have his punishment!"

There was hand-clapping, as these messengers passed along ; and through the multitude, like the sough of the storm through forest branches, could be heard the sentence : "*He* must be punished!" Nobody said *who* ought to be punished ; but everybody knew very well to whom the pronoun applied.

This lasted till midnight. Until midnight the cannon thundered. Until midnight the crowds stayed around the platforms. Many encamped at the Champ de Mars, making their first bivouac at the foot of the Patriot Altar.

Every report of the cannon resounded in the heart of the Tuileries.

The heart of the Tuileries was the King's chamber, where Louis, Marie Antoinette, the royal children, and the Princess Lamballe were assembled. They did not go out all day long. They felt that their destinies were somehow involved in that grand and solemn time.

The royal family did not separate till after midnight, — that is, till they knew the last gun had been fired.

Since the convocations in the faubourgs the Queen no longer slept in the old apartments. Her friends prevailed upon her to occupy a room situated between the King's chamber and the Dauphin's. Accustomed to wake always at daybreak, she insisted that neither the blinds nor shutters should be closed, so that her sleeplessness might be less disagreeable. Madame Campan slept in the same chamber with the Queen.

Let us relate how it happened that the Queen consented to let one of her attendants sleep near her. One night, when the Queen was about to retire, an hour after midnight, as Madame Campan was standing before the Queen's bed and talking with her, they

heard steps in the corridor, and then a noise which sounded like a struggle between two men. Madame Campan wished to ascertain what was going on, but the Queen clung to her attendant, — or rather to her friend, — and said : " Don't leave me, Campan ! "

Just then a voice in the corridor shouted : " Fear nothing, Madame ! It's only a rascal who meant to kill you, but I've got him ! " It was the voice of a chamberlain.

" My God ! " cried the Queen, raising her hands to Heaven, " what an existence ! Outrages by day ! Assassins at night ! "

Then she called out to the chamberlain : " Let the man go, and open the door for him ! "

" But Madame — ! " said Campan.

" Ah, my dear," said the Queen, " if he is arrested to-night, the Jacobins will carry him aloft in triumph to-morrow."

The man was released, and proved to be an employee connected with the King's toilet-room. Henceforth the King persuaded the Queen to let some one share her room. She selected Madame Campan.

The night following the proclamation of national danger, Madame Campan awoke towards two o'clock. A ray of moonshine crept through the window-panes, like a nocturnal visitant or a friendly flame, and rested on the Queen's bed, tingeing the linen with a pale, peaceful, and bluish hue.

Madame Campan heard a sigh. She knew that the Queen was not asleep. " Is your Majesty in pain ? " she asked softly.

" I suffer all the time, Campan," responded Marie Antoinette, " but I hope this suffering will not last much longer."

"Good God, Madame!" cried the attendant, "has your Majesty been indulging in painful thoughts?"

"No, quite the contrary, Campan!"

Reaching forth her colorless hand, which became still paler in the reflected moonlight, the Queen said with an accent of deep melancholy: "In a month this ray of moonlight will see us free and relieved from our chains."

"Ah!" cried Madame Campan, joyously, "have you accepted Lafayette's succor, and are you to escape?"

"Succor from Lafayette? No, God be praised!" said the Queen, with an accent of unmistakable repugnance. "No! but in a month my nephew, the Emperor Francis, will be in Paris."

"Are you sure of it, Madame?" cried Campan, in alarm.

"Yes, all is decided. There is an alliance between Austria and Prussia. The two powers combined will march on Paris. We know the route both of the princes and the allied armies. We can say positively that on such a day our rescuers will be at Valenciennes, on such a day at Verdun, on such a day at Paris!"

"And you do not fear — ?" Madame Campan checked herself.

"— being assassinated?" said the Queen, finishing the sentence. "That may be! I know it! But what then Campan? Whoever risks nothing, gains nothing!"

"On what day do the allies hope to reach Paris?"

"Between the Fifteenth and Twentieth of August."

"God grant it!" said Campan.

Fortunately God did not grant it! or rather, he heard the prayer, and sent to France unhoped-for aid, — the Marseillaise!

CHAPTER VI.

THE MARSEILLES HYMN.

WHAT encouraged the Queen was precisely what should have frightened her, — the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto. This manifesto was prepared at the Tuileries, and sent away early in the month; but it was not expected back in Paris, for publication, before July 26.

About the same time that the Court was preparing this brainless document, whose effect we shall note in due time, let us see what was going on at Strasburg.

Strasburg was an exceedingly French town, the more so because it had narrowly escaped being an Austrian dependency. Strasburg was one of France's most solid bulwarks, and saw the enemy at her very gates.

For six months, ever since there had been a serious question of war, patriotic battalions, composed of youthful and ardent volunteers, had been assembling at Strasburg.

Strasburg, whose sublime steeple is mirrored in the Rhine, which alone separated France from the enemy, was at that time a seething caldron of war. It was the seat of gayety, pleasure, balls, and parades, and the sound of warlike implements was unceasingly mingled with holiday music.

As arriving volunteers entered one gate of the city, out by the other went those soldiers who were considered properly prepared for the fray. In Strasburg friends met and embraced, before uttering their last farewells.

Sisters wept. Mothers prayed. Fathers said: "Go, and die for France!"

Above all could be heard detonations of cannon and the chimes of holy bells, those two brazen voices which speak to God, — one to invoke his mercy, the other his justice.

On the occasion of one of these departures — more solemn than the rest, because there were more troops — Mayor Dietrich of Strasburg, a worthy and excellent citizen, invited the brave young fellows to come to his house, and fraternize with the garrison officers in a banquet.

The Mayor's two girls, with a dozen or fifteen of their companions, — blond and noble daughters of Alsatia, who might have been mistaken for nymphs of Ceres, by their golden hair, — though they were not to preside at the festival, were to perfume and embellish it, like so many bouquets of flowers.

Among the guests — a frequent visitor at Dietrich's house as a family friend — was a noble young gentleman from Franché Comté, named Rouget de l'Isle.

At a later period the author of this history was acquainted with this gentleman. While the novelist listened, pen in hand, the poet related the story of the birth of this poetic war-flower, whose unfolding the reader is about to witness.

Rouget de l'Isle was then twenty years of age, and belonged to the Strasburg garrison as an engineering officer. A poet and musician, his harpsichord was to be heard in the midst of the grand harmony of the era, and his voice was to be heard among the strongest and most patriotic.

Never was a more French or more national banquet brightened by the warm summer sun. None talked of themselves. All talked of France.

Death was present, to be sure, as at the classic banquets of antiquity; but Death seemed beautiful, and wore a smiling face. He bore not the hideous scythe or the funereal hourglass, but in one hand was his sword, and in the other a palm-branch.

They wanted something to sing. The old *Ça ira* was an anthem of wrath and of civil war. What they wanted was a patriotic appeal, fraternal in spirit, but threatening to foreign enemies.

Where was the modern Tyrtæus who, amidst the smoke of artillery and the whistle of bullets, could lift up his voice in the hymn of France against her invaders?

To this demand the enthusiastic, passionate, and patriotic Rouget de l'Isle responded: "Here am I!" and immediately left the dining-hall.

In a half-hour, before they began to be uneasy over his absence, all was ready, words and music. The hymn had been struck out at one flow of the metal into the mould, as if it had been the statue of a god.

Rouget returned. His hair was tossed back. His forehead was covered with sweat. He was breathless from his struggle with those two sublime sisters, Music and Poesy.

"Listen!" he cried, "listen all!"

He was sure of his muse, this noble young fellow!

At the sound of his voice every one turned towards him, some holding their goblets, while others clasped their neighbors' trembling hands.

Rouget de l'Isle began:

Come on, ye children of our Nation,
The day of glory now is here!
Against us tyrants take their station,
Their blood-red standards to uprear.
Their blood-red standards to uprear.

Along our fields, are ye not hearing
The trampling oaths of soldiers fierce?
They come, within our arms, to pierce
Our sons and comrades so endearing.

To arms, ye patriot band! In bright battalions stand!
March on! March on!
May blood impure soon lave our thirsty land.

[NOTE. — As the version of the Marseillaise given by Dumas differs somewhat from the older popular version, still sung and printed in France, the usual words or lines are here and there inserted in brackets, while our author's preference is retained in the text. — *Translator.*]

Allons, enfants de la patrie;
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!
Contre vous [nous] de la tyrannie
L'étendard sanglant est levé,
L'étendard sanglant est levé.
Entendez-vous dans nos [les] campagnes
Rugir [mugir] ces féroces soldats?
Ils viennent jusque dans nos [vos] bras
Égorger nos [vos] fils, nos [vos] compagnes.

Aux armes, citoyens! formez vos bataillons!
Marchons, marchons;
Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons!

At the first lines an electric thrill ran through the assemblage. Twice or thrice bursts of enthusiasm followed the close of the stanza, but voices thirsting for more shouted: "Silence! attention!"

Rouget continued, with a gesture of deep indignation, as his soul was stirred within him:

What will these hordes of minions blameful,
Of perjured kings and traitors bold?
For whom are wrought these shackles shameful,
These irons kept from days of old?

For us, ye French! what outrage dire!
What anger it should swift excite!
Against our rights they dare unite,
To send us back to slavery's mire.

Que veut cette horde d'esclaves,
De traîtres, de rois conjurés?
Pour qui ces ignobles entraves,
Ces fers dès longtemps préparés?
Français, pour nous, ah, quel outrage!
Quels transports il doit exciter!
C'est nous qu'on ose méditer [menacer]
De rendre à l'antique esclavage!

The singer began his refrain alone; but he had no need to ask the company to join in the chorus, for that chorus came in a single cry from every lip:

To arms, ye patriot band! In bright battalions stand!
March on! March on!
May blood impure soon lave our thirsty land!

Then Rouget continued, amidst increasing enthusiasm:

By cohorts strange, a foreign legion,
Shall our dear hearths and homes be bound?
And hireling hosts, throughout this region,
Fell our bold warriors to the ground?
Jehovah! 'neath these fetters fateful,
We bow the head and bend the knee;
But masters of our destiny,
Shall never be these despots hateful.

Quoi! des cohortes étrangères
Feraient la loi dans nos foyers?
Quoi! ces phalanges mercenaires
Terrasseraient nos fiers guerriers?
Grand Dieu! par des mains enchaînées,
Nos fronts sous le joug se ploirant [plieraient]!
De vils despotes deviendraient
Les maîtres de nos destinées!

A hundred throbbing breasts waited for the poet's rejoinder, and before the last lines were sung they shouted: "No! no! no!"

Then, with the dominance of a trumpet, the chorus again rang out:

To arms, ye patriot band! In bright battalions stand!
March on! March on!
May blood impure soon lave our thirsty land!

Now there ensued such a tremulous rustle among his hearers, that before singing the fourth stanza Rouget was obliged to ask for silence. They listened feverishly, as his vehement voice sang on:

Ye tyrants, tremble! Traitors scheming,
By parties all ye stand condemned!
Quail! for your parricidal dreaming,
Whose just reward doth now impend!
Here all are soldiers strong to fight you;
And when they fall, in life's young spring,
The earth new heroes forth shall bring,
With hearts already armed to smite you.

Tremblez, tyrans! et vous, perfides!
L'opprobre de tous les partis!
Tremblez! vos projets parricides
Vont enfin recevoir leur prix.
Tout est soldat pour vous combattre,
S'ils tombent, nos jeunes héros,
La terre [France] en produit de nouveaux,
Contre vous tout [tous] prêts à se battre.

"Yes! yes!" shouted all voices.

Outsiders had come in after the banquet was over, to hear the song.

Fathers pushed forward their sons, who were able to march. Mothers lifted in their arms children who still had to be carried.

Then Rouget de l'Isle saw that a verse was still wanting, the song of the children, — the sublime chorus of the growing harvest, of the sprouting grain. While his comrades were repeating frantically the terrible refrain, he leaned his head on his hand. There, in the midst of noise, cheers, and bravos, he improvised the following stanza :

Upon their lifework, we will enter,
When our dear elders are no more ;
May their blest virtues be our mentor,
Along the paths they trod before.
Less anxious far to long survive them,
Than honored graves with them to share,
With pride sublime we 'll do and dare,
Their deaths to avenge, or die beside them.

Nous entrerons dans la carrière
Quand nos aînés n'y seront plus ;
Nous y trouverons leur poussière
Et la trace de leurs vertus.
Bien moins jaloux de leur survivre
Que de partager leur cercueil,
Nous aurons le sublime orgueil
De les venger ou de les suivre !

Above the stifled sobs of the mothers and the enthusiastic accents of the fathers, the pure voices of childhood could be heard singing the chorus :

To arms, ye patriot band ! In bright battalions stand !
March on ! March on !
May blood impure soon lave our thirsty land !

"Ah !" softly said one of the guests ; "but is there no pardon for those who have been led astray in our holy war ?"

"Wait, wait!" said Rouget, "and you shall see that my heart merits no such reproach!"

With a voice full of emotion he sang that holy apostrophe, which contains the very heart of France. Humane, noble, generous, even in its wrath, — flying aloft on wings of pity, — the Nation rises superior to her own anger:

Ye Frenchmen loyal, be forbearing,
Whene'er ye give or hold your blows, —
Those dupes regretful always sparing,
Against you armed by spiteful foes.

Français! en guerriers magnanimes,
Portez ou retenez vos coups:
Épargnez ces [les] tristes victimes
S'armant à regret contre nous.
[À regret s'armant contre vous.]

Applause interrupted the singer. "Yes! Yes! Yes!" came from all sides. "Pity and pardon for our brothers misled, our brothers enslaved, — who are forced against us at the point of the bayonet!"

"Yes!" replied Rouget, "all pardon and mercy for those!" and then he sang on:

But strike those blood-stained knaves infernal,
And tools of pitiless Bouillé, —
Who wait, like tigers for their prey,
To tear the loving breast maternal!

Mais ces despotes sanguinaires,
Mais les complices de Bouillé,
Contre ces tigres sans pitié,
[Tous ces tigres qui, sans pitié,]
Déchirant [déchirent] le sein de leur mère!

"Yes; down with them!" shouted every voice.

March on! March on!
May blood impure soon lave our thirsty land!

"Now to your knees, all of you!" cried Rouget de l'Isle. They obeyed.

Rouget alone remained upright. Placing one foot on a comrade's chair, as if it were the first step in the Temple of Liberty, and raising his hands to Heaven, he sang the last stanza, an invocation to the Presiding Genius of France:

Let holy patriot love ne'er perish!
Guide and uphold our vengeful hands!
Oh Freedom, whom we fondly cherish,
Fight thou with our defensive bands.
May victory perch beneath our banners,
Drawn hither by thy dulcet tones!
May dying foemen, mid their groans,
Thy triumph see, hear our hosannas!

Amour sacré de la patrie,
Conduis, soutiens nos bras vengeurs;
Liberté, Liberté chérie,
Combats avec tes défenseurs!
Sous nos drapeaux, que la victoire
Accoure à tes mâles accents;
Que nos [tes] ennemis expirants
Voient ton [ta] triomphe et notre gloire!

"Go on! France is saved!" cried a voice.

Then once more all lips joined in that sublime hymn, — the pathetic *De profundis* of Despotism, the exulting *Magnificat* of Liberty:

To arms, ye patriot band! In bright battalions stand!
March on! March on!
May blood impure soon lave our thirsty land!

Joy — wild, intoxicating, insensate joy — filled all hearts. Everybody threw himself into his neighbor's arms. Maidens spread the floral crowns and bouquets broadcast at the bard's feet.

Thirty-eight years later, in describing to the narrator this great day, — to me a young man, who had just heard for the first time, in 1830, this sacred hymn sung by the puissant voice of the people, — thirty-eight years later, the poet's forehead was still radiant with the splendid aureole of 1792.

This was just!

How comes it that even I, in writing these last verses, find myself so greatly moved? Why is it that my right hand trembles, while it copies the Children's Chorus and the Invocation to the Angel of France? Why does my left hand brush away a tear, ready to fall upon the paper?

It is because the holy Marseilles Hymn is not merely a war-cry, but a pæan of fraternity. It is because it typifies the powerful hand of France, outstretched to all nations. It is because this hymn will be the last sigh of Liberty in her death, her first glad cry in the new birth.

As this hymn was born at Strasburg, and christened the Song of the Rhine, how did it happen to blossom suddenly in the heart of France, under the name of the Marseilles Hymn?

That is precisely what we are about to tell our readers!

NOTE. — The translator is well aware of the inadequacy of his version to express the fervor and fire of the Marseillaise; but it follows very nearly the peculiar rhythm and rhyming of the original, line for line; whereas other easily accessible

translations, though meritorious, sacrifice either metre or meaning, and sometimes both.

There is a popular English version, which has been in use for over half a century, beginning thus:

Ye sons of France, awake to glory!
Hark, hark! What myriads bid you rise!
Your children, wives, and grandsires hoary, —
Behold their tears and hear their cries!

To arms! to arms, ye brave! The avenging sword unsheathe!
March on! March on!
All hearts resolved on victory or death!

This is both spirited and easily sung; but one looks in vain for the parallel of its language in the original hymn.

Other versions, full of poetic thought, give to every line eight syllables, divided into four equal feet, without the recurrence of the redundant closing syllable in the first, third, fifth, and eighth lines of each stanza; while one chorus,

To arms, citizens! Your battalions form!
March on! March on!
Until the beams of peace succeed the storm!

cannot be sung properly to the old music, and gives no hint of the decidedly bloodthirsty character of the French refrain, which even Dumas characterizes as *terrible*.

CHAPTER VII.

BARBAROUX'S FIVE HUNDRED MEN.

As if to give a basis for the proclamation of *Danger to the Country*, issued by the Assembly, the Coblentz manifesto arrived in Paris on July 28, 1792. As we have already said, this document was a foolhardy piece of work, a menace, and therefore an insult to France.

The Duke of Brunswick, a man of intellectual ability, deemed the manifesto absurd; but above the Duke were the kings forming the coalition. Having received the document all prepared from the hands of the French King, they sent it at once to their general.

According to this manifesto all Frenchmen were blameworthy, and every village deserved to be pulled down or burned. As to Paris, it was a modern Nineveh, preordained to briers and thistles. As in the famous Jerusalem Temple, not one stone should be left upon another.

This was the utterance of the manifesto which arrived from Coblentz on July 28, and bore the date of July 26. What eagle had transported this document in its claws, that it could travel two hundred leagues in thirty-six hours?

One can imagine the explosion produced by such a document. This evoked the spark which fell upon the powder. All hearts leaped. Everybody was alarmed, and prepared at once for the fray.

Among all these men let us select one, — among all these types, one type. Already we have named our

man, — Barbaroux. Now let us try to depict this type of manhood.

As we already know, early in July, Barbaroux wrote to Rebecqui: "Send me five hundred men who know how to die!"

Who was the man capable of penning such a phrase, and what influence did he exercise over his compatriots? His was the influence of youth, good looks, and patriotism.

This man was Charles Barbaroux, whose gentle and charming face troubled Madame Roland, even in her conjugal chamber, and made Charlotte Corday dream of him, even as she stood at the foot of the scaffold.

Madame Roland began by distrusting him. Why did she distrust him? He was too handsome!

This same reproach was bestowed upon two Revolutionists, whose heads, handsome as they were, appeared on the scaffold within fourteen months of each other, — one under the hand of the Bordeaux executioner, the other under the hand of the headsman of Paris. The first was Barbaroux. The second was Hérault de Séchelles.

Hear what Madame Roland said about them:

> Barbaroux is a trifler. The adoration lavished upon him by frivolous women has filched away his serious sentiments. When I see handsome young men fairly intoxicated with the impression they produce, as is the case with Barbaroux and Hérault de Séchelles, I cannot help thinking that they adore themselves too much to be truly devoted to their country.

In this our stern Pallas Minerva was mistaken. His country was Barbaroux's chief mistress. If not his only mistress, at least she was the one he loved well enough to die for her.

Barbaroux was born at Marseilles, of a race of hardy seamen who made commerce poetic. By his form, grace,

ideality, — above all, by his Greek profile, — he seemed like a direct descendant from the Phocians, who brought their gods from the banks of the Permessus to the borders of the Rhone.

Although so youthful, he had already practised the art of eloquence, — which the men of Southern France know how to make both a weapon and a gem, — and the art of Poetry, that flower of Parnassus, which the founders of Marseilles transported with them from the Corinthian Gulf to the Gulf of Lyons. He had also busied himself with the study of medicine, and had been a correspondent of Saussure and Marat.

He at first came into public notice during the agitations in his native city, following the election of Mirabeau to the Assembly. Soon afterward he was appointed secretary to the City Council of Marseilles.

Later there were troubles in Arles. In the midst of these disturbances appeared Barbaroux's handsome form, like an armed Antinoüs.

Paris claimed him. That great furnace needed this odorous vine-branch. The crucible needed this pure metal.

He was sent to the capital to give an account of the Avignon troubles. One might have said that he belonged to no party, — that his heart, like that of Justice, entertained neither friendship nor prejudice. He stated facts, terrible as they were; and in telling the truth, he seemed as great as Truth herself.

The Girondists had just arrived. What distinguished them from other parties, — what ruined them ultimately, perhaps, — was that they were genuine artists. They loved the beautiful. They grasped the warm and fresh hand of Barbaroux. Proud of their new adherent, they took him at once to Madame Roland's.

We already know what Madame Roland thought of Barbaroux at first sight. What astonished her especially was his youth. For a long time her husband had corresponded with Barbaroux, and his letters were always prompt, accurate, and full of wisdom. She had never asked about the age or aspect of this grave correspondent. It seemed to her that he must be a man at least forty years old, his head made bald by thought, his face wrinkled with nightly study.

Waking from her dream, she found him a handsome fellow of twenty-five, — gay, laughing, frivolous, fond of the ladies. All that fiery generation — which flourished in '92, to be cut off in '93 — were passionately fond of womankind.

It was in this head, which seemed so frivolous, and which Madame Roland thought too handsome, that the first thought was formulated, which found its culmination in the Tenth of August.

The storm was in the air. Frantic clouds rushed from north to south, from sunrise to sunset. Barbaroux gave these clouds a destiny, massing them above the tiled roofs of the Tuileries.

Before any one else had made a plan, he wrote to Rebecqui: "Send me five hundred men who know how to die!"

Alas! The true King of France was the King of the Revolution, who could write that he needed five hundred men who knew how to die, — men who came with the same simplicity of mind which had led him to send for them.

Rebecqui chose these men himself, — recruited them from the French party at Avignon. For two years they had been fighting. They had been hating through ten generations. They had fought at Toulouse, at Nismes,

at Arles. To blood they were accustomed. Of fatigue they did not even speak.

On the day appointed they set out as if it were a very simple journey, this stretch of two hundred and twenty leagues. Why not? They were hardened sailors, tough peasants, with faces burned by the African sirocco or by the mistral from Mount Ventoux. Their hands were black from tar and callous from labor. Wherever they went they were called *brigands.*

During a halt which they made beyond Orgon, they received the words and music of Rouget de l'Isle's hymn, still called the Song of the Rhine. Barbaroux had sent them this viaticum, this travelling provision, in order to make the journey seem shorter.

One of them deciphered the music and sang the words. Then with a great outburst they all repeated this awful chant, — far more terrible than Rouget himself had imagined.

In passing through the mouths of the sons of Marseilles, the song changed its character and the words changed their accent. No longer was it a song of fraternity, and of resistance to foreign invaders. It was an anthem of extermination, civil war, and death. It was the Marseillaise, — that resounding hymn which made us tremble with fear beneath our mothers' breasts.

This little band of Marsillians marched through one village after another, terrifying France by the ardor wherewith they sang this new song, heretofore unknown to the land.

When he knew they had reached Montereau, Barbaroux ran and told Santerre. Santerre promised him to meet the Marsillians at Charenton, with forty thousand men.

Here is what Barbaroux calculated to do with Santerre's forty thousand men and his own five hundred

Marsillians, — to put the Marsillians at the head, and carry the Assembly and City Hall with a rush. Then he meant to walk over the Tuileries, after the fashion of the conquerors of the Bastille in 1789, and proclaim the Republic on the ruins of that Florentine palace.

Barbaroux and Rebecqui went to Charenton, and there awaited Santerre and his forty thousand men from the faubourgs. Santerre came with two hundred men! Perhaps he did not wish to give Marsillians — that is, outsiders — the glory of such an achievement.

The little band, with fiery eyes, tanned skin, and hoarse speech, went through Paris, from the Royal Garden to Champs Élysées, singing the Marseillaise. Why should we call it by any other name than they gave it?

The Marsillians were to encamp on the Champs Élysées, where a banquet was to be given them the next day. The banquet did take place; but between the Champs Élysées and the Swinging Bridge, a few rods from the festival, were ranged battalions of grenadiers from the section called the Daughters of Saint Thomas. This was a Royalist detachment, which the palace had placed as a shield between the new-comers and itself.

The Marsillians and the Saint Thomas Grenadiers were enemies from the outset. They began by an interchange of insults, which they followed with blows. At the first show of blood the Marsillians shouted the call to arms, sprang for their guns, which were stacked near by, and charged with their bayonets.

The Parisian Grenadiers were sent head over heels by the first onslaught. Fortunately they had behind them the Tuileries and the iron gates. The Swinging Bridge protected the flight, and raised a barrier before their enemies.

The fugitives found an asylum in the royal apartments. Tradition has it, that one wounded man was cared for by the Queen's own hands.

The Federationists, the Marsillians, the Bretons, the Dauphinais, all numbered five thousand men. These five thousand men were a power, not by their numbers, but by their faith. The spirit of the Revolution was in them incarnate.

On July 17 they sent an address to the Assembly :

You have declared the country in danger ; but do you not endanger yourselves by prolonging the career of traitors? Send after Lafayette ! Suspend the Executive Power! Depose the Department Directories ! Renew the Judicial Power !

On August 3 Pétion himself renewed this demand. With his icy voice, and in the name of the municipality, he demanded an appeal to arms. It is true there were two dogs behind him, urging him on by biting the calves of his legs, — Danton and Sergent.

" The municipality," said Pétion, " denounces the Executive Power. To cure the ills of France, they must be assailed at their very source, and that without a moment's delay. We should prefer to ask simply for a temporary suspension of Louis Sixteenth; but that the Constitution forbids, and he constantly appeals to the Constitution. Therefore we not only ask his abdication, but demand it."

Listen to the King of Paris denouncing the King of France, — the King at the City Hall declaring war against the King at the Tuileries !

The Assembly recoiled at the proposal for such summary measures. The question of royal forfeiture was put off till August 9.

On the eighth the Assembly voted that there was no

ground for proceeding against Lafayette. The Assembly was evidently retracing its steps. What would be the vote next day, in reference to deposing the King? Would the Assembly also put itself in opposition to the popular will? Let the Assembly be on its guard! Can the members not see what imprudence may bring about?

To go back a little. On August 3, the same day when Pétion asked for the King's deposal, the people in the Saint Marceau District were dying with hunger, on account of a struggle meaning neither peace nor war. They accordingly sent delegates to the Quinze Vingts Section, and said to their brothers in the Saint Antoine Section: "If we march against the Tuileries, will you march with us?"

"We will march!" was the reply.

On August 4 the Assembly condemned the insurrectionary proclamation issued by the Mauconseil Section.

On the fifth the municipality refused to publish the Assembly's decree. It was not enough that the King of Paris should declare war against the King of France. Here was the municipality putting itself in opposition to the Assembly.

The report of all these movements reached the Marsillians. Barbaroux's men had arms, but they had no cartridges. They clamored for cartridges, but they did not receive them.

On the evening of August 4, an hour after the news was spread abroad that the Assembly had condemned the action of the Mauconseil Section as riotous, two young Marsillians called at the Mayor's office. There were only two city officials present, — Sergent, who was Danton's man, and Panis, who clove to Robespierre.

"What do you wish?" asked the two magistrates.

"Cartridges!" replied the young men.

"We have been positively forbidden to let you have them!" said Panis.

"Forbidden to give us cartridges?" replied one of the two Marsillians. "Why, the fight 's coming on, and we sha'n't be able to hold our own!"

"Have we been brought to Paris for slaughter?" cried the other.

The first Marsillian pulled out a pistol. Sergent smiled and said: "You can't intimidate municipal magistrates with such petty menaces."

"Who talks of menaces and intimidation?" said the young man. "This pistol is n't for you. It 's for myself!" Pressing the weapon against his forehead, he added: "Give me powder and cartridges! or, on the word of a Marsillian, I 'll blow my brains out!"

Sergent had an artistic imagination, a true French heart. He felt that the young man's appeal was the appeal of France herself.

"Panis, we must take care!" he said. "If this youngster kills himself, his blood will be required of us!"

"But if we furnish the cartridges contrary to orders, we shall be staking our heads on the cast!"

"Never mind! I believe the hour has come for us to risk our heads," said Sergent. "Every one for himself. I lay mine on the hazard of the die. It is for thee to choose for thyself!"

Taking a sheet of paper, Sergent wrote and signed an order for the delivery of ammunition to the Marsillians.

"Give it me!" said Panis, when Sergent had finished it; and he also signed the order.

Henceforth people might be easy on one point, — that while the Marsillians had cartridges, they would not lie still and be butchered.

The Marsillians being now armed, the Assembly, on August 6, welcomed a belligerent petition which the Marsillians had addressed to it; and not only so, but the petitioners were all admitted to the honors of the session.

The Assembly was frightened, so much so, that the members debated the question if it would not be better to retire into the provinces.

Vergniaud alone held his ground. In God's name, why? Who shall say it was not because he was bound to stay near the beautiful Candeille, that he preferred remaining in Paris? It does n't matter, however.

"It is in Paris," said Vergniaud, "that we must secure the triumph of Liberty, or perish with our goddess. If we leave Paris, let us do so after the fashion of Themistocles, taking all the citizens with us. Let us leave behind us only ashes, and flee before our enemies, only in time to let them dig their graves."

Everybody was in doubt. Everybody hesitated. Everybody could feel the earth tremble beneath him, and feared lest it should gape under his very footsteps.

On August 4, the day when the Assembly condemned the Mauconseil proclamation, the day when the two young Marsillians distributed among their five hundred comrades the cartridges wrung from Sergent and Panis, — on that very day there was a gathering at the Blue Dial, on the Temple Boulevard. Camille Desmoulins was there, both on his own account and Danton's. Carra held the quill, and drew up a plan of insurrection.

This plan being matured, the conspirators went to see Antoine, a member of the former Constitutional Assembly, living on the Rue Saint Honoré, opposite Assumption Church, with Carpenter Duplay's family, in the same house with Robespierre.

Robespierre was not then quite up to the political mark; for when Madame Duplay saw this band of agitators take possession of Antoine's room, she hurried up there and called to them in affright: "Monsieur Antoine, are you going to slay Monsieur de Robespierre?"

"He's all right!" responded Antoine. "Nobody thinks of Robespierre, thank the Lord! If he's afraid, let him get out of the way!"

At midnight Carra's scheme was sent to Santerre and Alexandre, the two district commanders. Alexandre would have marched at once, but Santerre said his district was not ready.

Santerre kept his word to the Queen on June 20. Even on August 10 he only marched against her because he could not avoid so doing. The insurrection was consequently postponed.

Antoine said that nobody thought about Robespierre. He was in error. The public mind was so agitated that they even thought of taking Robespierre for the driving-wheel, — him, the centre of immovability.

Whose notion was this? Barbaroux's! He was almost in despair, this hardy Marsillian. He was almost ready to quit Paris and return to Marseilles.

Listen to Madame Roland:

> We counted little on our defences at the North. Together with Servan and Barbaroux, we examined the chances for the preservation of liberty in the South, and of founding there a new republic. We took the atlas, and traced on its maps the lines of demarcation. Said Barbaroux: "If my five hundred Marsillians cannot succeed here, that will be our best resource."

Well, Barbaroux now thought he had found another resource, — the genius of Robespierre. Perhaps it was Robespierre who wished to know more about Barbaroux's outlook.

The Marsillians had left their former barracks, which were too far off, and had taken up their abode in the old Cordelier Convent, which was at the very door of the New Bridge.

This brought them into association with Danton. In case of an insurrection, these terrible Marsillians would start with Danton's impetus. If the movement succeeded, Danton would have all the honor.

Barbaroux asked for an interview with Robespierre. Robespierre put on an air of condescension to this desire. He sent word to Barbaroux and Rebecqui that he was ready to see them at his lodgings.

As has been said, Robespierre lodged at Carpenter Duplay's. It may be remembered that chance led him thither on the evening of the butchery at the Champ de Mars. This chance Robespierre regarded as a blessing from Heaven, not merely because Duplay's hospitality saved his life from imminent danger at the time, but because the place naturally became the scene of his future activity.

For a man who wished to deserve the epithet *incorruptible*, this was precisely the lodging required. Nevertheless, he did not at once take possession of it. First he took a trip to Arras, whence he brought back his sister, Mademoiselle Charlotte de Robespierre, and resided in the Rue Saint Florentin, with this dry and uninteresting person, to whom the author had the honor of an introduction thirty-eight years afterwards.

Robespierre fell ill. When Madame Duplay, who was a perfect fanatic about Robespierre, heard about his sickness, she reproached Mademoiselle Charlotte, because she had not notified her at once of his malady, and requested that the invalid should be taken to the Duplay home.

Robespierre was willing to go. When leaving that home, where he had been a transitory guest, he resolved some day to return thither as a lodger. Madame Duplay's proposal harmonized capitally with his plans.

She also had dreamed of the honor of having the Incorruptible for her guest. She therefore arranged for him a small but neat attic, into which she carried the best and prettiest furniture in the house, to keep company with a charming blue and white bedstead, full of coquetry, such as would be agreeable to a man who, at the age of twenty-seven, had been painted with a rose in his hand.

In this attic Madame Duplay had new pine shelves put up by her husband's workmen, on which Robespierre could place his books and papers.

These books were not numerous. The works of Racine and Rousseau formed the chief library of our austere Jacobin. Apart from these two authors, Robespierre read only Robespierre. The other shelves were loaded with his old law-papers, and his platform speeches.

As to his walls, they were covered with all the portraits of this great man, her lodger, which Madame Duplay's fanaticism could discover. As he had only to put out his hand in order to read Robespierre, so to whatever side he turned, Robespierre still saw Robespierre, — always Robespierre.

It was into this sanctuary, into this tabernacle, this Holy of Holies, that Barbaroux and Rebecqui were ushered.

Only the participators in this scene could tell with what subtile skill Robespierre wove the conversational threads. First he spoke of the Marsillians, of their patriotism, of his dread of seeing even the noblest sentiments carried to extremes. Then he talked of

himself, of his services to the Revolution, of the wise deliberation wherewith he had regulated its current.

Was it not time this Revolution should be checked? Had not the hour come for all parties to unite in choosing the most popular man among them, in order to put the Revolution into his hands, with directions for him to take charge of the entire movement?

Rebecqui did not let him go farther. "Robespierre, I see what you're at," said he.

Robespierre sprang from his chair, as if a reptile had reared its crest in his face.

Rebecqui also rose and said: "Come on, Barbaroux! We no more want a Dictator than a King!" and both departed in haste from the Incorruptible's attic.

Panis, who had come with them, followed them into the street, and said: "Ah, you have caught hold of the thing at the wrong end! You don't understand Robespierre's idea. He only wishes for temporary authority. If anybody follows out such an idea as yours, — why, certainly nobody better than Robespierre — "

Barbaroux interrupted Panis, and repeated the words already spoken by his comrade: "No more a Dictator than a King!"

Then he hurried away with Rebecqui.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT MADE THE QUEEN NOT CARE TO FLEE.

One thing reassured the people in the Tuileries. This was precisely what alarmed the Revolutionists. The Tuileries, having been put into a condition for defence, had become a fortress, with an effective garrison.

On that famous Fourth of August, when so many things happened, royalty did not remain inactive. During the night before August 5 some hired Swiss battalions had been brought from Courbevoie to the Tuileries. A few of these companies were separated from the rest, and sent to Gaillon, where the King perchance might seek a refuge.

Three sure men, three experienced commanders, were stationed near the Queen: Maillardot, with his Swiss; D'Hervilly, with his Saint Louis Chevaliers and his Constitutional Guards; and Mandat, a Commanding General of the National Guard, who promised the help of twenty thousand resolute and devoted soldiers.

August 8, in the evening, a man found his way into the interior of the palace. Everybody knew this man, so he entered the Queen's apartments without difficulty.

When Doctor Gilbert was announced, the Queen said, in a feverish voice: "Let him come in;" and as he entered she said: "Ah, come in, Doctor, come in! I am glad to see you."

Gilbert lifted his eyes towards her. In the whole appearance of Marie Antoinette there was a joyous and

satisfied air, which made him shudder. He would have much preferred to see her pale and downcast, than in this feverish state.

"Madame," he said, "I fear that I come too late and at a bad time."

"On the contrary, Doctor!" she responded, with a smile, — an expression which her mouth had almost forgotten, — "you come most opportunely and are most welcome! You will shortly see something I have for a long time wished to show you, — a king, a genuine king!"

"I fear you are deceiving yourself, Madame, and that you will show me only a local commander, not a king."

"Monsieur Gilbert, perhaps we can no more agree in our views of the symbolical character of royalty, than about many other things. In my mind, a king is not merely a man who can say, *I do not wish!* but one who can say, *I will.*"

The Queen alluded to the famous veto, which had led to the extremely humiliating situation wherein she now found herself.

"Yes, Madame," answered Gilbert; "and, above all in your Majesty's eyes, a king is a man who avenges himself."

"Who *defends* himself, Monsieur Gilbert! You know that we are publicly threatened. We are likely to be attacked with a strong arm. There are, so we are assured, five hundred men from Marseilles, led by one Barbaroux, who have sworn, on the ruins of the Bastille, that they will not return to Marseilles till they have bivouacked on the ruins of the Tuileries."

"I have heard something to that effect," replied Gilbert.

"And it does not make you smile, Monsieur?"

"It has alarmed me, both on your account and the King's!"

"So much so, that you come here to suggest that we abdicate, and put ourselves discreetly into the hands of Monsieur Barbaroux and his Marsillians?"

"Ah Madame, if the King could abdicate, and so secure, by the sacrifice of his crown, his own life, as well as yours and your children's — !"

"You would give him that counsel, would you not, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"Yes, Madame; and I would kneel at his feet to beseech him to follow it."

"Monsieur Gilbert, permit me to say that you are not very stable in your opinions."

"Madame, my opinion is always the same. Devoted to my King and my country, I have always wished to see the King in unison with the Constitution. Out of this desire have come the successive prevarications and the various counsels which I have had the honor of suggesting to your Majesty."

"And what advice do you give us at this moment, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"Never have you been in a better position to follow it than at this moment, Madame."

"Let us hear it!"

"I advise you to flee."

"To flee?"

"Ah, Madame! You know very well it is possible, and never were such facilities afforded you for its success."

"How so?"

"You have nearly three thousand men already in the palace."

"Nearer five thousand, Monsieur," said the Queen,

with a smile of satisfaction; "and we can have twice as many at the first sign."

"There is no necessity for making a sign which might perhaps be intercepted. Your five thousand men are quite enough."

"Well, Monsieur Gilbert, in your opinion, what ought we to do with these five thousand men?"

"Place yourself in their midst, with the King and your august children. Leave the Tuileries when such a move is least expected. When you are two leagues away, mount your horses, and get into Gaillon and Normandy, where you are expected."

"That is, trust myself to Lafayette?"

"He, at least, Madame, has shown his devotion to you."

"No, Monsieur, no! With these five thousand men, and five thousand more who will run at our first bidding, I prefer to try something else."

"What will you attempt?"

"To crush this rebellion at once and forever!"

"Ah Madame, Madame! He was right when he told me you were doomed!"

"Who said that, Monsieur?"

"A man whose name I dare not repeat to you, Madame, — a man who has thrice spoken to you."

"Silence!" said the Queen, turning pale. "He shall be proved a liar, this false prophet!"

"Madame, Madame, I am much afraid you fatally hoodwink yourself!"

"Then you think they will dare attack us?"

"The public mind inclines that way."

"And the populace fancy they can enter here again, as on the Twentieth of June?"

"The palace is not a well-fortified place."

"No; but if you will come with me, I will show you that we may be able to hold out some time."

"It is my duty to follow you," said Gilbert, bowing.

"Come, then!" said the Queen; and preceding Gilbert to the middle window, she bade him look out upon the Carrousel Courtyard, where they could see, not indeed the immense square which now extends along the whole front of the palace, but three small courtyards, shut in by walls which were then standing, — the courtyard belonging to the Floral Pavilion, and called the Courtyard of the Princes; the Central Courtyard, named after the palace; and the one nowadays bounded by the Rue Rivoli, and called the Swiss Courtyard.

"See there!" she said.

Gilbert noticed that the walls were pierced with narrow loopholes, which would give the garrison an advantage, if it should be necessary to open fire upon the mob. If the first outpost were forced, the garrison could retire, not only into the palace, whose every door opened upon a courtyard, but also into the side buildings, so that the Patriots who ventured into either courtyard would find themselves between two fires.

"What do you say to that, Monsieur?" asked the Queen. "Would you still advise Monsieur Barbaroux and his five hundred Marsillians to persevere in their enterprise?"

"If my advice would be listened to by such fanatics as they are, I would commend to them a course similar to that which I commend to you. I have come to ask you not to wait for an attack. I would ask them not to make that attack."

"And probably they would pass your advice by on one side?"

"As you pass it by on your side, Madame. It is the

misfortune of humanity, to constantly ask for advice which is never followed."

"Monsieur Gilbert," said the Queen, smiling, "you forget that the advice you give us is unsolicited!"

"True, Madame," said Gilbert, taking a backward step.

"But this," added the Queen, offering her hand to the Doctor, "only makes us the more grateful for it."

A slight smile of doubt hovered over Gilbert's lips.

At that instant some wagons, loaded with oaken timber, were driven into the Central Courtyard, where they were evidently expected by some men who, in spite of their plain clothing, were recognizable as soldiers. These men began to saw these planks into pieces six feet long and three inches thick.

"Do you know who those men are?" asked the Queen.

"Engineers, as it seems to me."

"Yes, Monsieur; and they are preparing to close up the windows, and leave only the loopholes open, so as to fire through them."

Gilbert looked sorrowfully at the Queen.

"What have you to say?" she asked.

"I pity you sincerely, Madame, for having forced your memory to retain these words and your tongue to speak them."

"Why so, Monsieur? There are circumstances when it is needful for women to make themselves men, and that is when the men —"

She checked herself; but presently she added, finishing her thought rather than her sentence: "But this time the King has decided."

"Madame, as you have decided upon these terrible extremes, which I see you regard as the door of your safety, I hope you have arranged for the defence of

all the approaches to the palace, — for example, by the Louvre gallery, from the adjoining palace."

"Ah, you set me thinking. Come with me, Monsieur. I wish to assure myself that an order which I gave has been carried out."

She preceded Gilbert through her apartments, as far as the door leading into the Floral Pavilion, which connected with the picture-halls.

The door was open, and Gilbert could see workmen dividing the gallery into spaces of twenty feet long.

"You see!" said she. Then she added, addressing the officer in charge of the work: "Well, Monsieur d'Hervilly?"

"Well, Madame, if the rebels only leave us twenty-four hours longer, we shall be done."

"Do you believe they will give us twenty-four hours, Monsieur Gilbert?" she asked the Doctor.

"If anything is on foot, Madame, it will not be before the Tenth of August."

"The tenth? On a Friday? A bad day for an outbreak, Monsieur! I supposed the rebels would be intelligent enough to choose a Sunday."

She walked on, while Gilbert followed. As they were leaving the picture-hall they met a man in the uniform of a general officer.

"Well, Monsieur Mandat," said the Queen, "are your arrangements all made?"

"Yes, Madame," responded the officer, looking doubtfully at Gilbert.

"Oh, you can speak before this gentleman, Monsieur!" said the Queen. "He is our friend. Is n't it so, Doctor?" she added, turning to Gilbert.

"Yes, Madame," replied Gilbert, "and one of the most devoted!"

"In that case," said Mandat, "there is another matter. A detachment of National Guards stationed at the City Hall, and another at New Bridge, will let the insurrectionists pass by them. When Monsieur d'Hervilly, with his gentlemen, and Monsieur Maillardot, with his Swiss, encounter the rebels in front, their retreat being cut off, they will be utterly crushed."

"You see, Monsieur, — your Tenth of August will not be a Twentieth of June."

"Alas, Madame, so I fear!"

"For us? — for us?" persisted the Queen.

"Madame," replied Gilbert, "you know what I told your Majesty. As much as I deplored Varennes —"

"Yes, — so earnestly you now recommend Gaillon! Have you time to go with me down to the basement, Monsieur Gilbert?"

"Certainly, Madame!"

"Come, then!"

By a small winding staircase she led the way to the lower story. It was a veritable camp, fortified and defended by Swiss Guards. The windows were already *blinded,* as the Queen expressed it.

She went up to the colonel and asked: "Monsieur Maillardot, what do you say for your men?"

"That they are ready, like me, to die for your Majesty!"

"They will defend us to the last extremity, then?"

"When they once open fire, Madame, they will only cease at the King's written order."

"You hear, Monsieur Gilbert? Outside the circuit of the palace, all is hostility; but inside, all is fidelity."

"That is a consolation, Madame, but not a surety."

"Do you know that you are very discouraging, Doctor?"

"Her Majesty has conducted me whither she would. Will she now permit me to reconduct her to her own rooms?"

"Willingly; but as I am tired, give me your arm!"

Gilbert bowed at this mark of high favor, so seldom bestowed by the Queen, except upon a few of her intimate friends, — especially since her unhappy days began.

He reconducted her to her chamber. Marie Antoinette sank into an armchair.

Gilbert dropped on one knee before her and said: "Madame, in the name of your august spouse, in the name of your dear children, for your own personal safety, once more I plead with you to use the forces which you have about you for flight, and not for battle."

"Monsieur," said the Queen, "ever since July 14 I have hoped to see the King take his revenge. The hour has come, — at least, so we think. We shall either save our royalty, or bury it in the ruins of the Tuileries!"

"Can nothing make you forego this fatal resolution?"

"Nothing!" and as she spoke the Queen offered Gilbert her hand, partly as a sign for him to rise, and partly that he might kiss it.

Gilbert kissed her hand respectfully, and rose from his knee.

"Madame," said he, "will your Majesty permit me to pen a few lines, which seem to me so urgent that they must not be an instant delayed?"

"Do so, Monsieur," said the Queen, motioning him to a table.

Gilbert seated himself and wrote these three lines:

Come, Monsieur! The Queen is in mortal danger, unless a friend can persuade her to flee; and I believe you are the only friend who can have any influence over her.

After he had signed and directed the letter the Queen said: "Without being too inquisitive, I should be glad to know to whom you have written?"

"To Monsieur de Charny, Madame!"

"To Monsieur de Charny?" cried the Queen, pale and tremulous. "Why do you write to him?"

"That he may persuade your Majesty to do what I cannot persuade you to do."

"Monsieur de Charny is too happy to remember his unfortunate friends!"

The door opened and an usher entered, saying: "Count Charny, who has this instant arrived, asks permission to offer his respects to your Majesty."

The Queen was no longer pale, but livid. She stammered some unintelligible words.

"Let him come in! Let him come in!" said Gilbert. "Heaven sends him!"

Charny appeared at the door, in his naval uniform.

"Oh, come, Monsieur!" said Gilbert to him. "I was writing to you!" and he handed the Count his letter.

"I heard of her Majesty's danger, and here I am," said Charny, with a low bow.

"Madame, Madame," said Gilbert, "in Heaven's name listen to what Monsieur de Charny says. His voice will be as the voice of France!"

Bending respectfully to the Queen and the Count, Gilbert went away, bearing with him a last hope.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE NIGHT BETWEEN AUGUST NINTH AND TENTH: AT DANTON'S.

Our readers must allow us to transport them into a house on the street called Ancienne Comédie, near the Rue Dauphine.

Fréron lived on the second story. We will pass by his door, where it would be useless to ring, because he is on the next floor, with his friend Camille Desmoulins. While we are going up the seventeen stairs which separate one story from the other, let us give a hasty account of Fréron.

Louis Stanislaus Fréron was the son of the famous Monsieur Élie Catherine Fréron, so unjustly and cruelly attacked by Voltaire. When one reperuses to-day the critical articles aimed by the journalist at the author of "La Pucelle," "The Philosophic Dictionary," and "Mohammed," one is surprised to see that the journalist said, in 1754, what we think in 1854, — a hundred years afterward.

Irritated by the persecutions which he had seen heaped upon his father, — who died with chagrin in 1776, after the suppression of his journal, "The Literary Year," by Miromesnil, the Keeper of the Seals, — the younger Fréron, who had reached the age of thirty-five at the period of our narrative, embraced with ardor the principles of the Revolution, and he had published, or was now about to publish, "The People's Orator."

On the evening of August 9, as we have already said, he was with Camille Desmoulins, and had supped there with Brune, the future Marshal of France, who meanwhile was foreman in a printing-office.

Barbaroux and Rebecqui were the two other guests. Only one woman shared the repast, which bore some resemblance to the refreshment enjoyed by the ancient martyrs before going into the arena, and which was called the Feast of Liberation.

This woman was Lucile, — a charming lady, with a sweet name, who left a mournful memory in our annals.

In our story we can hardly accompany thee to the scaffold which thou wilt ascend, poetic and loving creature, because it is the shortest pathway to reunion with thy husband; but in passing we can sketch thy picture with two strokes of the pen.

Only one portrait remains of thee, poor child! Thou didst die so young, that the painter was, so to speak, forced to grasp thy likeness in its flight. That is a miniature which we have seen in the admirable collection of Colonel Morin, who so affably placed his treasures at our disposal, — treasures which were allowed to be scattered, precious as they were, after the death of that excellent man.

In this portrait Lucile appears small, pretty, and decidedly roguish. There is something essentially plebeian in her charming face. Indeed, as the daughter of an old Treasury clerk, and of a very beautiful creature who was said to have been the mistress of Terray, the Secretary of the Treasury, Lucile, as her name proves, — Lucile Duplessis Laridon, — was born of the common people, like Madame Roland.

In 1791 a love-match wedded this young girl — rich in comparison with him — to that wild fellow, that waif of genius, Camille Desmoulins.

Poor, homely, slow of speech, because of the stammer which prevented him from becoming an orator, — and perhaps made him the great writer whom you know, — Camille won her at once, by the refinement of his mind and the goodness of his heart.

Although he was of Mirabeau's opinion, who said, "You can make nothing of the Revolution unless you *dechristianize* it," Camille was married in Saint Sulpice Church, according to the Catholic ceremonial; but in 1792, when a son was born, he carried the babe to the City Hall, and claimed for it a Republican baptism.

It was in their apartments, up two flights on the Rue Ancienne Comédie, that they unfolded, to the equally great alarm and pride of Lucile, the entire plan of insurrection, — a plan which Barbaroux frankly acknowledged he had accidentally sent in his nankeen breeches to his laundress, three days before.

As Barbaroux had no great confidence in the success of the blow he had himself prepared, and as he feared falling into the hands of the victorious Court, he displayed, with truly antique simplicity, a poison, — prepared, as was Condorcet's, by Cabanis.

At the beginning of supper, Camille, who had little more hope than Barbaroux, raised his glass, and repeated in Latin, that he might not be understood by Lucile, the sentiment from the Book of Ecclesiastes: *Edamus et bibamus; cras enim moriemur* (Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die); but Lucile understood him, and said: "Good! why speak a language I do not understand? I divine what thou sayest! Go on, Camille! It is not I, be assured, who will hinder thee from fulfilling thy mission."

On this assurance they spoke freely and aloud. Fréron was the most resolute of all. It was known that he loved

some woman hopelessly, but nobody knew who the woman was. His despair over Lucile's death revealed his fatal secret.

"And thou, Fréron," asked Camille, "hast thou poison?"

"I? If we do not succeed to-morrow I shall get myself killed! I am so weary of life, that I only look for some pretext for ridding myself of it."

Rebecqui was more hopeful as to the result of the contest.

"I know my Marsillians!" he said. "I chose them myself. I am sure of them, from the first to the last. Not one will draw back!"

After supper it was proposed to visit Danton. Barbaroux and Rebecqui refused, saying that they were expected at the Marsillian barracks, near by, hardly twenty rods from the Desmoulins home.

Fréron had an appointment at the City Hall, with Sergent and Manuel. Brune passed the night with Santerre. Each of these persons was united with forthcoming events by his own peculiar thread.

When they separated, only Lucile and Camille went to Danton's residence. These two households were strongly bound together, — not only the men, but the women.

We all know Danton. More than once, following the old masters who have painted his grand features, we have been called upon to reproduce them.

His wife is less known. Let us say a few words about her.

In Colonel Morin's collection was to be found a souvenir of this remarkable woman also, who was the object of her husband's deep adoration; only it was not a miniature of her, like Lucile's, which Morin possessed, but a plaster cast. Michelet believes this cast was moulded

after death. Its characteristics are goodness, calmness, and strength.

Although not yet sick with the malady which led to her death in 1793, she was already sad and restless; as if, feeling the approach of death, she had an inward perception of the future.

Tradition has it that she was pious and timid. Despite this piety and timidity she one day spoke her mind most vigorously, although it was opposed to the mind of her parents. That was when she declared her intention of marrying Danton.

As was the case with Lucile in her relations to Camille Desmoulins, so Madame Danton saw, behind the sombre and perturbed face of this obscure man, — without reputation or fortune, — the god of her idolatry, who, like Jupiter in his intercourse with Semele, was to destroy her in the act of revealing himself to her soul.

It was a tempestuous and terrible fortune to which the poor creature bound herself; but perhaps there was as much pity as love in the decision which united her to that angel of thunderous lightning, who was to have the honor of personifying the great year 1792, as Mirabeau had personified 1791, as Robespierre afterwards personified 1793.

The two houses were near together. Lucile and Camille, as we have said, lived on the Rue Ancienne Comédie. The Dantons lived on the Rue Paon Saint André. When Camille and Lucile arrived at Danton's, Madame Danton was in tears, and Danton, with a resolute air, was trying to console her. The woman went at once to the woman, and the man to the man. The women embraced. The men shook hands.

"Believest thou anything will happen?" asked Camille.

"I hope so!" answered Danton. "Santerre is lukewarm. Luckily, as I think, to-morrow's affair is not one of mere personal interest and individual leadership. The irritation produced by long suffering, the general indignation, the sentiments roused by the approach of foreigners, the conviction that France is betrayed, — those are the elements on which we must count. Out of forty-eight municipal sections, forty-seven have voted for the dismission of the King. Each section sends three delegates to unite into a Commune and save the country."

"Save the country? That is rather vague!" said Camille, shaking his head.

"Yes! but all the same it is perfectly understood."

"And Marat and Robespierre?"

"Naturally nobody sees either of them. One is hidden in his garret, the other in his cellar. When the business is all done, you will see them appear, one like a weasel, the other like an owl."

"And Pétion?"

"It would take a sharp man to say where he stands. On the fourth he declared war against the palace. On the eighth he gave notice to the department authorities that he would no longer be responsible for the King's safety. This morning he proposed to station National Guards in Carrousel Square. This evening he asked the department for twenty thousand francs, wherewith to send our Marsillians home again."

"He wants to lull the Court to sleep," said Camille.

"I fancy so," replied Danton.

Just then a new couple entered, — Monsieur and Madame Robert. It may be mentioned that the year before, on July 17, 1791, Madame Robert, or Mademoiselle de Kéralio, dictated, on the Patriot Altar,

the famous petition which her husband at once wrote down.

Unlike the other two couples, where the husbands were superior to their wives, this woman was superior to her husband.

Robert was a stout man, thirty-five or forty years old, a member of the Cordelier Club, with more patriotism than talent. He had no facility as a writer, was a great enemy of Lafayette, and was very ambitious, — if we are to believe Madame Roland's account of him in her Memoirs.

Madame Robert was thirty-four. She was small, adroit, witty, and proud, and had been brought up by her father, Guinement de Kéralio, a Knight of Saint Louis and a member of the Academy of Inscriptions, who had counted among his pupils a young Corsican, whose gigantic career he was far from foreseeing.

Educated by her father, as we have said, Mademoiselle de Kéralio naturally became a literary and learned woman. At seventeen she wrote, translated, compiled. At eighteen she composed a novel, called "Adelaide."

As her father's income was barely sufficient for himself, he wrote for "The Mercury" and "The Scholars' Journal;" and more than once he put his name to articles which his daughter wrote, and which were far superior to his own. It was thus she attained that acute, quick, and ardent mind, which made her eventually one of the most indefatigable journalists of her day.

The Roberts had just come through the Saint Antoine Quarter. Things looked strange there, they said.

The night was beautiful. The light was soft and peaceful. There was hardly anybody in the streets; but all the windows were illuminated, and all these

lights seemed to burn for the purpose of brightening the night.

The effect was peculiar. These were not the illuminations of a holiday. They were more like the pale lights which keep watch over the bed of death. One felt the life of the district breathing through this feverish slumber.

Just as Madame Robert finished her description, the sound of a bell made everybody start. It was the first stroke on the alarm-bell, which resounded from the Cordelier Club.

"Good!" said Danton. "I hear our Marsillians! I've no doubt that is their signal."

The women looked at each other with terror, especially Madame Danton, whose face bore testimony to her fear.

"The signal?" asked Madame Robert. "Is the palace to be attacked during the night?"

Nobody answered; but Desmoulins, who went into the next room at the first clang of the bell, came back with his musket in his hand.

Lucile uttered a cry. Then, feeling that in such a crucial hour she had no right to depress the man she loved, she threw herself into Madame Danton's sleeping alcove, fell upon her knees, leaned her head on the bed, and began to weep.

Camille came to her. "Be calm!" he said. "I won't leave Danton's side!"

Madame Danton seemed like a dying woman. Madame Robert, clinging to her husband's neck, wished to accompany him.

The men went out and the three women remained alone. Madame Danton was seated, in a fainting condition. Lucile was on her knees, weeping. Madame

Robert walked rapidly up and down the room, and said, without perceiving that every word was a blow to Madame Danton's heart: "This is all Danton's fault. If my husband is killed, I shall die with him; but before I die, I'll stab Danton!"

An hour passed away. They heard the stairway door open. Madame Robert hurried forward. Lucile lifted her head. Madame Danton remained motionless. was Danton who entered.

"Alone?" cried Madame Robert.

"Be calm, Madame!" said Danton. "Nothing will happen before to-morrow."

"But Camille?" asked Lucile.

"And Robert?" asked Madame Robert.

"They are both at the Cordelier Club, where they are preparing calls to arms. I have come to bring you this news. Nothing will happen to-night; and as a proof of it, I'm going to sleep."

Without undressing he threw himself on the bed, and in five minutes was as sound asleep as if there were not pending at that instant the question of life and death between royalty and the people.

At one o'clock in the morning Camille also came back.

"I bring you news about Robert," he said. "He has gone to the municipality to carry our proclamations. Don't be uneasy. They are for to-morrow only; and yet —"

Camille shook his head as if in doubt. Then he laid his head on Lucile's shoulder, and in his turn fell asleep.

He had been sleeping half an hour when somebody rang. Madame Robert hurried to open the door. It was Robert. He had come for Danton, in behalf of the municipal officers. He roused Danton.

"Go away!" said Danton. "Let me sleep. To-morrow 'll be time enough."

Robert and his wife accordingly went out and returned to their own home.

Presently the door-bell rang again. Madame Danton opened the door and admitted a big blond youth, twenty years old, dressed like a captain in the National Guards, and holding a gun in his hand.

"Monsieur Danton?" he asked.

"My dear!" said Madame, rousing her husband.

"Well, what is it now?"

"Monsieur Danton," said the big blond youth, "you are waited for down there."

"Where is down there?"

"The municipal quarters."

"Who waits for me?"

"The commissioners from the sections, and especially Monsieur Billot."

"That madman? Very well! Tell Billot that I 'm coming."

Then looking into the face of the unknown lad, who wore, despite his youth, the insignia of his superior rank, Danton said: "Pardon me, my captain, but who are you?"

"I 'm Ange Pitou, Monsieur, Captain of the Haramont National Guards."

"Ah ha!"

"One of the Bastille conquerors!"

"Good!"

"I had a letter yesterday from Monsieur Billot, telling me that probably there 'd be a coil down here, and that all good Patriots were needed."

"And then?"

"Well, then I came away, with such of my men

as wished to follow me; but as they 're not such good walkers as I am, they stopped over at Dammartin. They 'll be here to-morrow, in good time."

"At Dammartin? Why, that 's eight leagues off!"

"Yes, Monsieur Danton."

"And Haramont is how many leagues from Paris?"

"About nineteen. We left there this morning at five."

"Ah ha! So you 've done your nineteen leagues to-day, have you?"

"Yes, Monsieur Danton!"

"And you arrived — ?"

"At six this evening. I asked for Monsieur Billot. They told me he was sure to be in the Saint Antoine District, at Santerre's. I went to Monsieur Santerre's; but there they told me they had n't seen him, and that probably I should find him at the Jacobin Club, on the Rue Saint Honoré. Well, the Jacobins sent me to the Cordelier Club, and there they told me he had gone to the City Hall."

"And you found him at the City Hall?"

"Yes, Monsieur Danton. Then he gave me your address, and said: 'Thou 'rt not tired, Pitou?' — 'No, Monsieur Billot.' — 'Well, go and tell Danton that he 's a lazybones, and we 're waiting for him!' — So here I am."

"Morbleu!" said Danton, jumping from the bed. "Here 's a boy who makes me ashamed! Let us go, my friend, let us go!"

He kissed his wife, and then went out with Pitou. His wife uttered a feeble sigh, and leaned her head on the back of her armchair. Lucile thought she was weeping, and respected her grief.

At the expiration of an hour, seeing that Madame

Danton did not stir, Lucile roused Camille. Then she went to Madame Danton. The poor woman was in a deep swoon.

The first rays of morning stole through the windows. The day promised to be a fine one; but as if this were a painful harbinger, the sky was red as blood.

CHAPTER X.

DURING THE NIGHT BETWEEN AUGUST NINTH AND TENTH : AT THE TUILERIES.

We have seen what was taking place in Republican domicils. Now let us see what was going on five hundred steps away, in kingly dwellings.

There also the women wept and prayed. They wept even more plentifully. Chateaubriand says, that princes' eyes are so formed as to contain an immense quantity of tears.

However, let us render justice to each one separately. Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Lamballe wept and prayed. The Queen prayed but did not weep.

They all supped at the usual hour. Nothing could derange the King's appetite.

As they left the table, Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Lamballe returned to the room known as the Council Chamber, — where it was arranged for the royal family to pass the night, so as to hear every report, — but the Queen took the King aside, and wished him to go into another apartment.

"Whither are you conducting me, Madame?" asked the King.

"To my chamber. Will you not put on the shirt of mail which you wore on the Fourteenth of July?"

"Madame, that was well enough to save me from an assassin's knife or bullet, in a time of conspiracy or on a ceremonial day; but in a day of warfare, when my

friends are exposing themselves for me, it would be cowardly if I did not expose myself like my friends."

So saying, the King left the Queen and went into his private room, where he shut himself in with his confessor. The Queen rejoined Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Lamballe in the Council Chamber.

"What is his Majesty doing?" asked Madame de Lamballe.

"He is at confession!" responded the Queen, with an indescribable accent.

At this moment the door opened and Monsieur de Charny appeared. He was pale, but perfectly calm.

"May I speak with the King?" he asked, bowing to the Queen.

"Just now, Monsieur, the King is myself," she answered.

Charny knew that better than anybody else. Nevertheless he insisted.

"You can go up to the King's room, Monsieur," said the Queen, "but I assure you that you 'll disturb him tremendously."

"I understand. The King is with Monsieur Pétion, who has just arrived."

"The King is with his confessor, Monsieur."

"Then it is to you, Madame, I must make my report as Major General of the Palace."

"Yes, Monsieur, if you will be so kind."

"I have the honor to explain to your Majesty the condition of my forces. The mounted gendarmes, to the number of six hundred men, commanded by Monsieur Rulhières and Monsieur de Verdière, are arranged in line of battle on the Grand Square of the Louvre. The Paris Gendarmes on foot, *intra muros* (within the walls), are stationed in the stables. A squad of one hundred and

fifty men has been detailed to form a guard at the Mansion Toulouse, in order to protect, if need be, the treasury, the registry of accounts, and the special coffers. The Paris Gendarmes on foot, *extra muros* (outside the walls), comprising only thirty men, are stationed at the small royal staircase, leading to Princes Courtyard. Two hundred officers and soldiers of the old footguards or horseguards, fifty young Royalists, as many gentlemen, — some three hundred and fifty or four hundred fighters, — are assembled in the room called the Ox's Eye and the adjacent hallways. Two or three hundred National Guardsmen are scattered about the courtyards and gardens. Finally, fifteen hundred Swiss, who constitute the real strength of the palace, are assigned to different posts, — stationed under the Grand Vestibule and at the bottom of the staircases, which they are charged to defend."

"Well, Monsieur, are not all these measures very encouraging?"

"Nothing satisfies me, Madame," replied Charny, "when your Majesty's welfare is at stake."

"Then your voice is still for flight, Monsieur?"

"My advice is for you to put yourself, the King, and your august children in the very midst of your soldiers."

The Queen started.

"Your Majesty dislikes Lafayette! Well then, you have confidence in the Duke de Liancourt. He is at Rouen, Madame. He has hired the mansion of an English gentleman named Canning. The General of the Province has made his troops swear their allegiance to the King. The Swiss battalions of Salis Samade, on which we may depend, are distributed along the road. As yet all is quiet. Let us leave the palace by way of the Swinging Bridge, and the city by way of the Star

Barrier, at the end of the Champs Élysées. Three hundred horsemen, of the disbanded Constitutional Guard, await us there. At Versailles we can easily add fifteen hundred gentlemen to our ranks. With four thousand men I can answer for taking your Majesty wherever you may wish to go."

"Thanks, Monsieur de Charny," said the Queen. "I appreciate the devotion which has led you to quit your dearest friends, and offer your services to another — "

"The Queen is unjust," interrupted Charny. "The life of my sovereign will always be most precious of all in my eyes, as duty will always be the dearest of all the virtues."

"Duty, — yes, Monsieur," murmured the Queen ; "but as every one seems determined upon doing his duty, I think I also understand mine. My duty is to maintain the nobility and greatness of royalty, and to see to it that if royalty be struck down, it shall fall worthily, at its post of honor, — like the ancient gladiators, who studied how to die gracefully."

"This is your Majesty's last word ?"

"It is above all my last *wish*."

Charny saluted, and was about to withdraw. Meeting Madame Campan at the door, on her way to rejoin the princesses, he said to her : "Ask their Highnesses to put whatever precious things they have into their pockets. We may perhaps be compelled to quit the palace at any moment."

While Madame Campan went to transmit this suggestion to the Princess Lamballe and Madame Elizabeth, Charny again approached the Queen.

"Madame," said he, "it must be that you are in hopes some outside help may be added to our material resources. If this is so, let me know it. Remember that

by this time to-morrow, I shall have to render my account to God or to men, for what is now taking place."

"Very well, Monsieur!" she replied. "Two hundred thousand francs have been sent to Pétion and fifty thousand to Danton. Through this sum of two hundred and fifty thousand francs a promise has been obtained from Danton that he will stay at home, and from Pétion that he will come to the palace."

"But, Madame, are you sure of the trustworthiness of your agents in this transaction?"

"Pétion arrived just now, — so you told me."

"Yes, Madame!"

"That is something, as you see."

"That is not enough. I am told that he had to be sent for three times before he came."

"If he is on our side," said the Queen, "he is, while talking with the King, to lay his index finger on his right eye."

"But if not on our side —?"

"If he does not side with us, he will be our prisoner, and I shall give most positive orders that he be not allowed to leave the palace."

At that instant they heard a bell toll.

"What is that?" asked the Queen.

"The tocsin," said Charny.

The princesses rose in alarm.

"What 's the matter?" said the Queen. "The tocsin is only the trumpet of the insurgents."

"Madame," said Charny, who appeared more disturbed than the Queen by this sinister sound, "I must find out if that bell heralds any serious movement."

"And we shall then see you again?" said the Queen, vivaciously.

"I have placed myself at the orders of her Majesty,

and I shall not quit my post while there is the least shadow of danger."

Charny bowed and went out. The Queen remained awhile in thought, and then said to herself: "Let us see if the King has finished his confession!" and left the room in her turn.

Meanwhile Madame Elizabeth partly undressed herself, so that she could sleep more comfortably on a sofa. From her collar she removed a carnelian brooch, which she showed to Madame Campan. The stone was engraved. The carving represented a tuft of lilies, with a motto.

"Read it!" said Madame Elizabeth.

Madame Campan took it nearer the candles, and read :

Forget offences! Pardon injuries!

"I sadly fear that maxim has little influence over our enemies, but it is none the less dear to me!" said the Princess.

As she spoke, a shot resounded in the courtyard. The women screamed.

"There 's the first shot," said Madame Elizabeth. "Alas! It won't be the last!"

Pétion's arrival at the Tuileries had been announced to the Queen. Here are the circumstances under which the Mayor of Paris made his entry.

He arrived at half-past ten. This time nobody made him wait in the antechamber. On the contrary he was told that the King was expecting him. In order to reach the King, however, he had first to cross the ranks of the Swiss Hirelings, next of the National Guards, and finally of those gentlemen known as Knights of the Poniard.

Nevertheless, as they knew the King had sent for

Pétion, and that he might, if he had so chosen, have remained in his own proper palace, the City Hall, — and not have put himself into that lion's den called the Tuileries, — he was allowed to pass on; although such epithets as *Judas* and *traitor* were hurled in his face as he ascended the staircase.

Louis Sixteenth was awaiting Pétion in the same room where he had treated the Mayor so rudely on June 21, nearly two months before. Pétion recognized the door, and smiled. Fortune had already arranged for him a terrible revenge.

At the entrance the Mayor was stopped by Mandat, Commander of the National Guards, who said: "Oh, it 's you, is it, Monsieur Mayor?"

"Yes, Monsieur, it is I!" said Pétion, in his habitually phlegmatic way.

"What are you doing here?"

"I must excuse myself from answering that question, not recognizing your right to question me; and as I 'm in a hurry, I can't stop to discuss matters with inferiors!"

"With *inferiors?* '

"You are hindering me. I tell you I 'm in a hurry, Monsieur Mandat. I have come here because the King has three times sent for me. Of my own accord I should not have come."

"Ah ha! Well, then, as I have the honor of seeing you, I wish to ask why these City Police Commissioners have distributed a profusion of cartridges to those Marseilles men, and why I, Mandat, have received only three for each of my men."

"First of all," said Pétion, without losing his self-control, "no requisition has been made for more cartridges for the Tuileries. Three cartridges for each National Guard

and forty for every Swiss was the order. As many have been furnished as the King asked for."

"Why this discrepancy in the numbers?"

"It is for the King to tell, Monsieur. Probably he distrusted the National Guards."

"But I, Monsieur," said Mandat, "*I* asked you for powder."

"That is true; but unfortunately it was not the correct thing for you to receive it."

"That's a pretty answer!" cried Mandat. "It's for you to make it the correct thing, since the order must come from you!"

The discussion had now reached a point when it would have been difficult for Pétion to hold his own. Fortunately the door opened, and Rœderer, the Syndic of the Municipality, came to the Mayor's aid, with the message: "Monsieur Pétion, the King is waiting for you."

Pétion entered. The King was indeed waiting for Petion, and waiting impatiently.

"Ah, here you are, Monsieur Pétion," said his Majesty. "How is it with the city of Paris?"

Pétion gave him a nearly correct account of the condition of the city.

"Have you nothing more to say to me, Monsieur?" asked the King.

"No, Sire!" answered Pétion.

The King looked at him meaningly, and said: "Nothing, absolutely nothing?"

Pétion opened his eyes wide, not understanding the King's persistence.

On his side the King waited for Pétion to lay his finger on his eye. This, it will be remembered, was the sign by which the Mayor was to indicate that, in return for two

hundred thousand francs, the King might count on his help.

Pétion scratched his ear, but did not put his finger nearer his eye.

The King had been deceived. Some trickster had pocketed the two hundred thousand francs.

The Queen entered, just as the King was puzzled what to ask Pétion next, although Pétion was expecting some new demand.

"Well," whispered the Queen, "is he our friend?"

"No," said the King. "At least, he has made no sign!"

"Then he is our prisoner!"

"May I retire?" asked Pétion of the King.

"For God's sake, don't let him go away!" said Marie Antoinette.

"No, Monsieur. Presently you will be at liberty, but I have more to say to you." Raising his voice, the King added: "Go into my cabinet!"

To the ears of those in his cabinet this meant: "I confide Pétion to your care. Watch him, and don't let him get away."

The men in the cabinet understood perfectly well. They surrounded Pétion, who felt himself a prisoner.

Fortunately Mandat was not there. He was busy contesting an order which had just been issued for him to go to the City Hall.

There was a crossfire. Mandat was wanted at the Hôtel de Ville, as Pétion was wanted at the Tuileries.

Mandat objected strongly to accepting this bidding, and would not decide to go at once.

As to Pétion, he was the thirtieth person in a little room where four would have been in each other's way.

"Gentlemen," he presently said, "it's impossible to stay here long without suffocating."

This was everybody's opinion. Nobody therefore opposed Pétion's exit; but everybody followed him, albeit they did not quite dare to openly restrain him.

He went down the first stairway they came to. These stairs led to a basement room, opening into the garden. He feared for an instant that the garden door might be locked, but it was unfastened.

Pétion now found himself in a larger and more airy prison; but it was a prison quite as secure as the cabinet. Nevertheless, it was far more comfortable.

One man who followed him gave Pétion his arm after they entered the garden. This was Rœderer, the Attorney General of the Department.

Both began to walk up and down the terrace which skirted the palace. The terrace was lighted by a line of lamps. The National Guards came and extinguished those which were nearest the Mayor and his companion. Why was this? Pétion suspected mischief.

"Monsieur," he said to a Swiss officer who was following him, whose name was Salis Lizers, "are they planning mischief against me?"

"Be easy, Monsieur Pétion!" replied this officer, with a strongly pronounced German accent. "The King has commissioned me to keep watch over you; and I promise you that if anybody kills you, he shall die the instant after, by my own hand."

Under similar circumstances Triboulet said to Francis the First: "If it's all the same to you, let it be the instant *before*, Sire!"

Pétion made no reply, but walked as far as the Feuillant Terrace, which lay in the full moonlight.

This terrace was not then, as at a later day, bounded

by a grating, but enclosed by a wall eight feet high, with three gates, two small and one large.

These gates were not only closed and fastened, but barricaded. Moreover they were guarded by grenadiers from the sections of Butte des Moulins and Filles de Saint Thomas, well known for their royalism. From them there was nothing to be hoped. Now and then Pétion bent over and picked up a pebble. which he threw over the wall.

While Pétion was promenading and throwing stones, he was twice told that the King wished to speak with him.

"Well," asked Rœderer, "are n't you going?"

"No!" said Pétion, "it 's too hot up there. I remember that cabinet, and have no wish to return to it. Besides, I 've made an appointment to meet somebody here on the Feuillant Terrace!" and he continued to walk to and fro, and throw pebbles over the wall.

"An appointment with whom?" asked Rœderer.

At that moment the door of the Assembly Building opened, which led into the Feuillant Terrace.

"I fancy," said Pétion, "that 's just what I 'm waiting for."

"An order for the admission of Monsieur Pétion!" said a voice. "The Assembly summons him to its bar, to give an account of the condition of things in Paris!"

"Precisely so!" said Pétion to himself. Then he added aloud: "Here I am, ready to answer the questions of my enemies."

The National Guards, imagining that this would be to Pétion's disadvantage, let him pass.

It was now nearly three in the morning. Day was breaking; only, what was somewhat singular, the sky was the color of blood.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NIGHT BETWEEN THE NINTH AND TENTH OF AUGUST: BILLOT'S WILL.

WHEN sent for by the King, Pétion foresaw that leaving the palace might not be so easy as entering it. Stepping up to a rough-faced man, with an ugly seam across his forehead, he said: "Monsieur Billot, what news can you give me about the Assembly just now?"

"That there 'll be an all-night session."

"Very well! What did you say was to be seen at New Bridge?"

"Some cannon and National Guards, placed there by Monsieur Mandat's orders."

"And did you not also say that under Arcade Saint Jean, at the entrance of Rue Saint Antoine, a large body of soldiers was assembled?"

"Yes, Monsieur, also by Mandat's direction."

"Well, now listen to this, Monsieur Billot."

"I 'm listening!"

"Here 's an order to Manuel and Danton to send home the National Guards who are at Saint Jean's Arcade, and take away the defences from New Bridge. Cost what it may, this order must be executed, you understand."

"I will carry it to Monsieur Danton myself."

"Good! You live in the Rue Saint Honoré, I believe?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"After delivering the order to Danton, return to your lodging and get a little rest. After two hours or so, get

up, and take a walk along the outside of the wall by the Feuillant Terrace. If you see or hear some stones thrown over the wall from the Feuillant Terrace, it will be because I am kept there against my will, and threatened with violence."

"I understand."

"Then present yourself at the bar of the Assembly, and bid your colleagues send for me. You understand, Monsieur Billot, I trust my life in your hands."

"And I 'll be answerable for it! Go in peace!"

Pétion therefore came away, depending upon Billot's well-known patriotism. The latter had spoken with all the more confidence, because Pitou had just arrived.

He sent Pitou to Danton, bidding the lad not come back without the great leader. Despite Danton's sluggishness, Pitou reached his heart, and brought him to the City Hall.

Danton saw the artillery at New Bridge. He saw the National Guards at Saint Jean's Arcade. He saw how important it was that such large military detachments should not be allowed to remain where they could close in behind the armed populace. With Pétion's order in hand, Manuel and Danton dismissed the National Guards from Arcade Saint Jean, and sent the artillery away from New Bridge. This left the route of the insurrection clear.

Meantime Billot and Pitou returned to the Rue Saint Honoré, where Billot still lodged in his old quarters. Pitou nodded to the house as to a friend. Billot sat down, and made a sign to Pitou to do likewise.

"Thanks, Monsieur Billot," said the lad, "but I 'm not tired." However, Billot insisted, and Pitou sat down.

"Pitou," said the farmer, "I sent word for thee to come and join me."

"And as you see, Monsieur Billot, I have n't made you wait," said Pitou, with that broad smile, characteristic of Pitou, which showed all his thirty-two teeth.

"No indeed! Does thee guess that something serious is going to happen?"

"I thought as much; but tell me now, Monsieur Billot, —"

"What, Pitou?"

"I don't see either Monsieur Bailly or Monsieur Lafayette."

"Bailly is a traitor, who had us murdered on the Champ de Mars."

"Yes, I know; for, as you might say, I raked you up there, bathed in your own blood."

"Lafayette is a traitor, who wants to carry off the King."

"Ah, I did n't know that! Monsieur Lafayette a traitor! Who 'd have thought it? And the King?"

"The King is the biggest traitor of all."

"As to that," said Pitou, "that does n't surprise me!"

"The King plots with foreigners, and wants to deliver France to her enemies. The Tuileries is a hotbed of conspiracy, and so it has been decided to capture the Tuileries. Understand?"

"Parbleu! If I understand — say, Monsieur Billot — as we took the Bastille?"

"Yes!"

"Only it won't be so hard!"

"That 's a mistake!"

"How so? Will it really be harder?"

"Yes."

"It seems to me, however, the walls are n't so high."

"Yes, but they 're better guarded. You see, my dear boy, the Bastille was only defended by a garrison of fifty

pensioners; whereas there are three or four thousand able men in the palace."

"The Devil! Three or four thousand men?"

"Without counting the fact that the Bastille was taken by surprise; whereas, ever since the first of this month, the people at the Tuileries have feared an attack, and have put everything in a defensible condition."

"So they mean to defend it?"

"Yes! and all the better because Monsieur de Charny is entrusted with the defence."

"In fact he left Boursonnes yesterday by post, with his wife. — But is Monsieur de Charny also a traitor?"

"No! He 's an aristocrat, that 's all. He has always been on the Court side, and consequently has not betrayed the people, nor has he ever coaxed the people to trust him."

"So we are to fight against Monsieur de Charny?"

"Probably!"

"Singular, is n't it? — Neighbors, too!"

"Yes! This is what they call *civil war*, Pitou; but thou art not obliged to fight, if it is n't agreeable."

"Excuse me, Monsieur Billot, but what is agreeable to you is also agreeable to me."

"I should like it better not to have thee fight, Pitou!"

"Then why on earth did you send for me, Monsieur Billot?"

The farmer's face clouded. "I sent for thee, to give thee this paper."

"This paper, Monsieur Billot?"

"Yes."

"What paper is it?"

"The copy of my will."

"How? A copy of your will? Hey, Monsieur Billot,"

continued Pitou, laughing, "you don't look like a man who expects to lie down and die."

"No," said Billot, pointing to his musket and his pouch hanging on the wall; "but I look like a man who may be killed."

"Ah yes, we 're all mortal!" said Pitou, sententiously.

"Well, Pitou, I sent for thee here, so as to give thee this copy of my will."

"To me, Monsieur Billot?"

"To thee, Pitou, inasmuch as I make thee my sole legatee —"

"Me, your heir?" said Pitou. "No, I thank you, Monsieur Billot! You say that just for the joke of the thing!"

"I tell thee it is so, my friend!"

"It can't be, Monsieur Billot."

"What? Can't be so?"

"No! When a man has legitimate heirs, he can't give his estate all away to outsiders."

"Thou art mistaken, Pitou. He *can!*"

"Well, he *ought* not to, Monsieur Billot."

A cloud passed over Billot's countenance. "I have no heirs!" he said.

"You have n't any heirs? What do you call Mademoiselle Catherine?"

"I know nobody of that name."

"Go away, Monsieur Billot, and don't talk to me in any such way. It provokes me."

"Pitou, when a thing belongs to me I can give it to whom I choose. In like manner, if I die, it belongs to thee, in thy turn; and thou canst give it to whom thou wilt."

"Ah ha! Good!" said Pitou, who began to understand. "Then if any misfortune happens to you —

Bah! What an ass I am! You won't meet with any misfortune!"

"Just now thou saidst truly, that we are all mortal."

"Yes! — Well, you 're right. I 'll take the will, Monsieur Billot; but is it sure, if I am so unfortunate as to become your heir, that I can do what I please with your property?"

"Undoubtedly the property would all belong to thee. They won't be so likely to try any trickery on thee, a good Patriot, — understand, — as they might on folks who have been hand and glove with aristocrats."

Pitou's apprehension grew clearer and clearer.

"Well, things being so, Monsieur Billot, why, I accept," said Pitou.

"Well then, as that 's all I have to tell thee, put that paper into thy pocket, and get rested."

"For what purpose?"

"Well, in all probability we have work for the morrow, — or rather for to-day, for it is already two in the morning."

"You are going out, Monsieur Billot?"

"Yes, I have some business along the Feuillant Terrace."

"And you don't need me?"

"On the contrary, thou wouldst be in my way!"

"In that case, Monsieur Billot, I 'll eat a bit."

"True! Why, I quite forgot to ask if thou wert hungry."

"Oh, that 's because you know I 'm always hungry," said Pitou, laughing.

"No need to show thee where to find the pantry —"

"No, no, Monsieur Billot. Don't bother yourself about me. You 'll come back, won't you?"

"I will come back!"

"If not, you must tell me where I may find you again."

"Useless! In an hour I shall be back."

"Very well, then! Good luck!"

Pitou went in search of nourishment, with an appetite which, like the King's own, was never lessened by events, however grave; while Billot took his way towards the Feuillant Terrace.

We know his errand there. Hardly had he reached the place before he was apprised, by a stone which fell at his feet, followed by a second and then a third, that what Pétion feared had come to pass, and that the Mayor was detained in the Tuileries.

Following the instructions he had received, the farmer at once reported the matter to the Assembly, which at once sent for Pétion, as we have already seen.

Being thus set at liberty, Pétion merely walked through the Assembly Hall, and returned on foot to the City Hall, leaving his carriage to represent him in the courtyard of the Tuileries.

Billot also returned to his lodgings, and found Pitou finishing his supper.

"Well, Monsieur Billot, what 's the news?" asked the lad.

"Nothing," said Billot, "unless it be that day is breaking, and the sky is as red as blood."

CHAPTER XII.

FROM THREE O'CLOCK TILL SIX IN THE MORNING.

We have seen how the day began. The sun's first rays fell upon two horsemen, who were riding along the deserted quay nearest the Tuileries. These two horsemen were General Mandat and his aide.

About one in the morning Mandat had been summoned to the City Hall. At first he refused to go. At two o'clock the order was imperatively renewed. Mandat still wished to resist, but Rœderer came to him and said: "Monsieur, note the fact that, according to the stipulations of the law, the Commander of the National Guard is under the orders of the city government."

Mandat made up his mind to go, but he was ignorant of two things. First, he did not know that forty-seven out of the forty-eight municipal sections had decided to unite, and that each had chosen three commissioners, whose business was to meet and concert measures for saving the country. Mandat expected to find the old city government, composed as it had been up to that time, and he had no idea that he was to encounter one hundred and forty-one new faces. Mandat was also ignorant of the order which had been issued by the city, to clear out the soldiers from Arcade Saint Jean and New Bridge, — an order which, in view of its importance, had been attended to by Manuel and Danton in person.

On arriving at New Bridge, Mandat was therefore stupefied to find it completely deserted. He paused,

and sent his aide forward to reconnoitre. In ten minutes the aide returned. He had found neither artillery nor National Guards. Dauphine Square, Dauphine Street, and Augustin Quay were as deserted as New Bridge.

Mandat kept on his way. Perhaps it would have been better if he had returned to the palace, but men march whither Destiny pushes them.

As he drew nearer the Hôtel de Ville, he seemed to be drawing nearer to life and animation. Just as in certain organic conditions the blood retreats towards the heart and abandons the extremities, which remain cold and colorless, so the excitement, the heat, — in a word, the Revolution, — were along the Quay Pelletier, on the Place de Grève, and in the City Hall, the seat of popular life, the heart of the great body which we call Paris.

Mandat stopped at the corner of Quay Pelletier, and sent his aide to the camp under the Arcade Saint Jean. The popular tide was ebbing and flowing through the arcade, but the National Guards had disappeared.

Mandat wished to retrace his steps. The popular tide massed itself behind him, and forced him, like a waif, to the very steps of the City Hall.

"Remain here," he said to the aide, "and if any ill-luck happens to me, go and report it at the palace."

Mandat let himself be carried along by the waves which encircled him. The aide, whose uniform indicated his secondary importance, remained at the corner of the Quay Pelletier, where nobody molested him, the public attention being fixed on his commander.

On arriving at the great hall of the Hôtel de Ville, Mandat found himself in the presence of strange and stern faces. Here was the whole insurrection, ready to call to account the man who not only wished to curb

its growth, but to strangle that insurrection in its very birth.

At the Tuileries — we recall his scene with Pétion — it was Mandat who played the inquisitor. Here Mandat was himself to be interrogated.

One of the members of the new Commune — that terrible Commune which stifled the Assembly, and later struggled with the Convention — advanced, and asked, in the name of all present: "By whose order have the guards at the palace been doubled?"

"By the order of the Mayor of Paris."

"Where is that order?"

"At the Tuileries, where I left it, that it might be put into execution in my absence."

"Why was the artillery ordered out?"

"Because I wished to have a battalion parade; and when a battalion parades, the artillery goes with it."

"Where is Pétion?"

"He was at the palace when I left it."

"A prisoner?"

"No! He was at liberty, and walking in the garden."

Just then the examination was interrupted. A member of the new Council produced an unsealed letter, and asked to have it read aloud. Mandat only needed to glance at that letter to know that he was lost. He recognized his own handwriting.

This letter was the order which he had sent, at one o'clock that morning, to the battalion posted at Saint Jean Arcade, commanding an attack upon the rear of any crowd moving against the palace, while the battalion from New Bridge was to attack the crowd on the flank. This order had fallen into the hands of the Commune, after the withdrawal of the soldiers.

The examination was now done. What more fatal

avowal could be obtained from the accused than this letter?

The City Council decided that Mandat should be removed to the Abbaye Prison. This sentence was read to Mandat, and then its fulfilment began. In reading the decision to Mandat, the President, as we are informed, made a sort of horizontal gesture with his hand, — such a gesture as the populace knew but too well how to interpret.

Peltier, the author of "The Revolution of August 10, 1792," says that the President made a very expressive horizontal gesture, as much as to say: "Let him be disposed of!"

The gesture was indeed very expressive a year later; but this horizontal gesture, which meant so much in 1793, did not signify as much in 1792, when the epoch of the guillotine had not begun.

As it was not until August 21 that the head of the first Royalist was cut off in Carrousel Square, — that is, eleven days after the riot of August 10, — how could this horizontal sign, unless agreed upon in advance, have meant, "Kill this gentleman."

Unluckily, however, many facts seemed to justify the accusation.

Hardly had Mandat descended three of the steps in front of the City Hall, when, at the very moment when his younger son was hastening to meet him, a pistol-ball entered the prisoner's head. The same thing had happened three years before to Flesselles.

Mandat was only wounded. He rose, but in an instant fell again, beaten down by twenty pike-blows. The boy threw up his arms and shouted: "Father, father!" No attention was paid to his cries.

Suddenly, from out a circle wherein one could see only

the gleam of sabres and pikes, an arm was uplifted, holding a bleeding head, detached from its trunk.

This was Mandat's head. His son fainted. The aide galloped off to the Tuileries, to report what he had seen. The assassins separated into companies. Some of the wretches threw the body into the river. Others promenaded the streets of Paris, with Mandat's head on a pike. It was now nearly four o'clock.

Before the bearer of the fatal news reaches the palace, let us see what was going on there.

After the King had attended to the duty of confession, he went to bed ; for not only was he unable to withstand the demands of nature, but when his conscience was at peace, he was easy in regard to other matters. However, he retired without undressing.

When the tocsin was again heard, and the drums began to beat a general alarm, the King was awakened.

Monsieur de la Chesnaye, to whom Mandat had delegated his authority when he left the palace, roused the King, so that he might show himself to the National Guards, and reanimate their enthusiasm by his presence and a few apt words.

The King arose, heavy-headed, oscillating, half asleep. His hair was powdered, but the powder was all rubbed away from the side of his head which had touched the pillow. They tried to find the royal barber, but he was not there ; so the King left his room with his hair in disorder.

The Queen was still in the Council Chamber. Being forewarned that the King was about to show himself to his defenders, she ran to meet him.

Quite the opposite of this poor monarch, — whose dull look seemed to rest on no one in particular, the muscles of whose mouth were distended with involuntary palpita-

tions, and whose violet-colored coat gave him an air of being in mourning for royalty, — although the Queen was pale, she was burning up with fever, and her eyes were red and dry; yet she belonged to this monarchical phantom, who showed himself in full daylight, with large blinking eyes, and without the midnight halo of royalty.

She hoped to bestow upon him part of her superabounding courage, force, and life.

All went very well, however, as long as royalty was exhibited only in the privacy of its own apartments; although the National Guardsmen, who mingled with the noblemen, seeing the King so close at hand, — this poor, heavy, awkward man, who had figured at such disadvantage, under similar circumstances, on Monsieur Sausse's balcony at Varennes, — began to ask if this could be the hero of June 20, the King whose poetic story priests and women had already begun to embroider on funereal crape. They had to acknowledge to themselves that this was not the King whom the National Guardsmen expected to see.

Just at this moment the old Duke de Mailly, with one of those good intentions destined to furnish Hell with one more paving-stone, — just at this moment, we say, the old Duke de Mailly drew his sword, and threw himself at the King's feet, swearing, with a trembling voice, that he would die — he, and the French nobility whom he represented — for the descendant of Henry the Fourth.

Here were two blunders instead of one. First, the National Guards had no great sympathy for the nobility of France, whom Mailly represented. Second, it was not the descendant of Henry the Fourth whom they were to defend, but a Constitutional sovereign. In response, therefore, to a few cries of God save the King, cheers for the Nation resounded on all sides.

It was necessary to regain a lost opportunity. The King was urged to go down into the Royal Courtyard. Alas! That poor monarch — deprived of his food, having slept only one hour instead of seven, and possessing a wholly material nature — had no longer any will of his own. He was like an automaton, moved by the impulse of an outside volition.

Whence came this impetus? From the nervous nature of the Queen, who had neither slumbered nor eaten.

There are persons so poorly organized, that when once circumstances get beyond their control, they succeed badly in whatever they undertake. Instead of winning the disaffected, it seemed as if Louis Sixteenth approached them for the purpose of showing how little prestige the falling monarchy could leave in a man's countenance, when that man was lacking in native genius and force.

In the courtyards, as in the rooms upstairs, when the same few Royalists shouted "Long live the King!" there were tremendous hurrahs for the Nation.

The Royalists had the bad judgment to insist. "No, no, no!" shouted the Patriots, "no other King but the Nation!" and the King replied, almost like a suppliant: "Yes, my children, the Nation and your King are but one and the same."

"Bring the Dauphin," whispered Marie Antoinette to Madame Elizabeth. "Perhaps the sight of this child may affect them."

Some of the attendants ran after the Dauphin. Meanwhile the King continued his sorrowful inspection. He even conceived the wretched notion of going nearer the artillery, whose officers were mainly Republicans.

If the King had known how to speak, how to make men listen to him when their convictions were already

estranged from him, this would have been a courageous undertaking, and might have succeeded, even at the cannon's mouth; but there was nothing persuasive in either the speech or manners of Louis Sixteenth. He stammered. The Royalists tried to cover his hesitation, by raising anew the cry of "Long live the King," which had twice proved abortive.

This effort nearly led to a collision. Several cannoneers left their posts and shook their fists at the King as they called out: "Think we'll fire upon our brothers, for the sake of defending a traitor like thee?"

The Queen drew the King backward. Several voices called out: "The Dauphin! Long life to the Dauphin!" Nobody took up the cry. The poor child did not arrive on time. He was late at call and missed his cue, as they say in the theatre.

The King returned to the palace, and it was a veritable retreat, almost a flight. When he reached his own rooms, Louis Sixteenth sank breathless into an armchair.

The Queen remained at the door, looking all around for somebody to lean upon. She perceived Charny, leaning against the casing of the door of her room, and went to him at once.

"Ah Monsieur, all is lost!"

"I fear so, Madame!"

"Can we still flee?"

"It is too late, Madame!"

"What is there left for us to do?"

"To die!" responded Charny, with a salutation; whereupon the Queen sighed and re-entered her chamber.

CHAPTER XIII.

FROM SIX TO NINE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

HARDLY was Mandat murdered before the Commune appointed Santerre Commanding General in his stead. Santerre at once ordered the drums to beat a general tattoo throughout the city, and the church-bells to ring out a double alarm. Then he organized Patriot patrols, with orders to go as far as the Tuileries, and especially to keep an eye on the Assembly.

As a matter of fact the patrols had been hovering about the National Assembly all night. About ten o'clock in the evening the patrol arrested a knot of eleven persons in the Champs Élysées. Ten of these men were armed with daggers and pistols, and the eleventh with a blunderbuss. These eleven people allowed themselves to be taken without resistance, and were conducted to the Feuillant Guardhouse for safekeeping.

During the rest of the night eleven other prisoners were arrested, and brought to the same place. The twenty-two were confined in two separate rooms.

About daybreak the first eleven found a way of escape, by jumping from their window into a garden, and breaking through the gates. The other eleven were more securely confined.

At seven o'clock in the morning, a young man twenty-nine or thirty years old, wearing the hat and uniform of the National Guards, was brought into the Feuillant Courtyard. The freshness of his attire, the brightness

of his arms, the elegance of his style, had roused the suspicion that he was a Royalist, and this led to his arrest. Moreover, he was very cool.

A man named Bonjour, an old clerk in the Naval Department, was that day superintending the Feuillant Section. He questioned the National Guardsman.

"Where were you arrested?"

"On the Feuillant Terrace," replied the prisoner.

"What were you doing there?"

"I was on my way to the palace."

"What for?"

"In obedience to an order from the City Council."

"What duty did that order assign you?"

"To examine the condition of things, and report to the Attorney General of the Department."

"Have you that order?"

"Here it is!" As he spoke, the young man drew a paper from his pocket.

The superintendent unfolded the paper and read:

The bearer of this order will go to the palace, in order to look into the condition of things, and report to the Attorney General of the Department.

BOIRIE,
LE ROULX,
Municipal officers.

The order was regular. However, as there was some fear lest the signatures might be forged, a man was sent to the City Hall to have them identified.

This last arrest brought a crowd of people into the courtyard; and several voices in the crowd — there are always such voices in popular gatherings — began to call for the death of the prisoners.

A city official, who was present, knew that it would

not do to let these voices become too strong. He mounted a small platform, in order to harangue the crowd and get the people to go away. Just as they were about yielding to the influence of his sympathetic speech, the messenger who had been sent to the City Hall, to ascertain if the signatures of the city officers were genuine, returned to say that the order was all right, and that the man named Suleau, the bearer of it, should be set at liberty.

This was the same man whom we met one evening at Madame de Lamballe's reception, when Gilbert sketched a design of the guillotine, for Louis the Sixteenth, and Marie Antoinette recognized, in this novel instrument, the unknown machine which Cagliostro had caused her to see in a decanter at Taverney Château.

At the sound of this name a woman, unnoticed in the crowd, raised her head, and uttered a cry of rage.

"Suleau," she cried, "Suleau, editor-in-chief of 'The Acts of the Apostles,' — Suleau, one of the assassins of the independence of Liége? He belongs to me! I demand Suleau's death."

The crowd opened to make way for this woman. She was small and pinched, and wore an amazonian costume, in the colors of the National Guard. In her shoulder-belt she carried a sword. Advancing towards the municipal commissary, she forced him to step down, and then took his place. Hardly was her head seen above the crowd, when the crowd shouted her name with one voice, — Théroigne!

Théroigne was pre-eminently popular. Her share in the disturbances in October, 1789, her arrest at Brussels, her detention in Austrian prisons, her leadership on June 20, — all united to give her a popularity so great that Suleau, in his sarcastic journal, began, in 1789, to

jest about Citizen Populus as her lover, — meaning, by this name, to personify the whole people. In this there was a double allusion, both to the political popularity of Théroigne and to the looseness of her morals; for in this latter respect her reputation was widespread.

Suleau had published a Brussels paper called "The Royal Tocsin," and thus aided in suppressing the Liége revolt, and replacing a noble people — who wished to be free, and unite with France — under the Austrian yoke and the Bishop's crook and mitre.

At this time Théroigne was preparing a narrative of her arrest, and had read a few chapters of it to the Jacobins.

She now demanded the death, not only of Suleau, but of the eleven other prisoners.

Suleau could hear her voice in the midst of the applause, demanding his death and that of his companions. Through the door he appealed to the officer in charge of the post, who had under him two hundred National Guardsmen.

"Let me out," said he. "I'll give my name. They can kill me, and that 's the end of it. My death will save eleven other lives."

Naturally the guards refused to open the door. Suleau tried to jump out of the window; but his companions grasped him from behind, and pulled him in again. They could not believe they were to be delivered to butchers in cold blood.

They deceived themselves. Superintendent Bonjour, intimidated by the yells of the mob, granted Théroigne's demand, and forbade the National Guards from offering any resistance to the will of the rabble.

The National Guards obeyed and withdrew, and in so doing left the door unguarded. The populace rushed

into the prison, and seized the first man they chanced to find.

This first victim happened to be an abbé named Bouyon, a dramatic author, equally well known for his epigrams, over the signature of Cousin Jacques, and by the hisses with which three-fourths of his pieces were received at the Montansier Theatre. He was a colossal man. Snatched from the arms of the commissioner, who tried to save him, he was dragged into the courtyard, where he began a desperate contest with his murderers. Although he had only his arms to fight with, he was able to disable two or three scoundrels. A bayonet-thrust nailed him to the wall, and he died in such a situation that his last blows could not reach his enemies.

During this struggle two other prisoners managed to escape.

Next to Abbé Bouyon came a member of the old Royal Guard, named Solminiac. His defence was less vigorous than his predecessor's, and his death was the more cruel.

Then they murdered a third, whose name is unknown. Suleau came fourth.

"Hold on!" said a woman to Théroigne. "Here 's thy Suleau!"

Théroigne did not know him by sight. As he was commonly nicknamed Abbé Suleau, she believed him to be a priest. Like a wildcat she sprang upon him, however, and clutched him by the throat.

Suleau was young, brave, and vigorous. With a blow of his fist he sent Théroigne reeling ten feet away, violently shook off three or four men who were thirsting for his blood, snatched a sabre from the hands of the cut-throats, and with two blows felled two of these butchers to the ground.

A terrible fight ensued. Always gaining ground,

always nearing the door, Suleau three times freed himself. He reached the door at last, but he was obliged to turn, in order to open it, and was thus exposed to his assassins for a defenceless instant. That instant afforded enough time for twenty sabres to stab him. He fell at Théroigne's feet, who had the cruel joy of giving him a last wound.

While Suleau was struggling with his murderers, a third prisoner managed to escape.

The fifth man, who was dragged out of the guardhouse by the miscreants, roused a cry of admiration in the crowd. He had belonged to the old bodyguard. His name was Vigier, and he had been known as Handsome Vigier. Being as brave as he was handsome, and as adroit as he was brave, Vigier fought fifteen minutes. Thrice he fell and thrice he recovered himself. Every pavement in that courtyard was tinged, not only with his own blood, but with that of his murderers. At last, like Suleau, he was overcome by numbers.

The death of the others was simple slaughter. Their names are unknown. The nine corpses were dragged to the Square Vendôme, where they were beheaded. Their heads were stuck on pikes, and paraded throughout Paris.

Poor Suleau had been two months married to a charming woman, Adèle Hal, the daughter of a celebrated painter.

That evening one of Suleau's servants obtained his master's head by paying its price in gold, and subsequently succeeded, after long search, in recovering his body. Suleau's devoted wife had been for a month in the expectation of maternity, and it was she who demanded his precious remains, in order to bestow upon them the last sad rites.

Before the general struggle really began, therefore, blood had flowed in two places, — on the steps of the City Hall and at the Feuillant Guardhouse. Presently we shall see it flowing at the Tuileries. After the drops, the rivulet; after the rivulet, the river!

Just as these murders were committed, — that is, between eight and nine in the morning, — ten or eleven thousand National Guards, called together by Barbaroux's alarm-bell, and by Santerre's general drumbeat, came through the Rue Saint Antoine, entered the Arcade Saint Jean, — so well guarded the night preceding, — and entered the Place de Grève.

Those men came to ask for an order to march on the Tuileries. They had to wait an hour.

Two rumors as to the cause of this delay were circulated among the crowd. One was to the effect that the newly organized Commune hoped for concessions from the palace. The other rumor was that the Saint Marceau District was not quite ready, and it was desirable not to march without the Saint Marceau quota.

The thousand men who were armed only with pikes became very impatient. As usual, the worse armed men were the most zealous. They broke through the ranks of the National Guards, declaring they would go ahead, and sack the palace all alone.

Several confederated Marsillians and ten or a dozen French Guardsmen — the same guardsmen who, two or three years before, had helped to capture the Bastille — put themselves at the head of this rabble, and were hailed as its chiefs by common consent. This was the vanguard of the insurrection.

Meanwhile his aide, who had seen Mandat's assassination, rode at full speed to the Tuileries; but it was not till the King and Queen had returned to their respective

apartments, after his Majesty's ill-starred visit to the royal courtyards, that the aide was able to see them and report his gloomy news.

The Queen felt as one always feels, at the announcement of the death of a man who has left one's side an instant before; she could not believe it. She made the aide describe the scene once and again, with all its harrowing details.

Meanwhile the noise of a brawl made itself heard on the main floor, and came in through the windows.

The gendarmes, the National Guards, and the patriotic cannoneers — those who had raised the shout for the Nation when the King was present — at last began to provoke the Royalists, by calling them Royal Grenadiers, and declaring that there were, among the grenadiers from the sections of Saint Thomas and Buttes des Moulins, men who had been sold to the Court.

As they were still ignorant, in the courtyards and basement, of the death of their commanding-general, though this was already known on the main floor, a grenadier shouted: "That low-lived Mandat has sent nobody to the palace but aristocrats."

Mandat's older son was in the ranks of the National Guards. We already know the whereabouts of Mandat's younger son, who tried in vain to defend his father on the steps of the City Hall.

At this insult to his absent father, the elder brother rushed from the ranks with his sabre drawn. Two or three cannoneers threw themselves in front of him.

Weber, the Queen's chamberlain, was there, among the Saint Roch Grenadiers. He flew to the youth's assistance.

The sabres clashed. A quarrel was imminent between the two parties. The Queen was attracted to

the window by the noise, and saw Weber. She called Thierry, the King's valet, and ordered him to go after her foster-brother.

Weber came up, and told the Queen all about the fracas. In return, she announced to him Mandat's death.

The noise under the window increased. "See what is going on now!" said the Queen.

"What is happening, Madame?" said Weber. "The cannoneers are abandoning their guns. They have rammed home a ball in each, and as the cannon are not loaded with powder, they are now useless."

"What thinkest thou of the situation, my good Weber?"

"I think," replied the worthy Austrian, "that your Majesty had better consult Monsieur Rœderer, who appears to me one of the most devoted men in the palace."

"Yes, but where can I speak to him without being overheard, watched, interrupted?"

"In my room, if the Queen wishes," said Thierry.

"So be it!" said the Queen. Turning to her foster-brother she added: "Find Monsieur Rœderer, and bring him to Thierry's room."

As Weber went out by one door, the Queen followed Thierry by the other. Nine o'clock rung from the palace clock.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM NINE O'CLOCK TILL ELEVEN IN THE FORENOON.

WHEN one touches such an important point in history as we have now reached, not a single detail should be omitted; for these details are linked one to another, and their accurate adjustment constitutes the length and breadth of the picture on the canvas, which the hands of the Past unroll for the eyes of the Future.

At the very moment when Weber announced to the Queen the entrance of the Syndic of the Commune, the Swiss Captain Durler was on his way up to the King's rooms, to ask either the King or the Major General for the last orders.

Charny saw the worthy captain looking for an usher or chamberlain to introduce him, and asked: "What do you wish for?"

"Are n't you the Major General?" said Durler.

"Yes."

"I have come for final orders, Monsieur, as the head of the insurrectionary column is just visible from the Carrousel Courtyard."

"You have been ordered to stand your ground, Monsieur, for the King is determined to die in our midst."

"All right, Monsieur Major," simply responded Durler; and he returned to his companions with this order, which was their death-warrant.

As Captain Durler had said, the insurrectionary vanguard was coming into sight. It consisted of a thousand

men armed with pikes, with a score of Marsillians and a dozen or fifteen French guards at their head. In the ranks of the latter glittered the gilt epaulets of a young captain. This young captain, by Billot's recommendation, had been charged with a mission, which will be duly explained.

An eighth of a league (not far from a quarter of a mile) behind this vanguard came a large body of National Guards and Federals, preceded by a battery of a dozen pieces of artillery.

When Charny's order was communicated to them, the Swiss Guards ranged themselves quietly and resolutely, each one at his post, maintaining the gloomy and deliberate silence of determination.

The National Guards, less severely disciplined, took their places in a more noisy and disorderly way, but with equal resolution.

The gentry were badly organized, having only such short-range weapons as swords and pistols. Knowing that the forthcoming struggle would be to the death, they awaited with a sort of feverish intoxication the moment of actual conflict with the populace, — their old adversary, the immortal athlete, the fighter constantly overcome, yet rising again with increasing power, through eight centuries.

While the besieged, or those who were on the eve of a siege, were getting into position, there was a rap at the gate of the Royal Courtyard, and several voices cried out: "A parley!" Above the wall fluttered a white handkerchief, fastened to a spear or a pike.

Rœderer was sent for. He was already on the way.

"They are knocking at the Royal Gate, Monsieur."

"I hear it, and I 'm coming."

"What is to be done?"

"Open the gate."

The order was transmitted to the porter, who unfastened the gate, and then let his legs save his head.

Rœderer found himself face to face with a vanguard of pikemen, and said: "My friends, you have asked to have the gate opened for a parley, and not for an army. Who is your spokesman?"

"Here he is, Monsieur," said Pitou, with his mild voice and benevolent smile.

"Who are you?"

"I am Captain Ange Pitou, chief officer of the Haramont Federals."

Rœderer was not aware that there were any such soldiers as the Haramont Federals; but as time was precious, he judged it unnecessary to ask any questions; so he said: "What do you want?"

"I demand a free passage for myself and my friends."

Pitou's ragged friends, brandishing their pikes and making wry faces, appeared like dangerous enemies.

"A passage? Wherefore?"

"To block up the Assembly. We have a dozen cannon; but not one will be fired, if we get what we want."

"And what do you want?"

"That the King should be deposed."

"Monsieur, this is a serious matter," said Rœderer.

"Very serious, Monsieur," rejoined Pitou, with his customary courtesy.

"It demands deliberation!"

"That 's fair!" replied Pitou. Then he added, looking at the big palace clock: "It lacks fifteen minutes of ten. If at ten o'clock we receive no reply, we shall begin our attack."

"Meanwhile you will allow us to close the gate, will you not?"

"Of course!" replied Pitou, who then said to his comrades: "My friends, let them close the gate!" and he motioned to the foremost of the pikemen to retreat.

They obeyed, and the gate was closed without any difficulty; but during the short time it stood open, the besiegers had a chance to observe the formidable preparations made for their reception.

When the gate was fastened, Pitou's men were very anxious to continue the parley. Several were hoisted upon the shoulders of their comrades, and climbed upon the wall, which they straddled, while they began conversation with the National Guards inside, who met them halfway, and were more than ready for a friendly, peaceable, and familiar chat.

The quarter-hour rolled away. Then a man came from the palace, and gave orders to open the gate. This time the porter kept out of sight in his lodge, and so the National Guards lifted the bars.

The besiegers supposed their request had been granted. As soon as the gate was open they crowded in, like men who had been kept a long time waiting, and were pushed forward by a power in their rear, — that is, by the rabble. They called loudly for the Swiss Hirelings, swung their hats on the ends of their pikes and sabres, and shouted: "Hurrah for the Nation! Hurrah for the National Guards! Hurrah for the Swiss!"

The National Guards responded with cheers for the Nation. The Swiss maintained a deep and gloomy silence. At the mouths of the cannon the assailants paused to look ahead and around.

The great vestibule was full of Swiss, arranged three

ranks deep, according to height. As there was also a row of Swiss on each step of the portico, this made six ranks, able to open fire at the same time.

Some of the insurgents began to reflect, and Pitou was among this number; only it was rather late for reflection.

Now there came to pass what always happens to the brave populace under similar circumstances; for such people are like children, good-natured one moment, and cruel the next.

Seeing the danger, they did not think of running away, but they tried to go about, and jest with the National Guards and the Swiss.

The National Guardsmen were not disinclined to joke; but the Swiss were more serious.

Why? Five minutes before the appearance of the insurgent vanguard, this is what had happened.

After what was recounted in the previous chapter, and as a result of the quarrel to which Mandat's son gave rise, the Patriot National Guards had been separated from the Royalist National Guards, and dismissed.

In separating from their fellow-citizens, the Patriots also said farewell to the Swiss, whose courage was both admired and pitied. They added that if any of the Swiss would follow them, they should be received into their houses like brothers. Two Vaudois, in answer to this appeal, made in their own tongue, at once threw themselves into the arms of the Frenchmen, their natural companions.

At this instant two gunshots came from the palace loopholes, and two balls struck the deserters in the very arms of their new friends. The Swiss officers, who were excellent shots and hunters of the chamois and the ibex on their native hills, had taken the quickest way to nip

desertion in the very bud. One can easily understand how such an event made the Swiss soldiers grave and mute.

As for the men who had now been admitted into the courtyard, armed with old pistols, old muskets, and new pikes, — that is, so badly armed that they might as well have had no weapons whatever, — they were the same strange precursors of the Revolution whom we are sure to see at the beginning of all great outbreaks. They ran, laughing, to see the abyss open which was to engulf a throne, — yes, more than a throne, a monarchy.

The cannoneers were on their side. The National Guards seemed about ready to join them. They tried to persuade the Swiss to do likewise. They did not notice how time slipped away. Their chief, Pitou, had given Rœderer till ten o'clock to decide, and it was now quarter-past ten. The rabble were amusing themselves. Why should they count the minutes?

One of them had no pike, no gun, not even a sabre, but he had a pruning-hook, such a crook as is used to pull down the branches of trees which are to be cut away.

To his neighbor this man said: "Suppose I try to hook a Swiss!" and straightway the fellow caught a Swiss soldier by his crossbelt, and pulled the man towards himself. The Swiss only resisted enough to make it look as if he were resisting.

"There 's a bite!" said the fisherman.

"Pull gently!" said his neighbor.

The hookman did pull gently, and the Swiss passed from the vestibule into the courtyard, as a fish is drawn from the river and landed on the grass.

There were great cheers and loud bursts of laughter.

"Another! Another" they shouted on all sides.

The fisherman noted another Swiss, whom he could hook like the first. After the second came a third, and then a fourth and a fifth. The whole regiment would have been landed, if they had not heard the order: *Take aim!*

Seeing the muskets levelled, with the usual clank and mechanical precision which accompanies the movements of regular troops, one of the insurgents — for there is always, under such circumstances, some crazy-head who gives the signal for massacre — fired a pistol at one of the palace windows.

In the brief interval between the command to aim and the word *fire!* Pitou saw what would happen. "Lay low!" he cried to his followers, "or you 're all dead men!" and suiting example to precept, he prostrated himself; but before his advice could be followed, the order to fire resounded in the vestibule, which was forthwith filled with flame and smoke, and a hailstorm of bullets came crashing as from a giant's blunderbuss.

This compact human mass, — for at least half the column had crowded into the courtyard, — this compact mass swayed like a field of wheat bent by the wind. Then, like a harvest cut down by the sickle, the rabble staggered and collapsed.

Hardly one third of them remained alive. This third fled, passing under the fire of two lines of soldiers and the barrack-sheds. There came shots both from the sheds and the soldiers in line. The shooters would have killed each other, but for the thick screen of men between them.

This curtain was torn open in large rents, however. Four hundred men remained on the pavement, whereof three hundred had been killed outright. The other hundred, wounded more or less mortally, moaned, tried

to raise themselves, and fell back again, giving to some parts of the corpse-strewn courtyard a motion like that of the retreating waves, — a movement horrible to look upon.

Little by little all became quiet. Apart from a few delirious fellows, who obstinately insisted upon living, the sea became calm.

The fugitives scattered themselves through Carrousel Square, some rushing out upon the riverside, and others into Rue Saint Honoré, all shouting for help against their murderers.

At New Bridge these fugitives met the main body of the insurgents. This army was commanded by two men on horseback; but they were followed by a man on foot, who nevertheless had the air of being in command.

"Ah!" cried the fugitives, recognizing in one of the horsemen the brewer from the Saint Antoine District, remarkable for his colossal stature, — his enormous Flemish horse serving him as a pedestal, — "ah, Monsieur Santerre, — help, help! They are slaughtering our brothers!"

"Who are?" asked Santerre.

"The Swiss! They fired on us, while we were cheek by jowl with them."

Santerre turned to the other horseman and asked: "What do you think of that, Monsieur?"

The second rider was a small, light-complexioned man, whose hair was cut short like a brush, and who spoke with a strong German accent. "Faith!" he said, "I believe there is a military proverb which bids a soldier betake himself wherever he hears the voice of a fusillade or a cannon. Let us find the noise."

The man on foot said to one of the fugitives: "You had with you a young officer. I do not see him!"

"He fell among the first, Citizen Deputy! which is a pity, for he was a brave young man!"

"Yes, he was a brave youth!" responded the inquirer, paling visibly. "Yes, he was a brave youth, and he shall be bravely avenged! — Go ahead, Monsieur Santerre!"

"In such a grave affair I think we ought to summon experience to our aid, as well as courage, my dear Billot."

"So be it!"

"Consequently, I propose to assign the general command to Citizen Westermann, who is a thorough officer and a friend of Citizen Danton; and I propose to obey like a private soldier."

"As you please, provided you march without losing an instant."

"Will you accept the command, Citizen Westermann?" asked Santerre.

"I accept!" replied the Prussian, laconically.

"Then give your orders!"

"Forward!" cried Westermann; and the huge column, which had paused for an instant, put itself again in motion.

As the vanguard entered Carrousel Square, through the wickets from the Rue Échelle and the quays, eleven sounded from the Tuileries clock.

CHAPTER XV.

FROM ELEVEN O'CLOCK TILL NOON.

RE-ENTERING the palace, Rœderer met a chamberlain, who was searching for him on the Queen's account. In his turn he was looking for the Queen, knowing that she was the real strength of the palace in that hour.

He was glad to learn that she was waiting for him in a retired corner, where he could talk with her alone, and without fear of interruption. He therefore followed Weber upstairs.

The Queen was seated near the chimneypiece, her back towards the window. At the noise made by the opening door she turned quickly around, and said: "Well, Monsieur?" in an inquiring tone, yet without asking any positive question.

"The Queen has done me the honor to send for me?" asked Rœderer.

"Yes, Monsieur! You are one of the chief magistrates of the city. Your presence in the palace is a buckler for royalty. I wish therefore to ask you what you hope and what you fear."

"Little to hope, Madame! All to fear!"

"The populace are absolutely marching against the palace?"

"The vanguard is in Carrousel Square, talking with the Swiss Guards."

"Talking, Monsieur? I gave orders for the Swiss to repel force with force. Are they disposed to disobey?"

"No, Madame, the Swiss will die at their post."

"And we at ours, Monsieur. As the Swiss are soldiers in the King's service, so sovereigns are soldiers in the service of the monarchy."

Rœderer was silent.

"Am I so unfortunate as to have an opinion not in accordance with yours?" asked the Queen.

"Madame, I have no opinion whatever, unless your Majesty favors me by asking for it."

"Monsieur, I do ask for it."

"Well, Madame, I will speak to you with the frankness of a man whose mind is made up. My opinion is that the King is lost, if he remains in the Tuileries."

"But if we do not remain in the Tuileries, where shall we go?" said the Queen, rising in trepidation.

"At the present juncture of affairs, there is only one asylum for the royal family."

"And that, Monsieur —?"

"Is the National Assembly."

"Where do you say, Monsieur?" asked the Queen, snapping her eyes rapidly, and speaking as if sure she had not heard him correctly.

"The National Assembly!"

"And you believe, Monsieur, that I will ask anything of those fellows?"

Again Rœderer held his tongue.

"Taking one set of enemies with another, I like those who attack us openly, in the face of day, better than those who wish to stab us from behind, and in the dark."

"Well, Madame, make your decision, — either to give in to the populace, or beat a retreat towards the Assembly!"

"Beat a retreat? Are we then so poor in our defenders that we must retreat without firing a shot?"

"Before coming to a determination, Madame, will you listen to the report of a competent man, and learn what forces are at your disposal?"

"Weber, go after one of the palace officers, either Monsieur Maillardoz, Monsieur de la Chesnaye, or —" She was about to name Monsieur de Charny, but she paused, and Weber left the room.

"If your Majesty will go to the window, she can judge for herself!" said Rœderer.

With evident repugnance she took a few steps towards the window, drew aside the curtains, and looked out. Carrousel Square, and even the Royal Courtyard, were full of pikemen.

"My God!" she exclaimed, "what are those men doing there?"

"As I told your Majesty, they are talking."

"But they have come into the very precincts of the palace!"

"I have hoped to gain time, so as to give your Majesty an opportunity to decide what course should be taken."

At that instant the door opened. "Come, come!" said the Queen, without knowing to whom she was speaking.

Charny entered. "Here I am, Madame," said he.

"Ah, it's you! Then I have nothing to ask, for only a little while ago you told me what alone remains for us to do."

"And according to Monsieur," asked Rœderer, "there remains —?"

"Only to die!" said the Queen.

"You see that what I propose is preferable, Madame?"

"Upon my soul, I know not what is best!" said the Queen.

"What does Monsieur propose?" asked Charny.

"To conduct the King to the Assembly," said Rœderer.

"That is not death," said Charny, "but it is dishonor!"

"You hear, Monsieur," said she to Rœderer.

"Let us see if there is no middle course," replied Rœderer.

Weber came forward and said: "I am of small importance, and I know it is bold for me to speak a word in such a company; but perhaps my devotion inspires me. What if the Assembly should be asked to send a deputation to watch over the King's safety?"

"So be it! I consent to that!" said the Queen. "Monsieur de Charny, if you approve the proposition, go and submit it to the King, I beg of you!"

Charny bowed and went away.

"Follow the Count, and bring me the King's answer," she said to her foster-brother, who thereupon obeyed.

The presence of Charny, so grave, devoted, cold, was such a cruel reproach to the woman, if not to the Queen, that she could not see him without a shudder. Perhaps, also, she had an awful presentiment of what was soon to happen.

Weber returned to say: "The King accepts, Madame, and Messieurs Champion and Dejoly are going at once to the Assembly to carry his Majesty's request."

"Look there!" said the Queen, suddenly.

"What, Madame?" asked Rœderer.

"What are they doing there?"

The besiegers were just then busy catching the Swiss Guards.

Rœderer looked; but before he had time to get any idea as to what was going on, a pistol-shot smote the air, followed by a formidable discharge. The palace trembled, as if shaken to its foundations. The Queen uttered a scream, recoiled a step, and then returned to the window, constrained by curiosity.

"See! See!" she cried, with flashing eyes. "They 're fleeing! They 're routed! What do you say now, Monsieur Rœderer? Have we no other resource but the Assembly?"

"Will your Majesty do me the favor to follow me?" replied Rœderer.

"See! See!" continued she. "The Swiss are making a sortie, and pursuing them. The Square is empty! Victory! Victory!"

"In mercy for yourself, Madame, follow me," pleaded Rœderer.

The Queen recovered herself, and followed him.

"Where is the King?" he asked of the first lackey whom they met.

"In the Louvre Gallery," was the response.

"That is precisely whither I wish to conduct your Majesty," said Rœderer.

The Queen followed, without having any idea of her guide's intentions.

The extensive gallery of the Louvre was barricaded through half its length, and divided into three sections. Two or three hundred men were there to defend it, and they could retreat into the Tuileries, by means of a sort of swinging staircase, which a kick of the last fugitive would send tumbling down into the basement floor of the building.

The King was at a window with Chesnaye, Maillardoz, and five or six other gentlemen. In his hand he held a spyglass. The Queen ran to the balcony, but she had no need of a spyglass to see what was going on.

The insurrectionary army was approaching. It was long and wide, covering the whole quay, as far as the eye could see. By way of New Bridge the posse from the Saint Marceau District was effecting a junction with the

men from Saint Antoine. All the bells of Paris were frantically jangling the alarm. The big bell of Notre Dame Cathedral was overpowering all the other resonant bell-metal.

A hot sun poured out its myriad scintillations upon the gun-barrels and spear-heads. Like a distant storm, could be heard the heavy roll of artillery.

"Well, Madame?" said Rœderer.

Beside the King were collected some fifty persons. The Queen took a long look at the friends surrounding herself. This look seemed to come from her deepest heart, and to ask how much devotion really remained in her service. The poor woman stood mute, not knowing whom to address, not knowing what petition to make. She took her boy, and showed him to the officers of the Swiss and National Guards, and to the gentry who were present. It was no longer the Queen who demanded a throne for her inheritance. It was the distressed mother, in the midst of a conflagration, asking: "My child! Who will save my child?"

During this time the King was conversing softly with the Municipal Syndic, or rather Rœderer was repeating to him what he had already said to the Queen.

Two distinct groups were formed around the two august personages. The group about the King was composed of collected and grave counsellors, who apparently approved the advice given by Rœderer. The largest group, around the Queen, was made up of zealous and enthusiastic young officers, waving their hats, drawing their swords, extending their hands towards the Dauphin, kissing the hem of the Queen's gown, and swearing to die for herself and her son. In their enthusiasm the Queen found a breath of hope.

At this moment the King's retinue mingled with the

Queen's. With his usual air of immobility, the King stood in the centre of both groups united. Perhaps this quietness arose from courage.

The Queen seized two pistols from the belt of Maillardoz, the commander of the Swiss Guards.

"Come, Sire!" she said. "Now is the time to either come forth bravely, or perish in the midst of your friends."

The Queen's action raised the enthusiasm of her friends to the brim. With open mouth and suspended breath everybody awaited the King's response.

A young, handsome, and brave king, with flashing eye and quivering lip, might have thrown himself, with a pistol in each hand, into the midst of the combat, endeavoring to recall fortune to his side! They waited. They hoped.

The King took the pistols from the Queen's hands, and returned them to Maillardoz. Then he said, turning to Rœderer: "You say then, Monsieur, that I ought to betake myself to the Assembly?"

"Sire, that is my advice," said Rœderer, bowing.

"Let us go, gentlemen," said the King, "for there is nothing to be done here."

The Queen uttered a sigh, took the Dauphin in her arms, and addressed herself to Madame de Lamballe and Madame de Tourzel: "Come, ladies, since the King so wills!"

This was like saying to all the others: "We abandon you!"

Madame Campan awaited the Queen in the corridor through which she had to pass. The Queen saw her, and whispered: "Wait in my room. I will rejoin you there, or I will send for you from elsewhere, — God knows where!" Then leaning towards Campan she murmured: "Oh for a plunge into the sea!"

The gentlemen whom she had left behind looked at each other, as if to say: "Is it for this King that we have come to our deaths?"

Chesnaye understood this mute question, and answered it: "No, gentlemen, it is for royalty! Man is mortal, but principle is imperishable."

As to the unhappy women, — and there were many of them, though several who were absent from the palace made ineffectual efforts to re-enter it, — as to the women, they were completely terrified. One might have believed them so many marble statues, standing at the angles of the staircases and along the corridors.

At last the King condescended to think of those whom he abandoned. At the bottom of the staircase he paused and asked: "What will become of all those whom we are leaving up yonder?"

"Sire," responded Rœderer, "nothing is easier than for them to follow us. They are dressed like citizens, and can find their way out through the garden."

"True," said the King, "so let us go on!"

"Ah, Monsieur de Charny," said the Queen, perceiving the Count, who was waiting for them at the garden gate, with his sword drawn, "why did we not listen to you day before yesterday, when you counselled flight?"

The Count made her no reply; but he approached the King and said: "Sire, the King had best take my hat and give me his, for his own hat may lead to his detection."

"You are right," said the King, "on account of its white plume. — Thanks, Monsieur!" So he took Charny's hat in exchange for his own.

"Monsieur," said the Queen, "will the King run any danger during this short walk?"

"You see, Madame, if any danger does lie in the

pathway, that I am doing all I can to turn it aside from him whom it menaces."

"Sire," said the Swiss captain, charged with protecting the King on his way through the garden, "is your Majesty ready?"

"Yes," replied the King, pulling Charny's hat over his face.

"Then let us set out!" said the captain.

The King walked between two ranks of Swiss soldiers, who kept step with his Majesty.

Suddenly cries were heard at the right. The gate which opened into the palace yard, near the Café de Flore, was forced open. A mass of people, having learned that the King was on his way to the Assembly, rushed into the garden. A man who seemed to be the leader of the incursion bore aloft his banner, which was a head on the point of a pike. The Swiss captain called a halt, and prepared to shoot.

"Monsieur de Charny," said the Queen, "if you see me liable to fall into the hands of these wretches, you will kill me, will you not?"

"I cannot promise you that, Madame."

"And why not?" exclaimed the Queen.

"Because, before a single hand touches you, I shall be dead!"

"Hold!" said the King, "that is poor Mandat's head! I recognize it!"

The murderous band dared not come too near, but they heaped insults upon the King and Queen. Five or six muskets were fired. One Swiss fell wounded, and another dead. The captain ordered his men to aim, and they obeyed.

"Don't fire, Monsieur!" said Charny, "or not one of us will reach the Assembly alive."

"True, Monsieur," said the captain. "Shoulder arms!"

The soldiers again obeyed, and the party continued its way diagonally across the garden.

The heat of the year had yellowed the chestnut-trees. Although it was not yet the middle of August, the leaves were already dry and were strewing the ground. The little Dauphin amused himself by rolling the leaves under his feet, and kicking them over his sister's shoes.

"The leaves fall early this year," said the King.

"Did not some rabid fellow say that our monarchy would only last till the leaves should fall?" asked the Queen.

"Yes, Madame," replied Charny.

"And what is the name of this skilful prophet?"

"Manuel."

A new obstacle now presented itself to the progress of the royal family. Above them, on the terrace which it was necessary to ascend and cross, — in order to go from the palace garden to the Riding School, where the Assembly still held its sessions, — a large knot of men and women were waiting, and brandishing their arms threateningly.

This peril was all the greater, because the Swiss could no longer keep their ranks. Nevertheless the captain tried to force a way through the crowd; but this enraged the rabble so that Rœderer called to him: "Take care, Monsieur! You 'll get the King killed!"

There was a halt, and a messenger was sent to notify the Assembly that the King demanded an asylum. The Assembly at once sent out a deputation; but the mere sight of this deputation redoubled the fury of the rioters, whose angry shouts could be heard: "Down with old

Veto! Down with that Austrian hussy! Abdication or death!"

The children, observing that their mother was specially menaced, pressed nearer to her. The little Dauphin asked: "Monsieur de Charny, why do all these people wish to kill my mamma?"

One man of gigantic stature, armed with a pike, yelled louder than the rest: "Down with old Veto! Death to the Austrian Woman!" and tried to so thrust his weapon among them as to wound either the Queen or King.

The Swiss escort had vanished one by one. The royal family were surrounded only by the half-dozen gentlemen who had come out of the Tuileries with them, together with Monsieur de Charny, and the deputation from the Assembly. There were yet thirty paces to cover, in the midst of a compact mass. It was evident that the rabble did not mean to leave many days to the King, and especially to the Queen. At the foot of the steps the struggle began.

"Monsieur," said Rœderer to Charny, "put up your sword, or I can't answer for the results!" Charny obeyed without a word.

The royal party was lifted up by the multitude, as a ship is lifted by the waves in a storm, and so they were carried to the side of the Assembly building. The King was obliged to repulse a man who fairly shook his fist in the royal face. The little Dauphin, almost stifled, screamed, and put out his hands for help.

A man sprang forward, grabbed the child, and wrenched him from his mother's arms. "Monsieur de Charny! My child!" she cried. "In Heaven's name, save my boy!"

Charny took a few steps towards the man who bore the Dauphin; but this left the Queen so exposed, that

two or three arms were extended towards her, and one hand grasped the lace which covered her breast.

The Queen screamed. Charny forgot Rœderer's advice, and his sword disappeared in the body of the man who had dared to lay his hand upon the Queen. The crowd howled with rage, at seeing one of their own men fall, and rushed headlong upon the royal group.

The women yelled: "Kill her, the Austrian minx! Give her to us, till we eat her up! Death! Death!"

Twenty naked arms were ready to seize her; but the Queen, crazy with grief, did not think of her own personal danger, and continually cried: "My son, oh, my son!"

As the little party almost touched the threshold of the Assembly, the rabble made a final effort, feeling that the prey was about to elude their grasp.

Charny was so beset that he could only use the pommel of his sword. Among the clinched and threatening fists he could see one hand holding a pistol, pointed at the Queen. He dropped his sword, grasped the upraised pistol with both hands, tore it from the hands of the man holding it, and discharged it full in the breast of the nearest assailant. The wounded man was stunned, and fell to the ground.

Charny then stooped to pick up his sword. The sword was already in the hands of a vagabond, who was trying to stab the Queen with it. Charny threw himself upon the assassin. During that brief interval the Queen was drawn after the King, into the vestibule of the Assembly building. She was saved.

To be sure the door was closed behind her, and Charny fell on the doorstep, felled by a blow on his head from an iron bar, and stabbed in his breast with a pike.

" Like my dear brothers ! " he murmured, as he fell. " Poor Andrée ! "

Like his brothers, George and Isidore, Oliver de Charny had fulfilled his destiny. The Queen's fate was yet to come.

At that moment a frightful discharge of artillery announced that the insurgents were formally attacking the palace.

CHAPTER XVI.

FROM NOON TILL THREE O'CLOCK.

For an instant, like the Queen herself when she saw the flight of the advanced guard, the Swiss perhaps believed they had encountered and scattered the main army of the insurgents. They had killed some four hundred men in the Royal Courtyard, and a hundred and fifty or two hundred more in Carrousel Square. They had captured seven pieces of artillery.

As far as the eye could reach, not a man was to be seen who tried to defend himself. One small isolated battery, however, placed on the terrace of a house which faced the Swiss Guardhouse, kept up a firing which they had not been able to silence. Therefore, as they now believed themselves masters over the insurrection, the Swiss were taking measures to put an end to that battery, cost what it might; when suddenly they heard, from the riverside, the roll of drums and the jarring motion of heavy artillery.

This was the coming army, which the King had seen through his spyglass, while in the Louvre Gallery.

At the same time the rumor began to spread that the King had quitted the palace, and had asked an asylum at the Assembly. It is difficult to describe the effect of this news, even upon the most devoted Royalists. The King, who had pledged himself to die at his royal post, now deserted that post, and went over to the enemy, or gave himself up as a prisoner, without striking a blow.

The National Guards felt themselves relieved from their oaths, and nearly all went away. Several gentlemen followed them, judging it useless to stay and be killed for a cause which acknowledged itself to be virtually lost.

Only the Swiss remained, silent and gloomy, the slaves of discipline. From the highest part of the terrace next the Floral Pavilion, and through the windows of the Louvre Gallery, they could see approaching the men from those heroic faubourgs which no army had ever successfully resisted, and which in a single day had overturned the Bastille, — that fortress whose feet had been rooted in the soil for four centuries.

The assailants had their plan. They believed the King to be still in the palace. They wished to surround the palace on all sides, in order to capture the King.

The column which came along by the left bank of the river, therefore, received orders to force the grating on the waterside. Those who came by the Rue Saint Honoré were to break in the Feuillant Gate. The column on the right riverbank, commanded by Westermann, was under orders from Santerre and Billot to attack the front of the palace.

Suddenly the latter column came through the wickets into Carrousel Square, singing the *Ça ira*. The Marsillians were at the head of this column, dragging in their midst two small, four-pound cannon, loaded with grapeshot.

Nearly two hundred Swiss were on this square, in battle array. The insurgents marched straight upon them. The moment the Swiss levelled their muskets to open fire, the insurgents unmasked their two cannon and fired first.

The Swiss discharged their muskets, but immediately

retired into the palace, leaving thirty dead and wounded men on the pavement of the square.

Then the insurgents, having at their head the Marseilles and Breton Federals, rushed upon the Tuileries, spreading themselves through the two courtyards, the Royal Courtyard, also called the Central, — where lay so many dead bodies, — and the Princes Courtyard, next to the Floral Pavilion and the quays.

Billot wished to fight where Pitou had been slain. He was also in hopes that the poor boy was only wounded, and that he, Farmer Billot, might repay, in the Royal Courtyard, the service Pitou had rendered him in the Champ de Mars.

Billot was therefore among the first to enter the Central Courtyard. The odor of blood was such that it seemed as if one were in a slaughter-house. From this heap of corpses exhaled a gas which was as visible as smoke.

This odor and this scene exasperated the assailants, and they rushed upon the palace. Besides, retreat would have been impossible, even if they had thought of it. Masses of men were continually pouring through the wickets into Carrousel Square, — which were then much narrower than at the present time, — and pushed the vanguard on to the fight. Although the front of the palace blazed as with fireworks, not one assailant had an idea of going back.

Once inside the Central Courtyard, the insurgents found themselves caught between two fires, — like those in whose blood they were marching up to their ankles, — from the vestibule of the Clock Tower on one side, and from a double row of barrack-sheds on the other.

It was necessary to silence these barracks, first of all. The Marsillians threw themselves upon these huts, like dogs upon a roast; but they could not demolish them

with their hands, and so they called for crowbars, shovels, and pickaxes.

Billot called for mammoth cartridges. Westermann understood his lieutenant's plan. Big cartridges were brought, with tinder, sulphur, and matches.

At the risk of seeing the powder explode in their hands, the Marsillians set fire to the fuses, and threw the burning cartridges into the sheds. The barracks at once caught fire, and their defenders were obliged to evacuate them, and seek a refuge under the vestibule. Then iron smote iron, and fire met fire.

Suddenly Billot felt himself pulled backwards. He turned, supposing he was to encounter an enemy; but when he saw who had pulled him, he uttered an exclamation of joy. It was Pitou, — hardly recognizable, and covered with blood from head to foot, — but Pitou, safe and sound, without a single wound.

At the moment when he saw the Swiss muskets levelled at himself and his comrades, he shouted to his companions to throw themselves upon the ground, and set them the example; but this example they had no time to follow. The fusillade, like a huge scythe, cut away three-fourths of these human grass-blades, which take twenty-five years to grow, but may be mown down in a second of time.

Pitou was literally entombed under a mound of corpses, and bathed in the warm liquid trickling from their sides.

In spite of his exceedingly disagreeable situation, — weighed down by dead bodies, and soaked in their blood, — Pitou resolved not to breathe a word, but to wait and give a sign to somebody at the first favorable moment. For this opportune moment he had to wait a whole hour; and truly each minute of that hour seemed like an hour itself.

At last he judged the propitious moment had come, for he heard the victorious shouts of his companions, and Billot's voice calling his name in the midst of them.

Then, like Enceladus buried under Mount Etna, he shook off the bed of corpses which covered him, and managed to regain his feet. Recognizing Billot in the first rank, he was anxious to press the farmer to his heart, without caring which side he got hold of.

A discharge from the Swiss, which laid low a dozen men, recalled Pitou and Billot to the gravity of their situation. Nine hundred feet of buildings were on fire, at the right and left of the Central Courtyard.

The weather was oppressive, and there was not a flaw of wind stirring. The smoke of the conflagration and the fusillade weighed upon the combatants like a leaden coverlid. The smoke filled the vestibule of the palace. The whole façade, every window whereof emitted flame, was hidden by a veil of smoke. It was impossible to see which were the slayers or the slain.

Pitou, Billot, the Marsillians, the leaders of the column, went on ahead, and made their way into the vestibule, in the midst of the smoke.

There they found a wall of bayonets, — those of the Swiss soldiers. Then the Swiss began their retreat, — that heroic retreat, in which, step by step, stair by stair, leaving a file of their own men at every move, the battalion fell slowly backward. That night forty-eight corpses were to be counted on the staircase alone.

Suddenly, through the corridors and chambers of the palace, resounded the cry: "The King orders the Swiss to stop firing!" It was then two in the afternoon.

Here is what had happened in the Assembly, and led to the order proclaimed in the Tuileries to suspend the

contest, — an order which had the double advantage of lessening the exasperation of the victors and saving the honor of the vanquished.

When the door opening into the Feuillant Terrace closed behind the Queen, and through the aperture she saw the crowbars, bayonets, and pikes which threatened Charny's life, she screamed, and extended her arms towards the door; but drawn away by those who accompanied her, — at the very moment when motherly instinct bade her follow her child before all else, — she involuntarily moved along into the Assembly, following the King.

There a great joy awaited her. She saw her boy, seated on the President's desk. The man who had carried him triumphantly away was waving his red cap over the young Prince's head, and shouting joyfully: "I 've saved the son of my master and mistress! Long life to Monseigneur the Dauphin!"

Her son being in safety, a sudden twinge of the heart reminded her of Charny.

"Gentlemen," said she, "one of my bravest officers, one of my most devoted friends, remains outside your door, in danger of death. I ask succor for him."

At the sound of her voice five or six Deputies hurried away; while the royal family, and the adherents who accompanied them, found accommodations in the seats set apart for the cabinet-ministers.

The Assembly received them standing, not because of the etiquette due to crowned heads, but out of the respect due to misfortune.

Before seating himself, the King made a sign that he wished to speak. There was silence while he said: "I have come here to ward off a great crime. I believe I am nowhere safer than in your midst."

"Sire," replied Vergniaud, who was presiding, "you can count on the firmness of the National Assembly. Its members have sworn to die in defence of the rights of the people and of lawfully constituted authority."

The King seated himself. At that moment a frightful volley was heard almost at the gates of the Riding School.

The National Guards, mingling with the insurgents who were on the Feuillant Terrace, were firing upon the Swiss captain, and others who had served as an escort for the royal family.

An officer of the National Guard, having doubtless lost his head, entered the Assembly in affright, and did not pause till he reached the bar, where he shouted: "The Swiss, the Swiss! We are driven back!"

For an instant the Assembly believed that the Swiss Guards, having repulsed the Revolutionists, were marching upon the Riding School, to reclaim their King; for at that epoch Louis Sixteenth, it must be said, was rather the King of the Swiss than of the French.

The members rose spontaneously in a body, and with one accord. Representatives, spectators in the galleries, National Guards, secretaries, all raised their hands and shouted: "Come what will, we swear to die, or live as freemen." The King and his family took no part in this adjuration, but remained seated; but this cry, uttered by three thousand tongues, passed over their heads like a hurricane.

The error about the Swiss was of brief duration, but the enthusiasm was sublime.

Fifteen minutes later another cry was heard: "The palace is invaded. The insurgents are marching upon the Assembly to slaughter the King!"

Then the same men who had sworn, in their hatred of royalty, to die free, raised their hands with the same

spontaneous vim, and swore to defend the King unto the death.

At that very moment, in the name of the Assembly, the Swiss Captain Durler was being ordered to lay down his arms.

"I serve the King, and not the Assembly," he said. "Where is the King's order?"

The messengers from the Assembly had not brought a written order.

"I hold my command from the King," added Durler. "I will submit only to the King's orders."

They took him by force into the Assembly. He was black with powder and red with blood.

"Sire," he said, "they want me to lay down my arms. Is it the King's order?"

"Yes," responded Louis. "Give up your arms to the National Guards. I do not wish one of you brave fellows should perish."

Durler bent his head, uttered a sigh, and went out; but at the door he declared he would not obey unless the order was written.

Then the King took a sheet of paper and wrote:

The King orders the Swiss Guards to lay down their arms, and withdraw to their quarters.

Then it was that this order was heard throughout the rooms, corridors, and stairways of the Tuileries.

As this order restored some tranquillity to the Assembly, the President jingled his bell. "Let us resume business!" he said.

A Deputy arose and said, that according to the Constitution, the Assembly was forbidden to transact any business in the King's presence.

"True," said Louis Sixteenth, "but where will you put us?"

"Sire," said the President, "we can offer you the empty box reserved for 'The Logographe,' that journal having ceased to appear."

"Very well," said the King, "we are ready to go there."

"Ushers," cried Vergniaud, "conduct the King to the box set apart for 'The Logographe.'"

The ushers hastened to obey. The royal family left the hall by the same door which had given them ingress, and found themselves again in the corridor.

"What is this on the floor?" asked the Queen. "It looks like blood."

The ushers did not answer. If those stains were really blood, very likely the ushers did not know how they came there. As the fugitives came nearer the appointed place, the stains, singularly enough, grew larger and more frequent. To spare the Queen the sight of them, the King quickened his pace, and himself opened the door into the box, as he said:

"Enter, Madame!"

The Queen stepped forward, but as she set foot on the threshold she uttered a cry of horror, covered her eyes, and drew backward.

The presence of these blood-stains was explained. A corpse had been laid out in the box. It was this body the Queen, in her haste, had almost stumbled over, and which made her scream and retreat.

"Hold!" said the King, in the same tone in which he had said, "It's the head of poor Mandat!" — "Hold, this is the body of our poor Count Charny."

It was indeed the Count's body, which a few Deputies had rescued from the hands of his butchers, and had

obtained permission to place in this box, not foreseeing that ten minutes later the royal family would be likewise installed there.

The corpse was removed, and the royal family went into the cabinet. There was an attempt to wash it, or clean it, for the floor was covered with blood; but the Queen made a sign of objection, and was the first to sit down in her place. Nobody noticed that she broke the strings of her shoes, and placed her trembling feet in contact with the still tepid blood.

"Oh Charny, Charny!" she murmured, "why is not my blood spilled to the last drop, that it might mingle eternally with thine?"

Three o'clock sounded.

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM THREE O'CLOCK TILL SIX IN THE AFTERNOON.

We left the palace at the moment when the vestibule was nearly captured, when the Swiss Guards were being pushed back, step by step, to the very door of the royal apartments, and a voice resounded through the corridors: "An order for the Swiss to lay down their arms!"

This volume is probably the last we shall write on this awful epoch. In proportion as our narrative advances, we leave the historic ground we are now covering, never to return to it again. This makes it the more needful to place this important day, August 10, 1792, before our readers in all its details, and to do so without prejudice, animosity, or partisanship.

Our readers entered Royal Courtyard in the wake of the Marsillians. We followed Billot into the midst of flame and smoke, and saw him mount every step of the stairway, at whose angle we left him, accompanied by Pitou, who arose, like a bloody spectre, from out a heap of the slain.

The palace was taken. What lugubrious genius presided at this victory? "The popular Wrath," somebody replies.

Yes, undoubtedly; but who directed that wrath? A man whom we have scarcely named, that Prussian officer, mounted on his small black horse, beside the giant Santerre, on his colossal Flemish animal, — the Alsatian Westermann.

Who was this man, making himself visible only in the midst of the tempest, like the lightning? One of those men whom Deity retains in the arsenal of his anger, and only draws forth from obscurity when he has need of him, in the hour when a divine and retributive blow is to be struck.

This was Westermann, the Man of the Setting Sun, as he was called; and indeed he only appeared when royalty was sinking, never to rise again.

Who discovered him? Who divined his existence? Who was the messenger between him and Deity?

Who would have supposed that to this brewer Santerre, a giant carved out of a block of material flesh, would be given a soul for this struggle, wherein the Titans of earth were to overthrow the gods of royalty? Who complemented Geryon with Prometheus? Who filled out Santerre with Westermann? Danton!

Where did the potent Revolutionist find this conqueror? In a cell, in a cesspool, in a dungeon, — at Saint Lazare.

Westermann was accused — accused, please understand, not convicted — of having forged banknotes, and was arrested by way of precaution.

For the work of the Tenth of August, Danton needed just such a man, — one who would not draw back, because, in retreating, he would but mount the pillory.

This mysterious prisoner attracted Danton's attention. When the day and hour came wherein he needed this prisoner, Danton's powerful hand broke the chains and handcuffs, and bade him come forth.

The Revolution, as we have before said, involved not only the abasement of those who were above, but the exaltation of those who were beneath. It set at liberty the captives, and put into prison, not only those who

were free, but those who, until then, had been grandees, princes, and kings, — the most powerful of earth.

Doubtless it was because Danton felt so sure of what was coming, that he appeared so indifferent amidst the feverish clouds which preceded the sanguinary morning of August 10. He had already sown the wind. There was no need to disquiet himself further, for he was sure to "reap the whirlwind."

The whirlwind was Westermann. The tempest was Santerre, that gigantic personification of the people. Santerre hardly showed himself all day. Westermann was everywhere and did everything.

It was Westermann who directed the movement for a junction of the Saint Marceau and Saint Antoine men. It was Westermann, mounted on his little black horse, who appeared at the head of the army, at the wickets leading into Carrousel Square. It was Westermann who knocked at the door of the Tuileries with the hilt of his sword, as if he were commanding the door to open for a regiment reaching the end of its journey, and about to make the palace its headquarters.

We saw this door open. We saw how heroically the Swiss did their duty, how they were beaten down in their retreat, but without fleeing, — destroyed, rather than conquered. We followed them step by step up the staircase, which they lined with their own dead.

We might follow them step by step into the apartments, which they also will strew with their comrades.

When they learned the King was about quitting the palace, two or three hundred gentlemen, who had come thither to die with the King, held a meeting in the hall called the Queen's Guardroom, in order to consider if it was their duty to die without the King, he being no longer ready to die with them, as he had so solemnly

covenanted. It was decided, as the King had gone to the National Assembly, that these gentlemen should rejoin him there.

They rallied all the Swiss whom they met, and a score of National Guards, and descended, five hundred in all, into the gardens.

Their passage was barred by a grating called the Queen's Grille. They tried to spring the bolt, but the bolt would not yield. The strongest among them tried to pry it open with a bar, and finally succeeded in breaking it.

The opening gave passage to the party, but they had to go through one by one. It was only thirty paces from here to Royal Bridge, at whose grating insurgent battalions were stationed. Two Swiss soldiers were the first to undertake to cross this narrow interval. Both were killed before they had taken four steps. All the others walked over their dead bodies.

These fugitives were riddled with balls; but as the bright uniforms of the Swiss offered an attractive target, it was upon them the bullets preferably fell. For two gentlemen killed and one wounded, sixty or seventy Swiss were overcome. The two gentlemen slain were Monsieur de Carteja and Monsieur Clermont d'Amboise. The wounded gentleman was Monsieur de Viomesnil.

In their further walk towards the Assembly Hall they had to pass in front of a guardhouse erected under the trees, between the terrace and the riverside. The guards there also came out and fired upon the Swiss, slaying eight or ten more.

The remainder of the party, after losing some eighty men in eighty yards, kept on their way towards the steps leading to the Feuillant Terrace.

Monsieur de Choiseul saw them coming. With sword

in hand he ran to them, under the fire of the cannon on Royal Bridge and Swinging Bridge, and tried to rally the fugitives, by shouting to them to come to the Assembly. Believing himself followed by the four hundred men still able to run, he rushed into the corridors, and up the stairway which led to the legislative hall.

On the last step he met Deputy Merlin, who said to him: "What are you doing here with your naked sword, you rascal?"

Monsieur de Choiseul looked about him. He was alone.

"Put up your sword, and go and find the King," said Merlin to him. "I alone have seen you, — that is to say, nobody."

What had become of the men by whom Choiseul believed himself followed? The cannon-shot and musket-volley had made them turn upon themselves, like dry leaves in a whirlwind, and they went along as far as the Orangery Terrace. Thence the fugitives rushed into Louis Fifteenth (now Concorde) Square, and towards the old Garde Meuble (where the crown possessions were kept), in order to reach the boulevards or the Champs Élysées.

Monsieur de Viomesnil, eight or ten other gentlemen, and five Swiss took refuge in the Venetian Embassy, situated on Rue Saint Florentin, whose door happened to be standing hospitably open. They were saved.

The others tried to reach the Champs Élysées. Two cannon-loads of grapeshot were discharged from the base of the statue of Louis Fifteenth, and broke the line of fugitives into three fragments.

One section fled up the boulevard, and met the mounted gendarmes, who were coming with a battalion from the Capuchin Station. The fugitives believed themselves

saved; and Monsieur de Villiers, himself an old assistant-major of gendarmes, ran to one of the horsemen, shouting: "Help, my friends, help!" The horseman drew a pistol, and blew out the old gendarme's brains.

At this sight thirty Swiss, and a gentleman who had formerly been one of the King's pages, hurried into the building belonging to the Naval Department, where they were asked what business they had to be there. The thirty Swiss were disposed to give up. Seeing eight ragamuffins make their appearance, they laid down their arms and shouted: "Hurrah for the Nation!"

"Ah you traitors!" said the rioters, "you give up because you can't help yourselves! Do you shout for the Nation because you think this will save you? No quarter!"

Two Swiss dropped simultaneously, the one felled by the blow of a pike, the other by a gunshot. In an instant their heads were cut off, and placed on pikeheads.

The other Swiss, furious over the death of their two comrades, picked up their muskets again, and hastily fired. Seven out of the eight tatterdemalions fell dead or wounded.

The Swiss then made for the great gateway for safety, but found themselves face to face with a cannon's mouth. They recoiled. The cannon advanced. The fugitives grouped themselves together in an angle of the court-yard. The cannon was turned on its pivot, and its muzzle blazed upon them. Out of the twenty-eight, twenty-three were killed.

Fortunately, almost at the same moment, while the smoke blinded those who had fired the gun, a door opened behind the five remaining Swiss soldiers and the ex-page.

All six hurried through the door, which closed behind them, and the rioters did not see this sort of trap, which robbed them of the survivors. Believing their victims all dead, they withdrew, dragging their cannon after them with yells of triumph.

The second of the three sections of palace fugitives was composed of some thirty soldiers and gentlemen, commanded by Monsieur Forestier de Saint-Venant.

Surrounded on all sides at the entrance of the Champs Élysées, their chief determined to have them sell their lives dearly. Sword in hand, with his thirty followers armed with bayonets, he thrice charged upon the battalion stationed at the foot of the statue. In these three attacks he lost fifteen men. With the other fifteen he endeavored to fight his way through, and reach the Champs Élysées. A volley of musketry killed eight men. The other seven dispersed, and were pursued with sabres by the gendarmes.

Saint-Venant was seeking refuge in the Ambassadors' Café, when a gendarme galloped up, leaped the ditch which separated the sidewalk from the road, and with a pistol-shot wounded the loins of the unfortunate leader.

The third section, composed of sixty men, reached the Champs Élysées, and tried to wend its way towards Courbevoie, with that instinct which leads pigeons to fly straight to the dovecot, or sheep to the sheepfold. At Courbevoie were their regular barracks, from which the Swiss had been summoned to duty at the palace. Surrounded by the mounted gendarmes and by the populace, the sixty were taken to the City Hall, where they hoped to find security; but two or three thousand furious rioters, who were massed in the Place de Grève, tore them from their escort and slaughtered them in cold blood.

One young gentleman, however, Chevalier Charles

d'Autichamp, fled from the palace along Rue Échelle, a pistol in each hand. Two men tried to stop him, but he killed them both. The populace threw themselves upon him, and dragged him as far as the Place de Grève, in order to put him to death more deliberately and cruelly.

Happily they forgot to search him. Besides his two pistols, which he flung away as worthless, he had a knife. This he opened in his pocket, holding it ready against a time of need. Just as they reached the square in front of the City Hall, the sixty Swiss, who had been brought thither already, were in the process of butchery. This spectacle distracted his guards. With two blows of his knife he slew those nearest him, and then glided through the crowd like a serpent, and disappeared.

The hundred men who conducted the King as far as the Assembly, and then took refuge at the Feuillant Club, were afterwards disarmed. The five hundred whose fate we have related, and a few isolated fugitives like Charles d'Autichamp, — who evaded death so cleverly, — were the only men who escaped from the palace.

The rest were killed under the vestibule, on the stairway, on the landings, or were slaughtered in the various apartments, and even in the chapel.

Nine hundred dead bodies of Swiss Guards and gentlemen strewed the floors of the Tuileries.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FROM SIX TO NINE O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING.

THE populace entered the palace as one enters into a wild beast's lair, betraying their feelings by such cries as "Death to the wolf! Death to the she-wolf! Death to the cub!"

Had they encountered the King, the Queen, and the Dauphin, they would certainly and unhesitatingly, believing they were administering justice, have struck off these three heads at one blow. Let us acknowledge that this would have proved most fortunate for the victims.

In the absence of those whom they tracked with their shouts, whom they searched for even in the cupboards, behind tapestries, and under bedsteads, the victors seemed to revenge themselves upon everything, — upon things inanimate as well as upon men. They killed and destroyed with the same unfeeling ferocity. These walls, within which the massacres of Saint Bartholomew and of the Champ de Mars had been decreed, called for a terrible revenge.

It will be seen that we do not exonerate the people. On the contrary, we show them besmirched and bloody as they were. We must, however, hasten to say that the victors left the palace with hands red, but empty!

We read, in the book called "The Revolution of August 10, 1792," that some men were shot by the populace for stealing.

Peltier, who cannot be accused of partiality for the Patriots, tells us that a wine-dealer, named Mallet, brought to the Assembly one hundred and seventy-three golden louis, found on a priest killed at the palace; that twenty-five rioters brought thither a trunk full of the King's plate; that one combatant threw a cross of the Order of Saint Louis on the President's desk; that another deposited thereon the watch belonging to a Swiss. Another brought a roll of assignats; another a bag of crowns; others brought jewels and diamonds. The last restoration was a small coffer belonging to the Queen, and containing fifteen hundred louis.

The historian adds ironically, not at all aware that he is paying to these men a magnificent compliment:

The Assembly expressed its regret at not knowing the names of the modest citizens who thus came and faithfully placed in its bosom all these treasures stolen from the King.

We are not flatterers of the populace. We know them to be the most ungrateful, the most capricious, the most inconstant of all masters. We shall therefore relate their crimes as well as their virtues.

On that day they were cruel. They reddened their hands with delight. On that day gentlemen were flung alive out of the windows. Swiss soldiers, dead or dying, lay disembowelled on the staircases. Hearts were plucked from breasts and squeezed between both hands, like sponges. Heads were cut off and borne on pikes. On that day many people, who would have considered themselves dishonored by stealing a watch or a cross of Saint Louis, yielded themselves to the fearful joys of vengeance and cruelty.

Nevertheless, in the midst of this massacre of the living, of this profanation of the dead, they sometimes

granted mercy, like the satiated lion. Madame de Tarente, Madame de la Roche Aymon, Madame de Ginestous, and Mademoiselle Pauline de Tourzel remained at the Tuileries, forsaken by the Queen. They were in Marie Antoinette's own room. When the palace was captured, they heard the cries of the dying and the threats of the victors. They heard footsteps advancing towards them, precipitous and pitiless. Madame de Tarente went and opened the door. "Come in," said she, "we are only women!"

The victors entered, with smoking guns and bloody sabres in their hands. The women fell on their knees.

The slaughterers had already lifted their knives against them, calling them the counsellors of Madame Veto, the confidants of the Austrian Woman. A man with a long beard, sent by Pétion, cried from the threshold: "Have mercy on the women! Don't dishonor the Nation!" and mercy was granted.

To Madame Campan the Queen had said: "Wait for me! I shall return! or I shall send for you to meet me again, — God knows where." Madame Campan waited in their chamber for the Queen to come back or send for her.

She herself relates that she completely lost her head in the midst of the awful confusion; and that, missing her sister, who was hidden behind a curtain, or had crept behind some furniture, she hoped to find her in a chamber on the lower floor, and so went downstairs rapidly. There she found only two of her own chambermaids, and a sort of giant who was the Queen's Hungarian footman.

At the sight of this man, Madame Campan, all excited as she was, understood that the danger menaced him, rather than herself.

"Flee! Flee!" cried she. "Flee, unhappy man! The lackeys are already far away! Flee, while there is yet time."

He tried to rise; but falling back again, he exclaimed in a plaintive voice: "Alas! I cannot! I am dead from fright!"

As he was thus speaking, a company of men, drunk, furious, and bloodstained, appeared on the threshold, fell upon the Hungarian, and tore him to pieces.

Madame Campan and the two women fled by a private staircase. Some of the murderers, seeing these three women flee, ran after them, and soon overtook them.

The two chambermaids, who had fallen on their knees to supplicate the slaughterers for forbearance, grasped the murderous blades.

Madame Campan, caught at the top of the stairs, felt a rough hand slide down her back, in order to seize her by her dress. She saw, like a fatal flash, the blade of a sabre shine above her head. She even calculated the short interval which was to separate life from eternity, — an interval, however short, which contains a whole world of remembrances, — when, from the bottom of the stairs, a voice with the accent of command made itself heard.

"What are you doing up there?" asked that voice.

"Hey!" answered the murderer, "what is it?"

"The women are not to be killed, do you understand that?" continued the voice from below.

Madame Campan was on her knees. The sabre was lifted above her head. She already anticipated the pain she was to undergo.

"Get up, you jade!" said her executioner. "The Nation forgives you!"

What was the King doing meanwhile, in the box of "The Logographe"?

The King was hungry, and was calling for his dinner.

They brought him bread, wine, a chicken, cold veal, and fruit.

Like all the Bourbon princes, like Henry Fourth and Louis Fourteenth, this King was a great eater. Behind the emotions of his soul, — rarely betrayed in his face, with its soft and slackened fibres, — sleep and hunger, these two great beggars in the body, were constantly on the watch. We have seen him asleep in the palace. Now we see him eating at the Assembly.

The King broke his bread and carved his chicken, without paying the least attention to the eyes directed towards him.

Two of these eyes, the Queen's, were burning, because they could not weep. She refused all nourishment. Despair was her nurse. It seemed to her, with her feet dabbling in Charny's precious blood, that she could remain there forever, and live like a flower among the tombs, without other food than that furnished by grim Death itself.

She had suffered much on the return from Varennes; she had suffered much during her captivity in the Tuileries; she had suffered during the night and the day just past; but probably, on all these occasions, she did not suffer so much as when she saw the King eating.

The situation, however, was serious enough to deprive any man of his appetite, except Louis Sixteenth. The Deputies, to whom the King had come for protection, needed themselves to be protected. They did not conceal their weakness.

That morning, the Assembly endeavored to prevent the

massacre of Suleau, and did not succeed. At two o'clock the members tried to prevent the massacre of the Swiss, and failed.

Now they were themselves threatened by an exasperated crowd, shouting: "Abdication! Abdication! Deposal! Deposal!"

A committee was appointed during the sitting. Vergniaud was a member thereof. He assigned the presidency to Guadet, in order not to have the power escape from the hands of the Girondists, even for an hour. The deliberation of the commissioners was of short duration. They deliberated, as it were, under the resounding echo of rattling musketry and roaring cannon.

It was Vergniaud who took the quill and wrote an act for the provisional suspension of royalty.

He re-entered the Assembly, mournful and downcast; for this was the last pledge he could give the King of his respect for the Crown, and to his guest of his respect for the rites of hospitality. Here is his address:

GENTLEMEN: I come, in the name of our Extraordinary Commission, to propose to you a very rigorous measure; but I rely upon the deep sorrow which pervades your body, to teach you how important it is, to the welfare of the country, that you should at once adopt it.

The National Assembly considers that the perils of the country are at their height; that the evils from which the land suffers arise chiefly from distrust inspired by the Chief of the Executive Power, on account of a war undertaken in his name against the Constitution and against French independence; that this distrust has aroused, in all parts of the empire, a desire for the revocation of the authority now vested in Louis Sixteenth.

Considering, however, that the Legislature is unwilling to enlarge its power by its own authority, and that it can reconcile its allegiance to the Constitution with its firm desire to

save liberty, only by appealing to the sovereignty of the people, the following decrees are recommended:

The French people are hereby invited to form a National Convention.

The Chief of the Executive Power is temporarily suspended from his functions. A decree shall be proposed during the day, for the nomination of a Governor for the Prince Royal.

The payment of the King's civil list shall be suspended.

The King and the royal family shall remain within the precincts of the Assembly until Paris is restored to a state of tranquillity.

The department shall cause the Luxembourg Palace to be prepared for the royal residence, under a guard of citizens.

The King listened to this decree with his accustomed immobility. Then, leaning over the box of "The Logographe," and addressing Vergniaud, when the latter returned to take his place as President, the King said: "Do you know that what you have been doing is not very Constitutional?"

"Indeed, Sire!" answered Vergniaud, "but this was the only means left for saving your life. If we do not accord the deposal, the people will take your head!"

The King made a movement with his lips and shoulders, signifying: "It 's possible!" and went back to his seat.

At this very moment the clock above his head struck the hour. He counted every vibration. When the last one was reached he said: "Nine o'clock!"

The edict of the Assembly declared that the King and royal family must remain within the precincts of the Assembly until Paris was restored to a state of tranquillity.

At nine o'clock the inspectors of the hall came after

the King and Queen, and led them to the temporary lodgings prepared for them near by.

The King signified, with his hand, that he wished to tarry a moment. In fact, the business in hand was not without interest to him, — the nomination of a new ministry.

The Minister of War, the Minister of the Interior, and the Minister of Finance were all nominated. They were the men recently driven out by the King, — Roland, Clavières, and Servan.

Three offices still remained unfilled, — Justice, the Navy, and Foreign Affairs.

Danton received the portfolio of Justice, Monge that of the Navy, and Lebrun that of Foreign Affairs.

The last minister having been nominated, the King said: "Now let us go!"

He rose and went out first.

The Queen followed him. She had not taken any food since she left the Tuileries, not even a glass of water.

Madame Elizabeth, the Dauphin, Madame Royale, Madame de Lamballe, and Madame de Tourzel escorted them.

The apartments prepared for the King were situated in the upper story of the old, adjacent monastery of the Feuillants. It had been occupied by the Recorder Camus, and consisted of four rooms.

In the first, which was in reality simply an anteroom, were domiciled the King's attendants who remained faithful to him in his misfortunes. These were the Prince de Poix, the Baron d'Aubier, Monsieur de Saint-Pardon, Monsieur de Goguelat, Monsieur de Chamillé, and Monsieur Hue.

The King took the second room for himself.

The third was offered to the Queen. It was the only one with paper on the walls. On entering it, Marie Antoinette threw herself upon the bed, gnawing the bolster, — the prey to a grief such as would make the agonies of the rack seem small in the comparison.

Her two children remained with their mother.

The fourth room, though very narrow, was reserved for Madame Elizabeth, Madame de Lamballe, and Madame de Tourzel, who established themselves in it as best they could.

The Queen lacked everything, — even money, for her purse. Her watch had been taken from her during the tumult at the door of the Assembly. She had no linen, for it can be easily understood that she brought nothing extra with her from the Tuileries. She however borrowed twenty-five louis of Madame Campan's sister, and sent to the English embassy for some linen.

In the evening the Assembly caused the decrees of the day to be proclaimed by torchlight through the streets of Paris.

CHAPTER XIX.

FROM NINE O'CLOCK TILL MIDNIGHT.

WHEN these torches passed in front of Carrousel Square, through the Rue Saint Honoré and on the quays, they illuminated a sorrowful spectacle.

The material struggle was finished; but the combat lasted longer in human hearts, for hatred and despair outlived the contest.

Contemporaneous accounts and Royalist legends dwell at length and tenderly, as we also are ready to do, on the sufferings of the royal heads from whose brows the crown was that day torn. They note the courage, the discipline, the devotion of the Swiss Guards and the loyal gentry. They have counted the drops of blood shed by those brave defenders of the throne. They have not counted the corpses of the populace, the tears of the mothers, the sisters, and the wives.

Let us say what we mean in a single word: Before God, before that high wisdom which not only permits but directs the events of this lower world, blood is blood and tears are tears. There were many more deaths among the common people than among the gentlefolks and the Swiss Guards.

Note what is said by Peltier, the author of "The Revolution of August 10, 1792," — Royalist as he was:

That day, August 10, cost humanity nearly seven hundred regular soldiers and twenty-two officers, twenty Royalist National

Guards, five hundred Federals, three commanders of National troops, forty gendarmes, more than a hundred persons employed in the royal household, two hundred men killed for stealing, nine citizens massacred on the Feuillant Terrace, Monsieur de Clermont d'Amboise, and nearly three thousand common people killed in Carrousel Square, in the Tuileries Garden, and in Louis Fifteenth Square, — a total of about four thousand six hundred men.

This popular justice bestowed upon thieves found its repetition at a later day, in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848.

This loss is wholly conceivable. We have seen the precautions taken to fortify the Tuileries. The Swiss generally fired from behind good walls. Their assailants, on the contrary, could only parry the blows with their breasts.

Three thousand five hundred insurgents perished, without counting the two hundred thieves who were shot. Suppose there was an equal number of wounded men! The historian above quoted speaks of the dead only.

Many out of these three thousand five hundred men — suppose we say one half — were married, the poor fathers of families, and were driven into the fight by intolerable misery. They went into the contest with the first weapons they could grasp, and fell with them still in their hands. They even entered the contest unarmed, and so went to their deaths, leaving their wives in despair and their children famishing.

This death they found not only in Carrousel Square, where the fight began, but in the palace rooms, where it was continued, and in the Tuileries Gardens, where it ended.

Between three in the afternoon and nine in the even-

ing, every corpse wearing a uniform was picked up and hastily thrown into the Madeleine Cemetery.

As to the plebeian bodies, that was another matter. They were gathered into wagons, and carted away to their respective sections. Nearly all were from the Faubourg Saint Marceau or the Faubourg Saint Antoine.

There they were laid side by side, especially near the Arsenal and the Pantheon, in Bastille and Maubert Squares.

Wherever one of these gloomy vehicles rolled heavily along, it left a trace of blood behind. As it entered one or the other faubourg it was surrounded by a crowd of mothers, wives, sisters, children, filled with mortal grief. Read what Michelet says, for he is the true historian of the people. As fast as the living recognized the dead, cries, sobs, and menaces broke forth.

Mysterious and unheard-of maledictions rose like a flock of nightbirds, with their awful suggestiveness, beating their wings in the obscurity, and croaking pitifully over the gloomy Tuileries. Like so many flocks of crows over a field of battle, these curses hovered over the King, the Queen, the Court, over the Austrian circle which surrounded Marie Antoinette, over the nobles who counselled her. Some promised themselves a future retaliation; and they had it on September 2, 1792, and on January 21, 1793. Others were intoxicated with the blood their eyes had drunk. Grasping again their sabres, their pikes, their muskets, they again rushed into Paris to slay. To slay whom? Any Swiss who happened to remain alive, — any nobleman, any courtier, — to kill the King, to kill the Queen, if they could find them.

Somebody might remonstrate: "But in killing the King and Queen, you make their children orphans! In

killing the nobles you make widows of their wives, and plunge their sisters into mourning!"

But wives, sisters, and children might reply: "We also are orphans! We also are sisters in mourning! We also are widows!"

With hearts full of sobs they went to the Assembly, they went to the Abbaye Prison, and beat their heads against the doors, crying for vengeance.

The Tuileries presented a terrible spectacle, blood-stained, smoking, deserted by all save the dead, and three or four squads of soldiers, keeping watch lest, under pretence of searching for dead friends, nocturnal visitors should pillage the royal dwelling, entering through its broken windows and battered doors. In each vestibule there were sentinels, and also at the bottom of each staircase.

The detachment at the Clock Pavilion — that is, by the grand stairway — was commanded by a young captain in the National Guards, a youth whom the sight of this unparalleled disaster doubtless inspired with pity, if one could judge by the expression of his face, as wagon-load after wagon-load of corpses was driven away, — under his supervision, as it were. However, the awful events which had taken place seemed to have no more influence over his physical needs than over the King's, for at eleven o'clock in the evening he was busy satisfying his monstrous appetite with a four-pound loaf of bread, which he held under his left arm, while with his right hand, armed with a knife, he cut off one huge slice after another, and thrust it into his large mouth, opening wider and wider, in proportion to the magnitude of the supply it was destined to receive.

Leaning against one of the pillars in the vestibule, he watched that long spectral procession of mothers, wives,

daughters, — lighted by torches placed here and there, — who searched, in this extinguished crater, for the bodies of their fathers, their husbands, or their sons, destroyed in the great eruption.

Suddenly, at the sight of a shadowy, half-veiled form, the young captain shuddered, as he murmured : " Madame de Charny ! "

The shadow passed on, without hearing or pausing.

The young captain made a sign to his lieutenant, who came to him at once.

" Désiré," he said, " here is a poor woman, one of Monsieur Gilbert's friends, who is probably looking for her husband among these dead folks. Somebody must follow her, in case she needs help or information. I leave thee in charge of the post. Watch for both of us ! "

" The Devil ! " responded the lieutenant, — for he whom the captain called only by his first name rejoiced also in the appellation of Maniquet, — " thy dame looks like an aristocrat."

" That 's because she is one, — an aristocrat and a countess," said the captain.

" Go ahead ! I 'll watch for both of us ! "

The Countess had already turned the first angle of the staircase, when the captain, detaching himself from his pillar, began to follow her, at a respectful distance of fifty paces.

He was not mistaken. It was indeed her husband for whom poor Andrée was searching, only she was agitated, not by tremors of doubt, but by the certainty of despair.

When he heard, in the midst of his joy and happiness, the echoes of the events taking place in Paris, Charny said to his wife, his face pale and resolute : " Dear Andrée,

the King of France is in peril of his life, and has need of all his defenders. What ought I to do?"

Andrée answered: "Go where duty calls thee, my own Oliver, and die for the King, if need be!"

"But thou —?"

"Oh, as for me, be not troubled. As I have never truly lived except in thee, doubtless God will let me die with thee."

Thenceforth all was understood between these two great hearts, and they exchanged no more words on the subject.

They ordered posthorses, and began their journey. Five hours afterwards they dismounted at the little mansion in the Rue Coq Heron.

That very evening, — as Gilbert, depending upon the Count's influence, was writing to him, begging him to come to Paris, — Charny, in his naval uniform, waited upon the Queen. From that moment, as we know, he did not leave her Majesty.

Andrée remained alone with her attendants, praying in her own room. For an instant she thought of imitating her husband's devotion, and asking for her old place near the Queen, as the Count had taken his near the King; but she lacked the courage.

August 9 was full of anguish to her, but it brought her no positive ill-news.

On August 10, about nine in the morning, she heard the first sounds of the cannon. Needless to say that each thunderous reverberation sent a thrill to the remotest fibre of her being.

About two o'clock the fusillade ceased. Were the people the conquered or conquering? She inquired. The people were the victors!

What had become of Charny in that fearful struggle?

She knew him, — that he was sure to take a chief part in it.

She sought for further news, and was told that nearly all the Swiss Guards were killed, but that most of the gentry were saved.

She waited. Charny might return under some disguise. It might be necessary for him to fly instantly. The horses were therefore at once harnessed, and attached to the travelling-carriage.

Horses and carriage waited for the master; but Andrée knew full well, whatever danger he might incur, that the master would not go without her. She even had the gates opened, so that if Charny had to flee, nothing might hinder his flight; and then she continued to wait, as the hours crept along.

"If he is hiding anywhere, he can venture out in the night. Let us wait till night!"

So she reasoned; but night came, and Charny did not come.

In August the darkness comes on slowly. Not till ten o'clock did Andrée lose all hope. Then she threw a veil over her head and went into the street.

All along the way she met groups of women wringing their hands, and bands of men crying for vengeance. Through their midst she passed unchallenged. The wrath of the men and the grief of the women were her safeguards. Besides, they were looking after men that night, not women, and there were women on every side, — weeping.

Andrée at last reached Carrousel Square. She heard the proclamation of certain new decrees of the National Assembly. The King and Queen were under the protection of that Assembly. That was all she understood.

She saw two or three wagons drive away, and asked

what they were carrying. She was told that these wagons contained bodies gathered up in Carrousel Square and Royal Courtyard. As yet it was only from those places that any of the dead had been removed.

Andrée said to herself that Charny would be likely to fight neither in Carrousel Square nor Royal Courtyard, but at the door of either the King's or the Queen's rooms. She therefore crossed the Royal Courtyard and the Grand Vestibule, and went upstairs.

It was at this moment that Pitou, in his capacity of commander of the post there stationed, saw Andrée and followed her.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WIDOW.

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of the state of devastation at the Tuileries. Blood flowed in the chambers, and rolled like a cascade down the staircases. There were dead bodies in every apartment.

Andrée followed the example of the other seekers. She took a torch, and began her inspection of one corpse after another. As she searched, she drew nearer and nearer to the rooms formerly occupied by the King and Queen.

Pitou still followed her. There, as in the other chambers, she pursued her fruitless search. Then she stood for a moment undecided, not knowing which way to go.

Pitou saw her embarrassment. Approaching her, he said: "Alas! I can guess whom you are looking for, Madame."

Andrée turned, and he added: "Perhaps Madame needs my help?"

"Monsieur Pitou!" said Andrée.

"At your service, Madame!"

"Yes, yes!" said Andrée, "I need you sorely." Going to him, she grasped both his hands, and asked: "Do you know what has become of Count Oliver?"

"No, Madame, but I can help you look for him."

"There is one person who can tell us whether he is dead or living, — and also, dead or alive, where he is."

"Who is that, Madame?"

"The Queen!" murmured Andrée.

"You know where the Queen is?"

"At the Assembly, I believe; and I have a faint hope that Count de Charny is with her."

"Yes, yes!" said Pitou, grasping at this hope, — not on his own account, but on that of the widow. "Will you come with me to the Assembly?"

"But if they refuse us admission?"

"I promise to have the door opened."

"Come, then!"

Andrée threw away her torch, at the risk of setting the floor afire, and consequently the Tuileries; but what mattered the Tuileries to her profound despair, — so deep that she could not shed a tear?

Andrée knew the interior of the palace, from having lived there awhile. She therefore descended to the basement story, by the little staircase reserved for household service, and so regained the Grand Vestibule, without again passing through the blood-stained apartments. Once more Pitou found himself at his post in the Clock Pavilion.

Maniquet had kept careful guard. "Well," he asked, — "thy Countess — ?"

"She hopes to find her husband at the Assembly, and so we're going there." Then Pitou added, in a lower tone: "As we may only find the Count's dead body, send me four good fellows to the Feuillant Gateway, — four upon whom I may rely to defend the corpse of a Royalist, as faithfully as if it were the corpse of a Patriot."

"That's all right! Off with thy Countess. The men shall be there."

Andrée was waiting at the gate, where a sentinel had

been placed. As it was Pitou who had stationed him there, the sentinel naturally allowed Pitou to pass.

The gardens of the Tuileries were lighted by lamps placed here and there, particularly on the pedestals of the statues. As the weather was almost as warm as it had been during the day, and scarcely a breath agitated the leaves of the trees, the lamp-flames burned without a flicker, like so many lances of fire, and threw their light far and wide, not only on those exposed parts of the garden laid out in flower-beds, but even upon the dead bodies lying here and there under the trees.

Andrée was so sure that only at the Assembly could she obtain news of her husband, that she walked thitherward, turning neither to the right nor the left.

They reached the legislative building. The royal family had been gone from the hall an hour, having retired, as we know, into the temporary apartments provided for them.

In order to reach these apartments there were two obstacles to be overcome. First, there were the sentinels, watching outside; next there were the gentlemen, watching inside.

As a captain of National Guards, in command of a post at the Tuileries, Pitou had the password, and therefore could easily conduct Andrée as far as the antechamber, where the noblemen were assembled. It was for Andrée thereafter to gain admission to the Queen for herself.

We know the arrangement of the apartments occupied by the royal family. We have depicted the Queen's despair. We know how, on entering that little green-papered chamber, she threw herself on the bed, biting the bolster amidst sobs and tears. Certainly one who had lost throne, liberty, and life mayhap, had lost so

much that none had any reason to call her despair to account, or try to find, beneath her great abandonment, any more lively sorrow to draw tears from her eyes and sobs from her breast.

Out of the respect inspired by her supreme grief, the Queen's friends for a while left her alone. Presently, however, she heard the door leading into the King's room open and shut, but she did not turn her head in that direction. She heard footsteps approaching her bed, but still buried her face in the pillow.

Suddenly she sprang up, as if a serpent had bitten her to the heart. A well-known voice pronounced the one word *Madame.*

"Andrée!" cried Marie Antoinette, raising herself on her elbow. "What do you want with me?"

"I wish of you, Madame, what God wished of Cain, when he asked: 'Cain, where is thy brother?'"

"With this difference," said the Queen, "that Cain had killed his brother, whereas I — oh! — I would have given not only my life, but ten lives, if I had them, to save his!"

Andrée staggered. The cold sweat burst from her forehead, and her teeth chattered.

"Then he *is* killed?" she asked, making a great effort.

The Queen looked at Andrée and replied: "Do you fancy it is for my crown that I am weeping?" Then, showing her bloody feet, she added: "If this blood had been mine, do you not suppose I would have washed it away?"

Andrée became so pale as to be nearly livid. Presently she spoke: "You know where his body is?"

"If they will let me go out, I will show you!"

"I will wait for you in the entry, Madame," said Andrée, as she left the room.

Pitou was at the door. "Monsieur Pitou," said she to him, "one of my friends is willing to show me where I can find the body of Monsieur de Charny. She is one of the Queen's attendants. May she go with me?"

"If she comes out, Madame, it must be on condition that I bring her back again to the same place!"

"You can bring her back!" said Andrée.

"Very well, then!" said Pitou, — adding, as he turned towards the sentinel: "Comrade, one of the Queen's women wishes to go out, in order to aid us in searching for the body of a brave officer, of whom Madame is the widow. I will be responsible for that woman, — body for body, head for head."

"That's all right, captain," said the sentinel.

The door of the antechamber opened, and the Queen appeared, her face covered with a veil. They descended the staircase, the Queen walking foremost, and Andrée and Pitou following.

After a session of twenty-seven hours the Assembly had just vacated the great hall. That hall, where so many startling events had been compressed into twenty-seven hours, was mute, — empty and gloomy as a sepulchre.

"A light!" said the Queen.

Pitou took up an extinguished torch, relighted it by a lantern, and gave it to the Queen, who resumed her walk.

As they passed by the entrance, she pointed towards it with her torch, and said: "There is the doorway where he was killed!"

Andrée did not respond. She seemed like a spectre, obeying the spell of an enchantress.

In the corridor the Queen lowered her torch nearer the floor, and said: "There is his blood!"

Still Andrée was mute.

The Queen went directly to a sort of closet, situated opposite the lodge of "The Logographe," opened the door, and said, as she let the torchlight fall upon the interior: "There is his body!"

Still silent, Andrée entered the closet, sat down on the floor, and, with an effort, lifted Oliver's head upon her lap.

"I thank you, Madame," she said, "that is all I ask of you."

"But I have something to ask of you," said the Queen.

"Speak!"

"Will you forgive me?"

There was a moment of silence, as if Andrée hesitated. At last she said: "Yes, for to-morrow I shall be with him!"

From her bosom the Queen drew a pair of golden scissors, which she kept concealed as one hides a poniard, in order to have some weapon she could use against herself, in a moment of extreme danger.

"Then —" she said, almost prayerfully, presenting the scissors to Andrée, — "then —"

Andrée took the scissors, cut a lock of hair from the dead man's head, and gave it to the Queen, with the scissors. The Queen grasped Andrée's hand and kissed it. Andrée uttered a little scream and withdrew her hand, as if Marie Antoinette's lips were red-hot iron.

"Ah!" murmured the Queen, throwing a last look upon the body, "who can say which of us two loved him best!"

"Oh Oliver, my well-beloved," whispered Andrée in her turn, "I hope *thou* at least knowest that I loved thee best!"

The Queen was already on her way back to her apartments, leaving Andrée in that little room, alone with the body of her husband, whereon, like the glance of some friendly face, fell a ray of moonlight, shining through a grated window.

Without knowing who she was, Pitou reconducted Marie Antoinette to her own rooms, which he saw her re-enter. Thus, having discharged this responsibility in presence of the sentinel, he went out upon the terrace, to see if Désiré Maniquet had sent the four men asked for. The four men were there.

"Come in!" said Pitou to them; and they entered.

Lighting the way with the torch which he had retaken from the Queen's hands, he led the way to the little room where Andrée was still crouching, and gazing at the pale but always beautiful face of her husband, illumined by the loving moon. The torchlight made her raise her eyes.

"What do you wish?" she asked of Pitou and his followers, as if she feared these unknown men had come to take away from her the body of her dearly beloved Oliver.

"Madame," answered Pitou, "we come for the body of Monsieur de Charny, in order to carry it safely to the Rue Coq Heron."

"You swear to me it is for that purpose?"

Pitou extended his hand over the body, with a dignity whereof one might have supposed him incapable, and said: "I swear it, Madame!"

"Then I return you my thanks, and I shall pray God, with my latest breath, that he will spare you and yours the sorrow wherewith I am overwhelmed."

The four men took up the body and laid it on their guns. Pitou, with his sword drawn, put himself at the

head of the funeral cortege. Andrée walked beside the body, holding in hers the Count's cold hand, already stiffening.

On their arrival at the Rue Coq Heron, they laid the body on Andrée's bed, who then said to the four men: "Receive the blessings of a woman who, by to-morrow, will be on high, to renew her prayers to God in your behalf."

Then she said to Pitou: "Monsieur, I owe you more than I can ever repay. May I rely upon you for one last service?"

"Command me, Madame!"

"To-morrow morning, at eight o'clock, see to it that Doctor Gilbert is here."

Pitou bowed, and took his leave. In doing so, he turned his head, and saw that Andrée was kneeling before the bed as before an altar.

As he crossed the gateway into the street, three in the morning sounded from the clock on the church of Saint Eustache.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHY ANDRÉE WANTED GILBERT.

THE next day, at eight precisely, Gilbert rapped at the door of the little pavilion in Rue Coq Heron.

On receiving the request which Pitou brought him in Andrée's name, Gilbert was astonished, and made our captain recount the events of the night before, in all their details. Then he meditated for a long time. Finally, when he started out in the morning, he summoned Pitou, and asked him to go for Sebastien, at Abbé Berardier's, and bring him to the Rue Coq Heron. When there, they were to wait till the Doctor came out.

Doubtless the old porter had been notified of the Doctor's expected arrival; for as soon as his name was known, he was at once introduced into the parlor adjoining the little bedroom.

All clad in black, Andrée was awaiting him. It was easy to see that she had neither wept nor slept since the day before. Her face was pale, her eyes dry.

Never before were the lines of her face so firmly set, — lines which indicated a strength of will carried nearly to the point of insanity. It was difficult to see what resolution had taken possession of this diamond heart, but it was easy to perceive that some special idea enthralled her.

As a philosophic physician and a clever observer, Gilbert understood this at a glance. He bowed and waited.

"Monsieur Gilbert, I have asked you to come hither."

"And I have responded punctually to your invitation, as you see, Madame."

"I sent for you, rather than anybody else, because I wished that he of whom I asked a certain favor should be one who would have no right to refuse me."

"You are right, Madame, — not perhaps in what you are going to ask, but in what you say. You have a right to exact anything from me, even my life."

Andrée smiled bitterly. "Your life, Monsieur, is one so precious to humanity, that I should pray God to make it long and happy, instead of seeking to abridge it; but you cannot but agree with me that if your existence is blessed by a propitious influence, other careers seem born under a fatal star."

Gilbert made no reply, but Andrée resumed, after a moment's silence: "*Mine*, for example! What do you think of my existence, Monsieur?"

As Gilbert lowered his eyes, without replying, she went on: "Let me recall my history to you in a few words. — Be calm! There will be no reproaches for any one."

By a gesture, Gilbert bade her speak on.

"I was born poor. My father was ruined before my birth. My youth was melancholy, isolated, solitary. You knew my father, and no one better knows his depth of sordid interest in me! Two men — one of whom it would have been better if I had never known, the other a stranger — exerted a mysterious and fatal influence over my life, with which my own voluntary will had nothing to do. One of these men disposed of my soul, the other of my body. Without suspecting that I had ceased to be a maiden, I became a mother. In that sad event I feared losing the affection of the only being who had ever truly loved me, — my brother. I took refuge

in the idea of becoming a mother, and being loved by my child; but my child was stolen from me an hour after its birth. I found myself a wife without a husband, a mother without a child."

Here Andrée was somewhat moved, but presently she resumed her story.

"The Queen's friendship consoled me. One day chance placed a handsome and brave young man in the same carriage with us. Fate decreed that I, who had never known the passion of love, should love him. He loved the Queen. I became the confidant of their passion. I believe you also have loved without return, Monsieur Gilbert, and so you can understand how I suffered. Even this was not enough. A day came when the Queen besought me to save her life, — more than her life, her honor! It became my duty to be his wife, — the wife of the man I had loved for three years, — and yet to remain separated from him. I was wedded to him. Five years I lived near that man. Within, I was on fire. Outwardly I was ice, — a statue with a burning heart. Physician, tell me! Can you understand what such a heart must suffer?"

Still Gilbert spoke not.

"Finally, on one ineffably happy day, my devotion and silence, my self-abnegation, touched that man. Through seven years I had loved him, without making him suspect it, even by a look. Now he came to throw himself trembling at my feet, to say he knew all, and yet loved me! As if to reward my patience, at the very time when I was winning my husband, God ordained that I should regain my child also. A year sped by like a day, like an hour, like a minute. In that one year was concentrated my whole life! Four days ago the thunderbolt fell at my feet. My husband's honor bade him come

to Paris and die. I said nothing against it, I shed not a tear; but I came with him. Hardly did we reach the city before he left me. Last night I found him again, dead! He is in yonder room. Do you think it too ambitious in me, after such a life, — the desire to sleep in the same tomb with him? Is this a request which you have power to refuse, — this service which I demand at your hands? Monsieur Gilbert, you are a skilful physician, a learned chemist. You have been guilty of a great wrong towards me! You have much to atone for! Well, give me a sure and rapid poison, and I will not only forgive you, but I shall die with a heart overflowing with gratitude."

"Madame," replied Gilbert, "your life has been, as you say, one long and dismal trial, and gloriously have you endured it. You have borne your sorrows like a martyr, — nobly, sacredly."

Andrée gave a slight nod, to indicate that she was waiting for the answer.

"Now you say to your executioner: 'Thou hast given me a cruel life! Give me now a pleasant death.' — You have a right to say so. You have the right to add: 'Thou wilt do what I say, because thou hast no right to refuse me what I ask.'"

"Then Monsieur — ?"

"Do you still ask for poison, Madame?"

"I beseech you to give it to me, my friend!"

"Life is then so unbearable that you find it impossible to endure it?"

"Death is the sweetest favor men can bring me, the greatest benefit God can grant me."

"In ten minutes, Madame, you shall have what you desire."

He bowed and stepped backward, but Andrée offered

him her hand, and said : " Ah, in one instant you have done me more good than you have done me wrong in all your life. Bless you, Gilbert ! "

Gilbert went out. At the gate he found Sebastien and Pitou, who were waiting in a cab.

" Sebastien," he said, drawing from his breast a little flask, suspended from a gold chain around his neck, and containing an opal-colored liquid, — " Sebastien, thou wilt give this vial to the Countess, from me."

" How long may I remain with her, father ? "

" As long as it pleases thee."

" And where shall I find thee again ? "

" I will await thee here."

The lad took the vial and went into the house. In a quarter-hour he came out again. Gilbert glanced instantly at the bottle, and saw that Andrée had returned it unopened.

" What did she say ? " he asked.

" She said : 'Not by thy hand, my child ! ' "

" What did she do ? "

" She wept."

" Then she is saved," said Gilbert. " Come, my child ! " and he kissed Sebastien more tenderly, perhaps, than he had ever done before.

Gilbert reckoned without Marat. Eight days afterward he learned that the Countess had been arrested, and taken to the Abbaye Prison.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TEMPLE.

BEFORE following Andrée to the jail into which they were to send her as one suspected, let us follow the Queen to the prison in which they immured her as absolutely guilty.

We have shown the antagonism existing between the Assembly and the Commune. The Assembly, like all constituted bodies, had not kept pace with individuals. The Assembly launched the people into the track of the Tenth of August, and then lagged behind.

The sections improvised the famous Council of the Commune; and this Council really brought about the Tenth of August, which had been instigated by the Assembly.

The proof of this can be found in the fact that the King sought the Assembly as a refuge against the Commune. The Assembly gave a shelter to the King, whom the Commune would not have been sorry to find in the Tuileries, in order to stifle him between two featherbeds, or hang him between two doors, along with the Queen and the Dauphin, — with the *she-wolf* and the *cub*, as they were called.

The Assembly caused the project to miscarry; though the success of this scheme, infamous as it was, would really have been a great blessing.

As the Assembly protected the King, the Queen, the Dauphin, and even the Court itself, the Assembly was

called Royalist. As the Assembly issued a decree that the King should dwell at the Luxembourg, — that is to say, in a palace, — the Assembly must surely be growing aristocratic.

In Royalism, as in all things, there is a difference of degree. What was Royalistic in the eyes of the Commune, or even in the eyes of the Assembly, seemed Revolutionary in other eyes.

Lafayette, though proscribed from France as a Royalist, was liable to imprisonment as a Revolutionist by the Emperor of Austria.

The Commune began to accuse the Assembly of being Royalistic. From time to time Robespierre would thrust his small head, pointed and venomous, out of the hole in which he was hidden, and hiss forth a calumny.

Robespierre was just then saying that a very powerful party was offering the French throne to the Duke of Brunswick. He meant the Girondists, you understand, — that is to say, the party which would have been the first to shout for war, the first to give itself for the defence of France!

The Commune, therefore, in order to obtain dictatorial power, must oppose all the doings of the so-called Royalist Assembly.

The Assembly offered the Luxembourg to the King as a lodging-place. The Communists declared they would not answer for the King, if he went to live in the Luxembourg. The cellars of the Luxembourg, they affirmed, were connected with the unwholesome catacombs running beneath the city, and might offer a means of escape.

The Assembly, unwilling to quarrel with the Commune over such a trifle, left to the latter the choice of a royal residence. The Commune thereupon chose the Temple.

Consider whether or not the location was well chosen!

The Temple was not like the Luxembourg Palace, connected through its cellars with the catacombs, and by its walls with the plain, forming an acute angle with the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Ville. No, it was a prison, located under the eyes of the Commune. The Commune had only to reach out its hands, in order to open or close the Temple's doors. It was an old and isolated donjon, whose ditch had been covered over. It was an old tower, low, strong, gloomy, and dismal. Philip the Fair, that is to say, Royalty, crushed within it the Middle Ages, in revolt against him. Royalty was now to enter it, and be crushed by the New Age.

How came this old tower to remain there, in that populous quarter, — a tower dark and sorrowful, like a screech-owl staring in the broad daylight?

It was in this place the Commune decided that the King and his family should dwell.

Was this deliberately done, in order that the King should live in a place which had been a refuge for ancient bankrupts, who used to come there, put on green caps, and "smite the bottom of the stone," as the law of the Middle Ages expressed it, after which the debts of these bankrupts were regarded as cancelled?

Was the incarceration of the royal family in this place intentional, because of its historic memories? No, it came about through chance, through fatality, — through Providence, we might say, were not such a word too suggestive of deific cruelty.

In the evening of August 13 the King, the Queen, Madame Elizabeth, Madame de Lamballe, Madame de Tourzel, Monsieur Chemilly, and Monsieur Hue, the King's valets, were transferred to the Temple.

The Commune, in its haste to have the King occupy

his new residence, sent him there before the Tower was properly prepared. Consequently the royal family were at first taken into that portion of the building formerly inhabited by Monseigneur d'Artois, when he wished to stay in Paris, and which was therefore called the Palace.

All Paris seemed to rejoice. Thirty-five hundred citizens had died, to be sure; but the King, the friend of foreigners, the great enemy of the Revolution, the ally of nobles and priests, — the King was a prisoner!

All the houses overlooking the Temple were illuminated that night. Lanterns were even hung on the battlements of the tower.

When Louis Sixteenth stepped from the carriage, he found Santerre on horseback, ten paces from the coach door. Two municipal guards, with covered heads, awaited the King.

"Come in, Monsieur!" they said.

The King entered. Naturally mistaken as to his future abode, he asked to be shown the apartments of the Palace.

The guards exchanged a smile. Without telling him that the walk he was to take was useless, since it was the Donjon he was to occupy, not the Palace, they let him go through the more spacious portions of the Temple, room after room.

The King began to plan for the use of different apartments; and the guards enjoyed this error, which was to turn speedily into bitterness.

At ten o'clock supper was served. During the meal Manuel stood behind the King. He was no longer a servant, prompt to obey. He was a jailer, an overseer, a master. If two contradictory orders were given, one by the King, the other by Manuel, Manuel's was the

one obeyed. This was really the commencement of captivity.

Beginning with August 13, in the evening, the King, vanquished on the summit of monarchism, abandoned this supreme height, and descended with rapid strides the opposite declivity of the mountain, at whose foot lay the scaffold.

It took him eighteen years to reach the highest summit. It took him five months and eight days to reach the bottom.

Behold with what rapidity he was driven!

At ten o'clock they were in the dining-room of the Palace. At eleven they were in the drawing-room of the Palace. He was still the King; or rather he still believed himself to be the King, for he was ignorant of what was going on.

At eleven o'clock, one of the commissioners appeared, and ordered the valets to take whatever linen they had, and follow them.

"Follow you where?" asked the valets.

"To the night residence of your employers," answered the commissioner. "This Palace is simply their day residence."

The King, the Queen, and the Dauphin were no longer the masters of their own lackeys.

At the door of the Palace they found a city officer bearing a lantern, who led the way. They followed the officer. By the faint glimmer of this lantern, and partly owing to the fact that the public illumination was beginning to decrease, Monsieur Hue had to look hard to see the King's future residence. He could see nothing before him except the sombre Donjon, rising in the air like a granite giant, on whose brow still sparkled the embers of a fiery crown.

"My God!" said the valet, pausing, "can it be that you are leading us to that Tower?"

"Precisely!" answered the officer. "The time of palaces is gone by! You shall see how we lodge the assassins of the people."

As he spoke, the man with the lantern stumbled against the first steps of a winding staircase.

The grooms were about to stop at the first landing; but the man with the lantern continued on his way. At the third landing he stopped, turned into a corridor on the right of the stairs, and opened a door on the right side of the corridor.

This room was lit by a single window. Three or four seats, a table, and a poor bed composed its entire furniture.

"Which of you two is the King's servant?" inquired the city officer.

"I am his *valet*," replied Monsieur Chemilly.

"*Valet* or *servant*, it 's all the same!"

Pointing to the bed, he added: "There 's where your master will sleep."

The man with the lantern threw a blanket and two sheets upon a chair, lighted two candles on the shelf, and left the two valets alone.

The Queen's room, up two flights, was still to be made ready.

Messieurs Hue and Chemilly looked at each other in utter amazement. They could still behold, with tearful eyes, the splendors of regal dwellings. Now the King was not only thrown into prison, but he was lodged in a kennel. The majesty of a theatric stage was unhappily missing.

The valets examined the room. The bed was in an uncurtained alcove. An old wicker screen, resting against

the wall, indicated some precaution taken against vermin, — an insufficient precaution, as could readily be seen.

The valets were not, however, wholly disheartened, but went resolutely to work and cleaned up the room and bed as best they could. While one was sweeping and the other dusting, the King entered.

"Oh Sire!" they said with one voice, "what infamy!"

The King — was it from strength of soul, or was it from indifference? — remained tranquil. He cast a look around him, but did not utter a single word.

The wall was papered with cheap engravings; and as a few of these were obscene, he tore them off, saying: "I do not want my pure daughter to behold such objects!"

When his bed was made, the King retired; and he slept as peaceably as if he were still at the Tuileries, — more calmly, perhaps!

If at this period the King had been presented with a yearly income of thirty thousand francs, and a country house, with a forge, a library of Travels, a chapel where he could hear Mass, a chaplain to officiate, a park of ten acres, — a home where he could live apart from all intrigues, and be surrounded by the Queen, the Dauphin, and Madame Royale, — that is, to use much sweeter words, by his wife and children, — the King would have been the happiest man in the realm.

It was very different with the Queen.

If the arrogant lioness did not roar at the sight of her cage, it is because so cruel a pain had possession of her breast, that she became blind and insensible to all her surroundings.

Her domicil consisted of four rooms: an antechamber, which the Princess Lamballe occupied; a bedroom in which the Queen installed herself; a closet which was assigned to

Madame de Tourzel; and another bedroom, which became the habitation of Madame Elizabeth and the two children. These rooms were all somewhat cleaner than the King's.

Manuel, however, as if ashamed of the deception practised upon the King, said that the municipal architect, Citizen Palloy,— who formerly had charge of the levelling of the Bastille, — would come and confer with the King, and see what could be done towards rendering the abiding-place of the royal family as comfortable as possible.

While Andrée is burying the remains of her beloved husband, while Manuel is installing the royal family in the Temple, while the carpenter is erecting the guillotine in Carrousel Square, — in that field of victory, soon to be transformed into a Place de Grève, — let us cast a glance into the interior of the City Hall, where we have already been admitted many times; and let us weigh the government which has succeeded Bailly's and Lafayette's, — a government which is even substituting itself for the Assembly, and aspires to the dictatorship. Let us behold the men, and this will furnish us an explanation of their acts.

On the evening of August 10, when all was over, — when the noise of the cannon was hushed, when the rattle of musketry was deadened, when there were no longer any assassinations, — on that night, a troop of people, drunk and ragged, carried in their arms, into the midst of the Council of the Commune, that man of darkness, that owl with blinking eyelids, that prophet of the populace, the *divine* Marat, — as he was blasphemously called.

He yielded himself to their wishes. There was now nothing to be afraid of. The victory was secure; and the field was open to the wolves, the vultures, and the ravens.

They called him the Victor of the Tenth of August, he whom they had found when he was just venturing to put his head out through the venthole of his cellar!

They crowned him with laurels; and he, like Cæsar, simply suffered the crown to rest upon his brow.

They came, these Citizen Ragamuffins, and threw their god, Marat, into the midst of the Commune, — as we have said. Thus was the crippled Vulcan imposed upon the Council of the Gods.

At the sight of Vulcan, the other gods laughed. At the sight of Marat, many laughed and others were disgusted, but a few trembled. The tremblers were in the right.

Nevertheless, Marat did not belong to the Commune. He was never chosen a member of it. He was simply carried there; but there he stayed! They made for him — purposely for *him* — a journalist's lodge in the Council Chamber; but there was this difference. Instead of having the journalist under the control of the Commune, as "The Logographe" had been under the control of the Assembly, it was the Commune which was in the claw and under the paw of Marat.

As in the beautiful drama of our dear and great friend Victor Hugo, the Podesta Angelo rules Padua, but feels Venice above himself, so the Commune was above the Assembly, but felt Marat weighing down upon the Commune.

That haughty Commune, which the Assembly obeyed, see how in turn it obeyed Marat!

Here is one of the first measures they voted:

Henceforth, the printing-presses of the venomous Royalists shall be confiscated, and awarded to the Patriot printers.

On the morning of the day in which this decree was issued, Marat executed it. He went to the royal printing establishment, had a press removed to his house, and bagged all the type that best suited him. Was he not foremost among Patriot printers?

The Assembly was frightened by the crimes of August 10, but was powerless to stop them. The slaughter went on in the Assembly yard, in its corridors, and at the very door of its hall.

Danton said: "When the work of justice begins, popular vengeance must cease. I engage myself, before this Assembly, to protect the men who are within its precincts. I will march at their head, and I will answer for them."

Danton said this before Marat appeared in the Communal Council. From the moment Marat was admitted there, Danton could no longer hold himself responsible for anything.

The lion shuffled before the serpent, and tried to play the fox.

Lacroix, that old official, that athletic Deputy, — one of Danton's hundred arms, — ascended the rostrum, and asked that the Commander of the National Guard, Santerre, — the man who, according to the Royalists themselves, concealed behind his rough behavior a sympathetic heart, — that Santerre be empowered to nominate a court-martial, which should try the Swiss Guards, both officers and privates, though without finally disposing of them.

The following was Lacroix's idea, or rather Danton's: That a court-martial should be appointed from among those who had fought with the prisoners. They were men of courage, these fighters, and consequently men who would appreciate and respect courage in others.

Moreover, the fact that these native soldiers were the victors would make them reluctant to condemn the conquered.

Did not these victors, thirsting for blood and smoking with slaughter, spare lone women, and even protect and escort them? A court-martial, chosen from the Bretons and Marsillians,— in a word, among the victors, — meant the salvation of the prisoners. To prove that this was a measure of clemency, we need only mention that the Communal Council rejected it.

Marat preferred massacre. That would be the shortest way! He wanted heads, — first, last, and always!

His estimate of the necessary number of deaths, instead of diminishing, continually increased. First he asked for fifty thousand heads, next for a hundred thousand, then for two hundred thousand; and finally, he wanted two hundred and seventy-three thousand heads.

Why such an odd number, such a strange fraction? He would have been greatly puzzled over this question. He demanded massacre, that is all; and massacre began to organize itself.

Danton kept away from the Commune. His work in the ministry absorbed him, as he said.

What were the Communists doing? They sent deputations to the Assembly. On August 16 three deputations succeeded one another at the bar.

On August 17 a new deputation presented itself and said:

> The people are weary at not being avenged. Tremble, lest they take justice into their own hands! To-night, at twelve, the alarm-bells will be heard. We must have a Criminal Tribunal established at the Tuileries. We must have a judge for each section of the city. Louis Sixteenth and

Antoinette wanted blood. Let them see flowing the blood of their own satellites!

This audacity, this urgency, caused two men to spring to their feet, — the Jacobin Choudieu, and the Dantonist Thuriot.

"They who come here and demand massacre," said Choudieu, "are not friends, but flatterers of the people. An inquisition is demanded. I shall resist it to the death!"

"You wish to dishonor the Revolution!" exclaimed Thuriot. "The Revolution belongs not to France alone; it belongs to humanity!"

After petitions came menaces. Representatives from the sections took their turn, and said: "If, within two or three hours, the jury is not nominated, and the jurymen ready to act, great misfortunes will stalk throughout Paris."

This last threat compelled the Assembly to obey. The Deputies noted the creation of an extraordinary tribunal. On August 17 the demand was made. On August 19 the Tribunal was created. On August 20 the Tribunal was organized, and condemned a Royalist to death. On the evening of August 21 this man, upon whom sentence had been passed the previous day, was executed, in Carrousel Square, by torch-light.

The effect of this first execution was terrible, — so terrible, that the executioner himself could not stand it. At the very moment when he was exhibiting to the people the head of the victim of this first execution, which was to lead the way in so long a procession of funereal wagons, the headsman uttered a scream, allowed the head to roll upon the pavement, and then fell backwards. His aids lifted him. He was dead.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SANGUINARY REVOLUTION.

THE Revolution of 1789, that is to say, the Revolution of Necker, Sieyès, and Bailly, ended in 1790. The Revolution of Barnave, Mirabeau, and Lafayette ended in 1792. The great Revolution, the bloody Revolution, the Revolution of Danton, Marat, and Robespierre, had now begun.

In placing side by side the names of the last three men, we do not wish to confound them in one and the same estimate. On the contrary, to our eyes, they represent, in their very distinct individuality, the three faces of the three years which were to follow.

Danton's embodiment was the year 1792; Marat's was the year 1793; and Robespierre's was the year 1794.

Moreover, as events succeeded one another so rapidly, let us glance at these events. Let us examine the means by which the National Assembly and the Commune sought respectively to prevent or to accelerate these events.

Besides, we have nearly encroached upon the domain of history. All but a few of our personages have already foundered in the Revolutionary storm.

What has become of the three brothers Charny, George, Isidore, and Oliver? They are dead! What has happened to the Queen and Andreé? They are prisoners. Lafayette, — where is he? He is in exile.

On August 17 Lafayette succeeded, through a skilful manœuvre, in directing the army towards Paris, in order

to re-establish there the Constitution, defeat the work of August 10, and restore the King.

Lafayette, that loyal man, lost his wits, like the rest of them. His intention was to lead the Prussians and the Austrians directly into Paris. The army rejected him instinctively; just as they repulsed Dumouriez eight months later.

History would have coupled together the names of these two men, — we might say, chained them together, — if Lafayette, detested as he was by the Queen, had not had the good fortune to be arrested by the Austrians and sent to Olmutz. His captivity caused his desertion to be forgotten.

On August 18 Lafayette crossed the frontier. On August 21 the enemies of France, those allies of royalty, against whom the massacre of August 10 was aimed, and against whom the outbreak of September 2 was also to be directed, — those Austrians whom Marie Antoinette summoned to her assistance, on a certain clear night, when the moon, in shining through the panes of the Queen's chamber, poured a bright light upon her bed, — those Austrians invested the town of Longwy. After twenty-four hours' bombardment, Longwy surrendered.

The day preceding this capture, there was a revolt in the Vendée, at the other extremity of France. The required ecclesiastical oath furnished the pretext for this upheaval.

The Assembly met these events by nominating Dumouriez Commander of the Army in the East, and ordering the arrest of Lafayette.

The Assembly voted, that as soon as the city of Longwy should again be in the power of the French Nation, all the houses, except national buildings, should be destroyed, levelled with the ground. A law was also

enacted, banishing from the land every priest who had not taken the Constitutional oath. Domiciliary visits were authorized; and it was ordered that the property of refugees should be confiscated and sold.

What was the Communal Council doing meanwhile? We have said that Marat was its oracle. The Commune was attending to the guillotine on Carrousel Square. They had one head a day. This seems little enough now; but, in a book published towards the end of August, the members of the Tribunal explained the enormous task they imposed upon themselves in order to obtain this result, — unsatisfactory as it might be. This publication was signed by Fouquier Tinville.

See what the Commune was dreaming about. By-and-by we may assist at the realization of that dream.

It was on the evening of August 23 that the Commune put forth its prospectus. Followed by a mob picked up from the gutters of the faubourgs and the markets, a deputation from the Commune presented itself, towards midnight, before the Assembly.

What did it demand? That the Orleans prisoners should be brought to Paris to be executed.

Well, the Orleans prisoners had not yet been tried. What mattered it? This was a simple formality with which the Commune could well afford to dispense. Moreover, there was the memorial of August 10, which would come to the aid of this project.

Sergent, the artist, was to organize this lugubrious memorial, as he had already put upon the stage the procession which proclaimed the country's peril; and we know whether or not he succeeded in his efforts on that memorable occasion.

On this occasion, Sergent surpassed himself. The thing to be done was to fill with mourning, with vengeance, with

deathly sorrow, the hearts of all those who, on August 10, had lost any one dear to them.

In front of the guillotine, which was in operation on Carrousel Square, Sergent erected, in the midst of the great basin of the Tuileries, a gigantic pyramid, covered all over with black serge. Upon each side were inscribed the names of massacres with which the Royalists could be reproached, — the massacres of Nancy, Nismes, Montauban, and the Champ de Mars.

The guillotine was saying *I kill!* The pyramid seemed to respond : *Keep on killing!*

It was on Sunday evening, August 27, five days after the priestly insurrection in Vendée, — and four days after the surrender of Longwy, whereof General Clerfayt had just taken possession in the name of King Louis Sixteenth, — that this expiatory procession put itself into motion, in order to take advantage of the mysterious majesty wherewith darkness endows all things.

Through the clouds of incense, burning all along the route, could be seen, first the widows and orphans, left by the massacre of August 10. They were dressed in white robes, their waists girded with black sashes. They carried, in a structure built after the model of an antique arch, the petition dictated by Madame Roland, and copied upon the Patriot Altar, by Mademoiselle de Kéralio. These bloody sheets were collected again, scattered, as they had been, over the Champ de Mars ; and ever since July 17, 1791, they had been calling for a Republic.

Then came some huge, black coffins, recalling those overcrowded wagons which, on the evening of August 10, were piled with corpses in the Tuileries courtyards, and took their way towards the faubourgs.

Next came the ensigns of mourning and vengeance, demanding death for death.

Then came Law, — a colossal statue, bearing a sword at her side, — followed by the Judges of the Courts. At their head marched the special Revolutionary Tribunal, — the Tribunal which asked to be excused for causing only one head to fall each day.

Then came the Communal Council, the bloody mother of that blood-stained Tribunal.

In the Councillor ranks was a statue of Liberty, of the same size as the statue of Law.

Finally came the members of the Assembly, wearing those civic crowns which may console the dead, but are so insufficient for the living!

The procession advanced majestically, in the midst of sombre chants by Chénier, and of gloomy music by Gossec, — marching with similar steady steps.

Part of the night of August 27 was spent in the performance of this expiatory ceremony, the funereal feast of the multitude, during which the crowd, shaking their fists at the empty Tuileries, were threatening the prisons, those strongholds of security which had been given to the King and the Royalists, in exchange for their châteaux.

When the last lamps were extinguished, and the last torches reduced to smoke, the people retired.

The two statues of Law and Liberty remained alone, to guard the immense sarcophagus; but, as nobody paid any attention to them, it happened, either through imprudence or sacrilege, that during the night the two statues were despoiled of their lower garments; and on the day following, the two poor goddesses were less than women.

On beholding this sight the populace uttered a wild scream. They accused the Royalists, ran to the Assembly, called for vengeance, took possession of the statues, dressed them anew, and finally dragged them, by way of reparation, to Louis Fifteenth Square. At a later day

the scaffold followed these images to this square, and gave them, on January 21, a terrible satisfaction for the outrage of August 28.

On that very day, August 28, the Assembly voted the law in regard to household inspection.

The report began to spread among the people, of a junction of the Prussian and Austrian armies, and of the capture of Longwy by General Clerfayt. Thus the enemies, summoned by the King, the nobles, and the priests, were marching upon Paris. If nothing arrested their progress, they could reach the capital in about six forced marches.

What would then happen to Paris, which was boiling like a crater, and whose eruptions, during the last three years, had made themselves felt throughout the world? There would happen what Bouillé's famous letter predicted. That insolent joke, which created so much laughter, might now become a reality, — "not one stone should remain upon another."

There was talk, as of something sure to come, of a Great and General Judgment, terrible and inexorable, — a judgment which, after destroying Paris, would destroy the Parisians also. In what manner and by whom was this judgment to be administered? The writings of those days will show us. The blood-stained hand of the Commune was in that legend, which, instead of relating to the past, referred to the future.

What reasons have we for not believing that legend? The following statement appeared in a letter found in the Tuileries on August 10, which we ourselves have read in the Public Archives, where it can still be seen :

Tribunals come in the wake of armies. The Council of Refugees, along the road, and in the camp of the King of Prussia, are arraigning the Jacobins, and preparing their gibbets.

When the Prussian and Austrian armies arrived at Paris, the trials would take place, judgments would be rendered, and all that remained to do would be to execute the sentences.

In order to confirm what was said in this letter, the following was printed in the official bulletin of the War Department.

The Austrian cavalry, in the neighborhood of Sarrelouis, have captured the Patriot mayors and all known Republicans.

The Uhlans, having taken some municipal officers, cut off their ears, and nailed them to their foreheads.

If such acts were perpetrated in the inoffensive provinces, how would the conquerors behave towards Revolutionary Paris? What they would do was no longer a secret.

Listen to the report which was spreading itself, which was reported in public places, and which radiated from each centre, till it reached the most distant parts of the city! A large throne was to be built for the allied kings, in sight of the heap of ruins where once stood Paris. The entire captive population was to be driven, badgered, hunted, and brought to the foot of this throne. There, as in the day of the Last Judgment, there was to be a separation of the good from the evil, the sheep from the goats. The good — that is, the Royalists, the nobles, the priests — would be sent to the right, and France restored to them, that they might do with it whatever they pleased. The bad — that is, the followers of the Revolutionists — would go to the left, and there the guillotine would await them, — that instrument invented by the Revolution, through which the Revolution was finally to perish.

The Revolution, — that is to say, France. No, the Revolution was not France alone, for that would mean little. Nations were to serve as holocausts sacrificed to ideas. The Revolution was not so much France, as the ideal of France.

Why was France first in pronouncing the word *liberty* in Europe? She believed that she was proclaiming something holy, — light for the eyes and life for the soul. She proclaimed: "Liberty for France! Liberty for Europe! Liberty for all!" She thought she was acting nobly, in trying to emancipate the world; but in this she was apparently mistaken.

Behold, God put her in the wrong. Providence was against her! Believing herself innocent and sublime, she was culpable and infamous! Intent on a good action, she had committed a crime! Therefore was she to be judged, condemned, decapitated, and dragged to the Gehenna of the universe; and the universe, for whose salvation she died, would applaud her execution. Thus Jesus, crucified for the world's salvation, died amidst the jeers and insults of that world!

In order to oppose the foreign invader, must this poor Nation rely alone upon herself? Those whom she had adored, whom she had enriched, whom she had paid, would they not perhaps defend her? No!

Her King conspired with the enemy. From the Temple, where he was imprisoned, he continued to correspond with the Prussians and Austrians. Her nobles were marching against her, organized by her princes. Her priests had instigated revolt among the peasants.

In their prison depths the Royalists clapped their hands over the reverses of France. The Prussian success at Longwy raised a cry of joy in the Temple and the Abbaye.

No wonder that Danton, a man of extreme resolutions, entered the Assembly like a roaring lion. The Minister of Justice believed justice to be powerless, and came to ask for strength. Justice then must be backed by force.

Danton ascended the rostrum, and shook his lion's mane. Extending that powerful hand, which, on August 10, broke open the doors of the Tuileries, he said: "We must have a National Convention. That will cause the despots to retreat. So far we have only had a sham war. We must no longer be entertained by such miserable play. The people must fling themselves upon their enemies, attack them in a body, and exterminate them at one blow. At the same time conspirators must be bound, to keep them out of mischief."

Danton demanded a general levy, domiciliary visits, nocturnal investigations, and the proclamation of the death-penalty against whomsoever should lay obstacles in the way of the Provisional Government.

Danton received all he asked for. Had he demanded more, he would have received it in like manner.

Let us listen to Michelet:

> Never had a people come so near death. When Holland, seeing Louis Fourteenth at its doors, had no other resource except inundation, in order to drown herself, she was in less danger; for Holland had Europe on her side. When Athens saw the throne of Xerxes on the rock of Salamis, — when, spurning the ground, she dived into the sea, and had only water for her country, — she was in less danger; for she was wholly in her fleet, which was powerfully organized in the hands of the great Themistocles. More fortunate than France, Athens had no treachery in her bosom.

France was disorganized, disintegrated, betrayed, sold, delivered! France was, like Iphigenia, under the knife

of Calchas. The encircling kings awaited only her death, in order that the wind of despotism might fill their sails. She, poor France, extended her arms to the gods, but the gods were mute!

At last, when she felt the cold hand of death upon her, she roused herself by a violent and terrible contraction. Then, like a living volcano, she sent forth, from her very heart, that flame which has since enlightened the world for half a century.

It is true there is a spot of blood on the sun of France, — the blood-spot of September 2. We shall soon come to that, and see who then caused blood to flow anew, and whether or not the blame can be laid at the door of France.

Before entering upon this investigation, let us once more borrow from Michelet, and close this chapter with two of his pages. We are powerless in the presence of this giant subject, and, like Danton, call strength to our rescue. Who can speak like this Past Master in History? Listen!

Paris had the appearance of a stronghold, and seemed more like Lille or Strasbourg. Regulations, sentinels, military precautions, — premature to be sure, — were to be encountered everywhere. The enemy was still at a distance of fifty or sixty leagues. More serious, most affecting of all things, was the sentiment of profound and admirable solidarity, which revealed itself everywhere.

Each addressed himself to all, and spoke and prayed for the country. Each became a recruiting-officer, and went from house to house, offering a uniform, arms, — whatever else he possessed, — to any one who could enlist. Every man became an orator, — preached, talked, sang patriotic songs.

Who did not become an author in that peculiar moment? Who did not print? Who did not publish?

The most ingenuous scenes, in which every one took part, were enacted everywhere, — on public squares, in the enrolment-places, on the platforms where the names were registered.

All around there were songs, cries, tears of enthusiasm or farewell. Above all these voices, one great voice was resounding in all hearts, — a voice so much the more profound for being silent. It was the voice of France herself, eloquent in all its symbols, pathetic even in the most tragical of these symbols, — the flag, sacred and terrible, announcing the country's danger, a flag waving from the windows of the Hôtel de Ville, an immense flag, streaming to the winds, and seeming to invite the popular legions to march in haste from the Pyrenees to the Scheldt, from the Seine to the Rhine!

In order to appreciate the full significance of that moment of sacrifice, we must look into each cottage, into each home, and see the pain of the women, the travail of the mothers in this second childbirth, a hundred times more terrible than that in which those children first came from beneath the bleeding heart. We must see the old women, with dry eyes and broken hearts, gathering hastily the few garments which their boys will carry with them, and the poor earnings, the pennies saved by fasting, which the mothers have stolen from themselves for their sons, against that day of the last agony.

To give up their children to that war which was opening so hopelessly, to sacrifice them in that extreme and hopeless situation, was more than most of the mothers could do. They sank under the sorrow which oppressed them; or, by a natural reaction, they fell into fits of madness They ate nothing, feared nothing. No terror can lay hold upon such a state of mind. What terror can there be for one who invokes death?

We are told that one day, doubtless in August or September, a band of these furious women met Danton in the street, and insulted him as they would have insulted Death himself. They said he was responsible for the whole Revolution, for all the blood which had been shed, for the death of their children.

They cursed him and scratched him. They prayed that God would cause all the blame to fall upon Danton. He was not surprised; and although he felt traces of their finger-nails all over his body, he turned around briskly, looked upon those women, and pitied them. Danton had a great heart. He climbed upon a post, and began to insult them in their own language, in order to comfort them. His first words were violent, ludicrous, obscene. His hearers were astounded. His fury, real or simulated, disconcerted them.

For the groundwork of his popularity, this prodigious orator, keen and calculating, had a sensual and strong temperament, specially adapted to amativeness, a temperament in which flesh and blood were uppermost. Danton was, before and above all things, manly. There was in him a mixture of the lion and the bulldog, and also a good deal of the bull. His physiognomy was frightful. The sublime ugliness of his turbulent face lent to his speech, quick, darting, and fitful, a sort of savage sting. The masses, who love strength, felt, in his presence, that fear and sympathy which every powerful and generative being is capable of awaking. Underneath that violent and rough exterior, a heart could be felt.

At last a doubt arose in the minds of all whether this terrible fellow, who spoke only by threats, was not, after all, a brave man at heart. These women, arrayed against him, felt all this confusedly, and allowed themselves to be harangued and mastered. He led them where and how he chose. He rudely explained to them what women were good for, the purpose of passion, the object of procreation. He argued that one does not bear children for one's self, but for one's country

When he reached this point, he suddenly raised himself, and spoke as if no one were listening but himself. His whole heart, it is said, seemed to bound out of his breast, in words of violent tenderness for France. Upon that strange face, — pitted by smallpox, and resembling the ashes of Vesuvius and of Ætna, — there appeared two big drops; and they were tears!

The women could resist no longer. They wept for France, instead of weeping for their children Hiding their faces with their aprons, they ran away crying

Oh thou great historian whom we call Michelet, where art thou? At Nervi!

Oh thou great poet, called Victor Hugo, where art thou? At the Isle of Jersey.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE EVE OF SEPTEMBER SECOND.

"WHEN the country is in danger," said Danton in the National Assembly, on August 28, 1792, "everything belongs to the country."

On August 29, at four in the afternoon, a general alarm was beaten on the drums. Everybody knew what this meant, — that the household-inspection visits were to begin.

As by the touch of a magic wand, Paris changed its aspect at the very first roll of the drum. Populous as it was, Paris all at once became a desert. Open shops were closed. Each street was surrounded and occupied by a platoon of sixty men. The barriers were guarded. The river was guarded.

At one in the morning the visits began in every house. The sectional commissioners rapped at the street door in the name of the law, and the street door was forthwith opened.

Then they rapped at the door of each suite of rooms, always in the name of the law, and these doors were also opened. Unoccupied lodgings were opened by force.

Two thousand muskets were seized, and three thousand people arrested.

Terror was wanted, and terror there was.

Out of this was born a result of which no one had dreamed, or of which some had perhaps dreamed too much.

These domiciliary visits opened to the poor the abodes of the rich. The armed men from the sections, who followed the magistrates, gazed with amazement upon the silk and gold magnificence of the mansions still inhabited by their owners, as well as those from which the proprietors were absent. Out of this circumstance was developed, not a desire for booty, but an increase of hatred.

So little pillaging was done, that Beaumarchais, who was in prison at the time, relates that a woman plucked a rose in his splendid gardens on the Saint Antoine Boulevard, and that the rabble wished to throw her into the water for the offence.

Note that this took place while the Communal Council was voting to punish silver-brokers with death.

This Commune was already usurping the functions of the Assembly, and ordaining capital punishment. The Commune gave to Chaumette the right to open the prisons and free the prisoners. It arrogated to itself the privilege of pardon. It ordered that to the door of each prison should be affixed a list of the prisoners confined there. This was an appeal to hatred and revenge; for every one took special note of the cell in which some personal antagonist was confined.

The Assembly saw into what a ditch all this must lead. In spite of itself, the Assembly would be compelled to imbrue its hands in blood. Who was doing this? Its enemy, the Commune.

Only an occasion was wanting for the contest to break forth angrily between the two ruling powers. This opportunity was amply furnished by a fresh exploit on the part of the Commune.

On August 29, the day appointed for household visits, the Commune, on account of an article in his journal,

summoned to its bar Girey Dupré, — one of the boldest Girondists, because one of the youngest.

Having no time to flee to the Assembly, Girey Dupré took refuge at the War Secretary's Office. Huguenin, President of the Commune, had the office surrounded, in order to take the Girondist editor by force.

The Girondists were still in the majority in the Assembly. At this insult to one of their number they roused the Deputies, and summoned President Huguenin to the bar of their Assembly.

Huguenin paid no attention to this summons from the Assembly. On August 30 the Assembly passed a decree dissolving the Communal Council.

One fact proves that this decree of the Assembly derived strong support from the popular horror of theft.

A member of the Communal Council, or a man so styling himself, broke into the Garde Meuble, and stole a little silver cannon, a gift of the City of Paris to Louis Fourteenth, when a child.

Cambon, who had been appointed Guardian of the Public Treasures, heard of this theft, and summoned the accused man to the bar of the Assembly. The man denied nothing, and did not offer an excuse, but contented himself with saying that, as this precious object was in danger of being stolen, he thought it would be better off in his hands than anywhere else.

The tyranny of the Commune weighed heavily upon many people, and seemed a hindrance. Louvet, a man famous for courageous proposals, was President of the Rue Lombard Section. He declared publicly, in his district, that the General Council of the Commune was guilty of usurpation.

Finding themselves thus sustained, the Deputies voted, that as Municipal President Huguenin would not come

voluntarily to their bar, he should be brought forcibly; and that within twenty-four hours a new Council must be chosen by the sections.

This decree was passed on August 30, at five in the afternoon.

Let us count the hours, for now we are nearing the massacre of September 2. Every minute we may see a step taken by that bloody goddess called Terror, — her hair bristling, her eyes gory, and her arms writhing.

Though not quite logical in so doing, the Assembly voted that the Commune had done the country some meritorious service, even while its dissolution was decreed; for the Assembly still cherished some fear of this redoubtable foe.

Ornandum, tollendum! was Cicero's word concerning Octavius Cæsar. The Commune did as Octavius did. It would let itself be crowned, but would not let itself be driven away.

Two hours after the passage of this vote, Tallien, the little scribbler who prided himself on being Danton's man, and was Secretary of the Commune, proposed to the Thernes Section to march against the Lombard Section.

This meant civil war indeed, — not of the populace against the King, of the lower class against the upper, of plebeians aganst aristocrats, of cottages against castles, of houses against palaces, but of sections against sections, pikes against pikes, citizens against citizens.

Meanwhile Marat and Robespierre lifted up their voices, — the latter as a member of the Commune, the former as an outside amateur.

Marat demanded the massacre of the National Assembly. That was nothing. It was not unusual to hear him make such proposals.

Robespierre, the cautious, catlike Robespierre, — the vague and subtile denouncer, demanded that they should take up arms, not only for defence, but for attack. He must have felt that the Commune was very strong, or he would not have dared to speak in this way.

It was strong indeed; for that very night Secretary Tallien betook himself to the Assembly with three thousand pikemen.

This is what he wrote:

The Commune, and the Commune alone, has raised the members of the Assembly to their present rank as the representatives of a free people. The Commune passed the edict against obstreperous priests, and arrested those men upon whom nobody else dared lay a finger. Before many days the Commune will purge a free soil of their presence.

On the night between August 30 and 31, in the very presence of the Assembly which had voted to dissolve it, the Commune spoke the first word of slaughter.

Whose special mouth uttered the first syllable? Who threw out this blood-red programme, which was as yet unprinted?

As we have seen, it was Tallien, the man who later brought about the Ninth Thermidor.

We must do the Assembly the justice to say that it was aroused. Manuel, the Municipal Solicitor, saw that the Commune was going too far. He had Tallien arrested, and demanded that Huguenin should make reparation to the Assembly.

Meanwhile, although Manuel arrested Tallien, and demanded that Huguenin should apologize, yet he foresaw what was sure to happen. Listen to what was done by this poor pedant, with his small brain and honest heart.

In the Abbaye was Manuel's personal enemy, of Beaumarchais. Beaumarchais was a great jester, and his shafts had hit Manuel. It came into Manuel's head that if Beaumarchais was butchered with the others, this murder might be attributed to some low spite on Manuel's part. He ran to the Abbaye and called for Beaumarchais. The prisoner, on seeing him, began to offer some explanations to the victim of his literary raillery.

"This is no question of literature, of journalism, or of criticism. There is the open door! Save yourself to-day, if you don't wish to have your throat cut to-morrow!"

So spake Manuel. The author of "The Barber of Seville" and "Figaro's Marriage" did not wait for a second bidding. He slipped through the open door, and disappeared.

Suppose he had hissed Collot d'Herbois the actor, instead of criticising Manuel the author, then Beaumarchais would have been a dead man!

The Thirty-first of August arrived, the great day which was to decide between the Assembly and the Commune, — that is, between Moderation and Terror.

The Commune decided to hold its position at any price. The Assembly was willing to dissolve in favor of a new Assembly.

The Commune naturally wished to take the lead, especially as the times were most favorable to municipal ascendency.

The populace, without knowing whither they wished to go, were ready to go anywhere. Having been let loose on June 20, and having gone still farther on August 10, they now felt an undefined hunger for blood and destruction.

Marat on one side, and Hébert on the other, were stirring up the public mind.

They did not go so far as Robespierre, who was desirous of regaining his shaken popularity. All France had desired war. Robespierre counselled peace. Though not a novelist, he surpassed the most absurd novel by the extravagance of his gossipy mare's nests. He declared that a powerful party had offered the French throne to the Duke of Brunswick.

Who were the three strong parties engaged in this contest? The Assembly, the Commune, the Jacobins; and the Jacobins and the Communists might fairly be regarded as one party.

Certainly the Jacobins did not want Brunswick, and neither did the Communists. Indeed, Robespierre was a member of the club, and also of the Communal Council; and he surely did not mean to criminate himself.

Were the Girondists the powerful party who wanted Brunswick to rule over them?

We have said that Robespierre surpassed the most absurd romancers by his stories. What more ridiculous than to suppose the Girondists would declare war against Prussia and Austria, and then offer a throne to the opposing general?

Who were the men whom Robespierre accused of this absurdity? Such men as Roland, Vergniaud, Clavières, Servan, Gensonné, Guadet, Barbaroux, — the warmest Patriots, and at the same time the most honest men in France.

There are times when a man like Robespierre can say anything. Worse still, there are times when the people will believe anything. Such a time was August 31. If a physician that day had kept his finger on the pulse of France, he would have felt its pulsations rising every minute.

On the thirtieth at five in the evening, the Assembly,

as we have said, voted the dissolution of the Communal Council. The decree provided that within twenty-four hours the sections should appoint a new Council.

By five o'clock on the afternoon of the thirty-first this decree was to be put in force; but Marat's outcries, Hébert's menaces, and Robespierre's slanders made the old Council press so heavily upon Paris, that the sections dared not vote for a new Council. As an excuse for this neglect, they said that the decree had never been officially announced.

Towards noon, on August 31, the Assembly was notified that its decree of the day previous would not probably be obeyed. This necessitated an appeal to force, and who could say what force might do for the Assembly?

Through Panis, who was his brother-in-law, Santerre adhered to the Commune. Panis, it may be remembered, was a fanatical admirer of Robespierre, who once proposed to Barbaroux and Rebecqui to appoint a dictator, and gave them to understand that they needed such a dictator as the Incorruptible.

Santerre represented the faubourgs, and theirs was the irresistible power of the ocean. It was the men of the faubourgs who had broken down the gates of the Tuileries. They could also break down the doors of the Assembly.

The Deputies feared, if they took up arms against the Commune, not only that they might be abandoned by extreme Patriots, by those who wished for the Revolution at any price, but also, — and this was worse, — that they might be poorly sustained by moderate Royalists. In that case the Assembly would be wholly lost.

About six o'clock it was rumored among the benches that there was a great tumult at the Abbaye Prison.

A certain Monsieur de Montmorin had just been acquitted. It was popularly believed that he was the same man who, as cabinet-minister, signed the passport with which Louis Sixteenth tried to escape from France. The populace went in a mass to the prison, and noisily demanded the death of the traitor.

Every effort was made to undeceive the people, but all night long there was a frightful fermentation throughout the city.

It was easily seen, next day, that the slightest event might increase this excitement to gigantic proportions.

This event happened in the Châtelet Prison; and we will try to describe it in all its details, because it refers to one of the personages of our history of whom we have lost sight for a long time.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH WE ONCE MORE ENCOUNTER OUR FRIEND, MONSIEUR DE BEAUSIRE.

IMMEDIATELY after August 10 a special commission was instituted to take cognizance of the thefts committed at the Tuileries. The populace had done well, according to Peltier, in shooting two or three hundred robbers, taken in the very act; but there were as many others, as may be easily understood, who for a time were able to conceal their plunder.

Among these honorable and industrious men was to be found our old acquaintance, Monsieur de Beausire, formerly a subordinate officer in the royal service.

Knowing the antecedents of Mademoiselle Olivia's lover, the father of young Toussaint, our readers need not be astonished at thus finding him among those who had an account to settle, not with the Nation, but with the courts, for the part they had taken in the sack of the Tuileries.

Like all the rest of the world, Beausire went to the palace. He was a man of too much sense to commit the blunder of being the first, or even one of the first, to enter a place which it was perilous to enter among the earliest comers.

It was not Monsieur de Beausire's political opinions which brought him to the royal palace. He came neither to lament the downfall of royalty, nor to rejoice in the triumph of the people. No! Monsieur de Beausire came as an outsider, looking down, from a loftier altitude, upon

those weaknesses which men call their opinions. He had but one purpose, — to see if those who had lost a throne had not also dropped some more portable jewel, easily carried away to a place of safety.

To save appearances, Beausire wore the red cap, and was armed with an enormous sabre. He also slightly stained his shirt, and wet his hands in the blood of the first dead man he ran across. Like a wolf in the wake of a conquering host, or a vulture swooping over a battle-field after the fight, a superficial observer might have mistaken him for one of the victors.

Indeed he was generally mistaken for a conqueror, by those who heard him shouting, "Death to Royalists!" and saw him zealously searching under the beds, opening closets and even bureau drawers, in order to be sure that no contracted aristocrat was concealed therein.

Unluckily for Beausire, another man was there at the same time,— a man who did not shout, who did not grope beneath the beds, who did not open the cupboards, but who came in amidst the fire, although unarmed, along with the conquerors; though he had vanquished nobody, and was now promenading with his hands behind his back, as cool and collected, in his neat black suit, as if he were taking the air in a public garden on a holiday. Now and then this man would exclaim: "Don't forget, Citizens, that you are not to kill the women nor touch the trinkets."

To those whom he saw slaughtering men and throwing furniture out of the windows, this onlooker evidently thought he had no right to speak. At the first glance he noted Beausire as not belonging to the belligerent class.

About half-past nine Pitou — who, as we already know, had obtained, as a post of honor, the guardianship of the

Clock Vestibule — saw coming towards him, from the interior of the palace, a dismal sort of giant, who said to him politely, but at the same time firmly, as if he were commissioned to bring order out of disorder, and substitute justice for vengeance: "Captain, you will see a man coming downstairs, with a red cap on his head and a sabre in his hand, making all sorts of frantic gestures. You will have him arrested and searched by your men. He has stolen a casket of diamonds."

"Yes, Monsieur Maillard," answered Pitou, touching his hat.

"Ah ha!" said the old usher, "you know me, do you, my friend?"

"I think I *do* know you! Don't you remember, Monsieur Maillard, how we took the Bastille together?"

"Possibly!" said Maillard.

"Then once we were at Versailles together, in the turmoil."

"I was certainly there!"

"You were conducting some ladies, and you had a sort of a duel at the gate of the Tuileries, with a sentinel who would n't let you pass."

"Then you will do what I now bid you, will you not?"

"That, and anything else you may command, Monsieur Maillard! Ah, you 're a Patriot, you are!"

"I 'm proud of it," said Maillard, "and that is why we ought not to allow the name to be disgraced. Attention! Here 's our man!"

At that moment Beausire was coming down the stairway into the vestibule, flourishing his great sabre, and yelling, "Long life to the Nation!"

Pitou made a sign to Tellier and Maniquet, who quietly placed themselves before the door, while Pitou waited for Beausire on the lower stair.

Beausire saw this arrangement of things, and doubtless was troubled thereby; for he paused, as if he had forgotten something, and started to go upstairs again.

"Excuse me, Citizen," said Pitou, "this is the way out."

"Ah, this is the way out?"

"And as orders have been given to evacuate the Tuileries, you will come this way, if you please."

Beausire straightened himself, and resumed his way down. At the last step he stopped, touched his red cap, and said, in an affected military tone: "How is it, comrade, am I to go out or not?"

"You 're to go out; but everybody must submit to a little formality."

"Ah! And what is that, my fine officer?"

"To be searched, Citizen!"

"Searched?"

"Yes!"

"Search a Patriot, a victor, a man who comes here to exterminate the aristocrats?"

"Such is the order! So, my comrade, if you *are* a comrade, sheathe your big sword, — it is useless, now that the aristocrats are killed! — and let yourself be searched willingly; or else I shall be compelled to employ force."

"Force? Ah ha! Thou speakest like that, because thou hast twenty men at thy back; but if we were man to man — !"

"If we were man to man, Citizen, this is what I would do. I should grasp thee, — so! — thy wrist with my right fist. I should wrench thy sabre from thee with my left hand, and snap it under my foot, as not being worthy the touch of an honest man, after being handled by a thief!"

Putting his theories into practice, Pitou held the sham

Patriot with his right hand, snatched his sword away with his left, broke the blade under his foot, and threw the handle away.

"A thief!" cried the man in the red cap, "a thief! I, Monsieur de Beausire!"

"My friends," said Pitou, pushing the ex-gendarme into the midst of his men, "search this Monsieur de Beausire!"

"Well, search!" said the fellow, bracing his arms like a martyr.

They needed no permission from Beausire to proceed in their examination; but to Pitou's great surprise, and above all to Maillard's, though they searched the ex-gendarme thoroughly, turning his pockets inside out, inspecting every crevice, they found nothing on him but eleven sous, except a playing-card, whose figures were so blurred with age as to be scarcely visible.

Pitou looked at Maillard. The latter shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say: "What can you expect?"

"Begin again!" said Pitou, one of whose leading qualities, as we may remember, was patience.

The men obeyed, but the second search was as fruitless as the first. They found only the same old card and the same eleven sous.

Beausire was triumphant, and said: "Well, do you still think a sabre dishonored by my touch?"

"No, Monsieur," said Pitou; "and in proof of my sincerity, if you are not satisfied with the apologies which I make you, one of my men will lend you his sword, and I will give you any other satisfaction you please."

"Thanks, young man!" said Beausire. "You have acted according to orders, and an old soldier like myself knows that an order is sacred. Meanwhile Madame de

Beausire will be anxious on account of my long absence, and if may be allowed to retire —"

"Go, Monsieur," said Pitou. "You are free!"

Beausire bowed with an indifferent air, and took himself off. Pitou looked for Maillard. Maillard was not there.

"Did you see Monsieur Maillard go away?" he asked.

"It seems to me," said one of the Haramont Guardsmen, "that I saw him go upstairs again."

"It seems to me," said Pitou, "that I see him coming down again."

Sure enough, Maillard was coming down the stairs. Thanks to his long legs, he touched only every other stair, and was soon in the vestibule.

"Well," said he, "did you find anything else?"

"No," replied Pitou.

"Then I am more fortunate, for I have found the casket!"

"Then we were wrong!"

"No, we were right!"

Opening the casket, Maillard drew out some gold settings, from which all the precious stones had been extracted.

"What does that mean?" said Pitou.

"That means that this fellow anticipated a search, took out the diamonds, thought the settings might bother him, and so threw them and the casket back into the drawer, where I have just found them."

"Good!" said Pitou. "And the diamonds?"

"Well, he found some means to dispose of them."

"Ah, the robber!"

"Has he been gone long?" asked Maillard.

"As you came down he went through the gate of the Central Courtyard."

"Which side did he take?"

"He was heading towards the river."

"Adieu, Captain!"

"Are you going, Monsieur Maillard?"

"I want to relieve my mind," said the old usher; and stretching his long legs like a pair of compasses, he set out in pursuit of Beausire.

Pitou remained absorbed in thought over what had passed; and he was still burdened by his cogitation when he recognized Madame de Charny, and those events followed which we set down in their proper place, not judging it well to complicate them with this incident of the theft, which it seemed to us would come in better at a different point.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PURGATIVE.

Though Maillard's walk was so rapid, he did not overtake Beausire, who had three circumstances in his favor: first, several minutes of leeway; second, the obscurity; third, the number of people who were walking about in Carrousel Square, in whose midst Beausire had easily disappeared.

Nevertheless, having reached the Tuileries Quay, the ex-usher of the Châtelet Court did not return, but kept on his road. He lived in the Saint Antoine District, and it was but little out of his way to follow the riverside as far as the Place de Grève.

Over New Bridge and Exchange Bridge a great body of people were hurrying. There was an exposure of dead bodies on the square in front of the Palace of Justicè, and many were on their way thither in the hope, or rather the fear, of finding a brother, a relative, or some other friend. Maillard followed the crowd.

At the corner of the Rue Barillerie and Palace Square was a friend of his, — a pharmacist, as apothecaries were then denominated. Maillard entered his friend's shop, and chatted with him about current events, while surgeons were going and coming, obtaining from the druggist bandages, ointment, lint, — in fact all sorts of things necessary for dressing wounds; for among the dead was heard now and then a cry, a groan, a gasp,

which indicated the presence of life; and then the victim was at once drawn out from the companionship of the dead, and sent to the great hospital called Hôtel Dieu.

There was a good deal of bustle in the drug-store, but Maillard was not in the way. Moreover a Patriot of Maillard's stamp was always welcome, even at such a time; for his reputation was like a balm, both in the old Cité and in the faubourgs.

He had been there some fifteen minutes, his long legs drawn up under him so as to make himself as small as possible, when a woman came in, — a woman perhaps thirty-seven or thirty-eight years old, who, beneath an appearance of abject poverty, preserved a certain air of former opulence, with traces of aristocracy, either natural or assumed.

What specially struck Maillard was the strange likeness of this woman to the Queen. He would have uttered a cry of astonishment, had he not exercised over himself the self-control we have before noted.

By the hand she held a little boy, eight or nine years old. She approached the counter with some timidity, concealing her poverty-stricken attire as well as she could, which was all the more noticeable, because of the care she bestowed, even in her distress, upon her face and hands.

So numerous were the customers, that it was a long time before she could get any attention. At last she addressed the master of the establishment: "Monsieur, I wish to get a purgative for my husband, who is ill."

"What sort of a purgative do you wish, Citizeness?" asked the apothecary.

"Whatever you please, Monsieur, provided it costs no more than eleven sous."

This odd sum of eleven sous struck Maillard. Eleven sous was precisely the sum found, it will be recollected, in Beausire's pocket.

"Why must it not cost over eleven sous?" asked the apothecary.

"Because that's all the money my husband was able to give me."

"Make up a mixture of tamarinds and senna," said the apothecary to his oldest apprentice, "and give it to the lady."

The apprentice busied himself about this preparation, while the apothecary attended to other customers; but Maillard, who had nothing to distract his attention, took special notice of the woman who wanted a purgative which cost only eleven sous.

"Here is your medicine, Madame," said the apprentice.

"Here, Toussaint," said the woman, with a drawl which seemed habitual, "give me the eleven sous, my child!"

"Here they are," said the youngster, laying his fistful on the edge of the counter. "Now come, Mamma Olivia, come along! Papa's waiting!" and as he spoke, he tried to draw his mother away, still repeating: "Come, come, Mamma Olivia! Come along!"

"Excuse me, Citizeness," said the apprentice, "but here are only nine sous."

"What? Only nine sous?" said the woman.

"Count them yourself!" said the apprentice.

The woman did count them. There were indeed but nine sous.

"What hast thou done with the other two sous, thou naughty boy?" she asked.

"I don't know," said the child. "Come along, Mamma Olivia!"

"Thou shouldst know, — especially as thou didst wish so much to carry the money, that I gave it to thee."

"I must have lost them! Come along!"

"You have a bright boy there, Citizeness!" said Maillard. "He appears full of intelligence, but you must take care not to let him grow up a thief."

"A thief!" said the woman, whom the little chap had called Mamma Olivia. "Why do you say that, pray?"

"Because he has not lost the two sous. They are hidden in his shoe."

"Me?" said the child. "That is n't true!"

"In the left shoe, Citizeness," said Maillard, "in the left shoe."

In spite of young Toussaint's cries, Mamma Olivia took up his left foot, and found the two sous in the shoe. She gave the two sous to the druggist's apprentice, and then dragged the child away, threatening him with a punishment which would have seemed terrible to the listeners, if she had not accompanied her threats with endearments which left no doubt that motherly tenderness would get the upperhand.

This occurrence, unimportant in itself, would certainly have passed unnoticed in the midst of so many graver events, if the woman's resemblance to the Queen had not singularly impressed Maillard.

The result of his meditation was that he went up to his friend the apothecary, in an unoccupied moment, and said: "Did you notice it?"

"What?"

"That woman's resemblance, that woman who just went out —"

"To the Queen?" said the druggist, laughing.

"Yes. You have noticed it, then?"

"A long time ago!"

"How, — long ago?"

"Certainly! The resemblance is historic."

"I don't understand."

"Don't you recall the old story of the famous necklace?"

"It is not for an old Châtelet usher to forget that affair!"

"Then you surely remember a certain Nicole Legay, sometimes called the Demoiselle Olivia."

"Ah, that 's true! She was the woman who played the part of the Queen, in relation to Cardinal Rohan, was she not?"

"And lived with a scamp who was concerned in various doubtful affairs, an ex-gendarme, — a rascal, a gambler, a spy, a backbiter, — named Beausire."

"Called what?" said Maillard, starting as if a centipede had bitten him.

"Called Beausire," repeated the apothecary.

"And this Beausire is the man she calls her husband?" asked Maillard.

"Yes!"

"And it 's for him she wanted that medicine?"

"Probably the scamp has indigestion."

"A purgative dose?" continued Maillard, like a man on the track of an important secret, who will not let himself be turned from his pursuit.

"A purgative, yes!"

"Ah, I 've found my man!" said Maillard, tapping his forehead.

"What man?"

"The eleven-sou man!"

"Who 's the eleven-sou man?"

"Good gracious, — Monsieur de Beausire!"

"You 've got him?"

"Yes, if I can find out, right away, where he lives."

"I know, if you don't!"

"Good! Where is it?"

"Number six, Rue Juiverie!"

"Near here?"

"Two steps."

"Well, that does n't surprise me!"

"What?"

"That young Toussaint stole two sous from his mother."

"What, it does n't surprise you?"

"No! He 's Beausire's boy, is n't he?"

"His living portrait!"

"A good dog is born to the chase! Come now, my dear friend," continued Maillard, "tell me, with your hand on your conscience, how long will it take your medicine to operate?"

"Seriously?"

"Very seriously!"

"Not less than two hours."

"That 's all I need. I've time enough!"

"You take an interest in Beausire?"

"So great an interest that, fearing he may not be well cared for, I shall go at once for —"

"What?"

"Two nurses! Good-bye, my friend!"

Leaving the drug-store with a quiet smile, the only sort of smile which ever lightened his lugubrious visage, Maillard retraced his steps to the Tuileries.

Pitou was absent. It will be remembered that he had gone with Andrée to find some traces of Charny. In his absence, Maillard found Tellier and Maniquet in charge of the post.

Both recognized him; and Maniquet said: "Ah, is it

you, Monsieur Maillard? Well, did you overtake your man?"

"No, but I'm on his scent!"

"Faith, that's lucky!" said Tellier; "for notwithstanding we found nothing on him, I'll swear he had those diamonds."

"Lay a wager, Citizen, and you'll win."

"Good!" said Maniquet; "but can you get them back again?"

"I hope so, if you'll help."

"In what way, Citizen Maillard? We're at your orders."

Maillard beckoned the lieutenants to come nearer, and said: "Pick me out two reliable men from your company!"

"For courage?"

"For honesty!"

"Oh, take any of them." Then, turning to his men, Désiré said: "Two willing volunteers!"

A dozen men sprang up.

"That will do! Come, Boulanger!" said Maniquet. One of the men obeyed.

"Molicar, too!" A second took his place beside the first.

"Do you want another, Monsieur Maillard?" asked Tellier.

"No, two will do. Come on, my friends!"

The two Haramontese followed Maillard, who conducted them as far as the Rue Juiverie, and stopped before the house numbered six.

"Here we are!" he said. "Let us go up."

The two men went with him through the dooryard, and then up four flights of stairs. There they were guided by Monsieur Toussaint's cries, he not being

quite consoled for the correction, not wholly maternal; for Monsieur de Beausire, understanding the gravity of the boy's misdeed, had believed it his duty to add several whacks, with his hard hand, to the soft pats which Mademoiselle Olivia had bestowed upon her son, and which it went against her heart to inflict.

Maillard tried to open the door. It was bolted inside. He knocked.

"Who 's there?" asked Olivia's drawling voice.

"Open, in the name of the law!" responded Maillard.

A brief dialogue in an undertone could be heard, one result whereof was that young Toussaint held his tongue, believing that the law was seeking him out, on account of the two sous he had tried to steal from his mother. Beausire attributed this interruption to the edict for domiciliary visits; and though not feeling very confident about the matter himself, he made an effort to reassure Olivia.

At last she decided to open the door, just as Maillard was about rapping for the second time. The three men entered, to the great alarm of Olivia, and also of Monsieur Toussaint, who tried to extinguish himself behind an old rattan chair.

Beausire was abed. On a lightstand, illuminated by a poor candle, smoking in an iron candlestick, Maillard beheld, with satisfaction, the empty bottle. The medicine had been swallowed. It only remained to see what the effect would be.

During their trip Maillard had related to Boulanger and Molicar what had taken place at the pharmacy, so that when they reached Beausire's apartments, they thoroughly understood the situation.

When Maillard installed his assistants on each side of the bed, he contented himself with saying to them:

"Citizens, Monsieur de Beausire is exactly in the situation of the Princess in the Arabian Nights story, who would only speak when she was forced, but dropped a diamond every time she opened her mouth. Do not let a word fall from Monsieur de Beausire, without knowing what it contains. I will go to the City Hall and wait for you. When Monsieur no longer needs your services, you can conduct him to the Châtelet, where you will say that he is sent by Citizen Maillard; and then you may bring whatever he has given you to me, at the City Hall."

The two National Guardsmen bowed, as a sign of passive obedience, and placed themselves under arms, one on each side of Beausire's couch.

The apothecary was not mistaken. At the expiration of two hours the medicine operated. Its effects continued an hour or so, and could not have been more satisfactory.

About three in the morning Maillard saw his two men come in. They brought with them a hundred thousand francs' worth of diamonds of the purest water, wrapped in a memorandum of the incarceration of Monsieur de Beausire. These diamonds were deposited at the office of the City Solicitor, in the name of Maillard and the two Haramontese, and that officer filled out a certificate, declaring that Citizens Maillard, Molicar, and Boulanger merited the thanks of their country.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FIRST OF SEPTEMBER.

LET us see now what grew out of the tragico-comic occurrence we have just described.

The case of Monsieur de Beausire, shut up in the Châtelet Prison, was duly referred to the special jury, appointed to take cognizance of thefts committed on August 10 and the days following.

He could not deny his guilt, which was but too clearly evident; so the prisoner was constrained to humbly confess his offence, and implore the clemency of the court.

The tribunal ordered an inquiry into Beausire's antecedents; and not being greatly edified by the information thus elicited, the court condemned the ex-gendarme to five years in the galleys, added to public exposure and branding.

In vain did Beausire urge that he had been led into this theft by the most honorable sentiments, — that is, by the hope of providing a peaceful future for his wife and child. Nothing could modify the sentence, and as the tribunal was specially constituted, there was no appeal from its decisions. So on the second day after the case was decided, the sentence was to be put into execution. Alas, that the punishment was not executed at once, and Beausire sent far away.

Fatality decreed that on the eve of the day when Beausire was to be put into the pillory, one of his old

comrades was brought into the prison. The two recognized each other, and mutual confidences followed.

The new prisoner was, so he said, acquainted with a perfectly organized conspiracy, which had for its end an outbreak, either on the Place de Grève or Palace Square.

The conspirators were to assemble in large numbers, under the pretext of seeing the first public branding which was to take place, — this being done sometimes in front of the Palace of Justice and sometimes in front of the City Hall, in Place de Grève. At the watch-cries of "Long live the King! Hurrah for the Prussians! Death to the Nation!" the conspirators were to take possession of the City Hall, call to their aid the National Guards, — two-thirds of whom were Royalists or, at least, Constitutionalists, — insist upon the abolition of the Communal Council, which had been voted down by an Assembly decree of August 30, and finally effect a Counter-Revolution in favor of royalty.

Unfortunately it was Beausire's newly arrested friend who was to give the signal. As the other conspirators were ignorant of his arrest, they would of course go to the square on the day of the expected exposure of Beausire; but as there would be nobody to shout the signal, "Long live the King! Hurrah for the Prussians! Death to the Nation!" the outbreak would not take place.

This was the more to be regretted, added Beausire's friend, because no plot had ever been better arranged, or promised so sure a result.

The arrest of this friend was the more deplorable, because the condemned man could not fail to obtain his freedom in the midst of the tumult, and so escape the double penalty of the galleys and branding.

Although possessing no very decided opinions, Beausire had, at bottom, a leaning towards royalty. He therefore regretted bitterly — first for the King's sake, and secondarily for his own — that this movement could not go on.

Suddenly he smote his forehead. He was illuminated with a sudden idea; so he said to his comrade: "But this first exposure is to be of myself!"

"Undoubtedly! and I repeat, it would have been great luck for thee!"

"And thou sayest thy detention is unknown?"

"Entirely!"

"Then the conspirators will assemble just the same as if there had been no arrest?"

"Even so!"

"So if anybody gives the signal, the outbreak will follow?"

"Yes! but who will give it, when I am locked up, and can't communicate with anybody outside?"

"I will!" said Beausire, in the tone of Medea, in Corneille's tragedy.

"Thou?"

"Yes, I! I shall be there, sha'n't I, seeing that it 's my show? Very well, then, I 'll shout 'Long life to the King! Hurrah for the Prussians! and Death to the Nation!' That is n't very difficult, as it appears to me."

Beausire's comrade was transfixed with amazement and rejoined: "I always said thou wert in very truth a man of genius!"

Beausire bowed.

"If thou doest that," continued the Royalist prisoner, "not only wilt thou be freed, not only wilt thou be pardoned, but more! As I shall proclaim it abroad that the

success of the plot is owing to thee, thou mayest brag in advance of a goodly recompense."

"It is not for reward that I move in this matter," said Beausire, with the most disinterested air in the world.

"That 's all right!" said his friend; "but if the reward comes, I advise thee not to refuse it!"

"If this is thy counsel — " said Beausire.

"More! I not only advise it, but I urge it! If necessary, I will command it!" insisted the friend, majestically.

"So be it," said Beausire.

"Well," resumed the friend, "to-morrow we shall breakfast together, — the superintendent of the prison will not refuse a last favor to two old comrades, — and we will drink a bottle of wine to the success of the conspiracy."

Beausire entertained some doubt as to the complaisance of the superintendent in regard to next day's breakfast; but whether he breakfasted with his friend or not, he made up his mind to keep his promise.

To their great satisfaction, the superintendent gave his consent. The two friends breakfasted together, and drank not one bottle, but two, three, four bottles.

Over the fourth bottle Monsieur de Beausire was a furious Royalist. Luckily the officers came after him, to conduct him to the Place de Grève, before the fifth bottle was uncorked.

He ascended the wagon as if it were a triumphal chariot, and looked disdainfully around upon the crowd, for whom he was preparing such a tremendous surprise.

On the parapet at Notre Dame Bridge a woman and boy were waiting for his appearance. Beausire recognized poor Olivia, bathed in tears, and also young

Toussaint, who, seeing his father in the hands of the police, called out: "That 's good! Why did he pound me?"

Beausire wafted them a benignant smile; and he tried to add a gesture, which would doubtless have been full of majesty, if his hands had not been tied behind his back.

The square in front of the City Hall was crowded with people. It was known that the condemned man was expiating a crime committed at the Tuileries. Through the published accounts, everybody knew the circumstances which had accompanied and followed this theft, and there was no sympathy for the prisoner. When the wagon stopped in front of the pillory, the guard had much difficulty in keeping back the populace.

Beausire regarded this tumult and crowd with an air which plainly said: "You 'll see! This will be quite another sort of a show in a minute."

When he appeared on the platform there was one general hurrah! but when the moment of execution drew near, when the executioner unbuttoned Beausire's sleeve and exposed his naked shoulder, when he stooped to take the red-hot iron from the furnace, there came what always comes at such a time. In the presence of the supreme majesty of Justice, the world held its peace.

Beausire profited by this moment. Rallying all his strength, he called out, in a voice sonorous, loud, and penetrating: "Long live the King! Hurrah for the Prussians! Death to the Nation!"

Whatever tumult Beausire had expected, the result surpassed his hopes. They were not shouts which he elicited, but yells. The crowd uttered an immense roar and rushed upon the pillory.

This time the guard found it impossible to protect Beausire. The ranks were broken. The scaffold was invaded. The headsman was hurled down from the platform. The prisoner was wrenched from the post, nobody knew how, and thrown into the midst of that devouring ant-hill which we call the *multitude.*

He would have been killed, ground into mincemeat, when a man, wearing his official scarf, came running down from the porch of the City Hall, whence he had been watching the execution. This was the City Solicitor, Manuel. He had strongly humane sentiments, which he was usually constrained to lock up in his inmost breast, but which came to light under such unparalleled circumstances.

With great difficulty he made his way to Beausire, extended to him his hand, and said, in a loud voice: "In the name of the law I demand this man."

The populace hesitated about obeying him. Manuel detached his scarf, waved it above his head, and shouted: "Help, all good citizens!"

A score of men pressed about Manuel. They rescued Beausire, half-dead already, from the hands of the mob. Meanwhile the City Hall was seriously imperilled, the exasperation was so great.

Manuel appeared on the balcony and said: "This man is guilty, but he is guilty of a crime for which he has not been tried. Name a jury among yourselves. That jury shall meet in one of the rooms in this very building, and sit in judgment on this criminal. The sentence of this jury shall be carried out, whatever it may be."

Is it not singular that, on the eve of the massacres which took place in the prisons, one of the very men who has been blamed for these massacres should utter

such language as this, even at the peril of his own life? This is one of the anomalies of politics, explain it who can.

This pledge appeased the throng. Fifteen minutes later the popular jury was introduced to Manuel. It was composed of twenty-one members. These twenty-one jurymen appeared on the balcony.

"Are these men your proxies?" demanded Manuel of the crowd.

By way of response the people clapped their hands.

"Very well," said Manuel, "now that we have a jury, we can have justice."

According to promise, the jury was installed in a room in the City Hall.

More dead than alive, Beausire was brought before this improvised tribunal. He tried to defend himself; but his second offence was as open as the first, and in the popular opinion it was more serious.

To shout "Long live the King!" when the King was a prisoner in the Temple; to cry "Hurrah for the Prussians!" when the Prussians had just captured Longwy, and were not over sixty leagues from Paris; to yell "Death to the Nation!" when the Nation was stretched on the rack, — these were frightful crimes, which deserved the highest penalty.

The jury decided that he was guilty, and should not only receive capital punishment, but that his death should be rendered more shameful by hanging him on the very spot where the offence had been committed, in order that he should not gain what little benefit might accrue to him through receiving only the punishment of the guillotine, which the law had just substituted for the gallows.

The hangman was therefore ordered to immediately

put up a gibbet on the same scaffold where the pillory was placed.

The sight of this work going forward, and the certainty that the prisoner, who was kept in sight, could not escape, calmed the popular excitement.

We have no intention of glorifying Manuel, one of the most abused Revolutionists, but we do wish to tell the exact truth. Here is what Michelet says about this occurrence :

On September 1 a frightful scene took place in the Place de Grève. A thief, who was being branded in the pillory, and who was undoubtedly drunk, took it upon himself to shout "Long life to the King! Hurrah for the Prussians ! and Death to the Nation ! "

He was instantly torn from the pillory, and would have been torn into pieces ; but City Solicitor Manuel rushed forward, recaptured him from the hands of the populace, and took him into the City Hall.

Manuel himself was in extreme peril. He was compelled to promise that the prisoner should be judged by a jury of the people.

This jury sentenced him to death. The authorities held this sentence to be right and valid, and it was at once carried into effect, the culprit perishing next day.

This was the special event which, as we said at the close of a preceding chapter, occupied the attention of the Assembly.

The next day was Sunday, — an aggravating circumstance. The Assembly could not but see that everything tended towards another massacre. The Commune meant to maintain itself at any price. Massacre — that is, terrorism — was one of the surest means of accomplishing this result.

Retracting its decision of two days before, the Assembly repealed the decree dissolving the Commune.

Then one of the members rose and said: "It is not enough to repeal your decree. In voting that decree, only two days ago, you declared the Commune to be deserving of national gratitude. This praise is too vague; for some day you may say, that while the Commune merited the gratitude of the country, yet that such and such members of that Council were not included in the eulogy, and consequently that this or that member may be arraigned. It is necessary to say, not simply the *Commune*, but the *representatives* of the Commune."

The Assembly accordingly voted that the representatives of the Commune merited the national gratitude.

At the same time the Assembly was passing this vote, Robespierre was delivering a long speech at the Communal Council, in which he said that as the Assembly, by its infamous manœuvres, had undermined public confidence in the Commune, the Communal Council ought to retire, and do the only thing which remained for it to do, in order to save the people, — that is, to remand the power to the people.

Like all Robespierre's proposals, this was vague and indefinite, but terrible. What was the meaning of that phrase about restoring the power to the people? Did it mean that the Council should subscribe to the Assembly's decree, and ask for a new election? Probably not!

Did it mean that the Council of the Commune was to resign its legal authority, and declare, of its own accord, that the Commune, after what it had done on August 10, regarded itself as powerless to continue the great work of the Revolution, and wished the people to finish that work?

If the populace, without a curb, and with hearts full of vengeance, should undertake to continue the work

begun on August 10, this would involve the slaughter of the men who had fought with them on that same August day, and had since then been imprisoned in the various prisons of Paris.

This is how matters stood on the eve of the first day of September, when the atmosphere was heavy with storm-clouds, and all felt that lightning and thunder were suspended just above their heads.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE NIGHT BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND DAYS OF SEPTEMBER.

THIS then was the situation of things when, on September 1, at nine o'clock in the evening, Doctor Gilbert's *official* (the word *servant* had been abolished, as Anti-Republican) came into his employer's room to say: "Citizen Gilbert, the cab is at the door."

Gilbert pulled his hat over his eyes, buttoned his riding-coat up to his neck, and was ready to go out; but on the threshold there stood a man wrapped in a large cloak, his face shaded by a broad-brimmed hat.

Gilbert recoiled a step. In the darkness, and at such an epoch, anybody might be an enemy.

"It is I, Gilbert!" said a kindly voice.

"Cagliostro!" cried the Doctor.

"Even so! Only you forget that I no longer call myself Cagliostro, but Baron Zannone. However, for you, dear Gilbert, I change neither my name nor my heart, but am always — at least, so I hope — Joseph Balsamo."

"Oh yes," said Gilbert, "and the proof of it is, that I was just going to your house."

"So I suspected, and that is precisely why I am here. As you doubtless felt assured, — in such times as these I cannot do as Robespierre does, take a trip into the country."

"Yet I feared I might not meet you, and am the more glad to see you here. Come in, I beg of you."

"Certainly, here I am! Now I say, what do you want?" said Cagliostro, following Gilbert into the more retired room in his suite.

"Master, be seated," he said; and Cagliostro sat down.

"You know what is going on," resumed Gilbert.

"You mean what is to come," said Cagliostro, "for at this moment nothing in particular is taking place."

"You are right! Something terrible is on foot, is it not so?"

"Terrible indeed! Sometimes the *terrible* becomes the *essential*."

"Master, when you utter such words, with your inexorable sangfroid, you make me tremble."

"Why so? I'm but an echo, — the echo of Fate."

Gilbert lowered his head.

"Gilbert, do you recall what I told you, the day when I saw you at Bellevue, — October 6, three years ago, — when I predicted the death of the Marquis de Favras?"

Gilbert shuddered. Even he, usually so strong in the presence of events as well as of men, felt like a child when he was brought into contact with this mysterious personage.

"I then told you, that if the King had in his paltry brain a grain of the spirit of self-interest, — which I hoped he had not, — he would run away."

"Well, he did run away!" said Gilbert.

"Yes! — but I meant that he ought to flee while there was a chance. Zounds! When he did try to get away, as you know, it was too late. I added, what you have not forgotten, that if the King, the Queen, and the nobility resisted the progress of the Revolution, we should have a worse Revolution thereafter."

"Yes, you were right once more! The worst Revolution has come!"

"Not wholly! but it is going on, as you see, my dear Gilbert. Do you also recall what I told you about a certain machine, invented by one of my friends, Doctor Guillotin? Have you walked through Carrousel Square, on the Tuileries side? Well, that instrument is at work there, — the same which I caused the Queen to see in a decanter at Taverney Château! — You remember the time. You were there, a lad no higher than my arm, and already the lover of Mademoiselle Nicole, whose husband, by the way, — that dear Monsieur de Beausire, — has just been sentenced to be hanged, and there was no escape for him."

"Yes," said Gilbert; "but apparently the guillotine is too slow, for sabres, pikes, and daggers help it along."

"Listen!" said Cagliostro. "We must understand one thing, — that we have to do with wilful wrongheads. The Nobility, the Court, the Queen, and the King received all sorts of warnings, but they were of no avail. The Bastille was taken. That did them no good. Then came the October riots. They taught royalty nothing. The Twentieth of June taught the Court nothing. Then came the Tenth of August. Even that profited royalty nothing. They have put the King into the Temple, and the Nobility into the different prisons, — Abbaye, Force, Bicètre. All this has taught royalty nothing. The King, in the Temple, rejoices at the conquest of Longwy by the Prussians. At the Abbaye the nobles cheered for the King and the Prussians. They drink champagne under the very noses of the poor, who can only have water. To the very beards of paupers, famishing for bread, these aristocrats munch their patties and truffles. This indifference extends even to King William of Prussia, to whom some one might write: 'Take care! If you pass Longwy, if you take one step nearer to the heart of

France, that step will be the King's death-warrant.' He might respond : ' However frightful may be the situation of the royal family, the invading armies cannot retreat. With all my heart I hope to arrive in time to save the French King's life ; but my chief duty is to save Europe.' He is marching on Verdun. — We must make an end of things."

"An end of what?" asked Gilbert.

"Of the King, the Queen, the Nobility."

"You would murder the King? You would murder the Queen."

"Murder? Oh, no! That would be decidedly a blunder. They must be tried, condemned, and publicly executed, — as happened to Charles the First. We must rid ourselves of them in some way, and the sooner the better!"

"Who so decides?" cried Gilbert. "Is it the intelligence, the integrity, the conscience of the people of whom you speak? When you had Mirabeau for genius, Lafayette for loyalty, Vergniaud for fairness, if you had come to me in the name of those three men, and declared slaughter to be necessary, I should have shuddered, as I shudder now, but I should have been half convinced. But in whose name do you come to me to-day? In the name of Hébert, a huckster ; of Collot d'Herbois, a hissed playwright ; of Marat, a sick-brained fellow, whose physician is obliged to bleed him as often as he demands fifty thousand, a hundred thousand, two hundred thousand heads! Master, allow me to despise such commonplace men, men who must have emotional and hasty crises and changes of scene, — these wretched dramatists, these weak rhetoricians, who take delight in swift destruction, who fancy themselves skilful magicians, when they are ordinary mortals, and so deface God's handiwork.

They think it a grand and sublime thing to dam up the stream of life which feeds the world; to exterminate by a word, a sign, a wink; to cause the disappearance, by a breath, of any living obstacle, into which Nature has put twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years of creative work. These men are miserable scamps; but you do not belong to them."

"My dear Gilbert, you are still in error. You call these fellows *men*. You do them too much honor! They are only tools!"

"Tools of destruction!"

"Yes, — but for the benefit of a principle. That principle is the enfranchisement of nations, — it is Liberty! It represents the Republic, not merely of France, — God forbid such egotism! — but of the world, — a universal fraternity. No, these men lack genius, lack loyalty, lack conscience; but they have what is stronger, more stable, more irresistible than all those qualities, — *instinct*."

"The instinct of Attila."

"Exactly! You have said it, — the instinct of Attila, who called himself the Scourge of God, who came with the barbarous blood of the Huns, the Swabians, the Alains, to stamp out the civilization of Rome, corrupted for four hundred years, by the reigns of such men as Nero, Vespasian, Heliogabalus."

"But to come back to facts, instead of generalizing," said Gilbert, "to what will this awful and wholesale massacre lead?"

"Oh, that's easily seen. It will compromise the Assembly, the Commune, the people, — all Paris. Paris must be smirched with blood, you understand, in order that Paris, — which is the brain of France, the intellect of Europe, the soul of the world, — feeling already guilty of the unpardonable sin, may rise as one man,

urge France onward, and drive every enemy outside the sacred soil of the country."

"But what matters this to you? You are not a Frenchman!"

Cagliostro smiled and replied: "Can it be that thou, Gilbert, with thy superior intelligence and strong mind, wouldst tell a man not to meddle in the affairs of France, because he is not a Frenchmen? Are not French affairs the world's affairs? Does France — poor egotist! — labor for herself alone? Did Jesus die only for Jews? Would you challenge an apostle, because he was not a Nazarene? Listen to me, Gilbert! I have discussed all these matters with a genius greater than mine or thine, — with a man, or a demon, named Althotas. One day he made a calculation as to the amount of blood which must be shed before the sun of liberty would rise o'er all the world. Well, even that man's arguments did not shake my conviction. I have marched on. I am still marching on. I shall continue to march on, overturning everything that I find in my way. To such an obstacle I say, with a calm look and serene voice: 'Woe to the obstacle! I am the future!' — Meantime, thou desirest to ask a favor for some one! Is it not so? That favor is already granted. Tell me the name of the man or woman thou wouldst save."

"Master, I wish to save a woman whom neither you nor I can allow to die."

"Thou wouldst save the Countess de Charny?"

"I would save the mother of Sebastien."

"Thou knowest that Danton, as Minister of Justice, holds the keys of her prison?"

"Yes! but I also know that you can bid Danton open or close that door!"

Cagliostro rose, went to the desk, traced a cabalistic

sign on a scrap of paper, and then gave it to Gilbert. "There, my son. Go to Danton, and demand of him what thou wilt."

Gilbert rose, but Cagliostro added: "But afterwards, what is to be done?"

"After what?"

"When the King's trial comes."

"I hope to get myself nominated to the Convention, so as to oppose the King's death as best I can."

"Yes, I understand that," replied Cagliostro. "Act according to conscience! But promise me one thing."

"What is it?"

"There was a time when thy promise was without conditions, Gilbert!"

"In those times you did not talk of nourishing a people with blood, or a nation with murder."

"So?—Well, promise me that if the King is tried and put to death, thou wilt follow the advice I then give thee."

Gilbert offered his hand and said: "Master, all advice coming from you is precious to me."

"And will be followed?"

"I swear it, if it wounds not my conscience."

"Thou art unjust, Gilbert! I have offered thee much. Have I exacted anything?"

"No! and what is more, you have just accorded me a life more valuable than my own."

"Go on, then!" said Cagliostro, "and may the Genius of France lead thee,—one of whose noblest sons thou art."

Cagliostro left the house, and Gilbert soon followed. The cab was still in waiting. The Doctor entered, and told the driver to stop at the Bureau of Justice, where he could see Danton.

As Minister of Justice, Danton had a fair pretext for not being seen at the Communal Council. Besides, why should he go there? Were not Marat and Robespierre ever on hand? Robespierre would not allow himself to be distanced by Marat. Harnessed to butchery, they both rode at the same pace. Moreover, Tallien was watching them both.

Two things were possible for Danton. If he decided to ally himself absolutely with the Commune, he might form a triumvirate with Marat and Robespierre. If the Assembly should triumph, as Minister of Justice Danton might expect a dictatorship. On his side, he did not wish for the association of Robespierre and Marat; but on the other side, the Assembly did not care for Danton.

When Gilbert was announced, Danton was with his wife, or rather his wife was at his feet. The anticipated massacre was so well known beforehand, that she was supplicating him not to commit such a crime. She was dying with grief, poor woman, over the massacre which had already taken place.

Danton could not make her understand very clearly one thing, — that he could do nothing contrary to the decisions of the Commune, unless he had dictatorial authority conferred upon him by the Assembly. With the Assembly on his side, there was a chance of victory. Without the Assembly, defeat was certain.

"Die, die, die! if it must be," said the poor woman; "but don't let that massacre take place!"

"Men of my stamp do not care to die uselessly," replied Danton. "I would die willingly, however, if my death would serve my country."

Doctor Gilbert was announced.

"I shall not go away," said Madame Danton, "till I

have thy word to do everything in the world to prevent this abominable crime."

"Remain, then!" said Danton.

Madame Danton retired a few steps, to let her husband come forward and greet the Doctor, whom he already knew by sight and reputation.

"Doctor, you arrive opportunely. If I had known your address I would certainly have sent for you."

Gilbert saluted Danton; and, seeing a lady behind the minister, he bowed to her also.

"This is my wife, Monsieur, the wife of Citizen Danton, who believes her husband strong enough to prevent Marat and Robespierre, backed by the whole Commune, from doing what they choose, — that is, to keep them from killing, exterminating, devouring."

Gilbert looked at Madame Danton, who was weeping through her clasped hands. "Madame, will you allow me to kiss those pitiful hands?"

"Good!" said Danton. "Here we already have re-enforcements."

"Tell him, Monsieur," cried the poor woman, "that if he permits this massacre, there will be a bloodstain on his whole life!"

"Nor is that all," said Gilbert. "If this stain could rest upon only one man's forehead, — who believes it essential to the good of his country that this pollution should soil his name, — such a man might throw his honor into the gulf and sacrifice himself, as Decius threw his body into the abyss for the sake of his country. In the times in which we live, what matters the life, reputation, honor of one citizen? But this will be a blot upon the forehead of France!"

"Citizen," said Danton, "when Vesuvius has an eruption, show me a man who is strong enough to check

the molten river. When the storm rises, show me an arm vigorous enough to push back old ocean!"

"When one speaks the name of Danton, such a man need no longer be sought. He is here! No need to ask where that strong arm may be; for it acts, and thus speaks for itself."

"See here!" said Danton, "you're all out of your heads! Must I tell you what I scarcely dare say to myself? Certainly, I have the will. As certainly I have the genius. Certainly also I shall have the force, if the Assembly so wills it. But do you know what's going to happen? Just what happened to Mirabeau. Even his genius could not triumph over his reputation. I am not a crazypate, like Marat, to inspire the Assembly with terror. I am not an incorruptible Robespierre, to inspire it with confidence. The Assembly will refuse me the means of saving the state, because I am in bad repute. It will adjourn, and keep me dangling off and on. It will be whispered that I am a man of lax honor, — a man not to be trusted, even for three days, with absolutely arbitrary power. A committee of worthy men will be appointed. Meanwhile it will be too late. The slaughter will take place. As you say, the blood of a thousand unfortunates, slain by the crimes of three or four hundred drunkards, will draw before the scenes of this Revolution a crimson curtain, which will hide from historic view our sublime heights. It will not be France who is accused," he added, with a magnificent gesture; "it will be myself. I shall avert from France the world's curse, by causing it to fall upon my own head."

"And thy wife and thy children?" cried the unhappy woman.

"Thou? It will kill thee, as thou hast said! And thou wilt not be accused of being my accomplice, inasmuch as

my crime is thy death. As to our children, they are sons. Some day they will be men. Be assured they will either have their father's heart, and will bear aloft the name of Danton, or else they will be weak and belie me. So much the better! The feeble are not of my race, and I repudiate such sons in advance."

"But at least you will ask the Assembly for some authority?" said Gilbert.

"Do you fancy I have waited for you to give me this counsel? I have already sent for Thuriot, I have sent for Tallien. Wife, see if they are in the other room. If so, let Thuriot come in."

Madame Danton went out, and Danton said: "I shall tempt fortune in your presence, Monsieur Gilbert. You shall be the witness to posterity of my efforts."

The door opened. "Here is Citizen Thuriot, my dear," said Madame Danton.

"Come in!" said Danton, extending his large hand to the man who served him, as an aide serves his general. "That was a sublime word of thine on the rostrum the other day, about the French Revolution being not merely for ourselves, but for all the world, and about our being responsible for it to all humanity. Well, we must make a last effort to keep our Revolution pure."

"Speak on!" said Thuriot.

"To-morrow, at the opening of the session, before any business is begun, this is what thou must demand, — that the number of members in the General Council of the Commune be increased to three hundred, so that without interfering with those chosen before August 10, the old members may be hereafter outnumbered by the new. We must establish a fixed basis for the legislative representation of Paris. We must enlarge the Council, but neutralize it. We must augment its members, but

modify its spirit. If this proposition is not adopted, if thou canst not make the Deputies understand my idea, then confer with Lacroix. Tell him to attack the question openly. Let him propose the death-penalty for those who refuse, directly or indirectly, to obey the Executive Power, or in any way try to impede any of its orders or measures. If this measure passes, that will give us the dictatorship. The Executive Power, — that is myself! I will enter the Assembly and claim the authority; and if there is any hesitation about giving it to me, I will seize it."

"Then what will you do?"

"Then," said Danton, "I will grasp a flag. In place of the bloody and hideous demon of massacre, whom I shall banish to his native shades, I will invoke the noble and serene genius of battles, who strikes without fear or anger, and looks placidly upon death. I will ask if all those knots of men are banded together for the butchery of unarmed citizens. I will denounce as infamous whoever dares threaten the prisons. Perhaps many may *approve* massacre, but the murderers are not many. I will profit by the military spirit which reigns in Paris. I will surround each cluster of murderers with an eddy of genuine volunteers, who are waiting for an order to march, and then I will send them to the frontier, — that is, against the enemy, that the foul element may be dominated by the nobler."

"Do it! Do it!" cried Gilbert, "and you will accomplish something grand, magnificent, sublime."

"Oh Lord!" said Danton, shrugging his shoulders with a singular mixture of strength and carelessness, "this is the simplest thing to do! If I can only get the proper help, you shall see."

Madame Danton kissed her husband's hands. "Thou

wilt have help enough, Danton," she said. "Who would not be of thy mind, my brave and noble husband, hearing thee speak thus?"

"Yes! but unfortunately I cannot talk thus. If I were to expose these ideas by speaking out, they would begin the massacre with me."

"Well," said Madame, "would it not be better to finish in that way?"

"A woman, who talks like a woman! With me dead, what would become of the Revolution, between that bloodthirsty maniac they call Marat, and that sham philanthropist they call Robespierre? No! I ought not to die yet! I do not wish to die yet! What I ought to do is to prevent massacre, if I can. If it breaks out in spite of me, then I want to exculpate France, and let the crime be charged to my account. I shall go on to the end just the same, only the progress will be frightful. — Call Tallien!"

"Tallien," said Danton, when his friend entered, "it may be that to-morrow the Commune will send me a written order to report at the municipal headquarters. You are the Secretary of the Council. Arrange it so that I shall not receive that letter, and shall be able to prove that I have not received it."

"The Devil!" said Tallien, "how shall I do it?"

"That 's your lookout. I tell you what I want, what I demand, what ought to be. It is for you to find the means. — Come now, Monsieur Gilbert, you have something to ask of me."

Opening the door into a small office, he bade Gilbert enter, and then followed him.

"Now then, how can I be useful to you?"

Gilbert drew from his pocket the paper Cagliostro had given him, and presented it to Danton.

"Ah! You come from him. — Well, what do you want?"

"The liberation of a lady imprisoned at the Abbaye."

"Her name?"

"Madame de Charny."

Danton took a sheet of paper and wrote the order of release. "If you wish to save anybody else, speak! I would be glad, by instalments, to save all those unfortunate people."

Gilbert bowed and said: "I have all I wish."

"Go then, Monsieur Gilbert; and if you need me, come to me at once, man to man, without any go-between. I shall be too happy to do something for you."

As he reconducted Gilbert to the door, he murmured: "Oh Monsieur Gilbert, if I could only have your reputation as an honorable man for one day!"

As he closed the door behind the Doctor he sighed, and wiped away the sweat which ran down his forehead.

Gilbert wended his way to the Abbaye, bearing the precious paper which was to restore freedom to Andrée.

Although it was near midnight, suspicious groups were already gathered in the streets near the prison. Gilbert passed through their midst and rapped at the door. The gloomy door opened beneath a low vaulted archway. Gilbert shuddered. That low arch was not that of a prison, but of a tomb.

He presented his order to the superintendent. It directed that the person named by Doctor Gilbert should be at once set at liberty. Gilbert designated the Countess, and the superintendent ordered a turnkey to conduct Citizen Gilbert to the prisoner's cell.

Gilbert followed the turnkey, ascended three flights of stairs by a small staircase, and entered a cell lighted by one lamp.

A lady clad in black, looking pale as marble in her mourning, was seated near a table on which the lamp was placed. She was reading in a little book bound in shagreen, and ornamented with a gilt cross. The remnants of a fire burned on the hearth by her side.

Despite the noise made by the door, she did not lift her eyes. She seemed absorbed in her reading, or rather in her meditation, for Gilbert waited two or three minutes before he saw her turn the leaf. The turnkey locked the door behind Gilbert, and waited outside.

At last Gilbert said: "Madame!"

Andrée raised her eyes, and looked at him for an instant without seeing anything. The veil of her meditation still hung between her gaze and the man before her. At last she saw him clearly.

"Ah, it is you, Monsieur Gilbert?" she asked. "What do you wish?"

"Madame, there are sinister rumors current as to what may happen to-morrow in the prisons."

"Yes," said Andrée, "it appears that we are to be butchered; but you know, Monsieur Gilbert, that I am ready to die."

Gilbert bowed and said: "I have come after you, Madame."

"After me?" said Andrée, with surprise. "To take me where?"

"Wherever you will, Madame. You are free!" and as he spoke he showed her Danton's order of release.

She read the order; but instead of returning it to the Doctor, she kept it in her hand.

"I ought to have expected this, Doctor," she said, trying to put on a smile, — something to which her face had grown unaccustomed.

"Expected what, Madame?"

"That you would come and hinder me from dying."

"Madame, there is one life in the world more precious to me than my father's or mother's would have been, if God had given me the blessing of a father and a mother. I mean yours."

"Yes, and that is why you have broken your pledge once already."

"I did not fail in my promise. I sent you the poison."

"By my son!"

"I did not say by whom I would send it!"

"So you have thought of me, Monsieur Gilbert? For my sake you have ventured into the lion's den? For my sake you have brought that talisman to open the prison doors?"

"I have already said, that as long as I live you need not die."

"This time, however, I think I hold death securely, Monsieur Gilbert," said Andrée, with a brighter smile than the former.

"Madame, if I have to take you away by force, I declare to you that you must not die."

Without a reply Andrée tore the order into three or four pieces, and threw them into the fire.

"Try it!" she said.

Gilbert uttered an exclamation.

"Monsieur Gilbert, I have renounced all idea of suicide, but not the idea of death."

"Oh Madame! Madame!"

"Monsieur Gilbert, I wish to die!"

Gilbert let a groan escape him.

"All I ask of you," she said, "is that you will try to recover my body, — to save it, after death, from the outrages which in life it will not escape. Monsieur de Charny

rests in the tomb of his château at Boursonnes. It is there I passed the only happy days of my life. I wish to be placed near him."

"Oh Madame, in Heaven's name, — I swear to you —"

"And I, Monsieur, pray to you in the name of my misfortunes."

"Very well, Madame! You have rightly said that it is my duty to obey you in all points. I withdraw, but I am not yet conquered."

"Do not forget my last wishes, Monsieur!"

"If I do not save you in spite of yourself, then your last wishes shall be obeyed."

Once more bowing, Gilbert retired. The door closed behind him with that lugubrious clang peculiar to prison portals.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SECOND OF SEPTEMBER.

THAT happened which Danton had foreseen. At the opening of the session, Thuriot laid before the Assembly the proposition formulated on the previous day by the Minister of Justice. The Assembly did not understand. Instead of voting at nine o'clock in the morning, they argued the matter at needless length, and finally adopted the proposition at one in the afternoon.

It was too late. These four hours retarded the liberty of Europe for a whole century.

Tallien was more skilful. Requested by the Commune to send an order to the Minister of Justice, to betake himself at once to the Communal Council, Tallien wrote as follows:

MONSIEUR SECRETARY: On receipt of this communication, you will come to the Hôtel de Ville.

Only he addressed it wrongly! Instead of writing, "To the Minister of Justice," he wrote, "To the Minister of War."

Danton was expected. Servan appeared instead, and asked, somewhat embarrassed as he was, what they desired. Of Secretary Servan the Commune wanted absolutely nothing at all.

The blunder was satisfactorily explained, but the mistake was past recall.

We have said that the Assembly, in voting at one o'clock, voted too late; and this is proved by the fact that the Commune, which was in the habit of despatching things, profited by the delay.

What the Communists wanted was massacre and a dictatorship.

As Danton had said, the miscreants were not as numerous as people believed.

During the night between September 1 and 2, while Gilbert was unsuccessfully attempting to deliver Andrée from the Abbaye Prison, Marat was sending his growlers into the clubs and sections. Enraged though they were, these emissaries could make no impression whatever upon the clubs; and only two out of the forty-eight sections, Poissonnière and Luxembourg, voted for slaughter.

The Communists well knew that they could not obtain a dictatorship, unless they had on their side Marat, Robespierre, and Danton. This is why they ordered Danton's presence at the City Hall.

We have said that Danton foresaw all this; so he did not receive the letter, and consequently did not appear.

If he had received this letter, if Tallien's convenient blunder had not caused the order to be sent to the War Department instead of the Department of Justice, perhaps Danton would not have dared to disobey.

Notwithstanding his absence, the Communal Councillors were obliged to reach some conclusion. They decided to nominate a Committee of Vigilance; only that committee could not be chosen from outside the members of the Council. The question therefore arose, as to how Marat could be placed on this committee of massacre, — for such it really was! — inasmuch as Marat did not belong to the Council.

The whole matter was left in charge of Panis. It can be easily understood that this ex-attorney — this low-minded, mean-spirited, harsh man, this poor little author of a few ridiculous verses — could have no influence of his own; but through his deity, Robespierre, and through Santerre, his brother-in-law, his weight in the municipality was tremendous, — so much so, that he was authorized to choose three members, who should constitute the Vigilance Committee.

Panis did not dare to exercise alone this extraordinary power. He requested three of his colleagues to assist him, — Sergent, Duplain, and Jourdeuil.

These in turn chose five persons to aid them, — Deforgues, Lenfant, Guermeur, Leclerc, and Durfort.

The original decree bears the four names of Panis, Sergent, Duplain, and Jourdeuil; but on the margin is found another name, in the chirography of only one of the four signers. This handwriting is confused, though it is believed to be that of Panis.

The name thus inscribed is *Marat;* but he had no right to figure on that committee, since he was not a member of the Commune.

Michelet, the only historian who has thrown light upon the stormy darkness of that September, should be consulted. The document above-mentioned should also be seen. My friend Monsieur Labat, the librarian at the Prefecture of Police, is pleased to show it to those interested, as he has shown it to me.

With the name of Marat, murder was enthroned! Let us follow it through the fearful development of its omnipotence.

We have already said that the Commune did not spin out its business, like the Assembly, but despatched it promptly.

At ten o'clock the Vigilance Committee was appointed, and issued its first order, whose object was the transportation of twenty-four prisoners from the Mayor's office (where the committee was in session) to the Abbaye. The Mayor's office was then located where stand to-day (1855) the Police Headquarters. Eight or nine out of the twenty-four prisoners were priests. That is, they wore the cloth of an execrated profession, of men who had organized civil war in the Vendée and Southern France.

These captives were to be taken from prison by Marseilles and Avignon federationists. Four carriages were in readiness. Six prisoners entered each carriage, and the carriages started.

The signal was given by a third cannon-shot.

The intention of the Commune is easily understood. This slow and funereal procession would provoke the ire of the people. Likely enough the carriages would be stopped and the prisoners murdered along the route, or else at the door of the Abbaye. After that it would only be necessary to let the massacre follow its own course. Once begun, whether along the route or at the prison door, it would soon cross the threshold.

It was the very moment when the carriages left the Mayor's office that Danton took for appearing at the Assembly.

Thuriot's proposition had become useless. It was too late, as we have said before, to apply to the Commune the decree just passed. Only the dictatorship now remained.

Danton ascended the rostrum. Unfortunately he was alone. Roland was too honest a man to accompany his colleague. They looked for Roland, but looked for him in vain. Force was there, but not Principle or Honor.

Manuel had just announced to the Commune the peril at Verdun. He proposed that all enrolled citizens should encamp that very night on the Champ de Mars, in order to be ready for marching against the enemy next morning, at daybreak. This proposition was adopted.

Another member, in view of the urgency of the danger, proposed firing signal-guns, tolling the bells, and beating a general alarm.

This second proposition was put to vote and was adopted, like the one preceding. Under the circumstances, this measure was ill-omened and murderous. The drum, the bell, and the cannon rouse gloomy suggestions and dismal vibrations in the calmest breasts, much more so in hearts already so violently agitated. All this, however, was premeditated.

At the firing of the first cannon, Monsieur de Beausire was to be hanged.

Let us announce at once, with the sadness which must belong to the loss of so interesting a personage, that at the discharge of the first cannon Monsieur de Beausire was actually executed.

At the third discharge the carriages, already mentioned, were to leave the Prefecture. As the cannon was fired at intervals of ten minutes, those who witnessed the execution of Monsieur de Beausire could also assist in the transportation of the prisoners, and take part in their slaughter.

Danton was kept informed by Tallien of what was happening. He therefore knew about the national peril at Verdun, and about the proposed encampment on the Champ de Mars. He must therefore have known also that the cannon were to be fired, the bells tolled, and the drums beaten.

In his reply to Lacroix, he took as a text the danger

of the country, and proposed an edict, "that whoever refused to serve in person, or to furnish arms, should be punished with death."

Then, in order not to have his intentions misunderstood, and his projects confounded with those of the Commune, he added: "The tolling of the bells about to take place is not a signal of alarm. It is the signal for an attack upon the enemies of the country! In order to conquer them, gentlemen, we must have audacity, — audacity first, last, and every time. Then France will be saved!"

Thunders of applause followed these words.

Lacroix then arose, and made the following proposition: "That all who directly or indirectly refuse to obey legal decrees, or who hinder, in any shape or manner, the execution of the orders given and the measures taken by the Executive Power, shall merit the death penalty."

The Assembly understood full well, this time, that what they were asked to vote was a dictatorship. The Deputies seemingly approved, but they named a committee of Girondists to draft the decree. The Girondists, like Roland, were unfortunately too honest to place their trust in Danton, and the discussion lingered until ten in the evening.

Danton became impatient. He wished to do good, but he was compelled to allow evil to be done.

He whispered a word to Thuriot, and went out.

What did he say? He told Thuriot where to find him, in case the Assembly should confide to him the dictatorial power.

Where was he to be found? At the Champ de Mars, amongst the enrolled volunteers.

What were Danton's intentions, had the power been delegated to him? He would have caused himself to

be acknowledged by this mass of men, armed, not for massacre, but for foreign war. He would have entered Paris with them, and thus have drawn an immense number of miscreants to the frontier, — capturing them as in a net.

He waited until five o'clock, but no one came.

What happened meanwhile to the prisoners, who were on their way to the Abbaye? Let us follow them! They were going slowly, and might be easily overtaken.

At first they were protected by the coaches in which they were confined. The instinct of the danger they incurred caused each man to hide, as best he could, in the bottom of the carriage, and show himself as little as possible; but those who had the prisoners in charge themselves denounced those prisoners. The anger of the people did not rise fast enough; so the guards tried to lash it by their words to the passers-by: "Behold! Here they are, the traitors! Here they are, the accomplices of the Prussians! the men who will give up our cities and murder your wives, while you march to the frontier!"

Even this, however, was powerless to raise a massacre. Danton was right in saying that murderers were scarce. Anger, yells, threats could be heard, but that was the end of it.

The procession followed the line of the river, over New Bridge, and through the Rue Dauphine. The patience of the prisoners was not exhausted. The people could not be induced to commit a single murder. They were nearing the Abbaye. They had reached the Bussy Crossway, and it was time to decide upon some course of action.

Should the prisoners be killed after entering the prison? If so, it could then be easily seen that this

was done under the deliberate order of the Commune, and not by the spontaneous indignation of the people.

Fortune came to the assistance of these murderous projects.

On the Bussy Crossway stood one of those platforms where voluntary enrolments were in progress. There was some obstruction, and the carriages were obliged to halt.

The opportunity was propitious. If lost, it might not present itself again.

A man pushed through the escort, which did not object. He mounted the step of the first carriage. In his hand he held a sabre, which he plunged into the coach repeatedly and at random, and then drew out stained with blood.

One of the prisoners had a cane, with which he endeavored to parry the strokes. While doing so, he struck the face of one of the guards, who exclaimed: "Ah, ruffians! We protect you, and you strike us! To the rescue, comrades!"

A score of men, anxiously awaiting such an appeal, sprang from the crowd. They were armed with pikes, and with knives fastened to long sticks, which they thrust into the coach. One could hear the agonized cries of the victims, and see the blood ooze through the bottom of the carriage, leaving its trace in the street.

Blood calls for blood. The massacre, which was to last four days, was now begun.

The prisoners, crowded in the Abbaye, had conjectured ever since morning, by the countenances of their jailers, — and by a few words which escaped them, — that something tragical was on foot. During that day, by order of the Commune, meals were served before the usual hour in all the prisons.

What meant this change in prison rules? It meant something fatal; and the victims anxiously awaited their impending doom.

Towards four o'clock the distant murmur of the crowd began to beat against the base of the prison walls, like the first waves of the rising tide. From the barred windows of the turret overlooking the Rue Saint Marguerite, a few saw the approaching carriages. Yells of rage and pain soon found their way into the prison through all its openings, and were followed by a cry: "The murderers are upon us!" Such yells and cries soon spread themselves throughout the corridors, and penetrated into the cells, — even into the deepest dungeons.

Next came this other cry: "The Swiss! the Swiss!"

There were one hundred and fifty Swiss in the Abbaye. It had been difficult, on August 10, to protect them from the wrath of the people. The Commune knew what hatred the populace entertained towards red uniforms. To begin the massacre by killing the Swiss was therefore an excellent way of initiating the people.

It took about two hours to exterminate these one hundred and fifty unlucky fellows.

When the last one was despatched, Major Reading, the mob called for the priests.

The priests answered that they were ready to die, but first wished to enjoy the sacrament of confession. This desire was granted, and they received two hours' respite.

To what were these two hours devoted? To forming a tribunal.

Who formed that tribunal? Who presided over it? Maillard!

CHAPTER XXX.

MAILLARD.

It was fit that the hero of July 14, of October 5 and 6, of June 20, of August 10, should also be the hero of September 2.

The ex-constable of the Châtelet must have wished to apply some formality, some solemn procedure, some appearance of legality to the massacre. — He wanted the Royalists killed, but he wanted them killed legally, under a decree pronounced by the populace, whom he considered the sole and infallible judges, alone possessing the right of acquittal.

Two hundred persons had already been murdered before Maillard installed his tribunal.

Only one person had been spared, the Abbé Sicard.

During the tumult two other persons — Parisot, the journalist, and La Chapelle, the King's steward — succeeded in leaping from a window, and so found themselves in the midst of this committee, which was holding its session at the Abbaye. The members of this committee had caused the fugitives to sit near by, and thus rescued them; but the murderers deserve no thanks, for it was not their fault that these two men escaped.

We have before mentioned that a curious document, to be seen at the Prefecture of Police, records the appointment of Marat upon the Vigilance Committee. The Abbaye registry, a document no less curious, is even now stained with the blood which spurted forth, and reached even the members of the tribunal.

Ye who are in search of affecting souvenirs, look at this book, and you will see these two notes continually recurring on its margins : " Killed by the judgment of the people," — " Acquitted by the judgment of the people," with the name *Maillard* beneath.

These notes are written in a large, beautiful, steady hand, perfectly plain, and peaceful, free from trouble, fear, or remorse. The last note is repeated forty-three times.

Maillard therefore saved, at the Abbaye, the lives of forty-three persons.

While he enters upon the duties of this office, at nine or ten o'clock in the evening, let us follow two men who are coming from the Jacobin Club, and walking towards the Rue Saint Anne. They are the high priest and the adept, the master and the disciple, — Saint-Just and Robespierre.

We saw Saint-Just on the evening of the reception of three new Enlightened Ones into the Lodge in the Rue Plâtrière. His complexion is still unwholesome, — too white for a man and too pale for a woman. His necktie is starched and stiff. The pupil of a shrewd, hard, and unsympathetic master, he has outdone his master in these qualities !

The master still feels somewhat moved by those political combats, wherein man hustles man, and passion meets passion.

As to the pupil, all that is transpiring seems to him only a game of chess on a large scale, where life is at stake. Beware, ye who are playing against him, for he is inflexible, and will not pardon the loser !

Robespierre doubtless had good reasons for not going to the Duplay home that evening. He said, in the morning, that he should probably go into the country. Saint-

Just's little hired lodging perhaps seemed to Robespierre a place safer than his own room, wherein to spend that terrible night between September 2 and 3.

Saint-Just was still an unknown young man. We might almost call him a child.

The two men entered this little room at about eleven.

It is useless to inquire what these two men were talking about. Their topic was the massacre, of course; only one spoke of it with the affected sensibility of a philosopher of the Rousseau school; while the other spoke with mathematical dryness, as a disciple of the school of Condillac. At times Robespierre would weep over the victims, like the fabled crocodile.

On entering his chamber, Saint-Just laid his hat on a chair, took off his tie, and began to undress.

"What art thou doing?" inquired Robespierre.

Saint-Just looked at him with such surprise, that Robespierre repeated his question: "I ask what thou art about?"

"I'm going to bed, of course!" answered the young man.

"And why go to bed?"

"Why? To do what one usually does in bed, — go to sleep."

"What? Thou thinkest of sleep on such a night as this?"

"Why not?"

"When thousands of victims are falling, or about to fall, — when this is to be the last night for so many who breathe now, but will breathe not to-morrow, thou yet thinkest of sleep!"

Saint-Just bethought himself a moment. Then, as if that short moment's silence enabled him to draw a new conviction from the bottom of his heart, he said: "Yes,

I know! but I know also that it is a necessary evil, since thou hast authorized it. Suppose this were the yellow fever, the plague, or an earthquake, by which so many people often perish, — more than will perish to-night. No good to society results from *such* disasters; yet out of the deaths of our domestic enemies will come our own security. I advise thee therefore to go home, and go to bed, as I do. Try to sleep, as I shall!"

While uttering these words, the hard-headed and cold politician lay down. Adding only, "Adieu till the morrow!" he straightway fell asleep.

He slept as long, as calmly, as peaceably as if nothing extraordinary had happened in Paris. He fell asleep about half-past eleven in the evening, and awoke towards six next morning.

He fancied he saw a shadow between daylight and himself. Turning towards the window, he saw Robespierre.

Supposing the latter had left him on the previous evening, and had returned thus early, he said: "What brings thee here so soon?"

"Nothing," said Robespierre. "I have n't been out."

"What — not been out?"

"No."

"Not been abed?"

"No."

"Nor asleep?"

"No."

"And where hast thou spent the night?"

"Standing here, with my forehead glued to the window-pane, listening to the noise in the streets."

Robespierre did not lie. Either from dread, anxiety, or remorse, he had not slept one second.

As to Saint-Just, sleep seemed no different to him that night than on any other.

There was on the other side of the Seine, in the very courtyard of the Abbaye, a man who slept no more than Robespierre. This man was leaning on the angle of the last passageway leading into the courtyard, and was almost lost in its shadow.

This last passageway had been transformed into a tribunal, and its interior presented a strange scene. There stood a large table, lit by two copper lamps, which were necessary even in the daytime. Around this table, heaped with sabres, swords, and pistols, twelve men were seated.

Their dull faces, their robust frames, their red caps and their carmagnole jackets, all indicated that they belonged to the common people.

Another man, making thirteen, was in their midst, and presided over them. He was dressed in a black and threadbare coat, a white vest, and short breeches. His look was solemn and mournful, and his strong head was bare.

This man was perhaps the only one of them all who knew how to read and write. Before him lay the jail registry, with writing materials.

These men constituted the Abbaye jury. They were terrible judges, whose sentences, from which there was no appeal, were carried out instantly, by some fifty executioners. These men were armed with sabres, daggers, and pikes; and they were dripping with blood, as they waited in the courtyard.

The President was Sheriff Maillard.

Did he come here of his own accord, or was he sent by Danton? Danton wished to have done in the other prisons, — in Carmes, Châtelet, and La Force, — what was done here at the Abbaye, — that is to say, have a few persons saved.

How did Maillard happen to be there? No one can answer that question.

On September 4 Maillard disappeared. He was no longer to be seen, no more to be heard from. He was, so to speak, submerged and drowned in blood.

Meanwhile, since the previous evening, at ten o'clock, he had been presiding over this tribunal.

On his arrival he had this table brought out, and the registry placed before him. He selected haphazard, and without distinction, twelve jurors. Then he seated himself at the end of the table, while six assistants sat on his right, and six on his left. The massacre was now resumed, but not without some method.

The name of each prisoner was read from the jailer's book. The turnkeys went after the prisoner, while Maillard related the cause of imprisonment. When the prisoner made his appearance, the President consulted his colleagues with a glance. If the prisoner was found guilty, Maillard simply said: "To La Force!"

Then the outside door would be opened, and the condemned person fell beneath the stabs of the butchers.

On the other hand, if the prisoner was acquitted, the black spectre, Maillard, would arise, lay his hand on the prisoner's head, and say: "Let him be released!" and that prisoner was saved.

When Maillard first presented himself at the prison door, a man detached himself from the wall and went to meet him.

As soon as the first words were exchanged between them, Maillard recognized this man, and bent his tall body before him. This was done, perhaps, not exactly as a token of submission, but at least as a sign of good-will.

Then Maillard had this man enter the prison; and when the table was set up and the tribunal established, the President said to him: "Stand there. When the person you are interested in is on trial, just nod to me."

The man had been there in his corner since the night before. He was leaning on his elbows, and waiting, silent and motionless.

This man was Gilbert. He had sworn to Andrée that he would not let her die, and he was trying to keep his promise.

From four o'clock until six in the morning, both slayers and judges took some rest. At six they ate some food.

During the three hours thus spent in repose and repast, the wagons, sent by the Commune, came to remove the dead. The coagulated blood in the courtyard was three inches deep. Their feet slipped in this blood. As it would take too long to clean it up, they brought a hundred trusses of straw, which they laid here and there on the ground; and then they covered over the straw with the garments of the dead, — particularly with the Swiss uniforms. The clothes and the straw absorbed the blood.

While the jurors and the slayers were asleep, the prisoners, shaken with terror, were lying awake; but hope returned when the yells ceased. Perchance the executioners had only a certain number of victims assigned to them, and the massacre would end with the slaughter of the Swiss and the King's Guards.

This hope was of short duration! Towards seven o'clock in the morning the cries and the calls began anew.

A jailer came down to tell Maillard that the prisoners were ready to die, but desired to hear Mass.

Maillard shrugged his shoulders, but granted the request.

He was busy, at that very moment, listening to the congratulations addressed to him by an envoy of the Commune, — a man of slender stature, with a mild countenance, dressed in a puce-colored suit, and a small wig.

This man was Billaud Varennes. He harangued the slaughterers in the following terms: "Brave Citizens! You have just purged society of some great culprits! The municipality is at a loss how to pay its debt to you. The spoils of the dead should, doubtless, belong to you, but this would look like theft. As an indemnity for that loss, I am requested to offer to each one of you twenty-four francs, which will be paid at once."

Billaud Varennes actually caused the salary for this bloody business to be immediately distributed to the murderers.

We will now explain what had happened, and thus show a reason for the Commune's generosity and satisfaction.

On the evening of September 2 some of the butchers, who were without shoes and stockings, looked wistfully upon those of the prisoners, and even went to the sectional headquarters, to ask permission to step into dead men's shoes. The officials consented.

We have said *some* of the butchers, because the majority of them were small traders, and belonged in that vicinity; as we learn from the "Inquest of the Second of September," preserved in the police archives.

After that, Maillard noticed that these slayers believed themselves absolved from asking permission, and that they took not only shoes and stockings, but everything else that was fit to take.

Maillard thought that this was interfering with his massacre, and he therefore referred the matter to the Commune. Hence the message of Billaud Varennes, and the religious silence with which this singular message was received.

Meanwhile the prisoners heard Mass. Abbé Lenfant, an ex-chaplain of the King, read the service, and Abbé de Rastignac, a religious author, served as acolyte.

The priests were two old gray-headed men, with venerable countenances. Their words of resignation and faith, preached from a sort of rostrum, had a great and beneficent influence upon their unfortunate auditors.

The little congregation was just kneeling to receive the benediction from the Abbé Lenfant, when the calls began anew.

The first name announced was that of the consoling priest. He crossed himself, finished his prayer, and then followed those who had come after him.

The second priest remained, and continued the solemn exhortation. He was called next, and in his turn followed those who summoned him.

The other prisoners remained together. Their conversation became strange, gloomy, terrible. They discussed the manner in which death was to be met, and the chances of torture more or less prolonged.

Some proposed to reach out their heads, in order that they might fall at one blow. Others proposed to raise their arms, so that death might penetrate their breasts. Some said they would hold their hands behind their backs, in order to oppose no resistance.

One young man detached himself from the rest, and said : "I shall soon know which is the easiest way."

He went up inside a turret, whose grated window overlooked the scene of the massacre. Thence he studied

death. Then, coming back, he said: "They who are stabbed in the breast die easiest."

At that very moment the following words were heard: "My God, I go to thee!" Then followed a sigh.

A man had fallen on the floor, and was beating himself against the flagstones.

This was Monsieur de Chantereine, Colonel of the King's Constitutional Guard. He had stabbed himself thrice in the breast with a knife.

The prisoners took the knife, but used it with hesitation. Only one other succeeded in killing himself.

Three women were there. Two were frightened girls, who clung close by two old men. The other was a lady in mourning. She was kneeling in prayer, and calmly smiling as she prayed.

The two young girls were Mademoiselle de Cazotte and Mademoiselle de Sombreuil. The two old men were their fathers.

The young woman in mourning was Andrée.

Monsieur de Montmorin was now called. This gentleman, it will be remembered, was formerly a cabinet-minister, and had made out the passports by means of which the King tried to escape. Montmorin was so unpopular that the day before, a young man came near being killed on account of bearing the same name.

Monsieur de Montmorin did not come in to hear the exhortations of the two priests. He remained in his cell, furious and disheartened, — shouting for his enemies, asking for arms, shaking the iron bars of his prison, and breaking an oak table, whose boards were two inches thick.

He had to be taken by force before the tribunal. When he entered the passageway, he was not only pale, but his eyes were inflamed and his fists were raised.

"To La Force!" said Maillard. The ex-minister took the word literally, and thought that he was simply to be transferred from one prison into another, and so he said to Maillard: "President, since it pleases thee to be called by that name, I hope that thou wilt have me taken there in a carriage, in order to avoid being exposed to the insults of villains."

"Have a carriage brought for Monsieur de Montmorin!" said Maillard, with exquisite politeness. Then, addressing Montmorin, he continued: "Take the trouble to be seated, while waiting for the carriage, Monsieur!" The Count sat down, muttering.

Five minutes later the carriage was announced. One of the supernumeraries had understood the part he was to play in the drama, and proved himself equal to the occasion.

The fatal door was opened, — the one leading unto death, — and Monsieur de Montmorin passed through it. Scarcely had he taken three steps when he fell, pierced by a score of pikes.

Next came other prisoners, whose unimportant names are buried in oblivion.

In the midst of these obscure names, one shone with peculiar brilliancy, that of Jacques Cazotte, — Cazotte the Seer, who, ten years before the Revolution, predicted to every one the doom awaiting him. This was the author of "The Devil in Love," of "Olivier," and "A Thousand and One Trifles." His was a frenzied imagination, an ecstatic soul, an ardent heart, and he embraced with eagerness the cause of the Counter-Revolution. In his letters, addressed to his friend Pouteau, who was employed at the Superintendency of the Civil List, he expressed these opinions, which were at this time punishable by death.

His daughter acted as his secretary, in writing these etters, and when her father was arrested, she came and asked the privilege of sharing his imprisonment.

If any one were allowed to entertain Royalist opinions, it should certainly be that old man, seventy-five years of age, whose feet were rooted in the monarchy of Louis Fourteenth, and who, to rock the Duke de Bourgogne to sleep, composed two songs which afterwards became popular, "All in the beautiful midst of Ardennes," and "Godmother, you must warm the bed." Such reasons might have prevailed with philosophers, but did not influence, in the least, the slaughterers at the Abbaye. Cazotte was therefore doomed beforehand.

As soon as Gilbert saw this handsome, gray-headed old gentleman, whose eyes were bright and whose countenance seemed inspired, he detached himself from the wall, and made a motion, as if to go and meet him. Maillard noticed that movement. Cazotte advanced, leaning on his daughter.

The latter, on entering the passageway, understood that she was in the presence of their judges. She therefore left her father, and pleaded for him so hard, and with such sweet words, that the jurors began to waver. The poor child noticed that hearts were really beating under those rude exteriors; but in order to find them, she must descend into the depths. She gave herself to the task with bowed head, and with Compassion as her guide. These men, who knew not what it was to shed tears, — these men wept! Maillard rubbed, with the back of his hand, those dry and hard eyes, which for the last twenty hours had contemplated the massacre without once looking down. He extended his arm, laid his hand on Cazotte's head, and said: "Let him be set at liberty!"

The young girl did not know what to make of it.

"Fear not, Mademoiselle," said Gilbert, "your father is safe."

Two of the jurors arose and accompanied Cazotte as far as the street, for fear, through some fatal mistake, the victim might be again given over to the death from which he had just been rescued. For this time, at least, Cazotte was safe.

The hours passed on, and the massacre continued. Benches were brought for the spectators. The wives and children of the slayers were permitted to witness the spectacle.

These men were really conscientious actors. It was not enough for them to be paid. They wanted also to be seen and applauded.

Towards five o'clock in the afternoon, Monsieur de Sombreuil was called. Like Cazotte, he was a well-known Royalist. The difficulty of saving him was made greater by the fact, not forgotten, that as Governor of the Hôtel des Invalides, on July 14, he had fired upon the populace. Moreover, his sons were abroad, in the enemy's ranks. One of them had so distinguished himself at Longwy, that the King of Prussia honored him with a decoration.

Monsieur de Sombreuil was noble and resigned, bearing high his head of gray hair, whose curls flowed down as far as the collar of his uniform. Like the other old man, he came leaning on his daughter's arm.

This time Maillard dared not order the prisoner's release. Making an effort, however, he said: "Whether he be innocent or guilty, I think that it would ill become the people to befoul their hands in the blood of this old gentleman."

Mademoiselle de Sombreuil heard these noble words,

which will weigh heavily in the divine balance. She drew her father through the door of life, exclaiming: "Saved, saved!"

No judgment had been pronounced, either to condemn or to acquit.

Two or three of the assassins put their heads through the doorway, and asked what they should do.

The jurors were silent. At last one member said: "Do just as you please!"

"Well," cried the butchers, "let the young girl drink to the health of the Nation!"

Upon this a man, covered all over with blood, with upturned sleeves and ferocious countenance, presented a glass to Mademoiselle de Sombreuil. Opinions are divided as to whether the glass contained blood or wine. Mademoiselle de Sombreuil exclaimed: "Long live the Nation!" She then wet her lips with the liquid, whatever it was, and Monsieur de Sombreuil was saved.

Two hours more went by. Then the voice of Maillard — as cool in summoning the living as was the voice of Minos in summoning the dead — called for Citizeness Andrée de Taverney.

This name caused Gilbert's limbs to quiver and his heart to fail. A life, more important to him than his own, was to be in peril, — to be condemned or saved.

"Citizens," said Maillard, to the members of the terrible tribunal, "the woman who is to appear before you is a poor creature, formerly devoted to the Austrian Women; but the latter — ungrateful, as queens ever are — recompensed her devotion by ingratitude. To that friendship this woman sacrificed all she had, — her fortune and her husband. You will see her enter. She is dressed in black. To whom does she owe her mourning?

To the prisoner in the Temple! Citizens, I demand of you the life of that woman."

The members of the tribunal made approving signs. One said: "We will see."

"Well then," said Maillard, "look!"

At this instant the door was actually opening, and one could see, in the gloom of the corridor, a woman dressed in black. Her head was covered with a black veil. She came in all alone, with a firm step and without assistance. She might have been taken for an apparition of that dreadful world, "that undiscovered country," as Hamlet puts it, "from whose bourne no traveller returns."

At sight of her the judges trembled. Advancing as far as the table, she lifted up her veil. Never had a more incontestable though pale beauty appeared to mortal eye. She was a marble divinity. All glances were fixed upon her. Gilbert was breathless.

Addressing Maillard, in a voice at once sweet and firm, she said: "Citizen, are you the President?"

"Yes, Citizeness," answered Maillard, surprised that he, the questioner, should himself be questioned.

"I am the Countess de Charny, wife of the Count de Charny, killed on that infamous day, the Tenth of August. I am a Royalist, a friend of the Queen. I deserve death, and now I call for it aloud."

The jurors uttered a cry of surprise. Gilbert turned pale, and withdrew as far as possible into the angle of the gateway, in order not to be seen by Andrée.

Seeing the consternation of Gilbert, Maillard said: "This woman is beside herself. Her husband's death has turned her brain. Let us pity her and spare her life. The people's justice does not punish insanity."

He arose, and was about to lay his hand upon her head,

as he was wont to do with those whom he proclaimed innocent; but Andrée pushed Maillard's hand aside, and said: "I have my full reason. If you wish to spare any one, let it be one who asks and deserves that favor, and not I, who do not merit such a boon, and positively refuse it."

Maillard turned towards Gilbert. Seeing him in a supplicating attitude, he added: "This woman is crazy. Set her at liberty!" and he motioned to a member of the tribunal to push her out through the door of life.

"Innocent!" cried the man. "Let her pass!"

Everybody made room for Andrée. The sabres, the pikes, the pistols were lowered before this statue of Grief. She had scarcely advanced ten steps when Gilbert, who was leaning against the window and watching her departure, all at once saw her pause and cry out: "Long live the King! Long live the Queen! Shame on the Tenth of August!"

Gilbert groaned, and ran into the yard. He saw the flash of a sabre. Quick as lightning it disappeared, and buried itself in Andrée's heart.

He was at her side just in time to catch the poor woman in his arms. Andrée turned towards him her fainting eyes. She recognized him, and murmured, in a voice scarcely audible: "Love Sebastien for both of us."

Then, in a still weaker voice she said: "I shall be near him, shall I not? — near my Oliver, near my husband, — forever!" And so she died!

Gilbert took her in his arms and raised her from the ground.

Fifty naked arms, stained with blood, threatened him; but Maillard appeared behind him, laid his hand upon his head, and said: "Let Citizen Gilbert pass. He is

carrying away the corpse of a poor demented woman, who has been killed by mistake."

They all made way. Gilbert passed through with Andrée's corpse, and without encountering the slightest resistance, so potent was Maillard's influence upon the multitude.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE TEMPLE DURING THE MASSACRE.

THOUGH organizing the massacre, whereof we have endeavored to give a specimen, — though desiring to subjugate the Assembly, and constrain it by terror, — the Commune was nevertheless very fearful lest some misfortune should befall the prisoners in the Temple.

Longwy had been taken by the Prussians, and Verdun was surrounded by the same enemy, only fifty leagues (about one hundred and twenty-five miles) from Paris. Under these circumstances the King and his family were precious hostages, which might become safeguards for the most compromised Republicans.

Commissioners were therefore sent to the Temple. Five hundred armed men would not have sufficed to guard this prison, and such a guard would perhaps have themselves opened the gates to the populace. One commissioner bethought himself of a shrewd device, — a surer defence than all the pikes and bayonets in Paris; and that was to encircle the Temple with a tricolored ribbon, bearing the following inscription:

CITIZENS: You know how to unite the love of order with vengeance. Respect this barrier! It is essential to our vigilance and our responsibility!

Strange times, when oaken doors were battered down, when iron gratings were demolished, and yet the populace knelt before a ribbon! Yes, the mob absolutely

knelt before that tricolored ribbon at the Temple, and kissed it! Not a rioter stepped over it!

On September 2 the King and Queen were ignorant of what was going on outside in Paris. True, there was a greater fermentation than usual, in and about the Temple, but they had begun to get accustomed to these feverish outbursts.

The King generally dined at two o'clock. He did the same that day; and after dinner he went down into the garden, as was his custom, with the Queen, Madame Elizabeth, Madame Royale, and the little Dauphin. During their walk they heard the outside clamors redouble.

One of the municipal officers, who followed the King, whispered to one of his colleagues. What he said was spoken sufficiently loud, however, for Cléry to overhear: "We were wrong in allowing them to promenade this afternoon."

It was then about three o'clock, the hour when the slaughter began, of the twenty-four prisoners on their way from the Mayor's office to the Abbaye.

The only domestics allowed to the King were Cléry and Hue. The unfortunate Thierry — whom we saw on August 10, lending his chamber to the Queen, that she might therein receive Monsieur Rœderer — was at the Abbaye, and was to be executed on September 3.

It appears that the second municipal officer was also of the opinion that they had done wrong in allowing the royal family to come into the garden, and both officials intimated to the august prisoners that they had better go in at once.

They obeyed the order; but scarcely were they assembled in the Queen's chamber when two other municipal officers entered, who were not just then on duty at the Small Tower. One of them, an ex-Capuchin friar

named Mathieu, came towards the King and said: "Do you know, Citizen, what is going on? The country is in the greatest peril."

"How do you expect me to know anything, Monsieur?" replied the King. "I am in prison, and debarred from intercourse with the world without."

"Well then, I will tell you what's going on. Our enemies have entered Champagne, and the King of Prussia is marching upon Châlons."

The Queen could not repress a movement of joy, which, though very rapid, did not escape the official's notice, and he said: "Yes, yes! We are perfectly aware that we shall perish, with our wives and children; but you will have to answer for it all! You will die before we do, and the people will be avenged."

"Let God's will be done," answered the King. "I have done all I could for my people, and I have nothing to reproach myself with."

The same official said, turning towards Monsieur Hue, who was standing near the door: "As to thee, the Commune has ordered me to put thee under arrest."

"Who is to be under arrest?" asked the King.

"Your servant."

"My servant? Which one?"

"This one," said the official, pointing to Monsieur Hue.

"Monsieur Hue? Of what is he accused?" asked the King.

"That does n't concern me; but he will be taken away this evening, and his papers will be put under seal."

As he went out the ex-friar said to Cléry: "Look out how you behave, for the same thing will happen to you, if you don't walk straight!"

Next day, September 3, at eleven in the morning,

the King and his family were again assembled in the Queen's room. A municipal officer ordered Cléry to go up into the King's rooms, where the valet found Manuel, and a few other members of the Commune. All their countenances expressed great anxiety. We have before said that Manuel was not eager to shed blood. There was a party of Moderates, even in the Commune.

"What does the King think of the removal of his valet?" asked Manuel.

"His Majesty is very uneasy about it," answered Cléry, who heretofore had been the Dauphin's special valet, not the King's.

"Nothing evil will befall him," continued Manuel "Nevertheless, I am requested to inform the King that Hue will not return, and that the Council will replace him. You may apprise the King of this decision."

"This mission is not included in the duties of my office, Citizen," answered Cléry. "Please be kind enough to excuse me from announcing to my master a fact which is sure to grieve him."

Manuel meditated a moment, and then said: "So be it! I am going down to the Queen's rooms."

He indeed went down, and found the King, who calmly received the news which the Attorney of the Commune announced.

Then the King said, with the same indifference he had shown on June 20 and August 10, and which he would retain even in presence of the scaffold: "Very well, Monsieur, I thank you. I will make use of my son's valet, and should the Council object, I will try to help myself."

Presently he added, with a slight movement of the head: "I am quite decided in this, for I care for no new servant."

"Have you any complaints to make?" asked Manuel.

"We are short of linen," said the King; "and this is a great privation to us. Do you think you could prevail upon the Commune to furnish us with some linen, according to our needs?"

"I will refer the matter to the Commune," answered Manuel.

Then, seeing that the King did not ask him for any outside news, Manuel withdrew.

At one o'clock the King manifested his desire for a walk. During their promenades they could always observe certain signs of sympathy, made from some window, from some attic, or from behind some blind; and this was consolatory.

On this occasion the municipal officers refused permission for the royal family to go out.

At two o'clock they sat down to dinner. Towards the middle of the dinner, drumbeats were heard, and increasing yells therewith, approaching nearer and nearer the Temple.

The royal family left the table, and assembled in the Queen's bedroom. The noise continued to draw nearer.

Who was causing this noise? They were butchering at La Force, as well as at the Abbaye, — not under the presidency of Maillard, but under that of Hébert. The La Force massacre was therefore the more terrible. Yet these latter prisoners might have been still more easily saved. There were fewer held for political offences at La Force than at the Abbaye. The assassins were in smaller numbers, and the spectators less eager. But instead of Hébert's dominating the massacre at La Force, as did Maillard at the Abbaye, the massacre controlled Hébert. Forty-three persons were saved at the Abbaye, whereas not ten were spared at La Force.

Amongst the prisoners at La Force was the poor little Princess Lamballe. We have met this lady in the last three books we have written, — in "The Queen's Necklace," "Ange Pitou," and in our present history, — and she was always the Queen's devoted shadow.

The populace hated her. They called her the Austrian Woman's Counsellor. She had been the Queen's confidant, her intimate friend, something more perhaps, — at least so went the report; but she was never the Queen's adviser. This darling little girl from Savoy, with her pretty, compressed mouth and her constant smile, was capable of loving, and she proved it; but a counsellor, — and, above all, a counsellor to a virile woman, obstinate and domineering, like the Queen, — that Lamballe never was.

The Queen loved her, as she loved Madame de Guéméné, Madame de Marsan, Madame de Polignac; but being light, moody, and fickle in all such sentiments, she perhaps made the Princess Lamballe suffer as much for being her friend, as she made Charny suffer as a lover. Only, as we know, the lover grew weary; while the friend, on the contrary, remained steadfast. Both perished for the royal woman whom they had loved.

The reader will recall that evening at the Floral Pavilion, when Lamballe held a reception; for she used to welcome to her apartments, those whom the Queen could not receive in hers.

Soon after that soirée Madame de Lamballe retired to England. There she might have remained, and spent a long life; but the good and sweet creature, knowing the Tuileries to be in danger, hastened back, and demanded her place at the Queen's side.

On August 10 she was separated from her royal friend. Conducted first to the Temple with the Queen, she was almost immediately transferred to La Force.

There she felt crushed under the burden of her devotion. She wished to die near the Queen, with the Queen. Under her royal eyes, death would appear sweet. Away from the Queen, Lamballe no longer had the courage to die. This woman was not of Andrée's stamp. She was ill from fright.

Lamballe was not ignorant of the hatred stirred up against her. Shut up, as she was, with Madame de Navarre, in one of the upper rooms of the prison, she saw Madame de Tourzel taken away on the night of September 2. It was as if some one had said to her: "You only remain to die later."

She lay in her bed. As each puff of noise was wafted near her, she hid herself between the sheets, like a frightened child. She fainted every minute. Again coming to herself she would say: "Oh, my God! I expected to be dead!" Then she would add: "If we could only die as we swoon, it would be neither painful nor difficult."

Murder was everywhere, — in the courtyard, at the doors, in the lower rooms. The odor of blood reached her, like funereal incense.

At eight in the morning her chamber door opened. Her fright this time was such that she did not faint, did not hide herself between the blankets. She looked around, and saw two National Guardsmen.

"Get up there, Madame!" said one of them, roughly, "You are to go to the Abbaye."

"Oh gentlemen," said she, "it is impossible for me to leave my bed, I am unable to walk." Then she added, in a voice scarcely audible: "If you want to kill me, you might as well do it here as anywhere else."

One of the men whispered into her ear while the other listened at the door: "Obey! We wish to save you!"

"Then go out. and let me dress myself," said the prisoner.

The two men did go out, and Madame de Navarre helped her to dress; or rather, she put on her clothes for her.

About ten minutes later the two men came in again. The Princess was ready; only, as she had said, she was unable to walk. The poor woman quivered all over. She took the arm of the National Guardsman who had spoken to her, and leaned upon him as she descended the stairs. When she arrived at the entrance, she found herself all at once in front of the bloody tribunal presided over by Hébert. At the sight of these men, with their rolled-up sleeves, — the men who had constituted themselves judges, — at the sight of those other men with blood-stained hands, who had appointed themselves executioners, — the Princess fainted away.

She was questioned three times; and three times she swooned, without being able to answer.

"Cheer up, for they wish to save you!" softly repeated the man who had already spoken to her.

This promise restored some strength to the poor woman, and she murmured: "What do you want with me, gentlemen?"

"Who are you?" asked Hébert.

"Marie Louise de Savoie Carignan."

"Your business?"

"Superintendent of the Queen's Household."

"Have you any knowledge about the plots of the Court on the Tenth of August?"

"I am not aware that there were any plots; and if there were, I was ignorant of them."

"Swear allegiance to Liberty and Equality! Swear hatred to the King, the Queen, and Royalists."

"I will willingly swear to the first two points, but cannot swear to the rest, because this feeling is not in my heart."

"Swear, swear!" softly whispered the National Guardsman. "Swear, or you're a dead woman!"

The Princess extended her hands, and totteringly and instinctively took a step towards the further wicket.

"Why don't you swear?" asked her protector.

As if, in the terror of death, she feared lest she should pronounce a shameful oath, the Princess put her hand over her mouth, in order to keep back the words which might escape in spite of herself. A few moans were heard through her fingers.

"She has sworn!" cried the National Guardsman who accompanied her. Then he said to her softly: "Pass out quickly, through the door in front of you. Cheer for the Nation as you go, and you are saved."

As she went out she found herself in the arms of a butcher who was awaiting her. It was no other than Big Nicholas, who cut off the heads of the two bodyguards at Versailles. This time he had promised to save the Princess. He drew her towards something shapeless, quivering, and bloody, and whispered: "Cheer for the Nation! Hurry up, and shout for the Nation!"

Doubtless she would have screamed out these words, but unfortunately, on opening her eyes, she beheld in front of her a heap of corpses, upon which a man was trampling. The blood gushed from beneath his hobnailed shoes, as grape-juice splashes in the vintage.

She beheld this terrible spectacle, turned around, and could only exclaim: "Fie! What horrors!"

This cry was smothered, in order to save her.

It is said that her father-in-law, Monsieur de Penthièvre, had given a hundred thousand francs to effect her release.

She was pushed into the narrow passage leading from the Rue Saint Antoine to the prison, and which is called now the Priest's Alley, when a miserable fellow, a barber named Charlot, broke through the hedge formed around her, and snatched her cap off with his pike. This man had recently joined the Volunteers as a drummer. Was his intention simply to throw off her bonnet, or did he mean to strike her in the face?

The blood flowed. Blood calls for more blood. Another man threw a stick of wood at the Princess, which struck her in the neck. She stumbled, and fell upon one knee.

There was now no hope of saving her. From all sides sabres and pikes rained upon her. She did not utter a single cry, for she was virtually dead as soon as she spoke her last words.

Scarcely had the Princess expired, — perhaps she was still alive, — when they rushed upon her. In an instant her clothes were torn off, even to her under-garments. Palpitating with the last quavers of agony, she found herself nude. An obscene sentiment presided over her death, and hastened this robbery of her raiment. Her murderers wanted to see this beautiful form, to which the women of Lesbos would have rendered homage.

Naked as God had created her, she was laid on a bench, before all eyes. Four men installed themselves in front of her, washing and wiping away the blood flowing from seven wounds. A fifth man described, and pointed out with a stick, those corporeal beauties which, as people said, had formerly brought her into royal favor, and which now caused her death.

She remained thus exposed from eight o'clock until noon. At last the listeners grew tired of this lecture, on the scandalous history of the corpse. One man came

forward and cut off her head. That neck, long and flexible as a swan's, offered little resistance!

Grison was the name of the wretch who committed this crime, — more hideous, perhaps, than if committed upon a living person. History is the most inexorable of all divinities. She plucks a quill from her wing, dips it in blood, writes a name, and that name is held up for the execration of posterity! Subsequently that same man was guillotined as chief of a band of thieves.

A second man, named Rodi, opened the Princess's breast, and plucked out her heart.

A third, named Mamin, attacked another part of the body.

It was on account of her love for the Queen that this poor lady was thus mutilated. What hatred, then, must the Queen herself have inspired!

They spitted upon pikes the three detached parts of this ill-used body, and marched away towards the Temple. An immense crowd followed the three assassins; but with the exception of a few children and a few drunkards, who vomited at the same time wine and gall, the procession was silent and terror-stricken.

They halted at a hairdresser's shop on the route, and went in.

The man who carried the head placed it on a table, and said: "Curl this head for me! It 's going to visit its mistress, at the Temple."

After the Princess's beautiful hair was curled, the crowd kept on towards the Temple, — this time, with loud yells.

These were the yells which the royal family heard while at their dinner-table.

The assassins were approaching, for they entertained the abominable thought of exhibiting to the Queen this

head, this heart, and the other portion of the Princess's remains.

The ruffians presented themselves at the Temple, but the tricolored ribbon barred their entrance. These men — these assassins, these murderers, these butchers — dared not step over a ribbon!

They asked that a deputation of six fellows, three of whom were carrying the parts we have mentioned, might enter the Temple and march around the Donjon, in order to show these bloody trophies to the Queen. The request seemed so very reasonable, that it was granted without discussion!

The King was seated, pretending to play a game of backgammon with the Queen. Under the pretext of watching the game the other prisoners could draw nearer to each other, and so speak a few stray words, unheard by the municipal officers.

All at once the King saw one of the officials close the door, rush towards the window, and draw the curtains.

This man's name was Danjou. He was a former seminarist, a sort of giant, who, on account of his size, they called the Priestly Six-footer.

"What is the matter?" asked the King.

The official, seeing the Queen's back turned, took advantage of this, and signalled to the King not to question him.

Yells, insults, and threats reached the chamber, notwithstanding the fact that the door and windows were closed. The King understood that something terrible was taking place, and put his hand upon the Queen's shoulder, to keep her in her sitting position.

At this moment, knocks were heard at the door. Sorely against his will, Danjou was obliged to open it.

There stood some officers of the guard and some

municipals, whom the King addressed. "Gentlemen, is my family safe?"

"Yes," answered a man, dressed in a National Guardsman's uniform, and wearing double epaulets; "but a rumor has gone abroad that there is no one left here at the Tower, and that all of you have escaped. Place yourself at the window, in order to satisfy the people."

The King, ignorant of what really was going on, saw no reason for not obeying. He made a movement as if to advance towards the window; but Danjou stopped him, saying: "Don't do that, Monsieur!"

Turning towards the officers of the National Guard, Danjou added: "The people should have more confidence in their magistrates."

"Well," said the man with the epaulets, "that is n't all! They want you to go to the window, to see the head and heart of the Princess Lamballe, which they have brought here on purpose to show you, that you may know how the people treat their tyrants. I advise you, therefore, to appear at the window. Otherwise, these things will be brought up here."

The Queen uttered a cry, and fainted. Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale caught her in their arms. The King said: "You might have spared yourself the trouble, Monsieur, of announcing this terrible misfortune to the Queen." Then, pointing to the group of ladies, he continued: "See what you have done!"

The man shrugged his shoulders, and went out, singing the Carmagnole.

At six o'clock Pétion's secretary presented himself. He had come to pay to the King the sum of 2,500 francs.

Seeing the Queen standing motionless, and thinking she was doing this out of respect for him, he had the kindness to invite her to a seat.

Madame Royale, speaking of this event, says in her Memoirs:

My mother bore herself thus because, since that dreadful scene, she had remained upright and motionless, taking note of nothing that was going on in the room.

Terror had changed Marie Antoinette into a statue.

CHAPTER XXXII.

VALMY.

And now let us for an instant turn our eyes away from these fearful scenes of massacre, and follow, through the defiles of the Argonne, one of the characters of our story upon whom rested, at that moment, the supreme destinies of France. It will be readily understood that we refer to Dumouriez.

Dumouriez, as we have seen, on leaving the Royal Council, returned to his employ as an active general; and after the flight of Lafayette from France, he received the title of Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the East.

Dumouriez's nomination, by the men in power, was a sort of miracle of intuition. He was in fact detested by some and despised by others; but, more fortunate than Danton on September 2, he was unanimously acknowledged to be the only man who could save France.

The Girondists, who had originally nominated Dumouriez, now hated him. It will be remembered that they had been the means of his entering the Royal Council, and that he afterwards drove their special representatives out of it; and yet they went to seek him, obscure as was his position in the Army of the North, and made him General-in-Chief.

The Jacobins always hated and despised Dumouriez. They understood, however, that glory was the principal ambition of this man, and that he would conquer or die. Robespierre did not dare to support Dumouriez

personally, on account of the General's bad reputation in the Jacobin party, but persuaded Couthon to give this support.

Danton neither hated nor despised Dumouriez. He was a man of robust temperament, judging things from a lofty position, and caring little about reputation, — one of these men who do not disdain to employ vice itself, if it can be made to contribute to their ends. Danton knew what advantages could be obtained from Dumouriez, but mistrusted his stability. He sent two men after him. One was Fabre d'Églantine, — that is to say, Danton's Mind. The other was Westermann, — Danton's Arm.

All the forces of France were put into the hands of a man who was called an intriguer. Luckner, an old, weather-beaten German soldier, who had proved his incapacity at the beginning of the campaign, was now sent to Châlons, to levy recruits. Dillon, a brave and distinguished soldier, of a higher standing in the military hierarchy than Dumouriez himself, received orders to obey him.

Kellermann also was put under the command of this man, to whom weeping France was entrusting her sword, and saying: "Defend me! for thou art the only one whom I know who can defend me!" Kellermann grumbled, swore, and wept; but he obeyed. He however obeyed with an ill-grace; and the cannon's boom was needed to make of him what he really was, a truly devoted Patriot.

The march of the allied sovereigns upon Paris was mapped out into a certain number of stages; but after the capture of Longwy and the surrender of Verdun, the allies all at once halted.

What reason can be assigned for this? A spectre was standing between them and Paris, — the spectre of Beaurepaire.

Beaurepaire was an old rifle-officer, who had formed, and was commanding the Maine and Loire Battalion. As soon as he heard that enemies had placed a foot on the soil of France, he and his men crossed the country as fast as possible, from west to east.

On their way they encountered a Patriot Deputy from their section, who was returning homeward, and who asked them: "What news shall I take to your families?"

"That we are dead!" answered a voice.

No Spartan, marching to Thermopylæ, could have given an answer more sublime!

The enemy arrived before Verdun, as we have said, on August 30, 1792. On August 31 the city was called upon to surrender.

Beaurepaire and his men, supported by Marceau, wanted to fight to the death. The Council of Defence, composed of the town officers, assisted by the principal inhabitants of the place, ordered a surrender.

Beaurepaire smiled disdainfully, and said: "I have sworn to die, rather than surrender. You may survive in shame and dishonor, if you wish, but I shall remain faithful to my oath. Here is my last word — *I die!*" and Beaurepaire blew out his brains.

This spectre was as huge as the Giant Adamastor, and more terrible. Now the allied sovereigns — who had believed, on the statements of the Royalist refugees, that France would meet them with open arms — saw something else.

They saw the soil of France, so fruitful and so populous, changed, as by a magic wand. Grain disappeared, as if swept away westward by a whirlwind. The armed peasant alone remained erect in his furrow. Those who had guns took their guns. Those who had scythes took their scythes. Those who had only one pitchfork took that one pitchfork.

The weather was also favorable to France. A fearful rain drenched the men, softened the ground, and spoiled the roads. This rain fell upon one army as well as upon the other, — upon the just and unjust, the French and Prussians alike; only everything else aided France, while everything else was hostile to the Prussians.

For the Prussians, the peasants had nothing but their guns, their scythes, and their pitchforks; or, worse than that, nothing but their unripe grapes. For his compatriots, the peasants had a glass of wine, hid behind a bundle of fagots, a glass of beer, put away in an unknown corner of the cellar, and dried straw to spread over the ground, and make real beds for the soldiers.

Many mistakes were made, and those of Dumouriez were not among the slightest. In his Memoirs he records them all, — his own, as well as those of his lieutenants.

He had written to the National Assembly:

> The defiles of Argonne are the Thermopylæ of France; but fear not! Happier than Leonidas, I shall not perish there!

The defiles of Argonne were ill-guarded. One of them was taken, and Dumouriez was obliged to retreat. Two of his lieutenants missed their way, and were routed. Dumouriez went astray, and was nearly lost himself. He had fifteen thousand men, but they were so completely demoralized that twice they were put to flight by fifteen hundred Prussians! Nevertheless Dumouriez was the one man who did not despair. He retained his courage and even his cheerfulness. In writing to the Council he said: "I answer for everything." Although he was pursued, outflanked, and intercepted, he nevertheless succeeded in effecting a junction with Beurnonville's ten thousand men, and Kellermann's fifteen thousand. He

rallied his routed generals, and on September 19 he was in camp at Saint Menehould, where he could put his two hands upon seventy-six thousand men ; while the Prussians numbered only seventy thousand.

It is true that this army often complained. The soldiers were sometimes two or three days without bread. Then Dumouriez would mingle with his soldiers, and say : "My friends, the famous Marshal of Saxony has written a book upon War, in which he pretends that troops should be deprived of bread, at least once a week, in order to render them, in case of necessity, less susceptible to privation. We have come to that point, already ; but you are far better off than those Prussians, whom you see before you. They are sometimes four days without bread, and have to eat their dead horses. You have lard, rice, and flour. Make flapjacks, and Liberty will season them !"

There was something worse. The scum of Paris, the scum which rose to the surface on September 2, had now been pushed into the army. These miserable fellows came singing the *Ça ira*, and declaring that epaulets, crosses of Saint Louis, and embroidered coats must all be set aside. They would tear off decorations and plumes, and put all people and things on an equality.

In this state of mind they arrived at the camp, and marvelled at the void which was straightway formed around them. No one cared to answer either their threats or their advances. The General, however, announced that a review would take place on the morrow.

Next day the new arrivals found themselves, by an unexpected manœuvre, surrounded by a numerous and hostile body of cavalry, ready to sabre them, and artillery, ready to crush them.

In all, the rebellious soldiers formed seven battalions. Dumouriez now advanced towards them and exclaimed: "You fellows, — for I will not call you citizens, soldiers, or my children, — you fellows see before you this artillery, and behind you this cavalry. That is to say, you are placed between sword and fire! You have dishonored yourselves by your crimes. I shall suffer neither assassins nor thieves here, and I will have you all hacked to pieces at the slightest mutiny! If you amend your ways, and behave like the brave army into which you have had the honor of being admitted, you will find me a good father. I know there are among you certain scoundrels, charged to urge you on to crime. Drive them away yourselves, or else denounce them to me. I hold you responsible for one another!"

Not only did these men bend their necks, and become excellent soldiers, not only did they drive away the unworthy from their ranks, — but more, they cut in pieces that miserable Charlot, who struck the Princess Lamballe with a club, and carried her head at the end of a pike.

Such was the condition of things when Kellermann was expected, — Kellermann, without whom nothing could be risked.

On September 19 Dumouriez received notice that his lieutenant was at a distance of five miles from him, upon the left.

Dumouriez had him at once instructed to encamp, on the following day, between Dampierre and Élize, behind the Auve. This position was clearly indicated.

While sending this message to Kellermann, Dumouriez saw the Prussian army unroll itself over the mountains of Lune, which showed that the Prussians were between Paris and himself, and, consequently, nearer Paris.

It was more than probable that the Prussians wanted

battle. Dumouriez therefore sent word to Kellermann to take the heights of Valmy and of Gizaucourt as his field of battle. Kellermann confounded his camp with his field of battle, and stopped on the heights of Valmy. This was either a great mistake or a terrible venture.

Placed as he was, Kellermann could turn backward, only by causing his army to cross a narrow bridge. He could fall back upon Dumouriez's right, only by crossing a marsh, where he would be swallowed up. He could fall back on Dumouriez's left, only through a deep valley, where he would be crushed. No possibility, therefore, was left for retreat.

Was this what the brave Alsatian intended? If so, he grandly succeeded. A fine spot, this, if an army was resolved either to conquer or die.

Brunswick beheld our soldiers with astonishment, and said to the King of Prussia: "Those fellows, who have lodged themselves up there, have evidently decided never to retreat."

However, the Prussians had been led to believe that Dumouriez was headed off. They had been assured that this army of tailors, vagabonds, and cobblers, as the refugees called them, would disperse at the first volley of German cannon.

The French had neglected to have General Chazot occupy the heights of Gizancourt. He was stationed on the highway to Châlons, instead of on the heights, whence he could attack his enemies in the flank. The Prussians took advantage of this mistake, occupied the position themselves, and attacked Kellermann's corps.

The day began in gloom, and was darkened by a heavy fog. This the Prussians did not mind, for they knew where the French army lay. The French (so the Prussians believed) were all on the heights of Valmy.

Sixty iron mouths blazed away all at once. The Prussian artillery-men fired at haphazard; but as they were firing into masses of troops, it did not seem necessary to aim carefully.

The first shots were terrible, and fell hard upon that enthusiastic French army, who would have well known how to attack, but had scarcely learned how to wait.

And then luck — it cannot be called skill — was at first against us. The Prussian shells fired two powder-wagons, which burst. The drivers jumped from their horses, in order to shelter themselves from the explosion, and were arrested as deserters.

Kellermann pushed his horse towards the place of confusion, which was darkened by fog and smoke. All at once both rider and horse fell, as if by a thunderbolt. The horse had been shot through by a bullet, but the man was fortunately safe. He jumped upon another horse, and rallied a few battalions which were disbanding.

It was then eleven o'clock in the morning, and the fog began to dissipate.

Kellermann noticed that the Prussians were forming into three columns, and were preparing to attack the Valmy plateau. He in turn formed his troops into three columns.

Going throughout the lines he said: "Soldiers, let not a single gun be fired! Wait till you can meet the enemy man to man, and then receive them on your bayonets."

Putting his hat at the end of his sabre, he then continued: "Hurrah for the Nation! Let us on! and conquer for her!"

Brunswick shook his head. Had he been alone, the Prussian army would not have advanced another step; but the Prussian King was there. His Majesty wanted to join the battle, and must be obeyed.

The Prussians marched up, firm and gloomy, under the direction of the King and Brunswick. They crossed the space which separated them from their enemies, with the solidity of an old army of the Great Frederick. Each man seemed bound, as with an iron ring, to the one before him.

All at once this immense military serpent seemed to break in the middle, but the fragments were soon reunited.

Five minutes later the lines were again sundered, and were once more brought together.

Dumouriez's twenty pieces of artillery now attacked the flank of the Prussian column, and crushed it beneath a rain of fire. The head of the column could not advance, for it was continually drawn back by the writhing convulsions of the main body, which was riddled by grapeshot.

Brunswick saw that the day was lost, and ordered a retreat to be sounded.

The King, on the contrary, ordered a charge, put himself at the head of his soldiers, and pushed his docile and brave infantry under the double fire of Kellermann and Dumouriez. His ranks were dashed to pieces against the French lines.

Something luminous and splendid hovered over this young French army, — Faith!

Brunswick said: "Such fanatics have not been seen since the religious wars!"

These were sublime fanatics, — fanatics for Liberty. The heroes of 1792 had just begun the great conquest, the war which was to end in the conquest of mind.

On September 20 Dumouriez saved France.

The day following, the National Convention was emancipating Europe, by proclaiming the French Republic!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SEPTEMBER TWENTY-FIRST.

At noon, on September 21, before it was known in Paris that Dumouriez's sudden victory had saved France the night before, the doors of the Riding School were opened, and the seven hundred and forty-nine members of the new Convention might have been seen entering their hall slowly and solemnly, casting questioning looks at one another.

Two hundred of these men had been members of the former Assembly; and often this Convention was called the Assembly, from force of habit.

The National Convention was elected under the influence produced by the news of September. One might therefore expect it to be a reactionary assemblage. It was more than that, for several nobles were in it. An extremely democratic impulse led to a call for even servants to vote, and many of them nominated their masters.

These new Deputies were mostly from the middle classes, — doctors, lawyers, professors, sworn priests, literary men, journalists, and merchants. Their minds were uneasy and wavering. Five hundred of them, at least, were neither Girondists nor Mountaineers, — as the extreme Republicans were called, on account of the position of the benches they occupied in the Convention. Events would determine what place the new majority was to take in this Assembly.

All were united, however, in a twofold hatred, — hatred of those cruel September days, and hatred of the Paris Deputies, almost entirely chosen from the Commune (that is, from the Municipal Council so called) which was responsible for the awful tragedy of those days.

It almost seemed as if the blood then shed was flowing across the legislative hall, and separating the hundred Mountaineers from the rest of the Convention. The members of the Centre fairly leaned towards the Right, or conservative party, as if to avoid this red river.

When we recall the men, and remember the events which had occurred, we must confess that the Mountain presented a formidable aspect.

As we have before said, the members of the Commune were chosen from the inferior ranks of the populace; and above the Commune was that famous Vigilance Committee, which had generated the massacre.

At the summit of this triangle of organizations — the Convention, the Commune, and the Vigilance Committee — rose three terrible countenances, — or rather three profoundly characteristic masks, — like the three heads of a hydra.

First, there was the cold and expressionless face of Robespierre, its parched skin glued upon a narrow forehead. His blinking eyes were hidden behind a pair of spectacles. His extended hands were cramped upon his knees, reminding one of those stiffly seated Egyptian figures carved in porphyry, the hardest of all marbles. He was a sort of Sphinx, who alone seemed to possess the watchword of the Revolution, though no one dared ask him for it.

Next came Danton, with his agitated expression, his twisted mouth, his irregular face, — stamped with a sublime ugliness, — and his fabulous body, half man,

half bull. In spite of all this, Danton almost inspired observers with sympathy; for one could not help feeling that it was the beatings of his profoundly patriotic heart which caused that flesh to creep and that lava to flow, and that his large hand, always obedient to his first impulse, was ready to strike down a standing enemy, or to raise a fallen foe, with equal celerity.

Near these two countenances, so different in expression, — behind and above them, — appeared, not a man, — for it is not possible for a human being to attain such an unparalleled degree of ugliness, — but a monster, a grotesque fantasy, a vision sinister and ridiculous, — Marat! His brazen face was swollen with bile and blood. His eyes were insolent and bloodshot. His big and flabby mouth seemed specially designed to launch insults, — or rather, to vomit them. His crooked and supercilious nose inhaled, through its flaring nostrils, that odor of popularity which exhaled from the gutter and flowed with the sewer.

Marat was dressed no better than the dirtiest of his admirers. His head was tied up with a soiled piece of linen. His shoes, with nails in their soles, were without buckles, and often without strings. His pantaloons were made of rough cloth, and were spotted — or covered all over — with mud. His unbuttoned shirt exposed his lean breast, which was large, when compared with the size of his whole body. His narrow black cravat, greasy and crumpled, revealed the hideous ligaments of his neck, which were ill-adjusted, and caused his head to lean towards the left. His thick hands were always threatening fists. In their more peaceful intervals these hands would toil amid his tangled hair.

On the whole, with his giant's trunk perched upon a dwarf's legs, Marat was hideous to look upon. The first

inclination of all beholders was to turn away; but the eye could not withdraw quickly enough to avoid reading upon his visage the words *September Second!* and then the beholder's gaze would remain staring and horrified, as before the Medusa's mythologic head.

These were the three men whom the Girondists accused of aspirations towards dictatorship. The three, on the other hand, denounced the Girondists for advocating democratic Federalism.

Two other men, linked with our story by different interests and opinions, were seated at the two opposite sides of the Convention. They were Billot and Gilbert.

Gilbert was on the extreme Right, between Lanjuinais and Kersaint. Billot was at the extreme Left, between Thuriot and Couthon.

The members of the former Legislative Assembly, who escorted the new Conventionists to their benches, came there to solemnly relinquish their old authority, and place their power in the hands of their successors.

François de Neufchâteau, the last President of the dissolved Assembly, mounted the rostrum, and spoke as follows:

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATION: The Legislative Assembly has ceased to exercise its functions, and places the government in your hands.

The object of your efforts should be to give the French people Liberty, Law, and Peace: Liberty, without which Frenchmen can no longer live; Law, which is the firmest foundation of Liberty; and Peace, the sole and only legitimate end of war.

Liberty, Law, and Peace! These three words were engraved by the Greeks upon the portals of the Temple at Delphi. You should engrave them upon the entire soil of France!

The Legislative Assembly had existed one year, during which great and important events had taken place, — on June 20, on August 10, and on September 2 and 3.

At the close of that year France was at war with the two great powers of the North. There was civil war in the Vendée. There was a debt of 2,200,000,000 (over two billions) of francs in assignats, or paper bonds. Then there was the victory of Valmy, won on the previous day, but still unknown in Paris.

Pétion was chosen President by acclamation. The following secretaries were elected: Condorcet, Brissot, Rabaut Saint-Étienne, Vergniaud, Camus, and Lasource. Five of these were Girondists.

The whole Convention, with the exception of thirty or forty members, was in favor of a Republic. The Girondists, however, in a meeting at Madame Roland's, decided that the discussion upon the change of government should be admitted only at the proper hour and in its regular order, — that is, when all the executive and legislative committees had been lawfully appointed.

On September 20, however, the very day of the battle of Valmy, other fighters were engaged in a far more decisive affray.

Saint-Just, Lequinio, Panis, Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and several other members-elect of the Convention, were dining at a restaurant in the Palace Royal. They resolved that by the next day the word *Republic* should be hurled at their opponents.

"If our opponents take it up," said Saint-Just, "they are lost, for the word will be first pronounced by our party. If our opponents discard that word, they will be equally lost; for in antagonizing this popular passion, the Girondists will be submerged in the unpopularity which we will heap upon their heads."

Collot d'Herbois took it upon himself to make the motion. No sooner had François de Neufchâteau conveyed to the Convention the authority of the old Assembly, than Collot d'Herbois asked for the floor.

His request being granted, he mounted the rostrum, and the watchword was given to the impatient waiters.

He said: "Representative Citizens: I propose that the first decree of the Assembly, which has just met, be the abolition of all royalty."

These words were received with tremendous applause, both from the hall and the galleries.

Only two opponents arose. They were two well-known Republicans, Barrère and Quinette. They asked that the Convention should await the wishes of the people.

"The wishes of the people? What for?" asked a poor village curate. "What is the use of deliberation over a subject upon which all parties are agreed? In the moral order, kings belong to the same class as monsters do in the physical order. Royal Courts are the workshops of all crime. The history of kings is the martyrology of nations!"

The members asked one another who this man could be, who delivered this short but energetic history of royalty. Few only knew his name, which was Grégoire.

The Girondists felt the blow aimed against them. Perhaps they were henceforth to sail only in the wake of the Mountaineers.

Ducos, the friend and pupil of Vergniaud, cried out from his place: "Let us draw up the decree at this very sitting. The decree needs no introduction or explanation. After the light spread abroad by the Tenth of August, the history of the crimes of Louis Sixteenth is a sufficient prelude to your edict abolishing royalty!"

Thus was the balance again restored between the parties. The Mountaineers demanded the abolition of royalty, but the Girondists asked for the establishment of the Republic.

The Republic was not decreed by ballot; it was voted by acclamation. The Deputies threw themselves into the future, not merely for the sake of fleeing from the past. They rushed into the unknown, out of hatred for the known.

The proclamation of the Republic met an immense popular need. It was the consecration of the long struggle sustained by the people, since their rights had begun to receive legislative recognition; and they had, through their Commune, taken the law into their own hands. This decree involved the absolution, from all offences, of the Maillotins, of the League, of the Jacquerie, of the Fronde, of the Revolution, — the acquittal of all sinners against royalty. The proclamation of the Republic meant the crowning of the masses at the expense of kings.

So much more freely did every citizen breathe, that it seemed as if the weight of the throne had been lifted from every breast.

The ensuing hours of illusion were short, but splendid. It was supposed that a Republic had been proclaimed. Instead of that, a lawless rebellion had been consecrated. No matter! A great deed had been done, which would shake the world for more than a century.

Those true Republicans, the Girondists, — who were at least the purest, and wished the Republic to be free from crimes, and intended, the next day, to hurl themselves in the face of the triumvirate of Danton, Robespierre, and Marat, — the Girondists were filled with joy.

For them the Republic meant the realization of their fondest wishes. Thanks to them, the true type of human government, lost beneath the ruins of twenty centuries, was found again. Under Francis the First and Louis Fourteenth, France had been a subjugated Athens. Under Girondist lead, she would become an independent Sparta.

This was a beautiful, a sublime dream; and this is why the Girondists that evening held a banquet at the home of Minister Roland. There were assembled Vergniaud, Guadet, Louvet, Pétion, Boyer Fonfrède, Barbaroux, Gensonné, Grangeneuve, and Condorcet. Before another year had elapsed these guests were to meet at another banquet, far more solemn even than this one! but for the present, each turned his back on the morrow, shut his eyes to the future, and willingly drew a curtain before the vision of that unknown ocean upon which they were launched; though they could already hear the roaring of that whirlpool, which, like the *Maelstrom* of Scandinavian legends, was soon to absorb, if not the whole ship, at least the pilots and crew.

Their thought was born. It had taken to itself a form, — "a local habitation and a name." There it stood before their eyes! The young Republic had sprung forth, all armed with helmet and spear, like Minerva from the head of Jove. What more could these pure-minded Republicans desire?

During the two hours which this solemn love-feast lasted, — like the *agapæ* of the early Christians, — high thoughts were exchanged, upheld with great devotion. These men were talking about their lives, as of something which no more belonged to themselves, but to the Nation. They reserved to themselves only their honor!

that was all. If need be, they would relinquish fame and renown.

Some there were, in the foolish intoxication of youthful hope, who saw opening before them those cerulean and infinite horizons, found only in dreams. These were the young and fiery spirits, who had but recently entered that most exacting of all struggles, the contest of the political arena. Among these were Barbaroux, Rebecqui, Ducos, and Boyer Fonfrède.

Others there were who halted by the roadside, in order to regain strength for the remaining journey. These were the men who had borne the heat and burden of the legislative day, — men like Guadet, Gensonné, Grangeneuve, and Vergniaud.

Finally, there were those who felt that they had reached the goal, and understood that their popularity was on the wane. Lying under the shade of the ripening foliage of the Tree of the Republic, they sadly asked themselves whether it was really worth their while once more to rise, gird up their loins, and resume the pilgrim staff, only to stumble over the first obstacle. Such men were Roland and Pétion.

In the eyes of all these men, who was their future chief? Who was the principal founder of the young Republic, and must be its future regulator? — Vergniaud!

When dinner was ended, he filled his glass and said: "Friends, a toast!"

All stood, like himself, and he continued: "To the immortality of the Republic!"

All repeated after him: "To the immortality of the Republic!"

He was about to put the glass to his lips, when Madame Roland exclaimed, "Wait!"

She wore on her bosom a fresh rose, — just blossoming,

like the new era upon which they were entering. She took this rose, and as an Athenian woman scattered leaves into the goblet of Pericles, so did Madame Roland scatter these rose-leaves in Vergniaud's glass.

Vergniaud smiled sadly, drained the glass, and then whispered to Barbaroux, who sat at his left hand: "Alas! I fear that noble soul is mistaken. Not rose-leaves, but cypress twigs should flavor our wine to-night. In drinking to a republic whose feet are wet with the blood of September's horrors, God knows if we are not drinking to our own destruction. — Never mind!" he added, raising a sublime look to Heaven, "were this wine my heart's blood, I would drink it to Liberty and Equality!"

"The Republic forever!" repeated all the guests in chorus.

Almost at that very moment, when Vergniaud offered his toast, and the guests were responding with cheers for the Republic, trumpets were sounding in front of the Temple, imposing a great stillness.

From their chambers, the windows being open, the King and Queen could hear a city officer, with a sonorous, firm, and powerful voice, proclaiming the abolition of Royalism and the establishment of the Republic.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ROMANCE OF THE MARTYRED KING.

THOUGH printing under the form of fiction, my readers can see with what impartiality I have placed before their eyes, not only the terrible, the cruel, the bloodthirsty, the debased features of the Revolutionists, and the events which they fostered, but also the good, the beautiful, the sublime elements of those same people and events.

To-day those persons are dead of whom I write. The events only remain. Immortalized by History, they can never die.

I would gladly summon from the grave all those of whom I speak, — so few of whom filled out the appointed measure of their days, — and ask them if I have not pictured their careers, not perhaps exactly as they were, — for who can claim to know all mysteries? — but as they have seemed to my honest convictions.

I would say to Mirabeau, "Tribune, arise!" to Louis Sixteenth, "Martyr, arise!" I would say: "Rise, all of you, — Favras, Lafayette, Bailly, Fournier the American, Jourdan the Headsman, Maillard, Théroigne de Méricourt, Barnave, Bouillé, Gamain, Pétion, Manuel, Danton, Robespierre, Marat, Vergniaud, Dumouriez, Marie Antoinette, Madame Campan, Barbaroux, Roland, Madame Roland, — king, queen, artisan, orators, generals, murderers, politicians! Rise, and declare if I have not candidly presented you to my own generation, — to the low, to the exalted, especially to women, — that is, to the mothers of our sons, whom we would gladly instruct in history."

To the long lines of events, standing on either side of the road we have travelled together, I would thus appeal: "Great and luminous Fourteenth of July! Dark and threatening Fifth and Sixth of October! Thou crimson storm in the Champ de Mars, when powder was mixed with lightning, and the thunder of cannon mingled with heaven's artillery! thou prophetic invasion of the Twentieth of June! thou terrible victory of the Tenth of August; thou awful memory of the Second and Third of September! To all of you I say: Have I truthfully represented you? Have I told your story well? Have I wittingly lied about you? Have I unfairly tried to calumniate or defend you?"

The men and women would reply, the events would reply: "Thou hast sought the truth, without hatred or passion. Thou hast believed, or thou wouldst not have spoken. Thou hast been faithful to the glories of the past, insensible to the allurements of the present, confident in the hopes of the future. Be thou absolved! Be thou acquitted!"

Well, what I have so far done, not as an appointed judge, but as an impartial narrator, I shall continue to do unto the end; and that end we are approaching rapidly. We are sliding down the steep incline of events, and there are few breathing-places between September 21, 1792, — the day of the monarchy's demise, — and January 21, 1793, — the day of the monarch's doom.

We have heard the proclamation of the Republic, made beneath the royal prison-house, by the strong voice of Municipal Lubin; and that proclamation naturally summons us to that prison, — the Temple.

Let us enter into that gloomy edifice, wherein is confined a king who is fast becoming a man, a queen who still a queen remains, a virgin martyr, and two

poor children, innocent by their years, if not by their birth.

The King was in the Temple. How came he there? Was it deliberately planned to send him to this shameful prison? No!

To begin with, Pétion had an idea of transporting Louis to the interior of France, assigning him Chambord for his estate, and treating him as a sort of used-up sovereign.

If all the European monarchs would have curbed their generals, their ministers, and their manifestos, and have been content to note what was going on in France without meddling with her politics, then the throne-forfeiture of August 10, this secluded residence in a beautiful palace, with a fine climate, in the midst of what is well called the Garden of France, — all this would not have been a severe retribution for a man expiating, not merely his own faults, but those of the two Louis preceding him, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth.

However, there had just been a Royalist revolt in the Vendée, and it was objected that there might be a rescuing dash along the Loire. This reason appeared weighty, and so Chambord was passed by.

The Assembly suggested the Luxembourg, in Paris itself. The Luxembourg, a Florentine palace which had belonged to Marie de Medicis, — with its lovely solitude, and gardens which rivalled those of the Tuileries, — would have been a residence not less desirable than Chambord for a deposed ruler.

To this place it was objected that the cellars under the palace opened into the catacombs, which had recently been found both unsafe and unwholesome. Perhaps this was only a pretext on the part of the Commune, because the Council wished to have the King directly under its fist; but it was a plausible pretext.

The Commune decided for the Temple, the edifice which had formerly belonged to the Order of Knights Templar, so persecuted by Philip the Fair. By this decision was intended not the Grand Tower, or Donjon of the Temple, but the part called the Palace, which was of yore the Commandery of the Chiefs of the Templars, and later became a pleasure-house for Count d'Artois, the youngest brother of Louis the Sixteenth, and afterwards King of France.

At the very moment when Pétion was taking the royal prisoners to the Temple Palace, just as they were being installed there, and Louis was making his household arrangements, a denunciation reached the Commune, which led the Council to send Manuel to make a change in the municipal arrangements, and substitute the old Donjon in place of the Palace.

Manuel came and inspected the place designed as the home of King Louis and Marie Antoinette, and went away somewhat mortified.

The Donjon was really uninhabitable, and had only been occupied by a sort of janitor. Its narrow apartments did not afford sufficient room. The beds were inconvenient and alive with vermin.

All this arose less from reprehensible premeditation on the part of the judges, than from that fatality which weighs down a dying race.

The National Assembly did not dicker about the expense of gratifying the royal palate. The King was a hearty eater. This is not adduced by way of reproach. It belongs to the temperament of the Bourbons to be great eaters! Louis Sixteenth, however, ate at awkward times. He ate, and with a good appetite, even while the slaughter was going on at the Tuileries. During his trial, not only did his judges reproach him with his

unseasonable repast, but — what is worse — implacable History recorded the facts in her archives.

The National Assembly granted 500,000 francs for the expenses of the royal appetite. During the four months the King remained in the Temple, the cost was 40,000 francs, — 10,000 francs per month, over 333 francs a day. This was to be reckoned in paper assignats, it is true; but at that date the assignats had only fallen off some six or eight per cent.

In the Temple, Louis had three personal and thirteen table servants. He had four courses every day at dinner. There were six roasts, four side dishes, three varieties of jam, three dishes of fruit, a decanter of bordeaux, a decanter of malvoisie, a decanter of madeira. He and his little son drank wine. The Queen and the Princesses drank only water.

On the gastronomical side, therefore, the King had nothing to complain of; but he wofully lacked air and exercise, sunshine and shade.

Formerly accustomed to the chase at Compiègne and Rambouillet, to the parks of Versailles and the Grand Trianon, and latterly to the drives and walks from and around the Tuileries, Louis now found himself reduced, not to a courtyard merely, not to a garden, not even to a small park, but to a little piece of dry and barren earth, with four beds of exhausted turf, some decaying and stunted trees, made leafless by the autumnal gales.

In this place, every day at two o'clock, the royal family promenaded; or rather, let us say, that there, at two daily, the royal family were led up and down.

This was something unfamiliar, disagreeable, harsh; but it was less harsh and disagreeable than the cellars of the Inquisition at Madrid, the lead-mines established by the Council of Ten at Venice, or the dungeons

at Spielberg, where monarchs often sent *their* political offenders.

Let it be well understood that while we do not excuse the Commune, neither do we excuse the kings. We simply say that the Temple was a reprisal, — a fatal, ill-advised, a terrible reprisal; whereas this penalty has been represented as persecution, and thus the culprit has been transformed into a martyr.

Meanwhile, what was the present aspect of the different personages whom we have undertaken to follow in the principal phases of their lives?

The King, with his near-sightedness, his flaccid cheeks, his hanging lips, his heavy and uncertain gait, seemed like some worthy farmer, bowed down by misfortune. His sadness was like that of an agriculturist, when a hail-storm has bruised his crops and the lightning has fired his barns.

The Queen's attitude was as usual, quiet, supercilious and highly antagonistic. In the days of her grandeur, Marie Antoinette inspired love. In the hour of her downfall, she inspired much devotion, but no pity. Pity is born of sympathy, and sympathy the Queen did not win.

Madame Elizabeth, with her white robe, symbolic of her moral and physical purity, with her blond hair, which was all the more beautiful, now that she was forced to wear it loose and unpowdered, — with blue ribbons on her cap and about her waist, — seemed like the guardian angel of the family.

Despite the charm of her youth, Madame Royale was not very interesting. A complete Austrian, like her mother, — another Marie Antoinette or Maria Theresa, — she already displayed the contempt and pride which belong alike to royal families and birds of prey.

The little Dauphin was somewhat interesting, with his

golden locks, and his fair but somewhat sickly complexion; yet his blue eye was stern and bold, and he often wore an expression beyond his age. He understood everything, and could catch the suggestions which his mother gave him in a single glance. He had all the juvenile trickery and witchery which often draws tears from executioners themselves. He even touched Chaumette, — poor child! — Chaumette, that marten with a pointed snout, that weasel in spectacles.

"I would give him an education," said the ex-clerk to Hue, the King's valet; "but it would be necessary to take him away from his family, so that he would forget his rank."

The Commune officers were both cruel and imprudent, — cruel in subjecting the royal family to such harsh treatment, to vexations, and even insults; imprudent in letting the royal family be seen in its feeble and crushed condition.

Every day new guardians were sent to the Temple, who were called *municipals*. They entered the Temple sworn enemies of the King. They came out the sworn enemies of Marie Antoinette, but feeling softer towards the King, pitying the children, and glorifying Madame Elizabeth.

In place of the *wolf*, the *she-wolf*, and the *cubs*, whom did they find in the Temple? They found a middle-class family. They found the mother somewhat lofty, — a sort of Elmira, who would not allow anybody to touch the hem of her gown; but they found no trace of a tyrant.

How did the day pass with this family? Let us see how the time was employed, as we learn it from Cléry, the valet devoted to his master till the last minute.

First let us look about the prison, and afterwards return to the prisoners.

The King was confined in the Small Tower. The Small Tower was back to back with the Large Tower, but there

was no interior connection between them. The Small Tower was square, and flanked by two turrets. In one of these turrets was a small staircase, which ran from the main story to the gallery on the flat roof. In the other turret were small rooms, mere cabinets, corresponding to each floor of the Small Tower.

There were four stories in the main part of this Small Tower. The main story, up one flight from the court-yard, was divided into an antechamber, an eating-room, and the small room, or cabinet, in the turret.

The next story was divided in much the same way. Here the large room served for the bedroom of the Queen and Dauphin. The second room, separated from the first by a dark little entry, was occupied by Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale. In order to enter the cabinet in the turret, it was necessary to pass through this bedroom; and this turret-cabinet, — which, by the way, was only what the English call a *toilet-closet*, — was used in common by the royal family, the municipal guardians, and the soldiers.

The King occupied the suite up three flights, which contained the same number of rooms. He slept in the largest. The cabinet in the adjoining turret served him for a little study. Beside it was a kitchen, with a little anteroom, which at first, before they were separated from him, was occupied by Chamilly and Hue, but was afterwards sealed up.

The upper story was closed. The basement was consecrated to old kitchens and sculleries, long disused.

How did the royal family manage to live in such narrow quarters, half tenement and half prison? We shall see.

The King rose regularly at six o'clock in the morning. He shaved himself, as long as he was allowed to do so.

Cléry brushed his hair and helped him dress. As soon as he was brushed and dressed he went into his study, — that is, into a library, in which were fifteen or sixteen hundred volumes, besides the ancient archives of the Knights of the Order of Malta.

One day the King found among these books, and pointed out to Hue, the works of Voltaire and Rousseau. "These," he said, in a low voice, "are the men who have ruined France!"

When he entered this room each morning, Louis usually knelt five or six minutes in prayer. Then he read till nine. During this time Cléry put the King's chamber in order, arranged breakfast, and went downstairs to the Queen's apartments.

While alone in this cabinet, Louis amused himself by translating from Virgil or the Odes of Horace; for in order to keep up the Dauphin's education, he resumed the study of Latin.

This cabinet was very small. The door was always open; and a municipal officer was always in the bedroom, whence he could look through the open door, and see what the King was about.

The Queen did not open her door till Cléry's arrival; in order, the door being shut, that the municipal officer might not come in.

Cléry would dress the young Prince's hair, arrange the Queen's toilet, and then go into the other chamber to render Madame Royale and Madame Elizabeth the same service. This moment of toilet was both rapid and precious, for it was the only time when Cléry could tell the ladies whatever outside information he had gleaned. If he made a certain sign, which meant that he had something to say, the Queen, or one of the ladies, would enter into some conversation with the official, and Cléry would

take advantage of this distraction to whisper what he had to say.

At nine the ladies and children went up to the King's chamber, where breakfast was served. During the dessert Cléry went downstairs again, and put the Queen's apartments in order.

A man named Tison, with his wife, had been ordered to join Cléry, under the pretence of aiding him in his work, but really to act as spies, not only upon the royal family, but upon the guards also. The husband, formerly a clerk in the city excise-office at one of the barriers, was a harsh and malicious old fellow, incapable of any humane sentiments. The woman, made more womanly by the love she bore for her daughter, carried that love to such an extreme that once, when separated from her child, she denounced the Queen, in the hope that thus her daughter might be restored to her, — a pathetic story, which is related in the work which follows this one, "Le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

At ten o'clock in the morning, after breakfast, the King went down to the Queen's room, and there passed the day. He occupied himself almost exclusively with the Dauphin, making him repeat passages from Corneille or Racine, giving him a lesson in geography, and letting him draw maps. For three or four years France had been divided into departments, and it was particularly the geography of the kingdom in which the King instructed his son.

On her part the Queen busied herself with teaching Madame Royale. These lessons were often interrupted by the mother's relapse into deep and gloomy reveries. When this happened, her daughter would leave her alone in that mysterious grief, unblessed with tears, and withdraw on tiptoe, making a sign for her brother to keep

silence. The Queen would remain some time thus absorbed. Then a tear would appear on her eyelash, steal down her cheek, and fall upon her yellow hand, which had taken on an ivory tint. Then the poor prisoner — who had been for a while set free in an immense domain of thought, in the limitless field of remembrance — would emerge abruptly from her dream; and, looking about her, she would find herself again in her prison-house, her heart bruised, and her head bowed with shame.

At noon the three ladies assembled in Madame Elizabeth's room, in order to change their morning gowns, this being the one moment when the modesty of the Commune left them alone, and no guard was present.

At one o'clock, when the weather permitted, the royal family were taken down into the garden. Four municipals and an officer of the National Guards accompanied them, or rather watched them. As there were many workmen about the Temple, employed in demolishing old buildings and putting up new walls, the prisoners were only allowed to use that part called Chestnut Alley.

Cléry was also present at these outings, and gave the young Prince a little exercise at playing ball and quoits.

At three they all returned to the Small Tower. Cléry served the dinner. Every day at that hour Commander Santerre came to the Temple, accompanied by two aides, and examined scrupulously the apartments both of the King and Queen.

Sometimes the King spoke to him; but the Queen, never. She had forgotten June 20, and what she owed to that man's friendship, the first time the mob overran the Tuileries.

After dinner they all went upstairs again. The King played a game of piquet or backgammon with the Queen or his sister, while Cléry took his turn at dining.

At four o'clock the King stretched himself for a siesta, on a lounge or in a big armchair. Then the profoundest silence reigned. The ladies took their work or some books, and everybody was mute, even the little Dauphin.

Louis Sixteenth passed from wakefulness to slumber almost without an interval, — such was the tyrannical rule over him of his corporeal needs. He slept usually from an hour and a half to two hours.

When he awoke, conversation was resumed. Cléry was called, for he was never far off, and gave the little Dauphin a writing-lesson. Then he took him into Madame Elizabeth's room, and made him play battledoor and shuttlecock.

When evening came, the royal family gathered about a table. The Queen read aloud something to amuse and instruct the children. Aunt Elizabeth took the Queen's place when she was weary. This reading lasted till eight o'clock.

At eight the Prince had his supper in Aunt Elizabeth's chamber. The family were in the room while he ate; and from a set of the "French Mercury," which the King had found in the library, he gave out enigmas and conundrums for his children to guess.

After the Dauphin's supper, the Queen heard him say his little prayer:

ALL-POWERFUL GOD, who hast created and redeemed me, thee I adore. Prolong the days of the King my father, and also those of all my family. Protect us from our enemies. Give Madame de Tourzel the strength she needs to bear what she endures on our account.

Then Cléry undressed the boy and put him to bed, and one of the younger ladies remained near him until he fell asleep.

Every night about that hour a newspaper-carrier went along the street crying aloud the news of the day. Cléry would be on the alert, and then repeat to the King the crier's words.

At nine the King took his supper. On a tray, Cléry carried some food to whichever lady was still watching with the Dauphin.

His repast finished, the King would go into the Queen's chamber, to wave an adieu to her and his sister, and kiss the children, and then would go up to his own apartments, where he would sit in the little library and read till midnight.

When the King had gone the ladies would shut themselves in, an official staying in the small entry which separated their two chambers. The other official always followed the King upstairs.

Cléry placed his bed near the King's; but before lying down Louis always waited till the new official came upstairs, in order to ascertain who he was, and if he had ever been on duty before. There was always a change of guards at eleven in the forenoon, five in the afternoon, and at midnight.

This sort of life lasted, without any change, as long as the King remained in the Small Tower, — that is, till September 30.

As one can see, the situation was sad, and the worthier of pity because borne so nobly. The most hostile onlookers were softened by the sight. They came to keep watch over an abominable tyrant, who had ruined France, slaughtered Frenchmen, and appealed to foreign armies, — over a Queen who united the sensuality of Messalina with the depravity of Catherine Second. They found a man clad in gray, whom they might readily mistake for his valet, — a man who ate well, drank well, slept

well, played backgammon and piquet, taught his boy Latin and geography, and made his children solve riddles. They found a woman undoubtedly proud and disdainful, but noble, calm, resigned, and still beautiful, teaching her girl embroidery and her boy his prayers, speaking softly to the servants, and saying *my friend*, even to a humble and deferential valet.

The first hours were full of hatred. Each guard came with sentiments of vengeance and animosity in his heart, and gave free course to these sentiments. Gradually he relented. Leaving home in the morning with a high head and threatening aspect, these men would return to their homes in the evening with a gloomy air and bowed head.

The wife of one of these men was waiting for him with much curiosity.

"Ah, it 's thee!" she cried.

"Yes!" responded the municipal, laconically.

"Well, hast thou seen the tyrant?"

"Yes, I 've seen him!"

"Has he a ferocious look?"

"He looks like a retired grocer in the Marais District."

"What was he doing? Swearing, cursing the Republic —?"

"He passes his time in studying with his younkets, teaching them Latin, playing piquet with his sister, and propounding enigmas to amuse his wife."

"Has n't he any remorse, the wretch?"

"I saw him eat. He eats like a man with a tranquil conscience. I saw him sleep, and I 'll bet he never has the nightmare."

Then the wife would become pensive in her turn, and presently she would say: "So he can't be as cruel and guilty as folks say?"

"Guilty? Well I don't know. — Cruel? I should say not! — Unhappy? Most decidedly!"

"Poor man!" the wife would ejaculate.

This is what happened. The more the Communists humiliated the prisoner, the more they tried to show that he was only a man like any other, the more those other men pitied one in whom they recognized a fellow-man.

Sometimes this sympathy manifested itself directly to the King, or to Cléry and the Dauphin.

One day a stonecutter was busy making holes in the wall of the antechamber, where some enormous bolts were to be inserted. While the workman was taking his breakfast, the Dauphin amused himself by playing with the tools. Then the King took the chisel and mallet from the boy, and handled them in such a way as to show that he was a skilful locksmith and mechanic.

The mason looked on in amazement, from the corner where he was munching his bread and cheese. He had not shown the King and the Prince the courtesy of rising, but now he rose in respect for the man and his child. Approaching them, with his mouth full of bread, but with his cap in his hand, he said to the King: "When you go out of this Donjon you can say you worked at your own prison-bars!"

"Ah! When and how shall I go out?" said the King.

The Dauphin began to cry. The mason dried a tear. The King dropped chisel and hammer, and went into his chamber, where he walked the room for a long time.

Another day a suburban was acting as sentinel at the Queen's door, — a man coarsely dressed, but with a strong sense of propriety. Cléry was alone in the room, reading. The sentinel watched him very attentively. Presently, called elsewhere by his duties, Cléry rose and started to

go out; but the sentinel presented arms, and said in a low and timid voice, almost trembling: "You can't pass here!"

"Why not?" asked Cléry.

"Because my orders are to keep my eye on you."

"On me? Surely you must be mistaken!"

"Are n't you the King?"

"Then you don't know the King?"

"I have never seen him, Monsieur; and, if I must say it, if I see him at all, I would rather see him somewhere else."

"Speak low!" said Cléry. Then pointing to a door he added: "I 'm going into that chamber, and then you can see the King. He sits at a table, reading."

Cléry went in, and told the King what had happened; so the King rose and walked into the other room, that the good fellow might see him more readily.

Suspecting that it was solely on his account that the King was taking this trouble, the sentinel said to Cléry: "Ah Monsieur! how good the King is. As for me, I don't believe he has done half so much mischief as they say!"

A sentinel, stationed at the end of the alley which served as the promenade for the royal family, one day gave them to understand that he had some information to communicate. At the first turn in their walk, nobody appeared to give any attention to these signs; but at the second turn Madame Elizabeth approached the soldier, to see if he would speak to her. Unhappily the young man, who had a distinguished bearing, remained mute, either through fear or respect; but tears filled his eyes, and he pointed to a pile of rubbish, where a letter was probably concealed.

Under pretence of finding some stones for the little

Prince's quoits, Cléry began to search among the dirt; but the officials, doubtless suspecting what he was after, ordered Cléry to desist, and forbade his ever talking with the sentinels, under pain of being separated from his master.

All who came near the prisoners did not show the same sentiments of respect and pity. Hatred and vengeance were so strongly rooted in many minds as not to be eradicable by the sight of royal misfortunes, though borne with middle-class virtue, and consequently both King and Queen had to hear gross remarks and insults.

One day the official on duty near the King was a man named James, a teacher of English. This man stuck to the King like his shadow, never leaving him. When the King went into his little library to read, this official followed, and sat down near the prisoner.

"Monsieur," said the King, with his habitual mildness, "your comrades have usually left me alone when I came into this little room, — so small, that I cannot elude their watch when the door is open."

"My colleagues can take their own way, and I 'll take mine."

"Notice if you please, Monsieur, that the room is not large enough for two."

"Then go into the larger room!" harshly replied the official.

Without saying another word the King rose and went into the bedroom. The Englishman followed, and was in Louis's way till the guard was relieved.

The sentinels were regularly changed at midnight. One morning the King supposed the official on duty was the same who had been there the evening before; so he went to him, and said, with some interest: "Ah, Monsieur, I 'm sorry they forgot to relieve you from duty!"

"What do you mean?" was the surly reply.

"I only meant to say that you must be tired."

"Citizen," answered the fellow, whose name was Meunier, "I 'm here to watch you, and not for you to concern yourself with my affairs." Putting on his cap, he went closer to the King, and added: "Nobody, and you less than anybody else, has any right to meddle with me!"

One day the Queen ventured to speak to an official, who was present during dinner. "In what section do you live, Monsieur?"

"In my own country!" he proudly replied.

"But it seems to me that your country is all France," replied the Queen.

"Except the part occupied by the enemies whom you have brought into it."

Some of the commissioners would never speak to any member of the royal family without adding some obscene epithet or ringing oath.

One day an official named Turlot said to Cléry, loud enough for the King to hear every word: "If the headsman don't guillotine this sacred family pretty soon, I 'll guillotine 'em myself."

In going out for their walk the royal family had to pass by a large number of sentinels, several of whom were stationed in the interior of the Small Tower. When the military chiefs and the municipals passed by, the guards presented arms; but when the King came along, they would ground their arms or turn their backs.

It was the same with the outside guards on duty at the foot of the Tower. When the King came along, they would ostentatiously keep their caps on, or sit down; but as soon as he had passed by, they would stand up again, and take off their caps.

These insults were carried yet farther. One day a sentinel, not content with presenting arms to the military and municipal officers, while he refused to do so to the King, wrote as follows on the interior of the prison door:

The guillotine is a fixture, and awaits the tyrant, Louis Sixteenth!

This was a new device, and became very popular. This writer had many imitators. Very soon the walls of the Temple, especially on the staircase used by the royal family, were covered with such inscriptions as these:

We must put the fat hog on short allowance.

Down with the red ribbon! Strangle the Cubs!

Other inscriptions, like the title under a picture, explained some impertinent sketch.

Under the drawing of a hangman's noose was this sentence:

Madame Veto will dance!

Beneath the picture of a man on the gallows was the motto:

Louis taking an air-bath!

The most aggravating tormentors were two men who were always at the Temple, — Simon the shoemaker and Rocher the sapper.

Simon was a monopolist. He held all sorts of places. Not only was he a shoemaker, but a municipal official. Moreover he was one of six commissioners, charged with inspecting the work and surroundings of the Temple.

By virtue of these three occupations he never left the Donjon.

This man, celebrated for his subsequent ill-treatment of the little Dauphin, was the personification of impudence. Every time he came into the presence of the prisoners, it was for the purpose of inflicting some new outrage.

If the valet asked for something for the King, Simon would say: "Let Capet ask for what he wants all at once. I can't run up and down to please him!"

In impertinence Rocher was his equal, but he was not so bad a man. On August 10 it was Rocher who caught up the little Prince, outside the Assembly door, and placed him in safety on the President's table.

From being a saddler, Rocher became a military officer under Santerre, and then a janitor in the Temple. He usually wore his sapper's uniform and a black fur cap, and carried a large sabre. His beard and mustache were long. About his waist was a belt, from which depended his great bunch of keys.

He was placed in the Tower by Manuel, to watch over the royal prisoners, and prevent others from doing them any mischief, — not for the sake of harming them himself. He resembled a child, set to guard a cageful of birds, with directions not to let anybody harm them, but who amuses himself by pulling out their feathers.

When the King wished to go out, Rocher would appear at the door, but he would not open the door till he had made the King wait, while the janitor jingled his big bunch of keys. Then he would pull the bolts with a bang. When the bolts were drawn and the door was open, Rocher would rush downstairs, and place himself by the last wicket, at the end of the archway, with a pipe

in his mouth. As each member of the royal family came out, but particularly the ladies, he would blow a puff of smoke into their faces.

These miserable cowards did these things in the presence of National Guards, who, instead of checking them, often brought their chairs, and sat down to enjoy the fun, like spectators at a play.

This encouraged Rocher, who went everywhere bragging: "Marie Antoinette may be awfully proud, but I've brought her down, I have! Elizabeth and the girl have to knock down to me, in spite of themselves. The wicket is so low that they have to bow down when they go through it! Every day I give one or t' other of 'em a taste of my pipe. One day the sister says to the commissioner, says she: 'Why does Rocher smoke all the time?'—'Apparently because he chooses!' says the commissioner."

In all such great expiations, besides the penalty inflicted upon the victims, there is always some fellow who makes them drink the gall to its very dregs. For Louis Sixteenth this tormentor was Simon or Rocher. For Napoleon it was Hudson Lowe. These are the very men whose behavior causes others to idealize the victim's suffering, and sanctify his death, when he has submitted to the last penalty, and is done with life. Would Saint Helena be Saint Helena, without the jailer in his red coat? Would the Temple be the Temple without its sapper and its cobbler? Such men are genuine parts of the romance. They rightfully make a part of long and lugubrious popular stories.

Unhappy as the prisoners were, they had one consolation, that of being together; so the Commune resolved to separate the King from his family.

On September 26, five days after the legal proclama-

tion of the Republic, a municipal told Cléry that the apartments in the Great Tower, destined for the King, would soon be ready for him.

Much distressed, Cléry transmitted this sad news to his master, who received it with his usual courage, and said: "Try to find out beforehand when the painful separation is to take place, and let me know."

Unhappily Cléry could learn and impart nothing more.

On September 29, at ten in the forenoon, six municipals came into the Queen's room, when the royal family were all there together. They brought an order from the Commune, depriving the captives of writing-materials. The search-warrant extended not only to the rooms, but to the persons of the prisoners.

"When you need anything," said the spokesman, whose name was Charbonnier, "your man can come down, and inscribe your wishes in a register, which will be kept in the Council Room."

Neither King nor Queen made any answer. They found and surrendered all the writing-materials they possessed. The others did the same, and the servants followed the royal example.

Then only did Cléry ascertain, by some official words which he overheard, that on that very evening the King would be transferred to the Great Tower. He told Madame Elizabeth, who reported the news forthwith to the King.

Nothing happened till evening. At each noise, at each jar of a door, the prisoners' hearts beat more quickly, and their hands met in an anxious pressure. The King remained in his wife's rooms longer than usual.

The hour of separation came at last. The door opened. The six officials who had been there in the forenoon now came with a new order from the Commune, which one of

them read to the King. This was the legal warrant for the King's removal to the Great Tower.

This time the King's self-restraint failed him. Whither were they taking him, along this new and gloomy path? He was entering upon the unknown and mysterious, and he did so with fear and trembling.

The farewells were long and doleful. At last the King must follow the officials. As the door closed behind him, never had it sent forth a sound so melancholy.

In such a hurry were the authorities to impose this new affliction upon their captives, that the apartments to which they conducted the King were not yet in readiness. For furniture, there were only two chairs and a bed. The paint and the paper were not yet dry, and this made the odor of the place unbearable.

The King went to bed without complaining. Cléry slept on a chair near by.

Cléry roused and dressed the King as usual. Then he wished to go back into the Small Tower, to dress the Dauphin, but he was stopped, and one of the officials, named Véron, said to him: "You will have no further communication with the other prisoners. The King is not to see his children again."

This time Cléry had not courage to tell his master the doleful intelligence.

At nine, ignorant of the rigor of the separation, Louis asked to be taken to his family.

"We have no such orders," said the commissioners.

The King insisted, but they made no other answer, and left him.

The King was alone with Cléry, the master seated, and the servant leaning against the wall. Both were completely overcome.

Half an hour later two officials came in, followed by a

waiter from a restaurant, bringing some bread and a glass of lemonade.

"Gentlemen," queried the King, "am I not to dine with my family?"

"We take our orders from the Commune," answered one of them.

"But if I can't go down, can't you let my valet go? He has charge of my son, and I hope nothing will prevent his still caring for the boy."

The King asked this favor so simply, and with such an absence of animosity, that the officials were surprised, and did not know what to say. His tone, his manners, and his resignation were so far from what these men expected, that they were dazed, and again went away, only saying that it did not depend upon them.

Cléry stood near the door, looking at his master with deep sympathy. He saw the King take the bread which had been brought to him, and break it in two pieces. One he offered Cléry.

"It appears they have forgotten your breakfast," he said. "Take this half. The other is enough for me."

Cléry refused, but as the King insisted, the valet finally took the bread; but in so doing he could not help bursting into sobs, and the King also wept.

At ten came an official, with the workmen who were putting the rooms into proper condition.

Approaching the King with some pity in his face, the man said: "Monsieur, I was present when your family breakfasted, and I take it upon myself to assure you that they are all in good health."

The King's heart felt a glow of relief. This man's pity did him good.

"I thank you," he said, "and I beg you to report to my family that I also am well. Can I not have some

books which I left in the Queen's chamber? If so, you will do me a great favor if you will bring them to me."

The official asked nothing better, but he was greatly embarrassed, not knowing how to read. At last he acknowledged his difficulty to Cléry, and begged him to go also, and pick out the books the King desired.

Cléry was only too glad. By this means he could carry the Queen information about her husband. Louis made a sign with his eyes. This sign contained a world of intelligence.

Cléry found the Queen in her chamber, with Madame Elizabeth and the children. The ladies were weeping. The little Prince had been crying also, but tears vanish quickly from the eyes of children.

Seeing Cléry enter, the ladies rose and questioned him by gestures, though not by words.

The Dauphin ran up to him, crying out: "It 's my good Cléry!"

Unfortunately Cléry could only speak a few cautious words, the two guards, who had come with him, being in the room; but the Queen could not contain herself, and spoke directly to them: "Oh gentlemen, if we are not permitted to live near the King, can you not grant us the favor of seeing him once daily, — say at the dinner hour?"

The other ladies did not speak, but joined their hands supplicatingly.

"Gentlemen," said the Dauphin, "let my father come to us again, and I will pray the good God to bless you."

The municipals looked at each other, but did not reply; this silence drew grievous cries and sobs from the female bosoms.

"On my faith, it can't do any harm," said the man

who had conversed with the King upstairs. "Let them dine together to-day."

"But to-morrow?" said the Queen.

"Madame," responded he, "our conduct is regulated by the decrees of the Commune. To-morrow we will see what the Commune ordains. — Is n't that your opinion, Citizen?" he asked of his colleague.

The latter nodded assent. The ladies, who were waiting for this assent with anxiety, uttered a cry of joy. Marie Antoinette clasped her two children to her heart. Madame Elizabeth lifted her hands to Heaven in thankfulness. This unexpected joy, which evoked such cries and tears, seemed almost like grief.

One of the municipals could not restrain his tears; and even Simon said, for he had just come in: "I believe you beggars of women will make me cry, too!"

Then he added, speaking to the Queen: "You did n't cry in this sort of way, Citizeness, when you had folks killed on the Tenth of August!"

"Ah Monsieur," she replied, "the people are deceived as to our sentiments. If they knew us better, they would do as this gentleman does, — they would weep over us."

Cléry took the books the King had asked for, and went upstairs to repeat this good news; but the municipals were in almost as great haste as Cléry. It is so pleasant to be doing good!

Dinner was served in the King's rooms. All the members of the family were brought there. One might have thought it a holiday. Much had been gained by thus gaining a day.

Indeed much more had been gained; for thenceforth nothing was said about the order from the Commune, and the King continued, as heretofore, to see his family during the day, and to eat his meals with them.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WHICH MASTER GAMAIN REAPPEARS.

On the morning of the same day, while these events were taking place at the Temple, a man wearing a red cap and a carmagnole jacket, leaning on a crutch which aided his steps, presented himself at the office of the Department of State.

Roland was very accessible; but accessible as he was, he was forced to have ushers in his antechamber, just as much as if he were the minister of a monarch instead of being the secretary of a republic.

The man with the crutch and jacket was therefore obliged to pause in the antechamber, before an usher who barred his passage, asking him: "Whom do you wish to see, Citizen?"

"I wish to talk with the Citizen Minister," said the man in the jacket.

It was now a fortnight since the titles of *Citizen* and *Citizeness* had been substituted as a democratic modification of *Monsieur* and *Madame*.

Ushers are always ushers, — that is, somewhat impertinent fellows. We refer to the ushers belonging to the official departments. If we were speaking of church vergers, instead of government ushers who sport the chain, we might speak differently.

This usher responded in a patronizing tone: "My friend, you must learn one thing, — that we can't interview Citizen Roland in that way."

"How then should one see the Citizen Minister, Citizen Usher?" asked the man in the red cap.

"He can be seen when one has a written appointment."

"I know things were as you say under the tyrant's reign; but under the Republic, in a time when all men are equal, things are not so stuck-up."

This suggestion made the usher reflect.

"It is not very pleasant, don't you see," continued the man with the red cap, the jacket, and the crutch, "to come from Versailles expressly to render the government a service, and then not have the officer see you."

"You come to render a service to Citizen Roland?"

"A small one."

"And what sort of a service brings you?"

"I come to denounce a conspiracy."

"Goodness! We're up to our ears in conspiracies now."

"Ah!"

"You have come from Versailles just for that?" asked the usher.

"Yes."

"Well, then, you can go back to Versailles."

"All right! I can go back; but your secretary will repent it, if he don't see me."

"Good Lord! that's the order! Write to him, and come back with a letter appointing an audience. Then it'll be all right."

"That's your last word?"

"That's my last word."

"It appears to be more difficult to see Citizen Roland than it was to have an interview with his Majesty Louis Sixteenth."

"How so?"

"I know what I'm talking about."

"Well, what do you know?" asked the usher.

"Well, I know there was a time when I could enter the Tuileries whenever I chose."

"You?"

"Yes, and I had only to give my name at the door."

"What do they call you then, — King Frederick William, or Emperor Francis?"

"No, I'm neither a tyrant, a slave-merchant, nor a nobleman. I call myself simply Nicholas Claude Gamain, master of masters, master over all."

"Master in what?"

"In lockmaking! Did n't you ever hear of Nicholas Claude Gamain, Citizen Capet's old master in the locksmith business?"

"Ah! What! It 's you, Citizen, who are — "

"Nicholas Claude Gamain."

"Locksmith to the former King?"

"His *master* in lockmaking, — if that 's what you mean, Citizen."

"That 's what I meant to say."

"Yes, that 's me, flesh and bones!"

The usher looked questiouingly at his comrades. They responded with affirmative nods, and so he said: "Then it 's quite a different matter."

"What do you mean by *a different matter?*"

"It means that if you 'll write your name on a bit of paper, I 'll send that paper in to the Citizen Minister."

"Write? Ah yes, write! Writing was n't my forte, even before those scoundrels poisoned me; but now it 's still worse. See how their arsenic used me up!"

Gamain showed them how his legs were twisted, how his spine was distorted, and how his hands were as crooked and stiff as claws.

"What! Did they deform you in this sort of way, you poor fellow?"

"Themselves! That 's what I want to tell the Citizen Secretary, and many things beside. As they say he 's to be put on trial, that rascally Capet, what I have to say will not perhaps do the Nation any harm, under the present circumstances."

"Very well! Be seated here, Citizen, and I 'll send in your name to the Citizen Minister."

Thereupon the usher wrote as follows:

Claude Nicholas Gamain, formerly master locksmith to the King, asks for an immediate audience with the Citizen Secretary, in order to make important revelations.

This paper he gave to one of his comrades, whose special business it was to announce visitors. In five minutes this comrade returned and said: "Follow me, Citizen!" Gamain made an effort to rise, which wrung from him a cry of pain, and followed the usher.

The usher conducted Gamain not into the office of the nominal minister, Citizen Roland, but into the office of the real minister, Citizeness Roland. It was a small room, hung with green paper, lighted by a single window, in whose recess was a little table, at which Madame Roland was seated with her work.

Roland was standing by the fireplace. The usher announced Citizen Nicholas Claude Gamain, and Citizen Nicholas Claude Gamain appeared at the door.

The master locksmith never had a very prepossessing personal appearance, even in the times of his best health and prosperity; but the malady to which he was now a prey — and which was nothing but severe rheumatism

in the joints — so distorted his limbs and disfigured his face as not to add to his usual beauty.

When the usher closed the door behind Gamain, never did an honest man, — and it must be said that never did anybody deserve this title of honest man better than Roland, — never, we say, did an honest man, with a calm and placid countenance, find himself face to face with such a low-lived rascal, with a more repulsive physiognomy.

Roland's first sentiment was one of deep repugnance. He looked at Citizen Gamain from head to foot. Noticing that he was trembling on his crutch, a sentiment of pity for one of his fellow-men, — if one can suppose Citizen Gamain to be the fellow of Citizen Roland, — a sentiment of pity inspired the first word spoken to the locksmith.

"Sit down, Citizen! You appear to be suffering."

"I guess I *am* suffering," said Gamain, as he sat down. "It has been so ever since that Austrian wench poisoned me."

At these words an expression of profound disgust passed over Roland's face, and he exchanged a glance with his wife, who was half hidden in the alcove.

"Did you come here to denounce this crime?" asked Roland.

"For that and other things."

"Do you bring any proof of your denunciations?"

"Oh, as to that, you 've only to come with me to the Tuileries, and you 'll see the closet."

"What closet?"

"The closet where that rascal kept his treasures. Oh, I might have known something was up, when the work was done, and that Austrian woman said to me, in her wheedling way: 'You 're warm, Gamain! Drink

this glass of wine, Gamain! It 'll do you good!' — I might a' known the wine was poisoned!"

"Poisoned?"

"Yes! I might a' known," continued Gamain, with an expression of gloomy hate, "that men as helps kings to hide their treasures can't expect to live long afterwards."

Roland approached his wife, and questioned her with his eyes; and she replied: There is something at the bottom of all this, my dear. I recall this man's name. He *was* the King's teacher in lockmaking."

"And this closet, this safe?"

"Ask him more about that closet!"

"About that closet?" replied Gamain, who overheard her. "Oh, I 'll tell you about that. It 's an iron cupboard, with an invisible lock, in which Citizen Capet concealed his gold and his papers."

"And how did you learn about the existence of this closet?"

"Because I was sent for, me and my companion, from Versailles, to fix a lock which he 'd made, and which would n't go right."

"But this safe was probably broken open and pillaged on the Tenth of August!"

"No danger of that!" said Gamain.

"Why was there no danger?"

"Because I 'll defy anybody in this world, except him and me, to find it, — much more to open it."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure and certain! As it was when he quit the Tuileries, so it is to-day."

"And at what period did you and King Louis Sixteenth fix this safe?"

"Well, I can't exactly tell, but it was a year or more before he ran away to Varennes."

"And how did it come about? — Let us hear! — You must pardon me, my friend, but this affair appears so extraordinary, that before going to see the safe, I should like to know the particulars."

"Oh, the details are easily given, Citizen Minister, and they 'll turn out all correct. Capet sent to Versailles for me. My wife did n't want me to come. Poor wife! She had a presentiment. She says to me: 'The King 's in a bad fix. Thee 'll be compromised through him!' — But I says to her: 'When he sends to me for a matter connected with my trade, and he 's my pupil, why, I ought to go.' — 'Goodness!' says she, 'there 's some politics underneath it. He 's at something else besides lockmaking!' — "

"In short, my friend, in spite of your wife's advice, you came to Paris?"

"Yes. Better if I 'd listened to her! I should n't a' been in this fix. — But they shall pay me, the poisoners!"

"Then — ?"

"Ah, yes, — to return to the safe — "

"Yes, my friend; and will you try not to detain me longer than you can help? All my time belongs to the Republic, and I have very little to spare."

"Well, then he showed me a secret lock, which would n't work. He had made it himself, which proves that if it had, he would n't have sent for me, — the traitor!"

"He showed you a lock which would n't work?" repeated Roland, trying to keep Gamain on the track.

"Well, he says to me: 'Why don't it work, Gamain?' — Says I to him: 'Sire, I must examine the lock!' — Says he: 'That 's fair!' — Then I examined the lock, and I says to him: 'Do you know why the lock don't work?' — 'No,' says he, 'or I should n't ask you.' —

'Well, it don't work, Sire,' — they called him Sire, in those days, — the scamp! — 'it don't work, Sire, — it 's all simple enough, — it don't go' — Well, follow my reasoning now; for not being so well up in lockmaking as the King, you won't be able to understand me. — That is, — no, — now I think of it, it was n't a double lock, — it was a casket lock."

"It 's all one to me, my friend," replied Roland. "As you have surmised, I 'm not so well posted in lockmaking as the King, and I don't know one lock from another."

"I can explain the difference in a touch of the finger — "

"Needless! You explained to the King, you say — "

"Why the lock did n't work. — Shall I explain to you why it would n't work?"

"If you wish," answered Roland, who began to think it might be best to abandon Gamain to his prolixity.

"Well, it would n't work, you understand, because the projection of the key pressed so hard on the beard of the lock, that the spring could only go half a circle, and because, at that point, it was n't filed away enough, and so it didn't hold. That was the matter! Now you understand, don't you? The width of the beard being six lines, the shoulder should have been one line. See?"

"Marvellously," said Roland, who did not understand a single word.

"Says the King — you know they still gave that title to the infamous tyrant! — says the King: 'Faith, that 's so! Well, Gamain! please do what I don't know how to do as well as thee, my master.' — 'Oh,' says I, 'not only your master, but master of masters, master over all.'"

"Well, well?"

"Well, while I went about this task, Monsieur Capet chatted with my apprentice, whom I've always suspected of being an aristocrat in disguise. In about ten minutes it was done. Then I came downstairs, bringing the iron door into which the lock was fitted, and said: 'There it is, Sire!' — 'Hey, Gamain,' says he, 'come with me!' — He went before, and I followed. He took me first into a bedroom, — then into a gloomy entry, leading to the Dauphin's chamber. There it was so dark that we had to light a candle. The King says to me, 'Hold thou that candle, Gamain, so that I can see!' — He allowed himself to *thee-and-thou* me, that tyrant! — Then he lifted a wooden panel, behind which was a round hole, about two feet in diameter at the mouth. Then, as he saw my surprise, says he: 'This safe I've made on purpose to hold my money. Thou seest it must be closed with an iron door.' — 'It won't take long,' says I, 'for the hinges are on already, and the bolt.' — I hung the door, and did n't have to push it, neither. It shut itself. Then we put back the panel in its place; and so Good-night! No more closet, no more door, no more lock!"

"And you believe, my friend, that this closet was for no other purpose, and that the King took all this pains for the sake of hiding his money, so that he might keep it near him, in case —?"

"Hold on! That 's a trap. He believed, the scamp, that he was awfully cunning, but I beat him at it. This is what happened. Says he: 'Help me to count the money I have in this closet.' We counted two millions in double louis, which we placed in four leathern sacks; but while I counted his gold, I saw, out of the corner of my eye, his chamberlain carrying papers — papers — papers!

and I says to myself, says I : 'Good ! This closet is to conceal some papers. The money is a trick.'"

"What sayst thou to that, Madeleine?" asked Roland of his wife, bending over her in such a way that Gamain could not hear.

"I say this is a revelation of the highest importance, and that not an instant is to be lost."

Roland rang, and an usher appeared.

"Is there a carriage harnessed in the courtyard?" asked Roland.

"Yes, Citizen!"

"Order it to be ready."

Gamain rose and said, in a vexed tone : "Ah, you 've had enough of me, have you?"

"Why so?" asked Roland.

"Because you have called your carriage. It seems that government ministers have their carriages, even under the Republic."

"My friend," replied Roland, "ministers must always have carriages. A carriage is not a luxury for them, but an economy."

"Economy of what?"

"Of time, — the dearest and most precious commodity of any in the world."

"Then I must come again, I suppose?"

"What for?"

"Gracious ! — To show you that safe and its treasure !"

"Useless !"

"Why useless?"

"Because I have sent for the carriage in order to go there now."

"To go where?"

"To the Tuileries !"

"We 're going there?"

"As fast as we can," said Roland.

"That 's all right!" said Gamain.

"But —?"

"But what?" asked Gamain.

"The key!" said Roland.

"What key?"

"The key of the safe. It is not probable that Louis left it in the door."

"Certainly not! He was n't such a fool as he looked, that fat Capet!"

"Then take your tools."

"What for?"

"To open the safe!"

Gamain drew a new key from his pocket, and said: "What do you call that?"

"A key."

"A key to the safe, which I made as a souvenir. I studied that lock well, not doubting that some day —"

"That man is a scoundrel!" whispered Madame Roland to her husband.

"Thou thinkest then —?" asked Roland with some hesitation.

"I think we have no right, in our position, to refuse any information which fortune sends, to help us to a knowledge of the truth."

"Here it is!" said Gamain, as he twirled the key.

"And you think," said Roland, with a disgust it was impossible wholly to conceal, "you think that key, although made from memory, and after so many months, will open the iron door?"

"At the first turn, I hope. It ain't for nothing that a man is a master of masters, and master-in-chief."

"The Citizen's carriage is ready," said the usher.

"Shall I go with thee?" asked Madame Roland.

"Certainly! If there are papers, I shall confide them to thee. Art thou not the most trustworthy man of my acquaintance? — Come with me, my friend," he added, turning to Gamain.

Gamain followed, grumbling between his teeth: "Ah, did n't I say I 'd pay thee off for that, Monsieur Capet?"

That? — What did he mean by *that?* He referred to the King's ancient kindness towards him.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RETREAT OF THE PRUSSIANS.

WHILE Citizen Roland's carriage bowls along towards the Tuileries; while Gamain again finds the concealed panel in the wall; while his key, forged from memory, fulfils his malicious promise, and opens the iron closet with marvellous facility; while that iron closet yields up the fatal deposit entrusted to it, — the papers which, notwithstanding the absence of those confided to Madame Campan by the King himself, are to have a cruel influence over the destiny of the prisoners in the Temple; while Roland removes these documents to his office, and reads them one by one, searching fruitlessly for some trace of Danton's alleged treachery, and then files them carefully away, — while all this is going on, let us see what was being done by this former Minister of Justice.

We call Danton an ex-minister, because, when the Convention was once organized, he had no choice but to ask his dismission.

He therefore mounted the rostrum and said: "Before expressing my opinion on the first decree of the Convention, permit me to resign into its hands the functions delegated to me by the Legislative Assembly. I received these functions amidst the roar of cannon. Now the junction of our armies has been effected, and the union of our representatives is in operation. I am, therefore only an emissary of the people, and in that capacity I speak."

To these words, "The junction of our armies has been effected," Danton might have added, "and the Prussians

are beaten;" for he made his speech on September 21, and on September 20, — that is, on the evening before, — the battle of Valmy had been fought, though Danton was not yet aware of it.

He contented himself with saying: "Let us dissipate all idle phantoms of dictatorship, which alarm the people. Let us declare that there can be no Constitution, save one which the people accept. Heretofore it has been necessary to arouse the people against tyranny. Now let the laws be made as terrible against those who violate law, as were the thunders of the populace against tyrants. Let criminals be punished! Let us forswear all exaggeration! Let us declare that the rights of property, whether territorial or industrial, shall forever be maintained."

With his customary acuteness, Danton met the two great national fears. Frenchmen feared for their liberty and their property.

Strangely enough, who do you suppose feared most for the rights of property? The new proprietors, — those who had bought property the day before, and still owed for three-quarters of it.

These were the people who straightway became more conservative than the old nobles, the old land-owners. The nobles valued their lives above their ancient domains. The proof thereof is, that they abandoned their estates to save their lives; whereas the peasants, the purchasers of confiscated property, the parvenus, preferred their little corner of the earth to life itself, and guarded it, musket in hand, unwilling to leave it for anything else in the world.

Danton understood this. He knew that it was well to reassure, not only those who had been land-owners for a day, but also those who were to become so thereafter;

for the one grand idea of the Revolution was in this sentence:

All Frenchmen should be proprietors. Property does not always make men morally better; but it makes them worthier citizens, by inspiring them with the sentiment of independence.

The spirit of the Revolution is summed up in some other words, spoken by Danton:

Guarantee the abolition of all despotism, and the sacredness of all property. In other words: to begin with, man has a right to govern himself; and consequently, man has a right to the preservation of the fruit of his free industry.

Who said all this? The man who bears the sins of June 20, August 10, and September 2, — the Giant of Tempests, who made himself the Pilot of Peace, and threw into the sea two anchors, which are the safeguard of nations, — Liberty and Property.

The Girondists did not understand. The honest Girondists had an invincible dislike for the — how shall we express it? — the fickle Danton; for they knew that he refused the dictatorship, at the very moment when he was asking for it in order to prevent massacre.

A Girondist arose. Instead of applauding this man of genius, who had just voiced the two great fears of France, — in order to allay them by so doing, — this Girondist said to Danton: "Whoever tries to make property sacred, endangers it. To touch it, even for the purpose of steadying it, is to shake it. Property is anterior to law."

The Convention finally passed two edicts:

There can be no Constitution till one is adopted by the people.

Security of persons and property is the safeguard of the Nation.

This was just the thing; and yet it was not. Nothing is more perilous in politics than *nearly so.*

Danton's resignation was accepted. The man who dared shoulder the burdens of September 2 — that is, the dread of Paris, the hatred of the provinces, the execration of the world — was certainly a strong man. At that time he held the threads of diplomacy, of war, and of the police.

Dumouriez, and therefore the army, was in Danton's hand.

The news of the victory at Valmy reached Paris, and was the cause of general rejoicing. It was borne on eagles' wings, and was regarded as much more decisive than it was in reality. As a result of this, France jumped from abject fear into sublime audacity. The clubs breathed war and battle.

This is what was said aloud: "If the King of Prussia was vanquished, why was not the King of Prussia taken prisoner, bound, throttled, or at least driven to the other bank of the Rhine?"

In a lower tone men said: "It's very clear! Dumouriez has betrayed us! He was bribed by the Prussians."

Dumouriez was already receiving the usual recompense for a great service, — ingratitude.

The King of Prussia did not in the least regard himself as beaten. He had attacked Valmy Heights, and had not succeeded in taking them! That was all! Each army had saved its camp. From the beginning of the campaign the French had constantly lost ground, driven back by panics, by defeats, by reverses. This time the French held their own, — nothing more, nothing less. The loss of men was about equal on both sides.

Such was the popular French demand for a great

victory, that the real facts could not hastily be made known to Paris, to France, to Europe; but Dumouriez sent them to Danton, through Westermann. The Prussians suffered so little and were so far from being beaten, that twelve days after the Battle of Valmy they were still immovable in their camp.

Dumouriez wrote for instructions as to whether he should treat with the King of Prussia, in case any propositions were made. To this demand there were two replies. One was from the ministry. It was arrogant, perfunctory, dictated by victorious enthusiasm. The other reply was calm and wise, and emanated from Danton personally.

The ministerial letter took high ground, and thus it ran:

> The Republic will not treat with its enemies while they are within its territory.

Danton's letter said:

> If the Prussians will only evacuate our territory, agree with them at any price.

A settlement was not easily made, considering the Prussian King's present state of mind. At nearly the same time when the news of the victory at Valmy reached Paris, the news reached Valmy of the abolition of royalty and the proclamation of the Republic. The Prussian King was furious.

The invasion had been undertaken, in order to rescue the King of France; yet heretofore the only results had been seen on August 10, September 2, and September 21, — that is, in the King's captivity, the massacre of the Royalists, and the abolition of royalty. All this raised

Frederick William to a height of saturnine fury. He was determined to fight, come what would, and on September 29 gave orders for a bloody battle.

As may be seen, he was very far from an evacuation of French territory.

However, on September 29, instead of a fight, there was a conference.

Dumouriez was prepared at all points.

Brunswick, though very insolent in his words, was very prudent when deeds were in question. He was more English than German. He had espoused the sister of the Queen of England. He received his inspiration quite as much from London as from Berlin. If England decided for battle, he was ready to fight with both hands, one for England, the other for Prussia; but if England, his real master, did not unsheathe her sword, he was quite ready to sheathe his own.

On September 29 Brunswick produced, in the conference, letters from England and Holland, refusing to join in the coalition. Moreover, Custine was marching along the Rhine and threatening Coblentz. If Coblentz should be taken, the gateway of return to Prussia would be closed against Frederick William.

Then there was something still more serious, something more important. It chanced that the Prussian King had a mistress, the Countess of Lichtenau. She followed after the army, as was the fashion of the day. Like Goethe, who was in a Prussian army-wagon, scribbling the first scenes of "Faust," she thought this would be a famous military pleasure-trip, and she much wished to visit Paris.

The Countess was arrested at Spa. There she heard of the Valmy defeat, and of the dangers which beset her royal lover. Two dangers she greatly dreaded, this

beautiful Countess, — the bullets of French men and the smiles of French women. She wrote letter after letter, and her postscripts to these letters, — the summary of what she had written, — were always made up of two words, *come back!*

The Prussian King only remained, sooth to say, because he was ashamed to abandon Louis Sixteenth. Danton hastened to send him, through Westermann, the various orders of the Commune, which showed the royal prisoners to be well cared for. As this satisfied the King of Prussia, it is evident that he was not very difficult to please. His friends aver that before his retirement he made Danton and Dumouriez pledge their own honor to save Louis Sixteenth's life; but there is nothing to confirm this assertion.

On September 29 the Prussian army began its retreat, and marched a league. The next day it accomplished another league.

The French army was its escort, as if doing the honors of the country by this companionship. Whenever the soldiers wished to make an attack, to intercept the retreat, — in a word, to stir up the boar, and make him face the dogs at his heels, — Danton's men held them back.

If the Prussians would only get out of France, that was all Danton asked for. By October 22 this desire was fulfilled.

On November 6 the cannon at Jemmapes announced the judgment of God on the French Revolution. It was no longer a possible failure.

On November 7, the next day, the Girondists brought in a proposition for the trial of the King.

Something similar had taken place six weeks before, when Dumouriez gained the decisive battle of Valmy,

September 20, and the Republic was proclaimed the next day, September 21.

Each of these two victories had its coronation, and aided France in one more Revolutionary step.

This time it was an awful step. The blindfold pilgrims were now nearing a result towards which, for three years, they had been ignorantly journeying. As happens in nature, objects which had heretofore been seen only in a mass, now assumed more definite outlines.

What was to be seen in the horizon? A scaffold! At the foot of that scaffold, the King!

In that material epoch, the elevated ideas of superior minds were overruled by the inferior instincts of hatred, vengeance, and destruction. A man like Danton, one who had assumed the responsibility of the crimson days of September, — a man who felt the truth of what a certain English poet has said, —

> Great evils need great passions to redress them,
> And whirlwinds fitliest scatter pestilence, —

even he was loudly accused of being the chief of the *Indulgents.*

It is difficult for ideality to control deeds. What the members of the Convention could not understand — or, at least, what only a few of them could understand, some clearly and others intuitively — was this, that they should have proceeded against Royalism, not against the King.

Royalty was a gloomy abstraction, a mysterious peril, which nobody wanted. It was an idol, gilded on the outside; but, like the whited sepulchres of which Jesus spoke, it was full of "dead men's bones, and all uncleanness."

The King was another matter. The King was a

man, — a man not very interesting in the days of his prosperity, but a man purified by misfortune and broadened by captivity. His humanity was developed through his disgrace. The brightening influence of adversity over him was such that even the Queen, — either from new intuition or from repentance of the past, — now that she was a poor prisoner in the Temple, almost adored, worshipped — in a religious sense of the word — this king, this prince, this man, whose plebeian instincts and sensuous appetites had often sent the blood to her face. It cannot be said that she loved him however; for her poor broken heart had lost all the love it had ever contained, — like a leaking vase, which has lost its precious liquor drop by drop.

One day the King entered the Queen's rooms, and found her sweeping the chamber, where the little Dauphin lay ill. He paused on the threshold, let his head fall on his breast, and said with a sigh: "Ah Madame, what an occupation for the Queen of France! What if Vienna could see what you are doing? Who would have believed that I should cause you such a downfall, by linking your fate with mine!"

"And do you count as nothing," replied the Queen, "the glory of being the wife of the best and most persecuted of men?"

This is what Marie Antoinette said, and without a witness, as she believed, not knowing that a poor valet, who had followed the King's fortunes, gathered up these words like black pearls, that they might form a diadem, not for the brow of a king, but for a condemned prisoner.

Another day Louis saw Sister Elizabeth cutting with her teeth, for want of scissors, the thread with which she was repairing the Queen's gown.

"Poor sister!" said he. "What a contrast to that pretty mansion at Montreuil, where you once lacked nothing!"

"Ah, my brother," said this saintly lady, "can I regret anything, when I share your misfortunes?"

All this became known. All this was noised abroad. All this embellished, with golden arabesques, the sad romance of the royal martyr.

Royalty was smitten to the death; but the King, living and imprisoned, suggested a great and powerful thought, — so great and forcible that it entered the brains of but few men, who found it so unpopular that they hardly dared to give it utterance.

"People need salvation, but they do not need vengeance," said Danton to the Cordelier Club.

"Assuredly the King must be tried," said Grégoire to the Convention, "but he is regarded with so much contempt, that there is no place left for hatred."

This is what Thomas Paine wrote:

> I wish the prosecution could be drawn up, not against Louis Sixteenth, but against the whole tribe of kings. One of them we have in our power. He will put us on the track of conspiracy everywhere. . . . Louis Sixteenth will be very useful to prove the necessity of revolutions.

Lofty minds like Paine's, and great hearts like Danton's and Grégoire's, were in accord on this point. Not one king, but kings should be indicted, and Louis should be summoned as a witness.

Republican France — that is, a nation which had attained its majority — should proceed, not only in her own name, but in the name of nations still submissive to royalty, — that is, still under age. France should sit in judgment, not as an earthly magistrate, but as a

divine arbiter. She should look down from the higher spheres, and her word should no longer rise to the throne like a splash of mud and blood, but it should fall upon the kings of earth like a thunderclap.

Suppose a public prosecution, supported by proofs, had been begun against Catherine Second, — murderess of her husband, the plunderer of Poland. Suppose the monstrous details of her life had been openly exposed, like Madame de Lamballe's corpse. Imagine that Pasiphae of the North, chained in the pillory of public opinion, and say what would have been the result of teaching the nations by such a prosecution.

Nevertheless, whatever good there may be in such a process has yet to be brought out.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE ARRAIGNMENT.

THE documents in the iron closet opened by Gamain, — to whom the Convention, in return for his good work, voted a pension of twelve hundred francs a year, and who died in the tortures of rheumatism, after regretting a thousand times that he could not die on the guillotine, to which he helped to send his royal pupil, — these papers, minus those which had been sorted out by the King, and given to Madame Campan, — these papers, we say, to the great disappointment of the Rolands, contained nothing against either Danton or Dumouriez.

They were specially compromising to the King and the priesthood. They showed the poor, mean, narrow, ungrateful spirit of Louis Sixteenth, who specially hated those who wished to save him, — Necker, Lafayette, Mirabeau. Against the Girondists he had nothing to say.

The discussion as to the trial began on November 13. Who opened this discussion? Who made himself the sword-bearer of the Mountain, as the extreme Revolutionary party was now called? Who flamed down upon the gloomy assemblage like a devastating angel?

A young man, or rather a boy, twenty-four years old, — sent to the Convention before attaining the required age, and whom we have seen several times in the course of this history.

He was originally from one of the roughest districts of France, Nièvre. He had in him that bitterly acrid sap

which makes men dangerous, if not great. He was the son of an old soldier, whom thirty years of service had elevated to the cross of Saint Louis, and consequently ennobled with the title of Chevalier. This young man was born thoughtful and sad. His family had a small estate in the Department of Aisne, at Blérancourt, near Noyon; and he dwelt in this modest abode, which was far from attaining even the mediocrity glorified by the Latin poet.

Sent to Rheims to study law, he made poor lessons and poor verses; and he wrote a licentious poem, after the fashion of "Orlando Furioso" and "La Pucelle," which was unsuccessfully published in 1789, and republished, with greater success, in 1792.

He had hastened away from his province, and came to Paris to find Camille Desmoulins, — that brilliant journalist, who held in his hands the future reputation of unknown poets.

Camille, himself a sublime Bohemian, full of spirit, vim, and venture, saw coming to him one day this arrogant student, full of pretence and pathos, whose slow and measured words fell one by one, like drops of frozen water percolating the rock, and seemed as if they came from a woman's mouth. As to the rest of his face, his blue eyes were hard and stern, and shaded by black eyebrows. His complexion was pale white, — sickly, rather than healthy, — as when we met him at the time of his initiation among the Enlightened Ones.

His sojourn at Rheims had perhaps given our law-student that scrofulous malady which kings pretended to be able to cure by a touch on their coronation-days. His chin was lost in the midst of an enormous neckerchief wound about his throat; although it was then the fashion to wear the cravat loose and flowing, as if to give

the headsman every facility for baring it when the time should come.

His body was rigid and automatic. He would have seemed like a ridiculous machine, if he had not become terrible as a wraith. His face was overtopped with a forehead so low that his hair fell almost to his eyes.

Well, one day Desmoulins saw this strange figure appear before him, — a figure towards which he was supremely antipathetic.

The youngster showed Camille his verses, and said to him, in the course of a social interchange of thought, that since the days of the Romans the world was empty.

The verses appeared poor to Camille, the thought being false. He made sport of the poetry, he mocked the philosophy; and the philosophic poet returned to the solitude of Blérancourt, "like Tarquin," as Michelet, the great painter of men of this sort, expresses it, "like Tarquin decapitating poppies with a switch, — seeing in one poppy a Danton, and in another a Desmoulins."

His time came at last, for to certain men the occasion never fails.

His village, his borough, his little town of Blérancourt was in danger of losing a certain trade-market, upon which it largely depended for its prosperity. Without knowing him, the young man wrote to Robespierre, begging him to support the local measure, which was confided to him, and offering, besides, to give up his little estate, — all that he possessed, — that it might be sold for the profit of the Nation.

That which made Desmoulins laugh made Robespierre ruminate. He sent for the young fanatic, studied him, and saw in him the temper of those men by whom revolutions are carried on. Through his influence with

the Jacobins, Robespierre had the boy nominated to the Convention, although he was under the requisite age. The chairman of the electoral body, Jean de Bry, protested; and with his protest he sent the baptismal certificate of the member-elect, who was only three months over twenty-four years of age; but under Robespierre's influence, this objection was set aside.

It was into this young man's abode that Robespierre retired on the night of September 2. It was this youngster who then slept, while Robespierre could not sleep. This youngster was Saint-Just.

"Saint-Just," said Camille Desmoulins to him one day, "dost know what Danton says of thee?"

"No."

"He says thou bearest thy head as carefully as if it were the holy eucharist."

A smile glimmered around the youngster's feminine mouth. "Ah ha!" said he. "Well, I 'll make him carry his head as Saint Denis carried his, — in front of him!" and he kept his word.

When Saint-Just offered his proposition as to the royal indictment, he descended slowly from the summit of the Mountain, where he sat, to the rostrum in the centre, and as slowly he demanded a death-sentence. *Demanded*, do we say? *Ordered* would be the better word.

It was an atrocious discourse which fell from the pale and feminine lips of this handsome man. Let him hunt it up who will! let him print it who can! for we lack the courage to give much of it.

No long trial of the King is necessary! Let him be killed!

He must be killed, for there are no longer any laws by which to prosecute him. This very man has destroyed them.

He must be killed as an enemy. Only citizens have the right of trial. In order to try the tyrant, we should have first to reconstitute him a citizen.

He must be killed as a criminal taken in the very act, his hands dyed with blood. Moreover, Royalism is an eternal crime. A king is a being outside of nature. Between king and people there is no natural affinity.

Saint-Just spoke in this strain for an hour, — without warmth, without animation. He spoke with the voice of a pedagogue and the gestures of a pedant. In every paragraph he returned to his refrain, — which fell with singular weight, and which produced among his auditors a shock such as might come from hearing the *swish* of the blade of the guillotine, — *He must be killed!*

This speech made a great sensation. Not one of the judges who did not feel, in listening to it, as if the cold steel were piercing his own heart. Even Robespierre was alarmed at seeing his pupil, his disciple, plant the Revolutionary banner so strongly, and so far in advance of the most advanced Republican outposts.

Thenceforth, not only was the prosecution resolved upon, but the King was already doomed. To attempt to save the King was now to devote oneself to death. Danton had the disposition to do it, but not the courage. He had enough patriotism to let himself be innocently branded as an assassin, but he had not enough stoicism to incur the name of *traitor*.

On December 11, 1792, the trial began.

Three days before, a city official presented himself at the Temple, at the head of a deputation from the Commune. Entering the royal presence, he read to the prisoners a warrant, ordering them to give up their knives, razors, scissors, daggers, — in fact all sharp instruments, of which prisoners are generally deprived.

About the same time Madame Cléry came, accompanied by a friend, to see her husband. As usual, the valet went down to the Council Hall. There he conversed with his wife. She ostentatiously talked with him aloud about family matters; but while she was talking thus, her friend said to Cléry, in a whisper: "Tuesday next the King will be taken to the Convention. The trial will begin. The king may take his own counsellors. So much is certain."

The King had forbidden Cléry from concealing anything from him. Bad as was this information, the faithful servant decided to communicate it to his master. At night, therefore, when the King was undressing, Cléry repeated to him the words we have just reported; adding this fact, that during the trial the Commune proposed to separate Louis from his family.

Four days remained, in which Louis Sixteenth could arrange matters with his wife. He thanked Cléry for the fidelity with which he had kept his word, and added: "Continue to try and discover their intentions concerning me. Do not fear to distress me. I have arranged with my family not to appear as if we had been forewarned of anything, so that you may not be compromised."

As the day drew nearer when the trial was to open, the municipal officers became more distrustful. Cléry had therefore no other information to give the prisoners than he could find in a journal which somebody managed to send him. This journal published the decree, that on December 11 Louis Sixteenth should be brought to the bar of the Convention.

On December 11, at five o'clock in the morning, the drums beat a general alarm throughout Paris. The gates of the Temple were thrown open, and a squad of horsemen, with artillery, entered the courtyard. If the royal

family had been utterly ignorant of what was impending, they would have been alarmed by such an unseasonable racket. They feigned therefore to be ignorant of its cause, and asked the commissioners on duty for some explanation, which they refused to give.

At nine o'clock the King and Dauphin (who now shared his father's rooms) went to breakfast in the ladies' apartments. They were allowed to pass a last hour together, but it was under the eyes of the commissioners. At the end of the hour they had to separate, and as they were forbidden to appear to know what was in progress, they had to shut up their hearts when they separated.

The Dauphin really knew nothing. He was spared this sadness, on account of his youth. He insisted upon playing ninepins; and, distracted as he was, the King wished to give his son this recreation. The Dauphin lost every game, and three times the game ended with the number sixteen.

"Confound the number, sixteen," said the boy. "I believe it brings me bad luck."

The King answered not, but this word smote him as a sorrowful omen.

At eleven o'clock, while he was giving the child his lesson in reading, two officials came in, to say that they were after young Louis, to take him to his mother. The King wished to learn the motive of this removal. The officials only replied that they were executing the orders of the Council.

The King kissed his boy, and charged Cléry to conduct him safely to his mamma. Cléry obeyed, and came back again.

"Where did you leave my boy?" asked the King.

"In the Queen's arms," said Cléry.

One of the commissioners reappeared. "Monsieur,"

he said to the King, "Citizen Chambon, Mayor of Paris," — he was Pétion's successor, — "is in the Council Room, and is soon coming upstairs."

"What does he wish?" asked Louis.

"I do not know," answered the commissioner, and then went out of the room, leaving the King alone.

For a moment the King strode up and down the room, and then seated himself in an armchair at the head of the bed.

The official was with Cléry in the next room, and said to the valet: "I do not dare to go into the prisoner's room again, for fear he will question me." Everything was so quiet in the King's chamber, however, that the commissioner finally grew uneasy. He entered the room softly, and found Louis with his head between his hands, in deep meditation.

At the noise of the door, turning on its hinges, the King lifted his head, and asked aloud: "What do you wish?"

"I feared you were not comfortable."

"I am obliged to you," said the King. "No, I am not uncomfortable; only the way in which my son was taken away from me has affected me sensibly."

The official again withdrew.

Not till one o'clock did the Mayor appear. He was accompanied by a new City Prosecutor, Chaumette, by Recording Secretary Coulombeau, by several city officials, and by Santerre, who was himself attended by his aides.

The King arose. "What do you wish with me, Monsieur?" said he to the Mayor.

"I come for you, in virtue of a decree of the Convention, which Secretary Coulombeau will read to you."

The secretary unrolled a paper and read:

Decree of the National Convention, ordering Louis Capet —

At this point the King interrupted the reader by saying: "Capet is not my name. It is only the name of one of my ancestors."

As the secretary wished to continue the reading, the King said: "Useless, Monsieur! I have seen the decree in a newspaper."

Turning to the commissioners, he added: "I could have wished to have my little son with me during the two hours which I have passed in waiting for you, — two cruel hours, which then would have been very sweet. However, this treatment is only a specimen of what I have endured for the past four months. — I follow you, not to obey the Convention, but because my enemies can force me to do so."

"Come, then, Monsieur!" said Chambon.

"I only ask time to put on my riding-coat. Cléry, my riding-coat."

Cléry gave the King the garment required, which was nut-brown in color. Chambon walked first and the King followed. At the bottom of the staircase the prisoner looked anxiously at the muskets, the pikes, and especially at the cavalry in sky-blue, the formation of this corps being heretofore unknown to him. Then he cast a last glance at the Tower, and they set out.

It rained. The King was in a carriage, and made the journey with an unruffled countenance.

Passing in front of the gates Saint Denis and Saint Martin, he asked which of the two was to be demolished.

At the entrance of the Riding School (for the Convention met in the same old place) Santerre laid his hand on the King's shoulder and led him to the bar, to the place and armchair wherein he had sworn allegiance to the Constitution.

The Deputies remained seated when he entered, one

only rising and saluting as he passed. Much astonished, the King turned, recognized Doctor Gilbert, and said: "Good-day, Monsieur Gilbert!"

Then he added to Santerre: "Do you know Monsieur Gilbert? He was formerly my physician. I hope you will not be too hard upon him, for saluting me."

The examination began. Here the prestige and glory of misfortune began to disappear in the presence of publicity. Not only had the King to reply to a fire of questions, but he replied badly, — hesitatingly, evasively, contradictorily, trickily, as if he were a country lawyer, arguing about some petty farm. Such a man appears to poor advantage in open day. The examination lasted till five o'clock. At that hour Louis was conducted into the Conference Hall, where he waited for his carriage.

The Mayor came to him and said: "Are you hungry, Monsieur, and do you wish for anything?"

"I thank you," said the King, with a negative gesture; but almost immediately, seeing a grenadier take a loaf from his knapsack, and give half of it to Chaumette, Louis went to him and said: "Will you give me a bit of your bread, Monsieur?"

As he spoke softly, Chaumette drew back and said: "Speak louder, Monsieur!"

"Oh, I can speak loud enough," replied the King, with a sad smile. "I only asked for a bit of bread."

"Willingly," answered Chaumette, and he offered him the half-loaf, saying: "There, cut it! It 's a Spartan repast. If I had a root also, I 'd give you half of that."

They descended into the courtyard At sight of the King the crowd set up the refrain of the Marseillaise, *March on, march on!* dwelling with energy upon the line:

May blood impure soon lave our thirsty land!

Louis turned slightly pale, and stepped into the carriage. Then he began to eat his bread, — the crust only. The soft part remained in his hands, and he did not know what to do with it. The Prosecutor's assistant took the bread and threw it out of the window.

"Ah, that 's bad!" said the King, "to throw away bread, — especially when it 's so scarce."

"How do you know it 's scarce?" asked Chaumette. "You don't suffer for want of bread!"

"I know it must be scarce, because that which is given me has so much bran in it."

"My grandmother," replied Chaumette, "used to say to me: 'Little boy, never lose a crumb of bread, for you may not always be able to get it!'"

"Monsieur Chaumette," said the King, "your grandmother was a very sensible woman, as it appears to me."

They were silent. Chaumette leaned back in the carriage.

"What is the matter?" asked the King "You look pale!"

"Indeed, I don't feel quite right," said Chaumette.

"Perhaps it 's the motion of the carriage, which jolts along rather slowly."

"Perhaps so!"

"Have you ever been to sea?"

"I went to war with La Motte Picquet, in the glorious days of old," said Chaumette.

"La Motte Picquet was a brave man!" said the King; and then he also relapsed into silence.

Of what was he thinking? Of his splendid navy, victorious in the Indies? Of his harbor at Cherbourg, won from the sea? Of his glittering admiral's uniform, all red and gold, so different from the nut-brown costume he was now wearing? Of his artillery, which boomed

with delight, when he rode abroad, in the days of his prosperity ?

How far from his old estate was this poor King Louis, shut up in a wretchedly slow hack, making its way through hosts of people, who crowded up to catch a sight of him, — waves from an infectious and encroaching sea, rising from the ditches and cesspools of Paris. His eyes blinked in the daylight. His beard was long, thin, and faded. The skin from his famished jaws hung in folds on his thin neck. He wore a gray coat and a brown overcoat. As they jogged along he repeated, with that sort of automatic memory peculiar to the Bourbons and to babes: "Ah, there's such a street! There's such a street, — and such a street, — and such a street!"

When they reached the Rue Orleans he said: "Ah, there's the Rue Orleans!"

"Say the Rue Egalité," answered somebody.

"Ah, yes! On account of Monsieur —"

He did not finish, but relapsed into silence; and between the Rue Egalité and the Temple he did not speak a solitary word.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE MARTYR KING'S STORY.

THE King's first care, on returning to the Temple, was to ask that he might be taken to his family. The answer was, that there was no order to that effect. Louis then understood that he, like all prisoners under trial for capital offences, was to be kept in seclusion.

"At least, tell my family that I have returned!" he said.

Without paying any attention to the four officials who surrounded him, he then began to read, as usual.

He had yet one hope, that at supper-time his family would come up to his room. His expectation was in vain. They did not come.

"I suppose my boy will pass the night with me," he said, "for I see his things are still here!"

Alas! the prisoner no longer entertained, even with respect to his son, the certainty he affected to feel. This question was no more definitely answered than the other.

"Then suppose I go to bed," said he. As usual, Cléry helped him to undress.

"Oh, Cléry," murmured the King, "I was far from expecting such questions as were put to me!"

Indeed, nearly all the questions put to the King had their origin in that iron closet; and the King, ignorant of Gamain's treachery, did not suspect that this safe had been discovered.

Nevertheless he went to bed, and was hardly in bed before he fell asleep, with that peacefulness of which he

had given so many proofs, and which, under many circumstances, might be mistaken for lethargy.

It was not so with the other prisoners. This absolute separation was frightfully significant, for it was like the seclusion of the condemned.

As the Dauphin's bed and other things were still in the King's room, where he had slept in these latter weeks, the Queen put the child to sleep in her own bed, as was formerly her custom; and all night she sat by the foot of the bed, watching over his slumbers.

Her grief was so evident, her attitude so much resembled that of the celebrated statue of a Mother near the Tomb of her Son, that Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale resolved to pass the night in their chairs, by the side of the Queen; but the officials interfered, and compelled the two ladies to go to bed in their own room.

The next day, for the first time, the Queen asked a favor of her guardians. She asked for two things, — that she might see the King, and that she might receive the journals, in order to be informed as to his trial.

These requests were referred to the Council. One was utterly refused, — that in reference to the journals. The other was half granted.

The Queen could not see her husband, nor could the sister see her brother; but the children might see their father, on condition that they would see neither their mother nor their aunt.

This ultimatum was made known to the King. He reflected an instant, and then said, with his accustomed resignation: "Well, whatever happiness it would give me to see my children, I renounce that happiness. Besides, the business which occupies me will prevent me from devoting to them the time they need. Let the children remain with their mother."

On receiving this answer they removed the Dauphin's bed to his mother's chamber, who did not leave her children until she was on trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal, as the King now was before the Convention.

Despite this seclusion, they tried to find some means of communication. It was Cléry who again charged himself with arranging this correspondence, with the aid of another attendant of the princesses, whose name was Turgy.

Turgy and Cléry often met, as they were going and coming in the discharge of their duties; but the espionage of the city officials made conversation very difficult. The only words they were allowed to exchange were limited to these : "The King is well. — The Queen, the princesses, and the children are well."

One day, however, Turgy gave Cléry a little note, and said : "Madame Elizabeth slipped this into my hand in returning me a napkin."

Cléry hastened with the billet to the King. It was written with pinholes, — for the ladies had long been deprived of ink, quills, and paper, — and contained these sentences :

We are well, my brother. Write in your turn.

The King replied; for since the examination, he was allowed the use of writing-materials.

Giving it to Cléry he said : "Read it, my dear Cléry, and you will see it contains nothing that can compromise you."

Cléry respectfully refused to read it, and blushed as he pushed away the royal hand. Ten minutes later, Turgy received this reply, which in due time was transmitted to the other prisoners.

On the same day, as Turgy was passing before the slightly open door of Cléry's chamber, he threw a ball of thread under the bed. This ball contained a second note from Madame Elizabeth. This was the method agreed upon.

Cléry wound the same thread around second note from the King, and hid it in the cupboard, among the napkins. Turgy found it, and placed a reply in the same spot.

The same proceedings were repeated during several days. Every time the valet gave a new proof of his fidelity and cunning in this direction, the King would say to him, shaking his head: "Be careful, my friend! you're exposing yourself!"

This method was indeed too precarious. Cléry tried to find another.

The commissioners supplied the prisoners with candles tied in bundles. Cléry carefully saved the strings; and when he had a sufficient quantity, he informed the King that he had invented a means of making the correspondence more active.

Madame Elizabeth occupied a room beneath Cléry's. The window in her room was directly underneath a window in the little corridor adjoining Cléry's room. During the night he could lower the twine. Madame Elizabeth could tie her letters to this string, and in the same way receive those of her brother. There was a projection under the lower window, which would prevent the letters from falling into the garden.

By this same thread, stationery could be lowered, so that the ladies need no longer write with pins.

In this way the prisoners heard from one another every day, the ladies receiving news of the King, and the King receiving news from them and his son.

In other respects, the King's position was very much weaker since he had been arraigned before the Convention. When he answered, he answered somewhat arrogantly, with the pride of royalty, — not like an accused man on trial, but rather like a knight who accepts a challenge and takes up the gauntlet.

Unluckily for him, the nature of Louis Sixteenth was not such as to enable him to assume either of these two parts advantageously. He answered awkwardly, timidly, badly, as we have already said. Feeling fettered, in the presence of so many proofs as had fallen, he knew not how, into his enemies' hands, at last he asked for counsel.

After a tempestuous debate, which followed the King's withdrawal from the hall, it was voted that he might have counsel. The next day four members of the Convention, appointed for the purpose, visited the King, to ask him whom he would choose for his lawyer, and he named Target. The Commissioners retired, and notified Monsieur Target of the honor done him by the King.

Idiotic choice! Target — though a man of great worth, and an old member of the Constitutional Assembly, who had taken an active part in the preparation of the Constitution — was afraid. He refused in a cowardly way, turning pale with fear before his own century, that he might afterwards turn red with shame before posterity.

The next day, however, after the King's trial began, the President of the Convention received this letter:

CITIZEN PRESIDENT: I do not know whether the Convention will allow Louis Sixteenth an advocate to defend him, and leave to him the choice of a defender. If so, I wish Louis Sixteenth to know that, if he sees fit to select me for that duty, I am ready to attend to it.

I do not ask you to apprise the Convention of my offer, for I am far from supposing myself a person of sufficient importance to inspire the members with any special interest; but twice, when such appointments were much sought after, I was called to the Royal Council of him who was then my master; and I owe him the same service now, when it is a duty which many people consider dangerous.

If I knew of any other way to make known my disposition toward the King, I would not take the liberty of addressing you.

Considering the place which you occupy, it has seemed to me that you, better than anybody else, could transmit this message.

I am with respect &c.

MALESHERBES.

Two other requests were received at the same time, one from a Troyes lawyer, Monsieur Sourdat. He spoke boldly:

I am moved to defend Louis Sixteenth, by my conviction of his innocence.

The other letter was from Olympe de Gouges, that eccentric improvisatrice, — who dictated her comedies, because, so it was said, she did not know how to write.

Olympe de Gouges constituted herself the advocate of Woman's Rights. She wished them to have the same rights as men, — the right to elect delegates, discuss laws, declare peace and war; and she based her claim on a sublime sentence:

Why should women not mount the rostrum? They can mount the scaffold.

Poor creature! She did indeed mount the scaffold; but when the sentence was pronounced, she became once more a woman, — that is, feeble. Wishing to claim all

the advantages of the law, she declared herself in the way of maternity. The tribunal sent her to the physician and nurses, and the result of this consultation was, that if she was in such a condition, it was too recent to constitute any claim for mercy. At the scaffold she became more manlike, and died as becomes such a woman.

As to Monsieur de Malesherbes, he was the same man who was in the Royal Council with Turgot, and fell with him. We have elsewhere described him as a small man, of seventy or seventy-two years. Naturally he was awkward and absent-minded, stocky, ordinary-looking, "with the veritable physiognomy of an apothecary," as Michelet expresses it, — a man from whom one would scarce expect the heroism of classic days.

In the Convention he never called the King anything but *Sire*. "What makes you so bold?" asked one of the members. "My indifference to death," ingenuously replied Malesherbes.

He did indeed despise the death to which he afterward rode so calmly, chatting with his companions in the wagon; and he received the fatal blade as if it gave him only what Guillotin had said of it, "a slight coolness about the neck."

The superintendent at Monceaux — it was to this cemetery that the bodies of those publicly executed were conveyed — related a singular proof of Malesherbes's indifference to death. In the fob of the dead man's smallclothes he found Malesherbes's watch, which marked two o'clock. According to his habit, he had wound up his watch at noon, — that is, an hour before he went to the scaffold, — and it continued to run its daily course.

As he could not have Target, the King accepted Malesherbes and Tronchet; and they, being pressed for time, added another lawyer, Desèze, to their number.

On December 14 it was announced to Louis that he was at liberty to confer with his defenders, and that on the same day he would receive a visit from Monsieur de Malesherbes.

This devotion touched the King, though his temperament did not render him easily accessible to such emotions. Seeing this septuagenarian coming to him with such sublime simplicity, the King's heart swelled within him. Those arms — royal arms, so rarely opened — were outstretched, and he said, in the midst of his tears: "My dear Monsieur de Malesherbes, come and embrace me!"

After pressing him affectionately to his heart, the King continued: "I know how my affairs are situated. I expect death, and I am prepared to meet it. As you see me at this moment, — and I am very tranquil, am I not? — well, so I shall walk to the scaffold."

On December 16 a deputation — composed of four members of the Convention, Valazé, Cochon, Grandpré, and Duprat — came to the Temple. Twenty-one deputies had been appointed to examine the indictment against the King, and these four belonged to that committee.

They brought the King the act of accusation, and the documents relating to the case. The whole day was occupied with the verification of these papers.

Each document was read by the secretary. After the reading Valazé would say: "Do you recognize this?" and the King would answer Yes or No, as the case might be.

Several days after, the same commissioners returned, and read to the King fifty additional papers, which he acknowledged and signed, like the others. In all there were one hundred and fifty-eight such papers, of which he had copies.

During these interviews the King was somewhat afflicted with fluxion. He remembered Gilbert's salute, when he first entered the Convention, and asked the Commune if he might be permitted to call in his former physician. The Commune refused this request.

"If Capet will drink no more ice-water, he will have no trouble," said one of the members of the Council.

On December 26 the King made his second appearance at the bar of the Convention.

His beard had grown still longer. As we have said, it was homely, sandy, and straggling. He asked for razors, and they were granted, but only on condition that he should use them only in the presence of four city officials.

On December 25, at eleven o'clock in the evening, the King began the preparation of his will. This document is so well known, touching and Christian as it is, that we will not record it here.

Two last testaments have often attracted our attention, — that of Louis Sixteenth, who lived in the presence of republicanism, and yet could see only royalty; that of Orleans, who lived in the presence of royalty, and yet could see only republicanism.

We will cite only one phrase of the King's will, because it throws light upon his standpoint. Everybody sees, so it may be said, not according to the reality of things merely, but according to one's point of view. Thus he wrote:

I close by declaring before God, and expecting to appear before him, that I cannot reproach myself with the crimes charged against me.

These phrases have won for Louis Sixteenth, in the eyes of prosperity, the reputation of being an honest man. Perjured in all his oaths, he fled towards a foreign land, leaving behind him a protest against the very oaths he

had solemnly taken. He had discussed, appreciated, and recorded the plans of Lafayette and Mirabeau for his safety, yet had called upon the enemy to enter the heart of France. Being now ready to appear before God, who must be his judge, and believing that God would reward both good and bad actions, how could Louis feel able to say: "I cannot reproach myself with the crimes charged against me"?

Perhaps the construction of the phrase explains the matter. The King did not say: "The allegations against me are false;" but he said: "I cannot reproach myself with the crimes charged against me;" which is not exactly the same thing.

Although ready to go to the scaffold, Louis was still the pupil of Monsieur de la Vanguyon!

To say, "The allegations against me are false," would be to deny those allegations, and Louis could not deny them; but to say, "I cannot reproach myself with the crimes charged against me," might mean, strictly interpreted: "These crimes may exist, but I do not reproach myself with them."

Why did not Louis Sixteenth reproach himself? Because his point of view, as we have just said, was the standpoint of royalty. Because, thanks to the influences under which he was reared, thanks to his belief in the sanctity of hereditary rights, and the infallibility of the royal right divine, kings cannot see crimes, especially political crimes, in the same light as other people.

In the eyes of Louis the Eleventh, his revolt against his father was no crime. It was a war for the public welfare.

To Charles the Ninth, the Saint Bartholomew Massacre was no crime. It was a measure dictated by public security.

This same Malesherbes, who now defended the King, had tried in former days, when he belonged to the Royal Council, to persuade the King to reinstate the Protestants in their old political rights; but he found Louis Sixteenth very obstinate on this subject.

"No," said the King, "no! The proscription of Protestants is a law of the state, a law of Louis Fourteenth. Never disturb the ancient landmarks."

"Sire," replied Malesherbes, "politics should never override justice."

"But," cried the King, like a man who could not understand, "Where was there any proscription of justice in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Was not the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes necessary to the welfare of the state?"

In the eyes of Louis Sixteenth, therefore, this persecution of the Protestants, devised by an old devotee and a revengeful Jesuit, — an atrocious measure, which made the blood run in the streams of the Cevennes valleys, and kindled the pyres at Nismes, Albi, and Béziers, — this persecution was not a crime, but, on the contrary, a state necessity.

There is another matter which has to be urged for the royal standpoint, — that a king, almost always born of a foreign princess, from whom he derives the best part of his blood, is almost a stranger to his people. He governs them, — that is all. By whom does he govern them? By his ministers.

Not only are his subjects considered unworthy of being related to him, unworthy of being allied to him by marriage, but they are not even worthy of being directly governed by their King. Foreign sovereigns, on the contrary, are the relations and allies of a king, who has neither kinsfolk nor allies in his kingdom; and with

these foreign kinsmen he can correspond without the intervention of public officers.

The Spanish Bourbons, the Neapolitan Bourbons, the Italian Bourbons, all came from the same stock, Henry the Fourth. They were all cousins.

The Emperor of Austria was Louis the Sixteenth's brother-in-law. The Savoy princes were his kinsfolk, for Louis was Saxon on his mother's side.

When the people reached a point where they wished to impose upon the King conditions which he did not believe to be for his interest, to whom did Louis appeal for support against his revolted subjects? To his cousins, his brothers-in-law, his kinsfolk. To him, the Spanish and the Austrians were not the enemies of France, because they were the relatives and the friends of himself, the King; and from the Royalist point of view, the King was the state, was France. "The state? It is I!" said his great predecessor.

What did these kings come to defend? The sacred, infallible, almost divine cause of royalty.

This is why Louis Sixteenth could not reproach himself with the crimes charged against him.

Royalism inflamed the popular egotism. The people carried their hatred of royalism so far that they wished to suppress God, because it was said that royalism emanated from God. Doubtless the people also had their state reasons, which seemed reasonable from their point of view, and which led to the excesses of July 14 and October 5 and 6, 1789, and of June 20 and August 10, 1792.

We do not add September 2; for, we repeat it, those outrages did not originate with the people, but with the Commune alone.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE TRIAL.

DECEMBER 26 arrived, and found the King prepared for everything, even for death. He had made his will the evening before; because he feared, no one knows why, that he should be assassinated the next day at the Convention.

The Queen was forewarned that, for the second time, the King was on his way to the Assembly. The movements of the troops and the noise of the drums would have frightened her beyond measure, if Cléry had not found means to make her acquainted with the cause of so much excitement.

At ten o'clock Louis Sixteenth started, under the care of Chambon and Santerre.

At the Convention he had to wait an hour. The people took their revenge for having had to cool their heels for five hundred years in the royal antechambers at the Louvre, at the Tuileries, and at Versailles.

A discussion was taking place, at which the King must not assist. On December 12 a key, delivered by him to Cléry, had been seized in the valet's hands. It had occurred to somebody to try this key in the iron closet, and it fitted.

This key was shown to Louis Sixteenth. "I do not recognize it!" he said; yet in all probability he had wrought that key himself. It was over such details that the King completely failed in greatness.

This discussion over, the President announced to the Assembly that the accused and his counsellors were at the bar. The King entered, accompanied by Malesherbes, Tronchet, and Desèze.

"Louis," said the President, "the Convention has decided that you shall be heard to-day."

"My advocates will read you my defence," replied the King.

There was profound silence. The whole Convention felt that it could well allow a few hours to this King deprived of royalty, to this man whose life was to be cut off.

Perhaps this assemblage, some of whose members were gifted with superior minds, expected to enjoy the brilliancy of a grand discussion.

Prepared to lie down in its bloody sepulchre, already wrapped in its cerements, perchance royalty would suddenly rise, clad in the majesty of death, and utter some of those great words which History records and the Cycles re-echo. There was nothing of the sort. Desèze's speech was only the professional plea of an advocate; yet this was a beautiful cause to defend, — the cause of the heir of so many monarchs, whom Fate had arraigned before the people, not for the guilt of personal crimes, but to expiate the crimes and faults of a whole race.

It seems to us that if, on this occasion, we had experienced the honor of standing in Monsieur Desèze's shoes, we should not have uttered the speech set down to Monsieur Desèze's name.

Properly speaking, the floor belonged to Saint Louis and Henry Fourth. Those great chiefs of the royal race should have been summoned to cleanse Louis Sixteenth from the weakness of Louis Thirteenth, the prodigality of Louis Fourteenth and the debauchery of Louis Fifteenth.

It was not thus, we repeat. Desèze quibbled, when he should have charmed. He should have been poetic and flowery, rather than concise. He should have addressed the heart, not the reason.

Perhaps, when this commonplace discourse came to an end, Louis would take up the word. As he had consented to defend himself, perhaps he would do so worthily, grandly, nobly. Thus he spoke :

GENTLEMEN : My line of defence has been made clear to you. I will not recur to it. In speaking to you, perhaps for the last time, I declare that my conscience does not reproach me, and that my defenders have only spoken the truth.

I have never feared a public examination of my conduct ; but it lacerates my heart to find, in your indictment, the accusation that I have wished to shed the blood of my people, and above all, that the disasters of the Tenth of August should be laid to my charge.

I confess that the multiplied proofs which I have from time to time given of my love for the people, and the general course of my conduct, seem to me to give abundant evidence that I have not feared to expose myself, in order to save bloodshed ; and my career should put the imputation of bloodshed far from me.

Can you understand that the successor of sixty kings, the descendant of Saint Louis, Henry Fourth, and Louis Fourteenth, should have nothing else to say to his accusers ?

Ah Sire, the more unjust the accusation, from thy point of view, the more thine indignation should have made thee eloquent. Thou didst owe something to posterity, if only a sublime malediction launched upon thine executioners !

Much astonished, the Convention asked: "Have you nothing else to say in your defence?"

"No!" responded the King.

"You may retire!" and Louis did retire.

He was taken to one of the adjacent rooms. There he took Monsieur Desèze into his arms, and pressed him to his heart. Then, as Monsieur Desèze was perspiring, more from emotion than heat, Louis urged him to change his linen, and himself warmed the shirt which he handed the lawyer.

At five o'clock Louis returned to the Temple. An hour later his three counsellors visited him, just as he was getting up from the table. He offered them refreshment, but only Monsieur Desèze accepted.

While Desèze was eating, Louis said to Malesherbes: "Well, you see that I was not mistaken! From the first moment, I saw that my doom was pronounced before my case was heard."

"Sire," responded Monsieur de Malesherbes, "when I left the Convention I was surrounded by a crowd of good citizens, who assured me that you should not perish, or, at least, that they and their friends would perish first."

"Do you know them, Monsieur?" asked the King, quickly.

"I do not know them personally, but I certainly should recognize some of their faces."

"Well," said the King, "try to see each of them, and tell them that I shall never forgive myself, if a single drop of blood is shed on my account. I did not wish for bloodshed, even when it might have preserved my throne and my life; and all the more I do not wish bloodshed now, when both throne and life are sacrificed."

Monsieur de Malesherbes went away early, in order to obey this request.

The New Year's Day of 1793 arrived. Kept in still more rigorous confinement, Louis had only one servant with him.

He was meditating sorrowfully over his isolation one day, when Cléry approached the bed, and said in a low voice: "Sire, I ask leave to offer you my most ardent wishes for a speedy end to your misfortunes."

"I accept your good wishes, Cléry," said the King, offering his hand.

Cléry took the offered hand, kissed it, and wet it with his tears. Then he helped his master to undress At that moment the city officials entered.

Louis looked at them, one after the other. Observing one whose face indicated some sympathy, he went up to him, and said: "Oh Monsieur, will you do me a very great service?"

"What is it?" asked the man.

"Go, in my behalf, and get me some news of my family, and give them my good wishes for the year now beginning."

"I will go!" said the official, greatly moved.

"Thank you!" said the King. "I hope God will reward you for what you do for me!"

"But," said another official to Cléry, "why does n't the prisoner ask permission to see his family? Now that the trial is over, I am sure this will be granted without difficulty."

"To whom should the request be addressed?" asked Cléry.

"To the Convention."

An instant later, the official who had been to the Queen's room returned, and said: "Monsieur, your family thank you for your good wishes, and return you theirs."

The King smiled sadly, and said: "What a New Year's!"

That night Cléry imparted to the King what the official had said to him, as to the possibility of seeing his family.

The King reflected, and appeared to hesitate. "No," he said at last; "but in a few days they will not refuse me this consolation. We must wait."

The Catholic religion has awful heart-penances, which it imposes upon the elect! Was Louis under a penance?

Judgment was to be pronounced on January 16, 1793.

Monsieur de Malesherbes remained a long time with the King during the forenoon. Towards noon he went out, saying that he would return again, and give a report of the success of the formal appeal he had made, as soon as that appeal was heard.

The vote bore upon three questions, awful in their directness:

1. Is Louis guilty?

2. Shall there be an appeal from the judgment of the Convention to the judgment of the people?

3. What shall be the penalty?

That posterity should be able to see that the vote, if not without malice, was certainly without compulsion, it was public.

A Girondist, named Birotteau, demanded that each member should ascend the rostrum, and give his decision aloud.

One of the Mountaineers (as the members of the extreme party were called) went farther. He demanded that the votes should be signed.

Finally a man named Rouyer, who belonged to the Right, demanded that a list should be read of those members who were absent on special commissions, and

that those who were absent without being on duty should be censured, and their names sent to the several departments.

Then began that terrible session which lasted sixty-two hours. The hall presented a singular aspect, little in harmony with what was going on therein. The event was sad, sombre, gloomy. The aspect of the hall gave one the idea of a theatric spectacle.

The rear of the hall had been transformed into boxes, where sat the prettiest ladies in Paris, eating oranges and sipping ices, and wearing their winter costumes of velvet and fur.

Various gentlemen went to greet these ladies, and then returned to their benches, exchanging signs with their fair friends now and then. One might have supposed himself in an Italian theatre.

The side nearest the Mountain was conspicuous for elegance. Among the Mountaineers were seated the millionnaires, — the Duke of Orleans, Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau, Hérault de Séchelles, Anacharsis Clootz, the Marquis de Châteauneuf.

All these gentlemen had seats reserved in the gallery for their mistresses, who were decorated with tricolored ribbons, and provided with special cards and letters which they presented to the ushers, who acted as door-openers to the boxes.

The upper galleries, free to the populace, were filled throughout the three days. Their occupants were drinking as at a cabaret, eating as if they were in a restaurant, and speech-making as if the Convention were a club-house.

To the first question — Is Louis guilty? — 683 voices answered, *Yes.*

To the second question — Shall the decision of the

Convention be submitted to the ratification of the people? — 281 voices voted for such an appeal, and 423 voted against it.

Then came the third question, — the grave question, the supreme question, — What shall be the penalty?

When they reached this point, it was eight o'clock in the evening of the third day, — a January day, wet, cold, and gloomy. Everybody was tired, impatient, bored. Human strength, with the actors as well as the spectators, was exhausted by a prolonged session of forty-five hours.

Each member mounted the rostrum in his turn, and pronounced one of these four decisions, — Imprisonment, Exile, Death, or Death, with the Right of Appeal to the People.

All marks of approbation or disapprobation being forbidden, when the galleries heard that word *Death!* they murmured.

Once, nevertheless, this word was followed, not only by murmurs, but by howls and hisses. This was when Philippe Egalité mounted the rostrum and said: "Wholly devoted to my duty, convinced that all ought to be put to death who have ever attempted, or shall ever attempt, to gain the sovereignty over the people, I vote for death."

In the midst of this terrible scene a sick Deputy, named Duchâtel, had himself brought to the Convention, wearing his nightcap and his dressing-gown. He came to vote for banishment, and the vote was admitted, because it tended towards indulgence.

It was Vergniaud, who had been President on August 10, who was also President on January 19, and thus had to make the public proclamation, both of deposal and death.

"Citizens," he said, "you have exercised a great act of justice. Humanity, I hope, will lead you to maintain a religious silence. When Justice has spoken, Humanity should have her turn."

Then he read the result of the vote. Of 721 voters, 334 had voted for banishment or imprisonment, and 387 for death, — some for immediate death, and the rest for death, with the privilege of a popular appeal. There were consequently 53 more votes for death than for banishment. Taking from this majority of 53 votes for death the 46 votes for death after a reprieve, there still remained a majority of 7 votes for immediate death.

"Citizens," said Vergniaud, with an accent of profound grief, "in the name of the Convention, I declare that the penalty pronounced against Louis Capet is death."

It was during the evening of Saturday, January 19, that the penalty was voted, but it was not till Sunday, January 20, at three o'clock in the morning, that Vergniaud announced the decree.

During this time Louis, though shut out from all communication with the outside world, knew that his fate was decided. Alone, away from wife and children, — whom he had refused to see, in order to mortify his heart, as a sinful monk mortifies his flesh, — he committed his life or death into the hands of his Creator, and did so with apparent indifference.

On Sunday morning, January 20, at six o'clock, Malesherbes visited him. Louis had already risen. He sat with his back turned towards a lamp on the mantelpiece, his face in his hands, and his elbows resting on a table.

The noise made by his defender drew him from his revery, and he said, "Well, Monsieur?" when he saw who it was.

Malesherbes dared not answer; but the prisoner could see, by the lawyer's face, that all was over.

"Death!" said Louis. "I was sure of it." Then he opened his arms, and pressed Malesherbes to his breast. The lawyer was all in tears.

Then he said: "Monsieur de Malesherbes, for two days I have been considering whether, in the whole course of my reign, I have merited such condemnation from my subjects. Well, I swear to you, with all the sincerity of my heart, as a man about to appear before God, that I have always desired the welfare of my people, and have never had a single wish to the contrary."

This took place in the presence of Cléry, who was shedding hot tears. The King pitied Cléry's grief, and led Malesherbes into his private cabinet, where he remained closeted with him an hour. Then he came out, and once more embraced his brave friend, and begged him to return in the evening.

"This good old gentleman has greatly moved me," he said to Cléry, as he re-entered the chamber; "but what is the matter with you "

This question was elicited by a general tremor which overpowered Cléry, after Malesherbes, whom he had received in the antechamber, told him that the King was condemned to death.

Endeavoring to dissemble his feelings as much as possible, Cléry prepared the materials for shaving the King.

The King mixed the lather himself, and Cléry stood before him, with the basin in both hands. Suddenly the King became very pale. His cheeks, ears, and lips turned white. Fearing he was ill, Cléry put down the bowl, and tried to sustain him; but the King only grasped his servant's hands and said: "Come, come! Courage!" and then he shaved himself calmly.

About two o'clock the Executive Council came to make known the decision. Among them were Garat, Minister of Justice; Lebrun, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Grouvelle, Secretary of the Council; the President and the Attorney General of the Department; the Mayor; the Solicitor of the Commune; the President and Public Prosecutor of the Criminal Tribunal.

Santerre came forward, and said to Cléry: "Announce the Executive Council!"

Cléry was preparing to obey; but the King, who had heard the noise, spared him the trouble. The door opened, and Louis appeared in the little entry.

Then Garat, with his hat on his head, took the lead and said: "Louis, the National Convention has charged the Provisional Executive Council with the duty of communicating to you the proceedings of January 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20. The Secretary of the Council will read you these decrees."

Grouvelle accordingly unfolded the document, and read with a trembling voice:

ARTICLE I.

The National Convention declares Louis Capet, the late King of the French, guilty of conspiring against the liberty of the Nation, and of acting against the general security of the state.

ARTICLE II.

The National Convention imposes upon Louis Capet the penalty of death.

ARTICLE III.

The National Convention pronounces against the wish of Louis Capet brought before its bar by his counsellors, and asking for an appeal in his behalf to the Nation, against the decision of the National Convention.

ARTICLE IV.

The Provisional Executive Council will communicate the present decree to Louis Capet during the day current, and take the proper measures in reference to police and public safety, in order to have the execution take place within twenty-four hours of this notification; and the Council will report to the National Convention as soon as the execution is over.

During this reading the King's face remained calm, but his physiognomy perfectly indicated two sentiments, wholly distinct. At the words *guilty of conspiracy*, a disdainful expression played upon his lips; and at the words *penalty of death*, he raised his eyes towards Heaven, with a look which seemed to bring the condemned into nearer communion with God.

When the reading was over, the King came a step towards Grouvelle, took the decree into his own hands, folded it, placed it in his portfolio, and drew therefrom another paper, which he presented to Garat, saying: "Monsieur Secretary of Justice, I beg you at once to forward this letter to the National Convention."

As Garat appeared to hesitate, the King said: "I will read it to you."

Then he read the following letter, in a voice which was strikingly in contrast with Grouvelle's:

I ask a delay of three days, in order to prepare myself for appearing before God.

For that purpose I ask the privilege of seeing freely the person whom I will mention to the Communal Commissioners, and that the person so named may be shielded from any fear or anxiety on account of the act of charity which he may fulfil towards me.

I ask to be freed from the perpetual espionage exercised over me by the General Council during several days past.

During the interval, I ask the privilege of seeing my family whenever I wish, and without witnesses.

I would like to have the National Convention decide at once as to the future welfare of my family, and that its members may have the right to withdraw freely whenever they wish to do so.

I commend to the Nation's good-will all persons who have been attached to my service. Many of them depended entirely upon this support; and having no longer any employ, they must be in want. Among these pensioners there were many old men, women, and children, who have no other means of livelihood.

LOUIS.

Done at the Tower of the Temple,
January 20, 1793.

Garat took the letter and said: "Monsieur, this letter shall be sent at once to the Convention."

Then the King opened his portfolio, drew from it a little square of paper, and said: "If the Convention grants my request in regard to the person whom I wish to see, here is his address."

The paper bore this name, in the writing of Madame Elizabeth:

Monsieur Edgeworth de Firmont,
No. 483, Rue Bac.

As there was nothing more to say or hear, the King took a step backward, making the same movement wherewith, in former times, he was accustomed to indicate when an audience was ended. The ministers withdrew, and also their companions.

"Cléry," said the King to his valet, who was leaning against the wall, because he felt as if his knees were giving way under him, "Cléry, order my dinner."

Cléry went into the little dining-room, to obey the royal command. There he found two city officials, who read to him a warrant by which it was forbidden that the King should be served with knives and forks. The knife only was entrusted to Cléry, so that he could cut the bread and meat for his master, in the presence of two guards.

This new order was repeated by them to the King, Cléry not wishing to tell his master of it.

The King broke his bread with his fingers, and cut his meat with a spoon. Contrary to his usual custom, he ate little, and dinner was over in a few minutes.

At six o'clock the Minister of Justice was again announced. The King rose to receive him.

"Monsieur," said Garat, "I carried your letter to the Convention, and have been ordered to bring you the reply."

Louis is at liberty to call for the service of a clergyman of any worship he prefers, and to see his family freely and without witnesses.

The Nation, always generous and just, will see to the future of his family.

The creditors of his household shall receive their just dues.

The National Convention has passed no order for a reprieve.

The King nodded, and then Garat withdrew.

"Citizen Minister," said the city officials, "how may Louis see his family?"

"In private," answered Garat.

"Impossible! By order of the Commune, we are not to lose sight of him day or night."

The situation was indeed embarrassing. However, they compromised matters by deciding that the King should receive his family in the eating-room, so as to be

seen through the glass door, but that the door might be shut, so that they could not be overheard.

Meanwhile the King said to Cléry: "See if the Minister of Justice is still here, and if so, recall him."

An instant later Garat returned.

"Monsieur," said the King, "I forgot to ask if Monsieur Edgeworth de Firmont was at home, and when I can see him."

"I brought him with me, in my carriage," said Garat. "He is in the Council Hall, and will come up."

Indeed, at the moment when the Minister of Justice spoke, Monsieur Edgeworth de Firmont appeared in the doorway.

CHAPTER XL.

THE TWENTY-FIRST OF JANUARY.

MONSIEUR EDGEWORTH DE FIRMONT was Madame Elizabeth's confessor. Nearly six weeks earlier, the King, foreseeing the condemnation which had now been pronounced, asked his sister's advice as to the choice of a priest to be with him in his last moments; and Madame Elizabeth weepingly counselled her brother to send for Abbé Firmont.

This worthy ecclesiastic, having escaped the massacres of September, had retired to Choisy-le-Roi, where he lived under the name of Essex. Knowing his double address, and having notified him of the King's wish, Madame Elizabeth hoped that he would be in Paris at the time of the condemnation.

She was not mistaken. Abbé Edgeworth accepted the duty with resigned joy. On December 21 he wrote as follows to one of his friends in England:

My unfortunate master has cast his eyes upon me as the clergyman to prepare him for death, if the iniquity of the people carries them to the point of parricide.

I am preparing myself also for death, for I am convinced that the popular fury will not allow me to survive that horrible scene one hour. But I am resigned. My life is nothing. If, through its loss, I could save him whom God placed on a throne, for the ruin and resurrection of so many, I could willingly make the sacrifice, and should not die in vain.

Such was the man who was not to quit Louis Sixteenth till the King quitted earth for Heaven. Louis made him enter the private room, and then they shut the door. At eight in the evening the King came out of the cabinet, and said to the commissioners: "Gentlemen, have the kindness to conduct me to my family."

"That cannot be," they replied, "but they can come here, if you so desire."

"So be it," said the King, "provided I can see them in my chamber, and without witnesses."

"Not in your bedroom, but in your eating-room," replied the same official. "We have arranged this matter with the Minister of Justice."

"Nevertheless, you have heard that the Convention's order permits me to see my family without witnesses."

"That is true, and so you shall be by yourselves. The door may be shut, but we can see you through the upper half of the door, which is glass."

"Very well! Be it so!"

The Guards went out, and the King went into the dining-room. Cléry followed him, placed the table on one side, and pushed the chairs against the wall, in order to provide more room.

"Cléry," said the King, "bring a glass of water, in case the Queen is thirsty."

On the table was a decanter of ice-water, with which one of the Communists had reproached the King. Cléry therefore brought only a tumbler.

"Bring some ordinary water," said the King. "If the Queen drinks the ice-water it may make her ill, as she is not used to it. — Cléry, at the same time ask Monsieur de Firmont not to leave my private room. I fear lest his presence should make too great an impression upon my family."

At half-past eight the door opened. The Queen came in first, leading her boy by the hand. Madame Royale and Madame Elizabeth followed. The King opened his arms, and the weeping ladies and children threw themselves into them.

Cléry went out and shut the door. For a few minutes there was a painful silence, interrupted only by sobs. Then the Queen wished to lead the King into his bedroom.

"No," said he, detaining her, "I can only see you here."

The royal family had learned, through the usual channels of information, what sentence had been pronounced, but they did not know the details of the trial. The King gave them an account of it, excusing the men who had condemned him, and calling the Queen's attention to the fact that neither Pétion nor Manuel had voted for his death.

The Queen listened; but whenever she tried to speak, her sobs broke out afresh. God gave the poor prisoner this recompense, that in his last hours he was glorified by all who surrounded him, — even by the Queen.

As has been seen in the more romantic portion of this book, the Queen let herself be easily drawn to the picturesque side of life. She possessed a very lively imagination, which does more than temperament to make women imprudent. The Queen had been imprudent all her life, imprudent in her friendship, imprudent in her passion.

Her captivity was her regeneration, in a moral point of view. She reverted to the pure and holy love of her family, from which she had been alienated by her youthful and errant inclinations. As she could do nothing without passion, she now began passionately to

love, in his affliction, the King her husband whose commonplace and dull side only she had been able to see in rosier days.

The scenes at Varennes, and at the Tuileries on August 10, showed Louis Sixteenth as an irresolute, slow, and almost cowardly man, lacking in enterprise. In the Temple she began to perceive that not only had the woman unfairly judged the husband heretofore, but also that the Queen had unfairly judged the King. In the Temple she saw him calm, patient under insult, mild and firm, like Jesus. All her worldly asperity was softened, absorbed, and turned into profit by her better self. If she had been too scornful before, now she loved too much.

"Alas," said the King to Firmont, "why do I love so much, and why am I so much loved?"

During this last interview the Queen gave way to a sentiment which resembled remorse. Her reason for wishing to take her husband into his chamber was that she might be entirely alone with him for a few moments. When she saw that this was impossible, she drew the King into the recess of the window.

There she was doubtless about to fall at his feet, and ask his pardon in a torrent of sighs and tears. The King understood all this. Checking her, he drew his will from his pocket, and said: "Read this, my well-beloved wife."

He pointed to the following paragraph, which the Queen read in a whisper:

I beg my wife to forgive me for all the ills she suffers on my account, and the mortification which I have occasioned her in the course of our union; for she may be sure I lay up nothing against her, even if she feels that she has aught wherewith to reproach herself.

Marie Antoinette took the King's hands and kissed them. There was mercy and forgiveness in that phrase, "She may be sure I lay up nothing against her," and infinite delicacy in the words, "Even if she feels that she has aught wherewith to reproach herself."

So she died peacefully, this regal Magdalen. Her love for the King, tardy as it was, merited divine and human pity. Pardon was accorded to her, not privately and secretly, like an indulgence of which the King was ashamed, but openly and publicly.

Who dare reproach her with anything, when she thus stands before posterity doubly crowned, with the glory of martyrdom and her husband's pardon?

She was sensible of this. She felt that from that moment she was strong in the eyes of History; but she felt none the less feeble in the presence of him whom she loved so tardily, feeling that she had not faithfully loved him heretofore. No more words escaped from the breast of the unhappy lady, but only sobs and gasping moans. She said she wished to die with her husband, and that if this favor were refused her, she would starve herself to death.

The officials, who witnessed this scene through the glass door, could not endure it. At first they turned away their eyes. Though they could no longer see, they could hear the moans of the royal family, and so they finally gave way to their manhood, and broke down in tears.

These tearful farewells lasted nearly two hours. Finally, at half-past ten, the King was the first to rise. Then his wife, sister, and children clung to him, like fruit upon the parent-bough. The King and Queen each held one of the Dauphin's hands. Standing by her father's left side, Madame Royale put her arms

around his waist. Madame Elizabeth, on the same side with her niece, but somewhat farther back, grasped his arm. The Queen — as if she had the right to the most consolation, though she least deserved it — passed her arm about her husband's neck.

This sad group moved on together. In the midst of moaning, sobbing, weeping, could be heard such words as these: "We shall meet again, shall we not?"

"Yes, yes! Be calm!"

"To-morrow morning, — to-morrow morning at eight o'clock?"

"I promise it!"

"Why not at seven?" asked the Queen.

"Very well, yes, at seven," said the King; "but now, adieu! adieu!"

He uttered *adieu* in so expressive a voice, that one could see that he feared lest his courage should fail.

Madame Royale could bear it no longer. With a sigh she sank upon the floor. She had fainted. Madame Elizabeth and Cléry raised her.

The King felt that it was for him to be strong. He detached himself from the arms of the Dauphin and the Queen, and went into his chamber, crying "Good-bye, good-bye!"

Then he shut the door behind him. The Queen, completely overcome, leaned against the door, not daring to ask the King to reopen it, but weeping, sobbing, and smiting the panels with her open palm. The King was courageous enough not to come out.

The guards then requested the Queen to withdraw, and renewed the assurance already given, that she should see her husband at seven the next morning.

Cléry wished to carry Madame Royale, who was still in a swoon, to the Queen's apartments; but on the

second stair the officials stopped him, and made him return to his usual place.

The King rejoined his confessor in the little room in the turret, and made him relate the way in which he had been brought to the Temple. Did this recital enter the King's mind, or did the words reach his ear only, where they were extinguished by his own personal thoughts? That, no one can say.

However, this is what the abbé had to say. Notified by Monsieur de Malesherbes, who had arranged an interview at Madame de Senozan's, that the King would send for the priest, in case the death-sentence was passed, Abbé Edgeworth, though at considerable personal risk, returned to Paris. Knowing that the sentence was pronounced on Sunday morning, he waited expectantly, in the Rue Bac. At four o'clock in the afternoon an unknown man presented himself, and gave the priest a billet, which read as follows:

The Executive Council, having a matter of the highest importance to communicate to Citizen Edgeworth de Firmont, requests him to come to its place of meeting.

The unknown man had been ordered to accompany the priest, and a carriage was in waiting at the door. The abbé went away with the unknown visitor. The carriage stopped at the Tuileries. The priest found the ministers together. At his entrance they rose.

"Are you the Abbé Edgeworth de Firmont?" asked Garat.

"Yes," responded the priest.

"Well," continued the Minister of Justice, "Louis Capet having signified his desire to have you near him in his last moments, we have sent for you, to learn if you consent to render the service he asks."

"If the King has designated me for this service, it is my duty to obey."

"In that case you will come with me to the Temple. I am going there at once."

We have seen how the priest, after fulfilling the usual formalities, came to the King's room; and how Louis, after being visited by his family, resumed his conversation with the priest, of whom he asked the details which we have recited.

This recital being over, the King said: "Monsieur, let us now forget all else, and attend to the great, the special business of my salvation."

"Sire, I am ready to do my best, and I hope that God will atone for my deficiencies. Do you not think that it would be a great consolation to hear Mass and receive the communion?"

"Yes, undoubtedly," said the King. "You can well believe that I should fully appreciate such a great favor; but how can you accomplish it?"

"That 's my task, Sire. I wish to prove to your Majesty that I am not wholly unworthy of the honor you have done me, in choosing me as your spiritual adviser. If the King will give me *carte blanche*, I will be responsible for the result."

"Do as you will, Monsieur," said the King; but presently he added, shaking his head: "Go, but you will not succeed."

Abbé Edgeworth bowed and went out, requesting to be shown to the Council Room, when he said to the commissioners: "He who is to die to-morrow wishes, before dying, to hear Mass and make confession."

The commissioners looked at each other in surprise. The idea had never entered their heads that anybody would make such a demand; so they said: "Where the

Devil can you find a priest and church utensils at this hour?"

"The priest is found," responded the abbé, "since I am here. As for the utensils, the nearest chapel will furnish them. It is only needful to send for them."

The officials hesitated: "What if this were a trap?" said one of them.

"What trap?" asked the priest.

"What if you should poison the King, under pretence of giving him the holy wafer?"

Abbé Edgeworth looked intently at the man who suggested this doubt.

"You understand," continued the official, "that history furnishes enough examples of this sort to make us circumspect."

"Monsieur, I was so carefully searched when I came in, that you ought to be satisfied I have no poison about me. If I have any to-morrow, I must surely receive it from you, since nothing can reach me without passing through your hands."

The absent members were sent for, and the question discussed.

The request was finally granted, on two conditions. The first was, that the abbé should prepare a request, signed by his own hand. The second was, that the ceremony should be over by seven the next morning, as at eight precisely the prisoner was to be taken to the place of execution.

The priest wrote the request, and left it on the desk. Then he was reconducted to the King, to whom he announced the good news of this concession.

It was now ten o'clock. Till midnight Abbé Edgeworth was closeted with the King.

At midnight the King said: "Monsieur Abbé, I am

tired. I need sleep, for I shall want all my strength to-morrow."

Then he twice called for Cléry, who came in and undressed the King, and wished to unroll his hair; but the master said, with a smile: "It is hardly worth the pains."

Thereupon the King went to bed; but he said, as Cléry drew the bed-curtains: "You may wake me at five o'clock."

Hardly was his head on the pillow before the prisoner was asleep, so overpowering were his physical needs.

Firmont lay down on Cléry's bed, who himself passed the night in a chair.

Cléry's slumber was full of fits and starts, so he was sure to hear the bells ring five o'clock. He at once arose, and began to make the fire. The noise woke the King, who said: "Ah, Cléry! Has five o'clock rung?"

"Sire, it has sounded from several clocks, but not yet from our tower," replied Cléry, approaching the bed.

"I have slept well," said the King. "I needed it. Yesterday was a very wearisome day. Where is Monsieur de Firmont?"

"On my bed, Sire."

"On your bed? And where have you passed the night?"

"On this chair."

"I am sorry. You should not have done so."

"Oh, Sire, could I think of myself at such a moment?"

"My poor Cléry!" said the King, and he offered him his hand, which Cléry kissed through his tears.

For the last time this faithful attendant began to dress the King. He had prepared for the purpose a brown coat, gray breeches, stockings of gray silk, and a vest pointed in the form of a waistcoat.

When he was dressed, Cléry brushed his hair. Meanwhile Louis detached from his watch a seal, which he put into his vest-pocket, while he laid the watch on the chimneypiece. Then he drew a ring from his finger, which he placed in the same pocket with the seal.

When Cléry handed him his coat, the King took from it his memorandum-book, his snuffbox, his glasses, and laid them on the shelf, along with his purse. All these preparations were made in presence of the city officials, who came into the chamber of the condemned man as soon as they saw the light.

Half-past five sounded. "Wake Monsieur de Firmont!" said the King to Cléry.

The priest was already awake and dressed. Hearing this order to Cléry, he came in. The King nodded, and asked him to enter the private room.

Then Cléry hastened to prepare the altar, — which was the chamber bureau, covered with a tablecloth. As to the sacerdotal utensils and ornaments, they had been found, as Father Edgeworth said, in the first church where the request was made. This was the Capuchin Church in the Marais District, near the Soubise Mansion.

When the altar was dressed, Cléry notified the King, who asked: "Can you serve the Mass?"

"I hope so," answered Cléry, "only I do not know the responses by heart."

Thereupon the King gave him a prayer-book, open at the *Introit.*

Father Edgeworth was already in Cléry's room, putting on his sacerdotal garments. In front of the altar the valet placed an armchair, and before the chair he laid a large cushion; but the King made him take it away, while he himself found a smaller cushion, stuffed with hair, which he ordinarily used for his prayers.

When the priest entered, the officials retired to the antechamber, doubtless fearing contamination by contact with an ecclesiastic.

It was now six o'clock. The Mass was begun. The King listened to it throughout on his knees, and in deep contemplation. After the Mass he received the eucharist; and then Father Edgeworth, leaving him alone to his devotions, went into the next room, to divest himself of his priestly attire.

The King availed himself of this opportunity to thank Cléry, and speak his last farewells. Then he went into the small room, where the abbé rejoined him, while Cléry seated himself on the bed and wept.

At seven the King came out, and Cléry ran to him. Louis led him into the recess of the window, and said: "You will give this seal to my son, and this ring to my wife. Tell them that I leave them with pain. — This packet contains locks of the hair of my whole family. You will hand this also to the Queen."

"But shall you not see her again?" asked Cléry.

The King hesitated an instant, as if his heart forsook his breast, in order to be with her; and then he said, in a decided tone: "No, no! I know I promised to see them again this morning, but I wish to spare them the grief of a situation so cruel. — Cléry, if you see them again, tell them how much it cost me to depart without receiving their last embraces."

After drying his tears he said, with a mournful accent: "Cléry, you will give them my last farewells, will you not?" Then the King returned once more to his closet and his devotions.

The city officials saw the King place these different articles in Cléry's hands, and one claimed them; but another proposed to leave them with Cléry till the

Council decided what should be done with them. The latter suggestion prevailed.

A quarter-hour later the King once more came out of his cabinet, and said to Cléry, who was still in waiting. "Cléry, ask if I can have some scissors!" Then he went back again.

"Can the King have a pair of scissors?" asked Cléry of the commissioners.

"What will he do with them?"

"I don't know. Ask him!"

One of the officials entered the cabinet, and found the King kneeling before Father Edgeworth.

"You have asked for some scissors," he said. "What for?"

"To have Cléry cut my hair."

The official went down to the Council Chamber. There was a consultation of half an hour, but at the end of the half-hour the request was refused.

The official came upstairs again, and said: "The Council refuses."

"I need not touch the scissors," said the King, "and Cléry may cut my hair in your presence. I beg you to ask once more."

The official went down again, and renewed the prisoner's request; but the Council persistently objected.

An official approached Cléry, and said to him: "I believe it's time for thee to get ready to accompany the King to the scaffold."

"My God! what for?" said Cléry, trembling with fear, lest the last hour had come for him also.

"Nonsense!" said the other. "The headsman can do all that is needed!"

Day began to break. The general roll was heard, beating through all sections of the city. The noise and the

universal stir penetrated the Tower, and froze the blood in the veins of Cléry and the priest.

Calmer than they, the King listened, and then said, without emotion: "Probably the National Guards are beginning to assemble."

A little later a detachment of cavalry rode into the courtyard of the Temple. The King and his companions could hear the officers talking and the horses neighing. Once more the King listened, and said, with the same calmness: "Apparently they are coming."

From seven to eight o'clock in the morning people frequently knocked at the cabinet door, under different pretexts, and for various purposes. Each time Father Edgeworth feared it was the last call; but each time Louis rose without emotion, went to the door, answered calmly those who interrupted him, and then returned to his seat by his confessor.

Father Edgeworth could not see the people who came, but he could catch some of their words.

He heard one of these intruders say to the prisoner: "Oh ho! All this was well enough when you were a king; but you 're a king no longer."

The King returned with an unruffled face; only he said: "You see how these fellows treat me, my father; but one must learn how to suffer all things!"

There was another rap, and again the King went to the door. This time he said: "These fellows see daggers and poison everywhere. How little they know me! Suicide would be a weakness. They would think I knew not how to die."

At last, by nine o'clock, the noise grew louder, and the doors slammed. Santerre came into the rooms, accompanied by seven or eight city officials, and by ten gendarmes, who ranged themselves in two lines.

Without waiting for the knock at the door, the King came out of his cabinet, and said: "You are after me?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"I ask only for a minute." Then he went back, and closed the door.

"This time, all is over, my father," he said, throwing himself once more at the priest's knees. "Give me your final blessing, and pray God to sustain me to the end."

After the benediction was given, the King arose. Opening the door he advanced towards the city officials, who were in the middle of the bedroom. All wore their hats.

"My hat!" said the King to Cléry.

Cléry tearfully hastened to obey.

"Is there a member of the Commune among you?" asked the King. — "You are one, I believe?" he added, particularly addressing a man named Jacques Roux, — a priest who had taken the Constitutional oath, and who now asked: "What do you want of me?"

The King drew his will from his pocket, and said: "I beg you to deliver this paper to the Queen, my wife."

"We have not come here to receive thy commissions," answered Jacques, impertinently, "but to conduct thee to the scaffold."

The King received this insult with the meekness of Jesus; and with the same mildness, patterned from the divine man, he turned towards another official, named Gobeau, and said: "And you, Monsieur, will you also refuse me?"

As Gobeau seemed to hesitate, the King added: "It is only my will. You can read it. There are some things in it which I wish known to the Commune."

Gobeau took the paper.

Seeing that Cléry was not only holding the hat he had asked for, but his riding-coat also, — because the faith-

ful man feared lest his master should shiver with the cold, and this tremor be mistaken for cowardice, — the King said: "No, Cléry. Give me my hat only."

Cléry did so; and the King took advantage of the opportunity to press his faithful servant's hand for the last time.

Then he said, in such a commanding tone as he had seldom used in all his life: "Let us go, gentlemen!" and these were the last words spoken in his rooms.

On the staircase he met Mathay, the keeper of the Tower, whom the King had found seated by the fireside a night or two before, and brusquely ordered to give up the place.

"Mathay," said Louis, "I was too hasty with you day before yesterday. Do not lay it up against me."

Mathay turned his back, without answering.

The King crossed the first courtyard on foot. In doing so he turned twice or thrice, to bid adieu to his only love, his wife, to his one dear friend, his sister, and to his sole joy, his children.

At the entrance of the courtyard they found a hack, painted green. Two gendarmes were holding the door open. At the condemned man's approach one of them entered first, and placed himself on the front seat. The King followed, and made a sign for Father Edgeworth to sit beside him on the back seat. The other gendarme took his place last, and closed the door.

Two stories were afloat. The first was, that one of these two gendarmes was a disguised priest. The second was, that both had received orders to assassinate the King at the least attempt to escape. Neither of these two assertions rested upon a solid foundation.

At quarter-past nine the procession started.

One word now about the Queen, Madame Elizabeth,

and the two children, whom the King, in leaving, had saluted with a last glance.

The evening before, after that interview which was at once so sweet and so painful, the Queen was hardly strong enough to undress the Dauphin and put him to bed. She threw herself upon her own bed without undressing, and during that long winter's night Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale could hear her moaning with cold and grief.

At quarter-past six her door opened, and they searched for a prayer-book.

Then all the family made themselves ready, believing — after the King's promise the evening before — that they should presently be summoned to his rooms.

Time passed along. The Queen and the Princess, standing all the while, heard the different noises which found the King so calm, although they made his valet and confessor shudder. The family heard the noise of doors opening and shutting. They heard the cries of the populace, greeting the King's exit. They heard finally the clatter of the horses' hoofs and the boom of the cannon.

Then the Queen fell into her chair, moaning: "He has gone without bidding us farewell!" Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale knelt by her side.

One by one all their hopes had flown. At first they hoped for exile or continued imprisonment, but this hope vanished. Next they hoped for a reprieve, but this hope also vanished. Finally they hoped for some sudden blow on the final road, but this hope also was to vanish.

"My God, my God, my God!" cried the Queen. In this last despairing appeal to Deity, the poor woman expended her remaining force.

Meanwhile the hack rolled along, and entered the boulevards. The streets were almost deserted, and half the shops were closed. There was nobody at the doors, nobody at the windows.

A warrant from the Commune forbade any citizens, not forming a part of the armed escort, from traversing the streets leading from the boulevards, and from showing themselves at the windows along the route.

A misty sky lowered upon a forest of pikes, in the midst whereof glittered occasional bayonets. In front of the carriage rode the horsemen, and ahead of them was a legion of drummers.

The King wished to converse with his confessor, but could not do so, on account of the noise; so Father Firmont lent him his breviary, in which the King read.

At the Saint Denis Gate, he raised his head, believing he heard a different noise. Sure enough! Half a score of young men came rushing through the Rue Beauregard. Sword in hand they made their way through the crowd, shouting: "Help! — all who wish to save the King!" Three thousand conspirators were to respond to this appeal, made by the Baron de Batz, a scheming adventurer. He bravely gave the signal; but out of the three thousand conspirators, only a handful kept their pledges. The Baron de Batz and his eight or ten followers, crazed by their devotion to royalty, seeing that nothing was to be done, profited by the confusion caused by their outbreak, and escaped through the network of streets, in the neighborhood of the Saint Denis Gate.

This was the incident which distracted the King from his prayers, but it was so unimportant that the carriage did not even pause. When it did stop, at the end of two hours and ten minutes, it was because they had reached the end of the route.

When the King felt the motion cease, he leaned towards the priest's ear, and said: "Here we are, Monsieur, if I am not mistaken." Father Firmont was silent.

One of the three Samson Brothers, the headsmen of Paris, opened the door.

Resting his hand on the priest's knee, the King said, in an authoritative tone: "Gentlemen, I commend this gentleman to your courtesy. After my death, have a care that no harm comes to him. I charge you to guard him."

Meanwhile the other two headsmen drew near; and one of them said: "Yes, yes! Leave him to us. We 'll take care of him."

Louis dismounted. The assistants surrounded him, and wished to remove his coat; but he pushed them contemptuously away, and began to disrobe himself.

For an instant he remained alone in the circle about him, while he threw down his hat, untied his cravat, and took off his coat; but then the headsmen approached him, one of them holding a rope in his hand.

"What do you wish?" asked the King.

"To bind you," replied the headsman, holding the cord.

"To that I will never consent!" said the King. "Give up that idea! Do as you are ordered, but you shall never bind my hands, — no, never!"

The executioners raised their voices. In the public eye, a hand-to-hand struggle was likely to deprive the victim of the credit of six months' calmness, courage, and resignation; but one of the three Samsons, moved by pity, although doomed to fulfil this awful task, respectfully said to the King: "Sire, with this handkerchief —"

The King glanced at his confessor, who spoke with an effort: "Sire, there will be this additional resemblance

between your Majesty and the Divine Being who will recompense you!"

The King raised his eyes to Heaven, with an expression of supreme grief. "No *less* an example is needful to make me submit to such an affront."

Turning to the executioners he resigned his hands to them. "Do what you will. I will drink the cup to its dregs."

The steps up the scaffold were high and slippery. He went up, sustained by the priest, who for an instant, feeling the King weigh more heavily upon his arm, feared lest Louis might show some feebleness in his last moments; but when they reached the upper step, the King escaped, so to speak, from the hands of his confessor, as his soul was to escape from his body, and he walked quickly across the platform. He was very red in the face, and never appeared more thoroughly vivacious and animated.

The drums were beating, but he silenced them with a look.

Then, with a strong voice, he spoke the following words: "I die innocent of all the crimes imputed to me. I forgive the contrivers of my death, and I pray God that the blood you are about to shed may not be visited upon France."

"Strike the drums!" exclaimed a voice, long believed to be Santerre's, but which was that of Monsieur de Beaufranchet, Count d'Oyat, the bastard son of Louis Fifteenth and the Courtesan Morphise, and therefore the illegitimate uncle of the condemned man.

The drummers obeyed. The King stamped his foot.

"Stop your noise!" he cried, with tremendous emphasis, "I have something else to say!" but the drums kept on.

"Do your duty!" shouted the pikemen, surrounding the scaffold, to the headsmen.

The executioners threw themselves upon the King, who was walking slowly towards the knife, glancing at the bevelled blade, for which, three years before, he himself had drawn the outline.

Then he looked back at the priest, who was kneeling in prayer, on the edge of the scaffold.

Then there was a confused movement behind the two posts of the guillotine. The hinged plank was moved down to a horizontal position. For an instant the head of the victim appeared at the sinister little window. There was a bright flash. A heavy thud was heard, and then only a huge jet of blood was to be seen.

One of the executioners picked up the head and exhibited it to the populace, thus sprinkling the boards of the scaffold with the royal blood.

At this sight the pikemen shouted for joy, and hastened to wet in this blood their pikes and sabres, — their handkerchiefs, those who had any, — while they cheered for the Republic.

For the first time this grand cry, "Long life to the Republic!" which had so often roused the popular joy, died without an echo. The Republic already bore on its forehead one of those fatal stains which can never be effaced. The Republic, as was said later by a great statesman, had committed more than a crime, — a blunder.

There was a feeling of stupefaction throughout Paris. With some this sentiment amounted to despair. A woman drowned herself in the Seine. A barber cut his throat. A bookseller lost his reason. An old officer fell dead with the shock.

At the opening of the Convention a letter was opened

by the President. This letter was from a man who asked that the body of Louis Sixteenth might be sent to him, so that he could bury it beside his father's.

Head and trunk remained separate. Let us see what became of them. We know of no recital more terrible than the official report of the burial. Here it is, as it was made on that very day:

REPORT ON THE INTERMENT OF LOUIS CAPET.

On January 21, 1793, in the second year of the French Republic, we the undersigned, commissioners for the Department of Paris, as empowered by the General Council of this Department, in virtue of certain decrees of the Provisional Executive Council of the French Republic, went, at nine o'clock in the forenoon, to the house of Citizen Ricave, the rector of Saint Madeleine.

Finding him at home, we asked him if he had provided for the execution of the orders, issued by the Executive Council and the Department the evening before, for the burial of Louis Capet. He replied that he had done, point by point, what was commanded by the Executive Council and by the Department, and that all was in readiness.

Thence — accompanied by Citizens Renard and Damoreau, both vicars in Saint Madeleine Parish, charged by the Citizen Rector to attend to the burial of Louis Capet — we went to the cemetery connected with the above-named parish, situated on the Rue Anjou Saint Honoré, where we saw that the directions had been properly carried out, which had been communicated by us, the evening before, to the Citizen Rector, in virtue of the commission we had received from the General Council of the Department.

Soon after there was deposited in the cemetery, in our presence, by a detachment of gendarmes on foot, the body of Louis Capet, which we found to be entire in all its members, the head only being separated from the trunk. We took note that the hair on the back of his head was cut, and that the corpse

was without a neckerchief, without a coat, without shoes; but it was clad in a shirt, a vest pointed like a waistcoat, breeches of gray cloth, and a pair of gray silk hose.

Thus clothed it was placed in a coffin, which was lowered into the grave and immediately covered.

All was arranged and executed in a manner conformable to the orders given by the Provisional Executive Council of the French Republic; and we sign this report, together with Citizens Ricave, Renard, and Damoreau, the Rector and Vicars of Saint Madeleine.

LEBLANC,
Administrator of the Department;
DUBOIS,
Administrator of the Department.

DAMOREAU,
RICAVE,
RENARD.

Thus was Louis Sixteenth interred, on January 21, 1793. His age was thirty-nine years, five months, and three days. He reigned eighteen years, and was a prisoner five months and eight days.

His last wish was not accomplished; for his blood brought misery, not only upon France, but upon all Europe.

CHAPTER XLI.

CAGLIOSTRO'S COUNSEL.

On the evening of this awful day, pikemen were running about the deserted but lighted streets of Paris, — rendered all the more melancholy by this illumination, — and flourishing, at the ends of their weapons, tattered handkerchiefs and shirts, stained with blood. They shouted as they ran: "The tyrant's dead! See the tyrant's blood!"

Meanwhile two men were in the main story of a house in the Rue Saint Honoré. Both were equally silent, but their attitudes were widely different.

One, plunged in profound grief and dressed in black, was seated in front of a table, his head resting between his hands.

The other, dressed like a country tradesman, was striding up and down the room. His eye was gloomy. His forehead was scarred, and his arms were folded across his breast. Every time he passed near the table, in his diagonal walk across the room, he glanced interrogatively at the absorbed man on the other side of it.

How long had these men been sitting in this way? We cannot say.

At last the man in rustic attire, with folded arms, scarred forehead, and gloomy eye, appeared to weary of his silence. Stopping in front of the other man, in the black coat, whose head was hidden in his hands, he said, looking sharply upon the man whom he addressed: "So

you call me a brigand, because I voted for the King's death, do you, Monsieur Gilbert?"

The man in black raised his eyes, shook his head sadly, and offered his hand to his companion, and said: "No, Billot, you are no more a brigand than I a man aristocrat. You voted according to your conscience, and I voted according to mine; only I voted for life, and you for death. It is a terrible thing to take from a man what no human power can restore."

"Then in your opinion," said Billot, "despotism is inviolable and liberty is rebellion; and there is no justice here below except for kings, — that is, for tyrants. What then remains for the people? The right to serve and obey! And *you* say this, Monsieur Gilbert, a pupil of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a citizen of the United States of America."

"I do not say that, Billot, for it would be impiety against the race."

"See here," replied Billot, "I 'm going to talk, Monsieur Gilbert, with the brutality of my coarse common sense, and I will permit you to reply with all your mental skill. Do you admit that a nation, believing itself oppressed, has the right to abolish its church, to lower or even suppress its throne, and to fight for freedom with all its might?"

"Undoubtedly!"

"Then has it not a right to consolidate the results of its victory?"

"Yes, Billot, it has that right incontestably; but consolidation is not brought about by violence and murder. Remember what is written, 'Thou hast no right to kill thy fellow-man!'"

"But the King is not my fellow-man!" cried Billot. "He is my enemy. I remember my poor mother used to

read to me, in the Bible, about what Samuel said to the Israelites, when they wanted a king."

"I recall it also, Billot; but nevertheless Samuel consecrated Saul! He did not kill him."

"Oh, if I try to cross swords with your learning, I'm lost. Only let me ask you simply this, — Had we any right to take the Bastille?"

"Yes."

"Had we any right, when the King wished to deprive the people of the freedom of debate, to hold that meeting in the Tennis Court?"

"Yes."

"Had we any right, when the King wished to intimidate the Constitutional Assembly, through the banquet of the bodyguards and the assemblage of troops at Versailles, — had we any right to go to Versailles after the King, and compel him to come to Paris?"

"Yes."

"When the King tried to escape, and go into a foreign land, had we any right to arrest him at Varennes?"

"Yes."

"After he had sworn to support the Constitution of 1791, when we saw the King corresponding with the refugees and plotting with foreigners, had we any right to straighten things out, as we did on the Twentieth of June?"

"Yes."

"When he refused his sanction to laws emanating from the popular will, had we any right to get up the Tenth of August, — that is, to capture the Tuileries and proclaim the throne abolished?"

"Yes."

"When the King was confined in the Temple, but still kept up an active conspiracy against Liberty, had we, or

had we not, a right to take him before the National Convention, and try him?"

"You had."

"Then if we had the right to judge, we had the right to condemn."

"Yes, to exile, to banishment, to perpetual imprisonment, — to everything except death."

"And why not to death?"

"Because his guilt was in the results of his action, not in his intention. *You* look at it from the people's standpoint, my dear Billot. *He* acted from his standpoint, which was the standpoint of Royalism. Was he a tyrant, as you call him? No! Was he an oppressor of the people? No! Was he an accomplice of aristocrats? No! Was he an enemy of Liberty? No!"

"Then *you* also judge him from the standpoint of Royalism, do you?" said Billot.

"No, for from the Royalist point of view, I should have absolved him altogether."

"Did you not absolve him, so far as to vote for his life?"

"Yes, but with lifelong imprisonment. Billot, believe me, when I say I had to judge him more favorably than I wished. A man of the people, — or, rather, a son of the people, — the preponderance of feeling in me leaned towards the popular side. You saw him afar off, but you did not see him as I saw him. Ill-satisfied with the royal part assigned him, he was pulled one way by the Assembly, thinking him still too powerful, and another way by an ambitious wife. He was urged one way by the uneasy and mortified Nobility, and another by the implacable Clergy. He was impelled to one course by the selfish refugees, and to another by his brothers, — who went about everywhere, stirring up enemies to the

Revolution in his name. You say he was not your fellow-citizen, but your foe. Well, your enemy was beaten, and decent men do not kill vanquished enemies. A murder in cold blood is not justice, but an immolation. You have conferred something like martyrdom upon Royalism. To Justice you have given the likeness of Vengeance. Be careful! Be careful! In doing too much, you have, at the same time, not done enough. Charles the First was beheaded, but Charles the Second became King. James the Second was banished from England, and his son also died in exile. Human nature has its pathetic side, Billot, and we have now alienated from Republicanism — for fifty, perhaps for a hundred years — that immense portion of mankind which judges revolutions solely with the heart. Ah, believe me, my friend! the Republicans should most deplore the blood of Louis Sixteenth, for that blood will be required of them, and will cost them their Republic!"

"There is some truth in what you say, Gilbert," responded a voice which came from the entry door.

The two men started, and turned simultaneously. Then they exclaimed with one voice: "Cagliostro!"

"Oh Lord, yes!" answered he. "But there is also truth in what Billot says."

"Alas!" said Gilbert, "that's just the difficulty. The cause which we discuss has two sides; and each, looking at one side only, is forced to think himself right."

"Yes, but he ought also to be willing to let it be said that he is wrong," replied Cagliostro.

"Tell us your opinion, master!" said Gilbert.

"Yes, your opinion!" said Billot.

"You have tried the accused, but I am to sit in judgment on the trial. If you had condemned the *king*, you

would have done right; but you sentenced the *man*, and there you blundered."

"I don't understand!" said Billot.

"Listen, for I now partly begin to see through it!" said Gilbert.

"The King ought to have been killed," continued Cagliostro, "while he was at Versailles or the Tuileries, a stranger to the people, behind his network of courtiers and his barrier of Swiss. He should have been killed on October 6 or August 10. On those days he was a tyrant! but after being left five months in the Temple, in communication with everybody, — eating before everybody, sleeping in the presence of everybody, the comrade of common folks, of the workman, of the shopkeeper, — he was elevated, by this false abasement, to the dignity of manhood, and so he should have been treated like a man, — that is, exiled or imprisoned."

"I did not understand *you*," said Billot to Gilbert, "but I do understand Citizen Cagliostro."

"Undoubtedly, during these five months of captivity, the King has been seen in the most touching, innocent, and worthy light. He has shown himself a good husband, a good father, a good man. What ninnies! Gilbert, I supposed they had more sense! They regenerated him. They remodelled him. As the sculptor hews the statue from the marble block by blow upon blow, so, by blow after blow on this prosaic and commonplace nature, — neither wicked, nor yet good, immersed in corporeal habits, yet straight-laced in his piety, not after the fashion of an elevated spirit, but like a parish warden, — out of such a dull nature, I say, has been moulded a statue of Courage, of Patience, of Resignation. This statue has been mounted on a pedestal of grief. This poor King has been so elevated, so broadened, so

sanctified, that it has absolutely come to pass that his wife loves him."

Cagliostro laughed and added: "My dear Gilbert, who would have believed, in October, 1789, or last August, that the Queen would ever love her husband?"

"Oh," said Billot, "if I had only thought of all this!"

"Well, what would you have done about it, Billot?" asked Gilbert.

"What would I have done? I would have killed him, either in July, or October, three years ago, or else last August. It would have been so easy!"

These words were spoken in a gloomy tone of patriotism, which Gilbert pardoned, but which Cagliostro admired.

"Yes," said the latter, after a moment's silence, "but you did n't do it! You voted for his death, Billot! You, Gilbert, voted for his life. Now will you listen to a last piece of advice? Gilbert, you only had yourself elected to the Convention, in order to fulfil a duty. You, Billot, had yourself chosen in order to achieve vengeance. Duty and vengeance having been both accomplished, you are no longer needed here. Go away!"

Both men looked at Cagliostro.

"Yes," he resumed, "neither of you is a party-man. You are men of soul and reason. Now that the King is dead, the political parties will find themselves face to face, and they will destroy each other. Which will go under first? I know not; but this I know, that both will go down, one after the other. To-morrow, Gilbert, your indulgence towards the King will be regarded as a crime; and by the next day, your severity, Billot, will in its turn be treated as criminal. Believe me, in this impending mortal struggle between hatred, fear, vengeance, and fanaticism, few will remain secure and unsullied.

Some will be smirched with mud, others with blood. — Go away, my friends, go away!"

"But France?" said Gilbert.

"Yes, France?" repeated Billot.

"Outwardly France is saved. Outside enemies are beaten. The inside enemy is dead. As dangerous as the scaffold of January 21, 1793, may be for the future, it is incontestably a great power in the present, — the power of a Revolution which cannot go backward. The death of Louis Sixteenth condemns France to the vengeance of thrones, and gives to the Republic the convulsive and desperate strength of a nation under sentence of death. Look at Athens in the classic days. Look at Holland in modern times. All indecision and all negotiations cease with to-day. The Revolution stands with the axe in one hand and the tricolored flag in the other. — Go in peace! Before the axe is laid aside, the nobles will lose their heads. Before France lays down the tricolored flag, Europe will be at her feet. — Go, my friends, go!"

"God is my witness that I shall not regret leaving France, if her future is what you prophesy; but whither shall we go?"

"Ingrate! Dost thou then forget thy foster country, America? Dost thou forget all its immense lakes, its virgin forests, its prairies as vast as the ocean? Hast thou no need of nature's repose, — thou who *canst* repose thyself, — after the terrible agitations of society?"

"Will you follow me, Billot?" said Gilbert, rising.

"Will you pardon me?" asked Billot, going towards Gilbert.

The two men threw themselves into each other's arms.

"Very well," said Gilbert, "we will go together."

"When?" asked Cagliostro.

"In — in — a week!"

Cagliostro shook his head. "You must go to-night!" he said.

"Why to-night?"

"Because I go to-morrow," said Cagliostro.

"Where do you go?"

"You will know some day, my friends."

"But how can we go?"

"The ship Franklin will set sail for America in thirty-six hours."

"But the passports?"

"They are here!"

"My son —?" asked Gilbert.

Cagliostro went to the door and opened it, saying: "Come in, Sebastien! Your father calls you."

The lad entered, and threw himself into his father's arms. At this sight Billot sighed profoundly.

"Only a postchaise is wanting," said Gilbert.

"Mine is all harnessed and at the door," replied Cagliostro.

Gilbert went to the secretary, where there were, in the common purse, a thousand louis, — nearly five thousand American dollars, — and motioned to Billot to take his share.

"Have we enough?" asked Billot.

"We have more than enough to buy a province."

Billot looked about him in an awkward way.

"What are you looking for, my friend?" asked Gilbert.

"I am looking for something which will be useless, even if I find it, since I cannot write."

Gilbert smiled, opened his desk, and said: "Dictate!"

"I wish to send a farewell to Pitou."

"I will see to it!" said Gilbert, and began to write. When he had finished writing, Billot asked: "What have you written?"

Gilbert read it aloud :

MY DEAR PITOU : We are leaving France, — Billot, Sebastien and myself, — and we all three embrace you tenderly.

As you are at the head of Billot's farm, we think you need nothing more.

Some day we shall probably write for you to come and rejoin us. Your friend,

GILBERT.

" Is that all ? " asked Billot.

" There is a postscript ! "

" What is it ? "

Gilbert looked at the farmer, and then read the postscript :

Billot commends Catherine to your care.

Billot uttered a cry of gratitude, and again threw himself into Gilbert's arms.

Ten minutes later the postchaise was rolling along toward Havre, carrying Gilbert, Sebastien, and Billot far away from Paris.

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT ANGE PITOU AND CATHERINE BILLOT DID ON FEBRUARY 15, 1794.

On one cold and beautiful morning, in the terrible winter of 1793–1794, a little more than a year after the death of the King, and the departure of Gilbert, Sebastien, and Billot for America, three or four hundred persons — that is to say, nearly a sixth part of the population of Villers Cotterets — were waiting, on Château Square and in the courtyard of the Mayor's office, for the exit of two lovers, whom our old acquaintance, Monsieur de Longpré, was uniting in wedlock.

These two were Ange Pitou and Catherine Billot. Alas! it had taken many grave events to lead Viscount Isidore de Charny's former mistress, and little Isidore's mother, to become Madame Ange Pitou.

People related and commented upon these events in their own way; but whichever way the occurrences were twisted, they redounded to the glory and devotion of Pitou and the wisdom of Catherine; only the more interesting the bridal couple seemed, the more the two were pitied.

Perhaps they were happier than any individual man or woman in the crowd; but a crowd is so constituted as always to either pity or envy. On this occasion the tendency was towards compassion, and the crowd pitied accordingly.

The events predicted by Cagliostro, on the evening of January 21, 1793, had marched on with rapid strides, each of which left behind it an ineffaceable footprint of blood.

On February 1, 1793, the National Convention voted to raise 800,000,000 francs by the issue of assignats, or government promises. This augmented the entire amount of assignats issued to 3,100,000,000 francs, — three billions and one hundred millions, — (equal to six hundred million dollars).

On March 28, 1793, on the motion of Treilhard, the Convention passed an edict against the Royalist refugees. This edict made their exile perpetual, declared them legally dead, and confiscated their possessions for the benefit of the Republic.

On November 7 the Convention passed a vote directing the Committee of Public Instruction to present a plan for the substitution of some rational and legal form of worship, in place of that taught and practised by the Roman Catholic Church.

We need not speak of the proscription and death of the Girondists. We need not speak of the execution of the Duke of Orleans, of the Queen, of Bailly, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and of so many others. Although these events sent their reverberations even to Villers Cotterets, they had no influence over the persons of whom it remains for us to speak.

The result of the edict of confiscation was, that Gilbert and Billot, being regarded as refugees, their estates were

confiscated, and put up for sale. It was the same with the property of Charny, who was killed on August 10, and of his Countess, slain on September 2.

Catherine was therefore put out of the farm, which was regarded as national property. Pitou wished to reclaim it in Catherine's name; but Pitou, having become a Moderate, was himself somewhat *suspected;* and wise people advised him not to oppose the national orders, either by deed or word. Catherine and Pitou therefore withdrew to Haramont.

At first Catherine had a notion of taking up her abode, as she had done twice before, in the hut of Father Clouis; but when she presented herself at the door of the Duke of Orleans's ex-gamekeeper, he placed his finger on his lips, as a signal for silence, and shook his head, to indicate impossibility.

This impossibility arose from the fact that her old place was already occupied. The law against unsworn priests had been vigorously enforced; and one can readily understand that as the Abbé Fortier would not take the oath, he would have been banished, if he had not already banished himself.

As the times were not favorable for crossing the frontier, his exile was limited to forsaking his house at Villers Cotterets, — where he left his sister, Mademoiselle Alexandrine, to watch over his goods, — and seeking an asylum with Father Clouis, which the old man felt constrained to bestow upon him, by virtue of the old relations of both men to the Orleans family.

The hut at Clouise Rock, as may be remembered, was little more than a burrow excavated in the earth, where a single person was but poorly accommodated; and even with the additional *lean-to,* which Viscount Isidore had added for Catherine's convenience, before the birth of

their child, there was not room enough for the priest, Catherine, and little Isidore, besides old Clouis himself.

Then we must also recall the intolerant conduct of Father Fortier at the time of Madame Billot's death. Catherine was not enough of a Christian to pardon the priest's refusal to bury her mother; and even if she had been Christian enough to forgive him, he was too good a Catholic to pardon her. She had to relinquish, therefore, all idea of living in the Clouise hut.

Then there were Aunt Angelica's house, on the road to Pleux, and Pitou's hired tenement at Haramont, with its two or three rooms.

Aunt Angelica's house was not to be thought of. The farther the Revolution progressed, the more cross-grained the old woman became, if such a thing were possible; and the leaner also she became, though this seemed incredible.

This moral and corporeal change in Aunt Angelica's condition arose from the fact that in Villers Cotterets, as everywhere else, the parish church was closed, waiting for some rational and legal worship to be invented by the Committee of Public Instruction.

The church being closed, the rental of chairs, which constituted Aunt Angelica's principal revenue, fell off to nothing; and it was this paralysis of her resources which rendered her thinner and more crabbed than ever.

We must add also, that having so often heard about the capture of the Bastille by Billot and Ange Pitou, and having seen her nephew or the farmer start posthaste for Paris on the eve of every great upheaval in the capital, she had little doubt that the French Revolution was conducted by Ange and Billot, and that Citizens Danton, Marat, Robespierre, and others were but secondary to these two chief managers.

We can well understand that Mademoiselle Alexandrine encouraged her in these absurd ideas, which Billot's regicidal vote raised to an extravagant pitch of fanatical hatred.

It would not then do to think of placing Catherine with Aunt Angelica. The only place left was Pitou's rooms in the little cottage at Haramont; but how could two, to say nothing of three, dwell in this little cottage, without prompting the worst sort of gossip? This was yet more impossible than for Catherine to think of living at Clouise Rock.

Pitou then decided to demand hospitality of his friend Désiré Maniquet, — a hospitality which the worthy Haramontesian at once accorded, and which Pitou repaid by industry of all sorts.

All this gave poor Catherine no proper position in the community. Pitou lavished upon her all the tenderness of a friend, all the kindness of a brother; but she felt that it was neither as a friend nor as a brother that she loved Pitou.

Little Isidore also felt this; for as the poor boy had never had the happiness of knowing his father, he loved Pitou as he would have loved the Viscount, — perhaps better; for it must be said that if Pitou was the worshipper of the mother, he was the slave of her child. This skilful strategist knew that the one means of ingress to Catherine's heart was through the pathway opened by her child.

However, we must hasten to say that this sort of calculation never tarnished honest Pitou's sentiments. Pitou remained what we knew him in the earlier chapters of this story, and of the one which bears his name, — an innocent and dutiful lad; and if there was any change in him it was this, — that, in attaining his

majority, he became more devoted and single-hearted than ever.

All these qualities moved Catherine to tears. She felt that Pitou loved her ardently, loved her to the verge of adoration and fanaticism; and she often said to herself that she could reward such great love, such complete devotion, with a sentiment more tender than friendship.

Poor Catherine felt herself, aside from Pitou and her child, entirely alone in the world. She understood that if she should die, little Isidore would have no friend in the world except Pitou. Hence it came about, little by little, that Catherine was almost ready to give Pitou the only recompense in her power, and bestow herself upon him, body and soul; though, alas! her earliest love, the budding and odorous flower of her youth, was now transplanted in Heaven.

Nearly six months passed, during which Catherine kept her decision carefully guarded in one corner of her mind, or rather at the bottom of her heart; for she could not quite accustom herself to this new thought.

During this half-year, although Pitou was greeted every morning by a pleasanter smile, although he was welcomed every evening by a tenderer pressure of the hand, he had no idea that such a reversion in his favor was taking place in Catherine's sentiments; but as Pitou's devotion and love did not arise from hope of recompense, he loved her more and more, and grew more and more devoted, though ignorant of her changed sentiments.

This might have gone on till both Pitou and Catherine were in their graves, or till Pitou was as old as Philemon, and Catherine as aged as Baucis, without producing the least alteration in the sentiments of the Captain of the

Haramont National Guards; so it fell out that Catherine had to speak first, — that is, after the feminine fashion of speaking.

One evening, instead of offering him her hand, she offered him her forehead. Pitou fancied this was an oversight on Catherine's part, and did not profit by the oversight, but recoiled a step. Catherine, instead of releasing his hand, drew him towards her, and presented not only her forehead, but her cheek. Pitou hesitated still more.

Seeing all this, little Isidore put in his word: "Papa Pitou, kiss Mamma Catherine!"

"Oh my God!" murmured Pitou, turning pale as death, as he touched Catherine's cheek with his cold and trembling lips.

Taking her child, she put him into Pitou's arms, and said: "I give you my child, Pitou. Will you not take the mother also?"

For an instant Pitou's head whirled. He shut his eyes, and while still pressing the child to his heart, he dropped into a chair, crying out, with that heart-delicacy which only another heart can appreciate: "Monsieur Isidore, my darling Monsieur Isidore, how much I love you!"

Isidore always called him Papa Pitou; but Pitou had always said Monsieur Isidore to the Viscount's son.

Pitou felt that it was chiefly because of her love for her child that Catherine was willing to love himself, and therefore he did not say outright: "How I love you, Mademoiselle Catherine!" but, "How I love you, Monsieur Isidore!"

This point being understood, that Pitou loved the child better than the mother, they talked of marriage.

Said Pitou: "I will not hurry you, Mademoiselle

Catherine. Take your own time; but if you 're willing to make me happy, don't let it be too long."

Catherine only required a month. At the end of three weeks Pitou, in full uniform, paid a respectful visit to Aunt Angelica, to ask her to take part in his approaching union with Mademoiselle Catherine Billot.

Aunt Angelica saw her prodigal nephew coming while he was yet afar off, and made haste to shut the door; but Pitou none the less kept on his way towards the inhospitable portal, at which he rapped gently.

"Who goes there?" asked Aunt Angelica, in her most rasping tones.

"Me, thy nephew, dear Aunt Angelica!"

"Go your ways, you September-man, you massacre-maker!" said the old woman.

"Aunty, I come to announce a bit of news which cannot fail to please thee, and which gives me great happiness."

"And what news is that, you Jacobin?"

"Open the door and I 'll tell thee."

"Speak through the door. I won't open it for such a scalawag."

"That 's thy last word, dear Aunt Angelica?"

"That 's my last word!"

"Well, I am to be married."

The door opened as if by magic.

"To whom?" asked Angelica.

"To Mademoiselle Catherine Billot!"

"The wretch! the rascal! the donkey! He 'll marry that light-o'-love. — Bah! Go along, and take my curse with you!" and, with a gesture full of arrogance, she put out her dry and yellow hands, to repel her nephew from her heart and hearth.

"Aunty, please understand that I am too familiar with

thy curses to mind these more than the others. Nevertheless, I owed thee this courtesy of announcing my marriage. I have announced it. That ceremony is over, so Good-bye!"

Raising his hand to his three-cornered hat, Pitou saluted Aunt Angelica, and resumed his walk to Pleux.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE EFFECT PRODUCED UPON AUNT ANGELICA BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HER NEPHEW'S MARRIAGE WITH CATHERINE BILLOT.

Pitou went to the house of Monsieur de Longpré, who dwelt in the Rue Ormet, to notify him of his approaching marriage; and Citizen Longpré, less prejudiced than Aunt Angelica, felicitated Pitou on the good action he was about to perform.

Pitou listened, quite astonished. He could not understand that, in achieving his own happiness, he was also doing a kind deed.

As a good Republican, Pitou was now more than ever grateful to the Republic, for abolishing the publication of the bans, and all other tardy preliminaries, through the suppression of marriages in church.

It was agreed, between Citizen Longpré and Citizen Pitou, that on the Saturday following, Catherine and Ange should be united at the townhouse.

The next day, Sunday, was the time appointed by the commissioners for the sale of Billot's farm and the Boursonnes Château. The price of the farm was set at not less than 400,000 francs ($80,000), and the price of the château at 600,000 francs ($120,000); but these prices were estimated in assignats, and this paper money had begun to fall fearfully in value. The golden louis was ordinarily worth about 24 francs in specie; but the same golden louis was now worth 920 francs in paper money.

Indeed, there were no longer any genuine gold louis in circulation.

Pitou went back to tell Catherine the good news; though, as he had allowed himself to hasten the marriage by a couple of days, he feared lest the change should be displeasing to her. Catherine did not manifest any dissatisfaction, and Pitou was accordingly among the angels, — as his name warranted; but Catherine insisted that once more Pitou should visit Aunt Angelica, to announce the precise time of the marriage, and invite her to lend her countenance to the ceremony. The old lady was Pitou's sole kinswoman; and though not a very tender kinswoman, it was proper for Pitou to fulfil all social requirements.

On Thursday morning, therefore, Pitou went to Villers Cotterets, in order to pay his aunt a second visit. Nine o'clock was ringing as he came in sight of the house. This time Aunt Angelica was not at the door; and yet the door was fastened, as if she had expected Pitou.

Pitou fancied that she had gone out, and was delighted at this circumstance. He had made his visit, and a tender and respectful letter would well take the place of the speech he had dreaded.

As the lad was, above all, conscientious, he rapped at the door, fast as it was, and as nobody responded to his knocks, he began to call his aunt's name.

At this double noise of calling and rapping, a neighbor appeared.

"Ah, Mother Fagot, do you know whether my aunt has gone out?"

"Does n't she answer?" replied Mother Fagot.

"No, as you see. Probably she has gone out."

Mother Fagot shook her head, and replied: "I should have seen her go out. My door faces hers; and it 's very

seldom, when she gets up, that she does n't come into my house to get some warm ashes to put into her wooden shoes, with which she keeps herself warm all day. Is n't it so, Neighbor Farolet?"

This question was addressed to a new actor, who now opened his door, and came forward, when he heard the noise, to join in the conversation.

"What is it, Madame Fagot?"

"I am saying that Aunt Angelica can't have gone out. Have you seen her?"

"No, and I venture to say she 's still inside; for if she had been up and gone out, the shutters would certainly be open."

"That 's true!" said Pitou. "My God, can anything have happened to my poor aunt?"

"It 's possible," said Mother Fagot.

"It 's more than possible, it 's probable!" said Citizen Farolet, sententiously.

"She was n't a very affectionate aunt, 'pon my word," said Pitou. "Never mind, I should hate to have her suffer. — How can we find out?"

"Nothing difficult about it," said a third neighbor. "You only need to send for Rigolet, the locksmith."

"If it 's to open the door," said Pitou, "that delay would be useless, for I once used to open it with my knife."

"Well, open it, my boy," said Farolet. "We can bear witness that it 's done with no bad intention."

Pitou took out his knife. Then, in the presence of a dozen persons, drawn together by such an important occurrence, he began his work, with a dexterity which clearly proved that, more than once, he had employed this means of entering the home of his boyhood.

The bolt slipped from its socket. The door opened.

The obscurity in the room had been complete; but through the open door, the darksome light of a gloomy winter's morning enabled the neighbors to see Aunt Angelica lying on her bed.

Pitou twice called her by name: "Aunt Angelica! Aunt Angelica!"

The old woman remained motionless, and did not answer.

Pitou went up and took hold of her body. "Oh!" said he, "she's cold and stiff."

Somebody opened the shutters. Aunt Angelica was dead!

"What a misfortune!" said Pitou.

"Oh," said Farolet, "not so very great. She did n't love thee overmuch, my boy, this aunty of thine."

"That may be," said Pitou, "but I loved her well enough. Poor Aunt Angelica!" and, as he spoke, two great tears rolled down the good fellow's cheeks, and he fell on his knees by the bedside.

"Say, Monsieur Pitou," said Mother Fagot, "if you need any help, we're at your orders. — Goodness, we were neighbors, after all!"

"Thanks, Mother Fagot. Is your boy around?"

"Yes. — Here, Fagotin!" cried the good woman.

An urchin of fourteen years appeared on the threshold. "Here I am, Mother Fagot."

"Well," said Pitou, "ask him to run to Haramont, and tell Catherine not to be uneasy; but that I have found my aunty dead. — Poor aunt!"

He dried some fresh tears, and then added: "Tell her what is keeping me at Villers Cotterets."

"Thou hearest, Fagotin?" said Mother Fagot.

"Yes."

"Well, be off!"

"Go by way of the Soissons road," said the practical Farolet, "and notify Monsieur Raynal that there 's a case of sudden death to inquire into, at Aunt Angelica's old cottage."

"Thou hearest?" said the mother.

"Yes," said the urchin; and with that he stretched his legs, and bounded off in the direction of the Soissons highway, which was indeed a continuation of the Pleux lane.

The assemblage had greatly increased. There were now a hundred persons in front of the door. Everybody had an opinion as to Angelica's death. Some said the cause was apoplexy, others that it was a rupture of the vesicles of the heart; while others thought she had died of consumption in its last stages.

Under their breath they all said, that if Pitou were not so slow he would find a treasure on the upper shelf of a cupboard, or in a butter-crock, or under a mattress, or in an old sock.

In the midst of this chatter Doctor Raynal arrived, preceded by the Receiver-General. Now it would be known of what the old lady died.

Raynal entered, approached the bed, examined the body, laid his hand on the stomach and abdomen, and then declared, to the great astonishment of Pleux society, that the ancient maiden had died simply of cold, and perhaps of starvation.

Pitou's tears thereupon redoubled. "Poor aunt! poor aunt! and I thought she was rich! I was a wretch for leaving her alone. — Ah, if I 'd only known! — It can't be possible, Monsieur Raynal! it can't be possible!"

"Look in the meal-chest, and see if there 's any bread. Look in the shed, and see if there 's any wood. I 've always predicted she 'd die like this, — the old miser!"

They did look. There was not a shaving in the wood-box, not a crumb in the cupboard.

"Ah, why did n't she tell me?" cried Pitou. "I 'd have found wood in the forest to warm her. I 'd have poached, to get her some food. — It was your fault," continued the poor boy, accusing those who stood near. "Why did n't you tell me she was poor?"

"We did n't say she was poor," said Farolet, "for the very simple reason that everybody supposed her rich."

Doctor Raynal threw a cloth over Angelica's head, and went towards the door. Pitou ran after him. "You 're not going away, Monsieur Raynal?"

"And what can I do here, my lad?"

"She is surely dead?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, my God!" said Pitou. "Dead of cold and of hunger!"

Raynal beckoned to the young fellow, who came nearer. "My boy, all the same I advise thee to search high and low! — Understand?"

"But, Monsieur Raynal, when you say she died of hunger and cold — "

"There have been misers who died of cold and hunger, and yet lay on their treasures. — Mum!" he added, placing his finger on his lips, and then went out.

CHAPTER III.

AUNT ANGELICA'S ARMCHAIR.

DOUBTLESS Pitou would have reflected more deeply on what Raynal had said to him, but just then he saw Catherine running that way, with her child in her arms.

As soon as it was known that in all probability Aunt Angelica had died of hunger and cold, the anxiety of her neighbors to render her some last service was very great.

Catherine's arrival was most timely. As Pitou's affianced wife, she declared it would be her duty to attend to those matters for his aunt; and she did so, poor girl, with the same respect which she paid to her mother's remains, thirty months before.

Meanwhile Pitou was to give orders for the interment, which could not legally take place till the next day but one; as in case of a sudden death, like Aunt Angelica's, the body must remain above ground at least two full days.

Pitou only needed to see the Mayor, the coffin-maker, and the sexton, all religious ceremonies being forbidden at funerals as well as weddings.

"My dear," said Catherine to Pitou, as he took his hat to go for Citizen Longpré, "after this misfortune, will it not be well to put off our marriage a day or two?"

"If you wish it, Mademoiselle Catherine!"

"Will it not seem queer, if we enter upon so important an affair as marriage on the very day when we carry your aunt to the graveyard?"

"An important affair indeed, since it concerns my happiness."

"Well, my dear, consult Monsïeur de Longpré, and do what he thinks best."

"So be it, Mademoiselle Catherine!"

"And then, it might bring us bad luck to marry so near the open grave."

"Oh, as to that," said Pitou, "the moment I'm your husband, I defy ill-luck to get its teeth into me."

"Dear Pitou," said she, extending her hand, "wait till Monday. You see, I try to bring our wishes and the proprieties as near together as possible."

"Two days, Mademoiselle Catherine! That's rather long!"

"That sounds well," said Catherine. "When a man has already waited five years —"

"Many things may happen in two days!" said Pitou.

"It cannot happen that I shall love thee any the less, dear Pitou; and if, as thou pretendest, that's the only thing to fear —"

"The only one! Yes, indeed, the only one, Mademoiselle Catherine!"

"Well, in that case, — here, Isidore —!"

"Yes, mamma," said the child.

"Speak to Papa Pitou. Say to him: 'Don't fear Papa Pitou! Mamma loves thee, and will always love thee.'"

The child repeated what she said, in his soft young voice: "Don't fear, Papa Pitou. Mamma loves thee, and will always love thee."

On this assurance, Pitou interposed no further difficulty, but went after Monsieur de Longpré. When he came back, at the end of an hour, he had arranged everything, both for the burial and the wedding, paying

the bills in advance. With the rest of his money he had bought fuel and provisions enough for two days.

It was time for the wood to come; for in such a poor old house, where the wind cuts in at every crevice, one might easily die of cold. Indeed, Pitou found Catherine chilled through.

The marriage, according to her wish, had been deferred till Monday. During the two intervening nights and days, Pitou and Catherine did not quit each other or the house for an instant. Despite the enormous fire which Pitou built in the fireplace, the wind would steal in, icy and sharp, and Pitou declared that if Aunt Angelica had not died of hunger, she must certainly have died of cold.

The time came for removing the body. The journey was short, for Aunt Angelica's house almost touched the cemetery.

All the Pleux population, and many other townsfolk, followed the dead woman to her last resting-place. In the country, both women and men go to the grave. Pitou and Catherine were the chief mourners.

When the ceremony was over, Pitou thanked those present, in the dead woman's name and his own; and after a drop of holy water had been thrown on the old maid's tomb, every one passed out in front of Pitou.

Left alone with Catherine, Pitou turned to the side where he had left her. She was there no longer; for she was kneeling, with little Isidore, at a slab, over which were growing four cypresses, one at each corner. This was Mother Billot's grave. The four cypresses were some which Pitou had brought from the forest, and planted here.

He did not wish to disturb Catherine in her pious occupation; but thinking she would be awfully cold

when her prayer was finished, he ran round to the house, with the intention of starting up a big fire. Unluckily, one thing stood in the way of his good intentions. Since morning, the two days being over, his store of wood was exhausted.

Pitou scratched his ear. He had spent what money he had left in buying bread and wood. He looked about to see what old bit of furniture could be sacrificed to the needs of the moment. The wooden kneading-trough and the bedstead, though not of any great value, were still usable; but the armchair had for a long time been worthless to anybody save Aunt Angelica. In fact nobody, except the old maid, dared to sit down in it, so hopelessly dislocated were its joints.

The armchair stood condemned. Pitou proceeded after the fashion of the Revolutionary Tribunal. As soon as the sentence was passed, it was to be executed. He placed one knee on the morocco leather seat, black with age, and took hold of one post with both hands, and pulled. At the third pull the arm gave way. The armchair, as if to show its grief over this dismemberment, gave forth a strange moan. If Pitou had been superstitious, he might have believed that Aunt Angelica's soul was enclosed in the old armchair; as indeed it was!

As Pitou had but one superstition in the world, and that was Catherine, the armchair was condemned to the stake for Catherine's sake. If it had shed as much blood and sent forth as many groans as the enchanted trees in Tasso's poetic forest, that armchair would have been shivered into flinders just the same.

Pitou grasped the other post with an equally vigorous arm, and wrenched it from the carcass, now nearly in ruins.

Once more the armchair sent forth an odd metallic

sound. Pitou was still pitiless. He grabbed the mutilated piece of furniture by the leg, and in order to smash it the better, he banged it against the floor with all his might.

This time the armchair broke in twain; and to Pitou's great amazement, through the gaping wound it poured forth, not clots of blood, but jets of gold.

It will be remembered that whenever Aunt Angelica collected twenty-four francs in silver, she always exchanged those twenty-four francs for a golden louis, and hid the louis in her armchair.

Pitou was dumfounded. He trembled with incredulity and astonishment. His first thought was, to run after Catherine and little Isidore, bring them in, and show them the treasure he had discovered; but a terrible reflection held him back. If Catherine thought him rich, would she still be willing to marry him? He shook his head. "No, she would refuse me!" he thought.

A moment he remained motionless, involved in thought. Then a smile illuminated his face. Undoubtedly he had found a way out of the embarrassment which attended this unexpected fortune.

He collected the goldpieces which were on the floor. He cut open the chair-seat with his knife, searching in the remotest corners, and pulling out all the hair stuffing. Every part of the chair had been filled with louis. There was quite enough to fill that big pot, wherein Aunt Angelica cooked the famous rooster, — that bird which gave rise to a terrible scene between aunt and nephew, recounted in the story called "Ange Pitou."

Pitou counted his louis. There were 1550. Pitou was a rich man, with 1550 louis, — that is, 37,200 francs. As every golden louis was worth 920 francs in assignats, Pitou was now worth 1,426,000 francs,

almost a million and a half, — the cost of the famous Queen's Diamond Necklace.

At what a moment did this colossal treasure come to him! At a moment when, having no more money to buy wood, he was obliged to break up an old chair, in order to warm his darling Catherine.

How lucky that Pitou was so poor, the weather so cold, and the armchair so old. Who knows, except for this combination of circumstances, what might have happened to this precious inheritance?

Pitou began by stuffing his pockets with louis. Then he vigorously shook every fragment of the armchair, breaking the wood into small pieces, which he piled up in the fireplace. Then he struck the steel, partly on the flint and partly on his trembling fingers. At last he set the tinder afire, and with an unsteady hand lighted the pile of wood.

It was time. Catherine and little Isidore came back, shivering with cold. Pitou pressed the boy to his heart, kissed Catherine's cold hands, and ran away, saying: "I'm off to attend to something of vital importance. Get yourselves warm, and wait for me."

"Where's Papa Pitou going?" asked Isidore.

"I don't know," said Catherine, "but one thing is sure! When he goes so fast, he's busy, not on his own account, but on thine or mine."

Catherine might have said, "On thine *and* mine."

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT PITOU DID WITH THE GOLDEN LOUIS FOUND IN AUNT ANGELICA'S ARMCHAIR.

It must not be forgotten that on the next day was to take place the public auction of Billot's farm and the Charny Château. It will be remembered also that the lowest price of the farm had been set at the sum of 400,000 francs, while the château was valued at 600,000 francs, — in assignats.

When the day arrived, Citizen Longpré bought, for an unknown proprietor, both these estates, for the sum of 1350 louis in gold, — that is to say, — for 1,242,000 francs in assignats. He paid for the property on the spot.

This took place on Sunday, the night before Pitou and Catherine's wedding-day.

On that Sunday, early in the morning, Catherine started for Haramont, in order to make some of those little coquettish arrangements in which even the least ostentatious ladies like to indulge on the eve of wedlock. Perhaps also she did not care to remain in the village, so near the place where they were selling the beautiful farm where she had passed her childhood, where she had been so happy, where she had suffered so cruelly.

At eleven o'clock next day the crowd, assembled in front of the Mayor's office, both pitied and praised Pitou very strongly, for marrying a girl so completely ruined, — not alone by the loss of fortune, but by the

possession of a child ; for this child, instead of some day being richer than herself, — as she had fondly hoped, — was now even poorer and more dependent than his mother.

While the crowd were pitying and praising outside, Citizen Longpré was saying to Pitou, according to the usage of the epoch : " Citizen Pierre Ange Pitou, do you take for your wife Citizeness Anne Catherine Billot ? " and to Catherine : " Citizeness Anne Catherine Billot, do you take for your husband Citizen Pierre Ange Pitou ? " and both responded in the affirmative, Pitou with a voice tremulous with emotion, and Catherine most serenely.

When the Citizen Mayor had proclaimed, in the name of the law, that the two young people were now joined in marriage, he made a sign for little Isidore to come and speak with him.

Little Isidore was placed on the Mayor's desk.

" My child," said the Mayor, " here are some papers, which thou wilt give to Mamma Catherine, after Papa Pitou takes her home."

" Yes, Monsieur," lisped the child, taking the papers in his little hand.

All was now over, except that Pitou, to the great astonishment of the onlookers, drew from his pocket five golden louis and gave them to the Mayor, saying simply : " For the poor, Citizen Mayor ! "

Catherine smiled and said : " Are we rich folks, then ? "

" One is rich when one is happy, Catherine," replied Pitou ; " and thou hast made me the richest man on earth ! "

He offered her his arm, on which she leaned tenderly. They found the crowd awaiting them at the door. The bridal couple were greeted with loud acclaim.

Pitou thanked his friends, and heartily shook their hands. Catherine also saluted her friends, bowing right and left.

Meanwhile Pitou turned towards the right. "Where art thou going, my friend?" asked Catherine.

In fact, if Pitou meant to return to Haramont, he must take the road to the left, through the park. If he meant to go back to Aunt Angelica's house, he would go to the right, as far as Château Square. Why then did he go towards Fountain Square? That is what Catherine wished to know.

"Come, my well-beloved Catherine!" said Pitou. "I am taking thee to a place thou 'lt be right glad to see again."

Catherine went whither he led the way; but those who saw them said: "Where can they be going?"

Pitou crossed Fountain Square without stopping, took the Rue Ormet, went to the end of it, turned into the lane where, six years before, he met Catherine riding on her donkey, — the day when he was driven from home by Aunt Angelica, and knew not where to lay his head.

"We are not going to Pisseleu, I hope," said Catherine, checking her husband.

"Please keep on with me!" said Pitou.

Catherine sighed, but she went with him through the little lane, which led to the plain.

After walking ten minutes they reached the little bridge, where Pitou once found Catherine in a dead swoon, at the time of Viscount Isidore's sudden departure for Paris.

There she stopped and said: "Pitou! I can go no farther!"

"Oh, Mademoiselle Catherine, — only as far as the hollow willow-tree."

It was the willow wherein Pitou used to place Isidore's letters, and find those which were to be sent to the aristocratic young lover in return.

Catherine again sighed, and continued on her walk; but at the willow she said: "Now let us go back, pray!" but Pitou laid his hand on her arm and said: "Twenty more paces, Mademoiselle Catherine! That 's all I ask!"

"Ah Pitou!" said Catherine, in a tone so reproachful that Pitou paused in his turn, and said: "Ah Mademoiselle, — and I, — I thought I should be making thee so happy!"

"Thou thinkest to make me happy by taking me to see the farm where I was brought up, which belonged to my parents, which ought to belong to me, and which was sold yesterday, to go into the hands of some stranger, whose very name I do not know?"

"Mademoiselle Catherine, only twenty steps more. That 's all I 'll ask."

In twenty steps they turned an angle of the wall, which brought them into sight of the great gate of the farm.

Around this gate were gathered groups of laborers, wagoners, hostlers, milkmaids, with Father Clouis at their head. Each attendant held a bouquet.

"Ah, I understand!" said Catherine. "Before the new proprietor comes, it was thy wish to bring me here once again, that the old servants might bid me good-bye. Thanks, Pitou!"

Dropping her husband's arm and little Isidore's hand, she walked on in front of these good people, who surrounded her, and led her into the hallway of the farmhouse. Pitou took little Isidore in his arms, — the child still carrying the two papers given him by the Mayor, — and followed Catherine.

The young wife was seated in the middle of the great

hallway, smoothing her forehead with her hands, as if she wished to awake from a dream.

"In God's name, Pitou," she asked, "what are they saying to me?" Her eyes were wild and her voice feverish.

"My dear husband, I do not understand what they are saying to me!" she presently added.

"Perhaps the papers thy child has will help thee to understand it all better, dear Catherine!" said Pitou; and he pushed Isidore gently to his mother's side.

Catherine took the two papers from the child's little hands.

"Read, my wife, read!" said Pitou.

Catherine opened one of the two papers, and read:

This certifies that the Boursonnes Château, and the estates thereunto appertaining, were bought of me and paid for yesterday, February 14, 1794, on account of Jacques Philippe Isidore, the minor son of Citizeness Catherine Billot; and therefore it is to this minor child the aforesaid Boursonnes Château and its appertaining grounds lawfully belong.

DE LONGPRÉ,
Mayor of Villers Cotterets.

"What does this mean, Pitou?" asked Catherine. "Thou canst see I don't understand a word of all this?"

"Read the other paper!" said Pitou.

Unfolding the other paper, Catherine read as follows:

This certifies that the farm called Pisseleu, with all its dependencies, was bought of me, and paid for, yesterday, February 14, 1794, on account of Citizeness Anne Catherine Billot, and that she is therefore the sole and lawful proprietor of this farm, and all its dependencies.

DE LONGPRÉ,
Mayor of Villers Cotterets.

"In Heaven's name," said Catherine, "tell me what this signifies, or I shall go crazy!"

"It signifies," said Pitou, "that owing to the fact that I found fifteen hundred and fifty gold louis in Aunt Angelica's old armchair, — which I was breaking up to kindle a fire, against your return from the funeral, — the estate and château of Boursonnes will not pass from the Charnys nor the Pisseleu farm from the Billot family."

Then Pitou told the story, which we have already given our readers.

"Oh, Pitou!" said Catherine, "and thou hadst courage to go on and burn up that old chair, when there were louis in thy pocket wherewith to buy wood!"

"Catherine," said Pitou, "thou wert just coming home. Before there could be any fire otherwise, it would be necessary to buy the wood, and have it brought home. Meanwhile the cold would have found thee."

Catherine opened both arms. Pitou pushed forward little Isidore.

"Thee also! thee also! dear Pitou!" said Catherine.

In one embrace she clasped to her heart both son and husband.

"Oh, my God!" murmured Pitou, choking with joy, and at the same time paying the tribute of a last tear to the old maid, "to think she should have died with cold and hunger! Poor Aunt Angelica!"

"Faith," said a big wagoner to a fresh and pretty little farm-girl, pointing to Pitou and Catherine, "faith, there are two people who don't appear likely to die in any such way!"

THE END.

LE

CHEVALIER DE MAISON-ROUGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENROLLED VOLUNTEERS.

It was on the evening of the 10th of March, 1793, ten o'clock was striking from Notre Dame, and each stroke sounding, emitted a sad and monotonous vibration. Night had fallen on Paris, not boisterous and stormy, but cold, damp, and foggy. Paris itself at that time was not the Paris of our day, glittering at night with thousands of reflected lights, — the Paris of busy promenades, of lively chat, with its riotous suburbs, the scene of audacious quarrels, and daring crime, — but a fearful, timid, busy city, whose few and scattered inhabitants, even in crossing from one street to another, ran concealing themselves in the darkness of the alleys, and ensconcing themselves behind their portes-cochères, like wild beasts tracked by the hunters to their lair.

As we have previously said, it was the evening of the 10th of March,1793. A few remarks upon the critical situation of the country, which had produced the changed aspect of the capital, before we commence stating the events the recital of which form the subject of this history.

France, by the death of Louis XVI., had become at variance with all Europe. To the three enemies she had first combated, — that is to say, Prussia, the Empire, and Piedmont, — were now joined England, Holland, and Spain. Sweden and Denmark alone preserved their old neutrality, occupied as they were besides in beholding Catharine II. devastating Poland.

The state of affairs was truly frightful. France, more respected as a physical power, but less esteemed as a moral one, since the massacres of September and the execution of the 21st of January, was literally blockaded, like a simple town, by the whole of Europe. England was on our coasts, Spain upon the Pyrenees, Piedmont and Austria on the Alps, Holland and Prussia to the north of the Pays-Bas, and with one accord from the Upper Rhine to the Scheldt two hundred and fifty thousand combatants marched against the Republic. Our generals were repulsed in every direction. Miacrinski had been obliged to abandon Aix-la-Chapelle, and draw back upon Liege; Steingel and Neuilly were driven back upon Limbourg; while Miranda, who besieged Maestricht, fell back upon Tongres. Valence and Dampierre, reduced to beat a retreat, did so with a loss of half their number. More than ten thousand deserters had already abandoned the army, and cleverly scattered themselves in the interior. At last the Convention, having no hope except in Dumouriez, despatched courier after courier, commanding him to quit the borders of Bribos (where he was preparing to embark for Holland), and return to take the command of the army of the Meuse.

Sensible at heart, like an animated body, France felt at Paris — that is to say, at its core — each and every blow levelled at it by invasion, revolt, or treason, even from quarters the most distant. Each victory was

a riot of joy; every defeat an insurrection of terror. It is therefore easy to comprehend what tumult was produced by the news of these successive losses which we had just experienced.

On the preceding evening, the 9th of March, they had had at the Convention a sitting more stormy than usual; all the officers had received orders to join their regiments at the same time, and Danton, that audacious proposer of improbable things (but which nevertheless were accomplished), — Danton mounting the tribune, cried out, "Soldiers are wanting, say you? Offer Paris an opportunity of saving France. Demand from her thirty thousand men, send them to Dumouriez; and not only is France saved, but Belgium is secured, and Holland is conquered." This proposition had been received with shouts of enthusiasm, registers had been opened in all the sections, calling on them to assemble in the evening. Places of public amusement were closed to avoid all distraction, and the black flag was hoisted at the Hôtel de Ville, in token of distress. Before midnight, five and thirty thousand names were inscribed on the registers; only this evening, as it had before occurred in September, in every section, while inscribing their names, the enrolled Volunteers had demanded that before their departure the traitors might be punished.

The traitors were in fact the "contre-revolutionists," — the hidden conspirators who from within menaced the Revolution, thus menaced from without. But as may be easily understood, the word "traitor" extended to all those to whom the extreme parties who at this period tore France wished to apply it. The traitors were the weaker party; as the Girondins were the weakest, the Montagnards decided that the Girondins must be the traitors.

On the next day, which was the 10th of March, all the Montagnard deputies were present at the sitting. The Jacobins, armed, filled the tribunes, after having turned out the women; the mayor presented himself with the Council of the Commune, confirming the report of the Commissioners of the Convention respecting the devotedness of the citizens, but repeating the wish, unanimously expressed the preceding evening, for a Tribunal Extraordinary appointed to judge the traitors. The report of the Committee was instantly demanded with loud vociferations. The Committee met immediately, and in five minutes afterward Robert Lindet declared that a Tribunal would be formed, composed of nine judges (independent of all forms, and acquiring proof by every means), divided into two permanent sections, and prosecuting, by order of the Convention or directly, all those who were found guilty in any way of attempting to mislead the people.

This was a sweeping clause, and the Girondins, understanding it as their death-warrant, rose *en masse*. Death, cried they, rather than submit to the establishment of this Venetian inquisition.

The Montagnards, in reply to this apostrophe, demanded to put the matter to the vote in loud tones. "Yes," exclaimed Féraud, "let us vote to make known to the world the men who are willing to assassinate innocence under the mask of the law." They voted at length; and against all expectation the majority decided — (1) that they would have juries; (2) that these juries should be of equal numbers in the departments; (3) that they should be nominated by the Convention. At the moment when these three propositions were approved, loud cries were heard; but the Convention, accustomed to receive occasional visits from the populace, inquired their wishes, and were informed in reply that it was

merely a deputation of enrolled Volunteers, who, having dined at the Halle-au-Blé, demanded to be permitted to display their military tactics before the Convention.

The doors were opened immediately, and six hundred men, armed with swords, pistols, and pikes, apparently half-intoxicated, filed off amid shouts of applause, and loudly demanded the death of the traitors. "Yes," replied Collot d' Herbois, addressing them, "yes, my friends, we will save you — you and liberty — notwithstanding their intrigues." These words were followed by an angry glance toward the Girondins, which plainly intimated they were not yet beyond reach of danger. In short, the sitting of the Convention terminated, the Montagnards scattered themselves among other clubs, running first to the Cordeliers and then to the Jacobins, proposing to place the traitors beyond the reach of the law by cutting their throats that very night.

The wife of Louvet resided in the Rue Saint Honoré, near the Jacobins. She, hearing these vociferations, descended, entered the club, and heard this proposition; then quickly retraced her steps, and warned her husband of the impending danger. Louvet, hastily arming himself, ran from door to door to alarm his friends, but found them all absent; then fortunately ascertaining from one of the servants they had gone to Pétion's house, he followed them there. He found them quietly deliberating over a decree which ought to be presented on the morrow, and which by a chance majority they hoped to pass. He related what had occurred, communicated his fears, informed them of the plot devised against them by the Cordeliers and Jacobins, and concluded by urging them on their side to pursue some active and energetic measure.

Then Pétion rose, calm and self-possessed as usual,

walked to the window, opened it, looked at the sky, and then extended his hand, which he drew in covered with moisture. "It rains," said he; "there will be nothing to-night."

Through this half-opened window the last vibration of the clock was heard striking ten.

Such were the occurrences of the 10th of March and the evening preceding it, — occurrences which, in this gloomy obscurity and menacing silence, rendered the abodes destined to shelter the living like sepulchres peopled by the dead. In fact, long patrols of the National Guard, preceded by men marching with fixed bayonets, troops of citizens, armed at hazard, pushing against each other, gendarmes closely examining each doorway, and strictly scrutinizing every narrow alley, — these were the sole inhabitants who ventured to expose themselves in the streets. Every one instinctively understood that some unusual and terrible plot was in progress.

The cold and drizzling rain, which had tended so much to reassure Pétion, had considerably augmented the ill-humor and trouble of these inspectors, whose every meeting resembled preparation for combat, and who, after recognizing each other with looks of defiance, exchanged the word of command slowly and with a very bad grace. One would have said on seeing them separate and return to their several posts, that they mutually feared an attack from behind.

On the same evening, when Paris was a prey to one of these panics (so often renewed that they ought, in some measure, to have become habitual), — the evening on which the massacre of the lukewarm revolutionists was secretly debated, who after having voted (with reservation for the most part) the death of the king, recoiled

to-day before the death of the queen, a prisoner in the Temple, with her children and her sister-in-law, — a woman, enveloped in a mantle of lilac printed cotton with black spots, her head almost buried in her hood, glided along the houses in the Rue Saint Honoré, seeking concealment under a door-porch, or in the angle of a wall, every time a patrol appeared, remaining motionless as a statue and holding her breath till he had passed, and once more pursuing her anxious course with increased rapidity, till some danger of a similar nature again compelled her to seek refuge in silence and immobility.

She had already (thanks to the precautions she had taken) travelled over with impunity part of the Rue Saint Honoré, when at the corner of the Rue de Grenelle she suddenly encountered, not a body of patrol, but a small troop of our brave enrolled Volunteers, who, having dined at the Halle-au-Blé, found their patriotism considerably increased by the numerous toasts they had drunk to their future victories. The poor woman uttered a cry, and made a futile attempt to escape by the Rue du Coq.

"Ah, ah, Citizen!" cried the chief of the Volunteers (for already, with the need of command natural to man, these worthy patriots had elected their chief), "Ah, where are you going?"

The fugitive made no reply, but continued her rapid movement.

"What sport!" said the chief; "it is a man disguised, an aristocrat who thinks to save himself."

The sound of two or three guns escaping from hands rather too unsteady to be depended upon, announced to the poor woman that her haste was a fatal mistake.

"No, no," cried she, stopping short, and retracing her steps; "no, Citizen; you are mistaken. I am not a man."

"Then advance at command," said the chief, "and reply to my questions. Where are you hastening to, charming belle of the night?"

"But, Citizen, I am not going anywhere. I am returning."

"Oh! returning, are you?"

"Yes."

"It is rather a late return for a respectable woman, Citizen?"

"I am returning from visiting a sick relative."

"Poor little kitten!" said the chief, making a motion with his hand, before which the horrified woman quickly recoiled, "where is your passport?"

"My passport! What is that, Citizen? What do you mean?"

"Have you not read the decree of the Commune?"

"No."

"You have heard it proclaimed, then?"

"Alas, no! What, then, said this decree, in the name of God?"

"In the first place, we no longer say 'God'; we only speak of the 'Supreme Being' now."

"Pardon my error. It is an old custom."

"Bad habit — the habit of the aristocracy."

"I will endeavor to correct myself, Citizen; but you said —"

"I said that the decree of the Commune prohibited any one to go out, after ten at night, without a civic pass. Now, have you this civic pass?"

"Alas! no."

"You have forgotten it at your relative's?"

"I was ignorant of the necessity of taking it with me on going out."

"Then come with us to the first post; there you can

explain all prettily to the captain; and if he feels perfectly satisfied with your explanation, he will depute two men to conduct you in safety to your abode, else you will be detained for further information. File left! forward! quick march!"

From the cry of terror which escaped the poor prisoner, the chief of the enrolled Volunteers understood how much the unfortunate woman dreaded this interview.

"Oh, oh!" said he, "I am quite certain we hold distinguished game. Forward, forward — to the route, my little *ci-devant*."

And the chief seizing the arm of the captive, placed it within his own, and dragged her, notwithstanding her cries and tears, toward the post of the Palais Egalité.

They were already at the top of the barrier of Sergents, when suddenly a tall young man, closely wrapped in a mantle, turned the corner of the Rue des Petits-Champs at the very moment when the prisoner was endeavoring, by renewing her supplications, to regain her liberty. But without listening the chief dragged her brutally forward. The woman uttered a cry of grief mingled with terror. The young man saw the struggle, heard the cry, and bounding from the opposite side of the street, found himself facing the little troop.

"What is all this? What are you doing to this woman?" demanded he of the person who appeared to be the chief.

"Before you question me, you had better attend to your own business."

"Who is this woman; and what do you want with her?" repeated the young man, in a still more imperative tone than at first.

"But who are you, that you interrogate us?"

The young man opened his cloak, when an epaulet was visible, glistening on his military costume.

"I am an officer," said he, "as you can see."

"Officer! In what?"

"In the Civic Guard."

"Well, what of that?" replied one of the troop. "What do we know here of the officers of the Civic Guard?"

"What is that he says?" asked another man, in a drawling and ironical tone peculiar to a man of the people, or rather of the Parisian populace, when beginning to be angry.

"He says," replied the young man, "that if the epaulet cannot command respect for the officer, the sword shall command respect for the epaulet."

At the same time, making a retrograde movement, the unknown defender of the young woman had disengaged his arm from the folds of his mantle, and drawn from beneath it, sparkling by the glimmer of a lamp, a large infantry sabre. Then with a rapid movement which displayed his familiarity with similar scenes of violence, he seized the chief of the Volunteers by the collar of his jacket, and placing the point of the sabre to his throat, "Now," said he, "let us speak like friends."

"But, Citizen," said the chief, endeavoring to free himself.

"I warn you, that at the slightest movement made, either by you or any of your men, I pass my sabre through your body."

During this time two men belonging to the troop retained their hold of the woman.

"You have asked who I am," continued the young man, "which you had no right to do, since you do not command a regular patrol. However, I will inform you. My

name is Maurice Lindey; I commanded a body of artillery-men on the 10th of August, am now lieutenant in the National Guards, and secretary to the section of Brothers and Friends. Is that sufficient?"

"Well, Citizen Lieutenant," replied the chief, still menaced with the blade, the point of which he felt pressing more and more, "this is quite another thing. If you are really what you say, — that is, a good patriot —"

"There, I knew we should soon understand each other," said the officer. "Now, in your turn, answer me: why did this woman call out, and what are you doing with her?"

"We are taking her to the guard-house."

"And why are you taking her there?"

"Because she has no civic pass, and the last decree of the Commune ordered the arrest of any and every individual appearing in the streets of Paris without one, after ten o'clock at night. Do you forget the country is in danger, and that the black flag floats over the Hôtel de Ville?"

"The black flag floats over the Hôtel de Ville, and the country is in danger, because two hundred thousand slaves march against France," replied the officer, "and not because a woman runs through the streets of Paris after ten o'clock at night. But never mind, citizens. There is a decree of the Commune, it is true, and you only did your duty; and if you had answered me at once, our explanation might have been a much shorter and probably a less stormy one. It is well to be a patriot, but equally so to be polite; and the first officer whom the citizens ought to respect is he, it seems to me, whom they themselves appointed. In the mean time, take the woman with you, if you please. You are at liberty to depart."

"Oh! Citizen," cried the woman, who had listened to

the whole of this debate with the most intense anxiety, — "Oh! Citizen," she cried, seizing the arm of Maurice, "do not abandon me to the mercy of these rude and half-drunken men."

"Well, then," said Maurice, "take my arm, and I will conduct you with them as far as the Poste."

"To the Poste!" exclaimed the terrified woman, "and why to the Poste, when I have injured no one?"

"You are taken to the Poste," replied Maurice, "not because you have done any one wrong, or because you are considered capable of so doing, but on account of the decree issued by the Commune, forbidding any one to go out without a pass, and you have none."

"But, Monsieur, I was ignorant of the law."

"Citizen, you will find at the Poste brave and honorable men, who will fully appreciate your reasons, and from whom you have nothing to fear."

"Monsieur," said the young woman, pressing Maurice's arm, "it is no longer insult that I fear, it is death; if they conduct me to the Poste, I am lost."

CHAPTER II.

THE UNKNOWN.

THERE was in this voice an accent of so much terror, mingled with superiority, that Maurice was startled. Like a stroke of electricity, this vibrating voice had touched his heart. He turned toward the enrolled Volunteers, who were talking among themselves. Humiliated at having been held in check by a single individual, they were now consulting together with the visible intention of regaining their lost ground. They were eight against one; three were armed with guns, the remainder with pistols and pikes. Maurice wore only his sabre. The contest could not be an equal one. Even the woman comprehended this, as she held down her head and uttered a deep sigh.

As to Maurice, with his brows knit, his lip disdainfully curled, and his sabre drawn from its scabbard, he stood irresolute, fluctuating between the sentiments of a man and a citizen, — the one urging him to protect the woman, the other counselling him to give her up. All at once, at the corner of the Rue des Bons-Enfans, he saw the reflection of several muskets, and heard also the measured tread of a patrol, who, perceiving a crowd, halted within a few paces of the group, and through the corporal demanded, "Who goes there?"

"A friend," said Maurice. "A friend! Advance, Lorin!"

He to whom this order was addressed, placed himself at the head of his eight men, and quickly approached.

"Is it you, Maurice?" said the corporal. "Ah, libertine! what are you doing in the streets at this hour?"

"You see, I come from the section of Brothers and Friends."

"Yes; to visit that of sisters and friends. We know all about that.

"Ah, listen, ma belle,
When the dusk midnight hour
The church-bell shall toll,
I will haste to thy bower;
To thy side I will steal,
Spite of bolts and of bars,
And my love will reveal
'Neath the light of the stars.

Is it not so, eh?"

"No, friend, you are mistaken. I was on my way home when I discovered this citizen struggling in the hands of these citizen Volunteers, and ran up to inquire why they wished to detain her."

"It is just like you," said Lorin.

"For all the world knows that the fair sex so dear
Has ever a friend in the French cavalier."

Then turning toward the Volunteers, "Why did you stop this woman?" inquired the poetical corporal.

"I have already told the lieutenant," replied the chief of the little troop, "because she had no pass."

"Bah! bah!" said Lorin, "a great crime, certainly."

"Are you then ignorant of the decree of the Commune?" demanded the chief of the Volunteers.

"Yes; but there is another clause which annuls that."

"Which?"

"Listen: —

"On Pindus and Parnassus, it is decreed by Love,
That Beauty's witching face,
That Youth and fairy Grace,
Without a pass, by day or night, may through the city rove.

What do you say to this decree, Citizen? it is gallant, it seems to me."

"Yes; but it does not appear to me peremptory. In the first place it has not appeared in the 'Moniteur;' then we are neither upon Pindus nor Parnassus; it is not yet day; and lastly, the citizen is perhaps neither graceful, young, nor fair."

"I wager the contrary," said Lorin. "Prove that I am in the right, Citizen; remove your hood that all may judge if you come under the conditions of the decree."

"Monsieur," said the young woman, pressing closer to Maurice, "having saved me from your enemies, protect me now from your friends, I beseech you."

"You see," said the chief, "how she hides herself. In my opinion she is a spy of the aristocrats, — some street-walker."

"Oh, Monsieur!" said the young woman, stepping before Maurice, and discovering a face radiant with youth, rank, and beauty, visible by the light of the lamp, "do I look like what they have termed me?"

Maurice was dazzled. He had never even dreamed of beauty equal to that he had caught sight of for a moment, and only for a moment, since the unknown had again concealed her face in the hood as rapidly as she had unveiled it. "Lorin," said Maurice, in a whisper, "claim the prisoner, that you may conduct her to your post; you have a right to do so as chief of patrol."

"Very good," said the young corporal, "I understand with half a word."

Then, addressing himself to the unknown, "Let us go, ma belle," continued he; "since you will not afford us the proof that you are within the conditions of the decree, you must follow us."

"Why follow you?" said the chief of the enrolled Volunteers.

"Certainly. We shall conduct the citizen to the post of the Hôtel de Ville, where we are on guard, and there she will be examined."

"Not so, not so," said the chief of the first troop; "she belongs to us, and we will keep her."

"Citizens, citizens," said Lorin, "you will make me angry!"

"Angry, or not angry, *morbleu*, it is equally the same to us. We are true soldiers of the Republic, and while you patrol the streets, we go to shed our blood on the frontier."

"Take care you do not shed it by the way, citizens, which is very likely to occur, if you are not rather more polite than you are at present."

"Politeness is a virtue appertaining to the aristocracy, and we belong to the lower orders," replied the chief.

"Do not speak of these things before Madame," said Lorin, "perhaps she is an Englishwoman. Do not be angry at the supposition, my beautiful bird of the night," added he, gallantly, turning toward the unknown. "Doubtless you are conversant with the poets, and one of them tells us 'that England is a swan's nest situated in the midst of a large pond.'"

"Ah! you betray yourself," said the chief of the enrolled; "you avow yourself a creature of Pitt, in the pay of England. A—"

"Silence," said Lorin; "you do not understand poetry; therefore I must speak to you in prose. We are National

Guards, affable and patient fellows enough, but still children of Paris, — that is to say, if we are provoked we strike rather hard."

"Madame," said Maurice, "from what you have now witnessed you can easily imagine what will soon follow. In five minutes ten or twelve men will be cutting one another's throats for you. Is the cause your defenders have embraced worthy of the blood they are about to shed?"

"Monsieur," replied the unknown, clasping her hands, "I can only assure you that if you permit me to be arrested, the result to myself will be dreadful, but to others fatal; and that rather than you should abandon me, I would beseech you to pierce me through the heart with the weapon you hold in your hand, and cast my corpse into the Seine."

"Madame," replied Maurice, "I will take all the responsibility upon myself;" and letting drop the hand of the lovely *incognita* which he held in his own, —

"Citizens," said he, addressing himself to the National Guard, "as an officer, as a patriot, and a Frenchman, I command you to protect this woman. And, Lorin, if any of these *canaille* say one word, put them to the bayonet."

"Carry arms!" cried Lorin.

"God of mercy!" cried the unknown, enveloping her head still closer in her hood, and supporting herself against a post, "O God! protect him!"

The Volunteers directly placed themselves on the defensive, and one among them fired his pistol, the ball passing through the hat of Maurice.

"Charge bayonets!" cried Lorin.

Then, in the darkness of night, a scene of struggling and confusion ensued, during which one or two shots were heard, followed by cries, imprecations, and blasphemies; but no one appeared, because, as we have said,

a massacre was secretly debated, and it was believed that it had commenced. Two or three windows only were opened for an instant, but were immediately closed. Less in number, and worse armed, the enrolled Volunteers were in an instant defeated. Two were badly wounded and four others pinned against the wall, each with a bayonet at his breast.

"There," said Lorin, "I hope now you will remain as quiet as lambs. As for you, Citizen Maurice, I order you to conduct this woman to the post of the Hôtel de Ville. You understand you are answerable for her."

"Yes," said Maurice. Then, in a low tone, "And the password?" added he.

"The devil!" said Lorin, rubbing his ear, "the password; it is —"

"Do not fear I shall make a bad use of it."

"Faith," said Lorin; "make what use you like of it, that is your concern."

"Tell me then," said Maurice.

"I will tell you all in good time, but let us first dispose of these tipsy fellows. Then, before we part, I shall not be sorry to give you a few words of advice."

"Well, I will wait."

Lorin then turned to his National Guards, who still kept the enrolled Volunteers in subjection.

"Now," said he, to the latter, "have you had sufficient?"

"Yes, dog of a Girondin," replied the chief.

"You deceive yourself, my friend," said Lorin, coolly; "we are better sans-culottes than yourselves, seeing that we belong to the club of Thermopyles, of whose patriotism no one, I hope, entertains a doubt. Let these citizens go," continued Lorin, "they resist no longer."

"It is not the less true that if this woman is an object of suspicion —"

"If she was a suspicious character she would have made her escape during this skirmish, and not, as you see she has done, waited till it had terminated."

"Hum!" said one of the Volunteers, "What the Citizen Thermopyle observes is quite true."

"Besides, we shall know, since my friend is going to conduct her to the Poste, while we go and drink to the health of the nation."

"Are we going to drink?" said the chief.

"Certainly, I am very thirsty, and I know a pretty little cabaret at the corner of the Rue Thomas du Louvre."

"Why did you not say so at once, Citizen? We are sorry to have doubted your patriotism; and to prove it, let us, in the name of the nation and the law, embrace each other as friends."

"Let us embrace," said Lorin.

And the enrolled Volunteers and the National Guards embraced with warm enthusiasm. At this period the French people were as anxious to embrace as to behead one another.

"Let us now go," cried the two united troops, "to the corner of the Rue Thomas du Louvre."

"And we," said one of the wounded, in a plaintive voice, "do you intend to abandon us here?"

"Ah, well! yes," said Lorin, "abandon the heroes who have fallen bravely fighting for their country against patriots — it is true by mistake, but still true for all that; we will send you some wheelbarrows. Meanwhile you can sing the Marseillaise, it will divert you."

Then approaching Maurice, who was waiting for him, with the unknown, at the corner of the Rue du Coq, while the National Guards and enrolled Volunteers arm-in-arm retraced their steps toward the square of the Palais-Egalité, —

"Maurice," said he, "I promised you some counsel, and it is this. Be persuaded to accompany us, rather than compromise yourself by protecting this young woman, who, it is true, is very charming, and on that account not the less to be suspected; for charming women who run about the streets of Paris at midnight — "

"Sir," said the young woman, "judge me not from appearances, I implore you."

"In the first place, you say *sir*, and that is a great fault. Do you understand, Citizen, what I say?"

"Of course I do, Citizen; but allow your friend to accomplish his kind action."

"In what way?"

"By conducting me home, and protecting me on my road."

"Maurice, Maurice," said Lorin, "consider well what you are about; you will compromise yourself terribly."

"I know it well," said the young man; "but what would you have me do? If I leave the poor woman, she will be stopped at every step by the patrols."

"Oh, yes, yes! while with you, sir, — while with you, Citizen, I meant to say, I shall be safe."

"You hear," said Lorin, "safe! She then runs great danger?"

"My dear Lorin," said Maurice, "let us be just. She must be either a good compatriot or an aristocrat. If she is an aristocrat, we have erred in protecting her; if she is a good patriot, it is our duty to preserve her."

"Your pardon, friend; I am sorry for Aristotle, but your logic is at fault. See what he says: —

"Iris my reason steals away,
And yet she tells me to be wise;
Oh, lady! I can only say,
Then turn away those glorious eyes."

"Lorin," said Maurice, "a truce to Dorat, to Parny, and to Gentil-Bernard, I pray you. Speak seriously; will you, or will you not, give me the password?"

"That is to say, Maurice, you place me in this dilemma, — I must either sacrifice my duty to my friend, or my friend to my duty; but I fear, Maurice, my duty will fall the sacrifice."

"Decide, then, for one or the other, my friend; but in the name of Heaven, decide quickly."

"You will not abuse it?"

"I promise you."

"That is not sufficient; swear!"

"Upon what?"

"Swear upon the altar of your country."

Lorin pulled off his hat, presenting to Maurice the side with the cockade, and Maurice, finding the affair very simple, took, without smiling, the oath required upon this extemporary altar.

"Now, then," said Lorin, "this is the password — France and Lutece; perhaps you would say, France and Lucretia; but let that pass, it is Roman all the same."

"Fair Citizen," said Maurice, "I am now at your service. Thanks, Lorin."

"*Bon voyage*," cried Lorin, replacing on his head "the altar of his country," and faithful to his Anacreontic taste, departed singing: —

"Eleonora, Eleonora!
Now I 've taught you how to love,
Tell your passionate adorer
Does the lesson weary prove?"

CHAPTER III.

THE RUE DES FOSSES SAINT VICTOR.

MAURICE finding himself alone with the young woman felt for the moment deeply embarrassed. The fear of being duped, attracted by her marvellous beauty, troubled his conscience as a pure and exalted Republican, and caused him to hesitate when about to offer her the support of his arm.

"Where are you going, Citizen?" said he.

"Alas, sir, a long way from here," replied she.

"But how far?"

"By the side of the Jardin des Plantes."

"It is some distance; let us proceed on our way."

"Ah, sir!" said the unknown; "I plainly perceive I am a burden to you; but indeed it is no ordinary danger that I incur. Were it not so, believe me, I should not abuse your generosity."

"But, Madame," said Maurice, who during this *tête-à-tête* had totally forgotten the language imposed by the Republican vocabulary, and returned to the language of a gentleman, "how is it, in all conscience, that at this hour you are found in the streets of Paris, where, with the exception of ourselves, you do not see a solitary individual?"

"I have told you, sir; I have been paying a visit to the Faubourg du Roule. Leaving home at mid-day, and knowing nothing of what had taken place, I returned in equal ignorance, all my time having been spent in deep retirement."

"Yes," murmured Maurice, "in some retired house, the resort of the aristocrats. Confess, Citizen, that, while outwardly demanding my protection, you laugh in your sleeve at my egregious folly."

"Why should I act thus?"

"You are aware that a Republican is your guide. Well, this Republican betrays his cause, that is all."

"But, Citizen," quickly rejoined the unknown, "I, as well as you, love the Republic; you labor under a mistake concerning me."

"Then, Citizen, if you are a good patriot, you can have no cause for concealment. Where do you come from?"

"Monsieur, excuse me."

There was in this "monsieur" so much sweetness and modesty of expression, that Maurice believed it to be founded on some sentiment concealed.

"Surely," said he, "this woman is returning from some assignation."

At this moment, without knowing why, he felt deeply oppressed at this thought, and for a short time he remained silent.

When these two nocturnal promenaders had reached the Rue de la Verrerie, after having encountered three or four patrols, who, thanks to the password, allowed them free passage, the last watchman appeared somewhat suspicious. Maurice found it necessary to give his name and residence.

"That is all that is required from you," said the officer; "but the citizen, who is she?"

"The sister of my wife."

The officer permitted them to pass.

"You are then married, sir?" murmured the unknown.

"No, Madame; why do you think so?"

"Then," said she, laughing, "you had better have said I was your wife."

"Madame," said Maurice, "the name of wife is rather too sacred to be lightly bestowed. I have not the honor of your acquaintance."

The unknown in her turn felt an oppression of the heart, and remained silent and confused. At this moment they crossed the Bridge Marie. The young woman quickened her pace as they approached the end of their journey. They crossed the Bridge de la Tournelle.

"We are now, I believe, in your quarter," said Maurice, planting his foot on the Quai Saint Bernard.

"Yes, Citizen," replied the young woman; "but it is precisely here I most require your kind assistance."

"Really, Madame," said Maurice, "you forbid me to be indiscreet, yet do all in your power to excite my curiosity. This is not generous. Grant me your confidence. I have merited it, I think. Will you not do me the honor to tell me to whom I speak?"

"You speak, sir," said the unknown, smiling, "to a woman whom you have saved from the greatest danger she has ever encountered; to one who owes you a debt of everlasting gratitude."

"I do not require so much, Madame; be less grateful, and pending the second we shall yet be together, tell me your name."

"Impossible!"

"You would have told it nevertheless to the first sectionary, if you had been taken to the station."

"No, never!" exclaimed the unknown.

"But in that case you would have gone to prison."

"I had considered all that."

"And prison at this moment —"

"Means the scaffold; I know all that."

"And you would have preferred the scaffold?"

"To treason, — to discover my name would be treason."

"I said truly, you compel me to act a singular part for a Republican!"

"You act the part of a truly generous man. You find a poor woman subjected to insult; you do not contemn her because she might be 'one of the people,' but that she may be exempted from fresh annoyances, to save her from shipwreck, you reconduct her to the miserable quarter she inhabits."

"As far as appearances go, you state the matter correctly, and I might have credited you, had I never either seen you or heard you speak; but your beauty and mode of expression stamp you as a woman of distinction, and it is just this distinction, in opposition to your costume and this miserable quarter, which proves to me that your absence from home at this unseasonable hour conceals some mystery. You are silent. We will speak no more. Are we far from your house, Madame?"

At this moment they entered the Rue des Fosses Saint Victor.

"You see that small dark building," said the unknown to Maurice, pointing toward a house situated beyond the walls of the Jardin des Plantes. "When we reach there you must quit me."

"Very well, Madame, issue your orders; I am here only to obey."

"You are angry."

"I angry? — not the least in the world; besides, what does it matter to you?"

"It matters much, since I have yet a favor to ask of you."

"What is that?"

"A kind and frank adieu, — the farewell of a friend."

"The farewell of a friend! Oh, Madame, you do me too great an honor. A singular friend, not to know the name of his friend, who even conceals from him where she resides, no doubt from the fear of being too much troubled with his company."

The young woman hung down her head, but did not reply to this sarcasm.

"As to the rest, Madame," continued Maurice, "if I have discovered a secret, I did so involuntarily, and without any effort on my part to do so."

"I have now reached my destination, sir," said the unknown.

They were opposite the old Rue Saint Jacques, lined with tall dark-looking houses, intersected by obscure narrow alleys, leading to streets occupied by manufactories and tanyards, as within two steps ran the little river De Bièvre.

"Here!" said Maurice, "is it here that you live?"

"Yes."

"Impossible!"

"It is so, nevertheless. And now, adieu! my brave chevalier, my generous protector, adieu!"

"Adieu! Madame," said Maurice, with slight irony of tone, "but first again assure me you run no further risk of danger."

"None whatever."

"In that case I will leave you."

Maurice then bowed coldly and retired a few paces. The unknown remained standing for an instant in the same place.

"I do not like to take my leave of you thus," said she. "Come, Monsieur Maurice, your hand."

Maurice approached, and held out his hand, and then felt the young woman slip a ring on his finger.

"Oh, Citizen! what have you done? Do you not perceive that you have lost one of your rings?"

"Sir, you wrong me much."

"The crime of ingratitude is wanting in me; is it not so, Madame?"

"Come, I beseech you, sir — my friend, do not leave me thus. What do you wish to know? What do you ask?"

"Payment — is it not so?" said the young man, bitterly.

"No," said the unknown, with a bewitching expression; "but forgive me the secrecy I am obliged to preserve toward you."

Maurice, seeing in the obscurity those beautiful eyes wet with tears, feeling the pressure of that soft hand reposing between his own, hearing the accents of that persuasive voice, which had almost descended to the depths of prayer, felt his anger all at once yield to admiration.

"What do I ask?" said he. "To see you again."

"Impossible! utterly impossible."

"If only for once — one hour, a minute, a second."

"I tell you it is impossible."

"Do you tell me seriously," said Maurice, "that I shall never see you again!"

"Never," said the unknown, in a desponding tone.

"Madame," said Maurice, "you certainly jest with me." Then, raising his noble head, he shook his hanging curls like a man wishing to escape from some power which, in spite of himself, still bound him. The unknown regarded him with an undefinable expression. It was evident she had not altogether escaped the sentiment she had inspired.

"Listen," said she, after a moment's silence, inter-

rupted only by a sigh, which Maurice had in vain endeavored to suppress. "Swear to me, upon your honor, to shut your eyes the moment I desire you to do so, and to keep them closed while you count sixty. Mind, upon your honor."

"If I swear, what will happen to me?"

"It will happen that I will prove my gratitude to you in a manner that I faithfully promise you I will never again to any other person, should he even do more for me than you have done, which would be no easy matter."

"But, at least, am I not to know —"

"No; trust to me. You will see —"

"In truth, Madame, I know not whether you are angel or demon."

"Will you swear it?"

"Yes; I swear to do as you desire me."

"Whatever occurs, you will not open your eyes — whatever happens. You understand? even if you should feel yourself struck with a poniard."

"You bewilder me. My word of honor required with so much urgency?"

"Swear, then, Monsieur. It appears to me that you run no great risk in so doing."

"Well, I swear," said Maurice, "whatever may happen," closing his eyes.

He hesitated.

"Let me see you only once more — only once more," said he. "I entreat you."

The young woman let fall her hood, with a smile not quite free from coquetry, when, by the light of the moon, which at this moment shed its lustre between two clouds, he again beheld, for the second time, the raven hair hanging in masses of shining curls, the beautifully arched and

pencilled eyebrows overshadowing the almond-shaped eyes, so soft and languishing, an exquisitely formed nose, and lips fresh and brilliant as coral.

"Oh, you are beautiful, lovely, divine!" said Maurice.

"Shut your eyes," said the unknown.

Maurice obeyed.

The young woman took both his hands within her own, and placed him in the desired position.

Suddenly he felt a warm perfume pervade his face, and lips slightly touch his mouth, leaving between his lips the disputed ring.

All passed rapid as thought. Maurice experienced a sensation almost amounting to pain, so deep was it and unexpected, penetrating to his very inmost soul.

He made a brusque movement, and extended his arms before him.

"Your oath!" said a voice, already in the distance.

Maurice clasped his hands over his eyes the more strenuously to resist the strong inclination he felt to perjure himself. He counted no more; he thought no more, but remained tottering, his nerves totally unstrung.

In about an instant he heard a noise like that of a door closing a few paces distant from him; then again everything was silent. Then he removed his hand, and opened his eyes, looking round about him like a man just awakened from a deep sleep, and might, perhaps, have fancied all that had occurred a passing dream, had he not held between his lips the identical ring, proving that the adventure, however incredible, was an incontestable reality.

CHAPTER IV.

MANNERS OF THE TIMES.

When Maurice came to himself, he looked around, but saw only the gloomy, dirty alleys extending to his right and left. He essayed to find out exactly where he was, that he might recognize it again; but his mind was disturbed, the night was dark, and the moon, which for a moment had appeared to light up the lovely face of the fair unknown, had again retired behind the clouds. The young man, after a moment of cruel incertitude, retraced his steps toward his own house, situated in the Rue de Roule.

Arriving at the Rue Sainte Avoie, Maurice was much surprised at the number of patrols in motion in that quarter of the Temple.

"What is the matter now, Sergeant?" inquired he, of the chief of patrol, who, all on the alert, had just been thoroughly searching the Rue des Fontaines.

"What is it?" said the sergeant. "It is this, *mon officier*. It was intended this night to carry off the woman Capet, and the whole nest besides."

"How was that?"

"A band of Royalists had, I do not know how, procured the password, and introduced themselves into the Temple in the costume of chasseurs of the National Guard. Fortunately, he who represented the corporal, when speaking to the officer on guard, addressed him as 'Monsieur.' He sold himself, — the aristocrat!"

"The devil!" said Maurice; "and have they not arrested the conspirators?"

"No. The Royalists reached the street, and dispersed."

"And is there any hope of capturing any of these fellows?"

"There is only one among the number of sufficient importance to arrest, — that is the chief, a very slight man, who had been introduced among the men on guard by one of the municipals of the service. We gave the villain chase, but he found a door behind, and fled through the Madelonnettes."

Under any other circumstances, Maurice would have remained for the rest of the night with the patriots who guarded the safety of the Republic; but since one short hour, love of country was no longer his sole engrossing thought. He continued his way, and the tidings he had just learned were soon banished from his mind by the recent stirring events in which he had himself taken so active a part. Besides, these pretended attempts at rescue had become very frequent, and the patriots themselves were aware that under certain circumstances politicians made use of them to advance their own ends; therefore, this news caused our young Republican no great disquietude.

On returning home, Maurice found his "official" (at this epoch they had no longer servants), — Maurice, say we, found his official waiting, but who, while waiting, had fallen asleep, and while sleeping snored uneasily. He awoke him, and with all due regard for his fellow-man, made him pull off his boots, then dismissed him, that he might not interrupt his cogitations, and jumping into bed, it being very late, and he also having youth on his side, slept soundly, notwithstanding the preoccupation of his thoughts.

The next day he discovered a letter on his *table-de-nuit.* This letter was written in a clear, elegant hand, but unknown to him. He looked at the seal. Engraved on it was the single English word, "Nothing." The letter merely contained these words, "Thank you. Everlasting gratitude in exchange for everlasting forgetfulness." Maurice summoned his domestic (the true patriot never rang, the bell denoted servility; indeed, many officials only entered the service of their masters on this express condition).

The official of Maurice had received, nearly thirty years before, at the baptismal font, the name of John; but in '92 he was, by private authority, rebaptized (John savoring of Aristocracy and Deism), and now called himself "Scævola."

"Scævola," demanded Maurice, "do you know where this letter came from?"

"No, Citizen."

"Who brought it to you?"

"The concierge."

"And who brought it to him?"

"A messenger, no doubt, since it has no post-mark."

"Go down, and request the concierge to walk up."

The concierge complied, because it was Maurice who made the request, and he was much beloved by all the officials with whom he was concerned in any way; but at the same time the concierge declared that had it been any other tenant, he should have asked him to walk down.

The concierge was called Aristide.

Maurice interrogated him. It was a stranger who had brought the letter, about eight in the morning. The young man multiplied his questions, and varied them in every possible shape, but could elicit nothing further.

Maurice requested his acceptance of six francs, also desiring, if this stranger again presented himself, that he would follow him, without appearing to do so, and inform him (Maurice) where he went.

We hasten to say, that, much to the satisfaction of Aristide, who felt himself rather insulted by this proposition, the man returned no more.

Maurice remained alone, crushing the letter with vexation; he drew the ring from his finger, and placed it with the crumpled letter upon the *table-de-nuit*, then turned toward the wall, with the foolish idea of sleeping afresh; but at the end of an hour Maurice, relinquishing his attempted coolness, kissed the ring and re-read the letter. The ring was a splendid sapphire; the letter, as we have said, was a charming little billet, displaying its aristocracy in every line.

As Maurice re-read and examined it, the door opened. Maurice hastily replaced the ring on his finger, and concealed the note under his pillow. Was this the modesty of newly awakened love; or was it the shame of a patriot, who would not wish it to be known that he was in relation with people imprudent enough to write such a billet, of which the perfume alone was sufficient to compromise both the hand that penned it and the hand that received it?

He who entered was a young man attired as a patriot, but a patriot of surpassing elegance. His jacket was composed of fine cloth, his breeches of cashmere, and his stockings of fine striped silk. As to his bonnet, it might have shamed from the elegance of its form and splendid purple color even those of the Trojan Paris himself. Added to all this, he carried in his belt a pair of pistols of the royal manufacture of Versailles, and a short sabre like those of the pupils of Champ-de-Mars.

"Ah! thou sleepest, Brutus," said the new-comer, "and the country is in danger. *Fi, donc!*"

"No, Lorin," said Maurice, laughing, "I do not sleep, I dream."

"Yes, I understand, of Eucharis."

"Well, as for me, I cannot understand."

"Bah!"

"Of whom do you speak? Who is this Eucharis?"

"Why the woman —"

"What woman?"

"The woman of the Rue Saint Honoré, — the woman of the patrol, the unknown, the woman for whom you and I risked our heads last night."

"Oh, yes," said Maurice, who knew perfectly well what his friend would say, and only feigned ignorance, "the unknown."

"Well, who was she?"

"I know nothing about her."

"Was she pretty?"

"Pshaw!" said Maurice, pouting his lips disdainfully.

"A poor woman forgotten in some love adventure.

"Yes; weak creatures that we are,
'T is Love that ever tortures man."

"Possibly," said Maurice, to whom such an idea was at this moment peculiarly repugnant, and who would have much preferred finding the unknown to be even a conspirator rather than a light woman.

"And where does she live?"

"I know nothing concerning her."

"Come, now; you know nothing, that 's impossible!"

"Why so?"

"You escorted her back."

"She escaped from me at the Bridge Marie —"

"Escaped from you!" cried Lorin, with a roar of laughter; "a woman escape from you!

"Say, can the trembling dove elude
The vulture, — tyrant of the air;
The fawn, on whom the tiger rude
Springs from his solitary lair."

"Lorin," said Maurice, "I wish you would accustom yourself to speak like other people. You annoy me horribly with your atrocious poetry."

"To speak like other people, indeed! Now, it appears to me I speak better than most people. I speak as the Citizen Demoustier, both in prose and poetry. As for my poetry, *mon cher*, I know a certain Emilie who does not consider it so bad. But to return to yours."

"My poetry!"

"No; your Emilie."

"Have I an Emilie?"

"Ah, ah! your gazelle may have turned tigress, and shown her teeth in a manner that may not have pleased you, although in love."

"I in love?" said Maurice, shaking his head.

"Yes, you in love.

"Deadly are the bolts of Jove,
But deadlier far the shafts of love."

"Lorin," said Maurice, arming himself with a pipe-key which lay upon the table; "I swear that if you will spout verses I will whistle."

"Then let us talk politics; besides, that brought me here. Have you heard the news?"

"I know that Widow Capet wished to escape."

"Oh, that is nothing!"

"What more is there, then?"

"The famous Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is in Paris!"

"Is that true?" said Maurice, raising himself to a sitting posture. "When did he come?"

"Yesterday evening."

"But how?"

"Disguised as a chasseur of the National Guard. A woman who is thought to be an aristocrat, disguised as a woman of the people, took him the clothes to the barrier gate; an instant afterward they came in arm-in-arm. It was not till after they had passed that the suspicion of the sentinel was excited. He had seen the woman pass with a bundle and repass accompanied by a soldier, when it suddenly struck him something was wrong, and he ran after them. They had disappeared in a hôtel of the Rue Saint Honoré, where the door was opened as if by magic. The hôtel had a second point of egress, leading on to the Champs Elysées. *Bon soir* to the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge and his companion; they had both vanished. Our rulers will demolish the hôtel and guillotine the proprietor, but that will not deter the chevalier from renewing the attempt which has hitherto failed; it is four months since his first failure, and yesterday was his second."

"Is he not arrested?" demanded Maurice.

"Ah! well. Yes, *mon cher*, as well attempt to stop Proteus, arrest Proteus; you know the trouble Aristæus had to accomplish it, —

"'Pastor Aristæus, fugiens Peneïa Tempe.'"

"Take care," said Maurice, carrying the key to his mouth.

"Take care yourself, for this time you will not whistle at me, but at Virgil."

"That is very true, and as long as you do not translate him I have nothing to say. Now, to return to the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"We agree that he is a brave man."

"The fact is, that to undertake such things he must possess immense courage."

"Or intense adoration."

"Do you believe, then, in the love of the chevalier for the queen?"

"I do not believe it. I only mention what report says. Besides, she has turned the brains of so many others, that this would not be at all surprising. She has seduced Barnave, they say."

"Never mind; the chevalier must have had confederates even in the Temple."

"Very possibly, —

"Love breaks through bars,
And laughs at bolts."

"Lorin!"

"Ah! it is true."

"Then you think like the rest?"

"Why not?"

"Because according to your account the queen must have had already two hundred lovers."

"Two, three, four hundred. She is quite handsome enough for that. I do not say that she loves them; but in short, they love her. All the world beholds the sun, but the sun does not see all the world."

"You say, then, that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge —"

"I say they are on his track at this moment, and if he escapes this time the bloodhounds of the Republic, he will be a cunning fox."

"And what does the Commune in all this affair?"

"The Commune is about to issue a decree, by which every house (like an open register) must display on the front the name of every inhabitant, both male and female.

This is realizing the dream of the ancients, — why should there not be a window in every breast, that all the world may see what passes there?"

"An excellent idea that," said Maurice.

"To place windows in men's breasts?"

"No; but to place a list of names on every door."

Maurice felt, in fact, that this might be the means of assisting him to discover the unknown, or at least afford him some clew whereby he might be able to trace her.

"Is it not so?" said Lorin. "I have already betted this measure will secure us a batch of five hundred aristocrats. By the bye, we have received this morning, at our club, a deputation of enrolled Volunteers; they arrived conducted by our adversaries of last night, whom I had not abandoned till dead drunk, — they came, I tell you, with garlands of flowers and immortal crowns."

"Indeed," replied Maurice, laughing; "and how many were there?"

"They were thirty, and were shaved, wearing bouquets in their button-holes.

"'Citizens of the Club of Thermopyles,' said the orator, 'as true patriots, we wish the union of Frenchmen not to be interrupted by any misunderstanding; we therefore come to fraternize with you anew.'"

"Well, what then?"

"Then we again fraternized, and in this reiteration, as Diafoirus expresses himself, we raised an altar to the country, with the table of the secretary and two carafes in which the nosegays were deposited. As you were the hero of the feat, you were three times summoned to appear, that you might be crowned; but as you did not reply, seeing you were not present, and it was necessary to crown something, they crowned the bust of Washington. This was the order of the ceremony."

As Lorin concluded this statement, which at this epoch had nothing of burlesque, a noise was heard proceeding from the street; and drums, first heard in the distance, now approached nearer and nearer. This, at that period, was the common way of issuing general orders.

"What is all that?" said Maurice.

"The proclamation of the decree of the Commune," said Lorin.

"I will run to the station," said Maurice, leaping from his bed, and calling his servant to assist him.

"I will return home and go to bed," said Lorin. "I had not two hours' sleep last night, thanks to those outrageous Volunteers. If they only fight a little, let me sleep; but if they fight much, come and fetch me."

"But why are you so smart to-day?" said Maurice, eyeing him all over as he rose to withdraw.

"Because on my way here I am obliged to pass the 'Rue Bethisy,' and in the Rue Bethisy, on the third flat, is a window which always opens when I pass."

"Then you do not fear being taken for a fop?"

"I a fop! I am, on the contrary, known for a French sans-culotte. But one must make some sacrifice to the softer sex. The worship of the country does not exclude that of love; indeed, one commands the other:—

"Our Republicans profess
We should follow ancient lore;
Beauty we prize none the less,
That we love our freedom more."

Dare to whistle to that, and I denounce you as an aristocrat. Adieu, *mon ami.*"

Lorin held out his hand to Maurice, which the young secretary cordially shook, and went out thinking of a sonnet to Chloris.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT SORT OF MAN THE CITIZEN MAURICE LINDEY WAS.

WHILE Maurice Lindey, having dressed quickly, proceeds to the section of the Rue Lepelletier, of which, as we already know, he was secretary, we will endeavor to lay before the public the antecedents of this young man, introduced upon the scene by one of those impulses so familiar to powerful and generous natures.

The young man had spoken the plain truth the preceding evening, when in reply he had said his name was Maurice Lindey, resident in the Rue du Roule. He might have added he was a child of that half aristocracy accorded to the gentlemen of the robe. His ancestors, for two hundred years, had distinguished themselves by that invariable parliamentary opposition which had rendered so illustrious the names of Molé and Maupeou. His father, honest Lindey, who had passed his life grumbling against despotism, when on the fourteenth of July, '89, the Bastille had fallen by the hands of the people, died from sudden fright and the shock of seeing despotism replaced by a liberty militant, leaving his only son independent in fortune and republican in principle.

The Revolution which had closely followed this great event found Maurice in all the vigor and maturity of manhood befitting a champion about to enter the lists; his republican education improved by his assiduous attendance of the clubs, and by his reading all the pamphlets of that period. God alone knows how many

Maurice had read. Deep and rational contempt for the hierarchy, philosophical consideration of the elements which form the social body, absolute denial of all nobility which is not personal, impartial appreciation of the past, ardor for new ideas, a sympathy with the people which was blended with a belief in aristocratic organizations, — such were the morals, not of the hero we should have chosen, but of him whom the journal from which we draw our facts has given us as the hero of our narrative.

As to his personal appearance, he was in height five feet eight inches, from twenty-five to twenty-six years of age, and muscular as Hercules. His beauty was of the cast characteristic of the Frank, — that is to say, fair complexion, blue eyes, curling chestnut hair, rosy cheeks, and ivory teeth.

After the portrait of the man comes the position of the citizen. Maurice, not rich, but still independent, bore a name much respected, and above all popular. Maurice, known by his liberal education and principles still more liberal than his education, — Maurice placed himself, so to speak, at the head of a party composed of all the young citizen-patriots. It was well that with the sans-culottes he passed for rather lukewarm, and with the sectionaries as rather foppish. But the sans-culottes no longer remembered his lukewarmness when they saw him snap in twain the knotted cudgels, and the sectionaries pardoned his elegance when he one day scientifically planted a blow between two eyes that had been for some time watching him in an offensive manner.

And now for the physical, moral, and civic combined. Maurice had assisted at the taking of the Bastille; he had been on the expedition to Versailles, had fought like a lion on the 10th of August; and in this memorable journey, it is only justice to observe, he had killed as

many patriots as Swiss, — not being more willing to tolerate an assassin in a blouse than an enemy to the Republic in a red coat. It was he who in order to exhort the defenders of the chateau to surrender themselves, and to prevent the shedding of blood, threw himself before the mouth of a cannon which a Parisian artillery-man was about to discharge; it was he who by a window first entered the Louvre, regardless of the firing of five hundred Swiss and as many gentlemen in ambush; and when he perceived the signal of surrender, his avenging sword had already cut through more than ten uniforms. Then, seeing his friends leisurely massacring some prisoners, who having thrown down their arms and clasping their hands supplicated for life, he furiously attacked these friends, which gained for him a reputation worthy of the good days of Rome and of Greece. War declared, Maurice enrolled himself, and departed for the frontier in the rank of lieutenant, with the first 1500 volunteers the city sent against the invaders, which volunteers were each day to be followed by 1500 others.

At the first battle in which he assisted — that is to say at Jemappes — he was struck by a ball, which after having divided the muscles of his shoulder lodged against the bone. The representative of the people knew Maurice, and sent him back to Paris for surgical treatment.

For a whole month, consumed by fever, he tossed upon his bed of suffering; but in January was able to resume his command, if not by name, at least in fact, of the club of Thermopyles, — that is to say of one hundred young men of the Parisian citizens, armed to oppose any attempt in favor of the tyrant Capet. And yet more, Maurice, with contracted brows, dilated eyes, and pale face, his heart filled with a strange mixture of moral hatred and physical pity, assisted, sword in hand, at the execution of the

king, and perhaps he alone of all that throng remained silent when the head of the son of Saint Louis fell on the scaffold; and then Maurice only raised on high his redoubtable sabre, while his friends, loudly shouting *Vive la liberté*, omitted to notice that on this occasion at least one voice did not unite itself with their own.

This was the individual who on the morning of the 14th of March bent his steps toward the Rue Lepelletier, and of whose stormy career our history will furnish further details.

Toward 10 o'clock, Maurice reached the section of which he was the secretary. The commotion was great. The question in agitation was, to vote an address to the Convention in order to repress the conspiracies of the Girondins. They impatiently awaited the arrival of Maurice.

The only subject talked about was the return of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, the audacity with which this arch-conspirator had for the second time entered Paris, where he well knew a price was now fixed on his head.

To this circumstance was attributed the attempt made the preceding evening on the Temple, and each one expressed his hatred and indignation against the traitors and aristocrats.

Contrary to the general expectation, Maurice appeared preoccupied and silent, wrote down the proclamation, finished his employment in three hours, demanded if the sitting had terminated, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, took his hat, and proceeded toward the Rue Saint Honoré.

Arrived there, Paris appeared quite different to him. He revisited the corner of the Rue du Coq, where during the night he had first seen the lovely unknown struggling

in the hands of soldiers. Thence he proceeded to the Bridge Marie, the same road he had travelled by her side, stopping where the different patrols had stopped them, repeating in the same places (as if they had preserved an echo of their words) the sentences exchanged between them; only it was now one o'clock in the afternoon, and the sun, shining brilliantly upon this walk, reminded him at every step of the occurrences of the past night.

Maurice crossed the bridges, and entered directly the Rue Victor, as it was then called.

"Poor woman," murmured Maurice, "she did not reflect yesterday that the duration of the night was only twelve hours, and that her secret would not in all probability last longer than the night. By the light of the sun, I will endeavor to find the door through which she vanished, and who knows but I may perhaps even see her at a window?"

He then entered the old Rue Saint Jacques, and placed himself in the same spot as the unknown had placed him on the preceding evening. For an instant he closed his eyes, perhaps foolishly expecting the kiss he had then received would again impress his lips. But he felt nothing but the remembrance; 't is true that burned yet.

Maurice opened his eyes and saw two little streets, one to the right, the other to the left. They were muddy, dirty, and badly paved, furnished with barriers, cut by little bridges thrown over a kennel. There might be seen the beams of arches, nooks, corners, and twenty doors propped up, fast falling into decay. Here was hard labor in all its misery, here was misery in all its hideousness. Here and there was a garden enclosed by a fence, others by palisades of poles, some by walls;

skins were hanging in the out-houses, diffusing around that disgusting odor always arising from a tanyard.

Maurice's search lasted for nearly two hours, during which he found nothing, and divined nothing, and ten times he had retraced his steps to consider where he was. But all his efforts were in vain, his search was a fruitless one, as all trace of the young woman seemed to have been effaced by the fog and rain of the previous night.

"Truly," said Maurice, "I must be in a dream. This filthy place could not for an instant have afforded refuge for my beautiful fairy of last night."

There was, in this wild Republican, more real poetry than in his friend of the Anacreontic quatrains, since he clung to this idea, fearful to sully, even in thought, the spotless purity of the unknown. But all hope had now forsaken him.

"Adieu," said he; "mysterious beauty, you have treated me like a child and a fool. Would she have led me here if she really lived in this wretched locality? No; she would only pass as a swan over the infected marsh, and like a bird in the air leave no trace behind."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TEMPLE.

THE same day and the same hour, when Maurice, disappointed and unhappy, repassed the Bridge de la Tournelle, several municipals, accompanied by Santerre, Commandant of the Parisian National Guard, made a visit of inquiry to the Temple, which had been transformed into a prison, since the 13th of August, 1793.

The visit was made especially to a portion of the third story, consisting of an antechamber and three rooms. One of these chambers was occupied by two females, a young girl, and a child of nine years old, all dressed in mourning. The elder of the females was about seven or eight and thirty. She was seated at a table reading.

The second, whose age appeared twenty-eight or twenty-nine, was engaged on a piece of tapestry.

The young girl, who was about fourteen, was seated near the child, who, ill and in bed, closed his eyes as if asleep, although that was utterly impossible, owing to the noise made by the municipals. While some moved the beds, others examined their clothes and linen; the rest, when their search was concluded, remained rudely staring at the unfortunate prisoners, who never even raised their eyes, — the one from her book, the other from her embroidery, and the third from her brother.

The eldest of these women was tall, handsome, and very pale. She appeared to concentrate all her attention on her book, although in all probability her eyes read, but

not her mind. One of the municipals approached her, brutally snatched away her book, and flung it into the middle of the room. The prisoner stretched her hand across the table, took up another book, and continued to read.

The Montagnard made a furious gesture, as if he would take away the second, as he had the first; but at this attempt, which startled the prisoner at her embroidery near the window, the young girl sprang forward, and encircling the reader's head with her arms, weeping, exclaimed, "My poor mother! my poor mother!" and then embraced her. As she did so the prisoner placed her mouth to her ear, and whispered: "Marie, there is a letter concealed in the stove; remove it."

"Come! come!" said the municipal, brutally dragging the young girl toward him, and separating her from her mother, "shall you soon have finished embracing?"

"Sir," said the girl, "has the Convention decreed that children shall not embrace their mothers?"

"No; but it has decreed that traitors, aristocrats, and *ci-devants* shall be punished. That is why I am here to interrogate you. Answer, Antoinette."

She who was thus grossly accosted did not even deign to look at her examiner, but turned her head aside, while a flush passed over her face, pale with grief and furrowed with tears.

"It is impossible," said he, "that you are ignorant of the attempt last night. Whence came it?"

The prisoners still maintained silence.

"Answer, Antoinette," said Santerre, approaching her, without remarking the almost frenzied horror which had seized the young woman at sight of this man, who, on the morning of the 21st of January, conducted Louis XVI. from the Temple to the scaffold. "Reply. They were

conspiring last night against the Republic, and seeking your escape from the captivity in which you are kept till you receive that punishment of your crimes which the will of the people may inflict upon you. Tell me, do you know who are the conspirators?"

Marie started at the harsh tone of that voice, which she endeavored to fly from by removing her chair to the greatest distance possible, but replied no more to this question than to the former ones, paid no more deference to Santerre than she had done to the municipal.

"You are then determined not to reply?" said Santerre, stamping his foot furiously.

The prisoner took up a third volume from the table, Santerre turned himself away. The brutal power of this man who commanded 80,000 men, who had only need of a gesture to drown the voice of the dying Louis XVI., was defeated by the dignity of a poor prisoner, whose head he could cause to fall, but whose will he could not bend.

"And you, Elizabeth," said he, addressing the other lady, who at that instant ceased from her embroidery to join her hands in prayer, not to these men, but to God, "will you reply?"

"I do not know what you ask," said she; "therefore I cannot reply."

"*Morbleu!* Citizen Capet," said Santerre, impatiently, "I think what I say is sufficiently clear too. I again tell you, that yesterday an attempt was made for your escape; and you certainly must know the culprits."

"Having no communication with those outside, Monsieur, we cannot possibly tell what people do, either for or against us."

"Very well," said the municipal; "we will now hear what your nephew will say."

And he approached the bed of the young dauphin. At this menace, Marie Antoinette suddenly rose.

"Monsieur," said she, "my son is ill, and now asleep — do not wake him."

"Reply then."

"I know nothing."

The municipal walked straight to the bed of the little prisoner, who, as we have said, feigned sleep.

"Come, wake up, Capet," said he, shaking him roughly.

The child opened his eyes and smiled.

The municipals then surrounded his bed.

The queen, agitated with fear and grief, made a sign to her daughter, who, profiting by this moment, glided from the apartment into the room adjoining, opened the mouth of the stove, drew out a letter and burned it; then, re-entering the room, reassured her mother with a glance.

"What do you want with me?" asked the sick child.

"To inquire if you heard nothing during the night?"

"No; I was asleep."

"You are very fond of sleep, it seems."

"Yes; for when I sleep I dream."

"And what do you dream?"

"That I again see my father, whom you killed."

"Then you heard nothing!" said Santerre, quickly.

"Nothing."

"These wolf's cubs are, in truth, well-agreed with the she-wolf," said the municipal, furious with rage. "There has been, notwithstanding, a plot."

The queen smiled.

"She defies us, the Austrian!" cried the municipal. "Well, since it is thus, let us execute in all its rigor the decree of the Commune. Get up, Capet."

"What would you do?" said the queen, forgetting

herself. "Do you not see my son is ill, and suffering from fever? Do you wish to kill him?"

"Your son," said the municipal, "is the cause of constant alarm to the Council of the Temple; he is the point at which all the conspirators aim, and flatter themselves they shall carry you all off together. Well, let them come. Tison — call Tison."

Tison was a species of journeyman, charged with all the heavy household work in the prison. He appeared. He was a man of forty years old, much sunburnt, of a rude and ferocious aspect, with matted black hair overhanging his eyebrows.

"Tison," said Santerre, "who came yesterday to bring the prisoners' food?"

Tison gave the name.

"And their linen, who brought it to them?"

"My daughter."

"Then your daughter is a laundress?"

"Certainly."

"And you gave her the washing of the prisoners?"

"Why not? She might as well gain that as another; it is no longer the tyrant's money, but belongs to the nation, who pays for them."

"You were told to examine the linen with the greatest attention."

"Well, do I ever fail in my duty? In proof of which, they had yesterday a handkerchief tied in two knots. I took it to the Council, who ordered my wife to undo the knots, iron, and return it to Madame Capet, without saying anything about it."

At this remark of two knots being tied in the pocket-handkerchief, the queen trembled, the pupils of her eyes dilated, and she and Madame Elizabeth exchanged hasty glances.

"Tison," said Santerre, "your daughter is a person of whose patriotism no one can entertain a doubt; but when she leaves the Temple to-day she returns there no more."

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" said Tison, terrified, "what are you saying to me? Shall I not see my daughter except when I go out?"

"You shall go out no more," said Santerre.

Tison looked wildly around, without allowing his eye to remain fixed on any particular object, and suddenly exclaimed, "I am not to go out; that is it, is it? Well, then, I will go out altogether. Give me my dismissal. I am neither traitor nor aristocrat, that I should be detained in prison. I tell you I will go out."

"Citizen," said Santerre, "obey the orders of the Commune, and be silent; or I tell you it may be all the worse for you. Remain here and watch all that passes. There is an eye on you. I warn you."

During this time the queen, who thought herself for a moment forgotten, recovered by degrees, and replaced her son in his bed.

"Desire your wife to come up," said the municipal to Tison.

He obeyed without a word. The threats of Santerre had rendered him as meek as a lamb.

Tison's wife came up.

"Come here, Citizen," said Santerre; "we are going into the antechamber; during that time, search all the prisoners."

"Listen, wife," said Tison; "they are not going to permit our daughter to come to the Temple any more."

"What! they will not permit our daughter to come here! Then we shall see her no more?"

Tison mournfully shook his head.

"What do you say to this?"

"I say we shall make a report to the Council of the Temple, and the Council will decide it. In the mean time —"

"In the mean time I will see my daughter again."

"Silence," said Santerre, "you were brought here for the purpose of searching the prisoners; search them, then, and afterward we shall see —"

"But — now —"

"Oh, oh!" said Santerre, knitting his brows, "you are contaminated, it appears to me."

"Do as the Citizen General tells you, wife," Tison said; "afterward, we shall see."

And Tison regarded Santerre with a humble smile.

"Very well," said the woman; "go, then, I am ready to search."

The men went out.

"My dear Madame Tison," said the queen, "you know —"

"I only know, Citizen Capet," said the horrible woman, gnashing her teeth, "that you are the cause of all the misery of the people; and also that I have reason to suspect you, and you know it."

Four men waited at the door, to assist Tison's wife, if the queen offered any resistance.

The search commenced on the queen.

There was found on her person a handkerchief tied in three knots, which unfortunately appeared a reply to the one spoken of by Tison; a pencil, a scapulary, and some sealing-wax.

"Ah! I knew it," said Tison's wife; "I have often told the municipals she wrote, the Austrian! The other day I found a lump of sealing-wax in the socket of the candlestick."

"Ah, Madame," said the queen, in a supplicating tone, "only show the scapulary, I entreat you."

"Yes," said the woman, "I feel pity for you, who have felt so much pity for me to take my daughter from me."

Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale had nothing found upon them.

The woman Tison recalled the municipals, who entered, Santerre at their head. She showed them the articles found upon the queen, which, as they passed from hand to hand, afforded subject for an infinite variety of conjectures; but the handkerchief tied in three knots excited, above all, the imagination of these persecutors of the royal race.

"Now," said Santerre, "we are going to read the decree of the Convention to you."

"What decree?" demanded the queen.

"The decree which orders you to be separated from your son."

"Is it, then, true that this decree exists?"

"Yes; the Convention has too much regard for the health of a child confided to its guardianship, to leave him in the care of a mother so depraved."

The eyes of the queen flashed lightning.

"But make some accusation at least, tigers that you are."

"That is not at all difficult," said a municipal; and he pronounced one of those infamous accusations brought by Suetonius against Agrippine.

"Oh!" cried the queen, standing, pale with indignation, "I appeal from it to the heart of every mother."

"That is all very fine," said a municipal; "but we have already been here two hours, and cannot lose the whole day. Get up, Capet, and follow us."

"Never, never!" cried the queen, rushing between

the municipals and the young Louis, and preparing to defend the approach to his bed, as a tigress the entrance to her den. "Never will I permit you to carry away my child!"

"Oh, Messieurs," said Madame Elizabeth, clasping her hands in the most touching attitude of prayer, "Messieurs, in the name of Heaven, have pity on us two mothers."

"Then speak," said Santerre; "state the names, avow the project of your accomplices; explain what they wished to intimate by the knots made in the pocket-handkerchief brought with your linen by Tison's daughter, and the meaning of those tied in the handkerchief found in your pocket, and on these conditions I will leave you your child."

A look from Madame Elizabeth seemed to implore the queen to submit to this dreadful sacrifice.

But quietly brushing from her eye a tear which sparkled like a diamond, "Adieu, my son!" cried she; "never forget your father who is in heaven, or your mother who will soon join him there, and never omit to repeat morning and evening the prayer I have taught you. Adieu! my son."

She gave him a last kiss; then rising calm and inflexible, "I know nothing, Messieurs," said she, "do as you please."

But the queen must have required more fortitude than is contained in the heart of a woman, and above all of a mother. She fell back fainting upon a chair, while they carried away the child, who with fast flowing tears held out his arms, but uttered not a single word or cry.

The door closed behind the municipals who carried away the royal child, and the three women remained alone. There was for a moment the deep silence of despair, interrupted only by occasional sobs.

The queen first broke silence.

"My daughter," said she, "that letter?"

"I burned it, as you desired me, mother."

"Without reading it?"

"Without reading it."

"Adieu, then, to the last ray of hope, divine hope!" murmured Madame Elizabeth.

"You are right, my sister, you are right; it is almost beyond endurance." Then turning toward her daughter, "But you at least saw the handwriting, Marie?"

"Yes, mother, for a moment."

The queen rose, went to the door to make sure she was not observed; then drawing a pin from her hair, approached the wall, and from a chink drew out a small paper folded like a letter, and showing it to Madame Royale, "collect your thoughts before you reply, my child," said she; "was the writing the same as this?"

"Yes, yes, mother!" cried the princess; "I recognize it!"

"God be praised, then!" cried the queen, falling with fervor on her knees. "If he could write since this morning, he is safe. Thanks, O God! thanks! So noble a friend deserves thy miraculous preservation."

"Of whom do you speak, mother?" demanded Madame Royale. "Who is this friend? Tell me his name, that I may recommend him to God in my prayers."

"You are right, my child; never forget it. This name, for it is the name of a gentleman replete with honor and courage, one not devoted to us through ambition, for he has only revealed himself since our misfortunes. He has never seen the queen of France, or rather the queen of France has never seen him, and he devotes his life to her defence. Perhaps he will be recompensed as all virtue is now recompensed, by a dreadful death. But — if he

dies. — Oh! I shall still think of him in heaven. He is called — "

The queen looked uneasily around, then lowering her voice, "He is called the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. Pray for him."

CHAPTER VII.

THE OATH OF THE GAMESTER.

THE attempted abduction however doubtful might be the fact, since if it had any reality it had failed in its very commencement, had excited the anger of some, and the interest of others. What afforded strong probability to the existence of such a project was the fact that the Committee for General Security learned that three weeks, or a month before, a number of emigrants had entered France from different parts of the frontier. It was evident that these people who thus risked their lives did not do so without design, and this design was in all probability to co-operate in carrying off the royal family.

Already, upon the proposition of the Conventionalist Usselin, the terrible decree had been promulgated, which condemned to death all emigrants convicted of having returned to France; all Frenchmen convicted of having intended to emigrate; every individual convicted of having assisted in their flight, or in their return, either a female or male emigrant; and lastly, all citizens convicted of having afforded shelter to an emigrant. With this dreadful law commenced the "Reign of Terror." All that was wanting was the law for suspected persons. The Chevalier de Maison-Rouge was an enemy far too active and audacious for his return to Paris, and his appearance in the Temple, not to call forth the gravest measures. More severe inspections than had previously taken place were made in a number of suspected houses; but with the

exception of some female emigrants who allowed themselves to be taken, and some old men who did not care enough for their few remaining days to dispute with the executioner, their researches produced no other result.

The sections, as may be imagined, were after this event much occupied for several days, and consequently the secretary of the section Lepelletier, one of the most influential in Paris, had little time to think of his unknown fair one. At first, as he had resolved on quitting the old Rue Saint Jacques, he had tried to forget her, but, as his friend Lorin had observed to him, —

> " Alas ! endeavoring to forget
> But makes us recollect the more."

Maurice, however, neither said nor confessed anything. He buried in his heart all the details of that adventure which he had been able to conceal from the scrutiny of his friend. But Lorin, who knew Maurice to be of a joyous and hilarious nature, and now saw him constantly sad and thoughtful, seeking solitude, doubted not, to use his own expression, that the rogue Cupid had passed that way. It is remarkable, that, during its eighteen centuries of monarchy, France had had few years so mythological as the year of our Lord 1793.

In the mean time the chevalier was not taken, and he was no more spoken of. The widowed queen, cruelly robbed of her child, contented herself by weeping, in company with her sister and daughter. The young dauphin was consigned to the care of " Simon the Shoemaker," and entered upon that course of martyrdom which, in the short space of two years, was to reunite him with his father and mother. There was a moment's calm. The Montagnard volcano rested before devouring the Girondins.

Maurice felt the weight of this calm, as the heaviness of the atmosphere is felt in stormy weather, and not knowing how to dispose of his leisure, abandoned himself entirely to the ardor of a sentiment which if not actually love itself bordered closely upon it. He re-read his letter, again kissed his beautiful sapphire ring, and resolved (notwithstanding his oath) to make one more attempt, promising himself this should indeed be the last. The young man had first thought he would go to the section of the Jardin des Plantes, and there make inquiry from the secretary, his colleague. But the first idea (and we may add, which he still retained) that the beautiful unknown was mixed up in some political plot, still restrained him, as the thought that any indiscretion on his part might be the means of sending this lovely woman to the Place de la Revolution, and her head to the block, caused his blood to curdle and freeze in his veins. He therefore determined on seeking this adventure alone, and without any further information.

His plan, besides, was very simple. The catalogue of names inscribed on each door would certainly afford him some clew, and then by interrogating the porters he might be able to solve the mystery. In his capacity of secretary of the Rue Lepelletier, he possessed full and entire right to make all inquiries. Besides, Maurice, ignorant of the name of the unknown, was able to judge of it by analogy. It was impossible so lovely a creature should not possess a name in harmony with her form, some name appertaining to sylph, fairy, or angel, since her arrival on earth must have heen hailed as that of a superior and supernatural being. This name would then most infallibly guide him.

Maurice then dressed himself in a coat of dark brown cloth, adorned his head with the *bonnet-rouge* worn on

great occasions, and set out on his voyage of discovery alone. He had in his hand one of those knotted cudgels called a *constitution*, which wielded by his vigorous hand was powerful as the club of Hercules, and in his pocket he placed his commission as secretary of the section Lepelletier. These were at once his physical security and his moral guarantee.

He prepared himself to review afresh the Rue Saint Victor, the old Rue Saint Jacques, reading by the light of the declining day all those names (inscribed by hands more or less practised) upon the panels of every door.

Maurice had reached the hundredth house, and consequently read the hundredth list, and nothing had yet occurred to induce him to imagine that he was in the least degree upon the trail of the unknown, as he had fully made up his mind that no name could be hers which did not belong to the class he had imagined, when a good-natured shoemaker, noticing the anxiety and impatience depicted on the young man's countenance, came out with his strap of leather and his punch, and looking at Maurice over his spectacles, —

"Do you wish any information respecting the tenants of this house, Citizen?" said he; "if so, I shall be happy to give it to you."

"Thanks, Citizen," stammered Maurice; "I am looking for the name of a friend."

"Tell me the name, Citizen; I know everybody in this quarter. Where does this friend live?"

"He lived, I think, in the old Rue Saint Jacques; but I fear he has removed."

"But how is he named? I must know that."

Maurice taken thus unawares hesitated for a moment, then pronounced the first name that presented itself to his memory.

"René," said he.

"And what trade?"

Maurice was surrounded by tanneries.

"A journeyman-tanner," said he.

"In that case," said a burgess, who stopped and regarded Maurice with a certain good-nature, not totally exempt from distrust, "you should address yourself to his master."

"That is true," said the door-keeper; "you are quite right, the masters know the names of their workmen; here is Citizen Dixmer, who is manager of a tannery, and has more than fifty workmen in his yard, he can perhaps tell you." Maurice turned round and saw a burgess of commanding figure and mild countenance, the richness of whose attire denoted opulence.

"Only as the citizen porter observes, it is necessary I should know the family name."

"The one I said, — René."

"René is his baptismal name; it is the family name I require. All my workmen sign their family name."

"Upon my word," said Maurice, growing impatient under this species of interrogation, "the family name? I do not know it."

"What," said the burgess, with a smile, in which Maurice thought he discerned more irony than he wished to appear, — "what, not know the surname of your friend!"

"No."

"In that case, it is not probable you will find him," and the burgess, gravely bowing to Maurice, walked a short distance and entered a house in the old Rue Saint Jacques.

"The fact is, that if you do not know his surname," said the porter —

"Well, I do not know it," said Maurice, who would not have been sorry to find some occasion to vent his ill-temper, and was at the moment much inclined to seek a quarrel. "What have you to say to that?"

"Nothing, Citizen, nothing at all; only since you do not know the name of your friend, it is as Citizen Dixmer said more than probable you will not find him," and the citizen porter went into his lodge, shrugging his shoulders. Maurice felt a great inclination to thrash this porter, but he was an old man, and his infirmities saved him. Had the porter been twenty years younger, Maurice would have given a scandalous illustration of the principle, — equal in law, unequal in physical force. Besides, the day was drawing to a close, and he had only a few moments of daylight left. He availed himself of it by returning to the first street, then to the second, examined every door, searched in every nook, looked under every palisade, climbed each wall, threw a glance into the interior of every gateway, looked through the keyholes, knocked at some deserted warehouses without receiving any reply, till at length nearly two hours had elapsed in this useless investigation.

Nine o'clock struck; no more noise was heard, no movement seen in this deserted quarter, whose life seemed to have retired with the light of day. Maurice in despair made a retrograde movement, when all at once, at the winding of a narrow alley, he discerned a light. He immediately ventured into the dark passage, without remarking that at that very moment a curious head, which for the last quarter of an hour (from the midst of a clump of trees, rising above the wall) had followed all his movements, then disappeared suddenly behind this wall. A short time after this head had disappeared, three men came out from a small door in this same wall, went into

the alley where Maurice had preceded them, while a fourth, for greater security, locked the door of entrance into the alley. At the end of the alley, Maurice discovered a court; it was on the opposite side of this court that the light was burning. He knocked at the door of a poor, solitary house, but at the first sound the light was extinguished. He redoubled his efforts, but no one answered his call; he saw they were determined to make no reply, so comprehending that it was only a useless waste of time, he crossed the court and re-entered the alley. At this moment the door of the house turned softly on its hinges, three men came out, and then the sound of a whistle was heard.

Maurice turned round, and saw three shadows within a short distance. He saw in the darkness also (his eyes having become accustomed to this obscurity) the reflection of three glittering blades. He knew that he was hemmed in. He would have brandished his club, but the alley was so narrow that it touched the wall on either side. At the same moment he was stunned by a violent blow on the head. This was an unforeseen assault made upon him by the four men who entered through the door in the wall. Seven men at the same time threw themselves upon Maurice, and notwithstanding a desperate resistance, overpowered him, and succeeded in binding his hands and bandaging his eyes.

Maurice had not even uttered a cry, or called for aid. Strength and true courage are self-reliant, and are ashamed of extraneous aid. Besides, Maurice had often heard that no one would enter this deserted quarter. Maurice was thus, as we have said, thrown down and bound, but had not uttered a single complaint. He had reflected as to what would follow, — that as they had bandaged his eyes they did not intend to kill him directly. At Maurice's

age respite becomes hope. He recovered his presence of mind, and listened patiently.

"Who are you?" demanded a voice, still breathless from the late struggle.

"I am a man they are murdering," replied Maurice.

"What is more, you are a dead man if you speak loud, or call for assistance, or even utter the least cry."

"If I had wished to cry, I need not have waited till now."

"Are you ready to answer my questions?"

"Let me hear them first; I shall then see whether I ought to reply."

"Who sent you here?"

"No one."

"You came then of your own accord?"

"Yes."

"You lie!"

Maurice made a desperate effort to disengage his hands, but it was in vain.

"I never lie," said he.

"In either case, whether you came of your own accord or were sent, you are a spy."

"And you are cowards!"

"We cowards!"

"You are seven or eight against one man bound, and you insult that man. Cowards! cowards! cowards!"

This violence on the part of Maurice, instead of enraging his adversaries, appeared to produce a contrary effect. It was even a proof that the young man was not what they had laid to his charge; a true spy would have trembled, and begged for mercy.

"There is nothing insulting in that," said a voice, milder yet firmer than any that had previously been

heard; "in the times we live in, one may be a spy without being a dishonest man, only it is at the risk of one's life."

"If that is your opinion, you are welcome to question me, I will answer you faithfully."

"What are you doing in this quarter?"

"Looking for a woman."

This excuse was received with a murmur of incredulity; the murmur increased and became a storm.

"You lie!" replied the same voice. "There is no woman in the matter, and we know what we mean by 'woman;' there is no woman to pursue in this quarter. Avow your project, or die."

"Come," said Maurice, "you will not kill me for pleasure, unless you are downright ruffians."

Maurice made a second effort, more violent and unexpected than the first, to disengage his hands from the cord which bound them, when suddenly a cold sensation, sharp and painful, shot through his breast.

Despite himself, Maurice fell back a step.

"Ah! you felt that," said one of the men. "Well, there are eight inches like the inch with which you have just become acquainted."

"Complete your work, then," said Maurice, resignedly; "it will at least soon be over."

"Come now, who are you?" asked the voice which was at once mild and commanding.

"Do you wish to know my name?"

"Yes, your name."

"Maurice Lindey."

"What!" exclaimed a voice, "Maurice Lindey, the revolu — the patriot? Maurice Lindey, secretary of the Lepelletier section?"

These words were pronounced with so much heat that Maurice saw clearly that they were decisive. To reply was in a manner to fix irrevocably his fate.

Maurice was incapable of cowardice. He drew himself up like a Spartan, and said in a firm voice, —

"Yes, Maurice Lindey; yes, Maurice Lindey, the secretary of the section Lepelletier; yes, Maurice Lindey, the patriot, the revolutionist, the Jacobin; Maurice Lindey, in short, whose brightest day on earth will be that on which he will die for liberty."

A death-like silence followed this reply.

Maurice presented his breast, expecting every moment that the blade, whose point he had already felt, would be plunged into his heart.

"Is your statement really true?" asked a voice which betrayed some emotion; "come, young man, do not lie."

"Search my pocket," said Maurice, "and you will find my commission. Look at my shirt-bosom, and if my blood has not effaced them, you will there see embroidered my initials, *M* and *L*."

Maurice at once felt himself lifted by strong arms which bore him a short distance. He heard first one door open, then another; but the second was narrower than the first, for his bearers could scarcely pass through with him.

The murmurs and whispers continued.

"I am lost," thought Maurice. "They are going to tie a stone round my neck and throw me into some hole of the Bièvre."

But in another moment he felt that the men ascended some steps, where the air was warmer, and where they placed him on a seat. He heard a double door shut and

the steps withdraw. He believed that he was left alone. He listened as intently as a man can whose life depends upon a word, and he believed that he heard that same voice whose tones had already struck him as mixing mildness with command, say to the others, —

"Let us deliberate."

CHAPTER VIII.

GENEVIÈVE.

A QUARTER of an hour elapsed, which seemed a century to Maurice. Nothing more natural; young, handsome, vigorous, supported in his strength by a hundred devoted friends, in combination with whom he sometimes dreamed of the accomplishment of great achievements, he found himself all at once without the least preparation in peril of losing his life in an ignominious den of assassins.

He understood that they had shut him up in some chamber; but was he watched?

Again he struggled to break his bonds. His muscles of steel swelled and contracted; the cord cut into his flesh, but did not break.

The most terrible thing was that his hands were fastened behind his back so that he could not remove the bandage from his eyes. If he could only see, he might escape.

As he had made these attempts to free himself without opposition, without anything stirring around him, he concluded that he was alone. The ground under his feet was soft and soundless, might be gravel or perhaps clay. An acrid and pungent smell announced the presence of vegetable matter. Maurice fancied he was in a greenhouse, or some place very like it. He took a step or two, hit the wall, turned, and groping with his hands, felt some garden-tools. He uttered an exclamation of joy.

With unparalleled exertion he examined these tools, one after the other. His flight now became a question of time. If chance, or Providence, granted him five minutes, and if among these tools he found a sharp instrument, he was saved.

He found a spade. From the way in which Maurice was bound, it required a great struggle to raise the spade a sufficient height for his purpose. He at length succeeded, and upon the iron of the spade which he supported against the wall with his back, he at last cut, or rather wore away, the cord which confined his wrists. The operation was tedious, the iron cut slowly. The perspiration streamed from his face; he heard a noise as of some one approaching; with a tremendous effort the cord, half-severed, broke. He could not help giving a cry of joy; now at least he was sure to die in defending himself.

Maurice tore the bandage from his eyes.

He had not been mistaken; he found himself not in a greenhouse, but in a kind of pavilion used as a receptacle for the more delicate plants unable to outlive the winter in the open air. In a corner the gardening implements were stowed away, one of which had been the means of rendering him so important a service. Facing him was a window; he rushed toward it; it was grated, and a man armed with a carbine placed sentinel before it.

On the other side of the garden, about thirty paces distant, rose a small turret, fellow to the one where Maurice remained prisoner. The blind was down, but through the blind a light was visible.

He approached the door and listened; another sentinel paced to and fro before this door. These were the footsteps he had heard.

But from the end of the corridor a confusion of voices resounded. The deliberation had evidently degenerated into disputation. Maurice could not hear distinctly what was said; some words, however, reached him, and amid these words — as if for them only the distance was short — he distinguished plainly, Spy! Poniard! Death!

Maurice redoubled his attention; a door opened, and he heard more distinctly.

"Yes," said one voice, "he is assuredly a spy; he has discovered something, and is certainly sent to take us and our secret unawares. In freeing him we run the risk of his denouncing us."

"But his word," said a voice.

"His word — he will give it only to betray us. Is he a gentleman that we should trust his word?"

Maurice ground his teeth at the idea which some folks still retained, that only a gentleman could keep his oath.

"But he does not know us; how can he denounce us?"

"No; he certainly does not know us nor our occupation, but he knows the address, and will return; next time he will be well accompanied."

This argument appeared conclusive.

"Then," said the voice which several times already had struck Maurice as belonging to the chief, "it is decided."

"Yes, a hundred times yes; I do not comprehend you with your magnanimity. My good sir, if the Committee for the Public Safety caught us, you would see if they acted toward us with so much ceremony."

"You persist, then, in your decision, gentlemen?"

"Without doubt, and you are not, we hope, going to oppose it."

"I have only one voice, gentlemen; it has been in favor of his liberation: you possess six, and they all vote for his death. Let it, then, be death."

Maurice felt the blood freeze in his veins.

"Of course he will howl," said a voice; "have you removed Madame Dixmer?"

"Madame Dixmer!" murmured Maurice; "I begin now to comprehend. I am in the house of the master-tanner who spoke to me in the old Rue Saint Jacques, and who went away laughing because I was unable to tell him the name of my friend. But how can it be to his interest to assassinate me?"

Looking round, Maurice perceived an iron stake with a handle of ash-tree wood.

"In any case," said he, "before they assassinate me, I will kill more than one of them."

And he sprang to secure this harmless instrument, which, in his hand, was to become a formidable weapon. He then retired behind the door, and so placed himself that he could see without being seen. His heart beat so tumultuously that in the deep silence its palpitations might be heard. Suddenly Maurice shuddered from head to foot. A voice had said, —

"If you act according to my advice, you will break a pane, and through the bars kill him with a shot from a carbine."

"Oh, no, no! — not an explosion," said another voice, "that might betray us. Besides, Dixmer, there is your wife."

"I have just looked at her through the blind; she suspects nothing — she is reading."

"Dixmer, you shall decide for us. Do you advocate a shot from the carbine, or a stroke from the poniard?"

"Avoid fire-arms as much as possible — the poniard."

"Then let it be the poniard. Come!"

"Come!" repeated five or six voices, together.

Maurice was a child of the Revolution, with a heart of flint, and in mind, like many others at that epoch, an atheist. But at the word "Come!" pronounced behind the door, which alone separated him from death, he remembered the sign of the cross, which his mother had taught him when an infant he said his prayers at her knee.

Steps approached, stopped; then the key turned in the lock, and the door slowly opened.

During this fleeting moment, Maurice had said to himself, —

"If I do not strike at once, I am a dead man. If I throw myself upon the assassins, I take them unawares — gain first the garden, then the street, and am saved!"

Immediately, with the spring of a lion, and uttering a fierce cry which savored more of menace than terror, he threw down the first two men, who believing him bound and blindfolded were quite unprepared for such an assault, scattered the others, took a tremendous leap over them, thanks to his iron muscles, saw at the end of the corridor a door leading into the garden wide open, rushed toward it, cleared at a bound six steps, found himself in the garden, and guessing his whereabouts as nearly as possible, rushed toward the gate. It was secured by a lock and a couple of bolts. Maurice drew back the bolts, tried to open the lock; but it had no key.

In the mean time his pursuers, who had reached the steps, perceived him.

"There he is!" cried they; "fire upon him, Dixmer, fire! Kill him — kill him!"

Maurice uttered a groan; he was enclosed in the

garden; he measured the walls with his eye — they were ten feet in height.

All this passed in a moment. The assassins rushed forward in pursuit.

Maurice was about thirty paces in advance; he looked about him with the air of a condemned man who seeks the shadow of a chance to save himself. He perceived the turret, the blind, and behind the blind the light.

He made but one bound, — a bound of six feet, — seized the blind, tore it down, passed through the window, smashing it, and alighted in a chamber where a lady sat reading.

The lady rose terrified, calling for help.

"Stand aside, Geneviève; stand aside!" cried the voice of Dixmer, "stand aside that I may kill him!"

And Maurice saw the carbine levelled at him.

But scarcely had the woman looked at him than she uttered a frightful cry, and instead of standing aside, as desired by her husband, rushed between him and the barrel of the gun.

This movement concentrated all Maurice's attention on the generous woman, whose first impulse was to protect him from danger and death.

In his turn he uttered a cry of astonishment.

It was the unknown whom he had so eagerly sought.

"You!" he exclaimed, "you —"

"Silence!" cried she.

Then, turning toward the assassins, who, variously armed, approached the window, —

"Ah! you will not kill him!" cried she.

"He is a spy," said Dixmer, whose usually placid countenance had assumed an expression of stern resolution, — "he is a spy, and therefore must die."

"A spy — he!" said Geneviève; "he a spy! Come

here, Dixmer; I need only say one word to prove that you are strangely deceived."

Dixmer and Geneviève approached the window, and in a low voice she uttered a few words.

The master-tanner raised his head quickly.

"He!" said he.

"He himself," said Geneviève.

"You are certain, quite certain?"

This time the young woman did not reply, but smiling held out her hand to Maurice.

The features of Dixmer now assumed a singular expression of coolness and gentleness. He rested the butt-end of his musket on the ground.

"This is quite another thing," said he.

Then making a sign to his companions to follow, he stepped aside with them, and after saying a few words, they disappeared.

"Conceal that ring," murmured Geneviève; "it is known by every one here."

Maurice quickly drew the ring from his finger, and slipped it into his waistcoat-pocket.

A moment afterward the door of the pavilion opened, and Dixmer, unarmed, advanced toward Maurice.

"Pardon me, Citizen," said he, "that I did not know sooner the obligation I am under to you. My wife, while retaining a grateful remembrance of the service you rendered her on the 10th of March, had forgotten your name. We were therefore completely in ignorance with whom we were concerned; otherwise, believe me, we should not for a moment have entertained suspicion either of your honor or intentions. I therefore again ask your pardon."

Maurice was bewildered; with the greatest difficulty he preserved his equilibrium; he felt his head turn round,

and was near falling. He supported himself against the mantel-piece.

"Why on earth did you wish to kill me?" he asked.

"This is the secret, Citizen," said Dixmer; "I confide it to your keeping. I am, as you already know, a tanner, and principal in this concern. The greater part of the acids I employ in the preparation of my skins are prohibited goods. Now the smugglers have received intelligence of an information laid before the counsel-general. I feared you were an informer. My smugglers were more alarmed than myself at your *bonnet-rouge* and formidable appearance, and I do not conceal from you that your death was resolved upon."

"*Pardieu!* and well I know it," said Maurice; "you tell me no news. I heard your consultation, and have seen your carbine."

"I have already apologized," said Dixmer, in a tone of marked kindness. "You must understand that, thanks to the unsettled state of the times, myself and partner, Monsieur Morand, are likely to realize an immense fortune. We have the furnishing of the military bags, and finish from fifteen hundred to two thousand each day. Owing to this blessed state of things in which we live, the municipality are much occupied, and have not time strictly to examine our accounts, so that it must be confessed we fish a little in troubled waters; the more so because, as I have already told you, the preparatory materials we procure by smuggling allow us to gain two hundred per cent."

"The devil!" said Maurice, "that appears to me an honest living enough, and I can now understand your dread lest a denunciation on my part should put an end to it; but now you know me, you fear me no longer. Is it not so?"

"Now," said Dixmer, "I do not even ask your word of honor." Then, placing his hand on his shoulder and smiling, "As it is only between friends," said he, "may I inquire what brought you here, young man? But of course, if you wish to keep it secret, you are perfectly at liberty to do so."

"I have already told you, I believe," murmured Maurice.

"Yes, a woman," said the burgess; "I know there was something about a woman."

"*Mon Dieu!* excuse me, Citizen, I am aware some sort of explanation is due to you. Well, then, I sought a female, who the other evening, disguised, told me she resided in this quarter. I neither know her name, position, or place of abode. I only know I am madly in love with her, that she is short —"

Geneviève was tall.

"That she is fair, and of a lively temperament."

Geneviève was a brunette, with large pensive eyes.

"A grisette, in short," continued Maurice; "so to please her, I assumed the popular dress."

"That explains all," said Dixmer, with a faith which a sly wink did not belie.

Geneviève colored, and feeling herself blush, turned away.

"Poor Citizen Lindey," said Dixmer, laughing; "what a miserable evening we have caused you to pass! and you are about the last I would wish to injure, so excellent a patriot, a brother; but, in short, I believed some confounded spy had usurped your name."

"Let us say no more on the subject," said Maurice, who knew it was time for him to withdraw; "put me on my road, and let us forget —"

"Put you on your road!" exclaimed Dixmer; "let you leave us! no indeed, not yet. I give — or rather my

partner and myself give — a supper to-night to those brave fellows who wished so much to slaughter you a little while ago. I reckon upon your supping with them, that you may see they are not such devils as they appear to be."

"But," said Maurice, overjoyed at the thought of being for a few hours near Geneviève, "I do not know really if I ought to accept — "

"If you ought to accept!" said Dixmer; "I know you ought; these are good and stanch patriots like yourself. Besides, I shall not consider that you have forgiven me unless we break bread together."

Geneviève uttered not a word. Maurice was in torment.

"The fact is," stammered Maurice, "I fear I may be a constraint upon you, Citizen — this dress — my ungentlemanly appearance — "

Geneviève looked timidly toward him.

"We invite you in all kindness," said she.

"I accept your invitation, Citizen," said he, bowing.

"I will go and secure our companions," said Dixmer; "in the mean time, warm yourself, my dear sir."

He went out. Maurice and Geneviève remained alone.

"Ah, Monsieur!" said the young woman, in an accent to which she in vain tried to convey a tone of reproach, "you have failed in your word; you have been exceedingly indiscreet."

"Madame," cried Maurice, "have I in any way compromised you? Ah! in that case, pardon me; I will retire, and never — "

"Goodness!" said she, rising, "you are wounded in the breast; your shirt is stained with blood."

Indeed, upon the fine, white shirt of Maurice — a shirt forming a strange contrast to his coarser clothes — a large red spot of blood had spread itself, and had dried there.

"Do not be under any alarm, Madame," said the young man, "one of the smugglers pricked me with his poniard."

Geneviève turned pale, and taking his hand, —

"Forgive me," said she, "the wrong that has been done you; you saved my life, and I have nearly caused your death."

"Am I not sufficiently recompensed in finding you? You cannot for a moment imagine it was for another that I sought."

"Come with me," said Geneviève, interrupting him; "I will find you some clean linen. Our guests must not see you thus; it would be too great a reproach to them."

"I am a great trouble to you, Madame, I fear," said Maurice, sighing.

"Not at all; I only do my duty; and," she added, "I do it with much pleasure."

Geneviève then conducted Maurice to a large dressing-room, arranged with an air of elegance he had not expected to find in the house of a master-tanner. It is true this master-tanner appeared to be a millionnaire. She then opened the wardrobes.

"Help yourself," said she; "you are at home." She withdrew.

When Maurice came out, he found Dixmer had returned.

"Come! come!" said he, "to table; we only wait for you."

CHAPTER IX.

THE SUPPER.

When Maurice entered with Dixmer and Geneviève into the dining-room, situated in the part of the house where they had first conducted him, the supper was ready but the room vacant. He saw all the guests enter successively. They were six in number, men of agreeable exterior, for the most part young and fashionably dressed; two or three even wore the blouse and red bonnet.

Dixmer introduced Maurice, naming his titles and qualifications. Then, turning toward Maurice, —

"You see," said he, "Citizen Lindey, all those who assist me in my trade. Thanks to the times in which we live, thanks to the revolutionary principles which have effaced all distinction, we all live upon the same footing of sacred equality. Every day we assemble twice at the same table, and I am happy you have been induced to partake of our family repast. Come! to table — citizens, to table."

"And — Monsieur Morand," said Geneviève, timidly, "do we not wait for him?"

"Ah, true!" said Dixmer. "This citizen of whom I have already spoken, Citizen Lindey, is my partner. He conducts, if I may so express myself, the moral part of the establishment. He attends to the writing, keeps the cash, superintends the factories, pays and receives the money, and, in short, works harder than any of us. The result is that he is sometimes rather late. I will go and tell him we are waiting."

At this moment the door opened, and the Citizen Morand entered.

He was a short man, dark, with bushy eyebrows, and wore green spectacles — like a man whose eyes are fatigued from excess of work — concealing his black eyes, but not effectually obstructing their scintillating gleams. At the first words he uttered, Maurice recognized that mild, yet commanding voice engaged in his behalf when endeavoring to save him from becoming a victim to that terrible discussion. He was habited in a brown coat, with large buttons, a white waistcoat; and his fine cambric shirt-frill was often during dinner smoothed by a hand which Maurice, no doubt from its being that of a tradesman, admired much for its beauty and delicacy of appearance.

They all took their seats. Morand was placed on Geneviève's right hand, Maurice on her left. Dixmer sat opposite his wife. The rest of the guests seated themselves promiscuously round an oblong table. The supper was excellent. Dixmer had a capital appetite, and did the honors of the table with much politeness. The workmen, or those who pretended to be such, under this example became excellent companions. The Citizen Morand spoke little, and ate still less; drank scarcely anything, and rarely smiled. Maurice, perhaps from the reminiscences his voice awakened, felt for him immediately a lively sympathy, only he was in doubt as to his age; and this rather annoyed him, as sometimes he imagined him to be a man of forty or forty-five years, and sometimes to be quite young.

Dixmer, on placing himself at table, felt obliged to offer some explanation to his guests for the admission of a stranger into their little circle. He acquitted himself like an artless man, one unaccustomed to deceit; but the guests, as it seemed, were not hard to manage on this

point; for, notwithstanding the awkwardness displayed by the manufacturer of hides in the introduction of the young man, they all appeared perfectly satisfied.

Maurice regarded him with astonishment.

"Upon my honor," said he to himself, "I shall really soon think that I myself am deceived. Is that the same man who, with flaming eyes and threatening voice, pursued me, gun in hand, and absolutely wished to kill me three quarters of an hour since? Then I should have taken him for either a hero or an assassin. Goodness! how the love of hides does transform a man."

While making these observations Maurice experienced a strange feeling of joy and grief, and felt unable to analyze his own emotions. He at length found himself near his beautiful unknown, whom he had so ardently sought. As he had dreamed, she bore a charming name; he was intoxicated with the happiness of finding himself at her side; he drank in her every word; and at each sound of her voice the most secret chords of his heart vibrated; but he was deeply wounded by all he saw.

Geneviève was exactly what he had pictured her; the dream of a stormy night, reality had not destroyed. Here was an elegant woman, of sad demeanor but refined mind, affording another instance of what had so frequently occurred during the latter years preceding this present celebrated year '93. Here was a young woman of distinction compelled, from the ruin into which the nobility was ever falling, deeper and deeper, to ally herself to a commoner engaged in commerce. Dixmer appeared a trusty man. He was incontestably rich, and his manners to Geneviève were those of a man making every endeavor to render a woman happy. But could kindness, riches, or excellent intentions compensate her for what she had sacrificed, or remove the immense distance existing between husband

and wife, between a refined, distinguished, charming girl, and a vulgar-looking tradesman? With what could Geneviève fill up this abyss? Alas! Maurice now guessed too well. With love! And he therefore returned to that opinion of the young woman he had formed on the evening of their first meeting, — that she was returning from some love affair.

The idea of Geneviève loving any one was torture to Maurice. He sighed, and deeply regretted having exposed himself to the temptation of imbibing a still larger dose of that poison termed love. At other moments, while listening to that ductile voice, so soft and harmonious, examining that pure and open countenance which evinced no fear that he should read every secret of her soul, he arrived at the conclusion that it was utterly impossible that this matchless creature could descend to deceit; and then he found a bitter pleasure in remembering that this lovely woman belonged solely to this good citizen, with his honest smile and vulgar pleasantries, and would never be to him more than a passing acquaintance.

They conversed of course on politics. How could it be otherwise at an epoch when politics were mixed up with everything. Political subjects were even painted on the plates, political designs covered the walls, and politics were daily proclaimed in the streets. All at once, one of the guests who had hitherto preserved silence inquired concerning the prisoners of the Temple.

Maurice started, in spite of himself, at the ring of that voice. He recognized the voice of the man who, a strenuous advocate for extreme measures, had first struck him with his dagger, and then advocated his death. Nevertheless, this man, an honest tanner, and head of the manufactory, at least so Dixmer represented him,

soon incited the good humor of Maurice by the expression of ideas the most patriotic, and principles the most revolutionary. The young man, under certain circumstances, was not inimical to these extreme measures, so much in fashion at this period, of which Danton was the apostle and hero. In this man's place, from the effect of whose voice and weapon he felt himself still smarting, he would not have attempted to assassinate the man he believed to be a spy, but would rather have locked him in the garden, and there, equally armed, sword to sword, have fought him without mercy, without pity. This is what Maurice would have done; but he comprehended soon that this was too much to expect of a journeyman-tanner.

This man of extreme measures, who appeared to possess in his political ideas the same violent system as in his private conduct, then spoke of the Temple, and expressed surprise that the prisoners were confided to the guardianship of a permanent council liable to be corrupted, and to municipals whose fidelity had already been more than once tempted.

"Yes," said the Citizen Morand; "but it must be remembered that on every occasion, up to the present time, the municipals have fully justified the confidence reposed in them by the nation, and history will record that the Citizen Robespierre alone has merited the title of 'Incorruptible.'"

"Without doubt, without doubt," replied the interlocutor; "but because a thing has not yet happened, it would be absurd to suppose it never can happen. As for the National Guard," continued the foreman of the manufactory, "well, the companies of the different sections are placed, each in their turn, on duty at the Temple, and that indifferently. Will you not admit that there might

be, in a company of twenty or five-and-twenty men, a band of seven or eight determined characters, who some fine night might slaughter the sentinels and carry off the prisoners?"

"Bah!" said Maurice; "you see, Citizen, this would be a foolish expedient. In fact the thing was tried three weeks or a month ago, and did not succeed."

"Yes," replied Morand; "because one of those aristocrats who composed the patrol had the imprudence in speaking to let fall the word 'Monsieur,' I do not know to whom."

"And then," said Maurice, who wished to prove that the police of the Republic did their duty, "because the entrance of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge into Paris was already known —"

"Bah!" cried Dixmer.

"They knew that Maison-Rouge had entered Paris?" coldly demanded Morand; "and did they know by what means he entered?"

"Perfectly."

"Indeed!" said Morand, leaning forward to look at Maurice, "I should be curious to know that, as up to the present moment no one can speak positively. But you, Citizen, you, secretary of one of the principal sections in Paris, ought to be better informed."

"Doubtless; therefore, what I am about to tell you is the true statement of facts."

All the guests and even Geneviève appeared prepared to pay the greatest attention to this recital.

"Well," said Maurice, "the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge came from Vendée, it appears; he had traversed all France with his usual good fortune. Arrived during the day at the Barrière du Roule, he waited till nine o'clock at night. At that hour a woman, disguised as a

woman o the people, went out through the barrier, carrying to the chevalier a costume of chasseur of the National Guard. Ten minutes afterward she re-entered with him; but the sentinel, who had seen her go out alone, felt rather suspicious when he saw her return with a companion. He gave the alarm to the post; the post turned out, when the two culprits, knowing they were pursued, flung themselves into a hotel where a second door opened into the Champs Elysées.

"It seems that a patrol devoted to the tyrants waited for the chevalier at the corner of the Rue Burre-du-Bec. You are acquainted with the rest."

"Ah, ah!" said Morand; "this is very strange."

"But positively true," said Maurice.

"Yes, it has an air of truth; but the female, do you know what became of her?"

"No; she has disappeared, and they are quite ignorant who she is, or what she is."

The partner of Citizen Dixmer, and Citizen Dixmer himself, appeared to breathe more freely.

Geneviève had listened to the whole of this recital, pale, silent, and immovable.

"But," said Morand, with his usual coolness, "who can say that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge made one of the patrol who gave the alarm at the Temple?"

"A municipal, one of my friends, that day on duty at the Temple. He recognized him."

"He knew him from description?"

"He had seen him before."

"And what sort of man, personally, is this Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"A man of five or six and twenty, short, fair, and of a pleasing countenance, with magnificent eyes and superb teeth."

There was a profound silence.

"Well," said Morand, "if your friend the municipal recognized this pretended Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, why did he not arrest him?"

"In the first place, not knowing of his arrival at Paris, he feared being the dupe of a resemblance; and then my friend, being rather lukewarm, acted as the lukewarm generally act, — gave him the benefit of his doubt, and let him alone."

"You would not have acted thus, Citizen?" said Dixmer, laughing boisterously.

"No," said Maurice; "I confess it, I would rather find myself deceived than allow so dangerous a man as the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge to escape."

"And what would you have done, then, Monsieur?" timidly inquired Geneviève.

"What would I have done, Citizen?" said Maurice, "Oh, by Jove! I would have made short work of it. I would have had every door in the Temple shut. I would have walked straight up to the patrol, have placed my hand on his collar, and said to him, 'Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, I arrest you as a traitor to the nation;' and my hand once upon his collar, I would not soon release him, I can tell you."

"And what would have happened then?" asked Geneviève.

"It would have happened that he and his accomplices would have been arrested, and that very hour would have been guillotined; that is all."

Geneviève shuddered, and darted on her neighbor a look of affright. But the Citizen Morand did not appear to notice this glance, and phlegmatically emptied his glass.

"The Citizen Lindey is right," said he; "there was

nothing else to do; but, unfortunately, it was not done."

"And," demanded Geneviève, "do you know what has become of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"Bah!" said Dixmer, "in all probability he did not wish to remain longer, and finding his attempt abortive, quitted Paris immediately."

"And perhaps even France," added Morand.

"Not at all, not at all," said Maurice.

"What! has he had the imprudence to remain in Paris?" asked Geneviève.

"He has not stirred."

A movement of general astonishment followed this assertion which Maurice had stated with so much confidence.

"This is only a supposition, Citizen, on your part," said Morand, — "merely a supposition, that is all."

"No; I affirm it as a positive fact."

"Ah!" said Geneviève; "I acknowledge, for my part, I cannot believe it is as you say; it would be such an unpardonable imprudence."

"You are a woman, Citizen; and can comprehend, then, what would outweigh, with a man of such a character as the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, all considerations of personal security?"

"And what can outweigh the dread of losing one's life in a manner so dreadful?"

"Ah, Citizen!" answered Maurice, "love."

"Love!" repeated Geneviève.

"Certainly. Do you not know, then, that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is enamored of Marie Antoinette?"

Two or three incredulous laughs were faintly heard. Dixmer looked at Maurice as if he sought to penetrate the very depths of his soul. Geneviève felt the tears

suffuse her eyes, and a shuddering she could not conceal from Maurice ran through her frame. The Citizen Morand spilled some wine from his glass, which he was then in the act of putting to his lips. His paleness would have alarmed Maurice, had not all the young man's attention been at the time centred on Geneviève.

"You are moved, Citizen," murmured Maurice.

"Did you not say I should understand this because I was a woman? Well, we women feel for such devotion even if opposed to our principles."

"And that of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is the height of devotion, as it is said he has never even spoken to the queen."

"Ah! there now, Citizen Lindey," said the man of extreme measures; "it seems to me, permit me to observe, that you are very indulgent to the Chevalier—"

"Monsieur," said Maurice, perhaps intentionally making use of a word which had ceased to be in vogue, "I love all brave and courageous natures, which does not prevent my fighting them when I meet them in the ranks of my enemies. I do not despair of one day encountering the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"And—" said Geneviève.

"If I meet him—well, I shall fight him."

The supper was finished. Geneviève set the example of retiring, by herself rising from table. At this moment the clock struck.

"Midnight!" said Morand, coolly.

"Midnight" exclaimed Maurice,—"midnight already?"

"That exclamation affords me much pleasure," said Dixmer; "it proves you are not wearied, and induces me to hope we may see you again. It is the door of a true patriot which opens to receive you; and, I trust, ere long, you will find it that of a sincere friend."

Maurice bowed, and turning toward Geneviève, —

"Will the Citizen also permit me to repeat my visit?" demanded he.

"I do more than permit, I request you to do so. Adieu, Citizen," and Geneviève retired.

Maurice took leave of all the guests, particularly saluting Morand, with whom he was much pleased; pressed Dixmer's hand, and went away bewildered, but on the whole more joyful than sad, from the various and unexpected events of the evening.

"Unfortunate encounter, unfortunate encounter!" said the young woman, after Maurice's departure, and then burst into tears in the presence of her husband, who had conducted her to her room.

"Bah!" said Dixmer, "the Citizen Lindey, a known patriot, secretary to a section, admired, worshipped, and highly popular, is, on the contrary, a great acquisition to a poor tanner who has contraband merchandise on his premises."

"Do you think so, *mon ami?*" asked Geneviève, timidly.

"I think it is a warrant of patriotism, a seal of absolution, placed upon our house; and I think, after this evening, that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge himself would be safe at our house."

And Dixmer kissed his wife with an affection more paternal than conjugal, and left her in the little pavilion set apart for her special benefit, passing himself into another part of the building, which he inhabited with the guests we have seen assembled round his table.

CHAPTER X.

SIMON THE SHOEMAKER.

THE month of May had commenced. A bright clear day expanded the lungs tired of inhaling the icy fogs of winter, and the rays of the sun, warm and exhilarating, shone upon the black walls of the Temple. At the wicket of the interior, which separated the tower from the gardens, the soldiers of the post were smoking and laughing. But, notwithstanding the beauty of the day, and the offer made to the prisoners to descend and walk in the garden, the three females refused to do so; as, since the execution of her husband, the queen had obstinately secluded herself in her chamber, not wishing to pass the door of the apartment lately occupied by the king on the second story. When by any chance she took the air, since the fatal occurrence of the 21st of January, she did so on the platform of the tower, where even the battlements were inclosed with shutters.

The National Guards on duty, who knew the three females had received permission to go out, waited in vain all day, expecting them to turn the authority to some account. Toward five o'clock a man descended, and approached the sergeant in command of the post.

"Ah! ah! is that you, Father Tison?" said the sergeant, who appeared to be a right merry fellow.

"Yes, it is I, Citizen; I bring you, on the part of the municipal Maurice Lindey, your friend, who is now up-

stairs, this permission, granted by the Council of the Temple to my daughter, to pay a visit to her mother this evening."

"And you are going out just as your daughter is coming in? Unnatural father!" said the sergeant.

"I am going much against my inclination, Citizen Sergeant. I also hoped to see my poor child, whom I have not seen for two months, and to embrace her this evening. I am going out now. This service, this damned service, compels me to go out. It is necessary I should go to the Commune to make my report. A fiacre is waiting for me at the door, with two gendarmes, and it is exactly the time when my poor Sophie will arrive."

"Unhappy parent!" said the sergeant.

"And, Citizen Sergeant, when my child comes to see her poor mother, who is dying to see her, you will allow her to pass?"

"The order is correct," replied the sergeant, whom the reader has no doubt recognized as our friend Lorin; "so I have nothing to say against it; when your daughter comes, she may pass."

"Thanks, brave Thermopyle! thanks," said Tison; and he went out to make his report to the Commune, murmuring, "My poor wife, how happy she will be!"

"Do you know, Sergeant," said one of the National Guard, seeing Tison depart, and overhearing the last words, — "do you know there is something in these things that makes my blood run cold?"

"What things, Citizen Devaux?" demanded Lorin.

"Why," replied the compassionate National Guard, "to see this man, with his surly face and heart of stone, this pitiless guardian of the queen, go out with his eyes full of tears, partly of joy, partly of grief, thinking that his wife will see his daughter, and he shall not. It does

not do to reflect upon it too much, Sergeant; it is really grievous."

"Doubtless that is why he does not reflect upon it himself, this man who goes out with tears in his eyes, as you term it."

"Upon what should he reflect?"

"That it is three months since this woman he so brutally uses has seen her child. He does not think of her grief, only of his own; that is all. It is true this woman was queen," continued the sergeant, in an ironical tone rather difficult of comprehension; "and one is not obliged to feel the same respect for a queen as for the wife of a journeyman."

"Notwithstanding, all this is very sad," said Devaux.

"Sad, but necessary," said Lorin. "The best way then, is, as you say, not to think of it," and he began to sing —

"Where the branches met
On a rocky stone,
There I found Nicette,
Seated all alone."

Lorin was in the midst of his pastoral ditty, when suddenly a loud noise was heard from the left side of the post, composed of oaths, menaces, and tears.

"What is that?" demanded Devaux.

"It sounded like the voice of a child," said Lorin, listening.

"In fact," said the National Guard, "it is a poor little one they are beating. Truly they ought only to send here those who have no children."

"Will you sing?" said a hoarse and drunken voice.

And the voice sung in example —

"Madame Veto promised
That all our heads should fall—"

"No," said the child, "I will not sing."

"Will you sing?"

And the voice recommenced —

"Madame Veto promised —"

"No! no!" said the child. "No, no, no!"

"Ah! little beggar," said the hoarse voice; and the noise of a lash whirring through the air was distinctly heard. The infant screamed with agony.

"Ah! *sacre bleu!*" said Lorin; "it is that rascally Simon beating the little Capet."

Several of the National Guards shrugged their shoulders. Two or three tried to smile. Devaux rose and went out.

"I said truly," murmured he, "that parents should never enter here."

All at once a low door opened, and the royal child, chased by the whip of his guardian made a flying leap into the court, when something hard struck his leg, and fell on the ground behind him.

He stumbled, and fell upon his knee.

"Bring me my last, little monster, or else —"

The child rose and shook his head, in token of refusal.

"Ah! this is it, is it?" cried the same voice. "Wait, you shall see," and the shoemaker Simon rushed from his hut as a wild beast from its den.

"Hallo! hallo!" cried Lorin, frowning. "Where are you going so fast, Master Simon?"

"To chastise this little wolf's cub," said the shoemaker.

"To chastise him, for what?"

"For what?"

"Yes."

"Because the little beggar will neither sing like a good patriot, nor work like a good citizen."

"Well, what have you to do with that?" demanded Lorin. "Did the nation confide Capet to you that you might teach him to sing?"

"And what business have you to interfere, I should like to know, Citizen Sergeant?" said Simon, astonished.

"I interfere, as it becomes every man of feeling to do. It is unworthy of a man to see a child beaten, and to suffer him to be beaten."

"Bah! the son of a tyrant."

"He is a child; and the child has not participated in the crimes of the father. The child is not culpable, and, consequently, ought not to be punished."

"And I tell you he was placed with me to do what I choose with him. I choose that he shall sing 'Madame Veto,' and sing it he shall."

"Contemptible wretch!" said Lorin. "'Madame Veto' is mother to this child. Would you yourself like your child to be made to sing that you were one of the canaille?"

"Me!" cried Simon. "Vile aristocrat of a sergeant!"

"No names," said Lorin. "I am not Capet; and they shall not make me sing by force."

"I will have you arrested, vile *ci-devant!*"

"You!" said Lorin; "you have me arrested! you had better try to arrest a Thermopyle."

"Good, good; he laughs best who laughs last. And now, Capet, pick up my last, and come and finish your shoe, or by thunder!—"

"And I," said Lorin, turning deadly pale, and advancing a step forward, his hands clinched, and his teeth set,—"I tell you he shall not pick up your last, he shall not make shoes; do you hear, idiot? Oh, yes! you have your big sword there, but I am no more afraid of it than I am of yourself. Just you dare to draw it."

"Ah! *massacre,*" roared Simon, turning pale with rage.

At this moment two women entered the court. One of them held a paper in her hand. She addressed herself to the sentinel.

"Sergeant," cried the sentinel, "it is Tison's daughter, who asks to see her mother."

"Let her pass, since the Council of the Temple permit it," said Lorin, who did not wish to leave for a moment, for fear Simon should avail himself of his absence and again beat the child.

The sentinel allowed the two women to pass; but hardly had they ascended four steps on the dark staircase, when they encountered Maurice Lindey, who was descending into the court. It was almost dark, so that he was unable to distinguish their features. Maurice stopped them.

"Who are you, citizens?" said he; "and what do you want?"

"I am Sophie Tison," said one of the women; "I obtained permission to visit my mother, and have come to see her."

"Yes," said Maurice; "but this permission was for yourself only, Citizen."

"I brought my friend, that there might be two of us in the midst of the soldiers, at least."

"Very good; but your friend cannot go up."

"As you please, Citizen," said Sophie Tison, pressing the hand of her friend, who, close against the wall, seemed paralyzed with surprise and terror.

"Citizen sentinels," said Maurice, raising his voice and addressing the sentinels who were stationed on every landing, "allow the Citizen Tison to pass, but do not permit her friend to pass; she will remain on the staircase. See that she is treated with all due respect."

"Yes, Citizen," replied the sentinels.

"Go up, then," said Maurice.

The two women then passed on; and Maurice, leaping over the remaining five or six steps, advanced rapidly into the court.

"What is all this?" said he to the National Guard; "and what is the cause of this noise? The cries of a child were heard as far as the prisoners' antechamber."

"It is this," said Simon, who, accustomed to the manners of the municipals, believed, on perceiving Maurice, that he came as an ally; "this traitor, this spy, this *ci-devant*, this aristocrat, prevents me from belaboring Capet," and he shook his fist at Lorin.

"Yes, by Heaven, I did prevent it," said Lorin, drawing his sword; "and if you again call me *ci-devant*, aristocrat, or traitor, I will run my sword through your body."

"A threat!" cried Simon; "guard! guard!"

"I am the guard," said Lorin; "so you had better not call; for if I come to you, I will exterminate you."

"Come here, Citizen Municipal, come here," said Simon, now seriously alarmed at Lorin's threats.

"The sergeant is quite right," said the municipal, to whom he had appealed for assistance; "you are a disgrace to the nation, coward, to beat a child."

"And why did he beat him? Do you know the reason, Maurice? Because the child would not sing 'Madame Veto;' because the child would not insult his mother."

"The miserable wretch!" said Maurice.

"And you also?" said Simon. "Am I surrounded by traitors?"

"You villain!" cried the municipal, seizing Simon by the throat, and tearing the last from his hand; "try to prove that Maurice Lindey is a traitor," and he applied the leather strap vigorously to the shoulders of the shoemaker.

"Thanks, sir," said the child, who regarded this scene with the coolness of a Stoic; "but he will revenge himself upon me."

"Come, Capet, come, my child," said Lorin; "if he beats you again, call for help; I will chastise him, the hangman. And now, little Capet, return to your tower."

"Why do you call me Capet, even you who protect me? You know very well that Capet is not my name."

"Not your name!" said Lorin; "what is your name, then?"

"I am called Louis Charles de Bourbon. Capet is the name of one of my ancestors. I know the history of France; my father taught me."

"And you want to teach a child to mend old shoes, to whom a king has taught the history of France?" cried Lorin; "it beats everything."

"You need not be concerned," said Maurice to the child; "I will make my report."

"And I mine," said Simon; "and among other things I shall say that instead of allowing one woman to enter the tower, you permitted two to pass."

At this moment the two women went out from the keep. Maurice ran after them.

"Well, Citizen," said he, addressing the one by his side, "have you seen your mother?"

Sophie Tison placed herself immediately between the municipal and her companion.

"Yes, Citizen, thank you," said she.

Maurice had wished to see the young girl's friend, or at least to hear her voice, but she was enveloped in her mantle, and seemed determined not to utter a single word. He also thought that she trembled. This appearance of fear excited his suspicion. He reascended the stairs

quickly, and through the glazed partition saw the queen endeavoring to hide something in her pocket which looked like a billet.

"Ah! ah!" said he, "I have been duped."

He called his colleague.

"Citizen Agricola," said he, "enter Marie Antoinette's room, and do not lose sight of her."

"Heyday!" said the municipal, "is it because —"

"Enter, I tell you, and do not lose sight of her for an instant, a moment, a second."

The municipal entered the queen's apartment.

"Call the woman Tison," said he to one of the National Guard.

Five minutes afterward Tison's wife arrived in high spirits.

"I have seen my daughter," said she.

"Where was that?" demanded Maurice.

"Here, of course, in this antechamber."

"Well; and did not your daughter ask to see the Austrian?"

"No."

"Did she not enter her room?"

"No."

"And during the time you were conversing with your daughter, did no one come out of the prisoners' chamber?"

"How should I know? I was fully occupied with my daughter, whom I had not seen for three months."

"Recollect yourself."

"Ah, yes; I think I remember."

"What?"

"The young girl came out."

"Marie Thérèse?"

"Yes."

"Did she speak to your daughter?"

"No."

"Your daughter gave nothing to her?"

"No."

"Did she pick up nothing from the ground?"

"My daughter?"

"No, the daughter of Marie Antoinette."

"She picked up her pocket-handkerchief."

"Oh, woman! what were you thinking of?" cried Maurice.

And he rushed toward the string of a bell, which he pulled violently. It was an alarm-bell.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BILLET.

THE other two municipal guards came up hastily. A detachment of the post accompanied them. The doors were shut, and two sentinels intercepted the egress from each chamber.

"What do you want, sir?" said the queen to Maurice when he entered. "I was retiring to bed, when, five minutes since, the citizen municipal suddenly forced his entrance into my chamber, without informing me what he desired."

"Madame," said Maurice, bowing, "it is not my colleague who desires anything from you, it is myself."

"You, sir?" demanded Marie Antoinette, looking at Maurice, whose courteous behavior had caused her to regard him with some favor; "and what do you desire?"

"I request that you will be kind enough to show me the letter you were concealing when I entered just now."

Madame Royale and Madame Elizabeth trembled. The queen turned very pale.

"You are mistaken, sir; I concealed nothing."

"You lie, Austrian!" cried Agricola.

Maurice quickly placed his hand on the arm of his colleague.

"One moment, my dear colleague," said he; "leave me to speak to the citizen, I am a little bit of a lawyer."

"Go on then; but do not stand on ceremony with her, *morbleu!*"

"You have concealed a letter, Citizen," said Maurice, austerely; "now it is necessary we should see this letter."

"But what letter?"

"The letter that Tison's daughter brought you, and which the citizen, your daughter" (Maurice alluded to the young princess), "picked up with her pocket-handkerchief."

The three females looked at each other with terror.

"But, Monsieur, this is worse than tyranny," said the queen; "we are women! women!"

"Do not mistake," said Maurice, with firmness; "we are neither judges nor executioners, we are overseers, — that is to say, your fellow-citizens, — commissioned to guard you. We have our order; to violate it is treason. Citizen, I pray you to give me the letter you have concealed."

"Gentlemen," said the queen, with much hauteur, "since you are overseers, search, and deprive us of our rest to-night as usual."

"God forbid we should lay our hands upon women! I am now going to inform the Commune, and shall await its orders. But you cannot retire to bed; you may sleep upon these easy-chairs, if you please, and we shall guard you. If necessary, they will search you."

"What is the matter?" said Tison's wife, appearing at the door quite bewildered.

"It is this, Citizen," said Maurice, "that by lending yourself to treasonable practices, you have debarred yourself from seeing your daughter any more."

"From seeing my daughter? What do you tell me then, Citizen," demanded Tison's wife, who could not yet comprehend why she was not to see her daughter.

"I tell you, that your daughter did not come here to

see you, but to bring a letter to the Citizen Capet; and therefore she shall return here no more."

"But if she does not come here, I shall not be able to see her, as we are forbidden to go out."

"This time you have no one to blame but yourself, — it is your own fault," said Maurice.

"Oh!" screamed the poor woman, "my fault! why do you say it is my fault? Nothing has happened, I assure you. If I thought anything could have happened, woe to you, Antoinette; you should pay dearly for it," and the exasperated woman shook her fist at the queen.

"Threaten no one," said Maurice; "but rather gain by kindness what we demand, for you are a woman, and the Citizen Marie Antoinette, who is herself a mother, will take pity on you. To-morrow your daughter will be arrested, — to-morrow imprisoned; then, if they discover anything, and you know that when they choose they always can do so, she is lost, and also her companion."

The woman Tison, who had listened to Maurice with increasing terror, turned wildly toward the queen.

"You hear, Antoinette? My daughter! It is you who will ruin my child!"

The queen in her turn appeared bewildered, not by the fury which sparkled in the eyes of her female jailer, but by her evident despair. "Come with me, Madame Tison," said she, "I have something to say to you."

"Holloa! No cajolery; we are not in your way here," said Maurice's colleague. "Before the municipality — everything open and above board."

"Never mind, Citizen Agricola," whispered Maurice, "provided we discover the truth, it does not matter in what fashion we do so."

"You are right, Citizen Maurice; but —"

"Let us pass behind the glazed partition, Citizen Agri-

cola; and if you agree with me, we will turn our backs, and I am certain the individual for whom we evince this consideration will not make us repent it."

The queen heard these words, intended for her to hear, and cast upon the young man a look of grateful acknowledgment. Maurice carelessly turned his head, and walked to the other side of the glazed partition. Agricola followed him.

"You see this queen," said he to Agricola: "as a queen she is very culpable, as a woman she is high-minded and dignified. It is well to destroy crowns; princes are purified by misfortune."

"By thunder! you speak well, Citizen Maurice; I like to hear you talk, and your friend Lorin. Is that poetry you recited?"

Maurice smiled.

During this conversation, the scene which Maurice had anticipated was passing on the other side.

The woman Tison approached the queen.

"Madame," said the queen, "your despair grieves me. I do not wish to deprive you of your daughter, — that would be too cruel; but pray consider, perhaps by doing what these men require, your child will be lost none the less."

"Do what they tell you!" cried the woman, — "do what they tell you!"

"But first, at least, hear what is the matter."

"What is the matter?" demanded the woman, with almost savage curiosity.

"Your daughter brought a friend with her."

"Yes, a work-woman like herself. She did not like to come alone, because of the soldiers."

"This friend committed a letter to your daughter; your daughter let it fall. Marie, who was passing, picked

it up. It is, doubtless, a paper of no consequence, but still one upon which evil-minded people might put a bad construction. Did not the municipal just tell you, when they wish that they can always do so?"

"Well, go on."

"That is all; you wish me to give up this paper, — do you wish me to sacrifice a friend, without perhaps benefiting your daughter?"

"Do what they tell you!" shrieked the woman, — "do what they tell you!"

"But if this paper implicates your daughter," said the queen; "do try to understand."

"My daughter is, like myself, a good patriot," cried the hag. "Thank God, the Tisons are well known. Do what they tell you!"

"Good Heavens!" said the queen; "how can I make you understand?"

"My child, I want them to return me my child," cried Tison's wife, stamping her feet. "Give me the paper, Antoinette, give me the paper!"

"There it is, Madame," and the queen tendered a paper to the wretched creature, which she seized, and held joyfully above her head, crying, —

"Come here, come here, citizen municipals. I have the paper; take it, and give me back my child."

"You sacrifice our friends, sister," said Elizabeth.

"No, sister," replied the queen, mournfully; "I only sacrifice ourselves. The paper implicates no one."

At the cries of the woman Tison, Maurice and his colleague came toward her, when she immediately held out the paper to them. They opened it and read, —

"At L'Orient [the east] a friend still watches."

Maurice had no sooner cast his eyes on this paper

than he started. The hand-writing seemed to him not unknown.

"My God!" cried he, "can it be that of Geneviève? But no, it is impossible; I am mad. It resembles hers, certainly; but what can Geneviève have to do with the queen?"

He turned round, and observed that Marie Antoinette was watching him attentively. As for the woman Tison, as she awaited her fate, she devoured Maurice with her eyes.

"You have done a good action," said he, to Tison's wife; "and you, Citizen, a great one," addressing the queen.

"Then, sir," replied Marie Antoinette, "follow my example. Burn the paper, and you will perform a charitable one."

"You are joking, Austrian," said Agricola. "Burn a paper that may perhaps enable us to discover a whole covey of aristocrats? Good faith! no; we are not quite such fools as that."

"Ah, yes! do burn it; it might compromise my daughter," implored the woman Tison.

"I believe you; your daughter and some others," said Agricola, taking the paper from the hands of Maurice, which the latter, had he been alone, would most certainly have destroyed.

Ten minutes afterward, the paper was deposited on the bureau of the members of the Commune. It was instantly opened and commented upon in various ways.

"'At L'Orient — a friend watches.' What the devil can that mean?" said one.

"Why," replied a geographer, "at Lorient, that is clear enough. Lorient is a little town of Brittany, situated between Vannes and Quimper. Egad! we ought to

burn the town, if it be true that it shelters aristocrats who are watching still over the Austrian."

"It is all the more dangerous," said another, "because Lorient being a sea-port, they might establish communication with England."

"I propose," said a third, "that we send a committee to Lorient, and that a thorough search of the place be instituted."

This proposition made the minority smile, but was approved by the majority; they accordingly resolved that a committee be sent to Lorient to watch the aristocrats.

Maurice had been informed of the consultation.

"I think it may perhaps mean the East," said he; "but I am quite sure it is not in Brittany."

The next day the queen, who, as we have previously said, would no more enter the garden, to avoid passing the door of the apartment where her husband had been imprisoned, requested permission to ascend the tower to take the air, with her daughter and Madame Elizabeth. Her wish was instantly acceded to; but Maurice followed her, and mounting the stairs, ensconced himself behind a little turret where, concealed, he awaited the result of the letter of the preceding evening. The queen at first walked without manifesting any concern, with Madame Elizabeth and her daughter, then stopped, while the two princesses continued their promenade, and turning toward the "East," observed intently a house at the windows of which several persons were visible, one of whom held a white handkerchief.

Maurice, on his part, drew a telescope from his pocket, and while he adjusted it, the queen made a quick movement, as if to request those at the window to retire; but Maurice had already remarked the head of a man, with fair hair and pale complexion, whose salutation was

so respectful as almost to border on humility. Behind this young man, for he appeared to be five, or six, and twenty years of age, stood a woman partially concealed from his view. Maurice directed his glass toward her, and thinking that he recognized Geneviève, inadvertently made a motion which brought him under the notice of the party. Immediately the female, who also held a telescope in her hand, drew back, dragging the young man away with her. Was it really Geneviève? Had she also recognized Maurice? Had this couple only retired at the signal given them by the queen? Maurice waited a moment to see if the young man and woman would reappear; but seeing the window remain unoccupied, he recommended the strictest vigilance to his colleague, Agricola, quickly descended the staircase, and went and concealed himself at the corner of the Rue Portefoin, to see if they came out of the house. It was in vain; no one appeared. He could not resist the suspicion which had entered his mind from the moment the companion of Tison's daughter had persisted in maintaining so obstinate a silence. Maurice directed his course toward the old Rue Saint Jacques, where he arrived, bewildered by the strangest suspicions, doubts, and fears. When he entered, Geneviève, attired in a white morning-dress, was seated under an arbor of jasmine, where she was accustomed to breakfast. She, as usual, accorded Maurice a friendly greeting, and invited him to take a cup of chocolate with her. Dixmer on his part, who had in the mean time arrived, expressed the greatest joy at meeting Maurice at this unwonted hour; but before he permitted Maurice to take the cup of chocolate he had accepted, always enthusiastically attached to his trade, he insisted that his friend the secretary to the section Lepelletier should come with him and see the manufactory.

On their way to the work-shops Dixmer, taking Maurice's arm and hurrying him along, observed, —

"My dear Maurice, I have important news for you."

"Political?" asked Maurice, always occupied with one idea.

"Ah! dear Citizen," said Dixmer, smiling, "do you think we trouble ourselves about politics? No, no; relating to our business, thank Heaven! My honored friend, Morand, who, as you know, is a celebrated chemist, has discovered the secret of staining morocco red in an unequalled manner, — that is to say, the color remains unalterable, — by a process never discovered till now. It is this color I want to show you. Besides, you will see Morand at work; he is quite an artist."

Maurice did not exactly comprehend how making a red dye constituted an artist; but nevertheless accompanied Dixmer across the tanyards, and in a separate sort of office saw the Citizen Morand at work. He had on his blue spectacles, was in his working-dress, and seemed entirely absorbed in the intensely interesting process of changing a sheep-skin from dirty white to purple. He had tucked up his sleeves, and his hands and arms were red to the elbow. As Dixmer remarked, he had devoted himself heart and soul to cochineal.

So entirely was he preoccupied that he merely moved his head to Maurice.

"Well, Citizen Morand," said Dixmer, "what say we?"

"We shall gain a hundred thousand francs yearly by this process alone; but I have not slept for eight days, and these acids have affected my sight."

Maurice left Dixmer with Morand and joined Geneviève as he said to himself, "It must be confessed the trade of municipal is degrading to the hero! About eight days in the Temple one might fancy one's self an aristocrat

and denounce one's self. Honest Dixmer! Plodding Morand! Gentle Geneviève! And I, idiot that I was, to have suspected them for a moment!"

Geneviève awaited Maurice with a sweet smile calculated most effectually to dispel every vestige of suspicion. She was as usual sweet, amiable, and charming.

The hours passed in Geneviève's society were those only in which Maurice could be said really to exist. At all other times he was infected with that fever which might be termed the fever of '93, by which Paris was separated into two hostile camps, and existence rendered a perpetual combat. Toward noon, however, he had to part with Geneviève, and return to the Tower of the Temple.

At the end of Rue Sainte Avoie he met Lorin, who was bringing down his guard from duty. He left the ranks and came to meet Maurice, who still wore upon his countenance the impress of the happiness he had enjoyed in the society of the lovely Geneviève.

"Ah!" said Lorin, cordially shaking his friend by the hand, —

> "In vain you seek your anguish
> Within your heart to hide,
> I know for whom you languish,
> For whom so long you 've sighed;
> Within your heart, within your eyes,
> Love reigns, and triumphs in his prize."

Maurice put his hand in his pocket in search of his key. This was the method he adopted to put a stop to his friend's poetical vein. But Lorin saw the movement, and ran away, laughing. "Apropos," said he retracing his steps, "you have three days more at the Temple; I recommend poor little Capet to your care."

CHAPTER XII.

LOVE.

In fact Maurice for some time had experienced a strange medley of happiness and misery. It is always thus at the commencement of the tender passion. His daily occupation at the section Lepelletier, his evening visits to the old Rue Saint Jacques, and some occasional visits to the club of the Thermopyles, filled up his days.

He did not deceive himself. He well knew that to see Geneviève daily was to imbibe large draughts of a hopeless love.

Geneviève was a woman of retired manners and pleasing appearance, who would frankly tender her hand to a friend, and would innocently approach his face with her lips, with the confidence of a sister, and the ignorance of a vestal before whom the words of love appear as blasphemy.

Thus in the purest dreams that the first style of Raphael has traced upon the canvas is a Madonna with smiling lips, chaste eyes, and heavenly expression. This creation of the divine pupil of Perugino may help us to portray the likeness of Geneviève.

In the midst of flowers she imbibed their freshness and perfume; isolated from the occupation of her husband, and from her husband himself, she appeared to Maurice each time he saw her like a living enigma, of which he could not divine the meaning, and dared not ask it.

One evening when, as usual, he had remained alone with her, they were both seated at the same window by which he had entered, a few nights since, with so little ceremony; the perfume of the lilacs in full bloom floated upon the soft breeze that had succeeded the radiant sunset. After a long silence, Maurice, having during this silence followed the intelligent and holy eye of Geneviève as she watched the appearance of the stars in the azure vault of heaven, ventured to inquire concerning the great disparity between herself and husband. She so young, and he already past the middle age; she so refined in manner, while everything around announced him a man of inferior birth and education; she so sublime in her thoughts and aspirations, while her husband had not an idea beyond his manufactory.

"Here, at the abode of a master-tanner, are harp, piano, and drawings, which you acknowledge to be your own. How is it that here I meet with aristocracy which though I detest it in others, I adore in you?"

Geneviève fixed upon Maurice a look full of candor.

"Thanks," said she, "for this inquiry; it proves to me that you are a man of delicacy, and that you have not sought information concerning me from any one else."

"Never, Madame," said Maurice. "I have a devoted friend who would die for me; I have a hundred comrades ready to follow wherever I may lead them, — but among all these hearts, when a woman is concerned, and above all, such a woman as Geneviève, I know but one I would trust, and that one is my own."

"Thanks, Maurice," said the young woman, "I will myself tell you, then, all you desire to know."

"Your maiden name first," said Maurice. "I only know your married one at present."

Geneviève detected the selfishness of love in this question, and smiled.

"Genevieve du Treilly," said she.

Maurice repeated, "Geneviève du Treilly!"

"My family," continued Geneviève, "was ruined after the American war, in which both my father and elder brother had taken part."

"Gentlemen both?" said Maurice.

"No, no," said Geneviève, blushing.

"And yet you said your maiden name was Geneviève du Treilly."

"Frankly, Monsieur Maurice, my family was rich, but had no claim to nobility."

"You do not trust me," said the young man, smiling.

"Oh, yes! I do," replied Geneviève. "In America my father was connected with the father of Monsieur Morand. Monsieur Dixmer was managing man to Monsieur Morand. We were ruined, and Monsieur Morand, knowing that Monsieur Dixmer was a man of independent fortune, presented him to my father, who in his turn presented him to me. I saw that my father had beforehand resolved on my marriage. I understood it was the wish of my family. I did not love Monsieur Dixmer, neither had I ever loved any one, but I accepted him.

"I have now been Dixmer's wife for three years, and I am bound to say that he has proved to me so good and excellent a husband, that notwithstanding the difference of taste and the disparity of age you have remarked, I have never even for a moment experienced the slightest feeling of regret."

"But," said Maurice, "when you married Monsieur Dixmer he was not at the head of this manufactory."

"No, we lived at Blois. After the 10th of August

Monsieur Dixmer purchased this house and the adjoining workshops; and that I might not be annoyed by the workmen, and to spare me the sight of many things repulsive to a person of my habits, — which are, as you observed, Maurice, a little aristocratic, — he gave me this pavilion, where I live alone, retired, gratifying my various fancies and desires, and happy when a friend like yourself, Maurice, comes either to distract or partake in my reveries."

And Geneviève tendered her hand to Maurice, which he ardently kissed. Geneviève blushed slightly.

"Now, my friend," said the young woman, drawing away her hand, "you know how I became the wife of Monsieur Dixmer."

"Yes," said Maurice, regarding Geneviève with great attention; "but you have not told me how Monsieur Morand came to be associated with your husband."

"Oh, that is very simple," said Geneviève. "Monsieur Dixmer had, as I have told you, some fortune, but still not sufficient to engage alone in a large concern like this. The son of Monsieur Morand, his protector, as I have already mentioned, — this friend of my father, you will remember, — provided half the funds, and as he possesses a good knowledge of chemistry, he devotes himself to various improvements with the energy you have remarked, and, thanks to which, the business of Monsieur Dixmer, who has charge of all the practical part, has extended immensely."

"Monsieur Morand is also a great friend of yours, is he not, Madame?" said Maurice.

"Monsieur Morand is a noble-hearted being, one of the worthiest men in existence," gravely replied Geneviève.

"If he has given you no other proofs," said Maurice, a little piqued at the importance accorded by Geneviève to the young man, the partner of her husband, "than divid-

ing the expenses of this establishment with Monsieur Dixmer, and inventing a new dye for morocco, allow me to say that you rather over-rate his merits."

"He has given me many other proofs, sir," said Geneviève.

"He is young, is he not?" said Maurice. "His green spectacles render it difficult to tell his age."

"He is thirty-five."

"You have known him then a long time?"

"From infancy."

Maurice bit his lips; he had always suspected Morand loved Geneviève.

"Oh!" said Maurice, "that explains his familiarity with you."

"It seems to me, sir," said Geneviève, smiling, "that this familiarity, which is hardly even that of a friend, does not need any explanation."

"Oh, pardon me, Madame, you know all affectionate natures are jealous, and my friendship was jealous of that you appear to feel for Monsieur Morand."

He ceased talking. Geneviève also remained silent. Nothing further was said that day respecting Morand, and Maurice quitted Geneviève more than ever in love, for he was jealous.

However blinded the young man might be by his passion, whatever turmoil might be in his heart, there were in the recital of Geneviève many gaps, much hesitation, and many concealments, to which at the moment he had paid no attention, but which now returned to his memory and strangely tortured him. The feeling that there was some mystery about the family could not be dispelled even by the liberty allowed him by Dixmer of conversing with Geneviève as often and as long as he pleased, nor by the solitary interview they had together

every evening. Moreover, Maurice had now become a constant and expected guest at the house, where he not only enjoyed unrestrained intercourse with Geneviève, who seemed guarded by her angelic purity from any advances on the part of the young man, but he now escorted her in all the excursions made from time to time in the quarter in which she lived. In the midst of this established intimacy one thing surprised him. The more he sought (perhaps the better to watch his sentiments for Geneviève) the friendship of Morand, by whose genius, notwithstanding his prejudice, he felt himself captivated, and whose pleasing manners won him more and more every day, the greater the inclination evinced by this whimsical man to avoid him. Of this he complained bitterly to Geneviève; for he did not doubt that Morand had discerned in him a rival, and that his conduct proceeded from jealousy.

"The Citizen Morand hates me," said he one day to Geneviève.

"You?" said Geneviève, with a look of astonishment. "You? — Monsieur Morand hates you?"

"Yes; I am sure of it."

"And why should he hate you?"

"Do you wish me to tell you?" cried Maurice.

"Certainly," replied Geneviève.

"Well, then, because I —"

Maurice stopped; he was going to say, "because I love you."

"I cannot tell you why," replied Maurice, coloring. The fierce Republican near Geneviève was as timid and as confused as a young girl.

Geneviève smiled.

"Say," replied she, "there is no sympathy between you, and I may perhaps believe you. You are of a sanguine

temperament, have a brilliant intellect; and you are a man of birth and education, while Morand is a merchant grafted on a chemist. He is timid and retiring. It is this timidity that deters him from taking the first step toward your acquaintance."

"And who asks him to make the first advance toward me? I have made fifty to him, and he has never responded. No," continued Maurice, shaking his head; "that cannot be the reason."

"What is it, then?" said Geneviève.

Maurice chose to remain silent.

The day after this conversation with Geneviève, he visited her at two o'clock in the afternoon, and found her ready dressed to go out. "Welcome," said she, "you will act as my chevalier?"

"Where are we going, then?" demanded Maurice.

"I am going to Auteuil. The weather is delightful. I mean to walk part of the way. Our carriage will convey us to the barrier, where it will wait for us. We will then walk to Auteuil, and when I have finished my business there, we will return."

"Oh!" said Maurice, "what a delightful day you offer me!"

The two young people went on their journey. Beyond Passy the carriage put them down, and they continued their journey on foot.

On arriving at Auteuil, Geneviève stopped.

"Wait for me," said she, "at the entrance to the park; when I have finished I will rejoin you."

"Where are you going then?" demanded Maurice.

"To a friend's house."

"Where I cannot accompany you?"

Geneviève smilingly shook her head.

"Impossible!" said she.

Maurice bit his lips.

"Very well," said he; "I will wait."

"Ah! what?" said Geneviève.

"Nothing," replied Maurice. "Shall you be long?"

"If I had thought it would inconvenience you, Maurice, if I had known you were engaged," said Geneviève, "I would not have requested you to do me the slight favor to accompany me to-day. I might have asked —"

"Monsieur Morand," interrupted Maurice, sharply.

"No; you are aware Monsieur Morand is at the manufactory at Rambouillet, and does not return till this evening."

"Oh, it is to that circumstance that I owe the honor?"

"Maurice," said Geneviève, softly, "I cannot keep the person I came to see waiting; but if this puts you to the least inconvenience return to Paris, only send back the carriage for me."

"No, no, Madame," replied Maurice, quickly, "I am at your service." He bowed to Geneviève, who, sighing softly, proceeded on her way, and entered Auteuil.

Maurice went to the appointed place, and commenced walking backward and forward with long impatient strides, cutting off with his cane like Tarquin all the heads of the weeds, flowers, and thistles, which he found upon the road; and like all persons whose thoughts are preoccupied, he continued without pausing to trace and retrace his footsteps.

And what occupied his thoughts? The desire to know whether Geneviève loved him or not. Her manner to him was that of a friend or sister, but he felt this was no longer sufficient. He loved her with an entire love. She had become his sole thought by day, his constantly re-

newed dream by night. At one time, he only asked to see her again; nothing could satisfy him now but her love.

Geneviève was absent for an hour, which to him had appeared an age; he then saw her approaching him with a smile upon her lips. Maurice, on the contrary, went to meet her with a frowning brow.

Geneviève, smiling, took his arm.

"Here I am," said she; "pardon me, *mon ami*, for having made you wait."

Maurice only replied by a bow; and they then entered a shady lane, which, by a winding path, conducted them into the high-road.

It was one of those delicious evenings in spring when every plant sends its fragrance on high, when every bird, either seated on the branches, or skipping from spray to spray, warbles its songs of praise to God; one of those evenings that seem destined to live forever in our memory. Maurice was silent, Geneviève pensive. She fondled with one hand the flowers of a bouquet which she held in the other that rested on the arm of Maurice.

"What is the matter with you?" said he, all at once, to Geneviève; "and what makes you so sad to-day?"

Geneviève might have answered, My happiness. She regarded him tenderly.

"But you," said she, "are you not more than usually sad to-day?"

"I," said Maurice, "have reason to be sad, — I am unhappy; but you —"

"You unhappy?"

"Doubtless; do you not perceive sometimes from my tremulous tones how much I suffer? Does it not often happen, when I am talking with you or your husband, I am compelled suddenly to seek the air, because I feel as if my heart would burst?"

"But," demanded Geneviève, embarrassed, "to what do you attribute this suffering?"

"If I were an affected lady," said Maurice, attempting a laugh, "I should say it was a nervous attack."

"And at this moment do you suffer?"

"Much," said Maurice.

"Let us return, then."

"What, already, Madame?"

"Certainly."

"True," said the young man, "I forgot Monsieur Morand would return from Rambouillet this evening; and it is fast approaching." Geneviève looked at him reproachfully.

"Oh, again!" said she.

"Why then did you, the other day, favor me with so high a eulogium of Monsieur Morand? It is your own fault."

"How long is it since, to people we esteem," demanded Geneviève, "we may not express our real opinion of an estimable man?"

"It must be a very lively esteem to cause you to accelerate your pace, as you at this moment are doing, for fear of being too late by a few minutes."

"You are to-day absolutely unjust, Maurice. Have I not passed part of the day with you?"

"You are right; and I am indeed too exacting," replied Maurice, giving way to his impetuosity. "Let us return to meet Monsieur Morand."

Geneviève felt her displeasure pass from her mind to her heart.

"Yes," said she; "let us return to Monsieur Morand. He at least is a friend who never causes me the slightest pain."

"They are, indeed, valuable friends," said Maurice,

choking with jealousy, "and I, for my part, should like a few such."

They were now upon the high-road; the horizon crimsoned as the departing rays of the setting sun glistened upon the gilt moldings of the dome of the Hôtel des Invalides. A star which on a previous evening had attracted the attention of Geneviève, sparkled in the azure of heaven. Geneviève quitted Maurice's arm with melancholy resignation.

"Why have you made me suffer?" said she.

"Ah!" said Maurice, "I am not so clever as some people, and do not know how to make myself loved."

"Maurice!" said Geneviève.

"Oh, Madame, if he is always good, always composed, it is because he does not suffer."

Geneviève again placed her white hand on the powerful arm of Maurice.

"I pray you," said she, in an altered tone, "to speak no more; to speak no more!"

"And why?"

"Because your voice makes me ill."

"You are displeased with everything about me, even my voice?"

"Be silent, I conjure you."

"I will obey you, Madame," and the impetuous young man passed his hand over his face, damp with perspiration.

Geneviève saw that he really suffered. People of Maurice's temperament have griefs of their own, little known or understood by the generality of mankind.

"You are my friend, Maurice, a precious friend," said Geneviève, looking at him kindly; "do not deprive me of your valuable friendship."

"Oh, you would not long regret it," said Maurice.

"You are mistaken," said Geneviève, "I should regret it very long, and forever."

"Geneviève! Geneviève!" cried Maurice, "have pity upon me."

Geneviève shuddered. It was the first time Maurice had uttered her name in these passionate accents.

"And now," continued Maurice, "since you have divined me, let me tell you all, Geneviève, for though you should kill me with a look, I have been silent too long; I will speak, Geneviève."

"Sir," said the young woman, "I have supplicated you in the name of our friendship to remain silent; I still pray you to do so, for my sake, if not for your own. Not another word; in the name of Heaven! not another word!"

"Friendship, friendship! if it be a friendship like this you profess for me, that you feel for Monsieur Morand, I wish for no more of your friendship, — I, Geneviève, require more than others."

"Enough," said Madame Dixmer, with the gesture of a queen, — "enough, Monsieur Lindey; here is our carriage, please to conduct me to my husband's house."

Maurice trembled with fever and emotion, when Geneviève, to rejoin the carriage, which indeed was only a few paces distant, placed her hand on his arm.

They both entered the carriage; Geneviève took the front seat, and Maurice the one opposite. They traversed Paris without either one or the other having uttered a word. Only, all the way, Geneviève had held her handkerchief before her eyes. When they entered the building, Dixmer was occupied in his counting-house, Morand had just returned from Rambouillet, and was changing his dress. Geneviève held out her hand to Maurice, as she entered her chamber.

"Adieu! Maurice, you have wished it."

Maurice said nothing, but walked directly to the mantel-piece, where hung a portrait of Geneviève. He ardently kissed it, pressed it to his heart, replaced it, and went out. Maurice reached home without knowing how he arrived there; he had passed through Paris without seeing anything, without hearing anything; all that had happened to him appeared like a dream; he was unable to account for his actions, his words, or the sentiments which had induced them. There are moments when the most serene spirits succumb under the violence of their own emotions.

It was, as we have said, rather a race than a return, on the part of Maurice. He undressed himself without the assistance of his *valet-de-chambre*, nor did he reply to his cook, who displayed his supper duly prepared for him, but taking the day's letters from the table, he read them all, one after the other, without comprehending a single word. The mists of jealousy, that intoxication of reason, were not yet dissipated. At ten o'clock Maurice mechanically sought his bed, as, indeed, he had done everything else since his parting with Geneviève.

If Maurice in his cooler moments had been told of this extraordinary behavior in another, he would not have been able to comprehend it, but would have considered him mad to have pursued this desperate conduct, totally unauthorized either by too much reserve or too much "abandon" on the part of Geneviève. He now only felt that a terrible blow had been dealt to all his hopes, of which he had never even to himself rendered an account, and upon which, vague as they were, reposed all his visions of happiness, — dreams which like an unseizable vapor floated shapelessly toward the horizon, and there disappeared. Thus it happened, as it nearly always does in

such cases, that Maurice, stunned by this blow, dropped asleep directly he found himself in bed, where he remained free from all sentiment till the morrow. He was awakened by the noise of the official opening the door, who came as usual to unclose the windows which looked upon a large garden, and to bring some flowers.

At that time, in the year '93, much attention was paid to the culture of forced flowers, and Maurice dearly loved all flowers; but now without even bestowing a glance upon them, he half raised his heavy head, and supporting it on his hand, endeavored to recall the events of the preceding evening. Maurice asked himself, without being able to account for it, the cause of this mad folly. The sole cause was jealousy of Morand; but the moment was certainly ill-chosen to give vent to his jealousy of a man when this man was at Rambouillet, and while enjoying a *tête-à-tête* with the woman one loves, surrounded by the most enchanting scenery, on one of the lovely days of spring.

It was not suspicion of the inmates at the house at Auteuil, where Geneviève had remained an hour; no, the incessant torment of his life was the idea that Morand loved Geneviève, and yet — singular phantasy of the brain, strange combination of caprice — not a gesture, a look, not even a word from Dixmer's partner had afforded the slightest grounds for this belief.

The voice of the *valet-de-chambre* aroused him from this revery.

"Citizen," said he, showing him the open letters on the table, "have you selected those you wish to keep, or shall they all be burned?"

"Burn what?" said Maurice.

"The letters the Citizen read last night, before he retired to bed."

Maurice could not remember having read one.

"Burn all," said he.

"Here are to-day's letters, Citizen," said the official.

He presented a packet of letters to Maurice, and threw the others in the fire. Maurice took the letters, felt the impression of a seal, and fancied that he recognized the perfume of a friend, and looking over his correspondence he found a sealed envelope and hand-writing that made him tremble. This man, who bravely faced danger, trembled before the odor of a letter. The official approached him to inquire what was the matter, but Maurice signified a wish to be alone.

He turned and returned this letter; he felt a presentiment it contained misery for him, and started and trembled before unknown misfortune.

Having collected all his courage he at length opened it, and read as follows: —

CITIZEN MAURICE, — It has become necessary that we should burst these bonds — bonds which, on your side, affect to exceed the bounds of friendship. You are a man of honor, Citizen, and now that a night has passed since the occurrences of yesterday evening, you ought to comprehend that your presence at our house is no longer desirable. I leave it to you to excuse yourself in any way you think best to my husband. On the arrival this day of any letter from you to Monsieur Dixmer I shall be convinced that I have to regret the loss of a friend who has unfortunately been most imprudent, and whom all social propriety will deter me from meeting for the future. Adieu forever. GENEVIÈVE.

P. S. The bearer awaits your reply.

Maurice called; the *valet-de-chambre* reappeared.

"Who brought this letter?"

"A messenger."

"Is he waiting?"

"Yes."

Maurice did not sigh, did not for a moment hesitate, but, partly dressing, seated himself before his writing-desk, and taking the first sheet of paper that came to hand (he found it had on it the impression of a head with the name of the section), he wrote, —

"CITIZEN DIXMER, — I respected you, and I still do so; but I cannot visit you any longer."

Maurice considered what reason he could assign for not visiting Dixmer, and one idea alone presented itself to his mind, that which at this epoch would have occurred to any one. He thus continued, —

"Certain rumors are afloat relative to your lukewarmness in public affairs. I have no wish to accuse you, and no mission to defend you. Receive my respects, and feel assured your secrets will remain forever buried in my heart."

Maurice did not even revise this letter, written, as we have said, under the impression of the first idea that presented itself. He did not doubt the effect it would produce. Dixmer, an excellent patriot, as Maurice imagined from his conversation at least, would be much grieved at receiving it, his wife and Monsieur Morand would no doubt influence him not to reply, and forgetfulness would gradually spread itself like a dark veil over the happy past, transforming it into a dark and melancholy future. Maurice signed and sealed his letter, gave it to the official, and the messenger departed.

Then a heart-felt sigh escaped the Republican; he took his hat and gloves and proceeded to the section.

He hoped, poor Brutus, to recover his stoicism by occupying himself with public affairs.

Public affairs were indeed terrible; the 31st of May was preparing. The "Terreur,' which, like a torrent, pre-

cipitated itself from the height of the Montagne, endeavored to carry away the dike opposed to it by the Girondins, those audacious "Modéréts" who had dared to demand vengeance for the massacres of September, and to wrestle for an instant to save the life of the king.

While Maurice was working with an energy that drove the fever from his heart to his head, the messenger had re-entered the old Rue Saint Jacques, filling the dwelling there with terror and astonishment.

The letter, after passing through Geneviève's hands, was given by her to Dixmer.

Dixmer opened and read it, without at first understanding it; he then communicated the contents to the Citizen Morand, who, becoming as pale as death, supported his head upon his hand.

In the situation in which Dixmer, Morand, and their companions found themselves (a situation totally unknown to Maurice, but which our readers have penetrated) this letter was like a thunderbolt.

"Is this an upright, honest man?" asked Dixmer, in great distress.

"Yes," replied Morand, without the least hesitation.

"Never mind," said the advocate for extreme measures, "you see we were very wrong not to kill him."

"My friend," said Morand, "we struggle against violence, we brand it with the name of crime. We have acted rightly, whatever may be the result, in not assassinating this man. I repeat, I believe Maurice to possess a noble, generous spirit."

"Yes; but if so noble and generous a spirit belongs to this warm Republican, perhaps he may regard it in the light of a crime, if he has made any discovery, not to immolate his own honor, as they say, 'on the altar of his country.'"

"But," said Morand, "do you think he knows anything?"

"Do you not understand? He speaks of secrets buried in his heart.

"These secrets are evidently those confided to him by me relative to our contraband transactions. He knows no others."

"But," said Morand, "this interview at Auteuil? does he suspect anything? You know he accompanied your wife?"

"It was I who told Geneviève to take Maurice with her as a protector."

"Listen," said Morand, "we shall soon see if these surmises be true. The turn of our battalion to guard the Temple happens on the 2d of June, — that is to say in eight days. You are captain, Dixmer, and I lieutenant; if our battalion or even our company receives a counter-order, like that received the other day by the battalion of Buttes-des-Moulins, which Santerre has replaced by that of Gravilliers, all is discovered, and we have only to flee from Paris, or die fighting. But if all follows in the usual course of things —"

"We are lost all the same," replied Dixmer.

"How so?"

"*Pardieu!* does not all revolve upon the co-operation of this young municipal? Was it not he who, without knowing it, was to open the road for us to the queen?"

"That is true!" said Morand, confounded.

"You see, then," said Dixmer, knitting his brows, "that at any price we must renew our intimacy with this young man."

"But if he refuse, if he fear to compromise himself?"

"Listen!" said Dixmer, "I will question Geneviève; she saw him last, perhaps she may know something more."

"Dixmer," said Morand, "it is with pain I see you mixing Geneviève with all our plots; not that I fear any indiscretion on her part. O great God! the drama we are acting is a dreadful one, and I at once blush and tremble to place the head of a woman at stake."

"The head of a woman," said Dixmer, "weighs as heavily as that of a man, where stratagem, candor, and beauty can do as much and sometimes even more than force, strength, power, or courage. Geneviève shares in our convictions and our sympathies. Geneviève shall also share our fate."

"Well, my friend," said Morand, "I have said all I ought to say. Geneviève is in every way worthy of the mission you have given her, or rather, that she has taken upon herself. It is saints who become martyrs."

And he held out his delicate and effeminate hand to Dixmer, who roughly pressed it between his own. Then Dixmer, recommending Morand and his companions to watch with increased vigilance, quitted them, and entered Geneviève's apartments.

She was seated before a table, bending over a piece of embroidery. She turned round at the noise of the opening door, and recognized Dixmer.

"Ah! is it you, *mon ami?*" said she.

"Yes," said Dixmer, with a placid, smiling countenance. "I have received a letter from your friend Maurice, which I cannot understand in the least. Read it, and tell me what you think of it."

Geneviève took the letter with a hand of which (with all her self-command) she could not disguise the tremor, and read. Dixmer followed her eyes as they ran over every line.

"Well?" said he, when she had finished.

"Well! I think that Monsieur Maurice Lindey is an

honest man, and from him we have nothing to fear," replied Geneviève, with the greatest calmness.

"You think he is ignorant who the persons are you visited at Auteuil?"

"I am certain that he is."

"Why then this sudden determination? Did he appear yesterday less friendly or more excited than usual?"

"No," said Geneviève; "I believe he was just the same."

"Consider well what you tell me, Geneviève, for you must understand your reply will greatly influence our future projects."

"Wait, then," said she, with an emotion that overthrew all her attempt at calmness. "Wait —"

"Well!" said Dixmer, all the muscles of his face slightly contracting; "collect your thoughts, Geneviève."

"Yes!" said the young woman, "yes, I remember, yesterday he was not particularly civil. Monsieur Maurice," continued she, "is a little tyrannical in his friendship, and," hesitatingly added, "sometimes we have quarrelled for whole weeks."

"This is then merely a quarrel?" demanded Dixmer.

"Most probably."

"Geneviève, understand this: in our position it is not probability that will suffice, it is certitude we require."

"Ah, well, dear, I am certain."

"This letter, then, can be only a pretext for not visiting us again?"

"*Mon ami*, how can you wish that I should speak to you about such things?"

"Speak, Geneviève, speak; of any other woman I would not ask it."

"It is a pretext," said Geneviève, looking down.

"Ah!" said Dixmer. Then after a moment's silence, placing upon his wife's chair the hand with which he had been striving to compress the beatings of his heart, —

"Will you do me a service?" said he.

"What service?" said Geneviève, turning around surprised.

"To prevent even the shadow of danger. Maurice is, perhaps, deeper in our secrets than we imagine. That which you believe a pretext may, perhaps, be a reality. Write him a line."

"I!" said Geneviève, starting.

"Yes, you. Tell him that you have opened the letter and desire an explanation. He will then call, you can interrogate him, and will easily discover what is the matter."

"Oh, no!" cried Geneviève, "I cannot do as you wish me; I will not do it."

"Dear Geneviève, when interests so powerful as those that rest upon us are at stake, will you recoil before any paltry consideration of self-love?"

"I have told you my opinion of Maurice, Monsieur," said Geneviève, "he is honest and brave, but capricious; and I do not choose to submit to any authority but that of my husband."

This answer, returned with so much calmness, and at the same time firmness, convinced Dixmer that to insist further at this moment would be worse than useless. He did not add another word, but looked at Geneviève without seeming to do so, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and went out.

Morand was awaiting his return with great anxiety. Dixmer repeated word for word all that had been said.

"Well!" said Morand, "we will wait, and think no more about it; rather than I would cast a shadow of care

on your wife, rather than wound her self-love, I would renounce —"

Dixmer placed his hand upon his shoulder.

"You are mad, sir," said he, looking at him steadily, "or else you do not know what you are saying."

"What! Dixmer, do you think —"

"I think, Chevalier, that you have no more self-command than I have, to give utterance to sentiments on the impulse of the moment. Neither you, I, nor Geneviève belong to ourselves, Morand. We are the chosen defenders of a certain cause, and this cause depends upon its supporters."

Morand trembled, and preserved a gloomy and thoughtful silence. They took several turns round the garden without exchanging a word. Then Dixmer left Morand.

"I have some orders to give," said he, in a calm voice. "I must leave you, Monsieur Morand."

Morand held out his hand to Dixmer, and looked after him as he turned away.

"Poor Dixmer," said he, "I fear much that in all this you risk the most."

Dixmer returned to the manufactory, and having issued several orders, looked over the day-book, and distributed bread and fuel to the poor of the section, went home, and changed his working dress for his walking costume immediately on his arrival there.

An hour afterward Maurice Lindey, while deeply engaged in his readings and allocutions, was interrupted by the voice of his official, whispering in his ear, —

"Citizen Lindey, some one who, so he pretends at least, has something of importance to say to you, is waiting at your house."

Maurice, on entering, was much surprised at meeting the master-tanner, who had there comfortably installed

himself, and was turning over the newspapers. All the way along he had questioned the domestic, who, of course, not knowing Dixmer, could afford him no clew to his recognition.

On perceiving Dixmer, Maurice stopped at the threshold of the door, and blushed in spite of himself.

Dixmer smilingly arose, and held out his hand.

"What ails you? and what have you written to me?" he inquired of the young man. "Indeed, my dear Maurice, I feel it sensibly. You designate me as 'lukewarm and a false patriot.' Now as you dare not repeat these accusations to my face, acknowledge you wish to seek a quarrel with me."

"I will avow anything you please, my dear Dixmer, for your conduct to me has always been that of a worthy man; but I have nevertheless made a resolution, and that resolution is irrevocable."

"But how is that?" said Dixmer, "when according to your own confession you have nothing to reproach us with, and yet, notwithstanding, you leave us?"

"My dear Dixmer, believe me, acting as I now am, and depriving myself of such a friend, I must be actuated by powerful motives."

"Yes; but under any circumstances," said Dixmer, affecting to smile, "these reasons are not those you have written. What you have written to me is merely a subterfuge."

Maurice reflected an instant.

"Listen, Dixmer," said he; "we live in an epoch when a doubt conveyed in a letter can and must annoy you; this I can well understand. It would then be acting like a dishonorable man to allow you to remain in this state of inquietude. Yes, Dixmer, the reasons I gave you were not the true ones."

This avowal, which should have cleared the face of the merchant, only seemed the more to cloud it.

"But at least tell me the true motive," said Dixmer.

"I cannot tell you," said Maurice; "and yet I am certain if you knew it, you would afford me your approval."

Dixmer still continued to press him.

"Then you really wish to know it," said Maurice.

"Yes," replied Dixmer.

"Well, then," replied Maurice, who felt a sensation of relief as he approached the truth; "this is the truth. You have a young and beautiful wife, who is as virtuous as she is beautiful; yet Madame Dixmer's well-known character cannot prevent my frequent visits to your house from being misinterpreted."

Dixmer turned rather pale.

"Indeed!" said he. "Then, my dear Maurice, the husband should thank you for the wrong you do the friend?"

"Understand," said Maurice, "I have not the folly to suppose my presence can be dangerous to your repose, or that of your wife; but it might, perhaps, afford subject for calumny, and you are aware the more absurd the scandal, the easier it gains belief."

"Absurd!" said Dixmer, shrugging his shoulders.

"Absurd, as much as you please," said Maurice, "but separate, we shall not the less be good friends, for we shall have nothing to reproach ourselves with; while, on the contrary, if near —"

"Well! What then?"

"There would be food for scandal."

"Do you think, Maurice, that I should believe —"

"Oh, let us say no more," said the young man.

"But why did you write this instead of telling it to me, Maurice?"

"Just to avoid the scene of this moment."

"And are you vexed, Maurice, that I respected you sufficiently to demand an explanation?"

"No; on the contrary, I swear I am glad to have seen you once again before our final separation."

"Our final separation, Citizen! you whom we esteem so much!" taking Maurice's hand and pressing it between his own.

Maurice started.

"Morand," continued Dixmer, who failed not to notice this start, "Morand said to me again and again this morning, 'Do all in your power to bring back Maurice.'"

"Monsieur," said the young man, frowning and drawing away his hand, "I did not believe I stood very high in the estimation of Monsieur Morand."

"Do you doubt it?" said Dixmer.

"I!" replied Maurice, "I neither believe nor doubt it, and have no motive to inquire on the subject. When I went to your house it was to visit yourself and your wife, and not on account of Monsieur Morand."

"You do not know him, Maurice," said Dixmer; "Morand possesses a noble soul."

"I grant it," said Maurice, smiling bitterly.

"Let us, however, return to the object of my visit," continued Dixmer.

Maurice bowed, like a man who hears all, but has nothing more to say.

"You say, then, that these reports have already circulated?"

"Yes, Citizen."

"Well, then, let us speak frankly. Why should you pay any attention to the silly prattling of idle neighbors? Have you not your own clear conscience, Maurice; and Geneviève, has she not her sense of honor?"

"I am younger than you," said Maurice, who began to be astonished at this pertinacity, "and perhaps view things with more susceptibility. This is why I declare that on the reputation of such a woman as Geneviève a shadow even should not be permitted to be cast. Permit me, therefore, my dear Dixmer, to adhere to my former resolution."

"And now," said Dixmer, "since we are in order for confession, tell me one thing more."

"What!" said Maurice, coloring, "what more do you wish me to avow?"

"That it is neither politics, nor the report of your assiduity at my house, that induces you to leave us."

"What is it, then?"

"The secret you have discovered."

"What secret?" demanded Maurice, with so *naïve* an expression of curiosity, as completely to reassure the tanner.

"The secret of the smuggling affair, which you discovered the same evening when our acquaintance commenced in so strange a manner. You have never forgiven me this fraud, and accuse me of being a bad Republican because I employ English products in my manufactory."

"My dear Dixmer, I solemnly declare to you that when I visited at your house, I had totally forgotten I was in the house of a contrabandist."

"Truly?"

"Truly."

"You really, then, had no other reason for abandoning the house than that you have stated?"

"Upon my honor."

"Well," said Dixmer, rising and taking the young man's hand, "I hope you will re-consider this resolution

which has been productive of pain to us all, and will again return to us as usual."

Maurice bowed, but made no reply, which was of course equivalent to a refusal. Dixmer left, annoyed at not having been able to re-establish an intimacy with this man whom certain circumstances had rendered not only useful to him but almost indispensable. Maurice was agitated by a variety of emotions of a contrary nature. Dixmer entreated him to return. Geneviève would pardon him. Why then should he despond? Lorin in his place would have selected a crowd of aphorisms from his favorite authors. But then he had Geneviève's letter, that formal dismissal, which he had carried with him to the section and placed near his heart; also the little word received from her the day after he had rescued her from the cowards who insulted her; and lastly, the obstinate jealousy entertained by the young man against the detestable Morand, the first cause of his rupture with Geneviève.

Maurice remained inflexible in his resolution. But it must be acknowledged the privation of his daily visits to the old Rue Saint Jacques formed a sad blank in his existence; and when the hour arrived at which he had been accustomed to pay his daily visit to the quarter Saint Victor, he fell into a profound fit of melancholy, and began, from that moment, to experience every aspect of hope and regret.

Each morning on awakening he expected to receive a letter from Dixmer, and acknowledged to himself that he who had so firmly resisted all personal persuasion, would now at last yield to a letter; each day he sallied out in hopes of meeting Geneviève, and, beforehand, had arranged a thousand means of accosting her; each evening he returned home in hopes of there finding that messenger

who had one morning unwittingly brought him the grief which had now become his constant companion.

Often, in his hours of despair, his strong nature rebelled at the idea of enduring so much torture, without retaliating upon the primary cause of all his suffering and all his misery, Morand. Then he formed a project to go and seek some quarrel with Morand; but Dixmer's partner was so inoffensive and gentlemanly that to insult or provoke him would be a cowardly proceeding on the part of a Colossus like Maurice.

It was fortunate that Lorin came to distract the attention of Maurice from troubles which he obstinately concealed from his friend, though he did not deny to him their existence. Lorin had used every argument of theory and practice to secure to its country that heart overwhelmed in grief by another love. But although the political situation was grave, and although in another state of mind it might have dragged Maurice into the centre of the whirlpool, it could not restore to the young Republican that first activity which had distinguished him as a hero on the 14th of July and the 10th of August.

In fact, two systems, for the last ten months in view of each other, which thus far had only made some light attacks on each other, and had engaged in a few skirmishes as a prelude, now prepared to meet body to body, and it was evident that the struggle once begun would end fatally for one or the other. These two systems, born in the bosom of the Revolution itself, were those of Moderation, represented by the Girondins, — that is to say, by Brissot, Pétion, Vergniaud, Valazé, Lanjuinais, Barbaroux, etc., — and the Terror, or the Mountain, represented by Danton, Robespierre, Chénier, Fabre, Marat, Collot d'Herbois, Hébert, etc.

After the 10th of August, as after every action, the power appeared to pass into the hands of the Moderates. A ministry had been formed from the wreck of the former ministry, and of a new coalition. Roland, Servien, and Clavières, former ministers, had been recalled; Danton, Monge, and Le Brun had been nominated afresh. With one exception only, all these ministers belonged to the Moderate party. Of course when we say "Moderate" we speak relatively.

But the 10th of August had had its echo from afar, and the coalition hastened to march, not to the assistance of Louis XVI. personally, but of the royalist principle tottering at its basis. Then were heard the menacing words of Brunswick, and as a terrible realization, Longwy and Verdun had fallen into the power of the enemy. Then the Terrorist reaction had taken place; then Danton had dreams of the days of September, and had realized the bloody dream which displayed to the enemy all France as a scene of wholesale assassination, and ready to struggle for her precarious existence with all the energy of despair. September had saved France, but in saving her had rendered her lawless. France saved, and the Energetic party having become powerless, the Moderates regained some strength, and wished to recriminate those dreadful days. The words "murderer" and "assassin" had been uttered; a new name had even been added to the national vocabulary, — it was that of "Septembriseur."

Danton had bravely accepted it. Like Clovis he had for a moment inclined his head under the baptism of blood, only to raise it still more lofty and menacing. Another opportunity to renew the Terror presented itself; it was the process of the king. Violence and moderation entered, not altogether to wrestle against persons but principles. The trial of relative strength was made on

the royal prisoner. Moderation was overcome, and the head of Louis XVI. fell upon the scaffold.

As the 10th of August, so the 21st of January had restored to the coalition all its energy. It was still the same man who opposed them, but not the same fortune. Dumouriez, arrested in his progress by the disorder of all the administrations, which prevented the succor of men or money from reaching him, declared against the Jacobins, whom he accused of causing this disorganization, adopted the party of the Girondins, and ruined them in declaring himself their friend.

Then the Vendée arose; the departments threatened; misfortune producing treason, and treason misfortune. The Jacobins accused the Moderates, and wished to strike their death-blow on the 10th of March, — that is to say, on the eventful evening when our story commenced. But too much precipitation on the part of their adversaries saved them, and perhaps also the rain which caused Pétion (that profound anatomist of the Parisian mind) to remark, —

"It rains! there will be nothing to-night."

But since the 10th of March everything threatened ruin to the Girondins. Marat was accused and acquitted. Robespierre and Danton were reconciled, at least as a lion and tiger are reconciled before killing the bull they both intend to devour; Henriot, the Septembriseur, nominated Commandant-General to the National Guard; everything presaged that awful day which would carry away by storm the last obstacle the Revolution opposed to the Terror.

Such were the great events in which under any other circumstances Maurice would have taken that active part for which his powerful nature and exalted patriotism so fully qualified him. But happily, or unhappily, for Mau-

rice, neither the exhortations of Lorin, nor the terrible demonstrations on the streets, had been able to divert his mind from the one idea that possessed it; and when the 31st of May arrived, the fierce assailant of the Bastille and the Tuileries was laid upon his bed, devoured by that fever which destroys the strongest, and which nevertheless a word can dissipate, a look can heal.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE THIRTY-FIRST OF MAY.

DURING the morning of the 31st of May, when the tocsin and beat of drum had been sounding since the break of day, the battalion of the faubourg Saint Victor entered the Temple.

When all the usual formalities had been gone through, and the posts distributed, the municipals on service arrived, bringing with them four pieces of cannon in addition to those already forming the battery at the gate of the Temple.

At the same time Santerre arrived, with his epaulets of yellow wool, and a coat on which his patriotism was displayed by large spots of grease. He reviewed the battalion, which was in a prôper state, but on counting the municipals, found only three.

"Why are there only three municipals?" inquired he; "and who is the bad citizen who fails us?"

"The absent citizen, General, is not lukewarm," replied our old acquaintance, Agricola; "for it is the secretary of the section Lepelletier, the chief of the brave Thermopyles, the Citizen Maurice Lindey."

"Well, well," said Santerre, "I know as well as yourself the patriotism of the Citizen Maurice Lindey; but that will not deter me, if he is not here in five minutes, from inscribing his name in the list of the absent."

And Santerre passed on to other details.

A few paces from the general, at the moment he pronounced these words, a captain of chasseurs and a soldier had stationed themselves, one leaning against his gun, the other seated on a cannon.

"Did you hear?" said the captain to the soldier, in a low tone. "Maurice has not yet arrived."

"Yes; but rest assured he will arrive, unless there should be a riot."

"In case he should not come," said the captain, "I will place you sentinel on the staircase; and as she will probable ascend to the tower, you will be able to speak a word to her."

At this moment a man, evidently a municipal from his tricolored scarf, entered; but this man being a stranger to the captain and the chasseur, they both regarded him attentively.

"Citizen General," said the new-comer, addressing Santerre; "I request you to accept me in place of Citizen Maurice Lindey, who is ill. Here is the medical certificate; in eight days it will be my turn to mount guard. I now exchange with him; in eight days he will do duty for me, as to-day I will for him."

"Provided the Capets and Capettes live eight days longer," said one of the municipals.

Santerre replied by a slight smile to this pleasantry, and turning toward Maurice's proxy, —

"Very good," said he; "sign the register, in lieu of Maurice Lindey, and state in the column of observations the reason for this exchange."

The captain and chasseur exchanged looks of delight, mingled with astonishment.

"In eight days," said they.

"Captain Dixmer," cried Santerre, "take your position in the garden with your company."

"Come, Morand," said the captain to the chasseur his companion.

The drum sounded, and the company led by the master-tanner filed off in the direction prescribed. They piled arms, and the company divided into groups, which, according to their inclination, walked to and fro.

Their place of promenade was the same garden where, in the time of Louis XVI., the royal family came sometimes to take the air. This garden was naked, barren, and desolate, completely despoiled of trees, flowers, or verdure of any kind.

At about five-and-twenty paces, or perhaps rather nearer that portion of the wall built on the Rue Portefoin, was a species of cottage, which the foresight of the municipality had established for the convenience of the National Guard stationed at the Temple, who in days of riot, when they were not permitted to go out of the grounds, found it an accommodation to take their meals in this little cottage. The direction of this little alehouse had been a matter of contention, till at length concession was made in favor of an excellent patriot, the wife of a suburban killed on the 10th of August, who bore the name of Plumeau.

This little cabin, built of planks and mud, rose in the middle of a border, of which the bounds may still be recognized by a hedge of dwarf box-trees. It was composed of a single chamber, twelve feet square, under which extended a cave, the descent to which was by steps rudely cut in the earth itself. Here the Widow Plumeau stowed away her wine and provisions. This department was alternately managed by herself and daughter, a girl of twelve or fifteen years of age.

Hardly established at their bivouac, the National Guards separated, as we have said, some to saunter in

the garden, while others chatted with the hostess. Some amused themselves by criticising the designs traced upon the walls, which were all meant to be of a patriotic character, — such as the king pendent with this inscription, "Monsieur Veto taking an air-bath;" or the king guillotined with this, "Monsieur Veto spitting in the sack;" while others were giving gastronomical orders to Madame Plumeau, according to the suggestions of their different appetites. Among the latter were the captain and the chasseur whom we have previously remarked.

"Ah, Captain Dixmer!" said the *cantinière*, "I have some famous Saumur wine."

"But, Citizen Plumeau, in my opinion, at least, the Saumur wine is nothing without Brie cheese," replied the captain, who, before he stated this opinion, had carefully looked round, and detected the absence of his favorite viand.

"Ah! Captain, it is true; but the last morsel has been consumed."

"Well," said the captain, "no Brie cheese, no Saumur wine for me; and remark, Citizen Plumeau, my order would have been of some amount, as I had intended to treat all my company."

"But, Captain, I ask you to wait only five minutes, and I will run and procure some at the house of the citizen concierge who competes with me, and who always has it. I shall pay very dear, and you, I am sure, are too good a patriot not to compensate me."

"Yes, yes," replied Dixmer; "and in the mean time we will go down into the vault, and select our own wines."

"Make yourself at home, Captain, pray do."

And the Widow Plumeau ran with all her might toward the lodge of the concierge, while the captain and

chasseur, provided with a light, raised the trap-door, and descended into the cave.

"Good," said Morand, after an instant's inspection, "the cave extends in the direction of Rue Portefoin. It is nine or ten feet in depth, and there is no brickwork."

"What is the nature of the soil?" inquired Dixmer.

"Chalk; it is all made earth. These gardens have been turned over many times. There is nowhere any rock."

"Be quick," cried Dixmer, "I hear the clogs of our *vivandière;* take two bottles of wine and let us go up."

They both appeared at the trap-door as Madame Plumeau entered, carrying the cheese so strenuously insisted upon by Dixmer, while several chasseurs followed her, attracted by the favorable appearance of the said cheese.

Dixmer did the honors; he offered twenty bottles of wine to his company, while the Citizen Morand recounted the devotion of Curtius, the disinterestedness of Fabricius, and the patriotism of Brutus and Cassius, — histories almost as much appreciated as the Brie cheese and the Anjou wine offered by Dixmer, which is not saying a little.

Eleven o'olock struck. At half-past, the sentinels were relieved.

"Does not the Austrian generally take her walk from twelve to one?" asked Dixmer of Tison, who passed the cabin.

"From twelve to one, exactly," and he began to sing.

His song was received with a shout of laughter from the National Guard. Dixmer immediately summoned those men in his company whose duty it was to mount guard from half-past eleven o'clock till half-past one, told

them to hasten their breakfast, and made Morand take arms, in order to place him, as had been agreed, on the highest story of the tower, in the same turret behind which Maurice was hidden the day he had intercepted the signs intended for the queen from the window in Rue Portefoin. If any one had noticed Morand at the moment he received this order, simple and expected as it was, he would have seen him grow pale beneath the masses of his long black hair.

Suddenly a dull noise shook the courts of the Temple, and sounds were heard in the distance like the roaring of a hurricane.

"What is that?" asked Dixmer of Tison.

"Oh!" replied the jailer, "it is nothing; some little uproar these rascally Brissotins are making before they go to the guillotine."

The noise became more and more threatening, the roar of artillery was heard, and a crowd of people rushed past, near the Temple, shouting, —

"Long live the Sections!" "Long live Henriot!" "Down with the Brissotins!" "Down with the Rolandists!" "Down with Madame Veto!"

"Good!" said Tison, clapping his hands, "I will go and open the door for Madame Veto, that without any disturbance she may enjoy the love the people evince for her."

He approached the wicket of the turret-keep.

"Holloa, Tison!" cried a formidable voice.

"Yes, General," replied he, stopping short.

"No egress to-day," said Santerre; "the prisoners are not to quit their chambers."

The order was peremptory.

"Good!" said Tison, "so much the less trouble."

Dixmer and Morand exchanged looks of disappointment;

then waiting till the hour for duty had struck (though nothing could now be attempted), they both went to walk between the cabin and the wall running toward Rue Portefoin. Morand began to measure the distance, taking geometrical steps, — that is to say of three feet.

"What is the distance?" inquired Dixmer.

"Sixty to sixty-one feet," replied Morand.

"How many days will be required?"

Morand considered, then traced on the ground with a stick some geometrical signs, which he immediately effaced.

"Seven days at least," said he.

"Maurice will be on guard in eight days," murmured Dixmer. "It is, then, absolutely imperative that within eight days we should be reconciled to Maurice."

The half-hour struck; Morand, sighing, resumed his musket, and conducted by the corporal, went to relieve the sentinel who paraded the platform before the tower.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEVOTION.

THE day following these events, — that is to say the 1st of June, — at ten o'clock in the morning, Geneviève was seated in her accustomed place near the window. She asked herself why, for the last three weeks, the days for her rose so sad; why they passed so slowly; and lastly, why instead of waiting for the evening with impatience, she now dreaded its return.

Her nights above all were wretched, — those nights that used to be so happy; those nights passed in dreaming of the past and of the future.

At this moment her eyes fell upon a case of magnificent striped and crimson carnations, which since the winter she had removed from the little greenhouse where Maurice had been imprisoned, to bloom in her own apartment.

Maurice had taught her to cultivate them in the mahogany case in which they were inclosed; she had watered and trimmed them herself so long as Maurice had been there, for when he came in the evening she delighted to show him the progress, thanks to their united care, that the flowers had made during the night.

But since the cessation of Maurice's visits the poor carnations had been quite neglected, and for want of requisite care and attention the opening buds had withered, turned yellow, and fallen down outside the balustrade.

Geneviève comprehended, from this sight alone, the reason of her own melancholy. She said to herself, "It is with flowers as with certain friendships which we nourish and cultivate with ardor till they bloom in the heart, and then, in a moment, a suspicion, a caprice, an unkindness strikes at the root of this friendship, and the heart that it had revived again contracts, languishes, and dies." The young woman experienced a sensation of anguish. She examined her inmost thoughts; the sentiments she had endeavored to combat, and which she had hoped to conquer, she feared now more than ever would only die with her; then she felt a moment's despair, for she knew the struggle would become more and more impossible. She meekly bowed her head, imprinted a kiss upon the withered flowers, and wept.

Her husband entered at this moment. He, on his side, was too much preoccupied with his own thoughts to notice the trying ordeal through which his young wife was passing, nor did he pay the least attention to the tell-tale redness of her eyelids.

It is true Geneviève rose quickly to meet him, and in so doing turned her face from the window, standing in the dim light.

"Well?" said she.

"Well, nothing new; impossible to approach her, impossible to convey any message to her, impossible even to see her."

"What!" cried Geneviève, "with all the noise there has been in Paris?"

"It is this very uproar which has made the guard redouble their vigilance, from the fear that some might avail themselves of the general excitement to make an attempt on the Temple; and the very moment when her Majesty was about to walk upon the platform, an

order was given by Santerre that neither the queen, Madame Royale, nor Madame Elizabeth should go out to-day."

"The poor chevalier! he must be sadly disappointed."

"He was in despair when he saw the chance had thus escaped us, and turned so pale that I had to drag him away lest he should betray himself."

"But," asked Geneviève, timidly, "was there not then at the Temple any municipal of your acquaintance?"

"There ought to have been one, but he did not come."

"Who?"

"The Citizen Maurice Lindey," said Dixmer, in a tone he endeavored to render indifferent.

"And why did he not come?" said Geneviève, in her turn making a similar effort at self-command.

"He was ill."

"He — ill?"

"Yes, and seriously so. Patriot as you know him to be, he was obliged to cede his turn to another."

"This is most unfortunate."

"But, goodness, Geneviève!" replied Dixmer, "if he had been there, as matters now stand, it might have been just the same. Unfriendly as we are at present, he might perhaps have even avoided speaking to me."

"I think," replied Geneviève, "you exaggerate the unpleasantness of our situation. Monsieur Maurice may have taken a whim not to come here; may have some futile reasons to see us no more, — but is not on that account our enemy. Coolness does not exclude politeness, and I am convinced on seeing you come to him, he would meet you half-way."

"Geneviève," replied Dixmer, "what we require from Maurice needs something more than politeness, — a firm

and attached friendship. This feeling is destroyed; we have nothing further to hope from him."

And Dixmer heaved a deep sigh, while his usually placid face bore a troubled expression.

"But," said Geneviève, hesitatingly, "if you think that Monsieur Maurice is so necessary to your projects — "

"It amounts to this," replied Dixmer, "that I despair of being able to succeed without him."

"Well, then, why do you not try some new method to regain the Citizen Lindey?"

It seemed to her that in speaking of the young man by his surname, her voice sounded less tender than when she called him by his Christian name.

"No," replied Dixmer, shaking his head; "I have done all that I could. Any new proceeding would appear singular, and necessarily arouse his suspicions; and then, look you, Geneviève, I see further than you into this affair. Maurice feels deeply wounded."

"Wounded!" exclaimed Geneviève, greatly moved. "What would you say? Speak."

"You know as well as I do, Geneviève, that in our rupture with the Citizen Lindey there is more than caprice."

"To what then do you attribute this rupture?"

"To pride, perhaps," said Dixmer, quickly.

"To pride!"

"Yes; he did us honor, in his opinion at least, this good burgess of Paris, this demi-aristocrat of the gown, — concealing his susceptibilities under his patriotism; he conferred honor upon us, this Republican so powerful in his section, in his club, in his municipality, by according his friendship to a manufacturer of hides. Perhaps we have made too few advances; perhaps we have forgotten ourselves."

"If we had even been guilty in this respect, I think your last step would have redeemed all that," replied Geneviève.

"Yes; supposing the offence came from me; but if, on the contrary, it proceeded from you."

"From me! Do you imagine that I have in any way offended Monsieur Maurice?" said Geneviève, astonished.

"Who knows, with a person like him! Did you not yourself at first accuse him of caprice? I therefore return to my first opinion, Geneviève; you did very wrong not to write to him."

"I!" cried Geneviève; "do you think so?"

"Not only do I think so now, but have done so ever since this rupture of the last three weeks."

"And —" asked Geneviève, timidly.

"I look upon this step as indispensable."

"No, no! Dixmer; do not exact this of me."

"You know, Geneviève, I make no exactions of you; I only entreat you. Well, listen; I beseech you to write the Citizen Maurice."

"But —" said Geneviève.

"Hearken!" said Dixmer, interrupting her; "there is between you and Maurice either some serious cause of quarrel, — for, so far as I am concerned, he has had no reason to complain of my conduct toward him, — or some childish disagreement."

Geneviève made no reply.

"If this is merely a silly broil, it is folly to render it lasting; and if you have serious motives for quarrelling, situated as we are, you ought not even to value your dignity or self-respect. We must not place in the balance the quarrels of young people against objects of the highest interest. Make one effort; subdue your own feelings,

and write one word only to Maurice Lindey, and he will return."

Geneviève reflected a moment.

"But," said she, "could we not find some means less compromising to renew friendly intercourse between Monsieur Maurice and yourself?"

"Compromising, do you call it? It appears to me, on the contrary, to be the most natural way possible."

"No; not for me, *mon ami.*"

"You are very obstinate, Geneviève."

"Allow me to tell you it is the first time, at least, that you have discovered it."

Dixmer, who for some time had been crushing his handkerchief between his hands, now wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"Yes," said he; "and it is this that increases my astonishment."

"Good Heaven!" said Geneviève, "is it possible, Dixmer, that you do not divine the cause of my resistance, and that you wish to force me to speak?"

And overcome with contending emotions, her head sunk upon her breast, and her arms fell listlessly by her sides. Dixmer appeared to make a strenuous effort to command himself, took Geneviève's hand, compelled her to raise her head, looked into her eyes, and began to laugh; but in a manner so forced and unnatural, that had Geneviève been less agitated at the moment, it must have been evident even to her.

"I see how it is," said he; "you are in the right, and I was blind. With all your wit and distinction, my dear Geneviève, you have fallen into a vulgar notion, — you have been fearful that Maurice might fall in love with you."

Geneviève felt as if an icy chill had penetrated to her

heart. This irony on the part of her husband, relative to Maurice's affection for her, — that love of which, from the knowledge she possessed of the character of the young man, she could estimate all the violence, and in which, though only acknowledged with deep remorse, she participated in the depths of her heart, — this irony petrified her. She felt it was utterly impossible to reply.

"I have guessed rightly, have I not?" said Dixmer. "Well, reassure yourself, Geneviève; I know Maurice to be a fierce Republican, whose heart contains no other love than love of country."

"Sir!" exclaimed Geneviève, "are you certain of what you say?"

"Eh, without doubt," replied Dixmer. "If Maurice loved you, instead of quarrelling with me he would redouble his attentions and civilities to one whom it was his interest to deceive. If Maurice loved you, he would not so easily renounce his title of 'friend of the family,' generally used to cover these intrigues."

"Do not, I beseech you," cried Geneviève, "make a jest of these things."

"I do not jest, Madame; I only tell you Maurice does not love you, that is all."

"And I — I," said Geneviève, "tell you that you are mistaken."

"In that case," replied Dixmer, "Maurice, who has had sufficient strength to tear himself away rather than make a cuckold of his host, is an honest man; and as such men are rare, Geneviève, one cannot do too much to reclaim them when lost. Geneviève, you will write to Maurice, will you not?"

"Oh, my God!" cried the young woman, letting her head fall on her hands, for he to whom she looked for

support in a moment of danger had precipitated instead of restraining her fall.

Dixmer regarded her for a moment, then forcing a smile, —

"Come, darling," said he, "no woman's self-esteem. If Maurice wishes to recommence a declaration, laugh at the second as you did at the first. I know you, Geneviève, you are a worthy and noble woman. I can depend on you."

"Oh!" exclaimed the young woman, sinking on her knees, "how can one place confidence in others when one cannot place confidence in himself?"

Dixmer turned pale, as if all his blood had rushed back to his heart.

"Geneviève," said he, "I have done very wrong to cause you so much anguish of mind. I ought to have explained myself at once. Geneviève, we live at an epoch of self-sacrifice. I have devoted myself to the queen, our benefactress, — not only my arm, not only my head, but my happiness. Others will give her their lives; I do more than give her my life, — I risk my honor; and if that perishes, only one more tear will fall into the ocean of miseries which is preparing to swallow up France. But my honor runs no risk under the guardianship of such a woman as my Geneviève."

For the first time Dixmer had entirely revealed himself. Geneviève raised her head, and fixed her beautiful eyes, full of admiration, upon him; then slowly rose, and presented her forehead to him to kiss.

"You wish it?" said she.

Dixmer made a sign in the affirmative.

"Dictate, then," and she took up a pen.

"No; it is sufficient to use, not to abuse this worthy young man," said Dixmer; "and since he will be recon-

ciled himself to us on receipt of a letter from Geneviève, this letter should be from Geneviève, and not from Monsieur Dixmer."

And Dixmer a second time kissed his wife's forehead, thanked her, and went out.

Then Geneviève tremblingly wrote, —

CITIZEN MAURICE, — You know how much my husband respects you. Have three weeks of separation, which to us have appeared an age, made you forget? Come, we await you; your return will be a real fête. GENEVIÈVE.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GODDESS REASON.

As Maurice had informed General Santerre the preceding evening, he was seriously ill.

While he kept his chamber, Lorin in his daily visits had made use of every argument to induce him to enter into some active pursuit calculated to divert his mind from its trouble; but Maurice continued obstinate. There are some maladies we do not desire to heal. On the 1st of June, Lorin came about one o'clock.

"Is there anything particular going on to-day," asked Maurice, "that you are so superb?"

Indeed, Lorin was splendidly attired. He wore the *bonnet-rouge*, the *carmagnole*, and the tricolored girdle ornamented with two instruments, then called the "cruets of the Abbé Maury," but which before and since have been plumply and plainly termed pistols.

"In the first place," said Lorin, "it is generally the breaking up of the ice of the Gironde which is in train, but by beat of drum. At this moment, for example, they are heating the bullets red on the Place du Carrousel; then, in particular, there is a grand solemnity to which I invite you the day after to-morrow."

"But what is there to-day? You came for me, you say?"

"Yes; to-day we have the rehearsal."

"What rehearsal?"

"Why, the rehearsal of this great solemnity."

"My dear fellow," said Maurice, "you know that it is now eight days since I last went out; consequently I am ignorant of everything, and therefore the more require to be fully informed."

"What! Have I not told you?"

"You have told me nothing."

"First, you already know, we had suppressed God for some time past, and have replaced him with the 'Supreme Being.'"

"Yes; I know all that."

"Well, it seems they have found out something; that the 'Supreme Being' was a Moderate, a Rolandist, and, in short, a Girondin."

"No jesting on sacred subjects, Lorin; you know I do not like it."

"What would you have, my boy? we must keep up with the age. I too like the ancient God well enough; first, because I was accustomed to him. As for the 'Supreme Being,' it appears he really has faults, and since he has been above yonder, everything has been playing at cross-purposes; at all events, our legislators have decreed his downfall."

Maurice shrugged his shoulders.

"Shrug your shoulders as much as you please," said Lorin; "but now we are going to worship the 'Goddess Reason.'"

"And are you engaged in all these masquerades?"

"Ah! *mon ami*, if you knew the Goddess Reason as I know her, you would be one of her warmest partisans. Listen; I wish you to know her, and will present you to her."

"A truce with all this folly. I am out of spirits, you well know."

"The very thing, then; she will enliven you; she is a

nice girl. Ah! but you know the austere goddess whom the Parisians wish to crown with laurels, and drive about in a gilded paper-car! It is — guess."

"How can I guess?"

"It is Arthémise."

"Arthémise!" said Maurice, taxing his memory in vain to recollect the name.

"Yes; a tall brunette, with whom I formed an acquaintance last year at the Opera-ball; by the same token, you came to sup with us, and made her tipsy."

"Ah! yes," said Maurice, "I remember now. It is she, is it?"

"She has the best chance. I presented her to the concourse. All the Thermopyles have promised me their votes. In three days the general election will take place. To-day we enjoy the preparatory dinner, to-day we spill the wine of Champagne; perhaps after to-morrow we may spill blood! But let them spill what they like, Arthémise shall be goddess, or may the devil carry me away! Come, come, we will help her on with her tunic."

"Thanks; but I have always entertained a repugnance for things of this sort."

"To robe goddesses? *Peste!* old fellow, you are difficult to please. Let me see; if that does not suit you, I will put her tunic on, and you shall take it off."

"Lorin, I am ill, and not only out of spirits, but the gayety of others makes me miserable."

"Ah, that is it! You frighten me, Maurice; you no longer either laugh or fight. You surely are not engaged in any plot?"

"I? Would to God —"

"You mean, Would to the Goddess Reason!"

"Leave me, Lorin; I cannot, and will not, go out. I am in bed, and here let me rest in peace."

Lorin scratched his ear.

"Well," said he, "I see how it is."

"What do you see?"

"That you wait for the Goddess Reason."

"By Jove," cried Maurice, "witty friends are great bores. Go, or I shall load both you and your goddess with curses."

"Charge! charge!"

Maurice raised his hand to curse him, when he was interrupted by his official, who at this moment entered, bearing in his hand a letter for his brother citizen.

"Citizen Agesilaus," said Lorin, "you enter at an unfortunate moment. Your master was just going to be eloquent."

Maurice let fall his hand, which he listlessly extended for the letter; but the instant he touched it he started, and eagerly examining both the seal and handwriting, grew very pale in the anticipation of bad tidings, and broke the seal hastily.

"Oh, our interest is awakened at last," said Lorin, "it seems to me."

Maurice heard him not; his whole soul was merged in the four lines of Geneviève. He read and re-read them three or four times over; and then raising his head, gazed at Lorin like a man quite stupefied.

"The deuce!" said Lorin; "the intelligence must be wonderful indeed, which that letter contains."

Maurice read the letter for the fifth time; a hue of vermilion suffused his face, his eyes brightened, and a deep sigh relieved his breast; then forgetting at once his illness and attendant weakness, he leaped from his bed.

"My clothes!" cried he to the astonished official, — "my clothes, my dear Agesilaus. Oh, my poor Lorin —

my good Lorin, I expected this every day, but in truth I did not hope for it. Here, my white trousers and frilled shirt; please dress my hair and shave me immediately."

The official hastened to execute Maurice's orders, and dressed and shaved him in a trice.

"Oh, I shall again behold her! I shall again behold her!" cried the young man, "Lorin, I never till this moment knew what happiness meant!"

"My poor Maurice," said Lorin, "I think you require the visit I recommended to you."

"Oh, my dear friend, pardon me; for truly reason has forsaken me."

"Then I offer you mine," said Lorin, laughing at his own execrable pun.

The most surprising thing was that Maurice laughed also. His present happiness had made him so cheerful.

This was not all. "Wait," said he, cutting some orange blossom from a tree in full bloom; "present this from me to the worthy Widow Mausole."

"*A la bonne heure!*" said Lorin; "in consideration of your gallantry, I pardon you. Then it appears to me you are absolutely in love, and I always feel profound respect for the unfortunate."

"Yes, I am in love," said Maurice, and his heart dilated with joy. "I am in love; and now, since she loves me, I may declare it; for since she has recalled me, must she not love me, Lorin?"

"Doubtless," complacently replied the adorer of the Goddess Reason; "but take care, Maurice, for the fashion in which you take this makes me fear for you."

"Bravo, bravo!" cried Maurice, clapping his hands; then taking to his heels, he descended the steps four at a time, and directed his steps toward the well-known old Rue Saint Jacques.

"He is worse than I thought him," said Lorin, in his turn descending the staircase in rather a calmer mood. Arthémise was not Geneviève.

Hardly had Lorin and his orange blossom arrived at the Rue Saint Honoré, when a crowd of young citizens, to whom he had been accustomed to administer either kicks or half-pence, according to his humor, respectfully followed him, — mistaking him, no doubt, for one of those virtuous individuals to whom Saint Just had proposed people should offer a white robe and a bunch of orange blossoms.

As the cortège every moment increased in numbers, — for even at this epoch a virtuous man was a rare sight to behold, — there were several thousand young citizens present when the bouquet was offered to Arthémise, a homage which made several other "Reasons" who had joined the ranks very ill with sick headache next day. It was on the same evening the famous distich was circulated through Paris, —

"Long life to Goddess Reason —
The pure, clear dawn of day."

And as it has come down to us without any knowledge of the author, — a fact which has exceedingly exercised the sagacity of revolutionary archæologists, — we have the audacity to affirm it was composed for the fair Arthémise by our poetical friend, Hyacinthe Lorin.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRODIGAL CHILD.

MAURICE could not have been quicker, had he even possessed wings. The streets were crowded, but Maurice only remarked the crowd as it retarded his course. It was said everywhere that the Convention was sitting; that the majesty of the people was offended through the representatives, whom they prevented from coming out; and of this there seemed some probability, as the ring of the tocsin was heard, and the thunder of the cannon sounding an alarm. But what at this moment, to Maurice, mattered either the tocsin or the cannon? What cared he. whether the deputies were or were not able to come out, when the prohibition did not extend to him? So he quickened his pace, that was all. While running, he pictured to himself Geneviève waiting at the little window overlooking the garden, in order to see him; and that she would perceive him far off; and then her smile, more than ever charming, would welcome him back again.

Dixmer also was no doubt informed of this happy return, and would tender him his coarse, large hand, so frank and loyal in its greeting. He loved Dixmer; now even his love almost extended to Morand with his black locks and his green spectacles, behind which he fancied he could see the glitter of his brilliant but saturnine eyes.

He loved the whole world, for he was happy, and would willingly have showered flowers on the heads of all mankind that they might be as happy as himself.

But for once he was deceived. Poor Maurice! he deceived himself, as a man generally does when he reckons according to his wishes.

Instead of the sweet smile awaiting Maurice, which was to receive him when he would be seen from afar, Geneviève had determined on meeting Maurice with the most distant politeness, — a feeble rampart with which to oppose the torrent that threatened to invade her heart. She had retired to her chamber on the first floor, and did not intend coming down till sent for.

Alas! she also deceived herself.

Dixmer alone was not deceived; he watched for Maurice through a wired lattice, and smiled ironically.

Morand was gravely occupied in dyeing black some tails which are placed on white cat-skin to imitate ermine.

Maurice pushed open the little door of the alley, to enter unceremoniously through the garden; as of old, the door opening rang a little bell which indicated the arrival of Maurice.

Geneviève, who had stationed herself behind the closed window, started, and let fall the curtain she had drawn on one side.

The first sensation experienced by Maurice on entering his friend's house was disappointment. Not only was Geneviève absent from the window on the ground-floor, but on entering the little salon where he had uttered his last adieu, he found her not, and was compelled to announce himself, as if an absence of three weeks' duration had transformed him into a stranger. His heart was oppressed.

It was Dixmer whom Maurice first saw. He came forward, and embraced him with exclamations of joy.

Geneviève then came down. She had tried in vain to restore some color to her pallid cheek; but before she

had proceeded twenty steps the blood receded to her heart.

Maurice saw Geneviève appear in the shadow of the door; he advanced toward her smiling, intending to kiss her hand, and then only perceived how sadly she was changed. She on her part noticed with anxiety the attenuated frame of Maurice, and his fevered look of wild excitement.

"You are here then, sir," said she, in a voice whose emotion she could not subdue.

She had determined to address him with perfect indifference.

"Good-day, Citizen Maurice; why have your visits been so rare of late?"

This fickleness appeared more strange still to Maurice, and now what a shadow was cast upon all!

Dixmer cut short this examination, and put an end to all reciprocal reproaches by ordering dinner to be served; it was nearly two o'clock. They passed into the *salle-à-manger*, where Maurice saw a cover was placed for him. Then the Citizen Morand arrived, dressed in the same chestnut-colored coat and in the same waistcoat — he always wore his green spectacles — and white frilled shirt, and had the same long thick black hair. Maurice felt so well-disposed toward him that he wondered now when he had Morand before him that he should have ever felt the least concern about his rivalry at a distance. In short, what probability was there that Geneviève loved this little chemist? He was in love, and in consequence a fool to allow such folly to enter into his head.

Besides, the moment would have been badly chosen for jealousy. Maurice carried within his waistcoat pocket Geneviève's last letter, and his heart, bounding with joy, beat beneath it.

Geneviève had recovered her serenity. There is this peculiarity in the organization of women, that the present is able to efface all hues of the past, and distances all fears for the future.

Geneviève felt happy, having resumed her self-command: that is to say, she became calm and dignified, though still kind, — another shade which Maurice had not the requisite skill to comprehend. Lorin would have found the explanation in "Parny," in "Bertin," or the "Gentil Bernard."

The conversation turned upon the Goddess Reason. The fall of the Girondins, and the new mode of worship by which the kingdom of heaven had fallen to the lot of the distaff were the prevailing topics of the day. Dixmer pretended he should not have been sorry to see this unparalleled honor offered to Geneviève. Maurice felt inclined to laugh. Geneviève, however, concurred in the opinion of her husband, while Maurice regarded them both with astonishment, wondering that patriotism could so far mislead a sensible man like Dixmer and a woman of so poetical and refined a nature as Geneviève.

Morand developed the theory of female politicians. He cited Théroigne de Méricourt, the heroine of the 10th of August, and Madame Roland, the "Soul" of the Girondins. Then, *en passant*, he launched out against the "Tricoteuses." These words made Maurice smile. It was, however, a cruel joke against these female patriots that they were latterly termed "the female leeches of the guillotine."

"Ah! Citizen Maurice," said Dixmer, "we respect patriotism even when it is mistaken."

"As for me," said Maurice, "as far as I know of patriotism, I always find the women sufficiently good patriots, when not too high aristocrats."

"You are quite right," said Morand; "and as for myself, I frankly confess I consider a woman very contemptible when she affects the demeanor of a man, and a man a coward, unworthy of the name, when he insults a woman, even were she his bitterest enemy."

Morand was gradually drawing Maurice on to delicate ground. Maurice on his side replied by an affirmative sign. The lists being opened, Dixmer, like the sounding herald, added, —

"One moment, one moment, Citizen Morand; you except, I hope, those women who are known enemies of the nation?"

A silence of some moments succeeded this "parry and thrust" to the response of Morand and the sign of Maurice. Maurice first interrupted the silence.

"Let us except no one," said he, sadly; "those females who have been enemies to the nation are now, it appears to me, sufficiently punished."

"You allude to the prisoners of the Temple, — to the Austrian, the sister and daughter of Capet?" cried Dixmer, with a rapidity which deprived his words of all expression.

Morand changed color while awaiting the reply of the young Republican, seeming to sink his nails into his breast in the intensity of his interest.

"Just so," said Maurice, "it is of them I am speaking."

"Who?" said Morand, in stifled tones. "Is what they say, true?"

"What do they say?" demanded the young man.

"That the prisoners are cruelly maltreated, sometimes even by those whose duty it is to protect them."

"There are individuals," said Maurice, "who do not deserve the name of men. There are some cowards who, totally deficient in real courage, retain a desire to torture

the vanquished in order to persuade themselves that they are the conquerors."

"You are not one of those men, Maurice, I am quite certain," said Geneviève.

"Madame," replied Maurice, "I who now speak to you mounted guard near the scaffold on which perished the late king. My drawn sabre in my hand, I was prepared to slay any one who attempted to rescue him. Notwithstanding, on his approach I removed my hat, and turning toward my men said, —

"'Citizens, I here warn you that I shall run my sword through the body of the first man that insults the king.'

"And I defy any one to assert that a single shout was heard to proceed from my company. From my hand first emanated those ten thousand placards affixed to the walls of Paris after the king's return from Varennes, —

"'Whoever acknowledges the king shall be flogged. Whoever insults the king shall be hanged.'

"Well," continued Maurice, without noticing the deep impression his words had produced on his listeners, — "well, I have proved to you that I am a frank, good patriot, that I hate all kings and their partisans. Yet I declare, notwithstanding my opinion, which is nothing short of a firm conviction, that, notwithstanding the certainty I feel that the Austrian is in a great measure the cause of the miseries that desolate France, never, never shall any man, — let him be who he may, even Santerre himself, — insult the ex-queen in my presence."

"Citizen," said Dixmer, shaking his head as if he disapproved of so much hardihood, "are you aware you ought to be very sure of us before you make such declarations in our presence?"

"I make them before you, and would do so before all the world, Dixmer; and I will add, she may perhaps

perish on the same scaffold as her husband, but I am not one to fear a woman; on the contrary, I have a kindly regard for all those who are weaker than myself."

"And the queen, Monsieur Maurice?" demanded Geneviève, timidly; "has she sometimes evinced her sense of this delicacy, to which she is so little accustomed?"

"The prisoner has thanked me several times for my consideration for her, Madame."

"Then she must expect your turn to guard with pleasure?"

"I believe she does, Madame," replied Maurice.

"Then," said Morand, tremulous as a woman, "since you have confessed what no one nowadays confesses, — that you have a generous heart, — you will not surely persecute the children either?"

"I!" said Maurice; "ask the infamous Simon the weight of the arm of the municipal before whom he had the audacity to beat the little Capet."

This answer produced a spontaneous movement at Dixmer's table. All the guests rose respectfully; Maurice alone remained seated, and had not the slightest idea that he had elicited this mark of admiration.

"Why, what on earth is the matter?" said he, astonished.

"I thought some one called from the manufactory," said Dixmer.

"No," said Geneviève; "at first I thought so too; but we are mistaken." And all resumed their seats.

"Ah! it is you then, Citizen Maurice," said Morand, in a tremulous voice, "who are the municipal so much talked about, and who so nobly defended a child."

"Talked about?" said Maurice, with the utmost *naïveté*.

"Yours is a noble heart," said Morand, rising from

the table. That he might give way to his feelings, he retired to the manufactory, as if some pressing business there awaited him.

"Yes, Citizen," replied Dixmer; "they do speak about it, and it should be said that all those possessed of brave, generous hearts applaud without knowing you."

"And let him remain unknown," said Geneviève. "The glory he would acquire would be replete with danger."

Thus in this singular conversation, without knowing it, each had contributed his word of heroism, devotion, and sensibility. There had been love and admiration which could not be expressed in words.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MINERS.

At the moment they left the table, Dixmer was told that his notary awaited him in his study. He excused himself to Maurice; besides, he was accustomed to leave him thus, and proceeded to attend his man of business.

He was negotiating for the purchase of a small house, Rue de la Corderie, facing the garden of the Temple. It was rather, as to the rest, a lot than a house that Dixmer was purchasing, for the present building was in a state of dilapidation; but it was his intention to rebuild it.

The bargain had not been delayed with the proprietor; that same morning the notary had seen him and agreed to pay 19,500 francs. He therefore brought the agreement for signature, and came to receive the requisite money for the purchase, as the proprietor would that day clear out the building that the workmen might commence operations on the morrow.

The contract signed, Dixmer and Morand accompanied the notary to the Rue de la Corderie, to view this new acquisition; for they had purchased without seeing it.

It was a house situated near where No. 20 now stands, — three stories in height, and surmounted by a curved roof. The lower part at one time had been let to a wine-merchant, and contained some most excellent cellarage.

The proprietor, above all things, vaunted his cellars; they were the best part of the house. Dixmer and

Morand appeared to attach very little interest to these cellars, yet both, as if from mere politeness, descended with the proprietor into what he called his vaults.

An exception to the general rule, he had not exaggerated. The cellars were magnificent; one of them extended under the Rue de la Corderie, and from this cellar they could hear the carriages roll over their heads.

Dixmer and Morand did not appear to appreciate this advantage. They even spoke of filling them up, observing that however convenient they might be to a wine-merchant, they became perfectly useless to honest burgesses, who intended to occupy the whole of the house.

After the cellars they visited the first, second, and third story; from the third they completely over-looked the garden of the Temple. It was, as usual, invaded by the National Guard, who enjoyed this privilege, since the queen never walked there now.

Dixmer and Morand recognized their friend, the Widow Plumeau, with her usual activity, doing the honors of her tavern; but doubtless their anxiety to be in their turn remembered by her was not very great, as they kept themselves concealed behind the proprietor, while he expatiated on the advantages of this view, at once so varied and agreeable.

The purchaser then wished to see the attics.

The proprietor, doubtless, was unprepared for this demand, since he had not got the key; but soothed by the bundle of bills shown him, he descended to search for it.

"I was not deceived," said Morand, "and this house will answer our purpose exactly."

"And what do you say to the vaults?"

"That it is an interposition of Providence, which will spare us two days' labor at least."

"Do you think that it is in the direction of the cantine?"

"It inclines a little to the left; but that is of no consequence."

"But," said Dixmer, "how will you be able to follow your subterranean line with the certainty of its terminating where you wish?"

"Rest assured," said Morand; "that is my affair."

"If we were every day to give a signal from here that we are watching?"

"But from the platform the queen could not see it; for the attics alone are as high as the platform, and I am doubtful even about them."

"Never mind," said Dixmer, "either Maury or Toulan may see it from some opening, and they will inform the queen."

And Dixmer tied several knots in a white calico curtain, passing it backward and forward before the window as if shaken by the wind.

Then both, as if impatient to visit the roof, awaited the proprietor's return on the staircase, having first closed the door, not wishing to afford the worthy man a sight of his waving curtain.

The garrets, as Morand had foreseen, did not reach the height of the summit of the tower. This was at once an advantage and disadvantage, — a disadvantage, because they could not communicate by signs with the queen; and an advantage, because the very impracticability alone disarmed all suspicion. The highest houses were naturally the objects of the strictest surveillance.

"It is necessary, either by means of Toulan, Maury, or Tison's daughter, to find some way to tell her to keep upon the watch," murmured Dixmer.

"I have thought of that," said Morand.

They descended; the notary waited in the salon with the contract signed.

"It is all right," said Dixmer; "the house suits me; so hand over to the proprietor the sum of 19,500 francs in payment, and let him give a receipt."

The proprietor did so, first scrupulously counting the money.

"You understand, Citizen," said Dixmer, "the principal clause, that the house must be vacated this evening; that, in short, I must put the workmen in to-morrow."

"Well, Citizen, I agree to do so. You can take the keys this evening at eight o'clock; all will be free."

"Pardon me," said Dixmer, "but did you not tell me, Citizen Notary, there was a way out leading into the Rue Portefoin?"

"Yes, Citizen," said the proprietor; "but I had it closed; for having only one official, the poor devil had too much fatigue, being obliged to watch both doors. But it is so built up that at any time it can be reopened in two hours at least. Would you wish to convince yourselves, citizens?"

"Thanks, it is not necessary," said Dixmer, "I attach no importance to this way out; it is useless to me."

They then both left, having for the third time reminded the landlord of his promise that the apartments should be empty at eight o'clock that evening.

At nine o'clock they both returned, followed by five or six men at a distance, of whom, in the confusion then reigning in Paris, no one took any notice. They both entered first. The landlord had kept his word; the house was totally empty.

They closed the shutters with the greatest care, and with the aid of a tinder-box, lighted some wax candles which Morand had taken in his pocket.

Then one after another the six men entered. These were the ordinary guests of the master-tanner, the same contrabandists who one evening wished to kill Maurice, but had now become his friends.

They closed the doors, and descended into the vault.

This vault, so contemptuously treated during the day, had become at night the most important part of the house.

Having first stopped up every crevice through which a curious eye might penetrate to the interior, Morand placed a cask upright, and began to trace with a crayon geometrical lines upon a piece of paper.

While he was thus engaged, his companions, conducted by Dixmer, left the house, following the Rue de la Corderie, and at the corner of the Rue de Beauce stopped before a covered carriage. In this carriage was a man who silently distributed to each one the instrument of a pioneer, — to one a spade, to another a mattock, to this one a lever, to that a pickaxe ; each man concealed his tool under his overcoat, or mantle. The miners retraced the road to the small house, and the carriage disappeared.

Morand had finished his calculation.

He went straight to an angle of the cave.

" There," said he, " dig ! "

And the work of deliverance immediately commenced.

The situation of the unhappy prisoners in the Temple became daily more serious and hourly more wretched. For an instant the queen, Madame Elizabeth, and Madame Royale had indulged some hope. The municipals Toulan and Lepître, touched with compassion for the august prisoners, had evinced some interest in them. At first little habituated to the marks of sympathy, the poor women were suspicious ; but suspicion ceases to

exist where there is hope. Besides, what now could happen to the queen, separated from her son by a prison, from her husband by death. To follow him to the scaffold, — this idea had possessed her for some time, and she had now become accustomed to it.

The first time Toulan and Lepître returned on guard, the queen particularly requested, if they really felt any interest in her misfortunes, they would describe to her the last moments of the king. This was putting their sympathy to a sad test. Lepître had assisted at the execution; he obeyed the order of the queen.

The queen demanded the journals containing the report of the execution. Lepître promised to bring them when next on guard; it would be his turn again in three weeks. In the king's time they had at the Temple four municipals; the king dead, they had only three, — one to watch during the day, two during the night. Toulan and Lepître invented a stratagem, that they might always keep watch together at night.

The hours of guard were drawn by lot; they wrote on one ballot "day," on two others "night." Each drew his ballot from a hat, and chance decided the night-watch.

Every time that Toulan and Lepître were on guard they wrote "day" on three ballots, and presented the hat to the municipal they wished to oust, and he, thrusting his hand into the improvised urn, necessarily drew forth a ballot on which was inscribed "day." They then destroyed the other two, murmuring against the hazard which always decreed them the most wearisome watch of the two, — that is to say, the night.

When the queen was sure of her guards she corresponded with the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. Then an escape was attempted, but the attempt was detected. The queen and Madame Elizabeth were to flee disguised

as municipal officers, with cards that would be provided for them. As to the two children, — that is to say, Madame Royale and the young dauphin, — they had remarked that the man who came to light the lamps of the Temple was always accompanied by two children, of the same age apparently as the Princess Royale and the dauphin. It was therefore arranged that Turgy, of whom we have previously spoken, should dress himself as the lamplighter, and carry away the prince and princess.

We will mention in a few words who Turgy was.

Turgy was an old waiter of the king's, introduced at the Temple with part of the family from the Tuileries, for the king had at first been permitted a well-appointed table. The first month this consideration cost the nation thirty or forty thousand francs.

It may easily be understood this prodigality could not last. The Commune decreed otherwise. They dismissed the chiefs, the cooks, and scullions; one single manservant only was retained, — that man was Turgy.

He was naturally the medium of communication between the prisoners and their partisans, for Turgy was permitted to go out, and consequently was enabled to forward their letters, and introduce the replies. These billets were generally twisted round the stoppers of the *carafes* containing the milk of almonds brought to the queen and Madame Elizabeth. They were written with lemon-juice, and perfectly illegible till held near the fire.

All was prepared for the escape, when one day Tison lighted his pipe with the paper-stopper of a *carafe*. As the paper burned, the writing became visible. He instantly extinguished the half-burned paper, and carried the remaining fragment to the Council of the Temple, when, being held near the fire, they could only read a

few disjointed words, the other part being burned to ashes. But they recognized the handwriting of the queen. Tison, being questioned, mentioned some slight marks of attention and sympathy he fancied he had observed on the part of Lepître and Toulan toward the prisoners. The two guards were immediately denounced to the municipality, and allowed no more to enter the Temple.

Turgy remained.

But suspicion was now excited to the highest degree. He was never left a single moment alone with the princesses. All communication with the exterior was now utterly impossible.

Madame Elizabeth had nevertheless one day given Turgy a little gold knife to clean, with which she used to cut fruit. Turgy suspected something, and when wiping the knife drew off the handle, and in the handle found a letter.

This letter contained an alphabet of signs.

He returned the knife to Madame Elizabeth; but a municipal then present prevented him, and in his turn securing the knife, took the blade and handle apart; but fortunately the letter was no longer there. The municipal nevertheless confiscated the knife.

It was at that time the indefatigable Chevalier de Maison-Rouge meditated this second attempt, which they intended to carry into execution by means of the house which Dixmer had purchased.

The prisoners, however, had by degrees lost all hope. That day the queen, terrified by the noise in the streets which reached her ears, and learning from these cries they were debating the accusation of the Girondins, the last supporters of moderation, felt dreadfully depressed. The Girondins dead, the royal family lost their only defence in the Convention.

At seven o'clock the supper was served. The municipals examined every plate as usual, unfolded each napkin successively, searched the bread, the one with a fork, the other with his fingers, and concluded by breaking into pieces the macaroons and walnuts, for fear any letter should reach the prisoners. These precautions being concluded, the royal family were invited to their meal in these simple words: —

"Widow of Capet, you may eat."

The queen shook her head, signifying she was not hungry. But at this moment Madame Royale advanced, as if to embrace her mother, and whispered, —

"Seat yourself at table, Madame. I fancied Turgy made a sign."

The queen, tremblingly, raised her head. Turgy was opposite to her. The napkin laid over his left arm, and with his right hand he touched his eye.

She immediately rose, without any further objection, and resumed her usual place at table.

The two municipals assisted at the meal, being strictly prohibited from leaving the princesses alone for an instant with Turgy.

The feet of the queen and Madame Elizabeth met, and pressed each other under the table.

As the queen was seated opposite Turgy, not one of his gestures escaped her notice; besides, they were all so natural that they neither could nor did inspire the municipals with any suspicion whatever.

At the removal of the supper the same precautions were used as before; the smallest pieces of bread were taken up and examined. After which, Turgy went out first, the two municipals following; the woman Tison remained.

This woman had become ferocious since her separation

from her daughter, of whose fate she was totally ignorant. Every time the queen lavished a caress on Madame Royale, it threw her into an excess of rage almost bordering on frenzy; so much so, that the queen, who so well understood the griefs of a mother, often denied herself this consolation — now, alas! the only one left her — of pressing her daughter to her heart.

Tison came now to seek for his wife, who at first declared she would not leave till Widow Capet was in bed.

Madame Elizabeth then wished the queen good-night, and entered her chamber.

The queen and princess having also retired, Tison's wife took the candle and went out.

The municipals had already thrown themselves upon their beds in the corridor.

The moon, pale visitant of the unhappy princesses, shone through the window of the roof, casting her rays across the foot of the queen's bed.

For an instant everything remained calm and silent in the chamber.

Then a door turned softly on its hinges, a shadow passed through the rays of the moon, and approached the queen, — it was Madame Elizabeth.

"Did you notice?" said she, in a whisper.

"Yes," replied the queen.

"And you understood?"

"So well that I dare not believe it."

"Let us see; repeat the signs."

"First, then, he touched his eye to indicate he had some news for us; then he passed his napkin from his left to his right, which meant that they were occupied in our deliverance. Then he put his hand to his face, to signify that the expected aid would reach us from the in-

terior, and not from a stranger; then when you asked him not to forget the milk of almonds to-morrow, he made two knots in his pocket-handkerchief. Thus it is again the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, — noble-hearted man that he is."

"It is he," said Madame Elizabeth.

"Are you asleep, my child?" demanded the queen.

"No, *ma mère*," replied Madame Royale.

"Then pray for you know whom."

Madame Elizabeth quietly regained her chamber, and for some minutes during the silence of the night the soft, sweet voice of the youthful princess might be heard addressing her prayer to God. It was at that moment, at a signal from Morand, the first stroke of the pick-axe sounded in the small house at Rue de la Corderie.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLOUDS.

ASIDE from the intoxication of renewed visits, Maurice was certainly much disappointed at the reception of Geneviève, and reckoned upon solitary interviews to regain the road he had lost, or seemed to have lost, in her affections.

But Geneviève had wisely arranged her plan, and did not intend to allow him an opportunity for a *tête-à-tête*, being conscious of their danger even from the happiness they afforded her.

Maurice trusted to the morrow. A kinswoman of Geneviève's, no doubt previously invited, came to call upon her, and Geneviève had retained her. This time there was nothing to be said; it could not be the fault of Geneviève. When leaving, Maurice was requested to escort this relation to Rue des Fossés Saint Victor, where she resided. Maurice went away pouting, but Geneviève smiled, and he construed this smile into a promise.

Alas! Maurice deceived himself. The next day, the 2d of June, that terrible day that witnessed the downfall of the Girondins, Maurice dismissed his friend Lorin, who absolutely wished to carry him off to the Convention, and put everything aside that he might visit his fair friend. The Goddess of Liberty had a frightful rival in Geneviève.

Maurice found Geneviève in her little salon, all grace and amiability, but near her was a young *femme-de-*

chambre with the tricolored cockade, engaged in marking pocket-handkerchiefs in the corner of the window, who never left her place.

Maurice knitted his brows, and Geneviève, perceiving he was not in the best temper possible, redoubled her assiduities; but since her amiability was not carried so far as to dismiss the young official, he impatiently left an hour earlier than usual.

All this might have perhaps happened by chance. Maurice took patience. The political situation, besides, was so terrible that long as it was since he had interested himself in public affairs, the report reached even him. It required nothing less than the downfall of a party who had reigned in France for ten months to withdraw his attention from his all-engrossing passion for Geneviève.

The next day witnessed the same management on the part of Geneviève, and Maurice, having foreseen this, had arranged his plan. So ten minutes after his arrival, seeing that the young woman, having finished marking a dozen pocket-handkerchiefs, commenced six dozen of table napkins, Maurice, we say, drew out his watch, rose, bowed to Geneviève, and went out without saying one word.

Still more, as he left, he did not even once look back.

Geneviève, who had risen to watch him across the garden, remained an instant speechless, pale, and trembling, then dropped into her chair, thunderstruck at the effect of her diplomacy.

At this moment Dixmer entered.

"Maurice gone?" said he, with astonishment.

"Yes," stammered Geneviève.

"But he had only just arrived."

"He was here a quarter of an hour, or nearly so."

"Then he will return?"

"I much doubt it."

"Leave us, Muguet [lily of the valley]," said Dixmer.

The *femme-de-chambre* had assumed the name of the flower from hatred to her baptismal name of Marie, which was unfortunately that of the Austrian.

She rose at the command of her master, and quitted the room.

"Well, dear Geneviève," said Dixmer, "is peace restored between you and Maurice?"

"On the contrary, I think we are cooler than ever."

"And this time, who is to blame?" said Dixmer.

"Maurice, without the slightest doubt."

"Permit me to judge."

"What!" said Geneviève, blushing, "you cannot guess —"

"Why he is angry? No."

"It seems to me, it is some whim about Muguet."

"Bah! truly; then you must send the girl away. I will not deprive myself of a friend like Maurice for the sake of a *femme-de-chambre.*"

"Oh!" said Geneviève, "he is not, I think, so angry as to require her to be sent away; it will suffice to —"

"What?"

"To exile her from my chamber."

"And Maurice is right," said Dixmer; "it is you he comes to visit, and not Muguet; it is therefore quite unnecessary that she should be present."

"But, my dear Dixmer," replied she, regarding her husband with astonishment.

"Geneviève," replied Dixmer, "I hoped to have found in you an ally who would render more easy the task imposed upon me, and find, on the contrary, that your fears redouble our dangers and difficulties. Four days since

I thought all was settled between us, and now everything must be done over again. Have I not told you that I confide in you, in your honor? Have I not told you that it is positively necessary that Maurice should become our friend, more intimate than before, but less suspicious than ever? Oh, *mon Dieu!* these women are an everlasting obstacle to our projects."

"But, is there no other way? I have told you before, that for all our sakes it would be better if Monsieur Maurice returned here no more."

"Yes, for our sakes, perhaps; but for the sake of her who is far above us, of her for whom we have promised to sacrifice our lives, fortune, and happiness, it is necessary that this young man should return. Are you aware they begin to suspect Turgy, and talk of placing another servant near the queen?"

"Well, I will send away Muguet."

"Gracious Heaven! Geneviève," said Dixmer, with a movement of impatience very unusual with him, "why do you speak to me thus; why stifle the ardor of my ideas by your own; why strive to create difficulties where too many already exist? Geneviève, act like an honorable, devoted woman; act as you feel you ought to act. I tell you, to-morrow I go out — to-morrow I take Morand's place as engineer. I shall not dine with you, but he will; he has something to ask Maurice, and will explain to you what it is. What he has to request you may imagine, Geneviève, is a thing of vital import; it is not indeed the goal to which we march, but the way leading to it. It is the last hope of that devoted, noble-minded man, our protector, to whom we are bound to dedicate our lives."

"And for whom I will freely give mine," cried Geneviève, with enthusiasm.

"Well, this man, Geneviève, I cannot tell why, as you must have seen is not loved by Maurice, by whom, above all things, it is necessary he should be respected. In short, from the bad temper in which you have put Maurice to-day, he may perhaps refuse Morand that which it is so imperative we should obtain at any price. Do I now need to tell you, Geneviève, to what dread end your petty delicacy and sentimentality are leading Morand?"

"Oh, sir!" cried Geneviève, clasping her hands and turning pale, "let us never mention that!"

"Then," said Dixmer, pressing his lips to his wife's forehead, "reflect upon it, and form your resolution;" and he went out.

"O my God!" murmured Geneviève, with anguish, "with what violence do they compel me to accept this love toward which my whole soul inclines!"

The next day, as we have already said, was Sunday.

It was customary in the family of Dixmer, as in all the burgesses' families at that period, that the dinner should be longer and more ceremonious on that day than on any other. Since their intimacy, Maurice, having received a general invitation, never omitted to dine with them on that day. Although they did not dine till two o'clock, Maurice used to come at noon.

From the manner of their parting, however, Geneviève almost despaired of seeing him that Sunday.

In short, twelve o'clock struck, then half-past, then one.

It would be impossible to describe what passed in the heart of Geneviève during this period of anxious expectation.

She was at first dressed with the greatest simplicity; then, seeing that he delayed his coming, she, with a feeling of coquetry natural to the heart of woman, had

placed a flower at her side, a flower in her hair, and still listened, her heart each moment beating faster and faster. The dinner-hour had almost arrived, and Maurice had not appeared.

At ten minutes to two, Geneviève heard the sound of a horse's feet, that sound she knew so well.

"Oh!" cried she, "his pride could not wrestle against his love. He loves me! he loves me!"

Maurice dismounted, and gave his horse to the gardener, desiring him to remain where he was. Geneviève saw with anxiety that the gardener did not lead the horse to the stables.

Maurice on this day looked superlatively handsome. A splendid black coat, a white waistcoat, breeches of chamois leather designed for limbs after the model of Apollo, a white cambric stock, and his waving hair, displaying a fresh, beaming face, formed altogether a type of manly beauty.

He entered. As we have already said, his presence swelled the heart of Geneviève, who received him joyfully. "Ah!" said she, holding out her hand, "you have come to dine with us, have you not?"

"On the contrary, Citizen," said Maurice, coldly, "I have come to ask your permission to absent myself."

"To absent yourself?"

"Yes; the sectional affairs claim my attention. I feared you might wait, and would accuse me of being wanting in politeness, therefore came to make my excuses in person."

Geneviève again felt her heart sink within her.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!*" cried she, "and Dixmer, who does not dine at home, counted upon finding you here on his return, and desired me to detain you."

"Ah, then, Madame! I comprehend your importunity,

it is a command of your husband's; and I not to guess all this! I shall never cure myself of conceit."

"Maurice!"

"It is for me, Madame, to draw my inference from your actions rather than your words; it is for me therefore to comprehend that if Dixmer is absent the greater the reason I should not remain. His absence would surely add to your constraint."

"Why so?" timidly inquired Geneviève.

"Because you appear, since my return, sedulously to avoid me, notwithstanding I returned for your sake, and yours only; and you well know, *mon Dieu!* that ever since my return I have invariably found some one with you."

"Then," said Geneviève, "you are still angry, *mon ami*, although I endeavor to act for the best."

"No, Geneviève; you would do much better to receive me as before, or drive me away altogether."

"Maurice," said Geneviève, tenderly, "understand my situation, consider my anguish, and do not enact the tyrant over me any longer."

And the young woman regarded him mournfully.

Maurice remained silent.

"What do you require then?" continued she.

"I require your love, Geneviève; since I now feel I cannot live without that love."

"Maurice! have pity on me."

"Then, Madame, you leave me to die."

"To die?"

"Yes, to die, or to forget."

"You could then forget?" said Geneviève, the tears rushing from her heart to her eyes.

"Ah, no, no!" said Maurice, falling on his knees before her; "no, Geneviève, I may die, perhaps, but forget you, never, never!"

"And yet," replied Geneviève, with firmness, "that would be the best, Maurice; for this love is criminal."

"Have you said this to Monsieur Morand?" said Maurice, recalled to himself by her sudden frigidity of manner.

"Monsieur Morand is not a madman like yourself, and has never yet compelled me to indicate to him how he should conduct himself in the house of a friend."

"I wager," said Maurice, smiling ironically, "that if Dixmer dines out Morand is not absent. Ah, Geneviève, by this means you can always deter me from loving you; for while Morand is here, forever at your side, not quitting you even for a single moment," continued he, contemptuously, "I should not love you, or rather I should not confess that I loved you."

"And I," cried Geneviève, driven to extremity by this eternal suspicion, and seizing the young man's arm with a species of frenzy, "I swear solemnly — now, Maurice, mark me well, and let it be once for all — that Morand has never breathed to me a word of love, that he neither loves me nor ever will love me. I swear this on my honor; I swear this by the soul of my mother

"Alas! alas!" said Maurice, "I wish I could believe you."

"Oh, believe me, poor foolish youth!" said she, with a smile which to any one else than one blind with jealousy would have been a charming confession of the state of her heart, — "believe me. Besides, if you wish to know more, Morand loves a woman in whose presence all others sink into insignificance, as the flowers of the field fade before the stars of heaven."

"And who is this woman who is able to eclipse all other women," demanded Maurice, "when among the number we find Geneviève?"

"Do we not always," said Geneviève, smiling, "consider the one we love as the *chef d'œuvre* of the creation?"

"Then," said Maurice, "if you do not love me, Geneviève —"

The young woman waited with anxiety the end of the sentence.

"If you do not love me," continued Maurice, "will you at least swear never to love another?"

"Ah! that, Maurice, I will swear with all my heart," cried the young woman, delighted that he had thus compromised with her conscience.

Maurice seized the hands she was raising to Heaven, and covered them with ardent kisses.

"And now," said he, "I will be kind, indulgent, and confiding. I will even be generous. I wish to see you smile, and myself to be happy."

"And you will ask me nothing more?"

"I will endeavor."

"And now," said Geneviève, "I think it will be useless to hold the horse any longer. The section will wait."

"Oh, Geneviève! the whole world might wait, if I could only stay with you!"

Steps were heard in the court-yard.

"They come to tell us that dinner is ready," said Geneviève. They silently pressed each other's hands.

It was Morand, who came to tell them they only awaited their presence at table. He also was in full dress for the Sunday's dinner.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE REQUEST.

In the mean time Morand did not a little excite the curiosity of Maurice. The most refined of fops could not discover a fault in the tie of his cravat, the folds of his boots, or the texture of his linen; but it must be allowed his hair and spectacles were always the same. It then appeared to Maurice, so much was he reassured by the oath of Geneviève, that he now for the first time viewed these locks and spectacles in a proper light.

"The devil!" said Maurice to himself as he went to meet him, — "the devil take me if I am now ever again jealous of this worthy Citizen Morand. Put on every day, if you choose, your full-dress coat, or even make yourself one of cloth of gold, since from this time I promise to see nothing but your hair and spectacles, and above all, never again to accuse you of loving Geneviève."

We can easily understand that the shake of the hand bestowed upon the Citizen Morand at the conclusion of this soliloquy was more frank and cordial than usual. Contrary to custom, the party was small, covers being placed for only three on a narrow table.

Geneviève was seated nearly opposite Maurice, between himself and the light, which reflected on her luxuriant black curls, tingeing them with the blue hue of the raven's wing, and enhancing the brilliancy of her eyes and complexion.

Beyond his pigeon-colored suit, Morand appeared to have dismissed all recollection of the day from his mind, — that brilliant mind which Maurice had sometimes heard burst fresh from the lips of this singular man, which would no doubt have been accompanied by flashes from his eyes, had they not been totally obscured by the green spectacles.

He uttered a thousand witticisms, but never himself smiled; indeed, what added piquancy to his witticisms and a strange charm to his sallies was his own imperturbable gravity. This merchant, who had made numerous voyages and visited various countries, trading in every sort of skin, from the skin of the panther to that of the rabbit; this chemist, with arms dyed with his own chemical preparations, — was as conversant with Egypt as Herodotus, Africa as Lavaillant, and the Opera and the boudoir as any fop.

"But the devil take me, Monsieur Morand," said Maurice, "you are not only a clever man, but a scholar also."

"Ah! I have both seen and read much," said Morand; "and then it is necessary I should prepare myself in some degree for the life of pleasure I intend to lead when I retire on my fortune. It is time, Citizen Maurice, it is time."

"Bah!" said Maurice; "you talk like an old man. What age then are you?"

Morand turned round, startled by this question, natural as it certainly was.

"I am thirty-eight," said he. "Ah! see what it is to be a scholar, as you term it. It makes one old."

Geneviève began to laugh, and Maurice joined in; but Morand merely smiled.

"You have, then, made several voyages?" demanded Maurice, pressing Geneviève's foot between his own.

"Part of my youth," replied Morand, "was passed in a foreign land."

"And you have seen much? — pardon me, I ought to say, have observed much; for a man like yourself cannot see without observing," replied Maurice.

"*Ma foi!* yes; seen much?" replied Morand, "I have seen almost everything."

"Everything, Citizen," replied Maurice, laughing; "that is saying a great deal. If you were to search — "

"Ah, yes! you are right; there are two things I have never seen. It is true, in our days, these two things are becoming more and more rare."

"What are they, then?" demanded Maurice.

"The first," said Morand, gravely, "is a god."

"Ah!" said Maurice, "but in lieu of a god I shall be able to show you a goddess, Citizen Morand."

"How so?" interrupted Geneviève.

"Yes; a goddess of quite modern creation, — the Goddess Reason. I have a friend, of whom you have sometimes heard me speak, — my dear and brave Lorin, — with a heart of gold, whose only fault is that of making verses and vile puns."

"Well?"

"Well, he selected for Paris a Goddess Reason, in good condition, and in whom they can discover nothing at all objectionable. It is the Citizen Arthémise, ex-dancer to the Opera, and at present dealer in perfumes, Rue Martin. As soon as she is definitely received as goddess, I will show her to you."

Morand bowed his head in token of thanks, and continued, —

"The other," said he gravely, "is a king."

"Ah! that is more difficult," said Geneviève; "there are no more of them," she added, forcing a smile.

"You should have seen the last," said Maurice; "it would have been prudent to do so."

"The result is," said Morand, "I have not the least idea of a crowned head; it must be very sad?"

"Very sad, indeed," said Maurice; "I will answer for it, — I who see one nearly every month."

"A crowned head?" demanded Geneviève.

"At least," said Maurice, "one that has borne the weight and miserable burden of a crown."

"Ah, yes! the queen," said Morand; "truly, Monsieur Maurice, it must be a melancholy sight — "

"Is she as proud and beautiful as they say?" demanded Geneviève.

"Have you never seen her then, Madame?" demanded Maurice, surprised in his turn.

"I? never!" replied the young woman.

"Indeed!" said Maurice, "that is strange."

"And why strange?" said Geneviève. "We lived in the country till '91; since '91 we have resided in the old Rue Saint Jacques, which much resembles the country, only here they have neither light nor air, and still less flowers. You are acquainted with my life, Monsieur Maurice? It has always been the same. How do you suppose I could have seen the queen, when I have had no opportunity whatever of so doing?"

"And I do not think you will avail yourself of that which unfortunately, perhaps, may present itself," said Maurice.

"What do you mean?" demanded Geneviève.

"The Citizen Maurice," replied Morand, "alludes to a thing no longer a secret."

"To what?" demanded Geneviève.

"To the probable condemnation of Marie Antoinette, and to her death upon the same scaffold where her hus-

band died. The citizen said, in short, that you would not avail yourself of the opportunity offered you of seeing her the day when she will quit the Temple for the Place de la Revolution."

"Oh, certainly not!" cried Geneviève, as Morand pronounced these words with the utmost sang-froid.

"Then you can only lament," said the impassible chemist; "for the Austrian is well guarded, and the Republic a fairy that renders invisible whatever she pleases."

"I acknowledge, however," said Geneviève, "I have been very desirous to see this poor woman."

"Let us see," said Maurice, anxious to gratify all the wishes of Geneviève; "have you really such an inclination? Then only say the word. I agree with the Citizen Morand that the Republic is a fairy; but I, in quality of municipal, am somewhat of a wizard."

"Could you procure me a sight of the queen, you, Monsieur?" cried Geneviève.

"Certainly, I can."

"And how?" demanded Morand, exchanging a rapid glance with Geneviève, which escaped the notice of the young man.

"Nothing more simple," said Maurice. "There are certainly some municipals of whom they are distrustful; but as for me, I have given sufficient evidence of my devotion to the cause of liberty to render me above all suspicion. Besides, admittance to the Temple depends conjointly on the municipals and the chiefs of the post. Now, the chief of the post is, just at this moment, my friend Lorin, who appears to me to be called indubitably to replace General Santerre, seeing that in three months he has risen from the rank of corporal to that of adjutant-major. Well, come and see me at the

Temple the day I shall be on guard, — that is to say, next Thursday."

"Well," said Morand, "I hope now your wishes will be gratified. There is the whole matter arranged."

"Oh! no, no," said Geneviève; "indeed, I would not have it thus."

"And wherefore not?" said Maurice, who only anticipated in this visit to the Temple an opportunity of seeing Geneviève on a day when he had expected to be deprived of this happiness.

"Because," answered Geneviève, "it might perhaps, dear Maurice, expose you to some unpleasant dispute; and if anything were to happen to you through gratifying a whim of mine, I should never, while I lived, forgive myself."

"You have spoken wisely, Geneviève," said Morand. "Suspicion is at present very rife; the best patriots even are now suspected. Renounce this project, which, as you say, is after all a mere caprice of curiosity."

"They will say that you are envious, Morand, and that not having yourself seen either king or queen, you do not wish others to do so. Come, to end all discussion, join the party."

"I! good faith! No."

"It is then no longer the Citizen Dixmer who wishes to visit the Temple; it is I who entreat both her and you to come there, to divert a poor prisoner. For the great door once closed upon me, I remain for twenty-four hours as much a prisoner as the king would be, or a prince of the blood." And pressing between his own feet the foot of Geneviève, "Come then," said he, "I entreat you!"

"What do you say, Morand," said Geneviève, "will you come with me?"

"It will be losing a day," said Morand, "and will retard by just so long the time when I expect to retire from business."

"Then I shall not go," said Geneviève.

"But why?" demanded Morand.

"Because I cannot depend upon my husband to escort me; and if you will not accompany me — you, a respectable man, thirty-eight years of age — I have not the hardihood to encounter alone all the chasseurs, artillerymen, and grenadiers, requesting to speak to one of the municipals only three or four years older than myself."

"Then," said Morand, "since you deem my presence indispensable, Citizen — "

"Come! come! learned Citizen, be as gallant as if you were simply an ordinary man, and sacrifice half a day to the wife of your friend," said Maurice.

"Well, let it be so," said Morand.

"Now," said Maurice, "I only require one thing from you, — that is, discretion. Visiting the Temple is considered a suspicious proceeding, and should any accident occur in consequence, we should all be guillotined. The Jacobins do not jest. *Peste!* you see how they have treated the Girondins."

"The devil!" said Morand, "this observation of the Citizen Maurice requires consideration. This would be a sort of retiring from business that would not suit me at all."

"Did you not hear," said Geneviève, smiling, "that the Citizen Maurice said *all?*"

"Well, what of that? All?"

"All, together."

"Yes, without doubt," said Morand, "company is very agreeable; but I much prefer, fair sentimentalist, to live in your society than to die in it."

"What the devil was I thinking of," said Maurice to himself, "when I imagined this man loved Geneviève?"

"Then it is all settled," said Geneviève. "I address myself to you, Morand, thoughtful, absent man that you are, — remember it is on Thursday next; so do not on the Wednesday evening commence some chemical experiment that will occupy your time and attention for the next twenty-four hours, as very frequently happens."

"You may be perfectly easy on that point," said Morand. "Besides, you can remind me."

Geneviève then rose from table, and Maurice followed her example. Morand was about to leave also, and perhaps to follow them, when one of the workmen brought the chemist a small vial containing some liquid which instantly engrossed all his attention.

"Let us make haste," said Maurice, drawing away Geneviève.

"Oh, be assured," said she, "he will remain there for an hour at the very least."

And the young woman allowed him to take her hand, which he tenderly pressed between his own. She felt remorse for her treachery, and tried to compensate for it by her kindness.

"Do you see," said she to Maurice, crossing the garden and showing him the carnations, which had been removed into the air with the hope of reviving them, — "do you see my flowers are all dead?"

"What killed them?" said Maurice; "your neglect? Poor carnations!"

"It was not my neglect, but your desertion, kind sir."

"They required, my little Geneviève, some water, that was all; besides, my absence should have left you plenty of time."

"Ah!" said Geneviève, "if flowers were watered with

tears, the poor carnations, as you call them, would not have died."

Maurice threw his arms round Geneviève, and drawing her to him, before she had time to prevent him, pressed his lips upon the half-smiling, half-languishing eye, now fixed upon the drooping, dying flowers.

Geneviève felt so much self-reproach it made her lenient to others.

Dixmer returned home late, and on his return found Morand, Maurice, and Geneviève talking botany in the garden.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FLOWER-GIRL.

At length the anticipated Thursday, the day of Maurice's guard, arrived. It was now the month of June. The sky was of a deep and cloudless blue, and against this sheet of blue rose the heavy white mass of new houses. The coming of the dreadful dog-star was already foreseen, — that dog represented by the ancients as thirsting with an unquenchable thirst, and which, to borrow the phraseology of the plebeian Parisians, licked the pavement very dry. Paris was clean as a carpet, and perfumes filled the air, mounting from the trees, emanating from the flowers, circulating and intoxicating with joy, as if to render the inhabitants of the capital forgetful for a few moments of that vapor of blood which rose without intermission from the pavement of their streets.

It was Maurice's duty to enter the Temple at nine o'clock; his two colleagues were Mercevault and Agricola. At eight o'clock he was in the old Rue Saint Jacques, in grand costume as citizen municipal, — that is to say, with a tricolored scarf tightly fastened round his lithe, muscular frame. He as usual rode there on horseback, and on his route won the sincere approbation, admiration, and eulogiums of the fair patriots who saw him pass. Geneviève was already prepared; she wore a simple muslin dress, a species of light taffeta mantle, and a small bonnet ornamented with the tricolored cockade. Thus attired, she was of dazzling beauty.

Morand, who, as we have seen, had been earnestly solicited to accompany them, had, no doubt for fear of being mistaken for an aristocrat, attired himself in his usual costume, — half-burgess, half-artisan. He had just entered, and his countenance betrayed great fatigue; he said he had been at work all night, in order to complete some urgent business.

Dixmer had gone out immediately on the return of his friend Morand.

"Well," demanded Geneviève, "what have you decided on, Maurice; and how are we to see the queen?"

"Listen," said Maurice, "I have arranged everything. I shall arrive at the Temple with you, and then introduce you to my friend Lorin, who commands the guard; I then take my post, and on the first opportunity will come for you."

"But," demanded Morand, "where are we to see the prisoners, and how are we to see them?"

"At either their breakfast or their dinner, if that will suit you, through the glazed partition of the municipal."

"Perfectly," said Morand.

Maurice then saw Morand approach a cupboard at the farther end of the *salle-à-manger*, and drink hastily a glass of pure wine, which rather surprised him, as Morand was usually very abstemious, his strongest beverage being water merely colored with wine.

Geneviève saw that Maurice regarded him with astonishment.

"Only imagine," said she, "he must be half-dead with fatigue; he has taken nothing since yesterday morning"

"Did he not dine here?" asked Maurice.

"No; he was trying some experiments in the city."

Geneviève took a useless precaution with respect to Maurice, since lover-like he was an egotist, and had merely

bestowed upon the action of Morand that superficial attention which an amorous man accords to everything except the woman whom he loves.

To his glass of wine Morand added a crust of bread, which he hastily swallowed.

"And now," said he, "dear Citizen Maurice, I am quite ready; when you choose we will depart."

Maurice, who was stripping the decayed petals from one of the dead carnations he had plucked in passing, now offered his arm to Geneviève, saying, —

"Let us start."

On their way Maurice felt so happy that he could scarcely contain himself; he would have uttered cries of joy had he not restrained his emotion. What could he desire more? Not only had he acquired the certainty that she did not love Morand, but also the hope that he possessed her affection. The glorious sun shone upon the world, the arm of Geneviève was reposing within his own, while the public-criers, shouting at the top of their voices the triumph of the Jacobins and the defeat of Brissot and his party, announced that the country was saved.

There are truly moments of life when the heart of man seems too small to contain the joy or grief concentrated there.

"Oh, what a lovely day!" exclaimed Morand.

Maurice turned round in surprise. This was the first burst of feeling he had ever heard issue from the lips of this singularly reserved and absent man.

"Oh, yes; it is indeed lovely," said Geneviève, pressing closer the arm of Maurice; "would that it may continue till evening pure and cloudless as it is now!"

Maurice applied these words to himself, and his happiness redoubled each moment.

Morand at the same time regarded Geneviève through

his green spectacles with a peculiar, grateful expression. Perhaps he also applied her wish to himself.

They thus crossed the Petit Pont, the Rue de la Juiverie, and the Bridge Notre Dame; they then proceeded to the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, the Rue Barre-du-Bec, and the Rue Sainte Avoie. As they progressed, Maurice's step became more and more elastic, while on the contrary those of his male and female companions waxed slower and slower.

They had reached the corner of the Rue des Vieilles-Audriettes, when all at once a flower-girl impeded their passage, by offering them her basket filled with flowers.

"Oh, what magnificent carnations!" cried Maurice.

"Oh, yes, very beautiful!" said Geneviève; "it seems the cultivator of these had no pre-occupation to distress him, for they are not withered and dead."

This speech sank deep into the heart of the young man.

"Ah! my brave Municipal," said the flower-girl, "purchase a bouquet for the pretty citizen. She is dressed in white; look at these superb crimson carnations; white and purple look well together. She will place the bouquet upon her heart, and as her heart is near to your blue coat, you will have there the national colors."

The flower-girl was young and pretty; her compliment was well-turned and well-chosen, for had it been made expressly for that occasion, it could not have better applied to the circumstances. Besides, the flowers were almost symbolical; they were similar to those now dead.

"I will purchase some," said Maurice, "since they are carnations; all other flowers I detest."

"Ah, Maurice," said Geneviève, "it is useless, we have so many of them in the garden."

But although her lips uttered the refusal, her eyes expressed a longing desire to possess them.

Maurice selected the most beautiful of the bouquets. It was the one the pretty flower-girl had presented to him.

It consisted of twenty deep red carnations, emitting an odor at once sweet and pungent; in the centre, towering above the rest, rose a magnificent carnation.

"Here," said Maurice to the seller, throwing on her basket a bill of five francs, "that is for you."

"Thanks, my brave Municipal," said the flower-girl, "a thousand thanks."

And she went toward another couple, trusting the day commenced thus auspiciously would so continue till its close. During this apparently simple scene, which had only occupied a few seconds at most, Morand seemed scarcely able to support himself, and wiped the perspiration from his pallid brow, while Geneviève also turned pale and trembled. She took the nosegay which Maurice presented to her, and clasping it in her lovely hand, held it to her face, less to inhale the odor than to conceal her emotion.

The remainder of the journey was pleasant, at least so far as concerned Maurice. As for Geneviève, her gayety seemed affected, and Morand evinced his enjoyment in a fashion peculiar to himself, — that is to say, in smothered sighs or startling bursts of laughter, and occasionally uttering some formidable witticisms which fell upon the passers-by like sparks of fire.

At nine o'clock they reached the Temple.

Santerre called over the municipals.

"I am here," said Maurice, leaving Geneviève under the care of Morand.

"Welcome," said Santerre, holding out his hand to the young man.

Maurice took care not to refuse the hand thus offered

to him. The friendship of Santerre was certainly most valuable at this epoch. At sight of this man who had commanded the famous rolling of drums, Geneviève shuddered, and Morand turned pale.

"Who is this handsome citizen?" demanded Santerre of Maurice, "and what does she here?"

"She is the wife of the brave Citizen Dixmer; you have heard this excellent patriot spoken of, Citizen General?"

"Yes, yes," replied Santerre; "the chief of a tannery, captain of chasseurs of the legion Victor."

"The same."

"Good! good! My faith, she is pretty. And this ugly fellow who has given her his arm?"

"That is the Citizen Morand, her husband's partner, and chasseur in Dixmer's company."

Santerre approached Geneviève.

"Good-day, Citizen," said he.

Geneviève made an effort.

"Good-day, Citizen General," replied she, smiling.

Santerre felt flattered by both title and smile.

"And what brings you here, fair patriot?" continued Santerre.

"The citizen," replied Maurice, "has never seen the Widow Capet, and would like to see her."

"Yes," said Santerre, "before—" and he made an atrocious gesture.

"Precisely," replied Maurice, coldly.

"Very well," said Santerre, "only mind they are not seen entering the keep: it would be a bad example; in other respects, do as you think fit."

Santerre again shook hands with Maurice, made an inclination of his head to Geneviève in a friendly and protecting manner, and went to attend to his other duties.

After a great many evolutions of gendarmes and chasseurs, after some manœuvring with cannon, the heavy reverberations of which, it was considered, carried to the environs a salutary admonition, Maurice gave Geneviève his arm, and followed closely by Morand, advanced toward the post, at the door of which Lorin was vociferating loudly, commanding the manœuvres of his battalion.

"Good!" cried he, "why there is Maurice; *peste!* with a female too who appears to me rather agreeable. Does the sly rascal wish to bring her into competition with my Goddess Reason? If it were so, poor Arthémise!"

"Hallo! Citizen Adjutant," said the captain.

"Ah! that's right; attention!" said Lorin; "file to the left, left — Good-day, Maurice; not so quickly —"

The drums rolled, the company dispersed to their respective places, and when each was at his post, Lorin hastened to exchange compliments with his friend. Maurice presented Lorin to Geneviève and Morand. Then an explanation commenced as to the purport of their visit.

"Yes, I understand," said Lorin; "you wish your friends to enter the keep; that is easily managed. I will go directly and station the sentinels, then I will order them to admit you and your friends."

In ten minutes afterward Geneviève and Morand entered behind the three municipals, and placed themselves behind the glazed partition.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CRIMSON CARNATION.

THE queen had just risen. Having been indisposed for two or three days, she had remained in bed longer than usual; but having heard from her sister that there had been a splendid sunrise, she made an effort to quit her couch, and that she might be enabled to breathe the pure air with her daughter, had requested permission to walk on the platform, which had been granted her without the slightest difficulty.

She had also been induced to act thus from another cause. Once, and it is true once only, from the height of the tower she had seen the dauphin playing in the garden. But at the first signal of recognition between the mother and child, Simon interfered, and compelled the boy to retire immediately.

Nevertheless, she had seen him; that was a great source of happiness to her. True, the poor little prisoner was very pale and much changed. Then he was dressed as a child of the people, in a blouse and coarse trousers. But his beautiful fair waving curls were still left him, forming around him a glory which God no doubt intended the infant martyr to retain in heaven.

If she could only see him once again, oh, what a cordial to the heart of the unhappy mother!

There was yet another motive.

"My sister," Madame Elizabeth had said to her, "you know we found in the corridor a straw standing upright

in a corner of the wall. In the language of our signs this desires us to be watchful, as a friend is coming near us."

"That is true," replied the queen; who, regarding her sister and child with pity, would not on their account permit herself to despair of their ultimate safety.

The duties of the service accomplished, Maurice was then highest in authority in the keep of the Temple, since chance had elected him as guard during the day, and the other municipals, Agricola and Mercevault, as guards during the night.

The municipals had left, after laying their *procès-verbal* before the Council of the Temple.

"Ah, Citizen Municipal," said the woman Tison, coming forward to salute Maurice, "you bring company, then, to see our caged pigeons? It is only I who am condemned no more to see my poor Sophie."

"They are friends of mine," said Maurice, "who have never yet seen the Widow Capet."

"Ah! well, they will see admirably behind the partition."

"Assuredly," said Morand.

"Only," said Geneviève, "we shall seem to be actuated by that cruel curiosity which induces some persons to mock the misery of unfortunate prisoners from the outside of an iron grating."

"Ah! then why not take your friends to the tower walk, since the woman Capet will take an airing there to-day with her sister and her daughter; for they have left her a daughter, while I who am not guilty, have been deprived of mine. Oh, these aristocrats! it will always be the case; let us do what we will, favor is always shown to them, Citizen Maurice."

"But they have taken from her, her son," replied he.

"Ah! if I had a son," murmured the female jailer, "I should lament my daughter less."

Geneviève during this time had exchanged looks with Morand several times.

"*Mon ami*," said the young woman to Maurice, "the citizen is in the right. If you could by any means place me in the way of Marie Antoinette, it would be less repugnant to my feelings than gazing at her here. It seems to me that this manner of viewing people is at once humiliating both to them and to us."

"Kind Geneviève," said Maurice, "you possess true delicacy of mind."

"Egad! Citizen," said one of Maurice's colleagues who was at that moment breakfasting in the antechamber on bread and sausages, "if you were the prisoner, and Capet's wife felt curiosity to see you, she would not be so very particular about the indulgence of her fancy, — the jade!"

Geneviève, with a movement quicker than lightning, threw a rapid glance toward Morand, to note the effect of these words upon him. In effect, Morand quivered, a strange phosphorescent light gleamed from under his eyelids, and his hands were clinched for an instant; but all this was so momentary that it passed unperceived.

"What is the name of this municipal?" asked she of Maurice.

"It is the Citizen Mercevault," replied the young man; and then added, as if to apologize for his coarseness, "a stone-cutter."

Mercevault heard it, and cast a sidelong glance at Maurice.

"Come! come!" said the woman Tison; "finish your sausage and your half-bottle, that I may clear the table."

"It is not the fault of the Austrian if I finish them now," grumbled the municipal; "for if she could have murdered me on the 10th of August she would have done so; thus the day when she 'sneezes in the sack' I shall be in the first rank, firm at my post."

Morand turned as pale as death.

"Come! Citizen Maurice," said Geneviève, "let us go where you promised to take us; here it seems as if I were a prisoner. I feel suffocated."

Maurice conducted Geneviève and Morand out, when the sentinels, previously instructed by Lorin, allowed them to pass without any difficulty. They installed themselves in a little passage on the upper story, so that the moment when the queen, Madame Royale, or Madame Elizabeth ascended to the gallery, these august personages could not do otherwise than pass before them.

As the promenade was fixed for ten o'clock, and they had only a few minutes to wait, Maurice not only did not quit his friends, but further, in order that the slightest suspicion might not be excited by this rather illegal proceeding, having met Agricola, he took that municipal with him.

It struck ten.

"Open!" cried a voice from the base of the tower, which Maurice knew to be that of General Santerre.

Immediately the guard assumed arms and closed the iron gratings; the sentinels also prepared arms. There was then heard in all the court a confused noise of iron, stones, and footsteps, which vividly impressed both Morand and Geneviève, for Maurice observed them both turn pale.

"All these precautions to guard three poor women," murmured Geneviève.

"Yes," said Morand, endeavoring to smile; "if those who tempt them to escape were now here, and in our place saw what we see, it would disgust them with their trade."

"In fact," continued Geneviève, "I begin to think they will never escape."

"I hope they never will," said Maurice, inclining over the staircase as he spoke.

"Attention," cried he; "here are the prisoners."

"Name them to me," said Geneviève, "for I do not know any of them."

"The first two who are ascending are the sister and daughter of Capet. The last one, preceded by a little dog, is Marie Antoinette."

Geneviève made a step forward. Morand, on the contrary, instead of looking at them, pressed himself close against the wall, his lips more livid and earthy than the stones of the keep.

Geneviève, with her white robe and bright pure eyes, appeared like an angel awaiting the prisoners to cheer them on their dark and dreary road, and to administer in passing a ray of comfort to their desolate and blighted hearts.

Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale pursued their way, having only thrown a glance of astonishment at the strangers. No doubt the former imagined they were those whom the signals announced, for turning round quickly to Madame Royale, she pressed her hand, and while so doing, dropped her handkerchief, as if to inform the queen.

"Pay attention, my sister," said she; "I have dropped my handkerchief."

And she passed on with the young princess.

The queen, with panting breath accompanied with a

short dry cough indicating ill-health, stooped to pick up the handkerchief which had fallen at her feet, when her little dog, more agile than its mistress, seized it, and ran forward with it to Madame Elizabeth. The queen continued her ascent slowly, and after some steps found herself in her turn before Geneviève, Morand, and the young municipal.

"Flowers!" cried she; "oh, how long it is since I have seen any flowers! How deliciously they smell! You are happy to possess these flowers, Madame."

Quick as the idea formed in her mind, prompted by these melancholy words, Geneviève extended her hand to offer her bouquet to the queen.

Then Marie Antoinette raised her head, looked at her, and an almost imperceptible blush passed over her colorless face.

But by a natural movement, from an habitual passive obedience to regulation, Maurice put out his hand to arrest the arm of Geneviève.

The queen then remained hesitating, when, looking at Maurice, she recognized him as the young municipal who had always spoken to her with so much firmness, but at the same time tempered with equal respect.

"Is this forbidden, sir?" said she.

"No, no, Madame. Geneviève, you can offer your bouquet," said Maurice.

"Oh, thanks, thanks, sir," said the queen, with grateful acknowledgments; and bowing with gracious affability to Geneviève, the queen extended her emaciated hand, and selected at random a single carnation from the mass of flowers.

"Take them all, Madame, take them all," timidly said Geneviève.

"No," said the queen, with a fascinating smile; "this

bouquet may come perhaps from one you love. I will not deprive you of it."

Geneviève blushed, and at this blush the queen smiled.

"Move on! Citizen Capet," said Agricola, "you must continue your route."

The queen bowed, and ascended the steps, but before she disappeared, turned around and murmured, —

"How sweet these carnations smell! and what a beautiful young lady!"

"She has not seen me," murmured Morand, who almost kneeling in the shade of the corridor, had quite escaped the notice of the queen.

"But you had a good view of her, had you not, Morand? Had not you, Geneviève?" said Maurice, doubly happy, first from the sight he had procured his friends, and also that he had afforded ever so slight a gratification to the unhappy prisoner.

"Oh, yes, yes!" said Geneviève; "I saw her very well, and were I to live for a thousand years, I should never forget her."

"And what do you think of her?"

"She is charming."

"And you, Morand."

Morand clasped his hands, but made no reply.

"Tell me," said Maurice, laughing, in a whisper to Geneviève, "is it the queen of whom Morand is enamoured?"

Geneviève started, but recovering herself instantly, replied smilingly, —

"It really looks like it."

"You have not yet told me what you think of her, Morand," persisted Maurice.

"I thought her very pale," replied he.

Maurice retook the arm of Geneviève, to descend toward the court. In the dark staircase it seemed to him that Geneviève kissed his hand.

"Ha! what does that mean, Geneviève?"

"It means, Maurice, that I shall never forget that to gratify a whim of mine you have risked your life."

"Oh!" said Maurice, "what exaggeration, Geneviève! Between you and me, you well know that gratitude is not the sentiment I wish to inspire you with."

Geneviève pressed his arm softly.

Morand followed with faltering steps.

When they reached the court, Lorin came and identified the two visitors, showing them to the gate.

Before leaving the Temple, Geneviève made Maurice promise to dine the next day in the old Rue Saint Jacques.

CHAPTER XXII.

SIMON THE CENSOR.

When Maurice returned to his post, in a state of transcendent happiness, he found Tison's wife weeping.

"What have they done to you now, mother?" asked Maurice.

"All this makes me furious," replied the female jailer.

"Why?"

"Because there is nothing but injustice for poor people in this world."

"But how?"

"You are rich, you are a burgess, you come here only for a day, and they permit pretty women to visit you here, who present bouquets to the Austrian; while I who nestle everlastingly in this dove-cot am not allowed to see my poor Sophie."

Maurice took her hand, and slipped into it a bill of ten francs.

"There, good woman, take that, and do not despair. Goodness! the Austrian will not last forever."

"Ten francs," said the female jailer, "that is kind of you; but I would rather have even a curl-paper from my poor girl's hair."

As she finished these words, Simon, who was then coming up, heard them, and saw the female jailer put in her pocket the bill Maurice had given her.

We will mention what sort of a temper Simon was in.

He came from the court where he had encountered Lorin. Now, a decided antipathy existed between these two men.

This hatred was less induced by the violent scenes with which our readers are already familiar than by difference of race, an everlasting source of detestation, which, however mysterious it may at first appear, is easily explained.

Simon was hideous, Lorin handsome; Simon was vulgar, Lorin the very opposite; Simon was a Republican bully, Lorin one of those ardent patriots who had sacrificed everything to the Revolution; and then, if they had on a former occasion come to blows, Simon instinctively felt that the fist of the fop, no less effectually than that of Maurice, would have inflicted upon him a plebeian punishment.

Simon on perceiving Lorin, stopped short, and turned pale.

"It is still this battalion that mounts guard," growled he.

"Well," said a gendarme who overheard this apostrophe, "it is as good as another, it seems to me."

Simon drew a pencil from his pocket, and pretended to note down something on a piece of paper almost as black as his hands.

"Ah!" said Lorin, "you know how to write then, Simon, since you are tutor to young Capet? Look, citizens, upon my honor he takes notes; he is Simon the Censor."

A universal shout of laughter proceeded from the ranks of the young National Guards, almost all men of education, at the ridiculous title bestowed upon the wretched cobbler.

"Very well, very well," said he, grinding his teeth,

and turning white with rage; "they say you have permitted strangers to enter the keep, and that without the consent of the Commune. Very well, I am going to draw out the *procès-verbal* by the municipal."

"He at least knows how to write," said Lorin; "it is Maurice, Maurice with the Iron Hand; don't you know him?"

At this moment Morand and Geneviève went out.

On seeing this, Simon rushed into the keep, at the very moment, as we have said, when Maurice, by way of consoling her, presented the woman Tison with the bill of ten francs.

Maurice paid no attention to the presence of this miserable wretch, whom by a natural instinct he always avoided if he by any chance encountered him, regarding him in the light of a disgusting and venomous reptile.

"Ah, well!" said Simon to Tison's wife, who was wiping her eyes with her apron; "so you wish to bring yourself to the guillotine, Citizen?"

"I!" said the woman, "what put such a thought into your head?"

"Why, because you receive money from the municipal for allowing aristocrats entrance to the Austrian."

"I!" said the woman Tison; "be silent, you are mad!"

"This shall be entered in the *procès-verbal*," said Simon, emphatically.

"Come, now, they are friends of the Municipal Maurice, one of the best patriots that ever existed."

"Conspirators, I tell you. Besides, the Commune shall be informed; it will judge for itself."

"What! you mean to lodge information about me then, spy of the police!"

"Exactly so, if you do not lodge information yourself."

"Information about what? About what do you wish me to lodge information?"

"About what has happened."

"But nothing has happened."

"Where were these aristocrats?"

"There, upon the staircase."

"When Capet's wife ascended the stairs?"

"Yes."

"And they spoke to her?"

"They exchanged two words."

"Two words! Besides, there is a perfume of the aristocrat here."

"It is the scent of carnations."

"Carnations! what carnations?"

"Why, the citizen had a bunch of them, which perfumed the whole place."

"What citizen?"

"The one who saw the queen pass."

"Oh, the thing is clear; you say *the queen!* woman Tison this consorting with aristocrats will be your ruin! Ah, what is this I am treading upon?" continued Simon, stooping down.

"Ah!" said the woman Tison, "it is a flower, a carnation; it must have fallen from the hand of the Citizen Dixmer, when Marie Antoinette took one from her bouquet."

"The woman Capet took a flower from the Citizen Dixmer's bouquet?" said Simon.

"Yes; and it was I who gave her the bouquet," said Maurice, in a loud and menacing tone, who had been for some moments listening to this colloquy, and whose patience was nearly exhausted.

"It is all very well, it is all very well; one sees what one sees, and one knows what one says," growled Simon,

who still held in his hand the carnation crushed by his huge foot.

"And I also know one thing," replied Maurice, "which I am now going to tell you; it is that you have nothing whatever to do in this keep, and that your honorable post of hangman is down there with the little Capet, whom I would, for your own sake, recommend you not to chastise to-day, as I am here to defend him."

"Do you threaten me? Do you call me hangman?" cried Simon, crushing the flower in his hand. "Ah! we shall see if it is permitted these aristocrats — why, what is this?"

"What?" asked Maurice.

"That I feel in this carnation? Ah! ah!"

The eyes of Maurice were transfixed with astonishment as Simon drew from the calyx of the flower a small paper, rolled with the most exquisite care, which had been artistically introduced into the centre of the clustering leaves.

"My God!" said Maurice, "what can this mean?"

"We shall know, we shall very soon know," said Simon, approaching the window. "Ah! you and your friend Lorin told me I did not know how to read. Well! you shall see."

Lorin had calumniated Simon; he could read all kinds of print, and manuscript also when sufficiently large. But the writing on the little billet was so minute that Simon was obliged to have recourse to his spectacles. He consequently placed it on the window, while he proceeded to take an inventory of the contents of his pockets; but while thus engaged, the Citizen Agricola opened the door of the antechamber exactly facing the little window, thereby causing a current of air which blew away the little paper, light as a feather from a bird's wing, so that

when Simon, after a moment's exploration, had discovered his spectacles, placed them on his nose, and turned himself round, his labor was lost, — the paper had disappeared.

"There was a paper here," roared Simon, crimson with rage and disappointment, — "there was a paper here. Look to yourself, Citizen Municipal, for it must and shall be found."

And he descended precipitately, leaving Maurice in a state of stupefaction.

Ten minutes afterward three members of the Commune entered the keep. The queen was still upon the platform, and strict orders had been issued that she should be kept in total ignorance of all that had just occurred. The members of the Commune desired to be conducted to her presence.

The first object which met their view was the crimson carnation, which she still held in her hand. They regarded her with surprise, and approaching her, —

"Give us this flower," said the president of the deputation. The queen, who had not expected this intrusion, started and hesitated.

"Surrender your flower, Madame," said Maurice, in a sort of alarm, "I entreat you."

The queen tendered them the carnation. The president took it and retired, followed by his colleagues, into a neighboring apartment to make an examination, and draw up the *procès-verbal.*

They opened the flower — it was empty.

Maurice breathed afresh.

"Wait a moment," said one of the members, "the heart of the carnation has been removed. The calyx is empty, it is true, but in this calyx most unquestionably a letter has been introduced."

"I am quite ready and willing," said Maurice, "to furnish all necessary explanation; but first of all, I request to be arrested."

"We shall make a minute of your proposal, but shall not act upon it," said the president. "You are known as a stanch patriot, Citizen Lindey."

"And I will answer with my life for the friends I had the imprudence to bring with me."

"Answer for no one," replied the procurator.

A tremendous hubbub was now heard in the court. It was Simon, who having long and vainly sought for the little billet wafted away by the wind, went to Santerre and informed him that an attempt had been made to carry off the queen, with all the accessories which the powers of his excited imagination could lend to such an event. Santerre was in great haste; he investigated the Temple, and changed the guard, to the great disgust of Lorin, who stoutly protested against this offence offered to his battalion.

"Ah! vile cobbler," said he to Simon, menacing him with his sabre, "I have you to thank for this pleasantry; but only wait a little, and I will pay you back in your own coin."

"I think rather that the entire nation will pay you," said the shoemaker, rubbing his hands.

"Citizen Maurice," said Santerre, "hold yourself at the disposal of the Commune, who will examine you."

"I await your orders, Commandant; but I have already said that I desire to be arrested, and I repeat my request."

"Wait, wait," murmured Simon, with a malicious smile; "since you are so bent upon it, we shall try to settle that little matter for you," and he went to find the woman Tison.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ARTHÉMISE.

They searched during the whole day in the court, in the garden and its environs, for the little billet which had caused all this tumult, and which they no longer doubted contained the whole plot.

They interrogated the queen, after having separated her from her daughter and sister, but elicited nothing more from her than that she had, on the staircase, encountered a young woman carrying a bouquet, and had drawn a single flower from the centre.

"Moreover, she would not have plucked this flower had she not first obtained the consent of the Municipal Maurice."

She had nothing more to tell. This was the truth in all its force and simplicity.

This was all reported to Maurice when his turn came to be questioned, and he declared that the deposition of the queen was quite correct.

"But," said the president, "there was then a plot."

"Impossible," said Maurice; "I was dining at Madame Dixmer's, and proposed that she should see the prisoners, hearing her remark she had never done so; but neither the day nor the manner of so doing was arranged."

"But the flowers were purchased," said the president; "the bouquet had been made beforehand."

"Not at all; I myself purchased these flowers from a flower-girl, who offered them to us at the corner of the Rue des Vieilles-Audriettes."

"But at least this flower-girl presented the bouquet to you?"

"No, Citizen; I selected it myself from ten or twelve others. Certainly, I purchased the most beautiful."

"But was there a possibility of secreting this billet on your road to the tower?"

"Impossible, Citizen. I never left Madame Dixmer's side for a moment, and to perform the operation named on each flower, — for remark that every flower, according to Simon's account, must have contained a like billet, — would at least occupy half a day or more."

"But, in short, could not two prepared billets have been placed in the flowers?"

"The prisoner in my presence took one at random, after having declined the rest."

"Then, in your opinion, Citizen Lindey, there was not a plot at all?"

"Oh, there must have been a plot!" replied Maurice, "and I am the first not only to believe but to affirm it; my friends, however, were not concerned in it. Nevertheless, as the nation must necessarily be alarmed, I offer security by surrendering myself prisoner."

"Not at all," said Santerre; "should we act thus with tried friends like you? If you surrender yourself prisoner to answer for your friends, I surrender myself prisoner to answer for you. The thing is simple. There is no positive accusation. No one will know what has passed. Let us henceforth act with redoubled vigilance, — you especially, — and we shall succeed in probing this matter to the bottom, and at the same time avoid publicity."

"Thanks, Commandant," said Maurice; "but I shall answer as you would answer were you in my place. We must not stop here; we must discover the flower-girl."

"The flower-girl is far away, but be perfectly easy on that point; she shall be sought for. As for you, watch your friends, while I will guard the prison correspondence."

No one had thought of Simon, but he had formed his own project.

He arrived toward the conclusion of the sitting, and learned the decision of the Commune.

"Ah! then all that is needed is a formal accusation," said he, "to make sure work. Wait five minutes and I will lay one before you."

"What is it?" said the president.

"It is," said Simon, "the courageous Citizen Tison who accuses of secret practices that partisan of the aristocracy, Maurice, and denounces the intrigues of another equally false patriot, one of his friends named Lorin."

"Take care, take care, Simon; your zeal for the nation perhaps misleads you. Maurice and Lorin are tried patriots."

"That will be seen at the tribunal," replied Simon.

"Consider well, Simon; this will be a disgraceful proceeding in the sight of all true patriots."

"Disgraceful or not, what is that to me? Do I dread disgrace? We shall at least learn the whole truth about traitors."

"Then you persist in lodging an accusation in the name of the woman Tison?"

"I will accuse them myself this very night to the Cordeliers, and you too, Citizen President, if you do not at once command the arrest of that traitor Maurice.

"Well, so be it," said the president, who, after the manner of those wretched times, trembled before those who clamored the loudest; "he shall be arrested."

While this decision was forming against him, Maurice had returned to the Temple, where the following billet awaited him, —

Our guard being violently broken up, I shall not be able, in all probability, to see you before to-morrow morning. Come then and breakfast with me ; during that meal you shall give me a true and particular account of the plots and conspiracies discovered by Simon.

A pink the culprit was, —
So honest Simon does depose ;
But I shall information seek
This morning from a lovely rose.

And to-morrow, in my turn, I shall lay before you all Arthémise's answers to my questions.

Yours faithfully,

LORIN.

Maurice replied, —

There is nothing new ; so sleep in peace to-night, and breakfast without me to-morrow, as, on reviewing the incidents of the day, I find I shall not, in all probability, be able to leave till noon.

I should like to be a zephyr to waft a kiss to the rose of which you speak.

I give you leave to whistle at my prose as much as I do at your verse.

Yours faithfully,

MAURICE.

P. S. For the rest, I believe the conspiracy was only a false alarm, after all.

Lorin had indeed left at one o'clock with the whole of his battalion, thanks to the brutal conduct of the shoemaker ; he however consoled himself with a quatrain, and went to visit Arthémise.

Arthémise was delighted to see Lorin. The weather, as we have said, was magnificent; she therefore proposed a walk along the quay, to which Lorin of course assented. They had walked some distance, discoursing on politics, Lorin recounting his expulsion from the Temple and vainly endeavoring to divine the cause, when, on reaching the height of the Rue des Barres, they perceived a flower-girl, who, like themselves, was walking up the right bank of the Seine.

"Ah, Citizen Lorin!" said Arthémise, "I hope you are going to present me with a bouquet?"

"Two, if you wish it," said Lorin; and they both redoubled their speed to overtake the flower-girl, who walked at a rapid pace.

On arriving at the Bridge Marie, the young girl stopped, and leaning over the parapet, emptied the contents of her basket into the river.

The flowers separated, whirled round for an instant in the air, while the bouquets, dragged down by their weight, fell more quickly, till at last both flowers and bouquets floated upon the surface, following the course of the water.

"Stop!" said Arthémise, regarding the flower-girl thus strangely occupied; "it is said — but yes — but no — but if — ah! this is strange."

The flower-girl placed her finger on her lips, as if to entreat Arthémise to be silent, and disappeared.

"Who is this, then?" said Lorin; "do you know this mortal, goddess?"

"No; I fancied at first — but certainly I am deceived."

"She, however, made a sign to you," persisted Lorin.

"But why is she a flower-girl this morning?" said Arthémise to herself.

"You acknowledge, then, that you know her, Arthémise?" asked Lorin.

"Yes," replied Arthémise; "she is a flower-girl I sometimes deal with."

"At all events," said Lorin, "she has a strange method of disposing of her merchandise."

And both, after having looked for the last time at the flowers, which already arrived at the wooden bridge had received a fresh impetus from the arm of the river passing under its arches, continued their route toward the Rapée, where they anticipated dining *tête-à-tête*.

This incident was forgotten for the moment; but as it was at least singular, and of rather a mysterious character, it vividly impressed Lorin's poetic imagination.

In the mean time, the accusation brought by Tison's wife against Maurice and Lorin caused a great tumult at the club of the Jacobins; and Maurice was informed at the Temple by the Commune that his safety was endangered by the public indignation. This was a recommendation to the young municipal to conceal himself if he were guilty; but with conscious rectitude Maurice remained at the Temple, where he was found at his post when they came to arrest him, and at the same time to interrogate him.

Remaining firm in his resolution not to endanger the safety of his friends, in whom he felt the most implicit confidence, Maurice was not the man to sacrifice himself by a ridiculous silence worthy of a hero of romance, and therefore demanded that the flower-girl should be arrested.

It was five o'clock in the evening when Lorin returned home, and heard, at the same moment, of the arrest of Maurice, and also of the demand made by him.

The flower-girl of the Bridge Marie instantly recurred to him like a sudden revelation. This singular individual casting her flowers into the Seine; the coincidence of place; the half admission of Arthémise, — all these facts combined convinced him that this was the solution of the mystery demanded by Maurice.

He bounded from his chamber, flew rather than ran down four flights of stairs, and precipitated himself into the presence of the Goddess Reason, who was engaged in embroidering golden stars on a robe of blue gauze. It was her robe of divinity.

"A truce to the stars, sweetheart," said Lorin; "they have arrested Maurice this morning, and, in all human probability, this evening I shall share the same fate."

"Maurice arrested!"

"By Heaven, he is! In these times nothing is more common than the occurrence of such troubles; but they excite little attention because they come in troops, that is all. Almost all important matters originate in trifles. Never neglect trifles. Who was that flower-girl we met this morning, sweetheart?"

Arthémise started.

"What flower-girl?"

"The one who so recklessly cast her flowers into the Seine."

"Ah, my goodness!" said Arthémise; "is this circumstance, then, so serious that you return to question me so urgently about it?"

"So serious, sweetheart, that I entreat you to answer my question without loss of time."

"Dear Lorin, I cannot do so."

"Goddess, with you nothing is impossible."

"I am in honor bound to keep silence."

"And I am bound in honor to make you speak."

"But why do you insist upon it thus?"

"Why? Zounds! that Maurice may not have his throat cut!"

"Merciful Heavens! Maurice guillotined!" cried the young woman, much alarmed.

"Without speaking of myself; for to tell you the truth my head feels by no means secure upon my shoulders."

"Ah! No, no!" said Arthémise, "to speak would be the poor girl's utter ruin."

At this moment Lorin's official rushed into the apartment.

"Ah! Citizen," cried he, "save yourself! save yourself!"

"And why?" demanded Lorin.

"Because the gendarmes have arrived; and while they were forcing an entrance, I gained the next house by the roof, and hastened to prevent your return."

Arthémise uttered a heart-rending cry, for she truly loved Lorin.

"Arthémise," said Lorin, "do you really place the life of a flower-girl in comparison with that of Maurice and that of your lover? If so, I declare to you that I no longer regard you as the Goddess Reason, but shall proclaim you the Goddess Folly."

"Poor Sophie!" exclaimed the ex-dancer of the Opera; "if I betray you, it is not my fault."

"Well done, my darling!" said Lorin, presenting a paper to Arthémise, "you have already favored me with her Christian name, oblige me now with her surname and address."

"Oh, write it! never, never!" cried Arthémise; "I would rather tell you."

"Tell me, then, and rest assured I shall not forget."

And Arthémise, in an agitated voice, gave the name and address of the pretended flower-girl to Lorin.

"She is called Sophie Tison, and lives, Rue des Nonandières, No. 24."

At this name, Lorin uttered an exclamation, and fled. He had not reached the corner of the street when a letter was delivered to Arthémise. It only contained three lines, —

Not a word concerning me, dear friend ; the revelation of my name would infallibly ruin me. Wait till to-morrow. I quit Paris to-night.

Thine,

SOPHIE.

"Oh, my God!" cried the future goddess, "if I could only have divined this I should have waited till to-morrow," and she rushed to the window to recall Lorin, if there was yet time ; but he had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

We have already said that in a few hours the news of this event had circulated through Paris. In short, there were at this epoch various indiscretions easy to comprehend on the part of a government of which the political schemes were made and unmade in the street.

The rumor gradually gained ground, till it at length reached the old Rue Saint Jacques, and two hours after the arrest of Maurice they heard of his detention.

Thanks to the activity of Simon, the details of the plot were quickly reported beyond the Temple; but as every one embellished the original according to his fancy, the truth was somewhat altered by the time it reached the master-tanner's. One said a poisoned flower had been conveyed to the queen, by means of which the Austrian would stupefy her guards, and thus be enabled to escape from the Temple; it was also said that certain suspicions were entertained of the fidelity of the battalion dismissed by Santerre on the preceding evening, — so that already several victims were consigned to the hatred of the people.

But the inhabitants of the old Rue Saint Jacques were not, of course, deceived as to the real nature of the event; and Morand on one side, and Dixmer on the other, went out immediately, leaving Geneviève a victim to the most violent despair.

If this misfortune had befallen Maurice, it was she who had been the sole cause of it. It was her hand that had conducted the young man blindfold to the entrance of the dungeon which now enclosed him, and which, in all human probability, he would quit only for the scaffold.

But under any circumstances Maurice should not lose his head on account of his devotion to her wishes. If Maurice were condemned, she would accuse herself before the tribunal, and would confess all. She would take all the responsibility upon herself, and at the expense of her life would save Maurice. And Geneviève, instead of feeling any fear of death, experienced, on the contrary, a melancholy happiness at the idea of dying for Maurice.

She loved the young man, she loved him more than was right in a woman who belonged not to herself; and to die would be for her the means of giving back to God her soul, pure and unspotted as she had received it from him.

On quitting the house, Dixmer and Morand separated, the former took the road to the Rue de la Corderie, the latter hastened to the Rue des Nonandières. Arriving at the end of the Bridge Marie, Morand perceived that crowd of idlers and common people which in Paris during or after the occurrence of anything remarkable collects at the place, as crows assemble on the field of battle.

At this sight Morand stopped short, a universal tremor shook his frame, and he leaned for support against the parapet.

At length, after a few seconds, he regained the almost miraculous power which under trying circumstances he exercised over his feelings, and mingling with the various groups, commenced his inquiries, and learned that a short time before they had taken from the Rue des Nonandières,

No. 24, a young woman, most certainly guilty of the crime of which she stood then accused, as they surprised her in the act of making these packets. Morand inquired before what club the poor girl would be interrogated, and found they had conducted her to the section Mère, where he immediately followed her.

The club was thronged, but by making free use of his elbows and fists, he succeeded in forcing an entrance. The first sight he encountered was the tall and noble figure of Maurice, standing haughtily in the place of the accused, and annihilating Simon by his looks.

"Yes, Citizens," cried Simon, who was concluding his accusation; "the Citizen Tison accuses the Citizen Lindey and the Citizen Lorin. The Citizen Lindey mentions a flower-girl, upon whom he endeavors to cast all the blame; but, as I told you before, the flower-girl will not be found, and that it is a vile plot formed by a body of aristocrats who toss back the ball from one to the other, like cowards as they are. You have seen, besides, that the Citizen Lorin had decamped when his presence was required; and he will return no more than the flower-girl."

"Then you have lied, Simon," cried a furious voice; "he will return, for he is here."

And Lorin strode into the hall.

"Room for me!" said he, pushing aside the spectators. "Room for me!" And he placed himself near Maurice.

The entrance of Lorin, so natural, and without affectation, yet combining all the freedom and strength inherent in the character of the young man, produced an immense effect upon the Tribunes, who instantly greeted him with cries of applause.

Maurice contented himself by smiling and holding out his hand to his friend, — the friend concerning whom he

had said to himself, "I shall not long stand alone at the bench of the accused."

The spectators gazed with visible interest on these two handsome young men whom the foul shoemaker of the Temple, like a demon envious of their youth and beauty, had accused.

He soon perceived the unfavorable impression he had made, and determined to strike the last blow.

"Citizens!" roared he; "I demand that the generous Citizen Tison should be heard; let her speak, and bring forward her accusation."

"Citizens," said Lorin, "I demand that the flower-girl who has just been arrested, and who no doubt will be brought before you, may be first heard."

"No, no," said Simon; "it is just some false evidence, — some partisan of the aristocrats. Besides, the woman Tison is most impatient to forward the means of justice."

Meanwhile Lorin took the opportunity to whisper to Maurice.

"Yes," cried the Tribunes; "the deposition of the woman Tison; let her depose!"

"Is the woman Tison in the hall?" demanded the president.

"Without doubt she is here," cried Simon. "Citizen Tison, answer for yourself."

"I am here, President; but if I depose, will they give me back my daughter?" said the female jailer.

"Your daughter has nothing at all to do with the affair with which we are at present engaged," said the president. "Make your deposition first, and then appeal to the Commune to restore your child."

"Do you hear?" said Simon; "the citizen president commands you to make your deposition. Do so at once!"

"A moment," said the president, turning toward Maurice, astonished at the calmness of a man generally so impetuous. "One moment. Citizen Municipal, have you nothing to say first?"

"No, Citizen President, — except that before Simon attached the words 'traitor and coward' to a man like myself, it would have been better to have waited till he was more correctly informed."

"You say that? you say that?" replied Simon, with the sneering accent peculiar to the plebeian Parisian.

"I say, Simon," replied Maurice, with more of sorrow than anger, "that you will experience your punishment immediately, when you see what is about to happen."

"What is about to happen, I should like to know?" demanded Simon.

"Citizen President," said Maurice, without deigning to notice the question of his hideous accuser, "I unite with my friend Lorin in demanding that the young girl who has just been arrested may be heard before this poor woman is compelled to speak, who, no doubt, has been prompted to this deposition."

"Listen, Citizen!" said Simon; "listen! They say down there that you are a false witness?"

"I a false witness!" cried the woman Tison. "You shall see; you shall see! Wait!"

"Citizen," said Maurice, "in pity desire this woman to remain silent."

"Ah! you are afraid," said Simon, — "you are afraid! Citizen President, I require the deposition of the woman Tison."

"Yes! yes! the deposition!" cried the Tribunes.

"Silence!" cried the president; "the Commune returns."

At this moment the sound of a carriage was heard outside, amid the noise of shouts and arms.

Simon turned uneasily toward the door.

"Quit the box," said the president to him; "you have nothing more to tell." Simon descended.

At this moment some gendarmes entered, with a crowd of curious idlers, which was soon driven back, and a woman was pushed toward the judgment-hall.

"Is it she?" whispered Lorin to Maurice.

"It is," replied Maurice. "Miserable woman, she is lost!"

"The flower-girl! the flower-girl!" murmured the Tribunes, whose curiosity was raised to the highest pitch. "Is this the flower-girl?"

"I demand, before everything else," roared Simon, "the deposition of the woman Tison. You commanded her to depose, President, and she has not yet done so."

The woman was recalled, and entered upon a dreadful and circumstantial deposition. The flower-girl, it was true, was alone criminal; but Maurice and Lorin were her accomplices.

This denunciation produced an incredible effect upon the public mind; and now, indeed, Simon was in the ascendant.

"Gendarmes," said the president, "bring forward the flower-girl."

"Oh, this is frightful!" said Maurice, concealing his face in his hands.

The flower-girl was called, and placed before the Tribune, exactly opposite to Tison's wife, whose testimony had convicted her of a capital crime.

She raised her veil.

"Sophie!" cried the woman Tison; "my child. You here!"

"Yes, mother," replied the young woman, gently.

"And why do you enter between two gendarmes?"

"Because I am accused, mother."

"You! Accused, and by whom?" cried the woman, in anguish.

"By you, mother."

A frightful silence, like the precursor of death, fell suddenly upon the noisy assemblage, while the painful feeling excited by this horrible scene oppressed every heart.

"Her daughter," was whispered, as if by voices in the distance, — "her daughter! Unhappy woman!"

Maurice and Lorin regarded both the accuser and the accused with sentiments of deep commiseration, mingled with respectful pity for their unhappy fate.

Simon, anxious to witness the conclusion of this tragedy, in which he hoped both Maurice and Lorin would remain actors, endeavored to withdraw from the attention of the woman Tison, who gazed wildly around.

"What is your name, Citizen?" said the president to the young girl, himself affected at the scene.

"Sophie Tison, Citizen."

"What is your age?"

"Nineteen years."

"Where do you reside?"

"Rue des Nonandières, No. 24."

"Did you sell the Citizen Lindey, whom you now see on the bench, a bouquet of carnations this morning?"

The young girl turned round and looked at Maurice.

"Yes, Citizen, I did," said she.

The mother herself gazed at her daughter, her eyes dilated with terror.

"Are you aware that every carnation contained a billet addressed to the widow of Capet?"

"I know it," replied the accused.

A movement of horror and admiration spread itself through the hall.

"Why did you offer these carnations to the Citizen Maurice?"

"Because I perceived that he wore the scarf of a municipal, and I imagined he was going to the Temple."

"Who are your accomplices?"

"I have none."

"What! have you then concocted this plot alone?"

"If it is a plot, I alone am concerned in it."

"But did the Citizen Maurice know —"

"That the flowers contained the billets?"

"Yes."

"The Citizen Maurice is a municipal; the Citizen Maurice could converse with the queen at any hour of the day or the night. The Citizen Maurice, if he had wished to say anything to the queen, had no occasion to write; he could speak."

"And you do not know the Citizen Maurice Lindey?"

"I had sometimes seen him come to the Temple while I was there with my poor mother, but I only know him by sight."

"Do you see, miserable wretch," said Lorin, shaking his fist at Simon, who, dismayed at the turn of affairs, with his head lowered, was attempting to sneak away unperceived, — "do you see what you have done?"

Every one regarded Simon with looks of deep indignation.

The president continued.

"Since you made up these bouquets, you of course are aware that each flower contained a paper, and therefore must know also what was written upon that paper?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, then, tell us what it was?"

"Citizen," said the young girl, with firmness, "I have told all I either can, or will, tell."

"Then you refuse to answer this question?"

"Yes."

"Do you know to what you expose yourself?"

"Yes."

"You trust perhaps to your youth and beauty?"

"I trust in God."

"Citizen Maurice Lindey, Citizen Hyacinthe Lorin," said the president, "you are free. The Commune recognizes your innocence, and admires your loyal spirit. Gendarmes, conduct the Citizen Sophie to the prison of the section."

At these words the woman Tison seemed to awake, and uttering a piercing cry, attempted to rush forward once more to embrace her daughter, but was withheld by the guards.

"I forgive you, mother," said the young girl, as they led her away.

The woman Tison uttered a savage roar, and fell down as if dead.

"Noble girl!" murmured Morand, filled at once with grief and admiration.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CONSPIRACY.

IMMEDIATELY following the events we have just narrated, a last scene came to fill up the complement of the drama which was unfolding its sombre turns of fortune.

The woman Tison, struck as by a thunderbolt at what had occurred, and totally abandoned by those who had escorted her, — for there is something revolting even in an involuntary crime, and it certainly amounts to a great crime when a mother condemns her own daughter to an ignominious death, were it even from excess of zealous patriotism, — the woman, we say, after remaining for some time in a state of insensibility, at length raised her head, looked wildly around, and finding herself deserted and alone, uttered a loud cry, and rushed toward the door.

At this door a few idlers more curious than the rest still remained congregated together, who dispersed when they beheld her, and pointing with their fingers, said one to another, —

"Do you see that woman? It is she who denounced her daughter."

The wretched woman uttered a cry of despair, and rushed toward the Temple. But on reaching the third of the Rue Michel le Comte, a man placed himself in front of her, impeding her progress, and concealing his face in his mantle.

"Are you content," said he, "now you have killed your child?"

"Killed my child!" cried the poor mother, — "killed my child! no, no, it is not possible!"

"It is so, notwithstanding, for your daughter has been sentenced."

"And where have they taken her?"

"To the Conciergerie; from there she will be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and you know what becomes of those who are sent there."

"Stand aside," said the woman Tison, "and let me pass."

"Where are you going?"

"To the Conciergerie."

"What are you going there for?"

"To see her again."

"They will not allow you to enter."

"They will permit me to lie at the door, to live there, to sleep there. I will remain there till she comes out, and then at least I shall see her once more."

"Suppose some one promised to restore you your child?"

"What do you say?"

"I ask you, supposing a man were to promise to give you back your child, would you do what that man required of you in return?"

"Anything for my child! anything for my Sophie!" cried the woman, wringing her hands in despair, — "Anything! anything! anything!"

"Listen," said the unknown. "It is God who now punishes you."

"And for what?"

"For the tortures you have inflicted so mercilessly on a poor mother as unhappy as yourself."

"Of whom do you speak? What do you mean?"

"You have often driven the unhappy prisoner to the

very verge of that despair where you are yourself at this moment, by your revelations and brutalities. God now punishes you for all this by conducting this daughter, whom you love so much, to the scaffold."

"You said there was some man who could save her. Where is that man; what does he want; what does he demand?"

"This man requires that you cease to persecute the queen; that you ask her pardon for the outrages already committed against her; and that if at any time you perceive that this woman, who is also a weeping, despairing mother, by any unforeseen circumstance, or by some miracle from Heaven, is upon the point of saving herself, instead of opposing her flight, you do all in your power to aid and abet it."

"Listen, Citizen," said the woman Tison. "You are the man, — is it not so?"

"Well."

"It is you who promise to save my child?"

The unknown remained silent.

"Will you engage to do it? Will you promise; will you swear it? Answer me."

"All that a man can do to save a woman, I will do to save your daughter."

"He cannot save her!" cried the woman, uttering piercing cries, — "he cannot save her! When he promised me he lied."

"Do what you can for the queen, and I will do all in my power for your daughter."

"What care I for the queen? She is a mother who has a daughter. But if they come to cutting off heads, it will not be her daughter's they will cut off, but her own. They may cut my throat so that they spare my child. They may lead me to the guillotine, so that they

do not harm a hair of her head, and I will go there singing, —

"Ah! ça ira, ça ira, ça ira,
Les aristocrates à la lanterne. . . . "

And she commenced singing in a frightful voice, then suddenly stopped short, and burst into a fit of frenzied laughter.

The man in the mantle himself appeared alarmed at this burst of madness, and retreated a step or two from her.

"Ah! you shall not escape me thus," said the woman Tison, in despair, and retaining her hold of his mantle; "you shall not at one moment come and say to a mother, 'Do this, and I will rescue your child,' and afterward say, 'Perhaps.' Will you save her?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"The day she is conducted from the Conciergerie to the scaffold."

"But why wait — why not to-night? this evening — this moment, even?"

"Because I cannot do so."

"Ah! you know you cannot; you well know you cannot!" cried the woman Tison; "but as for me, I can."

"What can you do?"

"I can persecute the prisoner, as you call her; I can watch the queen, as you term her, aristocrat that you are! and I can enter the prison any hour of the day or night. All this will I do. And as to her escaping, we shall see. Yes, we shall very well see — since they will not save my daughter — if that woman will escape. Head for head. Do you like that? Madame Veto has been queen; that I know. Sophie Tison is only a poor girl; that I know. But under the guillotine we are all equal."

"Well, be it so," said the man in the mantle. "But you perform your part, and I will fulfil mine."

"Swear!"

"I swear it."

"By what do you swear?"

"Anything you choose."

"Have you a daughter?"

"No."

"Well, then," said the woman, in a disappointed tone, "by what then will you swear?"

"Listen. I swear by God."

"Bah!" exclaimed the woman Tison, "you know very well they have demolished the old one, and have not yet decided on the new."

"I swear by the tomb of my father."

"Swear not by a tomb, for that is prophetic of evil. Oh, my God! my God! When I think that perhaps in three days I may swear by the tomb of my child also! My daughter! My poor Sophie!" cried the woman Tison, frantically, till at the sound of her voice, raised to a shrill scream, several windows were opened.

At sight of the opened windows, another man, who seemed to detach himself from the wall, advanced toward the first.

"Nothing can be done with this woman," said the first; "she is mad."

"No; she is a mother," replied the other, and dragged his companion away.

When she saw them leaving her, the woman Tison seemed to come back to herself.

"Where are you going?" cried she. "Are you going to rescue Sophie? Wait for me then; I will go with you. Wait for me; do wait for me!"

And the poor wretch followed them, screaming, till at

the corner of the nearest street, she lost sight of them altogether; and not knowing which way to turn, she remained for an instant undecided, looking on every side, when seeing in the silence and darkness of the night only a double symbol of death, she uttered a cry of horror and fell on the pavement without sense or motion.

The clock struck ten.

During this time, and while the same hour was resounding from the Temple clock, the queen as usual sat in her chamber, between her daughter and her sister, near a smoky lamp. She was concealed from the sight of the municipals by Madame Royale, who, pretending to embrace her, was reading over again a small billet written on the smallest piece of paper imaginable, and in characters so minute that her eyes, already nearly blinded by her scalding tears, scarcely retained strength to decipher it.

The billet contained the following lines, —

"To-morrow, Tuesday, ask permission to walk in the garden; this will be accorded without objection, as an order has been issued to grant you this favor whenever you think proper to solicit it. After two or three turns, feign to feel fatigued, approach the cabin, and ask the Widow Plumeau to allow you to sit down. Then, in a moment, pretend to feel worse, and faint away. They will then close all the doors that they may be able to render you assistance, and you will remain with Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale. Immediately the trap-door of the cellar will open. Precipitate yourself, your sister, and daughter through this aperture, and you are all three saved."

"*Mon Dieu!*" said Madame Royale, "does our evil destiny tire in the pursuit?"

"If this billet should prove only a trap," said Madame Elizabeth.

"No, no," said the queen; "these characters have always indicated to me the presence of a mysterious but equally brave and faithful friend."

"Is it the Chevalier?" demanded Madame Royale.

"He himself," replied the queen.

Madame Elizabeth clasped her hands.

"Let us each read the billet again very softly," replied the queen, "so that if one of us forget any particular, another will remember."

They all three re-read the letter, and had just finished so doing, when they heard the door of their chamber turn slowly on its hinges. The two princesses turned round; the queen alone remained stationary, except that by an almost imperceptible movement she raised her hand to her hair and hid the billet in her head-dress. It was a municipal who opened the door.

"What is your business, Monsieur?" demanded Madame Elizabeth and Madame Royale, at the same moment.

"Hum!" said the municipal, "it appears to me that you retire very late to-night?"

"Is there, then," said the queen, with her usual dignity, "a new decree from the Commune, stating the hour at which I am to go to bed?"

"No, Citizen," said the municipal; "but if necessary they will make one."

"In the mean time, Monsieur," said Marie Antoinette, "respect, I do not say the chamber of a queen, but that of a woman."

"Truly," growled the municipal, "these aristocrats always speak as if they were something—"

But in the mean time, subdued by that dignity, haughty in her prosperity, but which three years of suffering had calmed down, he withdrew.

An instant afterward the lamp was extinguished, and the three females retired in darkness, as usual.

The next morning at nine o'clock, the queen, having re-read the letter before she arose, in order that she might not misconstrue any of the instructions contained there, tore it into almost invisible fragments. She then hastily finished her toilet, awoke her sister, and entered the chamber of the princess.

A minute afterward she came out, and called the municipals on guard.

"What do you want, Citizen?" said one of them, appearing at the door, while the other did not even discontinue his breakfast to answer the royal appeal.

"Sir," said Marie Antoinette, "I have just left my daughter's chamber, and find her very ill. Her limbs are pained and swollen for want of exercise; and you know, sir, it is I who have doomed her to this life of inaction. I received permission to walk in the garden, but in descending I had necessarily to pass before the door of the room occupied by my husband in his lifetime. When I made the attempt my heart failed me, and I had not courage to do so, and have since limited my walks to the platform. Now, however, I find this exercise insufficient for my poor child. I therefore entreat you, Citizen Municipal, to request of General Santerre, in my name, the renewal of this privilege."

The queen had pronounced these words in a manner at once so mild, yet dignified; had so strenuously avoided all allusions to anything that could wound the feelings of the Republican, — that he who had entered her presence with his head covered, as for the most part was the custom of these men, gradually raised his red bonnet, and when she had finished, said, bowing respectfully, —

"Rest assured, Madame, your request shall be laid before the citizen general."

Then on retiring, as if to convince himself he had yielded to justice rather than weakness. "It is just," said he, "after all; it is only right."

"What is just?" demanded the other municipal.

"That this woman should be permitted to walk in the garden with her child, who is an invalid."

"Bah!" said the other, "when she asks to be allowed to walk from the Temple to the Place de la Revolution, that will be permitted her fast enough."

The queen heard these words, and grew pale, but still drew from them fresh courage for the great attempt she meditated.

The municipal finished his breakfast, and descended. The queen requested permission to take hers in her daughter's room, which was granted.

Madame Royale, to confirm the statement concerning her ill-health, did not quit her bed; the queen and Madame Elizabeth remained near her.

At eleven o'clock Santerre arrived. His coming was, as usual, announced by the drums beating the march, and by the entrance of a fresh battalion and other municipals, who came in their turn to relieve those on guard.

When Santerre had fully reviewed the battalion leaving, and the one about to take its place, and had paraded his large heavy-limbed horse round the court of the Temple, he stood still for a moment. This was for the purpose of receiving any claims, denunciations, or requests.

The municipal, availing himself of this halt, approached him.

"Well, what do you want?" said Santerre, bruskly.

"Citizen," said the municipal, "I come to entreat on the part of the queen —"

"Who is the queen?" interrupted Santerre.

"True!" said the municipal, astonished at his own mistake. "What have I said — I must be mad! I came to speak on the part of Madame Veto —"

"All in good time," said Santerre. "Now I understand you, what have you to say to me?"

"The young Veto is ill, it appears, from want of proper air and exercise."

"Well, is it necessary again to bring this before the public? The nation granted her permission to walk in the garden, and she refused it. Good-morning."

"That is exactly it. She regrets this now, and requests you will permit her to do so."

"There is no difficulty about that. You all hear," said Santerre, "that Capet's wife will come down to walk in the garden. Now," addressing the whole battalion, "take care she does not abuse this favor granted her by the nation, by making her escape over the wall; for if that happens I will cut off every one of your heads." A roar of laughter followed this pleasantry of the citizen general. "Now that is settled," said Santerre, "adieu. I am going to the Commune. It appears that they have reunited Roland and Barbaroux, and the question under debate is to deliver them a passport to another world."

It was this intelligence that had put the citizen general in such good humor.

He then galloped away.

The battalion who were removing the guard followed him; then the municipals also gave place to those who had received Santerre's instructions respecting the queen.

One of the municipals went up to Marie Antoinette

and informed her that the general had granted her request.

"Oh!" thought she, looking through the window toward heaven, "does thy wrath abate, Lord? and does thy terrible right hand grow weary of pressing so heavily upon us?"

"Thanks, Monsieur," said she to the municipal, with that fascinating smile which had proved the ruin of Barnave, and turned the heads of so many of his fellow-men, — "thanks!"

Then turning round to her little dog, who leaped after her, walking on his hind-legs, for he well understood from the looks of his mistress that something unusual was about to take place, —

"Come, Jet," said she, "we are going for a walk."

The little animal began to yelp and jump, and after looking at the municipal attentively, comprehending, no doubt, that from this man originated the intelligence which had made his mistress so happy, ran toward him, and wagging his long and silky tail, ventured even to caress him.

This man, who perhaps might be insensible to the prayers of a queen, could not resist the caresses of a little dog.

"If only on account of this little beast, you should go out more frequently, Citizen Capet. Humanity commands us to take care of every creature."

"At what hour shall we go out, sir?" asked the queen. "Do you not think the sun would do us good?"

"You may go out when you please," said the municipal; "there has been no restriction on the subject. If you like to go out at mid-day, as that is the time they change the sentinels, there will be less bustle in the court."

"Then let it be at mid-day," said the queen, pressing her hand to her side to still the beating of her heart.

And she looked at this man, who appeared to her less stern than his associates, and who, perhaps, for kindly yielding to the wishes of the prisoner might fall a sacrifice to the conspiracy which they meditated.

But at the moment when compassion was stealing over the heart of the woman, the soul of the queen was aroused. She thought of the 10th of August and of the corpses of her faithful friends strewed upon the floors of the palace; she recalled to memory the 2d of September, and the head of the Princess Lamballe carried on a pike before her windows; she remembered the 21st of January when her husband died upon the scaffold, the noise of drums drowning his feeble voice; finally, she thought of her son, poor child! whose cries of distress had more than once reached her ears when she had no power to render him help, — and her heart became hardened.

"Alas!" cried she, "misfortune is like the blood of the ancient Hydras, — it teems with crops of future evils!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LITTLE DOG JET.

THE municipal left to call his colleagues and to read the *procès-verbal* left by the former municipals.

The queen remained alone with her sister and child. They all three looked at one another. Then Madame Royale threw her arms round the queen, and warmly embraced her. Madame Elizabeth approached her sister, and held out her hand.

"Let us offer up our prayers to God," said the queen, "but in such a manner that no one can hear us."

There are fatal epochs when prayer, that natural hymn of praise which God has implanted in every human heart, becomes suspicious in the eyes of men, since prayer is an act of praise and acknowledgment for mercies received. But in the ideas of her keepers hope and gratitude afforded subject for inquietude; since the queen could hope only for flight, and could thank God only for affording her the means of effecting it.

This mental prayer concluded, all three remained without uttering a word.

Eleven o'clock struck, then twelve. At the moment when the last stroke resounded from the bronze bell, the noise of arms was heard on the spiral staircase ascending to the queen.

"They are relieving sentinels," said she; "they come for us."

She saw her sister and daughter turn very pale.

"Courage!" said she, trembling herself with emotion.

"It is noon," cried a voice from below. "Bring down the prisoners."

"We are here, gentlemen," replied the queen, who, with a sentiment almost of regret, took a parting glance at the black walls and the rude appurtenances which had been more or less the companions of her captivity.

The first wicket opened, they gained the corridor, which, being dark, enabled the three captives to conceal their emotions. Before them frolicked little Jet; but when they arrived at the second, — that is to say the door from which Marie Antoinette endeavored to turn her eyes, — the faithful little animal first placed his nose to the ground, then laid his head upon his paws, and gave utterance to a succession of plaintive cries which terminated in a prolonged howl.

The queen passed on quickly, not having strength sufficient to recall her dog, and supported herself against the wall.

After advancing a few steps, her limbs refused their office, and she felt herself compelled to stop. Her sister and daughter approached her, and for a few moments the three females remained motionless, forming a melancholy group, the mother resting her face upon the head of her daughter, when little Jet rejoined them.

"Well!" cried the voice, "is she coming down or not?"

"We are coming," said the municipal, who had remained standing, respecting the queen's grief, so great in its simplicity.

"Come," said the queen, and again continued to descend.

When the prisoners had reached the bottom of the winding stair opposite the last door, under which the

sun shed his rays of bright gold, the rolling of the drum was heard summoning the guard; then a profound silence, the effect of curiosity, ensued, and the massive door opened, revolving slowly upon its creaking hinges.

A woman was seated on the ground, or rather on the corner of the stone contiguous to this door. It was the woman Tison, whom the queen had not seen for four and twenty hours, and whose absence at supper the preceding evening and at their morning's meal had excited her surprise.

The queen already saw the light, the trees, the garden, and beyond the barrier which enclosed the garden her eyes eagerly sought the little hut of the canteen, where her friends doubtless awaited her; when, at the sound of footsteps, the woman Tison removed her hands, and the queen beheld a pale and care-worn face beneath a mass of gray dishevelled locks.

The change wrought in these few hours was so great that the queen stood overwhelmed with astonishment.

Then, with the deliberation peculiar to those deficient in reason, the woman Tison knelt down before the door, impeding the passage of Marie Antoinette.

"What do you want, my good woman?" demanded the queen.

"He said it was necessary that you should pardon me."

"Who said so?" demanded the queen.

"The man in the mantle," replied the woman Tison.

The queen looked at Madame Elizabeth and her daughter, surprised at this appeal.

"Go along, go!" said the municipal; "let the Widow Capet pass; she has permission to walk in the garden."

"I know it," said the old woman; "that is why I

came to wait for her here, since they will not allow me to go up; and as I had to ask her forgiveness, I was obliged to wait for her coming out, to see her."

"But why then are you not permitted to go up?" demanded the queen.

The woman began to laugh.

"Because they pretend that I am mad," said she.

The queen looked at her and saw indeed that the wild eyes of the unhappy being reflected a strange light, — that vague light denoting aberration of intellect.

"Good Heaven!" said she. "Poor woman! what has happened to you?"

"Happened! Do you not know?" said the woman; "but if — You know very well, since it was on your account she was condemned."

"Who?"

"Sophie."

"Your daughter?"

"Yes, she, my poor child!"

"Condemned! by whom; how; why?"

"Because she sold a bouquet."

"What bouquet?"

"A bouquet of carnations. She is not a flower-girl, though," continued the old woman, as if endeavoring to collect her thoughts; "then how could she sell the bouquet?"

The queen shuddered; an invisible link connected this scene with her present situation. She understood that the time must not be lost in useless conversation.

"My good woman," said she, "allow me to pass, I entreat you; you can tell me all this by-and-by."

"No, now; you must pardon me, and I must assist you to escape, that he may save my daughter."

The queen turned as pale as death.

"My God!" murmured she, raising her eyes to heaven, then turning toward the municipal, —

"Sir," said she, "have the kindness to remove this woman; you see that she is mad."

"Come, come, mother," said the municipal; "decamp!"

But the woman clung to the wall, still reiterating, —

"She must pardon me, that he may save my daughter."

"But who is he?"

"The man in the mantle."

"Sister," said Madame Elizabeth, "try to console her."

"Oh, willingly," said the queen; "I believe, indeed, that will be the shortest way;" then turning toward the mad woman, —

"What do you desire, good woman?" said she.

"I wish you to pardon me all the suffering I have caused you by my unjust behavior; all the accusations I have made against you; and trust that when you see the man in the mantle, you will command him to save my daughter; for he will do all that you desire."

"I do not know whom you mean by the man in the mantle," said the queen; "but if all that is necessary to your peace of mind is to obtain my pardon for the offences you imagine you have committed against me, I freely forgive you, my poor woman, from the depths of my heart, and trust only that any one I may have offended will as sincerely pardon me."

"Oh!" cried the woman Tison, with an indescribable accent of joy, "he will save my child, since you have forgiven me. Your hand, Madame! your hand —"

The queen astonished, and at a loss to comprehend the meaning, presented her hand to the woman, who seized it, and ardently pressed it to her lips.

At this moment the hoarse voice of a hawker was heard in the Temple, resounding from the street.

"Here," cried he, "is the judgment and decree condemning Sophie Tison to the penalty of death for the crime of conspiracy!"

Scarcely had these words reached the ears of the woman Tison, than rising from her knees, with an air of dogged resolution, she extended her arms to impede the passage of the queen.

"O God!" cried the queen, who had not lost one word of the hawker's terrible cry.

"Condemned to death!" cried the mother; "my child condemned! — my Sophie lost! He has not then saved her, and now he cannot save her! Too late! too late!"

"Poor woman," said the queen, "believe me, I feel for you."

"You!" said she, looking at her fiercely with her blood-shot eyes. "You pity me? Never! never!"

"You are mistaken. I pity you from my heart; but do pray allow me to pass."

The woman burst into a hoarse laugh.

"Let you pass? No, no! I would have assisted you to escape, because he promised if I did so and asked your forgiveness he would rescue my daughter; but since she is condemned to death you shall not escape."

"Gentlemen!" cried the queen, "help! Do you not see that this woman is mad?"

"No, I am not mad; I know well what I am saying!" cried the woman. "It is the truth, — there was a conspiracy, and Simon discovered all. It was my poor daughter who sold the bouquet. She confessed it before the Revolutionary Tribunal — A bouquet of carnations — They had papers concealed in them."

"Madame," exclaimed the queen, "in the name of Heaven!"

The voice of the crier was again heard, repeating, —

"This is the judgment and decree condemning the girl Sophie Tison to the punishment of death for the crime of conspiracy!"

"Do you hear it?" screamed the lunatic, around whom the National Guards had now gathered; "do you hear? Condemned to death; it is you who have killed my daughter — you, Austrian, you!"

"Gentlemen," said the queen, "for pity's sake, if you will not release me from this poor mad creature, allow me at least to return to my apartments. I cannot support the reproaches of this woman; unjust though they are, they crush my heart," and she turned away, sighing deeply.

"Yes, yes; weep, hypocrite!" cried the maddened wretch; "your bouquet cost her dear — She might have known it. Thus it is with all those who serve you. You bring misery, Austrian, everywhere! Your friends are dead, — your husband and your defenders have all perished, — and now they will sacrifice my unhappy child! When will your turn come, that no more may die for you?" And the miserable creature accompanied these last words with threatening gestures.

"Unhappy woman!" observed Madame Elizabeth, venturing to speak, "do you forget that she whom you address is the queen?"

"The queen!" repeated the maniac, whose madness every moment increased, "if she is the queen, let her defend my poor girl from the hangmen who seek her life — Let her show mercy to my poor Sophie! — Kings show mercy — Render me back my child, and

I will acknowledge you as queen. Till then, you are only a woman, and a woman who brings misery upon all, and kills all — "

"Oh, have pity, Madame!" cried Marie Antoinette; "you see my tears and distress," and she again made an attempt to pass, no longer from any hope of escape, but to free herself from this cruel attack.

"You shall not pass!" roared the old woman. "You want to escape, Madame Veto — I know it all, the man in the mantle told me; you want to go and rejoin the Prussians. But you shall not escape," continued she, clasping the robe of the queen; "I will prevent you. *À la lanterne*, Madame Veto! To arms, citizens! let us march — "

And with her arms wrestling, her grizzled locks dishevelled and hanging over her haggard countenance, her eyes blood-shot, the unfortunate creature fell to the ground, in her fall tearing the robe she still held in her hand.

The queen, terrified, but freed at last from the maniac, was flying to the side of the garden, when all at once a terrible cry resounded, mingled with loud barking, and accompanied with a strange uproar, arousing the National Guards from their stupor, who, attracted by the uproar, immediately surrounded Marie Antoinette.

"To arms! to arms! Treason!" shouted a man, whom from his voice the queen recognized as the shoemaker Simon.

Near this man, who, sword in hand, guarded the threshold of the cabin, little Jet was barking furiously.

"To arms! every one to his post!" cried Simon; "we are betrayed. Compel the Austrian to turn back. To arms! to arms!"

An officer ran up, when Simon spoke to him, pointing

with enraged gestures to the interior of the hut. The officer in his turn then cried "To arms!"

"Jet! Jet!" called the queen, advancing some steps.

But the dog only continued to bark more furiously.

The National Guard ran to arms, and rushed toward the hut, while the municipals took possession of the queen, her daughter, and sister, and compelled them to re-enter the wicket, which they closed behind them.

"Prepare your arms!" cried the municipals to the sentinels. And the sound of firearms being made ready for action was heard.

"It is there! it is there!" cried Simon, "under the trap. I saw it move, I am certain of it. Besides, the Austrian's dog, a good little animal who was not in the plot, barked at the conspirators, who are no doubt still in the cellar. Hold! he barks again."

Indeed, Jet, instigated by Simon's cries and shouts, began to bark again more strenuously than before.

The officer seized the ring of the trap, but seeing he was unable to raise it, two of the gendarmes went to his assistance, but without the slightest success.

"You perceive they hold the trap-door from below. Fire through the trap-door, my friends, fire!" said Simon.

"Oh!" cried Madame Plumeau, "you will break my bottles."

"Fire!" repeated Simon, "fire!"

"Be silent, brawler!" said the officer, "bring some hatchets, and open the planks. Now let a platoon make ready, and fire into the trap-door the instant an opening is made." The groaning of planks and a sudden jerk informed the National Guards that some movement was taking place in the interior. Directly afterward they heard a motion under ground, like an iron portcullis being closed.

"Courage!" cried the officer to the sappers, who worked indefatigably.

The hatchets severed the planks. Twenty guns were lowered in the direction of the opening, which enlarged every moment.

But through the aperture no one could be seen.

The officer lighted a torch and threw it into the cave. It was empty.

They then raised the trap-door, which now offered no resistance. "Follow me!" said the officer, bravely leaping down the steps.

"Forward! forward!" cried the National Guards, following the example of their officer.

"Ah! Madame Plumeau," said Simon, "you lend your cellar to aristocrats!"

The wall was broken down; the humid soil had been trampled by numerous feet; and a conduit of three feet wide and five feet high, like the branch of a trench, plunged in the direction of Rue de la Corderie. The officer ventured into this opening, resolved to follow these aristocrats into the bowels of the earth; but when he had advanced three or four steps he found all farther progress impeded by an iron grating.

"Halt!" cried he, to those who were closely pressing behind him; "we can proceed no farther until this portcullis is removed."

"Well," said the municipal, who having placed the prisoners in security anxiously awaited the news, — "well, what have you discovered?"

"*Parbleu!*" said the officer, reappearing, "it was doubtless a conspiracy; the aristocrats wanted to carry off the queen during her walk, and she was probably in collusion with them."

"Plague take it!" cried the municipal, "send

some one for the Citizen Santerre, and inform the Commune!"

"Soldiers," said the officer, "remain in this cellar, and if any one presents himself, kill him!"

And the officer, having given this order, ascended the winding stair to make his report.

"Ah! ah!" said Simon, rubbing his hands, "ah! ah! will they still say I am a fool? Brave Jet! Jet is a famous patriot; Jet has saved the Republic. Come here, Jet, come!"

And the brute who had coaxed the poor little dog, the moment he approached him, raised his foot and kicked him to a distance of several feet.

"I like you, Jet," said he; "ah, you will cut your mistress's throat! Come here, Jet, come!"

But this time instead of obeying him, Jet ran away howling, on the road toward the keep.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MUSCADIN.

It was near two o'clock. Lorin was promenading up and down in Maurice's room, while Agesilaus polished his master's boots in the antechamber, only for the greater convenience of conversation the door remained open, and during his walk Lorin often stopped and questioned the official.

"And you say, Citizen Agesilaus, that your master left home this morning?"

"Oh, upon my soul! yes."

"At the usual hour?"

"It might be ten minutes earlier, or ten minutes later, I cannot say exactly."

"And you have not seen him since?"

"No, Citizen."

Lorin continued his walk, and after three or four turns again stopped and renewed his questions.

"Had he his sword with him?" demanded he.

"When he goes to the section he invariably carries it."

"Are you sure he has gone to the section?"

"He told me so, at least."

"In that case I shall join him," said Lorin; "but in case I miss him, tell him I have been here, and am coming back."

"Wait!" said Agesilaus.

"Why?"

"I hear his footstep on the staircase."

Almost at the same moment the door opened, and Maurice entered. Lorin bestowed a hasty glance upon him, and perceived nothing extraordinary in his appearance.

"So you are come at last," said he. "I have been waiting here these two hours."

"So much the better," said Maurice, smiling; "that has afforded you plenty of time to compose distichs and quatrains."

"Alas! *mon ami*," replied the improvisator, "I do not make them now."

"Why, is the world coming to an end?"

"My dear Maurice, I am very unhappy."

"You unhappy?"

"Yes, I am miserable. I am suffering from remorse."

"Remorse?"

"Oh, by Heaven! yes," said Lorin. "Between you and her I had to choose! — between you and her I could not hesitate; but, you see, Arthémise is in despair, for she was her friend."

"Poor girl!"

"And it was she who gave me her address — "

"You would have done much better to have allowed things to take their natural course."

"Yes; and at this very moment you would have been condemned in her stead. Powerfully argued, dear friend. And I came to ask your advice! I thought you were wiser than that."

"Never mind, ask away."

"This poor girl: do you understand? I wish to attempt some means of saving her. Even if I could only give or receive a blow in her defence, I feel as if it would do me good."

"You are mad, Lorin," said Maurice, shrugging his shoulders.

"Perhaps if I made an appeal to the Revolutionary Tribunal?"

"It is too late, she is condemned."

"Truly," said Lorin, "it is dreadful to see this poor girl sacrificed thus."

"The more so since it was my safety that has entailed her death. But after all, Lorin, we have one consolation. She was a conspirator."

"Goodness!" said Lorin, "does not every one conspire nowadays? She has done no more, poor girl, than every one else does."

"Grieve for her neither too much, nor too loudly, my friend," said Maurice, "for we have to bear our share in this trouble. Believe me, we are not so fully cleared from the accusation of being her accomplices, that no stain remains behind. To-day, at the section, I was termed 'Girondin,' by the Captain of the Chasseurs of Saint Leu; and I, at the same time, found it necessary to convince him by a stroke from my sword that he was mistaken."

"Then that was the reason you returned so late?"

"Just so."

"But why did you not inform me?"

"Because in affairs of this nature you cannot restrain yourself, and the thing had to be concluded immediately, that it might make no noise."

"And that scum called you 'Girondin,' Maurice, — you, a thoroughbred Republican?"

"By Jove, he did! and this will convince you that another adventure of this nature and we become unpopular; and you well know, Lorin, in these times unpopular is a synonymous term for *suspected.*"

"I know it well," said Lorin; "and that word appalls the bravest heart; but never mind — It is repugnant

to my feelings to allow this poor Sophie to be led to the guillotine without asking her forgiveness — "

"What do you wish to do?"

"I wish you to remain here; you have nothing to reproach yourself with, so far as she is concerned. With me, you see, the case is very different. Since I can do nothing for her, I will meet her on her way. I wish to go there, Maurice; do you comprehend me? Were she to give me only a wave of her hand — "

"I will accompany you then," said Maurice.

"Impossible, my friend; you are a municipal, secretary to a section, and you have just been tried, while I have only been your defender. They would think you guilty, therefore remain here. As for me, it is quite another thing. I risk nothing, and therefore go."

"Go then," said he, "but be prudent."

Lorin smiled, shook Maurice's hand, and left.

Maurice opened his window, and waved a sad adieu; but before Lorin had turned the corner of the street, Maurice could not help gazing wistfully at him more than once, and each time, as if drawn by magnetic influence and sympathy, Lorin turned round, looked at him, and smiled.

At last, when the latter had disappeared at the corner of the quay, Maurice closed the window, threw himself into a fauteuil, and fell into one of those dreamy moods which in people of strong mind and vigorous constitution are often the presentiments of misfortune, as they resemble the calm which is the precursor of the storm. He was softly awakened from his revery, or rather state of stupor, by his official, who, on returning from the execution of some commission, entered with the sprightly air of a servant anxious to communicate his budget of news. Seeing his master preoccupied, however, he dared not in-

terrupt him, and consoled himself by constantly passing and re-passing before him, without any reasonable cause for so doing.

"What is it?" at length said Maurice; "speak, if you have anything to tell me."

"Ah! Citizen, another desperate conspiracy."

Maurice merely shrugged his shoulders.

"A conspiracy enough to make the hair of one's head stand upright," continued Agesilaus.

"Indeed!" replied Maurice, like a man accustomed to hear daily of thirty conspiracies at this epoch.

"Yes, Citizen," replied Agesilaus; "it drives me to frenzy, you see. The very thought of it makes a good patriot's flesh creep."

"Let us hear this conspiracy," said Maurice.

"The Austrian has all but escaped."

"Nonsense!" said Maurice, beginning to listen with greater attention.

"It seems," continued Agesilaus, "that the Widow Capet was in communication with the girl Tison, who is to be guillotined to-day. She has not escaped that fate, unfortunate creature!"

"How had the queen communication with this girl?" demanded Maurice, who felt the perspiration exuding at every pore.

"Through a carnation. Can you imagine, Citizen, how they could have conveyed the plan to her in a carnation?"

"In a carnation? Who did this?"

"Monsieur le Chevalier de — wait then! His name is notorious, but as for me, I forget all these names. A Chevalier de Chateau — what a fool I am! It is not a Chateau — a Chevalier de Maison."

"De Maison-Rouge?"

"That is it."

"Impossible!"

"How impossible? when I told you they have found the trap-door, the subterranean passage, and coaches."

"On the contrary, you have told me nothing of all this."

"Well, I am going to tell you, then."

"Go on, then. If it is a story, it is at least a good one."

"No, Citizen, it is not a story, very far from it; and in proof of that, I had it from a citizen porter. The aristocrats had dug a mine, and this mine commenced at Rue de la Corderie, and terminated in the cellar of the little cabin belonging to Madame Plumeau, who has narrowly escaped being arrested as an accomplice. You know her, do you not?"

"Yes," replied Maurice; "go on!"

"Capet's wife was to escape by the subterranean passage. She already had her foot on the first step, when Simon caught her by her robe — But stay, they are beating to arms in the city, and the recall in the sections. Do you not hear the drum? There! It is said that the Prussians are at Dumartin, and have reconnoitred as far as the frontiers."

In the midst of this maze of words, a medley of truth and falsehood, probability and impossibility, Maurice seized the guiding thread. All sprung from the carnation presented before his eyes to the queen, and purchased by himself from the poor miserable flower-girl. This carnation contained the plan of a plot which had just come to light, the details of which, more or less true, had been reported by Agesilaus. At this moment the noise of the drum came nearer, and Maurice heard the crier proclaim in the street, —

"Tremendous conspiracy discovered at the Temple by the Citizen Simon! Grand conspiracy in favor of the Widow Capet discovered at the Temple!"

"Yes, yes," said Maurice; "it is just as I thought. There is some truth in all this. And Lorin, in the midst of this popular excitement, goes to offer his hand to this girl and be cut to pieces."

Maurice snatched up his hat, buckled his sword-belt, and with two bounds was in the street.

"Where can he be?" said Maurice to himself. "Probably on the road to the concierge," and he rushed toward the quay.

At the extreme end of the Quai de la Megisserie some pikes and bayonets, bristling in the midst of the crowd, attracted his attention, and he fancied in the centre he could distinguish the uniform of a National Guard, and in the group signs of hostile movements. He ran, his heart oppressed with the dread of impending misfortune, toward the assemblage on the banks of the river.

The National Guard pressed by the company of Marseillais was Lorin. He was very pale, his lips compressed, his eyes menacing; his hand upon the handle of his sword, measuring the place best calculated to strike the blows he fully intended to inflict on his cowardly assailants.

Within two feet from Lorin stood Simon. He was laughing ferociously, and pointing him out to the Marseillais and the populace, saying, —

"Look at him! look well at him! He is one of those that I drove from the Temple yesterday for an aristocrat. He is one of those who favored the correspondence with the carnations. This is an accomplice of the girl Tison, who will pass here presently. Well, do you see? — he walks quietly on the quay while his coadjutor goes to

the guillotine; and perhaps she was even more to him than an assistant. She might be his mistress, and he is here to bid her farewell, or to try to save her!"

Lorin was not the man to endure more. He drew his sword. At the same time the crowd opened before a man who charged headlong into the group, whose broad shoulders had already knocked down two or three spectators who were preparing to become actors in this scene.

"Be happy, Simon," said Maurice. "You regretted, no doubt, that I was not with my friend to enable you to turn your new title of Denunciator to full account. Denounce! Simon, denounce! I am here."

"Faith! yes," said Simon, with his hideous sneer; "and your arrival is very apropos. This," continued he, "is the elegant Maurice Lindey, who was accused at the same time as the girl Tison, but was acquitted because he was rich."

"To the lamp-post with them! to the lamp-post!" cried the Marseillais.

"Yes, forsooth, you had better make the attempt!" said Maurice, and advancing a step he pricked one of the foremost of the cut-throats in the forehead, so that the blood from his wound nearly blinded him.

"Have at the murderer!" cried the latter.

The Marseillais lowered their pikes, raised their hatchets, and loaded their guns, while the frightened crowd dispersed, leaving the two friends to contend alone against this storm of blows. They regarded each other with a last sad, yet sublime smile, while calmly awaiting their destruction from the whirlwind of iron and flame which threatened them, when all at once the door of the house against which they were leaning opened, and a swarm of young people, attired in the habits of those termed

"Muscadins," or "Fops," each wearing a sword and brace of pistols in his girdle, rushed upon the Marseillais, and were instantly engaged in a terrific contest.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried Maurice and Lorin, simultaneously, animated by this unexpected relief, without reflecting that to fight in the ranks of the new-comers was to confirm Simon's accusation, — "Hurrah!"

But if they were forgetful of their own safety, another thought for them. A short young man, about five-and twenty years of age, with blue eyes, who fought without any intermission, with infinite science and valor, with a heavy sword which any one would have thought his delicate and feminine hand incapable of wielding, perceiving that Maurice and Lorin, instead of escaping by the door which he seemed to have left open for that purpose, remained fighting by his side, turned to them and said in a low voice, —

"Fly directly through this door; pay no attention to what we do here, or you will uselessly compromise yourselves."

Then, seeing the two friends hesitate, he suddenly cried, addressing himself to Maurice, "Away! no patriots among us, Citizen Lindey; we are aristocrats here!"

At these words, united to the audacity which would induce a man publicly to accuse himself of what at this period must lead to certain death, the crowd uttered a loud shout.

But the fair young man and two or three of his friends, without evincing any symptoms of alarm, pushed Maurice and Lorin into the alley, and closed the door behind them. They then threw themselves into the mêlée, which was now considerably augmented by the approach of the fatal cart.

Maurice and Lorin, thus miraculously saved, regarded each other in amazement. The outlet seemed to have been designed for the express purpose of their escape. They entered a court, and at the end discovered a small private door which opened into Rue Saint Germain l'Auxerrois.

At this moment a detachment of gendarmes issued from Pont au Change, who had soon swept the quay, although, from the cross-street where our two friends had concealed themselves, they heard for an instant the noise of an obstinate struggle. These gendarmes preceded the cart which conducted the hapless Sophie to the scaffold.

"Gallop!" cried a voice, — "gallop."

The cart proceeded at a quick pace, and Lorin saw the unfortunate girl standing, a smile upon her lips, and calm reliance in her eye, but was unable to exchange even a gesture with her, as she passed without seeing him, in the midst of a perfect maelstrom of people, shouting, —

"To the guillotine with the aristocrat! to the guillotine!"

The noise decreased in the distance till it reached the Tuileries. Then the little door through which Maurice and Lorin had escaped, again opened, and three or four Muscadins, with their clothes torn and stained with blood, passed through. It was probably all that remained of the little troop. The fair young man went through the last.

"Alas!" said he, "this cause is then accursed!" and casting from him his sword, notched and bloody, he rushed toward Rue des Lavandières.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CHEVALIER DE MAISON-ROUGE.

MAURICE hastened to return to the section to enter a complaint against Simon. It is true that before quitting Maurice, Lorin had found a more expeditious way; this was to collect some Thermopyles to lie in wait for him, and on his first exit from the Temple to kill him in a pitched battle. But Maurice strenuously opposed this plan.

"You are ruined," said he, "if you make use of these means. Crush Simon, but do it legally. That ought to be an easy thing enough to the lawyers."

Consequently, the next morning, Maurice laid a formal complaint before the section, but was both astonished and annoyed when the president turned a deaf ear, excusing himself by saying he could not interfere between two good citizens, each incited by the love of country.

"Good," said Maurice. "I know now how to act to merit the reputation of a good citizen. To assemble the people in order to assassinate a man who displeases you: this you call being 'incited by love of country.' Well, I return to Lorin's opinion, which I was wrong to dispute. After to-day, as you hear, I shall adopt patriotism, and shall first experiment upon Simon."

"Citizen Maurice," replied the president, "you are, after all, perhaps more to blame in this affair than Simon. He discovered a conspiracy, which it was not his province to do. You saw nothing, although the discovery formed

part of your duty; and more, you have held communication — accidentally or intentionally, we know not which — with the enemies of the nation."

"I?" said Maurice. "Well, this is something new. And with whom, pray, Citizen President?"

"With the Citizen Maison-Rouge."

"I?" said Maurice, stupefied. "I had communication with the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge? I do not know him — I never —"

"You have been seen speaking to him."

"I?"

"Shaking his hand."

"I?"

"Yes."

"Where? When, Citizen President?" said Maurice, carried away by the firm conviction of his own innocence. "You have lied!"

"Your zeal for your country carries you too far, Citizen Maurice;" said the president, "and you will regret what you have said, when I tell you I can prove that I have advanced nothing but the truth. Here are three different reports accusing you."

"Now," said Maurice, "do you really think me simple enough to believe in your 'Chevalier de Maison-Rouge'?"

"And why should you not believe it?"

"Because it is only the ghost of a conspirator, with whom you always have a conspiracy ready to amuse your enemies."

"Read the denunciations."

"I will read nothing," said Maurice. "I protest I have never seen the Chevalier, — never spoken to him. Let any one who doubts my word of honor come and tell me so. I shall know how to answer him."

The president shrugged his shoulders. Maurice, who did not wish to be in arrears with any one, did the same. An air of gloomy silence pervaded the remainder of the sitting. After the meeting was concluded, the president, a stanch patriot raised to the highest rank in the district by the votes of his fellow-citizens, approached Maurice, and said, —

"Come, Maurice, I want to speak to you."

Maurice followed the president, who conducted him into a little cabinet adjoining that where the sittings were held. On arriving there, he regarded Maurice for a moment in silence; then placing his hand on his shoulder, —

"Maurice," said he, "I knew and esteemed your father; this makes me esteem and love you. Believe me, you incur great danger from want of faith, — the first falling off of a truly revolutionary spirit. Maurice, my friend, they who lose their faith also lose their fidelity. You do not believe in the enemies of the nation, therefore you pass near without seeing them, and become an instrument in their plots without being aware of it."

"What, the devil!" said Maurice, "I know, Citizen, I am a man of feeling, and possess some share of patriotic zeal; but my zeal does not render me a fanatic. There are twenty pretended conspiracies, to which the public assign the same name. I demand once for all to face my accuser."

"You will not believe in conspirators, Maurice," said the president; "then tell me, do you believe in the red carnation for which Sophie Tison was yesterday guillotined?"

Maurice started.

"Do you believe in the subterranean passage drilled under the Temple garden communicating through the

cellar of Citizen Plumeau with a certain house in the Rue de la Corderie?"

"No," said Maurice.

"Then do as Thomas the Apostle did, — go and see."

"I am not on guard at the Temple, and they would not allow me to enter."

"Any one may enter the Temple now."

"How is that?"

"Read this report, since you are so incredulous. I shall only proceed by official information."

"Ah!" said Maurice, reading the report, "has it come to this?"

"Continue."

"Are they going to remove Marie Antoinette to the Conciergerie?"

"They are; and do you think that from a dream, or what you call an imaginary idea or an idle story, the Committee of Public Safety would have adopted so grave a measure?"

"This measure has been adopted, but will never be executed, like many more I have seen sanctioned and all —"

"Read to the end," said the president, and he presented him with the last paper.

"The receipt of Richard, the jailer of the Conciergerie!" cried Maurice.

"She has been there these two hours." This time Maurice remained deep in thought.

"The Commune, as you know," continued the president, "acts with profound judgment. It is digging a furrow long and straight in its course; its measures are not puerile, and it has put in execution the principle of Cromwell, — 'Kings should be struck on the head.' Read this secret note from the minister of police."

Maurice read, —

"Seeing that we possess the certainty that the *ci-devant* Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is in Paris; that he has been seen in several places; that he has left traces of his appearance in various plots, happily frustrated, — I request all chiefs of sections to redouble their vigilance — "

"Well?" asked the president.

"I must believe you, Citizen President," said Maurice, and he continued, —

"Description of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge: In height, five feet three inches; fair hair, blue eyes, straight nose, chestnut-colored beard, dimpled chin, soft voice, and hands like a female's."

At this description a strange light burst upon Maurice; he thought of the young man who commanded the troop of Muscadins, and who on the preceding evening saved the lives of himself and Lorin, and so valiantly drew his sword upon the Marseillais in their defence.

"The deuce!" muttered Maurice, "it must be he; in that case the accusation that I have been seen speaking to him is not false. But I cannot remember taking his hand."

"Maurice," asked the president, "what do you say to all this, now, my friend?"

"That I believe what you have said," said Maurice, musing sadly, who for some time past, without understanding what evil influence saddened his life, had noticed everything darkening around him.

"Do not trifle thus with popularity," said the president. "In these days, Maurice, popularity is life. As for unpopularity, it is to be suspected of treason; and the Citizen Maurice Lindey ought not to brook the suspicion of being a traitor."

Maurice had nothing to reply to sentiments so much in accordance with his own. He thanked his old friend and left the section.

"Ah!" murmured he, "there is too much suspicion and battling. Now," drawing a deep breath, — "now for peace, innocence, and joy; now to Geneviève," and Maurice took the road to the old Rue Saint Jacques.

When he reached the abode of the master-tanner, Dixmer and Morand were supporting Geneviève, who was suffering from a violent attack of hysterics. Thus, instead of being allowed to enter unceremoniously as he was accustomed to do, a servant met him in the passage.

"Announce me, at all events," said he, "and if Dixmer cannot conveniently receive me, I will retire."

The domestic entered the little pavilion, while Maurice remained in the garden. It seemed to him that something strange was going on in the house, and the workmen, instead of being occupied in their usual employment, were pacing restlessly about the garden. At length Dixmer himself appeared.

"Come in, dear Maurice," said he, — "come in; you are not one of those against whom the door is closed."

"What is the matter?" inquired the young man.

"Geneviève is ill," said Dixmer; "indeed, more than ill, — she is delirious."

"Gracious Heaven!" cried the young man, overcome at again encountering trial and suffering; "what, then, is the matter with her?"

"You are aware, my friend," said Dixmer, "one never knows anything concerning the illness of women, especially their husbands."

Geneviève was lying on a lounge; near her stood Morand, offering her some salts, which she smelled occasionally.

Well?" asked Dixmer.

"Always the same thing," replied Morand.

"Sophie! Sophie!" murmured the young woman, from between her closed teeth and white lips.

"Sophie!" repeated Maurice, in much surprise.

"Oh, my God! yes," replied Dixmer, greatly affected; "Geneviève most unfortunately saw the cart pass yesterday conveying the unhappy girl to the scaffold. Since then she has had five or six attacks of hysterics, and keeps on continually calling upon Sophie."

"But the most astonishing thing of all is, that in her she recognized the girl who sold the carnations, which you already know about," said Morand.

"Certainly, I know about them," said Maurice, "since in consequence of them I very narrowly escaped having my throat cut."

"Ah! we have heard all that, dear Maurice, and, believe me, we have not been slightly alarmed; but Morand was at the sitting, and saw you fully acquitted and liberated."

"Silence!" said Maurice; "she again speaks."

"Oh, those empty, unintelligible words!" exclaimed Dixmer.

"Maurice," murmured Geneviève; "they are going to kill Maurice. Rescue him, Chevalier, — rescue him!" A profound silence followed these words.

"Maison-Rouge," again murmured Geneviève; "Maison-Rouge!"

Maurice felt a slight suspicion, but he could make out nothing clearly, and was too much affected by the suffering of Geneviève to attend much to her words.

"Have you called in a physician?" demanded Maurice.

"Oh, it will prove nothing," said Dixmer; "a momentary delirium, that is all," and he shook his wife so

violently by the arm that she revived, and uttering a shrill cry, opened her eyes, which till now had remained closed.

"Ah, you are both here, and Maurice with you. Oh, I am so glad to see you, dear friend; if you knew what I have —" she corrected herself — "what we have suffered for the last two days."

"Yes, we are all here," said Maurice; "have no more terror on that account. But there is one name above all others you must not accustom yourself to pronounce, seeing that at this moment it does not bear a very high repute."

"What name?" quickly demanded Geneviève.

"The Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"Have I named the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?" inquired Geneviève, bewildered.

"Without doubt you have," said Dixmer, with a forced laugh; "but understand, Maurice, there is nothing surprising in that, since it is said he was an accomplice with the girl Tison, and that it was he who concocted the whole plan of escape so happily frustrated yesterday."

"I do not say there is anything surprising in it," said Maurice; "I only say he should keep himself well concealed."

"Who?" demanded Dixmer.

"Zounds! The Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. The Commune seeks for him; and their bloodhounds have a fine scent."

"Provided that, before they arrest him," said Morand, "he has not accomplished some new enterprise that may succeed better than the last."

"At all events," said Maurice, "it will not be in favor of the queen."

"Why not?" demanded Morand.

"Because she is henceforth shielded from his bold attempts."

"Where is she then?" inquired Dixmer.

"At the Conciergerie," replied Maurice; "she was taken there this evening."

Dixmer, Geneviève, and Morand uttered a cry which Maurice mistook for one of surprise.

"Thus you see," continued he, "adieu to the Chevalier's plans for the queen. The Conciergerie is more secure than the Temple."

Morand and Dixmer exchanged looks unperceived by Maurice.

"Ah!" exclaimed Maurice, "Madame Dixmer has turned faint again."

"Geneviève!" said Dixmer, "you must go to bed, my child; you suffer."

Maurice took the hint. He respectfully kissed Geneviève's hand, and quitted the house. Morand left with him, and accompanied him as far as the old Rue Saint Jacques, where he parted with him to exchange some words with a man, a superior sort of domestic, who held a horse ready saddled and bridled. Maurice was so much occupied with his own thoughts that he did not even ask the man's name; indeed, he and Morand had not exchanged a word since they quitted the house together.

Maurice took the road to Rue des Fossés Saint Victor, and gained the quay.

"It is strange," said he, walking on. "Is my mind weakened, or are these events assuming undue importance? Everything appears to me as if viewed through a magnifying glass." And to recover his equanimity, Maurice leaned over the parapet of the bridge and presented his face to the breeze.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PATROL.

As he lost himself in these reflections, and leaning over the parapet of the bridge, enjoyed a melancholy pleasure in gazing on the dark still water, he heard the measured tread of a little troop, like that of a patrol. Maurice turned round; it was a company of the National Guard, arrived by the other extremity, and in the obscurity he fancied he recognized Lorin. It was he, indeed. The instant he saw his friend Maurice he ran toward him with open arms.

"Found at last," cried Lorin. "Faith, it is not with out some trouble that we have rejoined you.

> "'But since I find a friend so fond,
> My fate assumes an aspect new.'

This time you will not complain, I hope, for I have given you Racine instead of Lorin."

"But what do you do here as patrol?" inquired Maurice, anxiously.

"I am the chief of the expedition, old fellow; the business is to establish our blemished reputation upon its original footing." Then turning toward his company, "Carry arms! Present arms! Shoulder arms!"

"There, my lads, it is not yet sufficiently dark, so you can talk over your little affairs while we follow your example." Then turning to Maurice, "I have heard great news at the section to-day," continued Lorin.

"What!"

"First, that you and I are beginning to be suspected."

"I know it. What next?"

"Secondly, that the whole conspiracy of the carnations was conducted by the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"I know that also."

"But this you do not know, — that the conspiracy of the carnations and that of the subterranean passage are one and the same."

"Again, I know it."

"Then let us pass on to the third piece of news. This I am certain you cannot know. We go this night to capture the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"To take the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"Yes."

"Have you then turned gendarme?"

"No; but I am a patriot. A patriot belongs to his country. Now my country is horribly ravaged by this Chevalier, who forms plot upon plot. Well, my country commands me, being a patriot, to free her from this Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, who distresses her horribly, and I obey my country."

"It is all the same," said Maurice; "but it is singular that you should be charged with this commission."

"I am not charged; I charge myself, or rather, I should say, I solicited the commission. It required a brilliant stroke to reinstate us in our former position; while our re-establishment will not only prove security for our lives, but still more the right of putting, at the very first opportunity offered, six inches of steel into the belly of that hideous Simon."

"But how are they sure it was the Chevalier who was the instigator of this subterranean plot?"

"They are not yet certain, but they presume so."

"You proceed, then, upon inference?"

"No; we proceed by certainty."

"How do you make out all this?"

"Listen."

"I am listening."

"I had scarcely heard the cry 'Grand conspiracy discovered by the Citizen Simon,' — that beast Simon (the wretch is everywhere), — than I wished to judge of the truth for myself. Then, they spoke of a subterranean passage."

"Does it really exist?"

"It does; I have seen it;

"'Seen it with both my eyes; that I call seeing, —'

There, why do you not whistle?"

"Because that is Molière; and besides, these events, I must confess, appear to me rather too serious for pleasantry."

"What can we jest about, if we do not jest about serious things?"

"You say, then, that you have seen it?"

"I repeat that I have seen the subterranean passage. It extends from the cellar of the Widow Plumeau to a house in the Rue de la Corderie, No. 12 or 14, I cannot remember which."

"Really? Have you passed through it, Lorin?"

"I have, the whole length; and, faith, it is a trench prettily cut, I assure you; and moreover it was divided by three iron gratings, which they have been obliged to remove one after the other, but which, in case these conspirators had succeeded, would have given them time, by sacrificing two or three of their number, to have placed Madame Widow Capet in a place of safety. Happily it is not so, and that hideous Simon discovered all!"

"But it appears to me," said Maurice, "those who ought to have been first arrested were the inhabitants of the house in the Rue de la Corderie."

"This would have been, had they not found the house perfectly uninhabited."

"But at least this house must belong to some one?"

"Yes, to a new proprietor; but no one knows who. They know the house changed masters two weeks since, and that is all. The neighbors have often heard a noise; but the house being very old, they had imagined it was undergoing thorough repair. As to the late proprietor, he has left Paris. In the mean time I arrived."

"'Upon my word!' said I to Santerre, drawing him aside, 'you are in an awkward situation.'

"'Indeed we are,' replied he.

"'This house has been sold, has it not?'

"'Yes, it was, about a fortnight ago.'

"'Was it sold in the presence of a notary?'

"'Yes.'

"'Then we must search all the notaries in Paris, to discover which of them sold this house, and then make him produce the agreement, at the bottom of which will be found the name of the purchaser.'

"'Well and good!' said Santerre, 'that is capital advice, and coming too from a man they accuse of not being a good patriot. Lorin! Lorin! I will re-establish you, or may the foul fiend seize me!'

"To be brief," continued Lorin, "this was no sooner said than done. The notary was sought for, the act was found, and upon the agreement the name and domicile of the culprit were written. Then Santerre took me aside, and I have engaged to arrest him."

"Was this man the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"No, only his accomplice, — that is to say, in all probability he was so."

"Then how is it you say you are going to arrest the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"We are going to arrest them all together."

"Do you, then, know this Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?"

"Perfectly."

"Have you seen the description of him?"

"By thunder! Santerre gave it to me. Five feet two or three inches, fair hair, blue eyes, straight nose, etc.; besides, I have seen him."

"When?"

"This very day."

"You have seen him?"

"And so have you."

Maurice started.

"The short, fair young man who rescued us this morning, — he who commanded the troop of Muscadins, and struck so hard."

"Was that the Chevalier?" demanded Maurice.

"Himself. They followed and lost him in the environs of the domicile of our proprietor of the Rue de la Corderie, so that we surmise they live together."

"It seems probable."

"It is certain."

"But it seems to me, Lorin," added Maurice, "that if this evening you arrest him who rescued you this very morning, you are much wanting in gratitude."

"Go along, then," said Lorin; "why, you don't suppose he saved us for our own sakes, do you?"

"For what else, then?"

"Not at all; they were in ambush to carry off the poor girl, Sophie Tison, as she passed to the scaffold. Our cut-throats embarrassed them, so they fell upon the

cut-throats; that was the whole of it. We have been saved by a *contre-coup*. Now, as the intention is everything, and there was no intention, I have nothing to accuse myself with on the score of ingratitude. Besides, do you see, Maurice, the capital point is necessity; and the necessity is that we should reinstate ourselves by some brilliant achievement. And then I have promised for you."

"To whom?"

"To Santerre; he knows that you command this expedition."

"How can that be?"

"'Are you sure of arresting these criminals?' said he to me.

"'Yes,' I replied; 'if Maurice is with me.'

"'But are you sure of Maurice? For some time he has been looked upon as rather lukewarm.'

"'Those who say so are totally deceived. Maurice is no more lukewarm in the cause than I am myself.'

"'And you will answer for his fidelity?'

"'As for my own.' I then went to your house, but could not find you at home. I took this road first because it lay in my way, and then I remembered it was the one you usually frequented; so at last we have met. Forward! March!

> "'Where Victory leads us still onward we go,
> Ever joyfully singing we 'll face every foe.'"

"My dear Lorin, I am in despair. I do not feel the slightest taste for this expedition. Say that you were not able to find me."

"Impossible! all our men have seen you."

"Well, then, say you met me, and I was not willing to join you."

"Again impossible."

"But why so?"

"Because this time you will not only be considered lukewarm, but a *suspect;* and you well know the fate of *these suspects.* They are conducted to the Place de la Revolution, and are there invited to salute the statue of Liberty; only instead of saluting with the hat they substitute the head."

"Well, Lorin, I hardly care how soon this fate may befall me; but without doubt it seems strange to you to hear me say so."

Lorin opened his eyes wide, and looked at Maurice.

"Well," said Maurice, "I am weary of life."

Lorin burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ah! ah!" said he, "we have had a quarrel with our beloved, and that fills us with melancholy ideas. Come, my handsome Amadis! let us return to the man, and from that we shall pass to the citizen. As for me I am never a better patriot than when I am embroiled with Arthémise. Apropos, her Divinity the Goddess Reason charged me with a thousand gracious messages for you."

"Pray thank her for me. Adieu, Lorin."

"Adieu! how adieu?"

"Yes, I am going."

"Where are you going?"

"I am going home."

"Maurice, you will ruin yourself."

"I laugh at the idea."

"Maurice, reflect; my friend, reflect!"

"I have done so."

"I have not repeated all —"

"What?"

"That Santerre said to me."

"What did he say?"

"When I asked for you to be chief of this expedition, he said to me, 'Take care!'"

"'Of whom?'

"'Of Maurice.'"

"Of me?"

"Yes, Maurice; and he also added, 'he often goes into that quarter?'"

"Into what quarter?"

"Into that of Maison-Rouge."

"How?" cried Maurice, "is it here he hides himself?"

"They fancy so, since it is here his supposed accomplice resides, the purchaser of the house in the Rue de la Corderie."

"Faubourg Victor?" demanded Maurice.

"Yes; Faubourg Victor."

"And in what street?" —

"In the old Rue Saint Jacques."

"O God!" murmured Maurice, as if struck by a thunderbolt. And he pressed his hand before his eyes. But after a moment's interval, during which he had collected all his courage, —

"What trade?" said he.

"A master-tanner."

"His name?"

"Dixmer."

"You are right, Lorin," said Maurice, by a violent effort controlling his emotion; "I will go with you."

"And you do well; are you armed?"

"I always carry my sword."

"Take also this pair of pistols."

"And you?"

"I have my gun. Carry arms! Lower arms! Forward! March!"

The patrol commenced its march, accompanied by

Maurice, who walked near Lorin. They were preceded by a man dressed in gray, who directed their movements. This was an agent of police.

From time to time a shadow might be seen emerging from the angles of the streets or the doors of the houses, who exchanged some words with the man in gray. This was the inspector. On arriving at the little street, the man in gray did not hesitate for an instant. He was well instructed, and entered the street at once. Before the door of the garden where Maurice had been so nearly garroted, he stopped.

"It is here," said he.

"What is here?" demanded Lorin.

"It is here we shall find the two principals."

Maurice supported himself against the wall; he felt as if he were sinking to the ground.

"Now," said the man in gray, "there are three entrances, — the principal entrance, this one, and another which leads into a pavilion. I shall enter with six or eight men through the principal entrance, in the mean time keep guard here with four or five men, and place three sure men at the entrance of the pavilion."

"I will get over the wall," said Maurice, "and watch in the garden."

"The very thing," said Lorin, "as from the interior you can open the door to us."

"Willingly," said Maurice, "but do not clear the passage, or come, till I call you. All that passes in the interior I shall see from the garden."

"You are acquainted with the house, then?" demanded Lorin.

"Some time back I wished to buy it."

Lorin proceeded to conceal his men in the corners of the hedges and angles of the doors, while the agent of

police retired with six or eight National Guards to force his way by the principal entrance. In an instant the noise of their receding steps ceased in the distance, without having awakened the least suspicion. Maurice's men were at their post, and did their best to keep concealed. One would have declared that everything was perfectly quiet, and that nothing extraordinary was passing in the old Rue Saint Jacques. Maurice then began to climb the wall.

"Listen," said Lorin.

"To what?"

"The word."

"Right."

"Carnation and Vault. Stop all those who cannot give these three words. Permit all to pass who can. This is the password."

"Thanks," said Maurice, dropping from the top of the wall into the garden.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PASSWORD.

THE first blow was terrible. It indeed required all Maurice's self-command to enable him to conceal from Lorin how powerfully he was affected by these startling events; but once in the garden, once alone in the silence of night, his mind became more calm, and his ideas, instead of running disordered through his brain, became once more under the control of reason.

What! this house that Maurice had so often visited with the purest pleasure; this house which had formed for him a paradise on earth, — was in reality only a den of sanguinary intrigues. The kind and flattering receptions bestowed on his ardent friendship resulted then from sheer hypocrisy; the love of Geneviève from fear.

The plan of the garden is well-known, our readers having more than once followed our young folks there. Maurice glided from bush to bush till he was shaded from the moon's rays by the little conservatory where he had been imprisoned previous to his first introduction to the house. This conservatory was opposite the pavilion inhabited by Geneviève. But this evening, instead of gleaming stationary from her chamber, the light moved frequently from one window to another. Maurice saw Geneviève through the curtain, evidently raised by accident, hastily packing some things in a portmanteau, and with astonishment beheld some weapons in her hands. He raised himself upon a post to enable him to see

farther into the room. A large fire was blazing on the hearth, where Geneviève was destroying papers.

At this moment the door opened and a young man entered the room. At first Maurice imagined this man was Dixmer. The young woman ran toward him, seized his hands, and they both stood facing each other for a moment, evidently influenced by some deep emotion. What this emotion meant he could not divine, as their words did not reach his hiding-place. But all at once Maurice measured his height with his eye.

"This is not Dixmer," murmured he. Indeed, the man who had entered was small and delicate, while Dixmer was tall and masculine. Jealousy is an active stimulant, and in a second he had compared the figure of this man with that of her husband.

"This is not Dixmer!" murmured he, compelled as it were to repeat it, to convince himself of the perfidy of Geneviève.

He approached still nearer to the window, but the nearer he came the less he saw. His brain was on fire. He stumbled on a ladder; the window was seven or eight feet high. He seized the ladder, and planting it firmly against the wall, ascended and placed his eye at an aperture in the curtain.

Geneviève's unknown visitor was a fair young man, about twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, with blue eyes, and an elegant demeanor; he retained both the young woman's hands within his own, and was speaking soothingly, endeavoring fruitlessly to assuage the grief of Geneviève, which was plainly evinced by the tears which suffused her charming countenance. A slight noise, accidentally made by Maurice, caused the young man to turn his face toward the window. Maurice suppressed a cry of astonishment, he recognized his mys-

terious deliverer of the Place du Chatelet. At this moment Geneviève withdrew her hands from those of the unknown, and went toward the fireplace to ascertain that the papers were utterly consumed.

Maurice could no longer command his indignation. All those fierce passions which torture the heart of man — love, vengeance, and jealousy — lacerated him with their fangs of fire. He at once threw open the ill-closed casement, and vaulted into the chamber. At the same moment two pistols were pressed to his breast.

Geneviève, who had turned round at the noise, on perceiving Maurice stood speechless.

"Sir," said the young Republican, coldly, to him who had a double hold on his life, "you are the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"And what if I am?" replied the Chevalier.

"It is this: you are a brave man, and consequently a cool one, and I would say two words to you."

"Say on," said the Chevalier, without lowering his pistols.

"You can kill me; but you cannot do so before I have uttered a cry, or rather I will not die without giving an alarm. Should I do so, the thousand men who surround this house will have reduced it to ashes ere the lapse of ten minutes; so lower your pistols and listen to what I have to say to the lady."

"To Geneviève?" said the Chevalier.

"To me?" murmured the young woman.

"Yes, to you."

Geneviève, pale as a statue, seized Maurice's arm; but he repulsed her coldly.

"You know what you affirmed, Madame," said Maurice, with profound contempt. "I now see that you told the truth. You indeed do not love Monsieur Morand."

"Maurice! hear me," said Geneviève.

"I have nothing to hear, Madame; you have severed with a single stroke every cord that united my heart with your own. You told me you did not love Morand, but you did not tell me you loved another."

"Sir," said the Chevalier, "what say you of Morand; or rather of what Morand do you speak?"

"Of Morand the chemist."

"Morand the chemist stands before you. Morand the chemist is the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

And extending his hand toward the table, he in an instant resumed the black wig which for so long a period had concealed him from the young Republican.

"Ah, yes," said he, with redoubled disdain, — "yes, I understand. It is not Morand that you love, since Morand does not exist; but the subterfuge, for all its acuteness, is none the less contemptible."

The Chevalier made a threatening movement.

"Sir," said Maurice, "permit me to speak a moment with the lady; join in the conversation if you like; it will not be long, I assure you."

Geneviève, with a gesture, asked Maison-Rouge to have patience.

"Thus, Geneviève, thus," continued Maurice, "you have made me a laughing-stock to my friends and a curse to my party. You have rendered me, blind fool that I was, an instrument in all your plots and an easy tool in your hands. Listen! It was an infamous deed; but you will be punished, Madame, for in five minutes this man, who is going to kill me before your eyes, will be lying dead at your feet; or if his life be spared, it will only be to lose his head upon the scaffold."

"He die!" cried Geneviève; "he lose his head upon the scaffold! But you do not know then, Maurice, that

he is my protector, and that of my family; that I will give my life for his; that if he dies I will die; and that if you are my love, he is my religion!"

"Ah!" said Maurice, "perhaps you still mean to pretend that you love me. Really, women are sadly weak and contemptible."

Then turning to the young Royalist, —

"Now, sir," said he, "you must either kill me or die yourself."

"Why so?"

"Because, if you do not kill me, I shall arrest you."

Maurice extended his hand to seize him by the collar.

"I shall not dispute my life with you," said the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge; and he flung his pistols on a chair.

"And why do you not dispute your life?"

"Because my life is not equivalent in value to the remorse I should experience in feeling that I had killed a brave man, and more than all since Geneviève loves you."

"Ah!" cried the young woman, clasping her hands, "you are always kind, great, loyal, and generous, Armand!"

Maurice regarded them both, almost stupefied with astonishment.

"One moment," said the Chevalier, "allow me to return to my chamber. I give you my word of honor it is not to escape; I wish to conceal a portrait."

Maurice turned his eyes quickly toward that of Geneviève; it hung in its place. Perhaps the Chevalier divined Maurice's thoughts, or perhaps he wished to try his generosity to the utmost.

"Come," said he, "I know you are a Republican, but I know also that you possess a pure and loyal heart. I will trust you to the end. Look!"

And he drew a miniature from his breast, and displayed

it to Maurice. He beheld before him the portrait of the queen. Maurice bowed his head, and rested his forehead on his hand.

"I await your orders, sir," said Maison-Rouge; "if you desire my arrest, knock at this door when it is time for me to give myself up. I care not for my life from the moment it is not sustained by the hope of saving my queen."

The Chevalier quitted the room without a gesture from Maurice offering to detain him.

As he left the chamber Geneviève cast herself at the young man's feet.

"Pardon, Maurice," sobbed she, — "pardon for all the evil I have done. Forgive my deception; forgive me, if only on account of my tears and suffering, for believe me I have wept much and suffered much. My husband left me this morning; I know not where he is gone, and perhaps I may see him no more. And now I have only one friend left, — nay more than friend, a brother, — and you will destroy him. Pardon, Maurice, pardon!"

Maurice raised the young woman.

"What would you?" said he. "There is fatality in all this. Every one stakes his life in these days; the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge has played like all the rest, but he has lost the game, and he must therefore pay."

"That means that he must die, if I understand you rightly?"

"Yes."

"He must die; and it is you who tell me this?"

"It is not I, Geneviève; it is fatality."

"Fatality has not uttered its last word, since you can save him."

"At the expense of my word, and consequently of my honor. I comprehend, Geneviève."

"Shut your eyes, Maurice; that is all I ask; and as far as a woman may evince her gratitude I will promise you mine."

"I should close my eyes to little purpose, Madame; there is a password given, and without this password no one could go out. Besides, the house, as I have told you, is surrounded."

"And you know the word?"

"Certainly I know it."

"Maurice!"

"Well?"

"Dear friend Maurice, tell me this password; I must know it."

"Geneviève," cried Maurice, "do you mean to say to me, 'Maurice, for the love I bear you, sacrifice your word and your honor, betray your cause, abjure your opinions.' What do you offer me, Geneviève, in exchange for all this, you who tempt me thus?"

"Oh, Maurice, save him, save him first! and then ask of me my life."

"Geneviève," replied Maurice, in a desponding tone, "hear me! I have one foot on the road to infamy before I make a final descent I wish at least to find a sufficient excuse for so doing. Geneviève, swear to me you do not love the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge!"

"I love him as a sister and a friend; not otherwise, I swear."

"Geneviève, do you love me?"

"Maurice, I do love you; it is true, as God now hears me."

"If I do what you ask me, will you abandon relatives, friends, country, and fly with the traitor?"

"Maurice! Maurice!"

"She hesitates! Oh, she hesitates!"

And he turned from her with all the violence of disdain. Geneviève, who was leaning upon him, feeling suddenly her support give way, fell upon her knees.

"Maurice," said she, wringing her hands, "I will swear to do all that you require of me. Order, and I will obey."

"You will be mine, Geneviève?"

"I will."

"Swear it, by Christ."

Geneviève extended her arms.

"My God," cried she, "thou didst pardon one poor woman who had gone astray; I trust in thy mercy that thou wilt also pardon me."

And the great tears rained down her cheeks, falling upon her long hair hanging dishevelled on her bosom.

"Not thus!" said Maurice, "swear not thus! or I cannot accept that oath."

"O Heaven!" replied she, "I swear to devote my life to Maurice, to die with him, and if requisite, for him, if he will save my friend, my brother, my protector, the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"'T is well: he shall be saved," said Maurice.

And he went toward his chamber.

"Sir," said he, "resume your costume of the tanner Morand; I return your parole, you are free. And you, Madame," said he turning to Geneviève, "this is the password, 'Carnation and Vault.'" And as if horrified to remain in the chamber where he had pronounced the words which constituted him a traitor, he opened the window, and sprang from the room into the garden below.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SEARCH.

MAURICE had returned to his post in the garden, opposite the window of Geneviève, only it was now quite dark, she having left her apartment to enter that of the Chevalier.

It was time Maurice returned, for scarcely had he reached the corner of the conservatory when the garden-door opened, and the man in gray appeared, followed by Lorin, and five or six gendarmes.

"Well?" asked Lorin.

"You see I am at my post," said Maurice.

"And no one has attempted to force past you?" said Lorin.

"No one," replied Maurice, happy to escape by an evasion, from the way in which the question was put to him. "No one. And what have you done?"

"Why, we have acquired the certainty that the Chevalier entered the house an hour ago, and has not left it since," replied the agent of police.

"Do you know his chamber?" said Lorin.

"His room is only separated from that of Madame Dixmer by a corridor."

"Ah! ah!" said Lorin. "It appears this Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is a gallant."

Maurice felt the hot blood rush to his forehead; he closed his eyes, yet saw a thousand internal lights.

"Well, but Citizen Dixmer, what said he to that?" asked Lorin.

"Why, he thought himself highly honored."

"Come," said Maurice, in a choking voice; "upon what do we decide?"

"We have decided," said the police agent, "to arrest him in his chamber, perhaps in his bed."

"He does not, then, suspect anything?"

"Absolutely nothing?"

"What is the ground plan?" inquired Lorin.

"We have an exact plan," said the man in gray. "A pavilion situated at a corner of the garden, there it is; you ascend four steps — do you see them here? — and find yourself on a landing; to the right is the apartment of Madame Dixmer, — no doubt it is that of which we see the window. Facing this window, at the back part, is a door opening on the corridor, and in this corridor the entrance to the chamber of the traitor."

"Well, with so careful a specimen of topography," said Lorin, "we might, I think, easily find our way blindfold, much more with our eyes open. Come on!"

"Are the streets well guarded?" said Maurice, with an interest which the assistants very naturally attributed to his fear lest the Chevalier should escape.

"The streets, the passages, even the crossings," said the man in gray. "I defy any one to pass who has not the watchword."

Maurice shuddered; all these precautions being taken, made him fear that he had uselessly parted with his honor to add to his happiness.

"Now," said the man in gray, "how many men do you require to secure the Chevalier?"

"How many men?" said Lorin. "I hope Maurice and I are sufficient for that. Are we not, Maurice?"

"Yes," murmured the municipal, "we are certainly sufficient."

"Listen!" said the police agent; "no vain boasting. Do you mean to take him?"

"Zounds! Do we mean it?" said Lorin; "I should think so! We are bound to take him, are we not, Maurice?" Lorin laid a stress upon these words, for as he had truly said, suspicion began to settle upon them; and it was not wise to allow time for suspicion, which marched with such rapid strides at this epoch, to assume a firmer consistence, for Lorin well knew that no one would presume to doubt the stanch patriotism of any two men who had captured the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge.

"Well, then," said the police agent, "if you are in earnest, better take three men than two, and four than three, with you. The Chevalier invariably sleeps with pistols under his pillow, and his sword on a table by his side."

"Deuce take it!" said one of the gendarmes of Lorin's company. "Let us go in, without standing on ceremony who should enter first. If he resists, we will cut him to pieces; if he surrender, we will reserve him for the guillotine."

"Well said!" exclaimed Lorin; "do we go in by the door or the window?"

"By the door," said the agent of police; "it may be the key is in the lock, while if we enter by the window we must break some panes, and that would make a noise."

"On for the door, then!" said Lorin; "as long as we enter, it little matters how. Forward! sword in hand, Maurice."

Maurice mechanically drew his sword from the scabbard, and the little troop advanced toward the pavilion. The information of the man in gray proved perfectly correct; they first found the steps, then the landing, and at last entered the vestibule.

"Ah!" cried Lorin, joyfully, "the key is in the door." In short, extending his hand in the dark, his fingers had encountered the cold key.

"Then open it, Citizen Lieutenant," said the man in gray.

Lorin cautiously turned the key in the lock. The door opened. Maurice wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"We shall find him here," said Lorin.

"Not yet," said the man in gray; "if our chart is correct, this is the apartment of Citizen Dixmer."

"We can soon ascertain that," said Lorin; "light a wax candle; there is some fire in the grate."

"Light the torches," said the man in gray, "they are not so soon extinguished as candles," at the same time taking two torches from the hand of a gendarme, which he lighted by the dying embers. He placed one in the hand of Maurice, the other in that of Lorin. "You see," said he, "I was not deceived; here is the door opening into Citizen Dixmer's sleeping apartment, and here the one opening into the corridor."

"On, for the corridor!" said Lorin. They opened the door at the farther end, which was not more firmly secured than the first, and found themselves fronting the door of the Chevalier's chamber. Maurice had seen this door twenty times before, and never thought of inquiring where it led to. All his world was centred in the room where he was received by Geneviève.

"Oh! oh!" said Lorin, in a low voice, "here we must change our tactics; no more keys, and the door locked."

"Are you," asked Maurice, hardly able to articulate, "sure that he is here?"

"If our plan is correct, he ought to be here," replied the police agent; "besides, we shall soon see. Gendarmes,

force open the door; and you, citizens, hold yourselves in readiness, and the instant the door is opened, dash into the chamber!"

Four men, selected by the emissary of police, raised the butt-ends of their muskets, and on a signal from the man who conducted this enterprise, gave one blow all together, when the door flew into a thousand fragments.

"Surrender, or you are a dead man!" cried Lorin, rushing into the chamber.

No one replied, and the curtains of the bed were closely drawn.

"Mind the bed!" said the emissary of police; "at the first movement of the curtains, fire!"

"Wait!" said Maurice, "I will open them."

And no doubt in the hope that the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge might be concealed behind them, and that it would be his lot to meet the first stab or pistol shot, Maurice hastily pulled apart the curtains, which, creaking along the iron rod, left the tenantless bed exposed to view.

"The devil!" exclaimed Lorin, "there is no one here."

"He must have escaped," murmured Maurice.

"Impossible, citizens, impossible!" cried the man in gray. "I tell you he was seen to enter here an hour ago, and no one has been seen to go out, and all the outlets from the garden are well guarded.

Lorin opened the cabinets, the wardrobes, and looked everywhere, even where it was physically impossible that a man could be concealed.

"You see, however, that no one is here."

"No one!" repeated Maurice, with an emotion easily understood, — "you see no one is here."

"To the chamber of Madame Dixmer," said the police agent, "perhaps he may be there?"

"Oh!" said Maurice, "respect the chamber of a woman."

"Certainly we will respect it," said Lorin, "and Madame Dixmer also, but for all that we must visit it."

"Then," said Maurice, "permit me to pass first."

"Pass on, then," said Lorin, "you are captain: honor the powers that be," and leaving two men to guard the apartment, they returned to that where they had lighted the torches. Maurice approached the door opening into the chamber of Geneviève. It was the first time he had ever entered there. His heart beat violently. The key was in the door. Maurice laid his hand upon the key, but still hesitated.

"Well," said Lorin, "open!"

"But," said Maurice, "if Madame Dixmer should be in bed?"

"We shall look in her bed, under her bed, in the chimney, in the wardrobes, and then if we find no one there but herself, we shall wish her good-night," said Lorin.

"No, not so," said the police agent; "we shall arrest her; the Citizen Geneviève Dixmer is an aristocrat who has been recognized as an accomplice of the girl Tison and the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

"Open it yourself, then," said Maurice, "I do not arrest women." The agent of police looked at Maurice, sideways, and the men murmured among themselves.

"Oh, you grumble, do you?" said Lorin; "then you shall have two to grumble about. I am of Maurice's opinion," and he made a step backward.

The man in gray seized the key, opened the door, and the soldiers rushed into the chamber. Two wax lights burned upon a little table, but the chamber of Geneviève, like that of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, was uninhabited.

"Empty!" cried the police agent.

"Empty!" cried Maurice, turning pale; "where is she, then?"

Lorin regarded Maurice with astonishment.

"Let us search," said the agent of police, and closely followed by the military, he began to rummage the house from the cellars to the workshops. At length, when their backs were turned, Maurice, who had followed them impatiently with his eyes, in his turn darted into the chamber, opening the presses, which had already been opened, and calling in a voice replete with anxiety, "Geneviève! Geneviève!" But Geneviève made no reply; the chamber was indeed vacated. Then he began to search the house in a species of frenzy, outhouses, conservatories, sheds, — nothing was omitted, but all without success.

Suddenly a noise was heard, a troop of armed men presented themselves at the door, exchanged the password with the sentinel, entered the garden, and dispersed themselves over the house. At the head of this reinforcement waved the red plume of Santerre.

"Well!" said he to Lorin, "where is the conspirator?"

"How! where is the conspirator?"

"Yes! I asked what have you done with him?"

"I shall ask you that question. If your detachment had guarded the outlets properly, ere this he must have been arrested, since he was not in the house when we entered it."

"What! do you mean to say," cried the furious general, "that you have really allowed the Chevalier to escape?"

"We could not allow him to escape since we have never taken him."

"Then I can comprehend nothing," said Santerre.

"Of what?" said Lorin.

"Of the message you sent me by your envoy."

"We sent you an envoy!"

"Yes; a man in a brown coat, with black hair, and green spectacles, who came from you to inform me you were on the eve of capturing Maison-Rouge, but that he was defending himself like a lion; upon hearing which I hastened to your assistance."

"A man in a brown coat, black hair, and green spectacles?" repeated Lorin.

"Yes, with a female on his arm."

"Young and pretty?" cried Maurice, glancing toward the general.

"Yes, young and pretty."

"It was he and Madame Dixmer," said Maurice.

"What, he!" exclaimed Santerre. "Maison-Rouge! Oh, blockhead that I was not to have killed them both! Come, Citizen Lindey, we may capture them yet."

"But how the devil," asked Lorin, "came you to let them pass?"

"Zounds!" said Santerre, "I let them pass because they gave the password."

"They had the password?" exclaimed Lorin; "then there is surely a traitor among us!"

"No, no, Citizen Lorin; you are known, and we well know that there are no traitors among you."

Lorin looked around him as if to detect the miscreant, and publicly proclaim his shame. He encountered the gloomy face and wandering eye of Maurice.

"Ah!" murmured he, "what means this?"

"The man cannot be very far off," said Santerre; "let us search the environs; perhaps he has fallen in with some patrol who, more wide awake than we, did not allow themselves to be gulled so easily."

"Yes, yes; let us search," said Lorin; and, under

the pretence of so doing, he seized Maurice by the arm, and drew him into the garden.

"Yes, let us search," said the soldiers; "but before we search —" and one of them flung his still burning torch into an adjacent shed, filled with bundles of fagots and dried herbs.

"Come," said Lorin, "come!"

Maurice offered no resistance. He followed Lorin like a child; they both ran as far as the bridge without speaking; there they stopped, and Maurice turned round. The sky was red from the horizon to the Faubourg, and above the houses ascended innumerable sparks.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FIRE.

MAURICE shuddered as he extended his hand toward the Rue Saint Jacques.

"The fire!" said he, — "the fire!"

"Yes," said Lorin, "the fire; what then?"

"Gracious Heavens! if she has returned."

"Who?"

"Geneviève."

"Geneviève means Madame Dixmer, does it not?"

"Yes."

"There is no danger of her return; she did not go away for that purpose."

"Lorin, I must find her. I will have my revenge."

"Oh, oh!" said Lorin.

> "None can escape thy puissant sceptre, Love.
> Thou reign'st on earth and in the heavens above."

"You will assist me in my search, will you not, Lorin?"

"Zounds! there will be no difficulty in that."

"Why so?"

"Without doubt, if you are so much interested, as to me you appear to be, in Madame Dixmer's fate, you, being intimate with her, ought, knowing her, also to know her friends. She has not quitted Paris; her friends have every motive to stay; she has taken refuge in the house of some confidential acquaintance, and to-morrow morn-

ing you will receive a billet by some 'Rose,' or some 'Marton,' couched as follows, —

> "Wouldst see again, my Mars, thy Venus true?
> Borrow of Night her scarf of azure hue.

And requesting you to present yourself at the porter's lodge, such a number, such a street, and to inquire for Madame Three-stars; that is all."

Maurice shrugged his shoulders; he well knew there was no one with whom Geneviève could take refuge.

"We shall not find her," said he.

"Will you permit me to say one thing, Maurice?"

"What?"

"That it will be no great misfortune if we should not find her."

"If we do not, Lorin, I shall die."

"The devil!" exclaimed the young man; "it was, then, of this love that you lately so nearly died."

"Yes," replied Maurice.

Lorin reflected an instant. "Maurice," said he, "it is now nearly eleven o'clock; this quarter is deserted; here is a stone seat, particularly adapted for the reception of two friends. Accord me the favor of a private interview, as they used to say, under the ancient régime. I give you my word of honor that I shall speak only in prose."

They seated themselves upon the bench.

"Speak!" said Maurice, resting his aching head upon his hand.

"Without exordium, periphrasis, or commentary, I tell you one thing, old fellow, — it is this, that we are ruining ourselves, or rather that you are ruining us."

"How so?" demanded Maurice.

"There is, my friend, a decree issued by the Com-

mittee of Public Safety, which declares every man a traitor to his country who enters into any relationship with the acknowledged enemies of the said country. Eh ! do you know this decree ?"

"To be sure I do," replied Maurice.

"Well, it seems to me, you are not a vile traitor to your country. What say you ? as Manlius says."

"Lorin !"

"Undoubtedly ; unless you believe that those idolize their country who give house-room, bed, and board to Monsieur le Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, who is not a high Republican, as I suppose, and has not been accused at any time of having taken part in the days of September."

"Ah ! Lorin," said Maurice, sighing heavily.

"Still, it appears to me," continued the moralist, "that you have been, and still are, too intimate with the enemies of your country. Come ! Come, friend Maurice, do not rebel ! you are like the whilom Enceladus ; you move a mountain each time you turn yourself."

Lorin pronounced these words in the kindest manner possible, and glossed them over with an artifice truly Ciceronian.

Maurice merely made a gesture of dissent, but the gesture was unheeded, and Lorin continued, —

"If we exist in a green-house temperature, a healthy atmosphere, where, according to botanic rules, the barometer invariably points to sixteen degrees, I should say, my dear Maurice, that this is elegant, satisfactory ; what though we are occasionally rather aristocratic, we flourish and do well. But if scorched in a heat of thirty-five or forty degrees, the sap burns, so that it rises slowly, and from the excess of heat seems cold ; when cold, then comes the blight of suspicion, — you know this, Maurice, — and once suspected, you possess too much good sense

not to know what we shall be, or rather that ere long we shall be no more."

"Well, then," said Maurice, "they can kill me, and there will be an end of me, for I am weary of my life."

"For the last quarter of an hour," said Lorin; "indeed scarcely so long that I should leave you to act according to your own pleasure on this subject; and then to die now, it is necessary to die a Republican while you would die an aristocrat."

"Ah!" said Maurice, whose blood began to boil from impassioned grief, resulting from the consciousness of his own criminality, "you go too far, friend Lorin."

"I shall go farther still, and forewarn you, that if you turn aristocrat —"

"You will denounce me?"

"For shame! No. I will confine you in a cellar, and have you sought after to the sound of the drum, like something lost; then I will proclaim that the aristocrats, knowing what you had in reserve for them, had seized, victimized, and starved you, so that, like Provost Élie de Beaumont, Monsieur Latude, and others, when found, you will be publicly crowned with flowers by the ladies of La Halle, and the ragpickers of Section Victor. Make haste, then, to appear again an Aristides, else your business is concluded."

"Lorin! Lorin! I feel that you are right; but I am dragged along. I am sliding down the precipice. Are you displeased with me, because my fate drags me onward?"

"I am not displeased with you, but I shall remonstrate with you. Call to mind a few of the scenes enacted daily between Pylades and Orestes, — scenes which prove beyond all doubt that friendship is a paradox, since these model friends quarrelled without ceasing."

"Leave me to my fate, Lorin, you had much better do so."

"I will never abandon you."

"Then, allow me to love, to be mad, at my ease; to be criminal, perhaps, for if I again see her, I fear I shall kill her."

"Or fall upon your knees. Ah, ah, Maurice, Maurice, to love an aristocrat, I never could have credited it! It is like poor Osselin with the Marquise de Charny."

"No more, Lorin, I beseech you."

"Maurice, I will cure you, or may the Devil take me! I do not wish you to be drawn in the lottery of Saint Guillotine, as the grocer of the Rue des Lombards observes. Maurice, you will exasperate me! Maurice, you will render me bloodthirsty! I feel as if I wanted to set fire to the isle of Saint Louis! A torch! a firebrand!

> "The toil were idle. Maurice, thy passion dire
> Sufficient is Paris to set on fire."

Maurice smiled in spite of himself.

"You know," said he, "that it was agreed between us that we should speak only in prose."

"But you exasperate me with your folly," said Lorin. "Drink, Maurice, become a drunkard, do anything, study political economy; but for the love of Jupiter, let us fall in love with nothing but Liberty!"

"Or Reason?"

"Ah! that is true; by the way, the Goddess Reason talks much about you. She thinks you are a charming mortal."

"Are you not jealous?"

"Maurice, to save a friend I feel capable of any sacrifice."

"Thanks, my poor Lorin, and I truly appreciate your

devotion; but the best way to console me is to leave me to sate my grief. Adieu! Lorin, go to your Arthémise."

"And you; where are you going?"

"I shall return home."

And Maurice turned toward the bridge.

"You live, then, in the direction of the old Rue Saint Jacques now?"

"No; but it pleases me to go that way."

"To look once again upon the place inhabited by your fair inconstant?"

"To see if she has not returned where she knows I am awaiting her. Ah, Geneviève! Geneviève! I could not have believed you capable of so much deceit!"

"Maurice, a tyrant who well knew the fair sex, since he died from having loved them too well, said, —

"'Woe to the man who trusts his heart
To woman, changeful as the breeze.'"

Maurice sighed, and the two friends took the road to the old Rue Saint Jacques.

As they approached they heard a great noise, and saw the light increase; they listened to patriotic chants, which on a brilliant day in the glorious sunshine, or in the atmosphere of combat, sounded like hymns of heroism, but which by the red light of an incendiary fire savored more of the diabolic incantations of drunken cannibals.

"Oh, my God! my God!" cried Maurice, forgetting that God had been abolished, as he wiped the perspiration from his face.

Lorin watched him attentively and muttered, —

"Alas! when caught in Cupid's snare,
To Prudence we must bid adieu."

All the inhabitants of Paris appeared moving toward the theatre of the events we have just narrated. Maurice was obliged to cross a hedge formed by the gendarmes, the ranks of the sections, then the impetuous crowd of this always furious populace, at this epoch easily aroused, and who ran howling from spectacle to spectacle without intermission. As they approached, Maurice impatiently hastened his steps; Lorin, with some trouble, kept close behind him, for he did not like to leave his friend to himself at such a moment.

It was nearly all over. The fire had communicated from the shed where the soldier had flung his torch to the workshops, constructed of planks so put together as to allow the free circulation of air; the merchandise was consumed, and the house itself was now in flames.

"O God!" said Maurice to himself, "if she has returned, should she find herself in a chamber encircled by the devouring element, waiting for me, calling on me —" and Maurice, nearly insensible from grief, liked better to think of the folly of those he loved than of his treason. He rushed headlong toward the door, of which he caught a glimpse through the mass of burning flame. Lorin still followed him. He would have followed him to the infernal regions. The roof was in flames; the fire had now indeed commenced its work of destruction on the staircase. Maurice hastened to visit the first floor, the parlor, the chamber of Geneviève, of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, and the corridors, calling, in stifled accents, "Geneviève! Geneviève!"

No one replied. On returning from the search our two friends saw volumes of flame now entering the door; but not heeding the shouts of Lorin, who pointed to the window, Maurice passed through the flames, then ran to the house, crossed, notwithstanding all impediments, a

court-yard strewed with broken furniture, searched the dining-room, Dixmer's parlor, Morand's laboratory, — all filled with smoke, fragments, and broken glass. The fire had reached this part of the house, and the work of destruction would soon be complete. Maurice, as in the pavilion, did not omit visiting a single chamber, or leave unexamined even a corridor. He then descended to the cellars; perhaps Geneviève had taken refuge from the fire there. He found no one.

"Zounds!" said Lorin; "no one but a salamander could take refuge here, and it is not that fabulous animal that you are in search of. Let us go; we can make inquiry in this assemblage. Some one has perhaps seen her."

It needed all Lorin's force to drag away Maurice; hope still detained him there.

Then they commenced their investigation; they visited the environs, stopped all the females who passed, searched all the alleys, without any result. It was now one o'clock in the morning, and Maurice, notwithstanding his athletic vigor, was overpowered and broken down with fatigue, and at length desisted from his worse than useless efforts.

A carriage passed; Lorin hailed it.

"Come, bear up, old fellow," said he to Maurice; "we have done all in the range of human possibility to recover Geneviève. We have broken our backs, been roasted, and have been cruelly cuffed for her. Cupid, however exacting he may be, could require no more from a man in love, and above all, from one who is not. So jump into the carriage, and let us return home."

Maurice submitted without making any reply. They arrived at Maurice's door without either of the friends having uttered a single word. As Maurice descended

from the carriage, they heard a window of his apartment closed.

"All right!" said Lorin, "he is waiting; I shall rest easy now. Knock, however."

Maurice knocked, the door opened.

"Good-night!" said Lorin, "wait for me to-morrow morning to go out!"

"Good-night," said Maurice, mechanically, as the door closed behind him. Upon the first steps of the staircase he met his official.

"Ah! Citizen Lindey," he exclaimed, "how much uneasiness you have caused us!" The word *us* struck Maurice.

"You?" said he.

"Yes, me and the little lady who is waiting for you."

"The little lady," repeated Maurice, feeling the moment ill-chosen to remind him of his former loves; "you were right to tell me. I shall sleep at Lorin's."

"That is impossible; she was at the window, and saw you alight, and cried out, 'There he is!'"

"What care I whether she knows I am here or not? I have no heart for love. Go upstairs, and tell this woman she is mistaken."

The official made a movement as if to obey him, then stopped.

"Ah! Citizen," said he, "you are wrong. The little lady is already very sad; your message will drive her to despair."

"But," asked Maurice, "who is this woman?"

"Citizen, I have not seen her face; it is concealed by her mantle, and she weeps, that is all I know."

"She weeps!" exclaimed Maurice.

"Yes, but very softly, stifling her sobs."

"She weeps," repeated Maurice; "there is then some one in the world who loves me sufficiently to feel anxious in my absence?" and he ascended slowly behind the official.

"Here he is, Citizen, here he is!" cried the latter, rushing into the chamber. Maurice entered behind him.

He then beheld in a corner of the room the trembling form of a woman whose face was hid in the cushions, and whom he would have thought dead, but for her convulsive moaning, which made him start. He signed to his official to leave the room, who went out, closing the door behind him. Then Maurice ran to the young woman, who raised her head.

"Geneviève!" cried the young man, "Geneviève here! good Heavens! am I then mad?"

"No, you are in possession of your senses, my friend," replied the young woman. "I promised to be yours if you would save the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge. You have saved him, and I am here; I was awaiting you."

Maurice mistook the meaning of these words; he recoiled a step, and looked sadly at the young woman.

"Geneviève," said he, "you do not love me."

Geneviève regarded him with tearful eyes; then turning from him, leaned her head on the pillow of the sofa, and gave free vent to her sobs and tears.

"Alas!" said Maurice, "it is evident that you no longer love me; and not only that you love me no more, Geneviève, but that you must entertain a feeling of hatred toward me, to experience this despair."

Maurice had spoken so nobly, yet with so much feeling, that Geneviève arose and took his hand.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said she, "and is it ever thus that those we think the best prove merely egotists?"

"Egotists, Geneviève! what do you mean?"

"Can you not then imagine what I suffer? My husband a fugitive, my brother proscribed, our house in flames, and all this in one night; and then that dreadful scene between you and the Chevalier was added to the rest!"

Maurice listened with delight, for it was impossible even for the maddest passion not to admit that this accumulation of trouble was more than sufficient excuse for Geneviève's deep and violent grief.

"And now you are come, I shall keep you; you shall leave me no more!"

Geneviève started.

"Where should I go?" replied she, with bitterness. "Have I an asylum, a shelter, a protector, save he who has put a price upon his protection? Oh, rash and foolish that I am! I stepped over the Pont Neuf, Maurice, and in passing I stopped to gaze at the dark water, dashing angrily against the corners of the arches; it attracted and fascinated me. Then said I to myself, there, poor woman, is a shelter for you; there inviolable repose and oblivion!"

"Geneviève! Geneviève!" cried Maurice, "you said that? Then you do not love me?"

"I said it," replied Geneviève, — "I said it; but I am here."

Maurice drew a deep breath, and fell at her feet.

"Geneviève," murmured he, "weep no more! Geneviève, console yourself for all your grief, since you love me. Tell me, Geneviève, for the sake of Heaven! that it was not the violence of my menaces that brought you hither. Assure me that even had you not seen me this evening, on finding yourself alone, isolated, and without an asylum, you would have come to me; and accept the

oath which I now make you, to annul the one that I compelled you to take."

Geneviève looked down upon the young man with an expression of ineffable gratitude. "Generous!" said she; "Oh, my God! I thank thee, he is generous."

"Listen, Geneviève!" said Maurice. "God, whom they have here driven from their temples, but whom they cannot expel from our hearts, where he has implanted love, has made this evening in appearance dark and gloomy, but conceals behind its sombre curtain a silvery cloud. God has conducted you to me, Geneviève, and speaks to you through me. God is at length willing to compensate us for all the sufferings we have endured, for the virtue we have displayed in combating this love, as if this sentiment so long entertained, and so profound, could be a crime! Weep no more, Geneviève, weep no more; give me your hand! Do you wish to live in the house of your brother? Do you wish he should kiss the hem of your robe, and pass over the threshold of his door without turning his head? Well, say but the word, make but one sign, and I am gone, and you are free. But on the other hand, my adored Geneviève, will you call to mind that I have loved you so ardently that I had almost died of this love, which it remains with you to render so fatal or so fortunate to me; that for this love I have been a traitor to my party, and am become vile and contemptible in my own eyes, — will you now consider all the happiness which the future has in store for us, the strength and energy which our youth and love possess to defend this happiness, now but in the bud, from all who would dare attack it? Ah! Geneviève, what will you reply? You who are an angel of mercy, will you render a man so happy that he no longer regrets life, and ceases to desire eternal felicity? Then, instead of repelling me, smile, my Gene-

vière ; let me place your hand upon my heart, and incline toward one who worships you from the inmost recesses of his soul. Geneviève, my love, my life, do not take back your vow ! "

The heart of the young woman swelled at these words. The fatigue of her late suffering had worn out her strength, and though her tears no longer flowed, occasional sobs relieved her overcharged bosom.

" You still weep, my Geneviève," continued Maurice, with profound melancholy, — " you still weep. Oh, reassure yourself ! I will never impose my love on scornful grief, and never soil my lips with a kiss empoisoned by a single tear of regret."

He averted his face, and coldly turned away.

" Ah, Maurice ! " murmured Geneviève, " do not abandon me, Maurice ; I have no one left me in the world but you ! "

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE MORROW.

A BEAUTIFUL sun beamed across the green window-blinds, gilding the leaves of three large roses placed in a flower-stand before the window of Maurice. These flowers, more precious as the season was on the decline, perfumed with a delicious fragrance the little dining-room of spotless neatness, where at a table served with every elegancy, but without profusion, sat Maurice and Geneviève. The door was closed, for as the table contained all that was requisite, it was understood they waited on themselves. They heard the official stirring in the adjoining room. The warmth and life of the last few lovely days entered through the half-open jalousie, making glitter like emeralds and rubies the rose-leaves caressed by the rays of the sun.

Geneviève let fall upon her plate the golden fruit she held in her hand. She appeared to be deep in thought, and smiling only with her lips, while her eyes languished with a melancholy expression. She remained thus silent, abstracted, and happy in the sun of her love, as the beautiful flowers in the sun of heaven. Soon her eyes sought those of Maurice, and encountered his gazing upon her. She placed her soft white arm upon the young man's shoulder, and leaned on his breast with that faith and confidence far exceeding love.

Geneviève looked at him without speaking, and blushed as she regarded him. Maurice slightly inclined his head

to imprint a kiss upon the half-open lips of Geneviève. He bent his head, while she turned pale, and closed her eyes as the delicate flower conceals its calyx from the rays of light. They remained dreaming thus, when a sharp ring at the door-bell suddenly startled them.

The official entered mysteriously, and closed the door.

"Here is the Citizen Lorin," said he.

"Ah! dear Lorin," said Maurice, "I will go and dismiss him. Pardon, Geneviève."

Geneviève stopped him.

"Dismiss your friend, Maurice!" said she, "and such a friend! one who has consoled, assisted, and sustained you? No; I would no more drive such a friend from your house than from your heart. Let him come in, Maurice; let him come in."

"With your permission?" said Maurice.

"I wish it," said Geneviève.

"Ah! you will find that to love you is not enough," cried Maurice, delighted with her delicacy; "it is necessary to adore you!"

Geneviève held her blushing face to the young man. He opened the door, and Lorin entered, smart as usual in his costume of demi-muscadin. On perceiving Geneviève he manifested great surprise, which was succeeded by a respectful salute.

"Come here, Lorin, come here, and look at the lady! You are dethroned, Lorin. I have now some one I prefer to yourself. I would have given my life for you; for her, — I tell you nothing new, Lorin, — for her I have sacrificed my honor."

"Madame," replied Lorin, in accents of deep emotion, "I shall endeavor to value Maurice the more, that he has not altogether ceased to care for me."

"Sit down, sir," said Geneviève, smiling.

"Yes, sit down," said Maurice, who, having pressed in his right hand that of his friend, and in his left that of his mistress, presented the appearance of a man arrived at the height of human felicity.

"Then you do not wish to die now; do not wish any longer to kill yourself?"

"What do you mean?" asked Geneviève, turning pale.

"Oh, in good truth!" said Lorin, "man is a most versatile animal, and philosophers have good cause to despise his levity. Here is one, would you believe it, Madame, who no longer ago than yesterday evening wished to leap into the fire, throw himself into the water; who declared there was no more happiness for him in this world. And behold him this morning, gay, joyous, with a smile upon his lips, his countenance resplendent with happiness, life in his heart, seated at a well-furnished table; it is true he has not eaten much, but that does not prove he is unhappy."

"Did he wish to do all this?" said Geneviève.

"All this, and much more. I will tell you all, some day, but at this moment I am very hungry; it is all Maurice's fault for making me yesterday evening run all over the Quarter Saint Jacques. Permit me, then, to make an attack upon the breakfast, which I perceive you have neither of you yet touched."

"That is right," said Maurice, with childish glee; "I have not breakfasted, nor have you, Geneviève."

He watched Lorin's eyes as he uttered her name; but Lorin evinced no surprise.

"Ah!" said Maurice, "you have already surmised who it is, Lorin."

"Zounds!" said Lorin, cutting himself a large slice of white and rosy ham, and not seeming to hear Maurice's remark.

"I, also, am hungry," said Geneviève, holding her plate.

"Lorin," said Maurice, "I was ill yesterday."

"You were worse than ill; you were mad."

"Well, I think it is you who are suffering at this moment."

"Why?"

"You have not yet given us any verses."

"I will sing you one this moment," said Lorin, —

"Phœbus, in the midst of the Graces,
The lyre in his hand still retained,
Till following of Venus the traces,
'T was lost, and could not be regained."

"Always ready with a quatrain," said Maurice, laughing.

"And you will have to be contented with it, as it is now necessary to turn our attention to more serious affairs."

"Has anything new occurred, then?" said Maurice, anxiously.

"I am ordered on guard at the Conciergerie."

"At the Conciergerie!" said Geneviève, "near the queen?"

"Near the queen. I believe so, Madame."

Geneviève turned pale. Maurice frowned, and made a sign to Lorin, who cut himself another slice of ham, double the size of the first. The queen had indeed been removed to the Conciergerie, whither we shall follow her.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CONCIERGERIE.

At a corner of the Point au Change and of the Quai aux Fleurs rose the remains of the old palace of Saint Louis, called *par excellence* the palace, as Rome is called the city, and which still continues to retain the royal cognomen, when the only kings who inhabit it are the registrars, the judges, and the pleaders.

The house of justice was a large and sombre building, exciting more fear than love for the merciless goddess. There might be seen united in this narrow space all the instruments and attributes of human vengeance. The first wards were assigned to those who had been arraigned for crime; farther on were the halls of judgment, and lower down the dungeons of the condemned. By the door was a small space where the red-hot iron stamped its mark of infamy; and about one hundred and fifty paces from the first another space, far more extensive, where the last act of the fearful tragedy took place, — that is to say, La Grève, where they finished the work previously sketched out for them at the Palace. Justice, as we see, reigned paramount over all.

All these portions of the edifice joined one with another, sullen-looking, dark, and gray, pierced by iron-grated windows where the gaping arches resemble the grated dens extending along the side of the Quai des Lunettes. This is the Conciergerie.

This prison contains dens washed by the black mud from the waters of the Seine; it also possesses mysterious outlets, through which were formerly conducted to the river those miserable victims whom it was thought necessary to remove.

As seen in 1793, the Conciergerie, unwearying *procureur* for the scaffold, — the Conciergerie overflowed with occupants, which within an hour became the victims of the guillotine. At this epoch the old prison of Saint Louis was literally the Hold of Death. Under the arches some gates were hung, and at night a red lantern was suspended there, fit emblem of this abode of misery and despair.

The evening preceding the day when Lorin, Maurice, and Geneviève were breakfasting together, a dull rumbling shook the pavement of the quay and rattled the windows of the prison, then ceased before the arched gate. The gendarmes knocked with the handles of their swords, the gate opened, and a carriage entered the court; when the hinges had turned, and the rusty bolts had creaked, a female descended.

The gaping wicket opened immediately to receive her, and closed upon her. Three or four curious heads, protruding to gaze upon the prisoner by the light of the torches, appeared in mezzo-tinto, then vanished in the darkness, while vulgar jokes and rude laughter passed between the men leaving, who could be heard though not seen.

The person thus brought remained within the first wicket with the gendarmes; she saw it would be necessary to pass through a second, but forgot at the same time to raise the foot and lower the head, as there is a step to ascend and a beam which descends. The prisoner, not yet well habituated to prison architecture, notwithstanding her long sojourn there, omitted

to stoop, and struck her forehead violently against the bar.

"Are you much hurt, Citizen?" demanded one of the gendarmes.

"Nothing can hurt me now," she replied tranquilly, and passed on without uttering a single complaint, although sanguinary traces of the injury remained upon her brow.

Shortly the arm-chair of the porter became visible, — a chair more venerated by the prisoners than the throne of the king by his courtiers; for the porter of a prison is the dispenser of favor, and all mercy is important to a prisoner, as sometimes the smallest kindness may change the darkest gloom to a heaven of light.

The porter Richard, installed in his arm-chair, felt a due perception of his own importance. He remained undisturbed even when the rumbling of the carriage announced a new arrival. He inhaled some snuff, regarded the prisoner, opened a large register, and looked for a pen in the little ink-horn of black wood, where the ink, incrusted on the sides, retained in the centre a mouldy humidity, as in the midst of the crater of a volcano there always remains some melted matter.

"Citizen Porter," said the chief of the escort, "write, and write quickly, for they are impatiently awaiting us at the Commune."

"I will not be long," said the porter, at the same time emptying into the inkstand some drops of wine remaining at the bottom of his glass; "I am a good hand at this, thank God! Your name and surname, Citizen,' said he, and dipping his pen at the same time into this improvised ink, he commenced entering the new arrival at the bottom of a page already nearly filled; while standing behind his chair, Madame Richard, a female of benevolent

aspect, contemplated, with a mixture of astonishment and respect, this woman, so sad, so noble, and so proud, whom her husband interrogated.

"Marie Antoinette Jeanne Josèphe de Lorraine," replied the prisoner, "Archduchess of Austria and Queen of France."

"Queen of France!" repeated the porter, raising himself in astonishment by the arms of his chair.

"Queen of France," repeated the prisoner, in the same voice.

"Otherwise called the Widow Capet," said the chief of the escort.

"Under which of these names am I to enter her?" demanded the porter.

"Whichever you please, only do it quickly," said the chief of the escort.

The porter reseated himself, and with a trembling hand wrote down the name, surname, and titles given him by the prisoner, inscriptions the ink of which still appears visible to this day upon the register of which the revolutionary rats of the Conciergerie have nibbled the leaf at its most precious part.

Richard's wife still retained her position behind her husband's chair, and remained standing with her hands clasped together, commiserating the situation of the unfortunate being before her.

"Your age?" continued the porter.

"Thirty-seven years and nine months," replied the queen.

Richard wrote this down, then the description, and finished with the regular notes and forms.

"There," said he, "that is completed."

"Where shall we conduct the prisoner?" said the chief of the escort.

Richard helped himself to a second pinch of snuff, and looked at his wife.

"Indeed," said she, "we did not anticipate this, and have had but brief notice, so that we hardly know — "

"You must find out," said the brigadier.

"There is the council chamber," said Richard's wife.

"Too large," murmured Richard.

"The larger the better; we can the more easily place the guards."

"Go to the council chamber," said Richard. "But it is not habitable at this moment; it has no bed."

"True," replied his wife, "I had quite forgotten that."

"Bah!" said one of the gendarmes, "you can put a bed there to-morrow, and to-morrow will soon be here."

"Besides, the citizen could occupy our chamber for one night; could she not, good man?" said Richard's wife.

"And what are we to do?" said the porter.

"Oh, we can do without a bed for one night; and as the citizen gendarme observes, 'the night is nearly gone.'"

"Then," said Richard, "conduct the citizen to our chamber."

"And in the mean while you will prepare our receipt?"

"It shall be ready on your return."

Richard's wife took the candle from the table, and led the way.

Marie Antoinette followed without uttering a word, calm and pale as usual. Two turnkeys, at a sign from Richard's wife, followed them. The queen was shown her bed, on which the woman hastened to place clean sheets. The turnkeys installed themselves outside; the door was double-locked; and Marie Antoinette was left alone.

How she passed that night no one ever knew, as she

passed it in close communion with her God. On the next day the queen was conducted to the council chamber, a long four-sided room, the wicket-door of which opened upon a corridor of the Conciergerie, and which had been divided in its whole length by a partition which did not reach the height of the ceiling.

One of these compartments was occupied by the men on guard. The other was the chamber of the queen. A window, thickly-grated with small iron bars, lighted both these cells. A folding-screen, the substitute for a door, secluded the queen from the guards, and closed the aperture in the middle. The whole of this room was paved with brick. The walls, at one period or another, had been covered with gilded wood, where still hung some shreds of paper fleur-de-lis. A bed was placed opposite the window, and a single chair near the light. This was all the furniture the royal prison contained.

On entering, the queen requested that her books and work might be brought her. They brought her the "Revolutions of England," which she had commenced in the Temple, the "Voyage de Jeune Anacharse," and her tapestry.

The gendarmes established themselves in the adjoining compartment. History has preserved their names, as it has done that of many others more infamous, associated by destiny in great events, and who see reflected on themselves a fragment of that light cast by the thunderbolt which destroys the thrones of kings, perhaps even the kings themselves.

They were called Duchesne and Gilbert.

These two men were selected by the Commune, who knew them to be stanch patriots. They were to remain at their post in their cell till the sentence of Marie Antoinette. They hoped by this measure to avoid the

irregularities consequent upon a change of office several times during the day, and therefore laid the guards under a heavy responsibility.

The queen first became acquainted with this new regulation from the conversation of the gendarmes, whose discourse, not being softly uttered, reached her ears. She experienced at once joy and disquietude; for if on the one hand she felt that these men ought to be trustworthy since they had been chosen from a multitude, on the other side she reflected that her friends might more easily corrupt two known men at their post than a hundred unknown individuals selected by chance, passing near her occasionally, and then only for a single day.

On the first night before she retired one of the gendarmes, according to his usual custom, began to smoke. The noxious vapor glided imperceptibly through the apertures of the partition, enveloping the unfortunate queen, whose misfortunes had irritated instead of deadening her nerves. She soon felt herself seized with nausea and swimming in the head; but true to her indomitable system of firmness, she uttered no complaint.

During her melancholy vigil, while nothing disturbed the deep silence of the night, she fancied she heard plaintive cries outside. These cries were mournful and prolonged; there was about them something weird and piercing, like the howling of wind in the dark and deserted corridor when the tempest borrows the human voice to animate the passions of the elements.

She soon became aware that the noise that had at first startled her was the doleful and persevering cry of a dog howling on the quay. She immediately remembered her poor little Jet, whom she had not thought of when they removed her from the Temple, and now believed she

could recognize his voice. Indeed, the poor little animal, who by his mistaken vigilance had ruined his mistress, had unperceived descended behind her, had followed the carriage as far as the grating of the Conciergerie, where he continued till he narrowly escaped being cut in two by the double iron portcullis which closed behind her.

But the faithful creature had soon returned, and comprehending that his mistress was confined in this great stone building, he whined and howled, waiting, within ten feet of the sentinel, a caressing reply. The queen replied by a heart-broken sigh which reached the ears of her guards; but as this sigh was not repeated, and no other sound proceeded from the queen's chamber, they again composed themselves, and relapsed into their former state of drowsiness.

At break of day the queen rose and dressed herself, then took her seat near the window, the light from which, intercepted by the grating of iron bars, fell with a bluish tint upon her emaciated hands, in which she held a book. She was apparently reading, but her thoughts were far away.

The Gendarme Gilbert half opened the screen, and regarded her in silence. The queen heard the noise of the screen, but did not turn her head. She was so seated that the gendarme could see her head bathed in the morning light. Gilbert made a sign to his comrade to advance and look through the opening with him. Duchesne approached.

"Look!" said Gilbert, in a low tone; "how very pale she is; it is frightful! Those red circles round her eyes denote her suffering. She has surely been weeping."

"You well know," said Duchesne, "Capet's widow never weeps. She is too proud for that."

"Then she must be ill," said Gilbert, and raising his voice, "Tell me, Citizen Capet," said he, "are you ill?"

The queen slowly raised her eyes, and fixed an inquiring look upon the two men.

"Did you address me, gentlemen?" demanded she, in a voice full of sweetness, for she fancied she detected the accent of kindness in him who had spoken to her.

"Yes, Citizen, we spoke to you," replied Gilbert; "we feared you were ill."

"Why so?"

"Because your eyes are so red."

"And at the same time you are so pale," added Duchesne.

"Thank you, gentlemen, I am not ill; only I suffered much last night."

"Ah, yes, your misfortunes!"

"No, gentlemen, my miseries are always the same; and my religion having taught me to carry them to the foot of the cross, I do not suffer more one day than another. No; I am out of sorts because I could not rest last night."

"Ah! your new lodging and different bed?" said Duchesne.

"And then the lodging is not very comfortable," added Gilbert.

"Ah! it is not that, gentlemen," said the queen, shaking her head. "Lofty or lowly, it is all the same to me."

"What is it then?"

"I ask pardon for telling you; but I have suffered much inconvenience from the smell of the tobacco which that gentleman is smoking at this moment."

Indeed, Gilbert was smoking, which was his habitual occupation.

"Confound my stupidity!" cried he, much grieved from the kindness with which the queen had expressed herself. "Why did you not tell me so before, Citizen?"

"Because I thought, sir, I had no right to deprive you of any enjoyment."

"Well, you shall be incommoded no more, — by me, at least," said Gilbert, casting away his pipe, which broke upon the tiles, "for I shall smoke no more."

He turned round, his companion followed, and he closed the screen.

"Possibly they may cut off her head, that is an affair of the nation; but why should we cause her any suffering, poor woman? We are soldiers, and not hangmen, like Simon."

"It rather savors of the aristocrat, comrade, what you did just now," said Duchesne, shaking his head.

"Whom do you term an aristocrat? Explain yourself!"

"I call aristocrats all those who annoy the nation, and succor its enemies."

"Then, according to your theory, I annoy the nation because I cease to annoy with my smoking the Widow Capet? Go along, then! As for me," continued the brave fellow, "I remember my oath to my country, and the order of my brigadier. As for my order, I know it by heart. Not to permit the prisoner to escape; not to allow any one to see her; to resist all correspondence she may endeavor to institute; and to die at my post, — this is what I promised, and to this will I keep. *Vive la nation!*"

"That is what I tell you," said Duchesne. "It is not that I disapprove of your conduct, but I fear lest you should compromise yourself."

"Hush! here is some one."

The queen had not lost one word of this conversation,

although carried on in a low voice. Captivity had rendered her hearing doubly acute.

The noise which had attracted the attention of the two guards was the sound of several steps approaching the door. It opened, and two municipals entered, followed by the porter and some of the turnkeys.

"Well," they inquired, "where is the prisoner?"

"Here she is," replied the two gendarmes.

"How is she lodged?"

"You can see." And Gilbert touched the screen.

"What do you wish?" demanded the queen.

"It is the visit of the Commune, Citizen Capet."

"This man is kind," thought the queen; "and if my friends —"

"Very good, very good!" said the municipals, pushing Gilbert aside and entering the queen's chamber; "so much ceremony is not requisite here."

The queen did not even raise her head; and it might have been believed from her impassibility that she neither saw nor heard them, but fancied herself alone. The delegates of the Commune curiously observed everything around the chamber, sounded the wainscoting, the bed, shaking the grating of the window which looked upon the court of the female prisoners, and then having recommended to the gendarmes the utmost vigilance, took their departure without having addressed a word to the queen, who on her part seemed not to have been aware of their presence.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LA SALLE DES PAS-PERDUS.

TOWARD the decline of the day on which we have seen the municipals so carefully inspecting the queen's prison, a man attired in a gray jacket, his head covered with a mass of black hair, and on his head one of those hairy bonnets, which then among the people was a distinguishing mark of the most exaggerated patriotism, was walking about in the large hall so philosophically termed "La Salle des Pas-Perdus," and seemed most attentively observing all the goers and comers forming the general population of this hall, — a population considerably augmented at this period, when trials had acquired greater importance, and when the only pleading was to dispute their heads with the hangman and with Fouquier Tinville their indefatigable purveyor.

The attitude assumed by this man whose portrait we have just sketched was in very good taste. Society at this epoch was divided into two classes, — the lambs and the wolves. The one naturally inspired the other with fear, since one half of society devoured the other. Our fierce promenader was rather short, and wielded in his dirty black hand one of those knotted cudgels then called "constitutions." It is true the hand that flourished this horrible weapon might have appeared rather small to any one who might take into his head to act the inquisitorial part toward this singular personage which he had arrogated to himself with respect to others; but

no one felt the least inclined to risk it, for this man's aspect was far too terrible.

Indeed, this man with the cudgel caused much disquietude to several groups of petty scribes engaged in the discussion of public affairs, which at this time daily progressed from bad to worse, or from better to better, according as they were considered from a conservative or revolutionary point of view. These valorous folks looked askance at his long black beard, his green eyes surmounted by overhanging, shaggy eyebrows, and trembled whenever the promenade of the mighty patriot (a promenade which extended the whole length of the great hall) brought them in near contact with one another.

This terror was augmented from the fact that whenever they ventured to approach him too nearly, or even looked at him too attentively, the man with the cudgel struck his powerful weapon with its full weight upon the pavement, smashing the flag-stones upon which it fell, sometimes with a dull and heavy, sometimes with a sonorous and clashing sound.

But it was not only these brave men among the scribes, designated generally as the "rats of the Palace," who experienced this formidable impression; it was also the various individuals who entered the Salle des Pas-Perdus by the great door, or through some of its narrow vomitories, who also quickened their pace on perceiving the man with the cudgel, who obstinately continued his journey from one end of the hall to the other, finding each moment some pretext for making his weapon ring on the pavement.

If these writers had been less timorous, and the promenaders more clear-sighted, they would have discovered that our patriot, capricious like all eccentric or pronounced characters, appeared to evince a preference for certain

flag-stones, those for instance situated a little distance from the wall on the right, near the centre of the hall, which emitted a clear and ringing sound. He even finished by concentrating his anger upon some particular stones in the centre of the hall. At the same time he so far forgot himself as to stop, and with his eye seemed to be estimating the distance.

True, it was a momentary absence of mind only, and he immediately resumed his former expression, which a gleam of pleasure had replaced for an instant.

Almost at the same moment another patriot, — for at this epoch every one wore his opinions on his forehead, or rather in his dress, — almost at the same moment, say we, another patriot entered by the door of the gallery, and without appearing the least in the world to partake of the fear generated by the former occupant, began to cross the hall at a pace equal to his own, so that in the centre of the promenade they encountered each other.

The new arrival had, like the former, a hairy bonnet, a gray jerkin, dirty hands, and in one of them a cudgel; indeed, in addition he carried a sword, which struck against his legs at every step; and on the whole he appeared a greater subject for terror than his predecessor. The first had an air of ferocity, the last seemed replete with sinister cunning.

Although these two men appeared to belong to the same cause, and entertained the same opinions, the assembly ventured to watch the result, not of their meeting, for they were not walking in the same line, but their approach toward each other. At the first turn they were disappointed in their expectation, as the patriots contented themselves with exchanging looks; at the same time the smaller of the two turned slightly pale, — only

from an involuntary movement of the lips it was evident it was not caused by fear, but by disgust.

However, at the second turn, as if the patriot had made a violent effort, his countenance, till now so overcast, cleared up suddenly, and something like a smile passed over his lips as he inclined slightly to the left, with the evident intention of stopping the second patriot in his course.

Near the centre they joined each other.

"Why, upon my word, here is the Citizen Simon!" said the first patriot.

"Himself. But what do you want with the Citizen Simon? And, in the first place, who are you?"

"It seems, then, that you do not recognize me?"

"I do not recognize you, and for an excellent reason, — I never saw you before."

"Not recognize me! — when I had the honor to carry the head of the Princess Lamballe!"

At these words, pronounced with savage fury, and bursting passionately from the mouth of the patriot, Simon started.

"You?" said he, "you?"

"Ha! that surprises you! I thought that you would remember your friends better than that, faith! Ah, Citizen! you grieve me."

"You have done very well," said Simon; "but I did not recognize you."

"It is a greater privilege to act as guardian to the young Capet; it brings you more into notice. As for myself, I both know and esteem you."

"Ah! Thank you."

"You have no reason — are you taking a walk?"

"Yes; I am waiting for some one. And you?"

"I am doing the same."

"What is your name? I will make mention of you at the club."

"I am called Theodore."

"What else?"

"Nothing else: is not that enough?"

"Oh, certainly. Who are you waiting for, Citizen Theodore?"

"A friend to whom I wish to make a fine little denunciation."

"Indeed! Do tell me."

"A whole covey of aristocrats."

"What are their names?"

"No, indeed; I only tell that to my friend."

"You are wrong; for here is mine advancing toward us, who, it seems to me, is sufficiently acquainted with business to settle at once all this affair."

"Fouquier Tinville!" cried the first patriot.

"No one less, friend."

"That 's all right."

"Yes. Good-day, Citizen Fouquier."

Fouquier Tinville, calm and pale, opening wide, according to habit, his large black eyes shaded by his bushy eyebrows, at this moment entered by a side-door, his register in his hand, and a bundle of papers under his arm. "Good-day, Simon," said he; "anything new?"

"Several things. First, a denunciation from Citizen Theodore, who carried the head of the Princess Lamballe. I will introduce him to you."

Fouquier fixed his scrutinizing glance upon the patriot, who, notwithstanding his strong nerves, felt rather uneasy while undergoing this examination.

"Theodore!" said he; "and who is Theodore?"

"I!" said the man in the jerkin.

"You carried the head of the Princess Lamballe?"

said the public accuser, with an unmistakable expression of doubt.

"I. Rue Saint Antoine."

"But I know a person who boasts that he did so," said Fouquier.

"I know ten," replied the Citizen Theodore, courageously; "but, indeed, as they all make some claim for having done so, and I ask nothing, at least I ought to have the preference, I hope."

This reply excited Simon's laughter, and dispersed the cloud on the accuser's brow.

"Right," said he; "and if you did not do it, you ought to have done so. But leave us now; Simon has some business to transact with me."

Theodore retired, very little hurt by the frankness of the public accuser.

"One moment," cried Simon. "Do not send him away so; let us first hear his denunciation."

"Ah!" said Fouquier Tinville, with an absent air, "a denunciation?"

"Yes; a covey of conspirators," replied Simon.

"All in good time. Speak; what is the matter now?"

"Oh! not much; only the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge and some of his friends."

Fouquier made a leap backward, while Simon raised his arms toward heaven.

"Is this the truth?" they exclaimed, both together.

"The pure truth; will you take them?"

"At once. Where are they?"

"I met the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge in the Rue de la Grande Tissanderie."

"You are mistaken; he is not in Paris," replied Fouquier.

"I tell you I have seen him."

"Impossible! a hundred men have been sent in pursuit of him; he would not show himself in the streets of Paris."

"It was he, by Heaven!" said the patriot. "A tall dark man, as strong as three and bearded like the pard."

Fouquier shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

"Another blunder," said he; "the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge is short, pale, and has not the slightest sign of a beard."

The patriot dropped his weapon with an air of consternation.

"Never mind, your good intention is taken for the act. Come, Simon, we must both make haste; they require the register, this is the time for the carts."

"Well, there is nothing new; the child is well." The patriot turned his back that he might not appear indiscreet, but remained in a position which enabled him to hear.

"I will go," said he, "lest I should intrude."

"Adieu!" said Simon.

"Good-day," said Fouquier.

"Tell your friend that you were deceived," added Simon.

"Well, I shall wait," and Theodore removed to a short distance, and stood resting on his cudgel.

"So the child goes on well; but how fares he morally?" asked Fouquier.

"I mould him to my will."

"He will speak then?"

"When I choose."

"Do you think he will testify in the trial of Antoinette?"

"I do not think it; I am sure of it."

Theodore was leaning against a pillar, his eyes directed toward the door. But his eye was wandering, while his

ears were erect and uncovered under the hairy bonnet he wore. Perhaps he saw nothing, but most assuredly he heard something.

"Reflect well," said Fouquier, "and do not make what is termed a blunder of this commission. You feel sure that Capet will speak?"

"He will say all that I require."

"Has he told you what we are going to ask him?"

"He has told me."

"It is important, Simon, that you should promise this; the child's evidence is fatal to the mother."

"Zounds! I count upon that."

"There will have been nothing equal to it seen since the intimacy between Nero and Narcissus. Once more, reflect, Simon."

"One would fancy you took me for a brute, repeating constantly the same thing. Take this as an example: when I put leather in water it becomes supple, does it not?"

"But — I do not know," replied Fouquier.

"It becomes soft. Well, in my hands the little Capet becomes supple as the softest leather. I have my own method for that."

"It may be so," said Fouquier. "Is that all you have to say?"

"All — I forgot. There is a denunciation."

"Again? You will overwhelm me with business," said Fouquier.

"One must serve his country."

Simon presented a small paper, black as the leather he had just mentioned, but certainly less supple. Fouquier took it and read the contents.

"Again the Citizen Lorin; you have a great hatred to this man."

"I find him always acting in hostility to the law. He said, 'Adieu, Madame,' to a woman who saluted him from a window yesterday evening. To-morrow, I hope to give you a little information concerning another 'suspect;' that Maurice who was Municipal at the Temple when that affair of the red carnation occurred."

"Be sure! be sure!" exclaimed Fouquier, smiling at Simon.

He held out his hand, and then turned away with an abruptness that evinced little favor toward the shoemaker.

"What the devil do you wish me to be sure of? Many have been guillotined for much less."

"Patience," replied Fouquier, quietly; "everything cannot be done at the same time," and he passed quickly through the wicket.

Simon looked round for the Citizen Theodore, to console himself with him. He was no longer to be seen.

He had hardly crossed the western iron gate, when Theodore reappeared at the corner of a writer's hut. The occupant of the hut accompanied him.

"At what hour are the iron gates closed?" asked Theodore of this man.

"At five o'clock."

"Then what do they do here?"

"Nothing; the hall remains empty till next day."

"No rounds, no visits?"

"No, sir; our barracks are locked."

The word "sir" made Theodore knit his brows, and look round with distrust.

"Are the crowbar and pistols safe in the barracks?" said he.

"Yes, under the carpet."

"Return home, then — By the bye, show me again

the chamber of the Tribunal that has not a grated window, and looks upon the court near the Place Dauphine."

"To the left, between the pillars under the lantern."

"Go, now, and have the horses ready at the place assigned!"

"A glorious chance! — a glorious chance! — depend fully upon me."

"Now is your time — No one is looking — open your barrack."

"It is done, sir; I will pray for you."

"It is not for me you ought to pray. Adieu."

And the Citizen Theodore, after an eloquent look, glided so adroitly under the low roof of the barrack, that he disappeared like the shadow of the writer who closed the door.

The worthy scribe drew the key from the lock, took some papers under his arm, and went out of the vast hall with the few employees that the stroke of five sent rushing from their desks like a rear guard of belated bees.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CITIZEN THEODORE.

NIGHT had enveloped in her gray mantle the immense hall, whose sad echoes had to repeat the severe words of the advocates and the suppliant ones of the pleaders.

From afar, in the midst of the obscurity, upright and immovable, a white column seemed watching, in the centre of the hall, like a phantom protector over the sacred place.

The only noise heard in this darkness was the nibbling and galloping of innumerable rats, which gnawed the papers enclosed in the writer's huts, after drilling their way through the wood.

Sometimes the sound of a carriage penetrated as far as this sanctuary of Themis (as an Academician would say), and the vague clanking of keys, which appeared to proceed from under the ground; but all this only reverberated in the distance, and nothing save these distant sounds ever broke the deep silence, or penetrated the thick darkness save the glimmering of some far remote light.

Certainly the man would be seized by bewildering terror who at this hour would have ventured into the vast hall of the Palace, the exterior of whose walls was yet stained with the blood of the victims of September; whose staircases this very day had witnessed the descent of twenty-five human beings condemned to an ignominious death, and were separated only by a few

feet from the dungeons of the Conciergerie, peopled with bleached skeletons.

Nevertheless, in the middle of this frightful night, in the midst of this almost solemn silence, a low grating noise was heard; the door of a writer's hut turned upon its creaking hinges, and a shadow, darker than the shadow of night, glided cautiously out of the barrack.

Then the fierce patriot we have heard addressed as "sir," but who called himself Theodore, stepped lightly over the uneven stones. He held in his right hand a ponderous iron lever, and with his left felt that his double-barrelled pistol was secure in his belt.

"I reckoned twelve flag-stones from the stall; and see, here is the end of the first!" murmured he; and while calculating, he groped with the point of his foot to discover the chinks which time had rendered more perceptible.

"Let me see," said he, stopping; "have I taken my measurement correctly? Shall I possess strength sufficient; and she — will she have the courage? Oh, yes, her courage is known to me. Oh, my God! When I shall take her hand — when I can say, Madame, you are saved!"

He suddenly paused, as if oppressed by the weight of so great a hope.

"Ah!" he resumed, "rash and foolish project! others will say, hiding themselves under their bedclothes, or contenting themselves by sauntering about disguised as lackeys through the Conciergerie; but they have not my motive for daring all, — it is, that I not only desire to serve the queen, but the woman.

"Well, to work; let us again sum up the whole.

"To raise the stone is nothing, to leave it open is the danger, — they may perhaps make the rounds; but yet

they never do so. They cannot suspect anything, for I have no accomplices; and then what time is needed by an ardor like mine to dart through the dark passage? In three minutes I am under her chamber; in other five I raise the stone which is on the hearth. She will hear me working, but has too much firmness to feel alarmed; on the contrary, she will understand that a deliverer is near — She is guarded by two men who will doubtless hasten to the spot —

"Well, after all," said the patriot, with a melancholy smile, looking first at the weapon concealed in his girdle, and then at the one he held poised in his hand, "a double shot from this pistol, or a couple of strokes from this iron bar. Poor creatures! they will die like others not more culpable than themselves."

And Citizen Theodore resolutely pressed his lever between the chinks of the flag-stones.

At this moment a vivid light gleamed like a ray of gold across the stones, and a noise, repeated by the echoes of the vault, caused the conspirator to turn, and then with a single bound to conceal himself in the stall.

Soon voices, weakened by the distance, and softened by the emotion experienced by every one at night in a large and desolate building, reached the ears of Theodore.

He stooped down, and through an aperture in the stall perceived first a man in military costume, whose long sabre clanking on the pavement partly produced the sound which had attracted his attention; then, a man in a pistachio-colored suit, holding a rule in his hand and a roll of papers under his arm; thirdly, a man in a large waistcoat of ratteen and a fur bonnet; and lastly, a fourth, with wooden shoes and a jerkin.

The iron gate Des Merciers creaked upon its sonorous hinges, rattling the chain intended to keep it open during the day.

The four men entered.

"A round," murmured Theodore. "God be praised! ten minutes later and I should have been ruined."

He then with the utmost attention endeavored to recognize the individuals who composed the round, — indeed, three of them were known to him.

He who walked first, clad in the uniform of a general, was Santerre; the man in the ratteen waistcoat and fur bonnet was Richard the porter, and the man in clogs and jerkin was in all probability a turnkey.

But he had never seen the man in the pistachio-colored coat, who held a rule in his hand and a bundle of papers under his arm. Who or what could this man be; and what brought, at ten o'clock at night, to the Salle des Pas-Perdus, the general of the Commune, the keeper of the Conciergerie, a turnkey, and this other man? The Citizen Theodore knelt on one knee, holding in one hand his loaded pistol, while with the other he replaced his bonnet and hair, which his precipitous movement had deranged too much to look natural.

Up to this moment the nocturnal visitors had kept silence, or if they had spoken, their words had not reached the ears of the conspirator; but when about ten paces from his lurking place Santerre spoke, and his voice was distinctly heard by the Citizen Theodore.

"We are now," said he, "in the Salle des Pas-Perdus. It is for you now to guide us, Citizen Architect, and to endeavor to convince us that your revelation is no idle story; for you see the Revolution has done justice to all this folly, and we believe no more in these subterranean passages than in ghosts. What do you say, Citizen

Richard?" added Santerre, turning toward the man in the fur bonnet and ratteen vest.

"I have never said there was no subterranean passage under the Conciergerie," he replied. "Here is Gracchus, who has been turnkey for ten years, and consequently is as familiar with the whole of the Conciergerie as he is with the alphabet, and yet he ignores the existence of the vault of which the Citizen Giraud has spoken. However, as the Citizen Giraud is the city architect, he ought to know better than any of us. It is his business."

Theodore shivered from head to foot on hearing these words.

"Fortunately," murmured he, "the hall is large, and before they find what they search for, two days at least must expire."

But the architect opened his great roll of papers, put on his spectacles, and knelt down to examine the plan by the flickering light of the lantern which Gracchus held in his hand.

"I fear," said Santerre, ironically, "that the Citizen Giraud has been dreaming."

"You will see, Citizen General, if I am a dreamer. Wait a little; wait!"

"You see we are waiting," said Santerre.

"Good!" said the architect; and he began to calculate. "Twelve and four make sixteen," said he, "and eight are twenty-four, which, divided by six, makes four, and then half remains; that is it. I can tell the very spot; and if I am mistaken by so much as a foot, you may henceforth dub me an ass."

The architect pronounced these words with an assurance which curdled the blood of the Citizen Theodore.

Santerre regarded the plan with a species of respect, but evidently admired more than he comprehended it.

"Now follow what I say."

"Where?" asked Santerre.

"Zounds! upon this chart which I have drawn. Here we are! thirteen feet from the wall is a movable stone I have marked A; do you see it?"

"Certainly, I see A," said Santerre. "Do you think I do not know how to read?"

"Under this stone," continued the architect, "is a staircase; do you see? It is marked B."

"B!" said Santerre; "I see B, but I do not see the staircase," and the general laughed heartily at his own facetiousness.

"When once the stone is raised, and the foot upon the last step, count fifty paces, look up, and you will find yourself exactly at the register-office where the subterraneous passage terminates, passing under the cell of the queen."

"Capet's widow, you mean, Citizen Giraud," said Santerre, knitting his brows.

"Yes, Capet's widow."

"But you said 'the queen.'"

"The force of old habit."

"You say, then, it may be found under the register-office?" demanded Richard.

"Not only under the register-office, but I will tell you also in what part of the office you will discover it,—under the stove."

"That is curious," said Gracchus, "for I have noticed that every time I dropped a log in that place the stone sounded hollow."

"In short, if we find your statement correct, Citizen Architect, I shall pronounce geometry a fine thing."

"Then declare it, Citizen Santerre, for I am now going to conduct you to the place indicated by the letter A."

The Citizen Theodore sank his nails into his flesh.

"When I have seen it," said Santerre, — "when I have seen it! I rather resemble Saint Thomas."

"Ah! you said Saint Thomas."

"Yes, as you said 'the queen,' from mere habit; but they cannot accuse me of conspiring for him."

"Nor I for the queen."

After this retort the architect delicately placed his rule, reckoned the distance, then stopped, having apparently finished his calculation, and struck upon a particular stone.

This was the identical stone struck by the Citizen Theodore in his fit of frantic rage.

"It is here, Citizen General," said the architect.

"You fancy so, Citizen Giraud."

Our concealed patriot so far forgot himself as to strike his thigh with his clinched fist, at the same time groaning deeply.

"I am positive," said Giraud; "and your examination, combined with my report, will prove to the Convention that I have not been deceived. Yes, Citizen General," continued the architect, with emphasis, "this stone opens upon a subterranean passage, terminating at the register-office, and passing below the cell of the Widow Capet. Let us raise the stone; descend with me into the vault, and I will convince you that two men, even one man, could effect a rescue in a single night, without any one suspecting it."

A murmur of terror and admiration, elicited by the architect's words, ran through the group, and faintly reached the Citizen Theodore, who seemed turned to stone.

"Look at the danger we run," continued Giraud. "Well, now with a grating which I shall place in the

middle of this underground passage before it reaches the cell of the Widow Capet, I shall save the country."

"Ah, Citizen Giraud!" said Santerre, "that is an idea bordering on the sublime."

"Perdition seize you, addle-pated fool!" grumbled the patriot, with redoubled fury.

"Now raise the stone," said the architect to the Citizen Gracchus, who in addition to a lantern carried a crowbar.

Gracchus set to work, and in a second the stone was raised.

The vault appeared open, with the staircase lost in its profundity, while the moist air escaped like a pestilent vapor.

"Another abortive attempt," murmured the Citizen Theodore. "Alas! Heaven does not will that she should escape, and her cause must be accursed!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE CITIZEN GRACCHUS.

For an instant the three men remained motionless at the entrance to the vault, while the turnkey plunged his lantern into the opening without being able to penetrate its depth. The architect triumphantly exulted over his companions from the summit of his genius.

"Well!" said he, at length.

"Faith! yes," replied Santerre, "here incontestably is the passage. It only remains to know where it leads to."

"Yes,' repeated Richard, "it remains to know that."

"Well, then, descend yourself, Citizen Richard, and then you will see if I have told you the truth."

"I have something better to do than go in there," said the porter. "We will return with you and the general to the Conciergerie. There you can raise the hearthstone, and we shall see."

"Very well," said Santerre, "we will return."

"But we must be careful," said the architect; "this stone remaining unclosed may suggest an idea to some one."

"Who the devil do you imagine ever comes here at this hour?" said Santerre.

"Besides," said Richard, "the hall is deserted, and to leave Gracchus here is sufficient. Remain here, Citizen Gracchus, and we will return to you from the other side of the subterranean passage."

"All right," said Gracchus.

"Are you armed?" demanded Santerre.

"I have my sword and this crowbar, Citizen General."

"Just the thing! keep strict watch; in ten minutes we will be with you."

And having closed the iron gate, the three took their departure by the Gallery des Merciers, to repair to the private entrance of the Conciergerie.

The turnkey watched their receding footsteps, and followed them with his eyes as far as he could see, and listened as long as he had anything to hear; then all relapsed into silence, and supposing himself in perfect solitude, he placed his lantern on the ground, sat down, his legs overhanging the depths of the vault, and began to meditate. Turnkeys meditate sometimes; but people, generally speaking, do not trouble themselves to find out what is the subject of their meditations.

All at once, in the midst of his profound revery, he felt a hand press heavily upon his shoulder. He turned round, and attempted, on seeing a stranger, to give the alarm, but at the same instant the cold point of a pistol was pressed to his forehead.

The accents were arrested in his throat, his arms fell listlessly by his side, and his eyes assumed the most suppliant expression.

"Not a word," said the intruder, "or you are a dead man."

"What do you want, sir?" stammered the turnkey.

Even in '93, there were moments when, renouncing their idea of universal equality, they forgot to address each other as "Citizen."

"I wish," said the Citizen Theodore, "to be allowed to go down there."

"What for?"

"Never mind."

The turnkey regarded the person who had proffered this request with the most profound astonishment; but in the mean time his interlocutor fancied he detected in the man's look a ray of intelligence.

He lowered the pistol.

"Would you refuse to make your fortune?"

"I don't know. Hitherto no one has ever made me proposals on the subject."

"Well, then, I will begin."

"You offer to make my fortune?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean by a fortune?"

"Fifty thousand golden francs, for instance. Money is scarce, and fifty thousand francs now are worth a million. Well, I offer you that sum."

"To allow you to go down there?"

"Yes; but on condition that you come with me, and afford me your assistance in my undertaking."

"But what are you going to do? In five minutes that vault will be filled with soldiers, who will arrest you."

The Citizen Theodore was forcibly struck by this argument.

"Cannot you prevent the soldiers from descending there?"

"I have no means of so doing, I know none, and cannot think of any."

Indeed, it was evident the turnkey was taxing all his mental energies to discover some means of winning the fifty thousand francs.

"But," demanded the Citizen Theodore, "could we not enter to-morrow?"

"Yes; but to-morrow a grate of iron will be placed across the passage, occupying its whole width; and for the

greater security it is arranged that this partition should be entirely solid, and without even a door."

"Then we must think of something else," said Theodore.

"Yes; we must find some other way," said the turnkey.

It will be seen from the joint manner in which Gracchus expressed himself, that an alliance had already been struck between himself and the Citizen Theodore.

"That will be my concern," said Theodore. "What do you do at the Conciergerie?"

"I am a turnkey."

"What are your duties?"

"I open the doors and shut them."

"Do you sleep there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you take your meals there?"

"Not always. I have my hours of recreation."

"And then?"

"I avail myself of them."

"What to do?"

"To pay my respects to the mistress of a tavern called Noah's Well, who has promised to marry me when I am possessed of twelve hundred francs."

"Where is the tavern Noah's Well?"

"Near the Rue de la Vieille-Draperie."

"Very well."

"Hush, sir."

The patriot listened.

"Ah! ah!" said he.

"Do you hear?"

"Yes. Voices and footsteps."

"They are returning."

"You see very well that we should not have had time."

This *we* was becoming more and more pronounced.

"That is true. You are a brave fellow, Citizen, and are through me predestinated —"

"To what?"

"To be rich one day."

"God grant it!"

"You then still believe in God?"

"Sometimes; here and there. To-day, for example —"

"Well?"

"I should willingly believe."

"Believe, then," said the Citizen Theodore, putting ten louis into the man's hand.

"The devil!" said he, regarding the gold by the light of the lantern. "Is it, then, serious?"

"It could not be more so."

"What must I do?"

"Meet me to-morrow at Noah's Well; I will then tell you what I require of you. What is your name?"

"Gracchus."

"Well, Citizen Gracchus, get yourself dismissed from here to-morrow by the porter Richard."

"Dismissed! give up my place!"

"Do you reckon on remaining a turnkey, with fifty thousand francs?"

"No, but being a turnkey and poor, I am certain of not being guillotined."

"Certain?"

"Or nearly so; while being free and rich —"

"You will hide your money, and make love to a spinster instead of to the mistress of Noah's Well."

"Well, then, it is settled."

"To-morrow at the tavern."

"At what hour?"

"At six in the evening."

"Flee quickly; there they are. I tell you to be quick,

because, I presume, you descend and go through the vaults."

"To-morrow," repeated Theodore, hastening away.

And not before it was time, for the voices and steps drew near, and lights were already seen approaching in the obscurity of the underground passage. Theodore gained the gate which the writer from whom he had taken the hut had shown him, opened the lock with his crowbar, reached the window, threw it open, dropped softly into the street, and found himself upon the pavement of the Republic once again.

Before quitting the Salle des Pas-Perdus he heard the Citizen Gracchus again question Richard, and also his reply.

"The Citizen Architect was quite right; the vault passes below the chamber of the Widow Capet, and it was dangerous."

"I well believe it," said Gracchus, who in this instance told the perfect truth.

Santerre reappeared at the opening of the staircase.

"And the workmen, Citizen Architect?" demanded he of Giraud.

"Before daybreak they will be here; and during the session the grating will be placed," replied a voice which seemed to proceed from the bowels of the earth.

"And you will have saved the country," cried Santerre, half in jest, half in earnest.

"You little know the truth of what you say, Citizen General," murmured Gracchus.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ROYAL CHILD.

In the mean time, as we have seen in the chapter preceding, the queen's trial was about to take place.

It was already surmised that by the sacrifice of this illustrious head the popular hatred, so long displayed in murmurs, would at length be satisfied.

The means were not wanting for the completion of this tragedy; and in the mean time Fouquier Tinville, that fatal accuser, had resolved not to neglect the new mode of accusation which Simon had promised to place in his hands.

The day after he and Simon had met in the Salle des Pas-Perdus, the noise of arms again startled the prisoners who remained in the Temple.

These prisoners were Madame Elizabeth, Madame Royale, and the child who after having been called "Your Majesty" in his cradle, was now styled simply the "Little Capet."

General Hanriot, with his tricolored plume, his splendid horse, and long sword, followed by several of the National Guard, dismounted, and entered the dungeon where the royal child languished.

By the general's side walked a registrar of very unprepossessing appearance, carrying a writing-desk, a large roll of paper, and flourishing a pen of immoderate length.

Behind the scribe walked the public accuser. We have seen, we know, and shall meet again at a later period, this dry, jaundiced, cold man, with his bloodshot eyes, who made the ferocious Santerre himself tremble, even when cased in his armor.

Several National Guards and a lieutenant followed them.

Simon, smiling hypocritically, and holding his bear-skin bonnet in one hand and his shoemaker's stirrup in the other, walked before to show the committee the way.

They came to a very dirty chamber, spacious and ill-furnished, at the end of which, seated upon his bed, was the young Louis, in a state of perfect immobility.

When we saw the poor child fleeing from the brutal anger of Simon, he still retained a species of vitality, resenting the unworthy treatment of the shoemaker of the Temple. He fled, he wept, he prayed; then he feared and suffered, but still he hoped.

But now both fear and hope had vanished; without doubt the suffering still existed, but if it still remained, the infant martyr, whom they had made pay after so cruel a fashion for his parents' faults, buried it in the depths of his heart, and veiled it under an appearance of total insensibility. He did not even raise his head when the commissioners walked up to him.

Without further ceremony they instantly installed themselves. The public accuser seated himself at the head of the bed, Simon at the foot, the registrar near the window, the National Guard and their lieutenant on the side and rather in the shade.

Those among them who regarded the little prisoner with the slightest interest, or even curiosity, remarked the child's pallor, his extraordinary stoutness (resulting

from his bloated condition), and his bent legs, the joints of which had already begun to swell.

"That child is very ill," said the lieutenant, with an assurance that caused Fouquier to turn round, though already seated and prepared to question his victim.

Little Capet raised his eyes to discover who had uttered these words, and recognized the same young man who had already once before saved him from Simon's cruelty in the court of the Temple. A sweet and intelligent glance shot from his deep blue eyes, and that was all.

"Ah, ah! is that you, Citizen Lorin?" said Simon, thus calling the attention of Fouquier Tinville to the friend of Maurice.

"Myself, Citizen Simon," said Lorin, with his usual nonchalance.

And as Lorin though always ready to face danger was not the man to seek it uselessly, he availed himself of this circumstance to bow to Fouquier Tinville, which salutation was politely returned.

"You observed, I think, Citizen," said the public accuser, "that the child was ill; are you a doctor?"

"I have studied medicine, at least, if I am not a medical man."

"Well, and what do you discover in him?"

"Symptoms of sickness, do you mean?" asked Lorin.

"Yes."

"I find his cheeks and eyes puffed up, his hands thin and white, his knees swollen; and were I to feel his pulse, I should certainly count eighty-five or ninety pulsations in a minute."

The child appeared insensible to the enumeration of his sufferings.

"And to what might science attribute the condition of the prisoner?"

Lorin rubbed the tip of his nose, murmuring, —

"Phyllis wants to make me speak,
I am not the least inclined.

"Faith, Citizen!" replied he, "I am not sufficiently acquainted with little Capet's constitution to reply. However—"

Simon lent an attentive ear, and laughed in his sleeve to find his enemy so near committing himself.

"However," said Lorin, "I think he does not have sufficient exercise."

"I believe the little scoundrel," said Simon, "does not choose to walk."

The child remained quite unmoved by this apostrophe of the shoemaker.

Fouquier Tinville arose, advanced to Lorin, and addressed some words to him in a low tone. No one heard the words, but it was evident they assumed the form of interrogatories.

"Oh, oh! do you believe that, Citizen? It is a serious charge for a mother —"

"Under any circumstances, we shall find out. Simon pretends he has heard him say so, and has engaged to make him acknowledge it."

"This would be frightful," said Lorin; "but indeed it is possible; the Austrian is not exempt from sin, and right or wrong, does not concern me— They have made her out a Messalina; but not content with that, they wish to make her an Agrippina. I must acknowledge it appears to me rather hard."

"This is what has been reported by Simon," said the impassible Fouquier.

"I do not doubt that Simon has said all this. There are some men who stick at nothing, even the most impos-

sible accusations. But do you not find," said Lorin, fixing his eyes steadily on Fouquier, — "do you not find — you, an intelligent and upright man, possessed with a strong mind — that to inquire of a child concerning such circumstances as those which all the most natural and most sacred laws of Nature command us to respect, is to insult all human nature in the person of a child?"

The accuser did not frown, but took a note from his pocket and showed it to Lorin.

"The Convention enjoins me to investigate," said he; "the rest does not concern me. I shall investigate."

"It is just," said Lorin; "and I declare that if this child acknowledges —" And the young man shook his head, expressive of disgust.

"Besides," continued Fouquier, "it is not only upon the denunciation of Simon that we proceed; the accusation is public."

And Fouquier drew a second paper from his pocket.

This was a number of the paper entitled "Le Père Duchesne;" which, as is well known, was written by Hébert.

The accusation indeed appeared there in full.

"It is written, and even printed," said Lorin; "but till I hear a similar accusation proceed from the lips of the child, — mind, I mean voluntarily, freely, and without menaces, — notwithstanding Simon and Hébert, I shall disbelieve it, as much as you in reality do yourself."

Simon impatiently awaited the issue of this conversation.

The miserable creature was not aware of the power exercised upon an intelligent man by the looks which he receives from the crowd, expressive either of sympathy or subtle hatred. Sometimes this subtle influence repels, sometimes it attracts, makes the thought flow out and even draws the person of the man toward that other

man of equal or superior mental calibre whom he recognizes in the crowd.

But Fouquier Tinville had felt the keen observation of Lorin, and was anxious to be fully understood by him.

"The examination is about to commence," said the public accuser. "Registrar, resume your pen!"

The registrar, who had just drawn out the preliminaries of the investigation, was waiting, like Hanriot, Simon, and all the rest, till the colloquy between Fouquier and Lorin had ceased.

The child alone appeared perfectly unconscious of the scene in which he was soon to become the principal actor, and his face, which had for an instant gleamed with a ray of the highest intelligence, had relapsed into its listless, apathetic expression.

"Silence!" cried Hanriot, "the Citizen Fouquier Tinville is going to interrogate the child."

"Capet," said the public accuser, "do you know what has become of your mother?"

The little Louis turned from an ashy paleness to a brilliant red, but made no reply.

"Did you hear me, Capet?"

He still remained silent.

"Oh, he hears well enough," said Simon, "only he is like the ape, he will not reply for fear he should be taken for a man, and so made to work."

"Reply, Capet!" said Hanriot; "it is the Commission of the Convention that interrogates you. You must show obedience to the laws."

The child turned pale, but did not reply.

Simon made a frantic gesture of rage. With natures so stupid and brutal as his, anger becomes an intoxication, attended with all the loathsome symptoms of alcoholic inebriety.

"Will you reply, wolf's cub?" showing him the strap.

"Be quiet, Simon," said Fouquier Tinville; "you have not the right to speak."

This expression, which had become habitual to Tinville at the Revolutionary Tribunal, now escaped him involuntarily.

"Do you hear, Simon?" said Lorin. "This is the second time you have been told this in my presence; the first was when you accused Tison's daughter, whom you had the pleasure of bringing to the scaffold."

Simon was silent.

"Does your mother love you, Capet?" asked Fouquier.

Still the same silence.

"They say not," continued the accuser.

Something like a ghastly smile passed over the child's pale lips.

"But then, I say," roared Simon, "he has told me she loves him too much!"

"Look here, Simon," said Lorin, "you are angry that the little Capet chatters so much when you are together, and remains silent before company to-day."

"Oh, if we were alone!" said Simon.

"Yes, if you were alone; but unfortunately you are not alone. Oh, if you were, brave Simon, excellent patriot! how you would belabor the poor child, eh? But you are not alone, and dare not show your rage before honest men like us who know that the ancients, whom we endeavor to take for our models, respected all who were weak. You dare not, for you are not alone; and you are not valiant, my worthy man, when you have children of five feet six inches to combat."

"Oh!" muttered Simon, grinding his teeth.

"Capet," said Fouquier, "have you confided any secrets to Simon?"

The child never turned round, but his face assumed an expression of irony impossible to describe.

"About your mother?" continued Fouquier.

A look of supreme contempt passed over his countenance.

"Reply, yes or no!" cried Hanriot.

"Say yes!" roared Simon, holding his leather stirrup over the child's head.

The child shuddered, but made no movement to avoid the blow. Those present uttered a cry expressive of their disgust. Lorin did more. Before the wretch could lower his arm he darted forward and seized him by the wrist.

"Will you let me go?" roared Simon, purple with rage.

"Come, there is no harm," said Fouquier, "in a mother loving her child. Tell us in what way your mother loved you, Capet. It may be useful to her."

The young prisoner started at the idea of being useful to his mother.

"She loves me as a mother loves her son, sir," said he; "there are not two ways for mothers to love their sons, or sons to love their mothers."

"And I, little serpent, declare that you have told me your mother —"

"You have dreamed that," interrupted Lorin, quietly, "you must often have the nightmare, Simon."

"Lorin! Lorin!" growled Simon, grinding his teeth.

"Yes, again, Lorin. There is no way of beating Lorin, since he chastises the wicked; there is no way to denounce him for what he did in arresting your arm, as it was done before General Hanriot and Fouquier Tinville, who approve of it, and they are not lukewarm in the cause. There is then no way to bring him to the guil-

lotine, as you did poor Sophie Tison. It is very grievous, very vexatious, very enraging; still it is so, my poor Simon!"

"Later! later!" replied the shoemaker, with his mocking laugh.

"Yes, dear friend," said Lorin, "I hope with the help of the Supreme Being — Ah! you expected I was going to say with the help of God! But I hope with the assistance of the Supreme Being, and my good sword, to disembowel you first; but move aside, Simon, you prevent me from seeing."

"Rascal!"

"Be silent, you prevent me from hearing," and Lorin silenced him with a threatening look.

Simon clinched his black hands and shook his fists, but as Lorin had told him, he was obliged to confine himself to these manifestations.

"Now he has begun to speak," said Hanriot, "he will continue no doubt. Go on, Fouquier!"

"Will you reply now?" demanded Fouquier.

The child returned to his former silence.

"You see, Citizen! you see!" exclaimed Simon.

"The obstinacy of this child is strange," said Hanriot, troubled in spite of himself at this royal firmness.

"He is ill advised," said Lorin.

"By whom?" demanded Hanriot.

"By his guardian."

"Do you accuse me?" cried Simon, — "do you denounce me? Ah! that is curious —"

"Let us try gentleness," said Fouquier. Then turning toward the child, whom one would have supposed to be insensible, —

"My child," said he, "reply to the National Commission; do not aggravate your situation by refusing us any

useful information. You have spoken to the Citizen Simon about your mother, — how you caress her and love her; how she caresses and loves you?"

Louis threw a glance around the assembly, which gleamed with hatred when it rested on Simon, but he did not reply.

"Do you feel yourself unhappy?" demanded the accuser; "are you uncomfortably lodged, badly fed, and unkindly treated? Would you wish more liberty, better food, another prison, another guardian? Would you like a horse to ride upon, and some companions of your own age?"

Louis still maintained the profound silence he had only once broken, to defend his mother.

The Commission was utterly confounded at so much firmness and intelligence evinced by a child.

"Ah, these kings!" said Hanriot, in a low voice, "what a race! They are like tigers; even the young ones inherit their wickedness."

"How are we to write the investigation?" asked the registrar, much embarrassed.

"There is no charge against Simon; there is nothing to write," said Lorin; "that will suit him exactly."

Simon again shook his fist at his implacable enemy.

Lorin began to laugh.

"You will not laugh like that the day you will sneeze in the sack," said Simon, drunk with fury.

"I do not know whether I shall precede or follow you in the little ceremony you menace me with," said Lorin; "but this I do know, that many will laugh when your turn comes. Gods! — I have spoken in the plural, — gods! you will not be ugly then, Simon; you will be hideous."

And Lorin retired behind the Commission, with a fresh burst of laughter.

The Commission, having nothing more to attend to, withdrew.

As for the poor child, released from his tormentors, he began to sing a little melancholy ditty which had been a great favorite of his deceased father.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BOUQUET OF VIOLETS.

As might be foreseen, the felicity of Geneviève and Maurice was not of long continuance.

In the tempest which unchains the wind and hurls the thunderbolt, the nest of the doves is shaken in the tree where they had retired for shelter.

Geneviève passed from one terror to another. She no longer feared for Maison-Rouge, she now trembled for Maurice.

She knew her husband sufficiently well to feel convinced, the moment of his disappearance, that he was saved; but sure of his safety, she thought now of her own.

She dared not confide her grief to the least timid man of this epoch when all from desperation were devoid of fear, but it was plainly evinced by her red eyes and pallid cheeks.

One day Maurice softly entered, so quietly indeed that Geneviève, buried in a profound revery, did not notice his entrance. He stopped upon the threshold and saw Geneviève sitting immovable, her eyes fixed on vacancy, her hands lying listlessly on her lap, her head hanging pensively upon her bosom.

He gazed at her for a moment with an expression of deepest sadness, for all that was passing in the young girl's heart was suddenly revealed, as if he had read even to her latest thought. He stepped up to her.

"You have ceased to care for France, Geneviève; confess it is so. You fly from the air breathed here, and not without the greatest reluctance will you even approach the window."

"Alas!" said Geneviève, "I know I cannot conceal my thoughts from you, Maurice; you have divined rightly."

"It is nevertheless a fine country," said the young man; "life is here important, and well occupied now. This bustling activity of the Tribune, the clubs, the conspiracies, renders sweeter the hours spent by our own fireside. One loves it the more ardently, it may be, from the fear of not being able to love it on the morrow, for on the morrow one may have ceased to exist."

Geneviève shook her head. "An ungrateful country to serve," said she.

"Why so?"

"Yes; you who have labored so much for the cause of liberty, are you not to-day more than half suspected?"

"But you, dear Geneviève," said Maurice, with a look replete with tenderness, "you a sworn enemy to this liberty, — you who have done so much against it! You yet sleep, peaceable and inviolate, beneath the roof of a Republican; and there, you see, is my recompense."

"Yes," said Geneviève, "but that cannot last long; that which is wrong cannot endure."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to say that I, — that is to say an aristocrat, — that I who dream quietly of the defeat of your party and the ruin of your plans; I who plot, even in your house, the return of the ancient régime; I who, recognized, would condemn you to death and dishonor, according to your opinions at least, — I, Maurice, will not remain here as the evil genius of your house; I will not drag you to the scaffold."

"And where will you go, Geneviève?"

"Where shall I go, Maurice? One day when you are out I shall go and denounce myself, without saying where I come from."

"Oh!" cried Maurice, wounded to the heart's core, "already ungrateful?"

"No," cried the young woman, throwing her arms round Maurice's neck; "it is love, and the most devoted love, I swear. I should not wish my brother to be taken and slaughtered as a rebel; I do not wish my lover to be arrested and guillotined as a traitor."

"And you will do this, Geneviève?"

"As truly as there is a God in heaven," replied the young woman; "besides, I not only experience fear but remorse," and she bowed her head as if remorse were a burden too heavy to be borne.

"Oh, Geneviève!" said Maurice.

"You will understand all that I say, all that I feel, Maurice, for you yourself experience this remorse. You know I gave myself to you while I belonged to another, and you have taken me without my possessing the right to dispose of myself."

"Enough!" said Maurice, "enough!" He knit his brow, and a melancholy resolution shone in his clear bright eyes. "I will show you, Geneviève, how entirely I love you," said the young man, "I will prove to you that no sacrifice is beyond my love. You hate France. Well, so be it. We will quit France."

Geneviève clasped her hands, and regarded her lover with enthusiastic admiration.

"You will not deceive me, Maurice," murmured she.

"Have I ever deceived you?" asked Maurice, "and is this the time when, to obtain you, I have dishonored myself?"

Geneviève approached her lips to Maurice's, and remained hanging on the neck of her lover.

"Yes, you are right," said Geneviève; "it is I who am mistaken. What I feel is not remorse, perhaps it is a degradation of soul; but you will comprehend at least I love you far too much to feel any other emotion than the all-engrossing one, the fear of losing you. Let us go far away, Maurice, let us go far away where no one can ever reach us."

"Oh, thanks!" said Maurice, transported with joy.

"But how can we flee?" said Geneviève, trembling at the hazard. "It is not so easy to escape nowadays from the poniard of the assassins of the 2d of September, or the hatchet of the executioners of the 21st of January."

"Geneviève," said Maurice, "God will protect us. Listen to me! A good action which I endeavored to perform, on that very 2d of September which you have just named, is now about to receive its reward. I wished to save a poor priest who had studied with me. I went to Danton, and at his request the Committee of Public Safety signed a passport for the unfortunate man and his sister. This passport Danton forwarded to me; but the unfortunate priest, instead of coming to my house for it, as I had advised him to do, went and shut himself up with the Carmelites, from whom he was taken and killed."

"And the passport?" asked Geneviève.

"I have it now. It is worth a million. It is worth more than that, Geneviève, — it comprises both life and happiness!"

"Oh, God be praised!" cried the young woman.

"Now, my property, as you are aware, consists of an estate managed by an old servant of the family, a stanch patriot, and strictly loyal, in whom we may confide. He

will send remittances whenever I wish. On arriving at Boulogne, we will go to his house."

"Where does he reside then?"

"At Abbeville."

"When shall we go, Maurice?"

"Within an hour."

"No one need know of our departure."

"No one will know it. I will run to Lorin; he has a cabriolet and no horse, while I have a horse and no carriage. We will set out immediately on my return. Remain you here, Geneviève, and prepare everything for our departure. We want but little luggage; we can purchase all that we require in England. I shall give Scævola some commission that will remove him out of the way. Lorin will explain our departure to him this evening. By that time we shall be far away."

"But if we should be arrested upon the road?"

"Have we not our passport? We shall go to Hubert's house, — that is the steward's name. Hubert is a member of the town council of Abbeville; from Abbeville to Boulogne he will accompany us as safeguard. At Boulogne we will purchase and freight a vessel. I could, besides, proceed to the Committee, and make them give me a mission to Abbeville. But no; we shall use no fraud, Geneviève. It is better to risk our lives to save and secure our happiness."

"Yes, yes, dear Maurice; and we shall succeed. But how you are perfumed this morning!" said the young woman, concealing her face on Maurice's breast.

"True; I purchased a bunch of violets for you this morning, passing before the Palace d'Egalité; but on my return, finding you so sad, I thought of nothing but inquiring into the cause of your distress."

"Oh, give it to me; I will return it."

Geneviève inhaled the odor of the bouquet with that intense delight which persons of nervous organization always experience from the perfume of flowers. Suddenly her eyes suffused with tears.

"What is the matter?" asked Maurice.

"Poor Sophie!" murmured Geneviève.

"Ah, yes!" said Maurice, with a sigh; "but let us think of ourselves, and leave the dead, wherever they may be, to rest in the grave dug by their devotion. Adieu! I am going."

"Return quickly."

"In less than half an hour I shall be here again."

"But if Lorin is not at home?"

"What does it matter? his servant knows me. And even in his absence I can take what I please, as he would do here in mine."

"Very well."

"Now, my Geneviève, prepare everything; but, as I have told you, confine yourself to necessaries. I do not wish our departure to appear like a removal."

The young man advanced a step toward the door.

"Maurice!" said Geneviève.

He turned round, and saw the young woman extend her arms toward him.

"Good-by for the present, dear love," said he; "in half an hour I shall be here."

Geneviève remained alone, occupied, as we have said, in preparations for their departure.

She accomplished her task in feverish haste. As long as she remained in Paris, the part she was acting appeared to her doubly culpable. Once out of France, once among strangers, it seemed that her crime — a crime rather of fatality than her own — would weigh the less heavily on her conscience.

She even hoped, isolated and in solitude, she might at last forget the existence of any other man than Maurice.

They would fly to England; everything was arranged. There they would hire a little cottage, standing alone, very retired, shut out from all eyes; they would change their names, and instead of two names would have one.

There they would have two servants who would be perfectly ignorant of their past. Fortunately, both Geneviève and Maurice spoke English.

Neither of them left anything to regret in France, save that mother whom one always regrets, even when she is only a step-mother, — one's country. Geneviève commenced, then, making preparations for their voyage, or rather flight.

She took singular pleasure in selecting from the rest those objects for which Maurice had evinced any predilection. The coat setting off his tall figure to advantage, the cravat and waistcoat best suited to his complexion, the books whose leaves he had most frequently turned.

She had already made her selection. Clothes, linen, and books, waiting to be packed, strewed the floor, the chairs, the sofa and the piano.

Suddenly she heard the key turn in the lock.

"Why, Scævola has returned," said she; "surely Maurice could not have met him."

And she continued her occupation.

The doors of the salon were open, and she heard Scævola moving in the antechamber. She held a roll of music in her hand, and was looking for some string to tie round it.

"Scævola!" cried she.

An approaching step sounded in the adjoining room.

"Scævola!" repeated Geneviève, "do come here, please!"

"I am here," said a voice.

At the sound of this voice Geneviève turned quickly round, and uttered a terrified cry.

"My husband!" cried she.

"Himself," said Dixmer, coolly.

Geneviève was upon a chair, searching for some string in the wardrobe. She felt her head turn round, and extending her arms, fell backward, wishing she could precipitate herself into an abyss beneath.

Dixmer took her in his arms, and carried her to a sofa.

"What is the matter, my dear? What is it? My presence seems to have produced a most disagreeable effect upon you."

"I am dying," murmured Geneviève, turning from him, and pressing both hands over her eyes that she might shut out the frightful apparition.

"What!" said Dixmer, "did you believe me dead, my dear, and do you take me for a ghost?"

Geneviève looked round her with a bewildered air, when, perceiving the portrait of Maurice, she glided from the sofa and fell upon her knees, as if to implore the assistance of this powerless and insensible image, which still continued to smile.

The unhappy woman fully comprehended the menaces concealed by Dixmer under his affected calmness.

"Oh, my dear child," continued the master-tanner, "it is indeed myself. Perhaps you thought I was far from Paris; but no, I remained here. The day after I had left the house, I returned, and found in its stead a heap of ruins. I inquired after you. No one had seen you. I then commenced a search for you, and have had

much trouble to find you. I avow that I did not think you were here; however, I had my suspicions. So, as you see, I came. So here I am; and there are you. And how is dear Maurice? Indeed, I fear you have suffered much. You so stanch a Royalist, compelled to seek shelter under the roof of so fanatical a Republican."

"My God! my God!" murmured Geneviève, "take pity upon me!"

"After all, my dear," continued Dixmer, "what serves to console me most is that you are so comfortably lodged here, and that you do not appear to have suffered much from the proscription. As for myself, since the burning of our house, and the ruin of our fortune, I have had my share of wandering adventures, sometimes living in caves, sometimes in boats, and sometimes even in the common sewers which empty into the Seine."

"Sir!" said Geneviève.

"You have there some beautiful fruit; as for me, I have often gone without any dessert, not having had any dinner."

Geneviève, sobbing bitterly, supported her head between her hands.

"Not," continued Dixmer, "that I was destitute of money. I have, thank God! generally carried with me thirty thousand francs in gold, which at this time is worth five hundred thousand francs; but how should a 'collier,' a 'fisherman,' or a 'rag merchant' draw louis from his pocket to purchase a morsel of cheese or a sausage. Eh! my God! yes, Madame, I have successively adopted these three costumes. To-day, the better to disguise myself, I am dressed as a patriot of the patriots; I lisp, and I swear. An outlaw cannot conceal himself so easily in Paris as a young and pretty woman, and I

have not the happiness of knowing an ardent young female Republican who could hide me from every eye."

"Sir! sir!" cried Geneviève, "have mercy upon me! you see that I am dying."

"Anxiety; I can understand you have had much anxiety about me; but console yourself, you see me now. I have returned, and we shall part no more, Madame."

"Oh, you will kill me!" cried Geneviève.

Dixmer regarded her with a frightful smile.

"Kill an innocent woman! Oh, Madame, what makes you say so? It must be that grief for my absence has turned your brain."

"Sir!" cried Geneviève, "sir, I beseech you to kill me at once, rather than torture me with these cruel railleries. No, I am not innocent; yes, I am criminal; yes, I merit death. Kill me, sir, kill me!—"

"Then you acknowledge that you merit death?"

"Yes! yes!"

"And to expiate this I know not what crime of which you accuse yourself, you will submit to death without complaint?"

"Strike, sir, I will not utter a cry; and instead of cursing I will bless the hand that strikes me."

"No, Madame, I do not wish to strike you; nevertheless in all probability you will die. Only your death, instead of being as you seem to fear an ignominious one, shall be most glorious. Thank me, Madame; while punishing, I will immortalize you."

"What then will you do, sir?"

"You will follow the end to which we were tending when interrupted on our route. In your own eyes and in mine, you will die guilty; in the eyes of the world you will die a martyr."

"Oh, my God! you will drive me mad by speaking thus. Where are you conducting me? Where are you dragging me?"

"In all probability to death."

"Let me then offer up one prayer."

"To whom?"

"It matters not to you. The moment you deprive me of life, my debt is cancelled. My debt paid, I owe you nothing."

"True," said Dixmer, retiring into another room; "I will await you." And he left her once more alone.

Geneviève sank on her knees before the portrait, pressing her hands against her breaking heart.

"Maurice," said she, in a low tone, "pardon me; I did not expect to be happy, but I hoped to make you so. Maurice, I am depriving you of a joy that constituted your life; pardon me for causing your death, my best beloved."

Then severing a ringlet from her mass of curls, she bound it round the bouquet of violets, and placed them beneath the portrait, which insensible, and speechless as it was, still appeared to assume an expression of grief at her departure.

At least so it appeared to the unfortunate Geneviève, as she gazed at it through her tears.

"Well, are you ready, Madame?" demanded Dixmer.

"So soon?" murmured Geneviève.

"Oh, take your time, Madame," replied Dixmer; "I am in no hurry. Besides, I dare say Maurice will not be long, and I shall be delighted to thank him for all his kindness and hospitality toward you."

Geneviève trembled with terror at the idea of a meeting between her lover and husband. She automatically raised herself.

"It is finished, sir," said she, "and I am ready now."

Dixmer went out first, and the trembling Geneviève followed him with half-closed eyes, her head turned back to take a last fond look. They ascended the carriage which was waiting at the door. It rolled away.

As Geneviève had said, "It was finished."

CHAPTER XL.

THE TAVERN OF NOAH'S WELL.

This man attired in a jerkin, whom we have seen traversing with long and rapid strides the Salle des Pas-Perdus; whom we have heard, during the expedition of the architect Giraud, General Hanriot, and Richard, conversing with the turnkey left to guard the subterranean passage; this fierce patriot, who had introduced himself to Simon as having carried the head of the Princess de Lamballe, — found himself, on the next evening, about seven o'clock, at the tavern of Noah's Well, situated, as we have said, at the corner of the Rue de la Vieille Draperie.

He was seated at the end of a dirty room, redolent of tobacco and candles, pretending to devour a plate of fish swimming in melted butter.

The room where he supped was nearly deserted; two or three habitués of the house alone remained after the rest, enjoying the privilege to which their daily visit to the establishment entitled them.

The tables were for the most part empty; but we ought to remark, in honor to the tavern of Noah's Well, that the stained tablecloths denoted the departure of a satisfactory number of satisfied guests.

The last three successively disappeared, and at about a quarter to eight our patriot found himself alone. Then, with true aristocratic disgust, he pushed away the greasy plate, which an instant before he had appeared to think

so delicious, and drew from his pocket a tablet of Spanish chocolate, which he ate slowly and with a very different expression to that we have seen him endeavor to give to his countenance.

From time to time, while eating his chocolate and black bread, he cast toward a glass door, shaded by a red and white checked curtain, anxious and impatient glances. Sometimes he interrupted his frugal repast to listen; in short, evinced an absence of mind sufficient to induce the mistress of the mansion — seated at her counter, and near the door on which the patriot so eagerly fixed his eyes — to conclude that she might without vanity consider herself the object of his preoccupation.

At length the door-bell sounded in a way that made him start; he drew the plate again before him, and without attracting the woman's observation, threw half the contents to a famished-looking dog, and the remainder to a cat, who treated the dog to some stinging strokes of her velvet paws.

The door opened, and a man entered, dressed almost the same as the patriot, with the exception of the hairy cap, which he had replaced with the red bonnet. An enormous bunch of keys hung from his girdle, from which also depended a sword.

"My soup! my half-pint!" cried the man, entering the public room without removing his bonnet, but merely saluting the mistress of the house by a slight inclination of his head. With a sigh of fatigue, he seated himself at a table adjoining that where our patriot was discussing his black bread and chocolate.

The mistress of the tavern, in consequence of the deference she entertained for the new-comer, rose herself to order the requisite viands.

The two men turned their backs to each other, — one to look into the street, the other toward the end of the room, — not a word was exchanged between them till the mistress of the tavern had disappeared.

When the door had closed behind her, by the light from a single candle, suspended from the end of an iron wire so as to divide the light equally between the two guests, the man in the bear-skin bonnet — thanks to the glass placed before him — at length saw that the room was deserted.

"Good-evening," said he to his companion, without turning round.

"Good-evening, sir!" said the new-comer.

"Well," asked the patriot, with the same affected indifference, "where are we now?"

"Well! it is done!"

"What is done?"

"As we agreed, I have had some conversation with Father Richard about the situation. I complained of swimming in the head, dimness of eyesight, — in short, of general ill-health."

"What then?"

"Father Richard called his wife, and she rubbed my temples with vinegar, and that revived me. Then, as we had arranged between us, I said that want of fresh air produced this swimming in the head, that I was of too full a habit, and that the duty at the Conciergerie, which contains at the present moment four hundred prisoners, was killing me."

"What did they say to that?"

"Richard's wife pitied me, but he showed me to the door."

"It was not enough to show you to the door."

"But wait! Then his wife, who is a good soul, re-

proached him with having no heart, seeing that I was the father of a family."

"What did he say to that?"

"He said that she was right; but that the very first condition annexed to the situation of turnkey was to remain within the prison to which he was attached; that the Republic did not jest, but would without ceremony cut the throats of those who grew dizzy in the exercise of their duty."

"The devil!" exclaimed the patriot.

"And he was not far wrong either; for since the Austrian has been there, it is a perfect hell of surveillance. One would act the spy there upon his own father." The patriot here gave his plate to the dog to lick, who was directly bitten by the cat.

"Go on!" said he, without turning round.

"At last, sir, I began to groan, and to say that I felt very ill; asked concerning the infirmary, and said I was certain my children would die of hunger if my pay was stopped."

"And Father Richard?"

"The Father Richard replied that turnkeys had no business with children."

"But you had his wife on your side, I suppose?"

"Fortunately! She made a great to-do with her husband, reproached him with possessing a bad and hard heart, and Richard finished by saying to me, —

"'Well! Citizen Gracchus, speak to some one of your friends who will advance you something on your wages, present him to me, and I promise to accept him as your substitute.' Upon which I left him, saying, —

"'Very good, Father Richard, I will directly seek one.'"

"And you have found one, my brave fellow."

At this moment the mistress of the establishment entered, bringing the Citizen Gracchus his soup and half-pint.

This did not suit either the patriot or Gracchus, who evidently had still some communications to make to each other.

"Madame," said the turnkey, "I have received a slight remuneration from Father Richard to-day, which will permit me to treat myself to some better fare. So bring me a pork cutlet with cucumbers and a bottle of Burgundy wine; send your servant to fetch the one from the pork-butcher's, and bring me the other yourself fresh from the cellar."

The hostess immediately went to execute his orders.

"Well," said the patriot, "you are an intelligent fellow."

"So far intelligent that I do not hide from myself what, notwithstanding all your fine promises, will be the end of us both. Do you suspect what it may be?"

"Yes, perfectly."

"We both stake our necks."

"Do not be uneasy about mine."

"It is not yours, sir, I must confess, that causes me the greatest uneasiness."

"It is your own?"

"Yes."

"But what if I estimate it at double its worth?"

"Ah, sir, there is nothing more precious than one's neck!"

"Not yours."

"Why not mine?"

"At this moment at least."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean to say your neck is not worth a cent, seeing

that if I, for example, were an agent of the Committee of Public Safety, you would be guillotined to-morrow."

The turnkey suddenly turned round so abruptly that the dog barked at him.

He was as pale as death.

"Neither turn round nor turn pale about it," said the patriot, "but finish your soup quietly. I am not an agent, friend. Let me once enter the Conciergerie, install me in your situation, give me the keys, and to-morrow I will count out to you fifty thousand francs in gold."

"Is all this true?"

"Well, you have excellent security, — my head."

The turnkey considered for some seconds.

"Come," said the patriot, who could see him in the glass, "do not indulge in meditations of evil. If you denounce me, as you will only have done your duty, you will not receive a sou from the Republic; if you serve me, and on the contrary are deficient in this same duty to the Republic, as it is unjust in this world to do anything for nothing, I will give you fifty thousand francs."

"I understand perfectly," said the turnkey. "I have every inducement to do what you require, but I fear the results — "

"The results! And what have you to fear? I will not denounce you; very far from it."

"No doubt."

"The day after I am duly installed, take a turn through the Conciergerie, and I will count you twenty-five rolls each containing two thousand francs. These you can easily dispose of in your two pockets. With the money I will give you a ticket to leave France. You go, and wherever you are you will be, if not rich, at least independent."

"Well! it is settled, Monsieur, happen what may. I am a poor devil who never dabbled in politics. France has always got on very well without me, and will not perish through any fault of mine; if you do a wicked action so much the worse for you."

"At all events," said the patriot, "I think I shall never do worse than they are doing at this moment."

"Sir, permit me to decline passing an opinion upon the politics of the National Convention."

"You are a pattern of philosophy and indifference. When, however, will you present me to Father Richard?"

"This evening, if you please."

"Yes, certainly; but who am I?"

"My cousin Mardoche."

"Mardoche, then, let it be; the name pleases me. What trade?"

"A breeches-maker."

"Either breeches-maker or tanner. I have that at my fingers' ends."

"Are you a tanner?"

"I could be one."

"True."

"At what time will you present me?"

"In half an hour if you like."

"At nine o'clock then."

"When shall I have the money?"

"To-morrow."

"You must be enormously rich."

"I am in easy circumstances."

"A former nobleman? Is it not so?"

"What does it matter to you?"

"To possess money, and give it away to run the risk of being guillotined; surely the former nobility must be great blockheads."

"What would you have? Your red Republicans have too much sense to leave any for others."

"Hush! here is my wine."

"This evening, in front of the Conciergerie."

"All right."

The patriot paid his bill and went out. At the door his stentorian voice was heard, —

"Come, Citizen, quick! make haste with the pork cutlets; my cousin Gracchus is dying of hunger!"

"Mardoche is a good fellow," said the turnkey, tasting the wine poured out for him by the hostess, while she regarded him tenderly.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE REGISTRAR OF THE MINISTER OF WAR.

THE patriot left, but he had not gone far. Through the smoky panes he kept watch over the turnkey, to discover if he entered into conversation with any of the agents of the Republican police, one of the best that ever existed, since one half of society closely watched the other, less from the desire of promoting the great glory of the government than for the greater security of their own heads.

But nothing occurred of what the patriot feared. At a few minutes before nine the turnkey rose, chucked the hostess under the chin, and went out.

The patriot rejoined him at the quay of the Conciergerie, and they entered the prison together.

On that same evening the affair was concluded, and Father Richard accepted Mardoche as a substitute for Gracchus.

Two hours before this arrangement took place, another scene had been enacted in a different part of the prison, which, although apparently of no interest, was possessed of vital importance to the principal personages of this history.

The registrar of the Conciergerie, fatigued with his day's labor, was folding up his papers and preparing to leave, when a man, conducted by Madame Richard, presented himself in his office.

"Citizen Registrar," said she, "here is your fellow registrar of the Minister of War, who comes on the part of the Citizen Minister to transfer some military entries."

"Ah, Citizen," said the registrar, "you are too late; I have just put away all my papers."

"Dear brother, pardon me," said the new-comer; "but we are really so overwhelmed with business that we can only achieve our course by turning our leisure to profit; and our leisure is the time occupied by others in eating and sleeping."

"That alters the case, my dear fellow; so make haste, for, as you observe, it is near supper-time, and I am very hungry. Have you your documents?"

"Here they are," said the registrar of the Minister of War, exhibiting a portfolio of papers which his brother, anxious as he was to leave, scrutinized with the strictest attention.

"Oh, they are all right!" said Richard's wife, "and my husband has already thoroughly inspected them."

"Never mind, never mind!" said the registrar, continuing his examination. The registrar of the Minister of War remained like a man who had expected the strict accomplishment of all due formalities.

"Perfectly correct," said the registrar of the Conciergerie; "and you can now commence as soon as you please. Have you many entries to transfer?"

"A hundred."

"That will occupy you for several days."

"Therefore dear brother, I wish to form a small establishment with you, — that is to say, if you will permit me."

"How am I to understand you?" said the registrar of the Conciergerie.

"I will explain it to you fully, if you will join us at supper this evening. You say you are hungry?"

"I do not deny it."

"Well, you shall see my wife, who is a good housekeeper; and you will become better acquainted with me, and will acknowledge me for a good companion."

"Faith, yes; you strike me as such, my dear brother; yet, notwithstanding —"

"Oh, come without ceremony, and partake of some oysters that I will purchase as I pass the Place du Châtelet, a roasted chicken, and a few dishes which Madame Durand excels in."

"You tempt me, my brother," said the registrar of the Conciergerie, delighted at the bill of fare, to which he was totally unaccustomed as a registrar paid by the Revolutionary Tribunal at the rate of two livres in paper money, in reality hardly equal to two francs.

"Then you will accept my invitation?"

"Yes, willingly."

"In that case, to work to-morrow; this evening let us go."

"All right; let us start."

"Are you ready?"

"In an instant, only I must first inform the gendarmes who guard the Austrian."

"Why must you tell them?"

"So that when they know that I am absent, and that there is no one at the wicket, they may become suspicious of every noise."

"Ah, that is a very wise precaution, faith!"

"You understand now?"

"Perfectly."

The registrar of the Conciergerie went and knocked at the wicket, which was opened by one of the gendarmes.

"Who is there?"

"I, the registrar, you know. I am going out. Good-evening, Citizen Gilbert."

"Good-evening, Citizen Registrar," and the wicket was shut.

The registrar of the Minister of War had paid the greatest attention to this scene, and while the door of the queen's prison remained open, his looks rapidly penetrated to the first compartment, when, seeing the other gendarme Duchesne seated at table, he felt perfectly assured the queen had only two guards.

When the registrar of the Conciergerie returned, his fellow registrar's face had resumed its expression of stolid indifference.

As they went out of the Conciergerie two men entered. They were the Citizen Gracchus and his cousin Mardoche.

On seeing each other, Cousin Mardoche and the registrar of the Minister of War each, by a simultaneous movement arising from the same impulse, pulled over their eyes, the one his hairy bonnet, the other his broad-brimmed hat.

"Who are these men?" asked the registrar of the Minister of War.

"I only know one of them; it is a turnkey named Gracchus."

"Ah!" said the other, with affected indifference, "do the turnkeys then go out of the Conciergerie?"

"They have their day."

The investigation did not proceed any further, and the new friends took the road to the Pont-au-Change. At the corner of the Place du Châtelet, the registrar of the Minister of War, following the programme he had announced, purchased some oysters, and continued his way by the Quai de Grève.

The dwelling of this individual was simple. The Citizen Durand inhabited three little rooms in the Place de Grève, in a house without any porter. Each tenant had a key of the door in the passage, and it was agreed that if any one had omitted to take his key, he should intimate the same by one, two, or three raps with the knocker, according to the story he inhabited, and any one who was waiting, and heard the signal, then descended and opened the door; but the Citizen Durand, having provided himself with his key, had not any occasion to knock. They ascended two flights of stairs, when the Citizen Durand drew another key from his pocket, and they both entered.

The registrar of the Palace found his friend's wife much to his taste. She was indeed a charming woman; an appearance of profound melancholy diffused over her countenance stamped it with an expression of deep interest. It has always been allowed that sadness is seductive in women, especially pretty women. It attracts all men without exception, even registrars, — for registrars are but men after all; and what man possessed with natural feeling would not wish to console a pretty woman in affliction, and, as the Citizen Dorat remarks, "Change the pale tint of the white rose to a livelier hue"?

The two registrars did ample justice to their excellent supper; it was only Madame Durand who ate nothing.

In the mean time conversation proceeded. The registrar inquired of his brother registrar — with a curiosity the more remarkable in these days, when such frightful dramas were daily enacted — concerning the customs of the Palace, the days of judgment, and the means of surveillance.

The registrar of the Palace, delighted at being listened to with so much deference, replied with the greatest complaisance, spoke of the manners of the jailers, of Fouquier

Tinville, and lastly of Citizen Sanson, the principal actor in the tragedies daily performed upon the Placé de la Revolution.

Then in his turn, addressing his colleague and host, he made various inquiries concerning his vocation and ministry.

"Oh!" said Durand, "I am not so well informed as yourself, being a person of much less importance, seeing that I am rather secretary to the registrar than the incumbent of the place. I do the work of the registrar-in-chief, — an obscure employment, — laborious for me, profitable for them; but that is the way with all bureaucracies, not excepting those of the Revolution. Heaven and earth may perhaps change one day, but these things never."

"Well, I will assist you, Citizen," said the registrar of the Palace, charmed with the excellence of his host's wine, and above all with the beautiful eyes of Madame Durand.

"Thanks!" said he to whom this offer had been made, "anything to vary the habits; and locality is some distraction to a poor employee. I wish to protract my work at the Conciergerie rather than to hasten it, and therefore thought if I might every day bring Madame Durand with me to the office, who is very dull here — "

"I do not see any inconvenience in that," said the registrar of the Palace, delighted with the prospect of the charming recreation afforded him by his colleague.

"She can dictate the papers," said the Citizen Durand; "and occasionally when our work is finished, if you have not found this evening unpleasant, you can return and spend an hour or two with us."

"Yes; but not too often," replied the registrar of the Palace, foppishly; "for I declare I shall be scolded if I

return later than usual to a small house in the Rue du Petit Musc."

"Oh, we shall arrange all that splendidly; shall we not, my dear?"

Madame Durand, pale and melancholy as usual, raised her eyes toward her husband, and replied, —

"What you wish shall be done."

Eleven o'clock struck, announcing it was time to retire. The registrar of the Palace rose and took leave of his new friends, expressing the great pleasure he felt in making their acquaintance.

The Citizen Durand conducted his friend to the landing, then re-entered the apartment.

"Go, Geneviève, go to bed!" said he.

The young woman made no reply, but rose directly, took her lamp, and withdrew to the bedroom on the right. Durand, or rather Dixmer, watched her departure, remained stationary for a moment with a gloomy, thoughtful expression of countenance, and then passed into his own chamber on the opposite side.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE TWO BILLETS.

From this time the registrar of the Minister of War worked every evening indefatigably in his colleague's office, while Madame Durand dictated from the registers previously prepared, which Durand copied with avidity.

Durand strictly examined everything, while appearing to notice nothing. He had remarked that every evening, at nine o'clock, a basket of provisions, carried by either Richard or his wife, was placed at the door.

The instant the registrar said to the gendarme, "I am going, Citizen," one of the guards, either Gilbert or Duchesne, came out, took the basket, and carried it to Marie Antoinette.

During three consecutive evenings, when Durand had remained rather later at his post, the basket also was left untouched, since it was only when opening the door to say adieu to the registrar that the gendarme took in the basket containing the provisions, which a quarter of an hour afterward was returned empty to the same place by one of the two guards.

On the evening of the fourth day, it was the beginning of October, when after the ordinary sitting the registrar of the Palace had withdrawn, and Durand, or rather Dixmer, remained alone with his wife; he laid down his pen, looked around and listened as if his very life was at stake; he then rose hastily, and running noiselessly toward the door of the wicket, raised the cloth which cov-

ered the contents of the basket, and in the new bread destined for the prisoner inserted a small silver case.

Pale and trembling with that emotion which even men of the strongest organization feel when they have done an act of the most vital importance, the moment for which has been long planned and patiently awaited, he quickly regained his seat, and sank down overpowered, placing one hand on his forehead, the other on his heart.

Geneviève regarded him in silence; indeed, since the day her husband had taken her from Maurice, she had never spoken till he addressed her first. But this time she first broke silence.

"Is it to be this evening?" she inquired.

"No; to-morrow," replied Dixmer.

He then rose, and having again looked and listened, closed the registers, and approaching the wicket, knocked at the door.

"What now?" said Gilbert.

"Citizen," said he, "I am going."

"Well," said the gendarme, from the end of the cell, "good-night."

"Good-night, Citizen Gilbert."

Durand heard the grinding of the bolts, and knew that the gendarme was opening the door. He went out.

In the passage leading from the apartment of Father Richard to the court, he jostled against a turnkey dressed in a bear-skin bonnet, and dangling a heavy bunch of keys.

Dixmer was much alarmed. Perhaps this man, brutal as the generality of his species, was about to interrogate him, to watch him, and perhaps to recognize him. He drew his hat over his eyes, while Geneviève concealed herself, as she best could, in the folds of her cloak. But he was mistaken.

"Pardon!" said the turnkey only, although he was the man who had been nearly overthrown.

Dixmer trembled at the sound of that sweet soft voice. But the turnkey was doubtless pressed for time; he glided into the passage, opened Richard's door, and disappeared. Dixmer continued his road, leading Geneviève.

"It is strange," said he, when outside and the gate had closed behind them, and the freshening breeze had cooled his fevered brow.

"Oh, yes, 't is very strange!" murmured Geneviève.

In former times they would have communicated to each other the cause of their astonishment, but Dixmer now confined his thoughts to his own breast, and combated them as an hallucination; while Geneviève contented herself, on turning the corner of the Pont-au-Change, with casting a last look at the dark and gloomy Palace, where something like the phantom of a lost friend awoke in her memory many sweet and bitter remembrances.

They both reached La Grève without having exchanged a single word.

During this time the Gendarme Gilbert had brought in the basket of provisions intended for the queen. It contained some fruit, a cold chicken, a bottle of white wine, a carafe of water, and half a loaf.

Having first raised the napkin, and ascertained that everything was arranged as usual, he opened the screen.

"Citizen," said he, "here is your supper."

Marie Antoinette divided the bread; but as her fingers pressed it, they came in contact with the silver. In an instant she comprehended that the bread contained something unusual.

When she looked around her the guard had already disappeared.

The queen remained for an instant motionless, calcu-

lating his retiring footsteps. When she felt certain he was seated by his comrade, and not till then, she drew the case from its place of concealment. It contained a billet, which she opened, and read as follows: —

"Madame, be ready to-morrow at the hour when you receive this billet, as to-morrow at this hour a female will be introduced into your Majesty's prison. This female will exchange dresses with you, and you will then quit the Conciergerie on the arm of one of your most devoted servants.

"Do not be alarmed at any noise that passes in the first compartment; let neither cries nor groans deter you, only attire yourself quickly in the dress and mantle of the female who comes to take your Majesty's place."

"This is devotion!" murmured the queen. "Thank God, I am not, as it is said, an object of execration to all!"

She then re-read the billet, when the second paragraph attracted her attention, — "Let neither cries nor groans deter you."

"Oh! that means they will sacrifice my two guards. Poor men, who have evinced so much kindness and pity toward me! Oh, never! — never!"

She tore off the blank portion of the letter, and having neither pen nor ink, pricked on the paper the following words, —

I neither can nor will accept the sacrifice of any one's life in exchange for my own. M. A.

She then replaced the paper in the case, which she concealed in the other half of the broken bread.

This operation was just completed when ten o'clock struck; and the queen, holding the piece of bread in her hand, sadly counted the strokes which vibrated slowly

and distantly, when she heard at one of the windows opening upon the court termed the women's court a grating sound, like that produced by a diamond dividing the glass. This noise was followed by a slight knock upon the window, which was several times repeated, with the intention of concealing the cough of a man. Then at the corner of the pane a small roll of paper appeared, which glided slowly down and fell on the inside of the wall. The queen then heard the sound of keys jingling and clashing against each other, and receding footsteps on the pavement.

She was aware that the window had been perforated at this corner, and that through this aperture the departing individual had conveyed a paper which was doubtless a billet. It was now lying on the ground. The queen fixed her eyes upon it, listening if either of her guards was approaching, but heard them conversing in a low tone as they usually did, as if by a tacit agreement not to annoy her with their voices. Then she rose softly, holding her breath, and secured the paper. Some minute and hard substance slipped from it, which, falling on the bricks, sounded like metal. It was the most exquisite file that could be imagined, — more of the jewel than the tool, — one of those steel springs, with which the most feeble and uninitiated hand could, in a quarter of an hour, divide a bar of iron. The paper said: —

"Madame, to-morrow, at half-past nine, a man will be conversing with the gendarmes who guard you, through the window of the women's court. During this time your Majesty will saw the third bar of your window, going from the left to the right. Cut slanting. A quarter of an hour will suffice for your Majesty; and then be prepared to escape through the window. This advice reaches you from one of your most devoted and faithful subjects; one who has consecrated his

life to your Majesty's service, and would be happy also to sacrifice it for you."

"Oh!" murmured the queen, "it must be a snare. But no; this writing appears familiar to me, — it is the same as at the Temple. It is — it must be that of the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge! God is perhaps willing that I should escape."

And the queen fell on her knees, and took refuge in prayer, the only balm and consolation undenied to the unfortunate prisoner.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE PREPARATIONS OF DIXMER.

THE morrow, prefaced by a sleepless night, at length arrived, presenting a terrible appearance, and it might, without exaggeration, be said that the sky was the color of blood.

Indeed, each day at this epoch and in this year, however beautiful the sun, had a livid hue.

The queen slept with difficulty, and it was a sleep without repose. Hardly had she closed her eyes than she seemed to see blood, than she seemed to hear cries.

She had dropped asleep with the file in her hand. One part of the day was devoted by her to prayer, and the guards, seeing her often thus engaged, did not feel any alarm at what they considered an increase of religious feeling.

From time to time, however, she examined the file transmitted to her by one of her intended deliverers, and compared the fragility of the instrument with the strength of the bar.

Fortunately, these bars were only secured in the wall on one side, — that is to say, at the lower part.

The upper part was set in a crossbar; the lower part divided, there was only to pull the bar, and it of course would yield.

But it was not the physical difficulties which arrested the queen. She perfectly comprehended that the thing was possible, and it was this very possibility which caused hope, like a blood-red meteor, to dazzle her eyes.

She felt that to reach her, her friends must necessarily sacrifice her guards; and could she at any price consent to the death of the only individuals who, for a length of time, had evinced any interest in her, or pity for her?

On the other hand, beyond these bars which she had been directed to saw, over the bodies of the two men who would have to die in endeavoring to prevent her deliverers from reaching her, were life, liberty, and perhaps vengeance, — three things so sweet, especially to a woman, that she asked pardon of God for so earnestly desiring them.

She believed, moreover, that not the slightest suspicion agitated the minds of her guards; that they had not any idea of a snare (if such a thing existed) into which it was intended their prisoner should fall.

These simple men would have betrayed themselves to eyes so much exercised as those of this woman, habituated to detect evil from having so severely suffered from it.

The queen, then, entirely abandoned the idea that these double overtures were contrived as a trap; but as the fear of being betrayed into this snare disappeared, the still greater apprehension increased of bloodshed for her sake, before her very eyes.

"Strange destiny! sublime sight!" murmured she; "two conspiracies united to save a poor queen, or rather a poor female prisoner who has had no means of inducing or encouraging these conspiracies which are about to take place at the same moment! Who knows? Perhaps there may be one only. Perhaps it may be a double mine, leading to one and the same point.

"If I wished, I might then be saved.

"But a poor woman sacrificed in my stead! — two men killed before this woman could reach me! God and the future might perhaps forgive me. Impossible! impossible!"

Then passed and repassed in her mind visions of the great devotion of servants for their masters, and the ancient traditions of the right exercised by masters over the lives of their retainers, — phantasies almost effaced from the mind of expiring royalty.

"Anne of Austria would have accepted this," said she. "Anne of Austria would have set aside every consideration to the safety of the royal person.

"Anne of Austria was of the same blood, and was almost in the same situation as myself.

"What madness to have come to France to pursue Anne of Austria's principles of royalty! Was I not brought hither? Two kings said, 'It is important that two royal children who have never seen or loved each other, who perhaps never may love each other, should be married at the same altar, to die upon the same scaffold.

"And then will not my death accelerate that of my poor child, who in the eyes of my few friends is still king of France?

"And when my son, like his father, is dead, will not their shades both smile on me in pity, seeing me, in order to spare some drops of plebeian blood, stain with my own the remains of the throne of Saint Louis?"

In this ever-increasing anguish of thought, this fever of doubt whose pulsations went on in geometrical progression, and in a tempest of terror and fear, the unhappy queen continued till the arrival of night.

She had several times closely scrutinized her guards; but they had never appeared more composed.

Never had she been more forcibly struck by the invariable kindness and attention of these two uneducated men.

When the darkness of night reigned in the cell; when

the steps of the round, the noise of resounding arms, and the barking of dogs awoke the echoes of the gloomy vaults; when all the horrors of the prison revealed themselves, gloomy and hopeless, — Marie Antoinette, subdued by the natural weakness of a woman, rose affrighted.

"Oh, I will fly! I will fly!" said she. "Yes, yes; I will fly! When he comes, when he speaks, I will saw the bar. I will await what God and my deliverers ordain me. I owe myself to my children. They shall not murder them; or if they slay them, and I am free — oh, then, at least — "

She did not conclude; her eyes closed, and her deep emotion checked all utterance. This was a frightful vision to the unfortunate queen, enclosed with gratings and iron bars. But soon this vision disappeared, and in its stead another presented itself to her view. Gratings and bolts had vanished. She saw herself in the midst of a dark, stern, inflexible army; she orders the fire to consume, the sword to leap from the scabbard, and vengeance to be taken on a people she will no longer claim as her own.

During this time Gilbert and Duchesne were conversing tranquilly, and preparing their evening repast.

At this time, also, Dixmer and Geneviève entered the Conciergerie, and installed themselves in the office as usual. At the end of an hour the registrar of the Palace, having completed his business, according to custom took his departure, leaving them alone to themselves.

Directly the door had closed on his colleague, Dixmer rushed toward the empty basket placed at the door in exchange for that of the evening. He seized the bread, broke it, and found the case. The queen's answer was enclosed within it; he grew pale on reading it.

Geneviève observed him tear it into a thousand pieces, and throw them into the mouth of the burning stove.

"It is well," said he; "all is arranged."

Then turning toward Geneviève, —

"Come here, Madame," said he; "I must speak with you, and must speak low." Geneviève, motionless and cold as marble, gave a gesture of assent, and approached him.

"The time has arrived, Madame; listen to me!"

"Yes, sir."

"You prefer a death beneficial to your cause, — a death that will insure you the blessings of your party and pity from the whole nation, — to an ignominious and revengeful end of life, do you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"I might have killed you on the spot when I found you in the house of your lover; but a man who, like myself, consecrates his life to a holy and honorable cause, ought to be able to profit by his own private griefs by rendering them subservient to this cause. This I have done, or rather intend to do. I have, as you see, denied myself the pleasure of doing myself justice, and have also spared your lover."

Something resembling a fugitive but appalling smile flitted over the lips of Geneviève.

"But as for your lover, you who know me should be well aware that I only bide my time."

"Monsieur," said Geneviève, "I am ready. Then wherefore all this prelude?"

"You are ready?"

"Yes, I am ready. Kill me, if you choose; you have good cause to do so."

Dixmer looked at Geneviève, and started in spite of himself. She at this moment appeared sublimely beau-

tiful; a glory the most brilliant of all shone around her, — the glory that emanates from love.

"To continue," said Dixmer, "I have informed the queen; she expects you, notwithstanding she will in all probability raise numerous objections. You must overrule them all."

"Give me your orders, sir, and I will execute them."

"Immediately," continued Dixmer, "I shall knock at the door; Gilbert will open it, and with this poniard —" here Dixmer threw open his coat, and half drawing from its scabbard a double-edged poniard — "with this I shall kill him."

Geneviève shuddered.

Dixmer made a motion with his hand to command her attention.

"The instant I strike him, dart into the second chamber, that of the queen. There is, as you are aware, no door, only a screen. You will exchange clothes with her while I despatch the other soldier. Then I shall take the queen's arm, and pass through the wicket with her."

"Very well," said Geneviève, coldly.

"You understand me?" said Dixmer. "You have been seen each evening in your black taffeta mantle which conceals your face. Place your mantle upon her Majesty, and arrange it on her precisely as you have been accustomed to arrange it on yourself."

"All shall be done as you desire, sir."

"It remains now for me to pardon and to thank you, Madame."

Geneviève shook her head with a scornful smile.

"I neither want your pardon nor your thanks, sir," said she, extending her hand. "What I have done, or rather am about to do, would efface a crime. I have

only been guilty of a weakness; and again, this weakness — recall your own conduct, sir — you all but forced me to commit. I withdrew myself from him; you drove me back into his arms; so you are at the same time instigator, judge, and avenger. It remains for me to pardon you my death; and I do pardon you. It is I who should thank you for death, since life has become insupportable to me, separated from the only man I love; since that hour especially when you severed by your savage vengeance every tie that bound me to him."

Dixmer drove his nails into his flesh. He strove to reply, but his voice failed him.

He moved toward the wicket.

"Time passes," said he, at last. "Madame, every moment is of consequence. Are you ready?"

"I have told you, sir," replied Geneviève, with the calmness and courage of a martyr, "I await you."

Dixmer collected his papers, saw that the gates were fast closed, so that no one could enter the wicket, and then wished to reiterate his instructions.

"It is unnecessary, sir," said Geneviève. "I know perfectly all I have to do."

"Then, adieu!" and Dixmer extended his hand, as if at this supreme moment all recrimination was effaced before the grandeur of the situation and the sublimity of the sacrifice.

Geneviève, shuddering, touched with the tips of her fingers the proffered hand of her husband.

"Place yourself near me, Madame, and the moment I have struck Gilbert, pass on."

"I am ready."

Then Dixmer grasped in his right hand his poinard; with his left he knocked at the gate.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE PREPARATIONS OF THE CHEVALIER.

DURING the scene described in the preceding chapter as passing at the door of the register-office leading into the prison of the queen, or rather into the first compartment occupied by the two gendarmes, other preparations were taking place on the opposite side, — that is to say, in the women's court.

Suddenly a man appeared, like a statue of stone which had detached itself from the wall. He was followed by two dogs, and was humming the "Ça ira," a song much in vogue at this period. He held in his hand a large bunch of keys, which, in passing, he had rattled against the bars which barricaded the window of the queen.

The royal prisoner at first started, but recognizing the signal, immediately opened her window softly to commence her work, with a hand more experienced than would have been believed; for more than once in the blacksmith's shop where her royal husband amused himself by passing part of the day, she had with her delicate fingers handled instruments similar to that upon which at this moment depended her every chance of safety and deliverance.

Directly the man with the keys heard the queen's window open, he knocked at that of the gendarmes.

"Ah! ah!" said Gilbert, looking through the window, "here is the Citizen Mardoche."

"Himself," said the turnkey. "Well, but it appears you keep strict watch?"

"Much as usual, Citizen Key-bearer. It seems to me you do not often find us at fault?"

"Ah!" said Mardoche; "and vigilance is more than ever necessary to-night."

"Bah!" said Duchesne, who had now approached.

"Truly."

"Why, then?"

"Open the window, and I will tell you all about it."

Gilbert opened it, and shook hands with Mardoche, who had already made friends with the two gendarmes.

"What is it, Citizen Mardoche?" repeated Gilbert.

"The sitting of the Convention has been rather hot to-day. Have you read about it?"

"No. What passed then?"

"It was first stated that the Citizen Hébert had made a discovery."

"What?"

"It is, that the conspirators believed to be dead are found to be alive, and very much alive indeed."

"Oh! yes," said Gilbert; "Delessert and Thierry; I have heard speak of that. They are in England, the scoundrels!"

"And the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge?" asked the key-bearer, raising his voice so that the queen might hear.

"What, is he in England also?"

"Not at all," said Mardoche; "he is in France," still speaking in the same loud key.

"He has returned, then?"

"He has never quitted it."

"Well, he, for one, has good courage," said Duchesne.

"Indeed, he has."

"Well, are they going to arrest him?"

"Certainly; but that is much easier said than done."

At this moment the queen's file grated so forcibly

upon the iron bars that the key-bearer feared it might be heard, notwithstanding all his efforts to drown the sound. He hastily trod upon the paw of the nearest of his dogs, which uttered a prolonged howl of pain.

"Oh, poor beast!" said Gilbert.

"Bah!" said the key-bearer, "he had not put on his clogs. Be quiet, Girondin; will you be quiet?"

"Is your dog named Girondin, Citizen Mardoche?"

"Yes; that is the name I have given him."

"But pray go on with what you were telling us," said Duchesne, who, imprisoned himself, took that lively interest in news that all prisoners feel.

"I was telling you that in the Citizen Hébert you see a good patriot; and Hébert has made a motion to return the Austrian to the Temple."

"And why so?"

"Faith! because he pretends that she was only withdrawn from the Temple to remove her from the immediate inspection of the Commune of Paris."

"Yes; and from the attempts of that cursed Maison-Rouge," said Gilbert; "it seems too that the subterranean passage still exists."

"That was the reply the Citizen Hanriot made; but Hébert said, the instant that was defeated there was no more danger; that at the Temple, fewer precautions were requisite for the security of Marie Antoinette than here; and finally, that the Temple was differently enclosed from the Conciergerie, and another thing altogether."

"Faith!" said Gilbert, "for my part, I wish they would remove her again to the Temple."

"I understand; you are tired of the confinement?"

"No; but it makes me melancholy."

Maison-Rouge coughed loudly, as the noise of the file biting through the iron bar was distinctly heard.

"Well, what have they decided on?" said Duchesne, when the key-bearer's cough had subsided.

"It is settled that she shall remain here, but that her trial shall take place immediately."

"Poor woman!" said Gilbert.

Duchesne, whose sense of hearing was no doubt more acute than that of his colleague, or his attention less engrossed by the recital of Mardoche, stooped down to listen on the left side of the compartment.

The key-bearer saw the movement.

"So you see, Citizen Duchesne," said he, in an animated tone, "the attempts of the conspirators will become the more desperate from the fact of their having less time before them for their execution. They are going to double the guards of the prisons; so look out, Citizen Gendarme, since the matter in question is nothing less than the irruption of an armed force into the Conciergerie. They will murder all, sacrifice every impediment, till they effect an entrance to the queen, — to the widow of Capet, I mean to say."

"Ah! bah! How can these conspirators of yours get in?"

"Disguised as patriots, they will appear to recommence the 2d of September, the rascals! and when once the gates are open, good-night!"

There was an instant's silence, produced by the astonishment of the guards.

The key-bearer heard with emotions of joy and terror the continued grating of the file. Nine o'clock struck.

At the same moment there was a knock at the wicket, but the gendarmes, preoccupied, did not reply.

"Well, we shall watch, we shall watch!" said Gilbert.

"And if necessary, will die at our post like stanch Republicans," added Duchesne.

"She must soon be done," said the key-bearer to himself, wiping the drops of perspiration from his face.

"And you on your side," said Gilbert, "keep on the lookout, I presume? They would spare you no more than us, were such an event as you have been talking of to take place."

"I should think so," said the key-bearer. "I pass the night in going the round; thus I am always on the alert. The rest of you at least relieve each other, and can sleep every other night."

At this moment a second summons at the wicket was heard. Mardoche started; any event, however trifling, might mar the execution of his project.

"What is it, then?" demanded he, in spite of himself.

"Nothing, nothing!" said Gilbert; "it is only the registrar of the Minister of War. He is going now, and comes to inform me of it."

"Oh, very well!" said Mardoche.

The registrar still continued to knock.

"All right!" cried Gilbert, without leaving the window. "Good-night! Adieu!"

"I think he is speaking to you," said Duchesne, turning toward the door. The voice of the registrar was then heard.

"Come here, Citizen Gendarme," said he; "I wish to speak to you."

This voice, which appeared affected by some strong emotion which deprived it of its natural accent, startled the key-bearer, who fancied he recognized it.

"What do you want, Citizen Durand?" asked Gilbert.

"I wish to speak a word with you."

"Well, you can tell me to-morrow."

"No, this evening; it must be this evening," replied the same voice.

"Hah!" murmured the key-bearer, "what is about to happen now? It is Dixmer's voice."

Sinister and vibrating, this voice seemed to borrow something funereal from the far-off echoes of the gloomy corridor.

Duchesne turned round.

"Well," said Gilbert, "if he wishes it I must go," and he directed his steps toward the door.

The key-bearer availed himself of this moment when the attention of the two gendarmes was thus occupied by this unforeseen circumstance. He ran toward the window of the queen.

"Is it done?" said he.

"I have more than half finished," said the queen.

"Oh, for the love of God!" murmured he; "make haste! make haste!"

"Hallo! Citizen Mardoche," said Duchesne, "what has become of you?"

"Here I am," said the key-bearer, returning quickly to the window of the first compartment.

At that very moment, and as he turned to resume his former station, a frightful cry resounded through the prison, then an oath, and the ring of a sword snatched from its scabbard.

"Villain! brigand!" cried Gilbert, and the sound of a struggle was heard in the corridor.

At the same moment the door opened, displaying to the eyes of the turnkey two shadows struggling in the wicket, and thus affording free passage to a female, who, pushing aside Duchesne, rushed into the queen's chamber.

Duchesne, without noticing the woman, ran to his comrade's assistance.

The turnkey sprang toward the other window, and beheld the female on her knees before the queen, praying

and supplicating her Majesty to exchange clothes with her.

He lowered his burning eyes, endeavoring to gain a clearer view of this woman whom he feared he had already recognized too well. All at once he uttered a dreadful cry.

"Geneviève! Geneviève!" murmured he.

The queen had dropped the file from her hand, and seemed transfixed with despair. Here, alas! was another abortive attempt.

The turnkey seized the bar with both hands, shook it with all his strength; but the file had not accomplished its work, the bar of iron would not yield to his efforts.

Meanwhile Dixmer had hurled Gilbert back into the prison, and would have entered with him, but Duchesne, leaning against the door, prevented him. But he was unable to close it, for Dixmer, in despair, had placed his arm between the gate and the wall.

In his hand he still retained the poniard, which in the contest, checked by the buckle of the belt, had glided over the gendarme's breast, tearing open his coat and lacerating his flesh.

The two gendarmes encouraged each other to reunite their efforts, at the same time calling loudly for assistance.

Dixmer felt his arm must break; he placed his shoulder against the door, shook it violently, and succeeded in withdrawing his bruised arm.

The door closed with a great noise; Duchesne pushed the bolts, while Gilbert turned the key.

A rapid step was heard in the corridor, then all was over. The two gendarmes looked at each other, and searched everywhere around them.

They detected the sound of the assumed turnkey wrenching the bar.

Gilbert rushed into the queen's chamber, where he found Geneviève entreating her Majesty on her knees to exchange clothes with her.

Duchesne seized his gun and ran to the window; he discovered a man hanging to the bar, which he shook with rage, and tried in vain to scale.

He pointed his gun.

The young man saw it levelled at him.

"Oh, yes! yes!" cried he, "kill me! kill me!" and sublime in his despair, he bared his breast to the bullet.

"Chevalier," said the queen, — "Chevalier, I entreat you to live."

At the sound of the queen's voice the Chevalier sank upon his knees. The gun was discharged, but this movement saved him; the ball passed over his head. Geneviève, imagining her friend was dead, fell upon the ground without sense or motion. When the smoke disappeared, no one was seen in the women's court.

Ten minutes afterward, thirty soldiers, led by two Commissaries, searched the Conciergerie even to its most inaccessible retreats.

They discovered no one; the registrar had passed, calm and smiling, before Father Richard's arm-chair.

As to the turnkey, he had gone out crying, "Alarm! alarm!"

The sentinel opposed his egress with his bayonet, but his two dogs seized the soldier by the throat.

Geneviève alone was arrested, interrogated, and imprisoned.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE INQUIRY.

We can no longer leave in forgetfulness one of the principal personages of this history, he who, during the accomplishment of the various incidents of the preceding chapter had suffered most of all, and whose anxieties merit the liveliest sympathy on the part of our readers.

The sun shone gloriously in the Rue de la Monnaie, and the gossips were discoursing merrily at their doors, as if for the last ten months a mist of blood had not hung over the city, when Maurice returned home, bringing, as he had promised, the cabriolet with him. He gave the bridle of the horse to a shoeblack, on the pavement of Saint Eustache, and hastily ran upstairs, his heart filled with joy.

Love is a vivifying sentiment. It animates hearts long deadened to every other sensation; it peoples the desert; it resuscitates before the eyes the shade of the beloved one; it causes the voice which sings in the soul of the lover to display before him the entire creation illumined by the brilliant rays of hope and happiness, — at the same time it is egotistical, blinding him who loves to all but the existence of the beloved object.

Maurice neither saw these women nor listened to their commentaries; he saw only Geneviève preparing for a departure which was at last to bring them durable happiness; he heard only Geneviève singing carelessly her customary song, and this little song trilled so sweetly in

his ear that he might have sworn he was listening to the varied modulations of her voice, mingled with the less harmonious sound of closing locks.

Upon the landing Maurice stopped; the door was half open; it was generally kept closed, and this circumstance surprised Maurice. He looked all around, thinking Geneviève was in the corridor. She was not there. He entered, looked in the antechamber, the dining-room, the parlor, the bed-chamber; but anteroom, parlor, and bed-chamber were all empty. He loudly called. No one replied.

The official, as he knew, had gone out. Maurice imagined that during his absence Geneviève had perhaps required some cord to fasten her trunk, or some refreshments to store in the carriage, and had gone out to purchase them. He thought it imprudent; but although every moment his anxiety increased, he as yet feared nothing serious.

Maurice waited for some time, walking up and down the room with long impatient strides, and occasionally leaning out of the window, which, half opened, admitted puffs of air charged heavily with rain.

But soon he believed that he heard a step upon the staircase; he listened, it was not that of Geneviève; he ran to the landing, looked over the palisade, and recognized the official, who leisurely mounted the stairs after the manner of domestics.

"Scævola!" cried he.

The official raised his head.

"Ah! is it you, Citizen?"

"Yes. Where is the lady?"

"The lady?" demanded Scævola, with much surprise, as he continued mounting the stairs.

"Certainly! Have you seen her below?"

"No."

"Go down, then, and ask the porter, and inquire of all the neighbors!"

Scævola descended.

"Quicker! quicker!" said his master; "do you not see I am burning with impatience?"

After waiting five or six minutes, and Scævola not having made his appearance, Maurice re-entered the apartment and again leaned out of the window. He saw Scævola enter several shops. and leave them without having gained any fresh intelligence. He called him. The official raised his head, and saw his master impatiently looking from the window. Maurice signed to him to come up.

"It is impossible that she has gone out," said Maurice to himself, and again he called, "Geneviève! Geneviève!"

All was silent as death; even the solitary chamber appeared no longer to have an echo. Scævola reappeared.

"Well?" demanded Maurice.

"The porter is the only person who has seen her."

"The porter has seen her; how was that?"

"He saw her go out."

"She has gone out, then?"

"It seems so."

"Alone! It is impossible Geneviève would go out alone."

"She was not alone, Citizen; she had a man with her."

"How! a man with her?"

"That is what the porter says, at least."

"Go and seek him. I must find out who this man was."

Scævola made a step toward the door, then, turning, "Wait," said he, appearing to reflect.

"What is it?" said Maurice. "Speak, or you will be the death of me!"

"Perhaps it was the man who ran after me."

"What for?"

"To tell me that you wished the key."

"What key, stupid! will you not tell me?"

"The key of your apartment."

"You gave the key of the apartment to a stranger?" cried Maurice, seizing the official by the collar with both hands.

"It was not to a stranger, sir; it was to one of your friends."

"Ah, yes! to one of my friends. It is Lorin, no doubt. She has gone out with Lorin," and smiling a ghastly smile Maurice wiped away the drops of agony which had gathered on his brow.

"No, sir; no, it was not he. Zounds! I think I should know Monsieur Lorin."

"Who was it, then?"

"You know the man who came here one day?"

"What day?"

"The day when you were so sad; and he took you away with him, and you returned so happy."

Scævola had remarked all these things.

Maurice regarded him with a bewildered air; a cold shudder ran through his body. Then after a long silence:

"Dixmer!" cried he.

"By my faith! yes. I think it was he, Citizen."

Maurice tottered, and fell back upon a chair.

"Oh, my God!" murmured he.

When he re-opened his eyes they encountered the violets, forgotten, or rather left there by Geneviève.

He rushed toward them, seized and kissed them; then, remarking where she had placed them, —

"There is no longer any doubt," said he, "these violets — It is her last adieu."

When Maurice turned round he perceived for the first time that the trunk was half full, the rest of the linen was on the floor, or in the half-opened wardrobe.

The linen which lay upon the floor had no doubt fallen from Geneviève's hand at the appearance of Dixmer.

It was all explained now. The scene rose vivid and terrible before his eyes, between these four walls that had lately witnessed so much happiness.

Till now Maurice had remained crushed and heart-broken. Now the reaction was fearful. His rage bordered on frenzy.

He rose, closed the window, took from the top of his desk a pair of pistols, ready loaded for their intended journey, looked to the priming, and finding all right placed them in his pocket.

He also furnished himself with two rolls of louis, which notwithstanding his patriotism he had thought it prudent to conceal at the bottom of a drawer, and taking his sabre in his hand, —

"Scævola," said he, "you are attached to me, I think; you have served my father and myself for fifteen years."

"Yes, Citizen," replied the official, terrified at the pallor and nervous trembling he had never before remarked in his master, who had always been justly considered one of the most courageous and vigorous of men, — "yes; what are your orders for me?"

"Listen! if this lady who lived here — " He stopped; his voice trembled so much in pronouncing these words that he was unable to proceed. "If she should return," continued he, after a moment's pause, "receive her, close the door after her, take this gun, and station yourself upon

the staircase; and for your head, for your life, for your soul, do not permit a single person to enter here! If any one should try to break through the door, defend it! Strike! kill! kill! and fear nothing, Scævola, for I will answer for all."

The young man's impetuous harangue, his vehement confidence, electrified Scævola.

"I will not only kill, but will even suffer death for the Citizen Geneviève," said he.

"Thanks. Now attend! This apartment is odious to me, and I shall not enter it again until I find her; if she has been able to effect her escape, if she return, place before the window the Japan vase with the china-asters, which she loved so much. That is, during the day. At night, put a lantern. Every time I pass the end of the street I shall know, and if I see neither vase nor lantern I shall still continue my researches."

"Be prudent, sir! Oh, pray be prudent!" continued Scævola.

His master made no reply, but rushing from the chamber flew down the staircase as if possessed of wings, and ran toward Lorin's house.

It would be difficult to paint the astonishment and rage of our worthy poet when he heard the news; we might as well attempt to indite the touching elegies with which Orestes inspired Pylades.

"And you do not know where she is?" he repeated, incessantly.

"Lost! disappeared!" shrieked Maurice, in accents of despair, "he has killed her, Lorin! he has killed her!"

"No, my dear friend; no, Maurice; he has not killed her; it is not after so many days of reflection that he would be likely to kill a woman like Geneviève. If he had thought of doing so, he would have done it on the

spot, and have left her corpse there in token of his just vengeance. No, no; he has taken her away, only too happy at having regained his lost treasure."

"You do not know him, Lorin; you do not know him! This man had something fatal in his look."

"You are mistaken," said Lorin; "he always struck me as a brave man. He has taken her as a sacrifice. He will get himself arrested with her; and they will die together. Ah, there is the danger!"

These words redoubled Maurice's fury.

"I will find her! I will find her, or perish in the attempt!" cried he.

"Oh, as to that, we are certain to find her," said Lorin; "only calm yourself. They fail in success who do not reflect; and when agitated as you are, we reflect badly and unwisely."

"Adieu, Lorin, adieu!"

"Where are you going, then?"

"I am going."

"You will leave me, then? Why is that?"

"Because this concerns me only. I alone should risk my life to save Geneviève's."

"Do you wish to die?"

"I will face all. I will find out the president of the Committee of Surveillance. I will speak to Hébert, to Danton, to Robespierre. I will avow all; but she must be restored to me."

"Very well," said Lorin; and without adding another word he rose, adjusted his belt, put on his military cap, and as Maurice had done, provided himself with a pair of pistols, ready loaded, which he put in his pocket.

"Let us go," said he, simply.

"But you will compromise yourself," said Maurice.

"Well! what of that?"

"Where shall we seek her first?" asked Maurice.

"We will first search in the old quarter, you know, — the old Rue Saint Jacques; then we will watch for Maison-Rouge, as where he is, doubtless Dixmer will be also; then we will draw near the houses in the Vieille Corderie. You know they talk of transferring Marie Antoinette to the Temple; believe me, men like them will not, till the last moment, abandon the hope of saving her."

"Yes," repeated Maurice; "you are right — Maison-Rouge, do you think he is in Paris?"

"Dixmer is certainly."

"It is true, it is true; of course they will be together!" said Maurice, to whom these vague ideas seemed partially to restore reason.

The two friends commenced their search immediately, but all in vain. Paris is large and well adapted for concealment. Never was a pit known to conceal more obscurely the secret confided to its keeping by crime or misery.

A hundred times Maurice and Lorin passed over the Place de Grève, a hundred times passed the house that contained Geneviève, watched incessantly by Dixmer, as the priests watch the victim destined for sacrifice.

Geneviève on her side, seeing herself destined to perish, like all generous souls accepted the sacrifice, and only wished to die quietly and unnoticed; besides, she dreaded less for Dixmer than for the cause of the queen the publicity that Maurice would not fail to give to his vengeance.

She kept, then, a silence as profound as if death had already sealed her lips.

In the mean time, without saying anything to Lorin, Maurice had applied to the members of the terrible Com-

mittee of Public Safety; and Lorin, without speaking to Maurice, had, on his part, determined to adopt similar proceedings.

Thus on the same day a red cross was affixed by Fouquier Tinville to both their names, and the word "Suspects" united them in a sanguinary embrace.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE SENTENCE.

On the twenty-third day of the month of the second year of the French Republic, one and indivisible, corresponding to the 14th of October, 1793, old style, as it was then called, a curious crowd had since the morning invaded the galleries of the hall where the revolutionary sittings were held.

The passages of the Palace, the avenues of the Conciergerie, were lined with greedy and impatient spectators, who made over one to another their reports and passions, as the waves transmit their froth and foam.

Notwithstanding the curiosity with which each spectator was agitated, and perhaps even on account of this curiosity, each wave of this sea, swaying, pressed between two barriers, — the outer barrier which urged it forward, the inner barrier which urged it backward, — each wave kept, in this flux and reflux, almost the same position which it had at first taken. Thus those more conveniently situated, comprehending it was necessary they should obtain forgiveness for their good fortune, kept this object in view by transmitting to their neighbors less comfortably and commodiously placed than themselves, and who in their turn recounted to others, the first words they heard, and all they saw.

Near the door of the Tribunal a group of men was collected, rudely disputing for ten lines of space in width and height, — for ten lines in breadth sufficed to see be-

tween two shoulders the corner of the hall and the form of the judges; for ten lines in height was sufficient to overlook the entire hall and see the face of the accused.

Unfortunately, this entrance to the passage of the hall, this narrow defile, was almost entirely filled by a man with broad shoulders, and his arms akimbo, who most effectually excluded the wavering crowd ready to drop into the hall if this rampart of flesh were to give way.

This immovable man was young and handsome; and at every push bestowed on him by the crowd, he shook his head of hair, thick as a lion's mane, under which gleamed a dark and resolute expression; then, when either by a look or a movement he had repelled the crowd and resisted their violent attacks, he fell back into his attentive immobility.

A hundred times this compact mass had, notwithstanding, striven hard to overthrow him, — as, from his great height, to see anything behind him was utterly impossible, — but, as we have said, firm as a rock, he stood his ground.

In the mean time, at the other extremity of this human sea, in the midst of the crushing crowd, another man was forcing a passage, with a perseverance almost amounting to ferocity. Nothing impeded his indefatigable exertions, — neither the blows of those he left behind, the fearful imprecations of those he almost stifled in passing, nor the wails of the women, for there were many females in this crowd.

To blows he responded with blows; to imprecations, by a look before which the most courageous quailed; to complaints, by a carelessness bordering on disdain.

At last he arrived behind the powerful young man who, so to speak, closed the entrance to the hall. In the midst of the general expectation — for all were anxious

to see how the contest between two such rude antagonists would terminate — he essayed his peculiar method, which consisted in planting like wedges his elbows between two spectators, and thus breaking through the thickest of the crowd.

He was, notwithstanding, a short young man, whose wan face and emaciated appearance betokened latent illness.

His elbows had scarcely touched the young man before him, when he, indignant at the aggression, turned sharply round, at the same moment raising his clinched fist, which threatened, in falling, to crush the slender form of the intruder.

The two antagonists now found themselves face to face, when a cry of recognition escaped from each.

"Ah, Citizen Maurice," said the delicate young man, with an accent of inexpressible anguish, "permit me to pass; only let me see her, I entreat you; you may kill me afterward."

Maurice — for it was indeed he — felt himself affected by admiration and compassion for this ceaseless devotion, this adventurous daring.

"You here!" murmured he. "How imprudent!"

"Yes; but I am exhausted — O God! she speaks. Let me see her; let me hear her!"

Maurice drew aside, and the young man passed before him, and being at the head of the crowd there was nothing now to intercept the view of him who had undergone so many blows, so much buffeting, to attain his end.

All this scene, and the murmurs it occasioned, aroused the curiosity of the judges.

The accused also turned round, and immediately perceived and recognized the Chevalier.

A shudder ran through the queen's frame, seated in the iron arm-chair. The examination, conducted by the President Harmand, interpreted by Fouquier Tinville, discussed by Chauveau Lagarde, the counsel for the queen, lasted as long as the strength of the judges and the accused permitted.

During all this time Maurice remained motionless in his place, while several times already the concourse was renewed both in the hall and the corridors.

The Chevalier leaned against a pillar. He was no less pale than the marble that supported him.

The day was succeeded by a dark night; some lighted candles on the tables of the jurors, and some smoky lamps on the walls of the hall threw a red and sinister expression on the noble face of that woman who had been the cynosure of all eyes at the splendid fêtes at Versailles.

She was alone there, replying in brief and dignified language to the questions of the president, and occasionally addressing some words to her counsel in a low voice.

Her white and polished forehead retained all its wonted haughtiness. She was attired in a black dress, which she had worn ever since her husband's death.

The judges retired from the hall. The sitting had terminated.

"Have I evinced too much contempt for them, sir?" said she, addressing herself to Chauveau Lagarde.

"Ah, Madame," replied he, "you are always right when you act like yourself."

"How proud she is!" cried a woman among the audience, as if a voice from the people had replied to the question of the unfortunate queen to her advocate.

The queen turned and looked at her.

"Yes," repeated the woman, "you are proud, Antoinette; and I tell you, pride has been the ruin of you."

The queen blushed. The Chevalier turned toward the female who had uttered these words, and replied softly, "She was queen."

Maurice seized him by the wrist, saying, in a low tone, "Take care; do not forget yourself!"

"Oh, Monsieur Maurice!" replied the Chevalier, "you are a man yourself, and you know you are speaking to a man. Tell me, oh, tell me! do you think they will condemn her?"

"I do not think it," said Maurice; "I am sure of it."

"What! a woman!" said the Chevalier, with a deep groan.

"No, a queen," said Maurice; "you have yourself said so."

The Chevalier in his turn seized Maurice by the wrist, and with a force of which he appeared incapable compelled him to bend his ear. It was half-past three in the morning. Many vacuums were visible among the spectators; and a few lights burning here and there served only to render darkness visible. In one of the most obscure parts of the hall were the Chevalier and Maurice, the latter listening to what the former was telling him.

"Why are you here? What brings you here?" demanded the Chevalier; "you, sir, who have not a tiger's heart?"

"Alas!" said Maurice, "to discover what has become of an unfortunate woman."

"Yes, yes," said Maison-Rouge; "she whom her husband forced into the queen's cell? The female who was arrested before my eyes?"

"Geneviève?"

"Yes, Geneviève."

"Then Geneviève is a prisoner, sacrificed by her husband, killed by Dixmer? Oh, I comprehend all; I understand all now! Chevalier, tell me all that has occurred; tell me where she is; tell me where I can find her! Chevalier, this woman constitutes my life; do you hear me?"

"I witnessed all. I was there when she was arrested. I was there also to effect the escape of the queen; but our different projects not having been communicated to each other, injured instead of assisting our mutual cause."

"Why did you not save her, at least. — your sister, Geneviève?"

"How could I when an iron bar divided us? Oh, if you had only been there, if you had united your efforts with mine, the bar must have yielded, and both might have been saved!"

"Geneviève! Geneviève!" murmured Maurice. Then regarding Maison-Rouge with an indefinable expression of hatred and rage, —

"And Dixmer, where is he?" demanded he.

"I know not; he saved himself, as I did also."

"Oh!" said Maurice, grinding his teeth, "if ever I meet him —"

"Yes; I understand. But there is nothing yet to despair about concerning Geneviève," said Maison-Rouge; "her case is not yet desperate; but the queen — Oh! stop, Maurice, you are a man of feeling, an influential man; you have friends — Oh! I pray to you as I would pray to my God — Maurice, help me to save the queen! Maurice, Geneviève supplicates you through me!"

"Pronounce not that name, sir! Who knows but that, like Dixmer, you may have sacrificed this unhappy woman?"

"Sir," replied the Chevalier, haughtily, "when I at-

tach myself to a cause, I know better than to sacrifice any one but myself."

Maurice was about to reply, when the door of the chamber of debate opened.

"Silence, sir! silence!" said the Chevalier, "the judges are returning," and Maurice felt the hand tremble which Maison-Rouge had placed upon his arm. "Ah!" murmured the Chevalier, "my heart fails me now!"

"Have courage and constrain yourself, or you are lost!" said Maurice.

The Tribunal re-entered; and the news of its return spread rapidly through the corridors and galleries. The crowd again congregated in the hall, and even the dim lights appeared to burn brighter at this solemn and decisive moment. The queen rose and stood erect, haughty and immovable, her eyes fixed, her lips closed. The decree was then read which doomed the queen to death. She heard her sentence without even turning pale or uttering a sigh; her countenance evinced not the slightest emotion. Then turning toward the Chevalier, she regarded him with a long and eloquent look, as if to indicate her gratitude to this man whom she had ever seen a living statue of devotion, and supported on the arm of the officer of the gendarmes who commanded the forces, with a calm and dignified demeanor she quitted the court.

Maurice drew a deep sigh. "Thank God!" said he, "nothing in this declaration can compromise Geneviève; there is yet hope."

"Thank God!" murmured the Chevalier on his side, "it is all finished, and the struggle at length terminated. I have not strength to go further."

"Courage, sir!" said Maurice, in a low voice.

"I will take courage, sir," replied the Chevalier; and

having shaken hands, they disappeared by different outlets. The queen was reconducted to the Conciergerie; the large clock struck four as she entered. At the end of Pont Neuf, Maurice was stopped by Lorin.

"Halt!" said he; "you do not pass here!"

"Why?"

"First, where are you going?"

"I am going home. I can return there now, since I know what has become of her."

"So much the better; but you must not enter there."

"For what reason?"

"The reason is, that two hours ago the gendarmes went there to arrest you."

"Ah!" cried Maurice. "Well, that is the greater reason why I should go!"

"Are you mad? And Geneviève?"

"You are right. But where are we to go?"

"Zounds! To my house."

"But I shall ruin you!"

"The more reason, then, that you should come," said Lorin, dragging Maurice away with him.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE PRIEST AND THE EXECUTIONER.

On leaving the court, the queen had been conducted back to the Conciergerie. On reaching her chamber she had taken a pair of scissors, and cut off her long and beautiful ringlets, rendered still more so from the absence of powder, which she had not used for a year; she enclosed them in a packet, on which was inscribed, "For my son and daughter." She then seated herself, or rather sank into a chair, and worn out with fatigue, the trial having lasted eighteen hours, she fell asleep. At seven o'clock the noise of the opening screen roused her suddenly, and turning round, she beheld a man perfectly unknown to her.

"What do you want?" demanded she.

He approached and saluted her as respectfully as if she had not been the queen.

"I am called Sanson," said he.

The name was sufficient. The queen slightly shuddered and rose up.

"You are here early, sir; could you not have made it rather later?"

"No, Madame," replied Sanson; "I received orders to come."

As he uttered these words, he advanced still nearer to the queen. At this moment everything about this man was expressive and terrible.

"I understand," said the prisoner; "you wish to cut off my hair?"

"It is necessary, Madame," replied the executioner.

"I knew it, sir; and I wished to spare you the trouble. My hair is on the table."

Sanson followed the direction of the queen's hand.

"Only," said she, "I should like my hair sent to my children to-night."

"Madame," said Sanson, "this does not concern me."

"However, I thought — notwithstanding — "

"Oh, I get nothing, replied the executioner; "the clothes, the jewels — unless formally made over to me — all go to La Salpêtrière, and are allotted to the poor of the hospital. The Committee of Public Safety has so arranged these things."

"But, sir," persisted Marie Antoinette, "may I at least depend upon this packet being forwarded to my children?"

Sanson remained silent.

"I will endeavor to send it," said Gilbert.

The prisoner cast upon him a look of deep gratitude.

"I came," said Sanson, "to cut off your hair; but since you have done so, I can, if you wish it, leave you for a moment alone."

"I entreat you to do so, sir. I wish to collect my scattered thoughts, and offer up a prayer."

Sanson bowed and retired, when the queen once more found herself in solitude. While the condemned knelt on a low chair which served her as a *prie-dieu*, a scene no less terrible was passing in the parsonage of the small church of Saint Landry, in the city. The curé had just got up; the old housekeeper had prepared the humble morning meal, when a loud summons at the gate was heard. Even in our day, an unexpected visit to a clergyman is in general the precursor of some serious event, —

either a baptism, a marriage "in extremis," or a last confession; but at this epoch the visit of a stranger announced some matter of far graver import. Indeed, at this period the priest was no longer the mandatary of God, but rendered his account to man.

However, the Abbé Girard was of the number of those who had least cause for fear, as he had sworn to abide by the Constitution, — in him conscience and probity had spoken louder than either self-love or religious spirit. No doubt the Abbé Girard admitted the possibility of improvement in the government, and much regretted the abuses committed under the name of the Divine will, and had, while retaining his God, accepted the fraternity of the Republican régime.

"Go and see, Dame Jacinthe," said he, "who disturbs us at this early hour; and if the business is of no very pressing nature, say that this morning I have been sent for to the Conciergerie, and must go there directly."

Dame Jacinthe, formerly called Madeleine, had accepted this flowery appellation in lieu of her own, as the Abbé Girard had taken the title of citizen instead of that of curé. At the suggestion of her master, Jacinthe hastened down the steps of the little garden leading to the entrance gate. She drew back the bolts, when a thin, pale young man, much agitated, but with a frank and amiable expression, presented himself before her.

"Monsieur l' Abbé Girard?" said he.

Jacinthe, not slow to remark the disordered dress, the neglected beard, and the nervous tremor of the newcomer, augured unfavorably of him.

"Citizen," said she; "there is here neither 'Monsieur' nor 'abbé.'"

"Pardon me, Madame," replied the young man; "I meant to say the Curé of Saint Landry."

Jacinthe, notwithstanding her patriotism, was struck by the title "Madame," with which the Republicans would not have honored an empress. She, however, replied, —

"You cannot see him now; he is repeating his breviary."

"In that case I will wait," replied the young man.

"But," said Jacinthe, in whom this obstinate persistence revived her first unfavorable impression, "you will wait in vain; for he has been summoned to the Conciergerie, and must go there immediately."

The young man turned frightfully pale, or rather from pale to livid.

"It is then true!" murmured he; then raising his voice, "This, Madame, is the business which brings me to the Citizen Girard."

And in spite of the old woman he had, while speaking, effected an entrance; then coolly but firmly closing the bolts, and notwithstanding the expostulations and even menaces of Dame Jacinthe, he not only entered the house, but also the chamber of the curé, who on perceiving him uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Forgive me, Monsieur le Curé," immediately said the young man; "I wish to speak to you on a very serious subject; permit us to be alone."

The aged priest had experienced deep sorrow, and knew what it was to endure. He discerned deep and devouring passion in the confusion of the young man, and intense emotion in his fevered tones.

"Leave us, Dame Jacinthe!" said he.

The visitor impatiently followed with his eyes the receding steps of the housekeeper, who, from being accustomed to the confidence of her master, hesitated to comply; then when at length the door was closed,

"Monsieur le Curé," said the unknown, "you will first wish to know who I am. I will tell you. I am a proscribed man, doomed to death, who only at this moment lives from the power of audacity; I am the Chevalier de Maison-Rouge."

The abbé started in horror from his arm-chair.

"Fear nothing!" said the Chevalier, "no one has seen me enter here; and even those who might have seen me would never know me. I have altered much these last two months."

"But what do you wish, Citizen?" asked the curé.

"You are going this morning to the Conciergerie, are you not?"

"Yes; the porter has sent for me."

"Do you know why?"

"To perform the duties of my sacred office to an invalid, or some dying person, perhaps even to one condemned."

"You are right; it is to one condemned."

The old priest regarded the Chevalier with undisguised astonishment.

"But do you know who this person is?" demanded Maison-Rouge.

"No; I do not know."

"This person is the queen!"

The abbé uttered an exclamation of grief.

"The queen! Oh, my God!"

"Yes, sir; the queen! I made inquiry as to the priest who would attend her, and learned it was you. I therefore came directly to seek an interview."

"But what do you require of me?" asked the priest, alarmed at the wild accents of the Chevalier.

"I wish — I wish nothing, sir. I implore, I entreat, I supplicate you!"

"For what, then?"

"To allow me to enter with you into the presence of her Majesty?"

"You are mad!" exclaimed the curé; "you would not only ruin me, but would sacrifice yourself."

"Fear nothing."

"The poor woman is condemned, and that is the end of her."

"I know it, and it is not to make any attempt to save her that I wish to see her; it is — But listen to me, my father; you are not listening."

"I do not listen to you, since what you ask is impossible; I do not listen to you, since you act like a man bereft of his senses," said the aged man. "I do not listen to you, because you terrify me."

"Father, reassure yourself," said the young man, endeavoring to calm himself; "believe me, Father, I am in my senses. The queen, I know, is lost; but if I could only for an instant prostrate myself at her feet, it would save my life. If I do not see her I shall kill myself; and as you will have caused my despair, you will at the same moment destroy both body and soul."

"My son! my son!" replied the priest, "you ask me to sacrifice my life for you! Old as I am, my existence is still necessary to the unfortunate; old as I am, to precipitate my own death is to commit suicide."

"Do not refuse me, Father," replied the Chevalier; "you must have a curate, an acolyte; take me, let me go with you."

The priest tried to maintain his firmness, which was beginning to give way.

"No, no!" said he; "this would be a dereliction of duty; I have sworn to the Constitution, and I am bound heart, soul, and conscience. The unhappy woman con-

demned to death is a guilty queen. I would accept death, if by so doing I could benefit a fellow-creature; but I will not depart from the path of duty."

"But," cried the Chevalier, "when I tell you, and again repeat, even swear to you, I do not want to save the queen; here by the Gospel, by the crucifix, I swear I do not go to the Conciergerie to prevent her death!"

"What is your motive, then?" said the old man, affected by such undisguised accents of despair.

"Hearken!" said the Chevalier, whose soul seemed to speak from his lips; "she was my benefactress; she is attached to me; to see me in her last moments will I feel sure prove a consolation to her."

"And this is all that you desire?" demanded the curé, yielding to these irresistible accents.

"Absolutely all."

"And you have woven no plot to attempt to rescue the condemned?"

"None. I am a Christian, Father; and if there rests in my heart a shadow of deceit; if I entertain any hope of her life, or try in any way to save it, — may God visit me with eternal damnation!"

"No, no!" said the curé; "I can promise nothing," as the innumerable dangers attendant on an act so imprudent returned to his mind.

"Now listen to me, Father!" said the Chevalier, in a voice hoarse with emotion; "I have spoken like a submissive child; I have not uttered one bitter word or uncharitable sentiment; no menace has escaped my lips. Yet now my head whirls; fever burns in my veins; now despair gnaws my heart; now I am armed. Behold! here is my dagger." And the young man drew from his bosom a polished blade which threw a livid reflection on his trembling hand. The curé drew back quickly.

"Fear nothing," said the Chevalier, with a mournful smile; "others, knowing you to be so strict an observer of your word, would have terrified you into an oath. But no! I have supplicated, and I still continue to supplicate, with hands clasped, my forehead in the dust, that I may see her for a single moment. Look! here is your guarantee!" And he drew from his pocket a billet which he presented to Girard, who opened it and read as follows: —

I, René, Chevalier de Maison-Rouge, declare by God and my honor, that I have by threats of death compelled the worthy curé of Saint Landry to convey me to the Conciergerie, notwithstanding his refusal and great repugnance to do so. In proof of which I have signed —

MAISON-ROUGE.

"It is well," said the priest; "but swear to me once again that you will be guilty of no imprudence. It is not sufficient that my life is saved, I am answerable also for yours."

"Think not of that," said the Chevalier. "Then you consent?"

"I must, since you so absolutely insist. You can wait outside, and when she comes to the wicket you will see her."

The Chevalier seized the hand of the old priest and kissed it with all the ardor and respect he would have kissed the crucifix.

"Oh!" murmured the Chevalier, "she shall die at least like a queen, and the hand of the executioner shall never touch her!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE CART.

IMMEDIATELY after having obtained this permission from the curé of Saint Landry, Maison-Rouge withdrew into a cabinet, the door of which, being half opened, he had recognized as the priest's dressing-room. There his long beard and mustachios speedily disappeared under the stroke of the razor; and then only he was fully aware of his frightful pallor and altered appearance. It was terrible to behold. He re-entered perfectly calm, and seemed to have forgotten that notwithstanding the absence of his beard and mustachios, he might still probably be known at the Conciergerie. He followed the abbé, whom, during his momentary absence, two officials were seeking; and with the cool audacity which disarms suspicion, entered the iron gate at this time opening into the court of the Palace. He was, like the Abbé Girard, dressed in black, — sacerdotal habits at that period being abolished.

In the register-office they found about fifty persons assembled; some employed about the prison, some deputies, some commissaries, all waiting in the expectation of seeing the queen pass; there might be some mandataries and many idlers. Maison-Rouge's heart beat so violently when he found himself opposite the wicket that he heard not even the parley that ensued between the abbé, the gendarmes, and the porter. Only a man with a pair of scissors in his hand and a piece of stuff newly cut pushed against Maison-Rouge upon the threshold. He turned round and recognized the executioner.

"What do you want, Citizen?" demanded Sanson.

The Chevalier endeavored to repress the shudder which, in spite of himself, ran through his veins.

"You see, Citizen Sanson," replied the Chevalier, "that I accompany the curé of Saint Landry."

"Oh, very well!" said the executioner, drawing himself on one side, and giving orders to his assistant.

During this time Maison-Rouge had passed into the interior of the office, and from there into the compartment inhabited by the two gendarmes.

These men were overcome by contending emotions. Proud and haughty as she had been to others, she had ever been gentle and condescending to them. They seemed more like her servants than her guards.

In his present position the Chevalier could not obtain a view of the queen, — the screen was closed. It had been opened to give entrance to the curé, but directly closed behind him. When the Chevalier entered, the conversation had already commenced.

"Sir," said the queen, in a clear and firm voice, "since you have sworn allegiance to the Republic — in whose name they have condemned me to death — I have no confidence in you. We do not even worship the same God!"

"Madame," said Girard, struck by this disdainful profession of faith, "a Christian about to die should dismiss all hatred from her heart, and ought not to repulse her God, under whatever form he may be presented to her."

Maison-Rouge advanced a step to open the screen, hoping that when she saw him, and knew what brought him, she would change her opinion in regard to the curé; but the gendarmes detected the movement.

"But," said Maison-Rouge, "I am the acolyte of the curé —"

"Then, since she refuses the curé," said Duchesne, "she does not require you."

"But still, perhaps she may accept me," said he, raising his voice; "it is impossible she would refuse me." But Marie Antoinette was too much engrossed by the sentiment which agitated her either to hear or recognize the Chevalier's voice.

"Go, sir!" continued she; "leave me!" addressing Girard; "since at this time we in France live under the régime of liberty, I claim the right to die according to my own fashion."

Girard offered some resistance.

"Leave me, sir!" said she. "I desire you to leave me."

Girard endeavored to speak.

"I will not hear you; leave me!" said she, with the gesture of Marie Thérèse.

Girard went out.

Maison-Rouge essayed to gain a glimpse of her through the opening in the screen; but the prisoner had turned her back. The executioner's assistant crossed before the curé; he came in holding a cord in his hand. The two gendarmes pushed the Chevalier toward the door; amazed, despairing, and utterly bewildered, before he had been able to utter a cry or make the slightest movement to effect his purpose, he found himself with the curé in the corridor of the turnkey. This corridor brought them again into the register-office, where the news of the queen's refusal had already circulated, and where the Austrian pride of Marie Antoinette was to some the pretext of the coarsest invectives, and to others the subject of secret admiration.

"Go!" said Richard to the abbé, "return home, since she repulses you, and let her die as she likes."

"Well, she is in the right," said Richard's wife, "and I would act in the same way."

"Then you would do wrong, Madame," said the curé.

"Be silent," said the porter, opening his eyes very wide; "what does it concern you? Go, Abbé, go!"

"No," said Girard, "no; I will, notwithstanding all, accompany her; one word, only one word, if she will listen, might bring her back to duty; besides, I am sent by the order of the Commune, and I must discharge my office."

"Send back your sexton, then," brutally observed the adjutant-major, commandant of the armed forces. He had been formerly an actor of French comedy, named Grammont. The eyes of the Chevalier flashed lightning, as he mechanically thrust his hand into his breast, where Girard knew he had the poniard. He checked him with a suppliant look.

"Spare my life," said he, in a low voice; "you see that your cause is ruined; do not destroy yourself with her. I will mention you to her on the route; I swear to you I will tell her you risked your life that you might see her once more on earth."

These words calmed the effervescence of the young man, and the ordinary reaction taking place, he sank into a state of quiescence. This man of heroic mind, of marvellous power, had arrived at the termination of both strength and will, and glided irresolute, or rather exhausted and vanquished, into a state of torpor that might have been imagined to be the precursor of death.

"Yes, I believe," said he, "it should be thus: the cross for Jesus, the scaffold for her, — gods and kings drink deep of the chalice presented to them by men." This thought produced resignation; and now, totally prostrated, he allowed himself to be pushed without offering

any resistance, except an occasional involuntary groan, to the outer gate, passive as Ophelia when, devoted to death, she found herself borne away by the remorseless waves.

At the bottom of the gates and at the doors of the Conciergerie, a crowd was assembled, which unless once seen it was impossible to describe. Impatience ruled every passion; and each passion spoke its own language; and these combined formed an immense and prolonged uproar, as if the whole noise and the entire population of Paris were on this occasion concentrated in the quarter of the Palais de Justice.

In front of this crowd the whole army was encamped, with guns intended to guard the procession, and also to secure the privilege of those who came to witness the last act of the tragedy.

It would have been vain to attempt to pierce this deep rampart, increasing gradually, since the condemnation of the queen was now known not only at Paris, but by the patriots of the faubourgs.

Maison-Rouge, expelled from the Conciergerie, naturally found himself in the first rank among the soldiers, who instantly demanded who he was. He replied, "he was the vicar of the Abbé Girard, but having bound himself by the same oath, he, like the curé, had been dismissed and refused by the queen;" on which the soldiers, in their turn, pushed him into the first row of spectators, where he was again compelled to repeat what he had previously told them.

Then the cry arose, "He has just left!" "He has seen her!" "What did she say?" "What did she do?" "Is she as haughty as usual?" "Is she cast down?" "Does she weep?" The Chevalier replied to all these questions in a feeble but sweet and affable tone; as if this

voice was the last manifestation of life suspended on his lips. His answer was couched in the language of truth and simplicity. It contained an eulogium on the firmness of Marie Antoinette; and that which he recounted with the simplicity and faith of an evangelist cast sorrow and remorse over many hearts.

When he spoke of the little dauphin, and of Madame Royale; of this queen without a throne; of this wife without a husband; this mother bereft of her children; this woman alone and abandoned, without a friend, surrounded by executioners, — more than one face here and there assumed a sad expression, and more than one tear of regret was clandestinely wiped from eyes a moment before animated by hatred.

The Palace clock struck eleven. All murmuring at this moment ceased. One hundred thousand human beings counted these strokes, echoed by the pulsations of their own hearts.

When the last vibration had ceased and died away in the distance, a loud noise was heard within the gates, and at the same time a cart, advancing from the side of the Quai aux Fleurs, broke through the crowd, then the guards, and drew up at the bottom of the steps.

The queen soon appeared on the top of the staircase. Looks expressive of all kinds of passion were bent upon her; the mob stood in breathless expectation. The queen's hair was cut short; the greater portion had turned gray during her captivity, and this shade of silver rendered still more delicate the mother-of-pearl pallor which at this moment lent an almost angelic beauty to this daughter of the Cæsars. She was attired in a white robe, and her hands were fastened behind her back. When she appeared with the Abbé Girard on her right, who notwithstanding all opposition would still accompany her,

and the executioner on her left, both dressed in black, there ran throughout the crowd a murmur, of which God alone, who reads all hearts, could comprehend and sum up the truth.

A man passed between the executioner and Marie Antoinette; it was Grammont. He conducted her to the fatal car. The queen recoiled.

"Mount!" cried Grammont.

This word was distinctly heard by all. Emotion held every breath suspended on the lips of the spectators. A blush suffused the face of the queen, mounting even to the roots of her hair, but it immediately disappeared, and her face resumed its former death-like hue.

"Why a car for me," said she, "when the king had a carriage to convey him to the scaffold?"

The Abbé Girard advanced, and addressed a few words to her in a low tone; doubtless he condemned this last utterance of royal pride. The queen remained silent, but tottered so much that Sanson held out his arms to support her; but she recovered her self-possession before he could touch her. She then descended the staircase, while the assistants placed a foot-board behind the car. The queen entered first; the abbé followed her.

When the car was in motion it caused a great movement in the assemblage; and the soldiers at the same time, ignorant of its cause, united their efforts to push back the crowd, and consequently, a large space was cleared between the people and the vehicle of death, when suddenly a mournful howling was heard. The queen started, and instantly rose, looking around her. She then saw her little dog, which had been lost for two months, and which, unable to follow her into the Conciergerie, regardless of kicks, blows, and thrusts, now rushed toward the car; but almost directly poor Jet, emaciated,

starving, and bruised, disappeared under the horses' feet. The queen followed him with her eyes; she could not speak, for her voice was drowned in the noise; she could not point her finger toward him, for her hands were tied; and had she been able to do either, who would have regarded her? Having closed her eyes for an instant, she soon revived. He was in the arms of a pale young man, who, standing on a cannon, was conspicuous above the crowd, and whose natural stature seemed enlarged from the unspeakable elevation of the sentiments with which he was animated, while he saluted the queen and pointed to heaven. Marie Antoinette looked upward and smiled sweetly.

The Chevalier uttered a groan, as if this smile had broken his heart; and as the fatal car turned toward the Pont-au-Change, he fell back among the crowd, and disappeared.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE SCAFFOLD.

Upon the Place de la Revolution, leaning against a lamp-post, two men were waiting. Of those who followed with the crowd, some were carried to the Place du Palais, others to the Place de la Revolution, while the rest spread, impatient and tumultuous, over the whole road separating the two places. They were waiting until the queen should reach the instrument of punishment, which, defaced by the sun and storm, worn by the hand of the executioner, and, most horrible! blunted by too frequent contact with its victims, reared its head with a sinister pride over the subjacent mass, like a queen ruling her people. The two men, arm-in-arm, and speaking by fits and starts, with pale lips and contracted brows, were Lorin and Maurice. Lost in the crowd, but not in a way calculated to excite suspicion, they continued in a low tone their conversation, which was perhaps not the least interesting one then circulating among the various groups which, like an electric chain, a living sea, was agitated from the Pont-au-Change to the Pont de la Revolution.

The idea we have expressed regarding the scaffold seemed to have struck them both.

"See," said Maurice, "how the hideous monster rears her red arms; might it not be said that she calls us, and grins at us through her wicket as if it was her horrid mouth?"

"I," said Lorin, "must confess I do not belong to the school of poetry which sees everything blood-color. I see

everything *couleur-de-rose*, and even at the foot of that dreadful machine I should sing and hope still. '*Dum spiro spero.*'"

"You hope when they murder women?"

"Maurice," said Lorin, "child of the Revolution, do not deny your mother! Ah! Maurice, remain a stanch and loyal patriot. She who is condemned to die is unlike all other women; she is the evil genius of France."

"Oh, it is not her that I regret; it is not for her I weep!" cried Maurice.

"Yes; I understand, it is Geneviève."

"Ah!" said Maurice, "there is one thought that drives me mad! It is that Geneviève is in the hands of those purveyors to the guillotine, Hébert and Fouquier Tinville, — in the hands of the men who sent here the poor Sophie, and are now sending the proud Marie Antoinette."

"Well!" said Lorin, "it is this very fact that inspires me with hope. When the rage of the people has feasted on two tyrants it will be satiated for some time at least, — like the boa-constrictor, which requires three months to digest what he has devoured. Then the popular rage will swallow no more; and as is said by the prophets of the faubourg, 'the lesser morsels will be no longer palatable.'"

"Lorin! Lorin!" said Maurice, "I am more positive than you, and I say it in a whisper, but am ready to repeat it aloud, — Lorin, I hate the new queen who seems destined to succeed, the Austrian, whom she destroys. It is a sad queen whose purple is daily dyed in blood, and to whom Sanson is prime minister."

"Bah! we shall escape her."

"I do not think so," said Maurice, shaking his head; "to avoid being arrested at your house we have no resource but to live in the street."

"Bah! we can quit Paris; there is nothing to prevent us. We need not complain. My uncle will await us at Saint Omer; money, passport, nothing will be wanting. There exists not the gendarme who shall arrest us; what do you think? We remain in Paris because we choose to do so."

"No; that is not correct, excellent friend, devoted and faithful as you are — You remain because I wish to continue here."

"And you wish to remain to discover Geneviève. Well! nothing is more simple, just, or natural. You think she is in prison; nothing more probable. You wish to keep watch over her, and on that account we cannot quit Paris."

Maurice drew a deep sigh; it was evident his thoughts were wandering.

"Do you remember the death of Louis XVI?" said he. "I can see him yet, pale with pride and emotion. I was then one of the chiefs of this crowd, in whose folds I conceal myself to-day. I was greater at the foot of the scaffold than the king upon it had ever been. What a change, Lorin! and when one thinks that nine short months have sufficed to work this change!"

"Nine months of love, Maurice — Love ruined Troy!"

Maurice sighed; his wandering thoughts now took another direction.

"Poor Maison-Rouge," said he; "this is a sad day for him!"

"Alas!" said Lorin, "shall I tell you what appears to me the most melancholy thing about revolutions?"

"Yes," said Maurice.

"It is that one often has for friends those we should prefer as enemies; and for enemies those we would wish —"

"There is one thing I can hardly believe," interrupted Maurice.

"What?"

"It is that he will not invent some project, though the most hopeless, to save the queen."

"What! one man stronger than a hundred thousand!"

"I said, 'though the most hopeless.' I know that to save Geneviève —" Lorin frowned.

"I again tell you, Maurice," said he, "you are wild! No; even were it possible for you to save Geneviève, you would not become a bad citizen. But enough of this, Maurice; they are listening to us. Look how the heads undulate; see! there is Sanson's valet raising himself from under his basket, and looking in the distance. The Austrian arrives."

In short, as if to accompany this undulation which Lorin had remarked, a shuddering, prolonged and increasing, pervaded the crowd. It was one of those hurricanes which commence with a whistle and terminate with a bellow. Maurice raised himself by the help of the lamp-post, and looked toward the Rue Saint Honoré.

"Yes," said he shuddering; "there she is." And another machine now made its appearance, almost as revolting as the guillotine. It was the fatal car.

On the right and left glittered the arms of the escort; while in front marched Grammont, replying with flashes of his sabre to the shouts and cries of some fanatics. But ever as the cart advanced these cries subsided under the haughty courage of the condemned.

Never had a countenance commanded more respect; never had Marie Antoinette looked more the queen. Her proud courage struck terror into those around her.

Indifferent to the exhortations of the Abbé Girard, who despite of her opposition accompanied her, her face

moved neither to the right nor left; her deep thought was as immutable as her look; even the jolting motion of the cart upon the uneven pavement did not by its violence disturb the rigidity of her demeanor. She might have been taken for a marble statue conveyed in the car, had it not been for her brilliant eyes, and her hair waving in the wind.

A silence equal to that of the desert fell suddenly upon the three hundred thousand spectators of this scene, witnessed by the heavens for the first time by the light of the sun.

In the place where Maurice and Lorin were standing they heard the creaking of the axles and the snorting of the horses.

The car stopped at the foot of the scaffold.

The queen, who doubtless was not thinking of this moment, recalled herself, and understood it all; she threw a haughty glance upon the crowd, and again beheld the pale young man she had previously seen standing on the cannon. He was now mounted on a wall, and repeated the respectful salutation he had before offered her as she left the Conciergerie. He then disappeared. Many persons seeing him, it was soon reported, from his being dressed in black, that a priest was in attendance on Marie Antoinette, to give her absolution ere she ascended the scaffold.

Further than that no one disturbed the Chevalier. In moments of highest concern, certain things are treated with marked deference.

The queen cautiously descended the steps from the car, supported by Sanson, who to the last moment, in accomplishing the task to which he himself appeared to be condemned, treated her with the greatest respect.

As the queen walked toward the steps of the scaffold

some of the horses reared, and several of the foot-guards and soldiers appeared to oscillate and lose their equilibrium; then a shadow was seen to glide under the scaffold; but tranquillity was almost instantaneously re-established, since no one was willing to quit his place at this solemn moment, — no one was willing to lose the minutest detail in the dreadful tragedy about to be accomplished. All eyes were directed toward the condemned.

The queen was already on the platform of the scaffold. The priest still continued to address her; an assistant moved her gently forward, while another removed the scarf from her shoulders.

Marie Antoinette felt the touch of the infamous hand upon her neck, and making a sudden movement trod upon Sanson's foot, who, without her having seen him, was engaged in fixing her to the fatal plank. Sanson drew back his foot.

"Excuse me, sir," said the queen; "I did not do it intentionally."

These were the last words pronounced by the daughter of the Cæsars, the queen of France, the widow of Louis XVI.

As the clock of the Tuileries struck a quarter after twelve, the queen was launched into eternity.

A terrible cry — a cry comprising at once joy, terror, sorrow, triumph, expiation — rose like a storm, drowning a feeble burst of lamentation which at the same moment issued from beneath the scaffold.

The gendarmes heard it notwithstanding, feeble as it was, and advanced some steps in front. The crowd, now less compact, expanded like a river whose dike has been enlarged, threw down the fence, dispersed the guards, and rushed like the returning tide to beat the foot of the scaffold, which was already shaking.

All wished for a nearer view of the remains of that royalty which they believed, root and branch, forever exterminated in France

But the gendarmes had another object in view, — they sought the shadow which had repassed their lines, and glided beneath the scaffold.

Two of them returned leading between them by the collar a pale young man, whose hand held a blood-stained handkerchief, which he pressed to his heart; he was followed by a little spaniel howling piteously.

"Death to the aristocrat! death to the noble!" cried some men of the people; "he has dipped his handkerchief in the Austrian's blood, — to death with him!"

"Good Heavens!" said Maurice to Lorin, "do you recognize him? Do you recognize him?"

"Death to the royalist!" repeated the madmen; "take away the handkerchief he wishes to preserve as a relic! wrest it from him! tear it from him!"

A haughty smile flitted across the young man's lips, he tore open his shirt, bared his breast, and dropped the handkerchief.

"Gentlemen," said he, "this blood is not the queen's, but my own. Let me die in peace;" and a deep gushing wound appeared widely gaping under the left breast. The crowd uttered one cry and retired. The young man sank slowly upon his knees, and gazed upon the scaffold as a martyr looks upon the altar.

"Maison-Rouge!" whispered Lorin to Maurice.

"Adieu!" murmured the young man, bowing his head with an angelic smile, — "adieu! or rather, *au revoir!*" and he expired in the midst of the stupefied guards.

"There is still this expedient, Lorin," said Maurice, "before becoming an unworthy citizen."

The little spaniel turned toward the corpse, terrified and howling lamentably.

"Why, there is Jet," said a man, holding a large club in his hand, — "why, there is Jet; come here, old fellow."

The dog advanced toward him, but was scarcely within arm's length of the man who had called him, when the brutal wretch raised his club and dashed out his brains, at the same time bursting into a hoarse laugh.

"Cowardly wretch!" cried Maurice.

"Silence!" whispered Lorin, "or we are lost. It is Simon."

CHAPTER L.

THE VISIT TO THE DOMICILE.

Lorin and Maurice returned to their home; but the latter, in order not to compromise his friend too openly, usually absented himself during the day, and returned at night.

In the midst of these events, being present at the removal of the prisoners to the Conciergerie, he watched daily for the sight of Geneviève, not having been yet able to discover her place of imprisonment. Lorin, since his visit to Fouquier Tinville, had succeeded in convincing Maurice that on the first ostensible act he was lost, and would then have sacrificed himself without having benefited Geneviève; and Maurice, who would willingly have thrown himself into prison in the hope of being united to his mistress, became prudent from the fear of being separated from her forever.

He went every morning from the Carmelites to Port Libre, from the Madelonnettes to Saint Lazare, from La Force to the Luxembourg; he stationed himself before the prisons to watch the cars as they came out to convey the accused to the Revolutionary Tribunal. Then when he had scanned the victims, he proceeded to the other prisons to prosecute this hopeless search, for he soon became aware that the activity of ten men would prove inadequate to keep watch over the thirty-three prisons which Paris could boast of at this period. He therefore contented himself by going daily to the Tribunal, there to await the appearance of Geneviève.

He was already beginning to despair. Indeed, what hope was there for a person condemned, after arrest? Sometimes the Tribunal, whose sittings commenced at ten o'clock, had condemned twenty or thirty people by four o'clock: those first condemned had six hours to live, but the last, sentenced at a quarter to four, fell at half-past beneath the axe. To resign himself to such a fate for Geneviève, would be to grow weary in his battle against destiny.

Oh, if he had known beforehand of the imprisonment of Geneviève, how Maurice would have baffled the blind, human justice of this epoch; how easily and promptly would he have torn Geneviève from prison! Never were escapes more easy; and it may be said, never were they so rare. All the nobles, once placed in prison, installed themselves there as in a château, and died at leisure. To fly was like evading a duel; the women even blushed at liberty acquired at this price.

But Maurice would not have shown himself so scrupulous. To kill the dogs, to bribe a door-keeper, what more simple? Geneviève was not one of those splendid names calculated to attract general attention. She would not dishonor herself by flying, and besides — when could she be disgraced!

Oh, how bitterly he thought of the gardens of Port Libre, so easy to scale; the chambers of Madelonnettes, so easy of access to the street; the low walls of the Luxembourg, and the dark corridors of the Carmelites, where a resolute man could so easily penetrate by opening a window.

But was Geneviève in one of these prisons?

Then devoured by doubt, and worn out with anxiety, he loaded Dixmer with imprecations; he threatened, and nourished his hatred against this man, whose cowardly

vengeance concealed itself under an apparent devotion to the royal cause.

"I shall find him out too," thought Maurice; "for if he wishes to save the unhappy woman, he will show himself; if he wishes to ruin her, he will insult her. I shall find him out, the scoundrel! and it will be an evil day for him!"

On the morning of the day when the events occurred which we are about to relate, Maurice went out early to take his usual station at the Revolutionary Tribunal, leaving Lorin asleep.

Lorin was suddenly awakened by a loud noise at the door, the voices of women and the butt-ends of guns. He threw around him the startled glance of a surprised man who wished to convince himself that nothing that could compromise him was in view. Four sectionaries, two gendarmes, and a commissary entered at the same moment. This visit was sufficiently significant, and Lorin hastened to dress himself.

"Do you come to arrest me?" said he.

"Yes, Citizen Lorin."

"What for?"

"Because you are suspected."

"Ah, all right!"

The commissary scribbled some words at the bottom of the warrant for arrest.

"Where is your friend?" he inquired.

"What friend?"

"The Citizen Maurice Lindey."

"At home, probably."

"No; he lodges here."

"He! go along! Search, and if you find —"

"Here is the denunciation," interrupted the commissary, "it is plain enough;" offering Lorin a paper in

vile writing and enigmatical orthography. It stated that every morning the Citizen Lindey, suspected and ordered for arrest, was seen going out of the Citizen Lorin's house. The denunciation was signed "Simon."

"Why," said Lorin, "the cobbler will lose his custom if he follows two trades at the same time, — a spy and boot-mender. He is a Cæsar, this Monsieur Simon," and he burst into a fit of laughter.

"The Citizen Maurice, where is he?" asked the commissary. "We summon you to deliver him up."

"When I tell you he is not here!"

The commissary passed into the chamber adjoining, then ascended to the loft where Lorin's official slept, and at last opened a lower apartment, but found no trace of Maurice. But upon the dining-room table a recently written letter attracted the attention of the commissary. It was from Maurice, who had deposited it there on leaving in the morning without awakening his friend.

"I go to the Tribunal," said Maurice; "take breakfast without me. I shall not return till night."

"Citizens," said Lorin, "however anxious I may feel to obey your commands, I cannot follow you undressed. Allow my official to assist me."

"Aristocrat," said a voice, "do you require assistance to put on your breeches?"

"Oh, goodness! yes," said Lorin; "I resemble the Citizen Dagobert, — mind, I did not say king."

"Well, dress," said the commissary; "but make haste!"

The official came down to help his master to dress. However, it was not exactly that Lorin required a *valet-de-chambre;* it was that nothing might escape the notice of the official, and that consequently he might detail everything to Maurice.

"Now, gentlemen, — pardon, citizens. Now, Citizens, I am ready, and will follow you; but permit me, I beg, to carry with me the last volume of 'Lettres à Émilie,' by Monsieur Demoustier, which has just appeared, and I have not read. It will enliven the hours of my captivity."

"Your captivity?" said Simon, sharply, now become municipal in his turn, and entering, followed by four sectionaries, "that will not last long. You figure in the trial of the woman who wanted to assist the Austrian to escape. They try her to-day; and to-morrow, when you have given your testimony, your turn will come."

"Cobbler," said Lorin, "you stitch your soles too quickly."

"Yes; but what a nice stroke from the leather-cutting knife!" replied Simon; "you will see, you will see, my fine grenadier!"

Lorin shrugged his shoulders.

"Well," said he, "let us go; I am waiting for you."

As each one turned round to descend the staircase Lorin bestowed on the municipal Simon so vigorous a kick that he sent him rolling and howling down the entire flight of stairs. The sectionaries could not restrain their laughter. Lorin put his hands in his pockets.

"In the exercise of my functions!" cried Simon, livid with rage.

"Zounds!" said Lorin, "are we not all here in the exercise of our functions?"

He got into the carriage, and was conducted by the commissary to the Palais de Justice.

CHAPTER LI.

LORIN.

If for the second time the reader is willing to follow us to the Revolutionary Tribunal, we shall find Maurice in the same place where we have already seen him, only now infinitely more pale and agitated.

At the moment our scene again opens upon the lugubrious theatre, whither we are led by a tissue of events rather than by our own inclinations, the jury were deliberating; a cause had just been tried. Two of the accused had already, by one of those insolent anticipations by which they ridiculed the judges, attired themselves for the scaffold, and were conversing with their counsel, whose words somewhat resembled those of a physician who despairs of the life of his patient.

The people of the Tribune were this day in a ferocious mood, calculated to excite the severity of the jury placed under the immediate surveillance of the gossips and inhabitants of the suburbs. The juries under these circumstances became more excited and energetic, resembling an actor who redoubles his efforts beneath the eyes of a censorious public.

Since ten in the morning five condemnations had already taken place under the decisions of these harsh and insatiable juries.

The two individuals who now found themselves on the bench of the accused awaited the decisive moment when

"yes" or "no" would return them to life or doom them to death.

The audience, rendered savage by the daily occurrence of these spectacles, now become their favorite pastime, prepared them by exclamations and anticipations for the awful moment.

"There! there! look at the tall one!" said a beldam, who, not having a bonnet, wore a tricolored cockade as large as a hand on her head, — "there! is he not pale? One would swear he was already dead."

The condemned regarded the woman with a contemptuous smile.

"What do you say?" replied her neighbor; "why, he is smiling."

"Yes; on the wrong side of his mouth."

One of the men looked at his watch.

"What is the time?" inquired his companion.

"A quarter to one. This has lasted three quarters of an hour."

"The same as at Domfront, that unfortunate town, where you arrive at noon, and are hung in an hour."

"And the short one! the short one!" cried another person, "will he not be ugly when he sneezes in the sack?"

"Bah! it is done so quickly, you will barely have time to perceive it."

"Then we will demand the head from Sanson; one has a right to see it."

"Look! what a beautiful blue coat he has on. It is rather a pleasant thing that the poor can shorten the rich and well-dressed people."

Indeed, as the executioner had told the queen, the poor inherited the spoils of each victim; they were carried to La Salpêtrière, immediately after the execution, and dis-

tributed among the indigent; and there even the clothes of the unfortunate queen had been conveyed.

Maurice heard this whirlwind of words without paying any attention; for he was at this moment occupied by one engrossing thought, to the exclusion of all else. For several days his heart beat only at certain moments, and by fits and starts, as from time to time hope or fear appeared to suspend all vital action, and these perpetual oscillations to bruise the most tender sensibilities of his soul.

The jury returned to their places; and as had been fully anticipated, the president pronounced the condemnation of the two accused, who were directly removed, walking with a firm step and erect bearing, — for at this epoch every one learned to die boldly.

The solemn and sinister voice of the usher was again heard.

"The public prosecutor against the Citizen Geneviève Dixmer."

A shudder ran through Maurice's frame, and a cold sweat bedewed his brow. The little door by which the accused entered suddenly opened, and Geneviève appeared. She was dressed in white; her ringlets were tastefully arranged, instead of being cut short, hanging in long masses of clustering curls. Doubtless, to the last moment poor Geneviève wished to appear beautiful to her lover, who might perchance be able to see her.

Maurice beheld Geneviève, and felt that all the strength he had collected was inadequate to this occasion, notwithstanding he had expected this blow, since for twelve days he had not omitted a single sitting, and three times already had the name of Geneviève proceeded from the mouth of the public prosecutor, and reached his ear. But there are certain griefs and miseries so profound

that it is quite impossible to sound the depths of the abyss.

All those who witnessed the appearance of this young female, so lovely, so pale and innocent, uttered a simultaneous cry; some of fury, — for at this period there existed a class of people who detested everything bordering on superiority of beauty, riches, or of birth, — others of admiration, and some of pity. Geneviève, doubtless, among all these cries had recognized one cry, amid all these voices had distinguished one voice, for she turned in the direction of Maurice, while the president, looking up at her from time to time, turned over the law papers of the accused.

At the first glance she discovered Maurice, concealed as his features were under the broad brim of his hat; and turning round with a sweet smile, and a gesture still more engaging, she pressed her rosy but trembling hands upon her lips, and depositing her whole soul with her breath, she gave wings to a last kiss, which only one in this vast crowd had the right to appropriate to himself.

A murmur of interest ran through the hall. Geneviève, recalled, turned toward her judges, but stopping suddenly in the midst of this movement, her eyes dilated, and became fixed with an undefinable expression of horror toward one point of the hall.

Maurice in vain raised himself on his toes; he saw nothing, or rather something of more consequence recalled his attention to the scene that was being enacted, — that is to say, to the Tribunal.

Fouquier Tinville had commenced reading the act of accusation. This act stated that Geneviève Dixmer was the wife of an obstinate conspirator suspected of having assisted the ex-Chevalier de Maison-Rouge in his succes-

sive attempts to rescue the queen. She had, besides, been surprised at the feet of the queen, entreating her to exchange garments with her, and offering to die in her stead. This absurd fanaticism, continued the act, merited, no doubt, the admiration of the counter-revolutionists; but in our day every French citizen owes his life to the nation; it is therefore double treason to sacrifice it to the enemies of France.

Geneviève, when asked if she acknowledged that she had knelt before the queen, as stated by the two gendarmes Gilbert and Duchesne, and had entreated her to exchange vestments, simply replied, "Yes."

"Then," said the president, "inform us of your plan, and what hope you entertained of its success."

Geneviève smiled.

"A woman might conceive hopes," said she, "but a woman could not form a plan like this of which I am the victim."

"How came you there, then?"

"Not of my own accord. I was compelled."

"Who compelled you?" demanded the public prosecutor.

"Those who menaced me with death if I did not obey;" and again the agitated look of the young woman was centred on that part of the hall invisible to Maurice.

"But to escape from this death which menaced you, did you not know that you faced that death which must result from your condemnation?"

"When I consented, the knife was at my throat, while the guillotine was only in perspective. I succumbed under present violence."

"Why did you not call for assistance? All good citizens would have defended you."

"Alas! sir," said Geneviève, in a voice at once so sad

and sweet that it caused Maurice's heart to beat tumultuously, "I had no one near me."

Commiseration succeeded to interest, as interest had succeeded to curiosity. Many heads were lowered, some to conceal their tears, many to allow them to flow freely.

Just then Maurice perceived on his left an immovable head and an inflexible countenance. It was Dixmer, standing dark, gloomy, and implacable, never for a moment losing sight of Geneviève or of the Tribunal.

The blood rushed to the young man's temples; rage mounted from his heart to his forehead, filling his whole being with intense desire for vengeance. He darted at Dixmer a look so replete with burning hate, so condensed and powerful, that he, as if attracted by the electric fluid, turned his head toward his enemy. Their glances encountered like two flashes.

"Tell us the names of your instigators," said the president.

"There was only one, sir."

"Who?"

"My husband."

"Do you know where he is?"

"Yes."

"Inform us of his retreat."

"He has been brutal, but I will not be cowardly. It is not for me to tell you his retreat, but for you to find him."

Maurice looked at Dixmer. He never moved. One idea flashed through the young man's brain. It was to denounce him at the same time that he denounced himself; but he quickly suppressed the thought.

"No," said he; "it is not thus that he should die."

"Then you refuse to assist us in our search?" said the president.

"I think, sir, I could not do so without rendering myself as contemptible in the eyes of others as he is in mine."

"Are there any witnesses?" demanded the president.

"There is one," replied the usher.

"Call the witness."

"Maximilien-Jean Lorin!" shouted the usher.

"Lorin!" cried Maurice, "Oh, my God! what has happened?"

This scene took place the same day that Lorin had been arrested, and Maurice was in utter ignorance of the fact.

"Lorin!" murmured Geneviève, looking round with anxious solicitude.

"Why does not the witness answer to the call?" demanded the president.

"Citizen President," said Fouquier Tinville, "upon a recent denunciation the witness was arrested at his own house; he will be brought directly."

Maurice started.

"There is another still more important witness," continued Fouquier; "but we have not yet been able to find him."

Dixmer turned toward Maurice smiling. Perhaps the same idea flitted through the mind of the husband which had before entered that of the lover.

Geneviève, pale and horror-stricken, uttered a low groan.

At this moment Lorin entered, followed by two gendarmes.

After him, and by the same door, Simon appeared, who came to take his seat in the judgment-hall, according to his custom in that locality.

"Your name and surname?" inquired the president.

"Maximilien-Jean Lorin."

"Your condition in life?"

"Independent."

"You will not remain so long," muttered Simon, shaking his fist at him.

"Are you related to the prisoner at the bar?"

"No; but I have the honor of being one of her friends."

"Are you aware that she conspired to carry off the queen?"

"How could I be aware of it?"

"She might have confided in you?"

"In me! a member of the section of the Thermopyles? A likely story!"

"Notwithstanding, you have sometimes been seen with her."

"I might have been seen with her often."

"Did you know that she was an aristocrat?"

"I knew her as the wife of a master-tanner."

"But her husband did not in reality follow the business which he pretended to."

"Of that I am ignorant; her husband was not one of my friends."

"Tell us what you know of this husband."

"Oh, very willingly. He is a villain, who —"

"Monsieur Lorin," said Geneviève, "for pity's sake!"

Lorin continued unmoved.

"He is a villain, who has sacrificed his wife, the poor woman before you, not so much to his political opinions as to his private hatred. Faugh! I look upon the brute as lower and more degraded even than Simon."

Dixmer became livid with rage. Simon wished to speak, but a gesture from the president imposed silence.

"You appear to know the whole history, Citizen Lorin," said Fouquier; "continue your testimony."

"Pardon me, Citizen Fouquier," said Lorin, rising; "I know nothing more." He bowed and reseated himself.

"Citizen Lorin," said Fouquier, "it is your bounden duty to enlighten this Tribunal."

"It has received all the light that I can give it. As to this poor woman, I repeat she has only acted under compulsion. Look at her! does she look like a conspirator? What she has done she was compelled to do. That is all."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"In the name of the law," said Fouquier, "I require that the witness Lorin shall be placed before this Tribunal as an accomplice of this woman."

Maurice groaned, while Geneviève buried her face in her hands.

Simon screamed out in a transport of joy, "Citizen Prosecutor, you are the savior of your country!"

As to Lorin, he leaped over the balustrade without making any reply, and seating himself near to Geneviève, took her hand, and respectfully kissed it, saying, "Good-day, Madame," with a coolness which electrified the assembly; "how do you do?"

Then he took his seat on the bench of the accused.

CHAPTER LII.

SEQUEL TO THE PRECEDING.

ALL this scene had passed before Maurice like a fantastic vision. Leaning upon the handle of his sword, which he had never quitted, he saw his friends precipitated one after another into that gulf which never yields back its victims; and this fatal sight so affected him that he asked himself why he, the companion of these unfortunates, should still cling to the brink of the precipice, and not surrender himself to the giddiness which was dragging him with them.

In leaping the balustrade Lorin saw the dark and sneering features of Dixmer.

When, as we have said, he had placed himself near Geneviève, she whispered in his ear.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said she, "do you know that Maurice is here?"

"Where?"

"Do not look round directly; one look might prove his ruin."

"Calm yourself."

"Behind us, near the door. What a trial for him if we are condemned!"

Lorin regarded the young woman with tender sympathy.

"We shall be," said he. "I conjure you not to doubt it. The deception would be too cruel if you were to permit yourself to hope."

"Oh, my God!" said Geneviève, "pity our poor friend, who will remain alone in the world!"

Lorin then turned round toward Maurice, and Geneviève also could not refrain from glancing at him.

His eyes were fixed upon them both, and one hand was placed upon his heart.

"There is one way to save you," said Lorin.

"Are you sure?" said Geneviève, her eyes sparkling with joy.

"Oh, of that one I am sure," replied Lorin.

"Oh, if you can save me how I will bless you!"

"But this way —" replied the young man.

Geneviève read his hesitation in his eyes.

"You have also seen *him?*" said she.

"Yes; I have seen him. Will you be saved? Let him, in his turn, take his seat in the iron arm-chair, and you will be safe." Dixmer, doubtless from Lorin's look and the expression of his countenance, divined what he uttered. He at first turned pale, but soon recovered his gloomy composure and satanic smile.

"Impossible!" said Geneviève; "I can no longer hate him."

"Say that he knows your generous nature, and defies you."

"No doubt; for he is sure of him, of me, of us all."

"Geneviève! Geneviève! I am less perfect than you. Let me bring him here! Let him perish!"

"No, Lorin, I conjure you. Nothing in common with that man, not even death. It seems to me I should be unfaithful to Maurice were I to die with Dixmer."

"But you will not die."

"How can I live when Maurice is to die?"

"Ah!" said Lorin, "Maurice has reason to love you; you are an angel, and heaven is the angels' home. Poor dear Maurice!"

In the mean time Simon, who could not overhear the

conversation between the accused, devoured their looks instead of their words.

"Citizen Gendarme," said he, "prevent those conspirators from continuing their plots against the Republic, even in the Revolutionary Tribunal."

"You know, Citizen Simon," replied the gendarme, "that here they conspire no more, and if they do so it will not be for long. These citizens are only conversing together; and since the law does not forbid them to do so in the car, why should it be forbidden at the Tribunal?"

This gendarme was Gilbert, who, having recognized the prisoner taken in the queen's chamber, avowed with his ordinary honesty the interest which he could not help according to her courage and devotion.

The president having consulted the court, at the request of Fouquier Tinville commenced his questions.

"Accused Lorin," demanded he, "of what nature was your acquaintance with the citizen Madame Dixmer?"

"Of what nature, Citizen President?

"The pure flame of friendship bound us one to another;
As a sister she loved me, and I her as a brother."

"Citizen Lorin," said Fouquier Tinville, "your poetry is out of season here, and the rhythm is bad."

"Why so?"

"You have one syllable too many."

"Cut it off! cut it off! Citizen Prosecutor! that is your trade, you know."

The imperturbable countenance of Fouquier Tinville assumed a pallid hue at this horrible pleasantry.

"And in what light," demanded the president, "did the Citizen Dixmer view this liaison of a professed Republican with his wife?"

"As to that I can tell you nothing, declaring that I

was never acquainted with the Citizen Dixmer, and never had any desire to be so."

"But," resumed Fouquier Tinville, "you did not tell us that your friend Maurice Lindey formed the link of this pure friendship between yourself and the accused?"

"If I did not say so," replied Lorin, "it was because it seemed to me wrong to speak of it; and I think that you might even follow my example."

"The citizen jurors," said Fouquier Tinville, "will appreciate this singular alliance between an aristocrat and two Republicans, and at the very moment when this aristocrat is convicted of the blackest plot that could be concocted against the nation."

"How should I know anything concerning this plot you speak of?" demanded Lorin, disgusted by the brutal stupidity of the argument.

"You were acquainted with this woman; you were her friend; you term yourself her brother; you speak of her as your sister, — and you were not cognizant of her proceedings? Is it then probable, as you have yourself remarked," continued the president, "that she would have committed alone this act imputed to her?"

"She did not commit it alone," replied Lorin, repeating the technical words used by the president; "since, as she has told you, and I have told you, and now repeat, her husband compelled her."

"Then how is it that you are not acquainted with the husband," said Fouquier Tinville, "since the husband was united with the wife?"

It remained only for Lorin to recount the first disappearance of Dixmer; to mention the amours of Geneviève and his friend; and, in short, to relate the manner in which Dixmer had carried off and concealed his wife in some impenetrable retreat, — it needed only this to ex-

culpate himself from all connivance, and to elucidate the whole mystery. But for this he must betray the secrets of his two friends; to do this would be to put Geneviève to shame before five hundred people. Lorin shook his head, as if saying "no" to himself.

"Well?" demanded the president, "what do you reply to the public prosecutor?"

"That his logic is crushing," said Lorin; "and I am now convinced of one thing which I never even suspected before."

"What is that?"

"That I am, as it appears, one of the most frightful conspirators that has ever been seen."

This declaration elicited a roar of laughter; even the jury could not refrain, so ludicrous was the young man's manner in enunciating these words.

Fouquier felt the ridicule; and since with his usual indefatigable perseverance he had managed to know all the secrets of the accused as well as they did themselves, he could not help feeling toward Lorin a sentiment of pity mingled with admiration.

"Come, Citizen Lorin," said he, "speak in your own defence. The Tribunal will lend a willing ear. We are acquainted with your previous conduct, and it has always been that of a stanch Republican."

Simon essayed to speak; but the president made him a signal to remain silent.

"Speak, Citizen Lorin!" said he; "we are all attention;" but Lorin only shook his head.

"This silence is confession," said the president.

"Not so," said Lorin; "silence is silence, that is all."

"Once more," said Fouquier Tinville; "will you speak?"

Lorin turned toward the audience to encounter the

eyes of Maurice, and to learn from them what course he would wish him to pursue; but Maurice made no sign to him to speak, and Lorin maintained his former silence. This was self-condemnation.

All that followed was quickly executed. Fouquier summed up his accusation; the president reviewed the evidence; the jury retired, and unanimously returned a verdict of "guilty" against Lorin and Geneviève.

The president condemned them both to suffer the penalty of death.

Two o'clock sounded from the great clock of the Palace.

The president had just time sufficient to pronounce the condemnation as the clock struck.

Maurice heard the two with a sense of confusion and utter bewilderment.

When the vibration had ceased, his strength was utterly exhausted. The gendarmes led away Geneviève and Lorin, who had offered her his arm.

Both saluted Maurice, but in different ways. Lorin smiled; but Geneviève, pale and fainting, wafted him a last kiss upon her fingers, bathed in tears.

She had till the last moment clung to the hope of life, and now wept, not the loss of her life, but of her love, which must perish with her.

Maurice, half mad, had not replied to his friends' farewell. He rose, pale and bewildered, from the bench on which he had fallen. His friends had disappeared.

He felt only one sentiment alive within him. It was the hatred which was gnawing at his heart.

He threw a last look around him and recognized Dixmer, who was leaving with the rest of the spectators, and at that moment stooped to pass under the arched door of the passage.

With the rapidity of a steel spring when it unbends, Maurice sprang from bench to bench, and reached the door.

Dixmer had already passed through, and descended into the darkened corridor. Maurice followed behind him. At the moment Dixmer planted his foot on the pavement of the grand hall, Maurice tapped him on the shoulder.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE DUEL.

At this epoch it was always a serious thing to feel a touch upon the shoulder. Dixmer turned, and recognized Maurice.

"Ah! good-day, Citizen Republican," said Dixmer, without evincing any other emotion than an almost imperceptible start, which he immediately repressed.

"Good-day, Citizen Coward," replied Maurice. "You were waiting for me, were you not?"

"That is to say," replied Dixmer, "that, on the contrary, I had ceased to expect you."

"Why was that?"

"Because I expected you sooner."

"I still arrive too soon for you, assassin!" added Maurice, with a murmured growl rather than a voice, since it resembled the grumbling of a storm gathered in his heart, his looks being like the lightning's flashes.

"You fling fire from your eyes, Citizen," replied Dixmer. "We shall be recognized, and followed."

"Yes; and you fear to be arrested, do you not? You dread lest you might be conducted to the scaffold where you send others. Let them arrest us, so much the better; for it seems to me that the life of one guilty wretch was due to national justice."

"As there is one name the less on the list of people of honor. Is it not so — since yours has disappeared?"

"Well, we shall speak about all that again, I hope; but, in the mean time, you are avenged — miserably avenged — upon a woman. Why, since you have waited for me elsewhere, did you not do so at my house, when you stole away Geneviève?"

"You were the first thief, I believe."

"Neither by your wit nor your words have I ever known you, sir. I know you better by your actions, — witness the day when you wanted to murder me. That day your true nature spoke."

"And I have more than once regretted that I did not listen to it," answered Dixmer, coolly.

"Well," said Maurice, touching his sword, "I offer you your revenge."

"To-morrow, if you like, but not to-day."

"And why to-morrow?"

"Or this evening."

"Why not directly?"

"Because I am engaged till five o'clock."

"Another hideous project!" said Maurice; "another ambush!"

"Really, Monsieur Maurice, you are rather ungrateful!" replied Dixmer. "In truth you are. Here, for six months, I have allowed you to make love to my wife; for six months have permitted your meetings, and have not noticed your smiles. Never man, you must confess, has evinced so little of the tiger in his composition as myself."

"That is to say, you thought I might be useful, and you could mould me to your purpose."

"Without doubt," returned Dixmer, calmly, who ruled his own passion as much as Maurice was carried away by his. "Without doubt; while you were betraying your Republic, and were selling it to me for a look from my

wife; while you were dishonoring yourselves, — you by your treason, she by her adulterous love, — I remained the sage and hero. I waited, and I triumphed."

"Horrible!" said Maurice.

"Is it not? Yes; you appreciate your own conduct fully, sir. It is horrible! — it is infamous!"

"You deceive yourself, sir; the conduct I term horrible and infamous is that of the man to whom the honor of a woman had been confided, who had sworn to guard this honor pure and unsullied, and who, instead of keeping his word and oath, employed her beauty as a shameful bait to ensnare a feeble heart. It was your sacred duty beyond all others to protect this woman, and instead of protecting her, you have sold her."

"What I had to do, sir," replied Dixmer, "I will tell you. I had to save my friend who united with me in this sacred cause. Even as I have sacrificed my property to this cause, so have I sacrificed my honor. As for me, I have completely forgotten, completely effaced myself. Now my friend is no more; he has died by the poniard. My queen is no more; she has died ignominiously on the scaffold. Now! now! I can think of revenge."

"Say of assassination."

"One cannot assassinate an adulteress; when she is killed, she is but punished for her crime."

"This sin you imposed upon her, therefore it was rendered lawful."

"You think so?" said Dixmer, with a sardonic smile. "Judge from her remorse if she believes she has acted lawfully."

"Those who punish strike openly. You, you do not punish; for while striking you fly, and while casting her head to the guillotine you conceal yourself."

"I fly! I hide myself! when did you see that, poor

idiot that you are?" demanded Dixmer. "Is it concealing myself to be present at her condemnation? Is it flying when I go into the Salle des Morts to fling her my last adieu?"

"You are going to see her again, — to fling her a last adieu?" cried Maurice.

"Decidedly you are not expert at revenge, Citizen," replied Dixmer, shrugging his shoulders. "Thus, in my situation you would abandon these events to their strength alone, these circumstances to their natural course; thus, for example, the adulterous woman having merited death, the moment she has received the punishment of death I am quits with her, or rather she is quits with me. No, Citizen Maurice; I know better than that. I have discovered a way to return this woman all the evil she has done me. She loves you, and will die far from you; she detests me, and I will be near her. There!" said he, drawing a pocket-book from his pocket, "do you see this? It contains a card signed by the registrar of the Palace. With this card I can gain near access to the condemned. I will penetrate to Geneviève; I will call her 'Adulteress!' I shall see her curls fall under the hand of the vile executioner, and as they are severed she shall still hear my voice hissing, 'Adulteress!' I will even accompany her to the fatal car, and as she plants her foot upon the scaffold, the last sound that greets her ear shall be the word 'Adulteress!'"

"Take care! she will not have strength to support so much cowardice; she will denounce you."

"No," cried Dixmer, "she hates me too much for that. If she had wished to denounce me she would have done so when her friend urged her so softly. If she did not denounce me to save her life, she will not do so that I may die with her; for she well knows in that case I should

retard her execution for a day. She well knows that if she denounces me, I shall go with her not only to the lowest step of the Palace, but even to the scaffold; she well knows that instead of leaving her at the foot of the ladder, I shall ascend into the car with her, and that, seated by her side, the whole length of the road I shall constantly repeat the one dreadful word 'Adulteress;' that even on the scaffold I shall continue to do so till the moment she sinks into eternity and the accusation falls with her."

Dixmer was frightful in this state of anger and hatred. He seized Maurice by the hand and shook it with a force unknown to the young man, upon whom this had acted with a contrary effect; as Dixmer became excited, Maurice grew calm.

"Listen!" said the young man, "in your vengeance you have omitted one thing."

"What?"

"That you will be able to tell her, 'On leaving the Tribunal, I have seen your lover, and have killed him.'"

"On the contrary, I prefer telling her that you live, and will suffer for the remainder of your days from the spectacle of her death."

"You shall kill me, notwithstanding," said Maurice; "or," added he, turning round and finding himself nearly master of his position, "I will kill you!"

And pale with emotion, and excited by fury, finding his strength redoubled from the restraint he had imposed upon his feelings while listening to the unfolding of Dixmer's horrible project, he seized him by the throat and drew him backward toward a stair which led to the high bank of the river. At the contact with his hand, Dixmer, in his turn, felt hatred rush over him like hot lava.

"You need not compel me by force, I will follow."

"Come, then. You are armed."

"I will follow you."

"No, go first; but I give you notice, at the least sign or gesture I will cleave your skull with my sword."

"You know I am a stranger to fear," said Dixmer, with a smile rendered frightful from his pallor.

"Fear of my sword," said Maurice, "no; but fear of losing your revenge; and now that we are face to face you may bid it adieu."

They had, indeed, arrived at the water's brink; and had any one seen and followed them, he could not have arrived in time to prevent the duel from taking place, since an equal desire for vengeance now animated both. While speaking, they had descended the short stair leading to the Palace square, and gained the nearly deserted quay; for as the condemnations continued, seeing it was two o'clock at least, the crowd still filled the judgment-hall, the corridors, and the courts.

They appeared equally to thirst for each other's blood.

They plunged under one of those arches leading from the cells of the Conciergerie to the river; at this time drained, but then foul and saturated with blood, serving more than once as a means of conveyance for the corpses, which floated far away from the dungeons, leaving no trace behind.

Maurice placed himself between Dixmer and the water.

"I decidedly think I shall kill you, Maurice," said Dixmer, "you tremble so much."

"And I, Dixmer," said Maurice, taking his sword in hand and carefully enclosing him so as to cut off all retreat, — "I, on the contrary, believe that I shall kill you; and having killed you, shall remove from your pocket-

book the pass signed by the registrar of the Palace. Nay, you need not button your coat; my sword shall open it, I will be bound, were it even formed of brass like the cuirasses of old."

"And this paper," roared Dixmer, "you will take it, will you?"

"Yes," said Maurice; "I will use the pass. With this talisman I will secure an entrance to Geneviève. I will sit next her in the car; I will murmur in her ear while her life remains, 'I love thee;' and when the last stroke has fallen, I will murmur still, 'I loved thee.'"

Dixmer made a movement with his left hand to take the pass from his pocket, and together with the pocket-book to cast it into the river, when rapid as a thunder-bolt, and trenchant as a hatchet, Maurice's sword fell upon his hand, nearly severing it from the wrist. The wounded man uttered a cry, and shaking his mutilated limb, flung himself furiously on his antagonist.

Then in the obscurity of this gloomy vault the deadly combat commenced. The two men, enclosed in a space so narrow that the sword strokes could not diverge from the line of the body, slid upon the humid pavement, and with difficulty supported themselves by the sides of the arch; the impatience of the combatants caused them to redouble their blows. Dixmer, who, as he felt his life-blood flow, was aware that his strength diminished, charged Maurice so furiously that the latter was compelled to step backward; in so doing he lost his footing, and his enemy's sword grazed his breast. But by a movement rapid as thought, kneeling as he was, he raised the blade with his left arm and turned the point toward Dixmer, who, maddened with rage, darted forward, and impelled by the inclining ground, fell on the sword, the point of which entered his body. He uttered a fearful

imprecation, and the two bodies rolled to the outside of the arch.

One only rose. It was Maurice, — Maurice covered with blood, but with the blood of his enemy.

He drew his sword toward him, and as he drew it the remnant of life which still agitated with a nervous shuddering the limbs of Dixmer, ceased.

Then, when assured that he was dead, Maurice stooped toward the corpse, opened the dead man's coat, withdrew the pass, and hurried away directly.

But on looking at himself he felt assured that in his present state he should not proceed far without being arrested. He was literally covered with blood.

He approached the water's edge, and bending toward the river, washed his hands and coat. He then rapidly ascended the steps, casting a last look toward the arch, from whence a red, smoking stream issued, advancing slowly toward the river.

On approaching the Palace he opened the pocket-book, and there found the pass signed by the registrar.

"Thanks, just God!" murmured he, and he rapidly mounted the steps leading to the Salle des Morts.

It struck three.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE SALLE DES MORTS.

It must be remembered that the registrar of the Palace had opened his jailer's book to Dixmer, and had also entered into an arrangement with him which the presence of Geneviève rendered peculiarly agreeable. This man, it may be imagined, was terribly alarmed when the news of Dixmer's plot was communicated to him. He would doubtless be considered as nothing less than an accomplice of Dixmer, his false colleague, and would therefore be condemned to die with the wretched Geneviève. Fouquier Tinville had summoned him to appear before him.

It may easily be understood that this poor man would have some trouble to prove himself innocent in the eyes of the public prosecutor; he had, however, succeeded in so doing, thanks to Geneviève, whose declaration had clearly established his utter ignorance of the plot of her husband. He had succeeded, thanks to Dixmer's flight, and above all from the interest excited in Fouquier Tinville, who wished to preserve his administration free from all stain.

"Citizen," said he, flinging himself upon his knees before Fouquier, "pardon me, for I have been deceived."

"Citizen," replied the public prosecutor, "an employee of the nation who in these days permits himself to be deceived deserves to be guillotined."

"I may have been a blockhead, Citizen," replied the registrar, who was longing to call Fouquier Tinville "Monseigneur."

"Blockhead or not," replied the rigid prosecutor, "no one should allow his love for the Republic to sleep. The spies of the Capitol were only geese, yet they were sufficiently awake to save Rome."

The registrar looked upon this argument as totally unanswerable; he groaned, and remained waiting.

"I pardon you," said Fouquier Tinville. "I will go so far as to defend you, since I do not wish one of my employees to be even suspected; but you will bear in mind that at the least word that reaches my ears, the least revival of this affair, you shall go to the scaffold."

It is scarcely necessary to say with what anxiety this man sought the newspapers, always in haste to tell what they know, and sometimes more than they can certify, even should they cause the heads of ten men to fall by the guillotine.

He sought Dixmer everywhere, to recommend him to keep his own counsel; but Dixmer had very naturally changed his apartments, and was nowhere to be found.

Geneviève had been placed on the bench of the accused, and had already, in her testimony, declared that neither herself nor husband had any accomplices; and he thanked the poor woman with his eyes as she passed before him on her way to the Tribunal.

When she had passed, and he was returning to the office to fetch some law papers for Fouquier Tinville, he all at once saw Dixmer approaching him with a calm and quiet step.

This vision petrified him.

"Oh!" said he, as if he had seen a spectre.

"Do you not know me?" said the new-comer.

"Of course, I do. You are the Citizen Durand, or rather the Citizen Dixmer."

"Just so."

"But are you a dead man, Citizen?"

"Not yet, as you see."

"I mean to say that they will arrest you."

"Who wants to arrest me? — no one knows me."

"But I know you; and it only needs one word from me to send you to the guillotine."

"And two words from me to send you there with me."

"It is shameful of you to say that."

"No; it is logic."

"But what is your business? Make haste, — speak quickly; for the less time we are together the less danger we incur from each other."

"My wife is about to be condemned, is it not so?"

"I greatly fear for her, poor woman!"

"Well, I wish to see her once more, to bid her adieu."

"Where?"

"In the Salle des Morts."

"Would you dare to enter there?"

"Why not?"

"Oh!" said the registrar, like a man whose hair stood on end at the very thought.

"There must be some way," continued Dixmer.

"To enter the Salle des Morts? Without doubt there is."

"How?"

"To procure a pass."

"And where are these passes to be procured?"

The registrar turned frightfully pale, and stammered, "Where are they to be procured, you ask?"

"I inquire where are they to be procured?" replied Dixmer; "the question is plain enough, I think."

"They are procured — here."

"Ah! true; and who usually signs them?"

"The registrar."

"But you are the registrar?"

"Certainly I am."

"Oh, how lucky that is!" said Dixmer, seating himself, "you will sign me a pass."

The registrar made one bound.

"Do you ask for my head, Citizen?" said he.

"No; I ask you for a pass, that is all."

"I shall have you arrested, unhappy man!" said he, summoning all his energy.

"Do," said Dixmer; "and the next moment I will denounce you as an accomplice, and instead of leaving me to go alone to the famous hall, you shall accompany me."

The registrar turned ghastly pale.

"Villain!" said he.

"There is no villany in that," said Dixmer; "I wish to speak to my wife, and all I require of you is a pass to enable me to do so."

"Is it then so imperative that you should speak to her?"

"It seems so, since I risk my head to do so."

This appeared very plausible to the registrar, and Dixmer immediately perceived that he was relenting.

"Rest assured," said he, "no one shall know anything. The devil! why surely sometimes a similar case to mine must present itself to your notice!"

"Very rarely; it is by no means a common occurrence. But, let me see; let us arrange it in another way."

"If it is possible, I should ask nothing better."

"Nothing is more possible. Enter by the door of the condemned; there a card is not required. Then, when

you have spoken to your wife, call me, and I will let you out."

"Not a bad idea," said Dixmer; "but unfortunately there is a story current in the city."

"What story?"

"The history of a poor hunchback who mistook the door, thinking to enter the archives, but instead of so doing found himself in the hall of which we are now speaking. Only since he had entered by the door of the condemned instead of the large door, as he had no pass to prove his identity, once there he was not permitted to go out. They strenuously maintained that since he entered the door with the other condemned, he was condemned likewise. In vain he protested, swore, appealed; no one believed him, no one came to his assistance, no one helped him to get out. So that, notwithstanding his protestations, his oaths, and supplications, the executioner first cut off his hair, and afterward his head. Is this anecdote true, Citizen Registrar? You ought to know better than any one else."

"Alas! yes; it is too true," said the registrar, trembling.

"You must see then that with such a precedent I should be a fool to enter this cut-throat place without a pass."

"But I shall be there, I tell you."

"But if you should happen to be called away; if you should be otherwise engaged; if you should forget?"

Dixmer laid particular stress on these last words, "if you should forget."

"But since I promise you —"

"No; besides it would compromise you. They would see you speaking to me; and, in short, it does not suit me. I therefore prefer a pass."

"Impossible!"

"Then, dear sir, I will speak; and we shall both take a ride together to the Place de la Revolution."

The registrar, bewildered, stupefied, half-dead with terror, signed a pass for a "citizen."

Dixmer rose and went out precipitately to take his station in the judgment-hall, where we have already seen him. The rest is known to us.

At the same moment the registrar, to avoid all accusation of connivance, went and seated himself near Fouquier Tinville, leaving the management of the office to his head clerk.

At ten minutes to three, Maurice, furnished with the pass, crossing a hedge of turnkeys and gendarmes, arrived without interruption at the fatal door.

When we say fatal, we exaggerate, for there were two doors, — the principal one by which those possessing passes entered and returned; and the door of the condemned, by which no one departed except to the scaffold.

The place that Maurice entered was divided into two compartments. One of these was set apart for those employed in registering the name of the arrivals; the other, furnished only with wooden benches, was appropriated for the reception of those who were arrested and those who were condemned, which amounted to pretty nearly the same thing.

The hall was very dark, lighted only from the panes of the partition which divided it from the register-office.

A female dressed in white, in a half-fainting attitude, lay in a corner, supported against the wall.

A man was standing in front of her, from time to time shaking his head. His arms were crossed upon his breast, and he hesitated to speak to her, as if fearful of restoring her to the consciousness she appeared to have lost.

Around these two individuals several condemned persons were scattered promiscuously, — some giving vent to their feelings in sobs and groans, others joining in patriotic songs, while the remainder walked rapidly up and down, as if to chase away the thoughts which devoured them.

This was indeed the antechamber of death, and the furniture rendered it worthy of the name. Here were seen half-opened coffins filled with straw, seeming as if to invite the living to their beds of repose, the receptacles provided for the ashes of the dead.

There was a large closet opposite the partition. A prisoner, prompted by curiosity, opened it, but recoiled horror-struck. It contained the blood-stained garments of those executed on the preceding evening; long tresses of hair hanging here and there, the executioner's perquisites, who sold them to the relatives when not enjoined by the authorities to burn these precious relics.

Maurice, trembling with emotion, had hardly opened the door, when the whole tableau at once presented itself to his view. He advanced three steps into the hall, and fell at Geneviève's feet. The unfortunate woman uttered a cry, which Maurice stifled on her lips.

Lorin, weeping, pressed his friend in his arms; these were the first tears he had shed.

Strange that all these unhappy individuals, assembled to die together, scarcely looked at the touching tableau presented to their view by their unfortunate fellow-creatures! Every one suffered too much himself to take part in the miseries of others.

The three friends remained for a moment united in a silent embrace, happy, almost joyous. Lorin was the first of the ill-fated group to disengage himself.

"Are you, then, condemned also?" said he to Maurice.

"Yes," replied he.

"Oh, happiness!" murmured Geneviève.

But the joy of those who have only one hour to live cannot last even as long as their lives. Maurice, having contemplated Geneviève with looks of ardent and profound affection, and having thanked her for the expression, at once so egotistical and so tender, which had just escaped her, turned toward Lorin.

"Now," said he, taking Geneviève's hands within his own, "let us talk together."

"Yes," said Lorin; "let us converse while the time remains to us. It is only right so to do. What do you wish to say to me, Maurice?"

"You have been arrested for my sake, condemned on account of her. As for Geneviève and I, we are paying our debt; it is not fair, at the same time, that you should be made to pay also."

"I do not understand you."

"Lorin, you are free."

"I free? You are mad!" said Lorin.

"No, I am not mad; I repeat that you are free. See, here is a pass. They will inquire who you are; you are employed at the registrar-office of the Carmelites, and are going to speak to the registrar of the Palace; you have, from motives of curiosity, requested a pass from him to see the condemned; you have seen them, and are now leaving, perfectly satisfied with your visit."

"This is a joke, is it not?"

"No, indeed, my friend; here is the pass, take advantage of it. You are not a lover, like myself; you do not need to die that you may be enabled to pass a few more minutes in the society of the well-beloved of your heart, and not to lose a second of eternity with her."

"But, Maurice," replied Lorin, "if one might be able

to get out from here — a circumstance I swear to you I could not have believed possible — why do you not first save the lady? As to yourself, we will consider afterward about that."

"Impossible!" said Maurice, with a frightful oppression at his heart, "this card is for a man, not for a lady; besides, Geneviève would not depart, and leave me here, to live herself, while knowing that I remained to die."

"If she would not, then why should I? Do you imagine I possess less courage than a woman?"

"No, dear friend; I know and acknowledge your bravery, but nothing can excuse your obstinacy in this case. Then profit by this moment, and allow us the supreme felicity of knowing and feeling that you are free and happy."

"Happy!" exclaimed Lorin; "you are facetious, surely? Happy without you, eh? What the devil am I to do in this world without you; in Paris, without my usual avocations? Never to see you again, never to weary you more with my doggerel rhymes, — ah, good faith, no!"

"Lorin, my friend —"

"Exactly; it is because I am your friend that I persist in my opinion. With the prospect of recovering you both, were I a prisoner as I now am, I would tear down the walls; but to save myself, and go out from here alone into the streets, my head bowed down with a feeling resembling remorse, and a continual cry in my ears: 'Maurice! — Geneviève!' To pass into certain quarters and before certain houses where I have seen your persons, but shall now only recognize your shadows; to come at last to such an extremity of despair as to execrate this dear Paris that I have loved so well; ah, by my faith,

no! And I find there was good reason for proscribing kings, were it only on account of King Dagobert."

"And what relation has King Dagobert with what concerns us?"

"What? Did not this frightful tyrant say to the great Éloi, 'The best company must part?' Ah, well! I am a Republican, and I say that nothing should make us quit good company, not even the guillotine; I feel very comfortable here, and here I will remain."

"My poor friend! my poor friend!" said Maurice.

Geneviève said nothing, but looked at them with eyes bathed in tears.

"You regret to lose your life, then?" said Lorin.

"Yes, on her account."

"I am not in the least sorry at losing mine, not even on account of the Goddess Reason, who, I had forgotten to tell you, has latterly behaved most shamefully to me; who will not take the trouble even to console herself, like the other Arthémise of old. I shall go to my death perfectly cool and rather facetious. I will amuse all the beggarly wretches who follow the car. I will repeat a pretty quatrain to Monsieur Sanson, and wish the company good-night, — that is to say — wait! —" Lorin interrupted himself. "Ah! to be sure," said he, "I will go out. I well knew that I loved no one, but I forgot that I hated some one. The time, Maurice, the time?"

"Half-past three."

"I have time, Heaven! there is time."

"Certainly," cried Maurice; "there are nine more accused persons still to be tried, this will not terminate before five o'clock; we have therefore nearly two hours' respite."

"That is all that I require; give me your pass, and lend me twenty sous."

"*Mon Dieu!* what are you going to do?" murmured Geneviève. Maurice pressed his hand. The all-important thing for him was that Lorin was going out.

"I have my own plan," said Lorin.

Maurice drew his purse from his pocket, and placed it in his friend's hand.

"Now, the pass, for the love of God! — I ought to say for the love of the Supreme Being."

Maurice gave him the pass.

Lorin kissed Geneviève's hand, and availing himself of the moment when a fresh batch of the condemned were ushered in, he leaped the benches, and presented himself before the principal entrance.

"Eh!" said the gendarme, "here is one, it appears to me, trying to escape."

Lorin drew himself up and presented his pass.

"Hold, Citizen Gendarme," said he, "and learn to know people better."

The gendarme recognized the signature of the registrar, but belonging to a class of functionaries rather wanting in confidence, and as at this moment the registrar himself came down from the Tribunal with a nervous shudder, which had not left him since he had so imprudently hazarded his signature, —

"Citizen Registrar," said he, "here is a pass bearing your signature, with which this person wishes to leave the Salle des Morts, is it all right?"

The registrar turned pale with fright, and feeling convinced that if he turned his eyes in that direction it would only be to encounter the terrible look of Dixmer, hastily seized the card and replied, —

"Yes, yes; it is my signature."

"Then," cried Lorin, "if it is your signature, return it to me."

"No;" said the registrar, tearing it into a thousand pieces; "these cards can be available only once."

Lorin remained for a moment irresolute.

"So much the worse," said he; "but above all things it is necessary I should kill him;" and he passed through the office.

Maurice had followed Lorin with an emotion easy to comprehend. When he had disappeared, Maurice returned, saying with an exultation nearly amounting to joy, "He is saved! Geneviève; the card is destroyed, therefore he cannot enter. Besides, even if he were able to gain admission, the sitting of the Tribunal will have terminated. At five o'clock, he will return; but we shall have ceased to live."

Geneviève shuddered, and breathed a deep sigh.

"Oh, press me in your arms," said she, "and let us separate no more! Why is it not possible, oh, my God! for one blow to annihilate us both, that together we might breathe our last sigh?"

Then retiring into the depth of the gloomy hall, Geneviève placed herself near Maurice, and twined her arms round his neck. Thus they remained, rendered by the strength of their love insensible to the surrounding scene, almost to the approach of death itself.

Half an hour passed thus.

CHAPTER LV.

WHY LORIN WENT OUT.

SUDDENLY a loud noise was heard; the gendarmes entered by the lower door, behind them appearing Sanson and his assistants, the latter carrying rolls of cord.

"Oh, my love!" said Geneviève, "the fatal moment has arrived, and I feel that my senses are leaving me!"

"There you are wrong," said the cheering voice of Lorin.

"That you are wrong is plain, you see;
For what is death but to be free?"

"Lorin!" cried Maurice, in despair.

"They are not good, are they? I have adopted your opinion since yesterday; I can only make contemptible —"

"Ah! that is the question. You are returned, unhappy man, you are returned!"

"I considered that was our agreement But listen, as what I have to say to you will also interest the lady."

"My God! my God!"

"Allow me to speak, or I shall not have time to tell you all. I wished to go out that I might purchase a knife in the Rue de la Baullerie."

"What did you want with a knife?"

"I wished to despatch this nice Monsieur Dixmer."

Geneviève shuddered.

"Ah!" said Maurice, "I comprehend."

"I purchased it. Listen attentively to what I said to myself, and you will understand your friend has a mind

for logic; indeed, I begin to think I should have been a mathematician instead of a poet. Unfortunately, it is now too late. This is the way I reasoned: Monsieur Dixmer has compromised his wife; Monsieur Dixmer was present at her trial; and Monsieur Dixmer will not deprive himself of the pleasure of seeing her pass in the fatal car; especially as we accompany her. I will then look out for him among the foremost of the spectators. I will glide near him, and say, 'Good-day, Monsieur Dixmer;' and I will plunge my knife into his heart."

"Lorin!" cried Geneviève.

"Compose yourself, dear friend; Providence had arranged all. Picture to yourselves the spectators, instead of remaining stationary in front of the Palace, according to their usual custom, made a half-turn to the right, and lined the quay. 'Oh!' said I to myself, 'it is doubtless a dog drowned. Why should not Dixmer be there? Even a dog drowning will serve to pass away the time.' I approached the parapet, and beheld all along the high bank a crowd of people who, throwing their arms aloft into the air, and uttering loud exclamations, stooped down to gaze at something on the ground. I joined them, and also looked down. There was something! — Guess what it was."

"Dixmer!" said Maurice, in a gloomy tone.

"Yes. How could you guess that? Yes; it was Dixmer, killed by a ghastly wound. The unfortunate wretch had no doubt committed suicide in expiation of his guilt."

"Ah," said Maurice, with a sad smile, "do you think so?"

Geneviève let her head droop between her two hands. She was too feeble to support these successive emotions.

"Yes; I thought so, from his blood-stained sword

being found near him; unless, indeed — he had met some one."

Maurice, without reply, availing himself of the moment when Geneviève, overpowered by emotion, did not observe him, opened his coat and displayed to Lorin his waistcoat and shirt stained with blood.

"Ah! that alters the case," said Lorin, as he held out his hand to Maurice. "Now," said he, whispering in his ear, "they have not searched me, seeing that I entered in Sanson's suite. I have still the knife, if the guillotine is too revolting to your feelings."

Maurice seized the weapon with a joyful expression.

"No," said he, "she would suffer too much," and he returned the knife to Lorin.

"You are right," said Lorin; "long live Monsieur Guillotine! Why, what is it, after all? A fillip on the neck, according to Danton. And what signifies a fillip?"

And he flung his knife in the midst of a group of the condemned, one of whom immediately seized and buried it in his breast. He was dead in an instant.

At the same moment Geneviève awoke, and uttered a piercing cry. She felt the pressure of the executioner's hand upon her shoulder.

CHAPTER LVI.

LONG LIVE SIMON !

At the sound of this cry Maurice understood that the struggle was about to commence. The influence of love may be able to exalt the soul to heroism, — it may, against natural instinct, impel a human being to desire death, but it had not in this instance extinguished the repugnance to pain. It was evident that Geneviève resigned herself the more patiently to death since Maurice was to die with her; but resignation does not exclude suffering, and to quit this world is not only to fall into the abyss termed unknown, but also to suffer in the descent.

Maurice, at a glance, embraced the entire scene, and thought of what would follow.

In the centre of the hall lay the suicide, from whose breast the gendarme had just torn the weapon of destruction, fearing, probably, it might be used by some of the others.

Around him were several individuals mute with despair and scarcely heeding him, inscribing in their pocket-books some disconnected words, or pressing one another's hands; some repeating, without any intermission, a cherished name, or bathing with tears a portrait, a ring, or tress of hair; some venting imprecations against tyranny, a state of affairs cursed by all, ay sometimes even by the tyrants themselves. In the midst of these unfortunates, Sanson, oppressed less from his fifty years than his melancholy office, — Sanson, as mild, and as much their con-

soler as his terrible vocation permitted him to be, to this one offered advice, to that one some sad consolation or encouragement, finding some Christian responses to their accents of despair as well as to their bravado.

"Citizen," said he to Geneviève, "I must remove your scarf, and cut off your hair, if you please."

Geneviève began to tremble.

"Come, dear lady," said Lorin, softly, "take courage!"

"May I remove the lady's hair?" asked Maurice.

"Oh, yes," cried Geneviève; "I entreat you to permit him to do so, Monsieur Sanson."

"He may," said the old man, turning away his head.

Maurice first took off his necktie, and Geneviève, stooping, fell on her knees before the young man, presenting her charming head, appearing more beautiful in her grief than she had ever been in her days of sunshine and happiness.

When Maurice had completed the funereal operation, his hands were so tremulous and his countenance betrayed so much grief that Geneviève exclaimed, —

"Ah! I am courageous, Maurice."

Sanson turned round.

"Is it not so, sir?" said Geneviève; "am I not courageous?'

"Certainly, Citizen," replied the executioner, in a perturbed voice, "for yours is true courage."

In the mean time the first assistant had glanced over the list forwarded by Fouquier Tinville.

"Fourteen," said he.

Sanson counted the condemned.

"Fifteen, including the dead," said he; "why, how is this?"

Lorin and Geneviève counted after him, both struck by the same thought.

"You say there are only fourteen condemned, and that we are fifteen?" said she.

"Yes; the Citizen Fouquier Tinville must have made a mistake."

"Ah! you spoke falsely, then," said Geneviève, turning to Maurice; "you were not condemned."

"And why wait for to-morrow, when you die to-day?" said Maurice.

"My love," said she, smiling, "you reassure me; I am now convinced that it is easy to die."

"Lorin," said Maurice, "now for the last time — no one here can recognize you — say that you came to bid me adieu; say that you have been shut in by mistake; call the gendarme who saw you go out. I am the true criminal who ought to die. But you, my friend, we beseech you to live to guard our memory. There is yet time, Lorin; we entreat you!"

Geneviève joined her hands in an attitude of prayer. Lorin took both her hands and kissed them.

"I have said no, and I mean no," said Lorin, in a firm voice; "say no more on the subject, or I shall think I am a bore to you."

"Fourteen," repeated Sanson, "and here are fifteen;" then elevating his voice, "Is there any one here who can protest against this?" said he; "is there any one here who can prove he is here by mistake?"

Perhaps some lips half-opened at this question, but closed again without uttering a single word; since those who felt inclined to lie were ashamed to do so, and those who would not lie were determined not to speak.

A silence of several minutes ensued, during which the assistants continued their mournful office.

"Citizens, we are ready," said old Sanson, in his deep and solemn voice. He was answered only by sobs and groans.

"Well!" said Lorin, "so be it!

No death is nobler, none more high,
Than for our native land to die.

Yes, to die for our native land; but decidedly I begin to think we do not die for her, but for the pleasure of those who witness our deaths. Faith! Maurice, I have adopted your opinion. I am disgusted with the Republic!"

"The call!" said a commissary, at the door.

Several gendarmes entered the hall, closing up the issues, thus placing themselves between life and the condemned, as if to prevent them from returning to it.

The death-roll was called.

Maurice, who had witnessed the trial of the condemned man who had destroyed himself, when his name was called answered in his stead. They then found that, excepting the dead man, the number was correct.

The corpse was removed from the hall; but if the man's identity had been established, and he had been recognized as one condemned, he would have been guillotined with the rest, though already dead.

The survivors were pushed toward the outlet, in order that as each passed before the wicket his hands might be tied behind his back. For the space of ten minutes not a word was exchanged between these unfortunates; the executioners alone seemed endowed with life or motion.

Maurice, Geneviève, and Lorin, not being any longer able to retain their hold of each other, crowded together that they might not be separated.

When the condemned were removed from the Conciergerie into the court, the scene became truly appalling. Several grew faint at the sight of the carts, and the turnkeys were compelled to assist them to mount the steps of these vehicles of death. Behind the still closed doors

was heard the confused murmur of the crowd; and it might be inferred from the sound that the concourse was immense.

Geneviève courageously ascended the car; Maurice at her side sustained her; he sprang in rapidly after her.

Lorin did not hurry himself, but carefully selected his seat at the left of Maurice.

The doors opened, and foremost in the crowd stood Simon. The two friends immediately recognized him; indeed, the recognition was mutual. He was standing upon a fence near which the cars must pass, for there were three of them. The car containing our three friends moved first.

"Ah! good-day to you, my brave grenadier!" said Simon to Lorin; "you are going to try the effect of my leather-cutting machine, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Lorin; "and I will be careful not to notch it, that it may be ready when your turn comes."

The two remaining cars followed the direction of the first. And now commenced a terrific tempest of cries, shouts, groans, and maledictions, surrounding and following the condemned.

"Courage! Geneviève, take courage!" murmured Maurice.

"Oh!" replied the young woman, "I do not wish for life since I die with you. I regret only that my hands are tied, so that I cannot embrace you before I die."

"Lorin," said Maurice, "feel in my waistcoat pocket, there you will find a knife."

"Zounds!" said Lorin, "a penknife is the very thing needed; I should be ashamed to die, garroted like a calf."

Maurice placed his pocket on a level with his friend's hands; Lorin found the knife, which between them they

succeeded in opening. Maurice then placed it between his teeth, and severed the cord which bound Lorin's hands, who, the moment they were free, performed the same office for Maurice.

"Make haste!" said the young man; "Geneviève is fainting."

In fact, to accomplish this operation Maurice had for a moment turned from Geneviève, when, as if all her strength had been derived from him, her eyes closed, and her head sank upon her breast.

"Geneviève, open your eyes, my love," said Maurice; "we have only a few minutes more to see each other in this world."

"The cords wound me," murmured the young woman.

Maurice unbound them. She immediately re-opened her eyes, and rose, radiant with almost celestial beauty. She threw one fair arm around Maurice's neck, and with the other hand took that of Lorin; and thus, all three standing in the cart, with two more victims lying at their feet wrapped in the stupor of anticipated death, they gazed toward heaven with a look of ardent gratitude for having been permitted to support and console each other, while those who had outraged and insulted them previously were now perfectly silent. The scaffold was in sight. Maurice and Lorin beheld it. Geneviève did not; she saw naught but her lover. The car stopped.

"I love thee!" said Maurice to Geneviève; "I love thee!"

"The woman first! the woman first!" shouted a thousand voices.

"Thanks, good people," said Maurice; "who then can call you cruel?"

He took Geneviève within his arms, pressed his lips fondly upon hers, and delivered her to Sanson.

"Courage!" cried Lorin; "courage!"

"I have it!" said Geneviève; "I have it!"

"I love thee!" murmured Maurice; "I love thee!"

They were no longer victims about to be slaughtered, but friends making a festival of death.

"Adieu!" cried Geneviève to Lorin.

"Farewell, till we meet again!" replied he.

And Geneviève disappeared under the fatal drop.

"After you," said Lorin.

"After you," replied Maurice.

"Hark! she calls you."

At this moment Geneviève uttered her last cry.

"Come!" said she.

A furious uproar took place in the crowd. The fair and graceful head had fallen.

Maurice rushed forward.

"It is exactly correct," said Lorin; "let us follow logic. Do you hear me, Maurice?"

"Yes."

"She loved you, and they have murdered her first; you are not condemned, and therefore die the second; and I, who have done nothing, being the greatest criminal of the three, die the last.

> And thus you see how passing clear
> Logic makes everything appear.

Good faith! Citizen Sanson, I promised you a quatrain; but you must be content with a distich."

"I did love thee!" murmured Maurice, lying on the fatal plank, and smiling at the head of his beloved, — "I did lo —" The knife cut short the last word.

"Now for my turn!" cried Lorin, bounding on the scaffold, "and be quick, or I shall lose my head! Citizen

Sanson, I owe you two verses, instead of which I offer you a pun."

Sanson placed him in his turn.

"Let us see," said Lorin, — "it is the fashion to cry long live something, when dying. Once it was, 'Vive le Roi,' but now there is no king; next the cry was, 'Vive la Liberté,' but there is no more liberty. Faith, Long live Simon! say I, who unites us all three."

And the head of the generous and noble-hearted young man fell near those of Maurice and Geneviève.

THE END.